



# TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 11, 2015  
2:00PM • WHITNEY  
HUMANITIES CENTER

## PRINCESS MONONOKE

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM  
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



The origins of Hayao Miyazaki's *PRINCESS MONONOKE* date back to the late 1970s and a single drawing of a princess living in a forest with a magical beast. Nearly two decades later, that drawing had been expanded into a Studio Ghibli masterpiece, a box office triumph, and the first animated film to win the Japan Academy Prize for Picture of the Year. The saga of the cursed and exiled Prince Ashitaka on a quest through Muromachi-era Japan was described by Yale professor Aaron Gerow as "a powerful compilation of Miyazaki's world, a cumulative statement of his moral and filmic concerns." "PRINCESS MONONOKE," in the words of author and curator Helen McCarthy, "is a beautiful evocation of the dogged, determined, and wholly unconquerable persistence of life and love, an epic movie about ordinary people adrift in confusing times, with a core of power and passion rarely seen in modern works of art."



**THE LOOK:** Miyazaki began creating the storyboards for *PRINCESS MONONOKE* in May of 1995, with animation commencing that July. He personally reviewed each of the film's more than 144,000 cels, making his own revisions to an estimated 80,000 of those. The resulting film, according to critic A.O. Scott, "shows a great painterly sense, especially the landscapes, which Miyazaki renders with a delicacy reminiscent of Monet or Turner." Miyazaki, along with supervising animator Masashi Ando, and a team of art directors and background artists, visited the Yakushima rainforest (an inspiration for an earlier Miyazaki film, *NAUSICÄÄ OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND*, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site), paying particular attention to color, shadow, and the effects of light on water within the forest. Miyazaki looked to the Westerns of director John Ford in his design of Iron Town, and to Jomon pottery for the mystical creatures of the forest. Though most of the film was created through traditional means, it was the first Studio Ghibli feature to incorporate computer graphics. The film includes five minutes of digital imagery, such as the 3D-rendered demon snakes composited onto the hand-drawn Ashitaka, and another ten minutes of material with digital paint, employed late in production to save time (the film was completed less than a month before the premiere).

DIRECTED BY **HAYAO MIYAZAKI** (1997;  
ENGLISH DUB 1999) 134 MIN.

SCREENPLAY BY **HAYAO MIYAZAKI**  
ENGLISH ADAPTATION BY **NEIL GAIMAN**

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **ATSUSHI OKUI**  
PRODUCED BY **STUDIO GHIBLI**

WITH THE VOICES OF **BILLY CRUDUP,**  
**CLAIRE DANES, MINNIE DRIVER,**  
**BILLY BOB THORNTON, GILLIAN**  
**ANDERSON, AND JADA PINKETT SMITH**

**THE RESPONSE:** Released on July 12, 1997, *PRINCESS MONONOKE* was phenomenally popular in Japan, winning critical raves and unprecedented box office returns. It was seen by twelve million viewers—the equivalent of one-tenth of Japan's entire population—in just the first five months, and quickly broke E.T.'s 15 year-old record to become the highest-grossing film in Japan's history, an honor it held for only a few months until it was trumped by *TITANIC*. It remains the sixth highest-grossing film of all time in Japan, and the third highest-grossing Japanese production behind two other Miyazaki films, *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* and the current Japanese box office champ, *SPIRITED AWAY*. When it was released on VHS in 1998, it sold two million copies in the first two weeks in a market where very few titles sold even two hundred thousand. A remarkable 20% of these sales were to people who had never purchased a VHS tape before. The film garnered an astonishing 31.5% audience share when it was broadcast on Japanese television a full year and a half after its theatrical release.

**DID YOU KNOW:** LAST NOVEMBER, HAYAO MIYAZAKI BECAME THE FOURTH ANIMATOR TO RECEIVE AN HONORARY ACADEMY AWARD, JOINING WALT DISNEY, WALTER LANTZ, AND CHUCK JONES. HE IS THE ONLY NON-AMERICAN ANIMATOR AND ONLY THE SECOND JAPANESE FILMMAKER—ALONG WITH THE GREAT AKIRA KUROSAWA—TO RECEIVE THE HONOR. MIYAZAKI'S *SPIRITED AWAY* IS THE FIRST AND ONLY ANIME FILM TO WIN THE ACADEMY AWARD FOR BEST ANIMATED FEATURE.

**NEXT UP:** DIRECTOR JOHN FRANKENHEIMER'S ELECTRIFYING WORLD WAR TWO ACTION EPIC **THE TRAIN**, STARRING BURT LANCASTER, PAUL SCOFIELD, MICHEL SIMON, AND JEANNE MOREAU, EXPLODES ONTO THE SCREEN IN GLORIOUS BLACK AND WHITE ON **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 2:00 P.M.**