

Format: Color, 1.85:1, 122 minutes

Release in Japan: August 2, 2008

Presented by: Nippon Television Network and Production I.G

Based on the novel by: MORI Hiroshi

(published in Japan by Chuokoron-Shinsha)

Screenplay: Chihiro Ito (SPRING SNOW)

Music: Kenji Kawai (GHOST IN THE SHELL, INNOCENCE, THE RING, DEATH NOTE)

Chief Executive Producers: Seiji Okuda, Mitsuhsa Ishikawa

Director: Mamoru Oshii (GHOST IN THE SHELL, INNOCENCE, AVALON)

Animation Director: Toshihiko Nishikubo (GHOST IN THE SHELL, INNOCENCE)

Character Designer/Key Animation Director: Tetsuya Nishio

(JIN-ROH, NARUTO, GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX)

Mechanic Designer: Atsushi Takeuchi

(GHOST IN THE SHELL, INNOCENCE, IGPX)

Art Director: Kazuo Nagai (EUREKA SEVEN)

Layout/Art Settings: Takashi Watabe

(JIN-ROH, VAMPIRE HUNTER D: BLOODLUST, INNOCENCE, GHOST IN THE SHELL)

Color Designer: Kumiko Yusa

(PATLABOR 2: THE MOVIE, GHOST IN THE SHELL, INNOCENCE)

Visual Effects: Hisashi Ezura (INNOCENCE, BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE)

CGI Supervisor: Hiroyuki Hayashi (INNOCENCE, AVALON, SHINOBI)

CGI Production: Polygon Pictures (INNOCENCE)

Sound Director: Kazuhiro Wakabayashi (INNOCENCE)

Sound Design: Randy Thom (Skywalker Sound) (INNOCENCE, THE INCREDIBLES, HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE) and Tom Myers (Skywalker Sound) (STAR WARS: EPISODE III - REVENGE OF THE SITH, CARS, ARMAGEDDON)

Line Producer: Toru Kawaguchi (INNOCENCE, GHOST HOUND, xxxHOLiC)

Producer: Tomohiko Ishii (INNOCENCE, HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE, TALES FROM EARTHSEA)

Animation Production: Production I.G

Established by Mitsuhsa Ishikawa in 1987, Production I.G is one of the world's leading animation studios. With its cutting-edge works, such as GHOST IN THE SHELL (1995), JIN-ROH (2000), BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE (2000), KILL BILL: VOL. 1 (animation segment, 2003) and INNOCENCE (2004), I.G has gained high reputation around the globe, inspiring Hollywood creators such as James Cameron, Quentin Tarantino and the Wachowski brothers.

Official Website: <http://www.production-ig.com>

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PRODUCTION I.G

NTV
NIPPON TELEVISION NETWORK

Present

スカイ・クロラ The Sky Crawlers

Directed by Mamoru Oshii

65
VENEZIA 2008
Competition

TORONTO
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION
2008

*Somewhere, in a country similar to ours
There are children who do not become adults
They are very similar to us*



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THE GREATEST LOVE STORY EVER BY MAMORU OSHII

The story takes place in another possible ‘now’ - a world that has eradicated war and finally attained peace. However, this prolonged state of peace created demand for a new kind of war. A conflict happening elsewhere, that could be seen on TV or read in the papers - in order to get a feeling of reality.

Private war contractors enlist fighter pilots to perform their services in an endless “war as entertainment.” They call these pilots Kildren. Innocent-looking teenagers in appearance, Kildren never age into adulthood, and live in a state of eternal adolescence until the day they drift gracefully through the endless skies.

One day, pilot Yuichi Kannami arrives to his newly assigned airbase. He has only vague memory of his past. The only two things he recalls are that he is a Kildren and how to operate a fighter plane.

A woman is keeping an eye on Yuichi. She is Suito Kusanagi, the base commander. A Kildren herself, Suito behaves as if she’s been waiting to meet Yuichi for a long time. Perplexed, Yuichi is nevertheless gradually attracted by her.

All pilots at the base have to confront the most invincible enemy ace, known as Teacher. His trademark is a black jaguar painted on the nose of his plane. It is said that if you run into him up in the sky, you don’t come back to tell your friends.

Who really is Teacher? What does Suito know about Yuichi’s past? What are the secrets behind the Kildren?



THE WORLD-ACCLAIMED ANIMATION AUTEUR MAMORU OSHII BRINGS HIS LATEST MASTERPIECE TO LIGHT...

Born in Tokyo in 1951, Mamoru Oshii has changed the image of Japanese animation worldwide with his epoch-making GHOST IN THE SHELL that topped the Billboard video chart in 1996. The movie greatly influenced many filmmakers such as James Cameron and the Wachowski brothers. In 2004, Oshii made history again with GHOST IN THE SHELL 2: INNOCENCE, the first Japanese animation feature film ever to be nominated for the Palme d’Or at the Festival de Cannes.

With his most anticipated animation film, THE SKY CRAWLERS, Oshii moved on from his former filmmaking to a new style, while continuing to collaborate with Production I.G, the most cutting-edge anime studio behind GHOST IN THE SHELL and KILL BILL: VOL. 1 (animation segment).

