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A Film by Mami Sunada

THE KINGDOM OF DREAMS AND MADNESS

*A look inside the fantastically mad world
of the people behind Studio Ghibli*

PRESENTED BY Dwango
IN COOPERATION WITH Studio Ghibli
PRODUCED BY Nobuo Kawakami
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY Mami Sunada
MUSIC BY Masakatsu Takagi
PRODUCTION COMPANY ENNET

Technical Specification

FORMAT Digital
ASPECT RATIO 1920 x 1080
SOUND 5.1ch
COLOR Color
RUNNING TIME 118 minutes
LANGUAGE Japanese with subtitles
PRODUCTION YEAR 2013
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ABOUT THE FILM

There have been numerous documentaries about Studio Ghibli made for television and for DVD features, but no one had ever conceived of making a theatrical documentary feature about the famed animation studio. That is precisely what filmmaker Mami Sunada set out to do in her first film since her acclaimed directorial debut, *Death of a Japanese Salesman*.

With near-unfettered access inside the studio, Sunada follows the key personnel at Ghibli – director Hayao Miyazaki, producer Toshio Suzuki and the elusive “other” director, Isao Takahata – over the course of approximately one year as the studio rushes to complete their two highly anticipated new films, Miyazaki’s *The Wind Rises* and Takahata’s *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*. The result is a rare glimpse into the inner workings of one of the most celebrated animation studios in the world, and a portrait of their dreams, passion and dedication that borders on madness.

DIRECTOR: MAMI SUNADA

Born in 1978, Mami Sunada studied documentary filmmaking while at Keio University before apprenticing as a director’s assistant under Hirokazu Kore-eda and others. Her directorial debut, *Death of a Japanese Salesman*, a documentary about her father’s last days after being diagnosed with cancer, garnered numerous first-time director awards. The film’s revenue also surpassed 100 million yen at the box office, exceptional for a documentary.

Awards for *Death of a Japanese Salesman* (partial list):

- 28th Fumiko Yamaji Culture Award
- 36th Hochi Film Award for Best New Artist
- 52nd Directors Guild of Japan New Directors Award
- 62nd Ministry of Education Geijutsu Sensho Shinjin Award

Production credits (partial list):

- Letter from a Yellow Cherry Blossom* (2002), directed by Naomi Kawase
- The Ichikawa Kon Story* (2006), directed by Shunji Iwai
- Still Walking* (2007), directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda
- Air Doll* (2009), directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda
- ANPO* (2010), directed by Linda Hoaglund

PRODUCER: NOBUO KAWAKAMI

Born in 1968, Nobuo Kawakami graduated from Kyoto University Faculty of Engineering in 1990 and immediately joined Software Japan Laboratory. In 1997, he founded Dwango Company, Ltd. and became its president. He currently serves as Dwango's chairman while apprenticing as a producer at Studio Ghibli. Since 2006, he has been involved with the operation of the popular video sharing website Nico Nico Douga through the company Niwango, Inc. *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness* is his first film as producer.

MUSIC: MASAKATSU TAKAGI

Born in 1979, Masakatsu Takagi is both a visual artist who processes material he films himself through animation and other techniques as well as a musician who creates work centered on the use of his long-beloved piano. In 2009, *Newsweek Japan* named him one of the "100 Japanese People Respected by the World", earning him worldwide attention. He also scored Mamoru Hosoda's animated feature *Wolf Children* (2012).

ABOUT STUDIO GHIBLI

Studio Ghibli is a Japanese animation studio founded in 1985 after the success of Hayao Miyazaki's 1984 film *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. Headed by directors Miyazaki and Isao Takahata as well as producer Toshio Suzuki, the studio has since produced some of Japan's most successful films, including *Princess Mononoke* and the Oscar-winning *Spirited Away*, the highest grossing Japanese film of all time.

In the early years, the production team was hired on a per-project contract basis before the company switched to a permanent employee system. From 1999 to 2005, the studio was a subsidiary of Tokuma Shoten, a publishing company. In 2001, the studio opened the Ghibli Museum, Mitaka. Studio Ghibli is located in Koganei, a suburb of Tokyo.

HAYAO MIYAZAKI

Born in 1941, Hayao Miyazaki is one of the most acclaimed Japanese filmmakers of all time. In 1961, he joined Toei Animation, where he met Isao Takahata and began working as a key animator on numerous projects. He made his feature debut as a director with *The Castle of Cagliostro* (1979), then went on to make some of Japan's most beloved animated films, including *Castle in the Sky* (1986) and *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988). His latest film, *The Wind Rises* (2013), is his eleventh feature as director, and his last. In September 2013, he announced his retirement from feature-length filmmaking, though he indicated that he intends to continue working in some manner. His nickname is "Miya-san".

