

= Audition (1999 film) =

Audition (??????? , ?dishon) is a 1999 Japanese horror film , based on the novel of the same name , directed by Takashi Miike . It is about a recent widower , Shigharu Aoyama (Ryo Ishibashi) , whose son suggests that he find a new wife . Aoyama agrees , and with a friend , stages a phoney audition to meet a potential new partner in life . After interviewing several women , Aoyama becomes interested in Asami (Eihi Shiina) , who responds well to him , although as they begin to date , her dark past begins to affect their relationship .

Audition was originally started by the Japanese company Omega Project , who wanted to make a horror film after the great financial success of their previous production Ring . To create the film , the company purchased the rights to Ryu Murakami 's book Audition , and hired screenwriter Daisuke Tengan and director Miike to film an adaptation . The cast and crew consisted primarily of people Miike had worked with on previous projects , with the exception of Shiina , who had worked as a model prior to beginning a career in film . The film was shot in about three weeks in Tokyo .

The film premièred , with a few other Japanese horror films , at the Vancouver International Film Festival , but it began to receive much more attention when it was shown at the Rotterdam International Film Festival in 2000 , where it received the FIPRESCI Prize and the KNF Award . Following a theatrical release in Japan , the film continued to play at festivals and had theatrical releases in the United States and United Kingdom , followed by several home media releases . Audition was received positively by Western film critics on its release , with many noting the final torture sequence in the film and how it contrasts with the non @-@ horrific scenes prior . The film has been listed on several Best Horror Film lists and has had an influence on other horror films and directors including Eli Roth and the Soska sisters .

= = Plot = =

Shigeharu Aoyama (Ryo Ishibashi) , a middle @-@ aged widower of seven years , is urged by his 17 @-@ year @-@ old son , Shigehiko (Tetsu Sawaki) , to begin dating again . Aoyama 's friend Yasuhisa Yoshikawa (Jun Kunimura) , a film producer , devises a mock casting audition at which young women audition for the " part " of Aoyama 's new wife . Aoyama agrees to the plan and is immediately enchanted by Asami Yamazaki (Eihi Shiina) , attracted to her apparent emotional depth .

Yoshikawa develops misgivings about Asami after he is unable to reach any of the references on her résumé , such as a music producer she claimed to work for , who is missing . However , Aoyama is so enthralled by her that he pursues her anyway . She lives in an empty apartment , containing a sack and a phone . For four days after the audition , she sits perfectly still next to the phone waiting for it to ring . When it finally does , she answers pretending that she never expected Aoyama to call . After several dates , she agrees to accompany him to a seaside hotel , where a smitten Aoyama intends to propose marriage . At the hotel , Asami reveals that she was abused as a child and shows burn scars on her body . After making love , Asami demands that Aoyama pledge his love to her and no one else . A deeply moved Aoyama agrees . In the morning , Asami is nowhere to be found .

Aoyama tries to track her down using her résumé , but as Yoshikawa warned , all of the contacts are dead ends . At the dance studio where she claimed to have trained , he finds a man with prosthetic feet . The bar where she claimed to work has been abandoned for a year following the murder and dismemberment of the owner . A passerby tells Aoyama that the police found three extra fingers , an extra ear , and an extra tongue when they recovered the body ; Aoyama has hallucinations of the body pieces . Meanwhile , Asami goes to Aoyama 's house and finds a photo of his late wife . Enraged , she drugs his liquor . Aoyama comes home , pours a drink , and begins feeling the effects of the drug . A flashback shows that the sack in Asami 's apartment contains a man missing both feet , his tongue , one ear and three fingers on one hand . He crawls out and begs for food . Asami vomits into a dog dish and places it on the floor for the man . The man sticks his face into the vomit and hungrily consumes it .

Aoyama collapses from the drug . Asami injects him with a paralytic agent that leaves his nerves alert , and tortures him with needles . She tells him that just like everyone else in her life , he has failed to love only her . She cannot tolerate his feelings for anyone else , even his own son . She inserts needles into his eyes , giggling as she does so . She then cuts off his left foot with piano wire . Shigehiko returns home as Asami begins to cut off Aoyama 's other foot , and she chases him upstairs . As she attacks the boy , Aoyama appears to suddenly wake up back in the hotel after he and Asami had sex , and his current ordeal seems to be only a nightmare ; Aoyama proposes marriage and Asami accepts . As he falls back asleep in the hotel , he returns to find his son struggling with Asami . Shigehiko kicks her downstairs , breaking her neck . Aoyama tells his son to call the police and stares at the dying Asami , who repeats what she said on one of their dates about her excitement on seeing him again .

