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## 現代日本における芸術と儀式

### —4人の女性アーティスト

Art and rituality in contemporary Japan:  
four women artists

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In *The Disappearance of Rituals: A Topology of the Present*, the South Korean-German philosopher Byung-Chul Han diagnoses a new malady of our time: the triumph of information and data logic, which values the perpetually new and the surprising at the detriment of what returns, of ritual repetition. Conversely, following the Russian-born French philosopher Alexandre Kojève, he sees Japan and its ritualized society as a country where ceremony and beautiful appearances protect us from the logic of performance and novelty. And indeed, in the form of *matsuri* or codified politeness, rituals still seem to be alive and well. What's more, to counterbalance this contemporary evil, today's Japanese artists are reconnecting with rituals and their sacredness.

I would like to explore with you how this form of ritual—anachronistic and seemingly outdated—is deeply embraced by Japanese female artists and enables the emergence of a care for, or even an ecology of, the invisible. More specifically, the research will focus on four female artists working in different media: Yasuko Toyoshima, Rei Naito, Rinko Kawauchi and Michiko Tsuda. Priestesses of our time, their repetitive, circular, largely incantatory and poetic artistic practice allows a new space of ritual and invisible sacredness to emerge. Their artworks produce “a *community without communication*, in a time when *communication without community reigns*” (Byung-Chul Han).

プロフィール：クレリア・ゼルニク

Clélia Zernik is a professor of the philosophy of art at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. After earning a Ph.D. on the relationship between philosophy, science, and cinema, she turned her attention to contemporary Japanese art, particularly in the wake of the March 11, 2011, disaster. Her most recent book focuses on the films of Ozu – *Ozu et son double*, De l'incidence Editions, 2026. She is currently working on an overview of the contemporary Japanese art scene, titled *Japan in 2.5D*.

### ①豊嶋康子：スピログラフの儀式

#### Session 1/ Yasuko Toyoshima: The ritual of the spirograph

Yasuko Toyoshima is an artist whose work takes as its objects all the rituals of social life - from schooling to professional life, identity cards, sharpened pencils and so on. Her exhibition 'Origination Method' in 2024 featured two videos of real-time spirograph drawing dating from 1994. The spirograph is both a game linked to childhood and a way of magically creating volumes from the repetition of strokes. The fact that the frenetic succession of strokes accumulated by the spirograph gives rise to a thickness, a volume, stems from the same power to create a different kind of space within the everyday, as that of ritual or trance.

### ②川内倫子：生命と季節の儀式

#### Session 2/ Rinko Kawauchi: Rituals of life and the seasons

In her series of photographs devoted to her family life, Rinko Kawauchi articulates the cycle of the passage of generations and that of the seasons. She pays particular attention to the rituals of family life: New Year's celebrations, the death of her grandfather, her brother's wedding, the birth of her nephew, Hanami celebrations, and so on. Each intimate photograph, lit in Michiko Tsuda's characteristic white light at the beginning of the world, is associated with a particular time of year, a seasonal inflection, so that the family event is set against a background that is larger than itself, in a repetitive and regular time, creating a 'community without communication'.

### ③津田道子：不可視の儀式

#### Session 3/ Michiko Tsuda and rituals of the invisible

Michiko Tsuda has devised a whole series of protocols and exercises for seeing invisible things. Michiko Tsuda's performances are exercises in the practice of invisible territory. To do this, she evokes, for example, the practice of mai in the matsuri, which consists of a circular movement to make the invisible and its kami appear. Similarly, performance art involves a ritual of invoking the gods.

### ④内藤礼：祈りの儀式

#### Session 4/ Rei Naito and the ritual of prayer

Rei Naito sees her artistic practice as a prayer, a way of inventing a new spirituality that transcends all established ritual and belief in dogma. The Teshima Art Museum, whose architecture was designed by Ryue Nishizawa, houses Rei Naito's poetic and minimal work entitled 'Matrix'. The work describes the continuity of life on earth and in nature, through natural spirits such as light, water, wind, heat, gravity and colour. From the contemplation of

the drop of water to contemplation as prayer, the passage is made through silence and the presence of the invisible in this place. The quality of attention that gives her installations their grace and intensity is at play in this attempt to articulate the visible with the invisible. To achieve this, Rei Naito uses tiny objects the size of a hand, which she handles daily as if in the office of her prayer, linking meditative and spiritual aspiration with attention to the concrete.

A high point could be the exceptional visit of one of these artists.