



Image: Nakahira Takuma, "Amami." Published in Asahi Camera, February 1976

# Nakahira Takuma's "Amami" and the Disorientation of Yamato Space

Daniel Abbe

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18:00-19:30, June 6, 2024

Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University

No registration necessary / In person only

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**Abstract:** This presentation explores the construction and photographic representation of space by mainland Japanese actors in and around Okinawa during the mid-1970s. The 1975 Okinawa International Ocean Exposition shows how Okinawa was assimilated to the space of mainland Japan, in literally concrete terms. That is, the Ocean Expo brought the space of Okinawa into Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei's paradigm of construction, laid out in his 1972 book *Rebuilding the Japanese Archipelago*. A similar dynamic of assimilation also played out in the field of photographic representation. In particular, Tōmatsu Shōmei's series "Pencil of the Sun" (published as a book in 1975) connects the space of Okinawa to a longer history of cultural assimilation. During the mid-1970s, the mainland photographer Nakahira Takuma visited Okinawa to participate in a legal struggle and to work as a journalist. In 1976, Nakahira published a series taken not in Okinawa, but on the Amami islands. These photographs denied orientation in general, and this presentation suggests that their disorientation represents a spatial and embodied position against the mainland orientation that claimed Okinawa as its property.

**Bio:** Daniel Abbe is a lecturer at Shiga University. His research develops the connection between phenomenology and the history of photography, with a focus on artists, photographers and critics active during the 1970s in Japan. His essays and reviews have appeared in *Japan Forum*, *Aperture*, and *Bijutsu techo*.

This talk is organized by Noriko Murai (Professor, Sophia University).

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