

## LA WEBFEST 2026 Celebrates the Future of Digital Storytelling in Hollywood

Global creators, web series, podcasts, and audio innovators gathered at the 17th Annual LA WEBFEST as the festival expanded into the rapidly growing world of cinematic audio fiction.



**Los Angeles, California May 7, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com))** - The 17th Annual LA WEBFEST concluded successfully in Hollywood this week, welcoming creators, producers, actors, podcasters, and digital innovators from around the world to the historic Barnsdall Gallery Theatre.

Widely recognized as the world's first international festival dedicated to web series and digital-first storytelling, LA WEBFEST 2026 continued its tradition of spotlighting emerging voices and innovative formats shaping the future of entertainment.

This year's festival featured a wide range of projects, including web series, independent films, podcasts, audio dramas, animation, experimental media, and short-form digital content — reflecting the increasingly diverse landscape of modern storytelling.

Founded in 2009 by Michael Ajakwe Jr., LA WEBFEST helped pioneer the global web series movement and inspired the creation of more than 50 web festivals internationally. Over the years, the festival has become known for discovering breakthrough talent and supporting creators before mainstream recognition.

One of the festival's most notable alumni is Emmy-nominated creator Issa Rae, whose early web series *Awkward Black Girl* screened at LA WEBFEST before leading to HBO's *Insecure*. Actress Yvonne Orji was also among the artists connected to the festival's growing legacy.

Under the leadership of Festival Director Young Man Kang since 2022, LA WEBFEST has continued expanding its international reach while maintaining its original mission of supporting independent creators and emerging digital platforms.

The current leadership team includes Honorary President Jean-Michel Albert (founder of Marseille Webfest), board members Gus Blackmon and Rich Halke, and newly appointed board member Rob Edwards, screenwriter of *Captain America: Brave New World*.

## **Audio Storytelling Takes Center Stage**

One of the major highlights of LA WEBFEST 2026 was the special industry panel:

### **“Creating 21st Century Audio Fiction”**

The discussion focused on the explosive growth of audio storytelling and narrative podcasting as one of the fastest-rising sectors in entertainment.

Panelists explored evolving audience behavior, production models, monetization strategies, distribution opportunities, and the future of immersive storytelling in the creator economy.

Featured panelists included:

- Stephanie Elie
- Joe Fisher (*Midnight Burger*)
- Christof Laputka (*Leviathan Audio Productions*)
- KC Wayland
- Hannah Radcliff
- Jonathan Pezza (Moderator)

Collectively, the panelists represent projects with millions of listeners worldwide and demonstrated how audio fiction continues to expand beyond traditional podcasting into a major entertainment medium.

Festival Director Young Man Kang shared his vision for the festival's expansion:

“We are very excited to introduce this incredible panel on audio series. As one of the fastest-growing media platforms, audio fiction has become extremely popular in the United States and is rapidly expanding worldwide. Just as we helped pioneer the web series movement through LA WEBFEST, we aim to support and elevate this new wave of storytelling.

Also, audio and video are beginning to merge. Many audio series now use visual elements, cinematic imagery, and video trailers to create immersive experiences for audiences. Some audio series are becoming almost cinematic in presentation, and we are excited to showcase those evolving formats at LA WEBFEST.”

## **Continuing the Legacy**

For 17 years, LA WEBFEST has remained a global meeting place for creators pushing the boundaries of storytelling across digital platforms.

Through screenings, networking events, panels, and creator showcases, the festival continues to

champion independent voices while embracing the evolution of modern entertainment.

As digital media continues to transform worldwide, LA WEBFEST remains committed to supporting innovation, international collaboration, and the future of creator-driven storytelling.

**More information:**

[www.lawebfest.net](http://www.lawebfest.net)



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