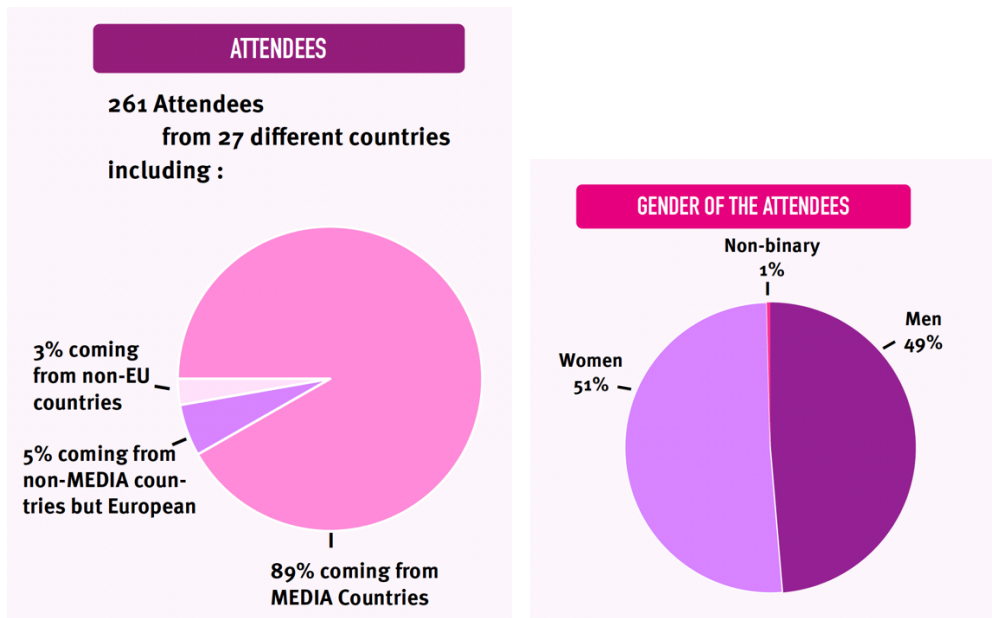


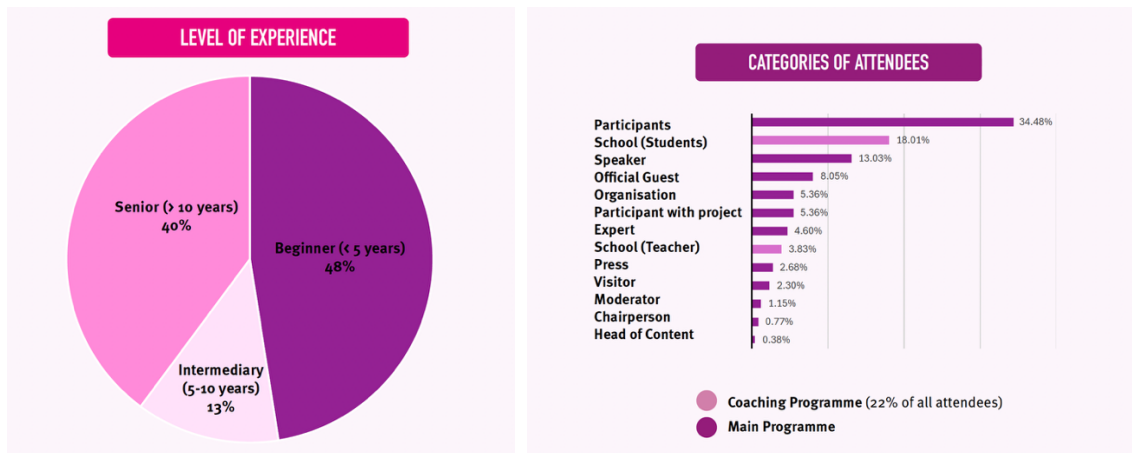
A new edition focused on the future of animation and new perspectives for the industry

From 8 to 10 April in Marseille, CARTOON held the 5th edition of CartoonNext. **Far more than a simple event, this edition established itself as a key meeting point for the European animation, video game, and creative communities, brought together to analyse the sector's transformations and anticipate its technological, professional, and structural challenges.** Over these three days, CartoonNext 2026 confirmed its status as a must-attend event, **offering professionals not only a space for discussion, but a genuine platform to collectively identify concrete solutions to tomorrow's challenges, anticipate change, adapt, and help shape the future of animation and creative industries.**

Participants at CartoonNext 2026

The 5th edition of CartoonNext brought together **261 professionals from 27 different countries, representing 107 companies.** These results are in line with previous editions, confirming strong participation despite a challenging economic climate. **These figures highlight the growing importance of the event and the increasing interest among European animation professionals in this type of training, dedicated to the issues addressed by CartoonNext.**





All of these elements highlight the wide diversity of participants' profiles, both in terms of experience and professional backgrounds, further enriching the discussions and strengthening the event's collective dynamic.



