



**Date: 10/31 (Tue)**  
**Time: 18:00-19:30**  
**Room 503, 5F, Building 6,**  
**Sophia University**  
**In person only**

**Moderator: Noriko Murai** (Professor of Art History, Sophia University)

# Gas Mask Nation:

## Wartime Civil Air Defense, Aviation, and Japan's Aerial Imaginary

**Gennifer Weisenfeld**

(Walter H. Annenberg Distinguished Professor of Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Duke University)

Prof. Gennifer Weisenfeld will discuss her latest book *Gas Mask Nation: Visualizing Civil Air Defense in Wartime Japan* (University of Chicago Press, 2023).

(from the publisher's website) *Gas Mask Nation* explores the multilayered construction of an anxious yet perversely pleasurable visual culture of Japanese civil air defense—or *bōkū*—through a diverse range of artworks, photographs, films and newsreels, magazine illustrations, postcards, cartoons, advertising, fashion, everyday goods, government posters, and state propaganda. Gennifer Weisenfeld reveals the immersive aspects of this culture, in which Japan's imperial subjects were mobilized to regularly perform highly orchestrated civil air defense drills throughout the country.



**GENNIFER WEISENFELD** is Walter H. Annenberg Distinguished Professor of Art, Art History & Visual Studies at Duke University. Her field of research is modern and contemporary Japanese art history, design, and visual culture. Her first book, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931* (University of California Press, 2002) addresses the relationship between high art and mass culture in the aesthetic politics of the avant-garde in 1920s Japan. Her second book, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's Great Earthquake of 1923* (University of California Press, 2012, Japanese edition Seidosha, 2014) examines how visual culture has mediated the historical understanding of Japan's

worst national disaster of the twentieth century. Her third book, *Gas Mask Nation: Visualizing Civil Air Defense in Wartime Japan* (University of Chicago Press, 2023) explores the anxious pleasures of Japanese visual culture during World War II. She has published extensively on the history of Japanese design, including a core essay for MIT's award-winning website Visualizing Cultures on the Shiseido cosmetic company's advertising design. She has a forthcoming book on the history of Japanese commercial art and design titled *The Fine Art of Persuasion: Corporate Advertising Design, Nation, and Empire in Modern Japan* (Duke University Press).

This event is organized by Noriko Murai (Professor of Art history, Sophia University)

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