

The Museum of Modern Art

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**THE FINNISH FILM PROJECT
ACCOMPANIES ALVAR AALTO EXHIBITION
AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
April 24–May 31, 1998**

The Finnish Film Project at The Museum of Modern Art, presented from April 24 through May 31, 1998, celebrates major filmmakers and trends in Finnish cinema from the silent period to the present. Held in conjunction with the exhibition *Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism*, the series opens with silent works by Erkki Karu, including his briskly paced farce, *Nummisuutarit (The Village Shoemakers)* (1923), and films by Valentin Vaala, an accomplished director who specialized in pastoral comedies and romantic melodramas from the 1930s and 40s.

Also included in the series are films by members of Projektio, Finland's first film society, which flourished in Helsinki in the 1930s before it was shut down by the State Police, suspicious of its "underground activities." Alvar Aalto, one of Projektio's founders, kept with the avant-garde spirit of the early 1930s—an inclination to work in a variety of mixed media to communicate a humanist vision—by making home movies. Presented in the series, these modest studies were one of the means by which Aalto could work out the spatial and temporal concerns of his architecture and designs.

Leftist critic Nyrki Tapiovaara, another founding member of Projektio, made five socially conscious, impressionistic films in the 1930s that inspired many at the time to regard him as one of Finland's most promising contributors to world cinema. Before his potential could be realized, Tapiovaara mysteriously disappeared in 1940 during the

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Winter War. Tapiovaara's brief but intriguing career will be examined with a selection of his films, including *Juba* (1937) and *Varastettu kuolema* (*Stolen Death*) (1938).

A revitalized Finnish cinema of the 1960s and early 70s is represented by the works of versatile director Risto Jarva. His films promise to be an exciting discovery for American audiences. The new Finnish cinema was ushered in by Jarva's *Onnenpeli* (*Game of Chance*) (1965), a critique of power politics among lovers. In later films, like *Työmiehen päiväkirja* (*A Worker's Diary*) (1967), *Ruusujen aika* (*Time of Roses*) (1969), *Bensaa suonissa* (*Rally*) (1970), and *Yhden miehen sota* (*One Man's War*) (1973), Jarva demonstrated his gift for blending social realism with melodrama in a variety of genres.

The Finnish Film Project concludes with a selection of films from the 1980s and 90s by Finland's latest generation of directors, and features the American premiere of celebrated director Aki Kaurismaki's *Juba*, a silent interpretation of Tapiovaara's 1937 film.

Presented in collaboration with the Finnish Film Foundation and the Finnish Film Archive, ***The Finnish Film Project*** is co-organized by Jytte Jensen, Associate Curator, and Joshua Siegel, Assistant Curator, Department of Film and Video, The Museum of Modern Art.

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