

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNSUNG MASTER OF JAPANESE CINEMA HIROSHI SHIMIZU TO BE THE SUBJECT OF A MAJOR 27-FILM RETROSPECTIVE AT MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE AND JAPAN SOCIETY

Part I: The Shochiku Years, May 4–19 at Museum of the Moving Image

**Part II: The Postwar and Independent Years, May 16–June 1 at Japan Society as part of
the John and Miyoko Davey Classic Film Series**



Pictured above: *Four Seasons of Children: Spring/Summer* © 1939 Shochiku Co., Ltd. | [Press gallery](#)

“Kindred to Jean Renoir, and even anticipating Hou Hsiao-hsien, was a man in Japan who brought a new wind to cinema: Hiroshi Shimizu.” —Ryusuke Hamaguchi

***“Ozu and I create films through hard work, but Shimizu is a genius.”
—Kenji Mizoguchi***

New York, New York, April 4, 2024 — Japan Society and Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) will co-present a 27-film retrospective devoted to Hiroshi Shimizu, an unsung master of Japanese cinema, from May 4 through June 1. Co-organized with the National Film Archive of Japan and the Japan Foundation, New York, the two-part series will offer the first New York

survey of the major, yet often overlooked filmmaker in more than 30 years and the largest ever assembled in North America—featuring rare, imported archival 35mm prints; live piano accompaniment; and newly commissioned subtitles.

A prolific filmmaker with 163 films to his name—of which only around a quarter survive—Shimizu (1903–1966) worked as a star director for leading Japanese studio Shochiku (alongside his close friend Yasujiro Ozu) from the mid-1920s until he left to form his own independent production company in the late 1940s, continuing to make work until 1959 through what has come to be known as the Golden Age of Japanese Cinema. He was highly regarded by contemporary critics, as well as peers like Ozu and Kenji Mizoguchi, for his seemingly effortless formal ingenuity, distinguished by his signature linear traveling shots, and his naturalistic, open-air depictions of regional Japan. Shot on location and frequently employing non-actors, the loosely plotted, low-key tragicomedies that comprise his most characteristic work foregrounded the transient lives and hardships of everyday people with a marked regard for those pushed to the margins of society, including drifters, migrant workers, war veterans, persons with disabilities, outcast women, and especially children, in whom the director took a personal philanthropic interest and of whom he remarked: “They are natural. They breathe the air. Films must have humans who breathe the air.”

Divided in two parts, the retrospective will begin with **Part I: The Shochiku Years**, presented at Museum of the Moving Image from May 4–19, gathering the best films of Shimizu’s protean and varied career with the studio, from his stark, strikingly modernist early melodramas, both silent and sound, to the lyrical tours of provincial life with which he would become chiefly associated. Highlights include the filmmaker’s hitherto best-known films in the United States—*Japanese Girls at the Harbor* (1933), *Mr. Thank You* (1936), *The Masseurs and a Woman* (1938), and *Ornamental Hairpin* (1941, starring Ozu stalwart Chishu Ryu and Shimizu’s one-time wife, the great actor-director Kinuyo Tanaka)—alongside rarer contemporaneous works that display the full stylistic and tonal range of this consummate craftsman’s accomplishments, such as two of his best silents, the harrowing, two-part fallen woman saga *Seven Seas* (1931–32) and the bitter family tale *A Hero of Tokyo* (1935); his richly atmospheric first talkie *A Woman Crying in Spring* (1933), a bleak Chekhovian drama set in wintry Hokkaido; the virtuosic sports comedy *A Star Athlete* (1937), featuring the apotheosis of Shimizu’s limpid sense of camera movement; the elegant period piece, exceptional among Shimizu’s typically contemporary-set films, *Notes of an Itinerant Performer* (1941); the stoic, King Vidor-esque treatise on a child’s reform school *Introspection Tower* (1941); the ethnographically detailed propaganda film *Sayon’s Bell* (1943, starring Shirley Yamaguchi), photographed and set in Taiwan; and two of the director’s supreme masterpieces *Children in the Wind* (1937) and its two-volume sequel *Four Seasons of Children* (1939).

