

Japanese films featured at Portland's Northwest Film Center

The Northwest Film Center is again featuring its Japanese Currents film series, which showcases a collection of Japanese cinema from December 4 to 13. Teaming up with the Japan-America Society of Oregon, the Japan Foundation of Los Angeles, Sapporo USA, the Consular Office of Japan in Portland, the Portland-Sapporo Sister City Association, and Lane Powell PC, the film center is screening recent Nipponese films, which range from anime to *jidaigeki* and documentary to comedy. Featured works include:

Round Trip Heart December 4, 7:00pm

In *Round Trip Heart*, a film by director Yuki Tanada, an unassuming, hardworking attendant on a luxury tourist train crosses paths with a snaky film producer who tries to steal items from her concession cart. The simple act propels the two on a wayward journey of personal exploration and reflection. (2015, 97 mins.)

Sapporo Shorts December 5, 2:00pm

The 2015 Sapporo Shorts program celebrates Portland's sister-city relationship with Sapporo, Japan. The short films were selected from this year's Sapporo International Short Film Festival. New shorts include *A Warm Spell*, *The Apology*, *Joseito*, *Sociopath*, *Savage Night*, and others. (107 mins.)

Neko Samurai 2:

Sun-Ju Ahn wins playoff in LPGA Tour's Toto Japan

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"I haven't thought much about that yet," Ahn said. "I'm just going to enjoy this win and this moment."

Ahn jumped from 29th to 22nd in the world ranking. She also won the Japanese tour's Century 21 Ladies in July, and had seven career Korea LPGA victories.

The 37-year-old Stanford won the last of her five LPGA Tour titles in 2012. She dropped to 1-4 in playoffs, including a loss in the 2003 U.S. Women's Open.

She played the first two Asian Swing events in Malaysia and South Korea, then skipped the stops in Taiwan and China.

"When I left Korea I was pretty upset because I played bad in Malaysia and



A Tropical Adventure December 5, 4:30pm

Director Takeshi Watanabe's *Neko Samurai 2: A Tropical Adventure* features the beloved cat/samurai duo from *Samurai Cat* in an adventure that finds heroes Tamanojo and Madarame marooned on the remote island of Shikokou after Madarame ventures out in search of work. (2015, 85 mins.)

I Alone

December 5, 7:00pm

I Alone, a comedy by director Sho Tsukikawa, pits a mild-mannered corporate lackey and a teenage wannabe gangster in a fierce battle against the *yakuza*

underworld and the corrupt mayor of their city. A decidedly cute kidnapped baby is at the center of the action, which revolves around the mismatched pair's attempts to keep the child free from harm while trying to thwart the mayor's nefarious redevelopment plans. (2015, 109 mins.)

Haruko's Paranormal Laboratory December 6, 4:30pm

Haruko's Paranormal Laboratory, an odd and eccentric film by director Lisa Takeba, centers on lonely 20-something Haruko, who talks incessantly to her television, but is more than a bit surprised when one day it sprouts a face, a body, and emotions. Interesting events occur when Haruko's new TV-man "boyfriend" becomes famous and adored by women across Japan. (2015, 76 mins.)

Ecotherapy Getaway Holiday December 6, 7:00pm

Shuichi Okita's *Ecotherapy Getaway Holiday* follows the story of seven women of varying ages and backgrounds who take a chartered trip to a remote waterfall. When the group's tour guide goes missing, the women's patience — with each other, their situations at home, and the environment — is tested. (2014, 88 mins.)

Sanchu Uprising: Voices at Dawn December 10, 7:00pm

Juichiro Yamasaki's inventive take on the *jidaigeki* (historical drama) focuses on a group of rural farmers treated poorly by tax authorities in the 18th-century

JAPANESE CURRENTS. Director Lisa Takeba's odd and eccentric Haruko's Paranormal Laboratory screens December 6 as part of the Northwest Film Center's Japanese Currents film series. (Photo courtesy of the Northwest Film Center)

Okayama town of Sanchu. On the verge of starvation, the farmers protest both the rising tax rate and the lack of access to the crops they grow — until samurai are dispatched to keep them under control. (2015, 117 mins.)

Ow

December 11, 8:00pm

Yohei Suzuki's *Ow* tells the story of a journalist who investigates the reason why people have become transfixed by a mysterious, black, moon-like orb. (2014, 89 mins.)

When Marnie was There December 12, 2:00pm

In Hiromasa Yonebayashi's *When Marnie was There*, a shy and withdrawn schoolgirl is sent to a seaside resort by her foster parents to live with her aunt and uncle. Upon arrival, she happens upon a seemingly abandoned house and meets a young girl, Marnie, who says she lives there. The two become friends, but is Marnie a real girl or just a figment of the schoolgirl's imagination? (2014, 103 mins.)

Wonderful World End December 12, 4:30pm

Daigo Matsui's *Wonderful World End* is a freewheeling peek into the world of teen fascination with fame and identity. The film incorporates live videofeed-style footage, text message overlays, and more than its fair share of onscreen emoji. (2015, 84 mins.)

Nuclear Nation II December 13, 4:30pm

Atsushi Funahashi's *Nuclear Nation II* provides a sober look at the lingering realities of thousands of people displaced from their homes and the radioactivity still spreading throughout Fukushima prefecture and beyond following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster. (2015, 114 mins.)

All films are screened at the Northwest Film Center's Whitsell Auditorium, located at 1219 S.W. Park Avenue. To learn more, call (503) 221-1156 or visit <www.nwfilm.org>.

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