



## Illuminating *Genji*:

### Reading the World's First Novel in Text and Image

Prof. Dr. Melissa McCormick (Harvard University)



Tosa Mitsuki (1617–1691), Portrait-Icon of Murasaki Shikibu, 17th century. Edo Period. Hanging scroll; Ink and color on silk. 90.5 × 52.7 cm. Ishiyamadera Temple, Shiga Prefecture. Ishiyamadera Temple.

Wednesday, 16th October 2019, 18:00–19:00  
UZH Main Building, Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zürich  
Room KOL-G-217

*The lecture will be held in English and is open to the public.  
For questions, please contact the Section for East Asian Art History:*

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## Abstract

*The Tale of Genji*, written by the court lady Murasaki Shikibu in the early eleventh century, inspired art works of tremendous variety throughout Japanese history. In this talk, Melissa McCormick discusses strategies for reading the tale today using highlights from an exhibition that she guest curated at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in Spring 2019. The exhibition traced the tale's cultural legacy over one thousand years, displaying more than 120 objects from collections in Japan and the United States. Central points to be examined in the lecture include new ways of interpreting the female authorship of the tale, *Genji*'s relationship to Buddhism, and the political uses of *Genji* imagery from the medieval to the modern era.