

ART IN THE COUNTRYSIDE: SYMPOSIUM ON ART AND
REGIONAL REVITALIZATION THROUGH CASE STUDIES FROM
JAPAN

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

“NATURE” AS HYPOTHETICAL SPACE? ART AND NATURE AT ECHIGO-TSUMARI ART TRIENNALE

GUNHILD BORGGREEN

ABSTRACT

Many of the rural art festivals in Japan feature “revitalization” as a goal for engaging local communities in the countryside in art or performance projects. The attractiveness of cultural activities plays a role in enticing young people to move to (or return to) rural areas and thus revitalize local communities through demographic change. An additional attractive aspect is the notion of “nature,” which is highlighted as an integrated part of the art festivals and often functions as a theme or concept in the artworks themselves. Nature is closely connected to the overarching concept of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, as seen in the English title of a book by the festival’s artistic director, Kitagawa Fram: *Art Place Japan: The Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale and the Vision to Reconnect Art and Nature* (2015).

How is this notion of “nature” promoted? How is “nature” in art festivals related to the concept of the “global countryside” as a hypothetical space? In the case of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, there are a number of discourses concerning “nature” and its contribution to revitalization. One is the aesthetic dimension of landscapes and the ability to unite communities through the appreciation of nature experience. Another is the revitalization connected to maintaining traditional agriculture and the experimentation with new formats of permaculture in transnational collaboration. This attention to the revitalization of “nature” might not be connected to a specific local community alone but also ties into broader discourses of social and environmental sustainability within the frames of global interrelatedness.

BIOGRAPHY

Gunhild Borggreen is Associate Professor in the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. Her research in Japanese visual culture and contemporary art focuses on relations between visual art and social issues, including gender, national identity, disaster management, and robot technology. She is the principal investigator of the international research network Collaboration and Community Building in Contemporary Art (CCCA), a platform for studying socially engaged art in a globalized world. Her publications include “Autonomy and Collectivity at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale in Japan,” coauthored with Anemone Platz, in *Cultures of Participation: Arts, Digital Media and Cultural Institutions* (Routledge 2020).

CONCEPTS OF ISLAND REVITALIZATION REFLECTED IN ART TOURISM

CAROLIN FUNCK

ABSTRACT

Revitalization of depopulating islands became a national policy with the introduction of the Remote Island Promotion Law in 1953. This influenced island research and policies in Japan, as islands were framed as disadvantaged, less developed peripheral locations. Among the efforts to attract people and investment, tourism has played a less important role than might be expected. However, since the 1990s, art tourism has come to be seen as a possible tool to showcase cultural and natural features unique to each island. The many islands dotting the Seto Inland Sea differ in their economic structure, population, administrative structure, and access possibilities. This presentation will examine how throughout the last 30 years a variety of approaches to art tourism developed that reflect concepts of island revitalization within the tensions of local, national and global, and peripheral and central intervention and organic development.

BIOGRAPHY

Carolin Funck obtained her PhD from the Albert-Ludwigs University, Freiburg. She is Professor in Human Geography at Hiroshima University (Japan), Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her research focuses on the development of tourism in Japan, sustainable island tourism, and the rejuvenation of mature tourist destinations. She is the author of *Tourismus und Peripherie in Japan* and coauthor of *Japanese Tourism*.

A SMALL GLOBAL CITY IN THE MAKING? – THE TOYOOKA THEATER FESTIVAL IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CULTURAL FLOWS AND RURAL REVITALIZATION

BARBARA GEILHORN

ABSTRACT

During the last decade, regional arts projects and festivals have grown in significance in Japan, specifically in the context of the revitalization of rural areas. My presentation will focus on the Kinosaki International Arts Center (KIAC), which was founded in 2014 by Hirata Oriza, a leading figure in the Japanese cultural and theater world, in the rural city of Toyooka (Hyōgo Prefecture). Providing a space for international artists to engage with the local community is a central aim of the KIAC's artists-in-residence program. KIAC is at the center of the emerging Toyooka Theater Festival, which will further contribute to existing opportunities for transnational communication mediated through performing arts. My paper will situate the festival in the recent trend to create new types of social, cultural, and economic capital in rural areas to promote countryside lifestyles and environmental awareness. I will show that Toyooka's endeavors go far beyond the engagement with discrete social issues or a quest for regional revitalization but extend to central issues in Japanese society.