The CartoonNext 2026 Programme

Remaining true to its mission of anticipating and responding to developments within the sector, **CartoonNext 2026 confirmed its role as a catalyst for innovation and exchange among professionals in the animation and creative industries, focusing on the challenges of the future.**

Key highlights of the CartoonNext 2026 programme

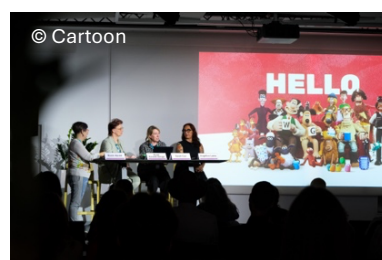
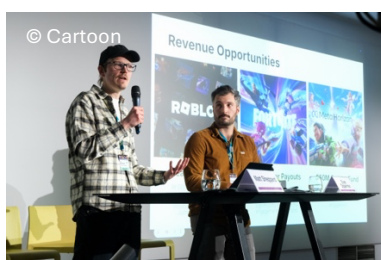
Over three days, the event explored the evolution of the creative and digital industries through a comprehensive programme of 14 conferences, case studies, and panels led by leading experts from a wide range of fields, including producers, key creatives, broadcasters, investors, emerging technology specialists, new media platform stakeholders, and data analysts.

These sessions addressed the major themes shaping this 5th edition, notably **innovation and new creative frontiers** (with a focus on artificial intelligence, new formats, immersive experiences such as video games including Roblox, as well as stop motion and music), **navigating a rapidly changing global market** (including case studies on broadcaster Gulli, the role of women in the video game industry, and the emergence of new cultural professions), **and the talents and creative forces shaping the future** (featuring contributions from major players such as Ubisoft, Aardman, Fortiche, and

ARTE around the project “Miss Saturne” as well as a spotlight on the Région Sud ecosystem).

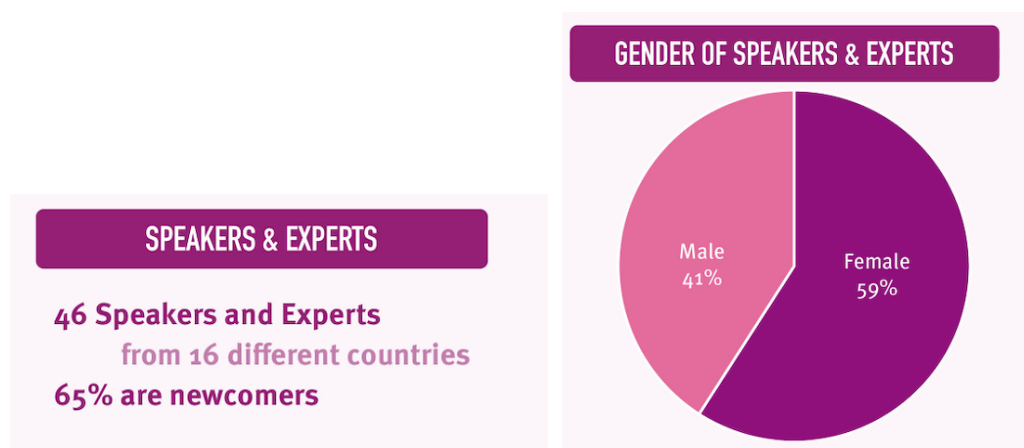
Under the motto “Dare to follow your dreams,” the event was marked by a strong creative energy reflecting an industry that is more resilient than ever, **where human craftsmanship combined with technological expertise remains central.** Professionals emphasized that experience and emotion continue to be essential drivers of creativity, particularly in panels dedicated to stop motion, music, and video games.

