

Sensitive content: violence, war, sexual assault, and harassment.

Presentations

July 10, 1:00 PM

1) Burden of COVID-19 Pandemic on Women in Okinawa under the Seventh-Wave (English)

Sumiko Ogawa (She/her) - Meio University

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the lives of women in Okinawa, as it has in many other parts of the world. During the eighth wave of infections, Okinawan women in their 20s to 60s were significantly more likely to be newly infected with COVID-19 than men during the seventh wave (July to September 2022), according to data from Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (source). This trend was more pronounced in Okinawa compared to the nationwide average.

In Okinawa, there were 1,544 confirmed COVID-19 cases among people ranging from under 10 years old to individuals in their 90s. Among the 792 cases where the route of infection was known, 68.4% (or 474 cases) were linked to domestic transmission (Okinawa Times Press, 2 May 2022).

The pandemic period also saw a noticeable rise in consultations related to sexual and spousal violence, as well as an increase in reports of child abuse. These trends occurred against a backdrop of socio-economic vulnerability in Okinawa. The prefecture has the highest rates among Japan's 47 prefectures in several concerning categories: a single-mother household rate of 4.88%, a non-full-time employment rate of 43.1%, a child poverty rate of 29.9%, and a GDP per capita of only 2,166,000 JPY.

According to surveys, 42.8% of households in Okinawa experienced some level of income decline during the pandemic, with lower-income groups suffering the most severe losses. Women, who are disproportionately represented in insecure, part-time, and low-paying jobs, were especially hard hit by job losses and reduced working hours. This has severely impacted their ability to support themselves and their families.

Furthermore, women were at higher risk of exposure to the virus due to their roles as caregivers for infected family members. The rise in social isolation and psychological stress during the pandemic also intensified pre-existing tensions within households. In Okinawa, these challenges placed an especially heavy burden on women, highlighting the intersection of public health, gender inequality, and economic hardship in the region.

Keywords: Okinawan, women, COVID-19, vulnerability, burden

2) LactaCare: A Breastfeeding Support App Including the LGBTQIA+ Population (English, Online)

Ingrid Ariel Maria da Silva Cintra (she/her)¹, Cláudia Sorelle Cavalcanti de Santana, Andrezza Renata Araujo de Figuerêdo Priori, Ana Carla Silva Alexandre - ¹Faculdade do Belo Jardim, Departamento de Enfermagem, Belo Jardim, Pernambuco, Brasil

Breastfeeding is a fundamental practice for the health of both infants and lactating individuals, globally recognized for its nutritional, immunological, and emotional benefits. However, access to qualified information on this topic remains limited for specific groups, such as the LGBTQIA+ community, which faces institutional barriers, prejudice, and invisibility within public maternal and child health policies. In this context, the LactaCare app

emerges as an innovative and inclusive digital solution aiming to promote equitable access to breastfeeding information and support, addressing diverse family structures and gender identities. Objective: The LactaCare app aims to provide reliable, evidence-based content on breastfeeding techniques, management of challenges, and information on the health of both the lactating person and the baby. It also features a dedicated section focused on the experiences, rights, and guidance for the LGBTQIA+ population, including trans men, trans women, and same-sex couples. Innovation Potential: LactaCare stands out for explicitly and respectfully including the LGBTQIA+ population in the context of breastfeeding—a topic historically overlooked in health technologies. From a technical standpoint, the app is being developed for Android and iOS systems using the free Android Studio platform and Java language, with an accessible and responsive interface. It will be built in React Native to ensure good usability and adaptability. Features include: a user support forum, integration with health professionals, personalized alerts, breastfeeding log, milk bank guidance, educational images, and a strong emphasis on safety and dignity for all forms of parenthood. Social Impact: Expected impacts of LactaCare include strengthening the autonomy of LGBTQIA+ lactating individuals, reducing early weaning rates in vulnerable populations, and encouraging more empathetic care practices. By expanding access to information through inclusive, low-cost digital technology, the app contributes to health equity and can generate positive social and economic outcomes. It is also intended to be a support tool for health professionals, fostering more ethical, welcoming, and informed care regarding the diversity of parenthood.

