# Speakers' Biographies

## Monica Bethe

### Director, Medieval Japanese Studies Institute

The Medieval Japanese Studies Institute's activities include research into the history, artifacts, rituals, and documents connected with the imperial convents (*amamonzeki*) in Kyoto and Nara. A part of this outreach is focused on assisting in implementing the conservation of important cultural properties, like the royal chair at Daishōji Imperial Convent. With a background in Japanese art and cultural history, Bethe has a special expertise in historic textiles. Publications include co-authoring and editing *Amamonzeki: A Hidden Heritage: Treasures of the Japanese Imperial Convents* (Sankei Shinbun, 2009) and *Fashioning a New Look for the Meiji Empress and Japan: Stories of a Court Dress Revealed During Conservation* (Mitsumura Suiko Shoin, 2025).

## Dr Joanna Marschner

### Senior Curator, Historic Royal Palaces (retired)

Dr. Joanna Marschner, retired senior curator of the Historic Royal Palaces, is an art historian with a strong background in cultural and material history. Her specialty is monarchial history of the 17th through 21st centuries. A life-time of work at the Historic Royal Palaces with special attention to the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection has built her expertise in British and European court attire. Her interest in the visual image of royalty as seen in their palaces sets the foundation for in-depth research on royal furniture and its manufacture. Publications include *Queen Caroline: Cultural Politics at the Early Eighteenth Century Court* (Yale University Press, 2014) and editing *Enlightened Princesses: Caroline, Augusta, Charlotte and the Shaping of the Modern World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017) and *Queen Victoria: Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

## Aya Ota

### Senior Curator, Imperial Household Agency Sannomaru Shōzō, Research Division (retired)

Aya Ota, after graduating from the Department of Cultural Properties, Faculty of Letters, Nara University, worked part time in the curatorial department at the Nara National Museum. Starting in 1992, as a curator at the Imperial Household Agency's Sannomaru Shōzōkan (Museum of Imperial Collections), she was engaged for many years in the research, conservation, and exhibition of masterpieces from the Imperial Collection and continues today to research and classify art works in the Imperial Household. At the Sannomaru Shōzōkan, she conducted investigative research and was deeply involved in the conservation, preservation, and transmission of masterpieces formerly in the Imperial Household, in particular Itō Jakuchū's *Colorful Realm of Living Beings*, a celebrated set of thirty hanging scrolls. In addition, her research encompasses early modern and modern Japanese painting, decorative arts, and art textiles associated with the Imperial Household and the former Imperial Household Agency. Through numerous academic papers and other publications, she has highlighted the significance of these works within Japanese culture. Her publications include *The Works of Itō Jakuchū* (Tokyo Bijutsu, 2015).

## Roberta Genta

**Deputy Director, CCR Conservation Laboratories Fondazione Centro Conservazione e Restauro "La Venaria Reale"**

Genta graduated in History of Art and Conservation Theory from the University of Turin, specializing in the conservation of textile artifacts. Since 2007, she has coordinated the Textile and Leather Materials and Artifacts Laboratory at the Centro Conservazione e Restauro “La Venaria Reale” (CCR) and, since 2016, she has held the role of Deputy Director of all Restoration Laboratories.Whilst never neglecting the methodological aspects of the restoration of ancient textiles (from archaeological collections to decorative textiles, such as tapestries, historic wallcoverings and upholstery) in recent years her work has focused on international research projects aimed at developing interdisciplinary protocols for the preventive conservation of the interior furnishings of historic residences.She contributes to scientific publications on the history of restoration and participates in conferences promoting restoration methodologies and establishing international standards for conservation protocols.

## Anna Piccirillo

**Coordinator of the CCR’s Scientific Laboratories Head of the Textile and Leather Materials and Artifacts Area Fondazione Centro Conservazione e Restauro “La Venaria Reale”**

Anna Piccirillo, PhD, is the Coordinator of the Scientific Laboratories at the Centro Conservazione e Restauro “La Venaria Reale” (CCR). She received her PhD in Chemical Sciences from the University of Turin in 2004, with a doctoral thesis focused on the characterization and ageing of natural organic binding media. Since 2014, she has been working as a Heritage Scientist at the CCR, providing scientific and diagnostic support for the conservation of a wide range of cultural heritage materials, from ancient Egyptian artifacts to modern and contemporary art. Her research focuses on the multi-analytical characterization of artistic materials and their degradation products using both invasive and non-invasive techniques. With considerable experience in FTIR spectroscopy, XRF, SEM-EDX, and optical microscopy, her current research includes international collaborations on pigment–binder interactions, particularly the formation of metal soaps, as well as the development of cleaning methodologies for historical textiles and preventive conservation strategies. In addition to her research and diagnostic activities, she is actively involved in professional training and knowledge transfer within the conservation community. She has contributed to several peer-reviewed publications and international conference proceedings.

## Shigeru Miyamoto

**President, Minerva Co., Ltd.**

Shigeru Miyamoto has taken over his father’s business in furniture modeling. As a professional upholsterer, he works across a broad range of fields, from chairs created with traditional upholstery techniques to custom-made furniture. In addition, he takes on projects involving the restoration or reproduction of historic furniture, including historic chairs associated with the Imperial Household Agency and similar important cultural properties. Overseas studies have broadened his experience in furniture making, building an awareness of traditional Japanese furniture materials and techniques as they compare with those used in other nations. In 2016, he received the Governor’s Award as a Tokyo Meister (Tokyo Metropolitan Government Outstanding Skilled Worker).