= = Cast = =

Ryo Ishibashi as Shigeharu Aoyama (?? ?? , Aoyama Shigeharu)
Eihi Shiina as Asami Yamazaki (?? ?? , Yamazaki Asami)
Jun Kunimura as Yasuhisa Yoshikawa (???? , Yoshikawa Yasuhisa)
Miyuki Matsuda as Ryoko Aoyama (???? , Aoyama Ryoko)
Toshie Negishi as Rie (??)
Tetsu Sawaki as Shigehiko Aoyama (?? ?? , Aoyama Shigehiko)
Shigeru Saiki as Toastmaster (??????? , Sakaba no masut?)
Ken Mitsuishi as Director (??????? , Direkut?)
Ren Ohsugi as Shimada (??)
Renji Ishibashi as Old man in wheelchair (??????? , Kurumaisu no r?jin)

= = Themes = =

Audition has been read as both feminist and misogynist . Miike has stated that when he met journalists in the United Kingdom and France , he found they commented on the film 's feminist themes when Asami gets revenge on the men in her life . The film sets up Aoyama with traits and behaviours which could be considered sexist : a list of criteria for his bride to meet , and the phoney audition format he uses to search for future wife . Tom Mes , author of *Agitator : The Cinema of Takashi Miike* stated that the torture sequence , with the mutilation of Aoyama , can be seen as revenge from Asami . Dennis Lim of the Los Angeles Times examined similar themes , noting that the film as " ultimately about the male fear of women and female sexuality " , noting that women are blatantly objectified in the first half of the film and in the second half Asami " goes on to redress this imbalance " when she becomes an " avenging angel " . Chris Pizzello , writing in the *American Cinematographer* , stated that one plausible approach to interpreting the film is to see the final act as a representation of Aoyama 's guilt at his mistreatment of women and his desire to dominate them . Aoyama develops a paranoid fantasy of an attacking object : because he harbours sadistic thoughts towards women , he develops a fear that the object will retaliate . Contrary to this , Miike has stated that the final torture scenes in the film are not a paranoid nightmare dreamed up by Aoyama . Mes has argued against the feminist portrayal of the film , noting that Asami is not motivated by an ideological agenda , and that acknowledging that she takes revenge on a man who has lied to her would be ignoring that she has also lied to Aoyama . Asami states " I want to tell you everything " during the torture scene , implying she had not been truthful before . Mes also notes that avenging angel theme contradicts the interpretation of a feminist @-@ themed revenge as one of people that Asami 's attacks was female .

In *Audition* , the character of Asami is a victim of child abuse . Colette Balmain , in her book *Introduction to Japanese Horror Film* , described Asami as " just one more face of the wronged women in Japanese culture ... They are victims of repression and oppression , and only death and loneliness remain for them " . " The film critic Robin Wood wrote that through her child abuse , Asami is taught that love and pain must be inseparable . The audience is led to identify with Asami

through this victimization and also what Stephen LeDrew described as a " patriarchal Japanese society " . Elvis Mitchell (The New York Times) stated that the theme of the film was : " the objectification of women in Japanese society and the mirror @-@ image horror of retribution it could create " . Tom Mes suggested that these themes can be witnessed in the scene where Asami feeds her mutilated prisoner and then turns into the childhood version of herself and pets him like a dog . Mes concludes that this is done to suggest that what had happened in Asami 's life had made her the violent adult seen in the film .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The main production company behind Audition was the Japanese company Omega Project . Omega were originally behind the production of Hideo Nakata 's film Ring ; this was a great success in Japan and , subsequently , the rest of Asia . Omega had problems setting up the release of Ring in Korea and had the company AFDF Korea work on a Korean re @-@ adaptation of the Ring . The following year , in 1998 , Omega partnered again with AFDF Korea and other production companies including Creators Company Connection , Film Face , and Bodysonic to make the adaptation of Ry? Murakami 's 1997 novel Audition . Omega wanted to create a film different than supernatural @-@ themed Ring , and chose to adapt Murakami 's novel , which lacked this trait . To attempt something different , they hired a screenwriter (Daisuke Tengan) and a director (Takashi Miike) who were not known for working on horror films . Prior to Audition , Tengan was best known as a screenwriter for working with his father (Shohei Imamura) on The Eel , which won the Palme d 'Or in 1997 .

= = = Pre @-@ production = = =

To create Audition , Miike worked with many of his previous collaborators , such as cinematographer Hideo Yamamoto . Miike spoke of his cinematographer by saying that Yamamoto was : " very sensitive towards death . Both of his parents died very young , and it 's not something he talks about much " . Miike also noted that he felt that Yamamoto was : " living in fear , and that sensibility comes through in his work . It 's something I want to make the most of " . The film 's score was composed by K?ji End? . End? had previously composed work for Miike on films such as The Bird People in China . Yasushi Shimamura was the film 's editor . Shimamura had worked with Miike as early as Lady Hunter : Prelude To Murder in 1991 .

