

# Contemporary Film Festivals in Japan: Part 1

Laura MacGregor

Eija Niskanen

## Introduction

*This paper is the first part of a report of the results of a research project funded by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Centre in 2011-2012.*

Japan Film Festivals Network (no date) lists 48 film festivals in Japan in 2011-2012, suggesting that the interest in film festivals in this country is significant. The term "film festival" is used loosely in Japan, and the vagueness of what a festival means to some and their ever-changing circumstances results in festivals coming and going, making them difficult to keep track of.

Some of the characteristics of film festivals in Japan are as follows: some have a competition, while others do not. Though most are multi-day, some are just one day long (i.e., Kichijoji Animation Film Festival). Some show mainly new films not yet released in Japan (i.e., Image Forum Film Festival), while others do not (Osaka European Film Festival, for example, had just four films new to Japan in a program of 27 in 2011). The most definitive unifying factor is that most festivals show both Japanese and foreign films.<sup>1</sup>

The idea for this research paper grew out of an interest in films, film festivals, and the film festival business. Questions such as "what are the components of a film festival in Japan?" "what are their unique features?" "how are they run?" "

where does funding come from?" "what are the politics behind them?" and "how is programming done?" came immediately to mind. Since there was very little written on film festivals in Japan about any of these questions and none of it compiled in an organized way, it was decided to develop a research project that would aim to answer at least some of these questions as well as others. The best way to start was to examine a selection of festivals in detail and to report on them individually at first, with analysis of them all to follow.

Choosing the festivals for this research was difficult. In consideration of practical issues such as time period, budget, and the number of researchers, eight were selected from across Japan that ranged in terms of their histories, from four years (as of 2011) to over 30, in size and in scope. In addition, the festivals chosen covered a broad variety of genres: short films, Asian films, documentaries, comedies, experimental films, and films by emerging Japanese filmmakers. The eight festivals, their locations, focus genres, and dates were:

1. Image Forum Film Festival (Tokyo; experimental films; April 29–May 8, 2011)
2. Shortshorts Film Festival & Asia (Tokyo; short films; June 16–26, 2011)
3. Fukuoka Asian Film Festival (Fukuoka; Asian films; July 1–10, 2011)
4. PIA Film Festival (Tokyo; emerging Japanese filmmakers; September 20–30, 2011)
5. Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (Yamagata; documentaries; October 6–13, 2011)
6. Sapporo International Short Film Festival (Sapporo; short films; October 5–10, 2011)
7. Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival (Yubari; feature films, shorts, documentaries; February 23–27, 2012)
8. Okinawa International Movie Festival (Ginowan, Naha; focus on comedy, with

various other genres; March 24-31)

Because there are so many events that call themselves festivals in Japan, certain criteria had to be put into place. All eight festivals:

- (1) ran for several days in a row and screened multiple programs
- (2) had an invited international jury<sup>2</sup> who awarded prizes to films in competition
- (3) required that competition films be new works

A notable omission from this list is the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF), which is probably the best-known film festival in Japan. One of the reasons not to include it here is that it has already been well documented by the media and other writers. Another reason is that leaving it out enabled researchers to focus on some of the lesser known though important festivals.

The information reported here is based on in-depth interviews with key festival organizers, festival print materials (press releases, festival guidebooks, online sources, media reports), and observations made at the festivals.

Four of the eight festivals are reported in this first installment, beginning with PIA Film Festival and Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, written by Eija Niskanen, and followed by the Okinawa International Movie Festival and the Sapporo International Short Film Festival by Laura MacGregor. Reports on the other festivals and a comprehensive discussion of all of eight festivals will be made in a future publication. For now, a table of basic information can be found in the Appendix.

The paper is organized into five parts, the first four of which are individual reports of each festival in the order listed above. Part 5 is a discussion and

conclusion that aims to bring together some key points of film festivals in Japan. References for each part are located at the end of the paper and notes can be found at the end of each part.

The format for the individual festival reports is as follows:

- A. Festival theme/concept
- B. Organization, structure, connection to local area, site
- C. Funding
- D. Programs, films, and events
- E. Guests and juries
- F. Audience and ticketing
- G. PR and merchandising
- H. Media coverage
- I. Conclusion

## Notes

1. PIA Film Festival's main screenings and competition feature Japanese films only, with the foreign film element in a director retrospective program.
2. Due to budget restrictions, the Fukuoka Asian festival had a jury of only two in 2011 (one Japanese and one nonJapanese), and the nonJapanese judge resided in Japan. Similarly, one of the two foreign judges at the 2011 edition of Sapporo Shortshorts was resident in Japan. And finally, in an exceptional year, PIA Film Festival had no foreign judge in 2011.

*Disclaimer: The information provided is the sole responsibility of its respective authors and any errors or omissions are theirs. Laura MacGregor can be contacted at <lauram@tokyo.email.ne.jp> concerning Okinawa International*

*Movie Festival and Sapporo Short Fest, and Eija Niskanen at <eija.niskanen@gmail.com> for PIA Film Festival and Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival.*

## **Part 1: PIA Film Festival**

### **Introduction**

PIA Film Festival's history is tightly woven around the rise of the so-called "New New Wave" of Japanese cinema beginning in the 1980s. The festival has nurtured new generation directors who have since become internationally known as central figures in contemporary Japanese cinema, including Sogo Ishii, Ryosuke Hashiguchi, and Kiyoshi Kurosawa.

The festival history is also tied to the changing technical working conditions in independent and beginner filmmaker practices. Behind the beginning of the festival was the widely-spread 8mm filmmaking among amateurs, students, and beginner filmmakers, as a way to make personal films cheaply. The rise and changes of PIA Film Festival (PFF) are also tied to changes in the media.

PFF was established in 1977 as a competition festival for young emerging filmmakers. The festival was a sideshow for the publishing company Pia Corporation, under whose wings the festival office works. Pia Corporation publishes guidebooks, magazines, and video catalogues. The golden time for them was during the 1980s and 1990s, when the weekly Pia magazine, founded in 1972, told readers where to go and what to do around town. It also runs its ticketing system, Pia Ticket. Since the Pia group is tuned to new developments in the entertainment world, the concept of a young filmmakers' film festival was well suited to the corporation's image. With the launch of Pia magazine, the corporation first screened 8mm films in a Pia Cinema Boutique program. In 1977, the program was developed into "Off Theater Film Festival," now know as

PIA Film Festival.

### **Venue, Funding**

Changes in consumer behavior since the spread of the Internet have diminished PFF's budget: Pia magazine saw its last edition in 2011 when the film audience started getting its information online. For the past few years, PFF has taken place at the National Film Centre in Tokyo. The festival was first presented during the winter/spring months, then moved to June–July and now, for the second year, takes place in September. PFF is currently supported by the National Film Centre (NFC) and sponsored by the PFF partners: Horipro and Nikkatsu. The current director of the festival is Keiko Araki, and executive producer is Hiroshi Yanai.

