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42nd Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival, November 11th – 19th 2023

The magic of film and everyday heroes

The 42nd Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival will take place from 11th to 19th of November 2023.

The films will take us on a journey to fascinating cultures and show us how to solve puzzles through wit and magic. There will be enthralling adventures, crazy coincidences for children and young people bravely forging their own path. And with funny and thought-provoking short films, the whole family will have an unforgettable experience.

"This year, the festival will highlight especially newer Austrian films for children and young people. In total, there are about a hundred films," says festival director Mika Anttolainen.

The children don't give up

Children's ingenuity is needed when they work together to solve mysteries in the adventure films such as *The Secret Of Mr. M.*, *Rangers Of The Lost Ring* and *Håkan Bråkan*. With a touch of magic, two girls are transported to other worlds in *Colombine* and *The Wishing Tree: Childhood Memories*. In *Totem*, a runaway girl gets help from an unexpected source. *The Hullabaloos!* send the whole city into a tailspin on their way to the amusement park.

Big Dreams show the endless urge of children to play hockey together, ice or no ice. In a multi-layered film *Fortune Favors Lady Nikuko*, Kikuko's astonishing mother serves up Japanese animated delights. In *Waters Of Pastaza*, clever kids in the Amazon are as at home in the jungle as most of us are in the supermarket. The real eye-catcher is the episode film *Poop, Spring And The Others*.

Young people forge their own paths

Poppy, full of joie de vivre, clears all obstacles in her way. *Sweet As* takes the youngsters on a road trip through the Australian bushlands. In *Rap And Reindeer*, we meet Mihkku, a rapper from Lapland who makes music in the North Sámi language. *This Is Normal* introduces the gang suburbs of East Helsinki, where friends drift in different directions, which has serious consequences. In *The Eaglets. Grodno '39*, the people of a Polish border town are hammered by a war of aggression in a realistically shot film about a boy trying to survive.

Alfons Jitterbit – Class Trip Chaos! is a story about a school trip, where every situation is a possibility for a teenager to be embarrassed in front of his friends. In the black humour-filled *Bubble*, one conclusion turns a family's life upside down. Hilarious characters and witty humour punctuate the search for flying saucers in *UFO Sweden*.

Austria in Focus

This year, we take a look at newer Austrian films for children and young people. *Tales Of Franz*, *Rabbit Academy – Mission Eggpossible* and *A Horse On The Balcony* show us how the power of friendship can help to overcome difficulties. *The School of Magical Animals* delves into a fascinating world of magic and songs.

A young woman gives her all in pursuit of her dream in *Hollywood*. In *Sonne*, tradition and culture are on one side of the scale, while social media and potential success are on the other. *Little Circus In Troubles* is documenting the survival of a small circus during the pandemic.

Films in Competition

There are eleven films in the Children's Film Competition, seven films in the Youth Film Competition, ten films in the Finnish Competition, nine films competing for the ECFA Award given to the Best European Children's Film and eight films competing for the ECFA Short Film Award given to the Best European Children's Short Film.

In addition to the competitions, the festival will also feature a number of special programmes. The programme in whole also includes The Kaleidoscope and the Nordic Junior Sessions project programmed together by Nordic children's film festivals which, for the first time, includes feature films. The Oskari competition is celebrating its 20th anniversary. In addition to the competitions, there will be a festive programme of films made by children and young people.

More information about the awards and the juries: www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en/awards-juries/

3rd Oulu Children's Film Forum 14th November 2023

The festival will organize the 3rd Oulu Children's Film Forum on Tuesday, November 14th 2023. It will be a unique international event for film professionals and audiences in Finland, addressing the state and future of children's and youth cinema, both long and short.

The language of the morning session will be Finnish. The theme is From Book to Film, which will explore the wonders and challenges of adaptation, both in terms of the script and the authentic setting and period of the film itself. The big question is whether to modernise the classics or to be faithful. Among the speakers are **Nina Linnovaara** and **Taavi Vartia**, screenwriters and director of *Rangers Of The Lost Ring*, **Antti Kairakari** and **Alexi Puranen**, screenwriters of *Roi* and **Väinö Weckström** and **Jarkko Felin**, screenwriters and directors of *Detective Agency Henkka & Kivimutka*.

