

Film Program

Avalon

107 mins. Japan/Poland, 2001. Polish language with English subtitles. Directed by Mamoru Oshii.

Rated M (medium level violence). Screening courtesy of Madman Cinema. In a bleak future dominated by the illegal virtual reality game "Avalon", a player named Ash (Malgorzata Foremniak) hears of a secret level hidden within the game and sets out to find it. *Avalon* is a genuine surprise: written and directed by anime superstar Mamoru Oshii (*Ghost in the Shell*) but shot as a live-action film in Poland with a local cast and crew. It is almost certainly the best science fiction film of its year, making the most of its limited budget and presenting a fresh, arresting SF story.

Monday 1100 Room 220

Cargo

Australian premiere. 112 mins. Switzerland, 2009. German language with English subtitles.

Directed by Ivan Engler and Ralph Etter. Unrated, 18+ only. Screening courtesy of Accent Film.

A starship travels slowly through deep space, its crew taking shifts of several months at a time to maintain the vessel while their crewmates remain in suspended animation. Midway through her four-month shift, the ship's doctor discovers that she may not be alone—and a terrible secret may lie within the ship's cargo. This 2009 Swiss production belies its low budget to present a fresh addition to SF cinema's rich legacy of spacecraft-set horror movies. The screening intersects with the discussion panel "ET Has a Chainsaw: When SF and Horror Collide".

Friday 2100 Room 210

Conspiracy '87

90 mins, UK. Directed by Greg Pickersgill.

In 1987 Brighton hosted the world science fiction convention in the form of *Conspiracy '87*. As a part of that event, video footage was shot of various aspects of the convention—originally as part of a fan room project that failed to eventuate. 23 years later, this archival footage is now available to view, providing a fascinating glimpse of the history of science fiction and Worldcon fandom. Please note that due to the archival nature of the footage, the picture and sound quality will vary.

Saturday 1000 Room 220

Dark Star

83 mins. USA, 1974. Directed by John Carpenter. Rated G (suitable for all audiences).

Screening courtesy of Umbrella Entertainment.

In this classic cult hit, things begin to go haywire on a long-haul space voyage with the crew facing an alien intruder, an insane computer system and a suicidal warhead. A cheaply made comedy riff on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Dark Star* marks the directorial debut of John Carpenter, who would go on to direct such cult hits as *The Thing*, *Assault on Precinct 13* and *Big Trouble in Little China*. *Dark Star*'s co-writer and star Dan O'Bannon would revisit the story with a horror spin in the 1979 Ridley Scott SF horror film *Alien*.

Thursday 1500 Room 220

Dreamland

94 mins. Australia, 2009. Directed by Ivan Sen. Unrated, 18+ only.

Screening courtesy of BUNYA Productions.

Dan Freeman, an obsessive UFO hunter, roams the Nevada desert around 'AREA 51' searching the skies for contact. But alone in the desert he awakens to a bigger mystery. Ivan Sen's feature debut, *Beneath Clouds*, immediately established him as a distinct and powerful creative force in Australian cinema. This lyrical follow-up reinforces that assessment: shot in stark black and white, and eerily still, *Dreamland* creates a unique and memorable film viewing experience.

Friday 1900 Room 210

Earthling

113 mins. USA, 2010. Directed by Clay Liford. Unrated, 18+ only.

Screening courtesy of Well Tailored Films.

On Earth, a troubled school teacher begins to suffer seizures and nightmares involving people she has never met. In orbit, tragedy strikes the International Space Station, killing all but one astronaut—who remains in a coma. What has been brought back down to Earth, and what is the cause of Judith's nightmares? Clay Liford directs this low budget science fiction drama that has already played at the Dallas, Santa Cruz, Sci-Fi London and SXSW Film Festivals. He draws on a diverse range of influences—Cassavettes, Roeg and the French 'new wave'—to create a special science fiction experience, low on visual effects but high on ideas.

Thursday 2100 Room 210

Fantastic Planet

72 mins. France, 1973. French language with English subtitles. Directed by Rene Laloux.

Rated M (animated violence and nudity). Screening courtesy of Umbrella Entertainment.

In the distant future, the descendants of the human race (known as Oms) are kept as pets by the giant Draags. One runaway slave escapes his masters with the aid of a strange technological device, and sets out to liberate his fellow Oms. This innovative animated film, based on the novel by Stefan Wul, was awarded prestigious Special Jury Prize at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival. The screening intersects with the discussion panel "Laloux, Moebius and Other Weirdness".

Sunday 1600 Room 220

Get Camp

Australian premiere. 90 mins. USA, 2009. Directed by Jason Scott. Screening courtesy of Text Files.

