



# EVIL DOES NOT EXIST

悪は存在しない

Hitoshi Omika Ryo Nishikawa

Ryuji Kosaka Ayaka Shibutani Hazuki Kikuchi Hiroyuki Miura Yuto Torii  
Tajiro Tamura

Written and Directed by **Ryusuke Hamaguchi**

Music by **Eiko Ishibashi**

Production: NEOPA / fictive Producer: Satoshi Takata Executive Producer: Sho Harada, Katsumi Tokuyama Cinematographer: Yoshio Kitagawa Sound Mixer: Izumi Matsuno  
Production designer: Masato Nunobe Assistant Director: Kaoru Endo Line Producer: Tomohisa Ishii Colorist: Ryota Kobayashi Editor: Ryusuke Hamaguchi, Azusa Yamazaki  
Original Concept by Ryusuke Hamaguchi and Eiko Ishibashi International Sales: m-appeal



**Original title:** 悪は存在しない (Aku Wa Sonzai Shinai)

**Running time:** 106 min

**Genre:** Drama

**Year:** 2023

**Language:** Japanese

**Country of Origin:** Japan

**Format:** 2K DCP(1800x1080), 24fps, 1.66:1, 5.1ch

**World Sales:** m-appeal

## **LOGLINE**

Urban ambitions clash with nature in a quiet village close to Tokyo

## **SYNOPSIS**

Takumi and his daughter Hana live in Mizubiki Village, close to Tokyo. Like generations before them, they live a modest life according to the cycles and order of nature. One day, the village inhabitants become aware of a plan to build a glamping site near Takumi's house; offering city residents a comfortable 'escape' to nature. When two company representatives from Tokyo arrive in the village to hold a meeting, it becomes clear that the project will have a negative impact on the local water supply, causing unrest. The agency's mismatched intentions endanger both the ecological balance of the nature plateau and their way of life, with an aftermath that affects Takumi's life.



## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Ryusuke Hamaguchi was born in Japan in 1978. In 2008, *Passion*, his master's degree graduate work from Tokyo University of Arts, was selected at the San Sebastián International Film Festival and Tokyo Filmex. In 2015, his award-winning film *Happy Hour* premiered at the 68th Locarno International Film Festival. In 2021, *Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy* won the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize at the 71st Berlinale. At the 74th edition of Cannes, *Drive My Car* won the Screenplay Prize and three independent prizes, including FIPRESCI. The following year it received four Academy Award nominations, including Best Film, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay and won the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film.



**Passion (2008, 115min.)** - Official Selection—San Sebastian Film Festival and Tokyo Filmex

**I Love Thee for Good (2009, 58min)** - Official Selection—Paris Cinéma International Film Festival

**The Depths (2010, 121min.)** - Official Selection—Tokyo Filmex

**Sound of Waves (2011, 142min., co-directed by Ko Sakai)** - Official Selection—the 65th Locarno Film Festival

**Intimacies (2012, 255min.)**

**Voices from the Waves Shinchi Town (2013, 103min., co-directed by Ko Sakai)** - Official Selection—Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival

**Voices from the Waves Kisenuma (2013, 109min., co-directed by Ko Sakai)** - Official Selection—Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival

**Storytellers (2013, 120min., co-directed by Ko Sakai)** - Official Selection—Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival

**Touching the Skin of Eeriness (2013, 54min.)**

**Happy Hour (2015, 317min.)** - Best actress & special mention for script—the 68th Locarno Film Festival

**Heaven is still far away (2016, 38min.)**

**Asako I & II (2018, 119min.)** - Official Competition—the 71st Cannes Film Festival

**Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy (2021, 121min.)** - Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize—the 71st Berlin International Film Festival

**Drive My Car (2021, 179min.)** - Best Screenplay, FIPRESCI, Jury œcuménique, AFCAE—the 74th Cannes Film Festival - Best International Feature Award—the 94th Academy Award

