

Facts about the Nordic Council Film Prize – 2017

Purpose

The Nordic Council prizes aim to increase interest in culture and in collaboration on environmental issues, to recognise outstanding artistic and environmental initiatives and to raise the profile and increase the visibility of Nordic co-operation.

The winning film

The winner of the prize will be announced on Wednesday 1 November 2017, during the Session of the Nordic Council in Helsinki. The prize is awarded to an artistically significant, Nordic-produced full-length feature film with cinema distribution. The film must have had its cinema premiere between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017. The DKK 350,000 prize will be shared equally among the screenwriter, director, and producer, underscoring how film as an art form is brought about by the close collaboration of these three main contributors.

Criteria for nomination

The nominated films must have deep roots in Nordic culture, be of high artistic quality, distinguish themselves by their artistic originality, and combine and elevate the many elements of film to form a compelling and holistic work of art.

National and Nordic juries

Each national jury consists of three members appointed by the Nordic Council of Ministers (Ministers for Culture). The members are selected from prominent figures whose work relates analytically and critically to film. Each national jury has a three-year tenure.

The members of the national juries for 2017 are:

Denmark:

Per Juul Carlsen, Jacob Wendt Jensen, Eva Novrup Redvall

Finland:

Jaana Puskala, Harri Römpötti, Mikaela Westerlund

Iceland:

Silja Hauksdóttir, Börkur Gunnarsson, Helga Þórey Jónsdóttir

Norway:

Inger Merete Hobbelstad, Kalle Løchen, Britt Sørensen

Sweden:

Kristina Börjeson, Gunnar Bergdahl, Emma Gray-Munthe

The Nordic jury is made up of the chairs of each of the national juries.

Previous winners of the Nordic Council Film Prize

The prize was first awarded in 2002, to the Finnish film *Mies vailla menneisyyttä* (*The Man Without a Past*) by Aki Kaurismäki.

Since the prize was made permanent in 2005, it has been awarded on an annual basis. The winners to date are:

2005: *Drabet (Manslaughter)*, directed by Per Fly, scripted by Kim Leona, Dorte Høgh, Mogens Rukov and Per Fly, and produced by Ib Tardini for Zentropa, Denmark.

2006: *Zozo (Zozo)*, written and directed by Josef Fares and produced by Anna Anthony for Memfis Film, Sweden.

2007: *Kunsten at græde i kor (The Art of Crying)*, directed by Peter Schønau Fog, written by Bo Hr. Hansen (based on a novel by Erling Jepsen), and produced by Thomas Stenderup for Final Cut, Denmark.

2008: *Du levande (You, the Living)*, written and directed by Roy Andersson and produced by Pernilla Sandström for Studio 24, Sweden.

2009: *Antichrist (Antichrist)*, written and directed by Lars von Trier and produced by Meta Louise Foldager for Zentropa, Denmark.

2010: *Submarino (Submarino)*, written and directed by Thomas Vinterberg, written by Tobias Lindholm, and produced by Morten Kaufmann for Nimbus Film, Denmark.

2011: *Svinalängorna (Beyond)*, written and directed by Pernilla August, written by Lolita Ray, and produced by Helena Danielsson and Ralf Karlsson for Hepp Film, Sweden.

2012: *Play (Play)*, written and directed by Ruben Östlund and produced by Erik Hemmendorff for Plattform Produktion, Sweden.

2013: *Jagten (The Hunt)*, written and directed by Thomas Vinterberg, written by Tobias Lindholm, and produced by Sisse Graum Jørgensen and Morten Kaufmann for Zentropa, Denmark.

2014: *Hross í oss (Of Horses and Men)*, written and directed by Benedikt Erlingsson and produced by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson for Hrossabrestur, Iceland.

2015: *Fúsi (Virgin Mountain)*, written and directed by Dagur Kári and produced by Baltasar Kormákur and Agnes Johansen for RVK Studios, Iceland.

