



Technical Information

Working Title: Iomante
Director: Takeshi Fukunaga
Screenplay: Takeshi Fukunaga
Nationality: Japan/United States
Genre: Drama
Length: 90 min
Shooting location: Hokkaido, Japan

Producer:
Eric Nyari (eric.nyari@gmail.com)

Director's Biography and Filmography

Main previous work: *Out of my Hand* (2015)

Awards: Nominated for the 2016 John Cassavetes Independent Spirit Award, Winner of the Best US Fiction Award at the 2015 LA Film Festival.

Takeshi Fukunaga is a Japanese filmmaker based in New York. He is an alumnus of Berlinale Talents and IFP First Feature Lab. His first feature film, *Out of My Hand* premiered in the Panorama section at the 2015 Berlin International Film Festival and won the Top Prize at the 2015 LA Film Festival. The film was released worldwide through Ava DuVernay's ARRAY after being screened at numerous festivals. Takeshi has been nominated for the 2016 John Cassavetes Independent Spirit Award and won the Emerging Filmmaker Award by Pacific Arts Movement.

IOMANTE

a film by Takeshi Fukunaga



Takeshi Fukunaga

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Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or

even first feature film, and the merits of their feature film project. During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.



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Synopsis

Ashi has spent his adult life away from home, trying to escape his roots as a descendant of indigenous Ainu people of northern Japan, Hokkaido. But when he finally makes the trek north to attend his sister's traditional Ainu wedding, he develops an unexpected bond with his heritage.

Looking for a way to honor his late father, Ashi moves back to Hokkaido where he decides to attempt to revive the forgotten Ainu ritual, *Iomante*. To do this, he must capture a baby cub, raise it into a full-grown bear, and then sacrifice the animal. But when he embarks on the journey to put the

ritual together, long-overdue confrontations with his family, as well as with the greater Ainu community, test his commitment to making peace with his past.

Statement of Intent

Ainu are the indigenous people of northern Japan, and have a unique philosophy and culture deeply rooted in nature. They were subjected to forced assimilation for many years, which to this day causes many Ainu descendants to struggle to maintain their sense of identity. In the film, the protagonist traces his roots and attempts

to revive the traditional ritual of *Iomante*, displaying courage and strength that challenges social pressures facing Ainu people.

As a filmmaker born and raised in Hokkaido, I am passionate about making this film and bringing attention to the Ainu's unique worldview and the challenges they face in Japanese society today. Essentially, this is a story about a man who tries to rediscover his identity by embracing his roots.

Synopsis

Ashi a passé sa vie loin de chez lui, essayant d'échapper à ses racines indigènes Aïnou, peuple du Nord du Japon à Hokkaido. Lorsque finalement il fait le voyage au nord pour assister au mariage Aïnou traditionnel de sa sœur, il établit un lien inattendu avec ses origines.

Cherchant le moyen d'honorer son défunt père, Ashi se déplace à Hokkaido où il décide d'essayer de ranimer le rituel Aïnou oublié, *Iomante*. Pour ce faire, il doit capturer un ourson, l'élever jusqu'à son âge adulte, puis sacrifier l'animal. Mais lorsqu'il entreprend le voyage pour préparer le rituel, les affrontements de

longue date avec sa famille ainsi qu'avec la plus grande communauté Aïnou, vont mettre à l'épreuve sa volonté de faire la paix avec son passé.

Note d'intention

La tribu Aïnou est un peuple indigène du nord du Japon. Ils ont une philosophie et une culture profondément enracinée dans la nature. Ils ont été soumis à une assimilation forcée pendant de nombreuses années, ce qui fait que de nombreux descendants Aïnou luttent pour maintenir leur sentiment identitaire. Dans le film,

le protagoniste retrouve ses racines et tente de faire revivre le rituel traditionnel *Iomante*, révélant le courage et la force qui défient les pressions sociales auxquelles sont confrontés les Aïnous.

En tant que cinéaste né et élevé à Hokkaido, je suis enthousiaste à l'idée de faire ce film et d'attirer l'attention sur la vision unique du monde des Aïnous et les défis auxquels ils sont confrontés dans la société japonaise d'aujourd'hui. L'histoire est essentiellement celle d'un homme qui essaie de redécouvrir son identité en embrassant ses racines.