



WINNERS LIST OF 65TH ZLÍN FILM FESTIVAL 2025

Prizes awarded by the statutory juries

International Expert Jury for Feature Films in the Children's Category

Chairman of the Jury: Dominic James

Golden Slipper for Best Feature Film in the Children's Category

Honey (DNK, 2024) directed by Natasha Arthy

Motivation:

Honey is one of the finest family films we've seen in years. With its original and emotionally rich narrative, endearing characters, and meticulous attention to detail, it feels effortlessly authentic. The storytelling is both fresh and profound, exploring generational cycles with honesty and tenderness. The performances — especially from the young lead and the grandfather — are outstanding, grounding the film in warmth and emotional truth. Honey speaks to all ages, reminding us that children don't have to repeat the mistakes of the past. It left us with tears, laughter, and a deep sense of hope.

Karel Zeman Award for Best Visual Concept in a Feature Film in the Children's Category

Lampie (NLD, 2025) directed by Margien Rogaar

Motivation:

Lampie receives our award for Best Visual Concept. It dazzled us with its richly imaginative world — a mystical fair, a mysterious castle, a lighthouse and a fish boy — all woven together in a striking, coherent visual universe. Lampie is the most visually stunning film of the selection.

Special Mention

I Accidentally Wrote a Book (HUN/NLD, 2024) directed by Nóra Lakos

Motivation:

Finally, our Special Mention goes to I Accidentally Wrote a Book, a beautifully directed work with strong performances and a sharp, thoughtful script. Its philosophical reflections on life and storytelling resonated deeply with us.



International Expert Jury for Feature Films in the Junior and Youth Category

Chairman of the Jury: Linda-Maria Birbeck

Golden Slipper for Best Feature Film in the Junior Category

Spilt Milk (IRL, 2024) directed by Brian Durnin

Motivation:

Through the eyes of a child the story unfolds like the layers of an onion — tender, raw, and revealing. The film never underestimates its audience and tells a story filled with warmth and humour, yet unafraid to confront the hardships of life.

We were deeply moved by the main character's ability to remain true to himself, showing that it is possible to feel joy even in the midst of sadness.

We find this film an artistic achievement with a remarkable attention to detail, both in cinematography and set design and the director has managed to create a film not only about children, but also profoundly for them.

For these reasons we believe *Spilt Milk* by Brian Durnin truly deserves The Jury Award International Competition of Feature Films in the Junior Category over 11 years of age. We believe this film has the power to show children everywhere that even in the darkest places, a little magic can still be found.

Golden Slipper for Best Feature Film in the Youth Category

Kevlar Soul (SWE, 2025) directed by Maria Eriksson-Hecht

Motivation:

In a world that often feels both superficial and artificial, this story stands out with raw honesty and emotional depth. We think this debut feature is the result of a deeply collaborative process between the scriptwriter, director, and actors—each element strengthening the others to create a cohesive and authentic whole. The result is a film that went straight to our hearts.

The director has made bold, thoughtful choices that allow the performances to breathe with sincerity and truth. The young cast delivers powerfully convincing portrayals, capturing both vulnerability and resilience as their world seems to fall apart around them.

Though the story is dark and firmly grounded in reality, it never loses its sense of light. It reminds us that even when everything is crumbling, love can be the force that keeps us standing.

For all these reasons, we believe that *Kevlar Soul* by Maria Eriksson-Hecht and Pelle Rådström deserves the Jury Award in the International Competition of Feature Films, Youth Category (15+).

We hope this universal story of struggle, hope, and human connection will reach all the young people out there desperately searching for something to hold on to—and show them that it truly is possible.



Special Jury Award for a Feature Film in the Junior Category

Nawi: Dear Future Me (GER/KEN, 2024) directed by Kevin Schmutzler, Toby Schmutzler, Apuu Mourine, Vallentine Chelluget

Motivation:

For bringing a seemingly distant topic closer through a sharply composed and powerful story, masterful cinematography, and an outstanding performance by its young lead actress—who holds the audience's gaze even when the subject matter makes them want to look away—the Special Mention/Jury Award in the International Competition of Feature Films in the Junior Category over 11 years of age, goes to the heartbreaking yet gently crafted film *Nawi: Dear Future Me* by Kevin Schmutzler, Toby Schmutzler, Apuu Mourine, Vallentine Chelluget.

