



## The Art of the Princess Mononoke

*Hayao Miyazaki, Kikuo Kawahara*

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## The Art of the Princess Mononoke Details

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# From Reader Review The Art of the Princess Mononoke for online ebook

## Alexander Curran says

Posted : 8 years, 4 months ago on 10 December 2009 08:11 (A review of Princess Mononoke)

*"You cannot change fate. However, you can rise to meet it, if you so choose."*

On a journey to find the cure for a Tatarigami's curse, Ashitaka finds himself in the middle of a war between the forest and Tataraba, a mining colony. In this quest he also meets San, the Mononoke Hime.

Yôji Matsuda: Ashitaka

Mononoke Hime(1997)Princess Mononoke is quite simply not just a Japanese animation; It is however a **phenomenon**. During it's box office run in Japan 1997 it didn't only become the highest grossing Japanese film of the year, but the highest grossing Japanese film...ever to be released.

Mononoke Hime takes place in 15th century Japan and opens with a warrior named Ashitaka in fierce battle with a Tatari Gama (a huge boar with worms covering it's body). Ashitaka kills the demon and successfully defends his village from it, but in the battle he is touched by the gigantic monster on his arm; leaving a dark scar as a reminder. The village doctor tells Ashitaka that it is a curse and is slowly killing him. Convinced that there must be a cure, Ashitaka leaves the village never to return....Thus begins the epic story of Mononoke Hime.

So what makes this film so amazing? First of all, the obvious: the writer/director and animator: Hayao Miyazaki. Known for revolutionizing the animation world with his non-conventional children's films (Kiki's Delivery Service, My Neighbor Totoro, Spirited Away), this is his most mature film, and I don't just mean in terms of content. Yes, this film is violent, deep and not for the squeamish but it's beside the point. The story is dark and deeply personal. Miyazaki had stated that after all his more family-friendly films were out, this was the film he felt he just had to make. There is an air of deep seriousness that comes with this film that is hard to miss.

Please remember this, most of all: Miyazaki's films are not strictly Anime.

Miyazaki is completely different in style, animation, texture and story. The one thing that angers more than anything are the people whom hurl abuse at this project because they do not like Anime. A reminder to everyone who hasn't seen this film is to take this into account.

Miyazaki's paints a world like no one has ever seen, and always beautiful and fascinating. What really brings his films to life is the resonating music. Half of what makes his films so beautiful is the score of Joe Hisaishi; perhaps one of the most gifted musicians in films around. His music is intriguing, mysterious and impossible to ignore. With films like this, I get to thinking his music was made for Miyazaki, and Miyazaki's films were made for Hisaishi. They balance each other perfectly and mirror each other in harmonic art.

Visually it's got so much going on to practically experience the abstractions that Hayao Miyazaki folds up into the rest of the story. The story itself trails along with the best of epic fantasy, with this crucial, earth-shattering quest that works on that level of action-adventure; as well as the mythological side of things. Some have stated that it is a piece of complex ideology in structure and storytelling; bordering on confusing and puzzling bewilderment. I would disagree, although I can see what they mean; You have to pay closer attention. On a more profound level, if one could call it such, it's really not hard to follow.

The protagonist of the film, is the type of tragic hero, though with one clear sight amid the chaos in his mind - peace. He is cursed by a sort of worm resembling jelly demon that runs amock in the darker recesses of the world. He searches for something to rid him of his scars while on the human side at some points (mostly dominated by the women impressed- or against- his skills); and with those of the wolves on the other side. The title character is part of the latter, though also human, bringing a little more of the underlying symbolism with a character. Then there are also the boars ready to destroy the humans; even at the expense of their lives. Amid the battles that rage on, leading to the significance of a certain Deer God as the centerpiece of the balance of the forests and civilizations; not too much is made explicit. At the same time, the side taken by the cursed hero is even questioned by one character; with that part connected among the others, the story elevates what could have been a kind of smothering over-symbolic representation into what is necessary and spectacular about the whole story. Quite simply, another masterpiece of Hayao Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli; that echoes a sensational message about our treatment of animals and the Environment.

*"In ancient times, the land lay covered in forests, where, from ages long past, dwelt the spirits of the gods. Back then, man and beast lived in harmony, but as time went by, most of the great forests were destroyed."*

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### **Alicia says**

I was very disappointed with this art book. It offered very little insight on the movie and was basically a retelling of the film (though not a very good one) with high quality images taken from the film and storyboards. Every so often you get a few concept sketched for characters, but these are very sparse. For whatever reason they're very selective in translating Japanese texts on the storyboards and concept sketches. For half of the book they go untranslated, then with no explanation they're suddenly translated on every page.

