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FESTIVAL DE CANNES
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SATOSHI KON, THE ILLUSIONIST

A FILM BY PASCAL-ALEX VINCENT



FESTIVAL DE CANNES 2021
OFFICIAL SELECTION - CANNES CLASSICS
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World Sales
CARLOTTA FILMS
5-7, imp. Carrière-Mainguet
75011 Paris

Vincent PAUL-BONCOUR
+ 33(0)1 42 24 10 86
vincentpb@aol.com

Press Relations
Mathilde GIBAUT
+33 (0)1 42 24 87 89
mathilde@carlottafilms.com

Digital Press Relations
Élise BORGABELLO
+33 (0)1 42 24 98 12
elise@carlottafilms.com



SATOSHI KON, THE ILLUSIONIST

A FILM BY PASCAL-ALEX VINCENT

A FASCINATING TRIBUTE TO THE MAN WHO CHANGED THE FACE OF ANIMATED CINEMA

The mangaka and anime filmmaker Satoshi Kon died suddenly in 2010, at the age of 46. He left behind a short and unfinished body of work, which is nevertheless among the most widely distributed and influential in the history of contemporary Japanese culture.

Ten years after his death, his family and collaborators finally speak out about his work, while his heirs in Japan, France and Hollywood look back on his artistic legacy.

Satoshi Kon, The Illusionist illustrates the trajectory of a solitary author, whose life was dedicated to comics and animation for adults.

Director Pascal-Alex Vincent (*Give me your hand, Miwa: A Japanese Icon*) went to meet those who knew Satoshi Kon or who worked with him, from Tokyo to Los Angeles, via Paris or London.

Generously illustrated with images of his films or rare archives, the documentary is a dive into the animation world of the 2000s, but also into the work of a filmmaker with a tragic fate, who became a cult director worldwide.

His colleagues and friends testify: Mamoru Oshii (*Ghost in the Shell*), Mamoru Hosoda (*Wolf Children*), but also the legendary Masao Maruyama, co-founder in 1971 of the Madhouse studio which produced Satoshi Kon's films. As for foreign filmmakers (Darren Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*; Jérémy Clapin, *I Lost My Body*), they will come to evoke the importance of Kon's work internationally.

“Satoshi Kon expanded the possibilities of animation. He created animated films of equal power to live-action films.”

MAMORU HOSODA (*WOLF CHILDREN*)

“As much for his personality as for his films, Satoshi Kon sought perfection at all costs.”

MAMORU OSHII (*GHOST IN THE SHELL*)

“It was not me who revealed his talent. It was already obvious to everyone.”

MASAO MARUYAMA (COFOUNDER
OF MADHOUSE STUDIO)



“SATOSHI KON, ILLUSIONIST AND VISIONARY”

BY PASCAL-ALEX
VINCENT

“Satoshi Kon’s art of directing has no equivalent in the history of animation. From his obsession with realism to his art of cutting, through his virtuosity as an editor, Kon has reshuffled the cards of half a century of Japanese animation, twenty years after the Ghibli tremor. And he shuffled them like a magician shuffles his own before a magic trick, between dexterity, inventiveness and malice.

A rare animation filmmaker to have been honored in the Venice competition with *Paprika* (2006), Satoshi Kon is today one of the most recognized Japanese directors in the world. Constantly re-released, his filmography is short (four feature films, a television series and a short film), but seems inexhaustible. Satoshi Kon was not only a magician of images, he also prophesied the era to come. From *Perfect Blue* to *Paprika*, including of course *Paranoia Agent*, Satoshi Kon’s work has never ceased to evoke the theme of the individual swallowed up by a society stronger than him. A society that condemns man to alienate himself, then to lose himself. The irruption of ‘alternative’ worlds proposed by cinema, television, and then the Internet have also blurred reference points and multiplied realities. All of Satoshi Kon’s work evokes the porosity between reality and fiction, between reality and imagination, between the waking world and fantasy, between the roughness of everyday life and the

exhilarating virtual worlds. But also: Satoshi Kon, a filmmaker of time? If this theme has obsessed more than one filmmaker, Kon has literally played with it in all his films - *Millennium Actress* in the lead, of course, with this temporal spiral that carries the two main protagonists, between yesterday and today’s Japan. Finally, Satoshi Kon, a painter of women? While his friend and contemporary Mamoru Hosoda (*Mirai*) never ceases to explore the theme of the family, Satoshi Kon has always placed women at the heart of his films. Mima the singer (*Perfect Blue*), Chiyoko the legendary actress (*Millennium Actress*) or Miyuki the homeless woman (*Tokyo Godfathers*) are all unforgettable female characters from which Kon deploys his range, without forgetting, often, to describe these women as the first victims of a toxic society, on the verge of implosion.”