From May 16–June 1, Japan Society will present the inaugural John and Miyoko Davey Classic Film Series **Part II: The Postwar and Independent Years**. Shimizu’s postwar films have seldom screened internationally, despite being achievements on equal footing with his prewar output. Capturing Japan in a state of regeneration, these films illustrate a society trying to pull itself

together, weaving themes of collective struggle and hope while zeroing in on the plight of the dispossessed underclasses. Highlights include Shimizu's complete *Children of the Beehive* trilogy. Rarely screened in its entirety and for the first time in North America, this late-period saga is the culmination of the director's postwar work, featuring the eight war orphans Shimizu himself adopted and brought up in a rented Buddhist temple after World War II. In addition, the program includes the international premiere of *Tomorrow There Will Be Fine Weather* (1948), lost for 70 years until it was rediscovered in 2022 by the National Film Archive of Japan. Shinto productions include the tragicomedy *Mr. Shosuke Ohara*, a personal favorite of director Shinji Somai, and *The Shiinomi School*. Four of Shimizu's Daiei productions will also screen, notably his tragic melodrama *Sound in the Mist* (1956, recently revived in Portugal to overwhelming acclaim) and *Image of a Mother* (1959), Shimizu's final film. As part of the series, Japan Society has commissioned new English subtitles for five films—some never-before screened in English-speaking countries—*Tomorrow There Will Be Fine Weather*, *Sound in the Mist*, *Image of a Mother*, *Children of the Beehive: What Happened Next* (1951), and *Children of the Great Buddha* (1952).

An iteration of the MoMI/Japan Society program entitled Hiroshi Shimizu: Notes of an Itinerant Director will travel to Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) in July.

Tickets for **Part I: The Shochiku Years** go on sale on April 4 at movingimage.org/series/hiroshi-shimizu.

Tickets for **Part II: The Postwar and Independent Years** go on sale on April 15 at japansociety.org.

FILM LINE-UP FOR PART I: THE SHOCHIKU YEARS

Museum of the Moving Image

36-01 35 Ave, Astoria, NY 11106 | www.movingimage.org

Seven Seas: Chapter 1 - Virginit

『七つの海・前篇・処女篇』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1931, 72 min., 35mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Saturday, May 4, 1:00 p.m. With live piano accompaniment by Makia Matsumura

Seven Seas: Chapter 2 - Chastity

『七つの海・後篇・貞操篇』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1932, 82 min., 35mm, b&w, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Saturday, May 4, 2:30 p.m. With live piano accompaniment by Makia Matsumura

A Woman Crying in Spring

『泣き濡れた春の女よ』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1933, 96 min., 35mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Sunday, May 5, 3:15 p.m.

Japanese Girls at the Harbor

『港の日本娘』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1933, 78 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Saturday, May 4, 6:00 p.m. With live piano accompaniment by Makia Matsumura

A Hero of Tokyo

『東京の英雄』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1935, 63 min., 35mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Saturday, May 4, 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Thank You

『有りがたうさん』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1936, 75 min., 35mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Sunday, May 5, 5:30 p.m.

Forget Love for Now

『恋も忘れて』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1937, 73 min., 35mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Sunday, May 5, 1:30 p.m.

Children in the Wind

『風の中の子供』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1937, 86 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Friday, May 10, 7:00 p.m.

A Star Athlete

『花形選手』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1937, 64 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Sunday, May 12, 4:00 p.m.

The Masseurs and a Woman

『按摩と女』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1938, 66 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Sunday, May 12, 5:30 p.m.

Four Seasons of Children: Spring/Summer

『子供の四季・春夏の巻』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1939, 70 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Saturday, May 11, 3:00 p.m.

Four Seasons of Children: Autumn/Winter

『子供の四季・秋冬の巻』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1939, 71 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.
Saturday, May 11, 4:30 p.m.

Introspection Tower

『みかへりの塔』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1941, 111 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.
Sunday, May 12, 1:30 p.m.

Notes of an Itinerant Performer

『歌女おぼえ書』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1941, 97 min., 35mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.
Sunday, May 19, 3:00 p.m.