Beyond the conferences, **CartoonNext 2026 was rich in highlights and exclusive moments, offering participants memorable premieres and privileged access to creative processes.** These included a musical interlude featuring “*Regarde Les Danser*”, a project by MoPA students accompanied by live improvisation from professional musicians, as well as the presentation of exclusive content from the upcoming ARTE series “*The Broos*”, introduced by Gabrielle d’Andrimont and David Mirailles. Other highlights included a first look at Fortiche’s new project, insights from Gulli into their production methods, and exclusive material from Aardman, one of the most iconic stop-motion studios.



About the Speakers

This year in Marseille, CARTOON brought together **46 speakers and experts from 16 different countries** (Germany, Spain, Estonia, United States, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom, Slovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland) to deliver conferences (the speakers) and to analyse the 8 projects selected in Marseille (the experts).





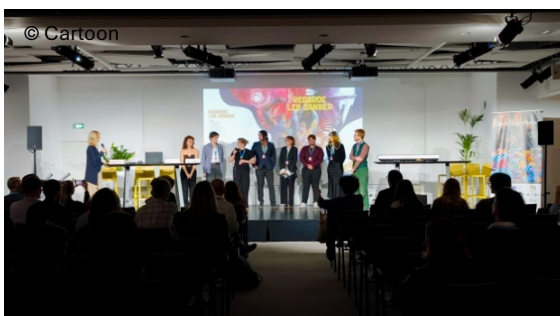
Highlighting the Région Sud, its stakeholders and its territory

Once again this year, the first session of the event was dedicated to the prospects of the animation industry in the Région Sud. During this session, SudAnim – the association of animation and video game professionals in the Région Sud – opened by presenting the region’s innovative talent and expertise, as well as the sector’s outlook in the area. The second part of the session featured Sami Chlagou (CEO of Cross the Ages), who presented an ambitious local IP project with international reach.

NEW IN 2026! This year also marked **a stronger presence of young local talent on the CartoonNext stage**, an initiative long envisioned: giving tomorrow’s creators a real place within the event. This ambition took shape through a musical interlude showcasing the ambitious film “*Regarde Les Danser*”, created by students from the MoPA School. The work presents an inventive fusion of animation, music, and dance. On stage, Alyssa Ibanez and Samuel Brault represented the film team and introduced the project, which raises a key question: can art save the world? The session also offered an exclusive preview of work-in-progress footage. Musicians accompanied the students live, improvising a soundtrack to the film’s visuals, **creating a particularly memorable moment for participants.**

Moreover, the initiatives introduced last year were renewed:

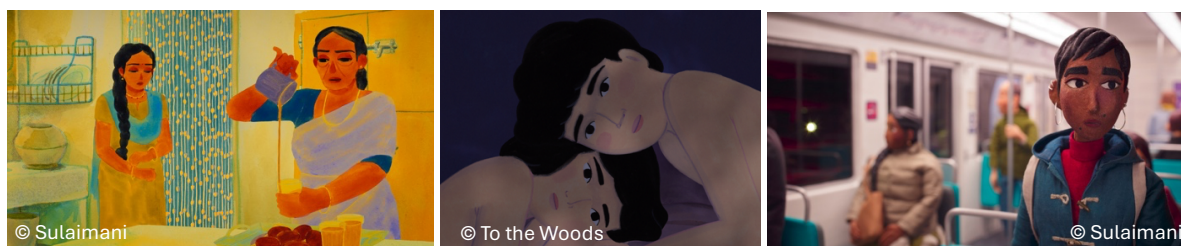
- With the support of the Tourist Office, we set up a [dedicated page](#) allowing event participants to book key tourist activities at reduced prices: **Many participants chose to stay and enjoy the city of Marseille and the Région Sud over the weekend**, as illustrated by this participant (based in the United Kingdom): “*The south of France is simply beautiful. We went there this weekend after the event with my children to discover the region. It was wonderful to spend time together in the South and to practice my French.*”
- **With the support of the “Fabriqué à Marseille” label, we also offered participants local product stands.** This initiative was greatly appreciated by both participants and exhibitors.



