

SARAH J. CLAY

CONTACT

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www.sarahclay.xyz

RESEARCH INTERESTS

More-than-human care • Multispecies ethnography • Political ecology • Affect • Mobility and circulation • Environmental subjectivities • Lively commodities and value • Hybrid ethnography

EDUCATION

- PhD, East Asian Studies • *Magna cum laude*** 2019–2026
Graduate School of East Asian Studies, Freie Universität Berlin
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Cornelia Reiher and Prof. Dr. Urs Matthias Zachmann
Dissertation title: *Ecologies of Care: Urban-to-Rural Migration and Environmental Practices in the Miyako Islands*
- MA, Japanese Studies • *Magna cum laude*** 2017–2019
Ghent University
Minor: *Global Studies* • *Exchange: Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan (2019)*
Internship: *Department of Foreign Affairs, Flemish Government, Brussels*
- BA, Japanese Studies • *Cum laude*** 2014–2017
Ghent University
Minor: *Political and Social Sciences* • *Exchange: Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan (2016–2017)*
- BA, Philosophy** 2008–2009
University of Amsterdam
- BA, Fine Art** 2006–2011
ArtEZ Academy of Arts & Design, Arnhem
Exchange: Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel (2009)

FIELDWORK

- PhD Fieldwork, Miyako Islands, Okinawa, Japan** 2020–2022
Hybrid ethnography combining online fieldwork (2020–2022) and in-person fieldwork (July–September 2022)
- MA Fieldwork, Okinawa Main Island, Japan** February–March 2019

PUBLICATIONS

- Clay, Sarah J. (2025). “Locals Don’t Care About the Natural World”: *The Making and Remaking of Ecological Space by Japanese Migrants on the Miyako Islands*. In: Zeynep Y. Gökçe and Jennifer Leetsch (eds.), *Ecological Interdependencies: Strong Asymmetrical Relations and More-than-Human Worlds*, Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 113–136.
- Clay, Sarah J. (2024). *The Miyako Bubble: Building the Future of a Remote Island*. In: Cornelia Reiher (ed.), *Lived Experiences of Crisis in Rural Japan*, CrossAsia Open Access Repository, Berlin, pp. 67–71.
- Clay, Sarah J. (2024). *Restoring a Kominka Together: The Recipe for Finding True Love*. In: Cornelia Reiher (ed.), *Lived Experiences of Crisis in Rural Japan*, CrossAsia Open Access Repository, Berlin, pp. 131–136.
- Bijlsma, Sarah (2021). Book review: *Drawing the Sea Near: Satoumi and Coral Reef Conservation in Okinawa* by C. Anne Claus, University of Minnesota Press, 2020. *Contemporary Japan*, pp. 163–166.

- Bijlsma, Sarah (2021). *Foreword: A Note from the Editor*. TERA: Journal of Technology, Ecology, and Risk Assemblages, pp. 1–8.
- Bijlsma, Sarah (2019). *The Healthy Body in Early Modern Japan: Translation of Santō Kyōden's kibyōshi Gotai Wago Monogatari 五体和合談 [Conversations on the Harmony of the Five Body Parts]*. Yale University, The Ten Thousand Rooms Project.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- European Association for Social Anthropology (EASA) Conference, University of Poznań (July 2026) — “*Migrating in Reverse: More-than-human Mobility and its Politics in the Japanese Miyako Islands*”
- World Conference of Environmental History (WCEH), University of Oulu, Finland (August 2024) — “*Healing Islands: Practices of Care in the Context of Miyakojima In-Migration*”
- European Association for Social Anthropology (EASA) Conference, University of Barcelona (July 2024) — “*The Healing Islands of Japan: Networks of Care in the Context of Miyakojima In-Migration*”
- Pollen Conference, Lund University, Sweden (June 2024) — “*Urbanite Migrants on Miyakojima: The Making and Remaking of Socio-Ecological Space*”
- VSJF-Fachgruppentagung, Vereinigung für sozialwissenschaftliche Japanforschung, Freie Universität Berlin (November 2023) — “*Living Here Is Like Studying Abroad: The Image of Miyakojima as a Foreign Country amongst Japanese Urbanite Emigrants*”
- Uncertain Mobilities Symposium, University of Siegen (October 2022) — “*Moving to the Edge of Japan: Lifestyle, Risk, and Environmentalism in the Context of Miyakojima In-Migration*”
- Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), Generation Asia, University of Reykjavík, Iceland (August 2022) — “*Miyakojima In-Migration: Caring for Nature in an On- and Offline World*”
- Japanese Anthropology Workshop (JAWS), Autonomous University of Barcelona (July 2022) — “*Digital Ethnographies of Care: Studying Miyakojima In-Migration in a More-than-Real World*”
- VSJF-Fachgruppentagung, Vereinigung für sozialwissenschaftliche Japanforschung (November 2021) — “*Miyako-jima Eco Island: Between Growth, Branding, and Conservation*”
- On the Boundaries of Here and Now, Ca' Foscari University of Venice (February 2021) — “*The Okinawa Migration Boom': Exploring Space, Identity and the Natural World through Japanese Migrants' Weblogs*”

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| Guest Lecturer, “Rural Japan,” Freie Universität Berlin | 2022–2025 |
| Annual guest lecture in Prof. Cornelia Reiher's course | |
| Guest Lecturer, “Research Methodologies,” Freie Universität Berlin | 2022–2026 |
| Annual guest lecture in Prof. Cornelia Reiher's course | |
| Guest Lecturer, “Political Ecology of Japan,” National University of Singapore | 2022 |
| Lecture in Prof. Chris McMorran's course | |

SELECTED WORK EXPERIENCE

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| Research Assistant, Freie Universität Berlin | 2021 |
| Literature reviews and grant proposal writing for Prof. Cornelia Reiher | |
| Freelance Translator, Japanese–English | 2019 |
| Conference Assistant, “Bodies in Motion,” Ghent University | 2017 |
| Program Director, De Kaaij Cultureel Festival, Nijmegen | 2014 |
| Supervisor Documentary Film, ArtEZ Academy of Arts & Design | 2014 |
| Freelance Filmmaker | 2011–2019 |

ACADEMIC & CREATIVE INITIATIVES

Co-founder & Editor, TERA Journal Journal of Technology, Ecology, and Risk Assemblages	2021
Co-founder, Over View Traveling Film Festival www.over-view.org	2019

LANGUAGES

Dutch (native) • **English** (fluent) • **German** (advanced) • **Japanese** (advanced)

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

TIFO Toshiba Foundation Fellowship	2022
Japan Foundation PhD Fellowship (awarded; canceled due to COVID-19)	2021
Freie Universität Frauenbeauftragte (awarded; withdrawn)	2021
DAAD Graduate School Scholarship Program	2019–2023
Generieke Beurs, Ghent University	2017
Fundatie van de Vrijvrouwe van Renswoude Scholarship	2017

RESEARCH TRAINING

Qualitative Interviewing, FU Berlin (2021)
PhD Workshop, European Association of Japanese Studies Conference, Ghent University (2021)
Summer School: The Contentious Koreans — Civil Society and Human Rights, FU Berlin (2021)
Digital Ethnography, FU Berlin (2021)
Doing Environmental Humanities in a Digital World, University of Stavanger (2020)
Whales of Power: PhD Workshop on Fieldwork Ethics, University of Oslo (2020)
Are We in the Age of the Anthropocene?, FU Berlin (2020)
Research Design, FU Berlin (2020)
Institutional Theory, FU Berlin (2020)
Gender, Power, and Technologies in an International Perspective, FU Berlin (2019)
Complex Project Management, Dahlem Research School (2019)