Keywords: breastfeeding, diversity, LGBT+, health, mobile app

3) Double Silenced: Okinawan Women in the History of Immigration to Brazil (English, Online)

Karina Satomi Matsumoto (she/her) - Independent Researcher (Sao Paulo, Brazil)

"Hajichi" is the name given to the tattoo typically made on the backs of women's hands during the Ryukyu Kingdom era (now Okinawa Prefecture). The practice was prohibited with the Meiji Reform at the end of the 19th century, and the tradition disappeared, leaving behind oral narratives, photos, and a few written records. This work explores the presence of hajichi among Okinawan immigrants by conducting a literature review of the history of Okinawan and Japanese immigration to Brazil. It shows how Ryukyuan women who immigrated to Brazil were affected by two prohibitions: the tattoo ban in Okinawa Prefecture (1899), and the restriction of Okinawan immigration to Brazil (1913–1916 and 1920–1926).

Keywords: Ryukyu, Meiji Reform, women immigrants, tattoo prohibition, Japanese-Brazilian history

4) Lily Corps and Continental Brides: Comparing Media Representations of *Himeyuri* and *Hanayome* in Wartime Okinawa and Manchuria (English, Online)

Lin Meng Walsh (she/her) - University of Rochester

My paper critically examines media representations of two groups of women in wartime Okinawa and Manchuria—the himeyuri gakutotai (ひめゆり学徒隊, “Lily Corps”) and the tairiku no hanayome (大陸の花嫁, “Continental Brides”). This comparative project illuminates the multi-layered process through which the women (1) were mobilized to participate in colonial expansion and war effort led by the imperialist government; (2) faced additional brutality during the war on the basis of their gender (for example, in the case of the Manchuria settler group from Kurokawa, Gifu Prefecture, unmarried women were forced into “sexual service” for Soviet soldiers in exchange for the soldiers’ protection of other members of the group towards the end of war); (3) were romanticized and sensationalized as a symbol of Japan’s victimhood in postwar media to eclipse the memory of wartime aggression. I pay close attention to *The Tragedy of Okinawa* (1951) by Nakasone Seizen and the 3 movie adaptations respectively released in 1953, 1982, and 1995. In conjunction with my analysis of the afterlives of the “Lily Corps” in media, I also incorporate examinations of the novel *The*

Continental Bride (Hayashi Fusao, 1939) and NHK dramatic series Pioneers (2012) that feature women who were sent from Japan to Manchuria.

Keywords: Okinawa; Manchuria; Wartime Women; Lily Corps; Continental Brides

5) Invisible words (Talk/Multimedia Installation in English/Japanese with Ryukyuan)
Mateus Rezende de Oliveira - UTokyo

沖縄県はかつて琉球王国という独立した国でした。しかし、薩摩藩や江戸幕府、そして近代日本による植民地主義的な同化政策の中で、多くの琉球文化が抑圧・排除されてきました。特に、学校教育では「方言札」と呼ばれる木札を使って、生徒が琉球語（ウチナーグチ）を話すことを禁止する制度が存在した。琉球語を話すとこの札を首にかけられ、その札は次に話した生徒へと引き継がれ続けた。

このインスタレーションは、その歴史を身体的に体験しながら、琉球語の一端に触れることを目的としている。

Okinawa was once the independent Ryukyu Kingdom. Through the colonial policies of the Satsuma Domain, the Tokugawa Shogunate, and later modern Japan, much of Ryukyuan culture was systematically suppressed and erased. One of the most affected was the Ryukyuan language. In schools, a tool of linguistic punishment known as the hōgen fuda (dialect tag) was used. Students who spoke Ryukyuan were forced to wear this wooden tag around their necks. The tag would then be passed on to the next student caught speaking in Ryukyuan—a chain of silence, enforced through shame. This installation invites you to physically engage with that history, while also offering a glimpse into the Ryukyuan language as a living voice.

July 11, 1:00 PM

1) Invited opening talk: UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Addresses Sexual Violence by U.S. Military Personnel in Okinawa (English)

Yuko Oyakawa - Be The Change Okinawa

In October 2024, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern to the Japanese government over incidents of sexual violence committed by U.S. military personnel stationed in Okinawa and recommended that it “Take appropriate measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators and to provide adequate reparations to the survivors of sexual and other forms of conflict-related gender-based violence against women and girls on Okinawa.”

