



New York International Children's Film Festival Announces 2026 Jury and Festival Award Winners

March 18, 2026 – New York International Children's Film Festival (NYICFF) has announced the award winners for its 2026 edition, with honors determined by both audience votes and a distinguished jury that includes Bob Odenkirk, Matthew Modine, Peter Ramsey, Jorge Gutierrez, and Chris Nee.

An Oscar®-qualifying festival, NYICFF 2026 presented 14 feature films and more than 80 short films, spotlighting bold and original storytelling from around the world. This year's slate placed a special emphasis on Native and Indigenous voices, with the NATIVE STORIES short film program serving as a centerpiece of the Festival and the feature documentary REMAINING NATIVE presented as a centerpiece selection.

Audience members across multiple age groups voted throughout the Festival to determine finalists and winners in several categories, while the Festival jury selected recipients for the Jury Awards.

This year's jury award for Best Live Action Short went to ¡Que Suene la Banda!, which follows a young Mexican musician as he prepares for an important audition. Juror Chris Nee called it "beautifully made," while juror Erin Odenkirk called it "a great, solid story. A real tear-jerker."

Echoing this year's Academy Awards, the NYICFF Jury Award for Best Animated Short resulted in a tie, garnering a win for both We're Kinda Different, an ode to being yourself, and The Apricot, about a 10-year-old spending the summer working on his family's apricot farm. Juror Peter Ramsey called We're Kinda Different "ridiculously charming," while juror Bob Odenkirk praised The Apricot for its incredible "direction and visuals. A moving reminder that children are under such pressure."

"Congratulations to all the award winners of the 2026 New York International Children's Film Festival, and to the organizers of the festival for presenting an incredible 3-week slate of programming for NYC families to enjoy," said Commissioner of the NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, Rafael Espinal. "When festivals like NYICFF take place in NYC, it reminds audiences that we are a global film and TV hub and shines a spotlight on the diversity of films

and jobs they provide. To the children of NYC who partook in the festival, we hope you were inspired to become part of NYC's next generation of filmmakers.”

The 2026 Festival Awards include:

Grand Prize Live Action Feature Film (Audience, All Ages)

LAMPIE (Margien Rogaar | Netherlands | East Coast Premiere)

Grand Prize Animated Feature Film (Audience, All Ages)

MY LIFE IN VERSAILLES (Clémence Madeleine-Perdrillat & Nathaniel H'limi | France, Luxembourg | U.S. Premiere)

Grand Prize Short Film (Audience, All Ages)

9 MILLION COLORS (Bára Anna Stejskalová | Czech Republic, Norway, Germany | New York Premiere)

Finalists:

¡QUE SUENE LA BANDA! (Jorge Parra Jr. | United States | East Coast Premiere)

LOLA AND THE SOUND PIANO (Augusto Zanolello | France, Poland, Switzerland | New York Premiere)

BUTTERFLY (Florence Mialhe | France | New York City Premiere)

Audience Award (Ages 3+)

THE SCARECROWS' WEDDING (Jeroen Jaspaert & Samantha Cutler | United Kingdom | New York Premiere)

Finalists:

KONIGIRI-KUN: SUPER MACHINE? (Mari Miyazawa | Japan | North American Premiere)

SKETCHES ON ICE (Marion Auvin | France, Belgium | New York Premiere)

LENA'S FARM: A PAIN IN THE BUTT (Elena Walf | Germany, Croatia)

Audience Award (Ages 5+)

WE'RE KINDA DIFFERENT (Ben Meinhardt | Canada | New York Premiere)

Finalists:

SHANLEY (Beau McCombs | United States | World Premiere)

DUET (Léo Brunel | France | World Premiere)

CARDBOARD (Sam Thornton | United Kingdom | New York City Premiere)

Audience Award (Ages 8+)

LOLA AND THE SOUND PIANO (Augusto Zanolello | France, Poland, Switzerland | New York Premiere)

Finalists:

¡QUE SUENE LA BANDA! (Jorge Parra Jr. | United States | East Coast Premiere)
FORT BUKU (Loëlle Monsanto | Netherlands, Suriname | New York Premiere)
LEGEND OF FRY-ROTI: RISE OF THE DOUGH (Sabrina Saleha | United States | New York Premiere)

Audience Award (Ages 10+)

9 MILLION COLORS (Bára Anna Stejskalová | Czech Republic, Norway, Germany | New York Premiere)

Finalists:

TURBULENCE (Christopher Rutledge & Magnus Igland Møller | Denmark, United States | New York Premiere)

AKABABURU: EXPRESSION OF ASTONISHMENT (Irati Dojura Landa Yagarí | Colombia | East Coast Premiere)

JUANA PELOS (Maria Mealla | United States)

Audience Award (Ages 12+)

BEAST OF THE SEINE (Jon Portman | United States | East Coast Premiere)

Finalists:

BUTTERFLY (Florence Mialhe | France | New York City Premiere)

THE DAY I LICKED A PEBBLE (Flavie Eliézer, Chloé Bernuchon, Goli Atefi, Maud Kolasa, Nathan Jauze, Marie Pijollet | France | North American Premiere)

THE GIRL WHO CRIED PEARLS (Chris Lavis & Maciek Szczerbowski | Canada)

Grown-Ups Award (Audience 18+)

BUTTERFLY (Florence Mialhe | France | New York City Premiere)

Finalists:

¡QUE SUENE LA BANDA! (Jorge Parra Jr. | United States | East Coast Premiere)

SPOOKY (Adeola Lawal | Ireland | International Premiere)

LOLA AND THE SOUND PIANO (Augusto Zanolello | France, Poland, Switzerland | New York Premiere)

Jury Award, Best Animated Short

TIE: WE'RE KINDA DIFFERENT (Ben Meinhardt | Canada | New York Premiere) and THE APRICOT (Alex Z. Zavila | United States, Mexico | New York Premiere)

Jury Award, Best Live Action Short

¡QUE SUENE LA BANDA! (Jorge Parra Jr. | United States | East Coast Premiere)

NYICFF 2026 Jury

Madeline DiNonno

CEO & President, Geena Davis Institute; Emmy® nominated producer

Jorge Gutierrez

Award-winning writer, animator, director (*Maya and the Three, The Book of Life*)

Guillermo Martinez

Director and Head of Story at Sony Pictures Animation

Matthew Modine

Emmy® nominated actor, director, and producer (*Oppenheimer, Stranger Things*)

Chris Nee

Emmy®-winning writer, producer, and creator (*Doc McStuffins*)

Bob Odenkirk

Emmy®-winning writer, actor (*Better Call Saul, Nobody*), and author of best-selling children's book *Zilot and Other Important Rhymes!*

Erin Odenkirk

Illustrator of best-selling children's book *Zilot and Other Important Rhymes!* and former NYICFF intern

Peter Ramsey

Academy Award®-winning director (*Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse, Rise of the Guardians*)

ABOUT NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL (NYICFF)

The Oscar®-qualifying New York International Children's Film Festival is the largest film Festival for kids and families in North America. Every year, we present the best new films from around the world for ages 3-18 (and above!) to an audience of 15,000 in New York City. Our slate of over 100 short and feature films typically represents over 30 countries and features 15+ languages. In addition to screenings, parties, filmmaker Q&As, and special events, the Festival provides an environment where kids are truly taken seriously and encouraged to use their voices. The 2026 Festival took place February 28 through March 15, and will included more great films, exciting events, and even some surprises. NYICFF is 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support Kathy Hochul, and the New York State Legislature, and additional support from the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment.

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