The historical importance of PFF cannot be underestimated. The festival has launched the careers of such internationally known new generation directors as Shinya Tsukamoto, Ryosuke Hashiguchi, Sion Sono, and Shinobu Yaguchi. PFF has carved its own niche by promoting independent filmmaking with an art-house flavor. Following PIA's lead, similar types of young filmmaker competition festivals have been launched in Japan, including Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival and Osaka's CO2 Festival. Often the same young directors take part in two or all three festivals.

### **Films, Programming and Audience**

The festival was created to screen films by emerging filmmakers and talented amateurs with ambitions for serious filmmaking. From these groups, the films for the festival were selected. Over time, the medium has naturally changed to digital. PFF started accepting video works in 1991 (PFF catalogue, 2000, p. 51). A minority of films has been made with 16 or 35mm cameras. The switch to digital video was in 1995, and from then, the majority of submitted works were

digital.

The festival accepts any length of work and any genre is acceptable, although the majority are fiction or experimental films. The number of submissions has steadily increased: in 1977, 77 films were submitted to the competition. By 1985, the number had grown to 760, a record for the 1980s. 1999 was another record year with 914 submissions. The pre-jury consists of PFF staff and other film professionals, and a jury of Japanese film and media professionals selects the winners.

Other programs consist of a retrospective of a foreign film director, with films by Francois Truffaut, Spike Lee, and Robert Altman having been screened, and scholarship films (films produced with the PFF scholarship). In addition, special invitation films by directors who have received awards at PFF in past years or otherwise belong to the PFF network are shown. The screenings are followed by discussion events.

In 1984, PFF launched its scholarship program. From among the prize winners the most promising filmmakers are selected. They are offered the opportunity to write a feature-length film script. PFF partners select the best script and help produce it, and the completed film is distributed by Pia Corporation. In 2012, the 34th scholarship film, "Homesick," by Satoru Hirohara, premiered at the festival. His film, "Good Morning to the World," was in the PFF competition in 2010.

PFF competition-awarded and scholarship films have received good reception at international film festivals. PFF owns the distribution rights for these films, and past PFF festival films have been programmed for NFC. Pia Film Festival has launched a DVD series of PFF films.

PFF caters primarily to the domestic audience and some of the competition films are not subtitled into English (though most films in the special programs are). The festival drew a relatively small audience of 4,000 in 2011, but its significance lies rather in its active support for filmmakers at the start of their careers.

## **Part 2: Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival**

### **Introduction**

Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (YIDFF) was established in 1989 and has grown to be one of the most respected documentary film festivals in the world.

### **Organization and Funding**

The festival occurs bi-annually in odd-numbered years for one week in October in Yamagata, Yamagata Prefecture, an agricultural region in the northern part of Japan. The festival's history is interesting and gives YIDFF its particular flavor and its ideological goal. It was started by the documentary filmmaker, Ogawa Shinsuke (1935-1992), a Yamagata native who wanted to establish a showcase for innovative, thought-provoking, and discussion-enhancing documentaries from around the world. The Ogawa ideal, to shoot by recording a reality that one has been truly immersed in, stands as the ideal for the films screened at YIDFF.

The festival is organized and supported by the NPO Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival and co-organized and supported by Yamagata City. Two offices, one in Yamagata and one in Tokyo, run year-round. The special sponsors are Eiki Industrial Co. Ltd and SKY Perfect JSAT Corporation, along with numerous local and national businesses, media outlets, and NPOs. Cultural institutes, such as Goethe Institute and British Council, provided

special programs in 2011. The festival budget is 150,000,000 yen for the festival year. 100,000,000 yen comes from the Yamagata city government and the rest from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, membership fees, donations, and other sources.

Seventeen people worked for the 2011 edition, either year-around or part-time, as well as 353 volunteers. Volunteers are recruited in Yamagata, Tokyo, and other parts of the country.

### **Venues, Audience**

As Yamagata does not have large multiplexes, the festival is spread around the city center, reached easily on foot or by community bus. The opening and closing ceremonies, as well the competition series are screened at the Yamagata Central Public Hall, Yamagata Citizen's Hall's two theatres, and others. Discussion and educational events are held at the Tohoku University of Art and Design, local schools and surrounding municipalities, and at the Yamagata Manabikan cultural center.

The audience consists of local Yamagata people, people from around Japan, and film festival programmers, film scholars, and a few film critics from abroad. The first festival in 1989 showed a total of 80 films to an audience of 11,920. Attendance has doubled since, with 23,373 in 2011, according to the count by the volunteers at doors.

### **Programming**

Programming has been central to the festival, with the following goals:

- To illustrate the current state of documentary cinema, by collecting radical documentary works from around the world and focusing on this genre, which continues to follow its own distinctive direction even as

cinema has become established as a common global culture.

- To impart the appeal of documentary, by allowing as many people as possible to see the world's best documentary cinema in Japan, where opportunities for viewing are few and far between. To present new realms and possibilities for expression through cinema, which is generally recognized as mass entertainment.
- To explore new concepts in the field of documentary, which is building a niche for itself while converging with various media in our high-tech information society.
- To uncover new talent and expand spheres of interaction, by actively encouraging the works of young filmmakers. (YIDFF, 2012)

The first festival established the basic lines for different programming slots, with an international competition consisting of 15 films selected by a pre-jury, six special invitation films, and nine "Works from Asia," which also included fiction features. The first edition included The Asia Symposium, headed by Ogawa Shinsuke, with documentary makers from around Asia. The Dawn of Japanese Documentaries screened 44 films from the beginning of cinema until 1945.

From the beginning, the unique YIDFF mix was created from programs of new international documentaries, Asian and Japanese documentaries, and retrospectives. Some new sections were added later and special programs emerge for a particular festival.

In 2011, 217 films were screened. The main competition with 15 films was selected from among 1,078 entries of new feature-length documentary films from around the world. Competition film directors were invited to the festival and held Q&A events after the screenings. Festival winners were announced

by an international jury of documentary filmmakers and other professionals in the field.

Other important programs are New Asian Currents, introducing new and rising Asian filmmakers, and New Docs Japan, introducing new Japanese documentary films. Films directed by foreign directors on Japan are also accepted. Special programs, such as an introduction to one country's documentary films, a director, or other themes are also regular side programs. In 2011, a special program was established around films related to the 2011 East Japan Earthquake.

The festival also runs after-screening Q&A talks, special discussion events, and seminars. Discussion on different documentary filmmaking practices, from style or political context of the films to production and distribution issues are a crucial part of the festival. In 2011, a workshop on documentary film criticism was organized for young beginner film critics.

