

The 27th Tokyo International Film Festival

The SAMURAI Award Special Talk Session with Takeshi Kitano

- Date and Time: October 25th (Friday) from 15:00 @Tower Hall, Academy Hills, Roppongi Hills 49F
- Appearance: Takeshi Kitano (Film Director); Tony Rayns (Japanese Cinema Splash Jury); Christian Jeune (Japanese Cinema Splash Jury); Winners of PFF Award 2014; Winners of three students film festivals in Japan

Thank you for your interest in the 27th Tokyo International Film Festival. A special talk event about the “Now and Future of Japanese Film” was held with Takeshi Kitano, Tony Rayns and Christian Jeune, featuring Director Kitano as the first recipient of the SAMURAI Award.

The event began with a talk session between Takeshi Kitano and the students who won the film festivals in Japan. Takeshi Kitano believes in creating what he wants to create, but knows the importance of accepting what he doesn't like. “It's a matter of creating what makes sense you, but not forgetting that there are other opinions and perspectives in filmmaking. The more objective you are, the less you'll push yourself into a tight corner” shared Kitano on his views towards filmmaking.



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Following this, Takeshi Kitano was joined by Tony Rayns and Christian Jeune for a talk session on the “Now and Future of Japanese Film”. Rayns and Jeune both first encountered Japanese cinema during their teenage years with Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi, and Yasujiro Ozu films. With such familiarity towards Japanese cinema, they both shared their outlooks on what's to come of the Japanese film industry. Rayns commented that “the future of Japanese cinema is sitting right here on this stage”, facing the students from the previous session. “I think the future of all big companies is drawing to an end. That is, ‘the future is all used up’, to borrow the famous lines from Orson Welles. The future is in the hands of the young people who are going to reinvent cinema themselves by teaching themselves how to make a film.” Christian Jeune agreed with Rayns on that the young generation will create the future of the movie industry. He also added that the same can be said about cinema around the world. “The world has changed so the directors have to change what they want to say and how they want to say it. And I hope they will find the means to tell a story.” Takeshi Kitano recalled what it was like for him. “When I began shooting films, the reviews I got in Japan were awful. Tony san was the first person to give me positive appraisal and to this day, I feel deeply indebted to him. The point is, you never know by who or when your films will be well-received which is why young filmmakers should follow their heart and shoot what they want to.”

Jeune and Rays then shared their first encounter with Kitano. Jeune first saw Kitano as an actor in Nagisa Oshima's 1983 film, *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, and the first film he saw that was directed by Kitano was *Sonatine*. “*Sonatine* remains as what I like very much in all of Mr. Kitano's films. It's not only the story, the humor and the black comedy but what remains with me after seeing his films...a kind of nostalgia or melancholy.” As for Rayns, during one of his trips to Japan in the late 80's, he saw Kitano's film, *Violent Cop*. “I thought it was terrific, I showed it at Vancouver International Film Festival, and the rest is history!” he said and beamed at Kitano.

As for what young Japanese filmmakers can do to breakthrough into the international arena, Rayns stated that the future of the commercial cinema is in the hands of a rather small number of rather big companies, which is why most of the young filmmakers are not going to breakthrough to the world of the big companies and major commercial releases. He feels that the opportunity for independence will become more limited in terms of the mainstream in the years to come. Yet, he is also confident that “other channels will appear which will



probably be based on the internet, on downloading and streaming. That is, other ways will become popular in discovering kinds of films that are not shown in big cinemas.” Which is why Rayns recommends young filmmakers to pursue such types of new channels of distribution. A recommendation in making a breakthrough is simple, he says. “Make good films. If you make good films, the world will notice. There are not that many good films out there. If you make something that’s special, people will pick up on it. You’d be surprised there’s not that much competition.” In the end, Kitano said in true Kitano style: “Thinking about what’s necessary to make a breakthrough is like asking what you should do to win the lottery. The answer is somewhere and your job is to find it. You can listen to advice, but don’t forget that you are the creator of your own film. What’s best is to build your own world which may lead to answers. I won’t tell you to keep at it because you see, it’s best to nip the buds!”