



28th UNAFF Honors Filmmakers and Visionaries Across ‘Messages for the Future’ Theme



PALO ALTO, Calif. (Oct. 31, 2025) — The [28th United Nations Association Film Festival](#) (UNAFF), one of the oldest documentary film festivals in the United States, concluded its 28th edition on Sunday, Oct. 26, with its annual awards ceremony. Seven award winners across five categories were announced, along with the previously revealed Visionary Award for Rep. Anna Eshoo.

UNAFF Founder and Executive Director Jasmina Bojic said:

“In this uncertain time, we often wonder about our future. These filmmakers and honorees are beacons of light in our industry. They pave paths, spark questions, reveal hard truths, and provide ‘Messages for the Future.’ We are deeply grateful for everyone at the festival — from our attendees, panelists, guests, and staff — for contributing to our dialogue.”

This year’s festival featured 60 documentary features and shorts. Fifty-five percent were directed or co-directed by women, and half were directed or co-directed by filmmakers of color. The program also included four world premieres — [*The Burning*](#), [*Exodus*](#), [*An Ordinary Insanity*](#) and [*Soaking the Ground*](#).

Screenings and events took place throughout the Bay Area, including Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, San Francisco and Stanford University, from Oct. 16–26, 2025.

Save the date: The 29th United Nations Association Film Festival will be held Oct. 15–25, 2026.

Award Winners

UNAFF recognizes filmmakers and films for their achievements in the following categories:



From left: “*The Librarians*” producer Janique Robillard, “*Comparsa*” film subject Lupe Perez, and “*The Changebaker*” film subject Manolo Betancur.

GRAND JURY AWARD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY [THE LIBRARIANS](#)

“In a particularly fraught time, when democracy is under attack around the globe and our artistic freedom as storytellers is increasingly at risk, we are grateful for UNAFF’s platform creating community and elevating critical social justice conversations while simultaneously celebrating the craft of filmmaking. It’s a real honor to have screened my fifth film here and to have been recognized again with this incredible award from the festival.”

— Kim A. Snyder, director



"The Librarians" producer Janique Robillard with UNAFF Founder and Executive Director Jasmina Bojic.

GRAND JURY AWARD FOR BEST SHORT DOCUMENTARY [THE CHANGEMAKER](#)

"Thank you, UNAFF, for giving me the love and hope that I need to keep moving forward in these cold and difficult times for us, the immigrant community of the United States. Thank you, UNAFF, for being brave and letting us know that we are not alone. You are in my heart."

— Manuel "Manolo" Betancur, film subject

AWARD FOR BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

Svetlana Cvetko

[THE TRUE STORY OF TAMARA DE LEMPICKA AND THE ART OF SURVIVAL](#)

"It's meaningful to me to be an alum of a long-standing festival that promotes art and filmmakers, and I have always appreciated their support over the years."

— Svetlana Cvetko, co-producer and cinematographer



From left: “*The True Story of Tamara de Lempicka and the Art of Survival*” producer Blake Wellen, director Julie Rubio, cinematographer and co-producer Svetlana Cvetko, and editor David Scott Smith.

AWARD FOR BEST EDITING

Amy Ferraris, Lisa Fruchtman and Michael Chandler

[COUNTED OUT](#)

YOUTH VISION AWARD

[COMPARSA](#)

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UNAFF MISSION

About UNAFF

Founded in 1998 by Jasmina Bojic, the United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF) is an international documentary film festival focused on human rights. It has screened some of the most acclaimed and talked-about documentaries in the industry, including eight that went on to win Academy Awards and 39 that were nominated. UNAFF promotes education and social change through film. Visit unaff.org.

About the 28th UNAFF

The 28th UNAFF ran Oct. 16–26, 2025, under the theme *Messages for the Future*. The festival showcased films highlighting human rights issues including the environment, women's rights, racism and peace, engaging a diverse Bay Area audience. UNAFF also hosted seven panel discussions featuring leading experts who examined topics such as climate change, criminal justice reform, immigration, war and freedom of speech, artificial intelligence, media and privacy, and the power of art to inspire social change.

