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## 43rd Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival, November 16<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> 2024

### Enchanting animation and big dreams

The 43rd Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival will take place from the 16th to the 24th of November 2024.

The festival programme features animals big and small in a wide variety of stories. We will meet clever children who are not deterred by any difficulties, and young people as active members of society. In addition, short films that cheer you up and show the diversity of cultures will provide unforgettable experiences for the whole family.

“This year the festival will celebrate animator Mikko Kunnas and the 30-year anniversary of Turku Animation School by presenting dozens of short animations specifically aimed at young children”, says festival director Mika Anttolainen.

### The power of true team spirit in children's films

The contemplative *PO Box Gods Home*, the captivating *The Book of Everything* as well as *Raspberry Hill* will envelop the viewer in a strong atmosphere. *Lampo, the travelling dog*, based on an incredible true story, the heartfelt *Greetings from Mars*, which portrays a boy on the autism spectrum, and the feel-good *Coco Farm* show the power of togetherness.

*The diary of Paulina P* follows the fate of a girl who is jealous of her friend. The exhilarating *Håkan Bråkan 2* and the visually stunning animation *Out of the nest* offer up some action-packed adventures. The real standout of the programme is *Emily Cat-alonian*, which surprises with its unusual storytelling perspective.

The festival celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Turku University of Applied Sciences Animation School with a cheerful short film package for children.

### Young people reaching for the stars

This year's youth films showcase big dreams in the fun road movie *Horia*, the down-to-earth *Emma's Dream* and *The Taste of Freedom*, which depicts the restaurant world. Youngsters living in the countryside fight environmental toxins in *Dry Season*. *Listen* is a powerful portrayal of exclusion. *When Adam Changes* creates a strong and peculiar atmosphere and tells the story of a young person absorbing nasty comments in his body.

## Documentaries for the fight against inequality

This year's programme includes a wide range of documentaries aimed especially at young people. *Nasrin's Voice* is a powerful documentary about a young woman's struggle for independence and freedom. *The Gamer* provokes deep thinking by telling a story of a gifted young gamer and his courage to face himself. The conversation-starting *Power of the People* gives a voice to those left in the shadows of power as a statement about otherness in a white community. *The Making of a Japanese* is a fascinating glimpse into the Japanese school life.

The friendship between young curling players and whether winning is the most important thing is explored in *Curl Power*. *The children of Mavungu* depicts school children living rurally along the Suriname River. *We Are Perfect* is an empathetic story about Polish queer youth wanting to be their true selves in a harsh reality.

### In the spotlight: Mikko Kunnas

This year the spotlight will shine on animator Mikko Kunnas, featuring episodes from his children's animations. *Three Aces*, produced during 1994-98, follows a detective trio consisting of two kids, Salla and Sakke, and their dog Saastamoinen. Together they investigate mysterious events in their neighbourhood. The series is written by author Simo Ojanen, creator of the famous TV show "Sirkuspelle Hermanni".

The animated series *Doghill* (2002-04) is based on the famous picture books by Mauri Kunnas. The series takes place in the 19th century countryside in Doghill, where everyday life is filled with chores of the old times. The home of *Albi the Snowman*, who has been adventuring since 2014, is in the land of permafrost, where he is befriended by a small bird and a worm who live in a tomato soup can hat. The series was created by Mikko Kunnas and Markus Majaluoma.

### Films in Competition

There are eight films in the Children's Film Competition, six films in the Youth Film Competition, eight films in the Finnish Competition and six films competing for the ECFA Short Film Award given to the Best European Children's Short Film. The ECFA Award for the Best European Children's Film will be given to one of the contestants in the Children's Film Competition.

In addition to the competitions, the festival will also feature a number of special programmes and The Kaleidoscope. Nordic Junior Sessions (NoJSe) film festival network programme presents both features and two short films packages. The short film programme includes dozens of marvelous films for all ages upwards from three-year-olds. Films made by children and youth take part in the Oskari competition in three different categories. The winners will be announced at the Oskari Gala on Friday 22 November.

More information about the awards and the juries: [www.oulufilmfestival.fi/en/awards-juries/](http://www.oulufilmfestival.fi/en/awards-juries/)

## 4<sup>th</sup> Children's Film Forum

The festival will organize the 4th Children's Film Forum on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2024. The event in question is a unique international event for film professionals and public audiences in Finland, addressing the state and future of both feature and short films for children and young people.

The morning public section is held in Finnish. Topics include from book to film, Finnish children's cinema and the role of video games in education. The event will delve into the challenges and wonders of adaptation, looking at scripts as well as film environments and time frames. **Saara Cantell**, director of *Raspberry Hill*, will talk about the topic. The authors **Outi Hupaniittu**, **Marjo Kovanen** and **Heta Mulari** will present *Suomalainen lastenelokuva*, a new multidisciplinary work on the history, development and current status of the children's film. **Janne Isokääntä**, teacher of digital and game art at the Liminka School of Art, will discuss the use and importance of video games as part of school education.

