

# Flesh & Mud:

Earthy Impurities in Newer Art in Japan

Bert Winther-Tamaki

18:30-20:00, July 4th, 2019

Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University

How do we map aesthetic experiences of soil in today's environment? Bodies were scrubbed spotless in the view of Japanese contemporary art and popular culture promoted in the name of Superflat in the late 1990s and early 2000s. But while these digital or plastic bodies rocketed far from soil underfoot or exploded into dematerialized fields of energy, a dramatic turn to earth has emerged in newer art. The contamination of the



ground beneath everyday life is exposed, mutilated heroines tread barefoot in mud, landmines blast luxury goods to filthy fragments, and performers dive into construction-site sludge. More than eco-critical protest,

these works are symptomatic of an environment of idealized digital cleanliness that fails to protect the body from impurity.

Bert Winther-Tamaki is Chair and Professor of the Art History Department and Professor in the Visual Studies Ph.D Program at the University of California, Irvine. His research focuses on twentieth-century Japanese art and Asian American art with an emphasis on materiality, ecocriticism, and transnationality. He has published two monographs with the University of Hawai'i Press: *Art in the Encounter of Nations; Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (2001) and *Maximum Embodiment: Yōga, the 'Western Painting' of Japan, 1912-1955* (2012). This lecture is drawn from a book-in-progress about manifestations of earth, land, and soil in late twentieth-century Japanese ceramics, photography and installation art.

This talk is organized by Professor Michio Hayashi (FLA) / Lecture in English / No RSVP required

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