



文學院
Faculty of Arts

日本研究學系
Department of
Japanese Studies



CUHK Japan Forum

Taking Ghosts Seriously: Towards an Ontology of 'Floating World' Visual Culture



Suzuki Harunobu, *Giving Daruma a Smoke*, 1765, Art Institute of Chicago

Prof. Radu LECA

Assistant Professor, Hong Kong Baptist University



6 March 2026 (Friday) 11:00 am - 12:00 noon
Room 401, Leung Kau Kui Building, CUHK

In English. No registration required.

All are Welcome!

Ukiyo-e ('floating world pictures') are among the most widely known and studied forms of early modern Japanese culture. Yet, as much of premodern Japanese visibility, their understanding has been straitjacketed by methodologies devised for Western art, which privilege iconography and social context. This talk focuses instead on popular culture references to viewers engaging with images, in particular anthropomorphic ones, as volumetric agentic presences capable of coming to life. This amounts to an 'aesthetics of animation' that relied on a permeability between living bodies and their representations.

After completing a BA in Japanese Literature at Kanazawa University, **Radu Leca** undertook an MA and PhD in art history at SOAS, with a PhD thesis on images of outside and the other in the spatial imaginary of late seventeenth century Japan. Radu has held research positions in Norwich, Leiden, Heidelberg and Kyoto. Among recent publications is "Stripes and Feathers: Trade and the Geographical Imaginary in Late 17th century Japan. In: Guth, Trede & Wakita (eds.) *Japanese Art – Transcultural Perspectives*. Brill, 2024.

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