Short film screenings

As in the previous year, CartoonNext provided an opportunity to screen local short films. Two sessions, each featuring two local short films, were organised on the second and third days of the event. These screenings helped showcase local creative works. The following two short films were presented:

- “*Sulaimani*”, directed by Vinnie Ann Bose
- “*To the Woods*”, directed by Agnès Patron



Multiplatform projects presented in 2026

Eight projects from across Europe, specifically designed for digital platforms, were presented at CartoonNext 2026:

- The eight projects presented this year **came from seven European countries** (Austria (1), Spain (1), Finland (1), France (2), Ireland (1), Italy (1), and Ukraine (1)).
- **The selection targeted different audiences:** children aged 6–9 (2 projects), teenagers aged 12–15 (2 projects), young adults (3 projects), and preschool audiences aged 5–6 (1 project).
- The projects were highly ambitious, **featuring innovative transmedia strategies spanning a wide range of animated formats** (TV series, films, and digital content), **as well as games** (mobile, video, and board games, toys), **publishing, and music.**

The list of selected projects for 2026 can be found [here](#).



Initial results collected shortly after the 2026 edition are promising. **All participants with a project left the event with concrete support for the development of their work**, as illustrated by this feedback: *“We (the Illogical Adult World team) generated strong interest from potential co-producers in several countries, which was extremely encouraging. To be honest, in over ten years of attending various markets and forums, I have rarely seen an initiative as effective as CartoonNext.”*

Business & Networking at the heart of CartoonNext

Alongside the sessions, CartoonNext organised dedicated networking slots for all participants. In line with the spirit of CARTOON training events, **these moments are designed as genuine spaces for exchange, where hierarchical barriers fade in favour of direct and informal encounters**. Speakers, experts, and participants come together in an open dynamic, with everyone making themselves available to share their experience, advice, and questions. **This accessibility, central to CARTOON’s identity, fosters rich, spontaneous discussions that are often decisive for the future of projects and professional paths.**

This is particularly true of **the One-to-One Meetings**. These meetings were held this year, as in the previous edition, on the first day of the event. Open to all participants, **they helped break the ice early on and encouraged people to get to know each other from the outset, enabling exchanges not only at a local level but also internationally**. This format was highly appreciated by participants.

In 2026, **92 meetings were organised, bringing together 14% of participants from 18 countries and representing a wide range of sectors** (authors, publishers, investors, broadcasters, directors, producers, etc.).



NEW IN 2026! For the first time at CartoonNext 2026, **a new meeting format was introduced: the Next Ideas Labs**. This initiative took the form of small-group discussion workshops (10 to 15 people), designed to encourage more direct and in-depth exchanges around ongoing transformations in the industry. **Participants shared their experiences, questions, and perspectives on how emerging tools and processes are reshaping creative and production practices**. Two sessions were held, moderated by Kelly Vero,

Eliza Jäppinen, and Japhet Asher, providing professionals with a privileged setting to exchange ideas and collectively reflect on the future of the sector.

Participants particularly appreciated the quality of the exchanges, as well as the opportunity to speak freely in a more intimate format where every contribution was valued. This new format was seen as a stimulating space for collective reflection, reinforcing the sense that professionals' voices truly matter in shaping the possible futures of the industry.



Beyond the conference sessions, **CartoonNext creates valuable networking opportunities, particularly through its social events** (welcome dinner, buffets, coffee breaks, experts' dinner, and closing cocktail). The spirit of the event can be summed up in one idea: **stress-free business networking!**



The Coaching Programme dedicated to young regional talent

The concept of the Coaching Programme

CartoonNext 2026 also offered a Coaching Programme for around fifty students from animation schools in the Région Sud Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, coordinated by mentor Agnès Bizzaro. **The Coaching Programme is a training initiative designed to build a bridge with the new generation and emerging talent.**

The programme was attended by 57 students and teachers from 8 schools across the region:

- Brassart Aix-en-Provence
- École de Condé Marseille (EDC)
- École MoPA
- ECV Aix-en-Provence
- ESRA (École Supérieure de Réalisation Audiovisuelle) – Côte d’Azur
- Lycée Marie-Curie
- ENSI (*new school in 2026*)
- Ynov Campus Aix-en-Provence



The Mini-Pitch Workshop

As in the previous year, a mini-pitch workshop was organised as part of the Coaching Programme, **giving students the opportunity to present their projects to a panel of experts and receive direct feedback.**

Six projects were selected by the Selection Committee composed of Florian Cabane (Région Sud), Chrystel Poncet (MaGic C / SudAnim), Marc Rius (TNZPV), and Agnès Bizzaro (mentor of the Coaching Programme and Editorial Director of Cartoon Springboard):

