

Female representation in AFN festival programming vol. 2

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Creative
Europe
MEDIA

Intro

Gender representation in animation has been widely discussed, yet precise and comparable data across festivals remain limited. This lack of systematic evidence was one of the main motivations behind our previous analysis, which focused primarily on the gender balance within the official selections of AFN festivals.

In the present survey, we aimed to broaden this perspective by looking beyond the final programme and examining the selection process as a whole. In particular, we asked how many films are submitted to individual festivals, what the gender distribution among submitting filmmakers is, and what proportion of these submissions ultimately reaches the official selection. This allows us not only to describe the gender composition of festival programmes, but also to explore whether the observed representation reflects the composition of the submission pool or whether differences emerge during the selection process.

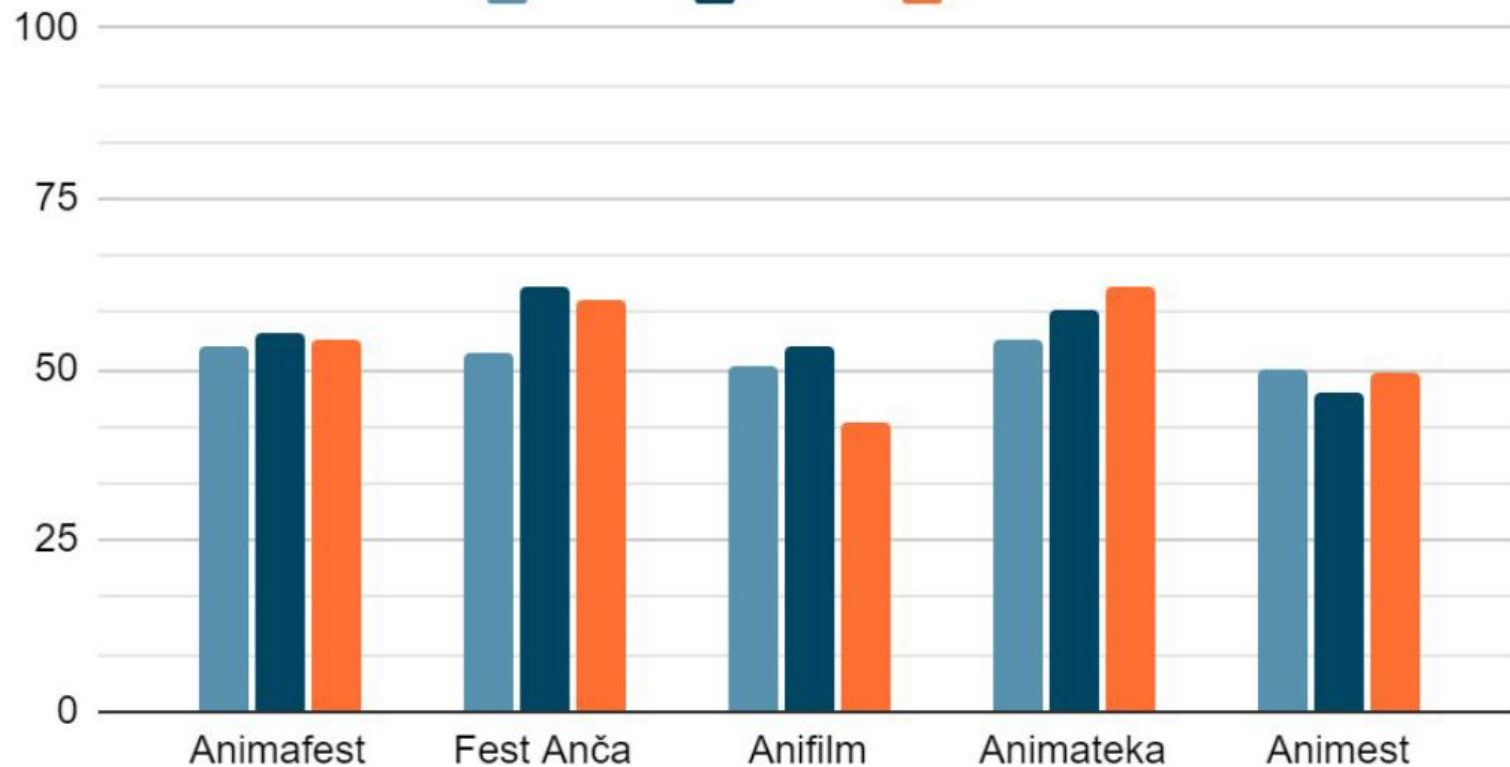
Intro

An important part of the analysis is therefore to consider both the gender distribution among submitted films and among selected films, as well as the corresponding selection rates. At the same time, interpretation of the results requires an understanding of the specific characteristics of each festival, as every festival within the AFN network has its own programme structure, eligibility criteria, selection procedures and curatorial approach.

