

# ICA



Press release: 19 December 2012

## Once Upon a Time in Japan

Reinventing the Past through the Eyes of Japanese Contemporary Filmmakers

The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme

1 - 7 February 2013 at the ICA

1 February – 27 March 2013 Nationwide

The ICA is pleased to welcome **Once Upon a Time in Japan**, the Japan Foundation's latest touring film programme from 1 to 7 February 2013. The programme marks the tenth anniversary of this successful showcase of contemporary Japanese cinema and will continue to tour nationwide until 27 March 2013. Isshin Inudo, director of *Zero Focus* will be in attendance at two ICA screenings (3 and 5 February 2013), a further screening at the Showroom Workstation, Sheffield (8 February 2013), as well as a special talk at the Japan Foundation (4 February 2013).

**Once Upon a Time in Japan** examines the country's past through the eyes of contemporary filmmakers such as Kore-eda and Takashi Miike. Characterising a trend in recent Japanese cinema, this year's programme showcases a series of works by both lesser known and established filmmakers whose aim is to reinterpret, reinvent or relive moments of times past.

The ICA will be screening UK premieres of **Rebirth** (*Yokame no semi*), **Castle Under Fiery Skies** (*Katen no shiro*), **Ninja Kids!!!** (*Nintama rantaro*), **Bubble Fiction: Boom or Bust** (*Baburu e go! Taimu mashin wa doramu-shiki*) and a London premiere of **Zero Focus** (*Zero no shoten*).

*Ninja Kids!!!* is adapted by one of the country's best known names, Takashi Miike (*Audition*, *Ichi the Killer*), from a 1990s TV anime series whilst *Rebirth* is Izuru Narushima's portrayal of the not-so-distant past through one's memory.

Through a variety of genres, styles and tones, from horror, drama, action to animation, this programme aims to give UK audiences the broadest and most colourful insight into the nation's history of any of our past seasons, and explore how the past has been brought to life through the eyes of contemporary filmmakers.

The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme is produced and organised by the Japan Foundation with kind support from the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and Japan Airlines.

## Press information:

For further press information, images and interview requests, please contact:

**Naomi Crowther | Press Officer ICA | [naomi.crowther@ica.org.uk](mailto:naomi.crowther@ica.org.uk) | 020 7766 1407**

**Paul Graham | Assistant Programme and Administration Officer, Japan Foundation | [press@jpf.org.uk](mailto:press@jpf.org.uk) | 020 7436 6695**

## Listings information:

**Once Upon a Time in Japan: Reinventing the Past through the Eyes of Japanese Contemporary Filmmakers  
The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme  
1 - 7 February 2013 at the ICA**

Ticket prices:

Special events (films + Q&As): £12 / £10 / £8

Regular film screenings: £10 / £8 / £7

Booking fees for non ICA Members: £1 per ticket or maximum charge per transaction £2.80

Book online at [www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk) Call Box Office 020 7930 3647 Textphone 020 7839 0737

The Institute of Contemporary Arts is supported by Arts Council England

[www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk) | [www.twitter.com/icalondon](http://www.twitter.com/icalondon) | [www.facebook.com/icalondon](http://www.facebook.com/icalondon)

**\*\*\*Please note tickets for all ICA screenings will be on sale from 7 January 2013\*\*\***

**\*\*\*For touring information, please see a full list of participating venues below\*\*\***

## Editor's Notes

### About The Japan Foundation

The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and became an Independent Administrative Institution in 2003. The organisation promotes international cultural exchange between Japan and the rest of the world by organising projects as well as providing financial support through grant programmes in the fields of Arts and Culture, Japanese language and Japanese studies.

The Japan Foundation currently has its Head Office in Tokyo, with offices and centres in over 20 countries outside of Japan.

The Japan Foundation London is the Foundation's only office in the UK, and one of the first overseas offices to be established, opening in 1972.

[www.jpf.go.jp](http://www.jpf.go.jp) (Head Office), [www.jpf.org.uk](http://www.jpf.org.uk) (London)

### About The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme

The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme is one of only a few contemporary Japanese film programmes which tours to London and venues across the UK, presenting the best selection of Japanese cinema to regional audiences.

Since 2004, the Japan Foundation has put together films under a carefully chosen theme to highlight trends in Japanese cinema, and showcased, in close partnership with distinguished film venues such as the ICA, some of the finest Japanese contemporary films in order to introduce their versatility and uniqueness. Most of films selected for the Japan Foundation Touring Programme have slipped under

the radar of other film festivals or programmes despite their quality, or have previously only received one-off screenings in the UK.

