



## Transnational writer

Susan Meehan gets up close with Kazuo Ishiguro

## The other side of the artist

Sir Hugh Cortazzi examines the etchings of Bernard Leach

As the dark December days draw in we might be forgiven for thinking 'the whole of England (is) like Norfolk on a grey afternoon . . . flat and bleached of all colour.' This is one of the many imaginative repostes given by author Kazuo Ishiguro in his conversation with Celyn Jones, which opens this issue. Our staff reviewer, Susan Meehan, was in the front pew at Friends' House to absorb the wit and wisdom of both writers. Discussion centered around Ishiguro's last published novel, *Never Let Me Go*, but ranged across all manner of miscellany, revealing a few unexpected traits in this often misinterpreted writer.

In our first review, Tim Holm rediscovers a pilgrimage made by the maverick Japanese photographer Daido Moriyama in the early 1970s, applying his photographic chiaroscuro to a tour of Tono in North-Eastern Japan. Re-examining the contents of this unsettling photobook, Holm finds Moriyama in a playful mood, muddling our conceptions of the past with images that alternate

between stark documentary and veiled memory. The collection includes some of Moriyama's most iconic images and is the first ever English edition to be printed.

Another highlight of our December issue is Sir Hugh's exploration of a famous potter's first love in *The Etchings of Bernard Leach*. Internationally recognised for his outstanding pottery, Simon Olding reveals that Leach first journeyed to Japan to teach the art of etching. You will find reproductions of these early artworks on the final pages of this issue, from landscapes produced in China and Japan, to portrait studies and decorative details later re-used in Leach's ceramics.

For best results, read this issue crouched over the yuletide log while the winter snows rage outside . . .

Jack Cooke, December 2012

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## Kazuo Ishiguro and The Man Booker talk

7 November 2012

Review by Susan Meehan

What an extraordinary event – Birkbeck's Russell Celyn Jones, Professor of Creative Writing and former Man Booker judge, was in conversation with Kazuo Ishiguro in a large theatre at the Friends' House and all for free.



The Booker Foundation and Man Group are collaborating with Birkbeck, University of London, to celebrate recent winners of the Man Booker Prize through a series of conversations with them.

Kazuo Ishiguro was born in Japan and came over to leafy Surrey from Nagasaki when he was five years old. His parents expected to stay in England for only a year or two. Rather than integrating into British life, the couple would observe their neighbours' behaviour and comment on how interesting all this was. Ishiguro admitted that this probably had the effect of allowing a young Kazuo to see Britain from an anthropological point of view.

Last time I heard Kazuo Ishiguro was at the Purcell Room, Southbank Centre in 2002. On that occasion Ishiguro went to great pains to dissociate himself from Japan. He emphasized to the audience that he could not read or write Japanese. He mentioned how in the 1990s he used to be asked to take part in television discussions for instance, to comment on the trade wars with Japan and to give his take on other Japan-related issues. Realising that he was not a spokesman for Japan, he deemed it best to begin declining these invitations.

Ishiguro's books, which had started off with Japanese themes, also began veering away. He went on to portray an English butler, a European musician, a detective trying to solve the case of his parents' disappearance in Hong Kong and, more recently, a group of friends who meet at a secluded English school called Hailsham.

At the Purcell Room talk in 2002, a woman asked Ishiguro how, as a Japanese man, he had been able to write about an English butler, to which Ishiguro, normally unflappable, visibly flinched and reminded her that he had lived in England since the age of five.

At the Man Book event at Birkbeck on 7 November, in conversation with Professor Russell Celyn Jones, Ishiguro seemed to have become reconciled to his Japanese heritage. It was a privilege to hear him at this free and well-attended event at the Friends House on Euston Road.

Kazuo Ishiguro, or Ish, as he was called by Professor Jones, won the Booker Prize in 1989 for his book, *Remains of the Day*. Three of his other novels have made it to the shortlist,

*When We Were Orphans* (2000), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) and *Never Let Me Go* (2005).

The evening's talk was mainly about *Never Let Me Go* but touched other aspects of Ishiguro's style of writing. What was made patently clear throughout the dialogue, was Ishiguro's tremendous humanity, empathy, honesty and reverence for human relationships.

The pair first looked at the naturalism in display in *Never Let Me Go* including references to Woolworths, an English seaside town and pubs in, ironically, a 'counterfactual world inhabited by clones' according to Jones. Though it is a novel rendered in simple language it is nevertheless other-worldly and Jones wondered where the voice came from.