Before we dive into the current survey, which examines the relationship between submissions and official selections in 2025, let us first revisit our previous survey. The previous analysis focused on female representation in the official selections of five festivals — Animafest, Animateka, Fest Anča, Animest, and Anifilm — across 2021, 2022, and 2023. That survey looked exclusively at the competitive sections of each festival and examined the gender balance among filmmakers.

Female+ Representation (in %)

2021 2022 2023



ANIMAFEST:
2021 - **54%**
2022 - **55%**
2023 - **54%**

ANIMATEKA:
2021 - **54%**
2022 - **59%**
2023 - **62%**

FEST ANČA:
2021 - **52%**
2022 - **62%**
2023 - **60%**

ANIFILM:
2021 - **50%**
2022 - **54%**
2023 - **42%**

ANIMEST:
2021 - **50%**
2022 - **47%**
2023 - **50%**

Survey vol. 2

In Survey No. 1, I collected the data on filmmakers' gender manually. This highlighted the need to incorporate a "Gender of filmmaker(s)" field into the submission form used by each festival, both to improve data accuracy and to make data collection more manageable, given that the number of submitted films reaches several thousand.

This field remains part of the submission process in subsequent festival editions. As a result, gender became more explicitly visible during the submission and selection process, which may also have contributed to a certain increased awareness of gender representation when selecting films.

Survey No. 2 therefore focused on the 2025 editions of the five festivals and, unlike the first survey, worked directly with gender data collected through the festivals' submission systems. For the purposes of the analysis, the data were grouped into three main categories: Female, Male, and Other.

Survey vol. 2

After collecting the materials from all five festivals, it became clear that each festival recorded and structured gender information in a slightly different way. Considerable data cleaning and harmonisation were therefore required before the datasets could be compared.

In some datasets, the category Other was further divided into categories such as Nonbinary or Trans, whereas in others these identities were grouped together under a single category. Some festivals also offered options such as “Would rather not say”, while in other cases gender information was missing altogether.

Where the datasets contained blank or unclear entries, I tried to complete the missing information by cross-checking other festival spreadsheets, or publicly available information on the web. This process of data harmonisation and selection of comparable records was essential to ensure that the submission and official-selection datasets could be meaningfully compared across all five festivals.

Survey vol. 2

For each festival, I ultimately worked with two main datasets: the complete pool of submitted films and the subset of films selected from among those submissions. This made it possible to compare the gender composition of the submission pool with the gender composition of the official selection and to calculate gender-specific selection rates.

At the same time, the results must be interpreted in the context of the individual festivals. Each festival has a different programme structure and curatorial approach. Some festivals include several curated or non-competitive sections, while others have a larger proportion of competitive programmes or use different eligibility and selection procedures. Consequently, the absolute numbers of submitted and selected films, as well as the overall selection rates, vary considerably from festival to festival. For this reason, the most meaningful comparison is not the absolute number of selected films between festivals, but rather how the gender composition changes from submissions to selection within each individual festival.

ANIMAFEST



Animafest 2025 submissions

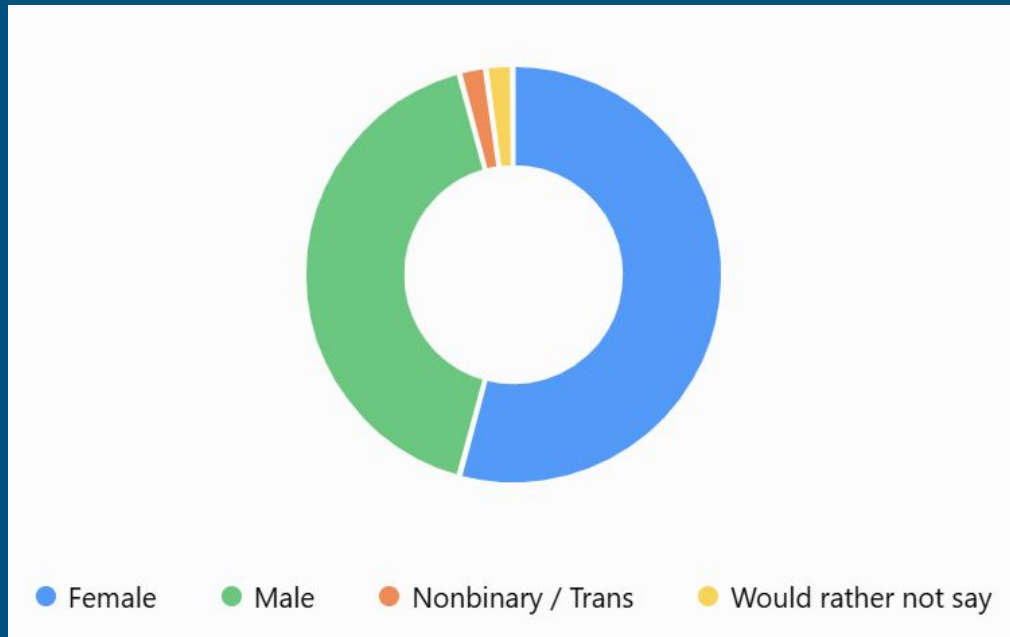
Female: 54,4 % (1,501)

