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## DAVID STRATTON CURATES AKI KAURISMÄKI RETROSPECTIVE

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Sydney Film Festival, Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), and the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) are delighted to announce that David Stratton will present a program of 10 essential films directed by the great Finnish filmmaker Aki Kaurismäki.

Entitled **Essential Kaurismäki: Selected by David Stratton**, the curated films will screen as a retrospective program at the **Art Gallery of New South Wales** and **Dendy Opera Quays** cinema, as part of the **65<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival (6-17 June)**. The retrospective will also screen in Melbourne at ACMI (14-30 June) and in Canberra at NFSA's Arc cinema (29 June - 10 July).

This retrospective consists of ten of the finest films made by Kaurismäski, from *Crime and Punishment* (1983) to *Le Havre* (2011).

Since his debut, Aki Kaurismäki has become Finland's most celebrated filmmaker. Known for his idiosyncratic, droll style, his films provide social criticism through the stories of ordinary people who overcome all the odds stacked against them to achieve modest successes.

Renowned critic and broadcaster, David Stratton, a former director of the Sydney Film Festival (1966 to 1983) will also introduce the Sydney screenings.

**David Stratton** said, "Kaurismäki is the complete auteur, producing, directing, scripting and usually editing his films. A master of the deadpan, the dialogue in his films is laconic and laced with stoic humour, not including a streak of sentiment, despite the presence of a loveable dog in almost every movie."

"This retrospective is a great showcase of his signature style and will be a revelation to those unfamiliar with the work of an exceptional director."

### The 10 films in the program are:

*Crime and Punishment* (1983)

*Shadows in Paradise* (1986)

*Ariel* (1988)

*Leningrad Cowboys go America* (1989)

*The Match Factory Girl* (1990)

*La Vie de Boheme* (1992)

*Drifting Clouds* (1996)

*The Man Without a Past* (2002)

*Lights in the Dusk* (2006)

*Le Havre* (2011)

Sydney Film Festival Director **Nashen Moodley** said, "Kaurismäki is widely recognised as one of Finland's greatest film directors of all time. His latest film, *The Other Side of Hope* was one of the highlights of Sydney Film Festival 2017, so we are very excited to present this essential line-up of his 10 most iconic films. We have sourced 35mm prints of all but one of the 10 films. This retrospective is crucial viewing for film fans."



ACMI Director and CEO **Katrina Sedgwick** said, "ACMI is delighted to once again be working with David Stratton and our good friends SFF and NFSA to present this exquisite Kaurismäki program. Screening in ACMI Cinemas, this retrospective is a unique opportunity for fans to indulge in some of Aki Kaurismäki's most beloved features and for new audiences to discover one of contemporary cinema's most distinctive voices. Since bursting onto the international film scene in the 1990's Kaurismäki has continued to charm audiences with stories that brim with humanity and humour – we're thrilled to be celebrating one of cinema's great auteurs."

NFSA Chief Executive Officer **Jan Müller** said, "We are delighted to bring the *Essential: Curated by David Stratton* retrospective to Canberra for the fourth consecutive year, this time dedicated to Aki Kaurismäki. David's curated program always resonates with Arc cinema audiences, and though it's a long way from Finland to the ACT, we are certain that this Kaurismäki program will prove very exciting for his local fans."

A recipient of the Australian Film Institute's Raymond Longford Award and named Commander of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, David Stratton AM has also served as President of the FIPRESCI (International Film Critics) jury in Cannes and served on the international juries of both Venice and Berlin film festivals, authored three books and lectured in Film History at the University of Sydney. He co-hosted *The Movie Show* and *At the Movies* with Margaret Pomeranz for 29 years.

Sydney Film Festival, ACMI and the NSFA are thankful to the Finnish Film Foundation and Palace Films for their support of this outstanding retrospective.

**Sydney Film Festival tickets are on sale now for Essential Kaurismäki: Selected by David Stratton** screenings for \$19.90 (Adult) each or Concession \$17.00 + booking fee.

