

Pressekontakt

Jonathan Kress
Phone: +49 (0)69 847 76 565
Presse@NipponConnection.com
NipponConnection.com



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19th Nippon Connection Film Festival First Program Highlights

May 28 – June 2, 2019, Frankfurt am Main

More than 100 Films from Japan / Ayako Wakao Retrospective / Diverse Supporting Program / Culinary Specialties

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From **May 28 to June 2, 2019** the nineteenth edition of the **Nippon Connection Film Festival** will take place in **Frankfurt am Main**. As the biggest festival for Japanese cinema worldwide, it offers an exciting insight into the current state of the Japanese film scene with more than 100 short and feature length films from all genres. Numerous filmmakers and artists from Japan will be present to introduce their works and establish a lively exchange with the German audience. A diverse cultural program including workshops, lectures, and concerts gives visitors the chance to explore the multifaceted culture of Japan. The main venues are at the **Künstlerhaus Mousonturm** and the **Theater Willy Praml in der Naxoshalle**.

Film Highlights

At the Nippon Connection Film Festival, numerous outstanding productions from Japan will be screened, most of them having their German premieres. **Shinsuke Sato** is considered a specialist for successful manga adaptations. With **Inuyashiki**, he has directed an action-packed film based on the popular manga in which a senior citizen turns into a superhero. **Nobuhiro Yamashita's** absurd and anarchic comedy **Hard-Core** is also based on a popular manga from the 1980s. With the episodic film **jam**, director **Sabu** returns to his roots – high tempo and black humor. Director **Ryuichi Hiroki**, who has been one of the festival's favorite's since its beginnings, will personally introduce his latest melodrama **It's Boring Here, Pick Me Up**.

In the atmospheric drama **And Your Bird Can Sing**, which was already praised at this year's Berlinale, **Sho Miyake** reflects the aimlessness of members of Generation Y. Two other films take a look back at Japanese history: **Takahisa Zeze's** new film **The Chrysanthemum and the Guillotine** tells a multilayered story about anarchists and female sumo wrestlers in the 1920s while the biopic **Dare to Stop Us** by **Kazuya Shiraishi** follows the career of cult director **Koji Wakamatsu** and other members of the independent Japanese film scene from the 1970s. In **The Chaplain** by **Dai Sako**, late actor **Ren Osugi** gives his last brilliant performance as a cleric offering spiritual support to inmates on death row.

Animated Films

Nippon Connection e.V. • c/o Atelierfrankfurt • Raum 5.08 • Schwedlerstraße 1-5 • D-60314 Frankfurt am Main
Phone +49 (0)69 847 76 565 • Fax +49 (0)69 847 76 566
presse@nipponconnection.com • www.nipponconnection.com

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Nippon Animation presents a number of outstanding Japanese animated films as German premieres. **Liz and the Blue Bird**, the latest work by **Naoko Yamada**, is a melancholic portrait of a friendship. Other highlights of this section include the coming-of-age story **Okko's Inn** by **Kitaro Kosaka** as well as **Hiroyasu Ishida's** visually stunning debut **Penguin Highway**. The renowned **Tokyo University of the Arts** will once more present short films from its Institute for Animation.

Nippon Honor Award

This year's **Nippon Honor Award** goes to director and actor **Shinya Tsukamoto**. Since his film **Tetsuo: The Iron Man**, Tsukamoto has been seen as one of the most important representatives of experimental and avant-garde cinema in Japan. However, the cult filmmaker has also been involved in mainstream productions as an actor – like in **Silence** by **Martin Scorsese** or the Japanese blockbuster **Shin Godzilla**. Nippon Connection will present Tsukamoto's latest film **Killing** as well as his two classics **Tetsuo: The Iron Man** and **Tokyo Fist** this year. Shinya Tsukamoto will personally receive his award at the festival and participate in an extensive filmmaker's talk about his impressive career.

Nippon Retro

The retrospective at the cinema of the Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum is dedicated to actress **Ayako Wakao**. Having received numerous prizes for her performances, Wakao made a name for herself especially as an actress for Daiei studios who has worked with such famous directors as **Yasujiro Ozu**, **Kon Ichikawa**, or **Yuzo Kawashima**. Apart from films by these directors, the retrospective will have a special focus on Wakao's intensive collaboration with **Yasuzo Masumura**. The film prints will be provided by the Japan Foundation in Tokyo.

Diverse Supporting Program

Accompanying the film program, numerous **workshops, lectures, concerts, performances, and exhibitions** offer a variety of perspectives on Japanese culture. Yusuke Yokoi will introduce the traditional **dyeing technique Bingata from Okinawa** in a lecture and workshop. The multi-award-winning **Foley artist Goro Koyama** (known from *Blade Runner 2049*, among others) will create sound effects for a short film together with the participants of his workshop.

Famous Japanese singer **Haru Nemuri** will give a concert at Mousonturm **on May 29, 2019 at 10 p.m.**, skillfully combining alternative rock, post rock, hardcore, and rap. At the Internationales Theater, **Senmaru & Yuki** will present the traditional Japanese entertainment art **Edo Daigakura**.

Topping off the program, many **merchandising stands** offer films, books, and artisanry on and from Japan. Various caterers serve authentic Japanese specialties such as **sushi**,

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takoyaki, yakitori, or savory ramen. Moreover, visitors can try out Japanese drinks like ramune or have a cooled Japanese beer with a frozen head.

Nippon Kids

The festival also offers an exciting program to its youngest visitors. Storyteller **Walburga Kliem** presents **Japanese fairytales and legends**, which will be translated into German Sign Language. Actor **Yuki Iwamoto** will read from the epistolary novel **Viele Grüße, Deine Giraffe** by Japanese author **Megumi Iwasa**, charmingly illustrated by **Jörg Mühle**, who will do a live drawing performance.

The Festival

The Japanese Film Festival Nippon Connection is organized on a mainly **voluntary basis** by the 70 members of the non-profit **Nippon Connection registered association**. The festival is under the patronage of **Peter Feldmann**, Mayor of the City of Frankfurt am Main. Festival centers are located at the **Künstlerhaus Mousonturm** and at the **Theater Willy Praml in der Naxoshalle**. Further venues include the **Mal Seh'n Kino**, the **Kino im Deutschen Filmmuseum**, the **Internationales Theater Frankfurt**, the **Naxos Atelier**, and the **Hessisches Literaturforum**.

The complete program and tickets will be available starting from **May 11, 2019** on the festival homepage: NipponConnection.com

Overnight stays during the festival can be booked at our **hotel partners** in Frankfurt offering special rates: NipponConnection.com/hotels-en.html

Venues

Künstlerhaus Mousonturm / Hessisches Literaturforum, Waldschmidtstr. 4, Frankfurt
Theater Willy Praml in der Naxoshalle / Naxos Atelier, Waldschmidtstr. 19, Frankfurt
Kino im Deutschen Filmmuseum, Schaumainkai 41, Frankfurt
Mal Seh'n Kino, Adlerflychtstr. 6, Frankfurt
Internationales Theater Frankfurt, Hanauer Landstr. 7, Frankfurt

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