



Scuola Italiana di Studi
sull'Asia Orientale
ISEAS



École Française
d'Extrême-Orient
EFO

CO-HOSTED BY



International
Research Center (IRH)
Kyoto University

ecaf
european consortium
for asian field study

2011 KYOTO LECTURES

Thursday, June 30th, 18:00h

Julia Sapin SPEAKER

Advertising Women Department Stores and Gender Construction in Meiji Japan

The female gaze dominated Japanese department-store posters in the early twentieth century, ruling over advertising layout as it had never done before. These visualizations of women grounded in naturalistic depiction changed the urban landscape and through their presence acknowledged—and perhaps to some extent led to an increasing augmentation of—women's economic power as one of the financial engines of Meiji society. This talk will introduce this early form of department-store advertising, its possible significance in understanding social trends during the period and the role visual media played in their development. While the precise grasp of physical form is one of the characteristics of naturalism, it is by virtue of the artist's or designer's imagination that naturalism has the power to suggest new realities by rendering unrealities in a realistic manner. Through the use of naturalism in fashioning these newly direct women, these posters projected hope for a new reality of increased social presence for women in Japanese society.

Julia Sapin is associate professor of Art History at Western Washington University. This year she is a guest scholar in the Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University. Her research focuses on the visual culture of the Meiji period (1868-1912), in particular, the graphic design, applied arts, and painting produced by and for the nascent department stores of that time. Her article, "Merchandising Art and Identity in Meiji Japan: Kyoto *Nihonga* Artists' Designs for Takashimaya Department Store, 1868-1912" (*Journal of Design History*, 17-4, 2004), approaches one aspect of the topic. An article forthcoming in January 2012 will take up the subject of department-store publicity magazines and their presence as both a gauge and instigator of social change in the early twentieth century.

This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room 4, no. 331, 3rd floor).

École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFO)
Italian School of East Asian Studies (ISEAS)
4th Floor, 4 Yoshida Ushinomiya-cho, Sakyo-ku Kyoto, 606-8302 Japan

EFO | T: 075-761-3946 F: 075-761-3947 E: efo.kyoto@gmail.com
ISEAS | T: 075-751-8132 F: 075-751-8221 E: iseas@iseas-kyoto.org

