

# Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan

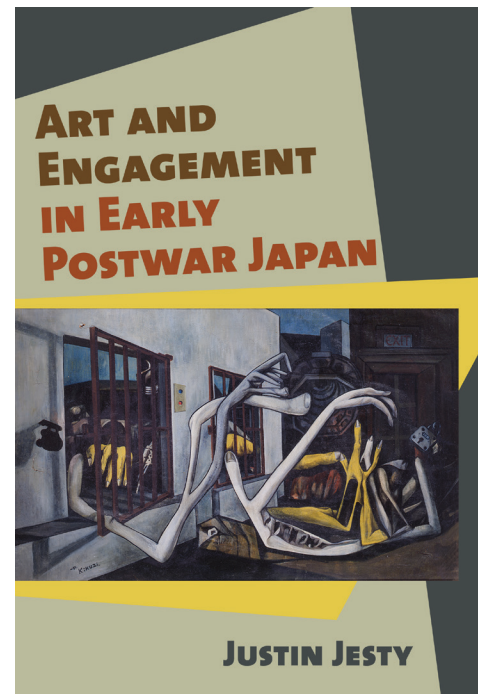
JUSTIN JESTY

\$49.95 | 326 PAGES | HARDCOVER

Justin Jesty's *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* reframes the history of art and its politics in Japan post-1945. This fascinating cultural history addresses our broad understanding of the immediate postwar era moving toward the Cold War and subsequent consolidations of political and cultural life. At the same time, Jesty delves into an examination of the relationship between art and politics that approaches art as a mode of intervention, but he moves beyond the idea that the artwork or artist unilaterally authors political significance to trace how creations and expressive acts may (or may not) actually engage the terms of shared meaning and value.

*Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* centers on a group of social realists on the radical left who hoped to wed their art with anti-capitalist and anti-war activism, a liberal art education movement whose focus on the child inspired innovation in documentary film, and a regional avant-garde group split between ambition and local loyalty. In each case, Jesty examines writings and artworks, together with the social movements they were a part of, to demonstrate how art—or more broadly, creative expression—became a medium for collectivity and social engagement. He reveals a shared if varied aspiration to create a culture founded in amateur-professional interaction, expanded access to the tools of public authorship, and dispersed and participatory cultural forms that intersected easily with progressive movements. Highlighting the transformational nature of the early postwar, Jesty deftly contrasts it with the relative stasis, consolidation, and homogenization of the 1960s.

**JUSTIN JESTY** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Washington. He is author in Japanese of several catalog exhibits for the Meguro Museum of Art and of articles in the *Nishi Nihon Shinbun* and *Gendai Shiso* (Contemporary Thought), and author in English of articles in *Japan Forum* and *Art in America*.



"*Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* is an exciting and original contribution to studies of postwar Japan. Jesty provides a new framework for assessing the avant-garde, offers a persuasive revision of the historiography of the postwar period, and challenges us to rethink the basic premises of radical art."

—Bert Winther-Tamaki, University of California, Irvine

"*Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* will make an immediate and strong impact on the field of Japan studies and I believe has great potential to cross over to visual culture, modern art, and cultural history readers."

—Steve Ridgely, University of Wisconsin-Madison

"Jesty makes a strong argument for the agency of art in postwar Japan through a range of creative practices. It is a cue to dare more breadth than most of us Westerners would have risked."

—Doris Sommer, Harvard University

SAVE 30% • USE CODE 09FLYER

- In the United States order online at [cornellpress.cornell.edu](http://cornellpress.cornell.edu) or call 800 848 6224
- In Canada email [info@codasat.com](mailto:info@codasat.com)
- In the UK, Europe, Asia, Middle East, & Africa save 30% on website orders at [combinedacademic.co.uk](http://combinedacademic.co.uk)  
Use discount code CS09FLYER
- In Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, & Papua New Guinea order online at [footprint.com.au](http://footprint.com.au)