



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

EAST ASIAN STUDIES CENTER

NOVEMBER 17

Thursday  
5:30-7:00pm  
Pomerene 150

**2022** THE INSTITUTE FOR  
JAPANESE STUDIES AND  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
OF ART PRESENT:

# "AVIATION AND JAPAN'S AERIAL IMAGINARY"

**GENNIFER WEISENFELD**

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Duke University**

Aviation was the global fetish of the twentieth century. The consummate example of technological modernity, it represented the triumph of man over nature in the service of progress. It also provided a deeply transformative sensory and affective experience described as everything from intoxicating to deterritorializing. Everyone from painters and poets to filmmakers and songwriters celebrated the new "aerial age." Japan shared the world's romance with aviation and it soon became a mania throughout the empire. Japanese visualizations of aviation were aesthetically implicated in the nation's militarized modernity. Civil air defense fused the scopical joys of aeriality with existential fear, producing a kind of technological sublime whose beauty was both awesome and awful. A visual stroll through the cultural landscape of aeronautic imagery reveals a creative investment among the "air-minded" in Japan that traveled through the 1930s all the way to the end of the Pacific War. This paper explores that landscape of visual pleasure.



**Free and open to the public**

**<https://easc.osu.edu/events/ijs-lecture-gennifer-weisenfeld>**

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