The continued collaboration between the Embassy of Japan and access > CINEMA has now reached its eighth year. Without the support of the Ireland Japan Association and the Japan Foundation, it wouldn’t have been possible. This year we will have 22 different films showing in Cork, Limerick, Galway, Dundalk, Waterford, Sligo and of course, Dublin. We are delighted so many people throughout Ireland will get to experience these fantastic films.

This year’s programme is one of the best yet, including films such as 100 Yen Love, a multi-award winning drama about how one argument can help transform your life. Nominated as Japan’s selection for Best Foreign Film at the 2016 Academy Awards, this film will surely warm your heart. When Marnie Was There, nominated for Best Animated Feature at the 2016 Academy Awards, is a Studio Ghibli produced animation telling the story of Anna, and her friendship with Marnie, who promises to keep her secrets from everyone. If you’re a fan of superstar idol Atsuko Maeda, we have two of her films: Initiation Love, a romance with a dark twist, and Tamako in Moratorium about an unemployed university graduate living with her father.

2016 is the 5th anniversary of the Great East Japan earthquake. Joy of Man’s Desiring is a film that explores the impact an unnamed earthquake has on children who lost their parents in the disaster. Informed by the director’s own childhood experience after the 1995 Kobe earthquake this film won a special mention at the 64th Berlin International Film Festival.

We are always looking for more ways to introduce Japanese culture to Irish people, especially as we approach 2017 when Ireland and Japan celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations. If you have any suggestions or comments, they are always welcome.

Enjoy & Arigato!
Embassy of Japan & access > CINEMA
EIICHIRO HASUMI (born 1967) made his debut with Sea Monkey (Umizaru, 04). Since then he has brought out a best-selling film almost every year in Japan, continuing the Umizaru series with Limit of Love (06), The Last Message (10), and Brave Hearts (12). For television he has directed such titles as Double Face (12), and seasons 1 and 2 of the police drama MOZU (14). Assassination Classroom was one of the biggest hits of 2015 in Japan.

Having already destroyed the moon, a mysterious visitor from outer space, named Koro-sensei, announces that he intends to do the same to Earth. But this alien – a cross between an emoticon and a giant yellow octopus – seems to like a challenge, and so offers the government a puzzling deal. He will train Class 3-E, the worst class in the prestigious Kunugigaoka Junior High School, to defeat him; but if they fail to take him out by graduation day, humankind will meet its fate.

Based on the popular manga and TV series, this live action version of Assassination Classroom is not

the violent blood-bath tale its name would lead those unfamiliar with the source material to expect. Instead this is a fun, irreverent and surprisingly smart film. The young cast are impressive, but the star of the show is undoubtedly Koro-sensei (voiced by Kazunari Ninomiya of Japanese boy-band Arashi), an entertaining and enigmatic presence throughout. By the film’s end this fantasy creation has become a fully developed character for the viewer and so unexpectedly provides an emotional heart to the film, in what is an otherwise insane and frantic setup. As you leave the cinema, you’ll find it hard not to smile – just like Koro-sensei!

MAMORU HOSODA (born 1967) first emerged as a key animator on Dragonball Z and the director behind Digimon. Few could have guessed watching those smash-'em-ups that the filmmaker, who studied oil painting, would graduate onto such splendid looking and emotionally involving science-fiction as The Girl Who Leapt Through Time and Summer Wars. Like Wolf Children (2012), The Boy and the Beast sees him reconfiguring mythology. Many have come to regard him as the new Hayao Miyazaki.

Mamoru Hosoda’s recent Japanese Academy Award prize-winner is a glorious animation about friendship.

Orphaned nine-year-old Ren escapes the streets of contemporary Tokyo into Jutengai, the kingdom of the beasts. There he becomes disciple to the boorish, ursine Kumatsu, one of two anthropomorphic animal candidates poised to inherit the realm’s throne when the current Lord reincarnates as a deity. Ren – renamed Kyûta by his master – becomes a promising martial artist and young man but complications arise when he discovers the route back to the human world.

Mamoru Hosoda explores loyalty, familial bonds, prejudice and depression through imaginatively rendered parallel worlds. There are old-school kendo showdowns and irresistible echoes of The Karate Kid and The Jungle Book as Kumatsu and Kyûta improve one another; there are even nods to Digimon, the show that marked Hosoda’s breakthrough. The residents of Jutengai warm to the interloper-hero, despite their collective fear of the ‘darkness of the human heart’. That darkness – and a riff borrowed from Moby Dick – powers along a surprising third act as Kyûta seeks out the mysterious son of Kumatsu’s chief rival. An affecting coming-of-age drama enlivened by elaborate plotting and playful folklore, the film has already grossed more than $50 million.
Acclaimed director Shunji Iwai revisits two of his most memorable characters in this charming animated prequel.

