

JAPANESE  
FILM  
FESTIVAL  
15

DUBLIN  
CORK  
SLIGO  
GALWAY  
LIMERICK  
DUNDALK  
WATERFORD



APRIL 2015  
WWW.JFF.IE

## BOOKING INFORMATION

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### VENUE INFORMATION

#### CORK

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North Main Street, Cork.  
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[www.corkcinemas.com](http://www.corkcinemas.com)

Triskel Christchurch  
Tobin Street, Cork.  
T: (021) 427 2022  
[www.triskelartscentre.ie](http://www.triskelartscentre.ie)

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An Táin Arts Centre  
T: (042) 933 2332  
[www.antain.ie](http://www.antain.ie)

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T: (091) 780 078  
[www.eyecinema.ie](http://www.eyecinema.ie)

#### LIMERICK

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T: (01) 872 8006  
[www.lighthousecinema.ie](http://www.lighthousecinema.ie)

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Dublin City University  
Henry Grattan Building, DCU  
Campus, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.  
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- [www.jff.ie](http://www.jff.ie)
- See individual venues for  
detailed ticket prices.
- Concession available for  
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and OAP.

## WELCOME TO THE JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL 2015

This year's seventh edition of the Japanese Film Festival marks the continuation of the very successful collaboration between the Embassy of Japan and access>CINEMA, with the support of the Ireland Japan Association and the Japan Foundation. Screenings will be held in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, and we are pleased to announce that this year's Japanese Film Festival has been expanded to include Sligo and Dundalk, giving audiences throughout Ireland the chance to see Japanese films.

This year's programme of 18 films is as varied as ever: highlights include *Uzumasa Limelight*, a moving portrait of an elderly actor of samurai roles facing redundancy as he is eclipsed by younger actors, and the unconventional and brilliantly acted love story *The Light Shines Only There*, Japan's official submission to the 2015 Academy Awards. Audiences can also look forward to *Tokyo Tribe*, a gangsta-rap musical set amidst the warring gangs of a stylised version of Tokyo, already tipped to be a future cult classic of Japanese cinema. The Japanese Film Festival would not be complete without a classic. This year's is the highly influential *Kwaidan* from 1965, a selection of four Japanese ghost stories by Lafcadio Hearn, the Irish-Greek writer known as Koizumi Yakumo in Japan where he lived for many years – not to be missed if you are a fan of scary movies. The Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Gardens in Tramore, Co. Waterford are scheduled to open this summer.

As always, we hope to introduce more Japanese films to audiences in Ireland through future events, and your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

*Enjoy & Arigato!*

Embassy of Japan & access>CINEMA

→ Ayumi Sakamoto's FIPRESCI prize-winning debut is a powerful and haunting thriller reminiscent of Michael Haneke's work.



## FORMA

**DIRECTOR:** Ayumi Sakamoto | 2013 | 145 minutes | Cert: CLUB  
**STARRING:** Emiko Matsuoka, Nagisa Umeno, Seiji Nozoe, Ken Mitsuishi

Back at school, Ayako and Yukari used to be friends. Ten years later, Ayako is an office manager, while Yukari has a menial job on a construction site. A chance meeting rekindles their friendship, with Ayako even offering Yukari a job at her company. Yet once they are colleagues, Ayako is quick to belittle her supposed friend, undermining her at every turn while carefully preventing her aggression from becoming overt. As Yukari herself puts it, there's something strange going on here. Were they really such good friends back then? How do teenage animosities play out in the world of work? How long can

past tensions remain buried?

Shot in a muted palette of greys, blacks and beiges in perfect tandem with the colourless lives of its protagonists, Ayumi Sakamoto's striking debut has a keen grasp of friendship's grey areas and linguistic cadences. As Ayumi and Yukari's relationship grows ever more complicated, so too does the film itself, gradually leaving its linear beginnings behind until very little remains certain. A slow-burning thriller whose long, rigorously composed shots demand closer scrutiny; never disregard the unspoken and the unseen.

— *Berlin Film Festival 2014*

**AYUMI SAKAMOTO** (born 1981) worked as a camera, lighting and director's assistant on films by Shinya Tsukamoto and has directed music videos,

documentaries and installation films. *Forma* is her debut feature film.

→ A bittersweet quirky comedy about the loveable Fuku-chan, who is too shy to speak to women.



## FUKU-CHAN OF FUKUFUKU FLATS

福福荘の福ちゃん

**DIRECTOR:** Yosuke Fujita | 2014 | 110 minutes | Cert: CLUB  
**STARRING:** Miyuki Oshima, Yoshiyoshi Arakawa, Asami Mizukawa

Thirty-two-year-old Tatsuo Fukuda, nickname "Fuku-chan" (Miyuki Oshima), is a painter who lives in a run-down apartment complex called Fukufuku Flats. He spends his days working up a sweat painting buildings, his nights mediating disputes between the other denizens of Fukufuku Flats, and his days off flying handmade kites down by the riverside.

