Justin Jesty, associate professor of Japanese language and literature, was recently awarded the 2019 ASAP (Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present) Book Prize for his book titled *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* (2018). This prize is awarded annually for the book that makes the most significant contribution to the study of the arts of the present.

"A virtuosic study of the intersection of art and politics, Justin Jesty’s *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* presents an original and important contribution to the fields of global contemporary art criticism and East Asian studies. But it is also a profound study of the art of one country that reaches outward toward other contexts and disciplines. Skewing the recent fascination with the so-called global conceptualism of the 1960s, Jesty shows how overlooked genres and amateur and collective artistic practices attempted to shape democratic culture from below amidst the radical uncertainty of the immediate postwar period in Japan. This was a transitional moment characterized by intense debate about how to move on from violent trauma and how not to reproduce the mistakes of the past. Jesty pushes back against the fashionable and aestheticized revolutionary demands typical of the neo-avant-garde by underscoring, instead, the problems of “organization, goal-directedness, and incremental change” that formed part of a postwar common sense overlooked by the emphasis, among recent art histories, on the effects of reconstruction and modernization during the following decades."

Please see [here](https://asian.washington.edu) for more information.