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America's Largest Japanese Film Fest Announces 27 NYC Premieres for 8th Installment

JAPAN CUTS: The New York Festival of Contemporary Japanese Cinema July 10-20, 2014 at Japan Society

New York, NY -- North America's largest showcase of Japanese film and "One of the loopiest... and least predictable of New York's film festivals" (*New York Magazine*), [JAPAN CUTS: The New York Festival of Contemporary Japanese Cinema](#) returns for its eighth annual installment.

Running July 10-20 and screening 27 features with 8 special guests, **JAPAN CUTS 2014** encompasses a thrilling cross section of cinephilic genre oddities, sword-swinging period action, profound documentaries, cathartic melodramas, warped comedies and cutting-edge arthouse cinema made in and around Japan. Guests include superstar performers and independent auteurs opening up in rare Q&As and dynamic parties rocking Japan Society's historic theater and waterfall atrium. As in past years, the festival dovetails with the 13th New York Asian Film Festival (NYAFF), co-presenting 13 titles in the JAPAN CUTS lineup July 10-13.

JAPAN CUTS 2014 again earns the distinction as "New York's premiere Japanese cinema event," every title never before screened in New York City, "unspooling across a kaleidoscopic range of taste and aesthetics" (*The Wall Street Journal*). Boasting 1 World Premiere, 3 International Premieres, 7 North American Premieres, 6 U.S. Premieres, 5 East Coast Premieres, and 4 New York Premieres, every day of the festival provides a must-see event for the NYC cinephile, follower of Japanese art and culture, and devoted world cinema aficionado alike.

The festival opens July 10 with the U.S. Premiere of **Takashi Miike's** candy-colored undercover cop saga *The Mole Song: Undercover Agent Reiji*, followed by the yakuza-turned-filmmaker movie magic that is Sion Sono's *Why Don't You Play in Hell?*. The screening is joined by young actress Fumi Nikaido, named by *Variety* this year as its International Star You Should Know, who joins for an introduction and Q&A, as well as the **JAPAN CUTS Opening Night "Let's Play in Hell!" Party**.

The festival centerpiece is the World Premiere on July 17 of director **Momoko Ando's** masterful dark comedy *0.5mm*—a wicked critique of patriarchy following an assisted living caregiver who survives unemployment by taking advantage of elderly men. Ando visits Japan Society to present and discuss her film, as well as participate in the intimate reception after the screening.

JAPAN CUTS' closing film is the magnificent *The Tale of Iya*, with its North American Premiere July 20. Director **Tetsuichiro Tsuta** joins to present his renowned work that tells a timeless story on beautiful 35mm, showing a vanishing part of rural Japan through a mode of film artistry which is itself disappearing. A sign of the times, **JAPAN CUTS 2014** marks the debut of a new

digital cinema projection system in the Lila Acheson Wallace auditorium of Japan Society's landmark building, continuing to show viewers the best of this vibrant international film scene in the best cinematic conditions possible.

The festival also celebrates the career of brave and unpredictable international star **Kazuki Kitamura**, who receives JAPAN CUTS' annual prize, the **CUT ABOVE Award for Excellence in Film**. Kitamura has proven to be not only a versatile performer in dramatic and comedic roles in *Japan's Tragedy* and *Thermae Romae*, but a trailblazer in transnational filmmaking in *The Raid 2* and *Killers*, receiving *Kinema Junpo's* Best New Actor award for his work in Rokuro Mochizuki's *Minazuki* and Takashi Miike's *Ley Lines (Nihon Kuroshakai)*. Kitamura joins the festival July 19 to share **Dave Boyle's** Japanese-American thriller *Man from Reno* along with the director, including an introduction and Q&A following the East Coast Premiere of this sexy, moody neo-noir. Kitamura will receive the award as part of the International Premiere of the irresistible comedy *Neko Samurai ~Samurai ♥ Cat-*, in which Kitamura plays a deadly *ronin* whose heart is melted by his feline target, followed by the **Japan CATS Party!**

Other festival highlights include the hotly anticipated East Coast Premiere of *Unforgiven*, Sang-il Lee's adaptation of Clint Eastwood's original Western masterpiece. Starring Ken Watanabe, this samurai-western remains in the realm of greatness, while completely reformed for the new setting. Japan's controversial mega-blockbuster *The Eternal Zero* will screen for the first time in the U.S., giving local audiences a chance to see its amazing aerial dogfight sequences as well as confront the film's contested vision of history. Yuya Ishii's *The Great Passage*, a moving tribute to the power of language and Japan's Oscar entry, receives its awaited New York Premiere, and anime fans get their fix with the North American Premiere of Keisuke Yoshida's rapturous *My Little Sweet Pea*, an emotional rollercoaster of a family melodrama about an aspiring anime voice actress *otaku*. Also slated is the U.S. Premiere of Aya Hanabusa's *Tale of a Butcher Shop* and the East Coast Premiere of Yoju Matsubayashi's *The Horses of Fukushima*, two remarkable documentaries that tackle inequality and post-3/11 life through the exploration of human-animal relationships.

July 18 sees a euphoric night of exceeding depravity, with the International Premiere of Ryoko Yoshida's must-be-seen-to-be-believed comic tale of sex and possession *The Passion* adapted from Kaoruko Himeno's acclaimed novel, U.S. Premiere of Daisuke Miura's brilliant orgy-cum-psychodrama *Love's Whirlpool*, and the East Coast Premiere of Eiji Uchida's bloody intergenerational battle to the death *Greatful Dead* with newcomer Kumi Takiuchi. Zany director Katsuhito Ishii takes on the children's genre with the North American Premiere of *Hello! Junichi* (kids get in for only \$6 following Ishii's own efforts to conscript young cinephiles during the Japanese release!). Award-winning writer for the screen and stage **Shiro Maeda** makes his directorial debut with the hilarious and profound *The Extreme Sukiyaki*, presented here in its North American Premiere. Maeda will join for a Q&A via live video stream to discuss this remarkable film.

"Curating annual festivals of a national cinema is necessarily problematic, swinging between exhaustive cultural surveys or limited selections of titles with international arthouse appeal, between a lineup that is representative and one that is exceptional. Our tactic at JAPAN CUTS-- and I believe this is especially so this year--has been to focus on diversity," says filmmaker/scholar Joel Neville Anderson, programmer for JAPAN CUTS 2014. "And the results have been surprising, politically incendiary, and always entertaining. I see the festival's ongoing engagement with high and low genre, mainstream and experimental forms, as an extension of Japan Society's century old mission of cultural exchange. The lineup demonstrates Japan's film cultures navigating issues such as discrimination, aging, regional transformation, and widespread social precarity, evincing a nationalist groundswell attempting to revise history, as well as positive political awakenings following the natural and human-made disasters of 3/11."