The story is based on a best-selling 6-volume novel written by MORI Hiroshi, an amazingly prolific writer whose books sold over 10 million copies in Japan alone.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR MAMORU OSHII

«I have a message for the younger generation.»

I turned 56 this year. I am at an age where I am neither too young nor too old to direct a film. Although I still have lots of what I want to experience and accomplish, in societal terms, I could be described as in my «prime years.» I sometimes feel aware of my age especially when I’m surrounded by staff that is much younger than me, or when I’m face to face with my daughter, who is no longer a child.

Consequently I’ve thought about these issues in my role as a filmmaker. I felt urged to give a message to the younger generation. In our peaceful country, there is no more starvation, revolution, or war. We have a society where we can live out our allotted spans of lives without ever having to feel deprived of food, clothing, or shelter. Ironically, I am unsure as to whether this is a good thing. Once I read the story of a man who climbed the skies and reached Heaven, but got bored after a few days. We are animals, whose true natures come out the moment we possess what we desire.

Isn’t this comfortable life that we have achieved, a monotonous purgatory that doesn’t end until we die? Perhaps the current society is the essential reason to all the painful crimes happening among the young adults today. Parents killing their own children. Children killing their own parents. Children killing themselves. And all for incomprehensible reasons.

The young people who choose not to work after leaving school and don’t pursue employment. Others who make a bare existence as «temporary employees.» The girls who hang out on shopping malls and the boy who killed his parent... Adults give bad names to these kids as if they were some kind of plague. In these times, we should be listening to them. So I think about what kind of message would penetrate their shriveled heart.

The protagonists of THE SKY CRAWLERS are children destined to live forever. They are known as Kildren. Their life spans continue indefinitely in a state of eternal adolescence. It is not because they can’t become adults. It’s because they do not.

The story is set on another possible, alternative ‘now’. Here, Kildren fight in a “war as a show” organized and operated by adults, a situation that can be considered a mirror image of our modern society. Today’s children may not know what to do with their futures, which seems indefinite and everlasting to them. Perhaps the offspring of modern consumerism, they are aware that there’s no need to become adults. Couldn’t we say that they are destined to live their entire life as children?

At the climax of the movie, we hear a monologue by the main character, Yuichi:

«But today is different from yesterday
And tomorrow is different from today
You can change the side of the road that you walk
down every day.
Even if the road is the same, you can still see new things.»

This is the theme of the movie and my message to the youngsters. Even if you had eternal life, your yesterday would be different from your today. Rustling of the trees, smell of the wind, warmth of a person next to you – all of which may be subtle, but these are the proofs that you’re alive. If you look at our world this way, the place we are living in is not so bad at all. Your life may just be a repeat of everyday, yet everyday you will see something different.

We should treasure each moment of it and make the best out of your given fate. I don’t want to give young people a hollow sense of justice or a clichéd pep talk. As a filmmaker, I’d like to show them a small and quiet but truthful hope with this movie.



ABOUT MAMORU OSHII

Mamoru Oshii is one of the most remarkable personalities in modern Japanese filmmaking. He introduced introspective philosophical speculation into the world of animation, influencing at the same time movie creators all around the globe with his visionary style. Oshii joined the animation industry in 1977. His main works are URUSEI YATSURA 2: BEAUTIFUL DREAMER (1984), PATLABOR: THE MOVIE (1989), the epoch-making GHOST IN THE SHELL (1995, N. 1 in Billboard Top Video Sales Chart), GHOST IN

THE SHELL 2: INNOCENCE (2004, first Japanese animated feature film ever nominated for the Palme d’Or at the Festival de Cannes) and TACHIGUI: THE AMAZING LIVES OF THE FAST FOOD GRIFTERS (2006, officially selected for the 63rd Venice Film Festival). Oshii has also directed a number of live-action features, including AVALON (2001). Oshii’s latest new movie, THE SKY CRAWLERS, has premiered in Japan on August 2, 2008.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 1981 URUSEI YATSURA - LUM THE INVADER GIRL (director, TV Series)
- 1983 DALLOS (director, video series)
- 1983 URUSEI YATSURA: ONLY YOU (director, movie)
- 1984 URUSEI YATSURA 2: BEAUTIFUL DREAMER (director, movie)
- 1985 ANGEL’S EGG (director, movie)
- 1987 THE RED SPECTACLES (director, movie)
- 1988 MOBILE POLICE PATLABOR (director, video series)
- 1989 PATLABOR 1: THE MOVIE (director, movie)
- 1991 STRAY DOGS: KERBEROS PANZER COPS (director, movie)
- 1992 TALKING HEAD (director, movie)
- 1993 PATLABOR 2: THE MOVIE (director, movie)
- 1995 GHOST IN THE SHELL (director, movie)
- 1999 JIN-ROH ~ THE WOLF BRIGADE (original script, movie)
- 2000 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE (planning, movie)
- 2001 AVALON (director, movie)
- 2004 GHOST IN THE SHELL 2: INNOCENCE (director, movie)
- 2006 TACHIGUI: THE AMAZING LIVES OF THE FAST FOOD GRIFTERS (director, movie)
- 2008 THE SKY CRAWLERS (director, movie)



WORLD VIEW: A WORLD AFTER THE ERADICATION OF WAR

THE SKY CRAWLERS is set in another, possible « now ».

