



THE REED

Winter 2015

Unveiled in 2003, this work of public art by Tatsu Miyajima, titled *Counter Void*, is displayed at the TV Asahi headquarters in Roppongi Hills, Tokyo. Miyajima is one of Japan's foremost sculptors and installation artists. He employs contemporary materials such as electric circuits, video, and computers in his artwork.



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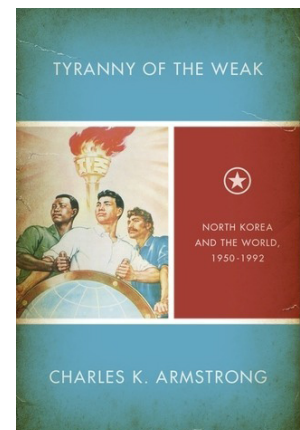
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Cover Photo: Ross Yelsey



Congratulations to Professor Charles K. Armstrong, who received the 2014 John K. Fairbank Prize from the American Historical Association for his book, Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992, a Study of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute published by Cornell University Press



WEAI Welcomes New Director

Q&A with Eugenia Lean



What was your path to becoming a historian of China?

My interest in history began when I was in college at Stanford at the tail-end of the 1980s. It was a heady period in terms of politics: there was a lot of concern about apartheid, feminism, and identity politics. During this exciting time to be a student, I was drawn to disciplines like the humanities and history. I found that these fields of study were very effective in allowing me to critically engage with a lot of contemporary issues. History turned out to be one of the most compelling ways for me to approach some of these issues: if you study the past and a different place—in my case, China—it often forces you to rethink assumptions about the present and about your own society. I found it a powerful way to link my more academic concerns with some of the activist concerns and politics, including feminism and ethnicity.

Can you talk about your first book and your current book project?

My first book *Public Passions: The Trial of Shi Jianqiao and the Rise of Popular Sympathy in Republican China* (California, 2007) is a study of a crime of passion. It is about the case of a woman, Shi Jianqiao, who, out of filial sentiment for her father, avenged his death by killing a famous warlord. This case and trial attracted tremendous media coverage in China in the 1930s and, by the end, Shi Jianqiao was exonerated and pardoned by the Nationalist state. I took this case to examine larger issues that were taking place in modern China, including the rise of public sympathy and how emotional collective support for this female avenger became a political and legal force. I was interested in the rise of a critical if sentimental public in an emerging mass society. It was an opportunity for me to challenge contemporary political and sociological

theory that privileges the assumption that only “rational” publics – which tend to be found in the modern West – have grounds for true political participation. In addition to this, I was also interested in the power of media and legal reform in China and in changing notions of gender and violence, as well as in the history of emotions.

My second book project is similar in the sense that it also focuses on a fascinating character—in this case, a man named Chen Diexian (1879-1940), who was a polymath in early twentieth century China. He was an amateur scientist, a romance novelist, and also a pharmaceutical industrialist. He became a captain of industry as well as one of the leaders of a patriotic “buy Chinese” national product movement. Again, as in my first book, I found a unique historical figure who is interesting in and of himself but whose life also offers a window into another pivotal period in China when it was entering into the arena of global capitalism as an industrializing nation-state.

In this time of transition, men of letters had to rethink what they wanted to do and what they could do. I challenge the idea that men of letters were hopelessly inept in science, industry, and commerce by exploring how they were actually savvy, entrepreneurial, technical, and “hands on.” Chen Diexian is a great case study for examining this. He is also interesting insofar that he is an editor and a manufacturer. He mass manufactured both words and things. He was a prolific writer and a prolific maker of mass produced goods. In both cases, he copied wildly: he adapted foreign technologies and modeled his novels after preexisting classical novels. Yet, at the same time, he fought for trademark infringement rights and copyright rules, and so he sheds light on an earlier period in modern Chinese history where the culture of copying and the culture of ownership of ideas and things was under flux. You see him navigating that terrain. Chen Diexian is a great persona through which to explore

issues of early twentieth-century China's experiences with industrialization and mass production. Insights from this project have contemporary resonances, as China proves to be such a central player in the global economy today.

