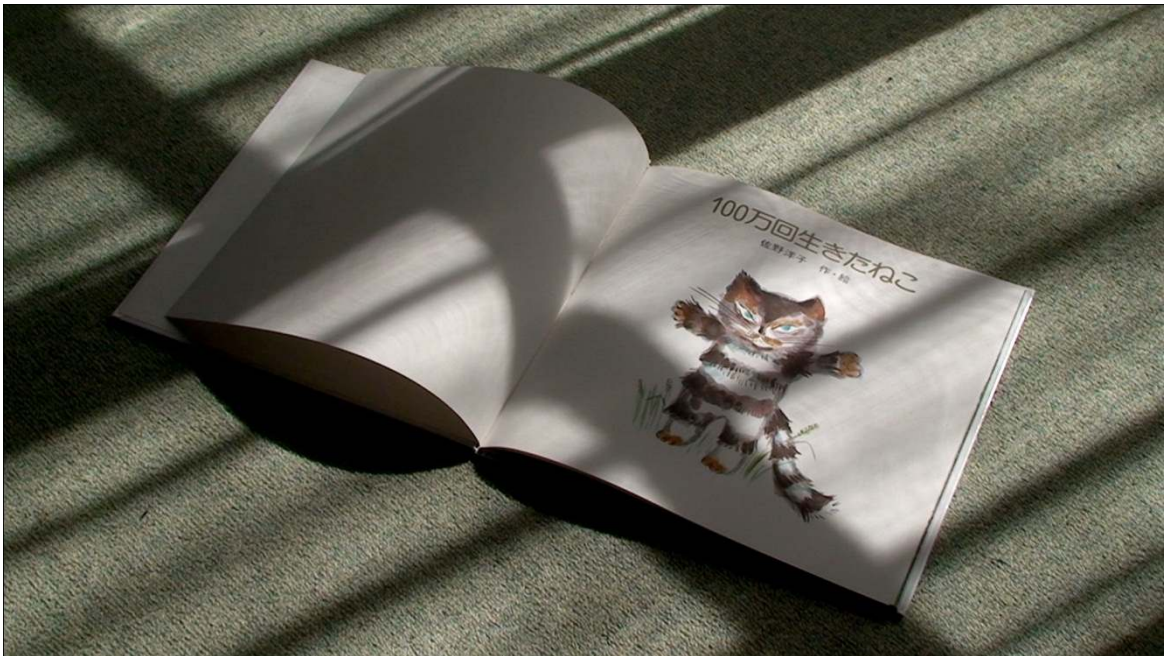


Documentary Film

The cat that lived a million times

(2012 / Japan / 91 min / HDV / Documentary)

Director : KOTANI Tadasuke



【 Contact Info 】

Producer : OSAWA Kazuo

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【 Director's Intention 】

In 2008, Yoko Sano, a picture novelist, announced in her autobiography that she got cancer. When I read it I was seized with the impulse to meet with her.

"I let you make a film about me if my image will not appear on." was her word when I first visited her. About one year has passed since then and I have done nothing but broken myself into pieces in front of "simple" Yoko. Looking back and thinking, I didn't pity her nor wanted to encourage her to fight against cancer...I just wanted to break my fixed ideas. There has been a tendency that people consider death as a negative thing, though I'd rather oppose it. Having said that, I might have admitted that death is negative.

Yoko has broken "myths" based on Japanese humanism or social justice after the war by creating picture novels about life-after-death of her young brothers, father and mother with whom relationship was difficult. Meeting with such a person for a year has made me confused and felt myself being broken. After the destruction, the next step is regeneration. One of Yoko's famous novels "The cat with a million lives" was published in 1977 and I was born in this year. My mother used to read it for me. The story about death and life of the cat was very scaring to me. It clearly showed that every living thing will die.

I visited various people to collect their life-after-death stories along with interviewing Yoko. A person who suffers from Gender Identity Disorder, a woman had a stillborn baby, a girl doesn't know who are her parents, a woman visiting her uncle who suffers from cancer, a woman receiving artificial insemination therapy many times, wife of an artist who has been in a coma and widow and her children living in the house with pictures of her late husband everywhere and etc.

Through talking with these people, I collected the life-after-death to shoot this film. This film is the process of the destruction and reproduction of a movie director through the picture novelist Yoko Sano and her readers.



【 Synopsis 】

Yoko Sano, picture novelist and essayist, is 70 years old now. She was diagnosed cancer and told her days were numbered. Now she is cherishing her days. Days without big adventure, days just ordinary. Her most well-known piece “The cat with a million lives” is published 33 years ago.

The novel with the great insight of love and life based on her view is still popular in Japan and has penetrated each reader’ The camera captured the image of the people who read it out and talk about the life and death and Yoko whose days are numbered. They are connected only by the picture novel.

The camera tried to find a sign of Yoko’ final destination and her existing life in Tokyo, and Beijing where Yoko has been.

This film aims to show the life, death and love through the symbolic picture novel.

【 Project Status 】

2009/6 Meeting with Yoko Sano first time : Start meeting with Sano twice or third times a month.

(Start recording our conversation between Sano & Director)

2009/8 Start meeting with the readers of “The cat that lives a million times”

(20 people are already filmed until now)

2009/9 Sano got difficult to walk with her cancer. Start visiting to the hospital and continue recording the conversation between Sano & Director.

