



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
CANNES PREMIERE
2021 OFFICIAL SELECTION

BELLE



DIRECTED BY ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE
MAMORU HOSODA

PLANNED AND PRODUCED BY STUDIO CHIZU



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BELLE

A NEW FILM BY
MAMORU HOSODA

(MIRAI, WOLF CHILDREN)

IN FRENCH THEATERS ON DECEMBER 29TH

JAPAN | ANIMATION | FORMAT: 2K SCOPE 2.35:1 | RUNTIME: 127 MIN

Press kit and visuals available at:
www.wildbunchdistribution.com

FRENCH DISTRIBUTION

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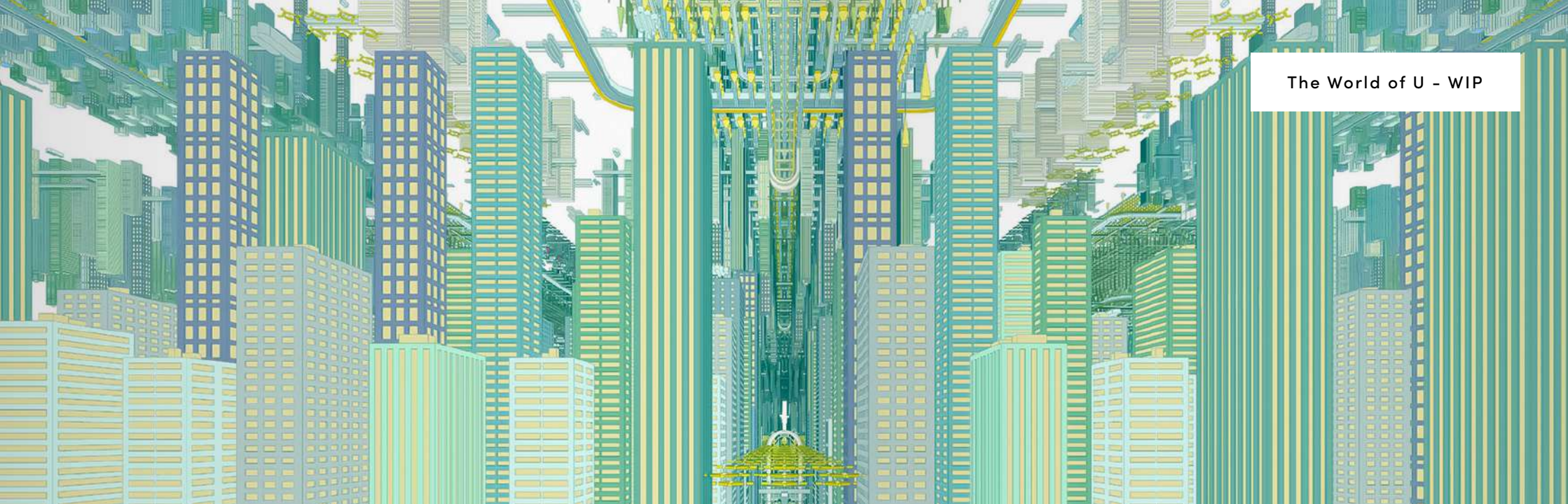


SYNOPSIS

Suzu is a 17-year-old high school student living in a rural village with her father. For years, she has only been a shadow of herself. One day, she enters "U," a virtual world of 5 billion members on the internet.

There, she is not Suzu anymore but Belle, a world-famous singer. She soon meets with a mysterious creature.

Together, they embark on a journey of adventures, challenges and love, in their quest of becoming who they truly are.



