

Institute for Japanese Studies Lecture Series

## Art Outlaws and Monopoly during the 1960s: Yayoi Kusama and the Rise of the Global Art Market

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**Friday, September 15, 2017**

**4:30-6:00 pm**

**Scott Lab E0004**

**201 W 19th Ave**

**Abstract:** Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama and Jewish art dealer Leo Castelli both launched their careers in New York's 1950s multi-cultural downtown scene. By the late 1950s, due to innovative transport and communication systems, the New York art world was becoming transnational. In the early 1960s, Kusama thus showed with the Pop and Minimal artists during their formative years. In Europe, she exhibited together with the Dutch Nul and the German Zero artists until the latter disbanded in 1966. However, as the global art market fully took root, multi-culturalism was replaced by New American Art, with mostly U.S.-born white male artists, most of whom were represented by a single New York gallery, Leo Castelli. In this milieu Kusama became increasingly marginalized. This was in large part due to the efforts of international collectors who sought a global art market monopoly. The experience distinctively shaped Kusama's art, forcing her to invent art that foreshadowed the politically charged feminist art of the 1970s.

**Bio:** The author of *Yayoi Kusama: Inventing the Singular*, Midori Yamamura is an Assistant Professor of Art History at CUNY Kingsborough Community College. She is a specialist in post-WWII Asian and Asian Diaspora art. Her essays on Kusama have been published in major museum catalogues, including Tate Modern, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Museo Reina Sofia, and the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. In 2016, she served as a consultant scholar for Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden's *Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors*. She is currently working on her second book, *Japanese Contemporary Art Since 1989: Emergence of the Local in the Age of Globalization*. Work on her new project has been funded by Terumo Foundation, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, *Kakenhi*, and was nominated for the Japan Foundation Long Term Fellowship. Her short-form writings on this topic have appeared in *CAA.Review* and *Art in America*. She has also published essays and reviews on Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Tadaaki Kuwayama, Rakuko Naito, Yoko Ono, Lee Wen, and Roberto Villanueva. She has taught art history at the Museum of Modern Art, Fordham University, Hunter College, and Pratt Institute. She has received fellowships from the Terra Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, the Center for Place Culture and Politics at CUNY, and the Ford Foundation.

*This lecture event is supported in part by the OSU Asian American Studies Program and by a U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant to The Ohio State University East Asian Studies Center.*

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