When Alice (Yu Aoi) moves to a new town, she discovers her classmates are obsessed with a bizarre mystery. The ‘Judas murder’ apparently saw one boy disappear, with the other students believing there was a supernatural cause behind everything. Unable to get straight answers, Alice finds herself drawn towards her reclusive neighbour Hana (Anne Suzuki) who has refused to return to school since the incident. Together, Hana and Alice start to uncover the truth behind the mystery while forming a strong friendship in the process.

Using rotoscoped animation to allow the cast to play younger versions of themselves, director Shunji Iwai here revisits the main characters from his cult 2004 hit *Hana & Alice*. This charming prequel recaptures the sense of fun and energy of the original, with Aoi and Suzuki’s chemistry as strong as ever. *The Case of Hana & Alice* is a welcome opportunity for fans to spend time with these two lovable characters again, while also proving to be a perfect introduction for newcomers.

Chigasaki Story is a charming and understated – not to mention very funny – film from first-time writer/director Takuya Misawa. Shot in the inn where Yasujiro Ozu spent months writing some of his most beloved scripts, this is also a film easily recommended to anyone who enjoys the vintage comedy-dramas of Woody Allen or Eric Rohmer.

With assured direction and its empathetic approach to characters, the delightful *Chigasaki Story* marks Misawa out as a welcome new voice in Japanese cinema.

**SHUNJI IWAI** (born 1963) started his directing career on TV dramas and music videos. His breakthrough feature *Love Letter* (95) proved a critical and commercial hit. He went on to become one of Japan’s most popular and acclaimed directors thanks to films such as *Swallowtail Butterfly* (96), *All About Lily Chou Chou* (01) and *Hana and Alice* (04). He also directed the English language film *Vampire* (11) and a segment of *New York, I Love You* (08). *The Case of Hana & Alice* (15) is his first animated feature.

**TAKUYA MISAWA** (born 1987) studied at the Japan Institute of the Moving Image, the prestigious school founded by Shohei Imamura. *Chigasaki Story* (14) is Misawa’s first feature, and has screened at international film festivals including Rotterdam and Beijing. He has also helped with production on a number of other features, and served as assistant director on *Taksu* (14) directed by Kiki Sugino (who also plays a main role in *Chigasaki Story*).
EARLY SUMMER
晩春

THE EMPEROR IN AUGUST
日本のいちばん長い日

DIRECTOR: Yasujiro Ozu | 1951 | 124 minutes | Cert: CLUB
STARRING: Setsuko Hara, Chishu Ryu, Chikage Awashima, Kuniko Miyake, Ichiro Sugai

DIRECTOR: Masato Harada | 2015 | 135 minutes | Cert: CLUB
STARRING: Koji Yakusho, Masahiro Motoki, Tsutomu Yamazaki, Shinichi Tsutsumi

YASUJIRO OZU (born 1903) began his career during the silent era and made dozens of films before his death in 1963. The serene humanism that underlines his best-loved works – including Late Spring (49), Tokyo Story (53), Floating Weeds (59), and An Autumn Afternoon (62) – is as indelible as his technical innovation. A director’s director, in 2012 Ozu’s Tokyo Story was voted the greatest film of all time by an extensive panel of filmmakers.

MASATO HARADA (born 1949) is a director, writer and actor. In 1979 he wrote and directed his first feature Goodbye Flickmania. He has made films across a wide range of genres including Spellbound (99), The Choice of Hercules (02), Chronicle of My Mother (12) and Kakekomi (15). The Emperor in August (15) is his latest film.

We remember the great Setsuko Hara, Ozu’s favourite actress, in a rare screening of this classic.

Masato Harada’s accomplished period film recreates the hours leading up to Japan’s official surrender in WWII.

There’s No Place Like Home plays on the soundtrack of Ozu’s unhurried, sly depiction of seismic familial shifts. Noriko lives contentedly in a multigenerational home that houses her elderly parents and her brother’s family. The clan are keen for Noriko (the great Setsuko Hara, who died last September, aged 95) to be married off. But her final decision on the matter is both impulsive and discombobulating.