Held in English, the afternoon section is aimed at film professionals and students. This section will look at filmmaking from the perspective of independent film production and explore the use of artificial intelligence in filmmaking and its potential for the future. The divide between Czech and Slovakia and its impact on the countries' production of children's films will also be discussed, in addition with ways in which festivals can be more environmentally responsible. Some new Nordic specialities will be explored and finally the question, how do you direct a dog, will be pondered. Speakers include **Mervi Enqvist**, **Gunnbjörg Gunnarsdottir**, **Ted Kjellsson**, **Markéta Pášmová**, **Sidse Jeppesen**, **Magdalena Nieć**, **Kaisa Rastimo**, **Kris Brown** and **Outi Rousu**.

For more information on the forum, visit <https://www.oulufilmfestival.fi/en/childrens-film-forum/>.

## Children's Film Competition

**THE BOOK OF EVERYTHING** Netherlands, Latvia 2024, directed by Ineke Houtman

**COCO FARM** Canada 2023, directed by Sébastien Gagné

**DIARY OF PAULINA P** Croatia 2023, directed by Neven Hitrec

**GREETINGS FROM MARS** Germany 2023, directed by Sarah Winkenstette

**HÅKAN BRÅKAN 2** Sweden 2024, directed by Ted Kjellsson

**LAMPO, THE TRAVELLING DOG** Poland 2023, directed by Magdalena Nieć

**OUT OF THE NEST** Thailand 2024, directed by Arturo A. Hernandez

**PO BOX GODS HOME** India 2023, directed by Sanket Mane

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

## Youth Film Competition

**DRY SEASON** Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia 2024, directed by Bohdan Sláma

**EMMA'S DREAM** Argentina 2023, directed by Germán Vilche

**HORIA** Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia 2023, directed by Ana-Maria Comanescu

**LISTEN** Greece, Bulgaria 2022, directed by Maria Douza

**TASTE OF FREEDOM** Ukraine 2023, directed by Oleksandr Berezan

**WHEN ADAM CHANGES** Canada 2023, directed by Adam Change Lentement

## **Finnish Competition**

**AATOS** Finland 2023, directed by Elisa Niku-Paavo

**THE ELF RING** Finland, Poland 2023, directed by Nellie Rajala

**THE GAMER** Finland, Germany 2023, directed by Petri Luukkainen, Jesse Jokinen

**THE MAKING OF A JAPANESE** Japan, Finland, United States, France 2024, directed by Ema Ryan Yamazaki

**NASRIN'S VOICE** Finland 2024, directed by Kaisa Rastimo

**POWER OF THE PEOPLE** Finland 2022, directed by Mervi Enqvist

**RASPBERRY HILL** Finland 2023, directed by Saara Cantell

**THE SUBSTITUTE** Finland 2024, directed by Simo Ritari

## **ECFA Short Film Award**

**BE YOURSELF, ENOUGH!** Norway 2023, directed by Ola Martin Fjeld

**BLUE TEDDY BEAR** Croatia, Slovakia 2023, directed by Marina Andree Škop

**CUPCAKES** Sweden 2023, directed by Charissa Martinkauppi

**MY NAME IS EDGAR AND I HAVE A COW** Czech Republic, Slovakia 2023, directed by Filip Diviak

**RHINO** Germany 2022, directed by Julia Ocker

**YUCK!** France 2024, directed by Loïc Espuche

## **Screening sites**

The films will be screened in Valvesali Hall and in the Cinema Studio, both located in the Cultural Centre Valve, Hallituskatu 7, Oulu. Festival info is open during the festival week in the lobby of Valvesali Hall. Tickets for the screenings are sold from the Valve ticket office and Ticketmaster.

## **Award Ceremony on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November**

The Award Ceremony, where the juries will award winners of the competitions, will take place on Saturday November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm at Valvesali Hall. The event will be free to attend! After the ceremony, a free screening of the winning ECFA short film will be held. Other winning titles will be screened on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> at Cinema Studio, starting at noon.

On our website at [www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en](http://www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en) you will find more information about the films. Stills from the films will be found at [www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en/press](http://www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en/press)

## **Celebrating children's rights**

The festival week is also Children's Rights Week, and November 20<sup>th</sup> is the World Children's Day. Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the right of children to participate in culture and art. The festival will celebrate children's rights with more than 130 films.

More information on films and filmmakers is constantly being added to <https://www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en>.

Image material of the films can be found at <https://www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en/press/>.

**Changes in programme are possible.**

**You can also follow the festival on social media:**

[www.facebook.com/lastenjanuortenekuvienfestivaali](https://www.facebook.com/lastenjanuortenekuvienfestivaali)

[www.instagram.com/oulufilmfestival](https://www.instagram.com/oulufilmfestival)

[www.tiktok.com/oulufilmfestival](https://www.tiktok.com/oulufilmfestival)

### **Accreditation**

Media representatives and film professionals can get accredited for free at <https://www.oulufilmfestival.fi/en/accreditation/>. (no deadline)

### **For more information, please contact:**

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Festival producer **Marja Seppänen**, [producer@oufilmcenter.fi](mailto:producer@oufilmcenter.fi)

Oulu Film Centre. [www.oulunelokuvakeskus.fi/oe](http://www.oulunelokuvakeskus.fi/oe)

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