Right next to ancient megaliths, there are cars, electricity, and various cultures that we are familiar with. Interestingly enough, computers exist, but jet engines have never been developed. Oshii and his staff flew to Ireland and Poland for field research.

In the world of The Sky Crawlers, too, mankind experienced one, or maybe more global conflicts, but the concept of war between nations seems now to have been abandoned. According to Oshii’s interpretation, the movie is set in a time several years after a great war mainly fought by European nations, and that terminated in an unexpected form as the United States of America proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine and withheld any intervention into the conflict.

But in this world that has eradicated war, people still needed war. Just like how we can realize peace only by hearing from the TV news about the ongoing struggles happening in distant countries, the people in this world also sought to watch wars happening elsewhere as a way of confirming their peace.

This War as a Show is staged by private war contractors. The Kildren of the movie belong to Rostock Corporation, a Japanese based company fighting a never-ending war against the European based Lautern Corporation. Those companies provide entertainment facilities around the bases for the pilots. They also stage large-scale projects for people to watch on TV, with grandiosity equal to a World Cup soccer game.



CHARACTERS: KILDREN - CHILDREN DESTINED TO LIVE FOREVER

The main character of THE SKY CRAWLERS, Yuichi Kannami is a Kildren. Kildren look about 17 or 18 years old, and apparently do not grow older, in a state of eternal adolescence. They are sent to various places around the world as fighter pilots to engage in war.

They are primarily immortal unless killed in action. Oshii compares the youngsters today to these Kildren:

«Today’s children are born in this peaceful generation where there’s no starvation, war, or revolution. They may not know what to do with their futures, which seems indefinite and everlasting to them. Perhaps the offspring of modern consumerism, they are aware that there’s no need to become adult. Couldn’t we say that they are destined to live their entire life as children?»



PRODUCTION STAFF

THE SKY CRAWLERS is being produced by the high-end creators at Production I.G, best known as the animation house behind extraordinary pictures, such as GHOST IN THE SHELL, BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE, JIN-ROH - THE WOLF BRIGADE, KILL BILL: VOL. 1 (animation segment) and INNOCENCE.

The characters are designed by Tetsuya Nishio, who is best known for characters in NARUTO and GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX. Nishio is also playing an important role of key animation supervisor.

The backgrounds are entrusted to art director Kazuo Nagai, the young talent behind TV series EUREKA SEVEN.

All of the lavishly detailed retro-style fighters, machines and vehicles are designed by mechanic designer Atsushi Takeuchi, also known for his works in GHOST IN THE SHELL, INNOCENCE, BATTLE FAIRY YUKIKAZE and IGPX.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Currently, there are two main ways in expressing animation - 2D cel animation and 3D CG.

Cel animation, so called because pencil drawings were traced and painted on transparent sheets of celluloid (cels) is the traditional way that Japan has been making animation. Today, although celluloid sheets are not used anymore and the colors are digitally painted by computer software, the pencil drawing on paper remains the starting point of all Japanese 2D productions. This technique allows a character to have subtle movements and emotions, which the Japanese has always enjoyed more.

3D computer-generated animation, or 3D CG, is now becoming the mainstream technique in the animation industry, especially in the USA. It enables the picture to have 3 dimensional images, giving it more of a live action look.

Oshii, who has been going back and forth between animation and live action, has succeeded in combining the two techniques into one flawless animation when he made GHOST IN THE SHELL 2: INNOCENCE. In THE SKY CRAWLERS, however, he’s even kicking it up a notch.

The dreamy and sophisticated music is provided by Oshii’s long term partner, Kenji Kawai, who has created inspirational scores for GHOST IN THE SHELL, INNOCENCE, THE RING, DEATH NOTE and many others.

Since Oshii believes that the sound is as equally important to a movie as the picture itself, he has chosen to go with George Lucas’ Skywalker Sound for the sound design.

Finally, in order to get closer to today’s youngsters’ sensitiveness, Oshii decided to entrust the task of writing the screenplay to a very young and talented scriptwriter, Chihiro Ito, who is getting attention in the current Japanese film industry thanks to movies such as CRYING OUT LOVE, IN THE CENTER OF THE WORLD and SPRING SNOW.

Everything on the land especially the characters, which requires detailed and subtle emotional expressions, will be drawn by hand, while everything in the sky including the fighters will be done in 3D CG. This is so that the dynamic dogfights can be expressed so realistically to give the film a look that nobody has ever seen before.

In this respect, director Mamoru Oshii commented as follows:
«As regards to the air battle scenes, I am confident I can beat Miyazaki-san (director Hayao Miyazaki.)
Of course he is known to argue he is the best.»

While 2D and 3D animation techniques are becoming overly saturated in the current animation industry, it may sound too challenging to get the best use out of the two techniques, however, it could also mean that this movie will launch itself as the pioneer to a completely new type of animation.

And of course, there’s no other studio besides Production I.G that can do the job.