

CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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Thursday 28th March: [Plan 75](#)

Japan/France/Philippines 112 mins 2022

Director: Chie Hayakawa

Writers: Jason Gray; Chie Hayakawa

Cast:

Chieko Baishô (*Michi Kakutani*); Stefanie Arianne (*Maria*); Hayato Isomura (*Hiromu Okabe*); Taka Takao (*Uncle Yukio Okabe*); Yumi Kawai (*Yôko Narimiya*)

Set in a near future, 'Plan 75' is the Japanese government's new programme, via which citizens aged 75+ are invited to be voluntarily euthanised to help counter the challenges of a super-aged society, receiving a small payment (of ¥100,00) for their (self-)sacrifice. To the corporatised powers that be, Plan 75 seems the preferable management solution – so much easier than burdening Japan's financial and health and social care systems, after all.

Celebrated actress Chieko Baishô plays Michi, who works as a hotel housekeeper before being made redundant, fearful that she may not be able to support herself and needs to sign up. We also follow two other characters: Hiromu (Hayato Isomura), a Plan 75 salesman facing a crisis of conscience when his estranged Uncle Yukio (Taka Takao) volunteers for the programme; and Maria (Stefanie Arianne), a young immigrant mother, who takes a low-level job at the company to help pay for her daughter's lifesaving surgery.

Debut director Chie Hayakawa's quietly realist treatment of the dystopian premise makes for haunting viewing. The mellow dialogue and casual pacing suggest an absence of conflict, but it is precisely the ordinariness of Plan 75's visual scheme that pricks the viewer's conscience: it is disconcertingly easy to imagine the plan being implemented in many countries with ageing populations. The film is less an argument about the merits and ills of euthanasia than a searing interrogation of how capitalism is making it too expensive to grow old with dignity.

Plan 75 expresses the escalating anxieties about one's silver years in Japan, which has one of the world's most rapidly ageing populations. But the film's exploration of life's sacredness, and its tender portrait of elderly relationships, transcend cultural specificities; it's a resonant lesson in humanism.

Our next presentation:

[Under The Fig Trees](#) will be shown on Wednesday, 03 April, starting at 8:00pm. We will be holding a Discussion session in the Café area of the theatre following the screening of this film.