



**NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL**

**SEVEN FILMS FROM EIGHT COUNTRIES TAKE HOME AUDIENCE AWARDS AT NEW  
YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL 2021**

**THE FESTIVAL ANNOUNCED ITS AUDIENCE, GRAND PRIZE, AND JURY  
AWARD-WINNING FILMS ON MONDAY**

**"I really enjoyed watching these films with my daughter. There was a lot of creativity and heart, they were inspiring to see," said Sofia Coppola, Festival juror.**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NEW YORK, NY (March 22, 2021): New York International Children's Film Festival closed its 2021 edition with a presentation of the Best of the Fest short films and the announcement of the 2021 Festival award-winners. For the first time in the Festival's 24-year history, audiences expanded from the New York metro area to across the country, drawing viewers from 47 out of 50 states to the virtual Festival.

The Festival received thousands of submissions from around the world to select and curate a collection of inventive, diverse, and artistically ambitious films for its annual event, held virtually from March 5-14, 2021. Audience and Grand Prize Awards are presented to the films and filmmakers with the highest-ranking votes from Festival audience members, while Jury Awards are selected by an esteemed jury of filmmakers, actors, and industry leaders.

The Best of the Fest, a collection of the highest-ranking short films from throughout the Festival, was released on Friday, March 19. In lieu of a traditional live awards ceremony, winners were announced on the Festival's website and social media channels on Monday, March 22.

"In addition to spotlighting the most innovative films for young audiences, the Jury and Audience Awards recognized the strength of women behind the camera, supported nonbinary storytelling, and acknowledged European co-productions that bolstered underrepresented filmmaker voices and stories from the Caribbean," said Programming Director Maria-Christina Villaseñor. "We're grateful to our esteemed jury and wonderful audiences alike."

**2021 JURY AWARD WINNERS**

"A strong selection of thought provoking films, beautifully made & truthfully told," said juror Nora Twomey (Academy Award®-nominated director and co-director of *The Breadwinner*, *The Secret of Kells*, and co-founder of Cartoon Saloon).

The 2021 Jury Award for Best Animated Short was presented to ***Matilda and the Spare Head***, by returning Festival filmmaker Ignas Meilūnas, who first delighted audiences at NYICFF with his 2017 short ***Mr Night Has a Day Off***. The Jury Award for Best Live Action Short went to Martina Matzkin's ***The Name of the Son***. In recognition of very close voting tallies and the jury's strong support of other top voted films, NYICFF presented Special Mentions to:

Aurora Brachman, director of **Joychild** (United States, *Becoming Ourselves: Breaking the Binary*)

Anne Koizumi, director of **In the Shadow of the Pines** (Canada, *Girls' POV*)

Rachel Harrison Gordon, director of **Broken Bird** (United States, *Celebrating Black Stories & Girls' POV*)

Festival Jury Award-winners were selected by 2021 jury members Sofia Coppola, Geena Davis, Madeline di Nonno, Jorge Gutiérrez, Matthew Modine, Mark Osborne, Peter Ramsey, Karen Rupert Toliver, Ira Sachs, Uma Thurman, and Nora Twomey. Winners of the Festival's Jury Awards are eligible for consideration in the 2022 Academy Awards®

"What an amazing group of films! I'm absolutely floored," said juror Mark Osborne (Academy Award®-nominated director, writer, producer, and animator *Kung Fu Panda, The Little Prince*).

## 2021 AUDIENCE AWARD WINNERS, FEATURE FILMS

The Grand Prize Feature Award for animation was presented to **The Legend of Hei** (China), directed by MTJJ Mutou. The Grand Prize Feature Award for live action was presented to **Buladó** (Curaçao, Netherlands), directed by Eché Janga.

"So many of the films in this year's program showcased truly unique points of view, while at the same time highlighting the universal experience of being a kid today. I am so glad that they resonated with a national audience, and that we were able to reach young people in 47 states to share such vital stories," said Executive Director Nina Guralnick. "The 2020 Festival was cut short just as pandemic restrictions were relegating us all into our separate homes and neighborhoods. What a meaningful bookend to a year of isolation to be able to share our program with kids across the country."

## 2021 AUDIENCE AWARD WINNERS, SHORT FILMS

Audience Award winners are determined by audience voting in 4 age ranges and an all-ages Grand Prize.

- Audience Award, ages 3+ — **INK** (Netherlands); Joost van den Bosch & Erik Verkerk, *Shorts for Tots*
- Audience Award, ages 5+ — **TULIP** (United States); Andrea Love & Phoebe Wahl, *Short Films One*
- Audience Award, ages 8+ — **VANILLE** (France, Switzerland); Guillaume Lorin, *Short Films Two*
- Audience Award, ages 10+ — **KAPAEMAHU** (United States); Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, & Joe Wilson, *Becoming Ourselves: Breaking the Binary*
- Grand Prize Short, Animation — **VANILLE** (France, Switzerland); Guillaume Lorin
- Grand Prize Short, Live Action — **BLACK BOY JOY** (United States); Martina Lee, *Celebrating Black Stories*

## COMPLETE LIST OF 2021 FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS

- Audience Award, ages 3+ — **INK** (Netherlands); Joost van den Bosch & Erik Verkerk, *Shorts for Tots*
- Audience Award, ages 5+ — **TULIP** (United States); Andrea Love & Phoebe Wahl, *Short Films One*
- Audience Award, ages 8+ — **VANILLE** (France, Switzerland); Guillaume Lorin, *Short Films Two*
- Audience Award, ages 10+ — **KAPAEMAHU** (United States); Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, & Joe Wilson, *Becoming Ourselves: Breaking the Binary*
- Grand Prize Short, Animation — **VANILLE** (France, Switzerland); Guillaume Lorin
- Grand Prize Short, Live Action — **BLACK BOY JOY** (United States); Martina Lee, *Celebrating Black Stories*
- Audience Award, Animated Feature — **THE LEGEND OF HEI** (China); MTJJ Mutou
- Audience Award, Live Action Feature — **BULADÓ** (Curaço, Netherlands); Eché Janga
- Jury Award, Best Animated Short — **MATILDA AND THE SPARE HEAD** (Lithuania); Ignas Meilūnas
- Jury Award, Best Live Action Short — **THE NAME OF THE SON** (Argentina); Martina Matzkin

### ABOUT NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL

New York International Children's Film Festival was founded in 1997 to support the creation and dissemination of thoughtful, provocative, and intelligent film for children and teens ages 3-18. Distinguished by its unique mission and high-caliber programming, the annual Festival is an Academy Award-qualifying event in the Best Animated and Best Live Action Short Film categories, as chosen by its distinguished jury of filmmakers, actors, and academic and industry leaders. The Festival cultivates an appreciation for the arts, encourages active, discerning viewing, and stimulates lively discussion among peers, families, and the film community.

The 2021 flagship event took place virtually from March 5-14, drawing viewers from 47 states across the country to over 100 short and feature films, sneak peeks, and filmmaker Q&As from around the world. The rich and dynamic film program—selected from over 1,500 international submissions—provided an opportunity for young audiences around the country to both connect with stories different from their own and to see themselves reflected on screen.

New York International Children's Film Festival is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and funds from Humanities New York. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Supporters include the Japan US Friendship Commission, the Consulate General of Canada, Dutch Culture USA, the Quebec Government Office in New York, and the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment.

To learn more about NYICFF, visit: [www.nyicff.org](http://www.nyicff.org)

Visit NYICFF's PRESS CENTER for images and additional information.

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