



White**Stone**Arts

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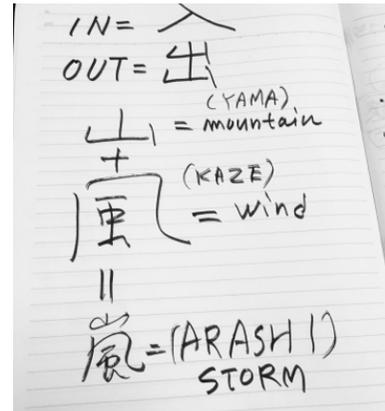
# STORMY HOUSE / ARASHI NO IE

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Development Workshops, June/July 2018



**Arashi no ie / Stormy House** is an Anglo-Japanese installation/performance project initiated by Whitestone Arts (Judith Adams playwright, Simon Warner film-maker, Stacey Johnstone performer) to explore *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (1818-48) through the prism of traditional Japanese ghost stories and their landscape settings, as transcribed by Greco-Irish polymath Patrick Lafcadio Hearn / Yakumo Koizumi (1850-1904).



Working in our studio on Haworth Moor in collaboration with designers Leo Warner and Jenny Melville and film-maker Jessie Rodger from the creative technology company 59 Productions (London and New York), five visiting Japanese Artists, theatre students from CAPA College (Wakefield) and performers Zoe Katsilerou (Athens) and Aaron White (Kent), we created moving silhouettes (ghosts) and scenarios and captured them on film. We also worked with pupils from Haworth and Copthorne Primary Schools and ran public workshops, demonstrations and calligraphy sessions in Haworth and central Bradford.

These explorations and their outcomes (see below) were supported and co-funded by the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Bradford Council, the British Council, the Japan Society, Bradford's Theatre in the Mill and 59 Productions.

Using the material and resources gathered, Whitestone Arts will stage an installation 3-10th November 2018 in the Old School Room, Haworth and in Theatre in the Mill 2019 (dates tbc) as part of the Emily Brontë birthday celebrations and to celebrate Patrick Lafcadio Hearn's unique literary excellence as well as his neglected contribution to the understanding of Japanese sensibilities and culture.

#### **Calligraphy workshop with Misuzu Kosaka and Natsuko Toyoshima (facilitator)**

Misuzu Kosaka, a prominent performance calligrapher and teacher, produces radical (often feminist) interpretations of traditional Japanese characters (kanji). In our workshops she was inspired to develop a performative group of large-scale graphic paintings based on selected kanji relating to text fragments in the show. These were captured in silhouette for later digital treatment by 59 Productions.



*I am in awe and have deep respect for the imagination that you showed, crossing time and space between Japan and the UK. This is really an unbelievable and amazing project... celebrating Emily Brontë's bicentenary year. I am most honoured to be part of this great creative activity and filled with gratitude. I hope it will make a big success.*

Misuzu Kosaka

## Butoh workshop with Ima Tenko and Riko Murakami

Ima Tenko is a leading exponent of Butoh, a post-war contemporary dance movement with traditional and avant-garde aspects. Working with fellow company member Riko Murakami as well as UK performers Stacey Johnstone and Aaron White and two students from CAPA College, Ima devised choreography from a feminist perspective in response to selected ghost tales. These were filmed by 59 Productions for inclusion in future design and showing.



*The experience and work at Whitestone are a big impact on not only my career as an artist but also on my individual life. I truly appreciate this opportunity. Because, I think, Japanese young artists at my age could hardly get the opportunities to work abroad. So it is a great experience for me to join and observe the creation in a foreign country with foreign artists.*

*In addition, I could re-discover Japanese culture / literature through this project. Although I knew about kaidan and yurei (angry ghosts), there were many episodes I'd never heard before. Those new discoveries will be surely a big inspiration for my work in Japan. I hope more and more Japanese artists could join the creation at Whitestone Arts in the near future.*

Riko Murakami

*Koizumi Yakumo (Hearn) rediscovered our Japanese sense of values forgotten in modernization and westernization. He left much literature that still reminds us of the lost things, which I'm grateful for. It's interesting for me that Wuthering Heights/ Kaidan come close and light up each other, and Butoh, the physical expression based on human memories before texts, will be approaching to something hidden about women in these literatures. I do appreciate that you gave me this thrilling opportunity to work with everyone in Whitestone. Happy days! Unforgettable memories!*