Ishiguro said that Kathy H, the narrator, is something that he created and happened to use as the narrator. Ishiguro tends to audition different characters in his head for the role of narrator, behind which his own voice disappears.

While Jones admitted to feeling unsettled at not knowing where Ishiguro himself is in the book, Ishiguro said he doesn't write as an alter ego. In fact, in his first novel, he took as narrator, someone as far removed from himself as possible – a Japanese woman in the latter stages of her life. Admittedly he is a little Japanese himself, he humourously admitted.

This distance allows Ishiguro to be less inhibited and allows him scope to figure out what to say which he wouldn't be able to do otherwise.

Writing *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro pretended that the whole of England was like Norfolk on a grey afternoon, so all places described in the book, no matter where their location, would be described as flat and grey. He made sure to leave out anything that was colourful or exciting about England, bleaching out all colours.

Jones probed a bit more about Ishiguro's Japanese family and voice. Ishiguro came over to Guildford when he was five. His father was an oceanographer and his parents expected to return home in a couple of years, but ended up staying on in England long-term.

Ish can understand Japanese women from the 1950s, thanks to having heard his mother talking Japanese when he was growing up, and tends to be able to understand 1950s women in Japanese films, while is completely thrown by the language used in samurai films.

The voice in his first novel, referred to above, was of an ageing Japanese woman, undemonstrative and elliptical. This voice has stayed with him through force of habit, he said, and is not artistically justified.

Jones brought up the theme often used by Ishiguro of unreliable memory against the backdrop of politics, be it World War Two or Japanese fascism, and wanted to further explore this. Ishiguro explained that well-meaning people may not have the perspective of the time they are living in. Ultimately, things they were most proud of may become what makes them most embarrassed in later life. Ishiguro wondered how his generation would react



if found in that situation.

It is this idea of self-deception which fascinates Ishiguro, as well as the battle that we face between wanting to remember yet at the same time not wanting to remember. Nations go through this as well, which Ishiguro also finds compelling. Most countries have dark periods that they want or need to confront, but find it difficult.

Celyn Jones quoted JG Ballard who said, 'The world is governed by fictions and it is up to authors to find reality.'

Jones asked Ishiguro what it is that makes us humans in the novel, wondering whether it is art that can be produced as evidence of our souls.

Ishiguro surprised me with his response which I found poignantly democratic and inclusive, by saying that art is a consolation and not 'a big deal.' Ishiguro said he is interested in all endeavours to make our lives meaningful and it could be our involvement in politics or menial work we do. Ishiguro sees people as having the determination to say we've done something well and finds this aspect of humans very moving. Even a burglar will want to execute his theft well.

This moral urge is what makes humans very different and special. It doesn't have to be achieved through artistic endeavour. There is a lot of dignity in striving to do things well, not least in how people deal with their family and friends.

['His parents didn't live like immigrants in Guildford as they thought they would return to Japan any day.'](#)

I was extremely touched by this compassionate take on life and surprised as some of his novels are about musicians and artists, and in *Never Let Me Go* there is a sense that artistic talent and achievement is a reflection of the soul.

Jones returned to the notion of Japan in Ishiguro's work and wondered how his career would progress, reminding us that his first three books had been about Japan, and that Ishiguro has something that has always intrigued writers, a confluence between East and West.

As a teenager Ishiguro said he wanted to be a singer/songwriter in the mould of Bob Dylan or Leonard Cohen. He would go to open mics [a live show where audience members may perform at the microphone] and folk clubs. His songwriting was his apprenticeship in writing fiction.

When he was 21-22 he went through a Japanese phase. Up until then he felt that Japan was secure in his head but at 21 realised that Japan was not there for him any longer, and that it had changed. His Japan was his world of childhood. When a child moves home, there is an incentive to remember and, furthermore, his memories of Japan were nourished by parcels he was sent, full of comics and toys. His Japan was a rather precious place as he was growing up – it contained his best-loved toys and his grandparents, and was not a world that he could revisit on a plane.

In his early twenties, he felt he had to preserve this world which no longer had a physical presence and that is why he came to write about it. Up until that age, he had never been an avid reader and had no ambition to be a writer until that age. To help with his project he consumed lots of Japanese films from the late 1950s and early 1960s to remind him of Japan as it was at the time he'd left.

