WAYS OF NOT FORGETTING:
Japanese citizen scientists’ artistic responses to the 2011 Fukushima disaster

Eight years after “3/11,” Japan is still coming to terms with the human, environmental, and economic damage wreaked by a deadly earthquake, devastating tsunami and multiple meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Whereas some officials in Japan call to put the memories of these disaster to rest...

The latter include local community residents, who to this day monitor radioactivity in the affected areas and communicate about environmental risks.

These citizen scientists, as they are sometimes called, have developed their own artistic responses to the Fukushima accident...

...in the form of posters, pamphlets, brochures, comics, and theatrical art...

These citizen scientists, as they are sometimes called, have developed their own artistic responses to the Fukushima accident...

...which convey how radiation has penetrated the everyday lives of citizens, ...

...and urge residents to share their experiences in dealing with the effects of radiation from the disaster.

Our aims are to:

1) Acknowledge the value of intimate and imaginative knowledge in the context of long-lasting exposure to radiation, and ...

2) Open up a dialogue among artists, citizens, and scholars who share a normative commitment to not forgetting.

In homage to these traditions, we deploy the burgeoning science-art format known as the Cartoon Abstract, which transforms academic research into a visually appealing cartoon strip.

The latter includes local community residents, who to this day monitor radioactivity in the affected areas and communicate about environmental risks.

In this cartoon, we bring into focus these artistic representations and link them to longer traditions of Japanese art culture...

...including manga...

...and the cuteness aesthetic known as kawaii.

Keywords: Art, Cartoon abstract, Citizen science, Fukushima disaster, Japan, Radiation.

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