Special Jury Award for a Feature Film in the Youth Category

DJ Ahmet (2025, MAC/CZE/SRB/CRO, 2025) directed by Georgi M. Unkovski

Motivation:

A film that tastefully portrays the contradictory world we live in—often tucked away from the reality of our daily lives—and, through its characters and their touching brotherly relationship, manages to present a believable blend of the modern and the traditional. With a great sense of humour that builds bridges and captivates its audience, this original and courageous musical gem reminds us of the importance of freedom—and makes us want to dance with the sheep. The Special Mention /Jury Award in the International Competition of Feature Films in the Youth Category over 15 years old, goes to *DJ Ahmet* by Georgi M. Unkovski.

International Expert Jury for Short Animations for Children

Chairman of the Jury: Will Becher

Golden Slipper for Best Short Animation for Children

Down in the Dumps (NLD, 2025) directed by Vera van Wolferen

Motivation:

The visual style, sound design and musical score come together beautifully in this film to create a memorable cinematic experience for viewers of all ages. Vera van Wolferen tells a tale which recognises the importance of taking responsibility and making things right when we make a mistake.

Down in the Dumps is a film about the courage to be who we truly are.



Special mention

Hello Summer (CZE/FRA/SVK, 2024) directed by Martin Smatana, Veronika Zacharová

Motivation:

We decided to give a special mention to a film which was a playful celebration of childhood imagination, where everyday objects take on surprising new roles. This is the delightful world of Hello Summer!

Hermína Týrlová Award for Best Short Animation for Children up to 6 Years of Age

Lena's Farm: A Pain in the Butt (GER, 2025) directed by Elena Walf

Motivation:

Director Elena Walf creates a warming tale of friendship using her distinctive visual style and sense of fun to excellent effect. This impressive film introduces fundamental human values — such as compassion, love, and even the more complex theme of prejudice—to the youngest audiences in a charming and accessible way. Lena's Farm: A Pain in the Butt is humorous, modern, and effortlessly understandable, even without the use of words.

Special mention

The Carp and the Child (FRA/BEL, 2024) directed by Morgan Simon, Arnaud Demuynck

Motivation:

We decided to give a special mention to a film made with both lightness and remarkable skill, guided by confident direction, The Carp and the Child tells a simple story—of one afternoon, one place, and one moment of life's realization.

Children's Jury for Feature Films in the Children's Category

Chairman of the Jury: Anna Rose Sedlářová

Children's Jury Award for Best Feature Film in the Children's Category

The Secret Floor (AUT/LUX/GER, 2025) directed by Norbert Lechner

Motivation:

The Secret of Grand Hotel Europe was really awesome! We really liked how the story took place both in the present and in the past – it was super interesting to see how everything connected together.

The actors were so good, we totally believed them – like it was all real. And the hotel? It looked beautiful and a bit mysterious, with a special atmosphere that made us want to know more. The music was amazing – it added suspense, emotions, and kept us excited the whole time. We were hooked from beginning to end and we'd definitely recommend the film to other kids too!



European Youth Jury for Feature Films for Youth

Chairman of the Jury: Tom Brenton

Youth Jury Award for Best Feature Film in the Junior and Youth Category

Nawi: Dear Future Me (GER/KEN, 2024) directed by Toby Schmutzler, Kevin Schmutzler, Apuu Mourine, Vallentine Chelluget

Motivation:

In our opinion, the most inspiring film was Nawi. It tells a powerful story that talks about serious topics with sensitivity, honesty, and without any unnecessary pretence. We were drawn in right from the start – by the film’s authenticity, the natural behavior of the characters, and its unique atmosphere.

Huge credit goes not only to the actors, who delivered truly believable and genuine performances, but also to the whole creative team. It was clear that they approached the subject with great care and responsibility. Every scene felt thoughtful, but still very human.

We really appreciate that someone decided to tell this story – it raises important questions and makes you think, and that, in our opinion, is what makes a film truly meaningful.

For us, it was one of the most powerful cinematic experiences of the festival.

Children’s Jury for Short Animations for Children

Chairman of the Jury: Lada Procházková

Children’s Jury Award for Best Short Animation for Children

Wolfie (CZE, 2025) directed by Philippe Kastner

Motivation:

Our favorite film was Little Wolf. It looked really beautiful – it was smart, emotional, and still easy to understand. What we liked the most was that even though it was simple, it had a strong and important message. We kept thinking about it even after it ended. That’s why we think it deserves an award.

International Expert Jury for Student Films Zlín Dog

Chairman of the Jury: Gianmarco Donaggio

Zlín Dog Award for Best Student Film (with prize money of EUR 1000)

Caught in 4K (AUT, 2025) directed by Adriana Mrnjavac, Nicole Stigler

Motivation:

The jury unanimously recognized the film’s urgent social relevance, highlighting a crucial issue of our time — one that feels especially vital to address within the context of a festival dedicated to children and youth. We are grateful that this topic was brought to the screen in such an original and captivating way, and we hope its message will ripple far beyond the walls of film festivals, inspiring reflection and change across generations.