Ishiguro felt he had fulfilled his Japanese project, which coincided with him realising that he could not act as a spokesman for Japan.

Jones wondered what Ishiguro thought of the film adaptations of his books, *Remains of the Day* and *Never Let Me Go*.

Ishiguro claimed to love both films and said he'd acted as a kind of consultant on for both. While he has written screenplays, Ishiguro said he would never write a screenplay of one of his own books.

Ishiguro feels there is a strong alliance between literary fiction and high-end films. He said that high culture, by what he means more thoughtful literature, for example, is fighting an increasingly hard battle to remain relevant. The fact that a lot of recent good films have been adaptations of thoughtful books is very positive and Ishiguro said he is very glad that the film industry is paying attention to books.

Responding to a question at the end of his conversation, Ishiguro revealed that each novel hasn't necessarily changed him as a person as had been anticipated by the questioner. As he writes very slowly, he wondered how much change was merely the fact that five years had elapsed during the writing of a book! He also said that while it would be easier if he could stick to one method of writing, it changes each time. Sometimes he plans a novel, on other occasions he won't. The creative process just keeps changing.

In reply to a question about his living across cultures, he admitted to not being able to compare his childhood and background to anything else and is aware of other authors who can cross cultures equally well without having had his kind of background. His parents didn't live like immigrants in Guildford as they thought they would return to Japan any day. Ishiguro saw them observe British culture through the eyes of Japanese people with a deep interest in England but without the feeling of investment towards a life in Surrey. It made him aware of rules and regulations in and differences between both cultures, resulting in a tendency to look at things through an anthropological lens.

Another question centred on the character of Ruth in *Never Let Me Go* who the questioner regarded as deceitful and problematic, leading her to ask Ishiguro how difficult she was to write as a character.

Ishiguro said he doesn't think of his characters much in isolation. He tends to focus on how relationships and characters evolve from this. Ruth, he admitted, is most

flawed as a human being but fundamentally decent. When her time is running out, Ruth goes about putting things right and fixing whatever had gone wrong in her relationships. For this reason Ishiguro sees her as a positive and affirmative character not concerned about wealth or selfish things at the end but about relationships. At heart, humans really care about friendship and love.

Ishiguro sees *Never Let Me Go* as his most cheerful novel, much to the amusement of his audience. He explained that the backdrop is sad but that the story is not about flaws and that all the characters are decent.

And on this note, this most thoughtful, magnanimous and humane of individuals got ready to sign books for a long queue of fans.

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## Tales of Tono

by Daido Moriyama

Tate Publishing, 2012

192 pages, £12.99

ISBN 978-1-84976-094-2

Review by Timothy Holm

Published to coincide with a joint Daido Moriyama + William Klein photo retrospective at the Tate Modern art gallery in London (although not directly related to that exhibition), this is the first time *Tales of Tono* has appeared in an English edition. It was originally released in Japan in the 1970s following a trip to the town of Tono by famed Japanese photographer Moriyama. For those readers unfamiliar with his work, it may be prudent to begin with a very brief biographical overview leading up to this photobook.

Born in 1938 in Osaka, Moriyama began working as an amateur photographer in the late 1950s. Moving to Tokyo in 1961 to pursue his new profession more seriously, he initially found work as an assistant to the legendary Eikoh Hosoe, whose dark, high-contrast black and white style undoubtedly had an influence on Moriyama's subsequent output.

For most of his career, Moriyama has worked as a freelancer, and as his work became more and more appreciated over the years, many public exhibits of his photos have occurred around the world. But Moriyama himself claims that he prefers photobooks over prints of his photos. Yet he has also said in interviews that the structure and organization of each book is not important to him. The main thing is the physicality and collection of the photos into a single volume which may be owned by anyone with a certain amount of interest and funds.

This is certainly true of *Tales of Tono*, a small jacketed

softcover book with dimensions measuring only 17 x 11.4 x 2.2 cm. The cost to the consumer is a mere 13 pounds in the UK, and may be found for less at online bookshops. Considering what many original and out-of-print works by Moriyama go for these days at auction sites, it is a significant bargain.

It is debatable whether or not the size of the book is the best way to show off Moriyama's photography. Each picture is given its own page with black borders on the top and bottom of the image. It might have been better if the photos were presented sideways in a landscape format, but that could also disturb normal reading habits.