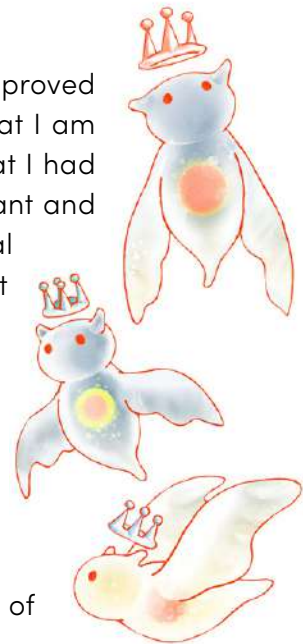
DIRECTOR'S NOTE

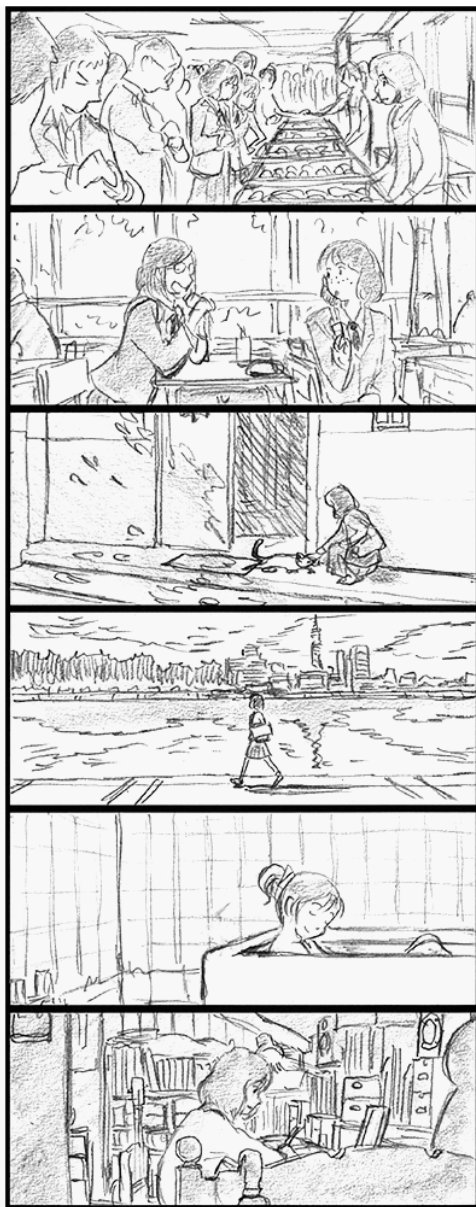
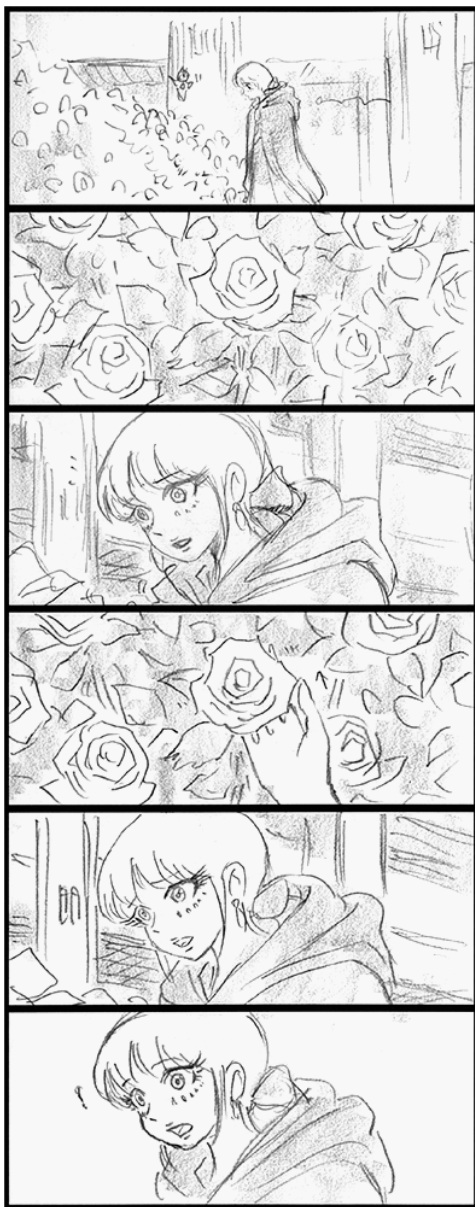
"*BELLE* is the film I've always dreamed of making and which now I've finally been able to make thanks to the success of my previous films. In *BELLE*, I explore romance, action and suspense, as well as deeper themes such as life and death. I hope that cinemagoers will also find it very entertaining for that is my intention. In the past I have dealt with the way in which people have become more connected than ever before, as well as the infinite subject of connectivity via the internet, which I hope will enable the younger generation to change the world for the better in a positive and fun way. But I am also very conscious of the problems associated with the internet such as online abuse, social exclusion and fake news.