2016: *Louder Than Bombs (Louder Than Bombs)*, written and directed by Joachim Trier, written by Eskil Vogt, and produced by Thomas Røbsahm for Motlys, Norway.

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2017 – DENMARK

PARENTS

SYNOPSIS

When their son Esben moves away from home, middle-aged Danish couple Kjeld and Vibeke are left with a sense of uncertainty and lack of purpose. In an attempt to reignite the magic of their younger days, they move into the old student apartment where they first fell in love. The experience changes them in strange and unexpected ways. Literally recapturing their youth, they wake up one morning to find themselves 30 years younger – and they are forced to recognise that the past they once knew might no longer exist.

WRITER-DIRECTOR – CHRISTIAN TAFDRUP

Christian Tafdrup (b.1978) is a renowned filmmaker and actor. As an actor, he has appeared in more than 30 films and TV series since he graduated from the Danish National Theatre School in 2003. He starred in Susanne Bier's *After the Wedding*, and in the popular Danish TV series *Park Road* and *Borgen*, for which he won a Robert award for Best Supporting Actor in 2014. He has directed three short films, including *Awakening*, which screened at more than 30 festivals and won a Robert for Best Short Film.

Parents (Forældre) is Tafdrup's debut feature. The film had its world premiere at New York's Tribeca Film Festival in 2016 before touring a dozen other festivals. Among the accolades it has collected are Best European Film at the Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival and Best Actor (Søren Malling) at the Valletta Film Festival. The film won three Robert awards for Best Director, Best Actor and Best Editor, and four Bodil awards from the Danish film critics, including Best Script.

Tafdrup's next film as writer/director is the comedy drama *A Horrible Woman*.

PRODUCER – THOMAS HEINESEN

Thomas Heinesen (b.1961) graduated as a producer from the Danish Film School in 1989. Throughout his career, he has played many roles in film crews, acquiring first-hand knowledge of the craftsmanship that lies behind every production. Over the past 17 years, he has worked with major Danish directors such as Susanne Bier, Niels Arden Oplev, Jakob Thuesen and Nils Malmros, and won numerous awards for his children's films, including *Triple Dare*, *Karla's World* and the animated *Terkel in Trouble*.

Upcoming productions include the 3D animated *The Incredible Story of the Giant Pear*, directed by Philip Einstein Lipski, Jørgen Lerdam and Amalie Næsby Fick, the comedy *A Horrible Woman* by Christian Tafdrup, and major film and mini-series *Lucky Per* by Bille August.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Forældre
Director & Scriptwriter	Christian Tafdrup
Principal Cast	Bodil Jørgensen, Søren Malling, Miri Ann Beuschel, Elliott Crosset Hove
Producers	Thomas Heinesen

Production Company	Nordisk Film Production
Running Time	87 minutes
Domestic Distribution	Nordisk Film Distribution
International Sales	LevelK

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2017 – FINLAND

LITTLE WING

Synopsis

Little Wing (*Tyttö nimeltä Varpu*) tells the story of 12-year-old Varpu (Linnea Skog), who is rapidly approaching adulthood while her mother Siru (Paula Vesala) refuses to grow up. One night, Varpu has had enough of her horse-riding friends and her mother. She steals a car and drives north in search of the father she has never met. Finding him awakens something in both Varpu and Siru, and they begin to realise the roles they play in each other's lives and in the world.

DIRECTOR-SCRIPTWRITER – SELMA VILHUNEN

Selma Vilhunen (b.1976) is an Academy-Award nominated director/scriptwriter of fiction and documentary films, based in Helsinki, and co-founder of the production company Tuffi Films.

Vilhunen graduated in film directing from Turku Polytechnic/Arts Academy. She has twice won awards at Tampere Short Film Festival, with her documentaries *My Little Elephants* (2003) and *Pony Girls* (2008). Her film *Pietà* (2007) was awarded the Venla prize for Best Finnish TV film of the year. Her short film comedy *Do I Have to Take Care of Everything?* (2012) was nominated for an Academy Award in 2014. The same year, she directed the documentary *Song*, and co-directed with French director Guillaume Manguet the short film *The Girl and the Dogs*, which premiered at Cannes' Directors' Fortnight.

