

PRESS RELEASE:

44th OULU INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL WINNERS 2025

Free for publication

Child's Day Award to Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival

Minister of Science and Culture **Mari-Leena Talvitie** has presented the Child's Day Award to RanKids association in Joensuu and the Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival. Both honourees received € 9,000. The award is given to organizations for their work or achievements in promoting arts education and activities. It has been presented traditionally on World Children's Day on November 20 since 1999.

Minister Mari-Leena Talvitie: *"Art education promotes creativity and learning and strengthens community spirit and, more broadly, civilization. The purpose of art education and activities is to inspire children and spark their interest in art and cultural activities and experiences. That is why it is also important to ask children for feedback and, if necessary, to change activities based on that feedback. The award winners have succeeded in creating activities that are popular with children."*

Festival director Mika Anttolainen: *"This is a great day for the Oulu Children's and Youth Film Festival and recognition of the festival's work in promoting children's film culture and film education. The award has special significance, as it conveys the kind of world we want to build for future generations."*

ECFA Award

Given by the International Jury: LAMPIE

Director: Margien Rogaar

ECFA Short Film Award

Given by the International Jury: SUMMER OF DREAMS

Director: Kim Faber

Children's Film Competition

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

Director: Margien Rogaar

Film: LAMPIE

Honorable mention:

Director: Nóra Lakos

Film: I ACCIDENTALLY WROTE A BOOK

Youth Film Competition

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

Director: Tönis Pill

Honorable mention: GIRLS DON'T CRY

Directors: Sigrid Klausmann, Lina Luzyte

Finnish Competition

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

Director: Visa Koiso-Kanttila

Film: DEFIANT

A BETTER WORLD Award

Outi Rousu

ECFA AWARD: LAMPIE

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: director, producer **Sigrid Klausmann** from Germany, cultural innovator and film education expert **Mikk Rand** from Estonia, and scriptwriter, producer **Antti Kairakari** from Oulu

The winner is *LAMPIE* directed by **Margien Rogaar**.

Jury statement: *"The protagonist of our award-winning film leads us into a strange world full of bizarre characters, even monsters. We fear such monsters, just as we fear anything different and unfamiliar. But the film shows us that true monsters don't look like monsters, and those that appear to be, often aren't monsters at all. The film is full of poetry and tenderness, with breathtaking cinematic images of an oceanic, rocky landscape that reflects our threatened planet. Our protagonist is exposed to this world, and she confronts it.*

The girl's story could also be the story of a girl of our time, the story of a fearless and courageous girl who accepts her destiny. She is curious, sensitive, with an open heart that hears the voice of her deceased mother. The excellent screenplay and strong direction create scenes with characters, even in supporting roles, full of depth. Nothing is superfluous; the dialogues are subtle and nuanced. This film has everything that makes an excellent movie: drama, romance, adventure, and poetry, accompanied by a wonderful soundtrack. And not to forget the story: A fairy tale that helps us find our way in our modern times."

ECFA Short Film Award: SUMMER OF DREAMS

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 *SUMMER OF DREAMS* by **Kim Faber**.

Jury statement: *"Our awarded film is a touching, tender story with a strong protagonist, beautiful inside and outside, facing an existential life situation. The film brings out hope and confidence in threatening circumstances. And that hope can even empower you. The strength of the film is the lightness within a heavy subject; it's about life and death, about being young, not knowing if you will ever get old. The young audience is invited to deal with this without fear and anxiety, but empathy. They learn that even in challenging times there can be joy, happiness and dance.*

We experience the importance and power of love and friendship, especially in dark and sad times. It's a film that burrows into your heart and stays with you for a long time. We would like to add the elegant camera work and the dramaturgy with its dramatic highs and lows that captivated us with the story."

Director Kim Faber: *"I'm truly honoured to receive this award for. This film follows Lotte as she finds new friends and moments of freedom at a camp for children who are facing the same challenges she is. I hope her story encourages young viewers to stay hopeful and to look for joy even when life gets tough. Thank you to*

the festival, the jury, producer Tangerine Tree and everyone who contributed to the film in any way. And, of course, a very special thanks to Lotte and all the brave kids who made this film possible."

CHILDREN'S FILM COMPETITION AWARD: LAMPIE

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 2000 euros.

The winner of the Children's Film Competition is **Margien Rogaar** for her film *LAMPIE*.

