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風たちの午後

AFTERNOON BREEZES

(Kazetachi no Gogo)

Director: YAZAKI Hitoshi
Screenplay: YAZAKI Hitoshi, NAGASAKI Shunichi
Photography: ISHII Isamu, KOMATSUBARA Atsushi
Lighting: FUJII Yoshihisa
Editors: NAKAJIMA Goro, ISHIZAWA Kiyomi
Music: SHINDO Kazuo, ABE Masashi, UCHIDA Tatsuo, YANO Hiroshi, BOOZY
Sound: SUZUKI Akihiko
Assistant Director: NAKAJIMA Goro
Producers: OIWAKE Shiro, NAGASAKI Shunichi

Cast:

Natsuko	AYA Setsuko
Mitsu	ITO Naomi
Hideo	SUGITA Hiroshi
Etsuko	ATAKE Mari

JAPAN, 1980

105 minutes

YAZAKI Hitoshi

was born in Yamanishi Prefecture, 1956. He studied at the Art College of Nihon University in Tokyo. In 1975, he formed the Furyumu Film Group with Nagasaki Shunichi and others, and he made his first two films (on Super-8) with the group. He went on to work as Nagasaki's assistant on two films. AFTERNOON BREEZES was his first 16mm film; he is currently planning his second.

Films:

1975: URAMADO (Rear Window) (Super-8)
1976: FUYU NO HIKARI (Winter Light) (Super-8)
1980: KAZETACHI NO GOGO (Afternoon Breezes)

Synopsis

A day in the early autumn. Natsuko comes home with two necklaces and a bunch of roses for her flat-mate Mitsu. It is Mitsu's birthday. But there is a white handkerchief hanging in the window of their apartment -- a sign that Mitsu's boyfriend Hideo is visiting, and that Natsuko should stay away. Natsuko secretly loves Mitsu. In order to possess her for herself, she seduces Hideo, hoping to drive a wedge between him and Mitsu. But Natsuko becomes pregnant in the process. It is Christmas when Mitsu finds out what has happened. She angrily throws Natsuko out of the apartment. Natsuko, however, cannot bear to leave the woman she loves. She compulsively follows Mitsu, watching her day and night ...

The film ends one afternoon in full summer.

Edinburgh International Film Festival 1985

#2130

AFTERNOON BREEZES: Production Notes

The film was indirectly inspired by a short newspaper report that appeared in 1976. It reported that a young woman who worked at a beauty salon had died of starvation. Yazaki developed this stark item into a story of two ordinary young women who share an apartment in the city. One of them, Natsuko, works in a nursery school; the other, Mitsu, works in a beauty salon. The film explores Natsuko's consciousness that she secretly comes to love Mitsu.

The script was three years in gestation, and the actual filming took 7 months. Yazaki shot a great deal more footage than was used in the final film; his shooting-ratio was nearly 10:1. One of the advantages of independent film-making is that it is possible to take one's time.

AFTERNOON BREEZES: From a Review

This is Yazaki Hitoshi's first 16mm film. It appears to have something in common with Claude Gagnon's KEIKO, but the film is a success in its own right: mysteriously attractive, it deals with the psychology of a woman who is possessed by love. It is as if the camera had been launched from the shore to catch sight of a floating boat. This is a film about being obsessed with love. The central character is terrified of losing her own identity through lacking the tension of being in love -- and her obsession therefore consumes her very being. Trying to separate the girl she loves from her boyfriend, she introduces another girl to the boy and eventually forces herself on him and becomes pregnant. Even after a formal split, she continues to watch her target girlfriend from a distance. The people around her serve only to reinforce her complacency, her secureness in the knowledge that she is in love. Their daily life is described in detail by a silent and sensual camera -- it is as if one is peeping into the apartment, the work-places, the coffee-shop and the snack bar where they hang out.

We can hardly hear the conversations. They are reproduced on the soundtrack simply to match the movements of lips. By contrast, the highly worked effects track seeks to capture the sounds of everyday life very fully. Perhaps this is because the characters around the protagonist are essentially objects without a meaningful life of their own? The writer probably intends to show the psychological state of his central character only, and he wants to avoid banal and reductive explications.

Besides, he hardly uses any close-ups. This is probably because he doesn't even allow the facial expressions to 'talk'. He knows that this kind of restraint can make for a very rich form of expression, and his experimental approach is bold and straightforward. Considering his steady way of producing the film, Yazaki must be considered a promising film-maker.

-- KAWARABATA Nei (Yomiuri Shinbun)