

Director in Focus: Koji FUKADA

33rd TIFF to Shine a Spotlight on Globally Acclaimed Director



The Real Thing ©Mochiru Hoshisato, Shogakukan / NagoyaTV



Koji FUKADA

The Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) is pleased to announce that we will be highlighting the work of internationally acclaimed director **Koji FUKADA** at the 33rd TIFF, running October 31 - November 9, 2020.

This year's Director in Focus in the Japan Now section will showcase a selection of works by Fukada, who has been attracting increased international attention and awards within and outside of Japan, demonstrating his contributions to the Japanese film industry. That attention intensified this year when his latest film, *The Real Thing*, was named to the Cannes Film Festival's 2020 Official Selection. Fukada also launched a "Mini Theater Aid" initiative with fellow directors like Ryusuke Hamaguchi, aiming to prevent the collapse of arthouse theaters that had been forced to close by the coronavirus. The crowdfunding campaign raised over 300 million yen, a staggering amount, raising Fukada's profile even further in the Japanese film industry and creating buzz that even gained political attention.

Fukada won his first TIFF award in 2010 with *Hospitalité*, which also won Best Feature in the Asian Films category at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival. He went on to win further festival awards for such work as *Au revoir l'été* (2013) and *Sayonara* (2015). In 2016, *Harmonium* premiered in the 69th Cannes Film Festival's Un Certain Regard section, where it won the Jury Prize, making Fukada one of the most highly regarded Japanese directors on the international scene.

In 2012, he co-founded the Independent Cinema Guild, an organization of film professionals that supports the indie sector with crowdfunding assistance, networking events and other initiatives, helping foster a diversity of films that do not fall into the dualism of commercial and independent cinema. In May 2020, Fukada participated in the unique digital event We Are One: A Global Film Festival, a collaborative effort between 21 film festivals around the world, including TIFF. Fukada was TIFF's selected director, and his new film *The Yalta Conference Online* was created exclusively for the event in a remote setting due to the impact of COVID-19, and gained much attention among the films screened.

TIFF is honored to showcase the works of director Koji Fukada, who is influencing film culture in various forms in Japan and abroad, with screenings of his latest film, *The Real Thing* (2020), as well as such masterpieces as *Human Comedy in Tokyo* (2008), *Harmonium* (2016) and *A Girl Missing* (2019).

Koji FUKADA Comments

It was a huge boost for my career as a film director to have participated in and won the award at the Tokyo International Film Festival in 2010. It has been a decade since then, which makes me realize that the film festival is a place that fosters artistry. I feel I am making a fresh start for the next decade through TIFF's invitation in this milestone year of 2020. The threat of COVID-19 is still continuing, and not only the film industry but many other industries are facing difficulties. But I hope that you will come to the film festival to broaden and refresh your outlook.

PRESS RELEASE

Aug 26, 2020

TIFF's Japan Now

Launched in 2015 to showcase outstanding Japanese films from recent and upcoming months, **Japan Now** displays the diversity of Japanese film and conveys unique aspects of Japanese culture, as well as providing a multifaceted look inside today's Japan. The first two iterations focused on directors Masato HARADA (*Climber's High*, *Chronicle of My Mother*, *Kakekomi*, *The Emperor in August*) and Shunji IWAI (*Fireworks*, *Should We See It from the Side or the Bottom?*, *Love Letter*, *Swallowtail Butterfly*, *A Bride for Rip Van Winkle*). Commemorating the 30th anniversary of the festival in 2017, Japan Now highlighted the achievements of four Muses of Japanese Cinema (in alphabetical order): Sakura ANDO, Yu AOI, Hikari MITSUSHIMA and Aoi MIYAZAKI, with screenings of their works as well as Q&A sessions and special talk events. In 2018, the Japan Now Actor in Focus was Koji YAKUSHO, with screenings of masterpieces selected from his 40-year career, followed by legendary director Nobuhiko Obayashi (*The Discarnates*, *Hanagatami*, *Labyrinth of Cinema*) in 2019. This year's TIFF will shine a spotlight on leading director **Koji Fukada**. The full lineup will be announced at our press conference in late September 2020.

Director in Focus: Koji Fukada (Japan Now Section)

The stories depicted by Koji Fukada always reflect the real world. His films express the relationship between us and our world in a realistic way, and project it onto the relationship between the audience and the screen. With the future ahead of us so difficult to predict, now is the time to be in touch with films that meticulously capture the world.

— **Kohei ANDO**, TIFF Programming Advisor

Koji FUKADA Profile

Born in 1980 in Tokyo, Koji Fukada studied in filmmaking at The Film School of Tokyo and in 2005, joined cutting-edge theater company Seinendan, headed by Oriza Hirata. His animated film *Zakuro Yashiki* received the Soleil d'Or (the Best Newcomer) at the 3rd Paris Kinotayo Film Festival in 2006. His first feature film, starring Seinendan actors, *Human Comedy in Tokyo*, was screened at the Rome International Film Festival in 2008 and won an award at Osaka Cine Drive. Fukada began earning global acclaim, receiving TIFF's Japanese Eyes section award and Best Feature in the Asian Films category at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival for *Hospitalité* in 2010. *Au revoir l'été*, featuring Fumi Nikaido in the lead, won the grand prize and the prize of the young jury at the Nantes Three Continents Festival in 2013. In 2015, *Sayonara* received the Days of Cinema Award at the Filmadrid International Film Festival. *Harmonium* (2016) premiered in the 69th Cannes Film Festival's Un Certain Regard section, winning the Jury Prize, and it also won the 67th Art Encouragement Prize from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Fukada's first international coproduction was *The Man from the Sea* (2018), followed by the Locarno International Film Festival selection *A Girl Missing* (2019). In 2018, Fukada was made a Chevalier dans L'ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government. His books include the novels "Harmonium" (2016), "The Man from the Sea" (2018) and "A Girl Missing" (2019). Currently, he is the co-representative director of the non-profit organization Independent Cinema Guild. His latest film *The Real Thing* was named to the Cannes Film Festival's 2020 Official Selection.

33rd Tokyo International Film Festival

Dates: October 31 (Sat) – November 9 (Mon), 2020

Venues: Roppongi Hills, Ex Theater Roppongi and other venues in Tokyo

Official Website: www.tiff-jp.net

Market: TIFFCOM 2020 November 4 (Wed) – 6 (Fri)

Press conference for the full lineup will be held on **Tuesday, September 29.*

33rd Tokyo International Film Festival: Oct. 31 – Nov. 9, 2020 tiff-jp.net
For further information or inquiries, please contact: TIFF Public Relations Division

Due to current situation in Japan, we are working remotely.

Please contact us by email: tiff-pr2020@tiff-jp.net