

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Research Unit "3.11 as Crisis and Opportunity" presents

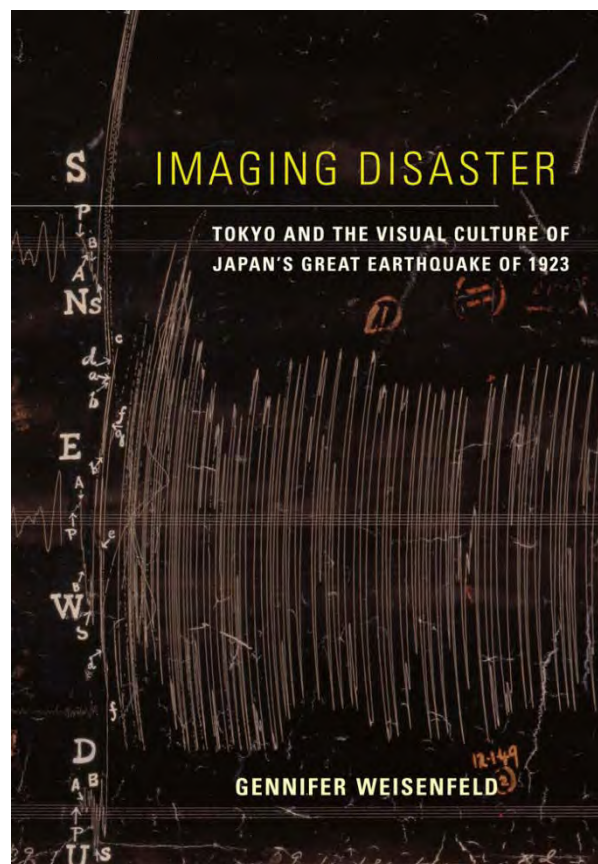
Imaging Disaster

Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's
Great Earthquake of 1923

Gennifer Weisenfeld
(Duke University)

June 26, Wednesday / 18:00-19:30
Sophia University Building 10, Rm301

The Indian Ocean Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, the Sichuan, Haiti and Tōhoku earthquakes—the experience of disaster is both universal and particular. Most of us understand these horrific events through a complex matrix of media, most of them visual, that attempt to record and assign meaning to destruction, chaos, and tragedy. Images mediate our experiences. How the visual functions in relation to disaster, however, requires close critical examination. Focusing on one landmark catastrophic event in the history of an emerging modern nation—the Great Kantō Earthquake that devastated Japan's imperial capital and its surrounding areas in 1923—this talk explores how different media produce modes of seeing, understanding, and, eventually, remembering.



Gennifer Weisenfeld is Professor of Modern Japanese Art History and Visual Culture at Duke University. She received her Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1997. She is the author of two monographs: *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931* (University of California Press, 2002) and *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's Great Earthquake of 1923* (University of California Press, 2012). She is also the co-editor of the recently published volume *Crossing the Sea: Essays on East Asian Art in Honor of Professor Yoshiaki Shimizu*, co-edited with Gregory Levine and Andrew Watsky (Princeton University Press, 2012), and she has written numerous journal articles, including several on the history of Japanese design, such as, "From Baby's First Bath: Kaō Soap and Modern Japanese Commercial Design" (*The Art Bulletin*, September 2004) and the core essay on MIT's award-winning website *Visualizing Cultures* on the Shiseido company's advertising design. She is currently working on a new book on the history of Japanese advertising and commercial design titled *The Fine Art of Persuasion: Commercial Design in Twentieth-Century Japan*.

Lecture in English / No Prior registration necessary