From the perspective of international human rights law, including that of the Committee itself, there is a shared understanding that gender-based violence against women constitutes a form of discrimination against women. The Committee carefully examined reports submitted by various civil society organizations and, based on the Japanese government’s responses during the in-person review, concluded that the sexual violence committed by U.S. military personnel is a serious and urgent issue. Furthermore, the limitations on the detention of suspects under the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) have resulted in perpetrators not being properly held accountable. In other words, it can be said that there has been a failure to implement measures in line with the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

In addition, the recent recommendations expressed concern that patriarchal and gender-discriminatory practices in Japanese society contribute to the perpetuation of sexual violence. Within the international community, there is a shared understanding that such violence has an even more severe impact on women and girls from vulnerable groups, including those who have faced discrimination based on descent, origin, or disability. Raising voices in protest against sexual violence committed by U.S. military personnel stationed in Okinawa aligns with this broader global concern. It is important to reflect on the efforts of civil society that led to the inclusion of this issue in the Concluding Observations and to reaffirm the significance of the recommendations.

2) Mabui: Creation Notebook and the “Okinawan Problem” (English, Online, Short Film Screening)

Lucia Yumiko Kakazu (she/they) - Universidade de São Paulo

This research aims to investigate the creation process of the show "Mabui"¹, performed in Brazil by the author; and the relationships found between the creation and the so-called “Okinawan Problem”. Mabui is a contemporary dance performance about Okinawan spirituality, created by Lucia Kakazu, the author, and musician Ricardo Kakazu. The dance premiered in March 2022 at the Jardim do Teatro João Caetano in São Paulo. The show received financial support from the city's dance promotion program through which the artistic nucleus was able to research how this spirituality manifests itself in the Okinawan community in Brazil.

The research was born out of contact with the kamintyu Beatriz Nagahama and the reading of the text “Becoming an Okinawan ethnic shaman in Brazil - Shamanization as a subjective and creative process of re-culturalization” by Koichi Mori. From this research, the group was able to get to know some of the life stories of the Yutás and Kamintyus who sustain this spirituality in Brazil. Special attention was drawn to the processes of updating and the hybridization created as strategies to enable them to operate in Brazil. The project resulted in a dance show, a documentary, panel discussions and a workshop.

The question the research team has attempted to answer, has been about how native Okinawan artists or descendants, belonging to the diaspora present in the USA and Brazil, especially women, have found strategies in their work to address issues of the transgenerational "unspeakable", related to the violence in Okinawan history and also in the current geopolitical scenario, in the face of growing North American militarization on the island, the fight against more military bases and discussions about the assimilation of an indigenous identity.

This text focuses on an autoethnographic analysis of the strategies found by the researcher in Mabui and reflects on a more recent Okinawan diasporic art scene, where women artists have sought ways to address issues related to the “Okinawa problem” and its social and geopolitical impact in their work, from a post-colonial perspective and centered on gender discussions.

The theoretical contribution of the research is built on the theoretical field of performance and anthropology, dialoguing with post-colonial theories. It focuses on studies about the social marker of gender, the politics of silencing, violence and trauma, as well as delving into notions about performative autoethnography. The methodology is built on a cross between bibliographical research, methodological analysis, qualitative and autoethnographic research.

1 - To find out more, visit: <https://youtu.be/yniCp4msO80>

Keywords: Performance and Memory; Postcolonial Studies; Performance and Okinawa.

3) Flowers and Typhoons: Asian-Brazilian intersectional activism and encounters between diasporic's Uchinanchu, Ainu and Koreans (English, Online)

Laís Miwa Higa (she/her) - NUMAS/USP [BR], PWFC/UVIC [CA]