Prizes for the international competition include the Robert and Frances Flaherty Prize (The Grand Prize) of two million yen, the The Mayor's Prize (Prize of Excellence) of one million yen, the Special Jury Prize of 300,000 yen, and two runners-up prizes of 300,000 yen. Other prizes include the Citizens' Prize, chosen by the audience by lottery, and the Ogawa Shinsuke prize of 500,000 yen for new up-and-coming Asian filmmakers.

A central place for festival socializing is Komian, a restaurant-bar run by a local volunteer group. Directors, industry representatives, press and organizers, film viewers and locals gather at the club nightly for an easy get-together and lively discussions. Komian events are special to the Japanese film festival scene, much different from Tokyo-based festivals, for example, which lack any established

place to socialize.

All competition film prints, subtitled in Japanese, stay at the YIDFF library, and are normally screened the following year in Tokyo and at other venues. They can also be viewed at the library. YIDFF arranges regular film screenings and workshops around documentaries and documentary filmmaking in between the festivals in Yamagata and Tokyo, and in other cities. The Yamagata program includes a twice-monthly screening program. In 2011, they arranged film tours to the East Japan earthquake evacuation centers.

### **Conclusion**

Documentary cinema has been one of the true radical and socially conscious filmmaking practices in Japanese film history. By starting with the legacy of Ogawa and other political documentarists of his generation, YIDFF has created a recognizable and internationally respected festival concept. The festival has established good contacts with other Asian documentary filmmakers and festivals. The location, away from the country's capital, creates an intimate space for the festival visitors to watch films, meet likeminded people, and hold discussions around documentary films. The festival works actively around the year by holding special screenings of past festival programs, and by arranging workshops and discussions – a trend currently visible with many international film festivals.

## **Part 3: Okinawa International Movie Festival**

### **Introduction**

The Okinawa International Movie Festival, which celebrated its 4th edition in March 2012, is a unique festival for several reasons. First, it is the only film festival in Okinawa prefecture. Second, the March dates are unique as there are no other large film festivals in Japan then.<sup>1</sup>

Third, it is run by a well-established company, the entertainment conglomerate Yoshimoto Kogyo. The vision for a movie festival was inspired by a 2006 trip to Cannes by Yoshimoto Chairman and CEO, Hiroshi Osaki. Yoshimoto was impressed with Cannes' beachside resort location, red-carpet opening, and star attraction, and decided to expand his business by adding a movie festival emulating Cannes.

At the same time, Yoshimoto had the vision of developing its contents holdings in Asia and the U.S. (Yoshimoto Kogyo, 2012). The festival supports this expansion through a two-day gathering of media companies from Japan and abroad and the participation of hundreds of Yoshimoto comics. One of Yoshimoto's particular interests is in TV show co-production between major Japanese TV stations and the U.S. and Asian countries. Indeed, as one Yoshimoto spokesman said, the event is a "Yoshimoto festival" (Schilling, 2012).

Fourth, while a small staff of two to three work in the movie festival division Laugh and Peace Co. Ltd. year-round, an additional 200 + staff from Yoshimoto Creative Agency kick in to work during the months leading up to and including the festival. The huge paid staff alone distinguishes this festival from others in Japan and perhaps around the world too. In addition, several hundred local volunteers support the event. Staff participation is considered an important form of professional development.

Fifth, the festival has a theme song written by Sanma Akashiya, a Yoshimoto comedian, and performed by the group "Begin," from Ishigaki island in Okinawa.<sup>2</sup> Using homegrown talent helps the festival connect with its island host. Other musicians and entertainers perform at the beach stage during the festival, including Okinawans Rimi Natsukawa and Kariyushi 58.

Sixth, the festival has the peculiar theme of "Laugh and Peace." It merges Yoshimoto's base as a comedy/entertainment company with two strong themes in Okinawa: its hopes for peace ("President Osaki," 2008), and its relaxed atmosphere.

Seventh, since the festival has the strong financial backing of Yoshimoto Kogyo and corporate sponsors, it does not rely on government financial support. Given this freedom, the festival planners can arrange things as they wish. For example, when most other events were being cancelled across Japan after the March 11 East Japan Earthquake in 2011, the festival went ahead as scheduled. According to a company press release, it took on the role of bringing a sense of hope from laughter, and a yell from the people of Okinawa and entertainers worldwide to the earthquake victims. Hence the festival's theme of "Laugh and Peace" was revised to include the word "yell." Concretely, charity events were quickly added to the program. Post-festival activities in 2011 included visits to the earthquake-affected region by Yoshimoto entertainers ("Yoshimoto Kogyo plans," 2011). At the 2012 festival, two types of activities were held in honor of the earthquake: an invited photo exhibition by a Japanese photographer whose show was already on a national tour, and three documentaries.

Eighth, given the nature of the sponsor, there is as much or more of an emphasis on live entertainment and doing business as there is on the film screenings. Hence, there are a number of events at the main venue's beach stage and elsewhere, including a fashion show, fashion-related events for women, comedy and music programs, a red carpet opening, and a fireworks display. As for the business aspect, there is a private Contents Bazaar, which aims to promote international collaboration of film contents with foreign companies. It is open to the press and participating media firms. For the public, a seven-day Contents Land displays the contents and services of more than 50 companies, many of

which are media-related, such as films, TV shows, mobile contents, and video games. At that venue, there is a PR stage with live entertainment and promotional events. In 2012, these programs were broadcast live by the online streaming companies, Niconico Douga (see reference for Niconico Douga) and USTREAM.

In addition to the goal of stimulating media-related business, the festival has several other aims. One of them is creating an entertainment festival (Poole, 2012), another is promoting the foreign tourist industry (Nelson, 2012), and a third is contributing to the economic development of Japan (Okinawa International Movie Festival).

In the next part of the paper, I will examine the festival in detail, beginning with the festival's structure and organization.

## **B. Organization, structure, connection to local area, site**

The festival runs for eight days in late March, in 2012 from March 24–31. The main venue in 2012 was the Okinawa Convention Center just outside the seaside city of Ginowan, while a second venue was the Sakurazaka theatre, an independent theatre in downtown Naha. Satellite events elsewhere were held during the festival. As the distance from Ginowan to Naha is around 10km, access between the two was available only by car or by infrequent bus.

For the movie component of the festival, three screens at the Sakurazaka were used, while the convention center was set up with four indoor screens and one outdoor screen. Pre-festival events by Yoshimoto comedians and artists took place on the main island and on Ishigaki and Miyako islands.

In 2012, 82 films were screened, with 26 feature films in competition divided equally between two categories, "laugh" and "peace." There were three awards

for the competition, two of which were determined by an international jury of five together with audience feedback and awarded cash prizes of 2.5 million yen each. The third prize, the Golden Shisa, was awarded by the judges.

