

NOYAKI 野焼き:

Fire, Art, and Ecology During the Economic Bubble

Bert Winther-Tamaki



18:00~19:30, Feb 2, 2023

(In person only)

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One of the more striking if less familiar developments in contemporary Japanese art during the 1980s was a series of dramatic outdoor fires, or noyaki, staged by artists. If the gleaming glass and steel skyscrapers built in Tokyo during these years symbolize its exorbitant land prices and material excess, some artists shunned the values of this world in favor of piles of ashen ceramic heads and soot-blackened towers of adobe. The ceramicist Koie Ryōji demonstrated a prodigious appetite for flames in a series of experimental burning projects. Two women artists undertook their first large fire events at Koie's workshop in the famous rural pottery town of Tokoname. Fujita Akiko then proceeded to create large scorched architectural installations in Brazil and elsewhere, while Nagasawa Nobuho conducted a ritual blaze on the site of a synagogue destroyed in Berlin during World War II. This lecture assesses the ecological ethics of the globalizing trajectory of these noyaki projects in the years of the Economic Bubble.

Image: Fujita Akiko, *House of Swallows*, 1985. Campinas, Brazil

Bert Winther-Tamaki is Professor of Art History at the University of California, Irvine. His research focuses on modern and contemporary Japanese art with an emphasis on materiality and transnationality. Winther-Tamaki's latest book, *TSUCHI: Earthy Materials in Contemporary Japanese Art*, employs an eco-critical approach to reassess ceramics, photography, and installation art (University of Minnesota Press, 2022). Previous publications include two monographs on twentieth-century Japanese art: *Maximum Embodiment: Yōga, the 'Western Painting' of Japan, 1912-1955* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2012) and *Art in the Encounter of Nations: Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2001). Winther-Tamaki is currently a visiting foreign research scholar at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the University of Tokyo.

This talk is organized by Noriko Murai (Associate Professor, FLA)

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