The afternoon session is aimed at film professionals and will be in English. It will look at filmmaking from both women's and immigrant perspectives. There will also be a look at some new Nordic specialities. Speakers will include **Kolbrún Anna Björnsdóttir**, actress and screenwriter of the TV series *Fractures*, **Nicole Kellerhals**, producer of *Alfons Jitterbit – Class Trip Chaos!*, **John Chambers**, screenwriter of the same film and of *The School Of Magical Animals*, and **Natalie Halla**, director and screenwriter of the documentary *Little Circus In Troubles*.

More information about the Forum: <https://www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en/childrens-film-forum/>

Children's Film Competition

F FOR FROG India 2023, directed by Francis Joseph Jeera

FORTUNE FAVORS LADY NIKUKO Japan 2021, directed by Ayumu Watanabe
THE HULLABALOO! Finland 2022, directed by Reetta Huhtanen
HÅKAN BRÅKAN Sweden 2022, directed by Ted Kjellsson
POOP, SPRING AND THE OTHERS Estonia 2023, directed by Heiki Ernits, Meelis Arulepp, Mikk Mägi, René Vilbre, Oskar Lehemaa
THE SCHOOL OF MAGICAL ANIMALS Germany, Austria 2021, directed by Gregor Schnitzler
THE SECRET OF MR. M. Czech Republic 2023, directed by Pavel Šimák
TALES OF FRANZ Austria, Germany 2022, directed by Johannes Schmid
TOTEM The Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg 2022, directed by Sander Burger
WATERS OF PASTAZA Portugal 2023, directed by Inês T. Alves
THE WISHING TREE: CHILDHOOD MEMORIES Romania 2022, directed by Andrei Huțuleac

The ECFA Award is given to the best European children's film in the Children's Film Competition.

Youth Film Competition

ALFONS JITTERBIT – CLASS TRIP CHAOS! Germany 2022, directed by Mark Schlichter
BUBBLE Finland 2022, directed by Aleks Salmenperä
POPPY New Zealand 2021, directed by Linda Niccol
RAP AND REINDEER Finland 2023, directed by Petteri Saario
SONNE Austria 2022, directed by Kurdwin Ayub
SWEET AS Australia 2022, directed by Jub Clerc
UFO SWEDEN Sweden 2022, directed by Crazy Pictures

Finnish Competition

BAD HAIR DAY Finland 2023, directed by Sebastian Granskog
BUBBLE Finland 2022, directed by Aleks Salmenperä
THE HULLABALOO! Finland 2022, directed by Reetta Huhtanen
JASMIN'S TWO HOMES Finland 2022, directed by Inka Achté, Hanna Karppinen
THE PRINCESS & THE PEARL Finland 2023, directed by Sonja Rajamäki
RANGERS OF THE LOST RING Finland, Greece 2023, directed by Taavi Vartia
RAP AND REINDEER Finland 2023, directed by Petteri Saario
SPIRAL Finland 2022, directed by Salla Sorri, Eva-Maria Koskinen
THIS IS NORMAL Finland 2023, directed by Ali Al-Saffu
TRACES IN ME AND YOU Finland 2021, directed by Aino Karasjoki

ECFA Short Film Award

BOOM France 2022, directed by Gabriel Augerai, Charles Di Cicco, Romain Augier, Laurie Pereira de Figueiredo, Yannick Jacquin
CARP XMASS Czech Republic 2022, directed by Anna Heribanová
THE CHILDREN Norway 2021, directed by Liss Anett Steinskog
DON'T BLOW IT UP Czech Republic 2022, directed by Alžbeta Mačáková Mišejková
ICE MERCHANTS Portugal, France, Great Britain 2022, directed by João Gonzalez
IN DREAMS Finland 2022, directed by Pete Riski
MADDEN Sweden 2023, directed by Malin Ingrid Johansson
PIG The Netherlands 2022, directed by Jorn Leeuwerink

Award ceremony on Saturday 18th November

The Award Ceremony, where the juries will award the winners of the competitions, will take place on Saturday 18th of November.

The number of participants is delightful

Before the corona pandemic, the annual attendance had stabilised at around 30 000 visitors. Thanks to online screenings, attendance was over 75 000 in 2021 and a staggering 165 000 in 2022. "We are delighted that the festival has been able to offer a cinematic experience to such a huge audience," says festival director Mika Anttolainen.

On our website at www.oulufilmfestival.fi/en you will find more information about the films. Stills from the films will be found at www.oulufilmfestival.fi/en/press

Changes in programme are possible.

You can also follow the festival on social media:

www.facebook.com/lastenjanuortenekuvienfestivaali

www.instagram.com/oulufilmfestival

www.tiktok.com/@oulufilmfestival

For more information, please contact:

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