

the naïveness of the Korean public and the political reality of the time. The 1995 Gwangju Biennale attracted 1.6 million visitors, the vast majority of whom had no preconceived idea of what a biennial was. They probably thought it was like a world's fair. I think the second reason for its success was perhaps its extreme political attitude and character, that the biennial is essentially different from the museum exhibition.

The record number of visitors to the first Gwangju Biennale has not been beaten by the following three, and may never be beaten. It is ironic that the 27 thousand visitors a day to the first Gwangju Biennale were too many for a cultural event and far too many for the exhibition spaces. For virtually all the visitors, the biennial was not so much a biennial — a word that no one had previously heard of — but a family outing. Ask yourselves if this was the case for those who visited the recent Yokohama Triennale.

When it came to a promotional strategy for the Gwangju Biennale, I made it a point of not presenting it as a purely artistic event. To attract as large a public as possible, I made sure that many other events accompanied the art exhibition. From the first to the last day of the biennial, the spectator could choose from drama, mime, concerts, North Korean art, symposiums, wall painting, walk-run racing, a commemorative festival of victims of the dictatorship, photography exhibitions, movie projections whose theme was the movement for democracy in Gwangju, and even a contest pitting contestants' screams against the tooting of an out-of-service locomotive installed on the biennial grounds. The word quickly spread that the Gwangju Biennale was fun! This strategy of seeking to fuse different cultural ideologies into a total cultural biennial without a strong bias for visual art continues today to be one of the organizing principles behind the Gwangju Biennale.

Today, Korea is the only country on the planet that is divided in half, which, in the context of globalism, constitutes a primitive political situation. It is a place where various politically supported events, in the name of ideology, are convincing to the public. Although the South is indeed industrialized and its president has received the Nobel Peace Prize, it is a country where, just a short 20 years ago, the most tragic event in its contemporary history occurred, when hundreds of students rose up against the military dictatorship, and were crushed by it. This is the seminal event that the Gwangju

Biennale embraced in its first edition. Today, the exact number of deaths remains fuzzy. Still, at the first biennial, a separate ground was designated as a place for the souls of the martyred patriots who, in dying in the name of freedom, became symbols of the struggle for democracy in Korea. It was here in the Gwangju region, then, that Korean democracy was born, here in the place where, throughout the 500-year history of the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), the greatest number of intellectuals were exiled for their political beliefs. They left behind the most poignant and brilliant writings and artworks, which are considered to be a definitive documentation on the culture of the exile. President Kim Dae-jung, who is a native of the Gwangju region, is imbued with this culture. It is no mystery for Koreans that this culture is at the heart of his Nobel Prize for Peace.

The Gwangju democratic uprising happened over 20 years ago, yet it is still an open wound for the people of the region. It is at the center of the Gwangju Biennale, both as a strategy and an ideological foundation.

Although in 1995 Gwangju had a population of 1.3 million, which made it the fifth largest city in the country, its infrastructures were too rudimentary to support an international biennial. It lagged behind the development of other major Korean cities because the violent anti-government discourse of its natives made it the favorite target of neglect for the government. I am not a native of the Gwangju region, nor have I lived there. Yet, when in 1994 the idea was conceived to create a biennial there, I was forcefully invited to prepare the event. You see, the mayor of the city was my friend. As soon as I accepted the job, I felt like I had fallen into a bottomless pit of problems.

One of my first activities was to conduct a shamanist ceremony (*goot* in Korean) in the name of both art and the hundreds of martyrs who were assassinated by the military dictatorship. The mayor of Gwangju knew only too well that it would have been impossible to heal the city's wounds in a purely political way. He called upon me as a professor, someone whom he considered to be politically neutral, to create an art festival that bypassed politics. This was a convincing strategy. He and his administration had a blind faith that nothing other than a biennial could open the door to the future of the city. His naïve enthusiasm was matched only by his erroneous information that, for instance, a magnificent international biennial could be

organized with 200 or 300 thousand dollars.

This year, from March to June, Gwangju celebrated its fourth biennial. With the next edition, in 2004, it will reach its 10th year of existence. Most if not all of you already know about the Gwangju Biennale. Perhaps a few more details will help you to understand it better. As its first director, I essentially took the job of a scientist in a laboratory. I researched a variety of areas such as general theories of the biennial, including the particular problems of culture in developing countries and in Asia, globalism and global events, the relationship between art and the public, and the vanity of a system that the system of the establishment brandishes. In a word, I researched the bridge between desire and ideal.

In January 1995, I was named artistic director of the Gwangju Biennale — a mere eight months before its official opening. The exhibition was to be held primarily at the Gwangju City Museum. The Museum of Folklore, located in a neglected park outside the city, was available, if needed. The mayor had succeeded in augmenting the budget to half a million dollars through supplications to the city council. But what about the volunteers that would still be necessary to get the job done? There were none. The only positive aspect of the project was that since the mayor had decided to create the event, it could count on the city administration to back him up and, consequently, to back me up: No obstacles stood in my way to creating the first Gwangju Biennale. I was in the lucky position to cut short any tergiversations.

I looked, with the help of the mayor, for other sources of funds. To its citizens, who believe that Gwangju was and still is the holy place where Korean democracy was born from the blood of its fallen children, the city had to create something important in their name. I suppose I decided to exploit the sorrow and guilt created by the democratic uprising in order to encourage big business to support the biennial. In any case, after just an initial foray into funding raising, we suddenly had a war chest of 20 million dollars. The biggest corporations, including Samsung and LG, wanted to participate. Some of them even encouraged us not to hesitate to ask for more money if we needed it later on. In the end, we didn't need to ask again.

The first thing I asked for was the construction of special biennial exhibition halls. Ground breaking began in April and construction

was completed in September, the month of the opening. The design of the halls is simple and intended for a multiplicity of usages, much like the Kassel Documenta Hall. The walls of the spaces rise up eight meters. The design entailed a long and arduous struggle between the architect who, of course, wanted to create a personal work and myself who preferred something functional, a place where the most divergent aesthetic expressions could be housed together. Thanks to the efforts of the administration of the city of Gwangju, the exhibition halls were completed just before the opening. In the course of the construction, the first architect disappeared, and the construction company changed twice.

More than the construction of the exhibition halls themselves, the organizers were tormented by the complicated discussions surrounding the organization of the exhibition itself. For instance, there was the problem of the families of the democratic uprising's martyrs, who felt left out of the planning process; the problem of involving the various political groups in the city; the problem of dealing with the local artists and other groups who opposed the city administration; the problem of those who opposed me and, through their administrative contacts, sought to block my efforts to create the biennial; and the problem of organizing the biennial on time. The newspapers had a front-page field day with each of these problems. They created polemics around my statement that the Gwangju Biennale should be different from a museum exhibition, that it should be a place for cultural discussion. In the end, I realized that all the news interest around these thorny problems directed a positive spotlight on the biennial itself. In any case, the biennial became a discussion about culture.