## EIKO ISHIBASHI

Composer / Concept design with Hamaguchi

**Eiko Ishibashi** is a Japanese multi-instrumentalist whose work has ranged from acclaimed singer-songwriter albums to scores for film, television, theater and exhibitions to improvised music. She has collaborated with international artists such as Jim O'Rourke, Keiji Haino, Charlemagne Palestine, Merzbow, Giovanni Di Domenico, Phew, and many others. Her own records have been released by Drag City, Black Truffle, and Editions Mego, amongst others. Amongst her film scores is Ryusuke Hamaguchi's Oscar-winning 2021 film *Drive My Car* for which she won the "Discovery of the Year" award at The World Soundtrack Awards and the "Best Original Music" award at the Asian Film Awards.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In this film, I had a wonderful opportunity to work with *Drive My Car*'s composer Eiko Ishibashi again. The film project began when she asked me to create some footage for her live performance, and I conceived of the film as an “original source material” for the footage. As I became more and more connected to this film we were creating, Eiko and her friends helped me a lot in the shooting, too. It was very free way of filmmaking, which vitalized me a lot. After the shoot, I felt that I had captured interactions of people in nature and completed the work as a single film with Eiko Ishibashi's beautiful theme music. I hope the audience will feel the life force of the figures that are stirring in nature and music.



## A collaboration of sound and image: Ryusuke Hamaguchi & Eiko Ishibashi

Musician Eiko Ishibashi and filmmaker Ryusuke Hamaguchi have teamed up once again following their successful collaboration on the critically acclaimed film *Drive My Car*. The unique result is two new works; a live score film performance titled *Gift*, which features a silent film directed by Hamaguchi accompanied by a live soundtrack performed by Ishibashi, and *Evil Does Not Exist*, the new narrative feature film by the director. *Evil Does Not Exist* provided the source material for the silent film in *Gift*, and Ishibashi created the soundtrack for the feature film. In their work together, Ishibashi and Hamaguchi seek to reimagine the relationship of sound to image and narrative.

**Ryusuke, could you tell us about the experience of this different way of working?**

**Ryusuke Hamaguchi:** The core of the production was creating video footage for Eiko Ishibashi's live performance, and naturally, it would become like a silent film. This meant that I couldn't develop the film through dialogue as I had done before. That was the most significant difference, and that was also the most intriguing point of this project for me. Moreover, nothing was predetermined, and I could try anything. There was a period when I couldn't come up with any ideas and struggled, but the freedom of this process was something I truly appreciated.

**Did it add a new element to your work?**

**RH:** Yes, it was a truly fantastic challenge for me. I was able to think about visuals in a more pure and dynamic way than ever before, and it felt like an unexplored channel that I wouldn't have been able to access without an opportunity like this.

**In what ways were Eiko and her friends involved in the shooting?**

**RH:** The shooting took place near the area where Eiko actually lives. I thought that since her music originates from that location, it would make it easier for me to conceptualize my visuals. Eiko introduced some of her friends as local collaborators for the project. Among them was someone I'd describe as an "expert of nature," and his perspective distinctly influenced the character of the protagonist. I learned from him how to perceive nature and understood once again how it's imbued with "movement." These various captured motions and fluctuations, I believed, would surely harmonize with the music Eiko creates.

**You said that you experienced a lot of freedom in making this film, could you tell us a bit more about that?**

**RH:** Hitoshi Omika, who plays the lead role, was actually a member of the production staff in *Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy*. Originally, he accompanied us on scenario hunts as a "driver" along with the cinematographer Yoshio Kitagawa. We often had him try out various shots we came up with on location. Gradually, I couldn't imagine anyone else in the lead role but him. In this film production, he also took on roles as part of the staff. Working with a small team, there were many individuals, like Hitoshi, who doubled as both staff and actors. During the filming period, there were quite a few script revisions, more so than in recent years. This unstructured way of filmmaking taught me once again about the freedom and potential of filmmaking.

