

TOWARDS THE CULTURAL CAPITAL YEAR

The Year 2025 of General Cultural Services
and Cultural Centre Valve



CULTURAL
CENTRE

valve

YEAR 2025 IN NUMBERS

CULTURAL CENTRE VALVE



230 798
Visitors at Valve



108
Theatre performances



19
Festivals



61
Dance performances



448
Film screenings



73
Concerts

CHILDREN'S CULTURAL CENTRE KOTILO



33 080
Visits to Children's Culture

374
Content

4
Online Content

32 261
Customer Contacts

819
Customer Contacts

URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD CULTURE



42
Productions



35 000
Number of Participants
(approximately)

ARTS AND WELL-BEING



2 956
Participant Contacts

35
Productions

1 609
Children and youth,
young adults

159
Working-age
adults

1 197
Elderly
people

NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS



GALLERIES IN VALVE

12

Photo North –
Northern Photographic Center

9

Exhibition space
at Restaurant

9

Valve Gallery

7

Comics Gallery



OTHER GALLERIES

9

Nurkka Gallery
(Valkea Shopping Centre)

11

Gallery Oskari Jauhiainen
(Kiiminki)



FESTIVALS IN VALVE

- National Monologue Competition in February
- Oulu Children's Music Festival in February
- Oulu Music Festival in March
- The Enchanted Words – Literary Arts Festival from April to June
- Oulu Pride in August
- Oulu August Festivals in August
- Literary Art Festival Muusajuhlat in August
- Oulunsalo Soi Chamber Music Festival in August
- Oulu Music Video Festival in August
- Seoul-u Stage and Fest in August
- Oulu Days in September
- OuDance Festival in September
- The Irish Festival of Oulu in September
- October of New Music in October
- Oulu Book Fair in October
- Kehä – one-to-one art festival in October
- Oulu Comics Festival in November
- Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival in November
- Lumo Light Festival in November



PERSONNEL

20

permanent employees

11

hourly-paid teachers
in art education positions

53

cultural sector trainees
in a one-month summer job

4

higher education cultural
sector trainees in a
two-month summer job

4

less than a year long
fixed-term employees

2

employees on
pay subsidy

2

internships or work try-outs
or social rehabilitation
through work employees

2

young people in work
experience (TET) placements

98

Total

General Cultural Services and Cultural Centre Valve

The City of Oulu's General Cultural Services' entirety consists of Cultural Centre Valve and Children's Cultural Centre Kotilo's operations, the promotion of Arts and Well-Being and Urban Neighbourhood Culture as well as shared development projects with the cultural administration.

While acting as a lively meeting place and platform for independent art operators, **Cultural Centre Valve** continues to collaborate with them closely. There are 20 permanent employees working at the General Cultural Services along with fixed-term employees, project workers, and summer interns. The production of services happens in collaboration with arts and culture operators as well as other organizations.



Mari Aholainen acts as the Head of General Cultural Services and Director of Cultural Centre Valve. Photo: Jaani Föhr.



After the organizational reform **Pauliina Eronen**, who had previously acted as the Head of Productions, started as the Head of Cultural Centre Valve. Photo: Jaani Föhr.



Employees of General Cultural Services pictured together: **Laura Kärki** (on the left), **Anna Anttonen**, **Ari-Matti Lappalainen**, **Minna Halonen**, **Pauliina Eronen**, **Tommi Nevala**, **Maaria Rousu**, **Tiina Paaso**, **Meri Kallio**, **Iida Salonen**, **Anni-Stiina Hujala** and **Kati Inkala**. Photo: Jaani Föhr.



In April 2025 **Iida Salonen** started as the Executive Producer of Urban Neighbourhood Culture working as a deputy for **Ville-Mikko Sikiö**.