Fuku-chan is a popular guy who treats everyone equally and with kindness, but romance is his Achilles heel. When Chiho (his first love from junior high school) turns up twenty years later, he begins

to fall in love all over again even though she was responsible for the traumatizing incident that led to his fear of women.

— *Hawaii International Film Festival 2014*

"An engaging bittersweet comedy pleasure, Fujita Yosuke's *Fuku-chan Of FukuFuku Flats* is a low-budget film that makes the most of the comedy talents of its leads with its mixture of slapstick humour and pathos working delightfully."

— *Screen Daily*

**YOSUKE FUJITA** (born 1963) began making films at university, and first came to attention in 1987 with his Super 8 film *A Terrible Tiger* which won the Grand Prize at the Turin Film Festival. He worked for a period with the comedy

theatre company Otona Keikaku, before making his feature film debut with the audience favourite *Fine, Totally Fine* (08). His other films include *Saba* (09) and *Fuku-chan of Fukufuku Flats* (14).

→ A musical comedy, based loosely on 'My Fair Lady', and set in the world of geisha.



## LADY MAIKO

舞妓はレディ

**DIRECTOR:** Masayuki Suo | 2014 | 135 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Mone Kamishiraishi, Hiroki Hasegawa, Sumiko Fuji, Tomoko Tabata

Haruko, a rosy-cheeked bumpkin, arrives in Kyoto's Shimohachiken district one momentous night. Her objective is to meet Momoharu (Tomoko Tabata), the only *maiko* (apprentice geisha) at the Bansuraku *chaya* (teahouse). Momoharu's blog, with its laments about the lack of new blood in the geisha world (Momoharu herself has been a *maiko* for an unseemly decade), has inspired Haruko to apply at the *chaya*. But when the elderly proprietress, Chiharu (Sumiko Fuji), discovers that the girl speaks an incomprehensible mix of back-country Kagoshima (far south) and Tsugaru (far north)

dialects, she turns her away. *Maiko* must master the more refined Kyoto dialect, of which Haruko is totally ignorant.

Her rescuer is Professor Kyono (Hiroki Hasegawa), a *chaya* regular and professor of linguistics, who sees the girl as an interesting object of study. Thus begins Haruko's *maiko* apprenticeship.

— *Mark Schilling, The Japan Times*

“Gorgeously appointed and exuberantly choreographed, this ensemble drama is a visual treat.”  
— *Variety*

**MASAYUKI SUO** (born 1956) started his film career as an assistant director before finding acclaim as the screenwriter and director of the award-winning *Sumo Do,*

*Sumo Don't* (92). His other film credits include *Shall We Dance?* (95), *I Just Didn't Do It* (06) and *The Terminal Trust* (12). *Lady Maiko* is his latest film.

→ Seven years in the making, Hiroyuki Okiura's second feature is a sensitive, beautiful, handmade animated story.



## A LETTER TO MOMO

ももへの手紙

**DIRECTOR:** Hiroyuki Okiura | 2011 | 120 minutes | Cert: PG

**WITH THE VOICES OF:** Karen Miyama, Yuka, Toshiyuki Nishida, Koichi Yamadera

From anime master Hiroyuki Okiura (director of *Jin-Roh* and animator for *Ghost in the Shell, Akira*) comes a touching, fantastical tale of a young girl's grief and the three mischievous spirits sent to look after her.

After the death of her father, Momo and her mother move from Tokyo to the remote island of Shio. Here, Momo is haunted by the discovery of an unfinished letter her father was writing to her – and plagued by the presence of three heaven-sent goblins whose bumbling efforts to protect her tend

to cause more chaos than good.  
— *Melbourne International Film Festival 2012*

As gorgeous as *Momo* is to behold, the film's sensitive portrayal of a teenager dealing with grief proves its most compelling element... With its complex characterizations and multiple storylines, (*Momo*) rivals mature live-action drama.

— *Variety*

**WINNER: Grand Prize**  
*New York International Children Film Festival 2012*

**HIROYUKI OKIURA** (born 1966) started his professional career at the age of 16 without having received any academic training. His innate talent for animation led him to work on classics like *Akira* (88)

and *Ghost in the Shell* (95). In 1999 he made his directing debut with *Jin-Roh*, written by Mamoru Oshii. *A Letter to Momo* is his long-awaited second film.

→ Japan's official submission to the 2015 Oscars' Best Foreign Language category is a dark but stunningly beautiful exploration into humanity.