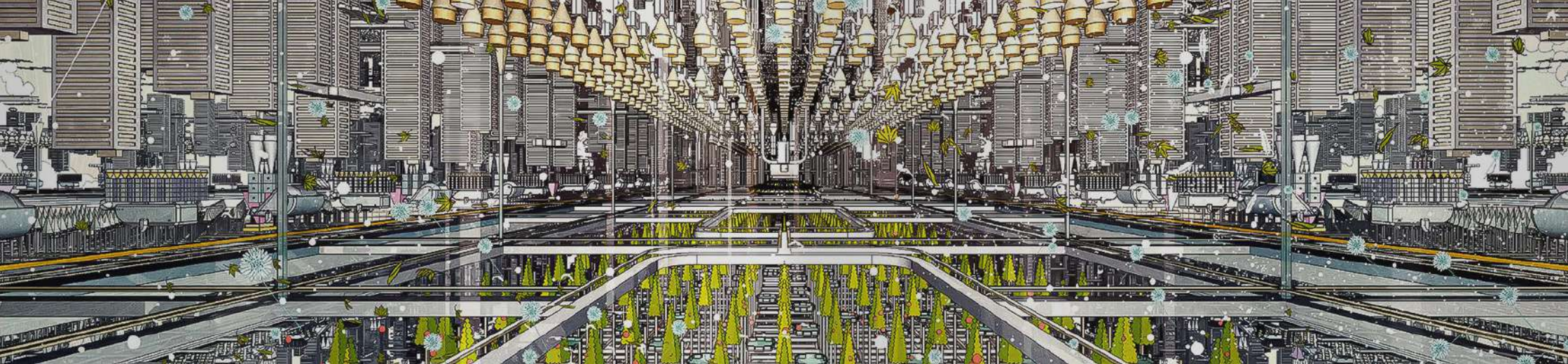
However, I remain convinced that the internet can also be a tool for good, to improve the lives of all. As the internet is constantly evolving, I promised myself that I would make a film that would show its positive benefits.

My own professional and personal life has improved exponentially thanks to the internet, and I feel that I am now one step closer to my vision of the future that I had imagined over 10 years ago. In this age of constant and rapid change, with few restrictions on conventional wisdom, I was bound to make a film on this subject one day.

However, I also think that the importance of some of the fundamentals of life will stay unchanged forever. Even if the tools and modes of transmission evolve, what we have inherited and learnt over the generations will endure... At least, that's what I hope for: a world that is changing at breakneck speed, but where the fundamentals of human existence endure."







LIFE AND INSPIRATION

When Mamoru Hosoda made *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time* (2006), he was a young director and this was his first feature-length animation film for Madhouse studio. The carefree youth of his heroine caught up in the passage of time was a testament to his state of mind at that time.

For *Summer Wars* (2009), he took inspiration from his own mother for the character of Sakae, the grandmother. With this film, he made the first family "geek" film at a time when smartphones and social networks were emerging and their impact was starting to be felt on family life.

In his film *The Wolf Children* (2012), Hosoda paid a warm and vibrant tribute to his own dear mother, the woman who raised him single-handedly and supported his film career. He even went a step further, making the film more poignant by bringing to the screen the final farewell he was unable to make to his mother who sadly died during filming.