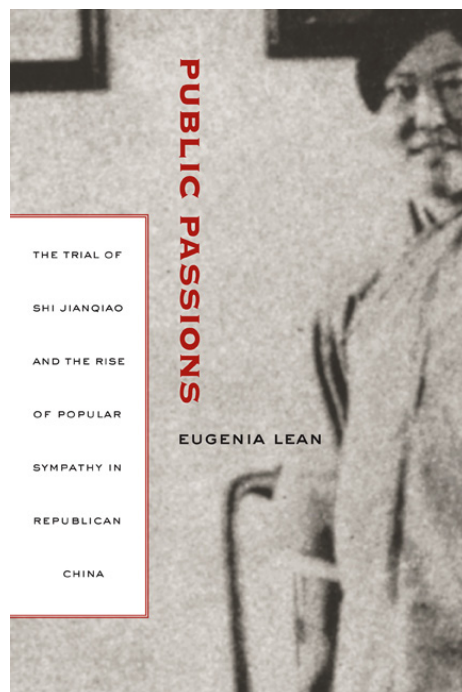
What are some of your goals as the incoming Institute director?

I think the Weatherhead East Asian Institute is one of the strongest regional institutes on the Columbia campus. As director, I want to build on its traditional strengths, which have been politics, contemporary society, and economy. At the same time, I also want to expand the purview of the Institute and build on the expertise of our East Asian faculty across the campus. To do this, I hope to deepen areas that we already have but that we perhaps have not emphasized in the past. This might include expanding our relationship with scholars in the humanities and scholars in the fields of science. Our interdisciplinary expansion will correspond nicely with current initiatives at Columbia to increase interdisciplinary exchanges and to reach across boundaries, like those between the humanities and the sciences, that have traditionally been seen as quite strict.

I also want the Institute to continue moving in a global direction. This corresponds with Columbia's ambition to become a truly global institution. Columbia is now committed to globalizing the experience of all undergraduates and is committed to the globalization of research in general. I think regional institutes play an important role in that: we offer in-depth and rich knowledge of areas of the world that are integral to understanding the world itself. To do that, of course, requires our ability to not become too narrowly focused on the region but to make linkages with other regions through collaborative relationships with other Columbia institutes, centers, and departments.

One of the initiatives that my predecessor, Myron Cohen, started was a push to expand our definition of Asia. This initiative involved adding educational opportunities

and programs about Southeast Asia. I remain committed to thinking of ways to make our understanding of our region more inclusive. This makes sense given the fact that when we have a perspective of the world in its entirety, we see that historically there have been strong relationships between areas that we have conventionally thought of as East Asia with areas that we now conventionally think of as Southeast Asia. I plan to continue developing Southeast Asian studies at Columbia.



You recently received an award for mentoring graduate students at Columbia. How do you see the Institute's role in preparing students academically and professionally?

I think the Institute does a good job helping both undergraduate and graduate students. One of our most successful undergraduate programs is the Global Scholars Program, in which two faculty members take a group of undergraduates to two different areas in the world over a summer. The fieldwork experience links to a serious academic seminar in which students examine the relations between the two regions through a comparative analysis of such topics as

economic development, cultural exchange, and environmental concerns. That's an example of how the Institute can provide a fulfilling experience for undergraduates. Many undergraduates have come back saying the Global Scholars Program was a life-altering experience that helped shape their thinking about the world.

We also help graduate students with fellowships and financial support and we have a wonderful master's program — the Master of Arts in Regional Studies-East Asia — for students interested in studying contemporary East Asia.

What I would like to see developed even further are professional opportunities for our PhD students. In addition to the fellowship support we have long provided PhDs, I would like to get them more involved in WEAI activities. Thus, we are initiating new opportunities for PhD students to have workshops that allow them to make contacts with other academics and professionals in their field and to get feedback on their scholarly work.

This academic year features several new events series. Can you speak about some of these?

Our event series is a wonderful way to continue a theme over a semester or a whole academic year. One full-year series this year is on "Museums and Material Culture in East Asia." This autumn, we have already featured two successful events: one on the possibility of an Asia Wing in the American Museum of Natural History and another on the international contemporary Chinese art market, which featured a prominent New York gallery owner. In the spring, we will host events on Japanese Calligraphy, the collection of Tibetan art, and Chinese fashion. A great aspect of this series is that it draws on the strengths on our faculty, many of whom have expertise and interests in material culture. What is also great about this program is that it will also draw a large public audience because these topics appeal very much to New Yorkers. It's a great idea to take advantage of all the museums and galleries that we have in our own backyard.

