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A Man Vanishes: The Legacy of Shohei Imamura

International cinema lost one of its most cherished filmmakers with the death of Shohei Imamura in 2006. A leading figure of postwar Japanese film, Imamura was an insightful, creative artist with a near-scientific interest in Japanese culture and society. His flair for depicting the human condition in both audacious and entertaining ways is legendary. The series began at the Freer Gallery of Art in November.

THIS TOURING RETROSPECTIVE, CO-ORGANIZED BY ADAM SEKULER OF THE NORTHWEST FILM FORUM IN SEATTLE AND TOM VICK, FILM PROGRAMMER AT THE FREER, HONORS IMAMURA IN WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN HIS EIGHTIETH YEAR. FOR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS RETROSPECTIVE THEY THANK MARI HIRUTA, THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, TOKYO; YOSHIHIRO NIHEI, THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, LOS ANGELES; IMAMURA PRODUCTIONS, TOKYO; AND BRIAN BELOVARAC, JANUS FILMS, NEW YORK.

PRESENTATION OF *A MAN VANISHES: THE LEGACY OF SHOHEI IMAMURA* AT THE FREER, AND THE PRODUCTION OF ITS ACCOMPANYING BOOKLET, ARE GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY TOSHIBA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION.

SCREENINGS ALSO TAKE PLACE AT THE AFI SILVER THEATRE. PLEASE VISIT WWW.AFI.COM/SILVER/NEW/ FOR SCHEDULE INFORMATION.

THESE FILMS ARE IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

Stolen Desire

Sunday, December 2. 2 PM.

Imamura's debut film is a bawdy tale drawn from his fond memories of working in a theater troupe. In the film, actors from the sleazy side of Osaka tailor their acts—from Kabuki to striptease—to the tastes of the raucous audience in the small town where they perform. The two strong-willed women for whom the troupe's director falls are early examples of the hearty, willful female characters that populate Imamura's later films. 1958 / 92 MIN. / B&W

Black Rain

Friday, December 7. 7 PM.

A stirring, compassionate view of life after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, this masterpiece from the later phase of Imamura's career tells the story of a young woman's struggle to live a normal life after being exposed to the blast's fallout. Critic Roger Ebert notes, "Perhaps only Imamura could have made a film in which the bomb at Hiroshima is simply the starting point for an unforgiving critique of Japanese society itself." 1989 / 123 MIN. / B&W

PANEL DISCUSSION

The World is Cruel When It's Changing: Edo, Imamura, and Eijanaika

Sunday, December 9. 1 PM. Meyer Auditorium.

Three film experts discuss director Shohei Imamura's unique perspective on Japanese cinema and the history and traditional culture of his native land. This discussion, followed by a screening of *Eijanaika*, is offered in conjunction with *Articulations* and the Sackler exhibition *Patterned Feathers, Piercing Eyes: Edo Masters from the Price Collection*.

PANELISTS

JAMES QUANDT, SENIOR PROGRAMMER AT THE CINEMATHEQUE ONTARIO AND EDITOR OF BOOKS ABOUT FILM DIRECTORS ROBERT BRESSON, SHOHEI IMAMURA, AND KON ICHIKAWA.

JOAN MELLEN, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AND CREATIVE WRITING AT TEMPLE UNIVERSITY AND AUTHOR OF SEVERAL BOOKS ON JAPANESE CINEMA, INCLUDING *WAVES AT GENJI'S DOOR: JAPAN THROUGH ITS CINEMA* AND *VOICES FROM THE JAPANESE CINEMA*.

GERALD FIGAL, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND JAPANESE CULTURAL STUDIES AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY AND AUTHOR OF *CIVILIZATION AND MONSTERS: SPIRITS OF MODERNITY IN MEIJI JAPAN*.

MODERATOR

TOM VICK, FILM PROGRAMMER, FREER AND SACKLER GALLERIES.

Eijanaika (a.k.a. Why Not)

Sunday, December 9. 2:30 PM.

In this dazzling, earthy evocation of life in 1860s Japan, Imamura depicts the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate and the end of the Edo era through the eyes of peasants. The film takes its title from the traditional *eija nai ka* celebration, which turns into a hedonistic riot in the film's remarkable climax. "A delirious exercise in sex, crime and weirdness...Imamura imbues the cruelty with virtuoso ferocity and an appalling, visionary beauty" (J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*).

INTENDED FOR MATURE AUDIENCES. 1981 / 151 MIN.

TICKETS FOR BOTH EVENTS ARE DISTRIBUTED AT NOON ON DECEMBER 9. A HALF-HOUR BREAK OCCURS BETWEEN THE PANEL DISCUSSION AND THE FILM.

Dr. Akagi

Friday, December 14. 7 PM.

This irreverent, enduring film is populated with the kinds of eccentrics of whom Imamura was always fond. The title character is a country doctor whose clientele includes a drunken monk, a drug-addicted surgeon, and a variety of sex fetishists, all trying to survive the waning days of World War II. An "idiosyncratic blend of frank earthiness, harsh flippancy, bizarre kinks, and flashes of unlikely formal beauty" (Janet Maslin, *New York Times*). INTENDED FOR MATURE AUDIENCES. 1998 / 128 MIN.

The Profound Desire of the Gods

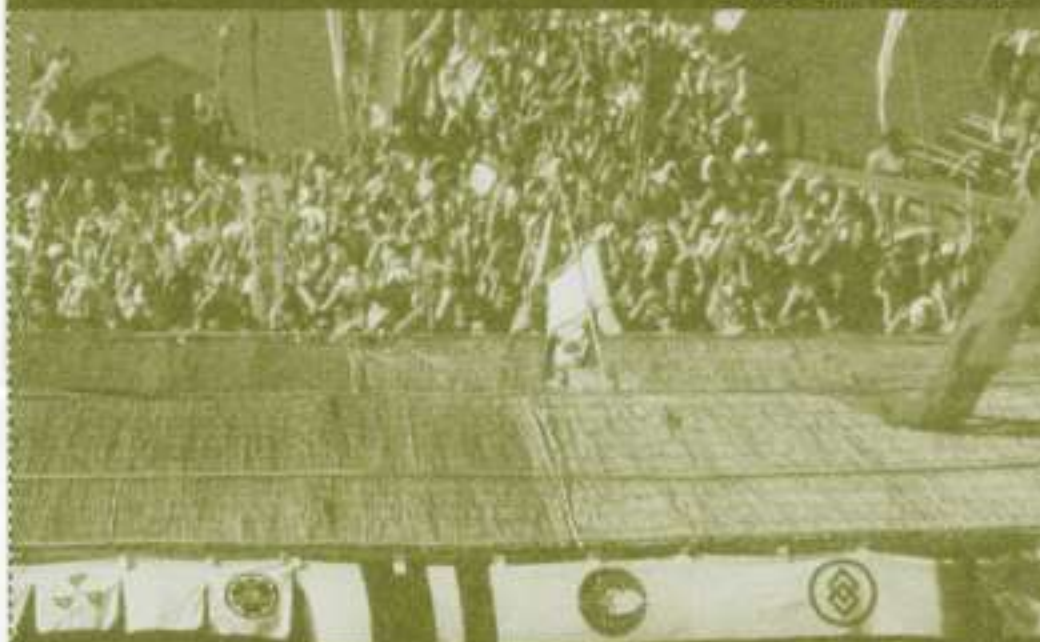
Sunday, December 16. 2 PM.

Modern progress and primitive culture collide in the film that has been declared Imamura's masterpiece. A Tokyo construction engineer travels to a remote island to build a sugar plant, only to find himself entwined with a native populace that lives according to its own ancient code. Critic David Ehrenstein calls this "a defiant example of what the movies can be and seldom are. No lover of Japanese film should miss it."

INTENDED FOR MATURE AUDIENCES. 1968 / 150 MIN.



STOLEN DESIRE



EIJANAIKA



EIJANAIKA



THE PROFOUND DESIRE OF THE GODS