

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**43<sup>rd</sup> OULU INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL WINNERS 2024**

**Free for publication**

**ECFA Award**

Given by the International Jury: HÅKAN BRÅKAN 2

Director: Ted Kjellsson

**ECFA Short Film Award**

Given by the International Jury: MY NAME IS EDGAR AND I HAVE A COW

Director: Filip Diviak

**Children's Film Competition**

Children's Film Competition Award given by the Children's Jury:

Director: Magdalena Nieć

Film: LAMPO, THE TRAVELLING DOG

**Youth Film Competition**

Global Future Prize given by the Youth Film Competition Jury: LISTEN

Director: Maria Douza

**Finnish Competition**

Look at Me... Award of the Media Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland:

Director: Nellie Rajala

Film: THE ELF RING

**A BETTER WORLD Award**

Valve Film School

**ECFA AWARD: HÅKAN BRÅKAN 2**

The ECFA Award was founded by the European Children's Film Association in 2010. It is given to the best European film in the Children's Film Competition by the International Jury: Norwegian-Icelandic filmmaker **Gunnbjörg Gunnarsdottir**, artistic director of the Zlín Film Festival **Markéta Pášmová** and PhD **Silja Kukka**, lecturer at the University of Oulu.

The winner is *HÅKAN BRÅKAN 2* directed by **Ted Kjellsson**.

**Jury statement:** *"The winner in the ECFA-category for best children's feature film, is an entertaining and memorable film with a highly imaginative plot. With strong performances from a talented cast and heartfelt direction, the movie delivers a vibrant energy from beginning to end, in a visually appealing universe. The courageous main character goes through an inner and outer struggle to figure out the importance of teamwork, friendship and compassion. With its clever humor and references to older film classics, this film also has a cross-generational appeal that the jury found most entertaining."*

## **ECFA Short Film Award: MY NAME IS EDGAR AND I HAVE A COW**

ECFA Short Film Award was founded by the European Children's Film Association in 2018. It is given to the best European short film by the same International Jury.

The winner is *MY NAME IS EDGAR AND I HAVE A COW* directed by **Filip Diviak**.

**Jury statement:** *"The winner addresses the theme of human emotions and relations in a beautiful way. The film is well written, with a humorous attitude, and a perfect blend of naive and realistic animation style. We also believe it will be a perfect starting point for conversations with children about our relationship with animals and farming. The film has terrific sound design and a musical score that complements the emotional journey of the main character Edgar."*

**Director Filip Diviak:** *"Just received a message that Edgar and his cow won the ECFA short film award, which I appreciate a lot. It makes me very very happy and makes me feel like my work has some purpose or meaning, so I will continue this. I already told my mom, she was very happy too and she is saying her hi's!"*

## **CHILDREN'S FLM COMPETITION AWARD: LAMPO, THE TRAVELLING DOG**

The Children's Jury gave the Children's Film Competition Award, sponsored by Oulun Energia, to the director of the best film in the Children's Film Competition. The award consists of 3000 euros.

The winner of the Children's Film Competition is **Magdalena Nieć** for her film *LAMPO, THE TRAVELLING DOG*.

**Jury statement:** *"The story of the film is interesting and different. The plot moves along smoothly, at an appropriate pace and with variety. There are also exciting twists in the escape and search scenes, and surprising locations, for example on a train track. The actors are very good at playing their roles with a wide range of emotions. Even the dog is skilful, brave and cute. It plays a major role in the film. Humour, but also occasional ill feeling, is provided by the strict and silly adults. The film is well edited and it's fun that there is a bit of animation. What is most touching is the love of the parents for their seriously ill child and the friendship between her and the dog. The most important thing is to understand that together we can help more and to experience that after all the hard times, the film has a happy ending."*

**Director Magdalena Nieć:** *"I'm honored by the jury's verdict and the victory of 'Lampo, The travelling dog' at the Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival. Thank you very much! This award brings me joy and motivation to continue working."*

