Call for Papers:

“Transpacific Minor Visions in Japanese Diasporic Art”
A Special Issue of Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas (Brill)
Guest Edited by Yasuko Takezawa (Kyoto University) and Laura Kina (DePaul University)

Papers should be 5,000-6,000 words with 5-6 images each
Submit papers by October 1, 2019 here: www.editorialmanager.com/adva/default.aspx
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This special issue of ADVA will focus on Japanese diasporic art and visual culture within an intersectional framework using what Francoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih called “minor transnationalism.” We wish to feature horizontal encounters, networks, and alliances. We hope to foster conversations between minoritized and marginalized peoples and “othered” Japanese/Japanese diasporic artists and scholars who transcend borders and have complex identities and multiple perspectives.

The 150th anniversary of Gannenmono in 2018 marked the first group of immigrants from Japan to settle in Hawai‘i, as well as the 110th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil. The forced incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII caused many Japanese Americans to sever ties and emphasize their distinction from Japanese in Japan. The postwar years also saw a drastic curtailing of migration from Japan, in sharp contrast to other Asian diaspora in the Pacific. Despite these disconnections between Japan and Japanese in the diaspora, the postwar years brought a new wave of Japanese avant-garde artists circulating in the diaspora (e.g. Yoko Ono, Yayoi Kusama, and Shigeko Kubota) as well as the international influence of Japanese art movements such as Gutai and Butoh that continue to inform contemporary art practice. By using a transpacific studies framework, we intend to reexamine and reevaluate transnational and inter-group relationships and networks such as these and uncover lesser-known stories.

Through a focus on the arts, we wish to expand on the transpacific studies works of Francoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih in Minor Transnationalism (Duke University Press, 2005); Naoki Sakai and Joo Yoo Hyon in The Trans-Pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture, and Society (World Scientific, 2012); Janet Alison Hoskins, Viet Thanh Nguyen in Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2014); and exhibitions such as the 2018 Transpacific Borderlands: The Art of Japanese Diaspora in Lima, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and São Paulo at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. Sakai and Yoo conceptualized the “trans-pacific imagination” as implying a “transpacific complicity” as “the United States as an area should not be definitely separated from East Asia; … and the United States is an integral part of things happening in East Asia (preface vii).” While we recognize this transpacific complicity especially between the U.S. and Japan, in this case, we propose to explore and expand on the concept of “minor transnationalism” proposed by Lionnet and Shih, who claim that “minor cultures as we know them are the products of transmigrations and multiple encounters, which imply that they are always already mixed, hybrid, and relational (p.10).” With the rise of nationalism, and xenophobic anti-immigrant and racist discourse in the United States and Japan and on a global level and the current upending of Cold War configurations and alliances under the Trump regime, it is urgent that Asian American studies not be limited to the assumption of delimited hemispheric or national boundaries.

This special issue of ADVA seeks contemporary art/art history/aesthetics/visual culture/cultural production/media scholarly papers, artist interviews, artist essays, and curatorial commentary on Japanese diasporic art or visual culture that focuses on subjects that may have previously been forgotten or as Lisa Lowe’s describes, “cast as failed or irrelevant because they do not produce ‘value’ legible within modern classifications (Intimacies of Four Continents (Duke University Press, 2015, 17–18)).”

Examples of topics might include:

Crossing borders and creating new aesthetics: How are artists employing aesthetics to literally or figuratively cross borders and how might their formal interventions challenge our previous conceptions? What new arts forms have emerged out of encounters with other minoritized peoples? What influence and inspiration did artists receive by this engagement?
Flows/ Circulations of Art Forms: How and why did certain art forms cross borders or circulate in the Transpacific? What memories are embedded in these forms? How have minoritized peoples recorded their crossings in these forms? How does their art speak about power relationships or networks of affinity in the Transpacific?

Island and Periphery Frameworks: Hawai‘i, Okinawa, Palau, Micronesia islands: How has the parallel positioning of an island as the periphery by the center/majority fostered the horizontal relationships between the peoples on islands and how do artists address issues they face in common?

Transpacific Activism and the Arts: How have the arts and visual culture been used to foster transpacific activism and solidarity? What are the ties, influences, and interchanges between for example, Native Hawaiian artists, indigenous artists in Latin America, aboriginal artists in the Australian continent and Japanese diasporic artists and vice versa?

We welcome submissions from different disciplinary approaches, including, but not limited to, contemporary art, art history, visual cultural, media, communication, performance, Indigenous and gender and critical ethnic studies, history, anthropology, and sociology. We especially welcome papers that bring together Area, Asian American, and Pacific Islander studies within relational or comparative, historical, or spatial contexts using interdisciplinary approaches.

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