

serious and pressing problem of what Asia is, investigating its historical roots as well as the present and going back to the past with a contemporary understanding. I give you Dr. John Clark.

**John Clark:** I'm going to provide some headlines and allow you, at your leisure, to look at some of the theoretical issues which I've referred to in a very tentative way, but issues which I've been observing seem to be in play in this field.

At the beginning of the paper, I summarized six positions from which modernity and Asian art can be understood. I have declared my own position to be somewhere between four and five, that modernities are heterogeneous, but in the Asian context they were largely mapped by local art discourses. I am not in favor of metropolitan centrism and its analog, the post-colonial discourse. The periphery exists and it is from the periphery that we must look at these problems. In fact, we must look at them to the extent that the center-periphery distinction disappears.

Secondly, something which has not come up in this conference so far, which is my fifth point, that we must see modernity in Asian art, however we construct it. Modernity is a construction; it is not a natural concept. We must see it from a position of resistance. Europe in the 19th century, in most of Asia, was not a very nice cultural continuum to come in contact with. And it is in reaction and resistance against that, at all levels, from the most local to high elite culture, that one sees the development of modernity in Asian art.

We should also be aware that these constructions are not purely intellectual ones. They do not exist in some neutral intellectual space, the reason being that there is an institutional practice in defining modern Asian art which has become clear in this conference. The institutional practice is linked to the functions of certain institutions, the functions of artists, the functions of art works, the functions of sites of production and reception of art works, and the sites of storage and distribution. In the last two cases, the function of the museum seems to overlap.

There is an institutional interest in creating a notion of origin and creating a notion of modernity. That interest is based on the kind of institution which provides for resource flows, curatorial time, art historical research in universities, and exhibition budgets in galleries and public spaces. It can be doubted that, without the institutions to legitimize such resources, artistic exchange would be recognized as such.

It is also clear that these interests mean that only certain kinds of works are recognized in certain kinds of contexts. This work *Nude* by Hyakutake Kaneyuki of around 1881 was painted in Rome. This is a similar work by Juan Luna, roughly speaking, at the same time, that would not have been brought together with Morimura Yasumasa's work *Portrait (Twin)* of 1988.

Morimura's work exists in a different space to Hyakutake's because institutions exist. They have been founded and are resourced to put the work in a different space. Yet we know that these works are in some kind of relationship in terms of its cultural location and that its reaction against the interim term of European Academy painting, and its series of representations are transgressed, played around with, by Morimura in this work against

Manet's *Olympia*. But the institutions do not bring them into relationship, and that accounts for, I think, the lack of historical context to the presentation of the modern in many international exhibitions.

We must accept that there is a very large difference between the interest of curators and the interest of art historians and critics. If we accepted this difference of interest, we might find that we are less in conflict than we have been in the past. The difference, largely, is that if people don't come and see art works in museums, the museum or the gallery would not function. For art historians and critics, on the other hand, the articulation of the arguments about works, the positioning in terms of other works, and the problematics of the works are important, not the fact that large numbers of people have come to see the exhibition. This is an art discourse or an art historical discourse-centered criterion, which is frequently in conflict with the presentation of smooth, agreeable, somehow "feel-good" situations about international exchange.

The second part of my paper deals with the question of reception of modern Asian art. Here, I have tried to make a distinction in a way which has appeared in anthropological literature, but has not really appeared in the literature to do with modern Asian art, as yet. It is about the distinction between sites, where things are received and function in circuits of exchange or circuits of reception, at other-than-Asian sites and where the works go to, and what the pattern of the circulation between the sites comes down to.

It is very unlikely any of you have ever seen this picture. It hangs in the presidential palace in Java and was painted at some time, we suppose, in the 1860s. It displays the capture of a rebellious Javanese prince by a Dutch general. It is one of the early works of modernity in the 19th century done by a Javanese aristocrat painter called Raden Salleh called, *The Capture of Prince Diponegoro by General de Kock* (c. 1860s).