Without resorting to explicitness, and using audiovisual language in a bold and inventive way, the film reveals how the invisible moments of digital interaction can leave vivid, lasting impressions on a child's psyche. In doing so, the director distinguishes herself from many other valuable works by affirming cinema as a craft that responds to the sensibilities and urgencies of our time — gently bridging the often difficult gap between art and the world.

Jury Award in the Animated Films Category

Pubert Jimbob (BEL, 2024) directed by Quirijn Dees

Motivation:

Pubert Jimbob by Quirijn Dees draws us into an unsettling odyssey through a dimension both frantic and fever-drenched, where reality fractures and reason slips its grip. The author distinguishes himself with a bold vision, weaving formal experimentation into the fabric of fiction, taking us to unforeseen territories and provoking unexpected responses both intellectual and emotional. By awarding this extravagant work, we celebrate the importance of young creators challenging themselves, their mediums, and their audiences — in the hope that cinema, in all its forms, will continue to evolve, transform, and surprise us.

Jury Award in the Live-Action Films Category

Buzz of the Earth (CZE, 2024) directed by Greta Stocklassa

Motivation:

Greta Stoklassa's Buzz of the Earth masterfully balances absurdity, exaggeration, and plausibility in its exploration of how society constructs its self-image — and how misunderstandings across generations and gender perspectives shape these decisions.

With a carefully crafted script, humor that is uncompromising in its critique, and editing that rhythmically mirrors the confusion and contradictions of the process, the result is a work that is as entertaining as it is incisive.

Jury Award in the Documentary Films Category

Confession (SVK, 2024) directed by Rebeka Bizubová

Motivation:

Confession by Rebeka Bizubová is a brave and deeply personal film, told with striking authenticity and emotional clarity. It draws from the director's own experience, capturing a journey of courage, healing, and confrontation with the past.

The film addresses themes that remain painfully relevant—abuse, the role of the Church, and the fragile, complex bond between parents and children. It offers moments that are raw, honest, and deeply affecting. We believe this is a film that deserves to reach younger audiences, as its emotional and social resonance extends far beyond the screen.



Prizes awarded by non-statutory juries

European Children's Film Association Jury

Chairman of the Jury: Volker Petzold

ECFA Doc Award for Best European Feature Documentary for Young Audience

Circusboy (GER, 2025) directed by Anna Koch, Julia Lemke

Motivation:

This beautiful film, depicting strong family ties and intergenerational communication, left a lasting impression on us as a jury.

The topics of the film communicated deeply with the young audience, connecting with them on their level.

We particularly enjoyed the portrayal of strong family bonds, warmth, and the joy of working together. We eagerly anticipate the next film from this remarkable duo of directors.

Ecumenical Jury

Chairman of the Jury: Joel Ruml

Ecumenical Jury Award for Best Feature Film in the Junior and Youth Category

Kevlar Soul (SWE, 2025) directed by Maria Eriksson-Hecht

Motivation:

Kevlar Soul is a film about two brothers struggling to find their way in life, dealing with problems of violence and alcoholism in the family with the older brother taking on parental responsibility.

It tells the story with consistent visual language with pictures that speak, even when the characters are silent. The film gives an example of compassion for people in need rather than judgment, letting the audience go through the difficult journey together with the main characters. Kevlar Soul comes alive with the authentic performance of the actors.

Special Jury Award

Nawi: Dear future me (GER/KEN, 2024) directed by Toby Schmutzler, Kevin Schmutzler, Apuu Mourine, Vallentine Chelluget

Motivation:

Eight camels, sixty sheep, one hundred goats – that is how much Nawi is worth. The family is in debt, so she has to marry, even though she scored the highest marks in the final exams and wants to go on with school. Courageously the young Kenyan girl tries everything to avoid having to marry a much older man. Even though Nawis can't escape her destiny in the end, the film leaves the audience with hope for a better future. The films' narrative is both playful and clear, using voiceover with visuals to underline the world of its protagonists. 'Nawi' helps us become aware of a problem which affects a huge number of girls around the world, who just want to live their lives and follow their dreams.



Audience awards

Golden Apple – the City of Zlín Audience Award for Best Feature Film

I Accidentally Wrote a Book (HUN/NLD, 2024) directed by Nóra Lakos

ČT: D Audience Award for Best Short Animation for Children

The Tiny Shoe (CZE, 2025) directed by Michal Žabka

Prizes awarded by the FILMFEST company

Festival President's Award for a significant contribution in the children's and youth cinema

Boris Masník, Simona Stašová