Male: 41,7 % (1,149)

Nonbinary / Trans: 1,9 % (53)

Would rather not say: 2,0 % (54)

A total of 2,078 films were submitted. In 8 cases, the filmmakers were not listed individually by name, but only as a collective or group; these submissions were therefore excluded from the gender analysis.



Animafest 2025 official selection

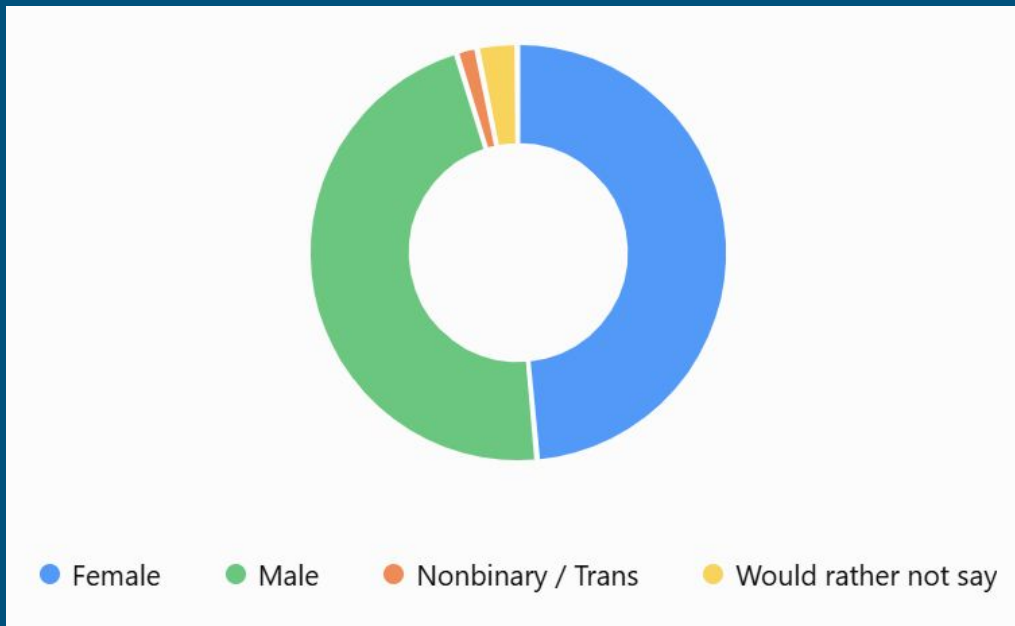
Female: 48,8 % (98)

Male: 46,8 % (94)

Nonbinary / Trans: 1,5 % (3)

Would rather not say: 3,0 % (6)

A total of 174 films were included in the official selection. Four of these films were not present in the submission dataset but were included in the official selection; all four were feature films.



Gender	Submissions	Official selection	Change	Selection rate*
Female	54.4% (1501)	48.8% (98)	−5.7 p.p.	6.5%
Male	41.7% (1149)	46.8% (94)	+5.1 p.p.	8.2%
Nonbinary / Trans	1.9% (53)	1.5% (3)	−0.4 p.p.	5.7%
Would rather not say	2.0% (54)	3.0% (6)	+1.0 p.p.	11.1%
Total	2757	201	—	7.3%

* Selection rate = number in official selection / number in submissions

Animafest Summary

Women constituted a clear majority of the submission pool (54.4%), whereas men accounted for 41.7%. In the official selection, however, this difference almost disappeared: 48.8% female vs 46.8% male. In other words, the official selection is nearly gender-balanced, but it does not originate from a gender-balanced submission pool.

The selection rates are even more informative: 6.5% of female submissions reached the official selection, compared with 8.2% of male submissions. Thus, in this dataset, the relative probability of selection was approximately 25% higher for male submissions than for female submissions. However, in a simple pooled comparison, this difference should be interpreted more as a trend than as conclusive statistical evidence.

Gender parity in the official selection does not necessarily imply parity in the selection process. Women represented the majority of submitted filmmaker credits (54.4%), but their share decreased to 48.8% in the official selection. Conversely, men accounted for 41.7% of submissions but 46.8% of selected filmmaker credits. The corresponding selection rates were 6.5% for women and 8.2% for men.

