



## JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL AUSTRALIA

The **Japanese Film Festival** is well and truly upon us once again. Now in its 23rd year, JFF has grown in leaps and bounds, and 2018 has seen it continue its outreach into regional towns and communities across Australia.

For our regular readers in NSW and the NT, we trust that they partook of the **free screenings** in Alice Springs and Newcastle, and that Darwin (19-20 Oct.) and Dubbo (TBC) readers get a chance to go theirs over the next two months. (Subscribe to our Facebook CGJSYD for updates about local screenings!) Highlights in the 2018 JFF Regional program include the magically whimsical, Ghibli-esque “Mary and the Witch’s Flower” and the cinematic adaptation of the irreverently irrepressible “Gintama”.



A Geisha © 1953 Kadokawa Pictures

The **JFF Classics Program** continues its long association with the Art Gallery of NSW with a curated program of works adapted from novels by celebrated authors Junichiro Tanizaki and Kyoka Izumi, and directed by cinematic masters from the Japanese Golden Age and New Wave screening between **3-31 October**. Classics screenings are also free but on a first-come basis. See [www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au) for details.

**The main film festival** is still to grace the major state capitals and the program will feature its usual heady mix of cult classics, art house eclecticism and contemporary blockbusters.

**JFF Sydney** is on **15-25 November** with tickets now on sale.

Visit the JFF website for more details:

[www.japanesefilmfestival.net](http://www.japanesefilmfestival.net)

## Culture’s new virtual reality

Walk through the front gates of the Tokyo National Museum, Japan’s oldest museum and largest art collection, and you know that you have arrived somewhere with serious intent and history behind it. Cultural heritage plays a very significant role in Japan—this is after all a country



Tokyo National Museum

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that has a public holiday for culture (*Bunka no Hi* on 3 November). With a system that designates national treasures and important cultural properties, there is a strong awareness of the need to preserve and pass on items in good order. Recently virtual reality has been playing a growing role in making even the oldest of treasures accessible to the public—including at the venerable Tokyo National Museum (TNM).

### Five of the very oldest national treasures brought together thanks to VR technology in the one space at TNM

There are more than 20,000 clay figurines dating from the Jomon Period (circa 11,000-1,000BCE) and they are known collectively as *dogu* in Japan. Only five are designated as national treasures and they are housed in museums in Nagano, Aomori and Hokkaido. In July through September this year, all five national-treasure *dogu* could be experienced in Tokyo at the TNM & Toppan Museum Theatre in a 3D screening called ‘DOGU The Dawn of Japanese Beauty’.

VR footage and copies are being actively encouraged by the Agency for Cultural Affairs to replicate delicate and priceless pieces that due to their fragility can only be displayed for short periods. It is also very difficult to lend such items to other domestic and international museums. It is hoped that virtual reality and the latest printing technologies will make such items accessible to much wider audiences. Renting out replicas could help fund preservation of the original items.

Back at TNM, the next ‘exhibition’ at the VR theatre is a display that is returning after a public vote. The public decided it wants to see a vanished treasure—the **last keep (tower) of Edo Castle** built by the Tokugawa Shogunate, said to be the tallest ever constructed. Using drawings and designs from the time, some 1 million individual pieces went into the ‘recreation’ of the keep, imagining that the original lost to fire in 1657 still exists to this day. On now until Christmas Eve.

TNM & Toppan Museum Theatre

[www.toppan-vr.jp/mt/en/](http://www.toppan-vr.jp/mt/en/)

National Institutes for Cultural Heritage

[www.nich.go.jp/english/](http://www.nich.go.jp/english/)