Ima Tenko

### **Statement by Judith Adams**

I've dreamed dreams since I first came to live on Haworth Moor in the 1980s of making a multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural exploration of *Wuthering Heights* that escapes the dominant (yet non-existent) romantic/sexual relationship of its two main protagonists much favoured by dramatists and readers alike. The seed was planted when I became first Education Officer for the Brontë Parsonage Museum (1994-7) and noted the particular Japanese fascination for Emily Brontë's novel and biography. It stirred back to life during a workshop with Opera North Projects on Japanese ghost traditions, where the dead live on earth and have no heaven or hell. I recalled Cathy as a child, flung out of heaven by disgruntled angels, weeping for joy to be back on the Heights, and Cathy's ghost, bleeding from her wrist over Lockwood's bed. I discovered Lafcadio Hearn's books and remembered Kobayashi's award winning film *Kwaidan* (1964) based on four of Hearn's stories. We researched Shinto's worship of the female and its instincts for the sanctity of landscape and natural things and saw photos of *torii* 鳥居, literally 'bird abodes': great gateways that seemed portals for flight into imaginary landscapes that might just turn out to be true.

We discovered that they were indeed true when we finally made a research trip to rural Japan in 2017 supported by the Daiwa and Sasakawa Foundations and the Artists' International Development Fund.

As a child, Emily Brontë chose the explorer Parry for her creative alter ego and (spookily) sited her imaginary world of Gondal in the North Pacific. There are many unlikely parallels between our two 19<sup>th</sup> century half-Irish writers, but none stranger than this apparently random coincidence. Wielding the same power she invoked when 'making-out' with her siblings in the tiny vaulted cellar at the Parsonage, Emily's imaginary world became a life-long immersive experience of non-linear narrative, text fragments, poetry, drawings, and mapping. She played obsessively with multiple personas and locations as we do today through digital gaming.

For me, *Wuthering Heights* is not a book about 'true romance' or unrealistic expectations or the need to grow up, choose, and choose 'wisely'. Nor is it a fantastical escape from 'reality' into gothic indulgence. It is a uniquely heretical book about identity. In this case, a brilliant woman's dual identity, riven by loss and contradiction so that her binary genius-soul becomes disallowed and invalidated by religion, society and culture because she is required to be 'other'. No female is in God's image. Yet Emily played out the god (Genius) of a self-made universe. This heresy is dangerous and is banished to the shadows of domestic life. In Japanese gothic tales too, home is where woman bides in enforced retreat and becomes a thing of male terror, *un-homely* as Freud groans, though as novelist and essayist Junichiro Tanizaki points out, Frankenstein has made his own monster: *our ancestors made of women an object inseparable from darkness (In Praise of Shadows, 1933)*. This bottling of alarming energies in stormy houses is shared by East and West alike, screwed down by the dominant culture's need to suppress a woman's right not only for equality but often for existence itself, given the equally riven, and so dangerous, male 'other'. Procreation (loving or not), like war and religion, is a serial killer of women in *Wuthering Heights*, and in Emily's world and in our world, still.

To explore this I have decided that the encircled moorland world of *Wuthering Heights* has a mirrored twin in that Gondal for 'grown-ups': ghostly Japan with its equally haunted yet solidly elemental landscapes where Amaterasu is Shinto sun-god, creator of the physical universe and a woman. I have long wished to make Lockwood's journey into Emily's world of 'otherness' the main focus for a reinterpretation. I find Lockwood, not Cathy or Heathcliff, to be the reader's true avatar and guide and, once we opened a portal to Japan, Lafcadio Hearn passed through as his obvious parallel 'other'. In the shadows of two writing rooms and in the elemental landscapes beyond - home of buried mothers, wives and lovers - we will place a permeable mirror. The Japanese name for this mirror of many souls, this portal sacred to Shinto that resides in its holy of holies, is *Ungaikyo*.

