

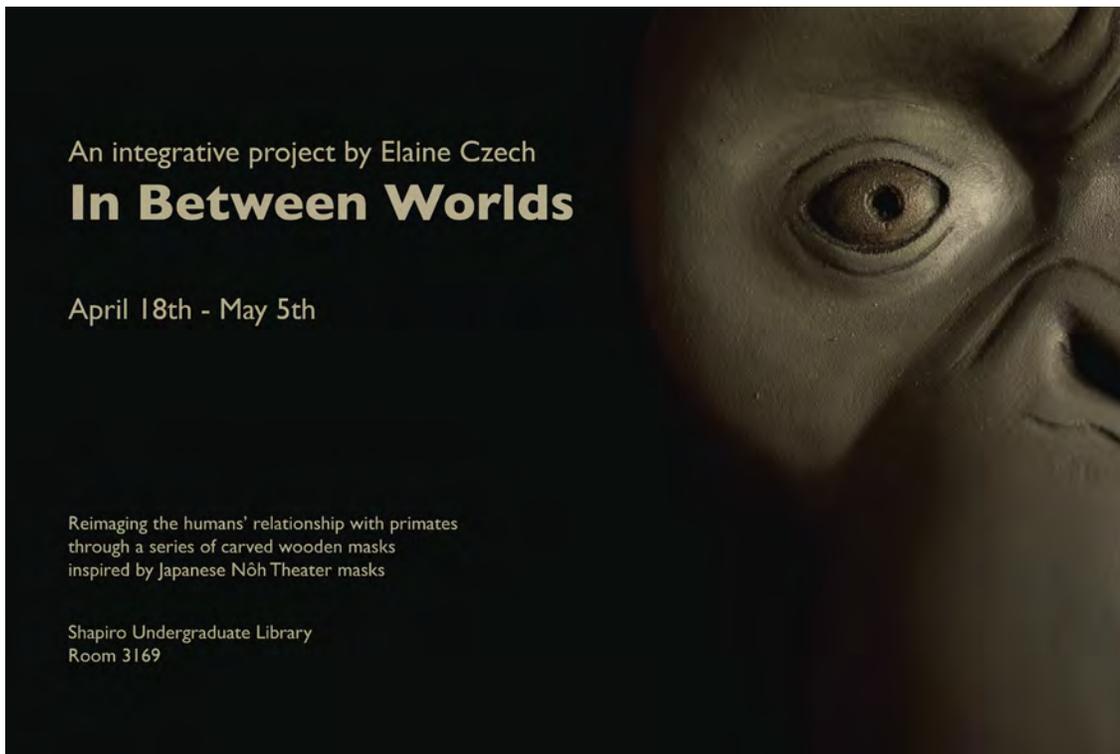
# In Between Worlds

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Elaine Czech  
Integrative Project 2012-2013  
Section 4

# Introduction

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**Figure 1:** Czech, Elaine. Advertisement for *In Between Worlds*. 2013. Digital Images. Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.

“Animals are critters just like you and me/So we buy pants and deodorants and claim not to be”  
–Jeffery Lewis, *singer/songwriter*

Besides studying Art and Design at the University of Michigan, I have also studied Biological Anthropology (the study of human evolution and primates) and History of Art (being mostly drawn to Japanese and Asian Art). Going into my integrative project I wanted to develop something that truly integrated all of the work that I have done at the University of Michigan. The theme of what it means to be human has recurred in each area of study. It is from this theme that I came up with my thesis project *In Between Worlds*.

Historically, humans were always placed at the top of the “food chain” and considered to be the “rulers” of the animal kingdom. Changes in how species are categorized, as well as changes in religious ideas, have made it so that much of these historical ideas have been disregarded. However, the two lines of Lewis’ song *Life* (2001) nicely sum up the modern perspective of the animal kingdom. While humans may no longer be considered the “top” of the animal kingdom, many people (myself included sometimes) still think of us humans as unique and separate. And thus I decided to make the base root of my thesis piece an exploration into how humans fit into the animal world.

The easiest way to explore the humans' "place" in the animal kingdom is to look at the humans' closest genetic ancestors: the Great Apes. The Great Apes, officially known as the Hominidae, consist of the chimpanzee, the bonobo, the gorilla, and the orangutan. Besides genetics and some physical similarities, humans share many traits with these animals. In particular, humans share many psychological reactions and expressions with the various Great Apes. This psychological link is sometimes forgotten when people are relating humans to the Great Apes. The humans' place in the animal kingdom can best be demonstrated by exploring various psychological/emotional aspects that overlap between humans and the Great Apes.

I plan to illustrate these emotional similarities through the Japanese performing art of *Nôh*. *Nôh* Theater combines dance, drama, music, and poetry to portray tales with intense human emotion ("Noh and Kutiyattam - "Treasures of World Cultural Heritage." 2004). By placing primates in stories written about human emotions the link between mankind and animals can be seen. An important aspect of *Nôh* Theater is the masks that are worn primarily by the main character. The designs of the masks (even those that are gods or demons) are based on human facial features. For my thesis I designed four of these masks based on Great Ape facial features. Therefore, *In Between Worlds*, through *Nôh*, explores not only the humans' place in the animal world but the humans' relationship with the Great Apes.