Tickets: \$13/\$10 Japan Society members, seniors and students, except for the July 10 screening *Why Don't You Play in Hell?* and the July 19 screening of *Neko Samurai ~Samurai ♥ Cat-*: \$20/\$15, including after parties. Tickets for *Hello! Junichi* are \$6 for any child 12-years-old or younger accompanied by an adult. Patrons who purchase more than 5 tickets for at least 5

different films receive \$2 off of each ticket (this special offer is available only in person at the box office or by telephone, not with online purchases, and is not valid for the July 10 screening of *Why Don't You Play in Hell?*, July 19 screening of *Neko Samurai ~Samurai ♥ Cat~*, or the discounted \$6 ticket for *Hello! Junichi*.) General admission tickets may be purchased in person at Japan Society, by calling the box office at 212-715-1258, or at www.japansociety.org. The box office will be closed July 4-7 in observance of the July 4th holiday weekend.

JAPAN CUTS 2014 SCREENINGS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

All films are in Japanese with English subtitles unless otherwise noted.

0.5mm (0.5 miri) - CENTERPIECE PRESENTATION

Thursday, July 17 at 6:30 pm

****World Premiere**

****Featuring Intro and Q&A with Director Momoko Ando, followed by a reception**

Japan. 2014. 198 min. Blu-ray, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Momoko Ando. With Sakura Ando, Junkichi Orimoto, Toshio Sakata, Masahiko Tsugawa, Akira Emoto.

Sawa, an assisted living caregiver for a middle class family with an elderly infirm grandfather, is forced to stretch her morals to keep her job. As a result, she finds herself broke and out on the street. She survives her first night by striking up an ambiguous friendship with a kindly old man, gaining access to a portion of the immense wealth held by Japan's aging population. She continues with similar encounters, and while these begin as scams or revenge on rampant sexism, they ultimately become vulnerable intergenerational exchanges. Director Momoko Ando (*Kakera: A Piece of Our Life*, 2009) masterfully crafts this journey through Japan's embattled sexual landscape, confronting aging, class and patriarchy. Adapted from the director's first novel, *0.5mm* features Sakura Ando (the director's sister), who charges each scene with as much humanity as its impeccably photographed frames can handle. This is a dark and profound comedy of the best sort.

"Her debut film (Kakera) is a finely tuned meditation on what it means to be loved and to love, regardless of boundaries and social constructs." --Film International

All-Round Appraiser Q: The Eyes of Mona Lisa (Bannou Kanteishi Q Mona Riza no Hitomi)

Sunday, July 13 at 5:30 pm

****North American Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2014. 119 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Shinsuke Sato. With Haruka Ayase, Tori Matsuzaka, Eriko Hatsune, Charles Deladonchamps, Hiroaki Murakami.

The Japanese will always have Paris! In this adaptation of the arch-popular eponymous mystery novel by Keisuke Matsuoka, the city of *l'art et l'amour* provides the gorgeous backdrop for a grand intrigue involving the world's most iconic artistic treasure: the *Mona Lisa*. Armed with quasi-supernatural powers of deduction, bottomless knowledge on a limitless array of subjects, and last but not least, cute-and-sexy librarian good looks that would give Audrey Tautou a run for her money, Riko Rinda (Haruka Ayase) is a brilliant appraiser whose "All-Round Appraiser Q" reputation earns the attention of The Louvre as a *Mona Lisa* exhibition is to be held for the first time in Japan. Accompanied by sidekick Yuto Ogasawara (Tori Matsuzaka), a magazine editor who follows Riko for professional and possibly most personal purposes, she goes to Paris and finds her judgment challenged by the shroud of mystery and threats of theft surrounding the masterpiece as well as the *Mona Lisa* herself. Minds will be blown, puzzles will be solved, but will a 500-year-old curse be removed? By the director who gave you the *Gantz* and *Library Wars* blockbusters.

The Devil's Path (Kyoaku)

Saturday, July 12 at 6 pm

****East Coast Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2013. 128 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Kazuya Shiraishi. With Takayuki Yamada, Pierre Taki, Lily Franky, Chizuru Ikewaki, Kazuko Shirakawa, Jitsuko Yoshimura, Katsuya Kobayashi, Yu Saito.

The Devil's Path shows the hell of guilt and conscience as it chronicles the case of a condemned yakuza. A massive monster of a thug (actor-singer Pierre Taki) seeks revenge on his former accomplice and hopes to achieve his goal by telling his story to a journalist (Takayuki Yamada), revealing three unknown killings. The film is a sullen journey that hardens its emotions, anxieties and energies into a shell of obsession. For the death-row gangster, who's now found God, killing was just part of the cost of doing business. For his accomplice (Lily Franky), killing is just fun. A modest, quiet man, Yamada stands in for the viewer as Taki's mesmerizing, murderous presence absorbs the space around him, inviting him in to encounter a possibly even more evil man, his former partner in crime. As it tells their deeds, the movie becomes an expression of philosophical despair.

Nominated for Picture of the Year, Director of the Year and Screenplay of the Year at the 37th Japan Academy Prize

The Eternal Zero (Eien no Zero)

Saturday, July 12 at 3 pm

****U.S. Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2013. 144 min. HDCAM, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Takashi Yamazaki. With Junichi Okada, Haruma Miura, Mao Inoue, Hirofumi Arai, Shota Sometani, Min Tanaka, Isao Natsuyagi.

Japan's biggest hit last year, one of the 10 top-grossing Japanese films of all time, will no doubt provide the most unique and extreme film experience of the NYAFF/JAPAN CUTS 2014 lineup. As infuriating in its ideological and political black holes as it is exhilarating in visual artistry, *The Eternal Zero* follows a young man who, as he investigates the life and times of his grandfather, a reluctant kamikaze pilot during the Pacific War, goes from troubling revelations to shocking truths about heroism, history and his own family. Adapted from a hugely popular novel by Naoki Hyakuta, the film tells the tale of *tokkotai* ("special section," or kamikaze) pilot Kyuzo Miyabe in flashbacks that progressively reveal his alleged cowardice in battle actually concealed a specific moral philosophy of survival. From the cruelties of war to breathtaking airborne battles, this kinetic, emotionally intense, but also politically ambivalent film will leave no one indifferent.

The Extreme Sukiyaki (Ji, Ekusutorimu, Sukiyaki)

Wednesday, July 16 at 6:30 pm

****North American Premiere**

****Featuring Q&A with Director Shiro Maeda via streaming video**

Japan. 2013. 111 min. HDCAM, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Shiro Maeda. With Arata Iura, Yosuke Kubozuka, Mikako Ichikawa, Kana Kurashina.

