

## “MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD” (Film Review)

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
Friday, 09 July 2010 15:47

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The cinema of Tak Sakaguchi (BE A MAN! SAMURAI SCHOOL, SAMURAI ZOMBIE), Noboru Iguchi (ROBOGESHIA, MACHINE GIRL) and Yoshihiro Nishimura (TOKYO GORE POLICE, VAMPIRE GIRL VS. FRANKENSTEIN GIRL) is a very specific brand for a very specific audience, but those who do take a shine to all that insanity can be excited about the perfect storm that is their first film together. Legendarily born out of last year's [New York Asian Film Festival](#)—where the three filmmakers got very drunk and realized a joint venture would be glorious—they quickly churned out a script and a movie in time for a premiere at this year's edition of one of NYC's best fests, and a midnight show tomorrow (Saturday, July 10) at Montreal's [Fantasia film festival](#)

Touted as a warped version of X-MEN (or in this case, X-WOMEN) adapted into the violent, body-horror-filled universe of the three directors, MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD focuses on Rin, a beautiful 16-year-old who experiences one hell of a coming of age when her birthday present from nature comes in the form of a shocking revelation. SQUAD doesn't waste any time forging into the absurd with its TEEN WOLF-style parental exposition gone horribly awry. Rin's father shows off his own mutations, which no written explanation would truly do justice; suffice to say it involves red, pulsating living organisms on his nipples and crotch. It turns out that Rin belongs to a race of mutants called Hirukos, who are being savagely hunted by armed forces with nose guns (!). She falls into the arms of a resistance headed by Sakaguchi—in drag and spouting Michael Jackson-like “woo!”s.



SQUAD is simply out of control from the first frame, which, while a lot of fun, also works slightly against it. Broken up into three chapters, each directed individually by one of the three helmers, SQUAD loses some steam (but none of its weirdness—wait for the floating head on a birthday cake) in the second act, and you may begin to worry that it peaked too early. While all the mutant girls are incredibly gorgeous and unforgettably deformed (the chainsaw coming out of one's ass will stay in your mind for weeks), it's easy to get distracted midway through.

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Any reservations are crushed, however, by the climactic battle between the mutant girls, the military and Sakaguchi’s hilarious and completely over-the-top freedom fighter. He really, really does steal the show. As do Nishimura’s special FX, which—while not as captivating as in TOKYO GORE POLICE—are nonetheless eye-catching and worthy of a gaping mouth. The film, like its creators’ previous individual flicks, was obviously done inexpensively, but the imagination involved in all the prosthetics and the (as usual) hokey and silly CGI go a long way toward making you love it all the more.

MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD is absolutely everything a film from this corner of the filmmaking universe should be. It’s funny, horrific, ultragross and, with its hypersexualized, overexaggerated and highly powerful “riot grrl”/freedom-fighting characters, very punk. Like its Cronenberg-meets-trash companions, TOKYO GORE POLICE and MACHINE GIRL, SQUAD is a must-see just for the experience, and those audiences who do find themselves reveling in its madness will find a flick they’ll happily revisit.



*Read about MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD and other films from Japan’s Sushi Typhoon label in Fango #295, on sale now.*

{jcomments on}