The layout job was terrible as well. I understand the creative design that they were going for, but it's as if they never considered how the layout would turn out in the finished book. This often leaves images spread across pages with the focal point falling in the gap between pages.

There are some poems written by Miyazaki, meant to convey character points to the music composer. These poems I think were the highlight of the book as they actually presented new information about the characters. I feel too that this book could have been better researched. In the first ten pages of it's mentioned that the character of Mononoke is modelled after an ancient clay figure. There's no picture of this figure leaving the reader to research themselves what it looks like.

If you are a fan of the film then it is enjoyable to flip through and see the art from the film, but don't expect any new insights. They could have done a much better job on this one.

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### **Jan Pospíšil says**

What you want from a movie artbook - great reproductions and a good ratio of concept art and animation backgrounds.

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### **Molly says**

Another great art book. This was the second Miyazaki movie I saw, the first one being "Lupin III- Il Castello di Cagliostro", and after this one I had to see them all (which I did). My love for Miyazaki's animation goes

further back in time. When I was little I watched on TV the post-apocalyptic anime series "Future Boy Conan", or to be precise the Italian dubbed version "Conan il Ragazzo del Futuro" (we on the Adriatic coast used to turn our analogue antennas towards the neighboring Italy- watched obscene amounts of anime that way). Every time someone asks me which was my favorite anime series, the immediate answer is Conan. And let's be clear, I watched everything and anything: from girl stuff such as Candy Candy, series with robots, aliens, animals (like Kimba the White Lion), historical (Lady Oscar-The Rose of Versailles), cross-dressing (Princess Knight, well "Oscar" fits here as well), space adventures (Captain Harlock, Star Blazers, Starzinger, Robotech), magical girls (Creamy, Emi, Gigi, Bia, you name it), witches, sports (soccer, baseball, boxing, volleyball, golf, basketball and professional wrestling-Tiger Mask), horror, martial arts (karate, kung-fu, judo), vampires, alternate dimensions, magical worlds, classic's adaptations (like Little Women or Anne of Green Gables, the latter also Miyazaki's) ninjas, samurais and formidable warriors/fighters/heroes sagas (like Dragon Ball or Ken il Guerriero - Fist of the North Star)....lost myself here (What was I saying?) ... yes ... , still ... Conan is the favorite anime series from my childhood or ever (love those old anime more than the new ones). I know this is a review of the "Mononoke" art book, but since I never found a "Conan" art book, and the series was the sole culprit for my love for Mr. Miyazaki's work, I just had to mention it during my marathon through his art books.

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### **Neatia says**

This was recounting the story of the film accompanied by screenshots from the movie. Every 30?50? pages or so there might have been a new piece of concept art and a poem, but most of the stuff in this book is in the movie and there isn't much about the making of the film at all.

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### **Jaslyn says**

Message of the film was delivered more meaningfully than Avatar imo. Every party, even the hero, the animal and natural gods, had good intentions but bad consequences. also, the story is pretty relevant now that Singapore has a couple of wild boar attack incidents lately due to forest clearings.

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### **Julie says**

I recently found a copy of this at a nearby bookstore and instantly scooped it up.

includes many screen shots from the movie as well as concept sketches of the major characters in watercolors.

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### **Yan says**

Easily my favorite film from Studio Ghibli and of course the art is brilliant as ever. Especially love all the mossy magic forest landscapes.

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### **Firman Widiasmara says**

One of the best animation film, ever! Cari filmnya, baca bukunya..keren sangat!

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### **Andrew says**

And so another entry in to my collection of Studio Ghibli books and I must admit as I sit here reading them and marvelling at the artwork I just wish I was more artistic, they are truly amazing.

Okay wishful thinking aside - this series of books and the Art of Princess Mononoke is no exception - they are amazing. Now I know the more I dig on a subject the less I feel I know about it, but I have not come across many anime films or TV shows which have such books available for.

Studio Ghibli is an incredibly influential studio which have (and I have said this many times before) influenced popular culture subtilely inserting their unique style and vision. I remember seeing this film many years ago and being spell bound not only by the scope of the story but also of the sheer beauty of the animation- something I can now stop and linger over with the help of this book.

In short if you enjoy the film (or in fact any anime) books like this allow you to take in the enormity of the work put in to what could be only a mere few seconds of screen time. It almost feels criminal the amount of work a film like this requires and yet so little of it is recognised (or at least registered) as you sit there watching. This book I think is an essential recognition of that mammoth task.

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### **Edward Rathke says**

Purely for people who already love the film, but there are some great poems written by Miyazaki inside, and lots of great concept art.

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