



© Sachiko Kashiwaba, KODANSHA/2021 The House of the Lost on the Cape Committee.

The House of the Lost on the Cape

岬のマヨイガ

2021/105min/Colour/English Subtitles

Distributor: Anime Limited

Director: KATSUWARA Shinya

Cast: ASHIDA Mana, AWANO Sari, OTAKE Shinobu

Exeter Phoenix screening information:

Wed 2 Mar	Kiba: The Fangs of Fiction	6.00 pm
Wed 9 Mar	Ora, Ora Be Goin' Alone	7.00 pm
Wed 16 Mar	Life: Untitled	6.00 pm
Sun 20 Mar	Aristocrats	3.00 pm
Wed 23 Mar	Iwane: Sword of Serenity	8.00 pm
Wed 30 Mar	The House of the Lost on the Cape	8.00 pm

Like all Japanese media, anime in the last decade had to respond to the catastrophe of March 2011. Examples include the blockbuster *Your Name*, about another natural disaster, and the somber short film *Pigtails*. Even last year's science-fiction *Evangelion 3.0+1.0* showed a rural community getting on with life after a devastating disaster.

The House of the Lost on the Cape references the tsunami from its first moments, with a haunting image of the three main characters walking through the remnants of a coastal town, almost completely washed away. There's Yui, a teenage girl; Hiyori, a younger girl; and Kiwa, the kind old woman who brought them together. They're not biologically related, but they've formed a surrogate family after the tragedy. Now Kiwa is bringing the girls to their new home, a huge wooden house above the sea where they can live together. The house looks wonderful on first sight, but it's far *more* wondrous than that.

The film is addressed to the people whose lives were permanently changed by the tsunami. Yui and Hiyori stand for the countless real children who were traumatized by what happened, and who found themselves living in very different homes, often with strange grown-ups. The film acknowledges the pain of these children, but offers a message of kindness and hope. The anime also celebrates the communities struck so horribly in the disaster. Even with the devastation still visible, there is still room for dance and merriment; indeed, the film shows how these things are needed for life to go on.

The story comes from a book by veteran author KASHIWABA Sachiko, who's written fantasy since the 1970s. Another of KASHIWABA's books became the 2019 anime film *Birthday Wonderland*. The writer's childhood influences include British fantasies such as Narnia and Mary Poppins. However, the story's central idea of a "*mayoiga*" – a strange, magic house in a remote area, offering succor to the people who find it – comes from Japanese folklore, particularly associated with the Tohoku region.

KASHIWABA's book was adapted by YOSHIDA Reiko, an incredibly prolific anime screenwriter. Her other screenplays include *A Silent Voice*, *Ride Your Wave*, *Liz and the Blue Bird* and principal writing credits on the series *K-ON!* and *Violet Evergarden*. She also scripted the delightful 2018 film *Okko's Inn*, about another bereaved girl who meets magical figures.

Dates & Venues:

4 – 13 February
ICA, London

5 – 22 February
Phoenix, Leicester

5 February – 26 March
Firstsite, Colchester

6 – 27 February
Eden Court, Inverness

6 – 27 February
Watershed, Bristol

8 – 23 February
Depot, Lewes

9 – 27 February
Storyhouse, Chester

12 February – 1 March
Cambridge Film Trust, Cambridge

13 February – 2 March
Aberystwyth Arts Centre

13 February – 27 March
Hyde Park Picture House, Leeds

13 February – 27 March
Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff

15 February – 3 March
HOME, Manchester

16 February – 16 March
Brewery Arts Cinema, Kendal

21 February – 31 March
Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle

26 February – 20 March
Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast

28 February – 28 March

Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling

1 – 30 March
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

2 – 15 March
Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee

2 – 30 March
Exeter Phoenix, Exeter

4 – 6 March
QUAD, Derby

7 – 28 March
Cinema City, Norwich

7 – 28 March
City Screen Picturehouse, York

8 – 31 March
Showroom Cinema, Sheffield

12 – 20 March
Belmont Filmhouse, Aberdeen

15 – 29 March
Plymouth Arts Cinema, Plymouth

18 – 24 March
Broadway, Nottingham

18 – 24 March
Filmhouse, Edinburgh

The animation is by the studio David Production, far removed from the style of its long-running action series *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*. Many of the early scenes recall *My Neighbour Totoro*, as the children must adjust to their mysterious new house. However, the animation cuts loose joyfully in sequences where Kiwa tells vivid stories; these sequences have artfully rippling images and near-abstract paintings.

The main viewpoint character is the teenage Yui, voiced by former child actress AHIDA Mana. She was in the live-action film *Usagi Drop*, and also in *Pacific Rim* as the child version of KIKUCHI Rinko's character. More recently, she voiced the teen protagonist in the mystical anime film *Children of the Sea*. Among the film's supporting voices, listen out for one of the first supernatural characters to appear, a friendly fellow from Kozuchi river. He's voiced by TASSO Takuya, the governor of Iwate Prefecture!

Andrew Osmond

Journalist and author specialising in animation

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