While these policy debates raged on the outside, while dissent grew and talk even moved to the question of whether the biennial project should be canceled and forgotten, on the inside we gained the necessary time to work but all the problems. Then, help from the citizens of Gwangju came to us in the most unexpected way. They liked the fact that here, in the cradle of the movement for Korean democracy, an innovative art biennial was also in the process of gestation. Because of their enthusiasm, the idea occurred to us that if we came upon any budget shortfalls, the city might levy a special biennial surtax. From this idea came the new Biennial Tax, which was proposed to the various city councils.

We chose as biennial theme "Beyond the Borders," our goal being to create an "encounter" among the diverse ideologies that appeared in the 1990s: modernism, postmodernism, deconstructionism, hybrid media, pluralism, restitutionism, etc. In coming up with this theme, I asked the curators to bear in mind two principles. The first was that in making their artist selections they should ignore the artist's notoriety or lack thereof, that, in fact they should choose young, lesser known artists who had yet to enter into the biennial circuit. The second was that instead of seeking to impress the public merely with remarkable installation work, they should present artworks of value that inspire the public's participation and provide it with information.

These two principles were practiced the best by the artist selection of the American Kathy Halbreich, the director of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As one of the seven biennial curators, she transcended art world conventions and came up with a meaningful exhibition pitting an unknown 25-year-old Cuban named K.Cho against the 60-year-old heavyweight Chuck Close.

The biennial was composed of one main exhibition surrounded by five special exhibitions. Forty percent of the artists were from Asian countries, sixty percent were from outside of Asia. One special exhibition consisted of an open-air show throughout the entire city of Gwangju, an exhibition without walls that shared space with the city's 1.3 million inhabitants. The entire city became one grand exhibition space, from city hall to the military barracks whose soldiers had participated in the government's crushing of the democratic uprising, from the police department to the high-rise apartment buildings, from the cemetery to the elementary schools and the universities, from the train station to the bus stops, from the sewer system to the airport, from discotheques to traditional restaurants, from traditional open-air eateries to public parks. All of these places and more became biennial spaces in which art was exhibited or performances staged. After witnessing this prodigious variety of exhibition venues, Catherine David, who, at the time, was both the director of the Kassel Documenta and a consultant for the Gwangju Biennale, said that she intended to introduce this style to the next Documenta, in 1997.

The biennial owed its overwhelming public participation to the involvement of television broadcasting. The network MBC, which was the co-organizer of the biennial, promoted it by installing a TV

studio in a corner of the biennial complex to diffuse the entire exhibition program, including artists interviews and curators talks. This spotlight on the Gwangju Biennale and on the city and region of Gwangju played an instrumental role in dissipating animosity both within the region and throughout the country in what can be considered the greatest social prejudice in the modern history of Korean politics. Beginning in the 1960s with Park Chung-hee, all four of the country's presidents were natives of the Gyeongsang region of Korea, and, like many of their constituents, they harbored great animosity toward the Gwangju region and its inhabitants, mistreating them in their government policies and stoking the fire of Gwangju natives' anti-government stands. Thanks to the Gwangju Biennale and its television broadcast across the country, this animosity receded and gave way to an art event that transcended politics. At the end of the biennial, the balance sheet showed that 1.6 million visitors had allowed the biennial to earn 8 million dollars, a tidy sum that would guarantee that a second Gwangju Biennale could be organized. As a footnote to this bottom line, those who had attacked the most virulently the organization of the first biennial now fought tooth and nail to be part of the second one.

### [III]

Just now everybody wants to talk about 'identity'...identity only becomes an issues when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty.<sup>1</sup>

We hear a great deal about identity at global, national, local and personal levels. Namely, identity and difference are words in common currency. In media coverage, identity is often addressed as problematic, for example, the loss of identity which may be seen as accompanying changes in employment and job losses, the search for identity which follows the break-up of communities or of personal relationships and even identity crisis. Are there any changes of identity in art today? Identities in contemporary art derive from a multiplicity of sources — from nationality, ethnicity, social class, community, gender, sexuality — sources which may conflict in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory

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K. Mercer, "Welcome to the Jungle," Jonathan Rutherford (ed), 1990, p.4.

fragmented identities.<sup>2</sup> Then where is the real change of artistic identities in the age of digital, technological revolution? What is the violence of image in the popular international artistic events including biennials?

I would now like to continue to make a few comments on a general theory of the biennial by first reading some excerpts from the first four paragraphs of "Violence of the image," written by Jean Baudrillard:

More subtle than that of aggression: violence of dissuasion, of pacification, of neutralization, of control. It is a "violence that, in a sense, puts an end to violence itself." It belongs to a "violence of the transparent," that appears and is sustained by the "manipulation" of media. It is the violence of "innocuousness," "the violence of a system that pursues all forms of the negative and the singular." It is "the violence of a society." "More than violence, we should talk about virulence. This violence is virulent, in that it operates not face to face, but by proximity, by contagion, by chain reaction, and its goal is first the breakdown of all immunity." Since this is violence involving "the spectacular, the media, the image, and information," it is "transparent," and its presence is perfect and "genetic." "This violence is virtuality." And "between Virtuality and Virulence, there is a profound complicity."<sup>3</sup>

The variety of the violence in toxic Virulence that Baudrillard writes about is for the most part linked to the global cultural phenomenon engendered by the technology revolution in information, image, media, spectacle, etc. Because they spread so rapidly through technology, Baudrillard sees them as having the particularity of working like a chain reactive contagion that overcomes all immune systems. He considers spectacle, image, media, and information — all prodigies of new technology — as more dangerous than physical violence because they are cultural phenomena at the heart of a dehumanizing technology. Here, Baudrillard uses "violence" as a kind of allegory to attack a variety of global "virulences."

Man complains that the brilliant technological civilization of his own making is inhuman. A half century of the dehumanizing expressions used in technology has made us become more aware of

the realities of capitalism, mercantilism, information, monopolies, not to mention globalization: techno-globalism, techno-police, techno-stress, techno-mania, techno-structure, techno-nationalism, techno-crash. . . These are the expressions that rhythm the reactions of intellectuals who analyze the cultural phenomena of the past century. They are also the vestiges of the School of Frankfurt. And the fact that they continue to haunt our discourses proves that the crux of the problem remains. The extent of this obsession doesn't just touch a few places, but is global. Global networks have the power to spread Baudrillard's idea that as a chain reaction gains strength, it weakens our immunity to it.

The sociologist Stanley Aronowitz believes that the political, economic, and ethical problems stemming from modern technology can also be resolved by modern technology.<sup>4</sup> The economist Robert Solow received the Nobel Prize for his theory that we can resolve seemingly endemic economic problems by redefining economic growth. His theory has no unique character, yet it can cure symptoms of an ailment. He sees the problem of the anti-humanistic self in technology as the remains of modernism.

Intellectuals' anti-technology discourses weaken visibly here, as they declare that the mission of the School of Frankfurt, which was once to formulate technological domination, is now over. Still, such declarations raise anxiety over the mechanization of society. A border war is raging between the being as a symbol of ecology and the machine as a symbol of civilization.

Nor does art go beyond this discourse. Artists often say that their own creations are inhuman. This is often the result when art meets technology. When an artist creates something inhuman, it is because he lacks either technique, productive philosophy, or productive process. The collision between he who criticizes and he who is criticized — that is, between humanism and the culture of the machine created by man — is a cultural and social issue that has appeared frequently, especially since the advent of the technological revolution. According to Baudrillard, if this is true, then is technology virulence? Or else is the way of life that technology has brought us virtuality? The parody of comfort that technology brings us is now under the spotlight.

