

STORY

Kosuke, a fashion magazine editor in his mid-30s, revels in the blessings of his comfortable lifestyle. He decides to get back into shape to revive his love life, and asks a friend to introduce him to a young up-and-coming personal trainer named Ryuta.

Ryuta was raised by his mother Taeko, and due to her falling ill during his youth, he was forced to drop out of high school to work. Ever since, he has supported her with his earnings. Kosuke, who lost his mother at a young age, finds himself increasingly drawn to Ryuta, and the two fall in love.

Although their relationship appears to be going from strength to strength, Ryuta is hiding a secret that he can't reveal to Kosuke.

For many years, Ryuta has been working as a male prostitute. It's the only way someone with an inadequate education such as himself can earn a high income.

Falling in love with Kosuke has made it difficult to keep turning tricks, so Ryuta asks to break up with him.

Kosuke doesn't want to give up on Ryuta, so he offers to pay him 100,000 yen (over US\$800) per month to become his exclusive client. Ryuta accepts.

To make up the shortfall in his income, Ryuta works several low-paying jobs. At least now he can tell his mother about how he makes a living, which gives him a newfound sense of fulfillment.

Sadly, that happiness doesn't last long. The strain of Ryuta's work takes its toll, and he suddenly dies. Kosuke feels responsible for Ryuta's death, and collapses in tears at his funeral. To his surprise, Taeko thanks him for everything he did for her son, and confesses that she knew they were lovers.

Kosuke attempts to recover from Ryuta's death by offering to support Taeko financially. She steadfastly refuses, but is worn down by Kosuke's persistence and determination.

However, soon after that, Taeko is diagnosed with terminal cancer. In the little time they have left, she and Kosuke become as close as a real mother and son.



CREW PROFILE

Director: Daishi Matsunaga

Biography

Born in 1974 in Tokyo. Made his directorial debut with “Pyyupiru2001-2008” (2011), a documentary shot over eight years about a friend who is a modern artist with gender identity disorder. It received a Special Mention at that year’s New Horizons International Film Festival, and was also an official selection of the 34th International Film Festival Rotterdam and the 11th Jeonju International Film Festival.

In 2015, he directed his first theatrically-released fiction feature, “Pieta in the Toilet.” It received numerous domestic Best Newcomer awards, including the 56th Directors Guild of Japan’s

New Directors Award, and was also an official selection of the 16th Jeonju International Film Festival’s International Competition, the 28th Tokyo International Film Festival, and the 45th International Film Festival Rotterdam.

His documentary “Vibration: THE YELLOW MONKEY” (2017), following Japanese rock band The Yellow Monkey, was an official selection of the 22nd Busan International Film Festival, and the 30th Tokyo International Film Festival.

In 2018, he participated in the Japan Foundation and Tokyo International Film Festival omnibus project “Asian Three-Fold Mirror 2018: Journey” alongside fellow filmmakers Edwin (Indonesia) and Degena Jun (China).

That same year, he directed an adaptation of author Haruki Murakami’s “Hanalei Bay,” which was an official selection of the 2019 Sofia International Film Festival’s International Competition, and the Hawaii International Film Festival.



Filmography

Pyuupiru2001-2008 / Documentary / 2011

Otokonoko / Short / 2011

Family / Short / 2012

MMA Documentary - HYBRID / Documentary / 2013

GOSPEL / Documentary / 2014

Shi to Koi to Nami to / Short / 2015

Pieta in the Toilet / Feature / 2015

Vibration: THE YELLOW MONKEY / Documentary / 2017

"Canaria" from "Utamonogatari" / Short / 2018

"HEKISHU" from "Asian Three-Fold Mirror 2018: Journey" / Short / 2018

Hanalei Bay / Feature / 2018

"On The Way" from "That Moment, My Heart Cried" / Short / 2019

Pure Japanese / Feature / 2021

STATEMENT

From Director: Daishi Matsunaga

In 2011, I made my directorial debut with a documentary film compiled from footage I took of a gay friend over a period of almost 10 years. Since then, genuine understanding of homosexuality has progressed little in Japan, so I had a desire to one day create a three-dimensional depiction of a fictional homosexual protagonist.

In this film's story, the gay protagonist comes to grips with his own understanding of various forms of love. Generally speaking, terms like "ego" and "self-love" don't have a very good image. However, shouldn't we acknowledge that having love for oneself makes it possible to have love for others? No matter how love comes about, if another person feels that they're loved, I think that's a wonderful thing. In this country where a great deal of importance is placed on how we fit into society, I'd say that valuing one's own happiness and feelings is more important than ever.

松永丈司

From Producer: Naomi Akashi

If someone you love found themselves in a desperate situation, you'd no doubt support them lovingly.

If money or goods could save them, you'd no doubt give them willingly.

After all, you met them and they became part of your life, so what choice do you have?

You love them, so there's no need to make a choice.

They mean the world to you, so there's only one choice to make.

Nevertheless, is that love unconditional? Is it hypocritical?

This film, "Egoist," asks the question: what is love?

Its inspiration is a semi-autobiographical novel by author Makoto Takayama.

Its protagonist Kosuke is gay. Its story focuses on him, his gay lover Ryuta, and their relationships with their mothers.

Kosuke loves Ryuta so much that he showers his lover's mother with the kind of generous affection he was unable to lavish upon his own late mother.

This is a love story, and also a story of love for family.

It weaves together the strength, depth, and preciousness of the bonds we forge, and leads us toward the unclouded forgiveness and salvation that wait beyond it.

I first discovered Mr. Takayama's novel in 2010.

At that time in Japan, LGBT understanding and awareness was still comparatively low, which was partly responsible for the difficulties I experienced while trying to get this film made. It took 12 years before shooting finally commenced.

Sadly, Mr. Takayama passed away in 2020, and was unable to see the completed film.

He had previously made the following statement: "I want this story to convey the message that the concept of family doesn't necessarily have to be limited to definitions dictated by blood and paper (official documents), and I'd also like it to offer hope, even if just in some small way."

Today, diversity has come to be celebrated.

It is my wish that this story will reach as many people as possible, to pass on hope for the future.