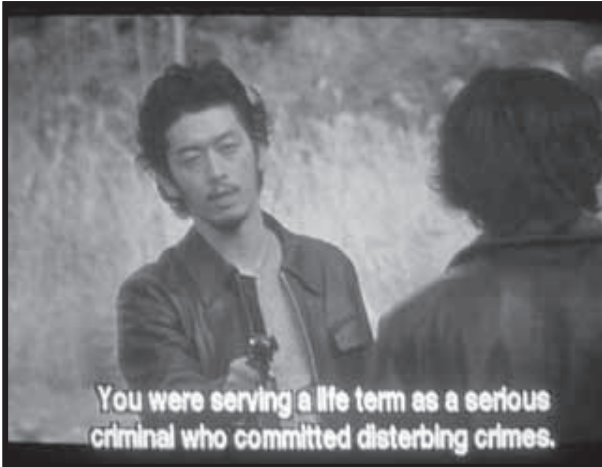


Film & Digital Media 2009-10 Colloquium Series



Markus Nornes

A Collaboration in Abusive Subtitling

Abé Markus Nornes, Professor in Screen Arts & Cultures/Asian Languages & Cultures, is the author of *Cinema Babel*, a theoretical and historical look at the role of translation in film history. He also wrote *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary and Japanese Documentary Film: From the Meiji Era to Hiroshima*. He is on the editorial boards of *Documentary Box*, *International Studies in Documentary*, and *Mechadamia* and has been co-owner of the internet news-group KineJapan since its inception.

Friday

January 22 / 12:00 PM
Communications 150

In 1992, director Sato Makoto released *Living on the River Agano*, a documentary examining the impact of Minamata Disease on a rural community in the mountains of Niigata. It was the result of several years spent living with the old farmers in the area. Ten years later, Sato and his cameraman returned to Niigata to renew their friendships with the farmers—at least those that had survived in the intervening years, and on this occasion, they made another film, *Memories of Agano* (2004).

These two films posed a range of challenges to the subtitler, beginning with the remarkably thick dialect of Niigata, so incomprehensible to most Japanese that it is usually subtitled in Japanese. Sato wanted his sequel to resist the reduction of these people to the disease, deciding that his goals could be best served by forcing spectators to listen to how people spoke rather than simply what they were saying. So he chose not to subtitle it in Japanese. The result was a beautiful film that almost no one could “understand.” This posed a novel challenge to Nornes, the English subtitler. Nornes uses *Memories of Agano* as an opportunity to bring his theorization of an “abusive subtitling” into thorough practice.

**Sponsored by the Film & Digital Media Department
and the Arts Research Institute**

For more information about the colloquium or accessibility:
459 - 3204 | film@ucsc.edu | <http://film.ucsc.edu>

