

Tara McGowan

Storyteller • Visual Artist • Teacher • Writer

Tara McGowan has been fascinated by all forms of picture-storytelling, East and West, since childhood. As a visual artist, who has lived and studied in Japan for many years, she brings to her performances and residencies an intimate knowledge of the language and culture. Her programs bring Japan to life through story, song, and image, and the artwork and artifacts she creates help students visualize the objects and landscape of everyday life.

Tara is currently a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Education's Language and Literacy in Education division at the University of Pennsylvania, where she has also been teaching graduate-level elementary education courses on Children's and Adolescent literature. Her forthcoming book on teaching kamishibai (Japanese paper-theater) storytelling in the classroom will be published by Teacher Ideas Press, an imprint of Libraries Unlimited

Tara earned a BA from Princeton University in Comparative Literature and East Asian Studies and later returned to Princeton to receive her teaching credential. She spent a year at the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies in Yokohama and a year at Kyoto University, studying Japanese folklore on an Ito Foundation Fellowship. She has returned to Japan many times to perform and study with kamishibai artists and storytellers.

Tara is certified to teach Japanese language through the secondary level and taught at the Princeton Community Japanese Language School for several years.

Here is a sampling of the performances, workshops, and residencies Tara has conducted over the past decade:

Long-term School Residencies (year-long projects involving upward of 20 sessions):

- Montgomery Upper Middle School (Independent Research Project) (2007)
- Extended Day Program for Gifted and Talented in the Trenton School District (2005-2006)
Patton J. Hill in Trenton, NJ
- "Teaching Literacy through Kamishibai," grade 4 (2005-2006)
- Schoenly School in Spotswood, NJ (2002-2005)
- Harrison School in Roselle, NJ, grades 1-4 (2001-2002)
- Cotsen Children's Library in Firestone Library (Princeton University), regularly scheduled 4-6 week workshops for children ages 5-7 and 8 and up (2002-2006)

Teacher Workshops and Conferences

- International Reading Organization (Phoenix, Arizona—February 2009)

- Japan Society in New York (October 2007, August 2005, February 2004, February 2004)
- NJEA TESOL Conference (July 2007)
- Susan J. Epply Summer Storytelling Institutes for Teachers, Princeton University (July 2007)
- Nara Prefectural Teacher's College in Nara, Japan (presented in Japanese) (July 2005)
- Cotsen Children's Library, Saturday Workshops for Teachers Series (July 2002)

Storytelling Performances and Events

- Featured Storyteller for Telebration, Storytelling Center of New York and The African American Folk Heritage Association (November 2008)
- Nobatake Library in Osaka, Japan (July 2008)
- Scandinavia House in New York (October 2006 and January 2008)
- Minoh Kamishibai Festival, Minoh City, Japan (July 2005, 2008)
- Japan Society in New York (October 2007)
- Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University (October 2005)
- Kamakura City Community Center, Kamakura, Japan (July 2005)
- Princeton University Art Museum (March 2005)
- NJ Storytelling Festival, Grounds for Sculpture (June 2005)
- Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Brooklyn Children's Museum (April 2004)
- S. Dillon Ripley Center, Smithsonian in Washington, DC (May 2004)
- Cotsen Children's Library in Firestone Library (Princeton University) (Family Series: 2001-2004)

Contact Information:

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