Events, International Collaboration and Future Changes

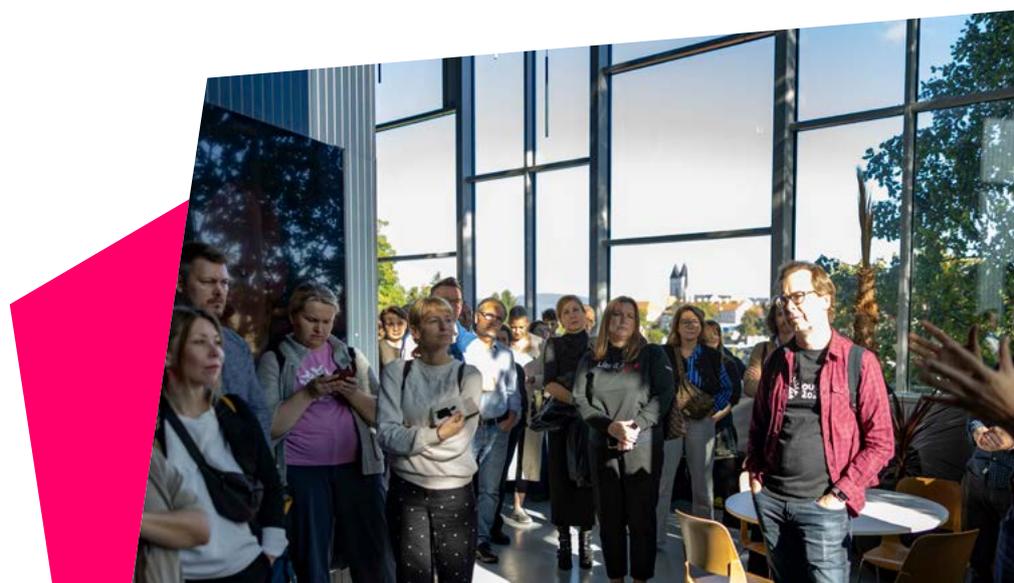
At General Cultural Services and Cultural Centre Valve, the year 2025 started with a reformed organization. During the year we focused on renewing and strengthening our operational processes as well as structures of human resource management. A key part of our work was maintaining the international contacts and creating new ones. We prepared in many ways for the upcoming European Capital of Culture year, as well as for the changes ahead – the biggest of which are the opening of Children’s Cultural Centre Kotilo’s separate facilities in early 2026 and the planned major renovation of Cultural Centre Valve between 2027 and 2029.

At the center of it was the widespread and versatile work among events, art, and culture. In 2025 Cultural Centre Valve and our other operations reached around 301 836 customers.

Welcome to read our annual report 2025!

Oulu’s Council on Disability rewarded Valve Film School as the disability-friendly operator of 2024. The award was received by the Executive Producer **Tommi Nevala** (on the left) and Art Instructor **Roni Liedes** on the 8th of April 2025.

In October 2025 the international development project of Children’s Culture *ECOC Echo’s* Oulu representation took part in the first study trip in 2023 cultural capital Veszprém, Hungary.



Cultural Centre Valve

Cultural Centre Valve is a versatile workspace, facilitator and platform for cultural activities in the Oulu City Centre. Valve advances the operational environment for arts and culture and maintains facilities for event and recreational activities' organizers. In 2025, the Cultural Centre's total number of visitors was 230 798. Versatile cooperation with culture and creative field associations, event managers, and artists is a pivotal part of all our activities. In 2025, Valve was a home for 15 different arts and culture operators, and the building facilities were used by around 150 different associations and operators as well as hundreds of private individuals.

Cultural Centre Valve is open seven days a week, with activities provided for all ages. During 2025, the Valve building hosted 19 different festivals and a total of 755 events and performances – including films, dance, theatre, concerts, and circus, as well as 37 art exhibitions. Valve enabled taking part in recreational activities of arts and culture such as crafts, visual art, dance, theatre, and film groups.

In 2025, we prepared for the upcoming cultural capital year. Valve's versatile and extensive program in 2026 provides a front row seat to a diverse local community and competence as well as to its cooperation with national and international operators. During 2025 we updated the lighting and

projection equipment of Valvesali Hall along with its stage. Several collaborative projects connected to European Capital of Culture program – such as Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde and Flow Productions' Climbing Over Oulu and Oulu Urban Culture's *Frozen People* – were implemented at Valve and around the city districts.

In the Fall, we participated in the meeting of European Network of Cultural Centres in Montenegro. The network assembles 181 cultural organizations from 31 different countries and enables a long-term development of European cooperation for us as well.

During 2025 we developed the accessibility and equality of culture. Together with different operators, we provided summer internships from events and cultural fields for 57 students. We worked closely with Oulu Culture Foundation's CultureCompanion2026 project aiming for equal opportunities for participation, as well as its volunteer Culture Companions. At the start of 2025 our website kulttuurivalve.fi was rebuilt, and during the year Children's Culture Centre Kotilo opened its own website and social media channels. As a result of rebuilding, the main website is now consistently bilingual.



