

AHIS 481 | Studies in Japanese Art

Colorful Damages:

Imag(in)ing War and Disaster in Modern and Contemporary Japan

Spring 2018 | Mondays and Wednesdays 10:00-11:50

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This course explores how practitioners of art and visual culture have responded to physical and psychological damages caused by wars and disasters in modern and contemporary Japan. The course loosely follows a chronological order and a thematic framework. We will look at expansive materials, including colorful and playful prints of natural disasters; views of Edo (current Tokyo) in reconstruction; prints and memorabilia of the Russo-Japanese war (1904-05); topography and the building of the Yasukuni Shrine and its war art exhibitions; the birth of the avant-garde and its relation to the Great Kanto Earthquake (1923); war documentary paintings and propaganda magazines during WWII; atomic bomb photographs and memorials; reportage painting of the 1950s; anti-art and non-art movements of the expanded 1960s; *kawaii* (cuteness) and monstrosity in manga and animation; and relational, socially engaged art about Fukushima. The course aims to enable students to analyze visual materials in respective socio-political contexts and to consider Japanese visual culture beyond a cartographical boundary. We plan to schedule a visit to a museum/archive. There are no prerequisites.