With limited sound, simple graphics, and tiny amounts of computing power, the first games on home computers would hardly raise an eyebrow in the modern era of photorealism and surround sound. But in the early 1980s, an entire industry rose over the telling of tales, the solving of intricate puzzles and the art of writing. Like living books, these games described fantastic worlds to their readers, and then invited them to live within them. Writer/director Jason Scott's feature length documentary delves into the history of the computer games industry to discover the story of the text adventure game from the people who made them.

Sunday 1400 Room 220

High School of the Dead

Episodes 1-Academic 2. 50 mins, Japan, 2010. Japanese language with English subtitles.

Directed by Tetsuro Araki. Rating to be confirmed. Screening courtesy of Madman Entertainment.

A deadly pandemic turns humans into zombies around the world. In Japan, Takashi Komuro and his classmates must fight their way out of the outbreak and find a way of surviving in a post-apocalyptic, zombie-filled future. *High School of the Dead* is the latest hit anime from production studio Madhouse, whose previous titles have included *Ninja Scroll*, *The Girl Who Leaped Through Time* and *Perfect Blue*. This latest production brings together the stylistic conventions of anime and the zombie horror tradition of the USA to brilliant effect. The first two episodes are presented here.

Friday 1200 Room 220

I Heart Doomsday 85 mins. Canada, 2010. Directed by Patrick Downing. <i>Unrated, 18+ only.</i> Maximilian Von Max, a heartbroken and lonely genius, uses his laboratory to build a robot to rekindle his lost love—an amnesiac named Tatiana, who doesn't even know who she is or her love for Max. Patrick Downing's science fiction comedy was awarded Most Kick-Ass Film Overall at the 2010 Seattle True Independent Film Festival. It stars Dan Biernie (<i>The Trotsky, The Bitter End</i>). Sunday 2130 Room 210
International Animated Shorts <i>50 mins. Unrated, 18+ only.</i> Aussiecon 4 is proud to present a special program of international animated short films, showcasing some of the most imaginative work produced around the world in recent years. The program consists of <i>The Astronomer's Dream</i> (d. Malcolm Sutherland, Canada), <i>Mon(s)tre</i> (d. Geoffroi Ridel, France), <i>Sprance</i> (d. Gerhard Höberth, Germany), <i>Mars!</i> (d. Joe Bichard and Jack Cunningham, UK), <i>My Desk is 8-Bit</i> (Alex Varanese) and <i>I am so proud of you</i> (d. Don Herzfeldt, USA). Sunday 1000 Room 220
International Science Fiction Shorts 1 <i>58 mins. Unrated, 18+ only.</i> Aussiecon 4 proudly showcases science fiction short films from around the world. In <i>Hangar No. 5</i> (d. Nathan Matsuda, USA), a pair of scavengers get more than they bargained for when sneaking around an abandoned military base. <i>Pumzi</i> (d. Wanuri Kahui, Kenya/South Africa) presents a stunning look at mid-21st century Africa, 35 years after the "Water Wars". <i>Quarto De Espera (The Waiting Room)</i> (d. Bruno Carboni and Davi Pretto, Brazil) is a haunting Brazilian SF short of empty cities and gas-masked children. Finally in <i>Hirsute</i> (d. A.J. Bond, Canada), a scientist attempting to create time travel may have succeeded – with unexpected results. Saturday 1500 Room 220
International Science Fiction Shorts 2 <i>57 mins. Unrated, 18+ only.</i> Aussiecon 4 proudly presents a second showcase of science fiction short films from around the world. <i>Postcards from the Future</i> (d. Alan Chan, USA) offers a hypothetical look at the future of space exploration. A stranded astronaut struggles to survive in <i>Defoe</i> (d. Ross Neil, UK). Finally in the effects-filled action short <i>Burden</i> (d. Michael David Lynch, USA) a city under alien attack looks to a special hero to defend it. Monday 1000 Room 220