This serene, slyly complex film is often overlooked within the ‘Noriko Trilogy’. Its themes – generational conflict and the emergence of a new, independent Japanese woman – are favourite preoccupations for Ozu. The seamless shifts in tone between humour and melancholy – another directorial specialty – are seldom as delicate as they are here. The visuals are equally balanced: his only known crane shot offers beautiful geometry. “Setsuko Hara is a fine person; if only there were four or five more such persons,” said Ozu of his leading lady, who also starred in Late Spring (1949) and Tokyo Story (1953). Her performance in Early Summer offers a masterclass in small, delicate movements.

August 1945 – World War II is coming to an end. Germany has fallen and the Allies are demanding that Japan accept the Potsdam Declaration. An Imperial War Council, established by Premier Suzuki (Tsutomu Yamazaki) at the request of the Emperor, and which includes Army Minister General Anami (Koji Yakusho) debates at length on how to proceed. The decision is a difficult one – the Army is resistant to accepting defeat and surrendering, while the Emperor wishes for peace to protect Japanese civilians from further attacks.

Reworking the same source material as Kihachi Okamoto’s 1967 epic The Longest Day – the writings of historian Kazutoshi Hando – director Masato Harada (Chronicle of my Mother) presents a tense, less sentimental version of the last days leading to Japan’s eventual surrender. With strong emphasis on the inside perspective of the Emperor Hirohito, and using his excellent cast to full effect, Harada delivers an elegant, accomplished film that manages to create a suspenseful and intriguing historical account out of procedural wartime negotiations.
**THE EMPIRE OF CORPSES**

Young medical student John Watson has become obsessed with replicating Dr. Victor Frankenstein's work from over a century ago. The legendary corpse engineer produced the only re-animated corpse to possess a soul and Watson wants to use Victor's research to bring his own recently deceased friend back to life. But when Watson’s illegal experiments come to the attention of the UK government’s secret society, the Walsingham Institution, he is recruited by them to search for Frankenstein’s private papers and ensure that they don’t fall into the wrong hands.

*The Empire of Corpses* is the first film in an anime trilogy based on the award-winning steampunk sci-fi novels of the late Japanese author Project Itoh.

**I AM A MONK**

24-year-old Susumu may have been raised in a temple and attended Buddhist university, but he has chosen to work in a bookshop rather than train as an apprentice monk. However when his grandfather, the temple’s Abbot, suddenly becomes ill and dies, Susumu decides it is time to accept his familial duty and take his grandfather’s place. As he learns that his new job has mundane duties and unexpected challenges similar to any other, he must also try to live up to the community’s expectations of him as a spiritual leader.

*I Am A Monk* is a light-hearted, honest depiction of the realities of life for the ordinary people who undertake the role of monks in Japan. Based on the best-selling memoirs of Missei Shirakawa – the current Abbot at Eifukuji Temple (the 57th stop on the fabled 88-temple pilgrimage in Shikoku) – first-time director Yukinori Makabe presents an enlightening, heartfelt and humanising portrait of a young man’s gradual discovery of the meaning in a profession that he had expected to leave behind.

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**RYOTARO MAKIHARA** (born 1980) has worked as a key animator on the TV Series *Paranoia Agent* (04) and films such as *The Place Promised in Our Early Days* (04), *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie* (05), *Summer Wars* (09) and *Colourful* (10). He has also directed TV episodes of *Tatami Galaxy* (10) and *Guilty Crown* (11). His feature directorial feature *HAL* (13) screened at JFF 2014. *The Empire of Corpses* (15) is his latest film.

**YUKINORI MAKABE** (born 1984) joined the production company ROBOT, where he worked as assistant director on films including *The Bayside Shakedown the Final* (12) and *Always – Sunset on Third Street* 3 (12). He has directed a number of short films including *The Sun and the Moon* (12), *Tokyo Sky Story* (13) and *A Piece of Dogu* (14). *I am a Monk* (15) is his first feature.
It seems like another ‘boy meets girl’ story... but this time not everything is as it seems.

Set in the 1980s, *Initiation Love* tells the story of Suzuki, who on a night out with friends finds himself falling head over heels in love with charming Mayu. After a few dates, the two become an item. Time passes and a fitter, more confident Suzuki is promoted in his job and has to move to Tokyo. Both he and Mayu agree to maintain a long-distance relationship. However, the energy of city life and the long weekend trips home provoke a personality change in Suzuki. He finds himself increasingly attracted to his co-worker Miyako and drifting away from Mayu...

*Initiation Love* makes no secret that there’s a twist in the tale, letting audiences know there’s a ‘secret’ before the film even starts. While that tease and eventual reveal adds an extra layer of mystery and surprise, even without it Yukihiko Tsutsumi’s film – based on a popular novel – is an endearingly perceptive relationship study. The film doesn’t downplay or attempt to apologise for Suzuki’s actions, making this a romantic tale brave enough to explore what happens in the aftermath of your average happy rom-com ending.