Actor Ryo Ishibashi wanted to work with Miike and agreed to the role . He commented that despite not being a great fan of horror films , he enjoyed scripts , such as that of Audition , that showcased human nature . Model Eihi Shiina was cast in the film as Asami . Shiina 's career was primarily as a model and she only began acting after being offered a film role while she was on holidays . Shiina first learned about Miike through his film Blues Harp , which made her interested in meeting the director . When Shiina first met Miike , they began talking about her opinions on love and relationships . On their second meeting , Miike asked Shiina to play the part of Asami . Shiina thought that the opinions and feelings she expressed to Miike were the reason she was cast in the role , and she tried to play the role as naturally as she could without going over the top .

= = = Production = = =

Audition was shot in approximately three weeks , which was about one more week than usual for Miike 's films at the time . Scenes such as those in Asami 's apartment and at a restaurant were shot on location in a real apartment and a real restaurant . Outdoor scenes were shot in Tokyo , along intersections in Omotesand? .

The torture scene at the end of the film did not initially contain Asami 's lines " Kiri @-@ kiri @-@ kiri " . Shiina was initially whispering her lines while filming this scene , but after discussion with

Miike , the two decided that having her say these lines would make the scene scarier . Ishibashi found that Miike was " having so much fun with that scene " , and that Miike was especially excited when Ishibashi 's character 's legs are cut off . For the special effects where Shiina 's character places acupuncture needles into Ishibashi , special effects make @-@ up was used to create a mask layer which was laid upon Ishibashi 's eyes , which is then pierced by the needles .

= = Release = =

Audition had its world premiere on October 2 , 1999 at the Vancouver International Film Festival . The premiere was part of a program of modern Japanese horror films at the festival , including Ring , Ring 2 , Shikoku and Gemini . Audition was screened at the 29th Rotterdam International Film Festival in Holland in early 2000 where it was shown as part of a Miike retrospective . Tom Mes stated that Audition received the most attention at Rotterdam , where it won the FIPRESCI Prize for the best film of competition . The FIPRESCI award was given by a jury of international film journalists , who grant this award during the Rotterdam International Film Festival . Only films not in competition qualify for the award . Audition also won the KNF Award , voted by the Circle of Dutch Film journalists .

Audition was released theatrically in Japan on March 3 , 2000 . It received its American premier at the Seattle International Film Festival in 2000 . The film was first screened outside Festivals in the United States in early August 2001 . In the United Kingdom , Audition received screenings in 2000 at both FrightFest and the Raindance Film Festival . It was released theatrically in the United Kingdom by Metro Tartan in mid @-@ March 2001 . It was Miike 's first film to be released theatrically in the United Kingdom .

= = = Home media release = = =

Audition was released on DVD in the United States by Chimera on June 4 , 2002 . The DVD included an interview with Miike and a documentary on the Egyptian Theater in Los Angeles . A new DVD was released by Lionsgate in 2005 dubbed the " uncut special edition " . This release included an interview with Ryu Murakami , a selected scene commentary by Miike , and a clip from Bravo 's The 100 Scariest Movie Moments . Peter Schorn of IGN gave a negative review of the 2006 DVD , finding that the video was " overcompressed to the point that a distracting , shifting blockiness frequently in backgrounds that draws the eye away from the actors " . IGN concluded that the : " overall image quality is soft and fuzzy , with weak black levels , murky shadow areas and less @-@ than @-@ impressive color saturation " . On October 6 , 2009 , Shout ! Factory released a DVD and Blu @-@ ray release of the film that featured an introduction by Miike and actress Eihi Shiina , a full audio commentary by Miike and screenwriter Daisuke Tengan , and a documentary featuring the cast .

Audition was released in the United Kingdom on DVD by Tartan Video on June 28 , 2004 . The disc contained an interview with Miike and liner notes by Joe Cornish . Matthew Leyland (Sight & Sound) reviewed this release , stating that the audio and visual presentation was " exemplary " while noting that the interview with Miike was the only noteworthy bonus feature on the disc . The film was later released by Arrow Video on February 29 , 2016 . The Arrow Video release was exclusively restored in 2K resolution and was scanned from a 35mm interpositive .

