Art after Fukushima (Bern, 13 Dec 24)

University of Bern, Mittelstrasse 43, room 324, Dec 13, 2024

Toni Hildebrandt

Art after Fukushima – Imaginations of the Atomic Age in the Anthropocene.

Location: University of Bern, Mittelstrasse 43, room 324
Date/Time: December 13, 2024

Concept & Organisation: Toni Hildebrandt, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art History, Institute of Art History / Walter Benjamin Kolleg, University of Bern, supported by the MVUB Grant at University of Bern.

Art in the Atomic Age refers to the historical period, primarily spanning from the mid-20th century, marked by the advent of nuclear technology and the proliferation of atomic weapons at the end of World War II. The Atomic Age names a transformative era characterized by the use and threat of nuclear power, which had profound impacts on science, geopolitics, culture and history. Since the Fukushima nuclear accident, it became furthermore clear that the Atomic Age and the Anthropocene are interconnected concepts. Scholars, writers, and curators from different fields and backgrounds will discuss critical entanglements, raising questions on Fukushima as a paradigm of the Anthropocene. Looking back at immediate responses after March 11, 2011, and on 13 years of experiences and reflections "Post-Fukushima", the workshop will address a set of interrelated questions: How are imaginations of the Atomic Age changing in the Anthropocene? How do works of art after Fukushima differ from those in the earlier Atomic Age (e.g. after Hiroshima/Nagasaki, after Chernobyl), especially in terms of testimonial images, the importance of victims, an aesthetics of ruins, and the impact of memorial culture? How is the transition to collective practices, the emphasis on collaboration, the sense for ‘more-than-human’ worlds (vegetal and animal life), to the growing awareness for local environmental and indigenous perspectives, and present and future scenarios connected to the broader, planetary discourse on (and against) the Anthropocene?

Program:

9.30 Welcome and Introduction by Toni Hildebrandt
9.45 Gabrielle Decamous (Kyushu, video conference), "Fukushima and Other Nuclear Disasters in the Arts"
10.15 Kyoko Iwaki (Antwerp, video conference), "Ghostly Realism: Matsubara Shuntarō and Atmospheric Subjects"
10.45 Response by Vega Tescari (Mendrisio)
11.00 Discussion

11.15 Coffee break
11.45 Maria Stavrinaki (Lausanne), "Bomb, human Head: Remarks on a Post-atomic Pattern"
12.15 Theresa Deichert (Heidelberg), "Representing the Unreal: The Nuclear Uncanny in Masaharu Satō's Fukushima Trace"
12.45 Response by Lilian Kroth (Fribourg)
13.00 Final discussion moderated by Toni Hildebrandt

Reference:
CONF: Art after Fukushima (Bern, 13 Dec 24). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 20, 2024 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/43216>.