

September 1, 2019
Landesmuseum Zurich

***One Hundred Years of Japanese Kamishibai:
Development and Popularity of the Paper Theater***

**Prof. Dr. Aki Nishioka
(Ritsumeikan University)**

In my presentation, I will introduce the history of the *kamishibai* (“paper theater”) using rare photographs and texts and seek to explain its popularity and importance in the cultural history of Japan. I will then discuss topics such as: earlier story-telling precedents of *kamishibai*, such as the mechanical peepshows, *etoki* (paintings explanations by monks), and *rakugo* (comic monologues); the two great waves of street *kamishibai* (*gaitō kamishibai*) in the 1930s and 1940s; the emergence of educational *kamishibai* (*kyōiku kamishibai* – also called *insatsu kamishibai*, or “printed kamishibai”); and the important role that *kamishibai* played in Japanese education after the war.

In addition, I will discuss the dark history of *kamishibai*, when it was used for state propaganda during World War II and when it underwent censorship under postwar occupation. The cultural role of *kamishibai* will be another topic, such as the way it interacted and influenced other contemporary and later media such as manga and anime. Finally, I will present the current state of *kamishibai* in Japan and the way that it has been used in education, nursing care, natural disasters (such as tsunami and earthquakes), and war stories – and then point to possible future developments.

Time allowing, there will be a chance for the audience to experience an actual *kamishibai* story in action. In addition, I have heard that *kamishibai* is sometimes used in Swiss educational settings, and I would like to start a discussion on the actual use of *kamishibai* in Switzerland and its possible future directions.

Prof. Dr. Aki Nishioka received her PhD in Comparative Studies of Cultures Program at Ochanomizu University in 2007 and is currently working as Associate Professor in the College of Letters, Communication Program at Ritsumeikan University, Japan. She has published extensively on various aspects of Japanese Literature, starting with her monograph on

Takehiko Fukunaga (2008), and specializes in Japanese-French comparative literature and culture, voice and iconographic media, written expression education, as well as anime and kamishibai studies.

Presented in a collaboration between the Swiss National Museum, the Swiss-Japanese Society, and the Section for East Asian Art, University of Zurich.