ANIMATEKA



ANIMATEKA

Animateka 2025 submissions

Female: 59,9 % (736)

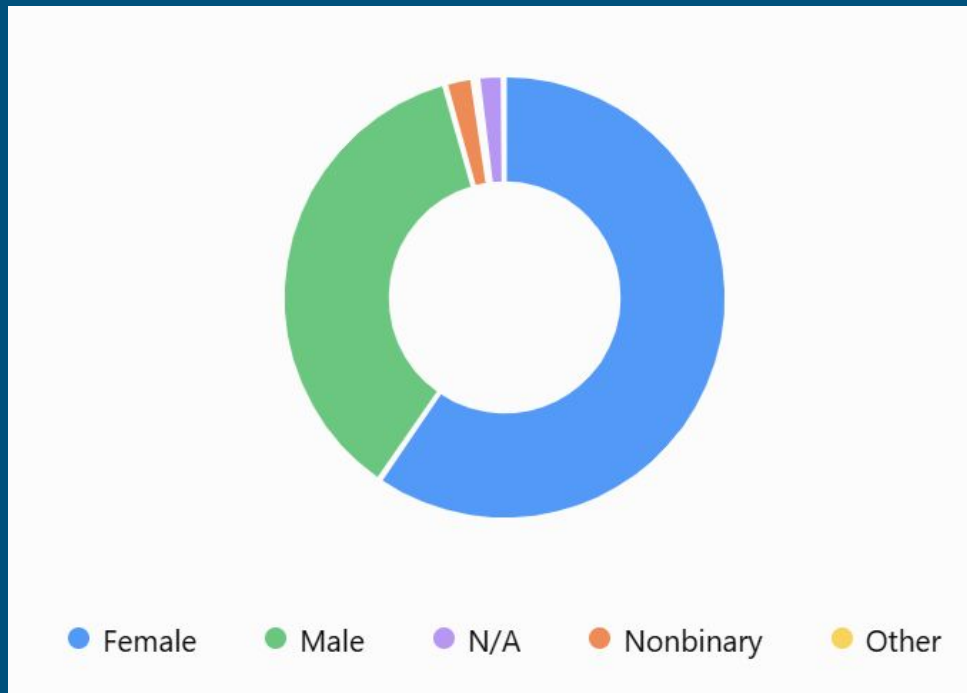
Male: 36,2 % (444)

Nonbinary: 2,0 % (24)

Other: 0,2 % (2)

N/A: 1,8 % (22)

A total of 930 films were submitted. In 14 cases, the filmmakers were not listed individually by name, but only as a collective or group; these submissions were excluded from the gender analysis.



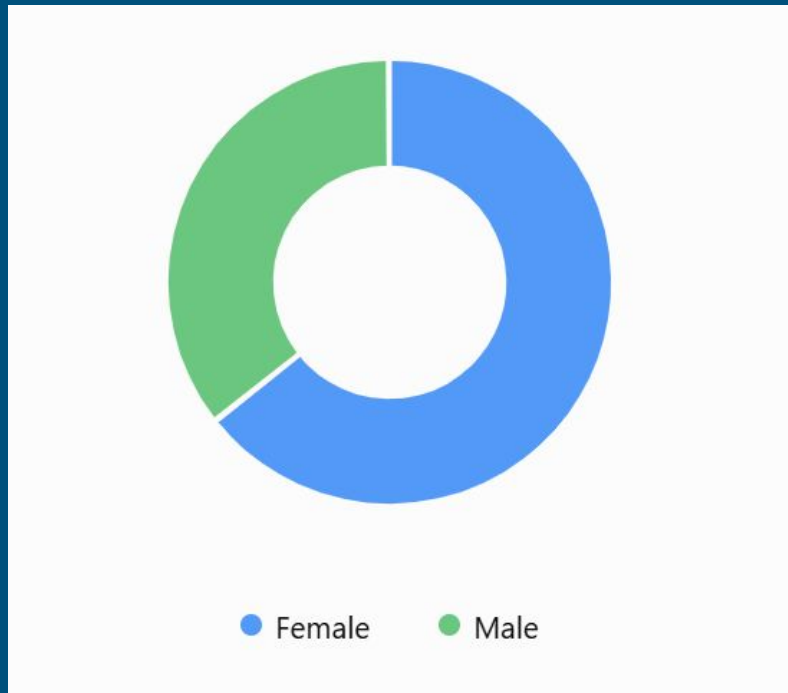
Animateka 2025 official selection

Female: 64,4 % (154)

Male: 35,6 % (85)

Nonbinary, Other: 0%

A total of 190 films were included
in the official selection.



