

Visual Perception in Postwar Japan

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This presentation seeks how postwar architecture in Japan interacted with visual experiences in the 1950s and 1960s. I align cinema with postwar urban architectures, such as Tokyo Tower, Shinkansen, and monorails, as “media” in that they formulate perceptions toward urban and suburban landscapes. Following the notions of Jonathan Crary and Michel Foucault, I believe that architecture, transportation, and film screens are optical apparatuses. This suggests how to view cities, and it also suggests how to map perceptively between the insides of the cities and suburban areas. This project sheds light on how “urban” and the relationship between “urban” and “suburban” in the post-war period ideologically conspire with visual practice through the public media of film, architecture, transportation, and infrastructure. This paper explores the (re)formation of visual perception through the public media culture in relation to the formation of postwar urbanization, re-industrialization, and postwar nationalism in Japan, as well as to conceptualize its intricacies using academic vocabulary through this project. I believe this project will contribute to reconsidering the concept of “media” in that they offer a collective visual experience in their historical and social context and, to explaining an aspect in postwar Japan.

Eun Jeong Choi received her B.A from University of Wisconsin-madison and majored in Film Studies at Columbia University for her first master’s degree. She also studied in the Department of Interdisciplinary Information Studies at the University of Tokyo for another master’s degree. She spent three years in the PhD program of East Asia at Princeton University.

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