This research addresses the construction of contemporary Asian-Brazilian activism (2016-2023), tracing it back to the emergence of the first three collectives focusing on anti-racism, feminism, and LGBTQIA+ issues within the Asian/Yellow community on Facebook. I explore their expansion to other social media platforms, mainstream media, and offline spaces. In a decade marked by significant transformations and crises, the ethnographic analysis contextualizes and aligns the trajectory of this activism with key events, such as the June Protests (2013), the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff (2016), the rise of the far-right with Jair Bolsonaro's election (2018), the Covid-19 pandemic (2020), and the election of Lula as President (2022). The primary objective is to analyze how Asian-Brazilian collectives and individuals have produced meanings and connections between social markers of difference such as race, gender, and sexuality in the shaping of political practices and modes of subjectivation during this period. The initial chapters examine the internet and the establishment of the first Asian collectives on Facebook within the context of the emergence of new social movements and cyberactivism. These spaces are portrayed as arenas for the meeting and political and subjective construction of young individuals, contrasting with older generations and conservative representatives within ethnic associations and right-wing parties. Subsequently, with a focus on the production of politicized categories of Asian-Brazilian identities and political subjects, I investigate the importance attributed to research and academic studies in debates surrounding ethnic-racial categories, theoretical-political concepts, and perspectives commonly used to underpin the discourse and practices of the movement. The last chapter delve into the myth of the Yellow Peril and the Model Minority, aiming to deepen theoretical and ethnographic understanding of how this youth mobilizes memories and stories of diasporas, particularly events of war, deprivation, and injustice experienced by immigrants and their descendants, both in their countries of origin and in Brazil. Examples and analyses from academic research enable, on one hand, the recontextualization and reinterpretation of their own lived experiences of microaggressions, xenophobia, racism, and discrimination and, on the other hand, contribute to the foundation of critiques and analyses that foster political formation and encourage engagement in social movements, collectives, and organizations.

Keywords: Diaspora; Intersectionality; War; Japanese Imperialism; Activism

4) Bodies, Borders, and Bases: Sexual Politics and U.S. Imperialism in Okinawa and Ciudad Juárez (English)

Sofía Huerta Nunes (She/her) - Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

This research explores how U.S. imperial power intersects with national state structures to produce and sustain militarized and gendered zones of domination in Okinawa, Japan, and Ciudad Juárez, México. Although geographically distant and culturally distinct, both sites share a deeply entangled relationship with the United States, shaped by military presence, economic dependency, and systematic gendered violence. Using the concept of liminal regimes, I analyze how overlapping sovereignties between the U.S. and the Japanese and Mexican states create ambiguous political spaces that blur lines of accountability and complicate the conditions through which gendered violence is enacted. In Okinawa, the disproportionate concentration of U.S. military bases has led to sexual violence and the growth of sexual economies directed toward American soldiers; a trend often sustained through legal loopholes and the tacit consent of the Japanese government. Drawing on preliminary fieldwork in Okinawa, including interviews with feminist activists and women working in the adult entertainment industry, I examine how military occupation shapes gendered violence and sex work, as well as the strategies of agency and resistance developed by local feminist movements. In Ciudad Juárez, U.S.-led neoliberal trade policies such as NAFTA transformed the city into a center for U.S.-owned maquiladoras, factories reliant on cheap and feminized labor. Simultaneously, bilateral security agreements

intensified the militarization of the border, enabling the cross-border movement of U.S. soldiers and civilians and reinforcing patterns of gendered exploitation. While feminicide and gender-based violence in Juárez have often been treated as internal Mexican issues, I examine them in parallel with Okinawa to foreground how both contexts have been shaped by U.S. imperial formations, whether through military occupation or economic intervention. Building on critical studies of empire and postcolonial feminist approaches, this research reveals how militarization across bases and borders produces distinct but interconnected forms of violence, as well as how local feminist actors contest and survive within these entangled regimes.

Keywords: U.S. imperialism, militarization, gendered violence, Okinawa, Ciudad Juárez

5) “Recuperation or Abjection? Female Survivors in Medoruma Shun’s War Stories”
(English)