Gender	Submissions	Official selection	Change	Selection rate*
Female	59.9% (736)	64.4% (154)	+4.5 p.p.	20.9%
Male	36.2% (444)	35.6% (85)	-0.6 p.p.	19.1%
Nonbinary	2.0% (24)	0.0% (0)	-2.0 p.p.	0.0%
Other	0.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	-0.2 p.p.	0.0%
N/A	1.8% (22)	0.0% (0)	-1.8 p.p.	0.0%
Total	1228	239	—	19.5%

* Selection rate = number in official selection / number in submissions.

Animateka Summary

In contrast to the previous festival, the representation of women did not decrease during the selection process, but increased. Their share went from 59.9% of submissions to 64.4% of the official selection. The proportion of men remained largely stable, decreasing slightly from 36.2% to 35.6%. The difference between women and men was relatively small.

The representation of the remaining gender categories is also noteworthy. The submission pool included 24 Nonbinary, 2 Other, and 22 N/A records, whereas none of these categories appeared in the official-selection data.

In this festival, women already constituted the majority of the submission pool (59.9%) and their representation increased further in the official selection to 64.4%. The corresponding selection rates were similar for women and men—20.9% and 19.1%, respectively—suggesting that the female majority in the official selection largely reflects the gender composition of the submissions rather than a major difference in selection probability. The submission pool itself was already strongly female-dominated, and the official selection largely preserved and slightly amplified this pattern.

FEST ANČA



Fest Anča 2025 submissions

Female: 56,2 % (1,301)

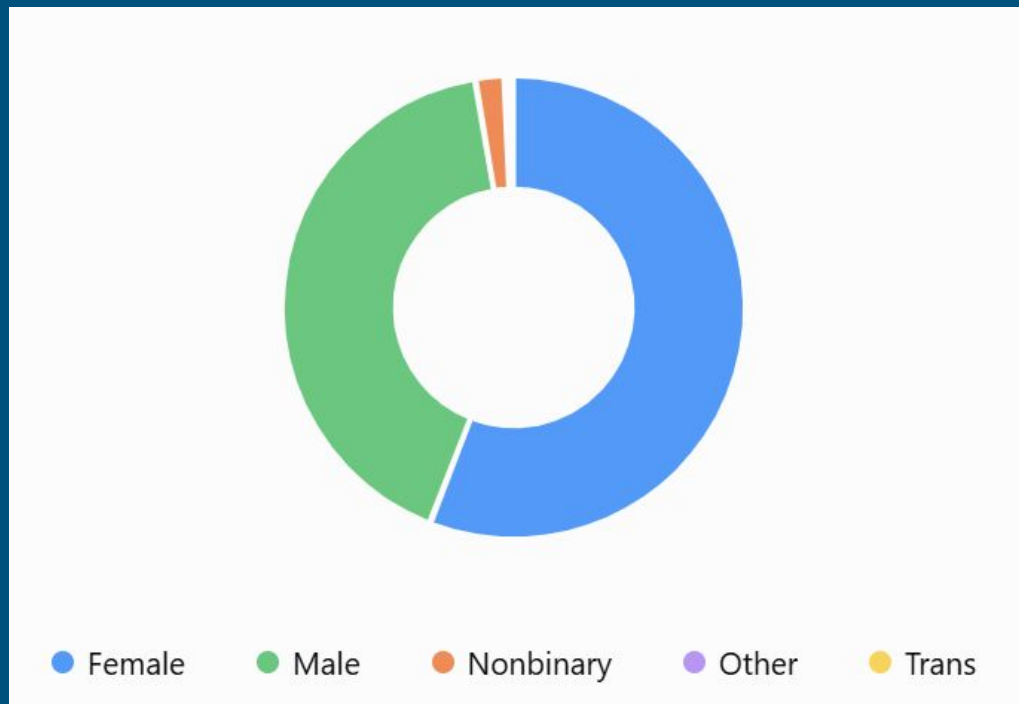
Male: 41,6 % (962)

Nonbinary: 1,9 % (44)

Trans: 0,2 % (4)

Other: 0,1 % (3)

A total of 1,738 films were submitted. In 19 cases, the filmmakers were not listed individually by name, but only as a collective or group; these submissions were excluded from the gender analysis.