It was almost certain that these two works would never be placed in the same space. This is Semsar Siahaan's *Olympia, Identity with Mother and Child*, again a work of 1987 which makes a comment on *Olympia*. You can see the fascination with this tragic treason against Western academic painting by Manet amongst many Asian artists. I am putting these works together because it seems that one of the positions for modern Asian art, to distribute it outside Asia, is to say that there is contemporary Asian art. Yes, there are contemporary artists; their art is interesting and relevant.

Of course, this entirely ignores the fact that there has been a modern contemporary Asian art since the middle of the 19th century. These paintings that we look at as old, have something to do with European discourses imposed or transferred or however we like to position it in some post-colonial mentality, was actually the contemporary art of Asia, and was modern in the 19th century. They existed under different conditions, which we don't really want to engage with because they were largely connected with European cultural and political domination.

The attempt to create a modernity around Asian art in terms of works by Semsar Siahaan is a *déjà vu*. This continual *déjà vu* as-



pect to the discovery of the "modern" and the discovery of the "contemporary" which ignores history is found in many recent exhibitions.

This work is by the Chinese artist, Liu Wei, called *The New Generation* from 1992. In an important sense, the discovery of the "contemporary" by the institutions who were presenting yesterday at this symposium, corresponds to a kind of exoticizing of the present as a way of relativizing discourses of modernity which seem to have already closed in the European or American context, such as the movement away from academic realism towards impressionism, expressionism, and various kinds of abstraction and off-the-wall work, installations and so forth. Witness the "Oh, they're still doing installation art in Southeast Asia, surprise, surprise," comments of New York art critics.

This is a work by Wu Shanzhuan, *Red Humour* of 1989. Perhaps we should not be too critical, however, of exoticizing processes in intercultural relations. It is fashionable to debunk exoticization. Exoticization is a learning process. We should judge it by its results. If this learning process allows us to discover the Chinese modern—I say, "us" speaking from the other side, the non-Asian side of the presumed cultural divide for the moment—then it is valuable that we are attracted to it by its strange contemporary irrelevance, since it is dealing with something in the 1980s which was being done in Japan in the late 1950s, and slightly later in America in the 1960s.

The next slide is a picture dealer, Joseph Duveen. He is responsible for accumulating masterpieces which were sold largely to the American collections and some to the English collections. He was on the board of Trustees of the National Gallery in London. I'm going to introduce you to two *figures*, as it were as theoretical models of positions which exist among our activities in the roles we sometimes ourselves perform. One is the entrepreneur, the dealer, the museum curator selling to his public, not for money but for museum entrances of modern Asian art. The next figure, who I am not comparing myself to, but might be analytically placed in the same space, is the connoisseur, the knower, the one who has access to the facts. The one who says: "What is a Botticelli?" "What is a Michelangelo?" "What is a good Chinese painting from the last five years?" "Did you like the Chinese installations in such and such an exhibition?" The person who is interested, actually personally interested, in terms of career, in terms of income sometimes, in making the right judgments for the first person, the first role, the museum curator, about the kinds of work that they are interpreting. The model of this partnership, what I call the Berenson-Duveen partnership, is indicative for us. Neutral scholarly judgment or, nowadays, curatorial estimates of artistic significance, change the value of a work—whether as an economic one on an art market, as Duveen did, or as a fraction of cultural capital which curators distribute within and across cultural borders.

When this model is transposed to the present situation or modern Asian art, the curator's opinion or the entrepreneur's opinion (sometimes they are the same person), creates cultural significance and, sometimes, a directly economic value in a work when it crosses cultural boundaries. The cultural value, and sometimes

the economic value, is not produced by a market which is already there or a patron who is already giving money to the artists. Indeed, you could say that modern museum curators are fulfilling three functions, as they are also fulfilling the function of "the aristocratic patron."