Cultural Centre Valve is a part of the European Network of Cultural Centres. In Autumn 2025 we took part in *Against the Tide: Empowering Marginalised Voices through Socio-Culture* conference in Montenegro. Photo: Jelena Milutin.



Towards the Future of Valve

The feasibility study of the major renovation planned for Cultural Centre Valve (2027–2029) was completed in the Spring of 2025. The study defined the extent of the renovation, the level of urgency, as well as the target price of the project. The study was presented to the City of Oulu Committee on Wellbeing, Culture and Sports in June. An operational plan for the Cultural Centre's future was also completed as part of the study. A large group of arts and culture operators, stakeholder groups and audience participated in making the operational plan. During 2025 we mapped and planned out the temporary facilities and operational requirements for the duration of the renovation.

The Tenth Anniversary of Kehä – The Multidisciplinary Art Festival for Two

Multidisciplinary cultural cooperative ILME's Kehä Festival, where all the works are produced for one experiencer at a time, was held at Valve on the 17th and 18th of October 2025. On Thursday prior the festival along with Valve's Arts and Well-being services organized a symposium which gathered together professionals and students from arts and culture fields as well as from social and healthcare fields. The 2025 Kehä Festival was executed as part of a European One-to-One Art project funded by EU's Creative Europe program. In 2026 one-to-one art can be experienced in ILME's *From Here to Art* Travel Agency, which is a part of the official European Capital of Culture 2026 program in Oulu.

Art Testers Brought Eighth Graders for Art Visits

In 2025, a large amount of basic education's 8th grade students visited Cultural Centre Valve as Art Testers in dance, circus, and object theatre performances. For example, Flow Circus organized 17 Art Tester shows, to which 2432 students in total attended. JoJo – Oulu Dance Centre organized four shows, attended by 446 students. Additionally, Art Tester shows at Valve were also organized by Theatre Akseli Klonk. Art Testers program, coordinated by the Association of Children's Culture in Finland, provides all Finland's 8th grade students and their teachers 1-2 visitations to experience high quality art, per school year. The program reaches about 70 000 people annually, from all municipalities around Finland.



Children's Cultural Centre Kotilo

Year 2025 was an essential year of planning and development, when designing the facilities, actions and contents proceeded towards a dedicated year-round operating space for Children's Cultural Centre. Children's Cultural Centre Kotilo opened on the 4th floor of Central Library Saari in January 2026. Kotilo's grand opening is a part of the Opening Festival of European Capital of Culture year, and the whole year's work in 2025 was strongly connected to the preparation of the Oulu2026 program.

Art education was the core of Kotilo's operations in 2025 as well. We organized versatile education in literary arts and film studies for children, youth, and families, and cooperated with early education centres and schools. In our work with art education, we support secure upbringing and the development of positive self-image of children and youth, by offering opportunities to experience art as well as create it. Kotilo also organized workshops, sponsorship programs in early education as well as continuing education for the professionals of early and basic education to strengthen the know-how in art education and equal possibilities to experience art throughout the whole city.

Kotilo organized workshops, support programs for early childhood education, and professional development for educators to strengthen expertise in arts education and ensure equal opportunities to experience art throughout the city.

The Children's Cultural Centre also organized events during the year. Enchanted Words – Literary Arts Festival for Children and Youth (in Finnish "Lumotut sanat") reached around 15 500 visitors in total. Oskari Gala gathered children's and youth film hobbyists together, as a part of the Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival. We promoted the upcoming grand opening of Kotilo at the Helsinki Child Fair, at Oulu Book Fair and at Welcome to Oulu festival during the Oulu Days. Kotilo also took part in "Oulun Ilon päivä" event aimed at families with children, which promotes children's rights.

During the year we prepared Kotilo's upcoming partnership activities and signed the first partnership agreements. In January 2026 the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare's Northern Finland's division as well as Oulu Mother and Child Home and Shelter Association will start as Kotilo's partners.

An essential part of the work in 2025 was the preparation of Oulu2026 European Capital of Culture year's program, with special focus being the execution of *The Book of Oulu* project. In its entirety 2025 created a strong base for the new children's cultural centre, the aim of which is to support children's engaging growth within arts, to advance participation, and to offer a permanent, accessible and communal meeting spot for children's culture, as the cultural capital year's legacy in Oulu.