Fest Anča 2025 official selection

Female: 56,3 % (162)

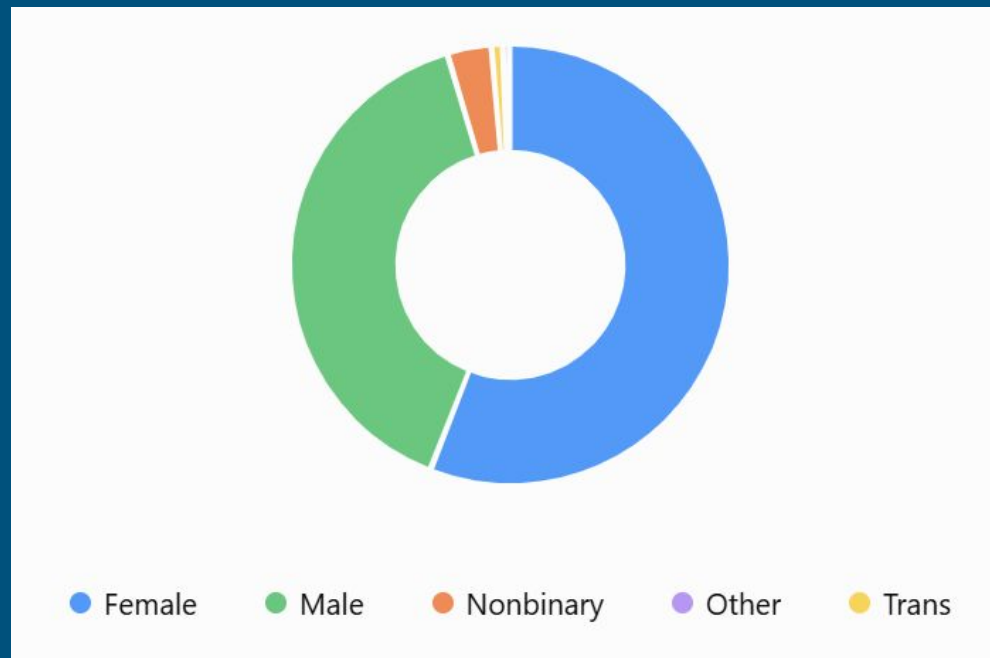
Male: 39,6 % (114)

Nonbinary: 3,1 % (9)

Trans: 0,7 % (2)

Other: 0,3 % (1)

A total of 218 films were included in the official selection.



Gender	Submissions	Official selection	Change	Selection rate*
Female	56.2% (1301)	56.2% (162)	+0.0 p.p.	12.5%
Male	41.6% (962)	39.6% (114)	-2.0 p.p.	11.9%
Nonbinary	1.9% (44)	3.1% (9)	+1.2 p.p.	20.5%
Trans	0.2% (4)	0.7% (2)	+0.5 p.p.	50.0%
Other	0.1% (3)	0.3% (1)	+0.2 p.p.	33.3%
Total	2314	288	—	12.4%

* Selection rate = number in official selection / number in submissions.

Fest Anča Summary

For this festival, the gender composition of the submission pool and the official selection was very similar, particularly with regard to the representation of women. Of all submissions, women accounted for 56.2%, while they represented 56.3% of the official selection. Their representation therefore remained virtually unchanged during the selection process. Among men, we observed a slight decrease: they represented 41.6% of submissions but 39.6% of the official selection, corresponding to a decline of approximately 2 percentage points.

An interesting finding is the increase in the Nonbinary category from 1.9% of submissions to 3.1% of the official selection, corresponding to a selection rate of 20.5%. Even higher selection rates were observed for the Trans and Other categories; however, these were based on only 4 and 3 submissions, respectively.

In this festival, the gender composition of the official selection closely reflected that of the submission pool. Women represented 56.2% of submitted filmmaker credits and 56.3% of selected credits, with similar selection rates for women and men (12.5% vs. 11.9%). This suggests that the female majority observed in the official selection primarily reflects the composition of the submissions rather than a gender-related difference in the selection process.

ANIMEST



Animest 2025 submissions

Female: 839 → **53,0 %**

Male: 700 → **44,2 %**

Other: 44 → **2,8 %**

A total of 1,216 films were submitted. In 4 cases, the filmmakers were not listed individually by name, but only as a collective or group; these submissions were excluded from the gender analysis.



● Female ● Male ● Other

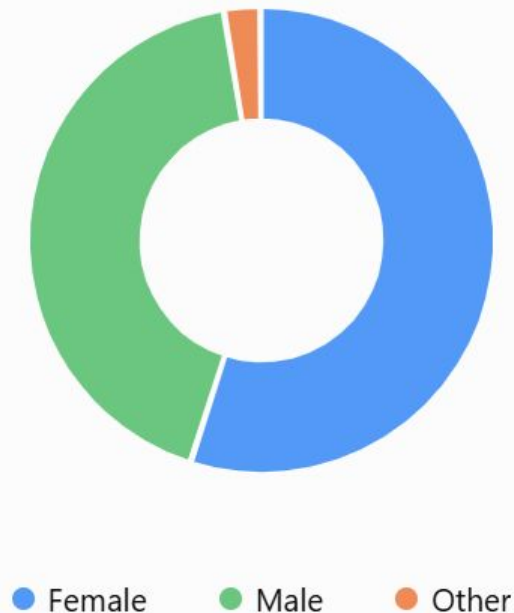
Animest 2025 official selection

Female: 92 → 55,1 %

Male: 71 → 42,5 %

Other: 4 → 2,4 %

A total of 126 films were included in the official selection.



