Press release
11 January 2010

ICA

JAPANESE FILM SEASON AT THE ICA

In February, the ICA hosts ***Back to the Future Japanese Cinema since the Mid-90s***, the Japan Foundation's Touring Film Programme; Japan's 2011 Oscar entry, ***Confessions***, alongside two earlier films by the same director, **Tetsuya Nakashima;** and the premiere of ***Confessions of Dog,*** a police corruption story deemed so controversial that it failed to get a theatrical release in Japan, including a director's Q&A with Gen Takahashi.

THE JAPAN FOUNDATION'S BACK TO THE FUTURE JAPANESE CINEMA SINCE THE MID-90S
The Japan Foundation explores a fertile period in Japanese filmmaking through a series of films made since the mid-90s. The films include those that were central to the Japanese film industry's artistic and commercial resurgence and showcases the work of some of the most important Japanese filmmakers of the past 20 years including established names such as Kiyoshi Kurosawa and new talent like Yuya Ishii.

Many of the films in the season were popular in Japan and international film festivals when originally released but have been relatively unseen in the UK because they did not find distributors, perhaps because they didn't fit the then current Western stereotype of Japanese film. The 2011 line-up offers UK audiences an insight into a pivotal period that changed the landscape of Japanese cinema and provided the industry with a new lease of life. The season launches at the ICA, the only London venue, before touring to venues in Belfast, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Bristol and Sheffield.

4, 5 February, Cinema 1
***Cure*, Dir Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Japan 1997**
115 mins, subtitles, 35mm, recommended cert 15
Cure is the seminal work by leader of the J-Horror genre, director Kiyoshi Kurosawa. A spate of murders in Tokyo are linked by a large X slashed across the dead bodies. Detective Takabe (Koji Yakusho) and psychologist Sakuma (Tsuyoshi Ujiki) are called in to track down the serial killer. Kurosawa often looks at how society can shape an individual, which we see here when a young drifter (Masato Hagiwara), suffering from amnesia and possessing strange hypnotic powers, becomes part of the investigation.

5 February, Cinema 1
***The Bird People in China*, Dir Takashi Miike, Japan 1998**
102 mins, subtitles, 35mm, recommended cert 15
The Bird People in China is a gentle and understated drama by Takashi Miike. The title refers to an ancient legend that bird people once soared the skies with the aid of large mechanical wings. Workaholic Wada (Masashiro Motoki) heads out of Tokyo to investigate a large deposit of jade accompanied by debt collector Ujiie (Renji Ishibashi) and their guide Shun (Mako). The trio reach the Yun Nan mountains of provincial China and a village where the titular legend lives on. The film addresses environmentalism, ethics and the value of wealth and becomes an allegory for man's loss of innocence and longing to regain it.

LOTTERY FUNDED
The Institute of Contemporary Arts is a registered charity in England No 236848

5, 10 February, Cinema 1
***Go*, Dir Isao Yukisada, Japan 2001**
122 mins, subtitles, 35mm, recommended cert 15
Go tells the story of a Korean teen living in Tokyo and struggling with prejudice, personal identity and first love. Adapted from Kazuki Kaneshiro's eponymous novel, *Go* has gained international cult status. The film opens with a raw energy reminiscent of Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* with the beleaguered protagonist, Sugihara (Yosuke Kubozuka), receiving a pasting from his own basketball teammates. Sugihara overcomes persecution with help from his father's boxing lessons until he meets Sakurai (Shibasaki), his first love.

6 February, Cinema 1
***Josee, the Tiger and the Fish*, Dir Isshin Inudo, Japan 2003**
116 mins, subtitles, 35mm, recommended cert 15
Josee, the Tiger and the Fish is a romantic drama about a college boy who falls for a girl with cerebral palsy. While at work in his part-time job in a mahjongg parlour, Tsuneo (Satoshi Tsumabuchi) hears talk of a crazy old woman who pushes a huge buggy around the neighbourhood. A chance meeting with the woman introduces him to Josee (Chizuru Ikewaki) who is in the buggy. Josee's narrow world is opened up as the pair become friends and then lovers. The film was an unexpected indie box-office success in Japan on its release.