Enchanted Words
– Literary Arts Festival.



Eino Jurvelin and Vilma Tikkanen from Metsokangas School reading excerpts from *The Book of Oulu*. Andy Field and Beckie Darlington recording material for a documentary.

The Book of Oulu Fixing the Gaze Towards the Cultural Capital Year

The Book of Oulu project, based on **Andy Field** and **Beckie Darlington's** concept *The Book of your Town* kickstarted the Oulu2026 program for children's culture. The project's basis are in the strong participation of children and multidisciplinary artist collaboration. Ten 3rd grade classes from eight different schools in Oulu area signed up to be a part of the project. For the spring of 2025 schools worked on a guidebook for adults, made by children. The work continued in August when the artists visited Oulu. In the fall, **Johanna Ilander** began the illustration process based on the children's stories.

In February 2025, Kotilo also started the collaboration with its first media artist **Joel Karppanen**. Karppanen's interactive installation *The Friend's House* was completed as part of Kotilo's Gallery's first exhibition. The artist taught two media art masterclasses in June and September. The film material created in the September class ended up as part of the final installation.



Enchanted Words Brought 15 500 Event Visitors to Valve

Enchanted Words (in Finnish: Lumotut sanat) – Children's and Youth Literary Arts Festival was organized in Oulu between the 26th of April and 1st of June 2025 for the 19th time. During the festival Cultural Centre Valve was full of joy and experiences related to literary arts: Stories, workshops, performances and artist meet & greets. In the centre of the festival was the immersive Kollektivet exhibition displayed in Valve Gallery, which presented a collection of best Finnish illustrators and their work. In May the exhibition hosted free-entry workshops and guided tours open for early education groups, schools, educational institutions, special needs groups and elderly people. Within the month, a staggering 98 groups visited the exhibition. As a whole the festival brought around 15 500 exhibition and event visitors to Cultural Centre Valve.

The Film Education Reforms

Children's Cultural Centre Kotilo has a long tradition as a developer of film education for children and youth. Children's Culture Centre has organized film hobby activities, implemented further training for teachers and media educators, as well as developed new teaching methods and learning materials first since 2003 as Nuku Film School and later as Valve Film School since 2008. In Fall of 2025, Valve Film School's hobby activities transferred as a part of the City of Oulu's basic art education and Oulu Art School. The transfer to Art School reinforces the pedagogical continuity and enables a curriculum-based basic art education. Film education remains an essential part of Kotilo's area of expertise and will continue developing as a part of media art.

The staff of Children's Culture Centre getting ready to move to Central Library Saari.

Urban Neighbourhood Culture

Valve's Urban Neighbourhood Culture produces and organizes cultural services in different districts around Oulu. The operations cover the whole Oulu area with special focus being on districts outside the city centre, while working as a collaborative network with third sector operators as well as other organizations of the City of Oulu. Our goal is to support and promote area-specific cultural activities, identity, and communities, as well as to reinforce wellbeing through arts and culture. In 2025, we executed several productions around Oulu in cooperation with a wide network of operators.

Valve's Urban Neighbourhood Culture manages Sykesali Hall located in the Kiiminki Syke-talo building, together with Oulu-opisto and City of Oulu's Youth Services. In addition to the Syke-talo building, we organized concerts and theatre performances at Teatteri-kuoppa in Haukipudas, Oulunsalo Youth Community Centre, Kokardiklubi in Hiukkavaara, Sports Centre Vorelli in Yli-li, as well as in the churches of Yli-li and Oulunsalo. Especially popular was the beloved *Jumppatyöt* performance's visit to the Ritaharju Community Center. Library concert tours aimed at families with children, were also a collaboration we continued with the Oulu City Library. During the year, we had the children's music groups *Henxelit* and *Liikkuva Laulureppu* perform at the library concerts.

The Photowalks project, executed in collaboration with Photo North – Northern Photographic Centre and consists of photowalks, a zine, and an exhibition, continued – this time in the Kaukovainio area. With the City of Oulu's Event Services, we collaborated to produce programming outside the city centre within Oulu Park Picnics (*in Finnish: Oulun Puistopiknikit*) and Lumo Light Festival. In

these events, we took into account wishes brought up by residents through the city's participatory budgeting. We also executed the *Archvision* demolition art gallery in the old *Postipankki* post office building located in Taka-Lyötty, together with Reformi Art.

