



Yanuni, winner of the SUNCINE Golden Sun Award, enters the official shortlist for the 2026 Oscars

The feature-length documentary directed by Richard Ladkani, with executive production by Leonardo DiCaprio, reinforces SUNCINE's role as a leading international festival

Barcelona, December 30, 2025 —

Yanuni, a feature-length documentary directed by Austrian filmmaker Richard Ladkani and winner of the Golden Sun Award for Best Documentary at the 32nd edition of **SUNCINE – the International Environmental Film Festival**, has been included in the preliminary shortlist for the **2026 Academy Awards**, in the category of **Best Documentary Feature**.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has announced the shortlists in 12 categories — including documentary, original song, original score, and the new category of best casting— from which the official Oscar nominees for 2026 will be selected.

The full list can be consulted on the Academy's official website:

<https://press.oscars.org/news/98th-oscarsr-shortlists-12-award-categories-announced>

A documentary with soul, impact and urgency

Premiered in Spain within the framework of SUNCINE, *Yanuni* was recognized by the festival's jury "for its emotional impact, visual strength, and its ability to connect the beauty of nature with the struggle to preserve it." The film follows over the course of one year **Juma Xipaia**, Indigenous leader of the Xipaya people in the Xingu River basin (Brazil), as she fights to defend Amazonian territory and the rights of Indigenous communities against deforestation and illegal mining.

Juma Xipaia is a historic figure: she was the first Indigenous woman to become chief of her people and one of the first to hold a senior position in Brazil's Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, created by President Luiz Inácio **Lula da Silva**. The documentary portrays her intimate and political life: threats, the birth of her child, protests, institutional activism, and her constant return to ancestral roots.

The film features **executive production by Leonardo DiCaprio**, with whom Ladkani has previously collaborated on high-impact environmental documentaries such as *The Ivory Game* and *Sea of Shadows*, winner of the **SUNCINE Special Golden Sun Award** in 2019.

SUNCINE, a launchpad to the Oscars

With this selection, *Yanuni* joins a growing list of films premiered or awarded at SUNCINE that later went on to receive recognition at the Academy Awards.

According to **Claudio Lauria**, President of SUNCINE:

“The selection of Yanuni in the Oscar shortlists once again confirms the positioning and high quality of the documentaries in the Festival’s Official Section. I believe this is already the fifth time that a film premiered at SUNCINE reaches the Oscars, the ultimate destination for any filmmaker.”

For his part, **Jaume Gil**, Director of SUNCINE, adds:

“We celebrate this great news for Richard and the entire documentary team, but also for the films that competed alongside Yanuni in the Official Section. This proves that the works premiered at SUNCINE have enormous potential within the film industry. For our festival to serve as a launchpad to the Oscars is truly a major achievement.”

Cinema, activism and global commitment

During the presentation of *Yanuni* at SUNCINE, Richard Ladkani received a message from Leonardo DiCaprio, underscoring their shared commitment to environmental cinema as a tool for social transformation. *Yanuni* is not only a cinematic portrait, but also a call to action at a critical moment for the Amazon, where illegal mining, deforestation, and violence against Indigenous leaders continue to increase across much of the territory.

The film’s inclusion in the 2026 Oscar shortlist reinforces the role of documentary cinema as a tool for global awareness and consolidates **SUNCINE** as one of the leading international festivals and showcases for contemporary environmental cinema.

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