

## Press Release



### *Forum* 2013: Special Screenings

Keisuke Kinoshita (1912-1998) was one of the most important directors of the Golden Era of Japanese cinema in the 1950s. After training to be a photographer, he started at Shochiku studios in 1933 and made his directorial debut in 1943 following work as a camera assistant and assistant director. Up until 1988, he made 49 films, most of which for Shochiku, a studio well known for its "shomingeki", stories of everyday life in which the worries and joys of normal people form the focus of attention. Yet the eclectic Kinoshita did not allow himself to be pigeonholed within one particular genre or style, shooting melodramas, comedies and historical films. His films that tackle the war are of particular interest, given that he was more interested in the silent suffering of the civilian population rather than patriotic heroism at the front.

In collaboration with the Japanese festival Tokyo FILMeX, the *Forum* is showing five films by the director restored over the last year in new 35mm prints. A further six films will be shown at the Arsenal cinema in February as part of a retrospective of the Japanese director's work.

The *Forum* already turned its attention to American director Shirley Clarke (1919-1997) last year. It is thanks to the untiring research and restoration work carried out by American distributor Milestone Films that Clarke's *Portrait of Jason* can now be screened as an additional revival. In the director's own room at the Chelsea Hotel, an Afro-American hustler called Jason Holiday talks of the different roles he plays in life: male prostitute, housemaid, con-artist, worker at a graveyard for dogs and nightclub entertainer. In the process, this provocative film questions our ideas of identity and truth.

An initiative by the Arsenal "Living Archive" project has led to the seminal Indian documentary *Kya hua is shahar ko? (What Happened to This City?)* by Deepa Dhanraj being digitalised and restored. The riots between Hindus and Muslims in 1984 form the starting point for this film of immense political power, which analyses the mechanisms of political power struggles as well as the instrumentalisation of economic conditions and municipal poverty.

The rediscovery of the only feature length film by Dominique Benicheti is a true film historical revelation. *Le cousin Jules*, which was shown at a few festivals in 1973/74 before being largely forgotten, is today seen as a milestone in documentary filmmaking. This extremely minimalist film shot in cinemascope and colour with stereo sound actually took 6 years of

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painstaking work to produce, following the ritualised everyday life of an 80-year-old farmer and blacksmith from Burgundy before gradually blossoming into a moving swansong to a bygone era.

*Cheongchun-eui sipjaro (Crossroads of Youth)*, a melodrama about the adventures of a country boy in the big city of Seoul, is the oldest surviving Korean feature film and the only one by director Ahn Jong-hwa to have been preserved. The end of the Japanese occupation, the division of the country and the devastating war between North and South did as much to destroy film historical heritage as carelessness in the post-war era. What has not been lost, however, are the memories of the art of mise-en-scène, the film narrators called "pyeonsa", the music and the costumes that all formed part of silent film performances in the 1930s. Taking these memories as his inspiration, director Kim Tae-yong (*Late Autumn, Forum* 2011) has put together a modernised stage show for the revival of this cinematic gem complete with orchestra, narrator and singers, which is now coming to Berlin thanks to the generous support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Korea, the Koreanische Kulturzentrum, the Korean Film Council, the Korean Film Archive and the Busan International Film Festival.

### Film List

*Le cousin Jules* by Dominique Benicheti, France 1973

*Cheongchun-eui sipjaro (Crossroads of Youth)* by Ahn Jong-hwa, Korea 1934

*Kya hua is shahar ko? (What Happened to This City?)* by Deepa Dhanraj, India 1986

*Portrait of Jason* by Shirley Clarke, USA 1967

Keisuke Kinoshita

*Kanko no machi (Jubilation Street)*, Japan 1944

*Onna (Woman)*, Japan 1948

*Konyaku yubiwa (Engagement Ring)*, Japan 1950

*Yuyake gumo (Farewell to Dream)*, Japan 1956

*Shito no densetsu (A Legend or Was It?)*, Japan 1963

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