Marshall McLuhan compared the artist to an antenna. The artist is a decision maker who has a remarkable sense for reading his times

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Stanley Aronowitz, "Technology and Future of Work," in *Culture on the Brink*, Gretchen Bender and Timothy Druckrey (ed), Bay Press, 1994, p.15.

and collecting information in the name of art. In the 1960s, as an intellectual, Marshall McLuhan was both praised and criticized. Today he is seen as a prophet. He foresaw the Internet decades before others did. The world came to McLuhan, and McLuhan came to the Internet. He was the Internet of the 1960s.

He wrote about electronic globalism, the global village as a country, an electronic tribe, and the information channel, all of which became the ideology of globalism. It also became a subject of the most complex and heated critical discussion, encompassing the whole of culture, economy, and modern politics and society. It is as complex and hybrid as the virulence of Baudrillard that informs media, information, image, and spectacle. McLuhan didn't create globalism — people did, by using technology. Even so, the political and social issues of globalism are complex. This includes the problem of power and the survival of humanity, of the dominator and the dominated, the producer and the consumer, the benefactor of global culture and the one who doesn't benefit from it at all.

The people of most developing countries, including Asians, often think that cultural, social, economic, and political events presented under the banner of globalism are Western products. Oftentimes they see themselves as victims who don't benefit from global events. In the worst cases, they see globalism as a power game presented by Western countries or imagine that globalism is a postcolonial carnival organized by new liberals. The fact that global events, whether they are successful or unsuccessful, are often the subject of intellectual criticism stems from the view that they ignore regionalism.

The identities of strong viruses and toxic contaminations, which global cultural events, including the biennial, spread, reveal, but only slightly, the real after a long time has passed. I am neither for or against the biennial. I am worried, however, because one movement of the visual arts today has come to dominate it. It's O.K. that the powerful discourse of a unique event and a "de-archeologized" art is the major art current. I see, however, that another kind of violence, fostered by the sixty or so biennials a year and the one hundred and twenty biennials every two years, contains this toxicity. The corruption and commercialization of technology from its collusion with capitalism is not a pretty sight. It seems like the original purpose, both beautiful and powerful, of the biennial as an instrument against the establishment has become paralyzed. Now, the components of

each biennial are the same, as though they come from an instruction booklet, and the artists and curators of each one are also the same. In fact, now, certain curators and artists specialize in biennial appearances.

Almost every biennial around the world loves to deal in haste with the ramifications of technology and the information revolution, what Baudrillard calls toxic: information, image, spectacle, media, globalism. Even if these artists and curators bring critical interpretations to globalism and technology, they never go beyond the level of political gestures. The intent of the biennial's global politics is to capture the cultural power of the self in global society. Yet, because it never really goes beyond its intention, it ends up basically as just a festival of tourism or a brilliant global information festival. The same holds true for almost every cultural event, from established biennials to new avatars that should exempt themselves from what now can only be called the biennial tradition.

## A Trojan Horse? : Multiculturalism in International Art Exhibitions

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I do not have the precise figures but there are now more than a hundred biennial or triennial international art exhibitions held in countries throughout the world. Especially since the 1990s, there has been a rush of international exhibitions. To mention only the most prominent: the Lyon Biennale in France started in 1991, the Taipei Biennale in Taiwan in 1992 (which became an international exhibition in 1998), the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Brisbane, Australia in 1993, the Johannesburg Biennale in South Africa in 1995 (discontinued after the second exhibition), the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea, also in 1995, the Shanghai Biennale in China in 1996 (which became an international exhibition in 2000), the Berlin Biennale in 1998, the Liverpool Biennale in England in 2000, the Yokohama Triennale in Japan in 2001, and the Busan Biennale in Korea in 2002. Another example is the Asian Art Show in Fukuoka, Japan, organized by Fukuoka Art Museum, which became a triennial exhibition in 1999 with the opening of the new Fukuoka Asian Art Museum.

Of course, there is nothing new about the biennial or triennial exhibition format, and there are exhibitions with more than a hundred-year history like the Venice Biennale. However, whether old and established or brand new, the international exhibitions of contemporary art presented since the 1990s have certain obvious characteristics. Simply stated, almost all of them have incorporated the viewpoint of multiculturalism or cultural pluralism. This is certainly true of exhibitions that I have been involved in organizing, such as Yokohama 2001 and the Busan Biennale.

An exception to this trend was the Kassel Documenta of 1997, which showcased a broad range of conceptualist art based on Western-centric, globalist ideas. The working concept of this show was the universality of Western analytical reason, and I remember a journalist at the opening press conference asking why there were only

a few Asian artists in the exhibition. Such a question would never have been raised at an exhibition of this kind up through the 1980s. My purpose in this paper is not to discuss the history of international exhibitions, but as far as the Venice Biennale is concerned, it is my personal impression that for many years after World War II it was basically a competition for prizes between the pavilions of the Western powers. Although there was sporadic criticism of the political nature of this game, the lack of diversity in the international art world was hardly ever mentioned directly.

So, to some extent, international exhibitions may have become fairer since the 1990s. The booing of the director at the press conference of the 1997 Documenta might be taken as a sign of this change.

There has certainly been an increase in fairness in the sense that contemporary art trends in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America are now taken seriously. It is often thought that this change is due to the fact that most of the locations of new biennial and triennial exhibitions are outside of the West, where it is only natural for the organizers to take a post-colonialist point of view. However, a look at the actual history of this tendency reveals that the present situation is a little more complex than that. In fact, it was an exhibition based in Europe rather than in Asia or Africa that took the lead in introducing this sort of fairness into international exhibitions.

Multiculturalism in art was first advocated most clearly in Europe (there are no regular large-scale international exhibitions based in the United States, except for the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh), and this approach spread and influenced and influenced the establishment of international exhibitions in regions outside of the West, with some differences in time.

I do not mean to say that multicultural exhibitions have been simply "transplanted" from Europe to Asia. Nor do I wish to criticize this phenomenon as a paradoxical form of colonialism. The current situation has grown even more complex, especially if we pay attention to the way the "transplanting" is often reversed. I think we need to recognize the overall situation of mutual influences and exchanges in the field of organizing exhibitions as providing many new possibilities for intercultural communication.

The decision to be fair in terms of cultural theory is ultimately a strategic choice in an exhibition. If curators rely on a naïve sense of

justice, they may not give sufficient consideration to the inevitable political implications. As a result the multiculturalism in international exhibitions, which should be conducive to harmony and communication, may actually be a Trojan horse that has been brought in without anyone becoming aware of it.

This is a trap that we must be careful of when dealing with multiculturalism in art. If this is thought to be an exaggeration, I would at least say that that we should be careful about accepting some aspects of it unconditionally. Of course, the general framework of multiculturalism deserves our support, but there are some areas of concern. Below, I will examine these problems in detail with reference to two exhibitions (one as an observer and the other as an organizer).