After a devastating earthquake, 12-year-old Haruna (Ayane Omori) and her much younger brother Shota (Riku Oishi) are left orphaned. They are taken in by their aunt and uncle, who choose not to tell the injured Shota that his parents have died. As Shota waits for his parents to return, Haruna is adjusting to a new home and school. She soon finds herself overcome by loneliness and guilt, haunted by the secret she is keeping from her brother.

Five years on from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, *Joy of Man’s Desiring* is a heartbreaking account of the human costs of a natural disaster. The two young lead actors manage incredible performances that beautifully and subtly capture the emotional complexities of the film. Meanwhile, writer/director Masakazu Sugita resists scenes of destruction and easy melodrama, choosing instead a quieter, more poetic approach. This is a devastating but deeply humanistic work.

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**YUKIHIKO TSUTSUMI** (born 1955) is a veteran film and television director. His previous work includes *Forbidden Siren* (06), *Happily Ever After* (07) and the 20th Century Boys trilogy (08-09). He was named Best Director by the Sports Hochi newspaper in 2015 for his work on *Initiation Love* (15) and *The Big Bee* (15) – an award previously given to the likes of Sion Sono, Hayao Miyazaki and Takeshi Kitano.

**MASAKAZU SUGITA** (born 1980) studied in the Visual Concept Planning Department at Osaka University. His short films include *Thank You for the Dream!* (03) and *The Serenity Prayer* (11). *Joy of Man’s Desiring* is his first feature film, and had its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival 2014.
**LITTLE FOREST: SUMMER/AUTUMN**

丽江・フォレスト 夏・秋

**DIRECTOR:** Junichi Mori  |  2014  |  112 minutes  |  Cert: CLUB
**STARRING:** Ai Hashimoto, Takahiro Miura, Mayu Matsuoka, Yoichi Nukumizu

This lovely, tranquil film is a celebration of country living and the endless joys of cooking & eating.

After a few years of city living, Ichiko (Ai Hashimoto, The Kirishima Thing) has moved back to her home village in Japan's mountainous Tohoku region. She commits to living off the land, spending her time making some of her estranged mother's favourite recipes and carrying out some experiments of her own. As the seasons pass and the crops allow Ichiko to cook ever more tantalising meals and treats, her reasons for returning home come into focus through a series of flashbacks.

You might want to have a table pre-booked for your favourite restaurant, because you will be hungry after watching Little Forest. This is a loving tribute to proper cooking and rural living, and you'll definitely be tempted to try out some of the delicious recipes on display here. The setting is stunning, with director Junichi Mori spending lots of time capturing the local sights, sounds and wildlife. The story is cleverly told in episodic chunks that complement the delicious food on display, and it's all held together through a charismatic performance from Ai Hashimoto. Little Forest is, simply put, an absolute treat.

**JUNICHI MORI** (born 1967) worked in TV & film as an assistant director and writer before making his first film Laundry (02). The screenplay for this debut was awarded the prestigious Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Award in 2000. He has gone on to direct films such as Ren’ai-Shousetsu (04) and A Pierrot (09). The Little Forest films marked his return to the big screen after spending several years working on television movies and series.

**LOVE AND PEACE**

ラブ&ピース

**DIRECTOR:** Sion Sono  |  2015  |  117 minutes  |  Cert: CLUB
**STARRING:** Hiroki Hasegawa, Kumiko Aso, Toshiyuki Nishida

A bizarre and brilliant clash of ideas and genres involving a disillusioned office worker and his giant turtle.

Kyo is an office worker living his life in constant fear of rejection and mockery. An adopted turtle named Pikadon is his only friend and confidante. However, when Kyo impulsively flushes Pikadon down the toilet in a fit of rage, things take a turn for the surreal. The turtle winds up in a mysterious sewer lair, where an old man cares for a ragtag group of toys and creatures he has brought to life. After consuming a magical sweet, Pikadon explodes in size and commits to fulfilling its former owner's every wish. Meanwhile, Kyo is unwittingly propelled down a path that leads him to superstardom.

If the synopsis sounds bizarre, in action Love and Peace is even stranger. There's a lot going on here – it's a fantasy movie, a monster film, a musical, a romance and a black comedy all at the same time. He may be working with a bigger budget than usual, but this is a Sion Sono film through and through, with a dizzying amount of surreal and ingenious ideas thrown at the audience. You've heard this said about a lot of films before, but you've really never seen anything quite like Love and Peace.

