

令和6年1月16日

関係者各位

早稲田大学国際教養学部

早稲田大学国際教養学部アートプロジェクト開催のお知らせ

拝啓 寒中の候、皆様ますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。

この度、私どもは1月21日、早稲田大学国際教養学部出身の映画監督を招待し、彼らの映画を上映する芸術イベントを開催いたします。

本上映会では、佐久間啓輔監督（映画『Funny』米リッチモンド国際映画祭観客賞&最優秀女優賞受賞）や大森亜璃紗監督（映画『四人姉妹』TAMA NEW WAVEにセレクト&『Tokyo Bhutan』）をお招きし、トークセッションも開催いたします。また、国際教養学部生であるジェフリー・ロー監督の映画『Rite of Spring』も上映いたします。

作品の上映後、上映作品の監督を囲んで、早稲田大学国際教養学部教員、英語学位プログラムの大学院学生、更には立命館大学からトゥニ・クリストフ准教授（近代日本の都市文化研究）による映画分析、講演が英語で行われます。観客の方も質問、ディスカッションに参加していただけます。

皆様お誘い合わせの上、ぜひご来場いただきますようよろしくお願いいたします。

敬具

—記—

早稲田大学国際教養学部アートプロジェクト開催のご案内

開催日時：1 月 21 日（日） 10:30 - 18:50

会場：早稲田大学 小野記念講堂アクセス：東西線早稲田駅 3a出口より徒歩およそ4分

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SUNDAY 21 JANUARY 2024
ONO MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
<https://silsartproject.wordpress.com>

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E S A K U M
A A L Y S A
O M O R I C
H R I S T P H
E T H O U N Y

SUNDAY 21 JANUARY 2024

WASEDA ONO MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

<https://silsartproject.wordpress.com>



S I L S A A A R R R T T T P R O J E C T

Inviting filmmakers who emerged from **SILS** (School of International Liberal Studies), **Keisuke Sakuma** and **Alysa Omori** (Makoto Kikuchi), this art project will present several of their films, such as *Funny* (2021), *Eativersity* (2022), *My Bitter Sweet Home* (2021) and *Tokyo Bhutan* (2023). A SILS student filmmaker, Jeffrey Lo's *Rite of Spring* (2023), will also be presented.

These films will be analysed from multiple perspectives in subsequent presentations, not only by faculty members, researchers and scholars of SILS, GSICCS and JCULP but also by Japanese pop culture scholar **Christophe Thouny** from Ritsumeikan University. The audience will also be invited to join discussions and interviews with filmmakers and presenters.

Invited Filmmakers:

Keisuke Sakuma

Alysa Omori (Makoto Kikuchi)

Jeffrey Lo

Films will be analysed by:

Christophe Thouny (Ritsumeikan Univ.)

Norimasa Morita (SILS, Waseda)

Maji Rhee (SILS, Waseda)

Masumi Nagasaka (SILS, Waseda)

+

Hiroki Ohsawa (Filmmaker)

aliwen (GSICCS)

Le Vu Thuy Linh (JCULP)



S I L S A A A R R R T T T PROJECT

KEISUKE SAKUMA Profile

Born and raised in Nagoya, Japan. Moved to U.S. at the age of fifteen and spent four years of high school in Pennsylvania. After returning to Japan, entered Waseda University and began making films. In his second year of college, he wrote and starred in the film “Sansangogo,” which won the Grand Prix and the Audience Award in the U-25 category at the 2015 Okinawa International Film Festival. The following year, with funding from the festival, he produced the film “Hana wa dai dai dai”, which was officially invited to the Okinawa International Film Festival. The same year, he studied filmmaking at Florida State University. Not only as a filmmaker, but also as an actor, he played the lead role in “Good People,” the graduation project of the Florida State University Film School. After studying abroad, he worked for a film distribution company, where he was involved in publicity work for a variety of films, both Japanese and foreign. He later became an independent film director and writer, directing music videos for idol groups and writing scripts for Vtubers. His short film “Funny” was nominated for the 2021 TAMA NEW WAVE Competition, selected for the Hong Kong International Short Film Festival, Nippon Connection (Germany), Market Picks at the Clermont-Ferrand International Film Festival in France, and won Audience Award & Best Actress Award at Richmond International Film Festival in the US. His latest film “Eatversity” was nominated for Vancouver Asian Film Festival.

