

Nordic Nights Report

Submitted by: *Katrine Handley-Derry*

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Overview

Nordic Nights is a collaborative film series co-presented by the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto (ICCT) and the Finnish Consulate in Toronto. The series aims to bring acclaimed Icelandic and Finnish films to Canadian audiences, celebrating Nordic culture, storytelling, and the distinct cinematic traditions of both countries.

Screenings are held monthly from September to March, alternating between Icelandic and Finnish films, and are presented in a hybrid format, allowing audiences to join either in person or online. All events are free to attend, with donations encouraged to help sustain the program.

Program Goals

- To **showcase Nordic cinema** and promote cultural exchange through film.
- To **build community** by connecting members and guests through shared cultural experiences.
- To **offer accessible programming** for both in-person and remote audiences.

2024–2025 Season Highlights

The 2024–2025 season continued to grow in reach and participation. This year we began in September and added a screening in April.

Film selections included:

- *Raise the Bar* by *Guðjón Ragnarsson* – October 29 2024
- *Fallen Leaves* by *Aki Kaurismäki* (Finland) – November 26 2024
- *An evening of short films from Finland* (Finland) – January 26 2025
 - *Pena's Special Hauling* by *Anssi Kassitonni*, 2024 11 min, 43 sec
 - *The King*, by *Milja Viita* and *Veli Granö*, 2024 7 min 30 sec
 - *Hope* by *Juhani Koivumäki*, 2023 16 min 34 sec
 - *Generatio spontanea* by *Vappu Rossi*, 2024 3min 32 sec
 - *Guests of Honor* by *Paula Lehtonen*, 2024 3 min 34 sec
 - *Duck Roast* by *Jelica Jerinić*, 2023 12 min 34 sec
 - *Strangers in the Dark* by *Perttu Inkilä* and *Jenni Pystynen*, 2022 12 min 48 sec
- *Solitude* by *Ninna Rún Pálmadóttir* (Iceland) - February 25, 2025
- *Je'vida* by *Katja Gauriloff* (Finland) - March 25, 2025
- *Bakk / Reverse* by *Gunnar Hansson & Davíð Óskar Ólafsson* (Iceland) – April 29, 2025

Each screening included an introduction and a post-film Q&A discussion, providing an engaging space for audience reflection on Nordic culture and film traditions.

Attendance and Engagement

- **Average attendance:** 35–45 participants per screening (in-person and online combined)
- **Total reach:** ~250 attendees across the season
- **Hybrid participation:** Steady growth in online attendance, with viewers joining from across Ontario and other provinces
- **Community feedback:** Positive responses to the hybrid format, curated film selection, and post-film discussions highlighting Icelandic film themes and traditions

Partnerships and Support

We gratefully acknowledge:

- **Finnish Consulate in Toronto** – for film coordination and promotion
- **Mike Pezzi** – for generously providing downtown venue space
- **Icelandic National League of North America (INLNA)** – for ongoing partnership support

Financial Summary

- Screenings are free to attend, with voluntary donations accepted through icct.info/movies.
- Donations have helped offset venue, promotion, and technical setup costs.

Looking Ahead

In 2025–2026, the goal is to:

- Continue alternating Icelandic and Finnish selections, expanding audience diversity.
- Explore a partnership with other Nordic groups in Toronto and the Norwegian Consulate
- Strengthen outreach through social media and partnerships with local cultural groups.
- Maintain our hybrid format to ensure accessibility for all ICCT members and friends.

Closing: Nordic Nights continues to grow as a cornerstone of ICCT's cultural programming, offering an engaging way to experience the depth and creativity of Nordic film. The series has fostered connection, cultural pride, and community across borders, and we look forward to building on its success in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Katrine Handley-Derry

Co-organizer, *Nordic Nights*

Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto