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UGETSU (UGETSU MONOGATARI)

Director: Kenji Mizoguchi

Japan 1953 96 minutes • Cast: Kinuyo Tanaka, Machiko Kyo

UGETSU
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UGETSU invariably turns up in pantheon polls. (Eric Rohmer recently chose it as his favourite Japanese film, as did numerous other directors, critics and programmers.) In a 16th-century village, a potter is seduced away by an exquisitely beautiful woman who turns out to be a phantom. Mizoguchi's rigorous compositions and camerawork, his use of the mist-enshrouded landscape around Lake Biwa, the intense performances of two of Japan's leading actresses (Kyo and Tanaka), and the theme of the illusory nature of human ambition and desire: all contribute to a work of infinite beauty and significance. "Its stylistic perfection and the rich overtones of its theme make UGETSU one of the most beautiful films of all time" (Georges Sadoul). "Simultaneously realistic, allegorical and supernatural, UGETSU is the most stylistically perfect of all Mizoguchi's work, and many critics consider it the greatest Japanese film ever made" (David L. Cook).

Cinematheque History • The Classics: 21 Years of the OFI, 1990; Requests & Special Screenings, 1995; Mizoguchi the Master, 1996; Mizoguchi the Master (repeat), 1997

Friday, July 28 6:30 p.m.