At the Kiiminki Syke-talo building, we coordinated the changing exhibitions of Gallery Oskari Jauhiainen, and organized screenings of Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival as well as the Oulu Music Video Festival's program for daycares and schools. We were also involved in organizing the free-of-charge Event Saturdays.

In 2025, Urban Neighbourhood Culture also prepared for the upcoming cultural capital year. The artist residences organized in the Sanginjoki nature reserve were connected to the collaborative production with Reality Research Center. The experiential piece *SWAMP – Walking Within the Frame*, combining nature and technology, will have its public performances in August 2026.

The Luminous Climbing Centre event at the Lumo Light Festival.
Photo: Torsti Paaso



Jumppatyöt
performance in Ritaharju.
Photo: Jukka Hämeenniemi.

State Award-Winning Jumppatyöt Visit in Ritaharju

Jumppatyöt is a theatre performance about aesthetic group gymnastics by Theatre Takomo. The performance is based on the personal experiences of **Katariina Havukainen**, **Ella Lahdenmäki** and **Inkeri Hyvönen** in group gymnastics. At its core is the question of how gymnastics can affect girls' self-esteem and self-image. *Jumppatyöt* received the State Award for Public Information in 2025. The performance visited the Ritaharju Community Center with four sold out shows on the 20th and 21st of September 2025. The performances gathered nearly 800 viewers and received abundant positive attention from both the audience and the local press.

Reformi – Archvision Taking Over an Old Office Building

The Archvision demolition art exhibition, executed in collaboration with Reformi Art, was open to the public in the old *Postipankki* post office building in Taka-Lyötty between the 20th of September and 31st of October 2025. The exhibition examined the aesthetics of bureaucracy, the layers of architectural memory, and the demolition of built space. It included fifty artists, and it consisted of wall paintings, photographic works, installations, graffiti, video pieces, computer-programmed lighting as well as theatre. The exhibition, which gathered around 3000 intrigued visitors, was the third demolition art gallery executed by Reformi in Oulu.

The Archvision art exhibition.
Photos: Juuso Haarala.





The Bridge event at the Lumo Light Festival.
Photo: Inkeri Jääntti.



The Luminous Climbing Centre event at the Lumo Light Festival.
Photo: Torsti Paaso

Open Call for Lumo Light Festival Oulu's Regional Program

In 2025, for the first time, Valve's Urban Neighbourhood Culture and the City of Oulu's Event Services executed the Lumo Light Festival's regional program through an open call. The regional program which spreads outside the city centre, is part of the festival's side events. The program consisted of ten events executed by several different Oulu-based operators. Together, the events gathered over 12 500 visitors.

Kaukovainio Photowalk

In 2025, the Photowalks took place in the greater area of Kaukovainio. During the open-for-all photowalks, the Kaukovainio area was examined gently, critically, but with a new perspective. The results and photographs were collected into a zine and into an outdoor exhibition that spreads around the Kaukovainio area between the 29th of November 2025 and 31st of March 2026. The Photowalks are a collaborative project between Photo North - Northern Photographic Centre and Valve's Urban Neighbourhood Culture, taking place in a different neighbourhood in Oulu each year.



Kaukovainio Photowalk.
Photo: Sami Mannikkö.



Arts and Well-Being

In 2025, with Art and Well-being services, we continued to provide versatile and accessible activities for different age groups. Like last year, the focus was on supporting the wellbeing and mental health of children, youth and young adults at risk of exclusion, by using art-oriented methods. Our actions are based on detected needs, especially in schools, youth services, and collaboration with health and social services. We have extensive collaborations with different units and operators.

“*Tuhatta ja sataa*” film club which we organize together with the Children’s Cultural Centre Kotilo and Inclusion Finland (KVTL) continued to offer artistic activities to children and youth with special needs in 2025. The Hospital School’s media and animation groups supported children and youth living with mental health challenges. Creative art activity groups executed with student welfare at Merikoski, Tuira and Kaakkuri lower secondary schools reinforced the wellbeing of students and supported their coping skills. We continued to develop the open art space, art clubs for youth, and Nurkka Gallery activities meant to support the mental health and participation of young adults, with Byström One-Stop Guidance Centre and Business Oulu. The art activities of *Preparatory Education for Programmes Leading to an Upper Secondary Qualification* (TUVA) continued with the school’s own HYTE funding, focusing especially on supporting young adults with immigration backgrounds.

