

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

## **Finncon 2018 to gather thousands of science fiction and fantasy fans at the University of Turku**

**This year's Guests of Honour at the Finnish science fiction convention are Lauren Beukes, Maria Turtschaninoff and Merja Polvinen**

Finncon, the foremost and oldest science fiction convention in Finland will be held at the University of Turku on 14-15 July. The event is free of charge and open for everyone who is interested. The event is intended for all fans of science fiction and fantasy, regardless of age or occupation: for readers, watchers, writers and everyone with an interest in the genre. This year's special focus are new fans, and the theme is *encounters*.

The author Guests of Honour are Lauren Beukes from South Africa and the Swedish-speaking Finn Maria Turtschaninoff. The Scholar Guest of Honour is Merja Polvinen, senior lecturer and docent in comparative literature at the University of Helsinki. Polvinen will be the giving the plenary lecture at the academic track seminar arranged by Finfar, the Finnish Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy Research.

The schedule for the Finncon weekend holds over 130 hours of programming. Most of it will be held in Finnish, but there are also many that programme items in English. The number of Swedish-language programming points is greater than at most previous Finncons.

There will be presentations, panels, award ceremonies, workshops and meetups, touching on all the dimensions and forms in the genre. The traditionally playful cosplay competition Masquerade will also be taking place.

Finncon is the oldest and one of the largest annual conventions in Finland. The first Finncon ever was held in Helsinki in 1986, but from the mid-1990's on the event has travelled to different cities in Finland.

Turku has hosted Finncon three times previously, in 1999, 2003 and 2011. Previous Finncons in Turku have also included Animecon, but since then the two events have gone separate ways. Next year Finncon will be held in Jyväskylä. (Last year there was no Finncon, as Worldcon 75 took place in Helsinki.)

Finncon is organised entirely by volunteers. The Finncon association transfers information and experience between the events each year. The main arranging party for this year's Finncon is Tutka, The Science Fiction Culture Cabinet at the University of Turku.

Finncon is sponsored this year by the Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike), The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, The Swedish-Finnish Cultural Foundation, Otavan kirjäsäätiö (The Book Foundation at the Otava Publishing House) and the Universitas Turku -project.

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