

## Winners of 66th Zlín Film Festival 2026

Prizes awarded by the statutory juries

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

Chairman of the Jury: Reinhold T. Schöffel

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

Happy Birthday (EGY, 2025) directed by Sarah Goher

Motivation:

In this movie we meet two girls playing with each other like sisters. Slowly the film opens our view, and great acting leads the way to our hearts. A smile or a tear moves us more than any action or special effect can do. Step by step we learn that these girls are different. The director gives space to the actors and trust the audience in a rarely seen way. A great film made in an almost documentary style that shows us how different life can be – depending in which family you were born. It is not only the reality of this country that this film is about, it is about injustice that children feel all over the world, in the North, South, East and West.

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

Mira (DNK, 2025) directed by Marie Limkilde

Motivation:

The hidden rules of a girls' society can be very hostile. This is a portrait of a period in life between being a child and a teenager, that is hard to go through and understand, especially when you are in the middle of it. A story told in a tender yet very elaborate style by director, DoP and production designer. An invitation to children, parents and educators to start a dialogue. In other words: A family movie in the very best meaning.

#### **Special Mention**

Koschka (GER, 2026) directed by Bernd Sahling

Motivation:

A film that does not need big emotions, but tells a suitable story for small children, concentrated and quiet. A special mention for all the cat lovers!

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

Chairman of the Jury: Jakub Košťál

**Golden Slipper for Best Feature Film in the Junior Category**

The Altar Boys (POL, 2025) directed by Piotr Domalewski

Motivation:

Piotr Domalewski strikes a rare balance between funny and sad, built on sharp, intelligent screenwriting and strong, assured directing. The young non-professional cast is remarkable, full of genuine chemistry, as the boys bug their confessional and try to do good in a world that keeps complicating it. Beneath it runs a quiet ache: children disconnected from their parents, no matter the class.

**Golden Slipper for Best Feature Film in the Youth Category**

Weightless (DNK, 2025) directed by Emilie Thalund

Motivation:

Emilie Thalund's debut stays tightly, unflinchingly focused on its subject, never looking away from a topic that matters and is too rarely told with this much care. The characters are built with patience and depth as the story unfolds, so that every shift feels earned and true. Marie Helweg Augustsen is extraordinary in the lead, and Joachim Fjelstrup is quietly chilling as Rune, the two performances locked in an uneasy balance. Sensitive, beautifully made and at times genuinely hard to watch — which is exactly why it stays with you.

**Special Jury Award for a Feature Film in the Junior and Youth Category**

The Flood (SVK/CZE/POL/BEL, 2025) directed by Martin Gonda

Motivation:

Martin Gonda's debut tells a historical story freshly and without a trace of nostalgia, with striking authenticity. As Mara, newcomer Sára Chripáková gives a luminous, utterly truthful performance that carries the film. Oliver Záhlava's cinematography is quietly beautiful and never decorative — every image serves the story. A confident, mature first feature from one of the most promising voices of his generation.

International Expert Jury for Short Animations for Children

Chairman of the Jury: Ignas Meilūnas

**Golden Slipper for Best Short Animation for Children**

Ostrich (SUI, 2026) directed by Marie Kenov

**Motivation:**

In the times where we perceive reality through the screens of our phones we find it important to highlight a film that encourages the young adults to find and cherish their own personality.

With her colorful and entertaining approach of this very relevant topic we give the award to Ostrich from Marie Kenov.

**Special mention**

The Naughty Seat (GBR, 2025) directed by David Johnson

**Motivation:**

Together with kids jury it was very important to give a special mention to the funniest movie in the competition. And they unanimously chose because of the great and funny character the naughty seat from David Johnson.

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

Experiences and Learning. And Parenting. (POL, 2025) directed by Malgorzata Rybak

**Motivation:**

For Hermína Týrlová award, we had a really hard choice between a great selection of funny, entertaining, sometimes sad but always well crafted short movies. We chose for our winner a movie that was able with its brave, simplistic approach that speaks to the smallest audience about the biggest topics without using moral lessons.

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

Chairman of the Jury: Amálie Pasternová

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

Grow (GBR/CAN/USA, 2025) directed by John McPhail

**Motivation:**

We chose Grow as the winner because we were captivated by its sensitive and beautifully told story. Set in a stunning environment, the film shows how important perseverance is, as well as the joy that can be found in simple things, such as growing a pumpkin. Friendship and mutual support also play an important role, giving the film a warm and uplifting atmosphere.

European Youth Jury for Feature Films for Youth

Chairman of the Jury: Alma Mlichová

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

TRAD (GBR, 2026) directed by Lance Daly

Motivation:

Lance Daly's TRAD deserves recognition from the jury for its authenticity, emotional impact, and celebration of human connection. Set within Ireland's rich musical tradition, it follows young people searching for identity, freedom, and a sense of belonging. Music serves not only as a form of self-expression but also as a force that brings people together. The film's authenticity is enhanced by performances from actors who are musicians, while the character of Harky, inspired by a real person, adds emotional depth. Through its sincere storytelling, TRAD offers a reflection on identity, community, and the enduring power of tradition.