The remaining 56 films were organized into nine noncompetition programs, including a Japanese comedy program, a world comedy program, a documentary program, and a "films from local areas" program. The films in these noncompetition programs included soon-to-be released, newly released, or previously released (some from as far back as the 1960s) films, and new films made specifically for the festival.

The focus at Sakurazaka theatre was on previous releases in what was called the Sakurazaka Movie University, which featured Yoshimoto comedians giving live commentary during the screenings and holding talk/entertainment shows.

Audience participation was vigorous before and during the festival with online voting to select two programs: the JIMOT commercial competition and the "best movie in your life" program.

### **C. Funding**

With a budget of several hundred million yen, the festival receives much of its financial backing from Yoshimoto Kogyo. The other main corporate sponsor was Kyoraku, a generous supporter of film festivals in Japan,<sup>3</sup> who provided some of the beach stage programs. Softbank, another common film festival sponsor, funded a comedy film program in a tie-up with Yoshimoto comedians-turned directors in a program of short films. The online video streaming company Niconico Douga sponsored a film screening live from the beach stage. Besides these, there were a number of smaller corporate sponsors.

#### **D. Programming**

Yoshimoto works with Phantom Film, a production and distribution company, to select the films. Their vice-president is the programmer for the competition program and other programs. As is sometimes the case in Japan, the selection committee is just one person. Some of the competition films are submitted while others are invited or the rights purchased. One program called "Local Origination Project," begun in 2011, features short 30-40 minute films from around the country produced by Yoshimoto in cooperation with TV stations and other broadcasters. It is intended to help promote tourism in these areas. In another local area program called the JIMOT CM Competition, local communities submit proposals that are reviewed, from which 10 are selected, then made into films featuring Yoshimoto talent and local residents. Besides the cash prize of 470,000 yen, the winning commercial is guaranteed broadcasting opportunities on TV during regular programming. In 2012, there were 900 applications for this competition.

#### **E. Guests and Jury**

Like most other international film festivals, the five members of the jury are invited from various fields of the media and entertainment industries. The festival has close connections with the Pusan International Film Festival and the Hong Kong International Film Festival, with booths at the markets of each, and one judge is sent from each. The jury watches the films at the festival and announces the prizewinners at the closing ceremony. Their trips are fully funded and they are offered an honorarium.

Nearly 350 guests, including Yoshimoto comedians, sponsors, filmmakers, and a few film industry members walked down the red carpet on March 24. All of them were fully funded to attend and many of them brought guests with them, all on Yoshimoto's tab, thus increasing festival expenses enormously. However,

since their star attraction brought people to the site, their participation was considered a plus.

#### **F. Audience/Ticketing**

As with most other film festivals in Japan, ticketing was handled by national online ticket vendor Ticket Pia, convenience stores, and local vendors. On average, 70% of the screenings and all of the non-film events were free of charge. Only the competition films and some of the special programs were charged. Since so much was free, it was an attractive event for the general public. Furthermore, the festival coincided with the school spring vacation and good weather, and therefore an attractive holiday outing. The audience consisted of approximately 80% from Okinawa, 200 from abroad, and the rest from other parts of Japan.

Yoshimoto reported 410,000 attendees for the 2012 festival, which was the grand total number of people passing through the entrance gates for each day of the festival.

#### **G. Merchandising**

Festival merchandise was available onsite during the event, at local shops in Naha, at Naha airport, and online until the end of the festival ([http://www.oimf.jp/en/ticket\\_goods/](http://www.oimf.jp/en/ticket_goods/)). Like most festivals, merchandise is not a big focus, but since Yoshimoto has a merchandising division, it was a simple addition to the festival. After the festival, some of the Yoshimoto films (from the local origination program) were bundled and sold as DVDs (see "Regional movies, 2011").

#### **H. Media coverage**

Media presence was huge, with invited press numbering over 300 representing

116 domestic agencies and 40 international agencies, according to the film festival official report. Yoshimoto provided full transportation and accommodation funding for nearly all of them and invitations to the Yoshimoto parties. This was in addition to the regular press privileges of free access to all events, assistance with arranging interviews, advance access to press photos and information, and a full support staff. The financial output for the press alone was clearly huge. In fact, it was one of the reasons why the festival lost money (Schilling, 2012).

While another of the goals was to give the festival as much media exposure as possible, Yoshimoto paid greatly to fulfill that aim, and the results are debatable. Looking at foreign print media, the results are sparse, with most journalists writing only one or in rare cases a few articles about the festival. The *Wall Street Journal* had only one article, even though the Tokyo-based journalist was fully funded for his five-day trip (Poole, 2012). Likewise, the *Japan Times* reporter, who was there for the entire festival, had but one article, published well after the festival had ended (Schilling, 2012). *Metropolis* magazine, the free Tokyo weekly, had one short preview article far ahead of the event (Schwartz, 2012).

In retrospect though, this event may be of little interest to the international readership, since few would be familiar with Yoshimoto comedians or have access to many of the films. Also, many of the films screened at this festival were older titles available on DVD and therefore not of journalistic interest. In any case, reporting was limited, and begs the question of why so many foreign press were invited in the first place.

Reporters seemed to have been more interested in Yoshimoto's CEO, and since Osaki made himself available to many of the journalists for private interviews

during the festival, most of the articles at least mentioned him, while some writers reported their interviews in detail, his business aims, and the company's background (Huq, 2012).

On the other hand, domestic coverage was more in-depth and plentiful. Many stations broadcasted special spots on the festival before, during, and after the event: 63 broadcasting firms across Japan presented TV spots or longer segments in variety shows on or at the festival and 14 made some form of news reports. There is also an iTunes app for the festival. Though not unique, it is one of a small number of festivals in Japan with smartphone content (iTunes, Okinawa International Movie Festival).<sup>4</sup>

### **I. Contents Bazaar**

Though not declared a market outright, the two-day Contents Bazaar was clearly set up to do business, specifically to stimulate entertainment contents business exchanges, as laid out in the festival program, press manual, and at the opening press conference on March 25. Thirty-seven media-related firms participated in the Bazaar and a number of projects were brainchild. The biggest winner, not surprisingly, was Yoshimoto Kogyo. For example, they signed a deal with a cable/satellite channel in Taiwan to begin production and broadcasting in four Asian countries (Blair, 2012).

### **J. Discussion and Conclusion**

The festival has many goals and here, I will examine how they were addressed. First, it supported the content industry through the meetings and contact opportunities presented by the Contents Bazaar, and to some extent through the Contents Land.

Second, its goal to showcase the festival to the world, with a particular focus on

Korea and Taiwan was addressed by the foreign press from Asia: China, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and India.

Third, specific activities to fulfill the aim of promoting tourism to Okinawa were not visible apart from the Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau booth at the Contents Land. This is something for Yoshimoto to think about in the future and/or delegate to tourist bureaus.