Little Wing, her feature-film debut, had its world premiere at the Toronto Film Festival in 2016 and then visited more than 20 international festivals. It earned Linnea Skog a Jussi award for Best Actress, as well as a Nordic Star Award at BUFF in Malmö.

Vilhunen's documentary *Hobbyhorse Revolution*, about a Finnish teen subculture, had its world premiere at the Tampere Film Festival 2017, where it won two awards including the main prize. The director's next feature film, *Stupid Young Heart*, will be released next year in Finland.

PRODUCER – KAARLE AHO

Kaarle Aho (b.1968) has a Master's in History from the University of Helsinki. After his studies in Helsinki and Ireland, he worked as a promoter of Russian classical music in Finland and other Scandinavian countries. In 1996, he set up the production company Making Movies with Kai Nordberg. The company has since produced more than 50 documentaries, ten feature films, two TV series and several shorts. Making Movies' productions have been distributed and broadcast in more than 40 countries and have won

nine Jussi awards, a Venla prize for Best TV Drama in Finland and two Kettu prizes for Best Short Film in Finland.

Aho has also written two documentaries, a short film and a novel. As a producer, his latest feature films include Selma Vilhunen's *Little Wing*, Klaus Härö's Golden Globe-nominated *The Fencer*, and *Law of the Land* by Jussi Hiltunen.

Aho has produced documentaries with directors such as Thomas Balmès, Sergey Dvortsevov, Phie Ambo and Tonislav Hristov. He is also co-producer of Joshua Oppenheimer's Academy Award-nominated *The Look of Silence*.

His upcoming films include Klaus Härö's *Dark Christ* and the heavy metal comedy *Impaled Rektum*.

PRODUCER – KAI NORDBERG

Kai Nordberg (born 1968) is CEO and co-founder of the Helsinki-based company Making Movies. Between 1989 and 1994, he worked as a foreign correspondent and photographer in Berlin. In 1989, he also studied film, TV and journalism at Berlin's Freie University. In 1996, he teamed up with Kaarle Aho to set up Making Movies, one of Finland's most successful production companies. Over the past 21 years, the company has produced more than 50 documentaries, ten feature films, two TV series and several shorts. Among the most acclaimed productions are Selma Vilhunen's TV drama *Pietà* (Best Finnish TV Drama 2007), her documentary *Pony Girls* (Tampere Best Long Documentary 2008) and feature film *Little Wing* (Jussi Best Actress 2017), Petri Kotwica's *Black Ice* (Berlin Golden Bear candidate 2008), Tonislav Hristov's *Love & Engineering* (Helsinki DocPoint Festival's Best Finnish Documentary) and *The Good Postman* (Sundance and IDFA competition entry). Klaus Härö's drama *The Fencer* was Golden Globe-nominated/Oscar shortlisted in 2016 and won Jussi awards for Best Film/Best Cinematography the same year. Upcoming films include Härö's *Dark Christ* and the heavy metal comedy *Impaled Rektum*.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Tyttö nimeltä Varpu
Director & Scriptwriter	Selma Vilhunen
Principal Cast	Linnea Skog, Paula Vesala, Lauri Maijala
Producers	Kai Nordberg, Kaarle Aho
Production Company	Making Movies
Running Time	100 minutes
Domestic Distribution	B-Plan
International Sales	Media Luna

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2017 – ICELAND

HEARTSTONE

SYNOPSIS

In a remote Icelandic fishing village, teenage boys Þór and Kristján experience a turbulent summer of emotional discovery and sexual awakening. As one tries to win the heart of a girl, the other begins to recognise new feelings toward his best friend. As summer ends,

and harshness of Icelandic nature starts to reassert itself, the time has come to leave the playground and face adulthood.

