

# Body, Pottery, Installation:

## Three Genres of Earth Art in Postwar Japan

**Bert Winther-Tamaki**

(University of California, Irvine / ICC Visiting Scholar)

July 7th, 2016, 18:30-20:00

Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University Yotsuya Campus

More than most art materials, soil is freighted with a wide range of ideological imperatives, from wholesome agrarianism to the abject or the toxic. *Tsuchi* (soil, clay, earth) is a force to be reckoned with in three genres: images and performances presenting the body besmirched with mud (Hamaya Hiroshi, Shiraga Kazuo); ceramic art that bakes clay into stony solids (Yagi Kazuo, Itō Kōshō); and installation work that excavates and deposits soil in large volumes (Sekine Nobuo, Endō Toshikatsu). These genres of earth art stand in relation to the urban ground, which changed rapidly underfoot in postwar Japanese cities from a largely unpaved and often muddy or unruly material substrate to a hard-paved, terraced, and floored-in surface. As the earthy ground receded, artists experimented with means of restoring wholesome contact, or mediating fears that such return was no longer possible.

**Bert Winther-Tamaki** is Professor of Art History at the University of California, Irvine. He specializes in the history of modern Japanese art, Asian American art, and the history of interactions between Japanese and American art worlds. His many publications include *Art in the Encounter of Nations: Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (2001) and *Maximum Embodiment: Yoga, the "Western Painting" of Japan, 1910-1955* (2012). His current research project is titled *Earth, Stone, Wood, Ink: The Natural Materials of Modern Japan*.

