


The Museum as an Art Platform / Archive Fukuoka Asian Art Museum

Hattori Hiroyuki, Nakao Tomomichi

In Asia, there are surprisingly few art museums with a focus on Asian art. Following on from the Asia-related activities of the Fukuoka Art Museum, the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum opened in 1999 as an institution specializing in Asian art. These combined efforts for around forty years to build up a collection of artworks and body of research into Asian art have become an important cornerstone of art activities in the region. In this interview, Nakao Tomomichi of the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum shares his insights on the past, present, and future of the art museum within the context of art museums serving as art platforms and archives.

Zoom Interview

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Guest: Nakao Tomomichi (Curator, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum)

Interviewer: Hattori Hiroyuki

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Reflecting on the interview

Nakao Tomomichi

What can be done only in Fukuoka? I think this question became a reference point for the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum when over forty years ago, the Fukuoka Art Museum decided to present an Asian art exhibition instead of a contemporary American art exhibition for its opening commemorative exhibition.

At the 1st Asian Art Show, Fukuoka held at the Fukuoka Art Museum in 1980, the works of 470 artists from thirteen countries were introduced. Since then, curators specializing in Asian art have continued to travel to Asian countries and gain firsthand knowledge of their art, and introduce artists and important artistic movements that have never been shown in Japan before. This approach has also been handed down to the five “Fukuoka Asian Art Triennales” held at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, established in 1999.

Having said that, after entering into the 2000s we have seen a continuous stream of large-scaled international exhibitions in Japan and across Asia, and this has gradually forced us to shift the focus of what can only be done in Fukuoka.

For one thing, we must streamline what we have accumulated through our pioneering activities over the past forty years, namely, the many artworks and various archive-related materials that have entered our collection with each exhibition, further our knowledge of these materials, and make them available for use.

We must also expand and enrich the intersection between the everyday interest of the Japanese people and Asian art. While as a museum we have always placed importance on the reconsideration of modernity and valued the perspective of minority peoples, we must additionally access areas that are closer to our everyday, for example, pop culture, environmental issues and global education. The exchange and empathy we have fostered through our residence programs will also surely continue to energize our museum.

Until now, we have generated a cycle of building networks among other Asian regions through periodic field work, organizing exhibitions and residence programs, and collecting artwork. Although maintaining this cycle on our own has become a greater challenge due to Covid-19, among other reasons, we believe that it is always possible to renew our network by exchanging information and passion with our fellow Asian countries.

Related Keywords

- Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Singapore Art Museum and National Gallery Singapore