

Four Days, 47 Countries, Millions of Viewers: XXI Within the Family Film Festival Comes to a Successful Close

Results of the International Film Festival of Family and Children's Cinema "In the family circle"



Jaroslavl, Russia Jul 14, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - On July 7, the XXI Within the Family International Family and Children's Film Festival concluded with a gala Closing Ceremony in Yaroslavl. Four days, **47 participating countries, 140 films, 17,300 cinema-goers, and more than 2 million online viewers** who followed the festival's live broadcasts on the Russian social network *Odnoklassniki*—these remarkable figures defined this year's edition, once again transforming Yaroslavl into the world's capital of family cinema.

The festival is held with the support of the **Rostec State Corporation, PSB Bank**, and the **Government of the Yaroslavl Region**.

"The Within the Family Film Festival has once again demonstrated that cinema is far more than an art form—it is the most sincere universal language, one that allows people of different generations, cities, and countries to understand one another with ease. This was our first year partnering with the festival, and the fact that it takes place in Yaroslavl—the city where PSB's headquarters are registered—makes this collaboration especially meaningful for us. We witnessed how the festival brings people together, creates warmth, and inspires heartfelt conversations. We sincerely hope this

wonderful tradition continues to grow stronger each year."

said **Anna Gruzdo**, Director of Marketing at **PSB Bank**.

For the first time in the festival's history, the Opening Ceremony connected not only cities across Russia but also audiences around the world. Live broadcasts linked **18 countries** and **nine Russian cities**, allowing participants from **Argentina, Uruguay, Egypt, India, Italy**, and many other nations to greet one another in real time. It was a powerful demonstration that the **Within the Family** Film Festival has become a truly global cultural event.

During the Closing Ceremony at the **Millennium Concert and Entertainment Centre**, members of the international jury announced the winners and presented the festival's highest honors—the signature **Peter and Fevronia of Murom** statuettes, named after the Orthodox patron saints of family, love, and fidelity. The Main Competition Jury was once again chaired by **People's Artist of the RSFSR Stanislav Lyubshin**.

Festival Awards

The jury presented awards across four competition programs covering both feature-length and short films. Twenty nominees from around the world joined the ceremony online to await the announcement of the winners.

The **Grand Prix** of the Main Feature Film Competition was awarded to the Iranian drama **Whisper My Name**.

The **Best Film Award** in the Children and Youth Feature Film Competition went to Russia's first motivational children's feature, **The Karate Kid**, directed by **Aleksey Alfeyorov**. The film also received the award for **Best Sound Design**. The prizes were accepted by actor and producer **Roman Kurtsyn**, who stars in one of the film's leading roles.

The **Best Director Award** in the Main Competition was presented to **Maksim Koliganov** for **To Grandpa's Village 2**. The award was accepted on behalf of the film's co-producers by **Yana Karushkina**, Director of the Yaroslavl branch of VGTRK.

The **Audience Award** in the Main Competition went to the Belarusian feature **The Barrel**, starring **Til Schweiger** and **Philippe Reinhardt**.

The **Russian Guild of Film Scholars and Film Critics Award** was presented to **Philip Rules**.

In the Children and Youth Feature Film Competition, among the winners was the Indonesian film **Onward: The Bitter Trail of Kembang Gula**, marking Indonesia's first participation in the festival.

The **Best Film Award** in the Main Short Film Competition went to the Italian production **CrossRoad**.

In the Children's Short Film Competition, the top prize was awarded to the Russian film **Parental Control**.

Academy Award member and Main Feature Competition juror **Shadmehr Rastin** announced that beginning next year the festival will introduce a new award for **Best Original Screenplay**. The decision reflects the festival's continued growth and its recognition of screenwriting as an artistic achievement

deserving its own distinction.

International Jury

This year, the festival's competition programs were judged by distinguished filmmakers and industry professionals from **Russia, China, South Korea, and Iran**.

Feature Film Jury

The Feature Film Competition jury was chaired by **Stanislav Lyubshin** (Russia), acclaimed stage and screen actor, People's Artist of Russia, and recipient of numerous state honors.

Joining him on the jury were:

- **Aleksandr Galibin** (Russia) — People's Artist of Russia, actor and director, recipient of the Presidential Prize for his contribution to Russian children's cinema;
- **Natalia Primakova** (Russia) — President of the Russian Guild of Film Scholars and Film Critics;
- **Gavin Lee** (China) — producer, Secretary General of the Franco-Chinese Association of New Cinema, NETPAC member, and Executive Committee member of the BRICS Association for Children's Film and Education;
- **Sook-hee Moon** (South Korea)—film director, writer and artist; recipient of literary awards and a regular participant in international film festivals;
- **Shadmehr Rastin** (Iran) — screenwriter, producer, professor, and member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Oscars).