**Eiko, how was the collaborative experience for you?**

**Eiko Ishibashi:** When the idea of doing live performances alongside visuals was proposed by overseas promoters, I wasn't immediately convinced. However, after some time, I realized that if visuals and music can each be interesting independently and can transform into something different when layered together, it could be intriguing.

I believe that Mr. Hamaguchi is not only an excellent storyteller but also creates films with a strong musical quality. When we worked together on the previous film *Drive My Car*, I could see his dedication to sound, and it was a very enjoyable collaboration. So, I approached Mr. Hamaguchi with the idea for the new project *Gift*. Having two versions like this has truly been a wonderful experience and I'm genuinely pleased about it.

**How would you summarize the main differences between *Gift* and *Evil Does Not Exist*?**

**RH:** First and foremost, the stories are slightly different. Although the filming material is shared, different shots and takes are used, and the narratives are subtly distinct. The impression of the characters will likely differ as well. It's a bit like a small multiverse. As for how the experiences vary when watching both works... truthfully, even I don't know the answer. I believe it's only when experienced as an audience alongside Eiko's performance that one can truly understand. However, I am convinced that both works inspire each other and expand the audience's experience.



**Do you want to add anything more about how *Evil Does Not Exist* became it's own cinematic work?**

**RH:** Certainly, when I wrote the script for the narrative film, I wanted to encourage the actors to act strongly. I thought the texts of the dialogues will support them to be there. I felt that the actors (the visuals) existing powerfully and largely independent of Eiko's music would create the most compelling synergy when eventually combined with her music. As a result, each actor, led by Hitoshi, was truly remarkable, and I was moved on set. This strength was particularly carried in their "voices." I wanted this "voice" to reach the audience as well, so while obtaining Eiko's permission, I decided to complete it as a standalone film titled *Evil Does Not Exist*. Once again, I want to express my gratitude to Eiko, who provided all the inspiration for this endeavour.

## CAST

### Hitoshi Omika as Takumi



Born in 1988. Graduated from Kuwasawa Design School. He has primarily worked as an assistant director, including Tatsushi Omori's *Every Day a Good Day*, Edmond Yeo's *Moonlight Shadow*, and Ryusuke Hamaguchi's *Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy*.

He has completed his first short film *Father And Father* (Gihu Yohu, 59min., 2023).

### Ryo Nishikawa as Hana



Born on March 14, 2014, in Osaka Prefecture. Affiliated with UNBLINK Co., Ltd. Her special skill is rhythmic gymnastics. Her debut work, the film *Evil Does Not Exist* was selected for the competition section of the 80th Venice International Film Festival.

## Ryuji Kosaka as Takahashi

Born in 1985 in Yamaguchi Prefecture, he ventured to Tokyo in 2012 to embark on his acting career. He has showcased his talent across various mediums, including film, television dramas, and stage performances. While he took a hiatus from his activities in recent years, he is making a comeback with this film. His previous notable appearances include roles in TV drama *HIGH&LOW* (2016) and *Prison's Thorn* (2017).



## Ayaka Shibutani as Mayuzumi

Born in 1991 in Hyogo Prefecture, she began her acting career with her appearance in the film *Happy Hour* by Hamaguchi. In recent years, she has been involved in various notable projects, including her role in the theatrical production of *Five Days in March* by Toshiki Okada's theater company, chelfitsch. She also participated in *Concert Rehearsal* by Tokidoki Jidou, and appeared in the film *Ten Years + One Day* by Shinya Nakata.



## **CREW**

**Director:** Ryusuke Hamaguchi

**Music:** Eiko Ishibashi

**Screenplay:** Ryusuke Hamaguchi

**DOP:** Yoshio Kitagawa

**Sound Mixer:** Izumi Matsuno

**Production Design:** Masato Nunobe

**Assistant Director:** Kaoru Endo

**Line Producer:** Tomohisa Ishii

**Colorist:** Ryota Kobayashi

**Editor:** Ryusuke Hamaguchi & Azusa Yamazaki

**Producer:** Satoshi Takata

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