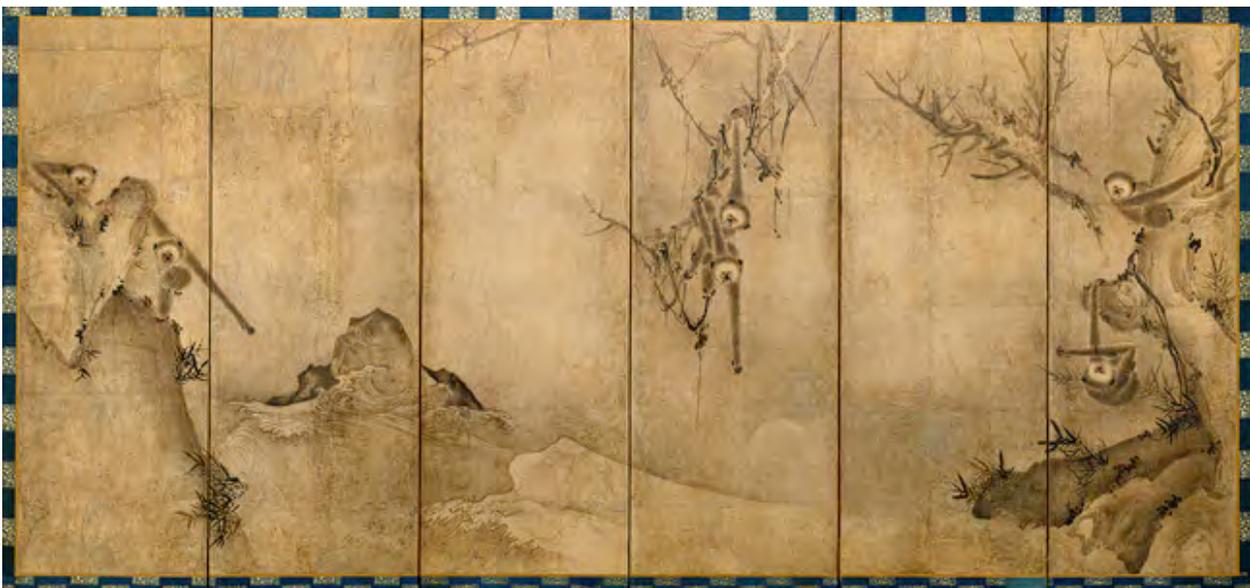
**Figure 2:**  
Czech, Elaine. *In Between Worlds*. 2013. Digital Images. Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.

# Contextual Discussion

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## *Primates in Asian Art and Culture*

Primates in Asian culture, particularly Japan, have a long, mostly religious, history. The significance of primates in religion stems from the Japanese word for monkey, *saru* (猿). This word shares its pronunciation with the word for expel (*saru* 去る) (“Monkeys in Japan.” 2012). It was from this dual meaning that monkeys were given such an important role in religion. Monkeys were thought of to be expellers of demons (“Monkeys in Japan.” 2012). However, much of the religious context of primates was brought over to Japan from India and China. Still, primates began being depicted in Japanese art from this religious context. One of the most widely reproduced primate depictions in Japan is that of the gibbon (or gibbons, as in the case of Shukei’s *Gibbons*) reaching for the reflection of the moon in a body of water (figure 3). This painting is meant to illustrate the Buddhist teaching that one should not recklessly attempt to do impossible tasks (“JAANUS / Enkou Sokugetsu.” 2001). Primates also make an appearance in Shintô writings and artworks. The Shintô *sarugami*, or monkey gods, serve as messengers to the deity *Sannô* (“Monkeys in Japan.” 2012). While some artists depicted these primates realistically, often the renditions were imaginative. On the archipelago of Japan, only the macaque is found, so artists’ depictions of gibbons had to rely on other paintings or pure imagination (Geissmann 2008). However, inaccurate body proportions, anatomical features, and postures of various primates, like gibbons, also occur in paintings of China where gibbons can be found (Geissmann 2008). Despite inaccuracies, primate imagery has been continuously popular among the various Asian countries since before 800 CE. Primate imagery and usage goes beyond a religious context and *saru* appears in other Japanese art forms.



**Figure 3:**  
Shukei, Sesson. *Gibbons*. n.d. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *Heilbrunn Timeline of art History*. Web. 26 December 2012.

## Primates in Japanese Performing Arts

Two of Japan's modern performing arts, *Kyôgen* and *Nôh*, have elements that tie back to primates. The origins of both of these performing arts was *sarugaku*, or monkey music, the name given to the variety-show style performing art that came over to Japan from the Asian continent (Harris 2006, p.47, Sakanishi 1938, p. 4). *Sarugaku* derives its name from the "monkey mimicry" essential to this variety-show style (Harris 2006, p.47). Besides "monkey mimicry", *sarugaku* relied on actors who could perform farce works that contained both music and dance (Harris 2006, p. 47, Sakanishi 1938, p. 4). *Sarugaku* eventually split into two different styles: one comedic, the other dramatic and focused heavily on highly skilled song and dance (Harris 2006, p. 49, Sakanishi 1938, p. 4-5). These eventually turned into the modern light-hearted *Kyôgen* and more serious *Nôh*. Typically, these two performing art styles are performed in succession, with the *Kyôgen* play serving as a sort of intermission to a *Nôh* work. These works are seen as a yin-yang pair that complement and contrast each other (Harris 2006, p. 49). The primate relationship in *Kyôgen* and *Nôh* can also be seen in some of the masks used, with each performing art having at least one mask with primate roots. *Kyôgen*, unlike *Nôh*, rarely uses masks, and when used, these masks are meant to exaggerate human emotions (Harris 2006, p. 65, Kirihata 1993, p. 86). Furthermore, *Kyôgen* masks depict a wide variety of characters, including the monkey (Harris 2006, p. 65, figure 4). Unlike *Kyôgen* masks, *Nôh* masks are less varied and the majority take on one of six forms: old man, elder, woman, man, demon, or ghost/spirit (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). All *Nôh* masks have some sort of humanistic element, which can be observed even in masks of demons and gods. However, *Nôh* has not wholly left behind its primate roots when it comes to its masks. Despite looking nothing like a monkey, *Sarutobide* is a mask used in the play *Nue*, which is about the strange Nue demon that has a monkey head, badger body and tail of a serpent (Marvin 2010, v.ii, p. 11, *Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center* 1998, figure 5). Sadly, the monkey roots have been somewhat forgotten and *Kyôgen* and *Nôh* naturally focus mostly on humans and their interactions.

