Interview: Chicago’s Asian Pop-up Cinema Features ‘Ten Years Japan’ on Mar. 13, 2019

Submitted by PatrickMcD [1] on March 12, 2019 - 3:51pm

- Akiyo Fujimura [2]
- AMC River East 21 [3]
- APUC [4]
- Asian Pop-Up Cinema [5]
- Cambodia [6]
- China [7]
- Film News [8]
- HollywoodChicago.com Content [9]
- Hong Kong [10]
- Indonesia [11]
- Japan [12]
- Mongolia [13]
- Patrick McDonald [14]
- Season Eight [15]
- Singapore [16]
- Sophia Wong Boccio [17]
- South Korea [18]
- Taiwan [19]
- Ten Years Japan [20]
- The Air We Can’t See [21]
- The Ito Sisters [22]

CHICAGO – In 2015, fearing the upcoming possibilities of losing their autonomy, Hong Kong released a short film anthology called “Ten Years,” which looked into the future of their province. Three years later, “Ten Years Japan” does the same, except of course with different filmmakers and attitudes. There are five films under the main title, and one of them is “The Air We Can’t See,” directed by Akiyo Fujimura. She will represent “Ten Years Japan” at Season Eight of Chicago’s Asian Pop-Up Cinema (APUC) on Wednesday, March 13th, 2019, at AMC River East 21 in the city. For more details and tickets, click here. [23]

“The Air We Can’t See” joins “Plan 75,” “Mischievous Alliance,” “Data” and “For Our Beautiful Country” in the shorts showcase, and gets its inspiration from the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant meltdown. Two girls are living underground within a society that formed after another, and more severe, radioactive poisoning affected the atmosphere above. They duo long to see the upper world, with sunshine, dirt and nature. The film combines beautiful imagery with the innocence of childhood for a powerful statement.



‘The Air We Can’t See,’ Directed by Akiyo Fujimura, a Short Film in ‘Ten Years Japan’
Photo credit: AsianPopUpCinema.org

This Chicago Premiere is part of the program-packed Season Eight of APUC, as their new format (multiple films per week) will spotlight a different Asian country every week. APUC is facilitated by founder and veteran film programmer Sophia Wong Bocchio, and Season Eight has an amazing line-up of films from Japan, Mongolia, Singapore, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Indonesia and South Korea. Films mainly screen at Chicago's AMC River East 21, with various other locations throughout the season (click link below at the end of the article for more details).

The young director of "The Air We Can't See," Akiyo Fujimura, already has a feature film (2016's "Eriko Pretended") and this high profile film participation under her belt. She spoke (through an interpreter) with HollywoodChicago.com about her contributions to cinema so far.

HollywoodChicago.com: The 'Ten Years Japan' project was inspired by a similar cinematic movement in Hong Kong. What do you think is different about the Japan project?

Akiyo Fujimura: The Hong Kong project was inspired by an outside force, the eventual rejoining of the province with China. The Japan project is more internally driven, reflecting on people and technology, and not so much on politics.

HollywoodChicago.com: Much of the culture of Japan, and the way they treat each other, is present in the five films of 'Ten Years Japan.' Do you think that the famous Japanese demeanor of deference is much more prepared if any of these disasters came about?

Fujimura: Being polite and humble, certainly has advantages in disaster situations. But the flip side of that coin is being introverted, keeping feelings and needs inside which might have a negative effect in those scenarios.



Director Akiyo Fujimura (right) in Chicago, with APUC Founder Sophia Wong Boccio
Photo credit: AsianPopUpCinema.org

HollywoodChicago.com: Your segment was obviously inspired by the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear meltdown. What type of outcry that came after the incident directly influenced your story?

Fujimura: What struck me was what is in the English title of the short, 'The Air We Can't See.' That our atmosphere can be poisoned, and dangerous, and fatal … and we can't see it. That was in the news afterward, and it inspired me.

HollywoodChicago.com: The story is also about what we take for granted after a disaster strikes. In a world where we've gotten used to getting virtually anything we've wanted for the right price, what did you think that you would miss the most when you were writing the story, and why?

Fujimura: The world of nature, the outside, and what I abhor that in a loss of the physical environment by going underground, that nature is lost to the girls.

HollywoodChicago.com: Getting the right child actors was vital for your film. In casting, what did you find out about the actor child business in Japan, and was it difficult to find the right girls for what you needed?

Fujimura: In the films I've made previously, I've used child actors. I'm looking for a child with curiosity, I can tell the slicker and more professional types. I like kids who don't care how they are perceived. In terms of labor issues, child actors are limited to eight hours a day, so that was difficult in doing a film like mine quickly.

HollywoodChicago.com: What was your previous film, 'Eriko Pretended,' inspired by? How did you put the unusual pieces of such a story

together?

Fujimura: My theme in the film was 'emerging adults.' That theme is really overplayed these days, so I wanted to add some kind of layer to it. I saw a news report that described the occupation I have in the film [professional mourners at funerals]. So I thought if I added that odd thing to the formula, a nice chemical reaction would result.

HollywoodChicago.com: If there was only the choice one film you could take down to watch in an underground bunker, like the one in your story, which one would it be and why?

Fujimura: 'Somewhere,' directed by Sofia Coppola. I connect profoundly to the pool scene in that film, and it's similar to my filmmaking aesthetic.

Season Eight of the Asian Pop-Up Cinema continues with "Ten Years Japan" on March 12th, 2019 (7pm), at the AMC River East 21, 322 East Illinois Street, Chicago. Director Akiyo Fujimura will make an appearance on behalf of the film. For a complete overview on Chicago's Asian Pop-Up Cinema Season Eight, click here. *[24]*

APUC's Season Eight concludes "Japan Week" on Saturday, March 16th, 2019, with "The Ito Sisters," about early 20th Century immigrants-to-America Japanese siblings, who experience U.S. History from a completely different perspective. The film will screen at the Wilmette (Illinois) Theatre at 2pm. For details and tickets, For more details and tickets, click here. **[25]**


[26]

By PATRICK McDONALD [27]
Editor and Film Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [26]

© 2019 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 28 2024 - 8:22am*):
http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/29229/interview-chicago-s-asian-pop-up-cinema-features-ten-years-japan-on-mar-13-2019

Links:
[1] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq
[2] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/akiyo-fujimura
[3] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/amc-river-east-21
[4] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/apuc
[5] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/asian-pop-up-cinema
[6] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/cambodia
[7] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/china
[8] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/film-news
[9] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content
[10] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hong-kong
[11] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/indonesia
[12] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/japan
[13] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mongolia
[14] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald
[15] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/season-eight
[16] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/singapore
[17] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/sophia-wong-boccio
[18] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/south-korea
[19] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/taiwan
[20] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ten-years-japan
[21] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-air-we-can-t-see
[22] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-ito-sisters
[23] https://www.asianpopupcinema.org/tenyears31319
[24] https://www.asianpopupcinema.org/
[25] https://www.asianpopupcinema.org/itosisters31619
[26] mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com
[27] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT