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## Wie Mayhem

When the land of the rising sun becons, you do not say *no*. October has become one of the most exciting times not only for the Japanese film industry, but also for the region. It is the time when the Tokyo International Film Festival happens.

This year, 23 to 31 October spelt “mo-oo-oooo-ooo-vie!!”. Opening with Yoji Yamada's “The Hidden Blade” and Steven Spielberg's “The Terminal” closing the festival, the selection of films could not have been more varied and perhaps for some, confusing. On the opening eve, audiences got to watch the highly anticipated and mixed reviewed “2046” by Wong Kar Wai. Still, for those who enjoy a wide palate of films, the 17 th Tokyo International Film Festival proved to be great meeting ground for film enthusiasts and industry players alike.

Visitors this year would have had a worthwhile trip in October because of the number of different activities that were planned for this period. There was the Super Indies Film Festival, Tokyo Internet Movie Festival, Tokyo International Women's Film Festival, Korean Cinema Week, Tokyo Anime Film Festival, Short Shorts Film Festival Asia, Tokyo International Computer Graphics Festival, Tokyo International Fantastic Film Festival, Tokyo Content Market, Tokyo Asia Music Market and more.

My trip was layered with visits to the National Film Centre, meeting the team of the Pia Film Festival and sharing with others information on the Singapore film industry at the Waseda University. The Japan Foundation had organised a trip for 10 Southeast Asian film-related representatives on a cultural exchange platform that allowed us to not only see what Japan's film industry had to offer but also, a wonderful opportunity to meet and learn about the other Southeast Asian countries' offerings in relation to film. A lot of dialogue happened within the 13 days and it built a sense of community within the different countries and the recognised effort to work together even more than we had.

### Waseda University

Back at the festival, a nice selection of Asian films were showcased. In the Winds of Asia selection, Malaysia's “The Beautiful Washing Machine” (Dir: James Lee) and horror ‘omnibus’ 4-directors film, “Visits” impressed. Making its presence was also Thailand's multiple-director commercial hit “My Girl”. Another multi-director film was Korea's “Twentidentity” where 20 directors come together with short films to mark the 20 th anniversary of the Korean Academy of Film Arts. Hong Kong's animated McDull movies also played to the delight of audiences. A film festival go-er would be spoilt for choice.

Some of the most anticipated films in competition must have been Bharatbala's “Hari Om”, Juan Pablo Rebella and Pablo Stoll's “Whisky”, Eiji Okuda's “Runin – Banished” and Kenneth Bi's “Dico Phengeddy”. “Whisky” of course walked away with the top Grand Prix Award. The

BIS “Rice Rhapsody”. “Whisky” of course walked away with the top Grand Prix Award. The well-deserved Award for Best Performance by an Actor in Leading Role went to Olhzas Nusuppaev for “Schizo” (Dir: Guka Omarova) and the Lead Actress Award went to Mirella Pascual for her performance in “Whisky”.

Rice Rhapsody's cast and crew

While the big films were the highlight of the festival, it was the showcase of small gems that made the festival prove its curating worth. With Hollywood commercial films such as “Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement” (Dir: Garry Marshall) playing next to “Somersault” (Dir: Cate Shortland), there was bound to be a huge mix of audiences attending the festival. To name a few, the films that stayed with me were “Schizo” (Dir: Guka Omarova), “The Life and Death of Peter Sellers” (Dir: Stephen Hopkins), and the animated feature “Howl's Moving Castle” (Dir: Hayso Miyasaki) – all of which resonate for different reasons and could not be more different from each other. That is the multi-dimensional experience of the Tokyo International Film Festival.

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Website for the Japan Foundation: [www.jpf.go.jp](http://www.jpf.go.jp)

Website for the Tokyo International Film Festival: [www.tiff-jp.net](http://www.tiff-jp.net)

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