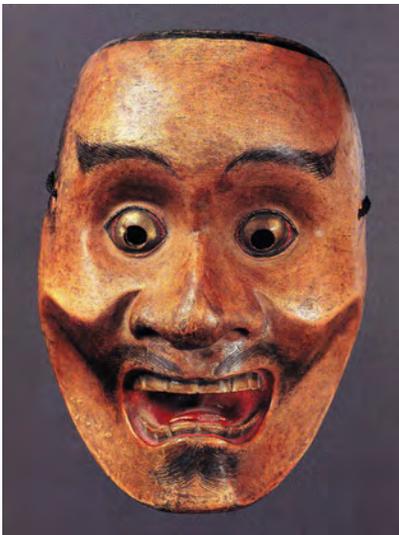
### The Primate's Role

In their historical and religious contexts, primates have kept a close relationship to humans by serving as surrogates almost equal to humans. For example, the monkey in the *Kyôgen* play *The Monkey-Skin Quiver* represents a human child. In this play, a lord commands a trainer to kill his monkey because the lord wants to use the monkey's skin to make a quiver. The trainer refuses the lord's commands since the trainer has "lavished on the animal since it was a tiny baby" much as if it was a human child (Harris 2006, p. 56). The lord is so moved by the trainer's

**Figure 4:**  
*Saru (monkey)*. Digital image. *Japan Fact Sheet: Noh and Kyogen*. Web Japan, 2011. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.



sentiment that even he gives the monkey gifts which are truly useful to a human (a fan, sword, cloak, and over-trousers) (Harris 2006, p. 56). Furthermore, this near equality between humans and primates is observed in the other Eastern Asian artworks (e.g. the image of the gibbon reaching for the moon's reflection). Despite these treatments, primates are not entirely regarded as equals. Even in the instances mentioned the primates are in subservient roles. In looking exclusively at *Nôh*, primates, for the most part, are absent from this art form and even when they are present, as in the case of the Nue, they are more human than primate. *Nôh* Theater mostly deals with portraying intense human emotion and more specifically looks at what it means psychologically to be human (Brandon 1997, "Noh and Kutiyattam – "Treasures of World Cultural Heritage." 2004). Therefore, in keeping with *Nôh's* Buddhist roots, humans remain the main focus of the play even if non-humans appear in a play. One of the original purposes of *Nôh* plays was to serve as a way to teach Buddhist principles to the masses. Therefore, the majority of the plays begin with person A meeting person B, person B then telling person A a (usually tragic) story, and person B revealing that they are the person from the tale. Person A then prays for person B's soul (or if person B has revealed themselves to be a god, person A, pays alms to them), and person B is no longer attached to the physical world (Caliber Cast Ltd. and Kinoshita 2012). In this sense, the *Nôh* plays show the audience another world (the spiritual world) as well as teach them to not have attachments in this world (the physical world). *In Between Worlds* blends the human and primate existence to reflect this *Nôh* concept of two worlds. *In Between Worlds* places primates in protagonist roles, thereby, giving primates a place among humans. The equality created allows the audience to insert their own dialogue. Thus, by understanding *Nôh* as a world originally meant only for humans, this insertion of primates in *In Between Worlds* will cause the audience to examine how primates and humans relate both physically and mentally.

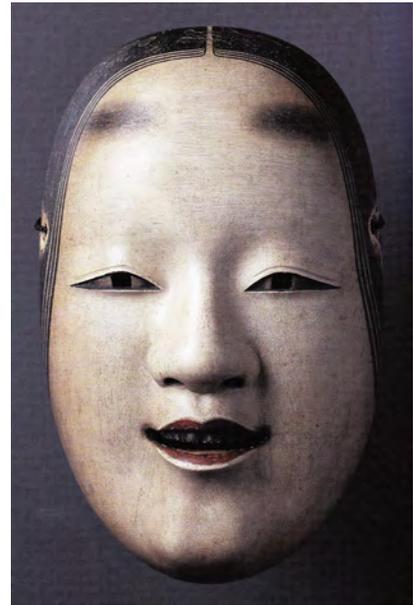


**Figure 5:**  
 "Sarutobide." *Heaven Has a Face, and so Does Hell: The Art of Noh Mask*. 1st ed. Vol. 2. n.p.: Floating Worlds Editions, 2007. 11. Print.

### *The Use of Masks*

The masks, which are somewhat realistic (physical), but mostly idealized and stylized (spiritual), similarly, reflect the combination of two worlds. The masks, which are the most recognizable aspect of *Nôh*, are the ideal medium for *In Between Worlds*. Even an audience vaguely familiar with Japanese performing arts would recognize *Nôh* by the masks. A basic knowledge of *Nôh* is enough to appreciate *In Between Worlds*; understanding the history of the masks or the plays is not required. The novice audience will be able to identify with the individual masks, which are meant to function as archetypal figures. For example, the *ko-omote* mask (figure 6) is meant to represent a youthful woman who is around the age of fifteen. Thus whenever a play has a youthful, innocent woman in it, typically the *ko-omote* mask will be used. Thus for my thesis, *In Between Worlds*, I took these basic archetypal

characters and adjusted them to fit with the various primates bone structures and other facial characteristics. To further aid the audience, the visual cues from the display and written accompanying text emphasize the significance of placing primates in a “human world” and provide additional background on *Nôh*. While the masks are serving as the main component for *In Between Worlds*, the display is critical for expressing the masks’ purpose and the overall concept. *Nôh* masks, in a museum setting, are typically mounted flat on either a wall or they are propped on a wire stand. This type of setting removes the masks from their original purpose. While the audience would recognize the pieces as masks, out of their theatrical context they lose their purpose, as well as all of their associations with *Nôh*. The artist Simon Starling dealt with a similar issue. For his work *Project for a Masquerade*, Starling with the help of a professional *Nôh* mask carver, created a series of *Nôh* masks for a play he wrote about the atomic energy. In displaying his masks, Starling built unique metal stand structures to hold the masks and staggered them in rows in a room facing a large mirror (figure 7). The metal stands became replacements for the humans that would normally wear the masks. *In Between Worlds* takes this concept a step further by giving slightly more shape to the stands and by changing the angles of the masks so that they do not necessarily face the viewer from the front. Furthermore the masks are placed on human-like forms to emphasize that *Nôh* is a world in which humans are the performers (that are typically performing as other humans). The display, not only demonstrates the masks’ theatrical purpose, but also brings the masks to life by blending humans (forms) and primates (masks).



