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The Tomb of Yasujiro Ozu: A Journey
Enacted homage through ‘architectural-filmic wandering’

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Why Ozu?

Our aim was to produce a film, documenting a journey to acclaimed Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu’s final resting place, his grave (‘tomb’) located in the Tokyo suburb Kita-Kamakura.

One of the most celebrated Japanese film director with an unsurpassed reputation.

Many acclaimed directors have acknowledged Ozu’s influence on their own film style: for example Jim Jarmusch, Wim Wenders, Claire Denis, Kyoshi Kurosawa, Hirozaku Koreeda, Hou Hsou Hsien, among others.

Influence, legacy, impact: all ensure connectivity between the past – body of work, artistic practice and ethos – and the present – the traces of an artistic vision that can be traced back to a particular artistic movement or canon. An ‘inter-cinematic’ gap is bridged, a gap which is opened with the passing of one master – in this case Ozu – and the beginnings of a new generation of filmmakers and artists.
Performative turn

The rationale for the film was to explore both the place itself and the act of journeying to that place. These are the two aspects forming the structure for the film script.

We also sought to examine the experience of being at the grave

‘Journeying’ or travelling to a final resting place is a not uncommon practice

- Japanese culture (and other cultures) stress the importance of familial visits to graves. See for example Koreeda’s film Still Walking, a paratext of Tokyo Story that culminates in a visit to the parent’s graves

- For the fans or aficionados the visit can have special significance, it can be invested with notions of constructed spirituality, devotion-type ritual around the ‘venerated’ persona and so on.

- Homage vis a vis a broader interest in celebrity graves – for instance Heddy Honigmann’s 2006 documentary film Forever about Pere Lachaise noted the transnational nature of the cemetery in this context, given the number of foreign cultural celebrities and political heroes buried there (Frideric Chopin, Oscar Wilde, Jim Morrison’s ‘shrine’).