

# LUNCHTIME SERIES

## CENTRE FOR JAPANESE RESEARCH

**NARRATIVE, PERFORMANCE, AND  
“PREMODERN” FORMS:**

ISHIMURE MICHIKO'S  
CONTEMPORARY  
NOH PLAY OKINOMIYA  
AND ITS COSTUMING BY SHIMURA  
FUKUMI



**SPEAKER: DR. CHRISTINA LAFFIN**  
**12:30pm, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23RD**  
**ASIAN CENTRE, ROOM 604**

Ishimure Michiko is often represented as a founder of Japan's environmental movement, thanks to her efforts to represent those affected by Minamata Disease through grassroots organization, direct action, and literary works. Among Ishimure's writings are two noh plays: Shiranui, staged in 2002, and Okinomiya, which will be performed in October 2018 featuring costumes naturally hand dyed and woven by Living National Treasure Shimura Fukumi.

My presentation will examine Ishimure's Okinomiya and its production from the perspective of translator and tangential contributor. By examining current ecocritical approaches to Ishimure's oeuvre, I will show how scholars and interlocutors have approached her complex use of narrative, voice, and dialect by sometimes reducing it to an interaction with classical, traditional, or premodern forms. What does this tell us about our understanding of the "premodern" and why a noh play about war, natural disaster, and human sacrifice is being painstakingly produced in 2018?



Christina Laffin is an associate professor and the Canada Research Chair in Premodern Japanese Literature and Culture at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests include medieval travel diaries, women's education and socialization before 1600, and waka culture. Laffin's publications include a monograph on the medieval poet Nun Abutsu (*Rewriting Medieval Japanese Women: Politics, Personality, and Literary Production in the Life of Nun Abutsu*, 2013), a co-edited collection of essays and translations on noh drama (*The Noh Ominameshi: A Flower Viewed from Many Directions*, 2003), and a multi-volume anthology on Japanese history (*Gender and Japanese History*, 1999; managing editor).