Fourth, the goal to make this an entertainment festival was clearly fulfilled by the range of activities and events. However, the aim to present the festival to Asia was not fulfilled, since only around 200 people from abroad attended, many of whom were press and guests.

Besides the above, the festival served as a springboard for other projects in Okinawa, including a proposal by Yoshimoto Kogyo to the Okinawa Prefectural Government to build a 17-hectare facility with an entertainment school, contents development center, a shopping area, and a casino ("Yoshimoto Kogyo suggests," 2012). Certainly, holding the festival in Okinawa is a sign that Yoshimoto wants to make a positive contribution to the island's development.

## Notes

1. A small event called the Earth Vision Global Environmental Film Festival in Tokyo in mid-March is the only one known.
2. Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival has a theme song too, but it changes each year, and is not well publicized.
3. Kyoraku sponsored the 2012 Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival in 2012 and participated in others.
4. Sapporo Short Fest, TIFFF, and Shortshorts & Asia also have iTunes apps.

## Part 4: Sapporo International Short Movie Festival

### Introduction

The Sapporo International Short Film Festival and Market, or Sapporo Short Fest (SSF), its more familiar name, celebrated its 6th edition in 2011. It came into existence with the support of Shortshorts Film Festival & Asia when Hokkaido native Toshiya Kubo, a producer and advertiser, met with actor Tetsuya Bessho, one of the founders of Tokyo's Shortshorts Film Festival & Asia in 2000. He had already drafted a proposal for a short film festival in 1990, but it took until his trip to Tokyo to bring it to life. As a result of their meeting, Bessho agreed to incorporate Sapporo into Tokyo's national tour, beginning in 2001. After a few successful years as part of the tour, the organizers in Sapporo saw that their event was drawing nearly the same number of people as Shortshorts, and decided that it was time to build their own festival. Getting the backing of the city of Sapporo was a big step towards that, and with the first edition of the festival in 2006, Sapporo cut its ties with Shortshorts. As an international event in its own right, it seeks to contribute to the artistic life in Sapporo, the island's capital, to support young filmmakers, and to stimulate business in Hokkaido. Specifically, the goals of the festival, as stated in the call for films are:

1. To create a market for short films
2. To help foster young short filmmakers
3. To support international exchanges through cultural activities
4. To promote film education

Like the Okinawa Movie Festival, the Sapporo festival has several unique points. First, it is one of two festivals in Japan with a formal film market (the other being the Tokyo International Film Festival, or TIFF).<sup>1</sup> It differs from

TIFF though in that it is not a fair with company booths, but a venue for buyers to watch films online, to meet people in the field, and to conduct filmmaker workshops.

Second, it is the only festival in Japan with a film database. *Spotlights.jp* functions as the portal for film submissions and is used by the programming committee for festival planning, by the participants at the market, and by registered buyers throughout the year.

Third, while there is a small committee of about a dozen that forms the backbone of the organization, the main work is done by a skeleton staff of two who work year-round.

Fourth, the festival makes a concerted effort to support filmmakers and film production and distribution in Hokkaido. It does this through the market, which is mainly poised at media-related businesses in Hokkaido, through programs made by Hokkaido natives, and by co-sponsoring a filmmaking event for local children.

Fifth, the festival gives out a large number of awards with 16 jury prizes. None of them come with cash or gifts, which is unusual. Also unusual is that there is no audience award.

Sixth, there is an off-theatre program of Japanese films held nightly at the secondary venue.

Thanks to the dedication of the two main organizers, the Sapporo Short Fest can be mounted each year. In the next section, I will examine the festival in detail, beginning with the festival's structure and organization. Due to the lack

of print materials and media coverage of the festival, this report is largely based on an interview with festival director, Takashi Homma (October 7, 2011), the website, the official guide, and informal discussions with onsite staff and volunteers.

## **B. Organization, structure, connection to local area, site**

The festival runs for five days in autumn. It was held October 5–10 in 2011 with screenings every day from 10:00am to 11:30pm, and one all night screening. In 2011, twelve competition programs and eight special programs were screened in 68 slots over the five days. The awards ceremony was held offsite on the eve of the last day and a screening of the award winning films was done on the last night. The main venue was a Toho theatre with two screens located on a shopping arcade street downtown. The off-theatre screenings venue was a small repertory theatre along the same street. The market was also nearby at an event space. Though the street is old and considered by some to be unfashionable compared to newer parts of the city, it is conveniently accessible by subway and all of the venues are within minutes on foot from each other. Besides that, the festival has the support of local merchants, who allow them to put up banners overhead and posters and flyers in shops. Another attractive point of the venues is that filmgoers are able to watch films in proper movie theatres, which surprisingly, is not the case with most other film festivals in Japan, who have makeshift "theatres" in event spaces.

In 2011, there were 2,291 entries from 88 countries. The festival showed 78 films in competition from 26 countries and with the special programs and off-theatre screenings the total number of films came to approximately 200.

The main connections to the local area are the Hokkaido programs and the four-day market. Since there is nearly no other chance to watch short films in a

theatre in Hokkaido or to see films made by Hokkaido natives, the festival brings something special to the area.

### **C. Funding**

The festival budget is roughly 40 million yen, half of which comes from a Sapporo city government foundation. The festival committee belongs to an umbrella foundation which also includes Intercross Creative Centre (ICC). The Centre provides an office for the festival and extra staff to work during the festival period. Other main sponsors include typical funders of the visual arts, Panasonic and Nikon, and Amino Up. Noncorporate program sponsors in 2011 included the California Short Film Festival, Portland Oregon, Sapporo's sister city, and the Irish Film Board.

Sapporo city helped set up the market database and helps fund the festival because it is concerned with developing the local economy. Simply put, without the market, there would no be city funding and without this funding, there would be no festival. As there is no funding to bring filmmakers to the festival, the market is key to attracting them. And finally, the revenue generated by the annual 50,000-yen membership fee for buyers is needed to help run the festival.

### **D. Programming**

Programming is done in-house by the volunteer committee. The festival is announced on Shortfilmdepot.com and on the festival website. Films are also picked up at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival (France) in February where the festival has a market booth. Staff do not have the means to visit other festivals, and this lack of exposure, particularly to North America and Asia, affects the range and quality of submissions. Even so, more than 2,000 films are submitted to the competition each year.

The programs are divided into two categories, with 12 competition programs and eight special programs. Besides two filmmakers' programs, there were six international programs, the Hokkaido program, the Family and Children's program, and two national programs. Included in the special programs were guest programs from the California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF), the Portland Northwest Film Center, and the Irish Film Board. These collaborations help expand the scope of the festival as they often result in a program exchange (i.e., with California and Portland).

The 90-100 minute programs are carefully balanced in terms of length, genre, subject matter, and country of origin, with the primary goal of making the festival as international as possible. While there is an interest in satisfying cinephiles, the greater aim is to entertain a general audience.

