

# HAF 12 Our Apprenticeship

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Japan

**GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:** Drama | Digital Format | English | 90 mins

**DIRECTOR:**

HAMAGUCHI Ryusuke

**PRODUCER:**

YAMAMOTO Teruhisa

**HAF GOALS:**

Funds, Pre-sales

**BUDGET:**

US\$ 1,300,000

**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

2018 *Asako I & II*

2015 *Happy Hour*

2013 *Touching the Skin of Eeriness*

2010 *The Depths*

2008 *Passion*

**ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS**

Once an idol, a Japanese girl studies abroad at a theatre school in Paris, where she gains new values and energy for her future through meeting people from different backgrounds.

**SYNOPSIS**

Naomi must escape her reputation as an idol when her relationship with a popular actor is revealed. She decides to leave Japan and study abroad at a French drama school, staying at the home of a French teacher, Beatrice. At the school, she became friends with Pierre and Jean, a French gay couple, Tahim from Syria, Marry from Belgium, and a South Korean actress, Soni. The group of friends adopts one policy: "To speak in their own languages." They learn each other's languages and different values as their bonds get tighter. One day, however, Pierre and Jean fight when Jean asks Naomi on a date. Tahim also makes his move on Naomi, and Marry gets hurt since she is in love with Tahim. Naomi feels as if she has broken their relationships and decides to go back to Japan. The day Naomi leaves, Beatrice consoles her gently. At the airport, only Soni comes to see her off. Naomi says to Soni, "I always liked you, but was scared to tell you." Soni holds Naomi's hands and says, "Sorry to make you say that, I like you very much, too." They both smile, hug, and the film ends.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film tells a story of love and friendships that also shows that these might be only ways to change one's viewpoint radically but gently. Although to love someone is a very natural everyday emotion, it has the potential for changing our social system at the same time. In Japan, nontraditional sexual orientations are still oppressed since they might actually undermine the patriarchal or male-dominant system of Japanese society. In this film, while the narrative structure follows the typical adolescent romance framework, the characters who have different backgrounds cross many boundaries of nationalities and genders in a very natural, or casual manner. This film, as a typical adolescent romance movie, will make the audience empathize with the various characters and that empathy will foster the power to resist and undermine the value of the people who fear getting along with the others. I myself would like to become more aware of my own unchallenged assumptions by working and communicating with young, diverse actors. This learning will permeate the film itself: I am looking forward to this opportunity.

## DIRECTOR

### HAMAGUCHI Ryusuke

Born 1978 in Kanagawa, Japan. His graduation film, *Passion* (2008) was selected for the 2008 San Sebastian Film Festival. With Ko Sakai, he made a three-part documentary: *Sound Of Waves* and *Voices From The Waves* show survivors of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, while *Storytellers* is about a folktale in Tohoku. In 2015, he made the 5-hours-17-minutes *Happy Hour*, starring 4 non-professional actresses who participated in his acting workshop; it won Best Actress at the Locarno Film Festival. His newest film, *Asako I & II* was selected for the competition at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival.

## PRODUCER

### YAMAMOTO Teruhisa

Born in 1981, Hyogo, Japan. After graduating from the Japan Institute of the Moving Image, he first worked at Toho Studio and then joined C&I Entertainment Co., Ltd. (former IMJ Entertainment Co., Ltd.). There he produced the TV series *Takayuki Yamada's Festival de Cannes* and the feature film *Birds Without Names* (2017) with the actress Yu Aoi and the actor Sadao Abe. In 2018, he produced *Asako I & II* (2018) with the actor Higashide Masahiro and the director Hamaguchi Ryusuke; it was selected for competition at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival.

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

### **C&I Entertainment Co., Ltd.**

Established in 2000 as the imaging division of IMJ Corporation, it became the entertainment division in 2001 and the independent IMJ Entertainment Inc. in 2003. Studio Swan Co., Ltd., a consolidated subsidiary established in 2005, merged with it in 2008. In 2011, the company changed its name to C&I Entertainment Co., Ltd. and added new shareholders before becoming a subsidiary of Culture Entertainment Co., Ltd. by organization reorganization in 2014. Among its major works are *Josee, the Tiger and the Fish* (2003), *Nana* (2005), *The Floating Castle* (2012) and *Rurouni Kenshin* (2012) and others.