

The Asian Studies Program Presents:

“Rebranding Himiko”: A Talk with Laura Miller

November 22, 2013 from 4:00-6:00pm

Hagstrum Room, University Hall, 1897 Sheridan Road

This presentation explores a popular female icon, the alleged third century ruler of Yamatai named Himiko, focusing on her representations as shamanic priestess, alluring ruler and dangerous witch in contemporary culture. She morphs from ancient dictator in manga to ditzy *gyaru* in anime. Himiko provides rich material for regional boosterism as mascot, beauty contest theme, and touristic motif. She appears in tarot card decks and is channeled by divination providers. I trace how the hazy yet tantalizing aspects of her story make her such an appealing and malleable icon available to serve a range of interests.



Laura Miller is Ei'ichi Shibusawa-Seigo Arai Professor of Japanese Studies and Professor of Anthropology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. She has published widely on Japanese culture and language. She teaches courses on Japan and linguistic anthropology and works to promote Japan Studies through campus and community programming.