## THE LIGHT SHINES ONLY THERE

そのみにて光輝く

**DIRECTOR:** Mipo O | 2014 | 120 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Go Ayano, Chizuru Ikewaki, Masaki Suda

In the grimmest fringes of Hokkaido, a port town in a permanent polluted haze, the traumatized Tatsuo spends his days drifting aimlessly and his nights drinking to oblivion. At a smoke-filled pachinko bar, he meets Takuji, a brash blond teen parolee, who impulsively invites him to the seaside hovel he shares with his bedridden father, careworn mother and world-weary older sister Chinatsu.

As Tatsuo and Chinatsu take tentative steps towards a relationship, finding a ray of light in this hopeless world, the happy go lucky Takuji latches on to Tatsuo

with unforeseen consequences. Portraying love and grace with down and dirty realism, Mipo O solidifies her reputation as one of Japan's most promising directors. — *Palm Springs International Film Festival 2015*

**WINNER: Best Director**  
*Montreal World Film Festival, 2014*

**MIPO O** (born 1977) studied at Osaka University of Arts and began her filmmaking career by working for five years as a screenplay editor for the director Nobuhiko Obayashi. After a couple of short films, she made her

feature directorial debut in 2006 with *The Sakais Happiness*, which earned her the Sundance/NHK Filmmakers' Award. She followed that with *Here Comes The Bride, My Mom!* in 2010. *The Light Shines Only There* is her third feature.

→ A rare chance to see Takahata's classic film on the big screen and in glorious 35mm.



## ONLY YESTERDAY

おもひでぼろぼろ

**DIRECTOR:** Isao Takahata | 1991 | 118 minutes | Cert: PG

**WITH THE VOICES OF:** Miki Imai, Toshiro Yanagiba, Yoko Honna

Isao Takahata's *Only Yesterday* is a gentle but poignant tale about a 27-year-old Tokyo office worker who embarks on a voyage of self-discovery while on holiday in the countryside. Flitting effortlessly between the protagonist's 1960s childhood and 1980s present, both the animation and the plot are a lot less fantastical than in the works of Takahata's Ghibli co-founder Hayao Miyazaki, but are none the less enchanting. As in his masterful animated war film, *Grave of the Fireflies*, Takahata once again proves – albeit less bleakly – that animation is more

than capable of treating serious subjects. Here he covers feminism, the effect of market reforms on agriculture and inevitable loss of tradition, as well as adolescent concerns like boys, periods and fashion.

Lingering, light-dappled pastoral shots give us plenty of time to take in the delicately-rendered Japanese landscapes, while intimate domestic scenes are captured with carefully-constructed, Yasujiro Ozu-like framing. A wistful score by composer Katsu Hoshi completes the nostalgic mood.

— *Film 4.com*

**ISAO TAKAHATA** (born 1935) graduated from the University of Tokyo with a degree in French literature before joining Toei Animation Company. He co-founded Studio Ghibli in 1985 with long-term

colleague of Miyazaki Hayao and has directed films including *Grave of the Fireflies* (88), *Only Yesterday* (91), *Pom-Poko* (94), *My Neighbors the Yamadas* (99), and *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* (14).

→ A mild-mannered bank official is corrupted by greed in this timely morality tale.



## PALE MOON

紙の月

**DIRECTOR:** Daihachi Yoshida | 2014 | 126 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Rie Miyazawa, Sosuke Ikematsu, Satomi Kobayashi

What tempts anyone from the straight and narrow? Daihachi Yoshida's award-winning drama follows bank employee Rika (Rie Miyazawa) as she casts aside respectability to get what she really, really wants from life. Trading on the trust she has developed with her elderly clients, Rika starts to embezzle large sums of money and has soon acquired a toy boy lover and a taste for the high life. This cannot end well but her actions

are regarded with a sneaking admiration in a country that prides itself on conformity and keeping up appearances.

An intriguing morality tale with a knock-out performance from Rie Miyazawa.

— *Glasgow Film Festival 2015*

**WINNER: Best Actress & Audience Award, Tokyo International Film Festival, 2014**

**DAIHACHI YOSHIDA** (born 1963) has worked as a commercial director for over eighteen years directing music videos, television dramas and short films. His first feature film, *Funuke Show Some Love, You Losers* (07), was officially invited to International

Critics' Week of the 60th Cannes International Film Festival and won the award for best new director at the 29th Yokohama Film Festival. His films include *The Wonderful World of Captain Kuhio* (09), *Permanent Nobara* (10.)

→ The hilarious sequel to 2012's surprise time-travelling box office smash, *Thermae Romae*.