Reaching a crisis in his post-college life, Horaguchi (Arata Iura) abandons his job and searches out his best friend from his school days. However the bitter and unemployed Ohkawa (Yosuke Kubozuka) hasn't heard from his friend in 15 years and is reluctant to resume their friendship. He is given no choice in the matter. Joined by Ohkawa's partner Kaede (Kana Kurashina) and Horaguchi's former love interest Kyoko (Mikako Ichikawa), the four set off on an aimless day trip to the beach, sukiyaki pot in tow. Ohkawa brings along the one thing that excites him--a crude boomerang he's carved. *The Extreme Sukiyaki* marks the reunion of Iura and Kubozuka, who shot to stardom after appearing side by side in *Ping Pong* (2002). This is the directorial debut of award-winning writer and playwright Shiro Maeda, whose film is adapted from his own novel.

Directorial debut of Shiro Maeda, winner of the 52nd Kishida Drama Award and 22nd Mishima Yukio Prize

The Great Passage (Fune wo Amu)

Saturday, July 12 at 12:30 pm

****New York Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2013. 134 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Yuya Ishii. With Ryuhei Matsuda, Aoi Miyazaki, Joe Odagiri, Haru Kuroki, Misako Watanabe, Chizuru Ikewaki, Kaoru Yachigusa, Kaoru Kobayashi, Go Kato.

Cult arthouse director Yuya Ishii (*Sawako Decides*) racked up top honors at the Japan Academy Awards this year (best picture, best director, best actor for Ryuhei Matsuda, best script plus technical prizes) with this captivating existential drama/comedy featuring a charmingly nerdy editor, Majime Mitsuya (Ryuhei Matsuda), who spends decades writing and compiling definitions for a "living language" dictionary while courting his landlady's granddaughter. Set in the mid-1990s, *The Great Passage* starts as the responsibility for putting together the massive dictionary project is passed on from long-time editor Kouhei Araki (Kaoru Kobayashi) to Majime Mitsuya, a much younger man with a degree in linguistics and an obsessive love for words. An oddball ode on the surface, the film is in fact a deeply humanist tribute to the power of language to connect people, a poignant study of life's slow but steady progression, and ultimately, about finding a reason to live.

"At once accessibly humanist and endearingly nerdy, suffused with a deep love of language and a quiet awe at the possibilities of human collaboration" - Variety

Selected as the Japanese entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 86th Academy Awards

Greatful Dead (Gureitofuru Deddo)

Friday, July 18 at 10:45 pm

****East Coast Premiere**

Japan. 2014. 97 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Eiji Uchida. With Kumi Takiuchi, Takashi Sasano, Kkobbi Kim.

Wealthy young Nami (Kumi Takiuchi) has found herself a hobby to while away the time between ordering new appliances and fashion accessories--surveilling the lives of the crazed and lonely, or "Solitarians," as she calls them. Perched atop the city with powerful binoculars, she tracks the descent of the elderly and unemployed into madness and death, gleefully snapping a selfie beside their freshly decaying corpses. When one of her most prized Solitarians (Takashi Sasano) is snatched up by Christian volunteers and becomes hopeful once again, Nami is sent into a murderous rage, pitting young against old in an epic, bloody battle. Eiji Uchida's genre pleaser is also a cutting critique of Japan's post post-bubble insularity and consumerism.

"Dark, bloody, unflinchingly brutal, yet also laugh-out-loud funny, genuinely touching and with a profound social conscience, Greatful Dead is the real deal." --Twitch Film

Hello! Junichi (Halo! Junichi)

Sunday, July 20 at 3 pm

****North American Premiere**

Japan. 2014. 90 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Katsuhito Ishii, Kanoko Kawaguchi, Atsushi Yoshioka. With Amon Kabe, Hikari Mitsushima, Ryushin Tei, Chizuru Ikewaki, Tatsuya Gashuin, Yoshiyuki Morishita.

Katsuhito Ishii (*Funky Forest: The First Contact* and *The Taste of Tea*) takes on the story of Junichi--a timid third grader who can't muster the courage to return an eraser he borrowed from his secret crush--and turns it into a children's rock 'n' roll comedy. Junichi's world is turned upside down as apprentice teacher Anna-sensei (Hikari Mitsushima) scraps her lesson plan to show the rambunctious students about life as an adult. With Anna's unorthodox style, Junichi and his friends are able to gain confidence and pursue their goal of putting on a big concert. Co-directed with Kanoko Kawaguchi and Atsushi Yoshioka, *Hello! Junichi* brings out the kid in adults and lets kids be kids. Boasting Ishii's signature dance numbers and Yoshiyuki Morishita (the

"Japanese Steve Buscemi") as the band's homeroom teacher, it's a unique experience built for future and current movie maniacs.

"Extraordinary." --Udine Far East Film Festival

Special price of \$6 for children 12-years-old and under!

The Horses of Fukushima (Matsuri no Uma)

Tuesday, July 15 at 6 pm

****East Coast Premiere**

Japan. 2013. 74 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Yoju Matsubayashi.

Fukushima's Minami-soma has a ten-centuries-long tradition of holding the Soma Nomaoui ("chasing wild horses") festival to celebrate the horse's great contribution to human society. Following the meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in the wake of the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami, local people were forced to flee the area. Rancher Shinichiro Tanaka returned to find his horses dead or starving, and refused to obey the government's orders to kill them. While many racehorses are slaughtered for horsemeat, his horses had been subjected to radiation and were inedible. Yoju Matsubayashi, whose *Fukushima: Memories of the Lost Landscape* is one of the most impressive documentaries made immediately after the disaster, spent the summer of 2011 helping Tanaka take care of his horses. In documenting their rehabilitation, he has produced a profound meditation on these animals who live as testaments to the tragic bargain human society made with nuclear power.

Note: Some scenes contain graphic animal imagery.

Winner of the Muhr AsiaAfrica Documentary Best Film Award at the 2013 Dubai International Film Festival

Love's Whirlpool (Ai no Uzu)

Friday, July 18 at 8:30 pm

****U.S. Premiere**

Japan. 2014. 123 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Daisuke Miura. With Sosuke Ikematsu, Mugi Kadowaki, Kenichi Takito, Eriko Nakamura, Hirofumi Arai, Yoko Mitsuya, Ryusuke Komakine, Seri Akazawa.

