

## Annecy Festival to Expand Scope With Sprawling \$27 Million International Animation Hub (Exclusive)

By Elsa Keslassy



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Annecy Animation Film Festival, which hosted the world premiere of Disney's "Once Upon a Studio" and welcomed more than 16,000 people during its latest edition, is expanding its scope with a sprawling €26 million (\$27.5 million) international institute dedicated to the world of animation.

Called the Cité Internationale du Cinema d'Animation, the venue is expected to launch during the second half of 2025 and will boast a 330-seat screening room, an artists' residency, special areas for training courses and cultural action, a space for temporary exhibitions, a permanent exhibition to showcase the animation film collections from Annecy's Musée-Château, a bookstore and a gift shop.

Mickaël Marin, the director of Annecy festival and its industry market MIFA, told Variety that the idea behind the venue was to "create a cultural hub like the French Cinematheque in Paris or the Lumiere Institute in Lyon, which will bring together animation lovers and artists from all around the world."

“We want to attract all kinds of audiences and host screenings, masterclasses and some programs aimed at youth, starting from kindergarten to high school,” Marin said.

The venue will be located in a 19th century landmark called Haras, which spreads over 2.6 acres of lush gardens and buildings listed as French historic monuments. Back in the 1880s, Haras was already a highlight of France’s cultural life, where Émile Reynaud, an inventor and pioneer, screened his first animated shorts. A gourmet food court will also be part of the Cité Internationale. “Our ambition is to celebrate animation, culture and gastronomy,” Marin said.

Marin said the 63-year old Annecy festival now only ranks as the world’s leading animation festival, it’s also now “one of the top five festivals in the world,” Marin said. As many as 16,000 professionals, executives and artists from nearly 100 countries turned up at this year’s edition in June.

“We needed to have a hub that would embody our festival and our commitment, and a place for our team to work from because we all live here in Annecy,” Marin said. “We couldn’t envision a better place than a historical monument like Haras.”

Designed by top-notch architects, the transformation of Haras is a long-gestated project that started 10 years ago and costs €42 million. It’s being backed the City of Annecy, the Département de la Haute-Savoie, the Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and the State.

