

The Japan Foundation presents:
**The Japan Foundation
Touring Film Programme 2023**

Experience Japan through Cinema

Celebrating 20 Years of Dedication to Japanese Cinema

Always Evolving:

Japanese Cinema Then, Now, and for the Future

3 February – 31 March 2023

In 24 Cities in the UK

The UK's largest and ever-evolving festival of Japanese cinema is back in February 2023, celebrating its twenty year anniversary. To mark this incredible milestone, this year's programme will showcase the fascinating trajectory of Japanese cinema, focusing mainly on the twenty-first century.

Japanese cinema is constantly in a state of flux: the noted golden age from the fifties to the seventies was followed by a gradual decline in the industry and the emergence of new directors in the nineties, such as the now prominent KITANO Takeshi and MIIKE Takashi. Nowadays, around five-hundred Japanese films are released in Japan every year*. Recent successes in the Japanese film industry abroad, such as HAMAGUCHI Ryusuke's Oscar-winning *Drive My Car*, and the growth of a large and enthusiastic international audience for new films directed by KORE-EDA Hirokazu, are expected to motivate other film makers from Japan. What is it that Japanese filmmakers are trying to say through their motion pictures? Can one see the future of Japanese cinema? Will Japanese films continue to be in thrall to the past or will a new phase emerge?

With the theme "Always Evolving" in mind, this year's programme aims to provide audiences with an overview of the development of Japanese cinema, focusing mainly on the past twenty years. This year's line-up of films includes: Ozu-esque family dramas, *jidaigeki* (period dramas), yakuza films, and films that explore modern social issues in Japan, such as the lives of LGBTQ+ people – a topic that is increasingly being covered by contemporary Japanese cinema. The programme will include both films that have recently been released, as well as films that are slightly older and which were largely not shown in the United Kingdom at the time of their release. Showcasing varied voices, from veteran directors to emerging talents, each selected film is a representation of Japanese cinema in the year of its release, and all films share connections to past themes of the Touring Film Programme**, as we aim to define what Japanese cinema truly is.

It may be too ambitious for our selection of films to definitively answer the question "what defines Japanese cinema?" But we hope that the programme will encourage audiences to think about where Japanese cinema has come from, where its current position in the world of cinema is, and potentially, where it is heading next.

*Based on the statistics by Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan

**See <https://www.jpffilm.org.uk/seasons>



Images, left to right: *Till We Meet Again*, IMAI Tadashi, 1950; *Hold Me Back*, OKU Akiko, 2020; *Under the Open Sky*, NISHIKAWA Miwa, 2021

“---a unique and sometimes once-only opportunity to see a selection of rare films that otherwise have a very limited distribution in the west.”

(Noel Megahey, The Digital Fix website, January 2019)

“(The programme) boasts an impressive legacy” (James Balmont, On Another, February 2022)

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#JFTFP23

The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme is produced and organised by the Japan Foundation, London.

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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 24 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. jpf.go.jp (Head Office), jpf.org.uk (London)

About the Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme

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 films in order to introduce their versatility and uniqueness. Most of films selected for the **Japan Foundation Touring Film 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 is the Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme's 20th edition and the Programme is the only one in the UK that provides the joy of Japanese cinema in multiple cities.

For details please visit: jpf-film.org.uk

The Japan Foundation presents:

The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme 2023

Always Evolving: Japanese Cinema Then, Now, and for the Future

Experience Japan through Cinema

3 February – 31 March 2023, nationwide
3 February – 12 February 2023 at ICA, London

Listings information:

The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme 2023
Always Evolving: Japanese Cinema Then, Now, and for the Future
3 February – 31 March 2023, nationwide

Film Line-up

Under the Open Sky (Subarashiki sekai)

NISHIKAWA Miwa, 2021, 126 min

Former murderer Mikami (YAKUSHO Koji) is released from prison and tries to re-adapt to society. Intrigued by his life, a TV crew follows Mikami's struggles and relationships with others. Can people with a criminal past truly become accepted?

Tokyo Night Sky Is Always the Densest Shade of Blue (Eiga Yozora wa itsudemo saikomitsudo no aoiro da)

ISHII Yuya, 2017, 108 min

Mika (ISHIBASHI Shizuka) deals with death as a nurse and works at a girls' bar at night. Shinji (IKEMATSU Sosuke) is a construction worker who constantly experiences inexplicable loneliness. The path of two lost souls meet under the Tokyo night sky, developing feelings for each other.

