

# Feminism and Female Empowerment in the 21st-Century Academy 2022

Photo via Pexels by Tima Miroshnichenko

## Person in Charge

Noriko Murai (03-3238-4026 / nmurai@sophia.ac.jp)

## Other FLA faculty/ICC member involved

Bettina Gramlich-Oka (FLA/ICC)

Yuka Minagawa (FLA/ICC)

Hanako Okada (FLA/ICC)

Angela Yiu (FLA/ICC)

Alice Ashiwa (ICC)

Naomi Kuromiya (ICC)

Lillian Wies (ICC)

## Description of Research Events & Activities Accomplished

### 1. Public lectures:

Lillian Wies, "Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Maryland, ICC Visiting Researcher, October 6, 2022.

"On Her Terms: Yoshida Fujio, Self-Determination and the Status of Women Artists in Modern Japan."

[https://www.icc-sophia.com/files/ugd/2edff9\\_134f465f-73de42a1aef49047d114192c.pdf](https://www.icc-sophia.com/files/ugd/2edff9_134f465f-73de42a1aef49047d114192c.pdf)

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Lecture Series 2022



**On Her Terms:  
Yoshida Fujio,  
Self-Determination,  
and the Status  
of Women Artists  
in Modern Japan**

Lillian Wies

October 6, 2022  
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM  
Face to Face only  
Please register:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/3kZ3JiuU>

Yoshida Fujio, Seattle, 1900, watercolor on paper, private collection.

Watercolorist Yoshida Fujio (1887-1987) did not choose to become an artist, at least not initially. Born into an artist family and later the wife of male artist Yoshida Hiroshi (1876-1950), Fujio's occupation was predetermined by her father and husband. Extremely rare for a woman of her time, Fujio was rigorously trained in Western-style painting, traveled extensively across America and Europe, and found repeated success at Japan's national exhibitions. She was poised to become one of the most celebrated women artists in modern Japan. This research-in-progress talk will provide an introduction to Fujio's work, exploring how early twentieth-century attitudes towards gender marked her career, artistic choices, and sense of self. In using Fujio's career as a case study, I will consider the position of women artists within art history and invite a reconsideration of how we define professional success and artistic identity.

Lillian Wies is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her dissertation focuses on the development of the "female artist" as an emerging visual and social type in early twentieth-century Japan, and explores the strategies women artists used to shape their careers and personas while navigating gender-based discrimination. Wies received her B.A. in Art History from Wellesley College and her M.A. in Regional Studies East Asia from Harvard University. She is currently a Japan Foundation-Japanese Studies Doctoral Fellow, affiliated with the Institute of Comparative Culture at Sophia University.



Organized by Prof. Noriko Murai (Art History, FLA, Sophia University) for ICC Collaborative Research Unit "Feminism and Female Empowerment in the 21st-Century Academy".

Yoshida Fujio, Untitled, date unknown, watercolor on paper, private collection.

**Namiko Kunimoto**, Director of the Center for Ethnic Studies at Ohio State University and Associate Professor in the Department of History of Art, December 15, 2022.

“Feminism, Bourgeois Liberalism and Shimada Yoshio’s Becoming a Statue of a Japanese ‘Comfort Woman.’”

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**Jennifer Robertson**, Professor Emerita, Anthropology and History of Art University of Michigan, January 19, 2023.

“Robo-Buddhism: Technology, Design, and Spirituality in Japan Today.”

[https://www.icc-sophia.com/files/ugd/2edff9\\_cd-1d965147324abe89b862a147a1cea1.pdf](https://www.icc-sophia.com/files/ugd/2edff9_cd-1d965147324abe89b862a147a1cea1.pdf)

## 2. Roundtable workshop:

Roundtable conversation with Prof. Jennifer Robertson, September 30, 2022.