In my last section I deal with a feature of art flows which has been ignored so far, although it has been commented on very honestly by a number of curators. The Asian art flows, the flow of modern Asian art between cultures, are not unilateral. It does not go from culture A to culture B. It also comes back from culture B to culture A. In other words, Lee U-Fan's *Work* of 1966 (fig. 22), or work of a similar kind, is recognized in 1970 in Germany and then comes back in 1977 (fig. 23), as a series of works, now recognized by the Japanese art market. We could conceive of this simply as Lee U-Fan being fortunate by being recognized by German curators in 1970-71. We could also conceive of it as the intervention of the artist in an external circuit. I think this is the way we must increasingly conceive of it, because there are other cases as in the international activities of some Indian artists, such as Francis Newton Souza and Maqbool Fida Husain in London, New York and Bombay in the 1950s. In other words, we are looking at a figure who is the site for a flow which moves in two directions at once.

I want to try and identify the function of modern Asian art in, what I call, "Euroamerica." The first kind of function is to present a different history of modernity. You are looking at the works of Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunso painted in India in 1903 (fig. 24). They present a different kind of modernity, which is somehow in between the kinds of modernity presented by Europe. Unfortunately, this is tied up in Japan, as we are well aware, with ultra-nationalism in which the logical end goes into the 1930s and to Nanjing. Some people think that there is an "Asian-type" of modernity. This may be appealing for nationalist purposes and it's perfectly understandable that such emotions and concepts arise. But this conceptualization is intellectually unfeasible. The founding moment of Asian modernity is the relativization of numerous horizontally differentiated art discourses, through their contact with multiple European and American ones from the 1750s to the 1930s and 40s. Modern art in Asia can only be constructed in terms of analytical similarities between categories, simply because of this founding moment.

Finally, I would like to mention the new situation for the old figures that I've described above in Asian art exchanges. The old figure is the merchant. The art works in culture A are known to people in culture B, and regarded as so valuable that it can be traded onto culture C. This has happened demonstrably in the movement of Japanese art works to China in the 12th-century Sung Imperial catalog. In the 17th century, we have records from Siam of works given to the King of Siam by the Emperor of Japan, the *shogun* (he was called the emperor in those days by foreigners), which are then given to the Shah of Persia. We actually have historical records of these exchanges. This figure of the trading-on of the cultural good is not new. What is new, perhaps, is that what has value in culture A may not function in the same way when it moves to culture B once it has been changed into ex-



change capital.

We are looking at Lu Xun's *Home Village* by Wu Guanzhong of the 1980s or late 1970s. This is a Chinese oil painting. This is an art historically important artist, art historically, although not so artistically, in my opinion. He is important because he is the first Chinese artist of the 20th century to be given a one person show at the British Museum in London. In other words, a particular oil painting which take on Chinese cultural tradition is valued outside China, at a time when it was certainly not valued in China despite his personal status. It returns back to China having been given that status and is now privileged.

This work by Xu Bing, *Cultural Animals*, by an artist who has been virtually thrown out of China and went to America, then sent the concept/work back to China for an exhibition.

In conclusion, I want people who are engaged in this activity to think much more carefully about the two *figures* at the centers of exchange. The two *figures* in the sense of models of types of roles in exchanges which seem to overlap. One is the cultural gatekeeper who controls what goes in and must come out, or what goes out and must come in. They are frequently the same person or sited in the same institution. The other is the producer of cultural goods, the artist or the craftsman.

When the museum curator invites artists into an exhibition space to make a work in site, they are actually functioning as a substitute producer, particularly for some political reasons with Asian art exhibitions. The atelier, or the studio, is being brought into the gallery but, of course, we know that the curator is not subject to the same judgments of history as the artist is.