A word must also be said about the book's actual contents. It consists of 12 pages of colour photography at the front of the book, followed by the main 'text' as it were: 137 duotone (B&W) photos, all taken in or near Tono, a small city located in Iwate prefecture in northeastern Japan (the same area that was most affected by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami).

At the back of the book can be found a lengthy, informative essay by Moriyama about his trip, as well as commentary by the translator and a short afterward by Simon Baker, curator of photography at the Tate. All together, it adds up to about 35 pages of writing, but this is where you are likely to spend the bulk of your time with the book.

As Moriyama mentions in the section of his essay called 'Why Tono?' – the inspiration for the title and content of this particular series of photos came about in response to *The Legends of Tono*, a collection of 119 brief folktales from the region compiled by Kunio Yanagita in 1910. (It was later translated into English by Ronald A. Morse and published by The Japan Foundation in 1975). Many of the stories involve some kind of ghostly or supernatural presence which permeates the atmosphere, lending Tono a certain reputation in the minds of Japanese people. Because of this, Moriyama had long held a desire to visit Tono and take photographs there. He says, "it [is] a place that evokes a mysterious world, strangely combining narration and lyricism, reality and fantasy (page 160)."

The Tono that Moriyama depicts in this photobook also evokes a mysterious world where reality and fantasy commingle, as his pictures are never very clear and seem to have been taken in a forgotten time and place. However, it should be noted that Moriyama does not attempt to hide traces of the modern world (as it was in the 1970s) from his camera's eye. Automobiles, utility poles, vending machines and so on can be found here, but there is a sense that these signs of modernity have not yet overwhelmed the more rural aspects of the landscape. Memories of a lost past are never far from view. No demons or spirits appear in a literal way, but spirits in other forms do seem to remain, as in the haunting photos of animals and pictures of old photographs and paintings. Shadows, graves, and folk traditions leave an indelible mark on the viewer's mind as well.

Moriyama goes on to talk about his life-long search for

the 'original landscape' of our memory, and what exactly that means to him, but it should be left to the readers themselves to discover whether or not he was successful in his quest to find that landscape in Tono.

This may not be the best place to start if you know little to nothing about Moriyama, but for established aficionados of his admittedly acquired taste, this is surely one of his most cohesive and fascinating books, and the photos still have the power to resonate even four decades after they were first produced.

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## Crossfire

by Miyuki Miyabe

Kodansha Europe, July 2007

416 pages, £8.99

ISBN-10 4770030681

Review by Michael Sullivan

*Crossfire* is the third novel by Miyuki Miyabe to be published in English. Originally this was a bestseller in Japan and was adapted into a movie in 2000 called

*Pyrokinesis* [クロスファイア]. It was directed by Shusuke Kaneko [金子 修介], and starred Akiko Yada [矢田亜希子] and Hideaki Ito [伊藤 英明]. Miyabe is a full time writer and has received numerous literary prizes including the Naoki Prize.

*Crossfire* is an apt name for the plot of this book, specifically in regard to the innocents who lose their lives because of crossfire. Junko Aoki is an amazing person who can create fire through willpower alone; her powers are so great that she routinely has to find a safe place where she can release her power to stop it building up. Believing herself to be an instrument of justice, a punisher of those who would commit crimes, she is also very dangerous. By chance she happens across a crime, a kidnapping involving a couple which leads her on a journey of death destroying all those implicated in the crime, and everyone in the way. The idea of right and wrong becomes blurred as she can't let anyone get in her way, and leaves behind her a trail of corpses and burned out buildings which attract media, and police attention. Detective Chikako Ishizu has a grown up son, and has struggled for years just to achieve her position. However, being in the arson squad normally keeps her behind a desk and she has to constantly assert her own independence and will. When the first burnt corpses turn up a link is drawn with a similar murder some years previously, it gives her the chance to examine the scene and begin her own investigation. The plot thickens when a young girl who could be another possible candidate for pyrokinetic powers is discovered, and it turns out that there is an organisation

which would like to train her to work for them, and their own brand of justice. At the same time this secret organisation seems to have ties with the police, and is actively seeking out Junko to recruit her. As the story progresses all of the characters, and the secret organisation, seem to be linked in a circle which is gradually becoming tighter. Junko finds herself being recruited by the organisation to train a pyrokinetic candidate, and detective Chikako works to protect the young girl and to find Junko, while having to face the possibility that people with extraordinary powers exist. The link between all of them appears to be leading to an unavoidable showdown.