**SION SONO** (born 1981) 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), Why Don't You Play in Hell? (13) and Tokyo Tribe (14). He released a number of films in 2015, including Tag and Love and Peace.
**MISS HOKUSAI**

The new film by the director of *Colorful* (which screened in the 2011 Festival) focuses on the untold story of O-Ei, daughter of the renowned Edo period Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai. O-Ei is an independent, headstrong young woman and a talented painter who assists her father in his work but never steps out from beneath his shadow. Told from O-Ei's point of view, Miss Hokusai portrays a complex father-daughter relationship that involves her finishing his paintings but also participating in frank discussions with him about how she can improve her own erotic art.

An adaptation of Hinako Sugiura's manga *Sarusuberi*, Hara stays true to the episodic nature of the source material, using this technique to explore a range of interesting subjects and themes, whilst holding the narrative-arc together with O-Ei's presence throughout. The animation is rich yet delicate, and shows exceptional attention to detail. It's no surprise that it scooped three awards at the 2015 Fantasia International Film Festival in Montreal, including the Gold Audience Award for best animated feature film.

**DIRECTOR:** Keiichi Hara  |  2015  |  90 minutes  |  Cert: CLUB

**WITH THE VOICES OF:** Anne Watanabe, Yutaka Matsushige, Gaku Hamada, Kengo Kora

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**100 YEN LOVE**

Lazy Ichiko (Sakura Ando, *Love Exposure*) lives at home above her family's takeaway restaurant, rarely motivated to venture outside at all. A family dispute forces her to eventually leave home and find her own place. She takes a night shift at the local '100 Yen' convenience store to pay her rent. Meanwhile, she finds herself increasingly fascinated by Yuji, an older man she spots training at a nearby boxing gym. As she begins an awkward friendship with Yuji, a violent encounter with a sleazy co-worker provokes Ichiko to take up boxing herself.

This smart and stylish boxing film was Japan's official submission to the 2016 Oscars Best Foreign Language category.

**DIRECTOR:** Masaharu Take  |  2014  |  114 minutes  |  Cert: CLUB

**STARRING:** Sakura Ando, Hirofumi Arai, Miyoko Inagawa

**100 Yen Love** is Japan's latest submission for the Oscars Best Foreign Language Film category, one of the most assured Japanese independent films of recent times. It brings fresh energy and insight to many of the great 'boxing movie' standards, but also marks a major departure from that familiar formula. It's hilarious, thrilling, surprising, inspiring and moody all at the same time. Masaharu Take's visceral direction and a truly extraordinary central performance from Sakura Ando make 100 Yen Love a very special film indeed.

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**KEIICHI HARA** (born 1959) graduated from Tokyo Designer Gakuin College. He started his career in TV, taking the role of head of animation for *Doraemon* (84–87) before working on series like *Esper Mami* (87). Between 1993 and 2002 he built his reputation as a writer and director on the cult series *Kureyon Shin-Chan* and its spin-off films. His feature films include *Summer Days with Coo* (07) and the Annecy-winning *Colorful* (10). His latest film, *Miss Hokusai* (15) has gained international critical accolades.

**MASAHARU TAKE** (born 1967) graduated from Meiji University before beginning his career as an assistant director on films including *Memories of Matsuko* (06). He made his directorial debut with *Boy Meets Pusan* (06). His other films include the Cafe Daikanyama series (08) and *Eden* (12). *100 Yen Love* (14) is his eighth film.
Jihei is a farmer living with his wife in Sanchu, Okayama Prefecture during the early 18th century. The local farmers are negotiating with the local authorities to gain more favourable tax rates. When the discussions don’t go according to plan, the peasants revolt against their wealthy lords, with timid Jihei attempting to observe events from the sidelines. The uprising proves to have major ramifications for everybody involved – not least Jihei.

Based on real events, Sanchu Uprising: Voices at Dawn is a captivating second feature from director Juichiro Yamasaki.

To say Tag opens with a bang is understating things. Two buses full of schoolgirls are travelling to a summer camp when a freak, bloody accident leaves Mitsuko (Reina Triendl) the only survivor. Seemingly pursued by a malicious, invisible force, a terrified Mitsuko finds sanctuary at a nearby high school. There, she’s convinced by her friend Aki that the whole thing was just a nightmare. Unfortunately, the peace doesn’t last for long before another burst of ultraviolence sees Mitsuko running and fighting for her life as the world she knows collapses around her...