BIOGRAPHY

Barbara Geilhorn is a Principal Researcher at the German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo (DIJ) and an Adjunct Researcher at the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University. Recent publications include "Towards a Culture of Responsibility – Relating Fukushima, Chernobyl, and the Atomic Bombings in Setoyama Misaki's Theatre" (*Japan Forum* 2021) and the coedited books *Okada Toshiki & Japanese Theatre* (with Peter Eckersall et al., Performance Research Books 2021) and *Fukushima and the Arts* (with Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt, Routledge 2017).

THEORIZING ART AND POLITICS IN NON-URBAN LOCATIONS

JUSTIN JESTY

ABSTRACT

My paper will explore the need for new theoretical approaches to contemporary art in non-urban settings. Many theories of art's spatial politics assume intensive market and demographic pressure on space, making them less relevant to rural areas characterized by entropic dynamics such as population and economic decline. Non-urban areas tend to have less media exposure and fewer public spaces than urban areas, making performance and media intervention less powerful. Artists and activists in rural areas must often build trust with diverse, non-specialist collaborators and audiences over a long period of time as a prerequisite to doing meaningful work, making disruptive, spectacular forms of intervention inappropriate. On the other hand, non-urban settings may be more vibrant than cities for experiments that involve long time frames, complex negotiations, and participants and audiences who have no prior experience with contemporary art. Cities are becoming less diverse, economic inequality is increasingly stark, and people around the world are seeking alternative lifestyles in communes, through low impact living, and through sustainable primary production and food systems. Contemporary art practices reveal and address these complicated cultural and political dynamics, which do not fit most existing frameworks for understanding art and politics. My paper will address these issues and sketch out alternatives.

BIOGRAPHY

Justin Jesty researches the relationship between art and social movements in postwar Japan. He recently published the book *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* (Cornell University Press 2018), which was awarded the 2019 ASAP Book Prize by the Association for the Study of Arts of the Present. He is currently researching contemporary socially engaged art. In 2017 he edited a two-part special issue on the topic in *FIELD: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism*. He has also published several articles on postwar social documentary.

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WOODCUT PRINTS AS HYBRID MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF TRANSNATIONAL ANARCHISTIC COMMUNITIES

AI KANO

ABSTRACT

Woodcut prints have been a commonly used medium in socio-cultural movements in many Asian regions throughout history. First, the woodcut is an accessible medium of individual expression that doesn't require specific skills and techniques. Second, the woodcut's mobility enables easy cultural and physical exchange. Third, woodcut printing is a reproduction that can disseminate political messages and individual expression to the masses. Thus, woodcut prints can broadly function as "art for the sake of people."

The transnational network of woodblock art collectives has been expanding around the globe for the past decade. It has spread throughout East and Southeast Asia, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Collaborative work and anarchism are key to this network and crucial to understand to distinguish it from traditional woodcut arts movement. Each collective often collaborates with the local community, minority groups, and other art collectives, both domestically and internationally, and it is through this collaboration that they incorporate both local and global issues. Furthermore, many woodcut art collectives share an anarchist attitude influenced by punk music and DIY culture, which draw on ideas from cultural theories and social movements related to anti-capitalism, feminism, environmental issues, and migration.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, art collectives communicated with each other by following social media accounts, which allowed them to know what was going on in real time. Social media stimulated physical communication as well: online projects, collaborative exhibitions, online talks, zine-making, and so on. This paper will present how woodcuts can be regarded as a medium to explore physical, political, and artistic spaces through art.

BIOGRAPHY

Ai Kano is Assistant Professor in the Department of Socio-Information Studies, Shizuoka University. She researches art collectives, exploring the relationships between art and politics in the intersecting fields of media, art, and activism within transnational movements. She is a member of the woodcut art collective A3BC and currently researching with the Working Group for Inter-Asia Self-Organized Woodcut Collectives Mapping Series. Her publications include "Trans Local Networking of DIY Art Collectives from Asia to Europe—The Case of A3BC" in *FIELD: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism* (2017). Kanō received her PhD in 2018 at Tokyo University of the Arts and completed an MA in Culture Industry at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2012.

