There are many ways to talk about Fujita Tsuguharu (1886-1968). Very often it is as the wildly successful French painter of the École de Paris, friend of Modigliani and Picasso, and flamboyant international star; very often it is as a Japanese painter known for using traditional themes and styles and for his war paintings (sensōga) and close ties with the militaristic government during the war years; often it is the story of his troubled and numerous marriages, and his troubled and rocky relationship with Japan.

In this presentation I will discuss Fujita’s life and work in the context of hybrid identities: what issues come with being Japanese in Paris in these years? Fujita is easily one of the most complicated and fascinating figures of the twentieth century; he serves, in many respects, as the image of Paris in the early decades of the twentieth century. I will thus discuss the compelling issues that his intriguing life raises about fame and the meaning of international/cosmopolitan, about the representation of France within Japan, and the flows of art in the early twentieth century.

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The DIJ History and Humanities Study Group is a forum for early/mid career researchers and Ph.D. candidates in the field, organized by Miki Aoyama-Olschina and Torsten Weber. All are welcome to attend, but registration (weber@dijtokyo.org) is appreciated.

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