

PATRON PICK

MILLENNIUM ACTRESS

FILM BY SATOSHI KON

One of only four feature films by legendary animator and director Satoshi Kon, *Millennium Actress* begins with two documentary filmmakers' visit to a retired movie star named Chiyoko Fujiwara. As she tells them the story of her life, the three are plunged into her memories and filmography. The line between story, reality, memory and movie becomes blurred as events in Chiyoko's personal life are interwoven with scenes from her movies, dragging the two confused and comedic filmmakers along.

I really love Satoshi Kon's iconic surrealism and fluidity. In *Millennium Actress*, we travel along Chiyoko's memories while wondering how much of what we see is "real" – is she remembering events accurately or is she dramatizing her own life to the movies she has starred?

Thrown into this mix are the memories of one of the filmmakers – an avid fan of Chiyoko who changes from mere observer to crucial player in her stories – making viewers question if what they are seeing on screen is subjective imagination (and of whose) or objective reality.

ABOUT DIRECTOR

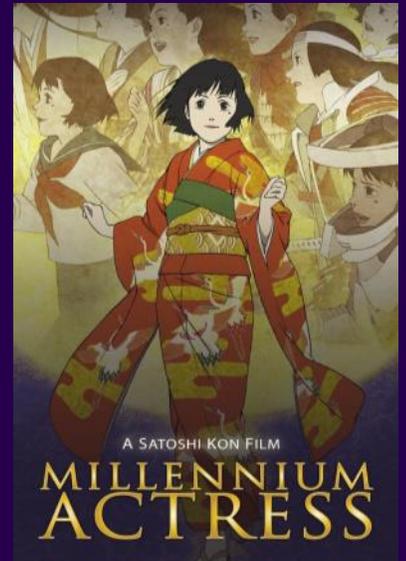
Satoshi Kon (今 敏) was born in 1963. He studied at the Musashino College of the Arts. He is best known for his anime films *Perfect Blue* (1997), *Millennium Actress* (2001), *Tokyo Godfathers* (2003), and *Paprika* (2006).

I recommend *Millennium Actress* to anyone interested in Japanese history or Japanese films. Following Chiyoko's personal life, we can see Japan during its turbulent modern history. *Millennium Actress* is an ode to classic post-World War II Japanese films, paying homage to the great samurai epics of Akira Kurosawa, domestic dramas of Yasujiro Ozu and even *Godzilla*. The movie is also partly based on the life of real-life actress Setsuko Hara. As Chiyoko's movies span over the various time periods of Japanese history, we can also see the inspiration from traditional Japanese art in the background, making this a truly beautiful film.

Against this great span of time and set, Chiyoko's goal in life driving the plot seems comparably overly simplistic and one-dimensional. But at the end of the movie, we see that the exact opposite is what Satoshi Kon is trying to relay with this movie. In life, we often focus on the final product or the end goal. But following Chiyoko's story, we can see that it's the chase – the journey towards the goal – that can be more meaningful.

– Caroline G.
June, 2020

– from imdb.com



Titles: Millennium Actress

Author: Satoshi Kon

Publisher: Dreamworks
Year: 2001

Run-time: 87 min.

Call no. DVD ANI KON 2001
Item no. 00012994

Original Japanese:
Sennen joyu
千年女優
Mad House, 2002.