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Philip Arneill *Tokyo Jazz Joints*

Texts by Philip Arneill, James Catchpole
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Documenting a vanishing world of Japanese jazz culture

Japanese jazz bars and coffee shops are insular worlds where time ceases to exist, removed from the speed and chaos of the modern urban landscape. *Tokyo Jazz Joints* is a visual chronicle of this unique culture that captures the transient beauty of these spaces. Established in 2015 to document Tokyo's myriad »jazu kissa«, the project has gradually expanded to cover the whole of Japan. These dedicated jazz listening spaces are slowly vanishing in the face of changing trends, ageing customers and gentrification. This book preserves these living museums before they disappear forever. *Tokyo Jazz Joints* is a documentary photography project by Northern Irish photographer Philip Arneill, in collaboration with American broadcaster James Catchpole, both long-term residents of Japan.

From the text *An Irishman and an American Walk into a Jazz Joint* by **Philip Arneill**:

The joint is tucked away near the train tracks. It's barely identifiable from the outside, but for the beautifully crafted sign bolted to the wall with the name in both Japanese and English characters. I peer up the roughly carpeted staircase. At the top there's a huge picture of Miles on the floor, sitting next to crates of empty bottles. His famous horn is poised, pointing perfectly down the staircase to beckon us as we approach. It has all the features we'd experience again and again: an impossibly narrow staircase, a cramped space yellowed from years of cigarette smoke, memorabilia, a treasure trove of vinyl, priceless audio equipment, and kind and generous owners. Personal, passionate homages to a music deeply embedded in Japan's modern musical culture. These photos are a love story. By crawling around these often cramped spaces shooting handheld images without flash in dark and gloomy lighting, I've created my own homage – a collection of dusty digital images –

that I hope, even in some small way, gives a sense of the sheer wonder of these spaces.

From the text *One Last Stop* by **James Catchpole**:

Japanese jazz joints are so full of love: love of music, audio systems, record collecting, alcohol, social gathering, shared interests and humanity. Philip has captured visually the love Japan has for jazz in these photos. This is why we've spent eight-plus years on this project – to show a side of Japan that too few people know about, a subculture that can astonish and thrill even the most cynical jazz heads around the world.

Philip Arneill is a Belfast-born photographer and writer and he is currently an AHRC doctoral researcher at Ulster University. Philip holds an M.A. Photojournalism & Documentary Photography from the University of Arts London. His work explores the illusory ideas of home and culture by exploring insider-outsider dynamics and autoethnographic issues of place and identity. His work has been published widely online and in print media, and he has exhibited his images worldwide.

James Catchpole is a broadcaster and writer based in Yokohama, Japan. He started *Tokyo Jazz Site* (TJS) in late 2007 to visit and briefly profile every jazz-related establishment in the Greater Tokyo Area. TJS has been featured in publications including the Japan Times, the Asia Wall St. Journal, The Tokyo Journal, BBC Travel, and Smithsonian Magazine, and currently has over 125 jazz joint profiles in its directory. James also hosts the online radio show Tokyo Jazz Map on www.jjazz.net, and the OK Jazz Podcast.

www.tokyojazzjoints.com / [@tokyojazzjoints](https://twitter.com/tokyojazzjoints)

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