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Visual Effects Society Names Academy-Award Winning Filmmaker Takashi Yamazaki as Recipient of the VES Visionary Award

Los Angeles (December 13, 2024) – Today, the Visual Effects Society (VES), the industry’s professional global honorary society, named Academy Award-winning director and Visual Effects Supervisor Takashi Yamazaki as the recipient of the VES Visionary Award, in recognition of his valuable contributions to visual arts and filmed entertainment. The award will be presented at the 23rd Annual VES Awards on February 11, 2025 at The Beverly Hilton hotel.

The VES Visionary Award, bestowed by the VES Board of Directors, recognizes an individual who has uniquely and consistently employed the art and science of visual effects to foster imagination and ignite future discoveries by way of artistry, invention and groundbreaking work. The Society will honor Yamazaki for his consummate artistry, expansive storytelling and profound ability to use visual effects to bring his unique visions to life.

“Takashi Yamazaki is a renowned talent in Japanese cinema, who accomplished a significant feat when he became only the second director to win an Academy Award for Best Visual Effects, and in the process reinvigorated a legendary kaiju franchise,” VES Chair Kim Davidson. “Yamazaki has been at the forefront in using visual effects to tell remarkable stories that transfix audiences and create unforgettable cinematic experiences. As a creative force who has made an indelible mark in the world of filmed entertainment, we are honored to award him with the prestigious VES Visionary Award.”

Born in Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture in 1964, Takashi Yamazaki is a Japanese filmmaker and visual effects supervisor, counted as one of Japan's leading film directors. Most recently Yamazaki wrote, directed and led the visual effects team responsible for the groundbreaking global hit *Godzilla Minus One*, making him the first director since Stanley Kubrick to win an Academy Award for Best Visual Effects. *Godzilla Minus One* is currently the 3rd highest grossing foreign language film in US box office history making over \$56 million dollars. The film also won eight Japan Academy Prizes including the prizes for Best Picture, Best Screenplay and Best Visual Effects, becoming the most-awarded film at the 47th annual awards.

Yamazaki is set to make his Hollywood debut with *Grandgear* for Bad Robot and Sony Pictures. In addition to writing and directing the film, he will also serve as a producer alongside J.J. Abrams and Glen Zipper.

Yamazaki credits childhood viewings of *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* with influencing his pursuit of a career in special effects. After graduating from Asagaya College of Art and Design, he joined VFX house Shirogumi Inc. in 1986 working on SFX and digital compositing in films directed by Juzo Itami,

such as *The Last Dance* (1993) and *A Quiet Life* (1995). He made his debut as a film director in 2000 with *Juvenile* and became a leading figure in visual expression and VFX using computer graphics in Japan.

Always: Sunset on Third Street (2005), using VFX to depict the streets of Tokyo in the late 1950s, won 12 awards, including Best Picture and Best Director at the 29th Japan Academy Film Prize. His films *The Eternal Zero* (2013) and *Stand by Me Doraemon* (2014) won Best Picture and eight other awards at the 38th Japan Academy Film Prize, as well as the Best Animation Film in the same year.

Previous recipients of the VES Visionary Award include: Christopher Nolan; Ang Lee; Alfonso Cuaron; J.J. Abrams; Syd Mead; Victoria Alonso; Jonathan Nolan; and Roland Emmerich.

About the Visual Effects Society

The Visual Effects Society is a professional global honorary society dedicated to advancing the arts, sciences and applications of visual effects and to upholding the highest standards and procedures for the visual effects profession. It is the entertainment industry's only official organization representing the extended global community of visual effects practitioners, including supervisors, artists, producers, technology developers, educators and studio executives. VES' more than 5,000 members in 50+ countries worldwide contribute to all areas of entertainment – film, television, commercials, animation, games and new media. To learn more about the VES, visit www.vesglobal.org and follow us on X (formerly Twitter) @VFX Society. Read our award-winning signature publication *VFX Voice* at www.vfxvoice.com.

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