



## One Piece!

**Shinobu Yaguchi,  
Takuji Suzuki**

JAPAN, 1999

75 minutes ■ Colour/Beta

Production Company: **Pia Film Festival**

Screenplay: **Shinobu Yaguchi,**

**Takuji Suzuki**

Cinematographer: **Shinobu Yaguchi,**

**Takuji Suzuki**

Editor: **Shinobu Yaguchi, Takuji Suzuki**

Music: **Shinobu Yaguchi, Takuji Suzuki**

Principal Cast: **Youji Tanaka, Nao Nekota,**

**Satoru Jitsunashi, Masumi Kiuchi,**

**Keiko Shionoya, Miako Tadano,**

**Yoko Chosokabe, Tsurumi Komatsu,**

**Saori Sekiguchi, Takuji Suzuki,**

**Naomi Nishida, Kazuhiro Nakahara,**

**Junko Ueno**

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"Home video – no zoom, pan, editing or post-sound – one scene, one cut – super-duper small size films!"

– *One Piece!* Manifesto

So reads the title card appearing at the beginning of *One Piece!*, the creation of Shinobu Yaguchi – whose lunatic comedy *Adrenaline Drive* is winning him fans the world over – and his collaborator Takuji Suzuki. While it could be read as a thumb-in-the-eye to the pretensions of the Danish "Dogme," the series was developed in isolation, as short video "warm-ups" for Yaguchi's feature film work. But, like the motivation behind "Dogme," this project seeks an immediacy in simple filmed experience. Unlike "Dogme," though, the individual segments are truly bizarre and, often, very funny.

Most of the pieces involve young adults in hilariously humiliating situations. A woman who misread an ad shows up to a job interview in a bunny suit; a woman who hides to surprise her friends hears their dismissive insults about her hygiene; three friends trying to make a video celebrating another friend's marriage lash out at her on camera. Some veer towards the surreal, like the piece called "Grampa From Hell," or a segment about fake cult leaders. Almost all are totally off-the-wall, their static, perfectly composed shots betraying nothing of what is to follow.

But this is not just a series of cute shorts. As the work unfolds, a pattern begins to emerge. We quickly realize that these guys

not only have a complete command of Japanese youth vernacular but have also found the perfect method of exposing the fears and aspirations of young Japan's present and future. There is a kind of demented genius at work here that, guaranteed, only comes along once in a very long while.

■ **Noah Cowan**

**Shinobu Yaguchi** was born in Kanagawa, Japan in 1967 and studied graphic design at Tokyo's University of Art and Design. While there, he began working with friends on Super 8 films. He directed his impressive first feature, *Down the Drain*, in 1993. Selected filmography: *Down the Drain* (92), *My Secret Cache* (96), *Adrenaline Drive* (99) and *One Piece!* (co-director, 99).

**Takuji Suzuki** was born in 1967. He collaborated on the screenplays for *Down the Drain* (92) and *My Secret Cache* (96) with Shinobu Yaguchi. Selected filmography: *Dancing with Hydra* (short, 99) and *One Piece!* (co director, 99).

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