A **special discount package** of all ten films in the retrospective is available for \$130 + booking fee.

**Flexipasses and subscriptions to Sydney Film Festival 2018 are on sale now.**

**Call 1300 733 733 or visit [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au) for more information.**

**The full Sydney Film Festival program is announced in May 2018.**

Tickets to **Essential Kaurismäki** at ACMI in Melbourne are \$18 Adult, \$14 Concession, \$12 ACMI Member. Three session pass \$45 Full, \$39 Concession, \$33 Member. Six session pass \$84 Full, \$72 Concession, \$66 Member. Tickets are available online [acmi.net.au/essential-kaurismaki](http://acmi.net.au/essential-kaurismaki), via phone 03 8663 2583 or in person at ACMI Fed Square. Check [acmi.net.au](http://acmi.net.au) for details.

Tickets to **Essential Kaurismäki** at Arc cinema, NFSA (Acton, ACT) are \$15 Adult, \$13 Concession, and season passes (\$100 / \$90) also available. Tickets are available online [shop.nfsa.gov.au/event-tickets/david-stratton-presents/](http://shop.nfsa.gov.au/event-tickets/david-stratton-presents/).

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\*\*\*Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available [HERE](#)



## EDITOR'S NOTES

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### ESSENTIAL KAURISMÄKI: SELECTED BY DAVID STRATTON

#### ***CRIME AND PUNISHMENT 'RIKOS JA RANGAISTUS' (1983)***

**Kaurismäki's first film is an intensely gripping updating of Dostoevsky's novel, relocated in contemporary Helsinki.**

The Raskalnikov character (Markku Toikka), a slaughterhouse worker and former law student, takes vengeance on the man who killed his fiancée in a hit and run accident. Reviewing the film for *Variety* I wrote: "The city itself becomes a character in the film thanks to the pristine photography. Getting marks for originality is the use of English rock songs. (This is) one of the best Finnish films of recent years."

#### ***SHADOWS IN PARADISE 'VARJOJA PARATIISISSA' (1986)***

**Kaurismäki's third feature is a terse, tightly structured romantic drama involving two lonely people – a garbage collector and a supermarket cashier.**

The film teams two of the director's favourite actors for the first time – Matti Pellonpää and Kati Outinen – both of them portraying the isolated, withdrawn characters that would crop up in Kaurismäki's later films. They're beset with mundane problems – his best friend dies, she gets fired – but despite it all they're able to share a kind of shadowy paradise. It's one of the director's most atmospheric films.

#### ***ARIEL (1988)***

**The misadventures of a mineworker from Finland's frozen north who heads south when the mine closes; Kaurismäki's first film released in Australia (in 1991) is the epitome of 'supercool'.**

Turo Pajala is the tenacious protagonist who inherits a convertible, with a top that refuses to work, from his late co-worker and finds romance with a woman who hands out parking fines. During the course of a typically succinct, no-nonsense scenario the hapless hero is mugged, jailed, double-crossed and yet never loses sight of that faraway paradise 'Over the Rainbow'.

#### ***LENINGRAD COWBOYS GO AMERICA (1989)***

**Kaurismäki's cheerfully slapdash, cartoon-like road movie involves a band from 'somewhere in the Tundra' that winds up playing all over the U.S.**

Kaurismäki transformed a Finnish band, Sleepy Sleepers, into the fictitious but wonderfully eccentric Cowboys, who fall foul of Soviet officialdom but head for America where "they'll take anything." With a title inspired by *The Marx Bros Go West*, the film is the director's funniest, thanks largely to Matti Pellonpää's droll performance as the band's manager. Jim Jarmusch crops up as a used car salesman.

#### ***THE MATCH FACTORY GIRL 'TULITIKKUTEHTAAN TYTTO' (1990)***

**A factory worker is exploited not only by her employers but also by her family and friends – until she stands up for herself.**

The spirit of French director Robert Bresson hovers over this beautifully made yet sad little story about one of life's losers. Kati Outinen plays the eponymous heroine who lives with her mother and stepfather, who spend her earnings and treat her badly. At the dancehall she's a perennial wallflower. Then she meets a man, but a one-night stand proves no solution to her troubles.

