

Kinema Club International Conference 2024 – University of Sheffield

Borders, Boundaries, and Fringes of Japanese Film (Studies)

“Rethinking Film Exhibition” Panel (June 12th, 2024)

Specialized Film Festivals’ ambivalent position regarding “Quality” and “Nation” paradigms

A focus on Nippon Connection and Kinotayo contemporary Japanese film festivals

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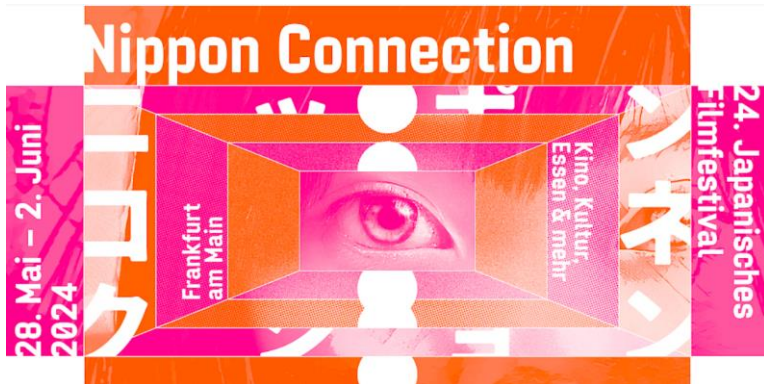
CREAT
Expertises • Arts • Transitions

Several observations

- Japan and Japanese culture's attractiveness worldwide
 - Japanese « auteur » films' critical success and commercialization outside of Japan
 - Festivals' roles:
 - A-list festivals' position as acknowledged institutions for the evaluation of the quality of the films, as well as marketplaces and highly mediatic events
- ⇒ Important for: critical reception, film funding, career... **Building “national cinema” discourses, canons, film history**

What about specialized film festivals' position concerning “quality” and “nation” paradigms?

Case studies



- **Nippon Connection**

(Annual, May-June, 6 days, 100 films, 50 events, >18500 visitors)

Founded in 2000, held in Frankfurt am Main (Germany), largest selection of Japanese films in the world



- **Kinotayo**

(Annual, in Nov-Dec., 3 weeks in Paris, several months in other cities, 20 films (5 exported), few events, ? visitors)

Founded in 2006, held in Paris and exportable to other French cities, only festival specialized on Japanese cinema in France

Specialized film festivals

- Around the 1970s: specialized categories appeared at a point where film festivals were **getting free of governmental control and trying to provide for world art and political cinema** (De Valck, 2007). From the 1980s, there is a “proliferation, professionalization, and standardization of festivals worldwide” (Ma Ran, 2018:165).
- Specialized = “smaller-scale” in “specific areas” and “devoted to particular themes” (Kraicer, 2012, quoting Iordanova, 2011)

Specialized festivals have two goals:

- **Promoting cinematic art** = “quality” films (with A-list festivals as references).
- **Promoting films that will engage discussion around their theme** (here, “Japan”/“Japanese culture”).








These festivals carry the “burden of cultural and national representation” (De Valck, 2016:103), and help build the idea of films as a “field of knowledge” (Wong, 2011:14-16) and as “a public culture to be debated” (Harbord, 2016:69-70).











Nippon Connection & Kinotayo, specialized on « Japanese cinema »

- Competitive sections for different types of films (feature, short ; documentary, fiction) + retrospective sections
 - Programming with different kinds of films: renowned *auteur* films (screened at A-list festivals) ; new *auteurs* films ; commercial films
 - Awards: jury and audience
 - Kinotayo in 2023: *Soleil d'Or (Kin no taiyō)* audience award, 2 jury awards
 - NC in 2024: 3 audience awards, 4 jury awards
- + Extra-filmic « cultural » events

Nippon Connection events

(from #2024, cf official website)