In a fancy split-level condo in Tokyo's Roppongi nightlife district, four women and four men gather from midnight to 5 am. They've all paid to be there (men more than women), and they have only one thing in common--they seek anonymous sex. Using no names, they're known only by their types: freeter (temp or part-time worker), mild-mannered salaryman, duplicitous OL (office lady), self-conscious working class factory worker, perfectionist teacher, veteran pervert, shy NEET ("not in education, employment or training") and bashful college student. Together, they unravel their identities in a night of increasing debauchery. Daisuke Miura's adaptation of his critically acclaimed 2005 play of the same name explores Japan's *fuzoku* (sex industry) with depth, humor and freewheeling indecency. This surprising, erotic and disturbing film features breakout performances by Sosuke Ikematsu and Mugi Kadowaki, who are tempted to mix love with sex.

18+ This film is unrated, and may only be viewed by persons 18 years of age and older.

Original stage play winner of the 50th Kishida Drama Award

Man from Reno (Rino kara Kita Otoko)

Saturday, July 19 at 4:30 pm

****East Coast Premiere**

****Featuring Intro and Q&A with Director Dave Boyle and Actor Kazuki Kitamura**

USA/Japan. 2014. 111 min. DCP, in English and Japanese with bilingual subtitles. Directed by Dave Boyle. With Ayako Fujitani, Kazuki Kitamura, Pepe Serna, Elisha Skorman, Hiroshi Watanabe.

A Japanese bestselling crime novelist visiting San Francisco finds herself embroiled in a real life mystery after a night with a handsome stranger. The man--Japanese and supposedly from Nevada--disappears the next morning, after which increasingly strange and dangerous events begin to occur. This beautifully photographed Japanese-American co-production overturns the gender stereotypes of the mystery thriller, casting international star Kazuki Kitamura as its *homme fatale*. Kitamura effortlessly slides between gentle and sinister, while Ayako Fujitani fits perfectly into the role of author-turned-detective. One of this accomplished transnational film's greatest features is a rare leading turn from Pepe Serna, veteran character actor of over 100 Hollywood films (*Scarface*, *The Black Dahlia*). Set in San Francisco, this neo-noir offers not only a compelling portrayal of gender and globalization, but a model for vibrant independent filmmaking across borders.

"Uncovers exhilarating new takes on genre conventions." --Los Angeles Film Festival

Maruyama, The Middle Schooler (Chuugakusei Maruyama)

Friday, July 11 at 8:30 pm

****New York Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2013. 119 min. Blu-ray, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Kankuro Kudo. With Tsuyoshi Kusanagi, Takuma Hiraoka, Kenji Endo, Ik-June Yang, Maki Sakai, Toru Nakamura, Nanami Nabemoto, Yuiko Kariya, Fumina Hara, Ryo Iwamatsu.

Though described by acclaimed actor/scriptwriter/director Kankuro Kudo as a "self-fellatio" comedy, *Maruyama* is also a moving coming-of-age story and an exploration of the infinite possibilities of the human imagination. Maruyama, a sex-crazed 14-year-old (Takuma Hiraoka) is not only dedicated to auto-eroticism but desires to defy the limitations of his body and transcend himself--until his spine literally cracks. When he encounters a newcomer, a nerdy, single father (Tsuyoshi Kusanagi) who finds fault with his neighbors, things take a weird turn as corpses are found in the otherwise ordinary neighborhood. As Maruyama's imagination gets out of control, his fantasies go joyously wild and free as he reimagines his family and the inhabitants of the entire apartment complex as manga-like characters cast in an action-packed saga of assassinations and revenge.

"[A] hugely entertaining, sensitive, hilarious and whimsical pop-comedy gem." - Twitch Film

Miss Zombie

Saturday, July 12 at 8:30 pm

****New York Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2013. 85 min. HDCAM, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by SABU. With Ayaka Komatsu, Toru Tezuka, Makoto Togashi, Riku Ohnishi, Tateto Serizawa, Takaya Yamauchi.

In a future or parallel world, family-man Dr. Teramoto (Toru Tezuka) receives a very special delivery: a crate containing a mail order female zombie (Ayaka Komatsu), complete with an instruction manual prescribing a vegetarian diet, a cautionary note against any meat, and a gun--just in case. Teramoto's wife (Makoto Togashi) promptly puts the zombie to work, assigning her the task of scrubbing the garden patio. In lieu of wages, she gets daily rations of rotten greens. Things take a disturbing turn when two contractors working at the villa molest the zombie girl. Witnessing this, the doctor becomes turned on and makes her his plaything. The zombie shows no particular emotional response and yet, as she stoically sews back her wounds, a sense of foreboding emerges. Fate comes knocking at the door when Teramoto's young son, Kenichi (Riku Onishi), has a dreadful accident. The tables begin to turn for master and servant.

"A deadpan social satire, an ode to motherhood, and a self-consciously grungy homage to classic silent horror-thrillers" - Variety

Winner of the Grand Prize at the 2014 Gérardmer Film Festival; Winner of Best Film Award at the 2014 Fantasporto Film Festival

The Mole Song: Undercover Agent Reiji (Mogura no Uta Sennyu Sousakan REIJI) - OPENING FILM

Thursday, July 10 at 6 pm

****U.S. Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2013. 130 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Takashi Miike. With Toma Ikuta, Riisa Naka, Takayuki Yamada, Yusuke Kamiji, Takashi Okamura, Shinichi Tsutsumi, Mitsuru Fukikoshi, Kenichi Endo, Sarutoki Minagawa, Ren Osugi, Koichi Iwaki.

Takashi Miike leaves respectability, restraint and decency at the door in this out-and-out balls-to-the-wall cops vs. yakuza farce. Inept rookie cop Reiji Kikukawa (Toma Ikuta) falls short of busting a city councilor who's caught molesting a teenage girl. Fired without ceremony, he is quickly rehired for an undercover mission to infiltrate a yakuza clan. Reiji's new colleagues give him a baptism of fire with an unorthodox initiation rite: he gets beaten up, tied naked to the hood of a car and driven around at top speed, and is coerced into shooting another cop. Reiji soon befriends Crazy Papillon (Shinichi Tsutsumi), the No. 2 in the gang. Sharing Reiji's taste in fashion as well as his distaste for drugs, they face down the diamond-toothed "cat" Nekozaawa (Takashi Okamura) and his gang. How far will Reiji go in the yakuza underworld, and will he be able to bring down the gangsters in the end?

"Takashi Miike hits a home run with an irresistible cops and yakuza romp" - The Hollywood Reporter

"Anyone who falls asleep during this extremely exuberant film can ask for his money back." - International Film Festival Rotterdam 2014

Monsterz (Monsutazu)

Sunday, July 13 at 3 pm

****North American Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2013. 111 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Hideo Nakata. With Tatsuya Fujiwara, Takayuki Yamada, Satomi Ishihara, Tomorrowo Taguchi, Motoki Ochiai, Taiga, Masaki Miura, Mina Fujii, Tatsuya Kawajiri, Yoshiyuki Morishita, Yusuke Hirayama.

