



Where a Nuclear Meltdown and Sexwork Intersect: Discovering the stories in the film “Boys for Sale”

A *u:japan* lecture film screening & talk by Thomas Ash

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Thursday
2022-10-06
18³⁰~20⁰⁰



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Boys are selling sex in Japan. Who is buying?

In the Tokyo district of Shinjuku 2-chome there are bars that specialize in “Urisen”, young guys who have sex with men. This documentary is an illuminating look into a rarely seen world that tantalizingly shows the humanity of sex work.

On topics as varied as the health of children following the Fukushima nuclear disaster („In the Grey Zone“, 2012 and „A2-B-C“, 2013), death and dying („-1287“, 2014 and „Sending Off“, 2019) and the treatment of asylum-seekers in immigration detention („Ushiku“, 2021), the films of Thomas Ash broadly deal with themes of health, medicine and human rights.

While many of his films share the same quiet and observational style, „Boys for Sale“ (2017) is an outlier in terms of the production visuals and soundtrack, yet Thomas’s influen-

男の子たちが売るセックスを買うのは・・・？ウリ専と共に・・・それは、男性にセックスを売る主にストレートの男の子・・・彼らが如何にして雇われたか、その職務や生活状況、彼らの体験が今、明らかとなる。東京・新宿二丁目を舞台に、売春行為は江戸時代より今日へと続く。

ce is strongly felt, particularly in the depth and flow of the interviews with his subjects.

In his speech, Thomas will speak about his conscious effort to prevent „Boys for a Sale“ from becoming sensational and exploitative and how his desire to quietly listen led to discoveries mid-interview which would echo back to his earlier work in Fukushima in a way in which he never could have predicted.

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Thomas Ash, born in America, earned an MA in Film and Television Production at the University of Bristol, UK (2005) and has lived in Japan for over 20 years. His first feature documentary was ‘the ballad of vicki and jake’ (2006), followed by two feature documentaries about children living in areas of Fukushima contaminated by the 2011 nuclear meltdown, ‘In the Grey Zone’ (2012) and ‘A2-B-C’ (2013), and one that dealt with themes surrounding health and medicine in Japan, ‘-1287’ (2014).

“Boys for Sale” (2017, dir. Itako), about male sex workers in Tokyo on which Thomas served as Executive Producer, screened in 40 film festivals across the world, receiving six awards for Best Feature Documentary. In 2019, Thomas released two films: “Sending Off” and “The Father’s Love Begotten”. Thomas’s newest documentary “Ushiku” (2021), is about asylum seekers to Japan who are detained at the infamous Ushiku immigration centre (More information on Thomas Ash’s website: <http://www.documentingian.com/>).

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