Jury statement: *"LAMPIE is a beautiful, moving, and unique film. Its plot is creative, multifaceted, and unpredictable, containing exciting and frightening moments as well as surprising twists and events. The performances of the actors, with their magnificent characters, are empathetic and convey a wide range of emotions. The scenery is beautiful, including the old-fashioned town. A lot of effort has gone into the film's evocative set design and detailed costumes including the tail(s). The story is carefully thought out and every scene is wonderful. The ending is open, but happy."*

Director Margien Rogaar: *"LAMPIE was a great adventure to make. We stood upon cliffs, high on a tower, deep in the water of the sea, in cold rain and storm. Doing that with children was unforgettable for the whole crew. Lotte and Manu are the heroes of this adventure. Without those two kids, it wouldn't have worked out so well. So this award I dedicate to Lotte and Manu as Lampie and Fish. I want to thank the festival for selecting our movie and the jury for this award."*

Honorable mention

The Children's Jury gave an honorable mention to director **Nóra Lakos** for her Hungarian film *I ACCIDENTALLY WROTE A BOOK*. *"The film, including its opening titles, is colourful, touching, and conveys a wide range of emotions, including sadness. The characters have their own personalities. The film as a whole features wonderful animation, special effects with magic tricks, funny abbreviated words, lots of humour and a story within a story. Writing may be the solution."*

YOUTH FILM COMPETITION - GLOBAL FUTURE PRIZE: FRÄNK

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 *FRÄNK* directed by **Tõnis Pill**.

Jury statement: *"This year's winner is a powerful message about peer pressure, friendship and how parents' actions are reflected on their children. The story is told in an entertaining way that keeps you on the edge of your seat for the full runtime. The film is almost disturbing from time to time, but in this instance, it only gives the film more power. The child actors are giving their all and pull of incredible performances where one exciting moment follows another. The plotline about a different kind of friendship between two main characters is moving and the film's 90s vibes were executed credibly. The judges might have had differing opinions during the selection process, but the winner was clear: the winning film is literally breathtaking and leaves you with a question "What on Earth did I just watch?"*

Director Tõnis Pill: *"It is a great honor to receive the award at Oulu! I am so very glad to hear how our simple story can still resonate with international young audiences and prove that the topics and themes our film explored are also relatable abroad."*

Honorable mention

The Youth Jury gave an honorable mention to the German film *GIRLS DON'T CRY*, directed by **Sigrid Klausmann** and **Lina Luzyte**. "All of us have girls in our lives: mothers, wives, sisters, friends and daughters. We wanted to thank *GIRLS DON'T CRY* and its directors with an honorable mention because the film told stories about girls around the world and the different struggles women face impressively and reminds its audience the work for women's rights isn't over."

FINNISH FILM COMPETITION - LOOK AT ME... AWARD: DEFIANT

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 Rebekka Naatus. The award goes to director **Visa Koiso-Kanttila** for his film *DEFIANT*.

Comments by Rebekka Naatus: *"Watching DEFIANT was not easy. The film felt bad, but at the same time it demanded unwavering concentration. All in all, it was an intense experience. I was particularly impressed by how emotions and motives were conveyed through gestures, touch, violence, and the distances between people. I felt that Defiant allowed me to see and experience things that can be difficult to see, understand, or even approach. The film left a strong impression and showed that light and hope are not necessarily as far away as it feels in the darkness."*

Director Visa Koiso-Kanttila: *"We are all very touched and delighted by this recognition. One of the key tasks of film and art is to give a voice and a face to people and phenomena that would otherwise not be seen or heard. This is essentially what the film DEFIANT is about: the need of its young protagonist, Vilma, to be seen and heard, to be accepted for who she is. DEFIANT uses the medium of fiction film to highlight the issues and challenges associated with the work of child welfare institutions, as well as the status and rights of the children and young people placed in them, which will hopefully receive the attention they deserve through this film. "*

A BETTER WORLD AWARD: Outi Rousu

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 third A Better World Award goes to **the Outi Rousu** for her long-standing work over several decades to promote Finnish children's films. From a Finnish perspective she has exceptional experience in international children's film productions and has worked as a producer on several international children's films.

The 45th Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival will be held from November 9 to 15, 2026, and is part of the official culture programme of Oulu2026 European Capital of Culture.

You can find photos of the winners on our homepage:
<https://www.oulufilmfestival.fi/en/news-winners-2025/>

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