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ALYSA OMORI (MAKOTO KIKUCHI)
Profile

Alysa Omori is a Japanese actress and director born and raised in Japan. Her acting career began after being scouted for an independent film “The Genkiya” which was nominated at Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival 2012. Her experience acting in an independent film led Alysa to study film at Waseda University School of International Liberal Studies. In 2013, she graduated Waseda University directing a graduation project short film “Hallucination.”

In 2021, she was funded by Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan, wrote, directed and played as an actor in “My Bitter Sweet Home.” This film was selected for TAMA NEW WAVE 2021 Un Certain Regard and won best actor at Tanabe Benkei Film Festival 2022. This led to the theatrical release at Theatre Shinjuku, full house in 2023. Her new projects “TOKYO BHUTAN” and “Nanba no Hanpana Shakintori” are about to be released.

JEFFREY LO
Profile

Jeffrey Lo is a Taiwanese-American writer-director. He speaks English and Chinese natively, speaks Japanese fluently, and writes and directs in all three. He also, in all three languages, writes short stories and essays. And poems...from time to time. He is a student at the School of International Liberal Studies of Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan, and did a year on exchange at the TISCH School of Arts at NYU.

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CHRISTOPHE THOUNY
Profile

Christophe Thouny received his M.A. in Japanese Studies at McGill University, East Asian Studies Department (2003) and his PhD in Modern Japanese Literature, Media Studies and Intellectual History at New York University, East Asian Studies Department (2011). His work focuses on modern Japanese urban and visual culture in literature, media and urban studies in relation with larger debates about environmentalism, planetary thinking, queer studies and critical theory. Thouny is co-editor of *Planetary Atmospheres and Urban Life After Fukushima* (Palgrave Mcmillian, 2017) and recently published his monograph entitled *The Urban Planetary and Tokyo Modernity: Dwelling in Passing* (Lexington Books, 2023). He is now working on two research projects: planetary imaginations of postwar Japanese urban visual culture; and postwar Japanese social critique in the work of Yoshimoto Takaaki.

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aliwen (GSICCS)
Presentation abstract

Queer/Crip Polyphony: On SAKUMA Keisuke's recent films

The following paper seeks to read two of SAKUMA Keisuke's films, in particular his recent works *Funny* (2021) and *Eatversity* (2022), from the perspective of crip/queer politics and criticism. In his two most recent filmic works released to public, Sakuma-san creates diegetic worlds in which neuro-atypical or corporeally disabled subjectivities are not only centered, but are the protagonists inside of relatively antagonistic societies which are both challenged as they are ostracizing to the main characters' Otherness.

In his earlier, female-centered *Funny*, a more naturalistic or grounded short film which relies on a shot/counter shot narrative with a plausible plotting—the odd-faced Inukai-san faces difficulties to maintain consistent labor opportunities due to her tendency to create undesirable face smirks, especially when confronted with person-to-person communication or highly-stressful situations. Is the smirking Inukai-san facing Tourette's syndrome, or another form of behavioral disorder which leads her to moue at store administration or at “catty” housewife circles uncontrollably? This surrealistic suspension of disbelief in a particularly ambiguous film text allows us to question the way in which we pathologize non-normative behaviors and tendencies with a “panopticon” composed of bad-mouthing gossip at best, and inability to sustain life under capitalism at worst. This film also redeems this strange characters through a queer sense of family yielding or an intergenerational and taboo shōjo romance; which is not exactly sexual in nature but rather the recognition of a pathologically eraser eating, “pica” eating disorder faced young woman Lisa-san, who finds community and acceptance in the odd, older Inukai-san.

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aliwen (GSICCS)
Presentation abstract

In Eatversity, a femininely named male character called Hana-kun inhabits a weeby, otherkin, furry, or cosplaying cat persona experience, and is lacking—again—of employment. He is thus invited to a “sort-of” date by the supportive and more normative character Lisa-san (is this maybe a paratextual reference to the character of the previous film?), who believes she can get a job for Hana-kun at this strange restaurant in which all chefs cosplay and live as animals. Through their luxurious dining experience, Lisa-san and Hana-kun taste certain exotic animals such as spit of alpaca, beaver anus, or the more common wagyu beef. The film requires a much higher suspension of disbelief, as the surrealist environment together with Hana-kun’s repeated facial spasms create an ambiguous filmic text, which is heightened by the fact this we discover that some of the restaurants’s chefs are able to come in and out of their animal personas. Certainly anti-speciesist in its messaging, the climax of the plot includes Hana-kun violently vomiting the exotic meats, prompting other customers to re-evaluate their own consumption and creating a chain of purging.