In our activities aimed at elderly people, our goal was to decrease loneliness and to strengthen the resources of everyday life by using artistic methods. People who

took part in the activities were elderly people living in their own homes, as well as clients of assisted living facilities. The Art Clubs for elderly people held at Tuira D-Station and facilities of Caritas Foundation, as well as My Life’s Pictures 60+ wellbeing art group held at Cultural Centre Valve offered the participants an opportunity to process their life stories by using art-oriented methods. Additionally, the funding from the city’s participatory budgeting enabled the execution of concerts aimed at elderly people, together with several cultural operators. Cooperation with the national digital service *Lämpö* continued as well.

During the year, the role of General Cultural Services in promoting wellbeing became stronger, and the potential of culture was recognized more frequently than before in the city’s common development processes. Cultural representatives were invited to join workgroups supporting youth employment and projects promoting regional wellbeing, among other things. Additionally, the producer of Arts and Well-being took part in the works of Council on Disability and Immigrant Council, while acting as an expert in several national networks and workgroups. This reinforced taking the cultural perspective into consideration on different levels. The funding of cultural services was complimented with the funding brought by the city’s participatory budgeting, as well as the HYTE funding targeted in different services by the city, to promote health and welfare. This enabled a more versatile range of activities as well as added to its accessibility.

Taideloikka workshop.
Photo: Riikka Kontio

Concerts for Elderly People with Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting is an operation model where citizens leave ideas and vote for feasible ideas to improve welfare and amenities. For Arts and Well-being, ideas left by the citizens were targeted for concerts aimed at elderly people in 2025.

With the participatory budgeting funding we executed a total of 24 concerts, which reached over 400 elderly people. The concerts were held in different units of private service providers and Pohde (*The Wellbeing Services County of North Ostrobothnia*) around Oulu. These concerts implemented as outsourced services, brought performances by various ensembles from Finnish zither meditation to participatory concerts, into the everyday lives of elderly people.

Kaikukortti Card has Established its Place in Oulu

With Kaikukortti card, youth, adults, families and elderly people in tight financial situations can get free entry tickets and course spots for a variety of different cultural services and adult education centres, among other things. Year 2025 was the 10th anniversary of the national Kaikukortti card activities. During the year, there were 3876 valid Kaikukortti cards in Oulu, 898 of which were in active use. The Royal Races (Kuninkuusravit) were a new Kaikukortti card object in the summer of 2025. Due to collaboration, Kaikukortti card can now also be used at the events of European Capital of Culture year 2026 which are produced by the Oulu Culture Foundation itself.

In 2025, a digital Kaikukortti card was made available alongside the cardboard version of Kaikukortti. The digital version gives clients a possibility to track the use of their card and, for example, give feedback on performances they've seen. There was also a well-being survey added to Kaikukortti card, implemented by the issuer of the card upon its hand-over, and repeated a year later. In 2025 Kaikukortti card clients' experience of their wellbeing on a scale of 1-10 was on average 6,64 in the beginning, and 8 after a year.

The Year 2025 of Kaikukortti Card

THE AMOUNT OF NEW CARDS ISSUED:


1 623
in total

of which brought
into use
480

THE NUMBER OF TIMES CARDS WERE USED:


3 121
times in total

Adults **2 683** times
Children **353** times
Community cards **85** times

THE NUMBER OF VALID CARDS AT THE END OF DECEMBER:


3 880
in total

of which
brought into use
898

MOST POPULAR DESTINATIONS VISITED:

Oulu Art Museum (741 visits: adults 730, children 11)
Oulu Sinfonia (672 visits: adults 555, children 117)
Oulu Theatre (422 visits: adults 378, children 44)
Cultural Centre Valve (375 visits: adults 321, children 54)
Turkansaari Open Air Museum (220 visits: adults 161, children 59)



General Cultural Services' responsibilities also include common development projects, project operations, and the preparation of grants and partnerships together with the Cultural Administration. Additionally, we actively work within different national, regional, and international networks.