REDISCOVERING THE CULTURAL VALUE OF THE REGION AND CONNECTING IT TO CULTURAL TOURISM

MARI KOBAYASHI

ABSTRACT

Art projects have been developed in rural areas of Japan since the beginning of the 2000s, though they look different from the art biennales and triennales held in Europe and the United States. In Japan, artistic techniques are used to solve regional issues. These projects have received a lot of attention, and many people have visited the areas, the most famous being the Earth Art Festival held in the Tsumari area and the Setouchi Art Festival held on the islands of the Seto Inland Sea. These festivals have also been popular with contemporary art fans from overseas. This method of developing art in sync with the challenges of the region has led to a move to reassess the inherent cultural value of traditional museums and galleries. For example, the Agency for Cultural Affairs is developing a project to connect the cultural value of each region to cultural tourism. In 2020, the Cultural Tourism Promotion Law was enacted, and 41 areas nationwide were certified as cultural tourism sites with projects already in the implementation stage. These projects are still in their infancy, but I will introduce further examples of regional promotion using art in the Japanese region.

BIOGRAPHY

Mari Kobayashi is Professor of Cultural Resources Studies, Course of Cultural Management in the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology at the University of Tokyo. She is involved in the institutional design and operation of the cultural administration of local governments, and she sits on cultural policy, museum, and cultural property protection subcommittees at the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

CONSIDERING THE "SUBURBS": COMMUNITY ART PROJECTS INVOLVING UNIVERSITIES

KUMAKURA SUMIKO

ABSTRACT

I lead an arts management laboratory at Tokyo University of the Arts, where we have been working on cultural projects co-created with the local community, local government, art NPOs, along with others. I will introduce several projects our group has been working on over the last 20 years. The first are projects in Toride City, Ibaraki Prefecture, a bedroom community of 100,000 residents, an hour by train from central Tokyo. Toride is a quiet agricultural town where commerce is declining rapidly, especially in the commercial space around the train station due to motorization. Vacant stores are conspicuous. I will share some of the projects we are developing on our university campus and in the station building.

The second case I will share is a project we are developing in the town of Senju, in the eastern suburbs of Tokyo. This is one of the poorest areas in Tokyo, with issues of child poverty, and community building between old and new residents is a challenge.

In my paper I will introduce these projects and use them as case studies to evaluate the effectiveness of community art projects.

BIOGRAPHY

Kumakura Sumiko is the Dean of the Graduate School of Global Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts and Professor in Arts Management and Cultural Policy Studies. She has been a leading figure in the field of arts management in Japan since launching the first arts management program in a national art university in Tokyo in 2002. She is actively involved in numerous community-based art projects and works as an executive producer for the Toride Art Project and Art Access Adachi. She has served as a national and municipal policy advisor numerous times.

TAKAYAMA AKIRA – PERFORMANCE-ENACTING MOBILITY AND SHIFTING BORDERS

TOM LOOSER AND PETER ECKERSALL

ABSTRACT

This paper considers how performances by Takayama Akira (founder of Port B) are made to explore and interrogate experiences of mobility and migration among people who traverse geographical and geopolitical spaces in Japan and elsewhere. In making works that uncover submerged and hidden sites connected to ways of forgetting and of diasporic and migratory passage, Takayama invites reflection on questions of borders, zones, and regions, and the passages between them. From his early work *One Way Street* (2006), named after Walter Benjamin's compilation of texts of the same name, to his recent *McDonald's Radio University* (2021), Takayama's performances are a form of expanded traveling dramaturgy that pushes performance into contact with the everyday and remakes our understanding of the borders and striations of space.