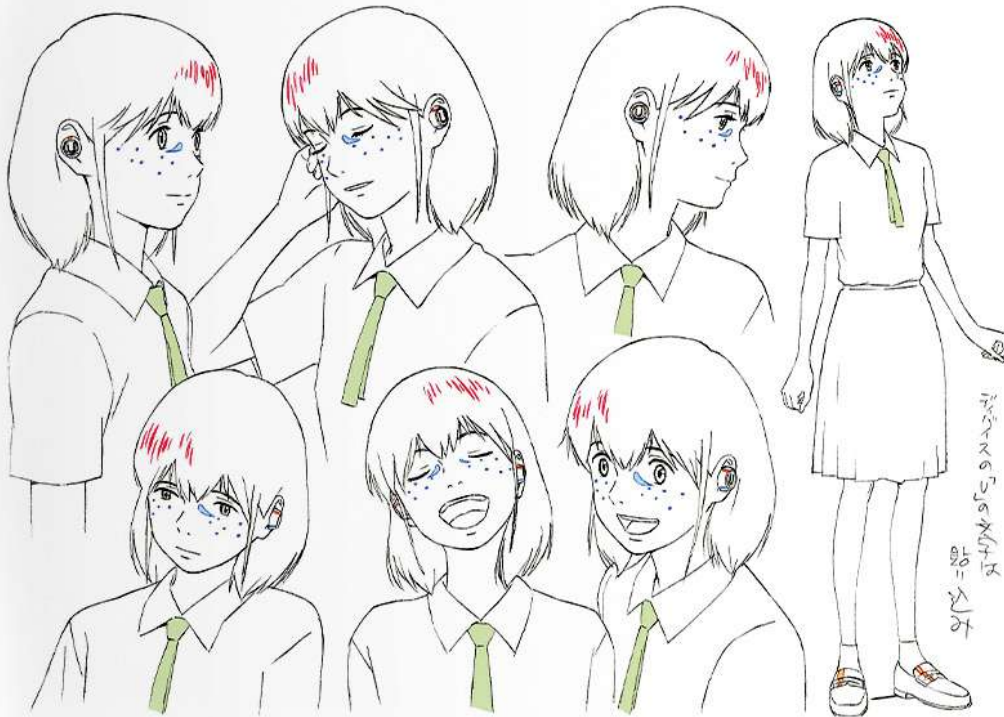
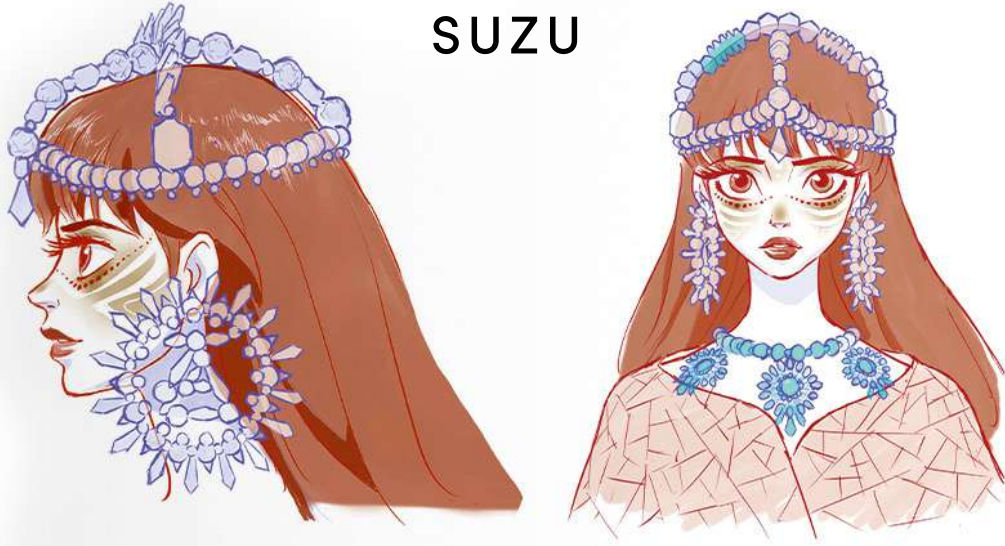
When his son was born, Mamoru Hosoda began to wonder how to help and encourage children to grow up in today's society. This question is at the heart of his film *The Boy and the Beast* (2015). The film deals with the ways knowledge and experience are handed down to the next generation.

This approach is also found in his next film *Mirai*. Here, the director draws inspiration from his own children's experience to explore the theme of brotherhood from the perspective of his four-year-old son. He delivers an intimate film in which all the characters are based on people he knows well, starting with his children.

