

Academy Award® Accredited & Asia's One of the Largest International Film Festivals

SHORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA 2025

**Festival President Tetsuya Bessho
Makes a courtesy call to the Governor of Tokyo
Announcing the Best Short Award
(Governor of Tokyo Award) for the Cinematic Tokyo Competition
Specially produced short film
" The place before daybreak " has also been released online.**



Actor Tetsuya Bessho, president of Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (SSFF & ASIA), one of Asia's biggest international short film festivals accredited by the Academy Awards®, paid a courtesy visit to Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building on Thursday, May 15th, 2025.

This year marks the 27th edition of the International Competition and the 22nd year of the Asia-Japan Competition, co-hosted with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. Reflecting on this year's festival theme, "creative active generative", Governor Yuriko Koike expressed her thoughts: "I deeply respect the power of continuity that has lasted over the years, which has led to the birth of many outstanding works and provided a stage for creators, including directors, to fully showcase their talents. This festival is one of the largest international short film festivals in Asia. Through short films, it brings joy and inspiration to many and fosters emotional connections between people. Recently, works created through collaboration between AI and creators have drawn attention, expanding new possibilities for expression. I hope that through this year's festival, more people will enjoy the charm of short films, including such emerging trends."

During a courtesy visit, Governor Koike announced the winning film in the "Cinematic Tokyo" category, a joint initiative between SSFF & ASIA and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to promote Tokyo's diverse appeal through globally solicited short films themed around the city.

This year, 197 entries were submitted from around the world, with five works making it to the final selection. The Best Short Award : Governor of Tokyo Award went to "GAJJIN", directed by Italian filmmaker Michele Motzo. The film is composed of seven short stories set in Tokyo and delivers a fantastical yet philosophical message. Festival president Tetsuya Bessho introduced the film, saying: "It's a story where a celestial voice watches over Tokyo and reflects the hearts of seven foreign residents. The film beautifully visualizes Tokyo through the eyes of foreigners, bringing attention to the term 'gaijin' itself. Its stunning cinematography and the anticipation it builds from scene to scene were highly praised." Upon receiving the award news, director Motzo shared a heartfelt message: "I'm deeply moved and surprised to receive this award in the very city that forms the heart of this film." Governor Koike responded warmly: "The Cinematic Tokyo section is one we are deeply committed to as co-hosts. This category vividly captures the very energy of Tokyo — from its sophisticated urban landscapes to the cultural and historical legacy passed down since the Edo period. We are truly grateful that creators from around the world help showcase Tokyo's charm globally. Congratulations!"

Additionally, the 8th collaborative film production project between Tokyo and the festival was introduced. The latest work in the “**Sustainable Recovery Project**”, which began last year, has been completed. The third film in the series, titled “**The place before daybreak**”, is directed by Sara Masuda, previously nominated in the Live Action Competition Japan category and won the Audience Award.

The cast includes Kanata Hosoda, Kai Inowaki, and American actor B.T., along with cameo appearances by Manami Konishi and Arata Iura. The film tells the story of a protagonist living a work-centered life in central Tokyo who prompted by a friend, visits Okutama. Through encounters with people and the rich natural scenery, he experiences small realizations and personal change. The film captures the Tokyo Metropolitan Government’s vision for sustainable recovery through beautiful visuals and delicate storytelling.

At today’s courtesy visit, the trailer for “**The place before daybreak**” was unveiled for the first time. After the screening, Governor Yuriko Koike praised the film: “The film truly lives up to the name of the Sustainable Recovery Project. Its relaxed tone is portrayed with delicate nuance, and I have high expectations for it. As the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, we are pleased to be able to promote Okutama, where one can experience the natural beauty of Tokyo. I’m grateful that such a natural setting was used to create such a natural film. I sincerely hope that many people will watch it and feel the charm of Tokyo’s nature.

“**The place before daybreak**” is now available for viewing on the festival’s official YouTube channel starting today. The award-winning film “**GAIJIN**” (Cinematic Tokyo Competition) will be available via Online Grand Theater from May 28 to June 11, and will also be screened at WITH HARAJUKU HALL on June 10.

