

Report of the Yamagata Creative Cities International Conference 2025 Celebrating UNESCO World Day for Audiovisual Heritage: Cinematic Heritage in Our Communities

Date: 2025.10.11 Sat 2:00–4:15PM

Venue: YAMAGATA CREATIVE CITY CENTER Q1

Organized by Yamagata City, Yamagata Creative City Promotion Council, Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival
Supported by Yamagata Autumn & Winter Arts Festival Committee

Yamagata, a member of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of film, holds an annual Yamagata Creative Cities International Conference. In 2025, experts from Busan (also a city of film), Hamamatsu (city of music), Fukuoka, and Hiroshima took part to discuss how film materials can contribute to the sustainable development of cities. As a related event, Film, Living Record of Our Memory (2021) was screened at Forum Yamagata.

The conference also marked UNESCO World Day for Audiovisual Heritage on October 27, established to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 1980 Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images. This was the first related event to be held in Yamagata. Over 50 people attended, showing keen interest in the topic.

Throughout its 36-year history, the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (YIDFF) has helped the city of Yamagata build a substantial collection of film materials. These resources, both a public asset and a driving force behind the festival's longevity and future continuity, are housed at the Yamagata Documentary Film Library, which opened in 1994.

Yamagata Citizens' Hall
Proposed Design



In the first half, the guests presented specific initiatives, highlighting common challenges despite differences in scale or context. In the second half, YIDFF chair Itaru Kato introduced plans for relocating the library to a new Citizens' Hall in 2029, showing an image of the completed building. Subsequent discussions further emphasized the significance of passing on cultural memory to future generations, informed by the guests' experience and passion. A glimpse of these insights is provided here, but we encourage you to watch the full recording for more details.

We hope that the expertise and dedication shared at this event will continue to support the sustainable development of creative cities like Yamagata.

Reported by Kae Ishihara – Researcher, Yamagata Documentary Film Library



“Serving as Hamamatsu’s creative city hub with regional reach”

Chisato Inagaki, Art Coordinator, Kamoe Art Center / Keisuke Kinoshita Memorial Museum

Hamamatsu, the first city in Asia to join the UCCN in the field of music, has developed as a hub for companies such as YAMAHA and SUZUKI. Many residents with foreign roots work in the manufacturing sector, making it a leading example of multicultural coexistence. Since 2018, the city has adopted a policy of operating the Memorial Museum and art center as an integrated institution. We have also inherited 16mm films of works by director Kinoshita from his personal collection, though their value has not yet been fully recognized. Although small in scale, we will work to enhance its outreach rather than let its size be an excuse.

“Defying outdated images and fostering citizen empowerment”

Atsuko Morimune, Moving Image Culture Specialist, Hiroshima City Cinematographic and Audio-Visual Library

Founded in 1982, our facility is the oldest municipally operated institution in Japan dedicated to moving images. Our collection has focused mainly on acclaimed Japanese films, including works on peace. Regarding local films, we adopted a reversed approach: instead of collecting and then thinking about how to use them, we began by screening them and then encouraging donations. We recently hired a film archivist and will relocate next spring to a commercial building near Hiroshima Station. Joining the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) remains our long-cherished goal, but first, let's build a nationwide network!



“Enhancing the value of the collection is the core work of a film archivist”

Keiji Matsumoto, Film Archivist, Fukuoka City Public Library Film Archive

Shortly after our opening, we rescued about 3,000 reels of 16mm films that local TV stations were about to discard. Later, when we managed to gain the city's support and joined FIAF, overseas experts highly valued these community-based materials. The Asia Focus Fukuoka International Film Festival, the archive's original reason for establishment, ended in 2020, but we were able to guide the film archive toward independent development beyond the festival. This year, we realized a long-held wish by acquiring a digital scanner, and in our newly opened exhibition space we are highlighting four people involved in film with local roots.



“Keeping the memories of local films alive for generations to come”

Shin Sung-eun, Film Archive Manager, Busan Asia Film Archive – Busan Cinema Center

BCC is the main venue for the Busan International Film Festival and hosts various events year-round. The iconic “Big Roof” is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Yet a building that only looks impressive means little. While glamorous festivals are welcomed, film archiving and regular screenings for citizens — the quieter, long-term work that truly sustains film culture — are often overlooked. The Film Library, which will be relocated to Yamagata's new civic hall, is truly a place for everyday encounters between films and people. I can't wait to visit once it's finished to see the outcome. After all, that's what really counts.