**Figure 6:**  
“Ko-omote.” *Heaven Has a Face, and so Does Hell: The Art of Noh Mask*. 1st ed. Vol. 2. n.p.: Floating Worlds Editions, 2007. 103. Print.



**Figure 7:**  
Starling, Simon. *Project for a Masquerade (Hiroshima) / Mirror Room*. 2010. Photograph. Modern Institute, Glasgow. *Mousse*. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.

## Creative Work

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### *The Masks*

As mentioned earlier, each mask is based them on an existing *Nôh* mask. Each mask represents an archetypal figure; however, to understand the purpose of each mask I looked at various plays featuring the specific archetypal figures. *Nôh* plays are categorized into five groups: god, warrior, woman, lunatic, and demon. Each play is placed in a category because it follows a similar plot or concept as the other plays in that category. When a *Nôh* performance is done in its entirety a play from each category is performed sequentially (the order follows the list mentioned, with the god play being performed first). This performance of five plays is called a *goban date*. And, as if by fate, the number five matches up with the number of members of the Homindae family (if the human is included). I placed the members of the Homindae family in the play category which best reflected their lives. Then I looked at the English translations of the abstracts of the various plays for each category. When I found a work that struck a chord with me, I then looked for an English translation of the play. After that I rewrote the abstract exchanging it with a similar story from the Homindae's life. I wanted to create abstracts for my masks to give them more meaning and a backstory. If I felt they matched well, I then looked at the masks used for the *Nôh* work. I then based my mask off of the mask used in the second half of the play. The mask used in the second half is supposed to be the face of the true form of the main actor: the ghost form.

Each mask was carved from a basswood block mostly by hand tools (i.e. chisels, gouges, drill, and dremel) with a band saw and belt sander used for the initial shaping. Then after sanding, each mask was painted using dry pigments mixed with water.



**Figure 8 (Various masks in progress [more images on last page]):** Czech, Elaine. *In Between Worlds*. 2013. Digital Images. Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.

# The God Mask

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The God play is typically one of celebration and thanksgiving. Gods in a *Nôh* play signify the promise of peace, happiness, and abundance (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). I chose the bonobo to represent this category. The bonobo tends to be forgotten when one thinks of the Great Apes and it is also typically mistaken for the chimpanzee. The bonobo is more gracile in its bone structure and socially interacts much differently than the chimpanzee. Bonobos are known to be the rather peaceful in their interactions using sex as a means of pacifying arguments. It is because of their more peaceful nature that I chose to use the bonobos to represent the God category.

I choose to base my abstract off of the *Nôh* play *Chikubu-shima*, which in short is about a deity and celestial maiden thanking a man for praying at their shrine and promising the man good fortune (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). In my abstract, the bonobo, serving as a god, thanks a human for helping the bonobos through conservation efforts. This abstract shows that human interactions with primates can be beneficial and all efforts should not be undercut.

My mask is based off of *kurohige* (figure 9, next page), the mask used by the dragon deity in the second half of *Chikubu-shima*. Ironically, the *kurohige* mask is quite the opposite of the bonobo as it is rather fierce and robust in structure. I took elements such as the defined eyebrows and the open mouth and mixed them with the gracile bone structure of the bonobo, giving the mask a softer shape (figure 10).

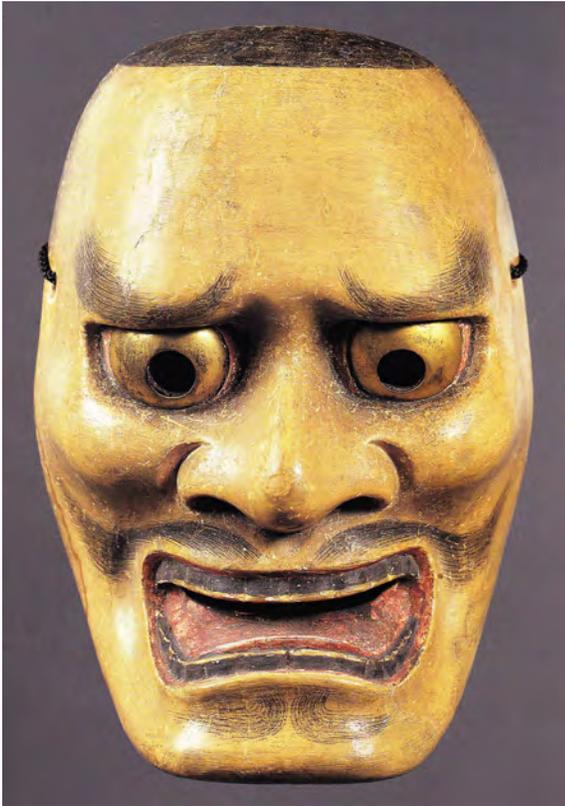


**Figure 10 (details):**  
Czech, Elaine. *Bonobo*. 2013.  
Digital Images. Personal  
Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD  
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## *Abstract for the Bonobo*

*A researcher goes to study bonobos at the Kokolopori Reserve in the Democratic Republic of Congo. While on a bus to the site, the researcher meets a child who tells them about the Kokolopori Reserve. The child then takes the researcher to the edge of the reserve and reveals that he is the spirit of the reserve. The child then disappears into the forest.*

*During the time the researcher is in the reserve, workers from the Bonobo Conservation Initiative present the researcher with some of the various treasures the reserve has to offer. On the researcher's last evening at the reserve, the spirit of the reserve appears at the researcher's camp and dances as a way to thank the researcher and the Bonobo Conservation Initiative for continuing to support the bonobo population. The spirit's dance is also a wish that the future may continue to be prosperous.*



**Figure 9 (left):**  
"Kurohige."  
*Heaven Has a Face, and so Does Hell: The Art of Noh Mask.*  
1st ed. Vol. 2.  
n.p.: Floating Worlds Editions, 2007.  
15. Print.



**Figure 10 (right):**  
Czech, Elaine.  
*Bonobo.* 2013.  
Digital Images.  
Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.