The Projects and Collaboration Projects of General Cultural Services in 2025

- **ECoc Echo: Maximizing the impact of the European Capitals of Culture beyond the spotlight year (Interreg Europe)**
- **The Oulu2026 Children's Culture Program (Oulu Culture Foundation)**
- **Wander-full Journeys – The artist mindset and meaningful citizenship education (Erasmus+)**
- ANSEL – Access the North with the Speed of Light (Interreg Aurora)
- CreArt 3.0 project (Creative Europe)
- Estradi project (Cities of Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo)
- Hybrid Event Producer 2026 (Oulu Culture Foundation & OAMK – Oulu University of Applied Sciences)
- STARTS LAB Oulu (OAMK)
- Art Seeds and Tutors in Culture Education Project / in Finnish: Taiteen taimet ja kulttuurituutorit (ESF+)
- TASSU – Dance and music as a source of social inclusion and agency (OAMK & Diak)
- Equitable Inclusion Through Volunteering project (Oulu Culture Foundation)

Picks from General Cultural Services's Networks in 2025

- Association for film and audio-visual education (The Czech Republic)
- European Network of Cultural Centres
- International Creative Ageing Network (UK)
- International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts IETM
- ALLI Network (cultural work for the aged)
- Network for Cultural Managers of the Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities (AFCM) and Arts Promotion Centre Finland
- The Six Cities Network
- City of Oulu's ERTU Network – for youth in need of special support
- City of Oulu's Immigration Council
- City of Oulu's guidance and service network for youth
- City of Oulu's Council on Disability
- Network of outreach work with elderly people in Oulu
- Vares Network of volunteer work in Oulu region
- POP-kulta – Network of Cultural Wellbeing in Northern Ostrobothnia
- Finnish Culture and Event Houses Association (Suomen kulttuuritalot ry)
- The Association of Finnish Children's Culture in Finland
- Taikusydän – Arts & Health Coordination Centre in Finland
- Unesco Creative Cities Network

Discretionary Arts and Culture Grants 2025–2026

The City of Oulu Educational and Cultural Services aids arts and culture operators and artists, as well as their formed groups annually. The principles and criteria of the Discretionary Arts and Culture Grants were remodeled in 2025 as a part of a larger development process of the city's aid types. The remodeled types of aid are aid for association and communities' activities, project aid, workplace aid for professionals, and small grants for event organizers. The final decisions about the beneficiaries are made by the Director of Culture, based on the evaluation and recommendation of a group of experts.

The application period for **arts and culture grants for year 2025** was open in October–November 2024. 281 applications were submitted by the deadline, with a total of 2 122 745 euros applied. For 2025, arts and culture grants were rewarded to 154 applicants, for a total of 552 812 euros. Additional 14 278 € was reserved for small grants for event organizers.

The application period for **arts and culture grants for year 2026** was open in October 2025. 253 applications were submitted by the deadline, with a total of 1 432 379 euros applied. For 2026, arts and culture grants were rewarded to 166 applicants, for a total of 554 019 euros. Additional 15 326 € was reserved for small grants for event organizers, and 3000 € for the year's Young Artist award (*in Finnish: Nuori taitelija -palkinto*).

In addition, the *Valistustalo* fund administered by the City of Oulu Education and Cultural Services provides grants annually. The total amount of funding to be granted in 2025 and 2026 has been 175 000 € for each year.

Culture and Arts Partnerships in 2025–2027 Period

- Flow ry (Flow Productions), 60 000 €
- JoJo – Oulun Tanssin Keskus ry (JoJo – Oulu Dance Centre), 110 000 €
- Kulttuuriosuuskunta ILME (multidisciplinary cultural cooperative ILME), 30 000 €
- Oulu Urban Culture ry, 50 000 €
- Oulun elokuvakeskus ry (Oulu Film Centre), 110 000 €
- Oulun kirjailijaseura ry (Oulu Writers Association), 40 000 €
- Oulun Kulttuuritapahtumayhdistys ry (The Oulu Culture Events Association), 120 000 €
- Oulun musiikkivideofestivaalit ry (Oulu Music Video Festival), 40 000 €
- Oulun Sarjakuvaseura ry (Oulu Comics Association), 30 000 €
- Oulun taiteilijaseura 63 ry (Oulu Artists Association), 50 000 €
- Pohjoinen valokuvakeskus ry (Photo North – Northern Photographic Centre), 70 000 €
- Sirkus- ja teatteriyhdistys Lumous ry (Lumo Company), 20 000 €
- TaikaBox ry, 40 000 €
- Uleåborg Jazz Organisation ry / Oulu All Star Big Band, 35 000 €

CULTURAL
CENTRE
value



OULU