This novel is well written, and the most striking features are the powers Junko possesses, which seem to be triggered by emotion. The angrier she is, the more power she has, and the more power she has the more she loses control. It is hard not to draw parallels with Japanese anime, movies, etc, where quite often there is a theme of repressed emotions leading to angry outbursts, specifically on occasions where other people can get hurt because of a loss of control. This is very pertinent in regards to Japanese society where everyone is very careful to hide their feelings, but in moments of anger, or alcohol intoxication, can commit regrettable deeds. Detective Chikako represents a theme of masculine domination in the police, she got her promotion because there had been pressure to appoint more female detectives. While she is determined to show herself worthy of the position she isn't given many opportunities to do so. At the same time she has to fight with her own reluctance to believe that people with extraordinary powers exist, while facing increasing evidence that they do. It is easy to be drawn into the plot of this book as there are deeper meanings in the story beyond the surface, while plenty of mystery is created by the existence of a secret organisation. It is shown that as strong as Junko is, her isolation from others has created a person missing love, while Chikako in her quest to prove herself has to confront some unpleasant truths.

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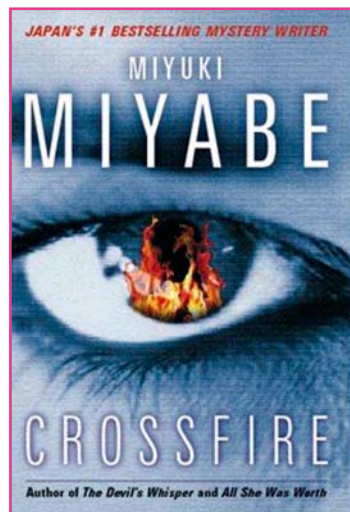
## Zero Focus [ゼロの焦点] directed by Isshin Inudo

2009, 131 minutes

Review by Susan Meehan

*Zero Focus*, set for the most part in photogenic Kanazawa is a slick and classy film made by Isshin Inudo. It is based on the best-selling crime novel of the same name written by Seicho Matsumoto [松本 清張].

The book is very popular in Japan, and has been made into a





TV drama no fewer than six times, and into a film now twice [the first movie version appeared in 1961].

This most recent film was made in 2009, to celebrate the centenary of Seicho Matsumoto's birth, and is described by Inudo as 'a new film about post-war Japan.' It is acted extremely well and boasts beautiful cinematography. Inudo admits to being more interested in the depiction of Japan in the late 1950s, and the lingering impact of the Second World War rather than in the story's riddle itself.

The film is set in 1957. Tokyo-based Teiko, acted with great sensitivity, luminosity and subtlety by the versatile Ryoko Hirosue [広末 涼子], falls for businessman Kenichi Uhara's calm exterior and good looks. Before long they are married and Kenichi has to return to Kanazawa to wrap up his work there. He intends to return within a week so that he can settle into married life with his new bride. He doesn't return.

Teiko, filled with foreboding and realising how little she knows her husband, embarks on a journey to Kanazawa to solve the mystery of his disappearance. Her only clues to his life there are two of his photographs - one is of a stately mansion and the other of a ramshackle house.

The views from the train as Teiko approaches snowy Kanazawa, skirting the sea, are breathtakingly beautiful. As Teiko meets her husband's colleagues, the mood is achingly suspenseful and ominous, especially as a dead body has just been found at the foot of the cliffs.

Teiko meets her husband's boss at Toyo Advertising and his wife. Each one, in separate conversations with Teiko, frustratingly says that the other knows more about Kenichi's life in Kanazawa. They immediately seem rather suspect.

Teiko gradually begins to learn more about Kenichi who, ten years her senior, had more fully engaged with the experience of post-war, defeated Japan. He worked briefly as police officer in Tachikawa, Tokyo during the American occupation of Japan, often keeping watch over the activities of the 'pan pan' girls, Japanese women who would dress up in glamorous Hollywood style, hoping to catch the attention of the American GIs. Discontent at having to enforce American rules and norms, Kenichi moved on and ended up working for the most part in Kanazawa.