All judgments of excellence which singularize modern Asian artists or works which are representative of cultures, but do not articulate their location against a specific and historically situated field of discourse, should be regarded as compromised by their self-interest. Curators and artists—artists do this as well as curators—should not be the blind servants of their own propaganda as we have seen in many cases of the Asian art world or the Asian art field. This is particularly important in modern Asian art, because in a field of exchange between differently sited cultural zones, the information given to the audience at the other may be very low about one cultural zone, yet may be privileged by the curator's access to it. These fields are very easily subject to two kinds of manipulation. One, as we have seen in the case of Chinese art, particularly but also sometimes in the case of Japanese art, is nationalist construction, sometimes of a chauvinist or, super-patriotic kind. Another—as we have begun to see with some exhibitions of Chinese “Mao goes Pop” variety—is a kind of entrepreneurial manipulation. This domain is very easily subject to these kinds of intervention, a self-interested intervention. For the development of modern Asian art, this kind of intervention is not in the long-term interest of the field, although it is unavoidable to some extent, human beings being human beings, institutions being institutions. I also think that art historians and critics should be sufficiently distant from the status of their own judgments. They should work to be neutral when they make judgments about works and to foreground all of their reasons why they like or dislike things.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : Thank you very much, Dr. Clark. In such a short time, many things have been said and touched upon. Dr. Clark believes that contemporary Asian art shows different aspects when the frequent exchanges and distribution through world-level exhibitions is reassessed rationally and with greater self-awareness and that we already have had a variety of historical experiences in cultural exchanges.

I have one question, Dr. Clark. When you write about “modernism” in Japanese, you translate it as *gendai*. When you speak of “modern” in the Asian context, what do you mean? Would you comment on that briefly?

J. Clark : I think that is a problem of Japanese. I don't think it is a problem in Chinese language. In China, they say “*gendai*.” In the Japanese language, you distinguish between “*kindai*” and “*gendai*,” modern and contemporary. However in China, anything that starts from the late 19th century is called “*gendai*” which is, more or less, contemporary if you translate it into Japanese. I think that the concept of “*kindai*,” or modernity, was established in the Japanese context about twenty, thirty years ago. Of course, historically or politically it can be traced even farther back, by a century or more.

I think that in the field of fine arts, whether or not it is closely related with other phenomena than art, the emergence of the concept or acceptance of the concept of the “modern” is closely related with the invasion of the West into Asia. In other words, the “modern” initially started as “otherness” for the Asian, then permeated to be called “contemporary.” In English, “*kindai*” is proto-modern or early modern, that is, the proto-type of the contemporary. However, in the Japanese language, you have two different words : the “contemporary” for the more recent ones and the contemporary phenomenon, while you use the word “modern” to describe something earlier in the modern age. Because of the Hegelian and Marxist historical concepts which still prevail in China, the Euramerican “modern” is set as “*gendai*” in the Chinese language.

That the introduction of the “modern” to the Asians was not without resistance, on the part of the Asians, is an important point that we should bear in mind. In the Meiji era, you can see Western-style paintings by the Japanese which many Japanese determined to be a copy of European art. But that is not necessarily true. It was something that the Japanese people painted but not as a copy. I believe it was a modern painting tried by the Japanese. The Japanese people often called it “Western-style art,” but I think that is not just so. Maybe you can find “Japanese-ness” in them. For instance, you see some Raphaelian influence on the painting *Kannon, the Compassionate Mother* by Kano Hogai, but you cannot determine that it is 100% Western. The material may be Japanese or the line drawing may be Japanese. Takamura Kotaro, when he wrote the *Green Sun* manifesto wrote that “if it is something by the Japanese, it is a Japanese work.”

MC (T. Mizusawa) : Your point on the “modern” being introduced to Asia not without resistance is a very important point. That means that Asia still continues to resist the West.



J. Clark : Yes.

Question (F. Nanjo) : How do you define the "modern" and the "contemporary" in the sense of the English language?

J. Clark : Well, each curator has his or her own subjective definition. You can't think about the contemporary without referring to the Second World War. If you think of Joseph Beuys as being a contemporary artist, then how do you define, or where do you put the Second World War? We are living in this society today. So the time we are living—do you just call it contemporary? Why, it is too simple a definition. I think it is more historical. There needs to be a historical analysis rather than just a question of time.

Question (F. Nanjo) : Are you saying that the two words are essentially the same?

J. Clark : Yes. I believe so.

Question (Nanjo) : In 150 years time, when those people living that time define themselves and their era, do you think they can continue to use the term "modern"?

J. Clark : Well, the world may be different then and, probably, not an extension of our world. But as far as we're concerned, we are still on the extension of the 19th century or, in the European sense, the mid-18th century. We're still in the extension of that time flow—the industrial revolution, then the 18th century, 19th century. But there are different ways to define the phases. Maybe the difference depends on how far a vantage point you may take a look at the globe.