Davinder Bhowmik (she/her) - University of Washington

Medoruma Shun (1960-) is arguably the most acclaimed contemporary Okinawan author. Sakiyama Tami (1954-) is a close contender who, like Medoruma, employs indigenous language in her fiction but Sakiyama’s self-described, no holds barred, guerrilla warfare writing method makes her stories opaque and difficult to translate, limiting wider circulation. War trauma, Medoruma’s signature theme, is a concern in Sakiyama stories yet her work is only indirectly focused on the war traumatized body. In this presentation I analyze Medoruma’s fictional works that center on the body in the intersection of war, community, and gender to illustrate the author’s propensity to depict problematically female survivors’ appearance, mentality, and silence. In particular, I consider female survivors in “Mabuigumi” (1998), “Tree of Butterflies” (2000), “Walking Along Peace Street” (2003), and “In the Woods of Memory” (2017). In “Mabuigumi”, “Tree of Butterflies” and “Walking Along Peace Street” Medoruma depicts female war survivors as either senile (“Mabuigumi”, “Peace Street”) or social pariahs (“Tree of Butterflies”). Although these elderly women’s suppression of traumatic war memory explains, in part, their condition, why is Sayako, the teenage post-war rape survivor of “In the Woods of Memory” depicted similarly? And, why does Sayako have no voice in a novel that offers, chapter by chapter, different characters’ perspectives of her rape? Medoruma’s stories are justifiably praised for being imaginatively powerful, rooted in the local, and infused with the magically real. Yet, it is my contention that his depiction of female survivors as half-clad, silent, and mentally unbalanced re-victimizes them. I argue that in the attempt to recuperate stories erased from local and national history Medoruma unwittingly creates the figure of a silent, sexually violated female who is raped, as in the case of Sayako, not only by American soldiers but also by fellow villagers. Rather than reverse female victimhood Medoruma seems to recreate the divide between the chaste female (Himeyuri) who sacrifices herself for the nation-state and the unchaste (Sayako) who must remain outside her village community. For an author as attentive to issues of language and class why does Medoruma homogenize his female characters? And even worse, through the narratorial voice don’t we as readers become complicit in the transgressive pleasure of the voyeuristic gaze Medoruma’s words create? How can Medoruma recuperate the stories of silenced women without consigning them to a state of abjection?

Keywords: literature, abjection, war, trauma, voyeurism

July 12, 1:00 PM

1) “O Silêncio É Muito Eloquent” (“Silence Is Very Eloquent”) (English, Online, Short Film Screening)

Thais Omine - queer Okinawan-Brazilian visual anthropologist and filmmaker from Guarulhos, São Paulo - currently based in Berlin

The experimental short film “O Silêncio É Muito Eloquent” (“Silence Is Very Eloquent”) comes from a conversation I had with the Okinawan-Brazilian anthropologist Miwa Higa when I was researching transgenerational trauma. She said this phrase to me, “silence is very eloquent”, in a moment of great frustration in the research on the Okinawan diaspora, realizing that silence is the norm amidst many words that don't connect. To observe, to contemplate and to record silences is about realizing that they shout and tear a past that one prefers to forget.

Heroic deeds, attitudes and behaviors that make us proud. They don't bring shame, they soften the pain, suffering, humiliation and fear. It makes it easier to continue living a forgetful life. It's easier to talk about what doesn't cause discomfort. It's easier to forget. Is it?

This short film is about the many people who died in fear. Those for whom the pain was unbearable. Who went mad. Who preferred death to being raped. Who preferred death to having to obey people who aren't even people. And for those whose bodies and souls demand us to look at them and mourn them. Those who deserve to have their voices passed on as memory.

In Portuguese we don't have a verb for mourning. “Luto” is substantive, timeless, collective. “Luto” is a process - I suspect of several lifetimes - of digesting the injustice and violence of war and colonization. It's about a process of finding myself in the artistic work of other people who had the same colonizer in common. It's about imagining a past and future in which we are able to recognize that the colonial binarity in which “one is the negation of the other” can and must be debunked without any side effects more harmful than its very existence. It is about the recognition of positions of privilege and subalternization starting from a critical dialectic about the gaze that only goes (enjoys) at the expense of the pain of the other.

Bio: Thaís Omine (she/her) is a queer Okinawan-Brazilian visual anthropologist and filmmaker from Guarulhos, São Paulo - currently based in Berlin. Her work moves towards decolonization as an anti-methodology praxis, focusing on diasporic narratives that come from sites of exclusion. As a daughter of the Okinawan diaspora in Latin America, Thaís has dedicated her research on stories affected by epistemicide through explorations with moving images. Thaís works also as a film curator, moderator, educator and film editor.