In honor of the 2011 East Japan Earthquake, the festival invited a Japanese filmmaker to make a short "message film." "Thank you world" was shown before the start of each program, and was also available in English and Japanese versions online via the festival homepage (English version: <http://sapporoshortfest.jp/thankyouworld/index-e.html>) and on Vimeo (<http://vimeo.com/29875393>).

The festival supports some offsite events, including "Hokkaido Music Night" featuring musicians from the Hokkaido Music Videos program. Besides that, there are photo and video exhibitions related to the festival at local galleries and cafes. Finally, there is a one-day children's filmmaking workshop organized by a volunteer father's group. However, these events are only announced via twitter and Facebook and publicized by the event organizers, so public exposure to them is limited.

### **E. Jury and Guests**

Like the Okinawa International Movie Festival and most international film festivals, the Sapporo Short Fest's international jury is comprised of people from the media and entertainment worlds. Normally, Sapporo hosts the typical number of five jurors with two Japanese and three from abroad. In 2011, however, one judge from abroad dropped out at the last minute. Judges are mainly sought out based on the recommendation of their predecessors. Besides that, one judge is generally found through the connections with the California Independent Film Festival and one is invited from South Korea. Jurors prescreen the films online in advance and meet in Sapporo to choose the winners. Corporate sponsors choose the winners of their programs, and a children's jury chooses the award winning children's short.

The term "guests" is used loosely, since the festival doesn't have the budget to invite people. Therefore, the filmmakers and other related people who come, do so on their own. They are given three nights' accommodation. Given the importance of the market, representatives from relevant companies are invited and given four nights' hotel. From both groups, however, the numbers are small. Thus, the "star" factor that dominates the Okinawa Festival (and Shortshorts and TIFFF) doesn't exist here, and as a result of this, there is very little media participation.

### **F. Audience/Ticketing**

Like the other festivals researched, ticketing was handled mainly by online ticket agencies such as Pia ([pia.jp](http://pia.jp)). Four sponsored programs were free.

The festival audience is largely composed of women aged 20-30. About 30% of attendees are new to the festival each year, and the 2011 edition had an impressive attendance figure of 10,779, which was even bettered in 2012 with

13,642. However, attendance remains at less than 50% capacity. It was 36% in 2010. As a result, less than 30% of the budget was covered by box office returns. Festival planners believe that better exposure to the festival with better media coverage, promotional screenings, and the means to do more publicity, as well as a greater general awareness of what short films are would boost attendance and increase revenue.

### **G. Merchandising**

The festival does not have the means to offer much in the way of festival merchandise. In 2011, it sold the official guide, festival t-shirts, and logo badges. These goods were available only onsite at the festival. Two DVDs of selections from the first and second editions were also sold.

### **H. Media coverage**

While there are a number of firms listed in the program as media and backup supporters, their physical presence at the festival was nearly invisible except for at the opening and awards ceremonies. Otherwise, the festival was announced online by sponsors and government supporters: CoFesta, Crypton Future Media, Nikon, and Sapporo city for 2012 and CoFesta in 2011 (see References). Online coverage is active by individuals on twitter and Facebook, and on blogs by local residents and companies. In addition, the festival is given mention on some embassy and film festival pages.

Press coverage for the 2012 edition was sparse. Two of the few reports included the *Yomiuri Shimbun's* Hokkaido bureau covering the awards ceremony (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 17, 2012), and a pre-festival article in English in *The Japan Times* (Brasor, September 7, 2012).

As the festival director admits, news agencies in Sapporo care little about cultural events, and that to improve this situation, they need a press agent.

## I. Discussion and Conclusion

There are a number of challenges to its future existence and greater success. First, while the program is admirable in scope and number of films, the methods used to attract submissions are targeted at Europe (Shortfilmdepot.com and the booth at Ferrand-Clermont). The budget doesn't allow for staff to go to other film festivals to find films. In particular, the festival would like to attract more Asian films and better Japanese films. Besides visiting more festivals abroad, more staff to travel in Japan and communicate with Japanese filmmakers is needed.

In the festival director's words, "Films that travel the world don't need to come to Sapporo." In order for filmmakers to prioritize having their films screened in Sapporo, there needs to be greater incentive for them to do so. Offering cash awards for the competition categories would be one way. Significant international media coverage would be another. Furthermore, a more robust market would motivate them to enter their films.

Second, the amount of financial support by the Sapporo city government is fixed and the festival has no backup organization as some festivals do: Okinawa has Yoshimoto Kogyo, Shortshorts Film Festival & Asia has its parent company, Pacific Voice, and Image Forum Film Festival belongs to a group with a publishing division, a movie theatre, and a school. Sapporo clearly needs a safety net and without more financial backing will never be able to make one.

Third, the two-member staff is overwhelmed and they are barely managing. An increased staff is really central to improvements in programming, advertising and other areas.

In spite of the challenges the Sapporo Short Fest faces, attendance figures rise

year by year with 13,642 people in 2012, exceeding those of the highly publicized and star-studded Shortshorts Film Festival & Asia, which registered 13,008. Despite its short history, Sapporo Short Fest has become an impressive event that deserves the chance to become even better. With more funding and increased staff, there is no limit to the festival's potential, and one day, it could become a truly world-class event.

### Note

1. Okinawa is excluded here on the grounds that the festival organizers deny that it is a market and refer to it as a "gathering."

## Part 5: Final Discussion and Conclusion

The four film festivals presented in this report are diverse in themselves: PIA is backed by a large company and is a niche festival supporting new talent. Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival is an internationally known and respected festival run by an NPO. Okinawa's festival is largely a corporate showcase, and Sapporo Short Film Festival is an underdog festival, with a limited budget and very small staff. There are many other characteristics that make these festivals unique, as highlighted in the individual festival reports above. To conclude this paper, we will highlight some salient features of each in turn, and suggest some areas for further development.

PIA Film Festival has proven to be instrumental in developing and supporting the rise of Japanese contemporary cinema since the 1980s, with many young filmmakers' careers kickstarted by an award and a scholarship production screened at the festival. Although the festival has a shrunken budget due to the downsizing of its parent company, the festival remains one of the central pillars in post-1970s filmmaking and Japanese cinematic culture, and continues to nurture new talent.

Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival has brought one region, Yamagata, into the realm of international documentary film professionals. The organic growth of the festival based on festival founder Shinsuke Ogawa's filmmaking practices in the region gives it the definite stamp of being about documenting reality, social consciousness, and constantly questioning the nature of documentary film and its role within filmmaking and social practices. Perhaps the challenge will be the festival's role of documentary filmmaking in the changing media landscape, but with the YIDFF staff's flexibility, these changes might prove to be fruitful. The 2011 East Japan Earthquake proved to be one challenge, which the festival was able to include into its programming on short notice.