Throughlines in the work of Sakuma-san are the adversity of capitalist labor systems in the inclusion and accessibility of difference, as well as subjectivities conformed or conforming in spite of their abjectness. I would like to apply the concept of feminist/queer “polyphony” as used by film critic KANNO Yuka, assessing how SAKUMA’s transgressive characters reflect on marginality and accessibility.

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Le Vu Thuy Linh (JCULP)
Presentation abstract

Despite its title "Tokyo Bhutan" referencing and juxtaposing two places, Alysa Omori's 2023 production took place in a closed space, and despite its relative short screen time, through the use of montage as well as a peculiar utilization of "cuteness" aesthetics, the work delivered a powerful and poignant criticism against the capitalistic society, whose rules and structures are delineated to oppress and distort the female bodies. In the presentation, I would like to focus specifically on the film's warped "cuteness" aesthetics as a point of subversion against and criticism of the capitalistic state where appearances of the female sex become capitalized, hence the female bodies are constantly monitored and distorted. Thereby, by employing the grotesque under "kawaii" aesthetic front, the film managed to grasp back the female's agency as first of all, an expression of despair, and secondly, as a critical voice of today's society. In the first part of the presentation, I would focus on the imagined audience's voyeuristic gaze through the depiction of space. As stated above, despite its title, the film (mostly) features two women as they montagely aged in a closed space - the effect is achieved through the almost too plain background, extensive use of still frames, the overtly artificial backgrounds, etc, sculpting an almost claustrophobic environment onto the viewers. There is no indication of Tokyo nor Bhutan - and as I would later argue, the two locations act more like a symbol for the infantile fantasy (of a suspension in time) amid the increasingly capitalistic state - but the eye-catching "kawaii"ness aesthetics of the whole set that emphasize the "Tokyo" of the title's equation.

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Le Vu Thuy Linh (JCULP)
Presentation abstract

However, the "kawaii"ness is inverted: in contrast with the usual product - fluffy feelings for the consumers of this aesthetics - "kawaii"ness in the film acts as a catalyst for rebellion by purposefully driving the "kawaii"ness to the grotesque, making the cute deplorable, nauseous and disturbing. Drawing on Laura Miller's argument in her essay "Cute Masquerade and the Pimping of Japan" (2011) that "kawaii" was promoted as part of the Cool Japan construction with an aim to monitoring the female sex, I would like to put forth my interpretation that despite the non-existence of male characters, the male gaze is implied behind the camera, and as such, the female actresses are constantly being observed, their bodies being disciplined to the "kawaii" aesthetics. However, their anxiety and their despair at this lack of freedom that they could not even speak of, fervently warp the aesthetics. In addition, I would dive into the last scene where two characters are in the hospital gowns which are also under the "kawaii" aesthetics - the gowns are not meant to be realistic but cutesy and sickly (menhera-ish) - and when one of the mummied characters was hit by a gardening tool by the old woman, she bled pink smoothie-like solution - again the dislocation of blood to the "kawaii" aesthetics, to speak of various intricacies of the "kawaii" aesthetics being employed here. As a conclusion, Tokyo Bhutan deploys, satires, and inverts the aesthetics of "kawaii" to evoke in the audience the female despair and anxiety, which is an act of reclaiming the female agency in a contemporary Japanese society where the otaku male gaze still dominates.

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Hiroki Ohsawa (Filmmaker)
Presentation abstract

After five years of experience in Hollywood as a film director, earning 13 awards and 14 nominations worldwide, I discovered a significant contrast in filmmaking philosophies between Japan and the universal standard, particularly in the US. Moreover, I believe it's time to revisit the discussion on what motion pictures truly represent amidst the current circumstances inundated with numerous social media platforms. As a professional film and commercial director from Japan, I consistently collaborate not only with Japanese cast and crew but also with international talents, including Oscar and Emmy-winning filmmakers. Throughout each phase—development, pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution—I notice their different mindsets toward filmmaking. A movie is fundamentally a visual art form, and it's still believed that the story of a masterpiece can be understood even when it's muted. How can we employ visual storytelling techniques and grammar to 'show, don't tell' a story? Regarding the business aspect of the industry, obviously there is a huge gap between Japan and the world. How we work is different, and how we get paid is different. Consider the budgetary differences: 'Spirited Away' (2001), an Oscar-winning animation from Studio Ghibli, had an estimated budget of \$19,000,000, while 'The Simpsons: Movie' (2007) had a budget of \$75,000,000. An episode of NHK's historical TV series 'Seiten wo Tsuke' (2021) reportedly cost ¥79,000,000, whereas just one episode of 'Stranger Things 4' (2022) required \$300,000,000. Why it's happening and how can we deal with it from now?