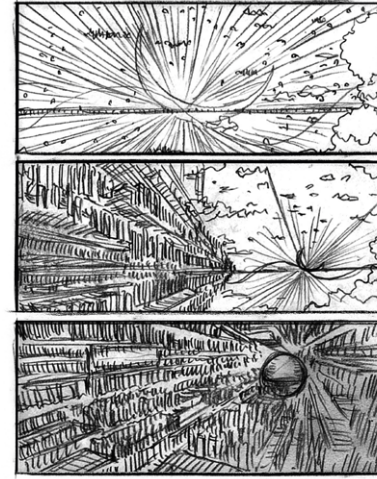
With *BELLE*, he once again takes a kind and warm-hearted look at young adulthood. The idea for the story came from his fears about what the adolescent years might bring for his own daughter. *BELLE* is the story of the first, tentative steps out into the world of a shy and self-conscious teenage girl called Suzu, who through the virtual world of "U" and her musical avatar Belle, will finally discover her true self and free herself of her fears.

"I want to encourage the children of the world, to celebrate their future, for they will carry the future on their shoulders in an ever-changing society." It makes you wonder if Hosoda's life influences his films, or if his films influence his life.

BELLE SUZU



THE CREATURE





MAMORU HOSODA

Mamoru Hosoda was born in Toyama in 1967. After graduating from Kanazawa Art College, Hosoda joined Toei Doga (now Toei Animation Co., Ltd.) as an animator.

In 1997, he made his directorial debut with the popular animated TV series *GeGeGe no Kitarō* (4th season). In 1999, he directed his first animated film *Digimon Adventure* but it was with his second go for *Digimon Adventure: Our*

War Game that he began to gain notoriety.

He then became a freelancer and, in 2006, he directed the film *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time*, which was not only a huge success in Japan but also further afield. It was widely distributed and even won an award at the

Annecy International Animation Festival in France.

In 2009, he directed *Summer Wars*, the first “geek” family film, which is still a cultural reference point for the younger generation today.

In 2011, he founded his own animation studio called Studio Chizu with his long-time producer Yuichiro Saito. The first film to come out of this young studio was *The Wolf Children* (2014) and subsequently *The Boy and the Beast* (2016), which confirmed Hosoda’s immense popularity in Japan and further afield.

With *Mirai*, Hosoda’s animation talent gained international recognition. *Mirai* was nominated for an Oscar in the Best Animated Film category, as well as for the Director’s Fortnight at Cannes, and won Best Independent Animation Award at the 46th Annie Awards.



Village in the
Mountains - WIP



Suzu's Bedroom - WIP

STUDIO CHIZU

Co-founded by Mamoru Hosoda and Yuichiro Saito in 2011 to produce the film *The Wolf Children*, this animation studio literally means "map" in Japanese.

Since its creation, Studio Chizu has been dedicated to the production of Hosoda's films, and has provided him with total artistic freedom, as well as the support of his friend and long-time producer Yuichiro Saito.

