Work-in-Progress Seminar Series 2010

1 - 2.30 pm, Friday 27th August  
Theatrette, Level 2, Sir Roland Wilson Building

**The Jinrikisha through the Lens: Tourism and Modernity in Meiji Japan**  
*Dr Luke Gartlan, School of Art History, University of St Andrews, UK*

For nineteenth-century globetrotters, a jinrikisha ride was an almost mandatory experience of their visit to Japan. To commemorate their experiences, such tourists often had themselves photographed in simulated jinrikisha scenes in one of numerous commercial studios. This discussion examines the relationship between the tourist experience of the conveyance and its representation in early photography in Japan. Although some scholars have argued that commercial photographers sought to document Japanese society before the impact of modernisation (the so-called ‘salvage paradigm’), the popularity of the jinrikisha photograph complicates this stance. As a recent invention of the treaty port milieu, the jinrikisha had the potential to signify innovation and change, and hence appeared an unsuitable subject for the souvenir market. Why did the jinrikisha quickly enter the studio repertoire and what role did photography play in the status afforded the conveyance? And why, significantly, was this theme adopted by entrepreneurial Japanese photographers of the period? Through an examination of travellers’ accounts and select photographs, this paper will examine the dynamic, shifting representational field of the jinrikisha portrait in Meiji-period Japan.

*Luke Gartlan is Lecturer in the School of Art History at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, where he teaches on the history of photography and cross-cultural visual culture. He has held research fellowships at the University of Vienna and Nihon University, Tokyo, and has contributed to exhibition catalogues for the National Gallery of Victoria and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. Luke has published articles in numerous journals, including Visual Resources, Early Popular Visual Culture, and The La Trobe Journal, and was guest editor of a special issue on photography in nineteenth-century Japan for History of Photography (May 2009).*

**All Welcome**  
Convenors: Ken Taylor and Alastair MacLachlan

Sir Roland Wilson Building, Bld #120, McCoy Circuit, Canberra. Phone: 6125 6674