	<p>LECTURE</p> <h3>Hands Off! How Japan Forgets, Remembers, And Censors Itself</h3> <p>A lecture by Mio OKIDO</p> <p>Lecture in German</p>	<p>Sun., June 02, 2024, 17:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>LECTURE</p> <h3>Horses, Feelings, And Shapes: On Properties Of Reality In Animation</h3> <p>A lecture by Çağrı HARMANDAR</p> <p>Lecture in English</p>	<p>Fri., May 31, 2024, 18:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>WORKSHOP</p> <h3>Ikebana Workshop</h3> <p>Workshop in German</p>	<p>Fri., May 31, 2024, 19:00 Mouzaorium Studio 2</p>
	<p>WORKSHOP</p> <h3>Japan From Anime To Zen</h3> <p>Workshop in German</p>	<p>Fri., May 31, 2024, 11:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>LECTURE</p> <h3>Japanese Cinema Without Frontiers: Cross-Cultural Influences, Collaborations, And Co-Productions</h3> <p>A lecture by Dr. Jasper SHARP</p> <p>Lecture in English</p>	<p>Sat., June 01, 2024, 19:00 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>PERFORMANCE</p> <h3>Kamishibai – Japanese Paper Theater for Kids</h3> <p>Performance in German</p>	<p>Sat., June 01, 2024, 11:30 Mouzaorium Studio 2</p> <p>Sat., June 01, 2024, 13:00 Mouzaorium Studio 2</p>
	<p>LECTURE</p> <h3>Lecture: GLOBIS University</h3> <p>Live, study and work in Tokyo with the MBA program</p> <p>Lecture in English</p>	<p>Fri., May 31, 2024, 16:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>

	<p>EXHIBITION</p> <h3>1000 Memories</h3> <p>A Kirigami exhibition by Michiyo ARAKAWA</p>	<p>Tue., May 28, 2024, – Sun., June 02, 2024 Entrance NexxoAlteier</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>LECTURE</p> <h3>Art As Revolution: Revolution As Art? Addressing The "MISHIMA" Phenomenon</h3> <p>A lecture by Dr. Christian CHAPPELOW</p> <p>Lecture in German</p>	<p>Tue., May 28, 2024, 19:00 Mouzaorium Studio 2</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>EVENT</p> <h3>Award Ceremony: Drawing Competition</h3> <p>Event in German</p>	<p>Sat., June 01, 2024, 17:00 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>LECTURE</p> <h3>Behind The Record: GHOST IN THE SHELL</h3> <p>A lecture by Frederic STADER</p> <p>Lecture in German</p>	<p>Thu., May 30, 2024, 18:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>PANEL DISCUSSION</p> <h3>Career Talk: Japanese Studies – What Comes Next?</h3> <p>A panel discussion with the Japanese-German Business Association (DJW)</p> <p>Panel Discussion in German</p>	<p>Fri., May 31, 2024, 14:00 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>WORKSHOP</p> <h3>Cooking Course: Japanese Seasoning Paste Shio Koji</h3> <p>Workshop in German</p>	<p>Sat., June 01, 2024, 11:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p>
	<p>KARAOKE</p> <h3>Crowd Karaoke</h3>	<p>Sat., June 01, 2024, 21:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>LECTURE</p> <h3>Cycling And Hiking In Japan</h3> <p>A lecture by Angela TROISI</p> <p>Lecture in German</p>	<p>Thu., May 30, 2024, 14:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>VINYL EVENING</p> <h3>Deep Listening: „A Symphonic Celebration“ von Joe HISAISHI</h3> <p>A vinyl evening with Audio-Technica</p> <p>Vinyl Evening in German</p>	<p>Thu., May 30, 2024, 20:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>
	<p>FILM TALK</p> <h3>Film Talk: Kotone FURUKAWA</h3> <p>Film Talk in English and Japanese</p>	<p>Sat., June 01, 2024, 14:30 Mouzaorium Studio 1</p> <p>free entry</p>

MCJP events during Kinotayo in Paris

(cf official website)