6, 9 February, Cinema 1
***Linda, Linda, Linda*, Dir Nobuhiro Yamashita, Japan 2005**
114 mins, subtitles, 35mm, recommended cert 15
Linda, Linda, Linda takes an upbeat look at Japanese youth culture and showcases fresh young talent. Three days before their high school festival, guitarist Kei (Yu Kashii), drummer Kyoko (Aki Maeda, *Battle Royale*) and bassist Nozumi (Shiori Sekine) are forced to find a new lead vocalist for their band. They choose Korean exchange student Son (Doona Bae, *Sympathy for Mr Vengeance*) despite her limited comprehension of Japanese. The group struggles to learn their set, which includes 'Linda, Linda, Linda' by Japanese 80s punk-popsters The Blue Hearts, in time for the performance.

9, 12 February, Cinema 1
***One Million Yen Girl*, Dir Yuki Tanada, Japan 2008**
121 mins, subtitles, 35mm, recommended cert 15
One Million Yen Girl is a Japanese road movie about a lonely college graduate Suzuko (Yu Aoi). An incident at work leaves her with a conviction and a criminal record. The shame this brings to her and her family results in her leaving town, moving from place to place taking part-time jobs and saving one million yen in each before moving on. Problems arise when she falls in love with a co-worker Nakajima (Mirai Moriyama), who hears of her one-million target and reputation for moving on.

10, 13 February, Cinema 1
Sawako Decides, Dir Yuya Ishii, Japan 2009
112 mins, subtitles, 35mm, recommended cert 15
Sawako Decides is a comic drama about female empowerment. Sawako (Hikari Mitsushima) leaves a humiliating office job in Tokyo – we see her testing wretched new toys on spoilt children – to return to her rural hometown and her ill father. Sawako attempts to help with her father's failing clam-packing business but the elderly female workforce resents and despises her. Meanwhile, Sawako's hopeless boyfriend tracks her down, and she begins to despair of ever making sense of her life. Yuya Ishii, who began as an indie maverick to become a major talent, turns Sawako's big decision into a credible and uplifting narrative twist.

UK PREMIERE: *CONFESSIONS OF A DOG* AND DIRECTOR'S Q&A WITH GEN TAKAHASHI
16 February, Cinema 1, 6.45pm
***Confessions of a Dog,* Dir Gen Takahashi, Japan 2006**
195 mins, subtitles, rec cert 18
Gen Takahashi introduces the most dangerous men on Japan's streets in *Confessions of a Dog,* a film deemed too controversial to receive a theatrical release in Japan. The worst perpetrators of violence, illegal pay-offs, drugs and intimidation are not the Japanese mafia but the police force. Takeda (Shun Sugata) begins as an honest officer but becomes embroiled in dirty back room dealings and blackmail while renegade investigator Kusama (Junichi Kawamoto) considers whether he will expose the force's institutional corruption.

THREE FILMS BY TETSUYA NAKASHIMA

18 – 27 February, Cinema 1
***Confessions*, Dir Tetsuya Nakashima, Japan 2010**
106 mins, subtitles, cert tbc, digital print
Confessions is Japan's official entry for this year's Oscars by Tetsuya Nakashima director of ICA favourites *Kamikaze Girls* and *Memories of Matsuko.* A teacher whose daughter has been murdered by two of her teenage students controls the narrative, standing before her unruly class and laying out her reasons for the revenge which is to follow. Inexorably, the truth behind the tragedy is revealed as the film moves between numerous perspectives, allowing the audience unprecedented access to the hearts and minds of a cross-section of troubled characters. The film is full of anger, sadness and surprises.
Released by Third Window