## THERMAE ROMAE II

テルマエ・ロマエII

**DIRECTOR:** Hideki Takeuchi | 2014 | 113 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Hiroshi Abe, Aya Ueto

Thanks to architect Lucius, the designer of thermal baths whose creations appealed the Roman people, Emperor Hadrianus has put an end to his expansionist policies and found peace with his neighbours. However, the Senate has every intention of putting world domination back on the Roman Empire's agenda, and is plotting to seize power. It's at the Coliseum that it maintains barbarity in the heart of its people, staging bloody gladiator fights that are, much to the chagrin of Lucius, met with thunderous applause. Moreover, he is tasked with building baths for the wounded combatants. Looking for inspiration, he takes a dip...

Having won the heart of audiences, the colourful characters from Mari Yamazaki's hit manga series *Thermae Romae* are back in all their glory! Carried by a faithful cohort of experienced actors, *Thermae Romae II* doesn't simply coast on the success of its predecessor – it surpasses it. Funnier, more grandiose and irreverent, this second journey from Ancient Rome to modern Japan care of director Hideaki Takeuchi is frankly spectacular, making the best of studio sets (a 50-metre Coliseum replica!) as well as the beauty of Japanese locales.

— *Fantasia International Film Festival 2014*

**HIDEKI TAKEUCHI** (born 1966) has worked mainly as a television director making numerous dramas for Fuji TV since 1996. He has also directed the

feature films *Nodame Cantabile: The Movie I* (09), *Nodame Cantabile: The Movie II* (10), *Thermae Romae* (12) and *Thermae Romae II* (14).

→ Following the blockbuster success of the first *Rurouni Kenshin* installment come the long-awaited sequels: *Kyoto Inferno* and *The Legend Ends*.



## RUROUNI KENSHIN: KYOTO INFERNO

るろうに剣心 京都大火編

**DIRECTOR:** Keishi Otomo | 2014 | 139 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Takeru Sato, Emi Takei, Tatsuya Fujiwara

At the request of the new government, Kenshin journeys to the old capital of Kyoto where unrest is brewing. Awaiting him there is a man so formidable that he was once allowed to inherit the very mantle Kenshin renounced: that of sanctioned assassin. And as Kenshin discovers, this crazed menace possesses skills that may be more than a match for his own.

*Rurouni Kenshin – Kyoto Inferno* is the first of two sequels that follow the original *Rurouni Kenshin* blockbuster. In Japan, *Kyoto Inferno* hit cinemas just a month before *The Legend Ends* (the third and final instalment), an unusual release timeline that shows these last two films are best enjoyed back-to-back. — *Japanese Film Festival Australia 2014*



## RUROUNI KENSHIN: THE LEGEND ENDS

るろうに剣心 伝説の最期編

**DIRECTOR:** Keishi Otomo | 2014 | 134 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Takeru Sato, Emi Takei, Tatsuya Fujiwara

Following on from the *Rurouni Kenshin – Kyoto Inferno* cliff-hanger, Kenshin awakes to find himself with his Master, Seijuro Hiko. Unable to defeat Shishio, he begs Seijuro to teach him the ultimate technique that will vanquish Shishio and his evil plans once and for all. But to succeed, Kenshin must learn how to unlock the power within. Meanwhile, Shishio has the entire government wrapped around his fingers, and the entire

nation is out for Kenshin's head.

In a final epic showdown, does Kenshin have what it takes to defeat Shishio, or is Shishio's sheer insanity just too much to handle? — *Japanese Film Festival Australia 2014*

**KEISHI OTOMO** (born 1966) graduated from the faculty of Law in Keio University, and joined the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) in 1990. In 1997, he went to study in Hollywood to learn script writing and film directing. He returned two years later and directed

many TV series including *The Vulture* (09) and *Ryomaden* (10). In 2011, he left NHK to set up his own production company. His films include *Platinum Data* (13) and the popular *Rurouni Kenshin* trilogy (12 – 14).

→ The smash-hit anime that asks if androids and humans can live as equals.



## TIME OF EVE

イヴの時間 劇場版



**DIRECTOR:** Yasuhiro Yoshiura | 2010 | 106 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**WITH THE VOICES OF:** Jun Fukuyama, Miki Ito, Yuri Lowenthal

Covering territory explored by *Blade Runner* and *I, Robot* (with frequent allusions to Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics), *Time of Eve* is an exquisitely drawn, sci-fi allegory that probes questions of artificial intelligence while flirting with the moral and personal implications of human-robot romance.

It is the future and household androids are becoming common. Completely lifelike and indistinguishable from humans, androids are programmed to serve with devotion – so it is no wonder that Rikuo begins to have unsettling feelings towards his android Sammy, feelings heightened when he discovers a curious phrase recorded

in her activity log: “Are you enjoying the Time of Eve?” Investigating with his buddy Masaki, they discover an enigmatic underground café, a robot safe-zone, where androids and humans interact as equals – in apparent violation of guidelines set by the all-powerful Robot Ethics Committee. Inside the café distinctions between human and android are blurred and both seem to reveal layers of emotional complexity not apparent in the outside world. — *New York International Film Festival 2011*

*With thanks to All The Anime*  
[www.alltheanime.com](http://www.alltheanime.com)

**YASUHIRO YOSHIURA** (born 1980) began making animations as a student, releasing his first DVD animation, *Pale Cocoon*, in 2006. His six-part *Time of Eve* series was an internet hit in 2009,

winning the Original Video Animations prize at the 2010 Tokyo Anime Awards. An enthusiastic participant in all phases of the production process, he is a bright new star in the anime firmament.