WRITER-DIRECTOR-PRODUCER – GUÐMUNDUR ARNAR GUÐMUNDSSON

Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson (b.1982) is based in both Denmark and Iceland. He graduated from the Iceland Academy of the Arts before moving to Denmark to study screenwriting. His short films have been shown at more than 200 festivals and won over 50 international awards.

Guðmundsson wrote his feature debut, *Heartstone (Hjartasteinn)*, during a Cannes Cinéfondation Residency. Since its world premiere at Venice Days 2016, the film has had a remarkable international career, being screened at around 50 festivals and garnering more than 30 awards, including Queer Lion at Venice Days, audience prizes at CPH:PIX, Transilvania, Linz Crossing Europe and Angers Premiers Plans festivals, and nine Edda awards in Iceland, including Best Film, Director, Screenplay and Actor.

The director's next project is *Chicken Boy*.

PRODUCER – JESPER MORTHORST

Jesper Morthorst (born 1977) works as producer at SF Studios Production in Denmark. He has a BA in Film and Media Studies from the University of Copenhagen and graduated as a producer from the Super16 Film School in Copenhagen in 2006. Over the past decade, he has worked on 18 feature films, shorts, documentaries and TV series. His production credits include the films *Heartstone* and Nordic Council Film Prize-nominee *Silent Heart* by Bille August, as well as the hit TV series *Norskov* and *Rita*. His films have competed at major festivals such as Berlin, Venice, Toronto, San Sebastián, Karlovy Vary and Rotterdam.

Morthorst was named Producer on the Move at Cannes 2011 and shared a Lorens Award in Göteborg 2017 for *Heartstone*.

PRODUCER – ANTON MÁNI SVANSSON

Anton Máni Svansson (b. 1984) established Join Motion Pictures in Reykjavík in 2007 with the goal of forging close working relationships with talented young writer-directors. He attracted international attention through his collaborations with the talented upcoming writer-directors Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson and Hlynur Pálmason. Their films have amassed 100 international awards and premiered in competition at festivals around the world, including Cannes, Venice and Toronto.

Svansson was named Producer on the Move at Cannes 2017.

PRODUCER – LISE ORHEIM STENDER

Lise Orheim Stender (b.1984) works as a producer at SF Studios Production in Denmark. She earned a degree in Film and Media Science from the University of Copenhagen in 2010. In 2016, she produced *Heartstone*, which premiered in Venice in August that year and has since won more than 30 prizes.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Hjartasteinn
Director	Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson
Scriptwriter	Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson
Principal Cast	Baldur Einarsson, Blær Hinriksson, Diljá Valsdóttir, Katla Njálsdóttir
Producers	Anton Máni Svansson, Lise Orheim Stender, Jesper Morthorst, Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson
Production Company	SF Studios Production/Join Motion Pictures
Running Time	129 minutes
Domestic Distribution	SF Studios
International Sales	Films Boutique

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2017 – NORWAY

HUNTING FLIES

SYNOPSIS

Hunting Flies (Fluefangeren) is a political metaphor about the rise and fall of dictatorship set in a classroom over the course of one intense day. Ghani, an idealistic teacher, loses his job on the first day of school. Making one last attempt to get it back, he locks his students inside the classroom, forcing them to resolve a generation-long conflict between their villages.

SCRIPTWRITER/DIRECTOR – IZER ALIU

Izer Aliu (b.1982) is a Macedonian-born director who grew up in Sweden before settling in Norway. In 2012, he graduated from the Norwegian Film School in Lillehammer with the short film *To Guard a Mountain*. The film won Best Short at the Norwegian Amanda Awards and was nominated for a Student Academy Award in Hollywood. His other short film, *The Good Life – Over There* (2014), won Best Film at Grimstad's Norwegian Short Film Festival.

Hunting Flies is Aliu's feature-length debut. Shot in Macedonia, the film had its world premiere as part of Toronto International Film Festival's Discovery programme in 2016 and then screened at another dozen festivals, including Tromsø, where it won the Norwegian Peace Film Award.