Japanese horror master Hideo Nakata (*Ringu, Dark Water*) returns with a remake of the 2010 South Korean film *Haunters*, a paranormal thriller that offers an original, exciting variation on the tale of two men with supernatural abilities locked in a duel to the death. The nameless villain is a brooding loner (Tatsuya Fujiwara) who uses his mind control to rob banks to fund his solitary lifestyle. He is thrown off guard when delivery man Shuichi Tanaka (Takayuki Yamada) remains unaffected by his power, even after everyone standing in a public square has been placed under the control of his menacing sapphire eyes. Feeling threatened, the malevolent mind-bender sends a speeding truck after Shuichi and leaves him for dead. The young man mysteriously recovers and finds a job working for the driver, Mr. Kumoi (Tomorrowo Taguchi), a guitar-shop owner. But when the mind-bender finds out that Shuichi is still alive, it is a war to the death between the two men.

My Little Sweet Pea (Mugiko-san to)

Saturday, July 19 at 2:15 pm

****North American Premiere**

Japan. 2013. 95 min. DCP, in Japanese with live English subtitles. Directed by Keisuke Yoshida. With Maki Horikita, Kimiko Yo, Ryuhei Matsuda, Yumi Asou, Yoichi Nukumizu.

It isn't easy to find a dream to chase when you're young, but Mugiko (Maki Horikita) has one: she can't wait to become an anime voice actress. Saving up for classes while she works part-time in a manga store, she lives with her older gambling brother (Ryuhei Matsuda), her father having passed away. When the mother (Kimiko Yo) she never knew turns up out of nowhere and moves in, it only causes irritation for the aspiring otaku. But when she disappears just as quickly, it leaves Mugiko (or "Sweet Pea") searching for answers, bringing her back to her mother's

hometown to discover what happened to her mother's own dream. Featuring fun animated sequences produced especially for the film by renowned studio Production I.G (*Ghost in the Shell*, *Blood: The Last Vampire*), *My Little Sweet Pea* boasts hilarious and moving performances all round, with director Keisuke Yoshida's signature comic timing and snappy dialogue. A consummate two hanky melodrama, *My Little Sweet Pea* won't leave a dry eye in the house.

"You'll feel like calling Mom after this one." --Mark Schilling

Neko Samurai ~Samurai ♥ Cat~ (Neko Zamurai)

Saturday, July 19 at 7:30 pm

****International Premiere**

****Featuring Intro and Q&A with actor Kazuki Kitamura, with CUT ABOVE Award Ceremony, Followed by the Japan CATS Party!**

Japan. 2014. 100 min. HDCAM, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Yoshitaka Yamaguchi. With Kazuki Kitamura, Misako Renbutsu, Yasufumi Terawaki, Kanji Tsuda, Shigeyuki Totsugi.

The ever versatile Kazuki Kitamura stars as masterless samurai Kyutaro Madarame, a feared swordsman who has fallen on hard times in old Edo. Caught between two warring gangs in an epic battle of cat lovers and dog lovers, he begrudgingly accepts the canine faction's offer to assassinate the opposite leader's beloved pet: an adorable white cat. Yet upon raising his lethal sword, he cannot bring himself to go through with the act, and the cat melts his ronin heart. But before finding peace as a newly minted cat person, the still fearsome Madarame will have to take on both gangs in a classic samurai street brawl. Kitamura and the cat ("Tamanojo") form a winning onscreen pair in this charming and hilarious romp. Directed by former Takashi Miike Assistant Director Yoshitaka Yamaguchi, *Neko Samurai ~Samurai ♥ Cat~* is perfect for cat lovers and cinephiles alike.

"Obviously, this is a must see film. Let's not even kid around about that." --Badass Digest

The Passion (Junan)

Friday, July 18 at 6:30 pm

****International Premiere**

Japan. 2013. 95 min. DCP, in Japanese with live English subtitles. Directed by Ryoko Yoshida. With Mayuko Iwasa, Kanji Furutachi, Yasushi Fuchikami, Kumiko Ito.

A singular deadpan comedy, *The Passion* tells a story of a young woman raised in a convent named Frances-ko (Mayuko Iwasa), after Saint Francesco. Distressed by not knowing about love and sex, she calls out for a sign from above, but instead hears a voice from below. A human-faced growth speaks to her from between her legs, constantly berating her, calling out "Woman, you are worthless!" Mr. Koga, as she names it, continues the verbal abuse, yet Frances-ko somehow adapts, forming an adversarial yet symbiotic relationship. This bizarre film, based on Kaoruko Himeno's acclaimed 1997 novel of the same name, is skillfully directed by Ryoko Yoshida, lensed by veteran cinematographer Akiko Ashizawa, grounded by Iwasa's show-stopping performance and enlivened by the hilarious Kanji Furutachi, who lends his voice to the chauvinistic Koga. The soundtrack boasts an unmissable eclectic score by legendary experimental musician and composer Otomo Yoshihide.

18+ This film is unrated, and may only be viewed by persons 18 years of age and older.

Original novel shortlisted for the prestigious Naoki Prize

Pecoross' Mother and Her Days (Pekorosu no Haha ni Ai ni Iku)

Sunday, July 20 at 12:30 pm

****East Coast Premiere**

Japan. 2013. 113 min. Blu-ray, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Azuma Morisaki. With Ryo Iwamatsu, Harue Akagi, Kiwako Harada, Ryo Kase, Naoto Takenaka, Kensuke Owada.

Laid-back baby boomer Yuichi (Ryo Iwamatsu) is a middle-aged manga artist and singer-songwriter when he isn't at his salaryman day job or watching out for his elderly mother. Suffering from increasing dementia since her husband's death, Mitsue (Harue Akagi) is a constant source of comic energy or annoyance for Yuichi, and he and his son must soon decide if they should put her in a home for the elderly. Jumping back in time, we see how Mitsue (played by Kiwako Harada) tracked the tumult of the latter half of the 20th century, being raised as one of 10 brothers and sisters, surviving the war, and having to push her alcoholic husband (Ryo Kase) along in life. *Pecoross* is directed by the oldest active film director in Japan, Azuma Morisaki (b. 1927), who creates an emotionally complex work that is only the more profound and life-affirming for its cartoonish portrayal.

Awarded Best Japanese Film of 2013 by *Kinema Junpo* and *Eiga Geijutsu*

The Pinkie (Samayou Koyubi)

Saturday, July 12 at 10:30 pm

****New York Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2014. 65 min. Blu-ray, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Lisa Takeba. With Ryota Ozawa, Miwako Wagatsuma, Haruka Suenaga, Reon Kadena, Takashi Nishina, Mondo Yamagishi, Kanji Tsuda.

