

MWU's DAAM (Department of Architecture and Architecture Major) Special Lecture

Byzantine Art and Architecture

Date : June 6 (Saturday), 2015, 13:00~16:30

Venue : West Hall, Koshien Hall

Lecturer : Dr. Tomoyuki Masuda (Professor, Waseda University, Japan)

Waseda University Professor Tomoyuki Masuda was invited to give a lecture entitled “Byzantine Art and Architecture.”

First, Department of Architecture Chair Okazaki explained the significance of this lecture. He observed that a problem of modern architectural space is its lack of murals. He told the audience of the need to once again consider the foundations of modern architecture by learning about Byzantine art and architecture.

Next, Professor Masuda gave the lecture. He first sketched an outline of the history of the Byzantine Empire and the characteristics of Byzantine art. He then introduced examples of mosaic and fresco Christian iconography, such as those found in the Basilica of San Vitale, the Church of Santa Maria dell'Amiraglio (the Martorana), the Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora, and Hagia Sophia. He commented on the meaning of these icons and techniques involved. Professor Masuda then taught the audience the art historian Otto Demus' system of analyzing Byzantine church decorations. Using the Church of St. George, in Kurbinovo, Macedonia, as an example, he commented on the relationship between the spatial layout of icons found in the church and their contents. He told his audience of a feature of Byzantine art: its skillful use of three-dimensional space to express content that cannot be expressed with just a single icon. Furthermore, he presented numerous icons with the theme of suffering Mary, the mother of Christ, and educated the audience on the continuity between the Byzantine and Renaissance art. Finally, based on his own experience Professor Masuda discussed the features of a monastery on Mount Athos and the characteristics of the monks' lifestyle.

Professor Masuda skillfully showcased the allure of Byzantine art by giving an easy-to-understand exposition of each icon's characteristics. This lecture provided an extremely valuable opportunity to consider the relationship between murals and space.

(Reported by Kazuhiko Yanagisawa)



West Hall



Dr. Tomoyuki Masuda