**Figure 12 (left):**  
"Chûjô."  
*Heaven Has a Face, and so Does Hell: The Art of Noh Mask.*  
1st ed. Vol. 2.  
n.p.: Floating Worlds Editions, 2007.  
141. Print.



**Figure 13 (right):**  
Czech, Elaine.  
*Chimpanzee.* 2013. Digital Images.  
Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.

## The Warrior Mask

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The Warrior play is less celebratory. These plays are about a warrior who is trapped in the warrior hell and is returning to earth seeking forgiveness or redemption (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). This category was the easiest to place since, besides the human, only one Great Ape is known for going to war, the chimpanzee. However, chimpanzee war is not exactly the same as human war. Similar to human war, the chimpanzees seek to overpower their neighbors and in turn gain more land. However, chimpanzee battles are more like gang attacks, in that they involve a group of chimpanzees going to the border of their territory and attacking a lone chimpanzee from their neighboring group. But if they find the neighboring chimpanzee is not alone, they will turn and run and not attack.

Since both sides fight valiantly in warrior plays, I had some difficulty choosing an inspirational work. However, in looking at the warrior plays I found that there was some variety in how each warrior's tale was told. I ended up being drawn to the play *Tomoe*. *Tomoe* is different from the other warrior plays in that the main character is not the warrior trapped in hell but a fellow warrior and his lover, Lady Tomoe. Lady Tomoe has become obsessed with the fact that she could not die fighting beside her lover and comes to earth asking to be freed from this obsession (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). This obsessed mourning has been observed in a variety of animals, especially the chimpanzee. Chimpanzee mothers have been observed to carry around dead infants until they become mummified (Khan 2010). While dying of grief is uncommon in chimpanzees it is possible. Primatologist, ethologist, and anthropologist Jane Goodall recounted to author Peter Miller the story of Flint, a chimpanzee, who died of grief when his mother passed away (Miller 1995). By choosing the work *Tomoe* as my inspiration I hope to teach my audience about two lesser-known behavioral traits of the chimpanzee. I want the audience to realize that chimpanzees can plot their aggression as well as the fact that they are able to express intense grief.

Choosing an appropriate model for this mask, again, brought about some complications. There are no cases in nature of female chimpanzees going to battle and thus, for my play I changed the role of Lady Tomoe to a male. Typically for the play *Tomoe* the *masukami* mask is used in the second half of the play (figure 11, next page). *Masukami* is easily distinguished by her furrowed brow and disheveled hair. However, since the character I created is that of a male warrior I decided to base my mask on *chûjô* (figure 12, last page). *Chûjô* represents a warrior in the prime of his life and like *masukami*, the *chûjô* mask has a furrowed brow. The *chûjô* mask is the perfect substitute since this mask has a unique feminine shape to its lower half. Thus for my mask I combine the defined brow of the chimpanzee with that of *chûjô* and give the lower part of the face a softer, gentler appearance (figure 13, last page).

## *Abstract for the Chimpanzee*

*An anthropologist, who was conducting research on the northeast side of the Kibale National Park in Uganda, travels to the Kanyanchu Visitor Centre toward the south. On the anthropologist's way, the anthropologist's team decides to stop at the ranger post that is half way to the centre. The post oddly is abandoned except for a lone man who is crying. The anthropologist asks the man why he is crying. Through their conversation the crying man learns that the anthropologist has just come from the northeast. The crying man tells the anthropologist about a sacred place in the northeast. The sacred area is where a distinguished alpha male chimpanzee, who had protected his troupe for many years, recently lost his life to a neighboring chimpanzee troupe. The man encourages the anthropologist to visit the site of this chimpanzee's death before revealing he is a ghost and disappears.*

*A fellow anthropologist then comes to the ranger post and tells the first anthropologist about two alpha males that had a really close relationship. One chimpanzee was the alpha male of the troupe and the other was his younger brother. The alpha male, who had been observed leading the troupe on many successful territory patrols, recently met a grisly demise and the brother, in his grief, passed on, too. The anthropologist comes to believe that the ghost he met earlier was the ghost of this alpha male's brother.*

*That night at the Kanyanchu Visitor Centre the anthropologist is visited by the alpha male's brother, this time in his true chimpanzee form. The brother explains that he is obsessed with regret that he could not be there to help his brother. He retells the anthropologist of his brother's last moments and his brother's valiant efforts to fight off the neighboring troupe's patrol group. The anthropologist consoles the brother's spirit and helps him become free from his obsession.*



**Figure 11:**  
Masukami. Digital image. Flickr.com. Manuel Palomino Arjona, 24 Jan. 2010. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.



**Figure 13 (detail):**  
Czech, Elaine. Chimpanzee. 2013. Digital Images. Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.

# The Woman Mask

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The Woman plays focus on the love and suffering of females (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). Because of her intense love, the woman of the tale is doomed to wander the earth because she cannot give up the earthly attachment to her loved one. For this category I decided to use the gorilla. This category was bit hard to place since none of the Great Apes are known for having intense love affairs the same way humans do. While cases of jealousy are not uncommon, this theme did not prove to be a beneficial avenue to explore. However, as the other pieces began to fall into place it became obvious that the gorilla should represent the Woman category. The purpose of *In Between Worlds* is to encourage the audience to explore the human and primate relationship by getting the audience members to regard these creatures in a new light. Normally, the gorilla in popular culture is displayed as a dominating male; thus by focusing on the female gorilla, the audience is already forced to look at the gorilla differently.