Following the courtesy visit, festival president Tetsuya Bessho shared that among the 4,592 submissions this year, 275 films were created with the help of AI. He commented: “AI is not a threat—it is a technology we created ourselves. If approached correctly, it can become a creative partner for filmmakers and expand the possibilities of artistic expression. I believe that, moving forward, co-creation between AI and humans will lead to more diverse and profound storytelling.”

*Sustainable Recovery Project: An initiative aimed at creating a brighter future and passing on a rich and thriving planet to the next generation by promoting sustainable living for all. This effort spans various aspects of society, including the environment, economy, culture, sports, human rights, and the values and behaviors of individuals and businesses.

Cinematic Tokyo Competition Best Short Award / Governor of Tokyo Award 『GAIJIN』

Established in 2016, the “Cinematic Tokyo Competition” invites short films from around the world that showcase the diverse appeal of Tokyo to both domestic and international audiences. This year, 197 entries were submitted from across the globe, and five films were selected as finalists. Today, Governor Yuriko Koike announced the Best Short Award, which went to “GAIJIN”. The film will be available for streaming via the Online Grand Theater from May 28 to June 11, and will be screened on June 10 at WITH HARAJUKU HALL.



『GAIJIN』

Director : Michele Motzo

JAPAN/18:30 / Experimental / 2025

“GAIJIN” by Michele Motzo is a short film featuring seven brief stories in Tokyo. A fragmented, surreal, philosophical narration guides the short film, jumping from one story to another. All the while, a giant head fluctuates in the night sky, wondering about human beings.

<https://www.shortshorts.org/2025/program/tokyo/gaijin/>



We’ve received a joyful and moving message from director Michele Motzo following his award win!

With immense gratitude and sincere emotion, I would like to thank you for this recognition, which honors not only my work but also every human, poetic, and invisible fragment that inspired GAIJIN. Receiving this award in this city — the beating heart of the film — is a surprising and profoundly moving honor. On behalf of myself and the entire team, thank you for embracing our wandering gaze with such generosity.

<Profile>

Michele Motzo is an Italian filmmaker and video editor born in 1991. With a background in Philosophy, he moved to Milan, where he built a career in visual communication. His personal projects explore a surreal and poetic aesthetic, blending visual storytelling with emotional depth.

The third installment of the “Sustainable Recovery Project,” which began in 2022, “The place before daybreak” has been completed. Directed by Sara Masuda, the film features performances by Kanata Hosoda, Kai Inowaki, and American actor B.T., along with cameo appearances by Manami Konishi and Arata Iura. Through stunning visuals and delicate storytelling, the film beautifully captures the essence of the Sustainable Recovery initiative promoted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The full film is now available on YouTube starting today, and a behind-the-scenes video will be released on Wednesday, June 11.

いつも選ばない方に 何かがあるかもしれない



日の出を知らない街

The place before daybreak



細田佳央太 井之脇海 B.T. 小西真奈美 井浦新

監督：増田彩佳 脚本：星月ゆり

エグゼクティブ・プロデューサー：宮西哲也

プロデューサー：東野正剛 方賀見敦也 渡井敏史

TokyoTokyo

TOKYO
METROPOLITAN
GOVERNMENT

SHORTSHORTS



https://shortshorts.org/tokyo_project/sustainable_recovery/en/

The place before daybreak

19:16 /Drama / 2025 / Japan

Director :Sara Masuda

Cast: Kanata Hosoda, Kai Inowaki, B.T., Yui Suzuki, Ouga Tsukao, Manami Konishi, Arata Iura

Naoya, living in the heart of Tokyo, spent his days caught up in the routines of a work-centered life. It had been a long time since he indulged in his favorite pastime — traveling, something he had loved since his university days.

One day, out of the blue, he receives a phone call from Shogo, a senior from his university, inviting him on a trip to Okutama. Though puzzled by the sudden invitation, Naoya heads out to Okutama, where Shogo introduces him to an American traveler named Jackson.

The three of them explore the lush natural surroundings — a place so rich in nature it hardly feels like it's still part of Tokyo. Along the way, they meet warm-hearted locals and fully enjoy the natural beauty of Okutama.

This unexpected escape from his ordinary life brings Naoya small yet meaningful realizations and changes. The scenery before his eyes begins to gently shine in a new light.