Ju-On: White Ghost/Black Ghost <i>121 mins. Japan, 2009. Japanese language with English subtitles. Directed by Ryûta Miyake (White Ghost) and Mari Asato (Black Ghost). Rated MA15+ (strong horror violence). Screening courtesy of Madman Entertainment.</i> To celebrate the 10th anniversary of its successful <i>Ju-On</i> franchise (aka <i>The Grudge</i>), Kadokawa Pictures simultaneously released two special one-hour films. In <i>White Ghost</i>, a teenage girl is haunted by the ghost of her murdered best friend. In <i>Black Ghost</i>, a nurse named Yuko cares for a young girl named Fukie. A cyst is found in Fukie's body—the remnants of an unborn baby whose spirit is now set on a murderous rampage. These two short features do not follow from the original <i>Ju-On</i> narrative, and are instead thematically linked: they present another bold exercise in Japanese supernatural horror. Saturday 1900 Room 210
Krabat <i>120 mins. Germany, 2008. German language with English subtitles. Directed by Marc Kreuzpaintner. Rated M (supernatural themes and violence). Screening courtesy of Accent Film.</i> In the plague-ridden aftermath of the Thirty Years War, a German orphan named Krabat is drawn to an isolated flourmill. There he is taken in as the 12th apprentice of an old mill keeper, and is drawn into an unexpected world of dark magic and the supernatural. Marc Kreuzpaintner directs a fabulous adaptation of Otfried Preußler's bestselling fantasy novel (published in English as <i>The Curse of the Darkling Mill</i>). Wonderfully dark and atmospheric in look and tone, the film features a strong leading turn by rising star David Kross—star of <i>The Reader</i> and the upcoming Steven Spielberg drama <i>Warhorse</i>. Friday 1600 Room 220
Kurau: Phantom Memory <i>50 mins, Japan. Japanese language with English subtitles. Directed by Yasuhiro Irie. Rated M (animated violence). Screening courtesy of Madman Entertainment.</i> It is the year 2100. On her 12th birthday Kurau is struck unconscious by a bolt of energy in her father's laboratory. When she awakes she finds her body has been taken over by two sentient energy-based life forms known as Rynax. The awakened Rynax give Kurau's body superhuman abilities. Ten years later Kurau works as a freelance agent for the Global Police Organisation. Featuring excellent visuals by noted production studio Bones, <i>Kurau: Phantom Memory</i> transcends its action-orientated storyline to become a wonderful anime based on character and relationships. The first two episodes are presented here. Friday 1500 Room 220
Linebarrels of Iron <i>Episodes 1-Academic 2. 50 mins, Japan. Japanese language with English subtitles. Directed by Masamitsu Hidaka. Rated M (animated violence and nudity). Screening courtesy of Madman Entertainment.</i> Fourteen year-old Kouichi Hayase leads a mediocre life, until an accident transforms him into the pilot of the gigantic robot Linebarrel and leads him towards a mysterious girl named Emi Kizaki. This 2008 production is one of the latest entries into the long canon of giant robot, or "mecha", animes. The series has been directed by Masamitsu Hidaka (<i>Pokemon</i>) for Studio Gonzo (<i>Full Metal Panic, Origin: Spirits of the Past, Desert Punk</i>). The first two episodes are presented here. Monday 1300 Room 220
Mushi-shi <i>Episodes 1-Academic 2. 50 mins, Japan, 2005. Japanese language with English subtitles. Directed by Hiroshi Nagahama. Rated PG (mild themes). Screening courtesy of Madman Entertainment.</i> The mysterious Ginko travels across Japan researching the mysterious supernatural entities known as mushi, and helping those people whose lives have been harmed by them. This episodic supernatural drama, based on the Yuki Urushibara manga, is rich in atmosphere and imagery, and is an excellent example of anime utilising supernatural and folkloric themes to good effect. The first two episodes are presented here. This screening intersects with the discussion panel "Spirits of Screen: Supernatural Anime". Sunday 1100 Room 220