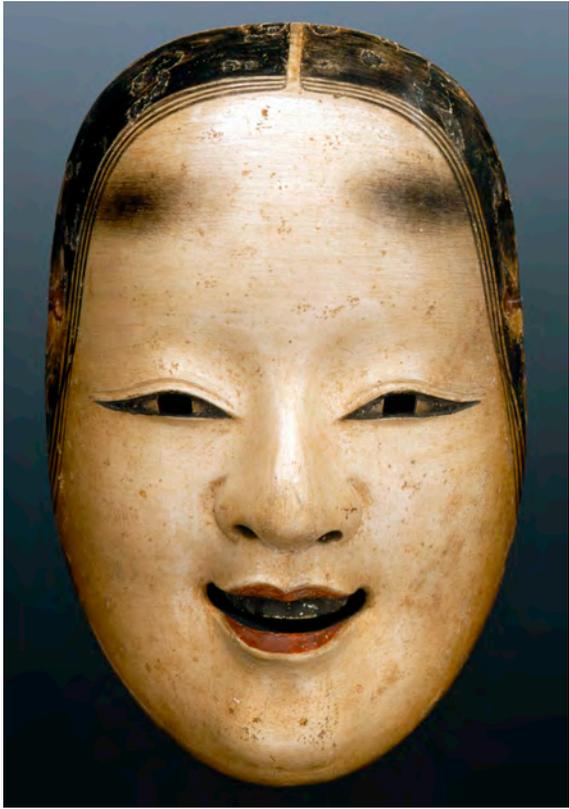
For this category, I sought inspiration from a unique play, *Ohara Goko*. *Ohara Goko* focuses on the former Empress' love for her lost son and mother. The former Empress' mother commits suicide with her grandson after being surrounded by an enemy army (Upton 1968). A unique aspect of this play is the fact that the Empress, the main character of the play, is not a ghost, but a living nun whom the secondary character (a retired Emperor) is visiting. After losing her loved ones the Empress, unsuccessful in trying to kill herself, decides to devote her life to prayer. What really drew me to this tale was the idea of the defenseless being attacked and killed. The only true predator of the gorilla is the poacher, from whom the gorilla is defenseless. The tale of *Ohara Goko* ends rather somberly with the former Emperor feeling broken-hearted for the former Empress; for my abstract I decided to end with a more hopeful message, focusing on the fact that many efforts are being done to put an end to poaching.

My mask was then based on the *zo* (figure 14, next page) mask; the main character in this play does not change from a living being in disguise to the true ghost self and therefore, the same mask is used in both the first and second act of the play. The *zo* mask is meant to be a classic representation of a woman who is or was married. For my mask I tried to create something that was very feminine with gentler features and an overall smoothness (figure 15, next page).

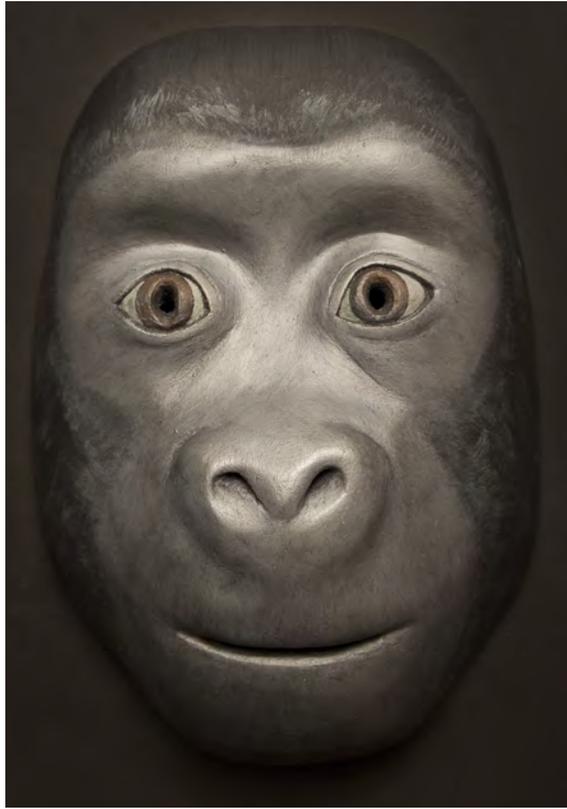
## *Abstract for the Gorilla*

*A member of the Congolese Wildlife Authority visits the secluded home of a woman, at her request. She contacted the Authority in hopes of learning how she can help their cause. Upon seeing the member, the woman begins to think about her past and proceeds to tell the member the real reason why she wants to help. She tells of how she witnessed her mother and young son trying to escape the poachers' attacks. She became human in order to prevent further deaths.*

*The Congolese Wildlife Authority member says that they, with the help of others, are working hard to make her wish come true. The woman, at peace with the member's words, turns back into a gorilla and returns to the forest.*



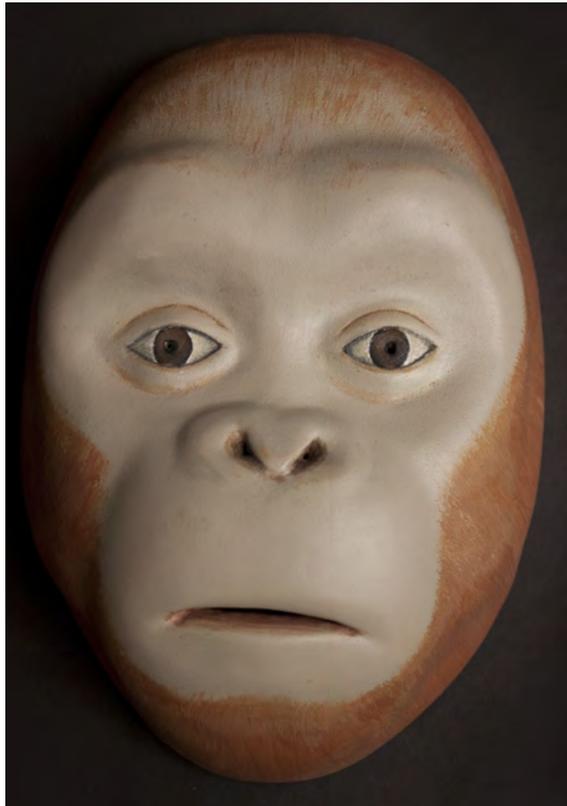
**Figure 14 (left):**  
*No Mask of an Aristocratic Lady.*  
18th Century.  
Museum  
Rietberg, Zurich.  
*Virtual Collection of Masterpieces.*  
Web. 21 Feb. 2013.



**Figure 15 (right):**  
Czech, Elaine.  
*Gorilla.* 2013.  
Digital Images.  
Personal  
Collection, Ann Arbor.  
.SD Card.