WEAI Conference

Understanding Change in China

Madeleine Zelin, the Dean Lung Professor of Chinese Studies, has been a key member of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute community since joining Columbia's faculty in 1979. In addition to directing the Institute from 1992-1993 and from 1995-2001, she has mentored generations of undergraduates, MARSEA students, and PhD students. During the 35 years that Professor Zelin has taught at Columbia, she has also become internationally known for pioneering the study of Chinese legal and economic history.

To honor Professor Zelin's important contributions to our understanding of the roots of China's business culture and legal practice, her colleagues and her former PhD students — many of whom are now leading scholars — held a conference at Columbia on September 19 and 20 titled "Beyond Modernity: Understanding Change in China."

The conference, co-sponsored by the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, the University Seminars, and the Department of History, brought scholars from around the world to campus in order to critically assess the concept of "modernity." The topic of "modernity" was apt because Professor Zelin's scholarship has demonstrated the limits of a stereotypical understanding of Chinese economic and legal actors as "pre-modern" and has questioned the validity of modernity-based periodizations and static notions of modernity itself. Professor Zelin has passed this methodology along to her students, who, regardless of their fields of study, were trained to adopt the same attention for the detail, careful readings of sources, and distrust for meta-narratives.

"As a previous advisee, I can add that Matti is a great advisor for many reasons, including the fact that she lets students explore the topics they want with her direction, while other advisors tend to steer students



Professor Madeleine Zelin with her former PhD students

toward their own areas of interest," noted Margherita Zanasi, a professor at Louisiana State University. "This allows students to maximize their potential. It is also why her students can be found in such a large variety of research areas. She always stresses the importance of sources, a habit that remains with us and strengthens our work. Despite the focus on sources, she always brings her students back to the basic question 'Why is this important?'— keeping us focused on the main argument to develop it to its full potential. Personally, I have also found in Matti a lifelong friend and I am lucky to still be able to enjoy, and benefit from, discussing my research with her."

Organized by Zanasi as well as by Fabio Lanza (University of Arizona) and Rebecca Nedostup (Brown), the conference brought together Professor Zelin's students Daniel Asen (Rutgers-Newark), Li Chen (University of Toronto), Alexander Cook (UC Berkeley), Joshua Fogel (York), Arunabh Ghosh (Harvard), Sue Gronewold (Kean), Kristine Harris (SUNY New Paltz), Joan Judge (York), Josephine Khu

(independent scholar), Elizabeth LaCouture (Colby), Weiwei Luo (Columbia), Georgia Mickey (Cal Poly-Pomona), Thomas Mullaney (Stanford), Sarah Schneewind (UCSD), Harold Tanner (University of North Texas), Hui-yu Caroline Ts'ai (Academia Sinica), Xu Xiaoqun (Christopher Newport University), Benno Ryan Weiner (Appalachian State), and Peter Zarrow (University of Connecticut).

The conference also featured Professor Zelin's friends and colleagues Robert Barnett (Columbia), Zvi Ben-Dor Benite (NYU), Myron Cohen (Columbia), Robert Gardella (US Merchant Marine Academy-Kings Point), Robert Hymes (Columbia), Rashid Khalidi (Columbia), Dorothy Ko (Barnard), Elizabeth Köll (Harvard), Eugenia Lean (Columbia), Feng Li (Columbia), Benjamin Liebman (Columbia), Andrew J. Nathan (Columbia), Jonathan Ocko (North Carolina State), Peter Perdue (Yale), Haruo Shirane (Columbia), David Weiman (Barnard), and Chuck Wooldridge (Lehman College).

2014 Global Scholars Program

Contemporary Cities of Eurasia



Professor Nephomnyashchy and students on the Great Wall of China

This past summer, Columbia University's Global Scholars Program (GSP) took fourteen Columbia undergraduates on an expansive journey across "Contemporary Cities of Eurasia." Students started in Berlin and traveled through Moscow, Ulan Bator, and Beijing. Focusing on the theme of "Socialist and Post-Socialist Cities of Eurasia," students had the opportunity to conduct comparative social science research across these four cities under the guidance of Columbia faculty Charles Armstrong and Catharine Nephomnyashchy. To travel from Moscow to Ulan Bator, students and faculty took the famed Trans-Siberian railroad through Europe and Asia. Participants explored the histories, cultures, and built environments of the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Mongolia and China through travel and site visits to major cities of the Eastern Bloc.