Gender	Submissions	Official selection	Change	Selection rate*
Female	53.0% (839)	55.1% (92)	+2.1 p.p.	11.0%
Male	44.2% (700)	42.5% (71)	-1.7 p.p.	10.1%
Other	2.8% (44)	2.4% (4)	-0.4 p.p.	9.1%
Total	1583	167	—	10.5%

* Selection rate = number in official selection / number in submissions.

Animest Summary

During the selection process, the representation of women increased slightly, from 53.0% to 55.1%, corresponding to an increase of approximately 2.1 percentage points. The proportion of men, in contrast, decreased slightly from 44.2% to 42.5%, a reduction of approximately 1.7 percentage points. The representation of the Other category remained very similar, with a slight decrease from 2.8% to 2.4%.

This festival shows a relatively stable gender distribution between submissions and the official selection. Female representation increased slightly during the selection process, but the difference in selection rates between women and men was small.

The gender composition of the official selection remained broadly similar to that of the submission pool. Women represented 53.0% of submitted filmmaker credits and 55.1% of selected credits, while their selection rate was 11.0% compared with 10.1% for men. The relatively small differences suggest that the gender balance of the official selection largely reflects the composition of the submissions rather than a substantial gender-related difference in selection probability.

ANIFILM



Anifilm
FESTIVAL LIBREC

Anifilm 2025 submissions

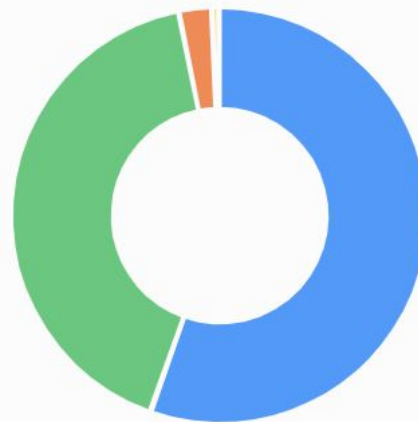
Female: 960 → 55,7 %

Male: 716 → 41,5 %

Other: 42 → 2,4 %

Nonbinary / Trans: 7 → 0,4 %

A total of 1,330 films were submitted. In 2 cases, the filmmakers were not listed individually by name, but only as a collective or group; these submissions were excluded from the gender analysis.



● Female

● Male

● Nonbinary / Trans

● Other

Anifilm 2025 official selection

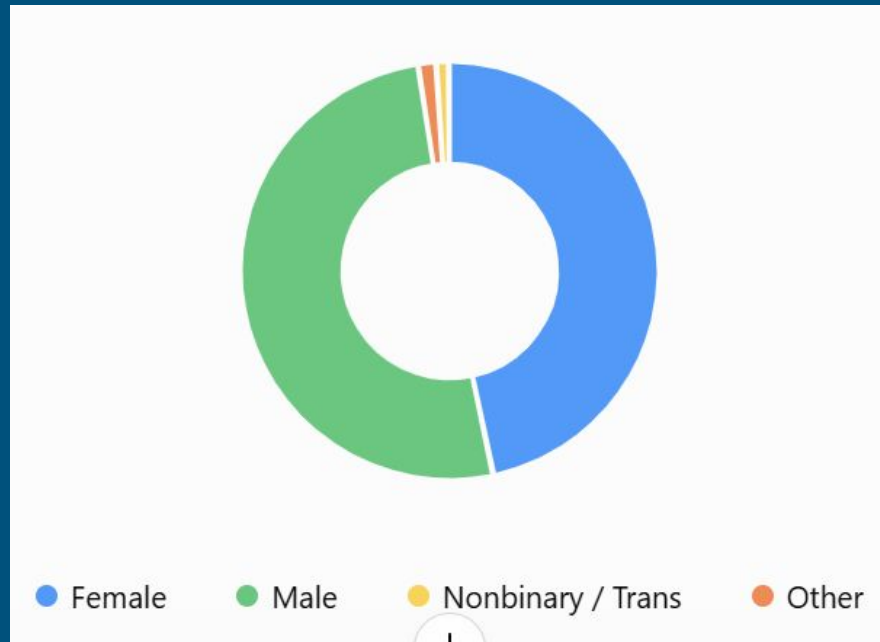
Female: 111 → 46,8 %

Male: 121 → 51,1 %

Other: 3 → 1,3 %

Nonbinary / Trans: 2 → 0,8 %

A total of 184 films were included in the official selection. Additional inconsistencies were identified. A total of 27 entries classified as Computer Games or Student Computer Games were excluded. 17 films included in the official selection were not present in the gender dataset. These films were nevertheless included in the overall number of selected films.