This year the Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme marks its 10th anniversary. It has gone from strength to strength, consistently delivering a stimulating and inspiring programme.

**For details please visit: [www.jpffilm.org.uk](http://www.jpffilm.org.uk)**

### **About the ICA**

The ICA, Institute of Contemporary Arts, is a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary arts centre established in 1947 by a collective of artists, poets and writers to showcase and champion contemporary culture across the broadest range of art forms. Housing two galleries, two cinemas, a theatre, reading room, bookshop and café/bar, the ICA has been at the forefront of cultural experiment since its formation and has presented some of the most radical exhibitions, artists, films, music and thought to have shaped our world. It exists today as a committed proponent of contemporary arts practice and new ideas, presenting an international and contextualised programme of work in new and experimental frameworks across a variety of platforms.

[www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk)

*The Institute of Contemporary Arts is supported by Arts Council England*

## **Once Upon a Time in Japan**

### **Reinventing the Past through the Eyes of Japanese Contemporary Filmmakers**

#### **The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme**

#### **DATES & VENUES**

1 – 7 February

##### **ICA, London**

Box office: 020 7930 3647

[www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk)

8 – 17 February

##### **Showroom Workstation, Sheffield**

Box office: 0114 275 7727

[www.showroomworkstation.org.uk](http://www.showroomworkstation.org.uk)

18 February – 27 March\*

##### **mac birmingham**

Sales & Info: 0121 446 3232

[www.macarts.co.uk](http://www.macarts.co.uk)

22 – 28 February

##### **Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast**

Box office: 028 9097 1097

[www.queensfilmtheatre.com](http://www.queensfilmtheatre.com)

1 – 7 March

##### **Filmhouse, Edinburgh**

Box office: 0131 228 2688

[www.filmhousecinema.com](http://www.filmhousecinema.com)

3 – 24 March\*

**Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle upon Tyne**

Box Office: 0845 217 9909

[www.tynesidecinema.co.uk](http://www.tynesidecinema.co.uk)

9 – 16 March\*

**Watershed, Bristol**

Box office: 0117 927 5100

[www.watershed.co.uk](http://www.watershed.co.uk)

22 – 27 March

**Broadway, Nottingham**

Box office: 0115 952 6611

[www.broadway.org.uk](http://www.broadway.org.uk)

\* Screening dates vary

Please see your local venue for specific line-up information

For more information, please visit the Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme website

[www.jpffilm.org.uk](http://www.jpffilm.org.uk)

## FILMS

### **Rebirth (Yokame no semi)**

**Dir. Izuru Narushima**

Cast: Mao Inoue, Hiromi Nagasaku, Konomi Watanabe, Eiko Koike, Hitori Gekidan

2011 / 147min / Colour / English Subtitles

Kiwako (Hiromi Nagasaku) runs away with her married lover's baby, spending four years on the run and bringing up the child as her own until one day she is arrested. The child abductee Erina (Mao Inoue) is returned to her birth parents, but is never able to come to terms with what happened in her childhood. Now grown up, Erina travels to the town where she grew up to discover the truth about her past.

Based on the popular novel by Mitsuyo Kakuta, Izuru Narushima's acclaimed drama questioning nature over nurture scooped an astounding 11 awards at the 2012 Japanese Academy Awards 2012, including best film and best director. A huge hit both critically and commercially, the film also ranked first in the Readers' Choice awards in *Kinema Junpo* 2011.

### **The Blossoming of Etsuko Kamiya (Kamiya Etsuko no seishun)**

**Dir. Kazuo Kuroki**

Cast: Tomoyo Harada, Masatoshi Nagase, Shunsuke Matsuoka, Manami Honjo, Kaoru Kobayashi

2006 / 111min / Colour / English Subtitles

Etsuko Kamiya (Tomoyo Harada) is a country girl expecting to marry in the coming years. Despite her sibling's efforts to find her a suitor in army engineer Nagayo (Masatoshi Nagase), Etsuko's true love is left for Nagoya's friend Akashi (Shunsuke Matsuoka), a young military man who has been conscripted to be a kamikaze pilot.

A tragic yet quaint love story set in Kagoshima as the Second World War drew to a close, this film, based on a stage play by Masataka Matsuda, is Kazuo Kuroki's final work before his death in 2006 and like many of Kuroki's works, concerns the trauma and unalterable influence of the Second World War of those who lived through it.