The students spent their first five days in Berlin. In the German capital, they drew comparisons between the former East Berlin and West Berlin, studied the influence of Germany's Bauhaus architecture on socialist cities, and met with former U.S.

Ambassador to Germany John Kornblum. Kornblum, who worked in Berlin during the years of the Cold War, shared his memories of living in a divided Berlin as well as his observations about Berlin's post-socialist development.

Students and faculty then departed for Moscow. There, students met with faculty and the Dean of the Journalism School at Moscow State University, explored the Kremlin and Lenin's Mausoleum, and had a discussion with Paul Sonne, a Columbia alumnus and correspondent at the Moscow bureau of *The Wall Street Journal*. During their travels through the city, students were able to gain a rich understanding of Moscow's momentous urban transformations, especially those during the massive reconstruction of the Stalin era.

Leaving Moscow, GSP participants traveled on the Trans-Siberian railroad over the next five days with a stop in Yekaterinburg, Russia's fourth largest city and the passageway between the European and Asian continents. Students went on a tour of the city with Dima Moskvina of the State Center

for Contemporary Art and saw an extensive amount of early Soviet architecture.

After spending nearly a week on the train, students finally arrived in Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia. Over the course of their three days in the city, students met with several academics from the National University of Mongolia, traveled to Terelj National Park — famous for its sweeping green hills and mountains — and talked with Piper Campbell, the current U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia, at the U.S. Embassy. By exploring the urban landscape, students learned about the complex legacy of Soviet rule in Mongolia and the dramatic changes that Mongolia has been going through as a result of the booming mining sector.

In the final segment of the program, students flew from Ulan Bator to Beijing, another city undergoing dramatic changes fueled by a flourishing post-socialist economy. The group was received by Joan Kaufman, director of the Columbia Global Center | East Asia in Beijing, who outlined the Center's mission and her own experience of working in China since 1980. Students then met several prominent journalists including Tian Wei, a prominent news anchor and journalist from China Central Television (CCTV), Charles Hutzler from *The Wall Street Journal*, and Tania Branigan of *The Guardian*. They also made excursions to the studio of contemporary artist Xu Bing as well as to the state-run Beijing Film Studio, the location of Oscar-winning productions such as "The Last Emperor" and "Farewell My Concubine." Before the students departed, they held a workshop in which they discussed their experiences over the course of the month-long program and began developing topics for their final research papers.

Undergraduate Anton Frederiksson

A Global Scholar Studies Urbanization



This summer, I had the extraordinary opportunity to travel, study and work in seven different countries with the majority of my summer spent in China. The funds from the Weatherhead East Asian Institute were used to cover my living expenses and travels costs while on Columbia's Global Scholars Program as well as during my internship at McKinsey & Company working for the Urban China Initiative in Beijing.

While in China with the Global Scholars Program, our group met with journalists, historians and urban planners, and saw sights like the Great Wall, Bird's Nest Stadium and the Forbidden City. After having come from Moscow, it was very interesting to see the similarities in planning styles between the two cities such as its ring roads and large central squares where the bodies of its leaders (Lenin and Mao) are on display for all to see.

The product of my participation in the Global Scholars Program was a final research paper titled "Governing Giants: The Central-Local Relationship in Russia and China's Transition to Market Economies." In this paper, I compared Russia and China's transitional experience over the past

three decades and argued that these two countries' remarkably different economic outcomes can be credited to their unique version and implementation of decentralization. In the case of Russia, which suffered from a crippling financial crisis in the wake of its reforms, decentralization took place right away both politically and economically. One of the results of this immediate full-scale implementation was that local leaders, emboldened by newfound democratic legitimacy in their home regions began posing a threat to the center. This carried over to the economic domain, where a confrontational relationship developed between Moscow and the rest of the country, particularly in the case of tax sharing.

China on the other hand, partly due to the experience of Tiananmen in 1989, decided to decentralize fiscally while maintaining strong control politically. Another crucial difference is that China chose to experiment with its new policies in limited areas before rolling them out across the entire country. This was first done with the household-responsibility system in Anhui Province. China's Special Economic Zones have also played an important role as "laboratories" for new reforms and their incredible

growth is a testament to the success of these policies. This strategy of "crossing the river by feeling the stones" is a large reason for China's economic prowess today.

