

For Immediate Release

HKIFF45 to Celebrate Shochiku Cinema's Centenary

3 February 2021 (Hong Kong) – The 45th Hong Kong International Film Festival will mark the 100th anniversary of Shochiku Cinema with a retrospective programme, showcasing ten masterpieces from ten revered Japanese maestros, including OZU Yasujiro, SHIMIZU Hiroshi, IMAMURA Shohei, and OSHIMA Nagisa.

Founded in 1920, Shochiku is one of Japan's oldest and most successful studios. A media giant that prided itself first and foremost as a director's studio, Shochiku offered creative freedom with which formative filmmakers crafted their signature styles to perfection. From Japan's first sound film, first colour film, first Oscar-winning film to the world's longest-running film series, Shochiku transformed the cinematic landscape, leading to Japanese cinema's rising profile globally.

The ten classics in this selection reflect Shochiku's remarkable achievements over a century. SHIMIZU and OZU, two pillars at the studio renowned for their spontaneous style, are exemplified in *The Masseurs and a Woman* (1938) and the contemplative sensibility embodied in *Equinox Flower* (1938), OZU's first colour feature. Together with MIZOGUCHI Kenji's theatrical transcendence of the purest cinematic artistry in *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum* (1939), the three maestros cast an everlasting influence on world cinema.

KINOSHITA Keisuke and KOBAYASHI Masaki, two founders of the directors' group *Four Horsemen Club*, impressed the world with *Twenty-Four Eyes* (1954), which offers a quiet commentary on the inhumanity of war, and *Harakiri* (1962), which creates fierce evocation of a ronin's resolution against the corrupt feudal system.

Through the studio's mentor-protégé system, fledging filmmakers like IMAMURA and YAMADA Yoji, who once served as OZU's assistant directors, flourished as auteurs with their own brands. Featuring in this selection are YAMADA's *The Yellow Handkerchief* (1977) and IMAMURA's *Vengeance is Mine* (1979) – the former an affectionate drama full of humour and pathos; the latter a crime classic loaded with explicit sexuality and subversive violence.

During the post-war period, Shochiku's reforms led to a new generation of nonconformist directors. YOSHIDA Yoshishige, SHINODA Masahiro and OSHIMA, who heralded the arrival of the *Shochiku Nouvelle Vague*, set a new milestone in Japan's film history. Their revolutionary styles, permeated with staunch social critique, can be witnessed in *Love Affair at Akitsu Spa* (1962), *Gonza the Spearman* (1986), winner of Berlinale Silver Bear for outstanding artistic contribution, and *Gohatto* (1999), OSHIMA's final feature.

HKIFF45 will adopt a new hybrid format for the first time, featuring screenings and audience-engagement events simultaneously in-theatre and online. The festival will reveal this year's programme on 9 March. The public can purchase tickets online (<http://www.hkiff.org.hk/>) and through all URBTIX outlets from 18 March.

Shochiku Cinema 100th Anniversary Retrospective Film List

1938	<i>The Masseurs and a Woman</i>
1939	<i>The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum</i>
1954	<i>Twenty-Four Eyes</i>
1958	<i>Equinox Flower</i>
1962	<i>Love Affair at Akitsu Spa</i>
1962	<i>Harakiri</i>
1977	<i>The Yellow Handkerchief</i>
1979	<i>Vengeance is Mine</i>
1986	<i>Gonza the Spearman</i>
1999	<i>Gohatto</i>

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About The Hong Kong International Film Festival

The Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) is one of Asia's oldest and most reputable platforms for filmmakers, film professionals and filmgoers from all over the world to launch new work and experience outstanding films. The Festival is the largest cultural event in Hong Kong. It introduces world cinema to local audiences with the aim to enrich and deepen the experience of Hong Kong moviegoers. Committed to discovering new talent, the Festival premieres the breadth of Chinese cinema and showcases Asian talent. Festival-goers have the opportunity to enjoy world-class films, attend seminars hosted by leading filmmakers from around the world, visit film exhibitions, participate in receptions and parties, and more. The Festival draws extensive coverage from the local and international media. It continues to grow in importance as one of the premier platforms to launch films in Asia.

About The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited

The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited (HKIFFS) is a charitable, non-profit and non-governmental organisation dedicated to discovering and promoting creativity in film's art and culture. It organises the annual flagship, the Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and the Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) in March and April. Another annual highlight is the Cine Fan Summer International Film Festival (Summer IFF) held every August. Launched in 2013, the repertory HKIFF Cine Fan Programme aims to enrich and deepen Hong Kong moviegoers' experience through a monthly programme of contemporary, retrospective and thematic showcases. In 2017, HKIFFS set up the Film Industry Services Office (FIS) to promote non-mainstream film industry development through co-production and support of festival strategies and overseas distribution (HKIFF Collection).

Official website: www.hkiff.org.hk

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