

# NEW PEOPLE

# VIZCINEMA

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## **NEW PEOPLE YOKAI EVENT CELEBRATES HALLOWEEN JAPANESE STYLE**

*Japanese Pop Culture Venue In San Francisco's Japantown Hosts Theatrical Showing Of BATTLE LEAGUE HARUMO And Welcomes A Rare Exhibit Of Demons, Monsters And Other Creepy Creatures*

**San Francisco, CA, October 16, 2009** – NEW PEOPLE, a dynamic entertainment destination bringing the latest examples of Japanese popular culture to North American shores delivers Halloween – Japanese style – as it opens *Yokai University: San Francisco Campus*, a fun and spooky exhibit beginning October 23<sup>rd</sup> thru November 6<sup>th</sup>. To complement the exhibit, VIZ Cinema will host a special premiere of the *yokai* combat action-comedy film *BATTLE LEAGUE HORUMO*.

*Yokai* refers to a class of preternatural creatures from Japanese folklore that range from the evil Oni (ogre) to the mischievous Kitsune (fox) or Yuki-onna (snow woman). All possess some sort of spiritual or supernatural powers and are feared. *BATTLE LEAGUE HORUMO* is based on the best-selling fantasy novel *Kamogawa HORUMO* and takes audiences on a wild adventure that blends a breathtaking backdrop of Kyoto with legends of bizarre monsters and spirits. Information, trailers and screening times are available at: <http://www.vizcinema.com>.

NEW PEOPLE will host a free exhibit of *yokai* related books, art prints and other media in the venue's lobby. Notably featured are Japanese Ukiyo-e woodblock prints by master artist Hokusai Katsushika, who is known for works including the *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido Road*. The exhibit also features artwork by *yokai* manga pioneer Shigeru Mizuki, who created the popular series *GeGeGe No Kitaro*.

As part of the two week celebration, NEW PEOPLE invites the public to an informative free *yokai* lecture by Tokyo-based writer Matt Alt, who with co-author Hiroko Yoda, chronicled Japan's long love affair with monsters and spirits in their book *Yokai Attack!: The Japanese Monster Survival Guide*. The book, published by Kodansha International, is the first-ever English language *yokai* guidebook. Matt Alt gives history and insights on

its culture on Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup> from 1 – 2:30pm at VIZ Cinema. His book and a special collection of *yokai* themed products will be available for purchase at *NEW PEOPLE the Store*.

In *BATTLE LEAGUE HORUMO*, after failing the entrance exam and enduring two years of cram school, Akira Abe (Takayuki Yamada) finally is accepted to the prestigious Kyoto University. One day while on his way home with a friend, Akira meets a senior who invites them to a welcome party hosted by his club called the Azure Dragon. At first, the club appears to be an ordinary social group, but the new members soon discover the mysterious 1000 year-old tradition of the “Horumo” battle upheld by the four universities of Kyoto. The battle is fought between 10 players per team who each manipulate an army of 100 spirits (referred to as *Oni*) to fight their opponents. The members go through rigorous training to achieve fluency in the *Oni* language as well as learn the indefinable gestures that are required to complement it. Let the battles begin!

*BATTLE LEAGUE HORUMO* features stunning visual effects created by the renowned GONZO animation studio, which also produced animated features like *Afro Samurai*, *Brave Story*, and *Basilisk*.

“The Halloween season and the beginning of Fall is the perfect time to introduce NEW PEOPLE visitors to a taste of what has been scaring, haunting and tricking people in Japan for centuries,” says Seiji Horibuchi, Founder of New People and President and CEO of VIZ Pictures. “Everyone is familiar with monsters like Godzilla, but *Yokai University* and our theatrical presentation of *BATTLE LEAGUE HORUMO* offer even seasoned fans a crash course in all kinds of new creepy creatures and spirits.”

VIZ Cinema is the nation’s first movie theatre devoted exclusively to Japanese film and anime and is located inside NEW PEOPLE, in the heart of San Francisco’s Japantown. The spacious 143-seat subterranean theatre features plush seating, digital as well as 35mm projection, and a THX<sup>®</sup>-certified sound system.

### **About NEW PEOPLE**

NEW PEOPLE offers the latest films, art, fashion and retail brands from Japan and is the creative vision of the J-Pop Center Project and VIZ Pictures, a distributor and producer of Japanese live action film. Located at 1746 Post Street, the 20,000 square foot structure features a striking 3-floor transparent glass façade that frames a fun and exotic new environment to engage the imagination into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A dedicated web site is also now available at: [www.NewPeopleWorld.com](http://www.NewPeopleWorld.com).

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