

# IMAGICA GROUP

## Unleashing Talent onto the Global Stage IMAGICA GROUP Original Film Project Second Edition to Be Presented at Cannes!

**Kei Ishikawa, Shozo Ichiyama and Yuka Sakano  
participated as jury members**  
With the opportunity for IMAGICA GROUP to nurture and discover creators

IMAGICA GROUP (Head office: Minato-ku, Tokyo; President and Group CEO: Shunjiro Nagase) is proud to announce the selection for the second edition of its "Original Film Project" during the 79th Cannes Film Festival, following the selected film of the first edition "Maria." This Project was launched in 2025 with the mission to nurture and discover new talent while exploring the potential of Japanese visual expression on a global stage.

This announcement is recognized as an official collaborative program by the Cannes 2026 – Marché du Film Country of Honour Executive Committee.



MARCHÉ DU FILM  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



JAPAN  
COUNTRY OF HONOUR  
2026

### **Outline of the "IMAGICA GROUP Original Film Project"**

Launched in 2025, this project invites film proposals from within IMAGICA GROUP companies with a view to winning awards at international film festivals, selecting and producing one project each year. By continuing this initiative over five years, we aim to nurture and discover talented creators, and at the same time, we will communicate the creativity of IMAGICA GROUP to the world.

The project for the second edition was selected through a rigorous final selection process from among 44 proposals submitted within our group companies. Subsequent production will be undertaken by one of the following companies: OLM, P.I.C.S., or ROBOT.

The jury features film director Kei Ishikawa, internationally acclaimed for works such as "A Man" (winner of Best Picture and Best Director at the 46th Japan Academy Film Prize) and "A Pale View of Hills," which was selected for the Cannes Film Festival. Sympathizing with the project's mission, Ishikawa joins to support next-generation creators from his unique perspective as a leading filmmaker. Returning to the jury are Shozo Ichiyama, Programming Director of the Tokyo International Film Festival, and Yuka Sakano, Executive Director of the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute. The project was determined through the selection by these three jury members.



From left, Shunjiro Nagase, President and Group CEO of IMAGICA GROUP, and jury members Kei Ishikawa, Shozo Ichiyama and Yuka Sakano

### **Application Requirements**

- Applicants must be producers affiliated with an IMAGICA GROUP company. (Outside producers, directors, and other creators may apply by partnering with them.)
- Submitted projects must be original and not based on or adapted from existing copyrighted works.

## Evaluation Process

- First Evaluation: A call for projects was conducted within IMAGICA GROUP companies, with a deadline of November 2025. Following internal evaluation, 16 projects were selected from among 44 submissions.
- Second (Final) Evaluation: Evaluation began in February 2026, and the project for the second edition was selected in early April 2026.
- Announcement of Results: The project will be announced during the Cannes Film Festival in May 2026.

IMAGICA GROUP will invest up to JPY 70M for the selected project. At the press conference during the Cannes Film Festival, IMAGICA GROUP President and Group CEO Shunjiro Nagase will announce the producer and director of the selected project. In addition, jury members Kei Ishikawa, Shozo Ichiyama, and Yuka Sakano will provide commentary on the selected project. They will also share insights into how submitted proposals have evolved through the continuation of this initiative. Through this presentation, IMAGICA GROUP will communicate the progress of the project from Cannes to the world.

**Shunjiro Nagase, President and Group CEO of IMAGICA GROUP** comment: We launched this project in 2025 with a strong commitment to creating opportunities for next-generation creators to take on the global stage. Since the announcement of the first edition, we have received a tremendous response from the film industry and beyond, reaffirming that this initiative is deeply meaningful for creators and everyone involved in filmmaking. For the second edition, we are honored to welcome Kei Ishikawa as a new jury member, alongside Shozo Ichiyama and Yuka Sakano, who continue their invaluable involvement from the first project. I'm immensely encouraged to have such internationally acclaimed experts join our jury. Following the first edition, this second call for entries attracted numerous projects with the potential to resonate globally. I truly believe this is evidence that our mission to nurture and discover creators is steadily gaining momentum. IMAGICA GROUP has always evolved alongside the front lines of film and media production. We will continue to drive this project forward, fostering an environment where creators can freely challenge themselves and express their vision, thereby creating opportunities for new talent to take flight to the world.



**Kei Ishikawa, Film Director**, comment: The vision of delivering original stories to the world is something every filmmaker aspires to. While I am honored to be part of such a wonderful initiative, I must admit a part of me wished I could have applied myself. I initially felt the weight of the responsibility, but once I started reading the proposals, I was completely captivated. There were moments of genuine jealousy and times when I felt challenged as a filmmaker. I am incredibly excited to see what kind of films will eventually emerge from this project.



**Shozo Ichiyama, Programming Director of the Tokyo International Film Festival**, comment: Having served on the jury for the second consecutive year, I found this year's candidates even more compelling than the last, requiring much more time and deep deliberation to narrow them down to a single selection. Ultimately, we chose the project that has reached the highest level of completion at this stage. However, among those not selected, there were several challenging projects that, while still unrefined, had the potential to shatter stereotypes of Japanese cinema. I look forward to following the future endeavors of all the directors whose scripts and plots I had the privilege of reading.



**Yuka Sakano, Executive Director of the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute**, comment: Since the conclusion of the first edition of the IMAGICA GROUP Original Film Project last year, I have personally heard from many directors and producers, underscoring the high level of interest in this initiative. The 16 projects were all compelling, offering a rich variety of genres and directorial styles. It was extremely difficult to narrow the selection down to just one, as they were all so competitive. I hope that the selected film will leave a significant mark at international film festivals.

