

MEDIA RELEASE: WEDNESDAY 15 AUGUST

THE JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2018 CLASSICS PROGRAM

From star-crossed lovers in the Meiji era to early feminists fighting societal norms, the **Japanese Film Festival (JFF)** presents a FREE classic film program from **29 September – 2 December**. The Festival will present a curated program: *Passion & Obsession* in Sydney with an abridged version in Melbourne and Canberra.

Featuring works adapted from novels by celebrated authors such as Junichiro Tanizaki and Kyoka Izumi, the program showcases influential works from cinematic masters from the Japanese Golden Age and New Wave.

Highlights include: *The Pornographers*, Cannes Palme d'Or-winning filmmaker Shohei Imamura's darkly comical portrayal of a pornographer hustling to keep his business alive amidst Japan's post-war economic boom; and Japanese auteur Seijun Suzuki's multi-award-winner *Kagero-za*, an adaptation of Kyoka Izumi's story of a playwright who meets a beautiful woman he suspects is the ghost of his patron's deceased wife.

Novelist-turned-politician Shintaro Ishihara's seminal Sun Tribe classic *Juvenile Jungle* will also screen. Exploding into a cultural phenomenon soon after its release, this controversial depiction of the sexual revolution of disillusioned post-war youth stars Yujiro Ishihara, the James Dean of Japan.

"The 2018 program depicts passion and obsession in varying shades of eroticism, ranging from melodramatic romance to fraught love affairs," said **Japanese Film Festival Program Coordinator Alison Groves**. "Beneath the drama, these films also offer us fascinating glimpses into the many different faces of Japan throughout the decades."

Two films offer intriguing insights into the world of geisha. In Cannes Jury Prize-winning director Kon Ichikawa's first colour film *Nihonbashi*, two geishas compete in a cut-throat competition to reign over Tokyo's premier geisha district; and an aspiring geisha and her established mentor navigate the realities of their profession in post-war Kyoto, in poignant drama *A Geisha*.

Also screening will be Yasujirō Shimazu's 1935 film, *Okoto and Sasuke*, starring prolific star of the Japanese Golden Age Kinuyo Tanaka as a blind koto (Japanese lap guitar) virtuoso; feminist New Wave film *The Affair*, starring prolific actress Mariko Okada (*Akitsu Springs*); and maverick director Yasuzo Masumura's intriguing queer melodrama *Manji: The Goddess of Mercy*.

The classics program arrives in: **Sydney** at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (Oct 3 – 31); **Melbourne** at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (Nov 23 - Dec 2); and **Canberra** at the National Film and Sound Archive (Sept 29 - 30).

The FREE program is a satellite event of the annual Japanese Film Festival (17 Oct – 2 Dec). The Festival's main ticketed program travels across Canberra, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, offering the best in new release, contemporary Japanese cinema.

2018 Japanese Film Festival Classics films include:

- ***The Pornographers*** – Cannes Palme d’Or-winning filmmaker Shohei Imamura’s darkly funny adaptation of Akiyuki Nosaka’s novel follows a pornographer hustling to keep his business alive amidst Japan’s post-war economic boom, despite threats from the police, local gangsters and his own family;
- ***Nihonbashi*** – Cannes Jury Prize-winning Japanese master Kon Ichikawa’s first colour film follows two geishas in a cut-throat competition to reign over Nihonbashi, Tokyo’s premier geisha district;
- ***Okoto and Sasuke*** – Featuring prolific star of the Japanese Golden Age Kinuyo Tanaka, this captivating melodrama follows the love between a blind koto (Japanese lap guitar) virtuoso and her devoted manservant, from Yasujirō Shimazu – one of the major creators of the shōshimingeiki (lower-middle-class) genre;
- ***Manji: The Goddess of Mercy*** – Adapted from Junichiro Tanizaki’s novel *Quicksand*, maverick film director Yasuzo Masumura’s queer melodrama follows the intriguing love affair between two society ladies;
- ***Kagero-za (Heat Haze Theatre)*** – Set in the Taisho Era (1912-1926), Japanese auteur Seijun Suzuki’s multi-award-winning adaptation of Kyoka Izumi’s Gothic-tinged ghost story follows a playwright who meets a beautiful woman he suspects is the ghost of his patron’s deceased wife;
- ***A Geisha*** – This poignant drama from multiple Venice Silver Lion-winning filmmaker Kenji Mizoguchi follows an aspiring geisha and her established mentor fighting to uphold their dignity amidst the economic pressures of post-war Kyoto;
- ***Juvenile Jungle (Crazed Fruit)*** – Novelist-turned-politician Shintaro Ishihara’s controversial portrayal of the sexual revolution of disillusioned post-war youth follows two brothers who fall for the same woman. Exploding into a cultural phenomenon soon after its release, this seminal Sun Tribe classic stars the late Masahiko Tsugawa (*Death Note*);
- ***The Affair*** – Prolific actress Mariko Okada (*Akitsu Springs*) stars in her husband Yoshishige Yoshida’s Japanese New Wave depiction of female characters defining their own sexuality, about a young woman’s illicit affair with her deceased mother’s lover;

The Classics programs is free admission. See japanesefilmfestival.net for ticketing details.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, SYDNEY

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is the Australian arm of the Japan Foundation, which was established by the Japanese government to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. It runs a diverse range of programs and events, including exhibitions, talk events, grant programs and Japanese language courses for all levels from beginner to advanced. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with a global network of 25 offices in 24 countries. The Australian office was founded in 1978.