

Japanese indie drama â??Ken and Kazuâ?? depicts the wages of dealing drugs

Description

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Call it timely coincidence.

The indie crime drama, â??Ken and Kazu,â?• one of the highlights of the 2016 Eiga Sai, the annual Japanese film festival mounted by Japan Foundation Manila, brings to mind the spate of extrajudicial killings of suspected drug pushers that followed Philippine President Rodrigo Duterteâ??s declaration of war on drugs.

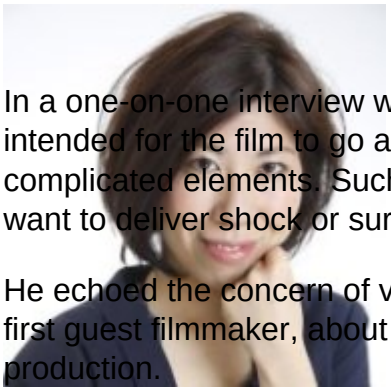


A story about drug dealersâ??that breed of people our chief executive is most allergic toâ??the film was screened Saturday night (Aug. 6) at a packed Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), during the Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival.

Film creator Hiroshi Shoji and line producer Yumi Honda flew to Manila to grace the event. They were also guests of honor at the Cinemalaya opening on Friday (Aug. 5).This yearâ??s alliance between



vs a crossover of films between the two festivals but has also to a larger audience.



In a one-on-one interview with Inquirer Lifestyle at Hotel Jen on Roxas Boulevard, Shoji said he intended for the film to go against the grain and develop a narrative that did not need bombastic or complicated elements. Such practices, he explained, were a recent trend in Japan whose filmmakers want to deliver shock or surprise.

He echoed the concern of veteran director-screenwriter Masato Harada, this yearâ??s Eiga Saiâ??s first guest filmmaker, about the dearth of original material that actually gets the green light for production.

A graduate of Tokyo Film Center School of Arts, the 30-year-old Shoji wrote, produced, directed and edited â??Ken and Kazu,â?• based on the short film he made in 2011 of the same title. He has had 10 short films, some of which have attracted the attention of Japanese film fests/award-giving bodies.

At the 2015 Tokyo International Film Festival, the full-length version won the Japanese Cinema Splash divisionâ??s Best Picture Award, a prestigious honor that comes with a cash prize of one million yen bestowed on Japanese indie films.

Shoji landed a distributor in Japan afterward, allowing â??Ken and Kazuâ?• regular screenings in a Tokyo cinema. He and Honda, who also interprets for him, have been touring the festival circuit to gain exposure for the film outside their country. Critics have praised Shojiâ??s work for its gritty depiction of gun-less violence and brutality,as well as for strong character development and acting chemistry.

The titular characters initially come off as just a pair of deceitful lowlifes who serve the yakuza. Yet, behind the thuggery and meth-pimping, Ken and Kazu are complex human beingsâ??one hoping to provide for his lover and unborn child, the other seeking better care for a mom who suffers from dementia.
Hereâ??s a tragic tale that finds a way to flesh out the humanity even in the worst possible kind of individualsâ??a stark contrast to the state of our nation, where â??cardboard justiceâ?• is meted out even unto those who have yet to be proven guilty.
(Source: http://www.inquirer.net)

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1. #tiffjp
2. Tokyo International Film Festival

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