Tsuyukusa (Tsuyukusa)

HIRAYAMA Hideyuki, 2022, 95 min

On the surface, middle-aged Fumi (KOBAYASHI Satomi) lives happily in a seaside town surrounded by her like-minded co-workers. However, she hides an inner sorrow and hesitates to move forward with her life... that is, until she meets a man with past. Can she take a step forward with a little bit of bravery?

Till We Meet Again (Mata au hi made)

IMAI Tadashi, 1950, 111 min

During the Second World War, Saburo (OKADA Eiji) and Keiko (KUGA Yoshiko) make their first encounter in an underground bomb shelter. From the moment they fall in love the clock starts ticking on their time together – and soon, Saburo receives a call-up notice, leaving their fate uncertain.

Intolerance (Kuhaku)

YOSHIDA Keisuke, 2021, 107 min

A junior high school girl (ITO Aoi) has a fatal accident after running away from a shop manager (MATSUZAKA Tori) who caught her shoplifting. The enraged father (FURUTA Arata) starts hunting down the ones to blame, unable to accept

his loss and his daughter's misdeed.

It Comes (Kuru)

NAKASHIMA Tetsuya, 2018, 134 min

Hideki (Tsumabuki Satoshi) seems to have a perfect life with his wife (Kuroki Haru). One day, Hideki receives a message from an unknown visitor – and then the haunting begins. A deeply unsettling exorcism film that pushes Japan's horror genre to a new level.

Ito (Itomichi)

YOKOHAMA Satoko, 2021, 116 min

Ito (Koma Ren), a talented shamisen player, is so shy that she has hardly any friends or a social life. To change this, she decides to start a part-time job at a maid café, much to her father's dismay. Can she ever change herself? Enjoy the shamisen performances and the unique Tsugaru dialect.

The Million Ryo Pot (Tange Sazen yowa: Hyakuman ryo no tsubo)

YAMANAKA Sadao, 1935, 92 min

A pot containing a secret map for treasure has been sold to a junk dealer and then sold again to an orphan, who uses it as a goldfish bowl. As everyone greedily chases after the pot, Tange Sazen (Okochi Denjiro), who works as a bodyguard, stumbles upon the frenzied search, knowing nothing about the secrets of the pot.

Angry Son (Sekai wa bokura ni kizukanai)

IIZUKA Kasho, 2022, 112 min

Jungo (Horike Kazuki) is an angry boy, and his main source of resentment is his Filipina mother (Gow). Growing up in a single-parent household and not knowing his own father, he feels marginalised and cannot even form a solid relationship with his boyfriend. Can he ever find a place to belong?

The Past is Always New, the Future is Always Nostalgic: Photographer Daido Moriyama (Kako wa itsumo atarashiku, mirai wa tsuneni natsukashii: Shashinka Moriyama Daido)

IWAMA Gen, 2021, 112 min

Despite his international acclaim, iconic photographer MORIYAMA Daido's methods and everyday life have been shrouded in mystery. This documentary film follows the reprint project of his debut photo book, offering an insightful glimpse of aspects of the photographer.

BL Metamorphosis (Metamorufoze no engawa)

KARIYAMA Shunsuke, 2022, 118 min

Despite a massive age gap and different cultural backgrounds, could an unexpected friendship arise from a shared interest? Urara (Ashida Mana) and Yuki (Miyamoto Nobuko), a girl and a woman with a fifty-eight year age difference between them, bond over BL (Boys Love manga), a distinct and popular manga genre.

Hold Me Back (Watashi wo kuitomete)

OKU Akiko, 2020, 133 min

Thirty-one-year-old Mitsuko (Non) enjoys her not-so-lonely solo life on the surface, holding conversations in her head with her own internal adviser (Nakamura Tomoya). But her peaceful single life takes a sudden turn after falling in love with Tada (Hayashi Kento).

Lesson in Murder (Shikei ni itaru yamai)

SHIRAIISHI Kazuya, 2022, 128 min

After receiving a letter from the worst serial killer (Abe Sadawo) in history, Masaya's (Okada Kenshi) university days build to a crescendo of nauseating dread as he learns the cruel truth. A terrific psychodrama plays out as Masaya investigates the murderer's last crime, diving deep into the criminal's mind.

Joint (JOINT)

KOJIMA Oudai, 2021, 118 min

A former criminal, Takeshi (Yamamoto Ikken), dips his toe once more into criminal activities by becoming involved with the illegal use of personal data. Soon, his life is tangled up in a yakuza war. This stylish film serves as an example of how 21st century Japanese noir films should be.

Sensei, Would You Sit Beside Me? (Sensei, watashi no tonari ni suwatte itadakemasenka?)

