

PAST LECTURERS  
OF THE YEAR:

2006 Ben Stout and *Fire and Ice*, a documentary about The Winter War between Finland and Russia

2007-08 Mark Coir and Susan Saarinen, "The Saarinen Architectural Legacy"

2009-10 Arnold Alanen, "From Finland to North America: Buildings, Landscapes and Cultural Change"

2010-11 Carl Rahkonen, "The Finnish-American Musical Journey"

2012-13 Glenda Dawn Goss, "Sibelius: A Composer's Life and the Awakening of Finland"

2013 Yvonne Lockwood, "Traditional Material Culture in Modern Finnish America"

Find more information on their programs at [www.finlandiafoundation.org](http://www.finlandiafoundation.org)

Finlandia Foundation National is the premier network of Finnish-American organizations in the United States.

Founded in Pasadena, California in 1953, FFFN administers grants, scholarships and programs supporting and celebrating Finnish heritage and Finnish-American culture and traditions.

FFFN is a 501 (c) (3) organization. For more information: [www.finlandiafoundation.org](http://www.finlandiafoundation.org)



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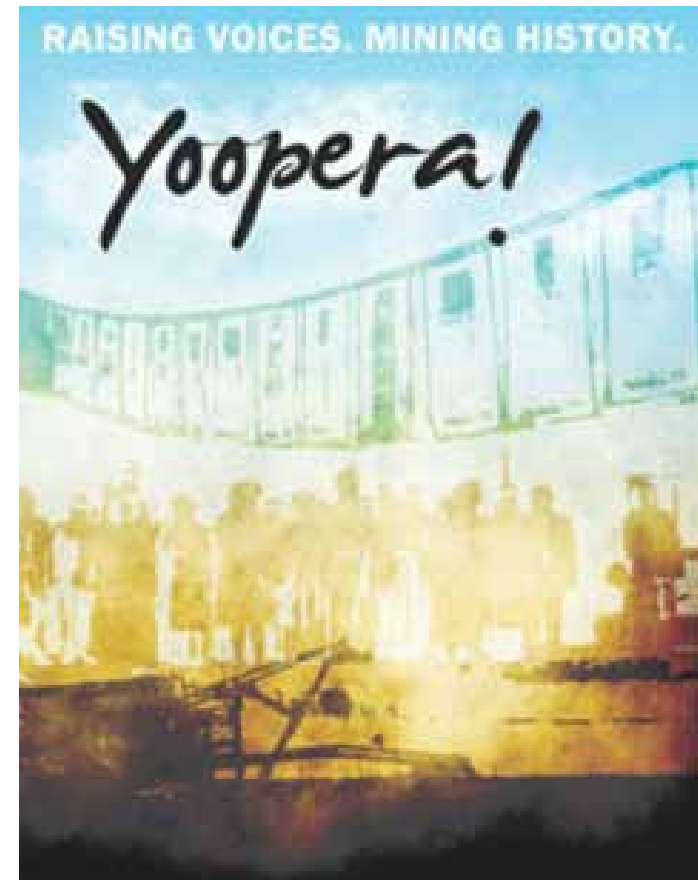


FINLANDIA FOUNDATION NATIONAL

## 2014 LECTURER OF THE YEAR

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS

SUZANNE JURVA AND ERIN SMITH



"SET AGAINST A LANDSCAPE OF SPECTACULAR NATURAL BEAUTY MARKED BY THE RUSTED AND BROKEN RELICS OF PAST INDUSTRIAL GLORY, YOOPERA! ATTEMPTS TO CAPTURE THE TENSIONS AND ALSO THE POSSIBILITIES THAT EMERGE WHEN CULTURAL HERITAGE IS TRANSFORMED INTO COMMUNITY ART AND PERFORMANCE."

[WWW.YOOPERAMOVIE.COM](http://WWW.YOOPERAMOVIE.COM)

# LECTURER OF THE YEAR

Since 2006 Finlandia Foundation National (FFN) has hosted a Lecturer of the Year program to encourage sharing of aspects of Finnish and Finnish-American history, culture and life.

The Lecturer of the Year for 2014 is the filmmaking team of Suzanne Jurva and Erin Smith, who produced the documentary *Yoopera!*

The film tells the story of the collaboration of Finnish and American talent in the making of an opera about the murder of two Finnish immigrants in 1906 in Rockland, a mining town in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (U.P.). *Rockland: The Opera* premiered in Nivala, Finland and Houghton, Michigan in 2011.

The documentary's title *Yoopera!* combines the word for U.P. residents, "Yoopers," and the Finnish word for the musical genre, *ooppera*.

*Yoopera!* weaves in the companion "Story Line" project that encouraged hundreds of area residents to tell their family stories on cloth banners. Conceived by artist Mary Wright, "The Story Line" involved children and adults who honored their immigrant ancestors through words and pictures.

The film premiered at the 2013 Copper Country FinnFest, where it was acclaimed by hundreds who viewed it there; now it is available to audiences nationwide.

Either Suzanne Jurva or Erin Smith will accompany each screening scheduled by an FFN Chapter. The filmmaker will conduct a question and answer period with audience members to encourage the sharing of their stories and heritage.

*Yoopera!* was the recipient of a grant from Finlandia Foundation National.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS



Suzanne Jurva  
Director and Producer

An award-winning filmmaker with experience in television, feature films and documentaries, Suzanne is a storyteller who has been involved in projects of all sizes, from the IMAX screen (Tom Hanks' *Magnificent Desolation: Walking on the Moon*) to content for Nokia's mobile phones.

She was a development executive at DreamWorks-SKG creating and heading the research department on feature films including *Saving Private Ryan*, *Amistad*, *Prince of Egypt* and *Men in Black*. Her work has been screened at many film festivals and seen on television.

Originally from the Detroit area, Suzanne graduated from Michigan Technological University in Houghton, which named her an Outstanding Young Alumni and inducted her into its Academy of Arts and Sciences. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia.



Erin Smith, PhD  
Editor

Erin is the Director of Humanities Digital Media and Senior Lecturer in Digital Media and Film at Michigan Technological University in Houghton. She has worked with Michigan Tech students on community-based documentaries and serves as an advisor to Cin/Optic Media and Communication Enterprise at the university.

For over two decades she has helped commercial and academic institutions adapt to changing production technologies and contexts.

Erin holds a PhD in English from the University of Wisconsin with specialties in narrative and film.

A native of Minnesota, she has adapted well to Houghton, admires the creative spirit of the Keweenaw and declares herself a Yooper at heart.