Short Film Jury

The Short Film Competition jury was chaired by **Viktoria Fanasyutina** (Russia), a TEFI Award-winning director and screenwriter whose films have received more than thirty national and international awards.

The jury also included:

- **Ivan Kapitonov** (Russia)—screenwriter, director, and producer of acclaimed films including *Summer*, *Passion for Matthew*, *Tin Head*, and the television series *Food Block*;
- **Dimitr Todorov** (Russia)—film and television producer, founder and CEO of Greenwich Production, member of the Russian Filmmakers' Union and the Producers Guild of Russia;
- **Nikoloz Bezhuashvili** (Russia) — producer and director whose short film *The Choice* has won more than ten international awards across Europe, Asia, and the United States.

Creative Meetings

One of the festival's greatest highlights was its series of creative meetings with celebrated actors and filmmakers. Every venue was filled to capacity as audiences gathered not only to watch films but also to meet the people behind them.

Following the success of **The Karate Kid**, actor and producer **Roman Kurtsyn** met with festival audiences to discuss the film. Speaking candidly, he reflected on how deeply personal the project had become for him, explaining that many elements of the story were inspired by his own life experiences—one of the reasons, he believes, the film resonates so strongly with young audiences.

In one of the meeting's most memorable moments, Kurtsyn demonstrated how he had overcome fear by calmly kissing a live cobra, leaving the audience both astonished and delighted.

Another unforgettable event was the audience meeting with **Fyodor Dobronravov**, Artistic Director of the Nationwide Program **Within the Family** and star of **To Grandpa's Village 2**. Sharing stories from the production, he spoke warmly about the importance of family, the bonds between generations, and the values that continue to unite people regardless of age. The audience responded with prolonged applause and was reluctant to let the beloved actor leave the stage.

Industry Programme

On July 5, the festival hosted an extensive industry program that brought together representatives of the cultural sector, the clergy, the business community, public authorities, media organizations, and leading content creators.

The forum focused on one of today's most pressing issues: **emotional burnout**, the search for inner resilience, and the role of the family as the strongest source of support in modern life.

The program's central event was a plenary session featuring **Metropolitan Kliment, Fyodor Dobronravov**, and festival president **Alexander Kovtunets**. Together, they discussed ways of overcoming personal and professional challenges, maintaining emotional resilience, and why the family remains the foundation of support, faith, and inspiration.

One of the most popular sessions was presented by the **Integration Production Centre**, whose speakers shared personal experiences of maintaining emotional well-being while balancing demanding professional careers with family life.

Another highlight of the forum was a presentation by **Natalia Spekhova** of **Enlightenment Publishing House**, titled **"Creativity as a Resource."** In her talk, she explored how creative expression can help professionals prevent burnout, restore emotional balance, and maintain psychological well-being in an increasingly demanding world.

A significant event within the program was the joint session organized by the festival together with the **Second Russian Civilizational Forum "Unity of Nations."** During the session, **Yulia Shpak** presented a report examining state policy as a tool for strengthening unity among the peoples of Russia.

The program also featured an open discussion with the **Marchenko family**, the **Viktorov family** (*Two Parents*), and Yaroslavl-based blogger and psychologist **Yulia Kozlova**. Their conversation focused on family values, raising children, and building meaningful relationships with audiences in the digital age.

Festival participants also enjoyed a series of interactive workshops, including sessions on **neurographic art** and the creation of **personalized therapeutic fragrances** designed to promote emotional well-being. Guests were also invited to visit the exhibition **Legends of Russian Animation**, which was toured by Academy Award-winning animator **Aleksandr Petrov**.

Festival by the Numbers

The XXI **Within the Family International Family and Children's Film Festival** set new records this year:

- **47 countries** represented in the competition programme;
- **18 countries** connected live during the Opening Ceremony;
- **140 films** screened throughout the festival;
- **17,300 spectators** attended screenings in Yaroslavl;
- **More than 2 million viewers** watched the festival's live broadcasts on the Russian social network **Odnoklassniki** across the country.

Odnoklassniki served as the festival's principal digital platform, enabling millions of viewers throughout Russia to take part in the event remotely. Live broadcasts of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, creative meetings, and selected screenings reached an audience far exceeding the capacity of any traditional cinema venue.

"The Festival Ends, but Family Remains"

The XXI **Within the Family International Family and Children's Film Festival** has officially come to a close. Yet its enduring message—celebrating family, love, tradition, and mutual care—continues long after the final curtain.

As festival president **Alexander Kovtunets** said during the Closing Ceremony:

"The festival comes to an end, but family remains. We may leave, but Angel Street remains here in Yaroslavl. The Award for the Preservation of Family Values remains with those who received it. And most importantly, the films remain. So do the conversations they inspire. And the reminder that the very best things in life happen only within the family."

These words perfectly captured the spirit of this year's festival—a celebration of cinema that not only entertained audiences but also brought people together across generations, cultures, and borders through stories that remind us of what truly matters.