→ Japan's *enfant terrible* is back with yet another film unlike anything you've ever seen before: a yakuza/street-gang/hip-hop musical epic.



## TOKYO TRIBE

**DIRECTOR:** Sion Sono | 2014 | 116 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Ryohei Suzuki, Young Dais, Nana Seino

In a futuristic, alternate-world Tokyo, the city is made up of ghetto slums and nightclub playgrounds where gangs of wayward youth rule the streets. The city is carved up into 'hoods, and the crossing of territorial lines quickly leads to riots and rumbles. On the turf ruled by the savage yakuza Big Buppa, the simmering tension is about to boil over into all-out war.

With *Tokyo Tribe*, Sono has crafted a cinematic melting pot of madness referencing everything from Walter Hill's *The Warriors* and *Streets of Fire* to Shūji Terayama's legendary

experimental film *Emperor Tomato Ketchup*, John Carpenter's *Escape from New York*, Julien Temple's *Sex Pistols* documentaries, the final showdown from *Scarface* and, of course, *West Side Story*. Set to a score of bangin' beats and bizarre rap lyrics, *Tokyo Tribe* will leave you beat-boxing for more. — *Toronto International Film Festival 2014*

Sono's film is a loud and vibrant assault on the senses, sometimes crass, often violent, and always able to take you completely by surprise. — *BFI London Film Festival 2014*

**SION SONO** (born 1961) began making 8mm films while attending Hosei University. His feature films include *Suicide Club* (01), *Strange Circus* (05), *Love Exposure* (08), which won the FIPRESCI Prize at Berlin,

*Cold Fish* (10), *Guilty of Romance* (11), *Himizu* (11), *The Land of Hope* (12) and *Why Don't You Play in Hell?* (13). *Tokyo Tribe* (14) is his latest feature.



→ A moving drama about the men who featured in the golden age of Japanese samurai films.



## UZUMASA LIMELIGHT

太秦ライムライト

**DIRECTOR:** Ken Ochiai | 2014 | 103 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Seizo Fukumoto, Chihiro Yamamoto, Hirotarō Honda

A moving, nostalgic portrait of the men behind the golden age of chanbara (sword-fighting dramas and films), *Uzumasa Limelight* goes behind the scenes of the distinctive film genre for which Japan is famous.

A professional extra named Kamiyama (real-life kirare-yaku Seizo Fukumoto) has devoted 50 years of his life as a kirare-yaku in sword-fighting movies produced at Kyoto's Uzumasa Studios. A master of the art, he lives to die – or more exactly “to be cut” – and show a beautiful,

spectacular death on screen. Now an elderly man, Kamiyama lives very modestly but has earned immense respect from his peers, some of them movie stars. When the studio where he works decides to discontinue its chanbara productions, Kamiyama finds himself at a loss.

Hope arrives in the form of a young girl named Satsuki, who soon becomes Kamiyama's disciple. Will the art of dying by the sword live on?

— *The New York Festival of Contemporary Japanese Cinema 2014*

**KEN OCHIAI** (born 1983) made his first film at age 12. He left Tokyo after high school to pursue a filmmaking career in the USA, graduating from the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts with a BA in Production and the

American Film Institute with a Master of Fine Arts in Directing. His directorial debut was *Tiger Mask* (13) based on a Japanese manga series and produced by Toshiaki Nakazawa (*Departures*). *Uzumasa Limelight* is his second feature.

→ An underachieving teen tries his hand at forestry in this coming-of-age comedy drama.



## WOOD JOB!

WOOD JOB! 神去なあなあ日常

**DIRECTOR:** Shinobu Yaguchi | 2014 | 116 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Shota Sometani, Masami Nagasawa, Hideaki Ito

Yuki Hirano (Shota Sometani), an ordinary 18-year-old high school graduate, fails his university entrance exams. Finding himself without a job or anything much in the way of career prospects, he abruptly decides to leave the city life behind, prompted by a brochure with a dishy girl on the cover (Masami Nagasawa) that advertises a one-year forestry program.

He winds up in Kamusari, a backwater village nestled deep in the mountains, far beyond

civilization, convenience stores and mobile phone coverage. There, he meets Iida (Hideaki Ito), a combination of mountain boy scout, dreamboat, handyman and wildman. Alongside Iida, Yuki learns and grows to love the Thoreau-like lifestyle in the woods and he finds himself embracing the dream of forging a fresh green life – and finding the girl from the brochure.