Tag, which boasts an almost entirely female cast, is destined to be a cult classic – a surreal, stylish and shocking film that doesn’t give the audience a chance to catch their breath. To say any more would ruin the surprises, but it’s safe to say Sion Sono has crafted some wildly imaginative setpieces here, held together by a story that will keep viewers on their toes. For all its cult film bona fides, it also boasts a poignant, thoughtful emotional core and features some of the cleverest aerial drone photography yet seen on the big screen. Make no mistake: Tag is pure, unadulterated Sono.
THREE STORIES OF LOVE
恋人たち

DIRECTOR: Ryosuke Hashiguchi | 2015 | 140 minutes | Cert: CLUB
STARRING: Atsushi Shinohara, Toko Narushima, Ryo Ikeda, Ken Mitsuishi

Ryosuke’s Hashiguchi’s first film in seven years, ranked as the best Japanese film of 2015, is a poignant and real portrayal of love and loss.

A lonely bridge inspector devastated by the senseless murder of his wife; a middle-aged housewife neglected by her indifferent husband; an arrogant gay lawyer whose success does not extend to his relationships. These three people with very different and unconnected lives, but each is faced with having to cope with personal tragedy and disappointment.

Ryosuke Hashiguchi’s first film in seven years began as a workshop project. Casting unknowns in the three lead roles, he used the actors’ personalities, as well as his own experiences, to develop the film’s characters during an eight-month process. The result is a triumph. Hashiguchi’s film may be concerned with themes of unfulfillment and unhappiness, but he is also keen to explore the extraordinary ability of people to confront, cope with and overcome difficulties. Using both his excellent cast and pitch-black humour he delivers an inspiring and human drama, and while there are no fairy-tale endings here, he quietly encourages us to celebrate life. Ranked by The Japan Times as the best domestic film of 2015, this is a very real, heart-breaking yet hopeful portrayal of what it means to love and also to lose love.

RYOSUKE HASHIGUCHI (born 1962) directed 8mm films while still at secondary school. In 1989 his 8mm film A Secret Evening won the Grand Prix at the Pia Film Festival. In 1992 his first feature, A Touch of Fever, screened at the Berlin International Film Festival. His 2002 film Hush! was invited to screen at the Directors’ Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival and was released in 69 countries. He has also directed Like Grains of Sand (95), All Around Us (08) and Zentai (13). Three Stories of Love (15) is his seventh feature film.

WHEN MARNIE WAS THERE
思い出のマーニー

DIRECTOR: Hiromasa Yonebayashi | 2014 | 103 minutes | Cert: PG
WITH THE VOICES OF: Sara Takatsuki, Kasumi Arimura, Nanako Matsushima

Arrietty director Hiromasa Yonebayashi’s Oscar nominated animation, and Studio Ghibli’s final film is a heartfelt and magical adaptation of Joan G. Robinson’s classic novel.

Lonely pre-teen Anna prefers sketching and solitude to company; even when it comes to her evidently doting adoptive mother. When Anna suffers an asthma attack, her worried parents send her to rural Kushiro, where she happens upon a mysterious abandoned mansion and the equally enigmatic Marnie, a similarly aged girl with cascading blonde locks and old-fashioned attire. The two quickly become firm (and secret) friends but Marnie’s propensity for disappearing and reappearing suggest that she’s no ordinary 12-year-old. What’s more, she seems to induce memory loss in Anna, who wakes up after their encounters, inexplicably dirty or shoeless.

Hiromasa Yonebayashi takes a painterly approach bringing moonlit nights and verdant landscapes to this lovely adaptation of Joan G Robinson’s 1967 young adult classic. The last film to emerge from Studio Ghibli, before the studio closed for ‘pause’ following the recent retirement of Hayao Miyazaki is, rather appropriately, characterised by magic and melancholy. The intensity of Anna and Marnie’s relationship – recalling Ghost World or a benign Heavenly Creatures – is poetically and sensitively handled.

HIROMASA YONEBAYASHI (born 1973) or Maro – as his work chums call him – is a long-time employee at Studio Ghibli, where he has worked as an animator on such classics as Princess Mononoke (97), My Neighbours the Yamadas (99), Spirited Away (02) and Howl’s Moving Castle (04). He made his directorial debut with The Secret World of Arrietty (10), an adaptation of Mary Norton’s The Borrowers. Last year, his second feature, When Marnie Was There, was nominated for an Academy Award.
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 fourth time, a jury representing the DFCC members will name their selections for Best Film and Best Anime at the 8th Japanese Film Festival.