Non-permanent events (ex. during Kinotayo #2023):



Conférence
07/12/2023 - 18h30

Le Japon, « leader discret » des Relations internationales

日本 - 国際関係における控えめなリーダー -
Conférence



Conférence
28/11/2023 - 18h30

Chemin faisant

日本を歩きながら
Conférence sur place et en ligne



Exposition
Du 28 novembre 2023 au 3 février 2024

Mokuzai

モクザイ
Petite exposition | Dessins et peintures de Philippe Weisbecker



Cinéma
Du 24 novembre 2023 au 13 janvier 2024

Cinéma dans le cadre de l'exposition "L'Art des charpentiers japonais"

「工匠たちの技と心」展関連映画
上映

Permanent spaces:



MCJP Library



MCJP Onigiri Bar Kunitoraya

(photo from Tabelog)

Permanent events : Japanese language course, tea ceremony course...

Kinotayo Association's activity on social networks

- Posts on :
- Japanese films in film culture events (A-category and specialized festivals, awards, critics, French releases)
 - Events at MCJP or other institutions about Japan in France (including academic talks)
 - Cultural facts or events in Japan

(facebook & instagram accounts only, the linkedin and X accounts being more activity report-accounts, and the youtube account only featuring interviews from the 13rd edition)



festival du cinema japonais contemporain kinotayo
10 mars · 🌐

🏆 Le Japan Academy Prize - 日本アカデミー賞, équivalent des César français, s'est tenu le 8 mars dernier à Tokyo.

🌿 Parmi le palmarès, Godzilla Minus One de Takashi Yamazaki remporte pas moins de récompenses dont le prix du meilleur film et du meilleur second rôle féminin pour Sohma Tadanobu. Cette dernière a également remporté le prix de la meilleure actrice pour son rôle principal dans le film Innocence de Hirokazu Kore-Eda.

🔥 Perfect Days, film d'ouverture du dernier festival Kino... [En voir plus](#)



Festival du cinéma japonais contemporain Kinotayo
26 mars · 🌐

👉 Partenariat Association Kinotayo x Fondation France-Japon de l'EHESS

🏠 Le Campus Condorcet Paris-Aubervilliers a tenu la première édition du festival le Printemps des Humanités du 21 au 23 mars dernier avec pour thème principal "prendre soin".

👉 C'est dans le cadre de l'échange «bien vieillir : prendre soin, d'Aubervilliers au Japon» que nous avons proposé la projection de la bande annonce de Tea Friends de Bunji Sotoyama, soleil d'or de la dernière édition du festival Kino... [En voir plus](#)



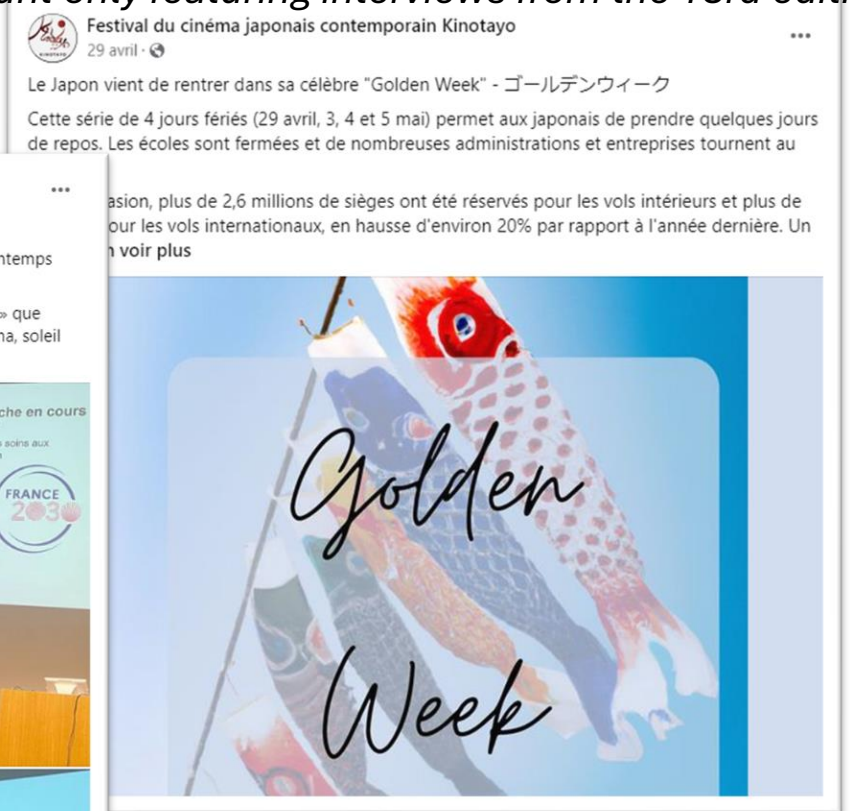
Bien Vieillir : Prendre soin d'Aubervilliers au Japon
L'innovation liée par le care - le cas des soins aux personnes âgées en France et au Japon
Sebastien LECHEVALIER
Boris HAURAY
Estelle GIRARD