— *Japan Cuts Festival 2014*

**SHINOBU YAGUCHI** (born 1967) studied graphic design at the Tokyo University of Art and Design. He directed his first feature film, *Down the Drain*, in 1993. Since then he has become best known

for comedy films that usually focus on coming of age stories or aspects of contemporary Japanese life. His films include *Waterboys* (01), *Swing Girls* (04), *Happy Flight* (08) and *Wood Job!* (14).

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### DUBLIN FILM CRITICS CIRCLE AT THE JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL 2015

Established in 2006, The Dublin Film Critics Circle offers the country's full-time professional movie reviewers an opportunity to pool opinions on recent releases, consider movie heritage and whinge about each other's shortcomings. This year, for the third time, a jury representing the DFCC including members Daniel Anderson (*Clickonline.com*), Tara Brady (*Irish Times*), Brogen Hayes (*movies.ie*) and Nicola Timmins (*Average Film Reviews*) will name their selections for Best Film and Best Anime at The 7th Japanese Film Festival.

#### GUEST SPEAKERS

**TARA BRADY** writes for The Irish Times and is chairperson of The Dublin Film Critics Circle. Tara will introduce the Dublin screening of *Kwaidan* on Thursday April 23rd.

**JONATHAN CLEMENTS** is the author of *Anime: A History* and the co-author of *The Anime Encyclopedia: A Century of Japanese Animation*. Jonathan will be with us in Dublin between Saturday April 18th and Sunday April 19th to introduce the anime films.

## JAPAN FOUNDATION DISCOVERY

The Japanese Film Festival is delighted to present screenings of four award-winning Japanese films from the Japan Foundation Film Library which have been chosen for their diverse representation of past and present Japan. The highlight is the classic horror film *KWAIDAN* (1965), nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the 1966 Academy Awards and winner of the Special Jury Prize at the 1965 Cannes Film Festival.

→ A special ticket price applies to these screenings.

→ A rare archive screening of the classic 1965 Japanese ghost story in luminous 35mm.



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## KWAIDAN

怪談

THE TICKET

**DIRECTOR:** Masaki Kobayashi | 1965 | 161 minutes | Cert: Club  
**STARRING:** Rentaro Mikuni, Keiko Kishi, Michiyo Aratama, Misako Watanabe

A swordsman is soon sorry to have left his devoted first wife. A woodcutter meets a snow witch. A blind musician sings for the royal court. Faces appear in a cup of tea. Working from a quartet of Lafcadio Hearn's atmospheric folk tales, director Kobayashi fashioned a spectacular and uncanny anthology film.

Lavish costumes and Takemitsu's seductively spooky score enhance the sumptuous visuals. A strange sense

of abstraction and cool distance hangs over every chapter and adds to the viewer's sense of unease. Kobayashi's interest in the supernatural is never about jump-scares. It is, rather, guided by a keen sense of mortality. A welcome dusting down of a criminally overlooked masterpiece. — *Tara Brady, The Irish Times*

*Film critic Tara Brady will introduce the Kwaidan screening at the Light House Cinema*

**MASAKI KOBAYASHI'S** (born 1916) early career at Shochiku Studios was interrupted when he was drafted into the army and sent to Manchuria. Years spent in a POW camp intensified his already pacifist tendencies. His second feature, *Thick Walled Rooms*, a drama concerning war criminals, was delayed for four years for fear of offending American authorities. The controversial

*Seppuku*, arguably his masterpiece, deconstructed the myths associated with bushido; it won the Special Jury Prize at Cannes in 1963. He won again with the spooky *Kwaidan* in 1965. Kobayashi may be a harder sell for western viewers than, say, Kenji Mizoguchi, but he demands to be mentioned in the same breath as Kurosawa.

→ This heart-warming film about following your dreams is also a love letter to Japan's train system.



© 2010 RAILWAYS FILM PARTNERS

## RAILWAYS

RAILWAYS 49歳で電車の運転士になった男の物語

**DIRECTOR:** Yoshinari Nishikori | 2010 | 130 minutes | Cert: CLUB  
**STARRING:** Kiichi Nakai, Reiko Takashima, Yuika Motokariya

A movie about realising your dream before it's too late, *Railways* is also a love letter to the simple life and the romantic attraction of old rural train services. Yoshinari Nishikori directs with an utter simplicity, free of any heart-tugging or rose-tinted spectacles. The flat landscape of Shimane prefecture, with the trains rattling along by the sea, is naturally caught by Hiroo Yanagida's clean widescreen photography, and hardly anything – apart from minor dramas involving the protagonist's dying mother – is allowed to disturb the film's pleasant, sunny tenor.

