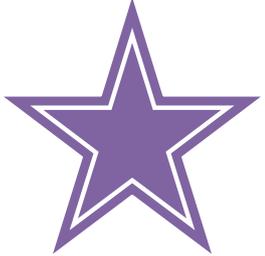


Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Lecture Series on Cultural Responses to 3.11
Organized by the ICC Project Unit "3/11 as Crisis and Opportunity"



This Machine Kills Nuclear Power Plants: The Music of Resistance in Post-Fukushima Japan



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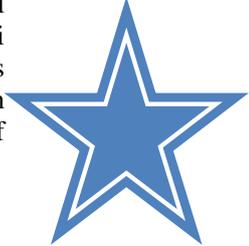
Friday, April 27th, 2012
6:30pm - 8:00pm
Sophia University, Yotsuya Campus, Bldg. 10, room 301



The Fukushima nuclear disaster in March has led to the recomposition of an anti-nuclear movement in Japan. Musicians representing a wide variety of genres have participated in the large anti-nuclear rallies that have been organised in Tokyo by urban activist grouping Shirōto no Ran (Amateur Riot). Music has always been an important medium for expressing concern and dissent in Japan. The Chernobyl disaster of 1986 prompted The Blue Hearts to compose their classic tune 'Chernobyl'. After Fukushima, young female rapper M.C. Rumi, who joined the protests in Kōenji, reworked one of her raps into a critique of the nuclear industry. Reggae artist Rankin Taxi's popular 'You Can't See It and You Can't Smell It' has been re-released. Rock artist Saitō Kazuyoshi rewrote one of his songs with new, anti-nuclear lyrics to express his anger and dismay. Music is an important aspect of political protest. Technological systems, such as nuclear power plants, are embedded in intricate webs of cultural representation. The nuclear industry in Japan has been built around a culture that emphasised the 'myth of safety' (anzen shinwa). In this paper I analyse the role of music in the creation of 'cultures of resistance'. I show how musicians have responded to the disaster by criticising the nuclear industry and expressing their hopes for a nuclear-free Japan. In doing so I emphasise that social movements involve not only demonstrations and overt political activity but the creation of rich 'cultures of resistance'.



Alexander Brown is a PhD candidate at the University of Wollongong in Australia where he is undertaking research on precarity and subjectivity in contemporary Japanese social movements. He is currently based in the Graduate School of Social Sciences at Hitotsubashi University as part of a research studentship funded by the Japanese government. Alexander's research aims to trace a cultural history of the new wave of social movements that has been emerging in Japan over the past ten years. His work draws on autonomist Marxist theories of class composition and political subjectivity in post-Fordist capitalism.



Free and open to all / Lectures in English

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