

# MABOROSI

**Directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda**

Japan 1995, 110 mins, Cert PG

A BFI release

**The debut fiction feature from the director of *Shoplifters*,  
winner of the 2018 *Palme d'Or***

**With Makiko Esumi, Taskashi Naito, Tadanobu Asano**



**Opening at selected cinemas UK-wide from 26 April 2019**

18 March 2019 – In the wake of **Hirokazu Kore-eda's** *Palme d'Or* winning, critically acclaimed hit ***Shoplifters*** (2018), the BFI pays tribute to this master of contemporary Japanese cinema with the release of his debut fiction feature, ***Maborosi*** (1995), in selected cinemas UK-wide on **26 April 2019**. Largely unseen in the UK (with previously only a very limited release here), *Maborosi* is a beautifully filmed, exquisite meditation on loss, loneliness, uncertainty, and coming to terms with the past. It will screen in an extended run at BFI Southbank during **Of Flesh and Blood: The Cinema of Hirokazu Kore-eda**, a dedicated season during April and May that will also be presented at other UK cinemas and include his films ***After Life*** (1998), ***Nobody Knows*** (2004) and ***Still Walking*** (2008).

After studying literature at university with plans to become a novelist, Hirokazu Kore-eda (b. 1962, Tokyo) established himself as a documentary maker in the late 80s, working in television, where he directed several prize-winning programmes. *Maborosi*, his first fictional film, brought him international attention when he and his cinematographer Masao Nakabori won prizes at the Venice Film Festival.

In a career spanning over 25 years, Kore-eda's gentle humanist dramas, and his focus on family, particularly parents and children, has brought him comparisons to Japanese masters Yasujiro Ozu and Mikio Naruse, but it is actually Britain's Ken Loach that he feels most akin to. He once said: "I simply want to look at people as they are."

*Maborosi* (mä.bo.ró.she) roughly translates to illusion or mirage. The film was based on an original short story, 'Maboroshi no Hikari' (*A Trick of the Light*) written by Teru Miyamoto (best-known as the author of *Muddy River*, made into a film directed by Kohei Oguri in 1981). As well as wins at Venice, it won prizes at the Vancouver and Chicago film festivals and was released commercially in western countries including the UK, the USA, the Netherlands and Sweden.

A young woman, Yumiko (**Makiko Esumi**, a fashion model at the time), becomes troubled by the notion that she brings death to people close to her. She still dreams of her grandmother who she lost when she was 12, after an incident for which she blames herself. Now married with an infant son, Yuichi, she and her husband Ikuo (**Tadanobu Asano**) appear to be happy together, but Yumiko's life is abruptly changed by her husband's sudden death – and the question, was it an accident or suicide? Trying to cope with her loss, eventually Yumiko remarries and perhaps will find happiness again with Tamio (**Taskashi Naito**), but on a return back home for her brother's wedding, a flood of troubling memories begin to haunt her.

Japanese cinema expert Alexander Jacoby, who is currently writing a book on Kore-eda and programmed the BFI's season comments:

*"Kore-eda's haunting, meditative film traces a widow's attempts to cope with and comprehend her bereavement. With its static camera setups and long takes evoking the work of the great Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu and Taiwanese master Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Maborosi announced a vital new presence in Japanese cinema."*

The director went on to become a regular at international film festivals, picking up a raft of awards along the way. In 1998 he made the fantasy drama *After Life* (1998), which won the FIPRESCI Prize at San Sebastián, then *Distance* (2001), the first of five films selected for Cannes Competition to date. *Nobody Knows* (2004), whose 12-year old star Yuya Yagira became the youngest-ever winner of Best Actor at Cannes, was followed by *Hana* (2006), about a young samurai, Kore-eda's first period piece. Two years later came *Still Walking* (2008), his first film to feature veteran actress Kirin Kiki, who would become his regular collaborator; then there was the quirky romance *Air Doll* (2009) which premiered at Cannes and *I Wish* (2011), winner of Best Screenplay at San Sebastián.

From there, 2013's *Like Father, Like Son* won the Jury Prize at Cannes and the audience award at San Sebastián. In 2015, *Our Little Sister* was nominated for the *Palme d'Or* and went on to win awards including the Jury Prize at San Sebastián. 2016's *After the Storm* premiered in *Un Certain Regard* at Cannes and in 2017 *The Third Murder* premiered in competition at the Venice Film Festival.

2018 gave Kore-eda his biggest hit to date when *Shoplifters* won the *Palme d'Or* followed by Academy Award, BAFTA and Golden Globe nominations and more award wins and nominations from around the world. He is currently working on his next film, *The Truth*, his first film not set in Japan, and not in Japanese, starring Catherine Deneuve, Juliette Binoche, Ethan Hawke and Ludivine Sagnier.

Following the re-release and the retrospective season, a new 4-disc box set, *Of Flesh and Blood: The Cinema of Hirokazu Kore-eda*, featuring UK Blu-ray premieres of *Maborosi*, *After Life*, *Nobody Knows* and *Still Walking* will be released by the BFI in July 2019.

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