For example, several of Takayama's early works took place in and around Sugamo's *Jizō dōri*—a location that evokes the memory of *shitamachi*, where, in Edo times, there was a northern gate to the city that signified a liminal space and transactional border between city and countryside. Takayama's works made in response to the Fukushima disaster explore the reterritorialization of place. His installation *Happy Island* (2015), about the farmer Yoshizawa Masami who refused to euthanize his radiation-inflicted dairy cows and took them to Tokyo to protest the response to the nuclear disaster, shows the unfolding of place as a radioactive site and a geopolitical struggle. Referring to his concept of the "tour performance" in his production of Elfriede Jelinek's *Kein Licht, Epilog* (2012), Takayama said that it aimed to explore the "the distance between Fukushima and Tokyo" (2015, 40). Takayama's work can be explored as a remapping of space that connects people who participate in his performances to lived experiences, politics, nostalgia, multitudes, and cultural memory. In doing this, Takayama works across and between the tactics and experiences of documentary theater, psychogeography, heterotopia, and diaspora, and he brings fragments of history into present-day consideration.

Our paper will discuss how Takayama's work is a form of placemaking. His tour performances and mobile ideas of theater create complexities around the meaning of place in terms of respatialized institutional strata and civic designations. He is interested in figural and embodied pathways between places, where participants become "'evacuees,' transferring their bodies as performers in a theater of routes connecting places" (Takayama 2015, 42). From this, we aim to explore how civic institutions and designations such as "rural" and "city" are being broken and/or made liminal; they are linking, expanding, and decoupling, making the contemporary idea of space one of constant movement. Our paper will outline how this spatial dramaturgy has ramifications for the "global countryside" (Woods) as something both institutionalized and yet to be.

REFERENCES CITED

TAKAYAMA AKIRA AND PORT B. 2015. *AKIRA TAKAYAMA/PORT B*, PŌTO KANKŌ RISĀCHISENTĀ SHUPPAN-KYOKU (PORT TOURISM RESEARCH CENTER PUBLISHING BUREAU). <https://bccks.jp/bcck/131906/info>. ACCESSED APRIL 15, 2022.

BIOGRAPHIES

Peter Eckersall teaches in the PhD Program in Theatre and Performance at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He is an Honorary Professorial Fellow in the Department of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne. His research interests include Japanese performance, dramaturgy, and theater and politics. Recent publications include *Okada Toshiki & Japanese Theatre* (with Peter Eckersall et al., Performance Research Books 2021), *Curating Dramaturgies* (edited with Bertie Ferdman 2021), and *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan* (2013). He is cofounder/dramaturg of Not Yet It's Difficult. Recent dramaturgy includes *Sheep #1* (Sachiyo Takahashi, Japan Society) and *Phantom Sun/Northern Drift* (Alexis Destoop, Beursschouwburg, Riga Biennial).

Thomas Looser (PhD in Anthropology, U. of Chicago) is Chair and Associate Professor of East Asian Studies at NYU. His areas of research include cultural anthropology and Japanese studies; art, architecture, and urban form; new media studies and animation; and critical theory and globalities. Previously a senior editor for the journal *Mechademia*, and now an editor for *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, and editorial advisory board member of ADVA, he is the author of *Visioning Eternity: Aesthetics, Politics, and History in the Early Modern Noh Theater*, and has published articles in a variety of venues including *Boundary 2*, *Japan Forum*, *Mechademia*, *Shingenjitsu*, *Journal of Pacific Asia*, and *Cultural Anthropology*.

NEO-ENDOGENOUS REVITALIZATION: INCREASING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART AND CREATIVE IN-MIGRANT MICRO- ENTREPRENEURSHIP

MENG QU

ABSTRACT

Rural revitalization and resilience have become the urgent objective of peripheral regions in Japan seeking to recover or re-create conditions to maintain their existence. Art and creativity are now important drivers of rural resilience in the knowledge economy, and a variety of related projects have been launched with an explicit rural revitalization mission. One such project is the Setouchi Triennale, a large-scale art festival held on twelve small islands in the Seto Inland Sea, which promotes socially engaged art and festival tourism as a means to revitalize island communities. Studies indicate that the decade-long festival development initiative has generated an increase of in-migrants who have established creative micro-businesses on some of the islands.