## 3. Other activities:

Participation at feminism, gender studies, diversity and equity related events, conferences, and symposia organized by the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), Dōshisha University, and Feminism & Art Research Project; discussions with scholars based outside Japan including faculty members at Boston University, Harvard University, the University of Chicago, and the University of Kansas.

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Lecture Series 2022

### Feminism, Bourgeois Liberalism and Shimada Yoshiko's Becoming a Statue of a Japanese 'Comfort Woman'

**Namiko Kunimoto**  
12/15 (Th), 18:00-19:30  
Room 301, 3F, Sophia University  
Yotsuya Campus, Building 10  
In person session only  
Please register from [here](#)



Namiko Kunimoto is a specialist in modern and contemporary Japanese art, with research interests in gender, race, urbanization, photography, visual culture, performance art, transnationalism, and nation formation. She is the Director of the Center for Ethnic Studies at Ohio State University and Associate Professor in the Department of History of Art.

Her essays include *Situating "Art in Transwar Japan" in ThirdText* (2022), "Tsujimura Kazuko and the Body Object" in *Asia Pacific Japan Focus* (2021), and "Tactics and Strategies: Chen Quilin and the Production of Space" (2019) in *Art Journal*. Dr. Kunimoto's awards include a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Fellowship, Japan Foundation Fellowships (2007 and 2016), Ikhbashi Foundation Fellowship (2020), a College Art Association Millard/Mess Author Award (2017), and the Ratner Distinguished Teaching Award (2019). Her book, *The Stakes of Exposure: Anxious Bodies in Postwar Japanese Art*, was published in February 2017 by the University of Minnesota Press and she is currently working on her next book, *Transpacific Erasures: Contemporary Art, Gender, Race, and the Afterlives of Japanese Imperialism*.

This talk is organized by Noriko Murali (Associate Professor of Art History, Sophia University) for the ICC Collaborative Research Unit "Feminism and Female Empowerment in the 21st-Century Academy."

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Lecture Series 2022

### ROBO-BUDDHISM: TECHNOLOGY, DESIGN, AND SPIRITUALITY IN JAPAN TODAY

**Jennifer Robertson**  
Professor Emerita, Anthropology and History of Art  
University of Michigan  
Visiting Professor, Tokyo University  
(January and February 2023)



January 19th, 2023, 18:00-19:30  
In person only  
Please register: <https://forms.office.com/r/WJ2NuQxt.wX>

Ever since the inauguration of the Humanoid Robotics Project (HRP) in 1998, many Japanese robotics building humanoids have sought to imbue their gendered robots with kokoro (heart/mind, mindful heart). Robotics pioneer Mori Masahiro has claimed that robots have the Buddha-nature (bushō) within them. Recently, the scholarly and popular media alike have announced the advent of "robot priests," one of which is Softbank's humanoid Pepper that debuted in 2015 (and was discontinued in 2021). Another Buddhist robot is Mindar, an "android Kannon" installed at a temple in Kyoto. Pet robots like Sony's robot dog AIBO and electronic devices like smart phones and laptops are given Buddhist funerals when they breakdown or become outdated. Also explored in this presentation are the motives for growing numbers of Japanese people to employ various technologies to satisfy their spiritual and religious needs.

Jennifer Robertson is Professor Emerita and Affiliate Professor of Robotics Institute at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is also Affiliate Professor, Departments of Anthropology and Japan Studies, University of Washington, Seattle. A historical anthropologist/anthropological historian, her seven books and over ninety articles and chapters address a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary subjects ranging from the 17th century to the present. Topics include nativist and social rectification movements, agrarianism, sex and gender systems and ideologies, mass and popular culture, nostalgia and internationalization, urbanism, the place of Japan in Anthropology, sexuality and suicide, theater and performance, votive and folk art, imperialism and colonialism, eugenics and bioethics, and technology and robotics. For more information, visit Professor Jennifer Robertson - Univ of Michigan - Univ of Washington

This event is organized by Noriko Murali (Associate Professor, FLA) Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture: <https://www.icc-sophia.com>