



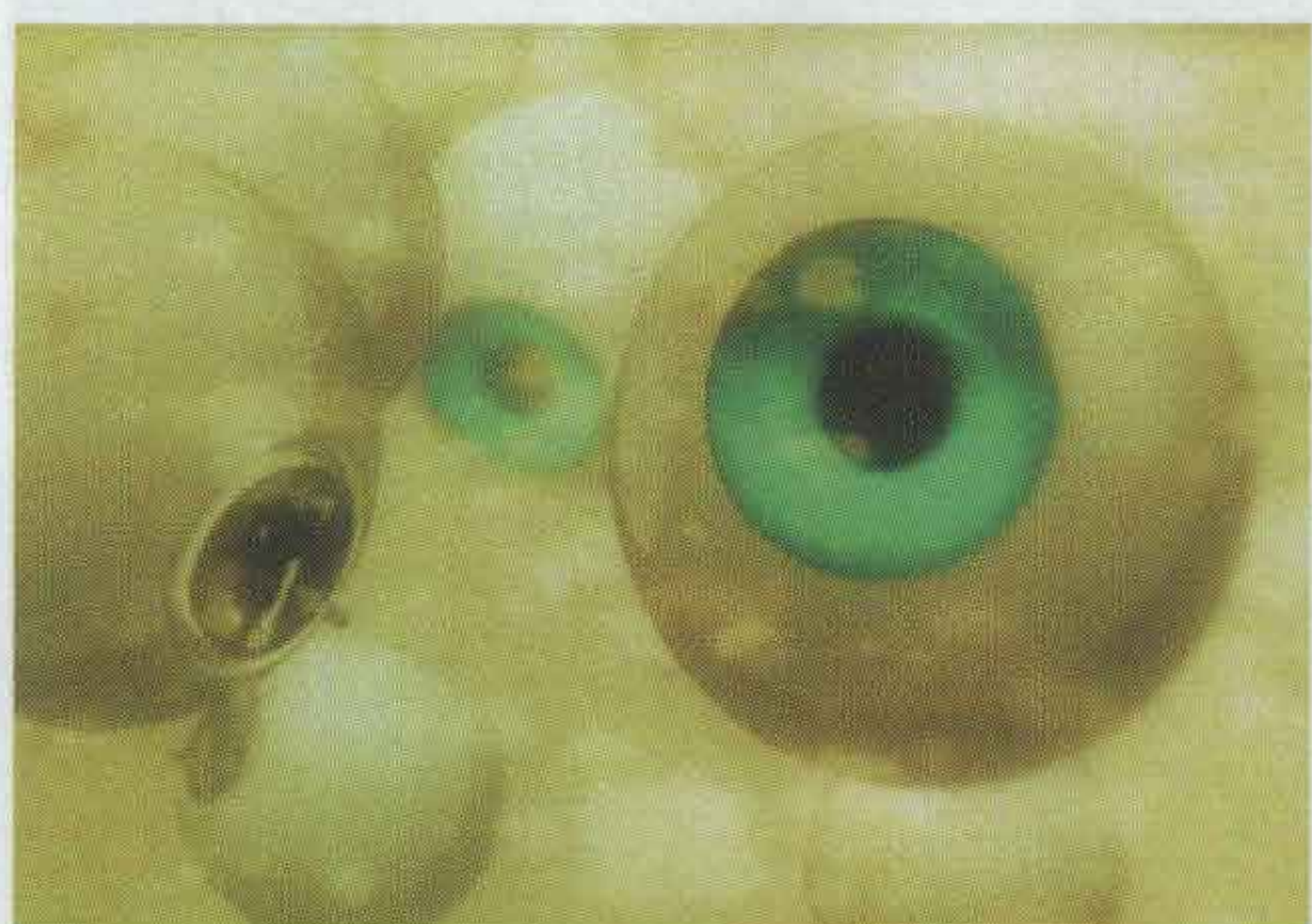
GHOST IN THE SHELL 2: INNOCENCE

Philosophical Debate + Art Appreciation = Perfection



IF THERE'S ONE FILM that you must buy in 2006, it has to be Mamoru Oshii's seminal masterpiece *Innocence*, the long awaited sequel to *Ghost in the Shell*. *Innocence* focuses on Major Motoko Kusanagi's cyborg partner Batou. Now teamed up with the

rookie Section 9 agent Togusa, Batou is assigned to investigate a murder perpetrated by a female robot (known as a gynoid), which then commits suicide. But a plea is left behind, two words that suggest these gynoids may be different: "Help me".



From the opening credits to a three-dimensional silver bell in a two-dimensional shop, it's clear that *Innocence* is unlike any film before it. Kenji Kawai returns with his chorale of vocalists, and their powerful voices enhance some of the most memorable scenes in the movie, from the breath-taking procession in Etorofu to the brief return of the Major.

Particularly impressive in the UK release is the specially created English language dub, featuring the cast of *Stand Alone Complex* reprising their roles. The dub is excellent and enhances viewing even for those who, by default, always watch anime with the Japanese audio track. And no Oshii production would be complete without his signature Basset hounds, who make a return here. Batou's beloved Gabriel, in his own way, steals the show.

Filled with philosophical dialogue on reality, references to theology, technology and the very nature of the soul, *Innocence* needs repeat viewings, which will not only allow the viewer to glean more of the plot but also appreciate the sheer beauty of the film and the stunning animation.

Innocence is quite simply a movie that every anime fan should own.

LESLEY SMITH

DVD Disc Extras

As well as two versions of the film (the second disc contains English DTS and Japanese DTS audio tracks) there is a plethora of extras including 'The Making Of *Innocence*' featurette, an audio commentary by Mamoru Oshii and Toshihiko Nishikubo, a UK-exclusive face-to-face interview with Mamoru Oshii, a sneak peak at *Ghost In The Shell Stand Alone Complex 2nd Gig* set to the show's opening theme 'Rise', and various other Manga Entertainment trailers.

ANIME ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★