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Staging the Supernatural: Ghosts and the Theater in Japanese Prints

Lecture

Presented by JICC

2 NOV 2023

THU, 6:30 PM

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Join us for a conversation with **Dr. Frank Feltens** and **Dr. Kit Brooks**, curators of Japanese Art at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art to discuss their most recent exhibition on the supernatural.

Japanese culture is known for having a remarkable number of stories involving ghosts and spirits. Many ideas about the supernatural developed during the Edo period (1603–1868), when rapid urbanization brought diverse populations from across different regions — each with their own folkloric traditions — into close contact with one another. In popular culture, supernatural entities were given life on the stages of *noh* (能; a classical form of Japanese theater) and *kabuki* (歌舞伎; a classical form of Japanese theater) theater and in vibrant, multicolor woodblock prints (版画; *hanga*). These materials are the subject of a current exhibition on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art: **Staging the Supernatural: Ghosts and the Theater in Japanese Prints**. Join the two curators of the exhibition, **Dr. Frank Feltens** and **Dr. Kit Brooks**, to discuss some highlights of the exhibition and the artists who worked in this tradition.



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ABOUT THE PRESENTERS



Dr. Frank Feltens initially joined the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, as an Anne van Biema fellow in Japanese art, and became the Japan Foundation Assistant Curator of Japanese Art in 2017 and Associate Curator in 2021. He is currently the Curator of Japanese Art at the National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Feltens holds a PhD in Japanese art history from Columbia University (2016). He is a specialist in Japanese art with a focus on the late medieval and early modern periods. Additional interests include Japanese photography and the intersections between painting and ceramics.

Feltens has published and lectured on a range of topics related to Japanese art. Recent articles examine the painters Ogata Kōrin and Sakai Hōitsu, and the photographer Domon Ken. Prior to coming to DC, he worked at the Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Asian Art in Berlin and the Nezu Museum and the temple Sensōji in Tokyo. At the NMAA, Feltens has organized a number of exhibitions, including *Meeting Tessa: Japanese Art from the Cowles Collection* and *Hokusai: Mad About Painting* (2019-2020), as well as *Japan Modern: Prints in the Age of Photography* (2018-19), *Painting the Classics*, *The Way of the Kami* (2019). His book *Ogata Kōrin: Art in Early Modern Japan* will appear with Yale University Press this fall. Feltens is a longtime practitioner of the Japanese tea ceremony in the Urasenke tradition and carries the honorary tea name Sōchoku.



Dr. Kit Brooks is currently the Japan Foundation Assistant Curator of Japanese Art at the National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution. Brooks has held positions at the British Museum, Harvard Art Museums, and the Children's Museum in Boston.

They hold a PhD in Japanese art history from Harvard University (2017), studying under professors Yukio Lippit and Melissa McCormick. Specializing in prints and paintings of the Edo and Meiji periods, their primary research interests revolve around the reevaluation of "eccentric" artists of the eighteenth century, as well as the relationship between illustrated books and paintings, and special prints that emulate the visual qualities of other media, such as *surimono* and *takuhanga*.

Brooks has long been interested in depictions of ghosts and spirits in Japanese art, and in 2015, they curated the exhibition *Uncanny Japan: The Art of Yoshitoshi* at the Worcester Art Museum, featuring many of his supernatural images.

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Freer Gallery of Art
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This event is free and open to the public, but registration through [Google Forms](#) is required. Doors open at 6:00PM. The program begins at 6:30PM. No admittance after 6:30PM or once seating is full.

Registered guests will be seated on a first-come, first-served basis. Please note that seating is

limited and registration does not guarantee guests a seat.

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