Following the conclusion of the Global Scholars Program, I began a five-week internship at the Urban China Initiative, a McKinsey think tank founded in conjunction with Tsinghua's School of Public Policy and Management, and Columbia Global Center | East Asia. This was a fantastic opportunity to gain industry experience in the urban policy field. While at the UCI, I helped organize an Urban Leaders Roundtable that brought together many senior Chinese government officials to discuss urban mobility. As a researcher, my main task was to compile a new liveable city ranking for Chinese cities.

The Weatherhead fellowship I received this summer enabled me to develop academically, professionally and also personally. It has broadened my understanding of the urban field and significantly strengthened my interest in the region. As I begin my senior year at Columbia and prepare for life post-graduation, there is a strong chance that I will be kicking off my urban policy career in China.

PhD Candidate Joshua Batts

Studying Japanese-Spanish Relations



The area around the Iwami Ginzan Rakanji silver mine in Shimane Prefecture

Thanks to the support provided by a WEAI Mitsui Research Fellowship, I was able to make important strides toward researching my dissertation and gaining language preparation for research in Europe. I just completed a trip through southern and central Japan, including time spent on-site at institutions in Nagasaki, Iwami Ginzan, Sakai, and Kobe. I also took advantage of the travel opportunities afforded by my summer funding to meet with scholars and graduate students active in my field in Kyoto and Nagoya, augmenting both my professional network and my preparation for fieldwork in Europe this fall.

My dissertation focuses on Japanese relations with Spain in the early seventeenth century, and I hoped use the funding to get out of Tokyo and familiarize myself with the holdings of institutions in central and southern Japan, where the bulk of commerce with the Spanish empire took place. The Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture and the Sakai City Museum were the most anticipated sites I visited, but the

most useful resources were the holdings and staff of the Twenty-Six Martyrs Museum and Monument in Nagasaki. There I found and copied a rare 1903 report on the 1613 — 1620 Keicho Embassy to Southern Europe, a report I had no knowledge of and one which will further my understanding of how the embassy was understood and presented in Meiji-era Japan. All three of the above also housed local academic journals on the region's history I was previously unaware of, some dating back to the early twentieth century. I was able to survey the entire catalog of one publication, copy multiple relevant articles, and make note of others to track down back in Tokyo.

In addition to Sakai and Nagasaki, I traveled to the former Iwami silver mine in Shimane Prefecture, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A guided tour of a mine shaft, and a self-guided tour of the wider mine area and the historical district adjacent provided the opportunity to better understand, quite literally, the source of the country's external trade in the early seventeenth century and

the commodity which brought traders from Manila to Siam to southwestern Japan.

I was also able to use my travel as a chance to meet with like-minded scholars working outside of Tokyo. While in the Kansai area I traveled to Kyoto to meet with two graduate students of Kyoto University, both of whom have experience working in Spanish and Italian archives, and were thus an invaluable source of information about where to go and how to best make use of my time while abroad. We were also able to discuss possible conference presentations and the potential for future support and collaboration.

On my way back to Tokyo, I stopped in Nagoya for an extended meeting with Professor Birgit Tremml, whose work on relations between China, Japan, and Manila in the seventeenth century is similar to my own interests in the period. I was able to get her feedback and insight on the merits and challenges of my own research, as well as more information about the state of the field in Europe and the academic community I can expect to converse with in the future.

Over the summer I was able to accomplish much of what I set out to do. I have a better grasp of the layout, strengths, and holdings of some of the major museums related to my field in southern Japan, and also discovered additional resources and institutions to draw upon now and in the future. I furthered my language study, and am now better prepared for life inside and outside of the archive in Spain this fall. Finally, I was able to expand my network of professional contacts and establish relationships I expect to deepen as my work and career progresses. All of this was made possible by the support of the Mitsui Research Fellowship, for which I am extremely grateful.

MPH Candidate Miriam Musa

Village Health Volunteers in Cambodia

Thanks to the financial assistance provided to me by the Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund from WEAI, I have had the most rewarding summer working with Helen Keller International (HKI) in Cambodia. The experience in Cambodia has been incredibly eye opening and inspiring, and I would not trade it for anything — I am grateful for the circumstances that brought me here.

