

Programme

- 11.00** **Introduction**
Martin Colthorpe Director of Modern Culture, will provide an overview of the day.
- 11.05 – 12.15** **Session One: Japan: Outside Influences** (Chair: Christopher Harding)
Yoko Tawada and Momoko Ando
Japan is often seen as an insular country, with little inward migration, and this session features artists from a range of genres whose work takes its cue from 'internationalism' and outside influence. Yoko Tawada is one of Japan's best known novelists in the West, and has lived most of her adult life in Berlin. *Memoirs Of A Polar Bear*, is her newly published novel. Momoko Ando is a filmmaker whose work includes *Kakera: A Piece Of Our Life* and *0.5mm*. She is currently based in Tokyo.
- 12.30 – 13.30** **Session Two: Japan in Fiction (i)** (Chair: Suzi Feay)
Hiromi Kawakami and Tomoka Shibasaki
Hiromi Kawakami and Tomoka Shibasaki exemplify the off-kilter style and atmosphere in Japanese fiction today, launching newly translated novellas at this session. *Kawakami* is renowned for *Strange Weather in Tokyo*. Her latest work in English *Record Of A Night Too Brief* (translator Lucy North), for which she won the Akutagawa Prize, is an alluring mix of imagery and surreal happenings, and full of emotional resonance. Tomoka Shibasaki's *Spring Garden* heralds a major new talent, with its luminous sense of time and place. It brilliantly compresses characters' lives into a series of photographic snapshots. They discuss their fictional worlds with Literary Critic Suzi Feay.
- 13.30 - 14.15** **Lunch**
- 14.15 – 15.30** **Session Three: Japanese Fiction: the art of translation (ii)** (Chair: Elmer Luke)
Polly Barton, Alfred Birnbaum, Elmer Luke, Aoko Matsuda and Masatsugu Ono
This session marks the launch of *Keshiki*, a series of stories from a diverse range of Japanese authors, both emerging and established. Aoko Matsuda and Masatsugu Ono read from their new work, and Polly Barton and Alfred Birnbaum explore the pleasures and complexities of the translation process. This event celebrates the range of vitality of contemporary fiction in Japan and the event is chaired by Elmer Luke, a specialist in Japanese literature and the editor of the *Keshiki* series.
- 15.45 – 17.00** **Session Four: Japan and the UK: building the future, echoing the past**
Alex Kerr and Takero Shimazaki
In this closing session Alex Kerr and Takero Shimazaki explore their fascination with their adopted homelands, and how, from their different perspectives they explore culture, sense of place, and history in this illustrated talk. In his books *Lost Japan* and *Dogs and Demons*, Alex Kerr has done more than perhaps any other contemporary author to evoke the physical and cultural landscape of contemporary Japan. His writing reflects a deep immersion in its aesthetics and traditions, and the changes that modernity has wrought. Takero Shimazaki, based in London, runs an architectural atelier, whose ethos is rooted in exploring the built fabric and historical narratives of the UK cities in which he works.

Programmed by Modern Culture in partnership with the Japan Foundation and Writers' Centre Norwich
Supported by the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, the Japan Society and the Nippon Foundation
Particular thanks to Strangers Press and Pushkin Press

Books by the participating authors will be available for purchase and signing throughout the event

Coffee, tea and refreshments will be available to buy in the Knowledge Centre before and in between sessions.