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## Preface

This is now the fifth volume of the Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies (VEAS), published by the Department of East Asian Studies of the University of Vienna and edited by Ina Hein, Lukas Pokorny, Agnes Schick-Chen and Rudiger Frank. As one of the few universities in Europe and the only one in Austria to have full-fledged programmes in Chinese, Japanese and Korean Studies as well as a graduate programme on East Asian Economy and Society, we recognise our responsibility to share the results of our research and provide an additional opportunity for scholars from other research institutions to publish theirs.

The papers in this issue reflect our Viennese approach to East Asian Studies. Building on their language proficiency in Chinese, Japanese or Korean, our scholars combine the universal methodology of various disciplines with rich empirical data collected qualitatively or quantitatively. They generate new results through intense field work and meticulous discourse analysis, thus making local and regional intellectual debates accessible to non-specialists, and use their knowledge to contextualise events and developments in the East Asian region, which we broadly define as China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia and ASEAN.

The contributions in this volume once more cover a broad range of issues and approaches, including contemporary Chinese oil painting (Caterina Egenhöfer), contemporary Okinawan fiction (Tamara Kameron), East Asian bond markets (Thomas Kemetmüller), the social networks of homeless people in Japan (Johannes Kiener), early Japanese psychiatry (Bernhard Leitner), and the Japanese woodblock print genre of *awate-e* (Hannah Nowak).

As diverse as they are in terms of methodology and focus, these contributions are unified by their relevance for understanding East Asia and the processes that take place in its societies and by the high academic quality of the single research projects. All these studies have been written in our Department and show the productivity of our young researchers.

In preparing the manuscripts for this publication, the authors have been strongly supported by peers who reviewed the contributions and provided valuable comments. For this issue, the authors and editors particularly thank guest editors Erika Forte, Ingrid Getreuer-Kargl and Sepp Linhart. My team at the Chair of East Asian Economy and Society, and in particular Julia Peitl, has done an excellent job in text editing and communication with our longstanding partner, the publishing house Praesens Verlag in Vienna. Without Susan Pares and her professional language editing, we non-native speakers of English could not have dared to present this volume to our readers. The University of Vienna through the Chair of East Asian Economy and Society has provided the necessary funding and administrative resources, despite a very difficult financial situation.

As always, Lukas Pokorny deserves the main credit for having acted as the project leader for this issue. It is only thanks to his persistent and tireless effort that this volume has been finalised and published.

The next volumes are already under preparation; we thus invite submissions and would like to note again that VEAS is open for contributions from outside the University of Vienna.

On behalf of the editors, it is my pleasure and honour to present this latest volume of our Journal to you, hoping that it will continue to be well received by a national and international readership.

Vienna, February 2014

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, flowing letters that appear to read 'R. Frank'.

*Rudiger Frank*

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# Fantastic Realities: Magical Realism in Contemporary Okinawan Fiction

Tamara Kameron

## Abstract

*This paper examines magical realism in Okinawa bungaku (Okinawan literature) with a special focus on the literary works of Medoruma Shun. The central research questions are what kind of Okinawan realities these magical-realistic texts point towards and which real problems thus become obvious. Against the theoretical background regarding the discussions on magical realism in literary science, qualitative analyses of the two short stories 'Akai yashi no ha' (1992) and 'Umukaji tō chiritei' (1999) are conducted. The findings of these analyses show that the narrative mode of magical realism is used to point towards post-colonial power relations and to express a political critique of contemporary relationships with mainland Japan and the United States from an Okinawan point of view.*

**Keywords:** Okinawa bungaku, magical realism, Medoruma Shun



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