The project given to me by HKI about maternal, child health, and nutrition issues, is one that is very unique to the Cambodian context and so it allowed me to learn more about the government system, the people, and the culture. For my time in Cambodia, I was responsible for conducting a qualitative research study that aimed to investigate the knowledge, perceptions, beliefs and motivations of Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) in the various tasks involved in their role. These volunteers are not a part of the Cambodian Ministry of Health's official health care system. Instead, they are relied upon quite often by UN organizations and various non-governmental organizations, such as HKI, to carry-out key aspects of many health interventions. HKI uses VHVs mainly for its Micronutrient Powders Distribution Project (MNPs). MNPs are small sachets of various vitamins and minerals in powder form that are meant to be added to semi-solid foods particularly for children 6-24 months in order to combat childhood malnutrition.

Village Health Volunteers assist HKI with the distribution of these powders to all households with children aged 6-24 months in the handful of villages where the MNP project is funded. Because VHVs play such a crucial role in this project and others like this, HKI has been curious to investigate what motivates these volunteers in order to better understand how the VHV model



can be made more attractive, effective and sustainable in order to be incorporated into more of Cambodia's health interventions. Given that this qualitative research was led by HKI, it focused on a sample of VHVs, Health Centers, and beneficiaries that are a part of HKI's MNP program. The study used a sample of 100 participants across four provinces and eight operational districts.

My role in HKI Cambodia has been to take total control of this project. I have been responsible for formulating the research design and the research protocol, as well as for training data collectors and analyzing the translated results. I spent a week conducting interviews and focus groups out in the field with my data collectors and it was a beautiful and invigorating experience.

It felt rewarding to give the VHVs, the Health Center staff that supervise them, and the project beneficiaries the opportunity to voice their opinions. I am currently waiting for the translated results to get back to me, and I am very excited to finally learn everything the study participants had to say.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in Cambodia, and this has only been possible thanks to the financial support given to me by WEAI. Overall, the fellowship has allowed me to fully enjoy all that Cambodia has to offer. It is a special country with lots of promise for the future, in spite of its horrific past. I expect to return to Cambodia many more times throughout my career and I have WEAI and SYLFF to thank for this extremely positive experience.

PhD Candidate Carrie Cushman

Photographer Miyamoto Ryoji



Miyamoto's photographs hanging outdoors on Tokunoshima Island



The blossoming of a sotetsu palm tree

This summer I spent three weeks in Japan conducting research for my dissertation proposal. My dissertation focuses on the acclaimed contemporary photographer Miyamoto Ryoji (1947-). His work deals with a range of structures and spaces that I describe as ruinous: demolition and construction sites that document the rapid, incessant development of Tokyo in the 1980s; the ungoverned Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong; the Angkor Wat temple; Kobe after the 1995 Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake; the cardboard boxes – homes of the homeless – found in the urban centers of Japan; and, most recently, the Tohoku region after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

The primary goal of my trip this summer was to establish the current state of research on Miyamoto Ryoji. I visited several libraries and museum archives in Tokyo, most notably the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, the Nihon Kamera Museum,

the Setagaya Art Museum, and the National Diet Library. While academic essays on Miyamoto's work are quite limited, he has participated in a number of solo and group exhibitions and projects. I was able to locate reviews and articles on these projects, giving me a more complete picture of his artistic contributions from the past four decades.

I was also able to meet with Professor Hayashi Michio of Sophia University, the one art historian to have engaged critically with Miyamoto's work. We discussed my project in detail, and he has agreed to sponsor me when I return to Japan for more substantial research in the fall of 2015.

The highlight of the trip was meeting Miyamoto Ryoji himself. For the past year, Miyamoto has served as the director of a revitalizing art project on Tokunoshima Island. I was able to visit for the art project's summer festival, for which Japanese

artists from all over the world created art installations throughout the island. I toured these projects, met with many of the artists, attended a performance by the avant-garde theater group ARICA, and conducted a formal interview with Miyamoto. We discussed his two latest projects, which are notably different from his previous work and directly related to his time on Tokunoshima.

The first is a series of portraits of the growing elderly population on the island. The second documents the blossoming of sotetsu, the Japanese sago palm trees which inhabit Tokunoshima. Although very different, both projects capture their subject matter in an intimate and colorful manner, highlighting the unique beauty that can be found in a less well-known area of Japan. It was an honor to meet the subject of my dissertation, and I am pleased to report that he has agreed to a further series of in-person interviews on his work on ruins when I return to Japan next year.

2014–2015 Scholars, Fellows & Students

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