**Figure 16 (left):**  
"Shakumi."  
*Heaven Has a Face, and so Does Hell: The Art of Noh Mask.* 1st ed. Vol. 2. n.p.: Floating Worlds Editions, 2007. 129. Print.



**Figure 17 (right):**  
Czech, Elaine.  
*Orangutan.* 2013. Digital Images. Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.

# The Lunatic Mask

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The Lunatic category is the hardest to define because it can be separated into two groups. The largest group deals with the theme of a person being driven mad by a tragic situation. The lesser other group is set aside for all the plays that do not quite fit into any of the other categories (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). I decided to focus on the larger group, the lunatic plays, to help narrow my search. An interesting point about the lunatic plays is that the person is driven mad usually because of some action another person has taken against them. Therefore, as with the woman play, I was able to look at a negative interaction humans have with primates.

Choosing the play for this category was rather easy; I was almost instantly attracted to *Sakuragawa*. *Sakuragawa* is about a mother who has her son taken from her by slave traders. The mother then goes crazy with grief and sets out to find her son. In the end the mother is reunited with her son. This situation was easily applied to what is factually known about the emotional turmoil of a mother orangutan when her child captured to be used in the entertainment industry (Orangutan Species Survival Plan 2012). In the actual play, the son is kept under the care of a monk, who does not take much part in reuniting the pair. However, in my version, I decided to amplify this role in an effort to counter the poachers.

As was the case with *Ohara Goko*, the main character of *Sakuragawa* is not a ghost; therefore the same mask, the *shakumi* mask (figure 16, last page), is used in both acts. The *shakumi* mask portrays a woman who is in the mid-range of her life, yet because of her grief she looks older. Her grief has caused her face to be sunken in and her mouth and eyes to be turned slightly downward. For my mask I adapt all of these elements to create a grief-stricken orangutan mother (figure 17, last page).

## *Abstract for the Orangutan*

*In the forest of Borneo, an orangutan infant is taken from its mother to be used by the entertainment industry. The mother in a frenzy of grief sets out after the captors to get her son back.*

*One year later the young orangutan is working with a trainer on the set of a movie in Hong Kong, China. During a break the trainer takes the young orangutan to a quiet part of the Wong Tai Sin Temple where they are filming. They come across a woman attempting to climb a tree. The trainer asks why she is climbing and she explains that it reminds her of the tree she and her son used to play in, before they were separated. The woman again attempts to climb the tree but she falls. The trainer, with the young orangutan trailing behind, goes to help the woman. The woman, who is the mother of the young orangutan in human form, upon seeing the young orangutan realizes that it is her child. She explains her story to the trainer and returns to her true form. The trainer is so moved by the story, so the trainer works to return the parent and child to their rightful home.*

# The Demon Mask

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In the Demon plays the main character portrays a demon, goblin, fairy, dragon or another otherworldly creature (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). These plays tend to be the most elaborate because they are meant to be the finishing performance in the *Nôh* series. The nature of these plays can vary: sometimes the demon creature will appear to either attack or help men, or just to tell its story (Comee 2012). This means that not all of these plays are necessarily unhappy and a lot of the time they end with some sort of lesson or positive message as a way to bring the five *Nôh* pieces together full-circle. For that reason, it seemed appropriate to use the human as the representative of the fifth category. In addition, the human form brings the *In Between Worlds* audience full circle to the project's theme of what it means to be human.

When approaching this abstract I knew from the start I wanted it to be somewhat different from the others. Although it focused on the human, I knew I did not want it to be truly about the human. *Nôh* itself is already a world for humans and *In Between Worlds* is about creating a new world. Hence when I came across *Raiden*, I knew I wanted to use it for my inspiration. *Raiden* is the story of a vengeful spirit that turns itself into Raiden (the God of Thunder and Lightning). Before turning into Raiden the spirit goes to visit his priest friend/disciple and warn him that he plans to take revenge on the Emperor who wronged him. The spirit tells the priest that he should not visit the palace if he wishes to live. The priest, however, is called upon by the Emperor to help protect the Emperor from the vengeful spirit. The priest goes to the Emperor and an epic spiritual battle ensues (Torre 2013). In this play, although the priest is technically the main character, the Emperor is perhaps the most important. This then fit perfectly with what I was hoping to achieve with my abstract. By making the Emperor role the human focus of my abstract, then the human is the most important character but not the main character. Furthermore, by making a primate as the priest it makes it so that the primate is saving the human, which in real life (i.e. in conservation) is never the case.

I decided not to create a mask for this piece for several reasons. The first, the human was not the main character of the abstract and in fact if the play were ever performed would never actually make a physical appearance. Another reason was that *Nôh* is a world for humans and as mentioned previously all of the masks have some sort of humanistic element to them. Consequently, creating a human mask would then be just creating another pure *Nôh* mask, which is not my intent. The final reason behind my choice to encourage deeper thought among my audience. I hoped that the audience would immediately bring up questions such as: Why is the human absent? What is the purpose of this absence? These types of questions are meant to lead the audience to ponder the relationship between these primates and the missing human.

*In a forest a primate prepares to rest for the night. The primate is startled by movement in the brush nearby. He calls out toward the location and a familiar voice responds. Then out from the brush appears the primate's friend who had died last year from starvation due to the humans' destruction of the primate's habitat. The primate is happy to see his friend whom he had mourned. The primate's friend thanks him for mourning his death and says that he is visiting him to warn him not to visit the nearby human settlement as he plans to take revenge upon the settlement. The primate's friend then turns into a frightening god and disappears into the forest towards the human settlement.*

*The next day the primate is awoken by screams and cries of suffering coming from the nearby human settlement. Knowing that he can not just leave the humans to suffer he decides to head to the human settlement despite his friend's warning. Upon reaching the settlement, he sees the humans suffering greatly from a mysterious illness. His friend, as the god, notices him and goes to attack the primate claiming he is disloyal. As the primate does not have any powers he can only use his words to fight his former friend. He tells his former friend that while some humans have brought destruction, some have done good. Furthermore, some humans have worked to create areas of preserved land and some have set up feeding stations. The primate reassures his friend that primates should have faith in humanity. The friend returns to his former self and the curse upon the humans is lifted. The friend then tells the primate that while it had suffered greatly at the hands of humans in life, he trust his friend's words and is able to pass on in peace.*