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Hiroki Ohsawa (Filmmaker)
Presentation abstract

On the other hand, as a lecturer who have taught hands-on filmmaking and media studies at multiple universities in Japan and the US, I've observed a stark contrast in the attitude of younger generations toward video media compared to my generation (I'm in my mid-30s) and older ones. Moreover, it's evident that contemporary professional filmmakers and others hold differing attitudes toward media due to rapid technological advancements. Almost everyone now has free access to video-making devices, such as smartphones. We remember the strikes in Hollywood by actors, screenwriters, and others. They demonstrated on various topics, and one of the most significant issues was AI. Indeed, AI has the potential to serve as a storyboard artist, screenwriter, actor, composer, and wear many hats sooner or later. Does anyone believe we can halt its progress? If not, will you oppose it, or will you choose to coexist with it? While I deeply respect the wisdom of our cinematic ancestors spanning over a hundred years of history, should we simply continue blindly adhering to tradition for the next century? Why not observe the current trends in media, confront reality, and contemplate the future? I don't mean that we must mimic Hollywood's style of filmmaking. Japan, along with each country and culture, has its very own unique and beautiful approach to artistic expression. I do believe, however, that we can learn from one another and it's worth discussing.

I aim to present some clips from my current work, share my experiences and insights, and foster a deeper discussion about what we're passionate about with all the visitors.

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Maji Rhee (SILS)
Presentation abstract

Poetics of *My Bitter Sweet Home*

This article introduces and analyzes *My Bitter Sweet Home* (Yonin Shimai in Japanese, 2021) directed by one of the brilliant next generation movie directors in Japan, Ms. Omori Alisa. Director Omori is also an actress who appeared in many Japanese movies and acted as the third daughter in *My Bitter Sweet Home*. This article analyzes characters of four sisters by implementing semiotics to find out how each actor conveyed personalizing relationship in search of the hidden family secret. Each four character finds her own resilient way to contest against ironies and paradoxical circumstances of patriarchy and patrilineality in the contemporary Japanese society.

All four sisters display their graceful resistance against the societal system by negotiating the bitter reality yet in the sweet family bonding.

To understand the deep meaning of four sisters' resilient consciousness toward empowering themselves, poetic signifiers and signified meanings are analyzed based on the selected scenes (Morin, 1956). For example, a scene that shows two sisters playing with small dolls when they were young, and a piece of ultrasonic picture of an embryo with the Japanese male first name written on the back of the photograph.

Dolls signify the past childhood and the male first name on the back of photograph of an embryo signifies the turning point to all sisters realizing there was "a family secret." Their parents longed for a son as the fourth child.

Like Nora escaping from "A Doll's House," dolls signified breaking of the past via personalization of the photograph of an embryo. The past existed within the realm of the patriarchal system where gender roles were admitted as unquestioned common sense. The embryo photo signified the family's longing for a male heir to carry on the lineage.

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Maji Rhee (SILS)
Presentation abstract

In addition to the scene analysis, this article explores how Director Omori poetically designed each sister's character (Wright, 2023) to connote the images as a means of empowerment and search for second-order signified discourse covering themes on international marriage, stay-at-home housewife, and career women.

Key words: Japan, Cinema, Signified, Patrilineality

References

Edgar Morin, *Le Cinema ou L'homme Imaginaire*, Paris 1956.
Matthew Wright, *Crafting Characters*, Unpublished Book Manuscript, (2023)

Profile

Maji Rhee is a faculty member at School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University teaching and engaged in research in the Korean Studies. Maji performed in theatrical productions such as in *Antigone*, *La Cantatrice Chauve*, *En Attendant Godot*, and other French and British plays.

