

Japan’s anime industry in crisis even as its popularity soars

Notes & Cues:	<p><b>Article:</b></p> <p>Three of the 10 feature films in the running for top prize at the world’s most important animation festival in Annecy in France are from Japan.</p> <p>But Japan’s booming animation industry is in crisis — with bad working conditions, a huge shortage of artists and a lack of creativity — just as its global popularity has never been higher.</p> <p>With talk of a talent shortage, its greatest star, the legendary Studio Ghibli founder Hayao Miyazaki, has come out of retirement at 78 to make ”How Do You Live?” — which may be released next year — with speculation that he could take on another feature if his health holds.</p> <p>Yoshiaki Nishimura, a former Miyazaki stalwart who produced the Oscar-nominated ”The Tale of The Princess Kaguya”, told AFP that his peers also complain of low pay, a paucity of emerging young talent and burn-out in overworked animation teams who often put in 12- to 18-hour days.</p> <p>Ayumu Watanabe — whose beautiful ”The Children of the Sea” was shown out of competition at the festival — worried about visual ”standardization” and lack of originality, with ”fewer and fewer animators who can draw well by hand.”</p> <p>Amel Lacombe, whose company Eurozoom is a key French animation distributor, said the industry’s travails are due to its rapid growth, and now ”we are in a period of adjustment”. She believes that the Japanese authorities are waking up to anime’s importance and global reach ”as a export force”.</p>
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