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As everyone knows, the first major exhibition to embrace multiculturalism was "Magiciens de la Terre (Magicians of the Earth)" in 1989. The organizer, Jean-Hubert Martin, stated that he first conceived of it as a new Paris Biennale to be held in the grand hall of La Villette. However, it eventually became one of the events associated with the bicentennial of the Revolution. And because Martin had recently been appointed director of the Georges Pompidou Center, he expanded it into a huge exhibition occupying both La Villette and the Pompidou Center.

In the preface to the catalog, Martin wrote, "The multiplication of images of the globe of the Earth (*la Terre*) is a symptom of the greater density of communication and ties, both mediated and personal, between the people of the planet."<sup>1</sup>

It is noteworthy that this simple sentence completely avoids the dualistic framework of the West versus the non-West. There are myriads of artistic images to be found in the many lands of the Earth, including the West, and this is the first announcement of the position that it is necessary to be mutually aware of this situation in a non-hierarchical way for communication to take place.

The word multiculturalism did not appear in Martin's long introductory article. However, in addition to criticizing the "arrogance of our culture" for assuming that it is only natural for the culture of other regions to follow us, he pointed out that our interest in other cultures may be problematic when we treat these cultures like

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Jean-Hubert Martin, "Préface,"  
*magiciens de la terre*, Centre  
Georges Pompidou, Musée  
nationale d'art moderne, 1989,  
p8.

ghosts of ancient civilizations without cultural relevance to our own age. In effect, this represented a clear change from the old primitivist view of non-Western art to the new attitude of multiculturalism.

Of course, the art world of Western modernism has continually shown an interest in other cultures in spite of its monolithic arrogance, or perhaps because of it. For example, Jean Debuffet, in assembling his collection of Art Brut, praised primitive art on the same level as the art of the mentally handicapped. The reason he gives is that it is "not poisoned by civilization." That is, he advocates a return to a pure form of art like ours used to be. However, even though he overturns the usual valuation of civilization, the spatial distance between modern art and the Art Brut of our own age is considered analogous to the temporal distance between our art and the art of older cultures (a condition prior to civilization, like that of our own past). Therefore, his approach is problematic in the sense pointed out by Martin.

In 1984, five years before "Magiciens de la Terre," an exhibition called "Primitivism in 20th Century Art" was held at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. It was a brilliant and impressive show that demonstrated how much Western modern art has been inspired by primitive art throughout its history from Cubism to earthworks. However, the juxtaposition of tribal art and ancient ruins as sources of inspiration treats things that actually existed in the same time frame as having a temporal distance from each other. That is, the tribal art is treated as an absolute other that cannot be put in the same category as modern art so it is considered on the same level as ancient art.

Art Brut and primitivism implied a re-reading of the map of the world chronologically, providing concepts by which the West could maintain its interest in others without having its own centrality threatened. In contrast, "Magiciens de la Terre" took a much fairer stance toward contemporaneous others. Rejecting the analogy of temporal distance to spatial distance from others that guarantees the centrality of the West, it looked directly at the spatial condition of the surface of the globe, which has no center. The whereabouts of each of the hundred artists in the show was marked on a world map in the catalogue (I do not remember if there was a similar map in the exhibition space), but no exhibition histories were listed. This was the opposite of the usual way of presenting artists in a catalogue, clearly

demonstrating a new position.

When the yearning for the primitive, which supposes that we were "that way" once, is applied to real others, it becomes the background for a progressive or developmental view of history, whether self-consciously or not. Martin rejected the paradoxical historicism of understanding a synchronous situation diachronically. He made a thorough study of the situation on the ground in Africa and Asia, and his fastidious approach to gathering information as he visited the places where artists lived and worked, no matter how remote, was like that of a cultural anthropologist.

The African masks seen in Paris by Picasso were simply a source of formal inspiration, and it was probably not important to him what tribe they were from or what their original function was. Since these masks were transported to Paris from French colonies, there was an element of cultural colonialism and exploitation in early Cubism. Martin took the trouble to study the work of the artists in their original context in person. There is no doubt of the honesty of his effort, and the result was greater than could have been expected with a theoretical equalitarianism. However, I was somewhat disturbed because of the lack of original context in the exhibition space. Ironically, this exhibition presented the "magiciens sans la terre" — "magicians" in a site separated from the earth.

The works of the individual "magicians" made a strong impact when they were considered separately, but the body of objects brought into the cultural apparatus of La Villette and the Pompidou Center seemed somewhat haphazard when viewed as a whole. After the "magicians" had come to Paris and reproduced their work in the exhibition space, it seemed to me, in spite of its unique qualities, that the spirit adhering to it in the original context was missing.

As Adorno pointed out, an exhibition of artworks is a place where things that have been robbed of their first life (life in the original context) take on a second life. Regardless of what may happen in the future, an exhibition at the present stage of history cannot escape from these modernist limitations. Martin's method of research could not transform the exhibition site into "earth" for the "magicians."

Even so, I believe that this exhibition was significantly original. It was quite stimulating and challenging in the context of the contemporary art of the time. Art works considered to be outside the

context of contemporary art showed a sort of "aura" when placed next to works by the likes of Daniel Buren, James Lee Byars, and Miyajima Tatsuo. That was a somewhat surprising discovery.

A major characteristic of this exhibition was the many African artists who were introduced for the first time, but there were also a large number from various locations in Asia (23 out of 100). Although this was not Martin's intention, the show made it clear that these kinds of works could be absorbed into the format of an exhibition and were suitable objects of contemplation even when cut off from the earth.

Another problem is that what Martin refers to as "the earth" does not have a self-evident existence nowadays. "Magicians" do not exist just anywhere. Many non-Western artists are caught in the wake of modernist art, and it is impossible to discover "magicians" except by looking in certain limited areas of Africa and Asia. Therefore, there are standards of exclusion operating in Martin's research in addition to his efforts at digging for information. Otherwise, the exhibition would not have been so unique.

In effect, like "20th century" and "primitivism," "earth" and "magicians" are words connected with Western ideas. But the exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, no matter how excellent, could never have stimulated art in regions outside of the West. In contrast, "Magiciens de la Terre" suggested an approach that could be transferred to international exhibitions in other regions. Therefore it was an epoch-making exhibition in terms of promoting globalism in art that rejects a Western-centered approach.

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I suggested earlier that the many large international exhibitions established in Asia since the 1990s use of a multiculturalist approach that has been transplanted from Europe. Even if the influence is not direct, this has been caused to some extent by the change in thinking represented by "Magiciens de la Terre" in 1989.

I would like to repeat that I do not see this as a bad thing. In fact, taking the position that Asian multiculturalism arose strictly in Asia or, conversely, limiting Western modernism to the advocacy of only one kind of art context would turn international exhibitions into a large Trojan horse.

If works of art can only be understood in their original context, international exhibitions based on multiculturalism, supposedly projects dedicated to communication, would be ultimately destined to fail achieving any sort of mutual understanding. The modernist limitations of an exhibition can only show the original context belonging to a work of art in a fragmentary way. If, in the name of justice, we reject any way of receiving the work other than an immaculately "correct understanding," an ominous form of intolerance will unexpectedly emerge from the Trojan horse that was brought in as a sign of peace.