The present study focuses on three islands involved in the Setouchi Triennale and shows that the opportunities brought by the exogenous art festival initiative have triggered endogenous community responses in terms of increased entrepreneurship and social engagement, which has in turn facilitated the emergence of neo-endogenous co-revitalization processes. The findings show that successful neo-endogenous revitalization through socially engaged art requires long-term creative and relational engagement between exogenous art development and endogenous community activities. Exogenous, endogenous, and neo-endogenous elements are therefore necessary to increase rural resilience. Furthermore, although in all three case studies neo-endogenous processes were found to facilitate rural revitalization and increase community resilience, the three islands each displays different response mechanisms despite starting from the same exogenous influence. These different revitalization pathways and outcomes depend on the resources and conditions of each island community.

BIOGRAPHY

Meng Qu is Assistant Professor at Hiroshima University, Visiting Research Fellow at Wakayama University, co-convenor at the Small Island Cultures Research Initiative (SICRI), and Research Director at the Art Island Center (Naoshima). His research draws from interdisciplinary perspectives, especially socially engaged art in rural regions, creative/tourism geography, and island studies.

THE END OF ART TOURISM? THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF ART FESTIVALS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE IN JAPAN

YOSHITAKA MŌRI

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe setbacks for most international art festivals held in the Japanese countryside. Prior to the emergence of the pandemic, international art festivals such as the Echigo-Tsumari Triennale and the Setouchi Triennale had been developing as a new form of art tourist industry, attracting not only domestic contemporary art fans but also overseas tourists who wanted to enjoy staying in the rural countryside of Japan. Due to COVID-19, however, most rural art festivals have been forced to change their business strategy: they must now get more local residents involved not only as hosts but also as attendees, as the return of overseas visitors is still uncertain. This paper looks at the situation of international art festivals in the countryside during the COVID-19 pandemic and considers how they are changing their framework in relation to local communities.

BIOGRAPHY

Yoshitaka Mōri is Professor in Sociology and Cultural Studies at the Graduate School of Global Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts. His research interests are postmodern culture, media, art, the city, and transnationalism. He has published numerous books and essays in both Japanese and English, including “New Collectivism, Participation and Politics after the East Japan Great Earthquake” in *World Art* (Routledge 2015).

THE RURAL AND THE EMPIRE: COLONIAL HISTORIES IN TRANSCULTURAL EXCHANGE

JESSICA NAKAMURA

ABSTRACT

The history of Okinawa as a colonial acquisition of Japan can illuminate some of the political and historical complexities of how we think of the rural in Japanese art. Okinawa is a region with a clear identity that existed before annexation, and artists' portrayals of the prefecture's history can serve as commentary on its ongoing status. By turning to Okinawa, I foreground the relationship between the rural and the colonial, exploring questions that include: How might Okinawa's regional identity make itself known and potentially influence the global art scene of visual and performing arts? In contrast, how might the arts reiterate imperial imaginings of the colonial rural state? And how might we as scholars interpret the effects of such histories?

To explore these questions, I look to Okinawan artists operating in and through urban centers of Japan and beyond. I consider the ways in which these artists make the issues of their locales relevant to those in the metropole, teasing out significances of exhibiting work in urban and global art markets. I plan to use the video and performance artist Yamashiro Chikako as one of my main examples. Born in Okinawa in 1976, Yamashiro has spent her career confronting her audiences with images of Okinawa's culture and colonial past. Her success in the Japanese art world, with exhibitions in Tokyo and internationally, provides an example of the ways in which artists may be able to negotiate the relationship between Okinawa and Japan through the global art world.

BIOGRAPHY

Jessica Nakamura is Associate Professor in the Department of Theater and Dance at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her current research project explores representations of the domestic in 20th-century Japanese theater, from the introduction of Western realism until the present.

AKIYA: FROM SCARY ABANDONED HOUSE TO SITE OF ARTWORK

ANEMONE PLATZ

ABSTRACT

Akiya, or abandoned houses and buildings, have been perceived as threat agents to their neighborhoods and as socio-political problems to local communities for several decades. However, recently positive images and reappraisals of forgotten qualities of the *akiya* have reemerged, and the buildings are being reconsidered as sites of special character, suited for different types of cultural events, particularly as spaces for art exhibits or as integrated parts of installations at art festivals.