#### ***LA VIE DE BOHEME (1992)***

**The adventures of three down and outs in Paris, this French-language delight is an adaptation of the book on which the opera, *La Boheme*, is based.**

Matti Pellonpää is a primitive painter, Kari Väänänen a music composer and André Wilms the author of a play in 21 acts. They share their fortunes and setbacks in a sublime series of tragi-comic episodes that Kaurismäki packs with tributes to other famous movies, and feature guest stars including Jean-Pierre Léaud and film directors Samuel Fuller and Louis Malle.

***DRIFTING CLOUDS 'KAUAS PILVET KARKAAVAT' (1996)***

**In the quintessential Kaurismäki film, He (Kari Väänänen) drives a tram while She (Kati Outinen) manages a restaurant. Both of them lose their jobs and have to start again.**

Dedicated to the late Matti Pellonpää, *Drifting Clouds* sees Kaurismäki's characteristically deadpan style and deceptively simple storytelling result in a quietly hilarious and uplifting tale of perseverance over adversity. As with many films by this director, it's only when the characters have reached rock bottom that they are given an opportunity for deliverance – and there's another great role for a devoted dog.

***THE MAN WITHOUT A PAST 'MIES VAILLA MENNEISYYTTÄ' (2002)***

**All Kaurismäki's themes combine in this delightfully optimistic, serenely graceful, film about a man with amnesia who has to start again.**

A stranger in town is robbed, beaten and left for dead. He can't remember his past, and has to start again. Markku Peltola plays the newcomer who experiences the comfort of strangers and makes his home in a shipping container. Kati Outinen is a member of the Salvation Army who becomes his companion. He also adopts a supposedly savage dog named Hannibal and encourages the Army's band to play rock 'n' roll. In other words, it brings together all the signature Kaurismäki ideas.

***LIGHTS IN THE DUSK 'LAITAKAUPUNGIN VALOT' (2006)***

**A man, two women, a robbery and a dog provide the elements of this typically terse and appealing romance; a story of crime, punishment and devotion.**

Kaurismäki cast new actors for this comedy-drama, the last instalment of his 'Finland' trilogy. Janne Hyytiäinen plays a lonely security guard who falls for a woman (Maria Järvenhelmi) he meets in a café, unaware that she is involved in the robbery of a jewellery store he's supposed to be guarding. Only later does our mournful hero discover his true love (Maria Heiskanen), who sells sausages from a mobile van.

***LE HAVRE (2011)***

**André Wilms plays Marcel Marx, a former writer who shines shoes for a living and cares for his beloved wife and a young refugee from Africa.**

Kaurismäki tackled the question of African immigration to Europe in this typically tender and humanistic tale set in the French port city. Kati Outinen plays Marcel's wife, whose sudden hospitalisation coincides with his decision to help a young orphan (Blondin Miguel), who arrives in a shipping container. Jean-Pierre Darroussin plays a tenacious cop, and there are the usual musical interludes plus Laika, the fifth-generation hound to bear this name.

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**ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**

From **Wednesday 6 June to Sunday 17 June 2018**, the 65<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, international guests and more.

Sydney Film Festival also presents an Official Competition of 12 films that vie for the Sydney Film Prize, a highly respected honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Prize winners: *On Body and Soul* (2017); *Aquarius* (2016); *Arabian Nights* (2015); *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011); *Heartbeats* (2010); *Bronson* (2009); and *Hunger* (2008).



The Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit: [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au).

The 65th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW, City of Sydney and Destination NSW. Federal Government support is provided through Screen Australia.

**Flexipasses and subscriptions to the 65<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival (6-17 June 2018) are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit [sff.org.au/tickets/flexipasses](http://sff.org.au/tickets/flexipasses) for more information.**

