



# NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

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## DIGITAL HOLLYWOOD UNIVERSITY PARTNERS MPA TO HOST FIRST TOKYO FILM WORKSHOP

**TOKYO/SINGAPORE:** On October 20, emerging Japanese filmmakers participated in a film workshop and pitching competition developed by the Motion Picture Association (MPA) in partnership with Digital Hollywood University (DHU), held alongside the 26<sup>th</sup> Tokyo International Film Festival 2013.

The program featured a series of lectures on script development, particularly for feature films catering to an international audience, along with script mentoring sessions and a feature film pitch competition. Ira Deutchman, Managing Partner of Emerging Pictures, Professor of Professional Practice in the School of the Arts, Columbia University, and Chair of the Film Program, kicked off the workshop with a masterclass on writing, developing and marketing independent films for an international audience.

Deutchman's wide-ranging presentation was followed by a panel discussion on developing a script from the writer, director and producer point of view where Deutchman was joined by filmmakers Maryam Ebrahimi (producer of *No Burqas Behind Bars*), Takehiko Shinjo (director of *Heavenly Forest* and *Beyond the Memories*) and Kasumi Yao (producer of *Beyond the Memories* and *Sue, Mai & Sawa: Righting the Girl Ship*).

In the afternoon, Takeo Hisamatsu, Vice President of Warner Bros. Movies Japan, presented how Warner Bros. selects scripts where they develop and produce as local productions. The filmmakers then joined lecturers in an intensive screenwriting coaching session to discuss techniques and best practice for presenting feature film ideas. Eight finalists were chosen from amongst 128 submissions in a film pitch competition.

The judges unanimously agreed on awarding first place to filmmaker Ryuhei Osako, who presented his project *Tokijoro*, about a man who begins to reveal his true identity as a woman by performing traditional Japanese theatre as a prisoner of war on the island of Okinawa during the Second World War. Osako will travel to Los Angeles to participate in a comprehensive five-day film immersion program.

Ira Deutchman said, "I've been participating in these film workshops for many years, and they are always fulfilling experiences. This is the first for Japan, and Digital Hollywood University is a perfect partner for this type of event. Japanese film has always fascinated me and it's stimulating to see the way young Japanese filmmakers are approaching their craft. The pitching competition really does put people in the spotlight, and as well as helping to develop their presentation skills, it helps the filmmaker think clearly about the core focus of their film and what the project needs to develop further. There are some exciting new voices in Japanese

cinema, and perhaps some of these filmmakers we worked with during the workshop will establish themselves in the future. I look forward to next year when we can do it all again.”

Tomoyuki Sugiyama, President, Digital Hollywood University, said, “I would like to thank the MPA for designing this workshop program with us and giving some of Tokyo’s talented emerging filmmakers the chance to share their special film projects with established industry representatives and for the lucky winner, visit Los Angeles for a film immersion course – which is very exciting. I think this type of exchange is a great idea.”

Given the high quality of the feature film pitch presentations in Tokyo, Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director Asia Pacific, MPA, and co-host of the film workshop, announced a President’s Special Recognition Prize to Takuma Kohara for his film *The Old Rapper* that will see him attend the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in Brisbane, Australia, next year.

Speaking at the event, Mike Ellis said, “Thanks again to DHU for their partnership in this terrific event. There’s no better place for bringing talented Japanese filmmakers together to share ideas, improve their projects and consider ways of extending the reach of their audience. Thanks also to our Japanese guests and international speakers who committed their valuable time and passed on to the participants a vast amount of useful knowledge and experience. The Tokyo International Film Festival is a great backdrop to this workshop and we look forward to being here and developing our program in years to come.”

The MPA Asia Pacific has hosted film workshops since 2006, providing opportunities for emerging filmmakers to kick-start their careers. In the last 12 months, the MPA has conducted film workshops in Beijing, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Busan.

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#### **About the MPA:**

##### *Promoting & Protecting Screen Communities in Asia Pacific*

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore. For more information about the MPA and the MPA-I, please visit [www.mpa-i.org](http://www.mpa-i.org).

#### ***For more information, please contact***

*Stephen Jenner  
MPA Asia-Pacific  
(65) 6253 1033*

*June Tan*  
*MPA Asia-Pacific*  
*(65) 6253 1033*