- “*Castormania*” by Anthony Sere and Calvo Tino (École de Condé)
- “*Chloé*” by Maëva Goder (École ECV Aix)
- “*Truffe Bleue*” by Marion Desaintedenis and Ale Altimari (École Ynov)
- “*La Légende des Soleils*” by Ema Parent (ENSI School)
- “*Les Sandwichs de Maman*” by Anouk Massé (École de Condé)
- “*Moi Ours*” by Léa Renard (École MoPA)

The winning projects were:

- **Région Sud Prize (a free accreditation and support for the Annecy International Animation Film Market (Mifa)):** “*La Légende des Soleils*” by Ema Parent (ENSI School)
- **Do Not Disturb Prize (a residency place):** “*Les Sandwichs de Maman*” by Anouk Massé (École de Condé)

- **Cartoon Springboard Prize (a free accreditation for Cartoon Springboard 2026): “Moi Ours” by Léa Renard (École MoPA)**



The Portfolio Review

The Portfolio Review gave students the opportunity to meet animation professionals in small groups of four to five, in order to receive feedback on their portfolios and advice on how to build a strong portfolio.

Ten mentors were involved for this session, coming from various sectors (2D, 3D, stop motion, etc.). **A total of 20 one-hour meetings were organised for this workshop** (at least two one-hour sessions per group).

Once again, this workshop was highly appreciated by both participants and mentors, as illustrated by this student feedback: *“The Portfolio Review was what we enjoyed the most! Speaking with professionals and showing them our work was extremely helpful.”*



An eco-responsible approach – strengthened awareness for CartoonNext 2026

All efforts are being made to find better solutions for organising a more responsible event and reducing its environmental impact. **Numerous measures are already implemented in the organisation of CartoonNext** (short supply chains, audience mobility, energy and resource consumption, waste sorting and management,

responsible communication, etc.), with the support of partners and service providers.

In 2026, awareness was further strengthened across several areas:

- **Communication:** we communicate transparently about all our efforts and initiatives. Participants are made aware through messages across our communication channels (emailings and social media), encouraging responsible behaviour through simple actions.
- **Transport:** participants were encouraged to travel by train whenever possible to attend CartoonNext 2026. Event venues were selected based on their location, ensuring they were easily accessible by public transport and on foot.
- **Meals:** the event was made 100% vegetarian in order to raise awareness among participants and reduce its carbon footprint. This initiative was widely appreciated, as illustrated by the following feedback: *“I found the catering, both lunch and dinner, excellent. The dishes were very tasty and original. Congratulations on choosing a vegetarian menu; it is a very effective sustainable practice.”*

An inclusive and caring space for dialogue

Since June 2025, CARTOON has partnered with Keep Festive (an initiative aimed at creating safer environments at festivals and events) to ensure that everyone can participate freely and safely, without facing harassment or discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion, age, or physical appearance. Practical tools are made available to participants to help maintain a safe environment, including an on-site contact person, an incident reporting form, and informational videos.

First results of the event and feedback from the participants

- 81% of the respondents found the event "excellent" (49%) or "very good" (32%)
- 89% of the respondents would recommend the event to other professionals / colleagues
- 92% of the respondents consider they increased their knowledge and/or skills thanks to the event.
- 62% of the respondents found that CartoonNext 2026 had led to networking or business opportunities
- 100% of project pitchers consider that the event helped with the development of their project

Here are some early participant feedback highlights on both the format and content of the event:

- *“The whole team is really efficient and friendly. I really appreciate the intimate nature of the event.”*
- *“The atmosphere at CartoonNext is always collaborative, friendly, and warm, which strongly contrasts with most other European animation events, and I truly see this as a unique strength!”*
- *“What stood out to me at CartoonNext was the great diversity of participants, which made the exchanges much richer: the event brought together future professionals, industry leaders, and journalists, all interested in the “Next” (future-facing) dimension of CARTOON’s name. Unlike many forums where the attitude towards speakers is rather passive (they speak, we listen), CartoonNext encouraged a continuous exchange of ideas across all its stages.”*
- *“This is probably the best-organised event I have attended as a speaker: from start to finish, the organisers were extremely professional.”*

Save the date!

The next edition of CartoonNext will take place from 12 to 15 April 2027.

Thanks to our partners & participants

CartoonNext would not have been possible without the support of [our valuable partners](#) and participants. Thanks to everyone for your energy and your involvement!