



Agitator: The Cinema of Takashi Miike

Tom Mes

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This edition features a new and expanded colour section, completely updated DVD information, and several brand new reviews of Takashi Miike films that were unavailable for coverage at the time of the book's initial production.

Agitator: The Cinema of Takashi Miike Details

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From Reader Review Agitator: The Cinema of Takashi Miike for online ebook

David Wilentz says

Fairly exhaustive overview of Japanese bad boy director Takashi Miike. I appreciate Tom Mes' passion.

Jason Coffman says

Tom Mes' dense study of Miike ends up being too much of a good thing. While it's packed with tons of good information and insights from the filmmaker himself, the comprehensive overview and analysis of Miike's films spends too much time on their similarities. This has the curious effect of making the films seem less interesting as individual works. Still, it's clear that Mes is passionate about Miike's films, and this is still an invaluable resource.

Emm² says

Takashi Miike is known for mostly his more bizarre, violent, controversial output in the film world. Though interestingly, I don't think there exists a genre he's not attempted. At all. His film oeuvre literally spans the entire rainbow from extreme psychological bloodbaths to historical dramas to candy-coloured, cartoonish family films.

But no matter what genre, unpredictable madness permeates most of them, which is not a bad thing in an era of overly cautious and formulaic films which treat the audience like an idiot. Miike never insults the audience's intelligence even if the content is offensive. My personal favourites of the few I've watched are the ones in-between, that are neither pure over-the-top taboo nor completely sombre.

Agitator is a wonderful biography and analysis of Miike's films and their themes.

I was fascinated by the author's interpretations of the more eye-searing insane ones, which I thought were smart and well-reasoned. I do think that the whole point of those probably *were* to be provocative, edgy, gratuitous, etcetera... but I agree that there lies an intelligent awareness of the audience and what will discomfort them the most using seemingly simple methods.

If I'm truthful, the book Mes wrote on Shinya Tsukamoto was better and more balanced. Both filmographies, however, are of exceptional quality and totally unexpected. It's not everyday you find a thorough, well-written book on *any* filmmaker, especially not divisive cult-horror directors, so these books are a rare treat.

Writing / Analysis - 4.5/5

Material - 4/5

General - 4/5

Andrew F says

Miike is an inherently interesting figure because his films are wildly diverse, yet linked by key things -

ultraviolence usually playing a part, but even that varies from slapstick to torture.

This book by Tom Mes (who also wrote the excellent Iron Man: The Cinema of Shinya Tsukamoto for Fab Press) is a good companion to your no-doubt growing Takashi Miike DVD/Blu-ray collection. Or am I just talking to myself?

Fab Press also put out such amazing books as Stephen Thrower's NIGHTMARE USA and BEYOND TERROR: THE FILMS OF LUCIO FULCI and ABEL FERRARA: THE MORAL VISION by Brad Stevens. All expensive, all amazing (I managed to nab a copy of Moral Vision and Iron Man at the Camden Film fair at a vastly reduced price...I had sold my copy of Moral Vision years earlier like an idiot).

Ad Blankestijn says

Guide to Japan's iconoclastic and prolific film director. I would have liked more analysis in this book, and less journalism. Also, I have my doubts about the quality of Miike's films, who after direct-to-video fests of over the top violence for the arthouse crowd in the 1990s and early 2000s, now seems to have sold out to commercial interests with little new to say.

Toby says

A bit dated now considering Miike's career is still going full pelt ahead, and misses out in particular in Miike's rise in popularity in the Western audience (assisted by Quentin Tarantino). But still the most in-depth and thorough look at Takashi Miike and his films that you will find anywhere, well worth the money if you are a fan!

Wendeline Wright says

invaluable if you love weird-o-rama Japanese films.

Pete says

For anyone who has ever tried explaining the appeal of Takeshi Miike's films to someone who hasn't seen any of them, I understand if you wondered: 'Should I really be talking about these movies in mixed company?'

High-five then, to Tom Mes: bravely stepping into the feces-filled kiddie pools, through the entrail-covered hotel suites, and among the blowgun-wielding vaginas, Mes takes Q-tip and magnifying glass to an impressive cycle of many of Miike's most legendary cinematic transgressions, and in doing so reveals the strong series of moral, ethical and psychological themes found within.

Mes conducts a no-nonsense, in-depth examination of the director's 1990-2002 theatrical and direct-to-video

releases, a span of preposterously explosive films that shake with raw human nerve and monstrous energy. The oversize-format book contains some excellent stills from the films(mostly b&w), but unlike a bona-fide table book of lavish photos, the reason to be there is definitely the scholarly take on Miike's work. The book closes with a lengthy interview with the director in 2002 for the revised edition.

Tony says

As stated in other reviews the interesting part of Miikes career is the contrast from early to present & his success over here. Good read, I just wish it covered Gozu

David Ashley says

THE book for Miike fans, absolutely essential and ridiculously exhaustive. A true passion project, you can almost feel Tom falling more and more in love Miike as the book goes on. Would absolutely love a follow up to this (a true follow up that is) that explores every film since the publication of this book over 10 years ago.

Balls Montgomery says

A good overview of Miike's wildman days, he's since settled into a savvy veteran filmmaker and away from his extreme/schlocky/hilarious material. Mes notes familiar themes that run rampant through his works which I completely didn't notice. I just found his sexually perverse insanity quite endearing.