The winner of the Grand Prix at the 24th Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival, Lisa Takeba's debut feature is a hyper-imaginative sci-fi(ish) drama about a slacker and his clone. Devil-may-care Ryosuke is taking it easy, nice and easy, particularly with the girls. Unfortunately, the latest beauty he seduces turns out to be a yakuza's moll. Reckoning comes when gangsters beat him up and chop off his pinkie, which falls in the hands of Momoko, a naughty girl who has been stalking him. She gets herself a cloning kit and grows her own Ryosuke-clone. It performs beyond expectations and proves to be a remarkable lover. Frantically paced, *The Pinkie* is chock-full of Western and Japanese pop culture references and jokes, as if Gen Sekiguchi's *Survive Style 5+* had been directed by the minds behind Sushi Typhoon splatter films, mixing *Weird Science*, *Battles Without Honor and Humanity* and *The Terminator* into 65 minutes of concentrated weirdness.

"The best thing about The Pinkie is its total adherence to a vision. That this vision is so utterly bizarre is what makes it special." - Film.com

The Snow White Murder Case (Shirayukihime Satsujin Jiken)

Friday, July 11 at 6 pm

****U.S. Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2014. 126 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Yoshihiro Nakamura. With Mao Inoue, Go Ayano, Misako Renbutsu, Nanao, Shihori Kanjiya, Nobuaki Kaneko, Erena Ono.

Yoshihiro Nakamura's *Snow White Murder Case* (helmer of *Fish Story* and *Golden Slumbers*) offers one of the best brain teasers of the year. Based on a novel by bestselling author Kanae Minato, the film dissects the odd goings-on behind the grim discovery of a corpse in the woods of a national park near Tokyo. The victim is a beautiful young office worker, Noriko Miki (Nanao), the object of much jealousy at the cosmetic company where she was employed. Suspicions soon turn toward her co-worker Miki Shirono (Mao Inoue), who has vanished after the murder. Blogger/journalist Yuji Akahoshi (Go Ayano) takes his investigation to the world of social media and the case quickly turns into a witch hunt with a full-blown Twitter storm. As the plot makes brain-bending twists and turns, the camera takes a cold, hard but not humorless look at the damage wrought by the pettiness of a passive-aggressive society.

"Exceptionally well-written and skillfully lensed, The Snow White Murder Case is definitely one of the most compelling crime thrillers to come out of Japan in the last few years." - Twitch Film

Tale of a Butcher Shop (Aru Seinikuten no Hanashi)

Saturday, July 19 at 12 pm

****U.S. Premiere**

Japan. 2013. 108 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Aya Hanabusa.

The Kitades run a butcher shop in Kaizuka City outside Osaka, raising and slaughtering cattle to sell the meat in their store. The seventh generation of their family's business, they are descendants of the *buraku* people, a social minority held over from the caste system abolished in the 19th century that is still subject to discrimination. As the Kitades are forced to make the difficult decision to shut down their slaughterhouse, the question posed by the film is whether doing this will also result in the deconstruction of the prejudices imposed on them. Though primarily documenting the process of their work with meticulous detail, Aya Hanabusa also touches on the Kitades' participation in the *buraku* liberation movement. Hanabusa's heartfelt portrait expands from the story of an old-fashioned family business competing with corporate supermarkets, toward a subtle and sophisticated critique of social exclusion and the persistence of ancient prejudices.

Note: Some scenes contain graphic animal imagery.

Official selection 2013 Busan International Film Festival and 2013 Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival

***The Tale of Iya (Iya Monogatari--Oku no Hito--)* - CLOSING FILM**

Sunday, July 20 at 6 pm

****North American Premiere**

****Featuring Intro and Q&A with Director Tetsuichiro Tsuta**

Japan. 2013. 169 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Tetsuichiro Tsuta. With Rina Takeda, Shima Ohnishi, Min Tanaka, Hitoshi Murakami, Naomi Kawase.

Shot on 35mm in Tokushima Prefecture's gorgeous Iya Valley, Tetsuichiro Tsuta's second feature feels like the work of a seasoned filmmaker. *The Tale of Iya* depicts the story of a shrinking rural community and traditional ways of life encroached on by modern society and consumerism. A grandfather (legendary dancer Min Tanaka) and his granddaughter, Haruna (actress and martial artist Rina Takeda), live together in a small mountain town, eating food they grow and hunting in the forest. Haruna is about to finish high school and must choose whether she will stay or move to the city. Tanaka is powerful and nearly wordless in this indelible screen performance, matched by Takeda, who provides the film with its emotional anchor. Through the appearance of a young man from Tokyo (Shima Ohnishi), Tsuta subtly portrays the dilemmas of leaving, staying and the politicized fights to conserve the environment or temporarily boost the economy.

"5/5 stars... a work of instant and startling brilliance." --The Telegraph (UK)

Unforgiven (Yurusarezaru Mono)

Tuesday, July 15 at 8:30 pm

****East Coast Premiere**

Japan. 2013. 135 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Sang-il Lee. With Ken Watanabe, Koichi Sato, Akira Emoto, Yuya Yagira, Shiori Kutsuna.

In adapting Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* (1992), Sang-il Lee paid tribute to the film's grandiosity and scale while exchanging America's Western frontier for Meiji-era Japan, a time of immense social and political change after the fall of the Shogunate. Jubei (Ken Watanabe), once a samurai assassin, has survived to raise his children as an impoverished farmer. Before his wife's death, he promised her that he would lay down his sword, but when Kingo Baba (Akira Emoto) comes with news of a bounty on two men who mutilated the face of a prostitute, he can't turn him down. Young Goro (Yuya Yagira) joins the hunt, but they'll have to get through sadistic police chief Ichizo Oishi (Koichi Sato) first, and Jubei must confront even greater injustices, as well as

his past deeds and killer heart. With gorgeously choreographed action set pieces in Hokkaido's beautiful and cruel landscape, this *Unforgiven* stands tall and alone.

"Unexpectedly brilliant." --Time Out London

Uzumasa Limelight (Uzumasa Laimulaito)

Sunday, July 13 at 8 pm

****International Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

****Featuring Intro and Q&A with director Ken Ochiai and actress Chihiro Yamamoto**

Japan. 2014. 103 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Ken Ochiai. With Seizo Fukumoto, Chihiro Yamamoto, Hiroki Matsukata, Masashi Goda, Hirotarō Honda, Hisako Manda.

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 (Seizo Fukumoto, a real-life *kirare-yaku*, or *chanbara* extras whose job it is to get killed on screen) 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?

