

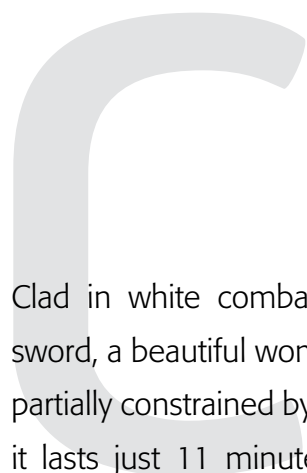
# MAMORU OSHII'S Warrior Women

## MAMORU OSHII

*Anime/movie director*  
born in 1951. Major works include *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), which reached the top spot in *Billboard* magazine's video charts, and *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (2004), the first Japanese anime to be selected for competition at the Cannes Film Festival.

Oshii's work has influenced many other filmmakers, including James Cameron and the Wachowski brothers.





Clad in white combat gear and wielding a long sword, a beautiful woman battles a female prisoner partially constrained by a black straitjacket. Although it lasts just 11 minutes, *Assault Girl 2*, the latest live-action short film from leading Japanese *anime* director Mamoru Oshii, resonates with viewers like the prologue of an epic tale. This short work is one segment of *Kill*, a sword-fighting anthology supervised by Oshii. He shot the film while working on *The Sky Crawlers*, an animated feature released this summer.

“Sword-fighting movies are an unpopular genre these days verging on extinction,” laments Oshii. “But I believe that the true essence of cinema lies in such B-movie films. A movie is like a marble bought from an old-time candy store. Film has the power to fabricate a story that will make that marble sparkle like a jewel.”

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**ABOVE:** *The Sky Crawlers*, released in the summer of 2008, is Oshii’s latest animated feature and tells the story of young pilots genetically designed to live eternally in adolescence. It also won the Future Film Festival Digital Award at the 65th Venice International Film Festival.



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Oshii has made many live-action movies, but his work often blurs the boundaries between *anime* and live-action. *Avalon*, for example, added extensive digital processing to live-action footage. So why shoot live-action films?

“At this time in my life I want to film real actresses. That’s something you can’t do with *anime*. Maybe I’m only just beginning to appreciate the opposite sex as I get older! An actress is more than simply a woman — she is a muse. But my muses are a little strange, in that they all carry weapons. For some reason ‘warrior women’ fascinate me. I have no interest at all in portraying real women. I want to depict women who could not possibly exist in the real world. Perhaps my motivation to do this stems from being an *anime* director.”

Oshii is currently shooting his next work, another live-action movie. Having exhausted the art of *anime*, what undiscovered visual treats might he bring the world next?

**TOP:** From the *Kill* Anthology supervised by Mamoru Oshii, which will open at Shibuya Cine Quinto on December 6. *Assault Girl 2*, the segment of the film directed by Oshii, features Yoko Fujita (right) and Rinko Kikuchi, who was nominated for an Academy Award for her role in *Babel*.