Link to screener:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/169fWj78rRCJuT2pvTeCl50nIbGezwql6/view?usp=drive_link

2) Writings and re-writings of femininity: heterotopias and politics of feeling (English, Online, Short Film Screening)

Lidia Lidia Ganhito, Mariana Pougy, Pacor - Feminisms, Genders, Images, Arts and Sexualities (FIGAS), State University of São Paulo

Writings and re-writings of femininity: heterotopias and politics of feeling

[...] who does not reinvent the world/word is [...] in the process of disappearing.

Nicole Brossard

FIGAS is a research group associated with UNESP's Institute of Arts (São Paulo/Brazil) which is dedicated to research on feminisms, genders, images, arts and sexualities. Since 2021 we have been creating a cross-space for academic research and artistic creation, building an expanded collective territory in which people - artists, researchers, the curious, those who want to take a peek, those who want to look intensely - get to grips with feminist / queer / antiracist / decolonial writings in (dis)order to create artfully.

Here the three coordinators of the group (Lidia Ganhito, Mariana Pougy and Pacor) present a video-performance developed in the context of our last semester investigating femininities' heterotopias. The ten-minute-long performance superimposes audio and video to tension

the limits of genders, that is: gender as genre and gender as incorporation of femininity and masculinity coding. A palimpsest lullaby of english, portuguese, spanish and french speaking poetical voices, with subtitles in Ryukuyan, nurses the three artists while they experiment their own gender incorporation limits. In doing so, we aim to make the rituals of gender incorporation visible as fictional, at the same time as the political genres of academic knowledge get cornered by artistic ones. The performance dismantles the preconceived ideas of a truth that is essential and universal to welcome the multiplicity of the imagined word/world.

The work inverts roles diffusely, queering the straight mind: man as/if woman, butch as/if femme, lesbian as/if transgender, art as/if knowledge production, theory as/if poetry and vice-versa.

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3) Cine-poetics of Archipelagic Relations: Creative Praxis Toward Decolonization and Deimperialization (English, Online, Short Film Screening)

Anita Wen-Shin Chang (She/they) - California State University East Bay

As a Taiwanese American filmmaker confronted with the unending wars, most recently in Sudan, Ukraine and Gaza, along with the growing threat of war between China and Taiwan, I asked: What can I as a filmmaker do? Situating myself within a constellation of geo-political relations formed through imperial histories and neoimperial presents, I produced the short video *What We Never Forget For Peace Here Now* (2024). The video took its inspiration from the “archipelagic thinking” of Caribbean and Pacific Studies as a framework, a methodology and a way of being with each other through a dynamic model of geography. Chamoru poet Craig Santos Perez has written, “no island is an island because islands exist in dynamic relationality to a larger archipelago and ocean.” Archipelagic thinking also decontenualizes because reframing continents as islands brings into relief inter-relationality, and the power dynamics of territorialism. This presentation proposes a cine-poetics of archipelagic relations as creative praxis that can work towards decolonization and deimperialization; it also proposes peace work as an important but, at times, neglected process of decolonization and deimperialization. Stories and memories of and from Taiwan, Okinawa, Vietnam, Japan, and the U.S., together become a personal peace memorial produced in the US, a country that does not have war memorials dedicated to peace. *What We Never Forget For Peace Here Now* explores how we forget and how we remember memories of war. I think about who my survivors and witnesses of war are, and the deep impressions they've given me, becoming a part of me.

Note: If there is time and interest, I can show the entire 11:45 minutes of the video What We Never Forget For Peace Here Now (2024). The entire presentation can be under 15 minutes.

