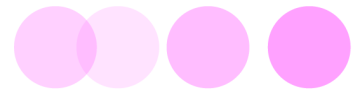


Press Release, April 7, 2014

Nippon
Connection



**Nippon
Connection**
14th Japanese Film Festival
May 27 – June 1, 2014
Frankfurt am Main
www.nipponconnection.com

Nippon Connection Retrospective 2014 – Director Ko Nakahira's Masterpieces

A journey straight into the heart of the roaring 1950s and 60s of Japan

The **14th Japanese Film Festival Nippon Connection** will dedicate this year's **Nippon Retro** retrospective to the Japanese director **Ko Nakahira** (1926-1978). In nine films, the audience is invited to delve deep into the rebellious era of Japan's postwar generation. The films will be screened at the German Film Museum in Frankfurt am Main from **May 30 until June 1, 2014**. This retrospective will be held in cooperation with the Japan Foundation Tokyo and the Japan Foundation Office (Japanisches Kulturinstitut) in Cologne.

After assisting star directors Akira Kurosawa and Kaneto Shindo, Ko Nakahira's scandalous first independent work, **Crazed Fruit (Kurutta Kajitsu)** (1956), was an immediate success. With this film, Nakahira jumpstarted an outstanding career as a director and profoundly inspired the New Wave of Japanese cinema. In his often sexually charged films, characters forever yearn to break free from stifling conventions. With their backs against the wall and nowhere to run, the protagonists are ruined either by their circumstances or their own obsessions. Sometimes a rollercoaster ride of quick cuts, sometimes static and stylized, the modern and experimental language of Nakahira's films fascinates audiences to this day. This retrospective shows a selection of his early works, produced in the 1950s and 60s by Nikkatsu Studio.

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The retrospective kicks off with Nakahira's debut feature **Summer Storm (Natsu no arashi)** (1956). When young Ryoko meets the future husband of her sister, it is the beginning of a fatal affair, where forbidden and unrequited love drives everyone closer and closer to the abyss.

Dark clouds also gather in the legendary film **Crazed Fruit (Kurutta kajitsu)** of the same year. In an idyllic resort, a clique of youngsters experiences anything but a carefree summer and is drawn into a vortex of unfulfilled desire, love and hatred.

The 1960s violent Japanese student protests provide the background of **That Guy and I (Aitsu to watashi)** (1961). Outwardly tough guy Saburo falls in love with his sheltered, high-society classmate Keiko. Yet the time of youthful innocence is over and nothing remains as it seemed. **Mud Spattered Purity (Dorodarake no Junjo)** (1963) features another unlikely couple. The film is based on a true story and tells the dramatic love affair between a young Yakuza gangster and the cultivated daughter of a diplomat. First enjoying carefree dates at boxing matches and classic concerts, they are soon faced with unsurmountable obstacles.

Four daring, sexually explicit films from Nakahira's very productive phase in 1964 provide a special focus in this retrospective. In **Only on Mondays (Getsuyobi no Yuka)** the naive girl Yuka desires nothing more than making all the men around her happy. Soon she finds herself in a dangerous love triangle with a rich sugar daddy and her young boyfriend. **The Hunter's Diary (Ryojin nikki)** is a breathtaking thriller about a married womanizer who keeps a diary on his conquests. Suddenly, one after the other turns up dead. Is it secret revenge? In **Flora on the Sand (Suna no ue no shokubutsugun)** a cosmetics salesman is drawn deeper and deeper into a complicated and surreal relationship with the sisters Akiko and Kyoko. An experimental psychological drama about passion, obsession and mysterious identities.

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Just as passionate is **Whirlpool of Flesh (Onna no uzu to fuchi to nagare)**, which presents Japan just a few years after the war. Hiding in a closet, the intellectual Nunami watches his wife in an act of adultery. In flashbacks, the film reveals how it could come to this and takes the audience on a journey to Manchuria during the Japanese occupation.

Black Gambler: Devil's Left Hand (Kuroi tonakushi – akuma no hidarite) (1966) provides the finale of this year's retrospective, starring Akira Kobayashi as the titular master gambler. A strange political gambling match between Japan and the fictional country Pandora, experimental in its style and full of surprises.

Venue:

German Film Museum (Deutsches Filmmuseum), Schaumainkai 41, Frankfurt am Main
Tickets are available from the beginning of May in the German Film Museum.

Retrospective Ko Nakahira:

Summer Storm (Natsu no arashi, 1956)

Crazed Fruit (Kurutta kajitsu, 1956)

That Guy and I (Aitsu to watashi, 1961)

Mud Spattered Purity (Dorodarake no junjo, 1963)

Only On Mondays (Getsuyobi no Yuka, 1964)

Flora on the Sand (Suna no ue no shokubutsugun, 1964)

The Hunter's Diary (Ryojin nikki, 1964)

Whirlpool of Flesh (Onna no uzu to fuchi to nagare, 1964)

Black Gambler: Devil's Left Hand (Kuroi tobakushi - akuma no hidarite, 1966)

All films are shown in the Japanese original version with English subtitles in 35 mm format.

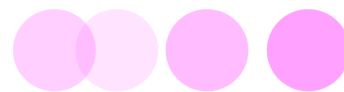
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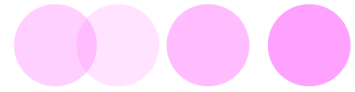
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THE FESTIVAL

The 14th Japanese Film Festival Nippon Connection takes place in Frankfurt am Main from May 27 to June 1, 2014. For six days, the world's biggest festival of Japanese cinema showcases over 130 new productions, among them many German and European premieres. Numerous Japanese film makers will be attending as special guests. For the second time, the festival center will be located at Künstlerhaus Mousonturm and Theater Willy Praml in der Naxoshalle in Frankfurt. Additional screenings will be held at Mal Seh'n Kino (encore presentations) and at the German Film Museum (Nippon Retro). Nippon Connection is organized on a volunteer basis by the non-profit organization Nippon Connection e.V.

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