International exhibitions are part of the cultural system that has been generated by modernism, and they are carried out with political intentions that are dominated by the need for continuing novelty. Just as this can be said about "Magiciens de la Terre," it can be said about the exhibitions held throughout Asia in the 1990s. Without awareness that the attempt to be fair in terms of cultural theory is also a political choice and not a claim for absolute justice, the exhibition will be dominated by oppositionalism instead of novelty.

I served as one of the artistic directors of Yokohama 2001, a triennial exhibition in which most of the artists I asked to participate were of Asian origin. However, the majority of them had moved to other countries, so they could no longer be called "magicians of the earth." This does not mean that I think of expectations toward "the earth" as a form of arbitrary exoticism originating in the West. The Earth continues to exist, so I chose artists who have continually placed themselves in a site of passage between cultures in order to deliberately relativize its meaning.

The distorted nostalgia that they inevitably feel requires temporal distance to exist, but this distance is not absolute. It creates a passage in which it is possible to move backward and forward through the imagination.

Asia is a specific part of the Earth but also a passage between different parts of it. That is, it is possible to describe Asia as an ambiguous gray zone. The international exhibition as a site of communication is neither a path to unity nor a means for recognizing difference. It needs to be an ongoing political operation for the maintenance of cultural relativism as a gray zone.

Finally, I would like to point out that the issues related to international exhibitions I have discussed here are directly connected

to decisions of the sort of curators to appoint, prior to choosing artists. For example, the director of this year's Documenta was Okwui Enwezor, an American curator originally from Nigeria. I do not have the space here to discuss his globalist policies, but the fact that the first director of non-Western origin was chosen for the first Documenta of the 21st century clearly indicates that multiculturalism is a political choice. One of the participants in this symposium, Mr. David Elliott, is the director of the Mori Art Museum that will open next year. He will be the first European to become a museum director in Japan. As far as I know, the only non-Japanese to ever serve as a museum director here is Lee Gyeong Seong, who was director of the Sogetsu Museum of Art, so this is an unusual move in the context of Japanese art museum practices. I look forward to hearing Mr. Elliott's own impressions about this appointment.

Incidentally, Martin also served as director of the Lyon Biennale in 2000. His proposal for the title of the exhibition was "Partage d'Exotismes (Sharing Exoticisms)." I am tempted to interpret the words "nostalgia" and "exoticism" as an inseparable pair of concepts. All minds entertain thoughts about the past, which is different from the present, and other places, which are different from here. We should not deny these thoughts because of their vagueness but cherish them because of the possibilities held out for communication by this very ambiguity. Since multiculturalism can be a philosophy of salvation, this vagueness must be repeatedly reexamined for its gray truths.

[Translated by Stanley N. Anderson]

## The Rules of Culture: Exhibition and the Politics of Knowledge

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'Asia in transition' — when, if it is a matter of representation and identity, has this not been so? For it is as true of Asian identities as it is of other identities that they cannot be properly understood if they are thought of as essences pre-existing the forms in which they are represented. To the contrary: identities are relational constructs that are shaped and defined through the process of being represented. They are, consequently, constantly in flux, always in the process of being made and remade through the terms in which their ever-shifting relations to one another are organised. If this is so, however, it needs to be added that these processes of representation are themselves shaped by the particular cultural and institutional contexts in which they take place. The contexts that are most relevant to this symposium are the art museum and related art institutions which shape identities through the ways in which they organise, exhibit, arrange and, in their turn, shape art practices. However, just as identities are relational, so too is the work that cultural institutions do. It is with this mind that I explore two questions in this paper. The first concerns the respects in which the art museum has itself been reshaped by the process of its translation from its western origins into Asian cultures, and the extent to which it might need to be further reshaped if it is to respond appropriately to the changing dynamics of Asian identity at the start of the 21st century. And the second concerns the kind of social and cultural work that art museums do when compared with other types of museum.

I begin by offering three contrastive scenes. The first, evoked by Ingrid Muan, centres on the National Museum of Cambodia where, in the Angkorian galleries, sculptures are set on pedestals, carefully arranged and separated from each other to achieve the effect of 'art' associated with the western art museum. Yet this aspiration is undercut by the open doors and windows which, allowing access to a disrespectful nature, counteract the mechanisms of purification that

are necessary to secure art's existence as an autonomous and special realm. 'Sparrows fly in and out of the museum,' Muan observes, 'flies buzz in the galleries, and ants and geckos crawl on the sculptures' (Muan, 2002: 4). Nor do the local audiences behave as the protocols of art demand they should as they forego a distanced and contemplative aesthetic stance in favour of a tactile engagement with the sculptures — touching and rubbing them — while the Museum's female employees stash their purses between the sculptures' legs for safekeeping. A scene, then, of a museum that is still 'unsettled, unsure, unfixed', not yet 'securely proper' so that it remains unclear 'what echo of the West (or not) this curiously colonial and 21st century Museum will become' (4-5).

My second scene is closer to home. It concerns the exhibition of *bakemono* (monsters) in the *misemono* (sideshowes) at Ryōgoku Bridge in Edo, circa 1865, three years before the Meiji Restoration. Gerald Figal evokes this scene as follows:

A whale washed ashore and advertised as a monster sunfish, a hideously ugly 'demon girl,' a scale-covered reptile child, the fur-covered 'Bear Boy,' the hermaphroditic 'testicle girl,' giants, dwarfs, strong men (and women), the famous 'mist-descending flower-blossoming man' who gulped air and expelled it in 'modulated flatulent arias,' and the teenager who could pop out his eyeballs and hang weights from his optic nerve, all attest to a libidinal economy in which a fascination with the strange and supernatural conditioned and sustained the production, consumption, and circulation of sundry monsters as commodities in 'the evening glow of Edo'. (Figal, 1999: 22)

And my third scene is of the same area, but today when, under the impact of successive waves of modernisation, the *misemono* and *bakemono* have all but disappeared, their place taken, at first, by western forms of popular entertainment — variety theatre and, later, the cinema — and, now, nearby, at the Edo-Tokyo Museum where the *bakemono* and *misemono* survive, but only as history in the Museum's various exhibits of the popular festivals and book trade of the late Edo period. It is a scene in which both *bakemono* and *misemono* succumb to the Museum and the claims it makes for itself as 'an instrument of civilisation' and 'a conduit for transmitting

knowledge' — a thoroughly modern museum which, breaking with earlier traditions of museums as 'mere treasure repositories', aims to 'evoke an emotional response' in visitors, to 'inspire them to develop their own ideas' and so to involve them in a process of 'cultural development' (Umesao et al, 1995: 165).

My point in drawing these contrasts is no more to criticise the National Museum of Cambodia for its failure to become a 'proper' art museum according to western standards than it is to congratulate the Edo-Tokyo Museum for so perfectly embodying the logic of the western history museum which, as its contribution to what Norbert Elias calls the 'civilising process' (Elias, 1994), has operated to displace popular customs and traditions standing in the way of modernisation by transforming them into historical representations of themselves. Nor is my purpose to propose some qualitative difference between Cambodian and Japanese societies so far as their relations to western exhibition practices are concerned. The history of the art museum in Japan reveals just as much friction between indigenous and western exhibition practices which, once disconnected from their origins in the bourgeois public sphere, were re-worked into something quite different in the context of the Japanese emperor system (Morishita, 2002).