Children's Jury for Short Animations for Children

Chairman of the Jury: Emma Skřivánková

**Children's Jury Award for Best Short Animation for Children**

The Naughty Seat (GBR, 2025) directed by David Johnson

Motivation:

Our winning animated film was very entertaining and adorable. It impressed us with its interesting and easy-to-follow story, which can be understood without any difficulty even by younger children. We really liked the high-quality animation as well as the charm of the characters. The humour was successful and worked for both children and adults, making the film enjoyable for everyone. It kept us entertained from beginning to end and felt appealing to audiences of all ages.

Overall, it is a successful animated film that truly deserves its award.

International Expert Jury for Student Films Zlín Dog

Chairman of the Jury: Kaisa Penttilä

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

Family Sunday (MEX, 2025) directed by Gerardo Del Razo

Motivation:

Gerardo Del Razo receives this award for a directorial act that is simultaneously a philosophical one. By placing us in the position of a voyeur watching violence unfold in real time, in a single shot, with nowhere to hide, Del Razo exposes the moral weight of observation itself. Then, with a quiet confidence few filmmakers possess, he transforms that weight into grace. "Family Sunday" is a film about what people do

when they seem to have no options and still choose to act together. It's a thought-provoking and surprisingly uplifting piece of cinema that will linger with the viewer through its uncomfortable position and the unsettling realization that what follows dread might, against all odds, be something like relief.

### **Jury Award in the Animated Films Category**

Me and You and Smoke (GBR, 2025) directed by Rachel Shiloach

Motivation:

Rachel Shiloach paints with the hand of a child this coming-of-age film in the truest sense: not about growing up, but about the specific terror of a feeling you don't yet know how to say out loud. Its deceptively simple brushstrokes hold something achingly true: that the right moment does not wait, that shyness has a cost, and that love kept for too long in private tends to stay there. The jury found it disarmingly beautiful.

### **Jury Award in the Live-Action Films Category**

1:10 (SUI, 2024) directed by Sinan Taner

Motivation:

"1:10" watches its characters the way a god might: from above, with patience, and without much sympathy. Sinan Taner's camera holds its aerial position like a verdict, surveying and surveilling a world of people too self-absorbed to notice, too disenchanted to care, too accustomed to their privilege. The witty humour is the sharpest instrument here: it gets in before the bitterness does.

### **Special Mention**

Fratrum (HUN, 2025) directed by Edit Nagyistók

Motivation:

Special mention for a portrait of masculinity that is at once concise, tender, and moving.

### **Jury Award in the Documentary Films Category**

Sanyi the Rooster (NLD, 2025) directed by Lotte Salomons

Motivation:

A rooster as a Rorschach test for human behaviour. Salomons builds her film with genuine narrative craft and a visual sensibility that elevates what could have been a curiosity into something that lingers. "Sanyi the Rooster" is about togetherness and division, community and its discontents – and it makes its case via one magnificently indifferent bird. The jury was charmed.

Prizes awarded by non-statutory juries

European Children's Film Association Jury

Chairman of the Jury: Rosa Ferro

**ECFA Doc Award for Best European Feature Documentary for Young Audience**

Rashid, the Boy from Sinjar (BEL/FRA, 2025) directed by Jasna Krajinović

Motivation:

The film addresses a deeply relevant issue in contemporary society. It follows a compelling and distinctive protagonist with sensitivity and intimacy. The viewer is immersed in the daily routines of a young Kurdish boy who struggles between the desire to stay in a land profoundly marked by death and captivity and the need to leave. The camera is a discreet and involved witness to what Rashid and his family are going through, while highlighting the Kurdish question. The film portrays the horror of war, but also love and hope in spite of everything. It makes the audience feel part of Rashid's world through a magnificently delicate and deeply human approach.

Ecumenical Jury

Chairman of the Jury: Petr Hasan

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

The Altar Boys (POL, 2025) directed by Piotr Domalewski

Motivation:

The ecumenical jury awards the prize to the film The Altar Boys for the way it raises the timeless question of what it means to do good. The film approaches this theme with lightness and authenticity, avoiding narrow-minded moralizing. Although the main characters are Polish Catholic altar boys, the film's universal message will resonate with audiences regardless of their religious, national, or other identities.

**Special Jury Award**

Gugu's World (BRA, 2024) directed by Allan Deberton

Motivation:

We would like to award a Special Mention to a film that taught us about identity and the importance of being ourselves in a world where we don't always fit in. Being surrounded by loved ones who encourage us to express ourselves is part of the beauty of life, and we hope that the message from Gugu's World will go beyond Brazil's borders and into the souls of young people everywhere around the globe.

Audience awards

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

TRAD (IRL, 2026) directed by Lance Daly

**ČT: D Audience Award for Best Short Animation for Children**

The Adventures of Fatty the Beetle and Ferda the Ant: A Birthday Present (CZE, 20256) directed by David Súpup

Prizes awarded by the FILMFEST company

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

Petr Koliha, Petr Kostka