Présentation d'une recherche en cours INNOVCARE
L'innovation liée par le care - le cas des soins aux personnes âgées en France et au Japon
<https://innocare.hypotheses.org/>
FRANCE 2030
PPR Autonomie
Programme Pluriannuel de Recherche
Du 1^{er} janvier 2024 au 31 décembre 2028

Vieillir, bien vieillir : une perspective japonaise
Video Bande annonce de Tea friends (avec le soutien de Kinotayo, Festival du film japonais en France)

Video Travail des seniors Japonais : bientôt la retraite à 80 ans ? (avec le soutien de Kinotayo, Festival du film japonais en France)

ur rappel, une perspective comparée sur le vieillissement (Source OCDE)




Festival du cinéma japonais contemporain Kinotayo
29 avril · 🌐

Le Japon vient de rentrer dans sa célèbre "Golden Week" - ゴールデンウィーク

Cette série de 4 jours fériés (29 avril, 3, 4 et 5 mai) permet aux japonais de prendre quelques jours de repos. Les écoles sont fermées et de nombreuses administrations et entreprises tournent au ralenti.

En plus, plus de 2,6 millions de sièges ont été réservés pour les vols intérieurs et plus de 10 millions pour les vols internationaux, en hausse d'environ 20% par rapport à l'année dernière. Un [en voir plus](#)



Editorials

- **Nippon Connection:**

Bring “Japanese culture in all its facets” to visitors, to catch “up on the entire range of contemporary Japanese cinema”. Targets: “fans of film and Japan” (press quote from Japan Digest)

(Official website)

- **Kinotayo:**

To “carry on the dialogue”, taking from *Japonism*. To “bring Japanese people’s point of view on shared social facts to the French audience’s attention”. To give access to inaccessible Japanese films. Selecting films on two possible criterions: either “intrinsic cinematic quality” OR capacity to show something about Japanese culture.

(Official website and Ianni 2019)

Quality

Festivals as **quality evaluation institutions** ; **gatekeepers/showcases** of « good » and « worthy » films (Wong, 2011:17)

De Valck (2016)'s analysis using Bourdieu's theories:

- Festival's frame of reference for quality evaluation comes from European conceptions of “art for art's sake”, the “romantic artist”, the division between high and low culture, and the cinephile approach to film consuming
- They bestow “symbolic capital” to films and operate “cultural legitimization”
- They “sustain” their own system by producing “festival films” (also see Wong, 2011) and by being “tastemakers” (also see Czach, 2004). Specialized festivals are thus “transits” for festival circuit filmmakers.

Wong (2016:90, 85): film festivals form and reproduce the “public sphere”.