The outstanding point of the Okinawa International Movie Festival is its star attraction, showcasing nearly all of the celebrities managed by Yoshimoto Kogyo. Furthermore, the huge festival budget and the large manpower base are luxuries as film festivals in Japan go. The fact that it is as much an entertainment festival as a film festival gives the event a different character than the other festivals examined. And the strong business drive at the Contents Bazaar shows that, unofficially, this is a business opportunity too.

However, Yoshimoto Kogyo could do well to focus more on some of its impressive aims if they are really true, first by working more vigorously to attract films, entertainers, and audiences from nearby Asian countries, and second, to negotiate more aggressively with the necessary parties to make their study-work-play facility proposal in Okinawa come to life. Finally, it would be prudent for them to manage their financial outlay better by reducing the number of paid guests and revising their support for the media, since it is not the norm among film festivals in Japan or anywhere else in the world to do so. Instead, they could channel this money towards fulfilling the two aims

mentioned above.

Sapporo Short Fest is a small festival that works extremely hard to bring a variety of entertaining and stimulating films to the local area. Thanks perhaps to the absence of high profile guests, the atmosphere is friendly and warm. It has a character of its own, with its local programs, easy access to all of the venues, and comfortable movie watching facilities. It is purely a film festival that offers no distractions from watching films, which could be an attractive point to both cinephiles and newcomers wishing to sample what may be an unfamiliar medium. Whatever the secret, the festival attracts many people, and while the theatres are still far below capacity, has recorded attendance figures of 10,000 or more in recent years. For a city of only three million, this is an impressive achievement, given that much larger events in bigger centers draw far fewer people.

However, the small box office returns are a burden to the festival purse, and the festival needs to do more publicity and must attract more media to the event to change that. They need more sponsors and more buyers to participate in the market. To do all of that, they need more staff, and to get more staff, they need more funding. Therefore, the festival is caught in a vicious circle that depends on money to remedy. It would be a shame if this festival disappears, as the organizers have nurtured an event that deserves to continue.

As an aside, it was impressive to note that three out of the four festivals reported here had special activities in 2011 and 2012 to support the March 11 East Japan Earthquake.

In closing, doing this research on film festivals in Japan has been a remarkable experience. To have the opportunity to go behind festival doors and to learn

how they work and what is involved in mounting such an event has been eye opening. I am deeply grateful to those who have shared the information reported here. In a future paper, I will report on the four film festivals that were not covered here and make a full analysis of the group of eight that will attempt to shed greater light on film festivals in Japan.

## References

*Note:* All online references active as of October 3, 2012.

## Introduction

Japan Film Festivals Network. (no date). List of Film Festivals in Japan. [Online]. Available: <http://www.filmfestivals.jp/partner-index>

Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival. (2007). Links: Fetivals [sic] in Japan (Location). [Online]. Available: <http://www.yidff.jp/links/links5-e.html>

## Part 1: PIA Film Festival

PFF catalogue 2000. (2000). Tokyo: Pia Corporation.

PFF catalogue 2012. (2012). Tokyo: Pia Corporation.

## Part 2: Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival

Documentary Box #19. [Online]. Available: <http://www.yidff.jp/docbox/docbox-e.html>

Festival Report 2009. Yamagata International Film Festival 2009. Yamagata: YIDFF NPO, 2010.

Fujioka, Asako--Niskanen, Eija. (2012.06.10; 2012.09.30). Email exchanges.

Hata, Yumi--MacGregor, Laura. (2012.10.1-2012.10.3). Email exchanges.

Yamagata International Film Festival website. (2012). FAQ. [Online].

Available: <http://www.yidff.jp/faq/faq-e.html>

Yamagata International Film Festival catalogue 2011. Yamagata: YIDFF NPO, 2011.

### **Part 3: Okinawa International Movie Festival**

Hoshi, Hiroshi and Yoshikawa, Tetsu--MacGregor, Laura. (2012. 03. 19). Interview. Tokyo: Yoshimoto Creative Agency. (With email correspondence, January-September, 2012.)

Huq, M. (2012). "Hong Kong and Thai films fly high at Okinawa Films [sic] Festival." *Dhakar Courier*, April 5, 2012. [Online]. Available: <http://www.dhakacourier.com.bd/?p=5616>

Nelson, D. (2012). "Fourth Okinawa International Movie Festival." Japan Trends, CScout Japan, March 28, 2012. [Online]. Available: <http://www.japantrends.com/fourth-okinawan-international-movie-festival/>

Niconico Douga. [Online]. Available: [http://www.nicovideo.jp/search/沖縄国際映画祭4th?track=videowatch\\_search\\_keyword](http://www.nicovideo.jp/search/沖縄国際映画祭4th?track=videowatch_search_keyword)

Okinawa International Movie Festival. "Concept." [Online]. Available: <http://www.oimf.jp/en/about/>

Poole, R. M. (2012). "Laughter rules at Okinawa's film fest." Japan Reel Time, *The Wall Street Journal* online, March 22, 2012. [Online]. Available: <http://www.wsj.com>

//blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2012/03/22/laughter-rules-at-okinawas-movie-fest/? KEYWORDS=OkinawaKEYWORDS%3DOkinawaKEYWORDS%3DOkinawa

"President Osaki of Yoshimoto Kogyo interview." April 11, 2008. [Online]. Available: <http://filminjapan.blogspot.jp/2011/04/yoshimoto-kogyo-president-osaki.html>

"Regional movies" 2011. amazon.co.jp. [Online]. Available: [http://www.amazon.co.jp/地域発信型映画～あなたの町から日本中を元気にする-%7E第3回沖縄国際映画祭出品短編作品集-DVD-佐向大/dp/B006K44HYA/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=dvd&ie=UTF8&qid=1344999773&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.co.jp/地域発信型映画～あなたの町から日本中を元気にする-%7E第3回沖縄国際映画祭出品短編作品集-DVD-佐向大/dp/B006K44HYA/ref=sr_1_1?s=dvd&ie=UTF8&qid=1344999773&sr=1-1)

Schilling, M. (2012). "410,000 attend Okinawa movie fest, but it is still a money-loser." *The Japan Times Online*, April 6, 2012. [Online]. Available: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/ff20120406a4.html>

Schwartz, R. (2012). "Tropical film fest: Okinawa international, take four." March 13, 2012. Movie news, *Metropolis*, March 13, 2012. [Online]. Available <http://metropolis.co.jp/movies/movie-news/tropical-film-fest/>

USTREAM. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/yoshimoto-kogyo>

"Yoshimoto Kogyo plans to go ahead with the Okinawa International Movie Festival," March 15, 2011. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nipponcinema.com/blog/yoshimoto-kogyo-plans-to-go-ahead-with-oimf>

"Yoshimoto Kogyo suggests a base for entertainment in Okinawa." *Ryukyū*

*Shimpo*, April 4, 2012. [Online]. Available: <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2012/04/16/6757/>

Yoshimoto Kogyo (2012). "A Timeline of the 100 Year history of Yoshimoto Kogyo." Yoshimoto Kogyo booklet.