XXI WITHIN THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL AWARD WINNERS 2026

Children and Youth Feature Films Competition

Best Film Award

The Karate Kid

Russia, 2026

Director: Aleksey Alfeyorov

Best Director Award

Maksim Koliganov

To Grandpa's Village 2

Russia, 2026

Best Cinematographer Award

Wenlei Liu

Where Eaglets Grow

China, 2025

Directors: Jingjing Lou, Da Ma

Best Child Performance

Elisey Chuchilin

My Friend

Russia, 2025

Director: Aleksandr Sukharev

Best Sound Design

The Karate Kid

Russia, 2026

Director: Aleksey Alfeyorov

Special Jury Prizes

For Exemplifying the Ideals of Family Cinema

The Dino Family

Russia, 2025

Director: Maksim Volkov

For the Outstanding Portrayal of a Young Protagonist

Katja Matković

The Second Diary of Paulina P.

Croatia / Slovenia / Serbia, 2025

Director: Neven Hitrec

For the Warmth That Brings Audiences Together

Scarecrow

Russia, 2026

Directors: Ilya Khotinenko, Vladimir Karabanov

Audience Award

Onward: The Bitter Trail of Kembang Gula

Indonesia, 2026

Director: Franklin Darmadi

Main Feature Film Competition

Grand Prix

Whisper My Name

Iran, 2025

Director: Rasoul Sadrameli

Best Actress Award

Seema Biswas

Khoya Paya

India, 2026

Director: Ashutosh Singh

Best Actor Award

Abdullah Abdulrahimzoda

Fish on the Hook

Tajikistan / Iran, 2025

Director: Muhiddin Muzaffar

Best Cinematographer Award

Sauvik Basu

Khoya Paya

India, 2026

Director: Ashutosh Singh

Best Director Award

Erkan Acar

The Ghost Bastard

Germany / Switzerland, 2026

Best Sound Design

Fish on the Hook

Tajikistan / Iran, 2025

Director: Muhiddin Muzaffar

Special Jury Prize

For the Compelling Portrayal of the Search for One's Path in Life

The Odyssey of Joy

Kosovo / France, 2025

Director: Zgjim Terziqi

Audience Award

The Barrel

Belarus / Russia, 2026

Director: Aleksey Zvontsov

Russian Guild of Film Scholars and Film Critics Award

Philip Rules

Russia, 2024

Director: Roman Kosov

Main Short Film Competition

Best Actress Award

Maria Zarina

The Girls

Russia, 2026

Director: Maksim Markov

Best Actor Award

Vladislav Gubarev (*as Nikita Gorovvykh*)

Acquired Deafness

Russia, 2025

Director: Nafisa Gavryuchina

Best Cinematographer Award

Ali Hosseinzadeh

The Exile

Iran, 2023

Director: Seyed Sajad Hosseini

Best Sound Design Award

Waste Fellow

India, 2026

Director: Prashanth Kumar

Best Animation Award

Paper Flowers

Iran, 2024

Director: Ramak Aminkazemi

Audience Award

Native

Russia, 2026

Director: Ivan Lavrenkov

Special Jury Prize

Farewell, Paris.

Iran, 2025

Director: Mohammad Ebrahim Shahbazi

Best Director Award

Sonia Panahi

As If Nothing Happened

Iran, 2026

Best Film Award

CrossRoad

Italy, 2026

Director: Luca Arcidiacono

Special Jury Prize for the Search for an Authentic Artistic Style

Mindless Mind

Tunisia, 2026

Director: Fadi Abdlkarim

Children's Short Film Competition

Best Child Performance

Maria Salakhova (*as Vasilisa*)

Parental Control

Russia, 2025

Director: Andrey Kozlov

Best Cinematographer Award

Santiago Meza Cortez

The Great Feat

Colombia, 2024

Director: Luber Yesid Zúñiga Ordóñez

Best Sound Design Award

Crazy Critters

Uruguay, 2025

Director: Juan Pablo Bornio

Best Director Award

Sandeep Reddy Sama

Sunny-Man

India, 2025

Audience Award

Prout

Belgium, 2025

Director: Marc-Henri Wajnberg

Special Jury Prize for Original Story

The Doll

Russia, 2025

Director: Vera Veredyuk

Special Jury Prize for Best Visual Design

My Father and the Beach

Brazil, 2024

Director: Marcos Alexandre

Special Jury Prize for a Bold Creative Experiment

A Dream Painted with a Tail

South Korea, 2025

Director: Valentina Dunaeva

Best Film Award

Parental Control

Russia, 2025

Director: Andrey Kozlov



Media Contact

International Film Festival "In the Family Circle"

*****@gmail.com

<https://vkrugu7i.com/>

Source : In the Family Circle

[See on IssueWire](#)