

Mongrel Media

Presents

# HUSH!

A film by HASHIGUCHI Ryosuke

Official Selection, Director's Fortnight  
Cannes Film Festival 2001

Japan/ 2001/ 135 min./ In Japanese with English subtitles

Distribution

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# **HUSH! – Synopsis**

Naoya is busy leading his modern, self-centered life as a gay man, but has a nagging suspicion that something is missing from his world. Suddenly, he meets and falls in love with a man named Katsuhiko and the two begin seeing one another. When a woman named Asako appears on the scene and proposes that she and Katsuhiko conceive a child together, Naoya opposes the idea. Naoya becomes increasingly irritated with Katsuhiko who has been concealing his homosexuality and refuses to make any concrete decisions. While struggling to untangle themselves from the situation and the mess of emotions that it has wrought, Katsuhiko's brother and sister-in-law arrive for a visit. His sister-in-law has become obsessed with the division of the family's property and when she learns of the relationship between Asako and Katsuhiko she'll do everything she can to end it. As Naoya, Katsuhiko and Asako struggle along they eventually come to the realization that they will have to decide for themselves the true meaning of family.

# HUSH! – Cast and Crew

Naoya  
Katsuihiro  
Asako

TAKAHASHI Kazuya  
TANABE Seiichi  
KATAOKA Reiko

Director  
Producer  
Screenplay  
Director of Photography  
Editor  
Lighting  
Sound  
Production Design  
Music

HASHIGUCHI Ryosuke  
YAMAGAMI Tetsujiro  
HASHIGUCHI Ryosuke  
UENO Shogo  
HASHIGUCHI Ryosuke  
YABE Kazuo  
TAKAHASHI Yoshiteru  
OGAWA Fumio  
Bobby McFerrin

# HUSH! – Director’s Bio and Filmography

Born in 1962 in Nagasaki, Japan, Hashiguchi Ryosuke began shooting *Sper-8* in high school. While studying film at Osaka Arts University, he gained a reputation for his documentary-like style, which focused on the realistic portrayal of his characters. His 1989 film, *The Secret of Last Night*, won the Pia Film Festival Grand Prize. Hashiguchi dropped out of university and worked as a director of TV programs and videos, and wrote the screenplay for *A Touch of Fever*. The film was released in Japan in 1993 and was a record hit in the theatre where it was shown. The film was invited to the Berlin Film Festival Young Forum and was screened at more than 25 festivals around the world. His film, *Like Grains of Sand*, won grand prizes at the Rotterdam and Dunkirk Film Festivals, as well as at the Turin Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. Hashiguchi has also written novels and essays, TV and film scripts, and recently performed in a TV drama.

- 1989 *The Secret of Last Night (Yube no Himitsu)*
- 1992 *A Touch of Fever (Hatachi no Binetsu)*
- 1995 *Like Grains of Sand (Nagisa no Shindobaddo)*
- 2001 *Hush!*

## Producer’s Bio

Born in 1954 in Kumamoto, Japan, Yamagami Tetsujiro began working for Seirinsha in 1981, and began producing films. He established Siglo Ltd. in 1986 as president and producer. He has produced and distributed 40 feature-length films to date. Among them are *Uminchu – the Old Man and the East China Sea* (directed by John Junkerman; Grand Prix at the New England Film Festival), *The River With No Bridge* and *Village of Dreams* (both directed by Higashi Yoichi). *Village of Dreams* won a Silver Bear Prize at the 46<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival, Grand Prix at the film festivals of Ghent Flanders and Amiens, and over 20 other awards at festivals around the world. Yamagami recently produced *The Crossing* (directed by Higashi Yoichi), which premiered at the 50<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival ‘Panorama Special’ program. Apart from his work as a producer, Yamagami directed *Jakupa – Birth of an Artist* in 1993, and recently wrote the story for *The Crossing*.

# HUSH! – Director’s Statement

People experience a number of beginnings in the course of their lives. For some it is graduating from school, for others, getting a job, marriage, giving birth or the death of a loved one. At these times, though the self may still be unsteady and driven by uncertainty, people find a way to come to terms with reality, pull their emotions together and find new hope to guide their lives.

This film tells the story of a woman and two gay men in their 30’s who find a new beginning from a state of despair. The woman has sought love from people too intensely, and has harmed herself and others in the process. She wonders if she is flawed as a human, if she is incapable of having a good relationship. The two men are gay. One accepted the fact that he was gay in his teens and ever since has been living an openly gay life to the fullest. He is not unhappy with his present lifestyle but he does feel somehow unfulfilled. The other man has concealed his homosexuality. It is not that he is ashamed, he knows he cannot change who he is and he is fully aware that he has got to get along with his inner self, but he cannot fully free himself from his feelings of guilt.

The three see themselves as units of 1, and they have given up hope of ever becoming a part of a unit of 2 or of 3. No one freely chooses to live a life of solitude, without hope or human warmth. Even these three, somewhere in their hearts feel a desire to be a part of a 2 or a 3. And they have in the past experienced being part of a 2 or a 3. The pain of losing that happiness has left them timid. They don’t want to suffer unnecessary pain and sadness again. Perhaps they have lost the courage to step into the wilderness.

My previous film, *Like Grains of Sand*, portrayed the time of teenagers. Beyond the last scene of that film lay the time of adults. To me, when my youth had passed, the world called adult time stretched before me like a wilderness. The wasteland extended forever, without a home in sight. It seemed pointless to walk, there was nothing there. But still, I had to begin walking. And I had to dream of coming across someone and the moment when we would smile and say, “I finally found you”.

Nowadays when you turn on the TV, there is nothing but the worst news. One might even think that it wouldn’t be surprising if the world were destroyed. But somewhere in this world filled with the worst, something most beautiful also exists. It’s simply that there are so many awful things that it’s become hard to see.

In this film I want to capture that most beautiful something, or something that lets us believe that it certainly exists. And I want to portray the three main characters finding the courage to walk in the wilderness and once again restart their lives.

For me, at 38, I also think courage is the only thing that will carry me through the rest of my life.

HASHIGUCHI Ryosuke  
Tokyo, 2000