#### **Part 4: Sapporo International Short Film Festival**

Brasor, P. (September 7, 2012). Movie buffs in Sapporo get the chance to see cinematic innovation at short-film festival. *The Japan Times*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/ff20120907r1.html>

City of Sapporo. (2012). Sapporo International Short Film Festival and Market. [Online]. Available: <http://www.city.sapporo.jp/keizai/shortfest/index.html>

CoFesta. (2011). Japan International Contents Festival. Events. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cofesta.jp/2011/jp/event/event-detail.html?eid=24&cid=&aid=>

Crypton Future Media. (2012). Piapro blog [Online]. Available: <http://blog.piapro.jp/2012/09/cgm-3.html>

Homma, Takashi--MacGregor, Laura. (2012.10.07). Interview. Sapporo. (With email exchanges throughout 2011 and 2012).

Nikon. (2012, July 7). Latest information. 「第7回札幌国際短編映画祭」に協賛 [Supporting the 7th Sapporo International Short Film Festival]. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nikon-image.com/news/info/2012/0907.htm>

Sapporo city welcome page. (2012). ようこそさっぽろ. [Welcome Sapporo].

News and topics. 「札幌国際映画祭」は9月12日(水)~17日(月) [Online]. Available: <http://www.welcome.city.sapporo.jp/news/20120908.html>

Yomiuri Shimbun. (2012, September 17). 札幌国際短編映画祭 2部門野最高賞決まる. [Sapporo International Film Festival: Two grand prix announced]. Entertainment news. *Yomiuri Shimbun*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/entertainment/news2/20120917-OYT8T00369.htm>

## Appendix: Basic information for the eight film festivals researched

Name and Main Genre	Place	Edition	Dates	Contact
<b>Image Forum Festival</b> (experimental films)	Tokyo tours to Kyoto Fukuoka Hamamatsu Nagoya	25th	April 29–May 8, 2011	Image Forum Film Festival Office 2–10–2 Shibuya Shibuya-ku Tokyo 150-0002 03-5766-0116 info@imageforum.co.jp
<b>Shortshorts Film Festival &amp; Asia</b> (short films)	Tokyo tour to Yokohama	13th	June 16–26, 2011	Committee for Short Shorts SSU BLDG 4F, 4–12–8 Sendagaya Shibuya-ku Tokyo 151-0051 03-5474-8330 www.shortshorts.org
<b>Fukuoka Asian Film Festival</b> (Asian films)	Fukuoka	25th	July 1–10, 2011	Fukuoka Asian Film Festival Hirako building 4th floor, 2–4–31, Daimyo Chuo-ku Fukuoka 810-0041 092-733-0949 faff@gol.com www2.gol.com/users/faff/english.html
<b>PIA Film Festival</b> (emerging Japanese filmmakers)	Tokyo tour to Kobe Kyoto, Nagoya Fukuoka	33rd	September 20–30, 2011	PIA Film Festival Shibuya First Tower, 1–2–20 Higashi Shibuya-ku Tokyo 150-0011 03-5774-4296 international@pff.jp <a href="http://pff.jp/">http://pff.jp/</a> <a href="http://pff.jp/">http://pff.jp/</a>
<b>Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival</b> (documentaries) *bi-annual in odd-numbered years	Yamagata tour to Tokyo in even-numbered years	12th	October 6–13, 2011	Yamagata International Documentary Festival #201, 9–52 Kinomi-cho Yamagata 990-0044 023-666-4480 info@yiddf.jp yiddf.jp/home-e.html
<b>Sapporo International Short Film Festival</b> (Sapporo Short Fest) (short films)	Sapporo	6th	October 5–10, 2011	Sapporo Short Fest Committee Intercross Creative Center 1–2, Toyohira 1–12, Toyohira-ku Sapporo 062-0901 011-817-8924 sapporoshortfest.jp
<b>Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival</b> (all types)	Yubari	22nd	February 23–27, 2012	Yasuhiro Togawa, Director Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival 1–32–13 Higashi-Nogawa, Komae-shi Tokyo 201-0002 03-5497-7220 Koji Aradate, Yubari Chief Adire Kaikan Yubari 4F Honmachi 4–3, Yubari-shi 068-0403 0123-53-2637 yubarifanta.com
<b>Okinawa International Movie Festival</b> (all types)	Ginowan, Naha	4th	March 24–31, 2012	Yoshimoto Creative Agency Co., Ltd. 5–18–21 Shinjuku, Shinjuku Tokyo 160-0022 03-3209-8290 www.yoshimoto.co.jp

\* Information festival programs, reports, calls for films, and personal communication

Contemporary Film Festivals in Japan: Part 1 (Laura MacGregor, Eija Niskanen)

Total films shown	Attendance	Awards	Award Categories	Budget	Market
118 (24 programs)	10,000	6	Grand Prix* Terayama Shuji Award * * ¥ 300,000 3 Scholarships @ ¥ 100,000	n/a	no
180 (68 in competition)	13,008 (incl. 1,454 at awards ceremony)	5 Audience awards (goods, i.e., camera) 16 (including sponsor awards)	3 Grand Prix * Let's Travel Project * 3D Competition * Stop Global Warming * (¥ 600,000 each) sponsor awards: J-Wave Award ¥ 500,000 EOS Movie Award	n/a	no
13 (5 in competition)	4,887	1	Grand Prix (no ¥)	¥3,000,000	no
27 (10 in competition)	3,800	5 + 2 sponsor awards (Cinema Fan award; Entertainment Award)	Grand Prix (¥ 1,000,000) Runner-up (¥ 200,000) Special Jury awards x 3 @ ¥ 100,000	n/a	no
241 (15 programs)	23,373	16 + 1 project	Flaherty Prize ¥ 2,000,000 Mayor's Prize: ¥ 1,000,000 Awards of Excellence x 2 @ ¥ 300,000 Community Cinema Award: US\$3,000 Director's Guild of Japan Award: ¥ 300,000 Sky Perfectx IDEHA Prize: ¥ 1,500,000	¥ 150,000,000	no
200 (78 in competition)	8,166	16 + sponsor awards	2 Grand Prix (no ¥) 14 category awards (no ¥)	¥40,000,000	yes
112 (shorts and features)	12,577	7 + 1 sponsor award	Grand Prix Special Jury Prize Governor's Award Audience Award (¥ figures not known)	¥40,000,000	no
94 (26 in competition)	310,000	4 + 2 sponsor awards	Laugh Grand Prix * Peace Grand Prix * (2,500,000 yen each) Golden Shisa Award x Special Mention x (x no ¥)	several hundred million yen	yes