### **Castle under Fiery Skies (Katen no shiro)**

**Dir. Mitsutoshi Tanaka**

Cast: Toshiyuki Nishida, Shinobu Otake, Saki Fukuda, Isao Natsuyagi, Renji Ishibashi  
2009 / 139min / Colour / English Subtitles

In the Age of the Country at War, peasant carpenter Motaemon Okabe (Toshiyuki Nishida) renowned for his 'divine hands' is summoned by Lord Nobunaga to oversee the mammoth task of the construction of the fabled 7 story fortress Azuchi Castle, a huge castle to be built on Mount Azuchi overseeing and guarding the then-capital Kyoto. However Motaemon must overcome some persistent obstacles on the path towards its completion.

This film introduces a fascinating insight into the world of traditional Japanese architecture. Mitsutoshi Tanaka's well-crafted spin on the period drama genre is a heart-warming tale of one ordinary man's skill and determination, and journey towards success beyond his normal capabilities.

### **Zero Focus (Zero no shoten)**

**Dir. Isshin Inudo**

Cast: Tae Kimura, Ryoko Hirosue, Miki Nakatani  
2009 / 131min / Colour / English Subtitles

Teiko (Ryoko Hirosue) has her life thrown into turmoil when her newly wed husband of only a week leaves on a business trip and never returns. Brought together by an arranged marriage and knowing little of her husband's past, Teiko embarks on a journey to discover the dark truth of her husband's sudden disappearance. Uncovering evidence to suggest her husband was not who she had thought, Teiko learns that her husband was close to two women: elegant aristocrat Sachiko (Miki Nakatani) and receptionist Hisako (Tae Kimura); two mysterious women who may know more than they protest.

Isshin Inudo's gripping Hitchcockian murder-mystery set in the beautiful location of post war Kanazawa features an all-star female cast in an adaptation of the celebrated crime novel by Seicho Matsumoto and revival of the classic 1961 Yoshitaro Nomura film.

### **Ninja Kids!!! (Nintama rantaro)**

**Dir. Takashi Miike**

Cast: Shindo Nakamura, Naoto Takenaka, Susumu Terajima, Hiroki Matsukata, Mikijiro Hira  
2011 / 100min / Colour / English Subtitles

Set in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the story follows little Rantaro (Seishiro Kato), a young aspiring ninja born into a family of farmers in disguise. Blessed with opportunity to leave his family's farm and enrol into a Ninja Academy run by Denzo Yamada (Susumu Terajima), Rantaro plunges into a crazy school packed full of explosive and dangerous tasks and madcap teachers. However, when a rival clan arrives, the school's future is thrown in jeopardy and it's down to Rantaro and his loveable classmates to save the day.

This wacky live-action adaptation of the long-running children's cartoon *Nintama Rantaro* is full of slapstick gags and comic schemes from the warped mind of the ever prolific director Takashi Miike, guaranteed to entertain kids and big kids alike!

### **Mai Mai Miracle (Maimai shinko to sennen no maho)**

**Dir. Sunao Katabuchi**

Cast (voice): Mayuko Fukuda, Nako Mizusawa, Ei Morisako, Manami Honjo  
2009 / 93min / Colour / English Subtitles

Inspired by her grandfather's stories, nine-year-old Shinko journeys into the past through her magical method of time travel, conjured entirely by her vivid imaginings of the past. Upon making a new friend

with the upper class Kiiko, they quickly discover they both have a fascination with history and what happened in the past, and transport back to the town a thousand years before, almost as if their dreams could become a reality.

Adapted from Nobuko Takagi's famous novel, *Mai Mai Miracle* is a beautifully animated nostalgic tale of friendship in post-war Japan. A former assistant of the great Hayao Miyazaki, director Sunao Katabuchi recreates 1950s south western Japan in its full-animated glory, inviting the audience to embark on a miraculous journey into the past with young Shinko.

### **Hula Girls (Hura garu)**

**Dir. Sang-il Lee**

Cast: Yasuko Matsuyuki, Etsushi Toyokawa, Yu Aoi, Shizuyo Yamazaki, Ittoku Kishibe, Sumiko Fuji  
2006 / 121min / Colour / English Subtitles

It is 1965 and in Japan, the country has started to shift from coal to oil. One by one the old mining towns begin their long slow decline, but for one small town way up north in the Tohoku region, its leaders and the local mining company aim to build Japan's first Hawaiian Village as a way save the town. And what's a Hawaiian Village without a troupe of Hula dancers? The only problem is that no one knows how to do the dance, or even knows what the Hula is! In this hilariously touching comedy, the scepticism and conservatism of the locals is gradually overcome as their daughters fall under the spell of one talented and determined dance instructor from the big city of Tokyo.