## Creative Works

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### *The Display*

The display proved to be a critical point for expressing the main purpose of my thesis. It was proving to be impossible to try to explain *Nôh* as well as convey the questions about the humans' relationship to the primates. However, after I heard a talk by artist Tania Bruguera, I realized that this impossibility was not a bad thing. Bruguera realized the importance of the audience understanding her work but she also wanted the audience to realize that they were not getting all the information. Furthermore, one goal of Bruguera's work is to create an experience (Figure 18). Therefore, my display became all about creating an experience. I decided ultimately to create a window display. I decided to place the mask on figure-like stands modeled from Simon Starling's display (Figure 19). Like Starling's stands, the stands were simply done, made out of wood. Unlike Starling, I varied the heights of the stands (Figure 20). Another crucial element for the display was the lighting. I decided to install my own spotlights and tested to find which angles and what distances would work to create a dramatic effect. I had to control how much outside light was coming into the space (by blocking one light with a canopy and disabling another). To give my audience the message that my masks were based off of a Japanese art form, I added various cultural touches. For the backdrop I tried to imitate a traditional Japanese room. I chose a muted green paper to create the walls, and I covered the floor with straw mats. Besides, imitating a traditional room, the walls and floors were very natural and thus also linked back to the habitats of the primates.



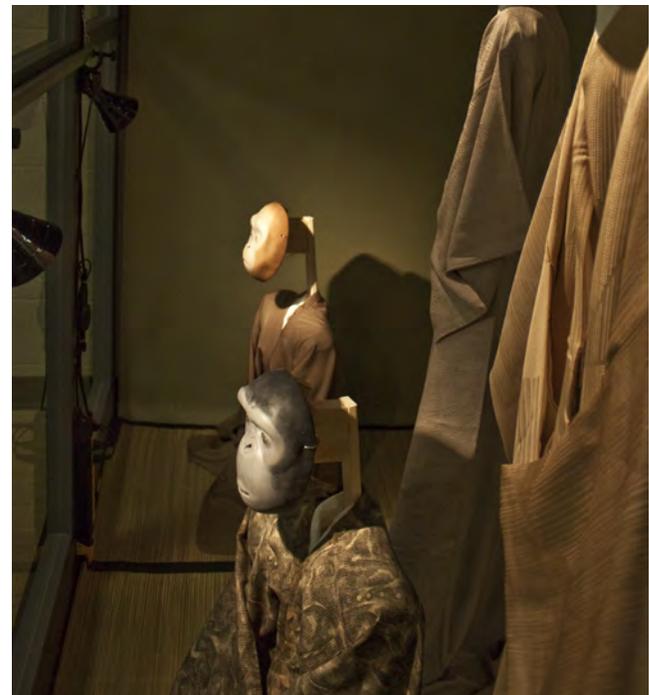
**Figure 18:**  
Bruguera, Tania. *Tania Bruguera*. n.p., n.d. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.



**Figure 19:**  
Starling, Simon. *Project for a Masquerade (Hiroshima) / Mirror Room*. 2010. Photograph. Modern Institute, Glasgow. *Mousse*. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.



**Figure 20:**  
Czech, Elaine. *In Between Worlds* (detail). 2013. Digital Images. Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.



**Figures 21 and 22:**  
Czech, Elaine. *In Between Worlds* (detail). 2013. Digital Images. Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.

## Conclusion

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The technical objective for *In Between Worlds* was to create a world that blurred the human realm with the animal realm. The project took the art form of *Nôh* and transformed that world into something else. I used *Nôh* to represent the human realm and primates to represent the animal world. Simply put, *In Between Worlds* blended these worlds by taking elements from each realm and combining them.

The obvious direction moving forward with this piece would be to further develop one of the plays and perform it. However, a true performance would require further study of *Nôh* play structures and music. This development would also involve the study of costuming and movements. Further study of primate movements, vocal patterns, skin and fur would be essential. This project would also necessitate the development of more masks. There are 60 basic masks and well over 200 masks used in *Nôh* today (Caliber Cast Ltd and Kinoshita 2012). Considering the current project, I have barely scratched the surface in mask development. Focusing on just carving more masks would increase my skill level in woodcarving. However, just focusing on mask carving would draw away from the basic message of my thesis; viewing only the masks loses contextual and conceptual meaning.

Therefore, dividing my attention between carving and the display, allowed me to create a meaningful art form. The display enhanced features of the masks as well as created an almost theatrical experience for the audience. The drastic difference between the space outside of the gallery and the gallery space, helped to create a new realm. This kingdom behind the window was one the audience could not physically enter. My masks were essentially trapped in their own world. Since combining Japanese traditional arts, primate masks, and human figures is unique, the audience had to use the visual cues and the narratives to realize the connections. This focus enabled the audience to understand the contextual and conceptual meaning of the work as a whole.

While overall the project was successful in creating this new world, like other projects, it had its limitations. *Nôh* explores many aspects of what it means to be human predominantly on a psychological level. This function of *Nôh* proved to be a strength for the project because psychology is a study that is most associated with humans. Furthermore, by taking primates out of nature and placing them in theater, the audience saw the animals in a new context. However, since the characters were immobile they were less relatable to the audience. By watching a performance, audience members grow attachments to and sympathy for certain characters in a story. By just reading a brief description and looking at the character out of context it was harder for this emotional sentiment to form. In this sense the relationship between humans and primates that I was trying to show was weakened.

In conclusion, I do not think my project at this point fully allowed the audience to see the close relationship between humans and primates. Performing may help form that relationship but I think human's innate superiority complex would prevent universal understanding. At this point in time, the human's only predator is the human and therefore, it is a struggle to remind people that they are a part of something more.



**Figure 22 (Various masks in progress):** Czech, Elaine. *Bonobo*. 2013. Digital Images. Personal Collection, Ann Arbor. .SD Card.

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