Kenichi is not the only one to have reinvented himself after the war. The sophisticated-looking wife of his boss at Toyo Advertising, had, in fact, been on the other side of the law, as a pan pan girl, also based in Tachikawa, Tokyo. She won't admit to this part of her life which she finds intensely embarrassing.



When unearthed, these connections to life in occupied Japan and Tachikawa eventually lead to resolving the initial disappearance of Kenichi and the subsequent crimes. By the end of the film, six people have died.

Through discovering the mystery of Kenichi's death and his involvement with two women from his past, whose lives have had different outcomes (remember the photographs?), Teiko comes to understand more about her husband and what drew him to her.

She realises that he has been cruelly deprived of life, just as he was about to start all over again with her. Now it is Teiko, who has to resume or restart her own life, which had been temporarily turned upside down during her sleuth-like investigations into Kenichi's death. Ironically, had he lived there is no certainty that he would have told her about his past, so she has ended up learning more about him than may have otherwise been possible.

*'In order to recreate old Japan for the film, much of it was shot on location in Korea, which has old buildings similar to those found in 1950s Japan.'*

Photogenic Kanazawa itself is one of the film's major protagonists. Situated by the Sea of Japan and with majestic mountains and cliffs it is incredibly beautiful. It was also the second largest city after Kyoto to survive destruction after the Second World War, so is the perfect place to begin life afresh and distance oneself from the horrors of war and its destruction.

Isshin Inudo was present at the Japan Foundation's screening of the film at the ICA on 3 February 2013 and answered a number of questions from the admiring audience. Aware that most of his Japanese viewers would be familiar with the story itself, in making the film he focused on the film's artistry and scenery. He also focused on the era itself.

In order to recreate old Japan for the film, much of it was shot on location in Korea, which has old buildings similar to those found in 1950s Japan and which retains a mood, reminiscent of that era.

In 1957, the year the story is set, an announcement was made by the Japanese government, stating that the postwar era was over. Perhaps, said Inudo, the story is called *Zero Focus* as Matsumoto was focusing on zero as the new starting point for postwar Japan from 1957 onwards.

Inudo wanted to focus on people who, even in 1957, were continuing to live under the shadow of the war, and who had been the foundation of today's Japan. He wanted to show what suffering and sacrifices they had experienced.

In terms of gender politics, Inudo pointed out that the murderess of the story only kills men. Admittedly, she does drive one woman to her death but this is the only victim she had any regrets about. It is almost as though she is taking revenge on male-dominated Japanese society, which had been responsible for starting the war.

A fabulous, atmospheric and thoughtful thriller!

## Arrietty [借りぐらしのアリエッティ]

Directed by Hiromasa  
Yonebayashi

2012, 91 minutes

Review by Michael Sullivan

In 1952 *The Borrowers* was written by Mary Norton, since then it has been adapted for the screen several times in America and the UK. As recently as December 2011 a version of *The Borrowers* starring Stephen Fry was released by the BBC. The adaptation by Studio Ghibli marks a continuation of British themes in Japanese anime movies which began with *Laputa* [天空の城ラピュタ] in 1986, with its similarities to Jonathan Swift's *Laputa* as described in *Gulliver's Travels*, and other full adaptations such as *Howl's Moving Castle* [ハウルの動く城] in 2004, which was based on Diana Wynne Jones' book of the same name. *Arrietty* was the top grossing movie of Japan for 2010 and won Animation of the Year at the 34th Japan Academy Prize film awards.

Shō moves to the house of his great aunt Sadako to rest in preparation for an upcoming operation, upon arriving he notices a cat chasing something in the bushes and sees a Borrower, a 10cm 14 year old girl, Arrietty. Along with her parents, Arrietty lives underneath Sadako's house and they make their living by 'borrowing' what they need. By this point in time two other Borrower families have either gone missing or left, and the family have not seen any others of their kind for a long time. When during the night Arrietty goes on her first borrowing expedition with her father to get sugar and tissue paper, she is startled to find Shō awake and watching her. He tells her not to be afraid, but they leave. Her father tells her that humans must never ever discover their existence. Despite this prohibition Arrietty seeks out Shō again and their friendship develops, however their friendship puts the little family's home in danger and eventually they must decide whether to stay or head out into the wild.