Pandorum Australian premiere. 108 mins. USA/Germany, 2009. Directed by Christian Alvart. Rated MA15+ (strong horror violence and coarse language). Screening courtesy of Icon Films. Two astronauts awaken in an enormous, pitch-black spacecraft. Both men are suffering from amnesia: they can't remember who they are, where they are or the nature of their mission. As they explore the ship, they discover that they are not alone—and the ship that carries them also carries a shocking and deadly secret. Starring Ben Foster and Dennis Quaid, and described by <i>SFX</i> as 'the finest interstellar horror in years', <i>Pandorum</i> is a tense new science fiction thriller in the tradition of <i>Alien</i> and <i>Event Horizon</i>. This Australian premiere screening intersects with the discussion panel "ET Has a Chainsaw: When SF and Horror Collide". Thursday 1900 Room 210
Pontypool 95 mins. Canada, 2008. Directed by Bruce McDonald. Rated MA15+ (strong violence and coarse language). Screening courtesy of Anchor Bay Entertainment. The staff of a small town radio station begin to hear reports of riots and violent breakouts across the streets. As the violence increases, the horrifying possibility rises of a strange virus, carried by the English language, which pushes anyone who hears it into a homicidal rage. Based on the Tom Burgess novel, <i>Pontypool</i> is a wonderful independent Canadian horror film and a fresh twist on the ageing zombie sub-genre. Saturday 2100 Room 210
Re-Cycle 108 mins. Hong Kong/Thailand, 2006. Cantonese language with English subtitles. Directed by Danny Pang and Oxide Pang. Rated M (moderate horror and adult themes). Screening courtesy of Beyond Home Entertainment. A successful author suffering from writer's block discovers creepy goings-on in her apartment. When she suddenly sees one of the characters from her current novel—apparently walking around in the real world—she follows him and becomes trapped in a terrifying dreamlike world. Filmmaking brothers Danny and Oxide Pang have continued to impress audiences across Asia with their visually inventive action, horror and fantasy films—most recently with their painterly 2009 sequel <i>The Storm Warriors</i>. Their 2006 horror/fantasy <i>Re-Cycle</i> is yet another astounding visual fantasy from the brothers, rich in atmosphere and stunning CGI effects. Friday 1300 Room 220
Silent Running 89 mins. USA, 1970. Directed by Douglas Trumbull. Rated PG (parental guidance recommended). Screening courtesy of Umbrella Entertainment. In a future where all plant life on Earth has died out, Freeman Lowell (Bruce Dern) helps control a small fleet of space-borne ecological domes. When orders come from Earth to abandon the mission and destroy the domes, Lowell rebels to save the forests inside. Visual effects pioneer Douglass Trumbull (<i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i>) made his directorial debut with this early 1970s science fiction film, cited as an inspiration by both Andrew Stanton for <i>Wall-E</i> and Duncan Jones for <i>Moon</i>. Thursday 1600 Room 220
The Abominable Snowman 91 mins. UK, 1957. Directed by Val Guest. Rated PG (low level violence). Screening courtesy of Umbrella Entertainment. An English anthropologist (Peter Cushing) joins an American expedition into the Himalayas, and comes face-to-face with the terrifying Yeti of Tibetan legend. Nigel Kneale remains one of the most influential and innovative writers of British television drama, through such classic productions as <i>The Quatermass Experiment</i>, <i>Nineteen Eighty Four</i> and <i>The Year of the Sex Olympics</i>. This 1957 film, from legendary production house Hammer Film Productions, was written by Kneale based on his BBC play <i>The Creature</i>. Peter Cushing starred in both versions. Friday 1000 Room 220
The American Astronaut 91 mins, USA, 2001. Directed by Cory McAbee. Rated M (moderate coarse language and sexual references). Screening courtesy of Commodore Films. Meet interplanetary trader Samuel Curtis, on his way to the women of Venus while engaging in a dance-off against his old drinking partner and evading the deranged Professor Hess on his way. <i>The American Astronaut</i> is a true one-of-a-kind movie experience: a black and white science fiction cowboy musical, written, directed by and starring San Francisco actor/musician Cory McAbee. This film screening intersects with the discussion panel "Hey Boy, Hey Boy!: The Innovative World of Low Budget SF Cinema". Sunday 1200 Room 220
Twentieth Century Boys Chapter 1: Beginning of the End 142 mins. Japan, 2008. Japanese language with English subtitles. Directed by Yukihiro Tsutsumi. Rating to be confirmed. Screening courtesy of Madman Entertainment. A series of catastrophic events occur, which inexplicably seem to reflect predictions made by Kenji and his friends when they were children. As an enormous robot attack strikes the city, the group's friendship is tested as the world begins to spiral wildly out of control. In 2008 Naoka Urasawa's ambitious manga serial <i>20th Century Boys</i> received a lavish ¥6 billion three-part movie adaptation. Massive hits in Japan, they finally come to Australia this month—Aussiecon 4 is proud to preview the first instalment here. Sunday 1900 Room 210
Western Australian Short Film Showcase 93 mins. Unrated, 18+ only. Perth may be the most isolated city in the world, but it's also one of the most creative hotbeds for young filmmakers in Australia. Aussiecon 4, with the assistance of the Film and Television Institute of WA, is proud to present this special showcase of science fiction, horror and animated shorts from Western Australia. Program consists of: <i>Professor Pebbles</i>, <i>Tinglewood</i>, <i>The Dead Wastes</i>, <i>Bridgetown</i>, <i>My Extraordinary Little Sister</i>, <i>Hairoes</i>, <i>The Planet Lonely</i>, <i>Edlar Was a Scientist</i>, <i>Distant Future</i>, <i>The Bubbleologist</i> and <i>Living with Benjamin</i>. Monday 1400 Room 220