

November 2026

A Report on the Future of AI Film Genres and Their Opportunities

By AI Film Director and Film Festival Curator **Marcel Barsotti**

The quality and quantity of AI films are currently increasing at a phenomenal pace worldwide. By far the largest number of films are coming from Asia, followed by United States, South America, Canada and then Europe. Both the quality and the visual execution are demonstrating entirely new approaches to filmmaking across all genres. As curator of the AI Film Festival in Biberach an der Riss (Germany) and an AI film director myself, I watch a vast number of international AI films and regularly engage in discussions with AI film festivals and creators from all over the world. Initial trends are already emerging in the distribution of AI films and in the different approaches to storytelling.

AI SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY

By far the strongest development can be seen in fantastical storytelling and its visual realization. While thousands of films fail at the box office or on streaming platforms every year, consuming enormous production budgets through CGI, this AI genre is currently, by a considerable margin, the most popular with audiences.

It demands creativity at the highest level. Successful AI films in this category are increasingly moving in directions that differ from the conventional science fiction productions of the industry, such as *Star Wars*. Unfortunately, there is also a growing tendency among some

creators to do little more than copy existing film footage and create stereotypical characters. I see this as an experimental phase in which creators are testing possibilities before establishing themselves as successful and individual AI film makers.

This year's winner of the AI Film Festival in Biberach, **THOSE WHO WAIT** (Spain), offered a striking example: a perfectly realized visual world featuring non-stereotypical characters in a familiar Asian mountain village setting, where rust-covered robots arrive one day to live alongside human beings. It is an entirely new approach to science fiction storytelling – a masterpiece.

Films such as **EMILYS** (France) and **HATE?** (USA) also demonstrate what becomes possible when filmmakers fully embrace the universe of science fiction storytelling. This genre requires tremendous creativity and the willingness to explore new and unconventional approaches to visual language.

AI DRAMA

Almost as many AI dramas are being produced as AI science fiction and fantasy films. One particularly noticeable trend is **AI SUPERREALISM**: the challenge of creating live-action imagery that can no longer be distinguished from AI-generated content.

Many films are already achieving extraordinary results in this field. One example is the masterpiece **BIG BALLS** (South Korea), a winner at the AI Film Festival in Biberach. It tells the story of a broker who is deeply unhappy in his profession and begins searching for new challenges in life.

Artistic dramas such as **KEEP STILL** (China), in which a woman is pursued by her own shadow, demonstrate how effectively AI-generated effects and AI characters can work together. This film was also among the festival's winners.

Dramatic films such as China's **THE LONG RAIN** demonstrate that AI dramas will undoubtedly find their place in cinemas and on streaming platforms. The film recreates the camera techniques of the 1930s to 1950s, imitating the visual texture and quality of early film stock while combining these elements with AI superrealism.

The ironic American drama **BLUE BUDDHA** also illustrates how successfully emotional stories can now be told using AI-generated characters. And **KEV** (USA) one of the most interesting ai drama in 2026 about the life of a blind is extremely sensitive and impressively staged.

AI CARTOONS

Immediately following AI dramas is the rapidly expanding market for AI cartoons, with Asia and the United States particularly dominant in this field. Virtually every genre is already demonstrating an extraordinary level of artistic perfection in animation. Examples range from

the inspiring comedy **NOT A CAKE** (South Korea) to the Walt Disney-inspired visual style of **HELPER** (Chile), anime and manga productions such as **MARS BEYOND 2010** (Canada), as well as traditional cartoons, clay animation, paper animation, arthouse experiments and even immersive installations. **T3-XR3** (Germany) and **WHO IS DREAMING?** (Brazil), both award-winning films at the AI Film Festival, demonstrate just how intimate, emotional and deeply moving stories in this format can be. Recently, I watched a film from Asia that combined realistic AI-generated characters with manga characters, creating an impressive emotional bridge between these two genres.

Another example is **CHOOSING THE FUTURE** (Russia), a film set in a dystopian world ruled by robots, in which a robot encounters the last remaining living flower. It demonstrates just how far the boundaries of creativity can be pushed with this new technology. Ultimately, however, a good story always wins.

AI HISTORY

This year saw the release of the monumental historical Chinese feature film **SANXINGDUI: FUTURE PAST** in Chinese cinemas. Although the film did not perform particularly well at the box office, it nevertheless demonstrates the enormous potential of AI-generated historical cinema. Whether historical dramas set during various dynasties, period films such as **DÉSIRÈE** (United Kingdom), the Stone Age film **BLURRED HORIZON** (USA), or the historical production **LIFE IN EVERY BREATH** (China), all of these examples reveal an extraordinary range of possibilities for AI-driven storytelling.

AI HORROR

The popularity of horror films continues to grow year after year, and AI has some remarkable strengths in this particular genre. In December 2026, **GODS DON'T GIVE GIFTS**, an impressive American science fiction horror film, is scheduled to launch in the USA theatres. Other films, such as **THE MISSING SEGMENT** (USA) and **KAGOME** (Japan), are also making their mark on the emerging AI horror market, even if they are currently still short films.

AI MOCKUMENTARY, AI DOCUMENTARY & AI ARTHOUSE

I find this particular approach to the new generation of AI films especially fascinating because it offers virtually unlimited opportunities to push the boundaries of visual quality. There is perhaps no other genre that provides such an exciting experimental playground for exploring new possibilities and entirely different forms of AI filmmaking. The market will undoubtedly be a challenging one, as there are still relatively few clearly defined target audiences for these productions. Nevertheless, films such as **SMOKE** (South Korea), the fictional docu **THE DOLLAR STORY** (China), the anti-war movie **WCNSF** (Spain,) and the diversity film **GUTE NACHT BERLIN**

(USA) demonstrate the considerable potential of this form of cinematic art. **OUR HANDS WERE TIED** (USA) is another excellent example of outstanding arthouse filmmaking in the future.

AI COMEDY

Pure comedy productions created with AI are still rather awkward and lack a certain degree of professional sophistication. The main problem lies in weak screenplays and dialogue that is insufficiently developed and lacks the wit and complexity required by the genre. Comedy is one of the most difficult disciplines to master, even in conventional live-action filmmaking. There is still a great deal of work to be done in this area. This is also why we decided not to include any purely AI-generated comedies in this year's AI Film Festival in Biberach. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that a market will emerge here as well. One promising approach would be to combine comedy with other genres and bring experienced screenwriters to the table. The potential for improvement and creative development is enormous!

CONCLUSION

The first feature-length AI films scheduled for release in the near future will clearly demonstrate where the industry is heading in 2027 – which AI films will succeed and which genres may struggle to find an audience. Ultimately, the art lies in the storytelling and the quality of the narratives, rather than initially in the visual execution alone.

Even if AI films are not yet perfect, major studios, international sales companies and distributors, as well as bold producers and production companies, will determine who ultimately becomes part of this emerging industry. What is needed now is greater courage and extraordinary storytelling.

AI filmmaking – whether in theatrical feature-film format, vertical video or 4:3/4:4 arthouse productions – is clearly on the verge of its international breakthrough!

Ai is here!

Marcel Barsotti