<『The place before daybreak』 Director・Casts>



Director: Sara Masuda

She started working as a photographer at the age of 16. She is also active as a filmmaker now, expanding creative activities by directing and shooting music videos, among other projects. Her short film "cafune" won the Audience Award in the Japan Competition at SHORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA 2024. As of 2025, their Instagram following has surpassed 160,000 followers.



Cast: Kanata Hosoda

He began his career at the age of four and has since appeared in numerous dramas and films. In 2019, he was selected from over 1,000 applicants to play the lead role in director Yuya Ishii's film "Almost a Miracle". He went on to appear in films such as "We Made a Beautiful Bouquet" and "One Summer Story", as well as dramas including "Dragon Zakur" (TBS) and "Love is Deep: Yankee-kun and the White Cane Girl" (NTV). In 2023, he gained attention for his performance as Tokugawa Nobuyasu, the eldest son of Tokugawa Ieyasu, in the NHK Taiga drama "What Will You Do, Ieyasu?"

In 2024, he appeared in the drama series "95" (TX) and "That Girl's Child" (KTV), and starred in "The Country of Tanabata", streaming on Disney+. He is currently appearing in the Netflix film Bullet Train Explosion and the NHK morning drama series Anpan.



Cast: Kai Inowaki

Born in 1995, from Kanagawa Prefecture. In 2008, he won multiple awards, including the Best New Actor Award at the 82nd Kinema Junpo Best Ten for "Tokyo Sonata" directed by Kiyoshi Kurosawa. In 2018, his short film "Kotoba no Iranai Ai", which he directed, wrote, and starred in, was selected for the Short Film Corner at the Cannes Film Festival.

His recent film appearances include "In the Wake" (2021, directed by Takahisa Zeze), "Onoda - 10000 Nights in the Jungle" (2021, directed by Arthur Harari), "Musicophilia" (2021, directed by Masaaki Taniguchi), "Straying" (2022, directed by Rikiya Imaizumi), "Tonbi" (2022, directed by Takahisa Zeze), "Everything Will Be Owlright!" (2022, directed by Masahide Ichii), "almost people" (2023, directed by Takuto Kato), "Buzzy Noise" (2024, directed by Taiki Kazama), and the lead role in "Waiting for the Pianist" (2024, directed by Kei Shichiri). He played a dual leading role in TV Tokyo's January 2025 drama slot "Bansan Blues" (Wednesday Drama 25), and is also currently appearing in the ongoing NHK Taiga drama "UNBOUND".



Cast : B.T.

Born in 1985. Made his acting debut in "Woman of the Crime Lab" (Season 17, Episode 6). His major appearances include the TBS Sunday Theater / Netflix series "VIVANT" (directed by Katsuo Fukuzawa), the film and TV drama "Black School Rules" (directed by Shintaro Sugawara), the TV drama "Keep Your Hands Off Eizouken!" (directed by Tsutomu Hanabusa), the film "We Made It Through Somehow: INTERNATIONAL" (directed by Nobuo Mizuta), the NHK Taiga drama "What Will You Do, Ieyasu!?" (episode 13), and NHK World's "Journeys in Japan".

In recent years, he has also appeared in the film "Grand Maison Paris" (directed by Ayuko Tsukahara) and the stage play "Chihayaburu: The Divine Land / Honnoji Incident - Another Story" (written and directed by Fumiko Kusakabe).



Cast : Yui Suzuki

Born in 2013 and originally from Saitama Prefecture.

She made his film debut as the lead actor in "Touch" (2024, directed by Kyosuke Takada), attracting attention as a promising and talented young actor.

Her major works include the short film " " (2024, directed by Momoka Endo)", and "The Boy and the Dog" (2025, directed by Takahisa Zeze).

She is also starring in "Renoir" (directed by Chie Hayakawa), scheduled for release on June 20, 2025—a role he landed through an audition.



Cast : Ouga Tsukao

Born on April 8, 2015, in Miyagi Prefecture. He began his career in the entertainment industry at the age of one.

He made his film debut in "A Man's Lifetime Love Letter" (2022, directed by Takahisa Zeze).

In "Shadow of Fire" (2023, directed by Shinya Tsukamoto), which depicts a black market in the immediate postwar period, he played the role of a war orphan. For this performance, he became the youngest-ever recipient of the Best New Actor Award at the 97th Kinema Junpo Best Ten Awards in 2023.

