

Knowledge as Generation

— Toward Film Practices of Co-Creation and Responsiveness

Kenichi Sawazaki (RIHN) , Go Ohba (NIHU) , Sachi Komai (NIHU)

Talk Session — November 8, 2025, from 1:00 PM | Venue: Project Works Venue1

The National Institutes for the Humanities (NIHU)’s collaborative research project, Imaginary Dialogue: An Interdisciplinary, Participatory Practice of “Question” Generation through Film, AI, and Art, undertakes a methodological practice—Imaginary Dialogue—that foregrounds the richness of the pre-practical phase of “conception” and reconsiders it as an academic resource. Through this development, the project seeks to reconstruct knowledge creation not as a “finished result,” but as a “generative event” that includes relations and productive deviations.

In this screening and discussion, we will present documentary footage—and subsequent edited outcomes—from AAS (Association for Asian Studies) in Asia 2025 held in Kathmandu, Nepal, where members of the Imaginary Dialogue project from literature, linguistics, anthropology, architecture, and the arts gathered to participate in the joint session, “Documenting Crises and Disasters: A Transdisciplinarity Tryout for Liberal Arts Communication.” Attending not only to conference presentations but also to the “margins” of activity—travel,

sightseeing, and dialogue—each participant focuses on their own experiences, edits from recorded materials, and composes the work as a participant-driven filmmaking approach termed **Meta/Commons Film**(Sawazaki, 2024).

Alongside the screenings, we will share production processes and host a dialogue session to discuss, from multiple angles, the creativity, embodiment, and ethics immanent in the moments when experiential “questions” are discovered and generated. Through such methodological practice, we reconsider “knowledge” not as an institutional artifact but as a site of co-creation and response. At Cultural Typhoon 2025, we will present the intellectual endeavor of “bringing forth questions” as an open, public process through a space that interweaves moving-image exhibition and dialogue.

Keywords: annotation; polyphony; participant involvement; narrative; commons; meta-perspective; documentation.
Reference: Sawazaki, K., et al. (2024). *Emergent Use of Visual Media in Young Muslim Studies*, TRAJECTORIA Vol.5, 2024

International Conference “AAS-in-Asia 2025” (June 2025, Kathmandu, Nepal)

We examined practices of “documenting” crises and disasters across literature, cultural anthropology, linguistics, and artistic practice. In addition to intangible phenomena such as memory, experience, and oral tradition, we made visible power relations, the involvement of researchers and participants, and processes of decision-making. Using a preparatory workshop and filmed records, we shared the generative process of collaborative research and proposed a new method for liberal-arts communication.



Implemented “Commons Film”
at AAS-in-Asia 2025 (Nepal)

“Commons Film” — Operating Footage as a Shared Commons

Commons Film is a method in which all participants become shooters/editors and treat footage as a shared resource in a common repository. Through iterative co-editing sessions and small public test screenings, the work inscribes editorial judgments from multiple standpoints. The approach renews the ethics of representation and frames the production process itself as an open, public dialogue.

Example: “Young Muslim’s Eyes: Crosswork between Arts and Studies” (2022–)

Commons Film

Applied Praxis



Sachi Komai (Comtemporary Japanese Literature)
“Reflected in the Eyes” 8 min 54 sec, 2025

On day four in Kathmandu, a police stop and filming ban bring into relief the asymmetrical gazes and power between filmer/filmed and Nepali/foreigner. Drawing on records of the “margins” of movement and sightseeing, the piece self-reflexively examines how the authority of an international conference and signs like knockoff “Dior” sunglasses shape who is seen—and believed. By including the “absence” of footage that was forced to be deleted, it makes visible ambiguous boundaries and bodily tension.



Akiko Yokoyama (Linguistics)
“Nepal: A Journey into the Joy of Language Learning”
6 min 26 sec, 2025

Starting not with a textbook but with twenty “usable phrases,” this ultra-beginner Nepali was tried out on site. The work traces the joy of being understood at airports and markets, the difficulty of Devanagari and the importance of phonemic distinctions, and how a phrase-first approach boosts motivation. Through market walks, exchange, and presenting in traditional dress, it rethinks instructional design for cultivating “new speakers” of endangered languages from the dual standpoint of researcher and learner.



Go Ohba(Architecture) “Mobility”
3 min 6 sec, 2025

After a 19-hour delay, the film silently records a glimpse of the Himalayas from the plane, backing-up negotiations on a lane barely wide enough for two cars as motorcycles thread through, rush-hour horns, and a “peacock” soliciting tips between tables. It sketches, in architectural terms, the city’s rhythms as micro-negotiations of gaze, signaling, and yielding across mobility and leisure.



Sakura Kudo(Cultural Anthropology)
“Unstable Realities” 9 min 15 sec, 2025

A cultural anthropologist with nearly twenty years in Nepal is pulled between guide/researcher/presenter amid a trip riddled with flight cancellations, delays, lost baggage, and road closures from demonstrations. Drawing the panel theme “Documenting Crisis and Disasters” into lived experience, the work reconsiders how to situate oneself within a 同行 world detached from everyday local life. Amid traffic jams and protest volatility, it rewrites—between observation and involvement—the question, “What did others feel here?”

Future Directions:

- * While examining all members’ films, Sawazaki—both a project member and the proponent of “Commons Film”—plans to produce a mid-length work.
- * We will compile feedback from each member’s disciplinary field on attempting “Commons Film,” assess possibilities for applied use, and submit the findings to domestic and international journals.
- * We plan a screening and discussion around February 2026.