= = Reception = =

On Rotten Tomatoes , the film has an approval rating of 80 % , based on 70 reviews , with an average rating of 7 @.@ 3 / 10 . The site 's critical consensus reads : " An audacious , unsettling Japanese horror film from director Takashi Miike , Audition entertains as both a grisly shocker and a psychological drama " . On Metacritic , the film has a weighted average score of 69 out of 100 , based on 19 critics , indicating " generally favorable reviews " . Ken Eisner (Variety) gave the film a positive review . The reviewer referred to the film as a " truly shocking horror film " that was : " made

even more disturbing by its haunting beauty " . Geoffrey Macnab , writing in Sight and Sound , referred to the film as a " slow @-@ burning but ultimately devastating horror pic " and said that : " It 's a virtuoso piece of film @-@ making with much more subtlety and depth than Miike 's other films " . The Hollywood Reporter 's Frank Scheck described the film as : " One of the most audacious , iconoclastic horror films in recent years " . Mark Schilling (The Japan Times) praised Shiina and Ishibashi 's acting , but noted that : " Among the film 's few irritants is a smarmy , snarly bad guy turn by Renji Ishibashi as Asami 's wheelchair @-@ bound ballet instructor . He is a reminder of where too many other Miike films have headed -- straight for the video racks " . Schilling concluded that : " Miike is ready for a bigger role -- as one of the leading Japanese directors of his generation " .

In the early 2010s , Time Out conducted a poll with several authors , directors , actors and critics who have worked within the horror genre to vote for their top horror films . Audition placed at number 18 on their top 100 list .

Writers for Variety , the Hollywood Reporter and Sight & Sound all emphasized the film 's final scene . Scheck (Hollywood Reporter) stated that : " Miike lulls the audience into a state of complacency with a studied , slow @-@ moving , lightly comic first half before delivering a gruesome final section that makes Stephen King 's Misery look wholesome " ; the ending was : " all the more shocking for the clinical way in which it is presented " . Eisner (Variety) stated that it is only at the ending of the film that Audition : " breaks out of creepfest ghetto " . In his essay on themes in Audition , Robin Wood stated that most of Miike 's films are disturbing for : " what they have to tell us about the state of contemporary civilization ; they are not in the least disturbing in themselves , operating on some fantasy level of annihilation , with ' comic @-@ book ' violence " . In comparison , he stated that Audition is " authentically disturbing , and infinitely more horrifying : the first time I watched it - on DVD , at home , after warnings I had received - I was repeatedly tempted , through the last half hour , to turn it off " . Wood compared the film to Pier Paolo Pasolini 's Salò , or the 120 Days of Sodom , stating that the film was : " almost as unwatchable as the news reels - of Auschwitz , of the innocent victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Vietnam , victims of Nazi or American dehumanization " .

Of the film 's success with Western audiences , Miike states that he was not surprised , but that he had : " no idea what goes on in the minds of people in the West and I don 't pretend to know what their tastes are . And I don 't want to start thinking about that . It 's nice that they liked my movie , but I 'm not going to start deliberately worrying about why or what I can do to make it happen again " . Actress Eihi Shiina stated that , in Japan , only a certain type of film fan would watch Audition . By comparison , she said , the film was seen by many more people overseas , which she attributed to " good timing " .

= = Aftermath and influence = =

After the release of Audition , Miike was going to adapt Murakami 's novel Coin Locker Babies , but the project failed to find financing to get started .

Audition has been described as an influence on " torture porn " . The term was invented by David Edelstein to describe films such as Saw , The Devil 's Rejects and Wolf Creek that offer " titillating and shocking " scenes that push the audience to the margins of depravity for them to " feel something " . Audition influenced American directors such as Eli Roth . Roth stated that Audition influenced him to make his film Hostel , with Miike even making a cameo as a satisfied customer of the kidnappers who let customers torture their victims . Richard Corliss , writing in Time , opined that Audition was different from torture porn films as : " unlike Saw and its imitators in the genre of torture porn , Audition doesn 't go for gore @-@ ific money shots . Miike 's films live inside their characters , taking the temperature of their longings , the ridiculous ambitions they chase so obsessively and their need to experience the extreme to prove they 're alive " . Audition was listed by twin directors Jen and Sylvia Soska as one of their favourite horror films , and with the sisters saying that it was an influence on their film American Mary . The directors noted the character of Asami , stating that an audience generally sees : " female characters in a horror film as the helpless victim . This film leads you in one direction , skillfully hinting at a darker storyline for the otherwise meek and slight Asami

until the final 15 minutes where we are introduced to a merciless monster . A perfect personification of the irrational rage of a woman scorned " .

Deadline reported that executive producer Mario Kassab had begun work on an English language adaptation of Audition in 2014 . Richard Gray was brought on to serve as the remake 's director and screenwriter . The film 's storyline will be taken from the Murakami novel as opposed to an adaptation of Miike 's film , and the film will take place in North America . The new film is set to include scenes and locations in the novel that were not in the Miike 's film .