Exactly the same age as the character he plays, veteran Kiichi Nakai turns in an effortless performance as the workaholic father who decides it's time to indulge himself a little, and he's well supported by Yuika Motokariya (*Swing Girls*) as his initially grouchy daughter and a host of older character actors. The absence of music until the very last minutes also helps *Railways* to avoid being the rote Japanese heart-warmer it could so easily have become. — *Film Business Asia*

**YOSHINARI NISHIKORI** (born 1962) began acting in high school and initially harboured ambitions to direct for the stage. His wrote and directed his first film *Bugs* in 1996. He has also directed *Will Be There*

*for You* (99), *The White Ship* (02), *Miracle Banana* (05), *Un, Nan?* (08), *Railways* (10) and *Konshin* (12). His ability of capturing everyday-life atmosphere with delicate images has been highly acclaimed.

→ A recession-hit town beats the blues by reinstating their tug of war competition, only this time with female participants.

© 2012 "TUG OF WAR!" FILM PARTNERS



## TUG OF WAR!

綱引きいちゃった!

**DIRECTOR:** Nobuo Mizuta | 2012 | 111 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Mao Inoue, Tetsuji Tamayama, Keiko Matsuzaka

In a bid to save his city from a recession, the mayor of Oita city enlists Chiaki Nishikawa (Mao Inoue) from the city's public relations department to run a campaign to stimulate the local economy and bring vibrancy back to the town.

A one-time Olympic sport, tug-of-war was once beloved in Oita, where a male team had much success (the city in the past won the tug-of-war world championship three times). But the mayor

insists women from a threatened local catering co-operative take part if he is to consider saving their factory.

Inspired by a true story, *Tug of War!* is the "heart-warming tale" of how seven ordinary women band together to try and revitalise their local community, forming firm friendships along the way.

— Mark Adams, *Screen International*

**NOBUO MIZUTA** (born 1958) joined NTV in 1981 working initially as producer on TV dramas. He has directed many TV shows including *Mother* (10), *Tokkan* (12), *Woman* (13) and *Mosaic Japan*

(14). He made his feature film debut in 2006 with *Hanada Shonenshi the Movie: Spirits and the Secret Tunnel*. His other films include *Maiko Haaaan!!!* (07) and *The Apology King* (13).

→ A life-affirming depiction of a woman's relationship with her brilliant but self-destructive writer husband in post-war Tokyo.

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## VILLON'S WIFE

ヴィヨンの妻 ~桜桃とタンポポ~

**DIRECTOR:** Kichitaro Negishi | 2009 | 114 minutes | Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Takako Matsu, Tadanobu Asano, Shigeru Muroi, Masato Ibu

An all-star cast enacts a story, distilled from seven of acclaimed novelist Dazai Osamu's works, in this literary drama released on the 100th anniversary of the birth of the novelist. Set in the chaotic post war period, the film explores the tumultuous relationship between a hard-drinking, promiscuous writer and his beautiful, upstanding, and devoted wife.

While raising a young son, Sachi, the wife of the popular writer Otani, struggles to contain the damage wrought by her profligate

husband. To pay off his debts, she starts working at a pub, where she wins the favor of Okada, a young fan of Otani's, and the lawyer Tsuji, whom she had a crush on in the past. But Otani surges with jealousy at the sight of the newly confident and popular Sachi. Struggling with his writing as well, he attempts to change his life in a dramatic way.

For *Villon's Wife*, Negishi won the best director award at the 33rd Montreal World Film Festival.

— *Festival Japan 2012, Canadian Film Institute*

**KICHITARO NEGISHI** (born 1950) started working at the Nikkatsu studio in 1978. In 1981 he made his feature film debut proper with *Enrai*, which won many prizes including a Mainichi Blue Ribbon

Best Director award. His other films include *What the Snow Brings* (05), *Dog in a Sidecar* (07) and *Villon's Wife* (09).

# SCHEDULE

## CORK

### THE GATE CINEMA

Mon April 13	Thermae Romae II	18:45
Tue April 14	Uzumasa Limelight	18:45
Wed April 15	Lady Maiko	18:45
Thu April 16	The Light Shines Only There	18:45
Fri April 17	Rurouni Kenshin: Kyoto Inferno	15:45
	Rurouni Kenshin: The Legend Ends	18:45
	Tokyo Tribe	23:30
Sat April 18	Pale Moon	18:45
	Time of Eve	23:30

### TRISKEL CHRISTCHURCH

Sun April 19	A Letter to Momo	18:00
Mon April 20	Wood Job!	18:00
Tue April 21	Forma	18:00
Wed April 22	Fuku-chan of Fukufuku Flats	18:00

