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Vision & Intelligence

EVIDENCE BRIEF
NOVEMBER 2026

EVIDENCE BRIEF · INDUSTRY EVENTS AND MARKETS

Long-Lived Events Reinvent Themselves

How do events survive for decades?

Most exhibitions recur: 61 percent of UK exhibitions are annual events. Histories of the Annecy animation festival, the Paris Salon and the Gothenburg Book Fair show how recurring events keep their central place for decades, and how they lose it.

By Eventamin · How we work 12 November 2026 France, Sweden, UK, Europe

4 studies · 2 industry sources

long-running events | festival history | trade fair evolution | event reinvention | Annecy festival | Paris Salon | book fairs | event prizes and awards | event calendar | recurring events

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KEY FINDING

Events stay central for decades by changing place, scope and calendar at critical moments, usually prompted by tensions among their own stakeholders, and by hosting rituals such as prizes that draw the field together. Events that stay closed to new entrants lose their field to alternatives.

Four studies, 2008–2024; industry data 2026

Key findings

- **Annecy reinvented itself three times.** The animation festival changed its place in 1958 to 1960, its scope in 1981 to 1983 and its calendar in 1997 to 1998, each time realigning with its industry[1].
- **Change came from inside.** Each transition was triggered by tensions among the festival's own stakeholders rather than directly by changes in the industry[1].
- **Demand forced an annual rhythm.** Film submissions to Annecy rose from 385 in 1983 to 1,271 in 1997, when almost 80 percent were rejected, and the festival moved from every two years to every year[1].
- **Closed events lose their field.** The Paris Salon, the central art event for two centuries, lost its role between 1830 and 1920 as rejected artists, dealers and finally the State turned to alternatives[2].
- **Prizes keep a fair central.** At the 2018 Gothenburg Book Fair, with almost 90,000 visitors and 700 exhibitors, prize givers used the fair mainly for visibility within the literary field and felt they could not miss it[3].

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FOR THE MARKET

Market outcomes

What the studies mean for each part of the industry.

Organisers & associations	Long-lived events change their format before they lose relevance: venue, scope and frequency are the levers. Tensions among stakeholders are an early signal that a transition is due; an event that turns away new entrants invites alternatives.
Venues & destinations	Moving a recurring event to a new city can anchor it for decades when local actors take ownership, as Annecy shows; local support also pushes events toward broader, more visible formats.
Exhibitors & sponsors	Prizes and ceremonies concentrate attention at fairs, but mostly within the trade; wider media attention requires dedicated public relations.

Events built to recur

Most industry events are designed to come back. In the UK, 61 percent of the 1,154 exhibitions held in 2025 were annual events, according to the Events Industry Alliance[4]. Across 13 European countries, UFI's Euro Fair Statistics certified 1,758 exhibitions in 2025, organized by 735 companies[5].

Recurrence alone does not keep an event central. Long-term studies of a film festival, an art exhibition and a book fair show what does.

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Annecy: three critical transitions

The Annecy animation festival began as a side event of the Cannes film festival in 1956 and moved to Annecy in 1960, where the first international animation festival led to the creation of the international animation association ASIFA[1,6]. Local politicians funded it to set the city apart from neighboring resorts[1].