Rather, my point concerns the relations between two aspects of the processes associated with the translation of western exhibition practices into non-western contexts — a process which is, of course, always a process of creative transformation. The first concerns the work that is played by those specialist knowledges (art history, history, archaeology, natural history) which, developed in close association with what I have called the 'exhibitionary complex' (Bennett, 1988), have played a key role in organising the conceptual frameworks within which artefacts have been collected, arranged and displayed in the context of western exhibition practices. A crucial aspect of their functioning in this regard consists in their role in organising the varied discursive domains — of art, the past, prehistory, nature — within which, across different types of museum, artefacts are exhibited to different purpose and effect. The role of art history in securing the autonomy of art and, by means of the varied devices of purification through which art objects are separated from other uses and contexts, installing it in a separate domain while simultaneously inculcating in the viewer the capacity to exercise the

'pure gaze' of disinterested aesthetic contemplation, has been the most thoroughly examined in this regard (Bourdieu, 1996). Yet similarly processes are at work in the other discursive domains associated with the exhibitionary complex. The ways of exhibiting history in evidence at the Edo-Tokyo Museum, for example, depend on a much longer process through which the notion of a past clearly distinct from the present has been introduced into Japanese thought (Tanaka, 1993), and through which it became possible to read the urban past of a city like Tokyo as symptomatic of a national past which, in its turn, is accorded its place within the longer 'universal' histories of 'progress' or 'civilisation' and, indeed, those of natural and geological history.

However, the claims of the Edo-Tokyo Museum also make clear how the functioning of these knowledges in the context of exhibition practices forms a part of the broader mechanisms of culture and the specific means for the transformation of persons which, in their western form, those mechanisms organise and put into effect. William Ray puts his finger on the distinguishing qualities of these mechanisms when he notes that the same term, 'culture', is used, on the one hand, to designate 'the shared traditions, values, and relationships, the *unconscious* cognitive and social reflexes which members of a community share and collectively embody', and, on the other hand, to refer to the 'the *self-conscious* intellectual and artistic efforts of individuals to express, enrich and distinguish themselves, as well as the works such efforts produce and the institutions that foster them' (Ray, 2001: 3). The key to understanding culture as a mechanism of person formation, Ray argues, lies not in opting for either the one or the other of these seemingly antithetical uses but in attending to the movement — the processes of working on and transforming the self — that arises from the tension between them. Culture, in simultaneously articulating a sense of sameness and difference, inscribes our identities in the tension it produces between inherited and shared customs and traditions on the one hand, and, on the other, the restless striving for new and distinguishing forms of individuality: 'it tells us to think of ourselves as being who we are because of what we have in common with all the other members of our society or community, but it also says we develop a distinctive particular identity by virtue of our efforts to know and fashion ourselves as individuals' (3). Culture is thus a mechanism which, at its

heart, takes issue with habit: tradition, custom, habitual usage, superstition (including, of course, monsters) — these are the ‘adversary to be overcome before we can realise our full humanity’ (16). It thus initiates a process of critique through which the individual extricates him or herself from unthinking immersion in inherited traditions in order to initiate a process of self-development that will result in new codes of behaviour, but ones which — in being freely chosen rather than externally imposed, and in meeting the requirements both of reason and of individual autonomy and expression — distinguish those who have thus culturally re-formed themselves from those who remain unthinkingly under the sway of habit.

Culture is thus simultaneously ‘the universal imperative to “make something of oneself,” as well as the institutions and processes that disseminate that law and enable its enactment’ (77). As such, however, it has tended also to be blind to the unequal distribution of the means — material and intellectual — for being either aware of this imperative or capable of responding to its demands. This has meant that culture, in serving as a mechanism of self-development, has simultaneously served as a social sorting mechanism through which, by virtue of the cultural activities they choose and the degree to which these enable them to break with habit and thus to become self-reforming, individuals ‘*sort themselves* into groups’ (91). There is, however, a deceptive aspect to this mechanism to the degree that the groups into which individuals seem to sort themselves are usually those to which they already belong by virtue of their class and educational backgrounds and the social trajectories to which these give rise.

This ‘logic of culture’, as Ray calls it, has played a significant role in the organisation of western exhibition practices from the 19th century through to the present. For the question of habit has always been, in one way or another, at issue in the museum. This is most evident, perhaps, in the art museum which — throughout the history of modernism and into that of postmodernism — has persistently pitched itself against the numbing of attention associated with habitual forms of perception. Jonathan Crary underlines the significance of the issues at stake here in noting the apprehensions that were generated, in the late 19th century, around the new forms of distracted and automatic forms of attention associated with

industrial production and the development of new forms of popular visual entertainment. The fear was that, owing to the association of the habitual with instinctual rather than rational procedures, modes of perception that had become routinised 'no longer related to an interiorisation of the subject, to an intensification of a sense of selfhood' (Crary, 2001: 79). They were therefore inimical to the production of those forms of tension and division within the self that are required for the machinery of culture to take a hold and be put to work within a dialectic of self development in which individuals renovate and distinguish themselves from the common mass by disentangling their selves from the weight of unconscious inherited reflex and traditional forms of thought, perception and behaviour.

It is, then, not surprising that, as an instrument of culture, the modern art museum has been committed to a programme of perpetual perceptual innovation, seeking to disconnect vision from falling, so to speak, into 'bad habit' by critiquing not only the distraction of attention associated with popular visual entertainments — with, today, the television and computer screens being the prime targets in this respect — but also the flagging forms of perception associated with earlier artistic movements which, while once innovative and able to provoke new forms of perceptual self-reflexiveness, have since atrophied into routine conventions. The modern art museum, looked at in this light, as an instrument for 'perpetual perceptual revolution', thus functions to keep the senses in the state of chastened attentiveness that the logic of culture requires to produce a dynamic of self-formation that is sustained by a dynamics of sensory life. This is clear at the "Under Construction" exhibition which, taking as one of its main themes the question of everyday life — the scene of repetition and habit, of taken-for-granted routine — seeks to disconnect the visitor's perception from the dulling effects of everyday familiarity by giving the *bric-a-brac* of daily life a new perceptual twist which allows the everyday to come into view in a new critical and questioning way. But the ability to keep up with this 'perpetual perceptual revolution' is not evenly distributed throughout all classes. To the contrary, this is true only for those members of the middle and professional classes who have acquired a sufficient degree of what Pierre Bourdieu calls cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) — that is, a knowledge of the rules of art and the workings of art institutions — and the ability to translate that capital into the

distinctive forms of perceptual athleticism that the programme of the art museum requires.