## GALWAY

### EYE CINEMA

Sun April 12	Thermae Romae II	19:00
	The Light Shines Only There	21:00
Mon April 13	Wood Job!	19:00
Tue April 14	Pale Moon	19:00
Wed April 15	Lady Maiko	19:00
Thu April 16	A Letter to Momo	19:00

## LIMERICK

### UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

Wed April 8	A Letter to Momo	18:00
	Fuku-chan of Fukufuku Flats	20:00

## DUNDALK

### AN TÁIN ARTS CENTRE

Sat April 18	A Letter to Momo	18:00
	Uzumasa Limelight	20:30

#### PLEASE NOTE:

→ All films are in Japanese with English subtitles

## DUBLIN

### LIGHT HOUSE CINEMA

Wed April 15	Thermae Romae II	21:15
Thu April 16	Pale Moon	18:00
	Lady Maiko	21:00
Fri April 17	Uzumasa Limelight	18:00
	Rurouni Kenshin: Kyoto Inferno	20:15
	Tokyo Tribe	22:50
Sat April 18	Wood Job!	11:00
	The Light Shines Only There	13:15
	A Letter to Momo	15:30
	Only Yesterday	18:00
	Rurouni Kenshin: The Legend Ends	20:15
Sun April 19	Time of Eve	16:00
	Fuku-chan of Fukufuku Flats	18:15
	Forma	20:15
Mon April 20	Railways	18:00
Tue April 21	Tug of War	18:00
Wed April 22	Villon's Wife	18:00
Thu April 23	Kwaidan	18:00

### UCD STUDENT CENTRE CINEMA

Thu April 16	Tokyo Tribe	20:30
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### DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Mon April 13	A Letter to Momo	18:15
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## WATERFORD

### GARTER LANE ARTS CENTRE

Thu April 16	A Letter to Momo	19:30
Fri April 17	Uzumasa Limelight	19:30
Sat April 18	Kwaidan	19:30

## SLIGO

### SLIGO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Thu April 9	A Letter to Momo	12:30
	Fuku-chan of Fukufuku Flats	18:00

# EXPERIENCE JAPAN

Established in January 2010, Experience Japan aims to celebrate, share and promote Japan as well as Japanese-Irish culture and heritage in Dublin and throughout Ireland. It marks the longstanding historical and warm relations which exist between our countries and peoples. Experience Japan is proud to be associated with the 7th Japanese Film Festival.

Experience Japan events have their highlight during Hanami when a day-long festival is held in the beautiful parkland surrounds of Farmleigh. Hanami or 'flower viewing' is the renowned Japanese custom of enjoying the beauty of sakura or 'cherry blossoms' in spring. Crowds of family and friends come together for outdoor parties to welcome the new season and celebrate the beauty of nature.

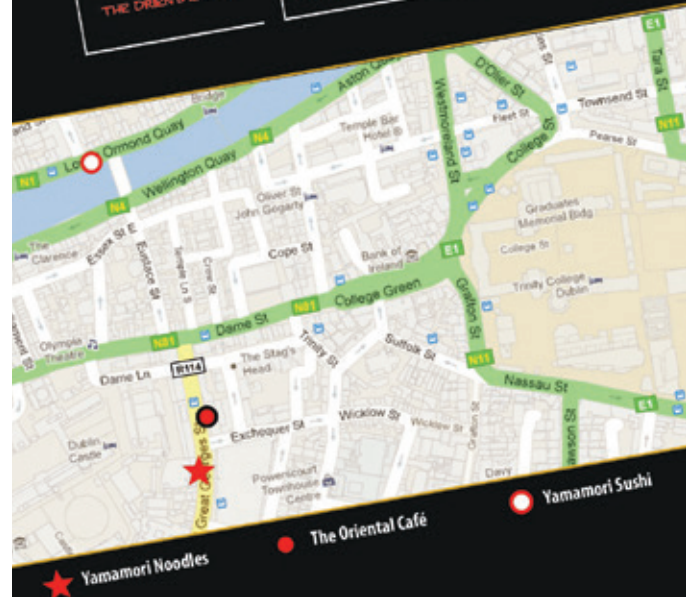
This year, Experience Japan's main festival day will be held on Sunday 12th April at Farmleigh in the Phoenix Park. Events will include martial arts, taiko drum performances, origami and craft workshops and Cosplay fashions framed with traditional Kimono displays. Activities are family-oriented and mostly free of charge.

For more information see:  
[www.experiencejapan.ie](http://www.experiencejapan.ie)

experience  
Japan

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The Oriental Café, 12-13 South Great George's Street, D2. Tel: 01-645 8001

The Izakaya, 12-13 South Great George's Street, D2. Tel: 01-645 8001

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→ FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE SEE [WWW.JFF.IE](http://WWW.JFF.IE)