The prolific Aliu has two upcoming feature projects: the realistic drama *12 Dares*, currently in post-production, and the political period film *Song of Scabs*.

PRODUCER – KHALID MAIMOUNI

Khalid Maimouni (b.1979) was born in Tangiers, Morocco and came to Norway aged 11. His first experiences in film were as the scriptwriter of Rune Denstad Langlo's TV series *Glatte gater* (2007) and documentary *99% Honest* (2008). He made his debut as writer-director with the 2010 short film *Concrete Dreams*, produced by Denstad Langlo for Motlys. In 2012, he joined Norway's top post-production company Storyline Studios, working first in the camera-rental department and then as a post-producer before heading

up its new production division, The End.

Izer Aliu's *Hunting Flies* is Maimouni's first feature film for The End. Upcoming projects with the director include the Norwegian/Swedish feature film *12 Dares*, the short film *Crazy Love* and feature-length political drama *Song of Scabs*, set in the early 1900s and based on one of the biggest miners strikes in Scandinavia.

Maimouni's other projects in development include the first Sámi feature for children: *Sáve – The Last of the First*.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Fluefangeren
Director & Scriptwriter	Izer Aliu
Principal Cast	Burhan Amiri, Miraxh Ameti, Hadis Aliov, Besar Amiri
Producers	Khalid Maimouni
Production Company	The End
Running Time	109 minutes
Domestic Distribution	Europa Film
International Sales	LevelK

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2017 – SWEDEN

SÁMI BLOOD

SYNOPSIS

Fourteen-year-old Elle Marja is a reindeer-herding Sámi girl. Confronted by the racism of the 1930s and demeaning racial examinations at her boarding school, she starts to dream of another life. But to realise her dream, she must become someone else, which means severing all ties with her family and culture.

WRITER-DIRECTOR – AMANDA KERNELL

Amanda Kernell (b.1986) graduated in directing from the National Film School of Denmark in 2013. Since 2006, she has directed several acclaimed shorts, including *Northern Great Mountain* (2015), the pilot for *Sámi Blood*. It premiered at Sundance and won several awards including the Audience Award at the Göteborg Film Festival 2015 and Best Short at Uppsala.

Sámi Blood (*Sameblod*) is her feature debut. The film had its world premiere at Venice Days 2016, where it won the Europa Cinemas Label's award for Best European Film and the Fedeora Award for Best Debut Feature. It then visited more than 20 world festivals and picked up several other accolades, including Special Jury Prize and Best Actress (Lene Cecilia Sparrok) in Tokyo, and 2017 Dragon Award for Best Nordic Feature and Sven Nykvist's Best Cinematography Award (Sophia Olsson) in Göteborg.

Kernell also directed the mid-length film *I Will Always Love You* while working on *Sámi Blood*. Her next feature-length project is the contemporary drama *Charter*. She was listed

as one of the top ten most prominent female directors in *Europe! Voices of Women in Film*.

PRODUCER – LARS G. LINDSTRÖM

Lars G. Lindström (b.1955) has long and wide-ranging experience of film, TV and theatre, and has been an in-house producer at Nordisk Film Production Sweden since 2013. For Nordisk Film, he produced Daniel Espinosa's debut film *Babylon Disease* (2004) and Åke Sandgren's *To Love Someone* (2007). Amanda Kernell's *Sámi Blood* was selected at more than 20 international film festivals and sold to more than 150 countries.

Lindström's upcoming films include the biopic *Becoming Astrid*, directed by Pernille Fischer Christensen, and Kernell's next feature, *Charter*.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Sameblod
Director & Scriptwriter	Amanda Kernell
Principal Cast	Lene Cecilie Sparrok, Mia Sparrok, Maj-Doris Rimpi
Producers	Lars G. Lindström
Production Company	Nordisk Film Production
Running Time	110 minutes
Domestic Distribution	Nordisk Film Distribution
International Sales	LevelK