A-list festivals are the ““heirs” of the liberal bourgeois sphere” // “alternative festivals” create “counter-publics”

Nippon Connection & Kinotayo's « counter processes » of evaluation:

- Quality as either « cinematic art » qualities or the capacity to show interesting cultural dimensions of Japan

= bestowing “cultural legitimization” to these two types of films

- Importance of audience awards

= empowering audience's tastes and judgements

Nation

- Historically, **“nation” is important as a category to sort films** (De Valck, 2007:92). Films are then selected to “adhere to a political agenda of what is good for the nation” (Czach, 2004).
- **“Japanese cinema” was theorized from outside Japan**, and “based on a fragmented view of its film heritage which had been cherry-picked to astonish audiences in the West” (Centeno Martín, 2018:4).

Ideals

Nippon Connection & Kinotayo follow the ideal of **educating the audience about the complexity and diversity inside the concept of “Japan”**.

⇒ “mediatic [and interpreting] machines” (Rueda, 2009:166)

⇒ “Alternative exhibition circuit” (De Valck, 2007:106) for commercial and non-commercial “non-English-speaking films that carry high commercial risk to exhibitors” (Harbord, 2016)

Economic realities

Zahlten (2010): Film festivals as intertextual nexus that negotiate between discourses on “nation” and “globalization”

- Film festivals share similarities with the anime-cosmos, that produces a framework to understand Japan in a “commodifiable” and very “global” way (Zahlten, 2010).
- Pop culture and shopping events at festivals make of “Japan” a consumable product. These events are “vital [...] for the global media coverage of the festival and, as such, part of its marketing strategy” (paraphrasing De Valck, 2007:118)

=> Festivals face “market logic” and “product differentiation” realities (Zahlten, 2010:24): they incorporate stereotypes to fit audience “expectations”

=>Festivals may provide the audience with a stereotyped “framewor[k] for understanding [these] unfamiliar [films]” (to paraphrase De Valck, 2016:112). They may also institutionalize and provide cultural legitimization to stereotyped visions of Japan

Papers/books/reports

- Centeno Martín, Marcos (2018), 'Introduction. The Misleading Discovery of Japanese National Cinema', *Arts* 7, no. 4 (26 November).
- Czach, Liz (2004), 'Film Festivals, Programming, and the Building of a National Cinema'. *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1: 76–88.
- De Valck, Marijke (2007), *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*, Film Culture in Transition (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press).
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- Harbord, Janet (2016), 'Contingency, Time, and Event: An Archaeological Approach to the Film Festival', in *Film Festivals: History, Theory, Method, Practice*, eds Marijke de Valck, Brendan Kredell, and Skadi Loist (London : New York, NY: Routledge), 69–70.
- Kraicer, Shelly (2012), 'Film Festival Yearbook 3: Film Festivals and East Asia', *Cineaste* 37, no. 2 (Spring): 65–66. [Report on Dina Iordanova and Ruby Cheung (eds) (2011), *Film Festival Yearbook 3: Film Festivals and East Asia*]
- Ma, Ran (2018), 'Asian Documentary Connections, Scale-Making, and the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (YIDFF)', *Transnational Cinemas* 9, no. 2.
- Nornes, Abé Mark (2006), 'Nippon Connection's Anti-Canon', *Midnight Eye* (blog), 3 May.
- Rueda, Amanda (2009), 'The Film Festival: Mediations and Construction of Imaginary Territories' (fr: Festival de cinéma : Médiations et construction de Territoires imaginaires'), *Culture & Musées* 14, no. 1, 149-171.
- Wong, Cindy H. (2011), *Film Festivals: Culture, People, and Power on the Global Screen* (New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press).
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Other sources

- Ianni, Dimitri (2019), « Interview with Dimitri Ianni, programming director of Kinotayo », *Journal du Japon*, 24 November, <https://www.journaldujapon.com/2019/11/24/entretien-avec-dimitri-ianni-responsable-du-comite-de-selection-du-festival-kinotayo/> [consulted on 24/03/19].
- Official websites and social media accounts of Nippon Connection and Kinotayo