



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

COMPARTMENT NO.6 (15)

Director: Juho Kuosmanen

Finland/Estonia/Russia, 2021, 1 hour 47 minutes SUBTITLES

According to Juho Kuosmanen, the director of *Compartment No.6*, the film is an Arctic road movie. But the road is a train track, and on board, sharing compartment no. 6, are two strangers. Finnish student and aspiring archaeologist, Laura is travelling to visit some petroglyphs, and escaping a complicated situation. Her compartment companion is a boorish Russian miner, Ljoha. The film follows the ebbs and flows of their relationship in the confined time and space of the train journey.

Adapted from a 2010 novel by Finnish writer, Rosa Liksom, Kuosmanen has set it sometime in the late 1990s, and both he and cinematographer wanted the film feel like a memory – a story from the past that is told in 2020. To achieve this, they chose to shoot on film: *'We tested different materials, but I think film still has this level of authenticity that digital format doesn't have. I'm pretty sure it has something to do with the imperfectness of film material... It has this romantic tone. And for the lighting, we said in the beginning that we were not going to use any LED lights. We tried to light this film with old lights, with mercury and this kind of industrial lights which people don't use anymore in lighting film. So we tried to find old-fashioned technical elements to create this memory-like feel.'* – **Nicholas Rapold, Substack IV with Juho Kuosmanen**

To give texture and depth to that authenticity that Kuosmanen was seeking, they chose to shoot, not in a studio, but in a rented 3 carriage train: *'The shoots on the train started at 9 in the morning from one station, and then we had 10- or 12-hour day in a train that was going around. We travelled depending on the scene: if we had a countryside scene, we had a countryside view, and if we had more of a city view, we had a view that was more like that. We did this for I don't know how many days, two weeks or so. It was an adventure.'* – **Nicholas Rapold in Substack IV with Juho Kuosmanen**

'It was much better idea on paper than in practice! Sound was recorded with hidden microphones, the crew was really small, and everything was slow as hell, there was not enough oxygen in these cramped spaces and the smells were terrible! But in the end, I'm thankful to each one of our crew that we did it in this intimate way. I think we managed to capture something special. There is real life in those images.' – **Press Kit IV with Juho Kuosmanen.**

Kuosmanen believes understanding the core of the character is crucial for the actors and it is important to find a common ground of understanding between the director and the actors. He seems to have succeeded, with nuanced and intimate performances from Seidi Haarla and Yuri Borisov playing the two main characters, with Seidi Haarla picking up many awards for her performance in the film which shared the Grand Prix at Cannes with Asghar Farhadi's *A Hero*.

Preview courtesy of Curzon Artificial Eye

Notes Compiled by Anne Cottringer