Ornamental Hairpin

『簪』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1941, 70 min., 35mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.
Saturday, May 11, 6:15 p.m.

Sayon's Bell

『サヨンの鐘』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1943, 74 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.
Saturday, May 11, 1:15 p.m.

Please note: MoMI will also show *Children of the Beehive* (1948) on Sunday, May 19, 5:15 p.m.

FILM LINE-UP FOR PART II: THE POSTWAR AND INDEPENDENT YEARS

Japan Society

333 E 47th St, Manhattan, NY 10017 | www.japansociety.org

Children of the Beehive

『蜂の巣の子供たち』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1948, 86 min., 35mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.
Thursday, May 16, 7:00 p.m. with Opening Night Reception
Sunday, May 19, 5:15 p.m. (at MoMI)

Tomorrow There Will Be Fine Weather

『明日は日本晴れ』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1948, 35mm, 65 min., in Japanese with live English subtitles.
Friday, May 17, 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Shosuke Ohara

『小原庄助さん』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1949, 97 min., 16mm, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Thursday, May 30, 7:00 p.m.

A Mother's Love

『母情』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1950, 83 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Friday, May 17, 9:00 p.m.

Children of the Beehive: What Happened Next

『その後の蜂の巣の子供たち』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1951, 94 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Friday, May 31, 7:00 p.m.

Children of the Great Buddha

『大仏さまと子供たち』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1952, 102 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Saturday, June 1, 8:00 p.m.

The Shiinomi School

『しいのみ学園』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1955, 100 min., 35mm, in Japanese with live English subtitles.

Saturday, May 18, 7:30 p.m.

Sound in the Mist

『霧の音』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1956, 84 min., DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Thursday, May 23, 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 30, 9:15 p.m.

The Sentimental Idiot

『人情馬鹿』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1956, 71 min., DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Saturday, May 18, 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 23, 9:00 p.m.

Dancing Girl

『踊子』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1957, 96 min., DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Saturday, May 18, 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 1, 3:00 p.m.

Image of a Mother

『母のおもかげ』

Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1959, 89 min., DCP, in Japanese with English subtitles.

Friday, May 31, 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 1, 5:30 p.m.

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About Museum of the Moving Image

Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) is the only institution in the United States that deals comprehensively with the art, technology, enjoyment, and social impact of film, television, and digital media. In its facility in Astoria, New York, the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, and creative leaders; and education programs. It houses the nation's largest collection of moving image artifacts and screens over 500 films annually. Its exhibitions—including the core exhibition *Behind the Screen* and *The Jim Henson Exhibition*—are noted for their integration of material objects, interactive experiences, and audiovisual presentations. For more information about the MoMI, visit movingimage.org.

About Japan Society

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. At Japan Society, we are inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together. We are committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, we've inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. We strive to convene important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to more fully appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan. From our New York headquarters, a landmark building designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura that opened to the public in 1971, we look forward to the years ahead, which will be defined by our digital and ideational impact through the *kizuna* that we build. Our future can only be enhanced by learning from our peers and engaging with our audiences, both near and afar.

All Part II: The Postwar and Independent Years screenings will be at Japan Society's landmarked headquarters at 333 East 47th St, New York, NY 10017, one block from the United Nations and minutes from Grand Central Terminal.

Press contacts:

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Screening links available upon request. | [Press images for Shimizu retrospective](#)

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Thurs, 2:00–6:00 p.m. Fri, 2:00–8:00 p.m. Sat–Sun, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$20 adults, \$12 senior citizens (ages 65+) and students (ages 18+) with ID, \$10 youth (ages 3–17). Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. General admission is free every Thursday, 2:00–6:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, tickets: \$15 adults, \$11 students and seniors, \$9 youth (ages 3–17), free or discounted for Museum members (depending on level of membership). Advance purchase is available online. Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: R to Steinway Street. N or W to 36 Ave or Broadway.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.org

Membership: movingimage.org/join-and-support/become-a-member or 718 777 6877

Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation). For more information, please visit movingimage.org.