



# AN

## Een film van Naomi Kawase

*AN (A Sweet Taste of Life)* is de nieuwe speelfilm van de veelvuldig bekroonde Japanse regisseur Naomi Kawase (*THE MOURNING FOREST*, *SUZAKU*, *STILL THE WATER*), gebaseerd op het gelijknamige boek van de Japanse schrijver Tetsuya Akikawa (onder het pseudoniem Durian Sukegawa). Sentaro runt een klein bakkerswinkeltje waar hij dorayaki verkoopt - Japanse pannenkoekjes gevuld met 'an', een zoete rodebonenpasta. Wanneer Tokue, een oude en ietwat spirituele vrouw, aanbiedt hem te helpen in de keuken, accepteert hij dat schoorvoetend. Tokue blijkt met veel liefde en aandacht overheerlijke 'an' te kunnen maken. Dankzij haar geheime recept, komt de kleine bakkerij tot bloei en ontstaat er een bijzondere vriendschap.

*AN (A Sweet Taste of Life)* was de openingsfilm van 'Un Certain Regard' op het Cannes Filmfestival en won de prijs voor Beste Film op het Valletta Film Festival 2015.



Speelduur: 117 min. - Land: Japan - Jaar: 2015 - Genre: Drama  
Releasedatum bioscoop: 11 februari 2016  
Distributie: Cinéart

Meer informatie over de film:

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*Persmap en foto's staan op: [www.cinéart.nl/pers](http://www.cinéart.nl/pers) - inlog: cinéart / wachtwoord: film*

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## Cast

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<b>Tokue</b>	Kirin Kiki
<b>Sentaro</b>	Masatoshi Nagase
<b>Wakana</b>	Kyara Uchida
<b>Eigenaresse dorayaki kraam</b>	Miyoko Asada
<b>Yoshiko</b>	Etsuko Ichihara

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## Crew

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<b>Regie</b>	Naomi Kawase
<b>Producent</b>	Masa Sawada Koichiro Fukushima Yoshito Oyama
<b>Co-producent</b>	Thanassis Karathanos
<b>Scenario</b>	Naomi Kawase
<b>Gebaseerd op het boek</b>	<i>An</i> van Durian Sukegawa (Poplar Publishing)
<b>DoP</b>	Shigeki Akiyama
<b>Licht</b>	Yasuhiro Ohta
<b>Art director</b>	Kyôko Heya
<b>Regie assistent</b>	Yuki Kondo
<b>Editing</b>	Tina Baz
<b>Muziek</b>	David Hadjadj
<b>Geluid</b>	Eiji Mori
<b>Sound design</b>	Roman Dymny
<b>Sound editing</b>	Boris Chapelle
<b>Sound re-recording mixing</b>	Olivier Goinard
<b>Productie</b>	Comme des Cinémas Nagoya Broadcasting Network Twenty Twenty Vision
<b>Co-productie</b>	AEON Entertainment Kumie, Poplar Publishing Hakuhodo, Elephant House The Asahi Shimbun Company ZDF/ARTE, MAM
<b>Met hulp van</b>	CNC Medienboard Berlin Brandenburg Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan

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## Regisseur Naomi Kawase

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Naomi Kawase is geboren op 30 mei 1969 in Nara, Japan. Nadat ze in 1989 afstudeerde aan de Osaka School of Photography, bleef ze daar vier jaar werken als docent voor ze de film EMBRACING uitbracht. Net als deze film gaan veel van haar eerste korte films over haar turbulente familiegeschiedenis.

Met de film SUZAKU werd Kawase de jongste winnaar van de 'Caméra d'Or Award' voor beste nieuwe regisseur op het Film Festival van Cannes van 1997.

In 2006 bracht ze de veertig minuten durende documentaire TARACHIME uit. In deze documentaire herbeleeft Kawase haar relatie met haar groottante, en worstelt ze met zeer persoonlijke thema's zoals de steeds erger wordende dementie van haar groottante.



Kawase vierde lange speelfilm THE MOURNING FOREST ging in 2007 in première in haar geboortestad Nara en won de Grote Prijs op het Cannes Film Festival van 2007. Haar film HANEZU ging in 2011 ook op dit festival in première en in 2013 nam ze tijdens het festival plaats als lid van de jury. Een jaar later werd haar film STILL THE WATER geselecteerd voor de officiële competitie van Cannes.

AN was in 2015 de openingsfilm van de 'Un Certain Regard' sectie op het filmfestival van Cannes.

### **Selectie uit filmografie**

AN (2015)

*Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard Opening Film*

STILL THE WATER (2014)

*Cannes Film Festival, in Competition*

HANEZU (2011)

*Cannes Film Festival, in Competition*

NANAYOMACHI (2008)

THE MOURNING FOREST (2007)

*Cannes Film Festival - Grand Prize*

SHARA (2003)

*Cannes Film Festival, in Competition*

HOTARU (2000)

*Locarno Film Festival - CICAIE Award & FIPRESCI Prize*

SUZAKU (1997)

*Cannes Film Festival - Golden Camera*

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## Director's statement

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Cherry trees in full bloom remind us of death. I do not know of any other tree whose flowers blossom in such a spectacular way, only to have their petals scatter just as suddenly. Is this the reason behind our fascination for blossoming cherry trees? Is this why we are compelled to see a reflection of our own lives in them?

