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Image created in Edmonton, Alberta

The Pursuit of Noh-ledge

Semi-Finalist

Kata, or fixed patterns, are an element of performance seemingly unique to the Japanese theatre tradition. To further investigate this phenomenon, I am tracing it back to what I believe is its genesis in medieval noh theatre. This is represented here by a ko-omote mask, of which both the inside and outside are presented simultaneously. Most people interpret this art form from an external perspective, never delving deeper into the internal mechanics which functionally drive the art. In other words, they limit their perspective to only one half of the whole. My research takes into consideration both the internal and external influences that have molded noh into the living tradition that it is today. I hope to illuminate the historical, pedagogical, and artistic factors that drive the preservation of the somatic texts of kata and consequently bring said insight into western dialogue. Additionally, when research takes place in one language and is published in another, the researcher necessarily becomes a bridge between the two cultures. My personal seal marking my translation on the image's left side reflects the personal responsibility I take on as a researcher to represent foreign cultures with dignity and autonomy.