This paper explores the implications of the usage of abandoned houses for rural communities in Japan, tracing the trajectory of change from irritating nuisance to local (touristic) attraction and art site. Initiatives to reuse as well as rethink the use of these types of buildings are, on the one hand, top-down, steered undertakings aimed at the revitalization of peripheral regions. On the other hand, they serve as places of interaction between local residents, artists, and visitors, influencing inside and outside perceptions of the local community but also as boundaries of local citizens' engagement and external involvement.

My presentation will center on these concepts and related aspects as perceived by the artists of two art installation projects in *akiya*. It will shed light on their thoughts regarding the use of former dwellings and the meaning of the site for their specific projects. Furthermore, it will focus on their experience of exchange with the local neighborhood while working and interacting with the local community before, during, and after the art event.

BIOGRAPHY

Anemone Platz is Associate Professor in the Department of Global and Area Studies, Japan Studies Section, University of Aarhus. Her current research takes its starting point in changing life and living styles in contemporary Japan and focuses on how these influence individual choices of living spaces, such as imaginaries of home and its implementation. As a member of the international research network Collaboration and Community Building in Contemporary Art (CCCA) led by Gunhild Borggreen, she investigates the impact of communal revitalization activities on local residents in terms of social engagement in their neighborhood and related issues of wellbeing.

PERFORMING ARTS UNDER MT. FUJI: SHIZUOKA'S WORLD THEATRE FESTIVAL

CODY POULTON

ABSTRACT

Director Suzuki Tadashi was a forerunner of a “back to the land” movement in the Japanese arts when he and his company, Waseda Shōgekijō, left Tokyo in 1976 and based themselves in the hamlet of Toga, in Toyama Prefecture. In 1982 Suzuki established the annual Toga Festival for performing arts; he founded the Suzuki Company of Toga (SCOT) in 1984 and regularly hosts a theater version of the Olympics in Toga. The Toga Art Park has since been a laboratory for native Japanese artists and a magnet for international theater artists during its annual summer festival. Suzuki was also instrumental in establishing the Shizuoka Performing Arts Center (SPAC) in 1997. Since that time SPAC has hosted an annual World Theatre Festival every spring under its artistic director Miyagi Satoshi, whose own work has been showcased in Avignon, Paris, and New York. My talk will focus on how SPAC’s annual spring theater festival has weathered the pandemic over the past three years, first by going totally online in 2020, then hosting a hybrid production in 2021 and again in 2022, while increasingly inviting international artists to Japan to present their work.

BIOGRAPHY

M. Cody Poulton is Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria, Canada. His most recent monograph is *A Beggar's Art: Scripting Modernity in Japanese Drama* (University of Hawai'i Press 2010). Additionally, he served as editor and chief translator of Hirata Oriza's *Citizens of Tokyo: Six Plays* (Seagull Books 2019). He is also coeditor, with Mitsuya Mori and J. Thomas Rimer, of *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Drama* (2014) and, with Peter Eckersall, Barbara Geilhorn, and Andreas Regelsberger, of *Okada Toshiki & Japanese Theatre* (Performance Research Books 2021).

TURNING INWARD AS A COPING MECHANISM: PHYSICALITY AND PANDEMIC IN THE TŌHOKU REGION

KRISZTINA ROSNER

ABSTRACT

My presentation focuses on the Aomori-based dancer and choreographer Mari Osanai. Osanai gives workshops in Japan and internationally, teaching a movement practice technique based on Noguchi gymnastics. This technique was developed by Michizō Noguchi in the second half of the 20th century and has been used by dancers, choreographers, and physical educators ever since. Noguchi's approach to body awareness training includes turning the attention inwards, accepting the body as a fluid entity, and working on the physical gravity rather than muscles.

These qualities emphasized by the concepts of Noguchi Taiso resonate surprisingly well with the constraints of the pandemic. However, the pandemic situation has raised many practical questions regarding regional revitalization: How has Osanai's practical training format been coping with the shift to the online format? What kind of practical resources are available from local cultural institutions for an artist/teacher living in a regional center? What kind of region-specific artistic challenges has she been facing?

Since 2014 I have been working continuously with Osanai, taking private and group workshops led by her, and in 2016 creating together a performance at the Nabegen Theatre Group. I also published an oral history video interview with her in 2016.

