



# Universität Zürich

Kunsthistorisches Institut, Abt. für Kunstgeschichte Ostasiens

Gablerstrasse 14  
Museum Rietberg  
CH-8002 Zürich  
Schweiz

Tel. +41 43 344 588 0  
direkt +41 43 344 588 2  
Fax +41 43 344 588 4  
thomsen@khist.unizh.ch  
[www.khist.unizh.ch/ostasien](http://www.khist.unizh.ch/ostasien)  
[www.eastasianarthistory.net/](http://www.eastasianarthistory.net/)

Prof. Dr. Hans Bjarne Thomsen



## An announcement from the KGOA

During the Spring Semester of 2010 the Section for East Asian Art History (KGOA) at the University of Zurich will present two courses on the recent Japanese phenomenon of *anime*. This will make the first time that the university has offered courses at the university dealing with this important topic.

The two courses are titled: “*Anime* aus der Perspektive der Japanischen Kunstgeschichte,” a series of lectures by Professor Thomsen, and a Übung course, “*Betrachtung von Anime*,” which will show full-length *anime* each week during the semester.



In recent years, the field of Japanese *anime* (“animated movies”) have become famous globe-wide, and has seen a wide range of popular receptions, from fan groups and overbooked conventions to strong interest from students and scholars within the fields of Japanese studies.

People are receiving *anime* in a number of ways, from fans who take play in “fansubs” (creating subtitles in non-Japanese languages) and through “kosuple” (dressing up as an anime character), to scholars presenting on anime in scholarly symposia and even completing dissertations on the topic of the *anime* and their reception. Clearly the field is here to stay.

In the middle of this wide-spread enthusiasm, art historians have also started to address the art historical issues of the anime, and the question of how to situate the new phenomenon within a scholarly understanding of Japanese visual studies. A number of scholars, such as Tadashi Kobayashi, have made preliminary statements, such as the latter claiming connections between



anime and the illustrated handscrolls of the twelfth century and the woodblock print of the nineteenth century. In such ways, slowly but surely, the anime are becoming imbedded as well into a history of Japanese art.

In this series of lectures, Professor Thomsen will take a critical look at various claims for the *anime*, and look at a number of other art historical aspects of anime using the methods and theories of the discipline. He will discuss issues of receptions from the past, the functions of traditional art and architecture within the anime, political uses of anime, its references to the West, as well as reoccurring themes such as those dealing with religion (Buddhism, Shintoism, and also Christianity) and the occult, use of space and material culture, references to performing arts, its use as an underground art form, and so on. The important relationship between anime and contemporary art (such as Takashi Murakami and the “Superflat”) will also be examined.



The staff of the KGOA hopes that these courses will mark a beginning of a significant study program in modern Japanese visual culture at the university, in particular a study centered on the *anime* and its relations with art history. In addition, an anime-related convention and film festival at the KGOA are currently in the planning for the year 2011.

