



Graduate School of Film and New Media

Although many film schools have been established around the world, primarily in advanced nations that realized the importance of film media as an industry, for various reasons this matter has not been given sufficient thought in Japan. The Tokyo University of the Arts proposed the establishment of a Film Department to the Education Ministry in 1949, but even though the plan was approved, it remained unimplemented.

The establishment of film schools and of measures for promoting films has been emphasized in various Asian countries over the past decades, and as a result, Asia has produced an array of flourishing creators who have come to represent a totally new type of Asian talent on the international stage.

The Graduate School of Film and New Media is an autonomous graduate college without a related undergraduate course, offering master's and doctoral programs. Following the initial establishment in 2005 of the Department of Film Production, the Department of New Media, and the doctoral program, the Department of Animation was added in 2008.

A film is a creator that spins contemporary stories out of images instead of words, functioning simultaneously as a narrator telling these stories. It is a vehicle for stories about things to come, communicated on a level beyond language barriers. In its quality as a storyteller, a film is often compared to literature, but the new expressive medium of visuals has in fact a much greater propagation ability than words.



Shooting Studio

Animation is commonly considered as an extension of pictorial art. However, there is a huge difference between painting, which has its *raison d'être* in its motionlessness, and animation with its additional notion of time based on motion.

There is always the possibility that the alluringly new world of artistic expression through film media can become so enslaved by the newness of rapidly evolving media technology that it loses sight of the basics of artistic expression.

The Japanese word *bunka*, referring to education generally and to reading and writing skills, is a translation of the English term “culture.” As we can understand from the existence of such words as “agriculture,” the meaning of “culture” encompasses the rather essential notion of “cultivation.” It would be fair to say that art and

culture fulfill important roles in social cultivation.

The nature of artistic expression lies in human beings’ instinctive resistance against loneliness. We can perhaps interpret communication as a way of sharing that battle against loneliness with others. To nurture outstanding artists means to encourage individuals to face that sense of loneliness, and to give them the confidence to sublimate it into artistic expression. In this regard, we want our students to “cultivate” themselves while enrolled at the graduate school, by exploring the depths of human nature through self-expression.

In an ideal world, this would mean that individual occurrences of artistic expression are transmitted to society via new media.

Film occupies a core position in the contents industry, which is expected to become a key industry in the 21st century. The aim of the Department of Film Production of the Graduate School of Film and New Media is to develop creators of narrative film works with international potential and cinematographers with advanced technical know-how and artistic sensibility.

Students in the Department of Film Production have the opportunity to work with the same facilities and equipment that professionals from the film industry are using, and to benefit from the experiences and specialized knowledge of a variety of professional filmmakers and producers who function as instructors. In addition, the course is a place for fellow students with the same aspirations to come together. The door of the Department of Film Production is open to everyone with a serious interest in pursuing a career in the film industry, as this is the best place to start.

In this Department, students specializing in various fields work all year long on film production, sharing a common goal. Focused on films with a dramatic structure, from short films to feature films, these productions use a very broad range of media standards, so as to keep pace with the current, rapid waves of change—from film to video, 16 mm to 35 mm, as well as DV, HDV, or HD.

The University provides a budget for each film depending on its particular scale, while students take charge of the casting and the choice of locations, as well as ensuring that all necessary materials and accessories are available.



The computer has been affecting our daily lives on various levels. Introduced as a practical tool providing great convenience, it also offers significant potential as an instrument for expression—in other words, a medium. It is possible to define the power of digital technology as the power to convert objects into numerical information. This means at once that the boundary between replica and original disappears, and that information can be distributed freely to any place in the world. Artists no longer need to fall back on paper or film to display their works.

Furthermore, the focus on interfaces for manipulating information has triggered a shift in the relationship between creator and recipient from a one-way affair toward interactivity. There is still much to explore about such characteristic features, as new, uncharted territory is added with every act of creative expression.

When there is a complete, predefined aesthetic, one may create works by simply following that theory, but in cases where artistic expression is formed within a relationship with others, it becomes necessary to analyze what occurs during the creation process from the viewpoint of media. In this sense, the creators and researchers who make up this Department's faculty, aim to train creators and at the same time, develop techniques to intensify artistic expression. We pursue these goals through actual creative work and workshops, based on the four thematic pillars of expression through media, theoretics, media concepts, and design.

The Department of Animation aims to reconfigure the increasingly diffuse world of animation, evaluate the originality of animation in this country from an international perspective, and dedicate itself to education, research, and the cultivation of creative talent in order to sustain this genre's autonomous development.

1) "Talent-spotting education" nurturing leadership qualities
We eagerly teach the ability to evaluate the quality and the cultural and economic value of one's own work from an objective point of view. We do so by focusing on spotting autonomously thinking creators and giving them ample opportunity to maximize their respective talents.

2) Creation-focused, on-the-spot research and learning environments
Another central aspect of this program is its systematization of knowledge to pass on to future generations, realized through hands-on learning grounded in practical creation that has been fostered in the field of artistic expression.

3) Innovative animation
We aim to nurture innovative creators capable of conceiving and producing new, never-before-seen works and projects.

4) Formation of a comprehensive network
While actively introducing international evaluation systems that have defined and developed animation as a form of art and culture, we connect animation-related institutes and individual researchers in Japan and abroad to establish a "contents platform" as a foundation for the creation of new opportunities.



The Graduate School of Film and New Media's doctoral program places importance on the aspect of gaining insight and experience through creating, while also building new practical knowledge. The aim is to conduct research into the vocabulary and grammar of film media, and ultimately to contribute to the systematization of this new field.

At present, doctorates in creative fields are a subject of worldwide controversy. A doctoral program must of course involve research aimed at the formulation of theoretical ideas, but in the field of art there must also be a tangible subject, in the form of an artwork and the creative process out of which it emerges. Moreover, the positions of the artist, the artwork, and the aspect of culture in a historical context must be defined; based on these definitions, the respective work must then be discussed theoretically in consideration of its relationship with previous theories of art production.

Concretely speaking, along with theorizing art as a creative human activity, in the doctoral program, such practical work is analyzed comprehensively in connection with the master's degree program's curriculum, which is centered on practical creative work.

While examining concrete results, at the same time we should not overlook the evolution of media technology, including camera and digital editing technology, as a supporting pillar of artistic expression. While reviewing the transformations of technology from the past to the present, we also keep a close eye on research and development of new media technology that enables new forms of expression.