Why Don't You Play in Hell? (Jigoku de Naze Warui)

Thursday, July 10 at 8:30 pm

****NYC Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

****Introduction and Q&A with actress Fumi Nikaido, Followed by the LET'S PLAY IN HELL!**

Opening Night Party

Japan. 2013. 126 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Sion Sono. With Jun Kunimura, Shinichi Tsutsumi, Fumi Nikaido, Hiroki Hasegawa, Gen Hoshino, Tomochika.

A tribute to old-school yakuza cinema and shoe-string amateur filmmaking based on a screenplay Sion Sono wrote 17 years ago. The Fuck Bombers, a group of film geeks led by Hirata (Hiroki Hasegawa), try to turn brawler Sasaki (Tak Sakaguchi) into their new Bruce Lee but are nowhere near making their action masterpiece. An ambush set up by a yakuza clan comes to a gory end in the home of boss Muto (Jun Kunimura) with only one man, Ikegami (Shinichi Tsutsumi), surviving. When Mitsuko, the Mutos' young daughter, makes an unexpected entrance, Ikegami is instantly smitten. Ten years later, she has become one sultry mean mess of a girl (Fumi Nikaido). Determined to make Mitsuko a star, her father gives Hirata a once-in-a-lifetime chance to make his movie, with the yakuza as film production crew and the Bombers joining the "real" action--the ultimate sword battle between the Muto and Ikegami clans.

"Quite possibly mankind's greatest achievement, Sion Sono's *Why Don't You Play in Hell*" is less of a question than it is a glorious grindhouse requiem for an entire mode of filmmaking... "-Film.com

Wood Job! (Ujjobu! Kamusari Naanaa Nichijo)

Sunday, July 13 at 12:30 pm

****North American Premiere, Co-presented with NYAFF**

Japan. 2014. 116 min. DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles. Directed by Shinobu Yaguchi. With Shota Sometani, Masami Nagasawa, Hideaki Ito, Yuki Hirano, Naoki Ishii, Yuki Iida.

The new film from Shinobu Yaguchi, director of *Water Boys*, is based on Shion Miura's bestseller, a bittersweet coming-of-age novel. 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.

"[Yaguchi's] latest ... is a return to comic form, with more laugh-out-loud gags than his films have produced in many years." - The Japan Times

GUEST SPOTLIGHTS

Kazuki Kitamura (*Neko Samurai ~Samurai ♥ Cat~, Man from Reno*) - An incredibly versatile, talented actor, Kazuki Kitamura has established himself over the past two decades as one of Japan's most sought-after stars. Embodying devilishly handsome villains and dashing heroes in dramatic and comedic performances of equal virtuosity, he'll present two of his latest films at JAPAN CUTS. In the hilarious *Neko Samurai* Kitamura plays a strong samurai whose ronin heart is melted by an unbearably cute feline target. In the Japanese-American independent thriller *Man from Reno* he is the mysterious titular roamer who befriends a novelist on the run, each harboring dangerous secrets. Recently taking on ambitious transnational projects such as the Indonesian action film *The Raid 2*, Kitamura hails from Osaka, and made a name for himself in 2000 when he received *Kinema Junpo's* Best New Actor award for his work in Rokuro Mochizuki's *Minazuki* and Takashi Miike's *Ley Lines (Nihon kuroshakai)*. That same year he was awarded Best Supporting Actor at the Yokohama Film Festival for his work in *Minazuki*, Ben Wada's *Perfect Education (Kanzen-naru shiiku)*, and Kazuhiro Kiuchi's *Kyohansha*. Since then, Kitamura has continued to impress with a wide range of memorable leading and supporting roles in film and television, including the deliciously evil alien commander in *Godzilla: Final Wars*, the *Thermae Romae* franchise and acting opposite Tatsuya Nakadai in *Japan's Tragedy*. JAPAN CUTS 2014 celebrates Kitamura's career with candid introductions and Q&As for *Man from Reno* and *Neko Samurai* followed by the Japan CATS Party!

Momoko Ando (*0.5mm*) is a multitalented filmmaker, artist and writer, and a rising star of Japan's independent filmmaking scene. Ando's first film, *Kakera: A Piece of Our Life*, was released in 2009 to great acclaim, scored by the Smashing Pumpkins' James Iha. *0.5mm*, her *tour de force* second feature, is adapted from her debut novel of the same name, and stars her sister, actress Sakura Ando. (From an immensely creative family, Momoko Ando is also the daughter of actor/director Eiji Okuda and essayist Kazu Ando.) While critically approaching contemporary issues of gender and patriarchy, Ando's films evince a classical visual style and brilliant comic touch. JAPAN CUTS presents the world premiere of *0.5mm* as the festival's Centerpiece Presentation, including an introduction, Q&A and reception with the director.

Dave Boyle (*Man from Reno*) is a Los Angeles-based filmmaker once memorably described by the *Wall Street Journal's* Jeff Yang as "the best Asian American filmmaker who's not actually in any way Asian American." After debuting with the bilingual comedy *Big Dreams Little Tokyo* (2006), in which he also starred as a young American businessman obsessed with Japanese culture, Boyle's sophomore feature *White on Rice* starring Hiroshi Watanabe and Nae Yuuki was released in theaters in 2009. In 2011, he embarked on a multi-film collaboration with San Francisco musician Goh Nakamura, who played himself in both *Surrogate Valentine* and *Daylight Savings*. JAPAN CUTS presents his fifth feature film, *Man from Reno*, accompanied by an introduction and Q&A with the director, and star Kazuki Kitamura.

Shiro Maeda (*The Extreme Sukiyaki*) is a writer/director/actor and leading figure in Japan's contemporary performing arts scene, also establishing himself through his work on novels, TV and movies. Born in the 1970s, Maeda is said to represent the voices of Japan's "Lost Decade," which refers to those who have lived through times of economic downturn and social uncertainty. Maeda is most recognized and praised for the way he deals with heavy and universal

issues through levity, subtle humor and even absurdism. He is recipient of Japan's most prestigious award for playwrights, the 52nd Kishida Drama Award, and the 22nd Mishima Yukio Prize for literature. Adapted from his novel, Maeda presents his directorial debut *The Extreme Sukiyaki* and joins JAPAN CUTS for a Q&A via streaming video.