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Masumi Nagasaka (SILS)
Presentation abstract

Surviving the Other: Death and Birth in the Rite of Spring

'Every death is murder and premature', says Emmanuel Levinas. The other's death is always frightening. Even if death occurs at an age generally considered long-lived, it remains too early and unacceptable by those who are left behind, as is the case with the protagonist of this film. Death comes to everyone, without ever being neutral or ordinary. This is a murderer whose violence is unparalleled; however, no one can accuse or blame the murderer for wielding this violence. As an irresistible wall, the violence disrupts the harmony that governs our everyday lives, creating a huge hole in the world and breaking the chain of causality.

In the first scene of the film, a woman wipes a mirror with a bubbled sponge. Hannah Arendt, who distinguishes between the concepts of labour and work, argues that household chores are labour. In fact, a household chore does not leave behind any work that will last forever. Chores are done only for the day. Cleaning is consumed as soon as it is done – a sort of Sisyphus's labour. Never an end in itself – the labour always serves something other than itself – to maintain our lives. It rotates, always returning to the starting point and restarts. Lifting the right arm and lowering it is a slow, but regular, orderly and rhythmic movement. This repetitive activity makes us wonder whether this is an act of stitching up an open hole in the chain of causality. The movement cannot create anything; however, it attempts to remedy the hole.

Nevertheless, a mirror functions as a mirror a reflecting board – only because a dark plate is placed behind the glass. It encloses our view, doubling the protagonist. Although it reflects the present's past, it does not open up the future.

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Masumi Nagasaka (SILS)
Presentation abstract

‘He can’t die’, she thought. An entity that has always existed since her birth has been taken like a permanent substance. Even if its attributes change – the wrinkles grow, the hair turns white, the body thins out – by its definition, a substance itself cannot cease to exist. The alternative – that a substance ceases to exist – is completely unimaginable.

The act of cleaning is superimposed on the protagonist’s narrative. As a process of stitching individual events together, describing her father’s death allows her to gather pieces of information in chronological order, coherently and comprehensively. Synthesising apprehension, reproduction and recognition re-establish a causal connection and continuity.

In the second half of the film, the screen suddenly brightens. She walks with a young man, apparently her family member, who seems to be her father’s grandson. The language of the narrative changes from Chinese to English, marking the interruption of the temporal sequence. Simultaneously, the narrative changes from a monologue to a dialogue.

The main protagonists in this film are the past, the present and the future. The future gives new light to the past, allowing it to become the present’s past. All past events begin to reveal themselves as valuable – including the unacceptable murder – in this unceasing mourning process. Far from the Leibnizian theodicy, this mourning process does not provide meaning to the meaningless and restore harmony. However, the process opens the interpenetration between ‘already’ and ‘not yet’, even without being able to recuperate what is forever lost and immemorial.

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Event schedule Presentation abstract

Sunday, 21 January, 2024

- 10:30 - 11:10 Movie director Hiroki Ohsawa's presentation
(30 min + QA - 10 min)
- 11:15-11:30 SILS student movie maker Jeffrey Lo,
Rite of Spring (Film)
- 11:30-11:50 Masumi Nagasaka (SILS faculty):
Surviving the Other - Death and Birth
in *Rite of Spring*
- 11:50 - 13:30 Lunch & Coffee Break
- 13:30 - 14:05 Makoto Kikuchi (Alysa Omori),
My Bitter Sweet Home (四人姉妹)
- 14:05 - 14:25 Maji Rhee (SILS faculty),
Poetics of *My Bitter Sweet Home*
- 14:25 - 14:35 Makoto Kikuchi (Alysa Omori),
Tokyo Bhutan
- 14:35 - 14:55 Le Vu Thuy Linh (JCULP)
- 15:00 - 15:30 QA w/ Makoto Kikuchi (Alysa Omori),
students, and audience
- 15:40-16:15 Keisuke Sakuma, *Funny*
- 16:15-16:45 Keisuke Sakuma, Eativersity
- 16:45-17:05 aliwen (GSICCS), Queer/Crip Polyphony:
On SAKUMA Keisuke's recent films
- 17:10 - 17:40 QA w/ Keisuke Sakuma, students,
and audience
- 17:50- 18:20 Conference of Christophe Thouny
(Ritsumeikan Univ.)
- 18:20-18:50 Panel discussion: Norimasa Morita
(SILS faculty), Kikuchi Makoto (Alysa Omori)
+ Keisuke Sakuma

※ The schedule may be subject to change.