However, if the exhibition practices of western art museums have functioned as mechanisms of social triage — that is, of sorting people into different groups and arranging these hierarchically — they have also always operated along racialised as well as class lines. This is evident in the chequered history of the evaluation of 'primitive art' which, prior to its integration into the dynamics of western modernism as a source of aesthetic innovation, stood as art's antithesis — as traditional, collective, and formulaic; that is, alongside the tools, weapons, decorations, and culinary implements of 'primitive peoples' as evidence of societies that had never broken with the force of inherited custom to initiate the restless dynamics of self-formation characterising the logic of western culture. The place accorded 'Asian' art and material culture within colonial frameworks of interpretation was a more intermediate one. Interpreted as evidence of once innovative and dynamic civilisations which had allegedly subsequently ossified under the weight of 'Asian despotisms' of one kind or another, they were seen as nurturing slavish habits and custom-bound behaviour as the price of an obedient population (Pagani, 1998; Prakash, 2002). The effect, however, was broadly similar. Whether it was a question of the static civilisation of 'the primitive' or the 'arrested development' of Asian societies, museums invoked and exhibited others — and their art and artefacts — as signs of societies where the 'logic of culture', and the independent, critical and individualising orientation it required, had either failed to operate or had gone into decline.

They did so, moreover, precisely as a means of putting the logic of culture into effect and — as museums became public museums — extending its reach beyond the middle classes to the newly enfranchised working classes of the western liberal democracies in which such institutions initially flourished. Viewed in class terms, the division between the custom-bound self and the individualising and innovative self, which the logic of culture generates as the site of its own operations, has served largely to organise a distinction between the middle and working classes. This has mainly been the work of the art museum. Yet, at the same time, in other kinds of museum — archaeological and anthropological, for example — the logic of culture has operated across racialised divisions, producing a western or

white self which, when looked at closely, might splinter into differentiated class capacities, but which, when viewed in the aggregate, was defined in terms of a capacity for an inner dynamic of self-development that was identified as such only by being distinguished from the flat, fixed or frozen personas which the primitive and 'Asiatic types' represented. Much the same purpose was served by the development of folk museums which, while romanticising the inherited customs and folkways of the parents and grandparents of modern urban populations, simultaneously transformed those customs and folkways into immobilised remnants of redundant pasts which served as a counterfoil to the forward thrust of the modern. Mark Sandberg quotes the account of a journalist who, recounting a visit to the Copenhagen Folk Museum in 1885, conveys this effect precisely as his glance moves between the museum displays and the railway yard outside:

And if during your wandering past all of the old treasures, stopping in front of this or that rare showpiece — a tooled mug, a majestic four-post bed, or a precious, nicely-inlaid wardrobe — if you have for a moment been envious of the people back then who enjoyed and lived surrounded by such magnificence, then just look out the window in front of you. Over under the train station's open hall a train is about to depart. The bell rings, the locomotive whistles, the steam billows up beneath the ceiling's iron beams and flushes out the pigeons nesting up there. In great arcs they circle around in the sunlight that gilds their wings. But the train is already far away, the last wagon is now passing the last telegraph pole you can see. Reconsider and tell me then, if you want to trade. I didn't. (cit. Sandberg, 2001: 8)

However, the balance that is struck here between custom and innovation, between the old and the new, is less sharp than that which is produced by the cutting edge of new artistic practices in the art museum. The same is true, typically, of history museums: the relations these organise between past and present are, with the exception of isolated ruptural moments (the French Revolution, the Meiji Restoration) more likely to be smooth and continuous, splitting the self between past and present in a manner calculated to generate a regular tempo of self-modernisation as opposed to the more staccato-

like pattern of self-modernisation associated with the modernist art museum. The Edo-Tokyo Museum is a good example of the tempo of the history museum in this regard, installing a qualitative division between the time of the Edo period and that of the post-Meiji period, the former as a realm of superseded (but still valued) custom and tradition — including the *bakemono* and *misemono* — and the latter as, once the break of 1868 has been passed, a realm of constant change and innovation in which the Japanese citizen is both depicted as, and thereby enjoined to become, incessantly self-modernising. And it is, of course, in relation to this realm that the Museum locates and defines itself as an ‘instrument of civilisation’. The Museum, if you like, tells the story it needs to about the past in order to place itself as both an outcome of, and a means of continuing, the ongoing dynamics of self-transformation that the ‘logic of culture’ promotes.

All of this is to say that museums are best understood as distinctive cultural machineries which, through the tensions that they generate within the self, operate as a means for balancing the tensions of modernity. They generate and regulate both how, and how far, we are detached from the past and pointed toward the future. But, depending on the type of museum concerned, they do this in different ways, producing different tempos of change. These differences of tempo are important, and are often related to the different publics that different types of museum address. History museums, for example, function more effectively as mass ‘people movers’ than do art museums which, in tune with the socially restricted publics they attract, function more effectively in installing new dynamics of self-development amongst those professional and managerial elites which are often implicated most quickly in processes of economic modernisation. In either case, though, the museum has proven itself a highly productive machinery in its capacity to transform modes of thought, perception and behaviour; in short, ways of life.

It has also proved to be a highly mobile machinery, one which has been carried far and wide in the context of colonial histories. Yet, to recall the three scenes with which I began, its passage in this regard has never been an unobstructed or unmodified one, and there are many contexts, like the Cambodian one, where western museums have been, and remain, disconnected from the dynamics of the societies into which they have been transplanted. There also have

been, and remain, many social groups whose members cannot be included within the 'we' that the museum — when it operates in accordance with the logic of culture — addresses. And there have been, and still are, many groups which, in explicit rejection of the place to which they have been assigned within the museum, have sought to disconnect themselves — their bodies and their cultures — from its operations. The repatriation struggles of indigenous peoples are the most obvious case in point, although there are also multicultural critiques of museums couched in similar terms. It is perhaps where these kinds of abrasion occur — in places where the museum rubs up against value systems which sit ill at ease with those derived from the museum's western origins — that we might glimpse prospects for the museum's future development that would lead beyond the logic of culture which, at the same time that it energises and dynamises social life, has also had significant divisive and exclusionary consequences.

This has been true just as much of the gendered aspects of the art museum's history as it has been of its operations in connection with relations of class and race. If, as I have suggested, the art museum can be understood as a 'people mover', then this has been true more of its relations to men than to women. Indeed, the art museum's ability to mobilise male identities has often depended on its simultaneously fixing women in unchanging positions. I refer here to the complex history of the relations between the art museum and aesthetic modernism (Pollock, 1999). For, if the linear time of modernism was a racialised time which organised different peoples and civilisations into different stages along the so-called unidirectional and forward-moving time of modernity, it was also — and still is — a gendered time in which the linear, largely male, and public time of modernity is contrasted to the private, cyclical, repetitive, and habitual time of everyday life which has classically been represented by women (Felski, 1999-2000). If it is to play a significant role in redefining Asian identities, the art museum, in its Asian trajectories, must be involved in a critical deconstruction of 'Europe' and 'the west' as well as of modernism and the always-one-step-behind position this accords Asia. Given that the time of modernism has had different consequences for men and women, however, the new forms of critical, artistic and curatorial work that such a project will require will need to accord significant attention to questions of gender if the

identities of Asian men and Asian women are to be productively redefined in the emerging field of new identities formed by an 'Asian in transition'.

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## Discussion

Moderator (S. Yoshimi): We just had three presentations that are closely related to each other. The first two, as I mentioned before, covered the topic of biennial and triennial exhibitions, how they rapidly grew in number, and how multiculturalism, or Asia as a theme has proliferated. In the third presentation by Professor Bennett, we saw how the representation of Asia is understood in the institutional discourse of art, or exhibiting culture.