Feature Filmography (as director):

| | |
|------|------------------------------------|
| 1979 | The Castle of Cagliostro |
| 1984 | Nausicäa of the Valley of the Wind |
| 1986 | Castle in the Sky |
| 1988 | My Neighbor Totoro |
| 1989 | Kiki's Delivery Service |
| 1992 | Porco Rosso |
| 1997 | Princess Mononoke |
| 2001 | Spirited Away |
| 2004 | Howl's Moving Castle |
| 2008 | Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea |
| 2013 | The Wind Rises |

ISAO TAKAHATA

Born in 1935, Isao Takahata is one of the most influential animation filmmakers in Japan, and a long-time collaborator of Miyazaki. Joining Toei Animation in 1959, he soon became one of its most prolific directors in addition to being active in its labor union. He has directed countless feature films and animated TV series (some of which were later edited into theatrical features), including *The Little Norse Prince Valiant* (1968), *Anne of Green Gables* (1979) and *Heidi a girl of the Alps* (1979). One of his most acclaimed films, *Grave of the Fireflies* (1986), was released as a double feature with Miyazaki's *My Neighbor Totoro*. His latest film, *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, was released in Japan on November 23, 2013. His nickname is "Paku-san". (*Paku-paku* is an onomatopoeia for the sound of eating, similar to "gobble-gobble".)

Feature Filmography (as director):

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1968 | The Little Norse Prince Valiant |
| 1979 | Heidi a girl of the Alps |
| 1980 | Marco, From the Apennines to the Andes |
| 1981 | Downtown Story |
| 1982 | Gauche the Cellist |
| 1987 | The Story of Yanagawa Waterways (documentary) |
| 1988 | Grave of the Fireflies |
| 1991 | Only Yesterday |
| 1994 | Pom Poko |
| 1999 | My Neighbors the Yamadas |
| 2013 | The Tale of The Princess Kaguya |

TOSHIO SUZUKI

Born in 1948, Toshio Suzuki is the former president of Studio Ghibli and has been the producer for nearly every Ghibli film since *Only Yesterday* (1991). He joined the publishing company Tokuma Shoten in 1972 and launched the animation magazine *Animage* in 1978. After meeting Miyazaki, Suzuki commissioned a manga serial from Miyazaki that became *Nausicäa of the Valley of the Wind*, which was then adapted into an animated feature by Miyazaki himself. He helped Miyazaki and Takahata found Studio Ghibli before leaving Tokuma Shoten in 1989 to officially join Ghibli. Though he stepped down as president of Studio Ghibli in 2008, he continues to serve as its managing director and executive producer.

OTHER NOTABLES

Hideaki ANNO

Filmmaker best known for directing the enormously popular animated series *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Responding to an ad for animators, Anno was hired by Miyazaki to draw the Giant Warrior at the end of *Nausicäa of the Valley of the Wind* (1984). He is considered one of the foremost filmmakers in Japan today.

Joe HISAISHI

One of the most acclaimed film composers in Japan, known for having scored every feature directed by Miyazaki since *Nausicäa of the Valley of the Wind* as well as seven of Takeshi Kitano's films. He also scored Yojiro Takita's Oscar-winning *Departures* (2008).

Goro MIYAZAKI

Trained and working as a landscape architect, Goro Miyazaki, son of Hayao Miyazaki was initially reluctant to follow in his father's footsteps, until Suzuki brought him in to design the Ghibli Museum in 1998. Also at Suzuki's behest, he directed *Tales from Earthsea* (2006) – despite fierce opposition from his father – as well as *From Up on Poppy Hill* (2011).

THE WIND RISES

The Wind Rises is Hayao Miyazaki's final animated feature. After opening in Japan on July 20, 2013, the film has surpassed 120 billion yen at the box office. Fusing two real-life figures – Jiro Horikoshi and Tatsuo Hori – into one fictional character, the film tells the story of a young man who dreams of building planes, and his relationship to the great love of his life, Nahoko.

THE TALE OF THE PRINCESS KAGUYA

The Tale of The Princess Kaguya is the long-awaited film from Isao Takahata and his first in 14 years. Adapted from the famous Japanese folktale *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*, it tells the story of a mysterious girl – discovered as a baby inside a stalk of bamboo – who turns out to be a princess from the moon. The film was originally announced to open simultaneously with *The Wind Rises*, but its release date was pushed back to November 23, 2013.