Daniel Anderson  Click Magazine
Nicola Timmins  Average Film Reviews
Donald Clarke  The Irish Times
Hilary White  The Sunday Independent
Brogen Hayes  movies.ie
David Turpin  nomoreworkhorse.ie
Tara Brady  The Irish Times

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 Early Summer on Thursday April 21st.
TOSHIYUKI MORIOKA (born 1960) founded the Straydog theatre company in 1993 before becoming a screenwriter and film director. He has written the screenplays for films including Rokuro Mochizuki’s Another Lonely Hitman (95) and Takashi Miike’s Fudoh: The New Generation (96). He made his directorial debut in 2000 with Requiem of Darkness, paying homage to the 1948 Akira Kurosawa classic Drunken Angel. His other films include Mondai no nai Watashitachi (04), Tears of Kitty (07) and Your Story (09).

The action of people relocating to Tokyo is such common practice in Japan that a verb has been assigned to it – *jokyo*, defined as “proceeding to the capital [Tokyo]”. The title of Toshiyuki Morioka’s film, based on Rieko Saibara’s manga of the same name, combines this reference with the Japanese word for “story” – *monogatari* – to give a playful nod to Ozu’s classic 1953 film.

Natsumi is a self-assured but naïve country girl. She travels to Tokyo to attend college and pursue her dreams of becoming a published manga artist. But Natsumi is soon brought down to earth with a bump when she finds herself having to scrape a living to stay in the city by juggling college, a low-paid job and a good-for-nothing boyfriend. If she wants to succeed, she must learn to pick herself up and use her experiences, both good and bad, as inspiration for her art.

NOBUO MIZUTA (born 1958) joined NTV in 1981 working initially as a 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).

Ryoro Kurojima (comedian Sadao Abe, sporting a terrific bowler hair-cut) is the founder and director of the Tokyo Apology Centre, where he works as a professional apologist. He specialises in the practice of *dogeza*, a traditional form of apology that requires one to fall on one’s knees, forehead to the ground, prostrating oneself in the ultimate expression of repentance. He teaches his apology techniques to a host of clients to solve a range of problems. But when he finds himself caught up in an international crisis, he realises he may be out of his depth and that he will need to extend himself beyond his normal apology methods.

Following up on their hits Maiko Haaaan!!! (07) and No More Cry!!! (09), writer Kankuro Kudo, director Nobuo Mizuta and actor Sadao Abe reunite for this madcap, surreal “comedy of manners” with hilarious results.

What does it take to be a professional ‘apologist’? Find out in this hilarious surreal comedy.

A young woman moves to Tokyo to pursue her dreams in this drama based on the life of manga artist Rieko Saibara.
A road trip becomes a life-affirming journey when two women decide to visit an old college friend.

When old college friends Jinko and Motoko hear that former classmate Miki is in hospital after falling into the sea, they decide to visit her. They are joined on this impromptu road-trip by unemployed Haraki who has offered to be their driver for the two days. As it has been six years since the friends have seen Miki, they start to contemplate their own lives and feelings when it becomes apparent that Miki's accident was intentional.

Writer/director Hiroshi Ishikawa's moving drama is a delicate and low-key affair, anchored in the strong performances of his four lead actresses. Inspired by the idea that friends are like petals fluttering in the wind, he had his cast improvise much of the drama. The result is a poetic and contemplative story, tinged with sadness and regret, but ultimately ending on an optimistic note, with the four women looking towards the future rather than back at the past.

HIROSHI ISHIKAWA (born 1963) is a film director and writer. His films include Tokyo. Sora (03) and Su-ki-da (05) which won him the Best Director prize at the 2005 New Montreal Film Festival. Petal Dance (13) is his third film.

An unemployed university graduate slowly realises she needs to make some life changes in this bittersweet family drama.

Tamako returns to live with her father after graduating from college. Uninterested in helping him run his sports equipment business, she falls into a state of “moratorium”, spending her days sleeping, eating and playing computer games. That is until her father starts dating an attractive divorcée and Tamako slowly starts to realise that she needs to make some changes.

First conceived as a television miniseries, Tamako in Moratorium successfully incorporates the episodic nature of the original idea, with the different seasons reflecting Tamako’s changing state of mind. Former AKB48 lead idol group member Atsuko Maeda lends a charm to the lead character that generates a genuine affection for Tamako despite her obvious failings. Nobuhiro Yamashita’s gentle humour recalls the intimacy of his earlier work and he uses it to effectively capture the uncertainties experienced by a young educated generation in this bittersweet family drama.