HORIE Takahiro, 2021, 119 min

The marriage between manga artist Sawako (KUROKI Haru) and her cheating husband Toshio (EMOTO Tasuku) is on the verge of rampage. Instead of confronting her husband directly, Sawako uses her creative talents: writing a new manga about adultery. And so, begins a psychological game of cat and mouse.

SAMURAI HUSTLE (Chokosoku! Sankin kotai)

MOTOKI Katsuhide, 2014, 119 min

Set in eighteenth century Japan, a small samurai clan is at crisis point when the shogunate threatens to confiscate their lands. Leader of the clan Naito Masaatsu (SASAKI Kuranosuke) makes desperate efforts to accomplish a mission which is considered impossible! Will he be able to succeed?

My Broken Mariko (My Broken Mariko)

TANADA Yuki, 2022, 85 min

Tomoyo (NAGANO Mei) has lost her best friend Mariko (Nao) to suicide. Caught up in a constant whirlwind of memories, Tomoyo embarks on a journey with Mariko's ashes to fulfil her friend's dream. An emotionally challenging film depicting trauma and abuse in our modern world.

Wandering (Rurou no tsuki)

LEE Sang-il, 2022, 150 min

Two lonely souls - ten-year-old girl Sarasa and nineteen-year-old university student Fumi (MATSUZAKA Tori), live together in peace until Fumi is arrested for kidnapping. Fifteen years later, they meet again, all the while nursing their own pasts and painful secrets...

What a Wonderful Family! (Kazoku wa tsuraiyo)

YAMADA Yoji, 2016, 108 min

The happy family is in panic. Shuzo (HASHIZUME Isao) and his wife Tomiko (YOSHIYUKI Kazuko) have been married for fifty years. But all his wife wants for her birthday... is a divorce. A 'family conference' is held which only makes things even more chaotic...

Blue Thermal (Blue Thermal)

TACHIBANA Masaki, 2022, 103 min

Tamaki (voiced by HOTTA Mayu) is a university fresher and a member of the aviation club. Reluctant at first, but gradually gaining her love for flying, Tamaki faces many emotional ups and downs. A rather unusual coming-of-age animation set in the world of aviation, with spectacular depictions of the sky for viewers to enjoy.

Goodbye Cruel World (Goodbye Cruel World)

OMORI Tatsushi, 2022, 127 min

A one-time robbery job by a group of five strangers ends in success. Obtaining a great sum of money, the five are engulfed in a chaotic war between yakuza, police and politicians ... all coming after their money. In this stylish noir film, who is friend and who is foe?

Touring programme information

The season will tour 24 venues nationwide until late March 2023. This year's participating venues are:

3 – 12 February

Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London

ica.art

3 – 8 February

Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Aberystwyth

aberystwythartscentre.co.uk

3 February – 31 March

Firstsite, Colchester

firstsite.uk

4 February – 25 March

Phoenix, Leicester

phoenix.org.uk

5 – 28 February

Showroom Cinema, Sheffield

showroomworkstation.org.uk

5 – 28 February

Watershed, Bristol

watershed.co.uk

6 February – 28 March

Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle

tynesidecinema.co.uk

10 – 16 February

CHAPTER, Cardiff

chapter.org

10 February – 16 March

Brewery Arts Cinema, Kendal

breweryarts.co.uk

13 – 27 February

HOME, Manchester

homemcr.org

16 February – 9 March

Plymouth Arts Cinema, Plymouth

plymouthartscinema.org

22 February – 7 March

Depot, Lewes

lewesdepot.org

24 February – 18 March

QUAD, Derby

derbyquad.co.uk

25 February – 26 March

Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast

queensfilmtheatre.com

27 February – 20 March

City Screen Picturehouse, York

picturehouses.com/cinema/city-screen-picturehouse

1 – 29 March

Exeter Phoenix, Exeter

exeterphoenix.org.uk

2 – 30 March

Cameo Picturehouse, Edinburgh

picturehouses.com/cinema/the-cameo

6 – 27 March

Cinema City Picturehouse, Norwich

picturehouses.com/cinema/cinema-city-picturehouse

10 – 15 March

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

warwickartscentre.co.uk

10 – 16 March

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

macbirmingham.co.uk

11 – 29 March

Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee

dca.org.uk

15 – 28 March

Storyhouse, Chester

storyhouse.com

18 – 19 March

Howard Theatre, Downing College, Cambridge

panoramajournal.org/events

18 – 23 March

Broadway, Nottingham

broadway.org.uk

Screening dates may vary; please see your local venue for specific line-up information.

End of Note