Question (F. Nanjo) : Are you saying that the concept of modern and contemporary is based on a different criteria? For example, is "contemporary" used in a context of practicality?

J. Clark : Well, I think there is some kind of immediate connection and, historically, it may be important. Santayana said that "those who forget the past are condemned to re-live it." Quite a piece of wisdom. It is more an Indian idea by Santayana than a Western one. Yes, the "contemporary" is within the "modern." You can single out the "contemporary" out of the "modern" and say that this is different from the "modern." This is one position you can take, but I don't endorse that. It depends on who you are, an artist or an art historian.

K. Kwok : To settle this binary opposition of, on the one hand, the curators and, on the other hand, the art historians, the curators have to operate in a way that they would have to interplay with various interests, whereas, the art historians are able to be more critical and work within a more academic framework. Later on, you went on to say that when Culture A, say Asian modern artist, goes to Culture B, say Western museums, it is a process of privileging this art because he has gone over to Culture B and he

comes back to Culture A having a higher status.

My questions would be on this binary of curators and art historians. First of all, how do you account for the know-how of the curators, in terms of trying to produce exhibitions, present catalogs, and so on, in a way that they could negotiate with realities? Do you not consider such knowledge of operations as something that is academic and creative too?

Now again, are the art historians totally immune from institutional and human politics? Are they not operating in the same social context as the curators? Are curators and art historians not working together, the art historians doing more research and development, whereas, the curators are people who do the operations and implementational work. And it is true, with these dynamics, we have the possibility of art exhibitions. Setting this up as a binary, I find, has an academic purpose, but is it a totally useful model at the end of the day?

You have mentioned that nationalist construction is very problematic. Yes, from the point of view of the art historians. Now, supposing from the point of view of the curators, that this is a nationalist discourse that they would want to ride on, in order to, say, compete in the promotion of visual arts in a certain social context with, for example, popular culture, or advertising. Then the art historians could come in, to critique and to complete the loop. This is, at the end of the day, educational for all. I would appreciate your comments, please.

J. Clark : That is a very interesting series of co-relations. Nobody is ever disinterested. It may be a different situation for the discussion which may surround an art exhibition by an artist or group of artists, or a particular period in an art culture where the works are already known. But we are not dealing with that. We are dealing with works, for example, from Japan which may go to Singapore, where context of the generation in Japan is not known to the audience you are presenting them to.

I have deliberately, in my paper, tried to argue or understand the positions. I have not tried to understand particular individuals because I think that will probably lead us away from understanding the generality of the situation. It remains a fact that people who would send the Japanese art to, maybe Singapore, would make choices about what Japanese art they thought was important. And the people in the position to make those choices would probably be Japanese curators or Japanese art historians and critics. But the Singapore audience, in the position to receive them, would have no idea what range of choices was available to those Japanese curators.

It must be accepted as I have seen three times in different parts of Europe, in North America by reviews, and in Australia on numerous occasions, that where a particular person has performed the function of curator and owner, they have performed the function of the producer of the exhibition. Any critical understanding of where the works had come from was, if you like, subsumed by the performance function of the exhibition. The exhibition had to perform in a certain way because of the institutional pressures, and sometimes the career pressures on individuals.

I am being overly idealistic about the gap between curators, art

historians and critics. It is not that I am being overly critical of other people's performance who had to make choices and defend exhibitions and see that they work. What I'm trying to do is understand different functions which are in play in this situation and which we have not brought to the surface.

There's a very good case in point which we could discuss here. Why is a large number of art works, which are inadequate, sometimes brought overseas by regimes who place a very important national construction on them? There's a very good Chinese example. Wu Guanzhong is presented as the great Chinese artist. He is the great father of a large number of people in the Chinese art world and made many brave comments about modern art. But he is no way, in my view, a great artist. He is part of the national construction of modern Chinese art by the regime and by particular political groups within the regime. I have never seen an exhibition of Wu Guanzhong which handled, for example, his technical inadequacies with drawing, his appalling use of the Chinese brush, and so on and so forth. We can go through a whole range of fairly public, fairly neutral technical categories to talk about his work. But this artist was positioned as the great Chinese 20th century artist and still positioned so by the regime in Beijing.

