

Left Handed BF-2009



Hikikomori is a typically Japanese phenomenon: a sufferer doesn't come out of his room any more. Like the schoolboy Hiroshi who destroyed his family in this way. Japanese are ashamed of it and asked a British director, who made a beautiful feature in black-and-white about it. Sharp yet sensitive.

A British debutant director shoots a film in Japan with a cast of amateurs. And the film is shot in black-and-white. On paper that looks like a risky and obscure experiment, but the result is wonderfully controlled and balanced, like the work of an experienced Japanese director from a past generation.

The protagonist is the schoolboy Hiroshi, although he's not on screen much. He suffers from the typically Japanese phenomenon of *hikikomori*, which primarily affects boys. It stands for a total withdrawal from social life. The family takes care of the victim, but shame makes them keep silent about the situation, that can last few years. In Japan, 1 million kids suffer from this mysterious psychological condition.

The film maker meticulously reveals the effect of the illness on Hiroshi's surroundings, but wisely does not enter his room, so that the boy's behaviour remains a puzzle. You could say that the real protagonist of the film is Yoshiko, the boy's mother. It's also her life that is completely destroyed, even though she continues to pretend to the outside world that everything is normal.

It seems an obvious conclusion that Takao Saiki, a Japanese producer with a company in Los Angeles, conceived the East-West construction of the film. It worked out well. The foreign film maker tackled the sensitive Japanese problem cautiously but without shame.

(GjZ)

JAPAN 2008

Director [Laurence Thrush](#)
Producer Takao Saiki
Scenario Laurence Thrush
Cast Kenta Negishi
Masako Innam
Takeshi Furusawa
Kento Oguri
Photography Gary Young
Editor Laurence Thrush
Art design Diane J Kami
Length 110'

0 votes



THEMES

2009 [Bright Future](#)

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SCREENINGS

Pathé 2	Fri 23 Jan	13:30
Pathé 6 *	Sun 25 Jan	13:30
Lantaren 2	Tue 27 Jan	22:30

* There are online no more tickets available for this screening

COMMENTS

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