NOBUHIRO YAMASHITA (born 1976) studied filmmaking at Osaka University of Arts. His first feature film was Hazy Life (99). In 2007 his two films The Matsugane Potshot Affair and A Gentle Breeze in the Village were released in Japan and he won the Best Director Prize at the Japanese Hochi Film Awards. His other films include My Back Page (11), The Drudgery Train (12), Girls in the Psychic Club (14) and La La La at Rock Bottom (15).
### SCHEDULE

#### CORK
**TRISKEL CHRISTCHURCH**
- **Sun** April 3: 
  - *Initiation Love* 18:15
- **Mon** April 4: 
  - *The Case of Hana & Alice* 18:15
- **Tues** April 5: 
  - *Chigasaki Story* 18:15
- **Wed** April 6: 
  - *Assassination Classroom* 18:15

**GATE CINEMA CORK**
- **Thu** April 7: 
  - *Miss Hokusai* 18:30
- **Fri** April 8: 
  - *100 Yen Love* 18:30
- **Sat** April 9: 
  - *Love and Peace* 18:30
- **Sun** April 10: 
  - *Three Stories of Love* 18:30

#### LIMERICK
**UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK**
- **Wed** April 6: 
  - *The Case of Hana & Alice* 18:00
  - *Miss Hokusai* 20:15

**BELLTABLE @ 69 O’CONNELL STREET**
- **Tue** April 5: 
  - *I am a Monk* 20:00
- **Wed** April 6: 
  - *100 Yen Love* 20:00

#### WATERFORD
**GARTER LANE ARTS CENTRE**
- **Fri** April 8: 
  - *The Case of Hana & Alice* 19:30
- **Sat** April 9: 
  - *Initiation Love* 19:30
- **Sun** April 10: 
  - *Little Forest: Summer / Autumn* 19:30

#### DUNDALK
**AN TÁIN ARTS CENTRE**
- **Sat** April 9: 
  - *The Case of Hana & Alice* 18:00
  - *Miss Hokusai* 20:30

#### GALWAY
**EYE CINEMA**
- **Sun** April 10: 
  - *Initiation Love* 19:00
- **Mon** April 11: 
  - *Chigasaki Story* 21:00
- **Wed** April 13: 
  - *100 Yen Love* 19:00
- **Thu** April 14: 
  - *Assassination Classroom* 19:00

#### DUBLIN
**LIGHT HOUSE CINEMA**
- **Wed** April 13: 
  - *When Marnie Was There* 21:30
- **Thu** April 14: 
  - *Joy of Man’s Desiring* 18:00
  - *Three Stories of Love* 20:00
- **Fri** April 15: 
  - *The Boy and the Beast* 18:00
  - *Sion Sono double-bill: Love and Peace* 20:15
  - *Tag* 22:45
- **Sat** April 16: 
  - *Sanchu Uprising: Voices at Dawn* 11:00
  - *The Emperor in August* 13:15
  - *The Case of Hana & Alice* 16:00
  - *When Marnie Was There* 18:00
  - *Assassination Classroom* 20:15
  - *The Empire of Corpses* 22:45
- **Sun** April 17: 
  - *I am a Monk* 16:00
  - *Chigasaki Story* 18:15
  - *Initiation Love* 20:15
- **Mon** April 18: 
  - *Tamako in Moratorium* 18:00
- **Tue** April 19: 
  - *Jokyo Monagatari* 18:00
- **Wed** April 20: 
  - *The Apology King* 18:00
- **Thu** April 21: 
  - *Early Summer* 18:00

**THE CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY**
- **Wed** April 20: 
  - *Petal Dance* 14:00

#### SLIGO
- Check [www.jff.ie](http://www.jff.ie) for screening updates.

### PLEASE NOTE:
- All films are in Japanese with English subtitles.
- All films, with the exception of *When Marnie Was There* are unclassified.
- Unclassified films are subject to club conditions, i.e. open to over 18+ years only.
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 8th 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 17th 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 about this and other events see: www.ExperienceJapan.ie
THE ORIENTAL CAFÉ & THE IZAKAYA

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Photography by Simon Lazewski

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Yamamori Sushi, 38-39 Lower Ormond Quay, D1. Tel: 01-872 0003
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

www.yamamori.ie
“An irresistible, light-filled family drama...
slips down as easily as the many
meals it shares with us”
Dave Calhoun, Time Out

“A touching but unsentimental
take on sisterly love”
Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

“An intelligent, quiet work
from a master filmmaker”
John Bleasdale, CineVue

OUR LITTLE SISTER
A film by Kore-edo Hirokazu

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