So if you want to get people in your exhibition, you have to tell him he's a great artist. The Emperor has no clothes. He's not a great artist. He's a culturally important artist but not a great artist in any sense that we can possibly think that we would remember his work in the same way as, for example, Fan Kuan, Ni Zan, etc. The list is endless. And this is because of the very important relationship between knowledge, media, producers of exhibitions, political positions, regime power, resource distribution, etc. This is a typical case. In many other cases, it won't be as severe as this one but the same elements will be in play. All I'm trying to do is identify some of those elements which we have let more or less pass us by.

V.N. Desai : I want to really follow up on this question because, if you are really trying to make a distinction between curators and art historians, and posing it as a binary is problematic. To make the distinction, I think we also have to understand all of the subtleties. In other words, there are curators who are academics. You, yourself, curate a show. There are a number of us, who have been academics and also curators, curating shows. I think that sometimes there is, intentionality of production, in terms of certain kinds of constructions. There are other times, where there is a de facto effect of an exhibition for things to happen.

You have to make those kinds of distinctions between a prior intention to create something à la Berenson versus those exhibitions or curatorial practices that have become part of a system. I think that by setting up the kind of the binaries that you set up, you are creating a fall guy of a curator or a cultural producer...

J. Clark : Or the art historian could be the fall guy, too.

V. Desai : Yes. I think that one needs to really make that kind of subtle distinction as well. I wonder if you really believe in the kind of binaries that you are setting up?

J. Clark : Well, if you read the fine print in my paper, you'll see that I regard these analytical types to overlap in any individual. I'm not suggesting that these come easily boxed. Yes, I agree with your reservation.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : We would now like to go on to the next speaker, Professor Tatehata Akira. He is currently teaching at Tama Art University in Tokyo but was once a curator at the National Museum of Art, Osaka.

Today, we have speakers who overlap in their profession as museum curators and independent curators. Their role is difficult to categorize under a binary model. In Professor Tatehata's case, he is an academic and a critic who works as an independent curator. He curated the "Fang Lijun" exhibition held here at the Japan Foundation Asia Center in 1996. He has been very much involved in Asian art in recent years.

Tatehata Akira : I am very happy to have the chance to speak here today. Like the other panelists here, I am basically in favor of the way of thinking known as multiculturalism. However, I believe that the indigenous qualities peculiar to a certain region should be thought of as something relative, not absolute or sacred, and I would like to make my remarks from this point of view. Before presenting my paper, I would first like to make two comments on some things discussed by the panel yesterday, point out a certain problem, and tie it in with the content of my paper.

Yesterday there was a discussion of organizing exhibitions of contemporary Asian art. The issues raised in that discussion included how to interpret works of art as well as how to select curators for exhibitions. It was mutually agreed that for Asia, Asian art should be placed in its original context and understood in terms of that context. Art museums should provide the necessary information and educational programs for this purpose.

I believe that this is a very reasonable idea, but depending on how it is interpreted, it could lead into some dangerous temptations. I agree, of course, that works of art should be understood in their original context, but I wondered why this idea became such an issue here. We need to discuss this because we are making an assumption that works of art will be exhibited in an art museum, which means that they will be removed from their original location.

The institution known as the art museum, as pointed out by Mr. Mizusawa, is basically a cultural device created by Western European modernity. That is, it is ultimately based on the premise of modern civil society. Therefore, it is an organization with a mission, the project of enlightening the members of society. In a sense, it is the institution which best symbolizes Western modernism.

And this is the place where exhibitions of contemporary Asian art are to be held. That is, we can speak of an indigenous art of Asia, but we do not speak of an indigenous Asian art museum, a unique Asian-model art museum. At least no such claim was made yesterday. To speak somewhat ironically, but perhaps dogmatically, we are placed in the position of taking something from outside the West and putting it inside the container of Western