Our immersive installation and its ongoing development (reliant, as all stages have been, on future funding) will link Yorkshire and Japan and our two writers' imaginations, biographies, ghostly texts and shared roots in Celtic and Shinto mythology through this mirror. Working with local students and using cutting-edge video design, we will embed the unlimited, timeless power of childhood play and imagination into the physical fabric of the piece. Releasing children and women from the margins of texts - and other male cultural, political and domestic prisons - to run wild in new worlds of their own creation has always been a career imperative of mine. *Looking Oppositely*, as Emily Dickinson wrote, *for the Kingdom of Heaven* we have located and linked two Queendoms of Heaven on Earth either side of the globe spinning in unity like quantum particles. This truly is, as Einstein once said gloomily, *spooky action at a distance*.

### **'Building Stormy House' at Theatre in the Mill, Bradford**

Whitestone Arts ran calligraphy workshops with two Year 4 classes from Copthorne Primary School, led by Stacey Johnstone, visiting artist Misuzu Kosaka and facilitator Natsuko Toyoshima. With many of the children speaking English as a second language, this was their first encounter with Japanese culture and their first experience of coming to their local theatre. The children recognised the link between kanji, Urdu and Punjabi and many took the opportunity to write the words that they were taught in their mother tongue as well as Japanese. It was a sharing of cultures and uniting of the class through a common cultural purpose that none of them had experienced before. Teachers commented that pupils who find the classroom environment challenging were seen to engage and thrive in this new setting.

The workshop day continued with a company exploration of Tiltbrush, and finally a public panel discussion on our work and the themes of the project. The banners are saved to become part of our set.



## Workshop programme at Haworth Primary School

We set up a workshop programme with the Brontë Parsonage Museum at Haworth Primary School and delivered six sessions to their Year 4 class, looking at imaginary worlds, performance and Japanese culture. Pupils were introduced to the museum, cellar and graveyard and were given an illustrated talk by Learning Officer Sue Newby. In subsequent sessions led by Stacey Johnstone they worked with Misuzu Kosaka, Ima Tenko, Riko Murakami, Judith Adams and Aaron White, writing kanji and devising group ghost stories that they acted out in shadow play, creating imagery that was filmed for future use in our installation.

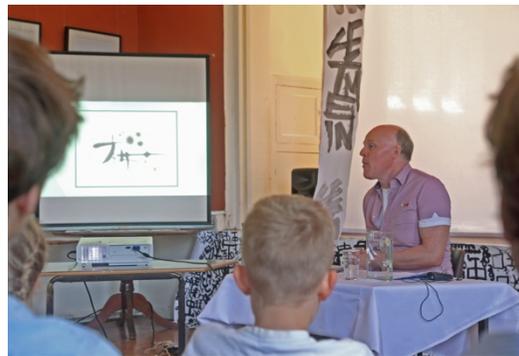
*I just wanted to send a quick message to thank you for involving our Year 4 class with this fabulous project. The children were enthralled with the work this week and all said that it was the best thing they had ever done, as they were going out of school.*

Helen Thompson, Headteacher, Haworth Primary School



## Japan Day in Haworth

The Brontë Parsonage Museum hosted a day of Japan-themed events on 1 July, curated by Whitestone Arts as a showcase for our collaborations and future work. In the morning Misuzu Kosaka led a calligraphy workshop for adults, demonstrating traditional forms of calligraphy and her own progressive style. All participants had the opportunity to practice multiple words in kanji, including 'Tea House' relating to one of the key *Kwaidan* ghost tales translated by Lafcadio Hearn: *In a Cup of Tea (The Possible Consequences of Swallowing a Soul)*.



In the afternoon writer and journalist Damian Flanagan gave a talk on the popularity of the Brontës in Japan and on why *Wuthering Heights* has such particular resonance for Japanese readers. He also discussed his collaboration with calligrapher Misuzu Kosaka when editing and translating the works of novelist Natsume Soseki in the early 2000s. The day ended with Ayaka Morimoto of Camellia Tea Ceremony sharing her skills - and tea - with artists and visitors.

## PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

[www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/16306275.going-japanese-for-a-creative/](http://www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/16306275.going-japanese-for-a-creative/)

[www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/16372249.stormy-times-as-bronte-shrine-links-with-japan/](http://www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/16372249.stormy-times-as-bronte-shrine-links-with-japan/)

[www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/16338731.art-and-culture-of-japan-introduced-to-children-at-haworth-primary-school/](http://www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/16338731.art-and-culture-of-japan-introduced-to-children-at-haworth-primary-school/)

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