19, 27 February, Cinema 1
***Memories of Matsuko*, Dir Tetsuya Nakashima, Japan 2006**
130 mins, subtitles, Cert tbc
A young man clears out the cluttered apartment of his recently deceased aunt Matsuko, and finds amid the clutter the truth about how she came to be beaten to death, homeless and alone, on a riverbank. Director Nakashima has created a moving melodrama of a woman's life from the 1950s to 80s, in which tragedy is offset by wonderful flights of fantasy and moments of magic. Miki Nakatani gives a brilliant, award-winning performance as Matsuko from angelic schoolteacher, through her fall into prostitution, to

her final tragic years. This visually vibrant film is an *Amelie*-esque fairytale of a starry-eyed woman searching for her prince and is punctuated by flamboyant musical set-pieces reminiscent of Bob Fosse.

26 February, Cinema 1
Kamikaze Girls, Dir Tetsuya Nakashima, Japan 2004
103 mins, subtitles
Kamikaze Girls is a stylistically playful look at Japanese idol culture, based on a manga comic by Novala Takemoto. Teenager Momoko escapes from the boredom of her hometown by adopting a Lolita image, although her doll-like clothing belies a gutsy, forthright attitude. It's the latter aspect of her personality that attracts her fashion opposite, surly biker chick Ichigo. Together the pair form an unlikely alliance. With two J-Pop stars in the lead roles, this cult comedy plays narrative tricks and features frenetic animated interludes.

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Listings information
£9 / £8 Concessions / £7 ICA Members
Box Office 020 7930 3647
Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London, SW1Y 5AH
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Fri 4 Feb	**Cure** 6.15pm
Sat 5 Feb	**Cure** 1.15pm **Go** 3.45pm **The Bird People of China** 6.30pm
Sun 6 Feb	**Josee, the Tiger and the Fish** 4.30pm **Linda, Linda, Linda** 7.00pm
Wed 9 Feb	**Linda, Linda, Linda** 8.45pm **One Million Yen Girl** 6.15pm
Thu 10 Feb	**Go** 8.45pm **Sawako Decides** 6.15pm
Sat 12 Feb	**One Million Yen Girl** 3.30pm
Sun 13 Feb	**Sawako Decides** 3.00pm
Wed 16 Feb	**Confessions of a Dog* with directors Q&A** 6.45pm
Fri 18 Feb	**Confessions** 6.30pm, 8.45pm
Sat 19 Feb	**Confessions** 3.30pm, 8.45pm **Memories of Matsuko** 6.00pm
Sun 20 Feb	**Confessions** 4.30pm, 7.00pm
Wed 23 Feb	**Confessions** 6.30pm, 8.45pm
Thu 24 Feb	**Confessions** 6.30pm, 8.45pm
Fri 25 Feb	**Confessions** 6.30pm, 8.45pm
Sat 26 Feb	**Confessions** 1.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm **Kamikaze Girls** 4.00pm
Sun 27 Feb	**Confessions** 2.00pm, 7.00pm **Memories of Matsuko** 4.15pm

***Confessions of a Dog* and *Confessions* are two different films by different directors**

Notes to editors

1. **The Japan Foundation** was established in 1972 by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and became an Independent Administrative Institution in 2003. It promotes international cultural exchange between Japan and the rest of the world, and provides financial support for a range of international cultural exchange programmes. Its activities are financed by annual subsidies from the Japanese government, capital gains accrued from the management of our original endowment fund, and contributions and donations from the private sector. For more information on the Japan Foundation visit http://www.jpf.org.uk/

2. The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) is a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary arts centre established in 1947 by a collective of artists, poets and writers to showcase and champion contemporary culture across the broadest range of art forms. Housing two galleries, two cinemas, a theatre, reading room, bookshop and café/bar, the ICA has been at the forefront of cultural experiment since its formation and has presented some of the most radical exhibitions, artists, films, music and thought to have shaped our world. It exists today as a committed proponent of contemporary arts practice and new ideas, presenting an international and contextualised programme of work in new and experimental frameworks across a variety of platforms. Entrance to galleries, bookshop, café and bar events is free of charge before 11pm.