Nihon University Film Study Group

The Nihon University Film Study Group (Nihon Daigaku Geijutsu Gakubu Eiga Kenkyukai, or ‘Nichidai Eiken’ for short) was a legendary filmmaking collective initially founded in 1957 by Jonouchi Motoharu and Hirano Katsumi, then Nihon University students. Closely affiliated with the university’s leftist organization, the Japan Revolutionary Communist League (known as the ‘Bund’), the collective attracted a number of politically radical students who would become some of the most talented postwar experimental and avant-garde filmmakers, including Adachi Masao, Ko Hiroo and Kanbara Hiroshi. Working under the ‘collective’ principle against authorship, the group produced a uniquely existential drama, *Kugi to kutsushita no kaiwa* (*Conversation Between Nail and Sock*, 1958), an experimental document of an actual disaster in *N no kiroku* (*The Record of N*, 1959) as well as an intermedial, cross-generic ‘collage’ of fiction and documentary in *Pu pu* (*Poo Poo*, 1960). Nichidai Eiken also became the source for the formation of another experimental film collective VAN Eiga Kagaku Kenkyujo (VAN Film Research Centre or ‘VAN’ for short) in the 1960s, in which the same group of filmmakers started living together communally. Nichidai Eiken members continued to expand their activities by collaborating with other avant-garde collectives (such as Hi Red Center) and performance artists (such as Akasegawa Genpei and Nakanishi Natsuyuki) and by engaging with mixed-media creations. However, Nichidai Eiken and VAN never detached their collective works from politics in favour of the autonomy of art.

Reference and further reading

- Furuhata, Y. (2013) *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Garde Filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics,* Dunham: Duke University Press.

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- Standish, I. (2011) *Politics, Porn and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s,* New York: Continuum.

Paratextual material

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