Keywords: archipelagic thinking, deimperialization, decolonization, peace work, war stories

4) 沖縄における性別役割分業に対する大学生の意識調査と考察 (A Survey on University Students' Perceptions of Gendered Division of Labor in Okinawa) (Japanese)

福元和音、橋本実久里、坂口学元、山里ひろみ (Kazune Fukumoto, Mikuri Hashimoto, Manamoto Sakaguchi, Hiromi Yamazato) - University of the Ryukyus

5) 軍事性暴力の特殊性と沖縄での現れ (The Characteristics of Military Sexual Violence and Its Manifestation in Okinawa) (Japanese)

福地麻咲季、坂模優、丸岡八雲 (Asaki Fukuchi, Yu Sakamaki, Yakumo Maruoka) - University of the Ryukyus

Poster exhibition and coffee break (July 10 to 12, ~3 to 3:30 PM)

From Hawai'i to Okinawa: A Student-Led Pantry Initiative for Reuse and Support at the University of the Ryukyus (English)

Ryudai Pantry NUCHI MAARU - University of the Ryukyus

NUCHI MAARU is a student-led food and necessities pantry open to all students at the University of the Ryukyus. The project began in November 2024, after seven of us participated in a short-term study program in Hawai'i through the Inter-Island Sustainability Educational Program. During our visit to Kaua'i Community College in Hawai'i, we were deeply inspired by the Hale Mālama initiative, which promotes community care and resource-sharing. We wanted to bring a similar spirit of support and sustainability to our university. At our university, many students come from outside Okinawa or overseas and live in off-campus housing. After completing their studies, whether for four years or just one semester, many students discard usable household items like rice cookers, microwaves, or furniture. These items are often thrown away, even though other students could benefit from them. At the same time, some students face financial difficulties, including challenges in affording food or daily essentials. To address these issues, we created NUCHI MAARU. Once a month, we collect donations from students, faculty, and staff, such as appliances, kitchenware, clothing, and food, and redistribute them for free to those who need them. Our goal is to reduce waste and create a more inclusive and caring campus through mutual aid. We believe that our action has shown us how study abroad can inspire real change in our community. By adapting what we learned to the context of Okinawa, we have put the ideas of inter-island sustainability into practice. NUCHI MAARU is not just a reuse system, it is a way for us to bring people together, support one another, and promote campus sustainability through what we've learned and shared. In this presentation, we will share the background of the project, the meaning behind the name NUCHI MAARU, how the project works, and what we hope to achieve in the future.

Keywords: Mutual Care, Student Empowerment, Campus sustainability, Inter-island Solidarity, Intersectionality

Ryudai Rainbow: LGBTQIA2P+ club at the University of the Ryukyus (English)

Hina, Rui, Zander, Duda - Ryudai Rainbow, University of the Ryukyus

Okinawa is the main island of the Ryukyu Islands, which was an independent kingdom until 1879, when the Empire of Japan colonized and annexed the territory as Okinawa Prefecture. After World War II, the islands were then occupied by the United States of America until 1972, when they returned to the Japanese government but with a strong U.S. military presence. Currently, over 20% of the island is covered by U.S. military installations.

Ryudai Rainbow was created in 2022 to promote the visibility of LGBTQIA2P+ topics in Okinawa and Japan and to create a safe space for queer people to build a community and network. Japanese human rights issues discussed in activities of our club, including the fact that Japan is one of the only members of the Group of Seven (G7) that does not recognize same-sex marriage or provide any other form of legally binding protection for LGBTQIA+ couples, as well as a gender gap index rank of 118th out of 146 countries in 2024.

Our activities have an intersectional and decolonial approach. For example, we have co-organized a workshop with the NGO Okinawa Girls Empowerment IAm, citizens of Yomitan City in Okinawa, and the city's Major Office, aimed to create policy proposals for Yomitan's gender equality plan. In pride month 2023, we organized several events and exhibited our posters at Ryudai library. In this poster, we share materials used in our activities, including banners to bring visibility about transgender people in Japan¹ and the Genderbread Person² edugraphics that illustrate the diversity of gender identities, expressions, and anatomical sexes.

¹<https://tgbooklet.wordpress.com/panel/?fbclid=IwAR3qL4LBSFX75fa0LS0Kcorf1txcJCDXT0Qp8DOYQLzMxGFOZ6C79WUrXxY>

²<https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2018/10/the-genderbread-person-v4/>

Keywords: *Sexual diversity, gender diversity, decolonialism*

アレン奨学会の活動 (Japanese)

Eiko Ginoza (she/her) - アレン奨学会沖縄

報道写真家石川文洋さんによるベトナム戦争の記録 (Japanese)

Eiko Ginoza (she/her) - アレン奨学会沖縄

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