Eurospace and Genco present
in coproduction with Carlotta Films
and Allerton Films
with the support of Agency for Cultural
Affairs, Government of Japan
SATOSHI KON, THE ILLUSIONIST
image Gordon Spooner, Toshiyuki Kiyomura
music Théo Chapira
editing Clément Selitzki
sound Hiroki Nakano
sound editing Xavier Thibault
produced by Kenzo Horikoshi and Taro
Maki in association
with Vincent Paul-Boncour
with the support of OCS
a film by Pascal-Alex Vincent

SATOSHI KON BY DARREN ARONOFSKY

“I had never seen Japanese animation in the service of an adult story. For me, it was new. His style was unique, as well as his way of describing the characters or setting the scene. Satoshi Kon was an exciting discovery for me. There were so many new things in *Perfect Blue*, things that had not been seen in any other kind of cinema.

There are really few directors that I can connect with, that I can discuss or exchange with. We met for the first time in Japan in 1999, then we corresponded a lot by email. It was very clear that he was a machine on his own. He gave me the impression that he was a solitary designer, working in his cocoon. I remember envying his ability to trust only himself to develop his work and thus assert his own vision. I don’t think of him as an animation filmmaker, but as a filmmaker at all.

At the time of *Requiem for a Dream*, I wrote to him to ask if I could use a scene from *Perfect Blue*. Later, when we returned to Japan, we met again, and I asked him what he thought of it. He said he thought it was great, and I thought it was great to have such a connection with him.”

A trip around the world to meet those who knew or admired Satoshi Kon...

JAPAN



Masashi Ando
character designer
(Ghibli, Satoshi Kon)



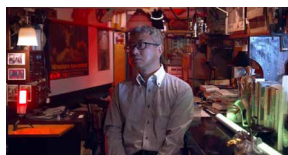
Mamoru Hosoda
filmmaker (*The Girl Who Leapt Through Time*)



Mamoru Oshii
filmmaker
(*Ghost in the Shell*)



Taro Maki
producer (*Millennium Actress*, *Tokyo Godfathers*)



Masaaki Usada
editor
(*Young Magazine*)



Masao Maruyama
producer and cofounder
of Madhouse studio



Sadayuki Murai
screenwriter
(*Perfect Blue*)



Junko Iwao
Mima's voice
(*Perfect Blue*)



Nobutaka Ike
art director



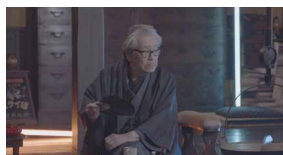
Shozo Iizuka
actor (*Millennium Actress*, *Paranoia Agent*)



Masafumi Mima
sound designer



Hiroyuki Okiura
filmmaker (*Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade*)

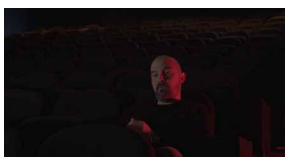


Yasutaka Tsutsui
writer
(*Paprika*)



Megumi Hayashibara
Paprika's voice

FRANCE



Jérémy Clapin
filmmaker
(*I Lost my Body*)



Marc Caro
filmmaker (*The City of Lost Children*)



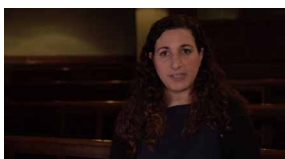
Marie Pruvost-Delaspre
historian



Alexis Blanchet
University teacher
Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle



Dimitri Megherbi
philosopher



Yael Ben Nun
head of the animated cinema collection
Musée-Château d'Annecy

USA



Darren Aronofsky
filmmaker
(*Requiem for a Dream*)



Rodney Rothman
filmmaker (*Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*)

UNITED KINGDOM



Aya Suzuki
animator
(Ghibli, Madhouse)



Andrew Osmond
animation critic