I do not intend to summarize the presentations any further. I want to turn to our three panelists and ask them to comment on each other's presentations. Professor Lee and Professor Tatehata mentioned how there has been an increase in the number of biennials and triennials around the world since the 1990s. They also described how these events are two-sided: they could potentially challenge the conventional Western system or the arts system on the one hand, but they also involve the system of global capitalism and a cycle that rapidly produces and consumes culture on the other. I would like to hear everyone's ideas on how we should think about this two-sided system in which Asia and multiculturalism are discussed, represented, exhibited and desired.

Additionally, referring to Professor Bennett's presentation, I would like to expand the discussion on biennials and triennials to include the issues of museums and galleries. What is happening today in these institutions that became popular means of exhibiting culture in modern times. What has been transformed and what has not? Has the representation of culture or art been changed in the process of globalization? How is this particularly related to Asia?

Y. Lee: When we talk about identity issues, they are closely

related to the transition from tradition to avant-garde, or from tradition to modernity. I do not think there is one way of introducing modernity or tradition. There are several ways to present yourself: you can present your past; you can give more weight to your present; or you can present yourself also as a judicious combination of present and past. In a democratic society, this means balance. There is more emphasis on balancing both, but this is not the best way to present yourself. Everyone has a different tone. It is not necessary for everyone to be similar or have the same tone. So in interpreting identity, there should be many different levels of discourse. We cannot simply set up identities A, B, or C in a forced way.

Identities are somehow contaminated. I will give you a specific example from my experience in running the biennial in Korea. A Mongolian artist approached me but I had no idea what kind of art he creates. He came to Korea carrying more than 100 horseshoes. He asked me to provide him five assistants for five days. He created a very beautiful piece that looked like strings. But when the audience came to see his piece they had no idea what it was about. He spread sand out on the floor to project a mysterious image of a Mongolian desert. He was the director of Ulan Bator Art Academy, who enjoyed riding his horse at least three times a week. When the audience understood this fantastic context, they were able to enjoy his work. Works that are made in a heterogeneous or an unfamiliar way are fascinating when they are received by a different culture.

Moderator (S. Yoshimi): Thank you very much. May I have a comment from Professor Tatehata?

A. Tatehata: Before I started working at my university, I worked in an art museum for a long time. Therefore, I am quite familiar with the context of an art museum, but not so much with other kinds of museums. So, it was interesting to listen to Professor Bennett's explanation of the modernist restrictions that apply to the museum system, whether for good or ill.

So, speaking from my experience as a curator, an exhibition

space in an art museum is precisely a space that fulfills a desire, or constructs desire. At the same time, the spaces in an art museum are generally white cubes. A white cube is literally a space that is inorganic and white. Because the white cube is a neutral space, any context can be fabricated there, putting it somewhat negatively.

I mentioned that multiculturalism is prevalent in today's exhibitions. Having said this, I must admit that art still operates in a system that is supported by big capital, commercial galleries, and art museums. Therefore, the system as a whole is not quite so multicultural. Multiculturalism is something that is reconstructed or consumed in a white-cube museum space by a curator who takes an interest in this subject matter. Therefore, the situation is ironic: the conditions surrounding art are not multicultural, yet exhibitions are organized in a context of multiculturalism.

The art museum that I worked for was next to the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka. This institution embodied a system that was surprising to art museum curators. They would have works on display — “work” is a word applied to artworks, so maybe “object” is a better word — without any information on the year or period when they were produced. Instead, a map was hung on the wall to indicate which part of the world an exhibited piece of furniture or wagon came from. If the wagon were a gypsy cart, it would be labeled “gypsy cart,” without any indication of whether or not it is still used today or was used in the past.

As a curator, it was an extremely frustrating experience to go through these exhibits. On the contrary, if we had Jasper Johns or Daniel Buren displayed in our art museum, we would indicate when their works were produced, but would not display any information that would indicate that Johns was from America or Buren from France. We were only interested in attaching the year of execution, the title, and the artist's name to each work and were not concerned with indicating the artist's country or city of origin. Our method of exhibition may have seemed strange to the people working at the ethnology museum next door.

I have stated that museums are modern institutions. Considering their limitations and thinking about how to deal

with the fact that an art museum is an institution where the context is fabricated in a white cube, I think that a synthesis between the practices of art museums and other museums could provide a solution.

Such an approach has actually been applied in certain biennials and triennials, as indicated by Professor Lee's attempt to create a place for comprehensive cultural events at the Gwangju Biennale. I would say that this approach would help the art museum overcome the disadvantages of the white cube.

But, of course, the problem of the white cube is not easy to solve. "Under Construction," for example, an exhibition presenting urban movements in Asian cities that are not easily assimilated into a fine arts context, is being presented in two venues. One of the venues, the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, is basically a white cube. According to the curator, they faced many problems in installing the artworks in their space. Obviously, there is a limit to reviving a city street atmosphere in a white cube setting. I was also told that in the other venue, the Japan Foundation Forum, they capitalized on the theatrical features of a multi-purpose hall, and succeeded in creating the desired atmosphere with comparative ease.

So, one way for the art museum to overcome the limitations of being a white cube is to adopt the practices of other museums. I am not sure if I should call these museum practices or a more composite exhibition style. Since an art museum is a typical modernist institution, it will always have its limits. I think that one way to vividly present Asia and its arts is to understand the limits of the white cube but at the same time use a more comprehensive approach, always realizing that there is no solution entirely without problems. We also need a self-critical approach that would enable us to overcome the limits of modernity. This is my response to the two presentations.

Moderator (S. Yoshimi): Thank you. Professor Bennett, could I have your comment?

T. Bennett: Thank you. I learned an enormous amount from

Professor Lee's and Professor Tatehata's presentations, both of which prompted in me questions concerning the relationships between art museums and the biennial movement: the extent to which there are continuities between the two, and the extent to which the biennial movement represents a new departure from the art museum, a promise of something different. I took it, particularly from Professor Lee's presentation, that the jury is still out on these questions. It may well be that biennales extend the social reach of the art museum and involve new publics. Or it may be that the name "biennial" is a front for practices which, in terms of who becomes involved in art, are essentially continuous with those of the more restricted publics of art museums. Which of these is the case is really an empirical matter that only careful study can resolve.

Similar issues are involved in relation to the questions Professor Tatehata raised about multiculturalism. These are, of course, questions that can be put in relation to an art museum, or any kind of museum, just as much as to biennales: the extent which multiculturalism is genuinely pluralistic in terms of the range of cultures that it encompasses, as well as the range of publics that are involved in the debate about culture and diversity. For there is more than a minor risk that biennials and art museums are now institutions which collaborate in organizing a new form of cosmopolitanism which, by and large, is participated in only by elites.

This is always something that needs to be factored into debates around globalization. It is really important to recall that globalization, as a cultural phenomena, does not involve all sections of the population in the same way. I was particularly interested in the argument that the biennial movement speeds up the tempo of the art world, thus increasing the dynamic of aesthetic renovation as a perpetual mobile.

It is also important, to go back to questions of multiculturalism, to connect issues about the representation of different cultures to those aspects of multiculturalism which concern questions of civic entitlement — multiculturalism as a question of citizenship and the entitlements that go with it.