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Phase-Earth (Iso-daichi)

THE DEATH OF LANDSCAPE IN POST-WAR JAPANESE ART AND VISUAL CULTURE

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Three suggestive and historically important incidents occurred almost simultaneously in the realm of contemporary art and visual culture around 1970 in Japan:

- 1) The production of the 1969 A.K.A. *Serial Killer*, an experimental documentary film;
- 2) The rise of the so-called Mono-ha movement in the context of contemporary art practices;
- 3) The innovative movement in photography and its theory epitomized by the *PROVOKE* magazine.

These cases have been studied extensively in their respective fields—the history of film, art history, and the history of photography. However, most likely due to conventional disciplinary restrictions, these incidents have neither been analyzed as belonging to a larger epistemic shift nor studied together as forming a symptomatic triad to indicate the nature of that shift.

This lecture attempts to do precisely that: to see these cases as interconnected through key terms and concepts: the ‘extinction/death of landscape,’ high economic growth and the maturation of the consumer society, and the formation of subjectivity in this period. I seek to situate this shift in relation to a larger historical framework by looking back to the origin of its epistemic formation. The ‘birth of landscape (*fūkei*),’ famously put forward by Karatani Kōjin (1993) in his *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, will be used as a reference point to illuminate this historical framework. I suggest that the category of the landscape (*fūkei*), born around 1880s according to Karatani, ended its life cycle about a century later, at about 1970.

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