

BEYOND CONTAMINATION

Corporeality, Spirituality and Pilgrimage in Northern Japan

けがれを超えて：パフォーマンスと東北（身体・靈性・巡礼）

28 August - 1 September 2015 / Aomori, Japan

<http://psi21.portfolio-butoh.jp/>

NOW CALLING FOR PRESENTATIONS

Tohoku is a “fluid” site. It is the northern region of Japan, which lies between the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean. It is also a site of pilgrimages to Mt. Osore, which is located on a far North Eastern peninsula and known as a place of passage between life and death. Our event focuses on this “between states” of crisis and passage. Among the questions we wish to address are: What is the relationship of specific geographies to the identity of a nation? How do certain regions become marked by strange or otherworldly qualities? How do these myths of place contribute to the expansive history of a nation and the local history of the inhabitants? What happens to the cultural ecology of a place when it is irreparably devastated and indefinitely quarantined? When disasters strike, whether slowly or suddenly, human induced or nature driven, what are the ways we deal with the immediate and long-term repair and change? What role have the arts played in this and other fluid states of crisis and recovery?

Following the March 11, 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear melt down, Tohoku experienced increased economic hardships, which added to its spiritual burden of being a place of aversion. At the same time, the commitment of the local population to recovery has gained increasing momentum. The concept “Beyond Contamination” in our title is pivotal to many aspects of our gathering. Our themes of corporeality, spirituality, and pilgrimage interact in many ways with traditional and contemporary ideas of contamination and its memorialization in Japan and elsewhere.

While our location near the city of Aomori is not directly linked to the Fukushima nuclear disaster, we are aware of its proximity to the triple disaster, not to mention Aomori’s own nuclear plants, and its own eccentric reputation. It is a perfect site for our conference event for many reasons. Among our related topics, we are interested in investigating place-based crisis cultures, locally and globally. In what ways does local geography and its

memorialized histories become part of national consciousness? In what ways does disaster, human-made or otherwise, shift values and needs in the moment and over time? How do these shifts change our ways of being in that place and in the world? How do artists respond to large-scale disaster and its aftermath? What can art making do in the continuing crisis of disaster? How do national enterprises use or abuse the arts in times of devastation?

On an individual level, how does memory act on the devastating event? What are the workings of memory and event? How can we create art that questions, moving us deeper into the event and allowing us perspective and critical distance? Memory, place, ancestors, actions all form a woven fabric of the event: How are these things sometimes contaminated and in need of renewal? What can be “beyond” disaster, difficulty, and/or the weight of time and place?

Tohoku is also the birthplace of butoh dancer Hijikata Tatsumi and avant-garde playwright and director, Terayama Shuji. Both artists dealt directly with states of crisis and critical re-imagination of Japan. Our host institution, Keio University Art Center is the repository for the Hijikata Archive and our conference host site, Aomori Art Museum, holds a collection of Terayama’s art works as well as artifacts of the ancient Jomon culture of Japan.

We encourage researchers and performers to engage in discussions and interventions around the key working group themes of: corporeality, performance, pilgrimage, and place. This conference will afford us the opportunity to sound out and struggle with the borderlines between the extraordinary and the everyday, and how the arts in times of critical upheavals deal with political and spiritual crises.

4 July 2014

Hayato Kosuge, Katherine Mezur, Peter Eckersall, Takashi Morishita, Yu Homma

Our conference will begin with a group pilgrimage to Mt. Osore, with all other events at the Aomori Art Museum. Our call for presentations includes participation in panels and working groups. We will focus on interaction and discussion in all forms of presentation. Please consider the following points:

- You may apply for a panel and/or a working group.
- If you are applying for a working group, please indicate your working group preference by ranking your choices, 1 through 4, with 1 being your first choice.
- Each working group will have its own format, with shared papers and performative events. WGs will also present their key issues in the last roundtable of the entire conference. Please be aware that there are very few panel presentations and our working groups will accommodate more participants and forms of presentation.
- We are especially interested in presentations that focus on our themes but expand their application to other local, global, and virtual sites.
- English will be the main presentation language at our conference, but abstracts and elements of the program will be in English and Japanese. Discussion will be aided by some interpretation and translated abstracts.

PROPOSALS MIGHT ADDRESS (BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO):

Bodies contaminated, purged, purified / Domesticated and floating performance

Spirituality and Performance / Pilgrimage and Performance

Tohoku and Avant-garde / Hijikata Tatsumi and Terayama Shuji

*** We DO NOT limit the area of the study to 'Japan' or 'Northern Japan'. Topics from/about various locations and contexts are welcome.**

HOW TO APPLY

You may apply for both panel and working groups. While we will try to accommodate your indicated rankings in the working groups, we may suggest other contexts for your work. Please read the working group abstracts.

If you choose the option of panel presentation only and you are not chosen for a panel, you may be invited to join a working group. We encourage abstracts which relate directly to our themes. We hope to assemble panel and working group presentations into publications in the future.

Panel Presenters: 16 slots. 45 minutes each.

Working group presenters: 20 slots for each WG.

Submission Form: <http://psi21.portfolio-butoh.jp/cfp/>

* Please send your submission to cfp@psi21.portfolio-butoh.jp with information required, if the form doesn't work.

DEADLINE: January 15, 2015, 24:00 GMT

Important note on the deadline for the WG

We previously set the deadline for the WG on 15 Feb 2015, but we were obliged to bring it forward due to several reasons. If you have planned to apply for the WG based on the previous deadline and can not be in time for the new date, please do contact us so that we can make possible arrangements.

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

LIST OF WORKING GROUPS

Corporeality Working Group (Curator: Katherine Mezur)

Performance Working group (Curator: Peter Eckersall)

Pilgrimage Working Group (Curator: Stephen Barber)

Place Working Group (Curator: Yasushi Nagata)

WORKING GROUP ABSTRACTS: <http://psi21.portfolio-butoh.jp/cfp/>

Timetable (provisional)

Date	Program
28 August	Pre-conference Excursion (Mt. Osore)
29 August	Opening remarks
	Keynotes: Marilyn Ivy, Takashi Morishita
	Performance
	Welcome Buffet
30 August	Jomon Tour
	Keynote
	Panel Session
	Working Group
	Performance
31 August	Panel Session
	Butoh Workshop and Screening
	Working Group
	Closing Party
1 September	Working Group Report
	Closing Remarks

Contact: PSi 2015 TOHOKU Office

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