Gender	Submissions	Official selection	Change	Selection rate*
Female	55.7% (960)	46.8% (111)	-8.8 p.p.	11.6%
Male	41.5% (716)	51.1% (121)	+9.5 p.p.	16.9%
Other	2.4% (42)	1.3% (3)	-1.2 p.p.	7.1%
Nonbinary / Trans	0.4% (7)	0.8% (2)	+0.4 p.p.	28.6%
Total	1725	237	—	13.7%

* Selection rate = number in official selection / number in submissions.

Anifilm Summary

For this festival, the difference between the gender composition of the submission pool and the official selection was considerably more pronounced than in the previous festivals. Women constituted a clear majority at 55.7%, while men accounted for 41.5%. In the official selection, however, this pattern was reversed: women represented only 46.8%, while the share of men increased to 51.1%.

This difference is also apparent in the gender-specific selection rates. Of 960 female submissions, 111 were selected, corresponding to a selection rate of 11.6%. Among 716 male submissions, 121 were selected, corresponding to 16.9%. In the dataset, male submissions therefore had an approximately 1.46-fold higher selection rate, or about a 46% higher relative probability of selection, than female submissions.

In this festival, the gender composition changed substantially between submissions and the official selection. The corresponding selection rates were 11.6% for women and 16.9% for men, indicating a substantially higher selection rate for male submissions. Thus, the relatively balanced gender composition of the final programme does not reflect the markedly female-majority submission pool.

ANIMA
TEKA

animafest
BUCHAREST INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL

ANIMAFEST
ZAGREB
WORLD FESTIVAL
OF ANIMATED FILM

fest anča
INTERNATIONAL
ANIMATION
FESTIVAL

Anifilm
FESTIVAL LIBREC

Animation Festival Network

1. The official selection closely reflects the submission pool – Fest Anča

Women represented 56.2% of submissions and 56.2% of the official selection, while the selection rates were also very similar: 12.5% for women and 11.9% for men.

2. A slight increase in female representation – Animest and Animateka

At Animest, the proportion of women increased from 53.0% of submissions to 55.1% of the official selection, while at Animateka it increased more markedly, from 59.9% to 64.4%. Female selection rates were slightly higher than male selection rates at both festivals, although the differences were small.

3. A decrease in female representation – Animafest and Anifilm

At Animafest, the male selection rate was 8.2%, compared with 6.5% for women. The most pronounced difference was observed at Anifilm: the selection rate was 11.6% for women compared with 16.9% for men.

Festival	Female submissions	Female official selection	Change	Female selection rate	Male selection rate
Anifilm	55.7%	46.8%	−8.8 p.p.	11.6%	16.9%
Animest	53.0%	55.1%	+2.1 p.p.	11.0%	10.1%
Fest Anča	56.2%	56.2%	+0.0 p.p.	12.5%	11.9%
Animateka	59.9%	64.4%	+4.5 p.p.	20.9%	19.1%
Animafest	54.4%	48.8%	−5.7 p.p.	6.5%	8.2%
All festivals	55.6%	54.5%	−1.1 p.p.	11.6%	12.2%

Change = female share in official selection – female share in submissions.

AFN Summary

Across all five festivals, women constituted the majority of submitted filmmaker credits, representing between 53.0% and 59.9% of submissions. However, the relationship between the gender composition of submissions and that of the official selection varied considerably between festivals.

When all five festivals were pooled, women represented 55.6% of submissions and 54.5% of official-selection credits. The overall selection rates were similar for women and men (11.6% vs. 12.2%), with no statistically significant overall difference. This suggests that there is no uniform gender-related selection pattern across the festival network.

Most importantly, the findings demonstrate that gender balance in an official selection cannot be interpreted in isolation. Evaluating gender representation therefore requires consideration of the entire pathway from submissions to selection, alongside the specific structure and curatorial practices of each festival.

Conclusion

The survey helps distinguish between two related but different concepts: representation in the final programme and representation throughout the selection process. Rather than assuming that every festival should simply aim for a 50/50 split, the key question is whether the final selection should reflect gender parity or more closely mirror the gender composition of submissions.

This allows for a more nuanced discussion of diversity policies and selection practices. The aim does not necessarily have to be for every festival to mechanically achieve a 50/50 gender split. It may be more important to understand where the final distribution comes from.

The survey does not prescribe one approach. Rather, it provides a basis for further discussion among the festivals about which approach best reflects the diversity of contemporary animation filmmaking, while taking into account both equal representation in the final programme and the actual composition of the filmmaker community submitting their work.