



Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Department of Asian
and North African Studies

PhD in Asian and African Studies

Ca' Foscari series
カフオスカリ・レクチャー・シリーズ
3.11, ten years on: reflections on
contemporary Japan after the
Great East Japan Triple Disaster



CRITICAL PERFORMANCE, CRISES AND DISASTERS

Installation "Sansen sōmoku" (2011)
by Ozeki Ritsuko, Azabujūban Gallery
Photo: Ozeki Ritsuko

Wednesday, October 27, 2021, 2:00 PM (CEST)
Online conference

Shintarō Fujii, Waseda University, Tokyo

On Romeo Castellucci's *The Phenomenon Called I* (2011), Created in the Wake of the Great Earthquake in Eastern Japan

Peter Eckersall, The Graduate Center, CUNY

Okada Toshiki's Laboratory for an Ecological Theatre – The Eraser Series (2020-21)

Discussant:

Katja Centonze, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

14:50 **Q&A**

Registration is required at the following link:

unive.zoom.us/join/register/tZctd--qrjkjHtVX3ob354iAbBr7AkNE8r0q

Organised by the Department of Asian and North African Studies (Katja Centonze)

CRITICAL PERFORMANCE, CRISES AND DISASTERS

On Romeo Castellucci's *The Phenomenon Called I* (2011), Created in the Wake of the Great Earthquake in Eastern Japan

Shintarō Fujii, Waseda University, Tokyo

Romeo Castellucci directed *The Phenomenon Called I*, inspired by the poem by Kenji Miyazawa, for the 2011 Festival/Tokyo, only six months after a powerful earthquake struck Japan and caused serious destruction of the region where the poet comes from. The performance took place in an outdoor space, a circular park located in Tokyo Bay, in the centre of which a large number of white empty chairs were orderly placed and then moved away, as if driven by an invisible force. It left the

audience with a strong sense of community/communion, being united by loss, as symbolised by a white flag that each person of the audience was asked to carry and, at a given moment, wave. This presentation will focus on the way the absent was brought into spectacle and try to analyse the stakes of this performance (and other works by Castellucci) in light of catastrophe, a term which, synonymous with *peripeteia*, has its roots in theatre.

Okada Toshiki's Laboratory for an Ecological Theatre – The *Eraser* Series (2020-21)

Peter Eckersall, The Graduate Center, CUNY

This paper offers an analysis of Okada Toshiki's *Eraser* series (2020-21) made in collaboration with the sculptor Kaneuji Teppei – as a laboratory for an ecological theatre. While this work was originally made prior to the pandemic, versions were also shown in the last 18 months, as will be discussed.

I will discuss how theatre has been linked to ecological crisis since the 1960s and ecological praxis and ecocriticism are now at the forefront of scholarly work, activism, science and politics, as well as in the arts. Artists and scholars have begun to think about and create theatre in terms of assemblages, material cultural forms, slow dramaturgy and non-human forms. Hence, Okada's *Eraser* series begins with the question: "Can we use theatre to present a world in which people and objects are completely equal, rather than trapped in their usual subservient relationship?" (Okada 2020).

The *Eraser* series is three dramaturgical linked nonlinear, mixed media art works that place actors in a forest of objects and continually defamiliarize and flatten their presence. The motivation for the work was Okada seeing a mountain literally erased and transported to the Fukushima region to fortify the landscape against future disasters. In my paper, I read this work in relation to Kohso Sabu's *Radiation and Revolution* (2020) in which he argues that Fukushima has "become a big laboratory for testing the endurance of individuals and communities to radioactive contamination" (Kohso 2020, 108). My point is that, if, as Kohso says, post-disaster Fukushima is a laboratory for the nuclear industry and for the biopolitics of living in a time of environmental collapse, then what is the *Eraser* series? I will explore Okada and Kaneuji's work in a similar vein, as a laboratory for an ecological theatre and showing where theatre might need to go in the future.