



## **CULCON Arts Dialogue Committee Report to CULCON XXV**

### **I. Background:**

Among six task forces established at CULCON XXIII in 2008 to identify issues for potential action, the Arts and Cultural Exchange Task Force examined topics of mutual concern including:

- Assessing the impact of exchanges of curators;
- Mobilizing networks of curators and presenters;
- Organizing symposia on Performing and Visual Arts.

Based on the task force's activities and potential for positive impact in the field, CULCON announced in the CULCON XXIV Joint Statement that it would establish a "working group of specialists to consider future measures to enhance exchange in the fields of traditional, modern and contemporary art and to establish a framework for mutually beneficial curatorial collaboration and exchange."

Later named the Arts Dialogue Committee, the group has had two lively and substantive binational meetings since the last plenary session, once in Washington, DC in May, 2011 and once in Tokyo in March, 2012.

### **II. Accomplishments:**

The Arts Dialogue Committee is a forum that has allowed representatives from U.S. and Japanese private and public institutions to air differing points of view and to reach greater consensus on important issues, such as the development of programs for curatorial and academic exchanges, the need for mutual understanding of indemnification, methods of fundraising and effective means for the promotion of contemporary art.

As a direct result of the Arts Dialogue Committee meetings, the International Workshop on Japanese Art History for Graduate Students (JAWS) program was re-established after a hiatus of five years. Funded by the Agency for Cultural Affairs as the primary sponsor, the 10th JAWS is to be organized by graduate students of art history mainly from the U.S. and Japan. The discussion and research programs will be held in Tokyo and Nara and managed by Tokyo University of the Arts from August 16-26, 2012. One of the longer-term impacts of JAWS is the successful creation of an international network of emerging scholars; since the 1<sup>st</sup> JAWS was held in 1987 242 students have participated in the program.

Also as a direct result of the discussions, the Agency for Cultural Affairs plans to host an international program, a so-called Japanese Art Workshop that would target curators from abroad.

### **III. Recommendations:**

The Arts Dialogue Committee agenda has been wide in scope but the group has delved deeply into various issues in search of resolutions to differences. As a result of the research and discussions among its members, the group recommends the following:

#### **A. Exchange and Professional Development:**

1. JAWS: make the selection process of participants and host schools more transparent and inclusive. Future programs to be organized regionally and to include other institutions, such as museums, private collections, and temples;
2. Continue to promote curatorial exchange programs, particularly those organized by the Japan Foundation. Encourage more practical dialogue between curators and other museum personnel, including administrators and conservators, from both countries. These programs should take a variety of forms including those targeted to specialists as well as relative newcomers to the study of Japan;
3. Nurture and expand the number of researchers on Japanese art;
4. Encourage existing programs to institutionalize a Japan component. For example, the Philadelphia Museum of Art could try to ensure that at least one Japanese student each summer is among its undergraduate/graduate summer interns. The Japanese Council of Art Museums would like to collaborate with a U.S. organization to develop a curatorial exchange program along the lines of ones that have already been initiated with Korea, the U.K. and Australia;
5. Place special emphasis on two-way curatorial exchanges that might result in joint exhibitions;

#### **B. Exhibitions:**

6. Further encourage the exchange of art exhibitions between the U. S. and Japan, following the new models for collaboration in the development of exhibitions recommended by this group ;
7. Include regional museums in exchanges and joint exhibitions;
8. Facilitate the further examination and revision of the new Japanese indemnification laws, which are posing barriers to exchange of cultural properties. Continue the dialogue at U.S. associations, such as the American Association of Museums (AAM);
9. Encourage interdepartmental participation in exchanges. For example, strengthen collaborative work of contemporary and traditional art specialists in one museum;
10. As a result of March 11, many U.S. museums have cancelled their plans to lend art to museums in Fukushima. Advocate that American institutions honor their commitments and make plans to share their collections.
11. There are cultural properties that were damaged during the earthquake and tsunami that have been conserved and are available for exhibition abroad. Encourage American institutions to exhibit these pieces as well as feature information about rescue and conserving processes and activities.

#### **C. Information Sharing:**

12. Create a bilingual database of past exchanges as background for future exchanges;
13. Establish a bilingual forum for information sharing among institutions to enhance networking and avoid duplication. For example, use the summary of exhibitions and projects provided for the annual meeting of American Curators for Asian Art as a model;
14. Encourage bilingual publication in electronic form of results of surveys and research on Japanese art in the U.S. conducted by scholars and curators from both countries so that they are available to a wider audience;
15. Using March 11 as a benchmark, encourage institutions to examine and share information about the efficacy of anti-seismic technology already in used in Japan.
16. With the financial challenges faced by museums in Japan and the United States, promote further dialogue between museum administrators about ways to contain or reduce costs for loan or collaborative exhibitions
17. Given the long history of philanthropy and fundraising within American art museums, encourage continued dialogue between American museum administrators and their Japanese counterparts wherein American fundraising methods and strategies can be examined and modified for effective use in Japan.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

In the short time it has been in existence, the Arts Dialogue Committee has made tangible contributions to the field in promoting and improving art and museum exchange between the two countries. In addition to these contributions, the Committee offers a unique binational forum to facilitate conversations on issues that arise in the community, for instance indemnity and CITES. The group should continue to meet over the next two years with a focus on concrete results in specific areas and programs.

Following CULCON's valuable role as incubator of collaboration, the Committee should explore other organizations with which to partner in continuing and expanding the important work it has begun.