

Press release 26 November

Helsinki Central Library Oodi's first year has been a success

Helsinki Central Library Oodi will turn one year old on 5 December. Opened on 5 December 2018, Oodi had a successful first year, as the estimates for the number of visits have already been far exceeded. Over the year, Oodi has also received numerous awards and a great deal of positive feedback from the public. On Thursday 5 December, Oodi will celebrate its 1-year anniversary with a diverse programme and work.

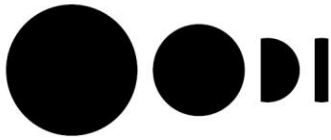
'Our original goal was to receive 2.5 million visits per year, but this year we will reach 3 million visits. We have already had 2 877 560 visits during this calendar year. We are likely to go over the three million visits right around the anniversary date. A lot of new library cards have been issued at Oodi: 18,400 by the end of October. Over half a million volumes have been borrowed from Oodi this year. When including renewals, the number climbs to over a million,' says Director of Oodi Anna-Maria Soininvaara.

The customers have received Oodi well, and the majority of customer feedback has been very positive. Customers have praised the beautiful architecture, versatile services, daily surprises and activity opportunities, among other things. More negative feedback has been given to the gender-neutral toilets, lack of CDs and occasional noise.

'We will keep the gender-neutral toilets, because this principle realises our value of equality and makes the use of the toilets easier for children and parents, for example. Unfortunately, there occasionally is noise, because 10,000 daily visitors cause sounds. There has been some feedback regarding the shortcomings of the building, and warranty work is underway. The door at the southern end of Oodi immediately proved too cramped, and we will be receiving a new door that can take more traffic by the end of the year,' Soininvaara says.

1-year anniversary on 5 December

Oodi will celebrate its 1-year anniversary on Thursday 5 December. All of Oodi's operators, i.e. Helsinki City Library, EU@Oodi, Brygga, Helsinki City Information, Fazer Food & Co, Kino Regina and Playground Loru, will have a programme of activities and events during the anniversary day. Various events will be held from



morning to evening.

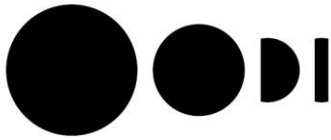
The Young Poetry Reader of the Year **Miiko Toiviainen** will read **Henriikka Tavi's** celebration poem for Oodi in the third floor book heaven from 4.30 pm onwards. EU@Oodi will give out glogg to the thousand first visitors from 12 noon onwards. There will also be music performances and various workshops for all ages. The detailed programme is available on the Oodi website: www.oodihelsinki.fi/en.

Awards and nominations

Oodi has received numerous awards and nominations during its first year of operation. The most important one of these was Oodi's selection as the best new public library of the year at IFLA's (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) World Library and Information Congress in Athens in August. Oodi also played an important role in the selection of Helsinki as the 2019 Library Municipality of the Year in a competition organised by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.

The construction of Oodi has also received awards, as it won the Vuoden Teräsrakenne 2018 competition for the best steel structure of the year. In June, Oodi received a People's Choice award at the international AZ Awards. It was the winner in the category of buildings over 1,000 square metres. In October, Oodi received the European Steel Design Award. The readers of Ilta-Sanomat chose Oodi as the most beautiful building in Finland in August. Oodi was nominated for the 2019 Finlandia Prize for Architecture. Oodi is also nominated for the 2019 Puupalkinto wood architecture award. The winner will be announced at the Wood Day event held at Messukeskus on 28 November.

The art rugs designed for Oodi won the Hopeahuippu silver award in the Vuoden huiput 2019 competition. In October, Oodi was awarded the Suomen Paras Asiakasteko 2019 prize for the best deed for customers. Oodi won the prize by being an overall reformer of the library concept, an unhurried meeting place and an experiential environment that offers diverse services for various everyday activities. In August, Oodi was included in TIME Magazine's list of World's Greatest Places. In addition to these, Oodi was nominated in the Europe category of the British Guild of Travel Writers' International Tourism Awards 2019.



Oodi has spurred interest in libraries

'Oodi has spurred interest in libraries throughout Helsinki even more than we had anticipated. Oodi has raised the number of visits to other libraries of Helsinki City Library by one per cent. This is a positive surprise, as we had anticipated an average drop of 5% in the number of visits to other libraries. People have voted with their feet for libraries, found the renewing services of all libraries and demonstrated that local libraries are important in their everyday lives. The same trend can be seen in many other cities in Finland,' says Helsinki's Director of Library Services **Katri Vättinen**.

The coming year will bring a wide range of events and new services to Oodi, for example, to the studio premises on the second floor and the Urban Workshop. Services will be further improved in cooperation with customers. Feedback and ideas will be collected, for example, in Oodi's lobby on the 1-year anniversary. Cooperation between the different operators at Oodi will be made even closer, allowing them to organise even more diverse and interesting events. Customers are also asked to voice comments and ideas for the planning of events.