How Ghibli Became the Subject of a Documentary Feature

During the summer of 2012, a certain company approached Mami Sunada about creating a documentary about Studio Ghibli. Sunada had just finished working on her first theatrical feature documentary, *Death of a Japanese Salesman*, and was hoping to direct a narrative feature next. According to her, it remains a mystery to this day why she was the one who was approached about this Ghibli-related project, but having grown up watching Ghibli films since her childhood, she considered it an honor and instantly agreed to work on it.

From there, Sunada pitched several different ideas to Ghibli's producer, Toshio Suzuki, but found progress slow to come. She was never given a flat-out "no," but she was continually told, "I don't really understand what you want to do."

As Sunada pored through books after books about Ghibli, re-watched Ghibli films, and listened to people talk about Ghibli, her thoughts gradually changed. She then went back to Suzuki and boldly told him, "What I'd like to do is make a theatrical documentary about Ghibli." The look on Suzuki's face suddenly changed. "I see. Understood," he said as he agreed to the proposal. There had been numerous TV documentaries about Ghibli, but apparently Sunada was the first to suggest a theatrical documentary feature about Ghibli.

Matters progressed quickly after that. By the fall of 2012, filming had begun as Sunada started frequenting Ghibli alone with a camera in hand, day after day. She began filming without a producer on board, until Suzuki introduced her to Dwango's Nobuo Kawakami, who had been apprenticing as a producer at Ghibli.

Thus began Sunada's nearly year-long adventure as she found herself getting a nearly unfettered look at the never-before-seen inner workings of Studio Ghibli.

About the Poster Art

Excerpted from Producer Toshio Suzuki's column in the Chunichi Shimbun newspaper

A film called *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness* will be opening in November. It's directed by Mami Sunada. She's a young filmmaker who earned attention for a film titled *Death of a Japanese Salesman*, in which she follows her father's last days before he succumbs to cancer. She appeared before me one day, asking to make a documentary feature with Ghibli as the subject. Not a TV documentary, but a theatrical movie. What's the difference? I listened to her explanation but couldn't make much sense of it. Figuring I'll understand it in time, I agreed to it.

It's been perhaps just over a year since she showed up. The film is almost finished. It's produced by Dwango's Nobuo Kawakami.

Today I'll write about the film's poster and how it came about. It's already being displayed in theaters, so I'm sure many readers have already seen it. It shows Isao Takahata, Hayao Miyazaki and me seated side by side. Behind us is a large building. If you look closely, it becomes quite obvious that the building is drawn. The sign reads: "Nagomi-sou (Serenity House)". It would appear that the three of us are at a senior home. Look even closer and you'll find that the building is in fact Studio Ghibli's former office. The truth is that this poster art is a prank by Hayao Miyazaki.

While we were in production on *The Wind Rises*, the French photographer Nicolas Guérin visited Ghibli. His career is dedicated to photographing film directors and producers around the world. To be photographed by him is like a stamp of approval.

Miya-san suggested that it would be a good opportunity for the three of us to be photographed together. Indeed, it was true that the three of us had never sat down to have a proper picture taken. Miya-san is never shy about suggesting such things.

Takahata-san and I did as we were told. We gathered at the front gate of Ghibli. It was Miya-san who suggested that the three of us sit there together. Then the question became, who will sit in the middle? I suggested Takahata-san, who's the most senior among us, but somehow I found myself being placed in the middle. The photo session went off without a hitch.

Some time later, the photos arrived from France. There were perhaps five photos included. Miya-san chose the one he liked. Of course, he asked neither me nor Takahata-san for our opinions. Before we knew it, he drafted up a sketch of how we wanted the background and asked the resident art director Noboru Yoshida to draw it. In no time, the background was done. Miya-san wrote the "Nagomi-sou" sign himself.

Miya-san took a pair of scissors and cut the photo himself, placed it on the background and came up with an ad hoc composite. He then taped it to the wall of the producer's office.

People who visited the room peered curiously at this photo. Seeing that, Miya-san couldn't have been more tickled. They say we can always find a peaceful moment even when we're busy, but in Miya-san's case, that moment can turn into something rather elaborate.

When Nobuo Kawakami came to me asking about the poster design, I immediately suggested the photo to him. "It has to be this." Fortunately, Kawakami was thinking the same thing, and agreed.

— *Toshio Suzuki*

International Sales :

wild bunch

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