Fumi Nikaido (*Why Don't You Play in Hell?*), one of Japan's most popular rising stars, was scouted at the age of 12 to become a model and television actress. Hailing from Naha, a southern coastal town on Okinawa Island, Nikaido made her film debut in Koji Yakusho's 2009 *Toad's Oil*. For her stirring performance in Sion Sono's 2011 *Himizu*, she received the Marcello Mastroianni Award at the Venice International Film Festival with co-star Shota Sometani, the festival's highest prize for emerging talent, never before awarded to a Japanese performer. Nikaido joins JAPAN CUTS to present Sion Sono's *Why Don't You Play in Hell?*, including an introduction and Q&A followed by the Let's Play in Hell! Opening Night Party on the festival's opening night

Ken Ochiai, Seizo Fukumoto, Chihiro Yamamoto (*Uzumasa Limelight*) - Ken Ochiai is a writer/director based in Los Angeles who works in both the U.S. and Japan. Having made his first film at age 12, he left his native Tokyo after high school to pursue filmmaking in the U.S., graduating from the USC School of Cinematic Arts with a BA in Production and the American Film Institute. Seizo Fukumoto entered Toei Studio Kyoto at 15. Since then he has been featured in film and TV for more than half a century. Chihiro Yamamoto started learning Tai Chi at 3 and won gold and silver medals at the World Junior Wushu Championship. This is her film debut. The director and stars present *Uzumasa Limelight* at JAPAN CUTS, joining for an introduction and Q&A.

Tetsuichiro Tsuta (*The Tale of Iya*) studied filmmaking at Tokyo Polytechnic University, where he began using black-and-white 16mm film. His first feature, *Islands of Dreams* was produced on this now rare format, and his magnificent second film, *The Tale of Iya*, is shot on color 35mm in the mountains not far from his hometown. *The Tale of Iya*, starring legendary dancer Min Tanaka, was awarded a Special Mention in the Asian Future section of the Tokyo International Film Festival, and chronicles not only a disappearing part of Japan, but a rare mode of film craftsmanship. Tsuta joins to present his spectacular work as JAPAN CUTS' Closing Film, with an introduction and Q&A.

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Japan Society's annual **JAPAN CUTS** festival is an inimitable platform for contemporary Japanese cinema, showing the diversity and vitality of one of the most exciting world cinemas. Since its launch in 2007, the festival has attracted over 34,000 filmgoers and presented over 170 feature films, many never-before seen in the U.S. The first annual JAPAN CUTS was one of the most successful single events in the Society's 2007-08 centennial celebration. Noted for its "rich and varied selection of recent Japanese films" (*The New York Times*), JAPAN CUTS has premiered several films that have gone on to garner international acclaim, including: *About Her Brother*, *Buddha*, *Confessions*, *Death Note*, *Fish Story*, *Gantz*, *Haru's Journey*, *Kamome Diner*, *Love Exposure*, *Milocrorze*, *The Mourning Forest*, *Ninja Kids!!!*, *Sawako Decides*, *Sukiyaki Western Django*, *Sway*, *Sketches of Kaitan City*, *United Red Army*, *Vacation*, and *Yasukuni*. Every year JAPAN CUTS features a number of panels, post-screening parties, and exclusive Q&As with filmmakers and actors. Past festivals have included appearances by Koji Yakusho, Masami Nagasawa, Kenji Kohashi, Sora Aoi, Tatsuya Fujiwara, Yoshimasa Ishibashi, Shusuke Kaneko, Naomi Kawase, Masahiro Kobayashi, Kazuyoshi Kumakiri, Kentaro Moriya, Miwa Nishikawa, Naoko Oigami, Natsuki Seta, Shota Sometani, Sion Sono, Tomorrowo Taguchi, Gen Takahashi, Toshiaki Toyoda, Hitoshi Yazaki, and Isao Yukisada.

Now in its 13th year, the **New York Asian Film Festival** is North America's leading festival of popular Asian cinema, which the *New York Times* has called "one of the city's most valuable events." Presented by Subway Cinema, the 2014 festival runs June 27-July 14 at the Film Society of Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater and Japan Society. More at <http://subwaycinema.com>.

The **Japan Society Film Program** offers a diverse selection of Japanese films, from classics to contemporary independent productions. Its aim is to entertain, educate and support activities in the Society's arts & culture programs. The Film Program has included retrospectives of great

directors, thematic series and many U.S. premieres. Some original film series curated by Japan Society have traveled to other U.S. venues in tours organized by the Film Program. For more, visit <http://www.japansociety.org/film>.

Founded in 1907, **Japan Society** is a multidisciplinary hub for global leaders, artists, scholars, educators, and English and Japanese-speaking audiences. At the Society, more than 100 events each year feature sophisticated, topically relevant presentations of Japanese art and culture and open, critical dialogue on issues of vital importance to the U.S., Japan and East Asia. An American nonprofit, nonpolitical organization, the Society cultivates a constructive, resonant and dynamic relationship between the people of the U.S. and Japan. More at <http://www.japansociety.org>.

Japan Society is located at 333 East 47th Street between First and Second avenues (accessible by the 4/5/6 and 7 subway at Grand Central or the E and M subway at Lexington Avenue). For more information, call 212-832-1155 or visit www.japansociety.org.

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SCREENING SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

Thursday, July 10

6:00 - THE MOLE SONG: UNDERCOVER AGENT REIJI
8:30 - WHY DON'T YOU PLAY IN HELL? + guest intro/Q&A + party

Friday, July 11

6:00 - THE SNOW WHITE MURDER CASE
8:30 - MARUYAMA, THE MIDDLE SCHOOLER

Saturday, July 12

12:30 - THE GREAT PASSAGE
3:00 - THE ETERNAL ZERO
6:00 - THE DEVIL'S PATH
8:30 - MISS ZOMBIE
10:30 - THE PINKIE

Sunday, July 13

12:30 - WOOD JOB!
3:00 - MONSTERZ
5:30 - ALL-ROUND APPRAISER Q: THE EYES OF MONA LISA
8:00 - UZUMASA LIMELIGHT + guest intro/Q&A

Tuesday, July 15

6:00 - THE HORSES OF FUKUSHIMA
8:30 - UNFORGIVEN

Wednesday, July 16

6:30 - THE EXTREME SUKIYAKI + guest intro/Q&A

Thursday July 17

6:30 - 0.5MM + guest intro/Q&A + reception

Friday, July 18

6:30 - THE PASSION
8:30 - LOVE'S WHIRLPOOL
10:45 - GREATFUL DEAD

Saturday, July 19

12:00 - TALE OF A BUTCHER SHOP
2:15 - MY LITTLE SWEET PEA
4:30 - MAN FROM RENO + guest intro/Q&A
7:30 - NEKO SAMURAI ~SAMURAI ♥ CAT~ + guest intro/Q&A + party

Sunday, July 20

12:30 - PECOROSS' MOTHER AND HER DAYS
3:00 - HELLO! JUNICHI
6:00 - THE TALE OF IYA + guest intro/Q&A