

The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme 2010
Girls on Film: Females in Contemporary Japanese Cinema

Fourteen (*Juyon-sai*)

Dir: Hiromasa Hirosue

Cast: Hiromasa Hirosue, Akie Namikim, Teruyuki Kagawa, Shota Sometani

2007/35mm/ 114min/ Colour/ English Subtitles



Ryo (Akie Namieki) is a young teacher who, unlike her colleagues, does not adopt an authoritarian attitude to the adolescents she has in her care. She does not realise at first that by doing this she is putting herself at risk. The 14-year-olds feel misunderstood by the adults who insensitively snuff out their young ambitions. When their frustration grows, the adolescents turn into secretive and hard-bitten kids. As a result, Ryo is thrown back in time and confronted with her own dark past, in which she resisted the insensitive world of her superiors. Then she meets Koichi (Hiromasa Hitrosue), a man she knows from her studies. He was a talented pianist in his youth, but his ambitions were also dashed by an adult. Now he works for the local electricity company but he has allowed himself to be persuaded to give piano lessons to the son of a colleague. It becomes clear that Ryo and Koichi have shared experiences that they can only now relive and then come to terms with. *Fourteen* is an atmospheric and subtle drama in which two different generations mirror each other in the most vulnerable period of their lives. (SdH)

(International Film Festival Rotterdam / Part edited)