Based on a true story, *Hula Girls* is a heart-warming comedy about coal miners' daughters who took a once-in-a-lifetime chance to escape their monotonous lives, only to become unwitting heroes to their depressed mining town as well as the whole of Japan.

### **Kaidan Horror Classics (Ayashiki bungo kaidan)**

**Dir. Shinya Tsukamoto, Sang-il Lee, Hirokazu Kore-eda**

2010 / 121min / Colour / English Subtitles

Three haunting stories written by Japanese literary masters, reinterpreted and revived by some of Japan's greatest directors, *Kaidan Horror Classics* is a collection of beautiful yet terrifying tales of the darkness of the human heart.

### **The Whistler (Hazakura to mateki)**

**Dir. Shinya Tsukamoto**

2010 / 36min / Colour / English Subtitles

Yuko (Aoba Kawai) spends her days caring for her terminally ill younger sister Itsue (Eri Tokunaga), however upon finding a bundle of anonymous letters addressed to Itsue, Yuko is determined to find out from whom and why have they been sent.

Based on the original story by Dazai Osamu, Shinya Tsukamoto's distinctive cinematic style portrays the inner rage of adolescents towards those dear to them.

### **The Nose (Hana)**

**Dir. Sang-il Lee**

2010 / 34min / Colour / English Subtitles

A monk named Zenchi (Yutaka Matsushige) attempts to save a child from drowning in a river, but when the child sees the enormous nose he was concealing the monk impulsively pushes him away. Racked with guilt, Zenchi becomes fearful of silently watching eyes.

Inspired by an early short story by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, this loose interpretation retains the protagonist's predicament, and includes elegant cinematography, reminiscent of classic period films.

**The Days After (Nochi no hi)**

**Dir. Hirokazu Kore-eda**

2010 / 51min / Colour / English Subtitles

A child appears before a young couple who lost their beloved son at an early age. Is he the reincarnation of their son, or a ghost?

This strange and serene story of a family's days spent with the son who seems to have come back to life, is adapted from the fantasy stories by Murou Saisei.

**United Red Army (Jitsuroku: Rengo Sekigun Asama-sanso e no michi)**

**Dir. Koji Wakamatsu**

Cast: Maki Sakai, ARATA, Akie Namiki, Go Jibiki, Shima Onishi

2007 / 190min / Colour / English Subtitles

Koji Wakamatsu's three-hour docu-drama epic traces the rise and self-destructive collapse of one the most radical of political groups in the 1960s; the United Red Army. Amidst the student movements of the period and violent clashes between protesters and riot police, Wakamatsu examines the figures behind the group which eventually split into factions and spiralled into extremism, leading ultimately to a police standoff known as the Asama-Sanso incident: a climatic incident that saw the group's demise.

Set to a score by composer Jim O'Rourke, Wakamatsu's story draws extensively from his own experience with radical politics, based on interviews conducted with surviving Red Army members, and provides a fascinating insight into a brutal and bloody history that has almost already been forgotten.

The film is perhaps the most ambitious production by Wakamatsu, who tragically passed away in October 2012, the same year in which he was honoured with the 'Asian Filmmaker of the Year Award' at Busan International Film Festival.

**Bubble Fiction: Boom or Bust (Baburu e go!: Taimu mashin wa doramu-shiki)**

**Dir. Yasuo Baba**

Cast: Ryoko Hirose, Hiroshi Abe, Hiroko Yakushimaru

2007 / 116min / Colour / English Subtitles

With the Japanese economy on the brink of collapse with 80 trillion yen in debt, government bureaucrat Shimokawaji (Hiroshi Abe) conjures the crazy idea of going back in time to 1990 in an attempt to prevent Japan's financial collapse. Luckily, Shimokawaji's ex-lover Mariko (Hiroko Yakushimaru) has created one of the most unusual time machines; a DeLorean-esque washing machine, transporting anyone who dons a wetsuit and climbs into the drum some twenty years back in time. Having lost Mariko somewhere in the past, Mariko's daughter (Ryoko Hirose), a ditzy bar hostess, spins back to 1990 to the height of the bubble economy, teaming up with a 17 years younger Shimokawaji to look for her mother and prevent Japan's 'bubble' economy from bursting

Yasuo Baba's 2007 time-travel comedy is a hilarious satire of bubble-era Japan, filled with nostalgic gags, retro fashion and music, guaranteed to lift your spirits and cast away any recession blues!