This paper will be looking at her practice pre- and mid-pandemic.

It is a work-in-progress presentation.

BIOGRAPHY

Krisztina Rosner (Meiji University) is a Tokyo-based Hungarian researcher and practitioner of contemporary performing arts. Her PhD thesis was written on the actor's presence and the performative aspects of silence (University of Pecs, Hungary, 2011). Her current research focuses on transmedia and technology, with a special emphasis on the nonhuman aspects of contemporary Japanese performance: robots and animals. With her practice-as-research approach, she is also active as an actor and director, leading workshops in the United States, Japan, and Europe. Grants include UNESCO-Aschberg Bursary for Performing Artists (2006), "Eotvos" Hungarian State Research Grant (2008), Hungarian Academy of Science Book Publication Grant (2011), Japan Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (Hosei University, Tokyo, 2014), Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (Waseda University 2015–2017). Homepage: www.tinarosner.com

ART FESTIVALS IN JAPAN: FUELING REVITALIZATION, TOURISM, AND SELF-CENSORSHIP?

EIMI TAGORE-ERWIN

ABSTRACT

This paper critically considers large-scale contemporary art festivals that have become a significant force of art tourism in Japan. While many of these projects got their start in socially conscious endeavors with a focus on *machizukuri*, or local community building, how has the increase of government-sponsored revitalization initiatives and heightened pressure from the tourism industry shifted art production over the years? Recent incidents of state intervention within Japan's art world have created troubling new precedents for censorship and the use of art by the state for fulfilling certain socio-political narratives. As such, this paper discusses some of the ways that artists and their artwork may be subjected to instrumentalization by various festival stakeholders, as well as some of the material repercussions of "festivalization" on rural locales. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic's adverse effect on foreign travel and shipping costs has impacted the art tourism industry, revealing that the seasonal model may not be as sustainable as envisioned. This paper aims to situate such festivals within their shifting genealogy and raise points of critique for audiences to consider around the topic of rural revitalization, specifically focused on the challenges artists, curators, and organizers face today.

BIOGRAPHY

Eimi Tagore-Erwin is a doctoral candidate of East Asian Studies at New York University. Her research focus is contemporary Japanese art engaging with colonial history, memory, and transpacific politics. She is a curator at Alison Bradley Projects and a Curatorial Fellow at the Shigeko Kubota Video Art Foundation. She was a 2021 Wikipedia Fellow for PoNJA-Genkon and Asia Art Archive in America, where she focused on Japanese artists who have faced censorship.

EXPERIENCING ART FROM A FIELD OF RICE—HOW FARMERS RELATE TO RURAL REVITALIZATION AND ART AT THE ECHIGO-TSUMARI ART TRIENNALE IN JAPAN

LINE MARIE THORSEN

ABSTRACT

In this paper I propose a novel mode of conceptualizing the role of art for rural revitalization, focusing on the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial (ETAT) in Niigata, Japan, and on how local farmers experience art as a catalyst for social, cultural, and natural changes. While several social and cultural science scholars have researched the role of art in rural revitalization, this work is often focused on arts' problem-solving affordances (e.g., economic, demographic) or how rural engagements matter to the development of art (e.g., art world discussions on socially engaged art). Instead, I turn attention to the middle-ground: what art as rural revitalization does as an intervention in the everyday life and practices of farmers living in the festival area. Specifically, I explore how farmers relate to different types of artworks presented at ETAT and how this art spurs farmers to consider their farming and lifeways anew. Based on qualitative interviews with farmers and ethnographic field work at ETAT I draw on the art analysis by Japanese sociologist and cultural theorist Tsurumi Shunsuke as well as the aesthetic philosophy of American pragmatist John Dewey. Collectively they offer a set of broad and inclusive notions of "art" and "aesthetic experience" well equipped to grapple with the way art can spur farmers to reflect on their lives, their farming, and the environments they inhabit.

BIOGRAPHY

Line Marie Thorsen is a Postdoc with the Independent Research Fund Denmark, based at Aarhus University, Department of Anthropology and Centre for Environmental Humanities. She researches the intersections of art, farming, and environmental activism in East Asia.