2009/11 Start filming the places which Sano lived in Japan.

(Gumma, Yamanashi, Shizuoka)

2009/12 Start filming the places which Sano lived in abroad.

(Milan, Italy : Germany, Berlin)

2010/11 Yoko Sano passes away.

2011/6 Yoko Sano`s birth place photography in Beijing.

2012/6 Completion.



【 Project Proposal 】

○“The cat that lived a million times” (Published by Kodan-sha)

This is the original Japanese edition of a well known picture book that tells the "tail" of a cat who...lived a million times. A touching portrait of one cat's lives and deaths, owners and lovers.

○Story

There was a cat who died a million times, and came back to life a million times. During all these lifetimes, he never loved anyone. But one day, he falls in love with a white cat. Loved by generations of readers, this picture book questions the meaning of life.

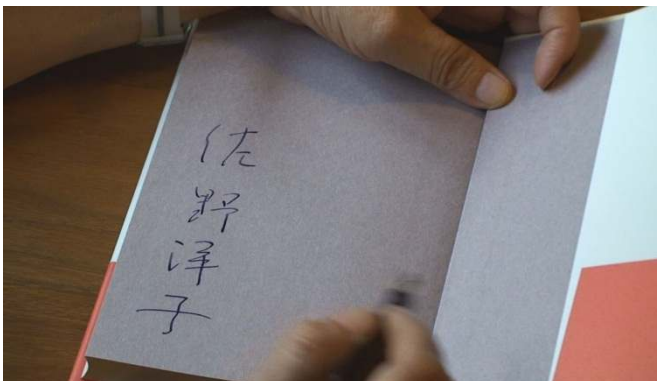


○Yoko Sano

Sano was born in Beijing in 1938. When she was 9 years old, she lost her elder brother, and this experience formed a strong impression about life and death that would become the cornerstone of her later work.

In 1967-1968, Sano attended Berlin's University of the Arts to study lithography. Then, she entered the world of picture books. Her works include, "Uncle's Umbrella" chosen as a recommended book by the Sankei Award for Children's Books & Publications in 1975, "The cat with a million lives" in 1977, "My Hat" which won The Kodansha Award for Picture Books in 1978,

"When I Was A Younger Sister" which won the 1st Niimi Nankichi Children's Literature Prize in 1983, and "Hey, Dad" which won the Japan Picture Award and the Shogakukan Award for Children's Literature in 2002.



【 Biography / Filmography of Director and Producer 】

○ Biography of the director

KOTANI Tadasuke is born in 1977 in Osaka prefecture of Japan. He graduated from the Visual Arts College Osaka. Since the graduation from the college, he started to teach the film making at Visual Arts College Osaka. And now, he is a free director.



○ Filmography

“**Lullaby**” (2002/60min)

: Runner-up prize in the competition of the Kyoto International Student film & video Festival: Japan

“**Good girl**” (2006/118min)

: Invited work of the 28th PIA FILM FESTIVAL : Japan

“**LINE**” (2008/52min)

: Invited to a Tokyo special screening on the Yamagata International documentary movie side : Japan

: Selected film for the Punto de Vista Film Festival : Spain

: Selected film for the Kassel Film & Video Festival : Germany

: Selected for the cult award by the Torino Film Festival : Italy

: Invited to a Nippno Koma Film Festival : Portugal

○ Biography of the producer

OSAWA Kazuo was born in 1975 Tokyo. After graduate the medical University, he starts study film making at the “Nihon Eiga Gakkou” . After graduate, Start producing the independent films. “The Duckling” (05,directed by Sayaka Ono) producing and Editing “BACK DROP KURDISTAN” (07, directed by Masaru Nomoto)producing, camera, editing.Now, he got some projects and doing distributing & publicity also.

○ Filmography

“**The Duckling**” (2005/92min)

: Shadow Documentary Film Festival : Holland

: HOT DOCS International Documentary Film festival : Canada

“**Back Drop Kurdistan**” (2007/100min)

: Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival'07 [encouragement prize • Citizen prize] : Japan

: Mainichi Film Contest [Documentary prize] : Japan

: Vision de Reel International Documentary Film Festival: Switzerland

: South Taiwan International Film Festival : Taiwan

: VIGPR International Film Festival : India

“**Tadaina Sorezoreno Ibasho**” (2010/85min)

“**September 11**”(2010/75min)

“**Never let me go**”(2011/85min)

: Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival'11 : Japan



【The cat that lived a million times】
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Director, Photographer: Kotani Tadasuke

Assistant Director: Kensuke Tsutsumi

Lighting: Ito Kaori

Sounding: Osawa Kazuo / Kensuke Tsutsumi

Composition : Osawa Kazuo

Editor: Tsujii Kiyoshi

Voicing: Ogawa Takeshi

Music: Cornelius

Production assistance: Mitsunari Naho

Producer: Osawa Kazuo, Kase Shuuichi, Kinoshita Shigeki.

Theme song: Sleep Warm (Cornelius)

Production: nondelaico,contrail,TOFUU

Performance: Sano Yoko, Watanabe Makiko, Feng Yan

All readers of “The cat that lived a million lives”.