



**TAMPERE  
FILM  
FESTIVAL**  
5. - 9. 3. 2025

**PRESS RELEASE 15.1.2025**

**Free for publication**

## In the Spotlight: Pirjo Honkasalo – *Orenda*'s Finnish Premiere at Tampere Film Festival

**Pirjo Honkasalo**, one of Finland's internationally most successful directors, will be celebrated for her over 50-year career with a retrospective focusing on her work at Tampere Film Festival. As part of this unique screening series, Honkasalo's highly anticipated new film *Orenda* (Finland, Estonia, Sweden, 2025) will be shown, with its Finnish premiere taking place at the festival's opening screening on 5 March.

*Orenda* is a drama film written by **Pirkko Saisio**, starring Jussi Award-winning actress **Alma Pöysti** alongside Saisio herself. The film, which stretches the boundaries of everyday reality, is a flowing tale of grace and severity. The story follows two strong-willed women (Pöysti, Saisio) who meet each other and confront their guilt-ridden memories in the magical landscapes of the archipelago. Other significant roles in the film are played by **Hannu-Pekka Björkman** and **Luca Leino**. The film is produced by **Misha Jaari** and **Mark Lwoff** of the production company Bufo, alongside Estonian Allfilm and Swedish Plattform Produktion as co-producers.

*Orenda* will have its world premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam on 31 January, and it has also been selected for Göteborg Film Festival, where it will compete for the Best Nordic Film Award in late January and early February. After Göteborg, the film will continue to Tampere Film Festival, where it will be screened for the first time in Finland.

The Opening Screening of Tampere Film Festival will be held at Finnkino Plevna (iSense screen) on 5 March at 18:00. Director Pirjo Honkasalo, screenwriter and lead actress Pirkko Saisio, and lead actress Alma Pöysti will be present. A press screening will take place at 12:00 on the same day, offering an opportunity for interviews with the filmmakers. *Orenda* will have its nationwide theatrical release on 17 April 2025.

### A Unique Retrospective of a Career

In addition to *Orenda*, the screening series will feature a significant selection of films from Honkasalo's career. Among the highlights is *Concrete Night* (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, 2013), her previous collaboration with Pirkko Saisio, from just over ten years ago. The film,

which won six Jussi Awards, tells a dreamlike story of a day spent in the heart of a concrete jungle, during which a young man named Simo follows his admired older brother through a series of fateful events.

Honkasalo's documentaries will also be showcased, including *The Trilogy of the Sacred and the Satanic* (Finland, 1991, 1993; Germany, 1996), *The 3 Rooms of Melancholia* (Finland, 2004), and *ITO – A Diary of an Urban Priest* (Finland, 2009).

*The Trilogy of the Sacred and the Satanic* consists of the films *Mysterion* (Finland, 1991), *Tanjuska and the 7 Devils* (Finland, 1993), and *Atman* (Germany, 1996). These documentaries focus on people whose lives are deeply influenced by faith.

*The 3 Rooms of Melancholia* (Finland, 2004) is one of the most awarded documentary films in the world and has also won numerous awards in Finland (including Best Documentary at the 2005 Jussi Awards and the Main Prize in the over 30-minute category at Tampere Film Festival in 2005). Set against the backdrop of the Chechen War, the film explores the lives of children and young people in a war-torn world.

*ITO – A Diary of an Urban Priest* (Finland, 2009) is a personal documentary about the Buddhist priest and former boxer **Yoshinobu Fujioka**. Set in Tokyo, the film delves into the search for meaning in life, as Fujioka seeks to find the red thread of existence amid dreams, the city's back alleys, and the human psyche.

In addition to the feature-length documentaries and fictions, the programme will include a selection of Honkasalo's short films and a *Carte blanche* screening curated by Honkasalo herself. The short film screening will feature the films *Ennen kuolemaa* (Finland, 1967), *The Whole Truth and Nothing But the Truth* (Finland, 1968), *Ikäluokka* (Finland, 1976), and *250 grammaa* (Finland, 1983).

## Masterclass and Discussions

In addition to the film screenings, there will be open discussion events featuring Pirjo Honkasalo. A speaking event titled *Film and Philosophy*, focusing on Honkasalo's work, will take place on Friday, 7 March at 13:00 in the Lehmus Hall at the main library Metso. A masterclass, where writer and director **Reetta Aalto** and director **Selma Vilhunen** will interview Honkasalo about her career and films, will be held on Saturday, 8 March at 14:00 at Finnkinö Cine Atlas.

More detailed information about the screenings and events will be released on 11 February, alongside the full programme announcement of Tampere Film Festival. Individual tickets will also go on sale on 11 February, but serial cards are already available via Lippu.fi's [online store](#) and sales points. Tampere Film Festival will be held for the 55th time on 5–9 March, 2025.

[Still photos of Honkasalo's films](#)

[Photos from the 2024 festival](#)

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