

BEYOND *BUNRAKU*: JAPAN'S DIVERSE PUPPETRY HERITAGE

Date and Time: May 11, 7pm (Tokyo)

Register from HERE: <https://forms.office.com/r/TJZJoentH6>



CLAUDIA ORENSTEIN

Theatre Professor at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY



Sambaso dancing toward the sea as part of the new year ritual at Anori Shrine, Mie Prefecture.



Dr. Orenstein and a puppet
Both photos by the courtesy of Dr. Orenstein

While the marvelous *bunraku* puppetry tradition, as performed by the National Bunraku Theatre in Osaka, is the most well known form of Japanese puppetry both in Japan and abroad, Japan is also home to a number of other wonderful, long-established forms, some of which draw on *bunraku*'s famous three-person style of manipulation and dramatic repertoire, and others that have their own unique histories, means of manipulation, and stories to tell.

Drawing on the research she has conducted during her time in Japan as a 2021-22 Fulbright Research Fellow, hosted by Sophia University's Institute of Comparative Culture, Professor Orenstein introduces a variety of these traditions, looking closely at how they are performed, by whom, and in what contexts. Her talk sheds light on the web of practices that make up Japan's rich performing object heritage and brings up questions about preservation of tradition as uniquely highlighted by the current Corona virus pandemic.

Claudia Orenstein, Theatre Professor at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY, has spent nearly two decades writing on contemporary and traditional puppetry in the US and Asia. Recent publications include the co-edited volumes *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations* and *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. She worked as dramaturg on Tom Lee and *kuruma ningyō* master Nishikawa Koryū V's *Shank's Mare*. She is a Board Member of UNIMA-USA, Associate Editor of *Asian Theatre Journal*, and will be the Editor of the new, online, free access journal devoted to puppetry, masks, and related arts, *Puppetry International Research*, published by Martin E. Segal Theatre Center in collaboration with UNIMA-USA. Current book projects are *Reading the Puppet Stage: Reflections on Dramaturgy and Performing Objects* and a two-volume co-edited anthology with Tim Cusack, *Puppet and Spirit: Ritual, Religion, and Performing Objects*. She is the recipient of a 2021-22 Fulbright Research Fellowship for research on ritual puppetry in Japan.

This event is organized by Noriko Murai (Associate Professor, FLA).