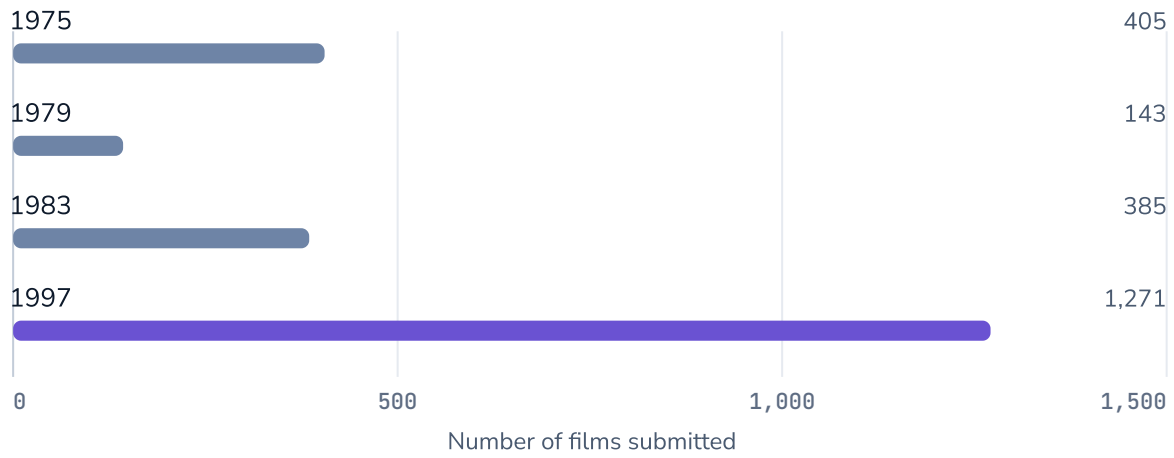
Two further transitions followed. In 1981 to 1983, after submissions had fallen from 405 in 1975 to 143 in 1979, the festival opened to commercial and television animation and moved its management from Paris to Annecy[1]. In 1997 to 1998, with submissions at 1,271 and a rejection rate of almost 80 percent, it moved from a biennial to an annual rhythm[1]. Accreditations fell by 20 percent in the first annual year, while the permanent staff grew from four to 15[1].

None of the transitions was triggered automatically by the market. Each came when tensions among stakeholders reached a point where new solutions had to be found[1]. The festival's film market allowed the field not only to gain recognition through selection and awards but also to find funding, distribution and technology[1].

TRANSITION	PERIOD	WHAT CHANGED
Place	1958 to 1960	From a side event at Cannes to its own festival in Annecy[1]
Scope	1981 to 1983	From auteur films to commercial and television animation; management moved from Paris to Annecy[1]
Calendar	1997 to 1998	From every two years to every year, as a creative marketplace for the industry[1]

Number of films submitted to the Annecy International Animation Film Festival in selected years from 1975 to 1997

Number of films submitted.



Source: Leca et al. · Release date: 2015 · Region: France (Annecy) · Data: municipal and festival archives

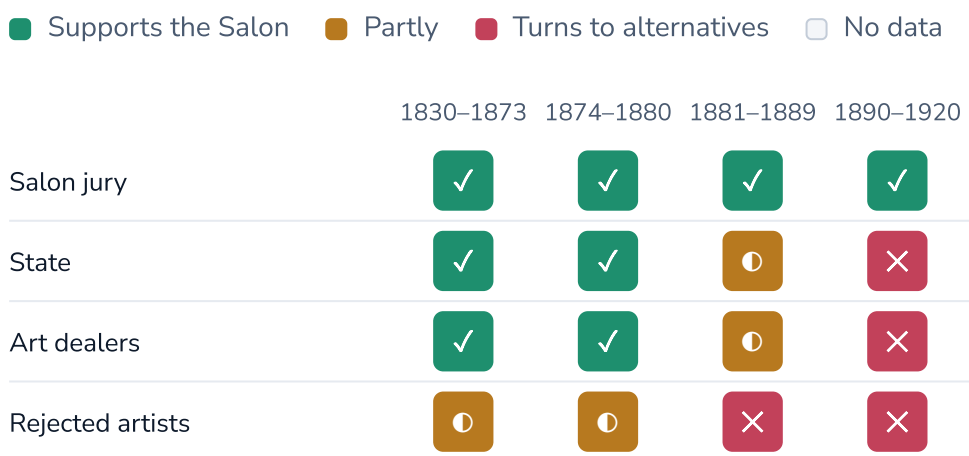
The fall of the Paris Salon

A dominant event can lose its field. The Paris Salon decided artistic reputations for two centuries, but its jury stayed closed to innovation[2]. Pressure built over decades: in 1843, more than 4,000 works were submitted and 1,637 accepted, and submissions rose from 2,067 in 1872 to a record 7,311 in 1880[2].

