Premiering this Saturday, July 3 at the New York Asian Film Festival is a double dose of Japanese cinematic extremity, in the form of the first two installments from Nikkatsu Studios' freshly minted Sushi Typhoon label: ALIEN VS. NINJA (pictured left) and MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD. In preparation for the screenings and the launch of Sushi Typhoon, Fango tossed a few questions to the films' directors.

At the helm of ALIEN VS. NINJA is Seiji Chiba, who has directed several thriller/mystery films and co-scripted 2005's DEATH TRANCE. Chiba's installment in the Sushi Typhoon series dares to answer the age-old fanboy question: If a ninja and an alien went at it, who would win?

FANGORIA: What was the genesis of AVN?

SEIJI CHIBA: As the film was intended for the U.S. market, I wanted to do something straightforward, with a concept that would be easily grasped by the general audience in America. I've also been a big fan of ninja and aliens since I was a kid, and saw this as a chance to mix the two together. Oh, and as you've probably guessed, the title was inspired by ALIEN VS. PREDATOR.

FANG: How did the production come together?

CHIBA: I've always wanted to work with Yoshinori Chiba, the Nikkatsu producer who heads the Sushi Typhoon label, so I concocted a project I thought he would take to. Right after I came up with the idea for AVN, I talked to Yuji Shimomura, the action director, about it and he liked it. Then we went to Chiba, and he liked it too. After that, we enlisted Soichi Umezawa to create the special makeup and Tsuyoshi Kazuno to do the visual effects. Following that initial meeting, it took about two weeks to finish the first draft of the script, and then it took about half a year until we started shooting.

FANG: AVN mixes a number of genres. How would you categorize it?

CHIBA: Probably comedy…action/comedy? Let me say, I think AVN is a ridiculous movie—but I mean this in a good way. It's a crossover of different genres. I believe it will entertain various kinds of film fans.

FANG: What is your most outstanding memory of the AVN shoot?

CHIBA: During production, a major typhoon hit and we were told to cancel a day of shooting. But with the budget so limited, I didn't want to lose even a single day. So, to try and avoid the storm, we went to a location that was about 125 miles away and changed the setting to the inside of a cave. As we were shooting, the typhoon was passing by. Outside was heavy rain and the wind blowing around like crazy. Producer Chiba called me over and asked, "Did you even consider that the cave might collapse?" It was kind of an intense moment.

FANG: Anything you want to tell the audience in New York?

CHIBA: As AVN goes along, the story gets more and more outrageous. So please go in with an open mind. If you do, you'll have a great time. Also, I want people to enjoy the work of Shimomura, Kazuno and Umezawa. They are immensely talented, and their work truly elevates AVN.

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AVN's co-feature, MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD, proves once and for all that cute girls fitted with bizarre prosthetics is never a bad thing. MUTANT was helmed by three directors—Noboru Iguchi, Yoshihiro Nishimura and Tak Sakaguchi, who collectively have under their production belts some of the most intense films to come out of Japan in the past 10 years: VERSUS, MACHINE GIRL, TOKYO GORE POLICE, VAMPIRE GIRL VS. FRANKENSTEIN GIRL and ROBOGEISHA.

Two of these filmmakers, Nishimura and Iguchi, will be in attendance for the New York premiere. Although both were insanely busy preparing for their trip across the globe, the two leaders of Japan's splatter movement made the time to answer some questions for Fango readers.

FANG: How did the production of MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD come about?

NOBORU IGUCHI: It started when Toei Video producer Sato-san asked me to do a girl action film, which is increasing in popularity domestically and internationally. Originally, the idea was to make an omnibus movie with three different stories. But as we discussed it, we decided to make it one story with each of us directing one of the sections.

YOSHIHIRO NISHIMURA: Toei wanted a splatter-action film in the vein of THE MACHINE GIRL and TOKYO GORE POLICE. However, Iguchi and I didn't want to make the same thing. We decided that we should do a parody of our own work. The concept of three directors was triggered at last year's New York Asian Film Festival, where Iguchi and Sakaguchi met for the first time. I knew both of them and was pleased to see they got on well. This is when we decided that the three of us would do something together.

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