


KADOKAWA,  
TOKYO GARAGE  
& COMME DES CINEMAS  
PRESENT

Locarno Film Festival  
Concorso internazionale

MARIKO  
TSUTSUI

MIKAKO  
ICHIKAWA



# A GIRL MISSING

A FILM BY  
KOJI FUKADA





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2019 – JAPAN, FRANCE – DRAMA – JAPANESE – 1h51– DCP – 1.66 – 5.1

(Press Kit and photos available for download)

## SYNOPSIS

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Ichiko works as a private nurse for a family she has almost become a part of. While Ichiko cares for the grandmother, she is also a confidant to Motoko, the eldest sister.

But one day, Motoko's younger sister disappears. And the media soon reveal the kidnapper to be Ichiko's own nephew...

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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### **ICHIKO, THE CENTRAL MOTIF**

Ichiko contends with reality as it comes. As a nurse, she has always led an honest, upright existence helping terminally ill patients face death. But when a crime committed by her nephew plunges her into an absurd situation, she loses her job, her fiancé and even her home. In spite of herself, Ichiko is gradually cut off from the world, a helpless bystander to the fading of her existence.

The film is centered around Ichiko's turpitudes as both accomplice and victim in the crime and its punishment. Though her actions may sometimes seem futile or ridiculous, the scratches she makes on the screen will leave marks in the hearts of the audience, and her scream will make them shudder over the speakers in the movie theater. Ichiko learns the hard way that social status, self-esteem and social attachments are like different floors in a building whose foundation was laid on shaky ground. And that shaky ground is not just under Ichiko, it is under all of us.

Why do we need a film to speak to us of this?

Will viewers, purchasing their tickets, take this wound home with them?

Of course they will. For art is also a repetition of life.

### **A REPETITION OF LIFE**

Life is full of unsolvable problems. No matter how much we may desire it, we cannot become Superman, Leonardo DiCaprio or even the most popular kid in school. In the end, we do not understand the feelings of our friends, love partners, wives or husbands. We think we do, and day after day we smile and get on with things. But when the going gets tough, we're alone.

And time is irreversible and limited. No one can escape the inevitability of death. The gulf between an ideal life and reality, solitude and death are problems that cannot be solved. There's no point trying harder, it won't help.

Throughout the ages, art has been describing the imperfect reality of our world. From Greek tragedies to Shakespeare and the Memento Mori of plague-ridden Europe, artists have explored the splendors of the human soul and, even more so, our helplessness and pain as reality and destiny have their way with us. Just as we take in food to nourish our bodies as we grow, we feed on art to train our minds to the wild and absurd reality bombarding our "ego". Art provides exercise to build up our resistance to this life that cannot be avoided. This is one of the most beautiful things art does for humanity.

Through the character of Ichiko, I hope my film A GIRL MISSING speaks to the audience of our determination to keep on living despite the absurdity of our existence.

## **TWO TIMELINES**

One of the main distinguishing features of the film's structure is the coexistence of two timelines.

The first concerns the time following the incident involving Ichiko's nephew, as she loses her place in society after being betrayed by Motoko, the young woman she loved like a sister and trusted completely. The other follows Ichiko as she prepares her revenge on Motoko = Life.

These two timelines are not storytelling devices in the form of flashbacks. They represent two realities moving forward as the present for Ichiko. I think the two timelines lend the character more depth and ambiguity.

When she reaches the end of the two timelines, Ichiko suffers. Her inner scream joins that of the viewers, who also cannot escape pain, in their past, their present or their future.

The role of Ichiko is played by Mariko Tsutsui. Her great feeling for acting brought so much life to Ichiko, and has exceeded my expectations and my vision. I can't wait for my heroine to take her first steps in front of an audience. And I believe it is a director's duty to deliver those first steps.

Kôji Fukada

## KOJI FUKADA

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### DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Koji Fukada was born in 1980 in Tokyo. He attended Faculty of Literature at Taisho University, and began taking classes in filmmaking at the same time at Film School of Tokyo in 1999. After making his first feature film *The Chair*, he joined the Seinendan theatrical company headed by Oriza Hirata in 2005. Koji Fukada made *Hospitalite (Kantai)* in 2010 and *Au revoir l'été (Hotori no Sakuko)* in 2013. His film *Harmonium* in 2016 won the Jury Award in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes. In 2018, Koji Fukada was awarded Chevalier of Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France.

### FILMOGRAPHY

- 2019 A GIRL MISSING – Locarno, Competition
- 2018 THE MAN FROM THE SEA
- 2016 HARMONIUM – Cannes, Un Certain Regard, Jury Award
- 2015 SAYONARA
- 2013 AU REVOIR L'ÉTÉ
- 2010 HOSPITALITÉ
- 2008 HUMAN COMEDY IN TOKYO
- 2006 LA GRENADIÈRE

## CAST & CREW

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### CAST LIST

Mariko Tsutsui	Ichiko
Mikako Ichikawa	Motoko
Sosuke Ikematsu	Kazumichi
Hisako Ookata	Tôko
Mitsuru Fukikoshi	Totsuka
Miyu Ogawa	Saki

### CREW LIST

DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
EDITING  
LIGHTING DIRECTOR  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER  
SET DECORATOR  
SOUND RECORDING  
COSTUME DESIGNER  
HAIR AND MAKEUP ARTIST  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
PRODUCTION MANAGER  
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

Koji Fukada  
Kenichi Negishi  
Koji Fukada, Julia Gregory  
Eiji Oshita  
Yasuaki Harada  
Jun Terao  
Koji Kihara  
Kyoko Baba  
Kyoko Toyokawa  
Tomohiro Kubo  
Yamato Saito  
Hiroyuki Onogawa

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
EXECUTIVE IN CHARGE OF PRODUCTION  
PLANNED AND PRODUCED BY  
PRODUCERS

Shinichiro Inoue  
Daiji Horiuchi, Yosuke Miyake  
Kazumasa Yonemitsu  
Naohiko Ninomiya, Daisuke Futagi,  
Hirohisa Mukuju, Masa Sawada

PRODUCTION COMPANY

KADOKAWA DAIEI STUDIO  
COMME DES CINEMAS

INTERNATIONAL SALES

mk2 films / KADOKAWA

## INTERNATIONAL SALES

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