Rejected artists, dealers and critics built alternatives. From 1874, rejected painters held their own group exhibitions, and the number of gallery exhibitions in Paris rose from 15 in 1880 to 117 in 1900[2]. Dealers turned to innovative painters, and by the 1890s the State itself bought at alternative exhibitions[2]. The decline came from the interaction of internal contradictions and the alternatives built around the event, not from a single shock[2].

Positions of key groups toward the Paris Salon from 1830 to 1920, by period

Classification of the study's historical findings.



Source: Delacour & Leca · Release date: 2011 · Region: France (Paris) · Period: 1830 to 1920 · Classification: Eventamin

Prizes as anchors

Rituals keep participants coming back. The 2018 Gothenburg Book Fair, Scandinavia's largest literary event, drew almost 90,000 visitors, 700 exhibitors, around 800 speakers and close to 1,000 accredited journalists[3]. Six prizes awarded there for at least nine consecutive years used the fair mainly for visibility within the literary field, to draw attention to niches such as crime fiction, children's book translation and cultural journals[3].

Wider media attention was limited: only a publisher-backed prize with its own public relations reached national television[3]. Prize givers nevertheless felt they could not miss the fair, because no other place concentrated the field's actors and resources in the same way[3].

Notes on the data

The figures are based on four studies published between 2008 and 2024: an exploratory paper and a full history of the Annecy festival from 1956 to 2013, a

history of the Paris Salon from 1830 to 1920 based on archives, and a study of six prizes at one edition of the Gothenburg Book Fair[1–3,6]. All cases come from cultural fields. Submission figures for Annecy are available for selected years only. The classification of positions toward the Salon is Eventamin's coding of the study's findings.

Sources

● Study ○ Industry source

1 Leca, B., Rüling, C.-C., & Puthod, D. (2015). Animated Times: Critical Transitions and the Maintenance of Field-Configuring Events [Journal article]. *Industry and Innovation, 22(3), 173–192*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2015.1033839 First-hand

2 Delacour, H., & Leca, B. (2011). Grandeur et décadence du Salon de Paris : une étude du processus de désinstitutionnalisation d'un événement configurateur de champ dans les activités culturelles (English version in the same issue: "The Decline and Fall of the Paris Salon: a Study of the Deinstitutionalization Process of a Field Configuring Event in the Cultural Activities") [Journal article]. *M@n@gement, 14(1), 47–78*. https://doi.org/10.3917/mana.141.0436 First-hand

3 Pallas, J., Grünberg, J., Edlund, P., & Raviola, E. (2024). Producing and sustaining field-configuring events: the role of prizes in a Swedish Book Fair [Book chapter]. *Culture and Organization, 30(1), 47–64*. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2023.2243636 First-hand

4 Events Industry Alliance. (2026, April). The Size and Scale Index for Exhibitions (SASIE) 2025 [Report]. Retrieved November 9, 2026, from cdn.asp.events First-hand

5 UFI. (2026, October). Euro Fair Statistics 2025: Certified key figures of exhibitions in Europe [Report]. Retrieved November 12, 2026, from ufi.org First-hand

6 Rüling, C.-C. (2008). Festivals as Field Configuring Events: The Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Market [Conference paper]. *Paper presented at the conference Cultural production in a global context: The worldwide film industries, Copenhagen*.

First-hand

The evidence

4 studies · 2 industry sources

SAMPLE

Four studies: two histories of the Annecy festival (1956 to 2013), a history of the Paris Salon (1830 to 1920) and a study of six prizes at the Gothenburg Book Fair; two industry sources

YEARS

2008–2024 (studies); 2026 (industry data)

METHOD

Historical case studies from archives and interviews in France, a field study with observation, interviews and documents in Sweden

About Eventamin

Eventamin reads the peer-reviewed research on events, exhibitions and hospitality, sets it against industry data and states what it means for the market. Every brief is published by Eventamin as an organisation: its sources, method and corrections are open.

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