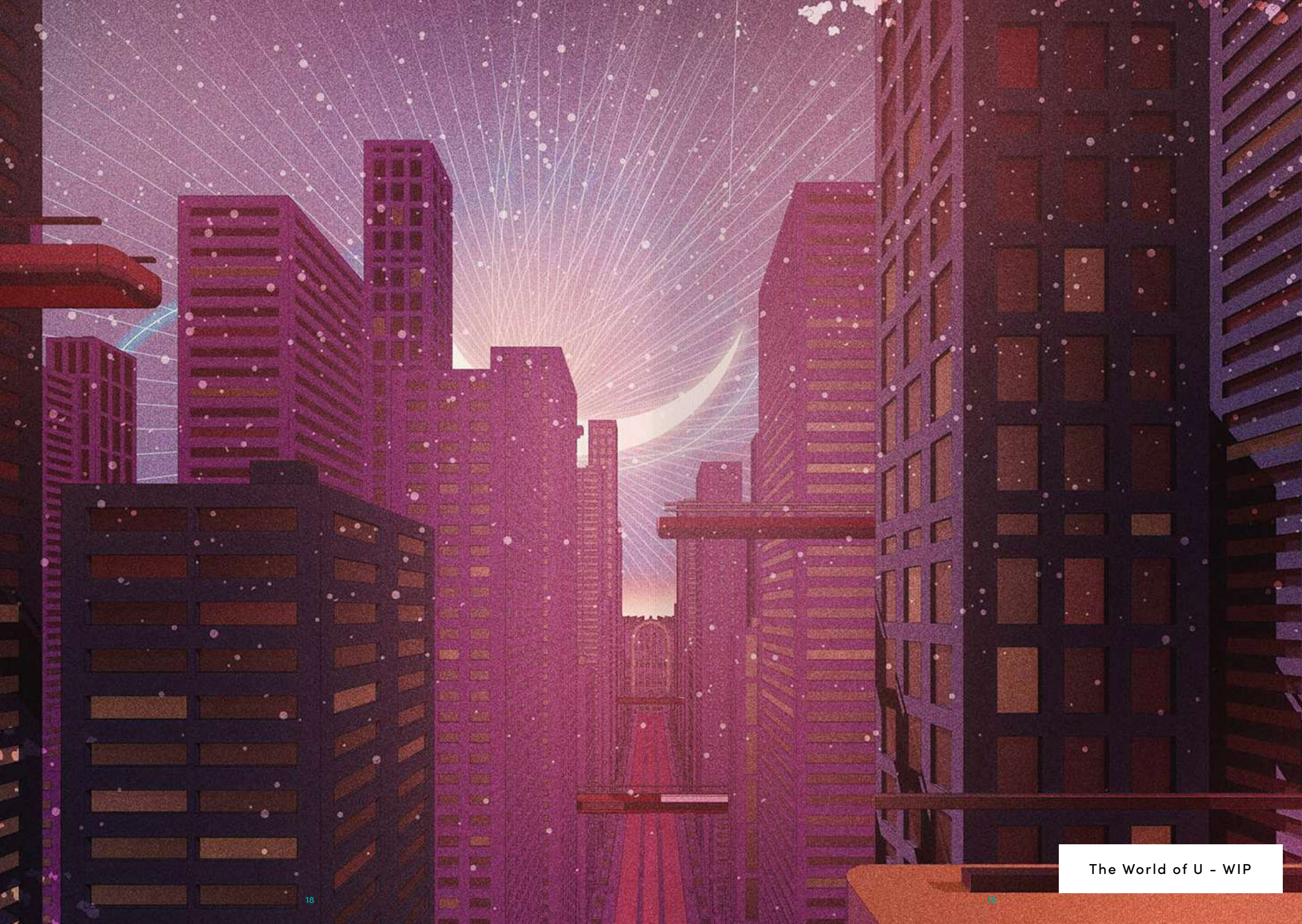
Saito's intention was to nurture an intimate and creative bubble for Hosoda: "My role as the producer of his films is to create the right environment and find the best possible set-up for the creation of his films and then do everything in my power to present these films to the world."

Thanks to the unprecedented international success of *Mirai*, Studio Chizu studio, which Saito likes to call the smallest animation studio

in the world, has opened its doors to many prestigious international collaborations, especially with this new project.

Among the top designers who have joined *BELLE* is Jin Kim, the character designer of several iconic Disney films such as *Frozen*, *Tangled* and *Moana*. Cartoon Saloon, the Irish studio behind *Wolfwalkers*, also helped create some of the virtual fantasy worlds in *BELLE*. The directors Tom Moore and Ross Stewart personally contributed to the visual universe of the film.

With *BELLE*, Studio Chizu celebrates its 10th anniversary, and remains, along with Studio Ghibli, the only animation studio in Japan devoted to one emblematic director.





CAST

Kaho Nakamura : **Belle** | **Suzu**
 Takeru Satoh : **The Creature** | **Kei**
 Kôji Yakusho : **Suzu's Father**
 Lilas Ikuta : **Hiro**
 Ryô Narita : **Shinobu**
 Shôta Sometani : **Kamishin**
 Tina Tamashiro : **Luka**
 Toshiyuki Morikawa : **Justin**
 Fuyumi Sakamoto : **Okumoto**
 Kenjiro Tsuda : **Jellinek**
 Mami Koyama : **Swan**
 Mamoru Miyano : **Hitokawa Muitaro** | **Gutto koraemaru**
 Michiko Shimizu : **Kita**
 Ryoko Moriyama : **Yoshitani**
 Sachiyo Nakao : **Hatanaka**
 Yoshimi Iwasaki : **Nakai**