Sentaro, Tokue and Wakana meet when the cherry trees are in full bloom. The trajectories of these three people are very different. And yet, their souls cross paths and meet one another in the same landscapes.

Our society is not always predisposed to letting our dreams become reality. Sometimes, it swallows up our hopes.

After learning that Tokue is infected with leprosy, the story pulls us into a quest for the very essence of what makes us human. As a director, I have the honour and pleasure of exploring different lives through cinema, as is the case with this film.

By unveiling the complex mechanics of this society, I hope to further an understanding of the very essence of existence. AN is the meeting of two souls who unite in order to face life's obstacles. How many times must we be knocked down before we can reach paradise?

Sometimes an impenetrable silence engulfs us. And yet, the joy resulting from commitment and connection to the world allows us to better appreciate its changes and evolution. Through this film, I therefore wish to reveal and underline the joy we are able to feel at these precise moments.

Throughout our lives, there are times when we might find ourselves filled with regret and despair, and feel like giving in. Despite this – or maybe even because of this – we are nevertheless capable of holding onto our hopes and of continuing to have faith in the future.



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## Interview met Naomi Kawase

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### **How did you get the idea to adapt the book *An* by Durian Sukegawa, edited in 2013 in Japan?**

Actually, Durian Sukegawa is in one of my films, *Hanezu* (2012), as an actor. We went to Cannes together when the film was selected for the Competition and, while we were there, he briefly talked about the story of *An*. Later he finished the book and sent it to me, and he asked me if I was interested in making a film based on it. So I read the book and I was drawn to how it carefully traced the presence of “what’s invisible” in life. Cinema is the medium in which we construct reality with what’s visible, but at the same time, I believe cinema can also create the presence of what’s invisible in life and present it for us as audience.

### **How personal is this film? How did you adapt the story from the book to the script of the film?**

When I was writing the screenplay, I locked myself up in the library located inside the property of National Tama Zenshoen, which is the sanatorium in the outskirts of Tokyo for leprosy and ex-leprosy patients. I also spent some time walking alone inside the forest of the sanatorium, feeling the actual light and winds of the place, and talking to some ex-patients who actually reside in the sanatorium, so that I could bring more reality into my script, as well as making the literal language into more of cinematic language. As a personal stand point, I was especially seeing one of the main characters, Tokue, in the reflection of my own foster mother, who passed away three years ago.

### **The three main characters of the film are lonely people who for various reasons do not belong in society. How do their situations change in the film? What do they come to understand?**

First, anyone cannot live alone. This is what I think of us as human beings. Also, most of us have experienced some kind of failures in life. Sometimes, such failures can change one’s life dramatically. Even so, every one of us can still possess the power to continue living one’s life no matter what, and I believe it is inside us by nature. However,



sometimes, our societies could confront such will and desire of someone, and in this film, we could see the main character Tokue being “robbed” of most of her lifetime, but at the same time, she had also learnt a lot of things from the particular situation she was put in. Being helped by or passed on by Tokue, who had lived and experienced much more, the two other main characters, Sentaro and Wakana, gain their own ways of believing in who they are and become able to make one small but very important step forward in their own life.

### **Is society such an agent of exclusion? Or do you think people create their own barriers?**

In contemporary societies, it seems to me that sometimes people are creating their own barriers. As a consequence in a broader scale, such barriers might be leading us to re-create the notions and actions of trying to get rid of the “others”. Sometimes, someone who looks so angry from afar can actually be crying if we get close enough to see the person. Such a person can simply be looking for the warmth of others.

### **Even if this time the action merely takes place in the city, in opposition to your previous film *Still the Water*, nature still is superb too in *An*. What part does nature play in this film?**

As an essence, the role of the nature in this film is not any different than the one in my previous film or films. Nature is something that quietly watches over us, human beings. The cherry trees for instance

don't speak any word but they understand and accept what and how we are. They bring flowers every coming season, no matter what, which I think is so lovely.



**How did you choose the main actors?**

As for Tokue, I discussed with Durian Sukegawa, the author, and we decided to ask the actress, Kirin Kiki. She read the original story and very happily accepted our offer immediately. For Sentaro, I had been dreaming to make a film with him for a long time, and he took my passion pleasantly. As for Wakana's role, it took a while to finally decide on the actress, but at the end, we decided to go with her who is a real granddaughter of Kirin Kiki, who plays Tokue.

**Do you believe simple things as recipes can change people's lives?**

Yes, I believe so. To be honest, I really love eating and can't resist to delicious dishes. Eating good food makes my mind wondrous and happy. I also believe no one would be angry for eating delicious food.