Although on first appearances this appears to be a film aimed at kids, actually it is suitable for adults as well. The story is very gentle in comparison to previous Studio Ghibli movies, and slow paced, but this allows room for appreciation of the rich artistry of the animation. In one scene a doll house in Shō's room is described as being made in England with attention to the smallest detail, and this equally reflects the impressive visual attention given to the scene by the film's animators. The music was composed by French musician Cécile Corbel who also sang the movie's theme song in Japanese, English, French, Italian and German. Originally she sent a fan letter to Studio Ghibli with a copy of her album and it was after hearing this that it was decided to invite her to work on the music for this film. Her music perfectly fits every scene and at times it is hard to decide which is more enchanting, the animation or the music.



The relationship between Shō and Arrietty is very touching and represents the meeting of two worlds, through their eyes we see that whether a person is little or big their heart is bigger than their size.

## The Etchings of Bernard Leach by Simon Olding

Crafts Study Centre, University of  
the Creative Arts, and the Leach  
Pottery, St Ives, 2010

135 pages

ISBN 978-0-954374-8-9

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi



This book was launched at Daiwa House in London on 23 November 2010 with an explanatory talk by Professor Olding. Dr Julian Stair, a potter and writer, took the chair. Professor Olding, who wrote the introductory essay, reminded his audience that while Bernard Leach is best known as perhaps the leading British craft potter of the twentieth century he first went out to Japan to teach the art of etching. In the early years of the twentieth century Leach had studied fine art and the technique of etching at the Slade and the London School of Art. He worked under the guidance of Frank Brangwyn about whose connections with Japan Libby Horner has written an interesting biographical portrait in *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume VII* published by Global Oriental for the Japan Society in 2010 [See our review in issue 29].

During his studies Leach who was influenced by William Blake, Whistler, Ruskin and Augustus John, produced a number of fine etching of urban and rural scenes. One of his most famous etchings was one produced in 1908-9 of coal heavers in Earl's Court Road.

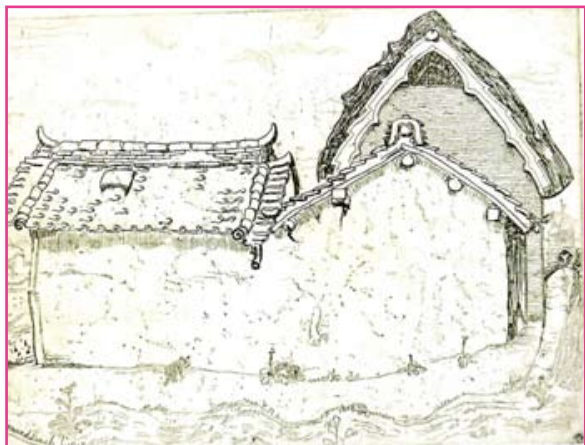


After five terms at the Slade and the London School of Art, Leach welcomed Brangwyn's peremptory command "Get out! Go to nature." He found this in Japan where he



arrived in 1908 and was soon inspired to depict aspects of the Japanese landscape in his etchings. He was also clearly influenced by Japanese artists such as Hiroshige and Hokusai both in the composition of his landscapes and the movement which he depicted in some of his etchings.

One of his closest friends in Japan was the artist and potter Kenkichi Tomimoto [富本憲吉] who came from a village near Nara. One of Tomimoto's favourite motifs was a simple Japanese cottage or barn. The following etching by Leach in 1912 is of a farmhouse in Tomimoto's village.



Leach's feeling for the Japanese landscape is particularly apparent in this sensitive etching of 1918 of the lagoon at Taganuma, Abiko.



Leach also produced some fine etchings during his time in China such as the following of Chen Mun Gate, Peking in 1918.



Leach drew figures with similar dexterity. These included self-portraits such as that on the cover of the book as well as of a number of women with whom Leach came in contact. Perhaps the most charming etching of all in this collection is the following of his son David Leach dated 1920.



Some of his etchings were forerunners of designs which he developed for his pots such as this.



Leach gave up producing etchings in the early 1920s preferring to concentrate on pottery and drawing of which he was a master. But he used his etchings as gifts to friends until the end of his life.

This book brings together the etchings which have survived at the Craft Study Centre to which Stella and Nick Redgrave donated 65 of the surviving metal plates which Leach had collected and stored at St Ives. According to one source some were kept under his bed and others in sacking in the attic.

The author hopes that the publication of this collection of Leach etchings will lead to the discovery of other etchings in private collections. Anyone attracted by Bernard Leach as a potter will want to have a copy of this well produced publication.