## **Honorable mention**

The Children's Jury gave an honorable mention to director **Sébastien Gagné** for his Canadian film *COCO FARM*. *"The story is good, and the plot is full of joy, even if the beginning is sad because of the loss of the mother. The story is also liberating because it encourages people to believe in their own skills and that combining different skills is the best way to succeed. The film takes a stand on the welfare and comfort of domestic animals, it talks about everyday rural life and reminds us to listen to children, because adults are not always right."*

**Director Sébastien Gagné:** *"It is with great honour that I accept this award on behalf of the whole team. We made this film for families. We wanted them to be able to experience it together. It makes me truly happy, as a parent myself, that kids and their parents can share this positive cinematic experience."*

*Coco Farm is about the power of community. It moves me to see that its message resonates with audiences around the world, and of all cultures. In a way, I feel like I, too, have been accepted by the international film community! Thank you so much for this award. Best regards from Montreal, Canada."*

#### **GLOBAL FUTURE PRIZE: LISTEN**

Awarded by The Finnish 4H Organization's Association in Oulu, the Global Future Prize is given by a jury of young people to the best youth film in the festival. The winner is *LISTEN* directed by **Maria Douza**.

**Jury statement:** *"The film is very visual and makes good use of sets. The sound design was important because of the subject matter and was interestingly done. Many things had to be thought about and read between the lines and information was not fed to the viewer. Although the characters in the film were morally questionable, they were still humanly written and their behaviour and actions made sense in the context of the film."*

**Director Maria Douza:** *"I want to thank from the bottom of my heart the Oulu Film Festival for Children and Young People for giving the award of the Youth Film Competition to our film LISTEN. It was already a great honor to be part of the competition section of this long-standing festival. LISTEN was not specifically made for a young audience and it is therefore extremely rewarding to see that it touches and moves that audience. I made this film to address the subject of communication, and what happens when it breaks down. I tried to show people not as I would like them to be, but as they are; contradictory, complex, troubled, lost. Yet - in the end - with the potential to do good. I am delighted that the young audience of Oulu embraced the movie and I am hugely honored to receive this award! THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!!"*

#### **LOOK AT ME... AWARD OF THE MEDIA FOUNDATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND: THE ELF RING**

The Media Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland grants a 1500-euro award to a Finnish feature or short film at the festival. This year the recipient was chosen by the Church Media Foundation board member **Mikko Hieta**. The award goes to director **Nellie Rajala** for her short film *THE ELF RING*.

**Comments by Mikko Hieta:** *"Adults sometimes fall into a negative cycle of thinking, where believing in failure leads to it. The winner of the Finnish Film Competition shows us a child who believes that things can be changed. In this film, faith, hope, and love are powerfully present, inspiring the child to act when adults seem ready to give up. Through skillful visual and auditory storytelling, the director prompts viewers to reflect on themes ranging from strong bond between generations to respect for nature. Despite the challenges of the short film format, the story remains cohesive, and the film as a whole is both beautiful and impactful. Particularly noteworthy is that the filmmaker is still at the early stages of her career. She has succeeded well."*

**Director Nellie Rajala:** *"I would like to thank the Church Media Foundation for this award, both on my own behalf and on behalf of the working group. "The Elf Ring" is an attempt to tell the story of the loss of a loved one in a way that will hopefully help young viewers deal with this difficult subject. Thanks again to everyone who has been involved in supporting this project."*

#### **A BETTER WORLD AWARD: Valve Film School**

The award is given to an individual, an organisation, or, for example, a team, who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of children's and youth cinema. The second A Better World Award goes to **the Valve Film School**.

*"Film clubs, workshops, summer camps, teaching materials, method guides, media education seminars, coordination of the national Schools' Film Week, the Oskari competition for films by children and young people, Oulu Children's News... All this, every year, with children and young people at the forefront, for over twenty years. The Valve Film School has really worked for a better world,"* says festival director **Mika Anttolainen**.

You can find photos of the winners on our homepage: <https://www.ouluofilmfestival.fi/en/news-winners-2024/>

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