In the upcoming film "Danshin" (directed by Masaki Inoue), scheduled for release in the fall of 2025, he delivers a notable performance as Mamoru Wada, the son of the protagonist. He is also active in a wide range of fields, including television dramas and commercials.

**Cast : Mnamo Konishi**

Born on October 27, 1978.

She made her debut on stage under the direction of Kohei Tsuka, and later won several awards, including the Best Newcomer Award at the 26th Japan Academy Prize for her performance in the film "The Hidden Blade".

She received numerous Best Actress awards for her leading role in the film "Nonchan Noriben".

As an actress, she has played a wide range of roles.

In recent years, she has also been active as a honey therapist and a forest bathing facilitator, promoting genuine beauty and wellness to many women.

**Cast : Arata Iura**

Born in 1974. Made his film debut in 1998 as the lead in Hirokazu Kore-eda's film "After Life". Since then, he has been active across a wide range of fields including film, television dramas, and narration. In addition to his acting career, he supports independent cinemas through "MINI THEATER PARK," serves as the director of the apparel brand ELNEST CREATIVE ACTIVITY, and is the founder of the sustainable cosmetics brand "Kruhi". His work extends across multiple creative and cultural fields.

[SHORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA 2025 OUTLINE]

■ **Festival President** : Tetsuya Bessho

■ **Schedule** :

April 24 – June 30 Online Grand Theater

*Streaming programs vary depending on the period.

May 28, Opening Ceremony @ TAKANAWA GATEWAY CITY

May 29 – June 1 TAKANAWA GATEWAY CITY

June 3, 4 Akasaka Intercity Conference

June 6 – 10 WITH HARAJUKU

June 6 - 8 LIFORK HARAJUKU

June 11 Award Ceremony LINE CUBE SHIBUYA

■ **Ticket** :

<**Online Grand Theater Passport**>

¥2,500 (JPY) for Japan residents only /

\$15 (USD) for international users, 500JPY (Japan)

<https://app.lifelogbox.com/shortshortsonlinegrandtheater>

<**Tokyo Venues**>

•1 Program (advance sale)

General 1,500JPY

Students, Seniors, Disability Discount 1,200JPY

Children under elementary school age Free

•1 Program (same-day ticket)

General 1,800JPY

Students, Seniors, Disability Discount 1,500JPY

Children under elementary school age Free

•Passport : Omotesando Hills Space O, WITH HARAJUKU

General 7,000JPY

Students, Seniors, Disability Discount 5,500JPY

URL <https://ssff2025passport.peatix.com>

■ **General Inquiry** : info@shortshorts.org

■ **Official Site** : <https://www.shortshorts.org/2025>

■ **Host** : Committee for Short Shorts / Committee for Short Shorts Asia



【Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia】

In 1999, actor Tetsuya Bessho, member of the Screen Actors Guild of America (SAG), has worked to introduce the then new genre, "short films," which he first encountered in the United States, to film fans in Japan as the American Short Shorts Film Festival. In 2001, the festival was renamed the Short Shorts Film Festival. In 2004, SSFF was recognized as an Academy Award® accredited film festival.



In the same year, with the aim of promoting new visual culture from Asia and nurturing up-and-coming young filmmakers, the Short Shorts Film Festival Asia (SSFF ASIA, co-sponsored by Tokyo Metropolitan Government) was established and the festival is now known collectively as SSFF & ASIA.

To commemorate the festival's 20th anniversary in 2018, the Grand Prix film was named the "George Lucas Award" in honor of director George Lucas.

In January 2019, the Short Shorts Film Festival in Hollywood was held to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the festival. Beginning with the 2019 festival, in addition to the Official Competitions (International, Asia International, and Japan), the Non-Fiction Competition and this year, the Animation Competition Best Short Award winners have also become eligible for nomination at the Academy Awards the following year.

SSFF & ASIA will continue to support young creators through the festival.

<https://shortshorts.org/index-en.php>

【Press Inquiry】

Committee for Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia

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【Stills are available from the link below】

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uMdiAnRp7PX5HOzyYI3BCXkedq9k2-jN?usp=sharing>