

# VISUALIZING THE LABORING FEMALE BODY IN CHIKUHŌ “WOMEN’S WORK” AND REGIONAL HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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Tokyo University of the Arts, 2019 - 2020

JANUARY 23, 17:00  
EAST ZONE D-107



*IN the Chikuhō region of Kyushu, particularly after the closure of its coal mines from the late 1950s, the laboring female body proliferates as image and theme in photography and painting. Women’s bodies also function collectively as a repository for regional memory and the repertoire through which it is (re)enacted in folk performance. This talk explores the relationship between the visibility of coal modernity, women’s labor, performance, and the formation of historical consciousness to argue that, while Chikuhō women shape memory regionally from within, their image is often under threat of extinction in national narratives of labor, industry, and modernization premised on the image of the masculine, muscled male miner. The female laboring body, as persistent image in Chikuhō, therefore, challenges national modes of remembering Japan’s coal era as gender, labor, and regional (as opposed to national) history.*