STAFF

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY:
Mamoru Hosoda

ANIMATION DIRECTOR:
Hiroyuki Aoyama

CG ANIMATION SUPERVISOR:
Takaaki Yamashita

CG CHARACTER DESIGNERS:
Jin Kim, Kageichi Akiya

CG DIRECTORS:
Ryo Horibe, Yohei Shimozaawa

ART DIRECTOR:
Nobutaka Ike

PRODUCTION DESIGNERS:
Anri Jojo, Eric Wong

MUSIC DIRECTOR:
Taisei Iwasaki

MUSIC:
Ludvig Forssell, Yuta Bando

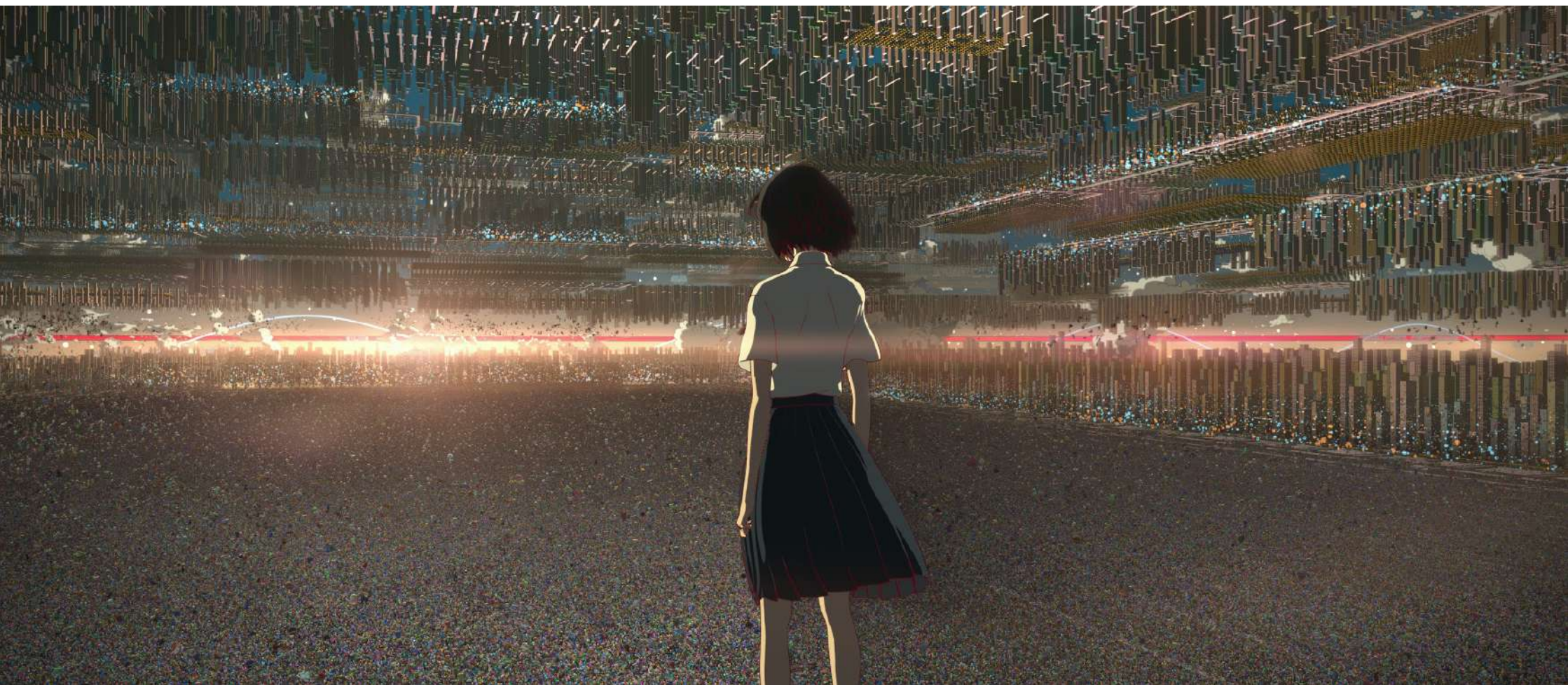
THÈME PRINCIPAL :
millennium parade x Belle "U"

MONTAGE :
Shigeru Nishiyama

PRODUCERS:
**Yuichiro Saito, Genki Kawamura,
 Nozomu Takahashi, Toshimi Tanio**

A STUDIO CHIZU production





BELLE



STUDIO CHIZU

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