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CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA PRESENTS

24TH SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL



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The Crimson Kimono

Retrospective

USA 1959 | 82 mins | B&W 35mm | English

The screening of this film will be followed by an on-stage conversation between James Shigeta and filmmaker Arthur Dong.

With his very first film, James Shigeta promptly whisked aside the collective humiliation of decades of Asian emasculation in Hollywood. Assured and dignified, his stereotype-shattering role in THE CRIMSON KIMONO was groundbreaking then and remains a rarity today—an Asian American man as a romantic lead. B-movie maestro Samuel Fuller embeds a provocative examination of interracial relationships into a noir detective narrative, delivered in his trademark tabloid style. Japanese American Joe Kojaku (Shigeta) and Caucasian Charlie Bancroft (Glenn Corbett) are detective partners and friends who share an apartment in L.A.'s Little Tokyo. While investigating the murder of a burlesque stripper, they meet a Caucasian artist, Christine (Victoria Shaw). Charlie falls for her first, but when it soon becomes apparent that she and Joe are falling for each other, the murder mystery plotline gives way to a surprisingly sophisticated love triangle, one beset by Charlie's jealousy towards Joe, and Joe's accusatory response of racism. Foreshadowing the very predicaments of interracial fear and doubt explored in this year's Opening Night film AMERICANSE, Fuller's exploration of race and racism was ahead of its time, and Christine's choice between the two men—and the ensuing kiss—made celluloid history.

—Taro Goto

Print Courtesy of Sony Pictures Entertainment

ARTHUR DONG is the award-winning documentary filmmaker of SEWING WOMAN, COMING OUT UNDER FIRE and LICENSED TO KILL.

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San Francisco State University - Asian American Studies Department
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credits:

Director: Samuel Fuller

Producer: Samuel Fuller

Writer: Samuel Fuller

Cast: Victoria Shaw, Glenn Corbett, James Shigeta, Anna Lee

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