

As early as Qin Shin Huangdai, the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, books have been burned in China. From that time on, I think the intellectuals in China learned how to survive and work. Maybe cynicism in China is a way to survive, like humor. Cynicism is a way for artists in China to critique politics without hurting themselves. It's a detached, indifferent way to engage the changing world around them, of opening themselves up.

Question (M. Ushiroshoji) : I have seen your works during the photography exhibition and I was quite impressed. To see the one on the women in upper class China who had their feet bound was quite a shocking experience for me. By looking at Ms. Hung Liu's works, I must admit, I was lured into exotic curiosity. I am sure when the photographs were taken, the intent was to take something quite rare, unusual and exotic. I felt myself in the same position, enjoying that exoticism, just as the situation was at the time the photograph was taken originally. There is always the possibility of the audience looking at your work purely through exotic interest. In other words, the audience may look at your work in a way that is totally against your intent as an artist. People may just enjoy your work as something that's exotic. What is your view?

H. Liu : The beauty in life could be the most ugly thing in art. Sometimes horrible subject matter can be transformed to something powerful. The subject matter is not always easy or pleasant. You mentioned the horrible image of a woman with her disfigured feet. Actually, when I saw her picture for the first time myself, I was shocked. It was pretty exotic to me. The woman was a Chinese woman, but the picture was taken by an American photographer in 1900 who brought the photograph back to the West. I always have questions, looking at historical photographs, like "Who was this woman and had she ever seen her own photographs? Had she left any descendants?" The foreign photographer probably traveled to China and saw what were to him, exotic images or situations, so he documented and brought them back to the West, maybe for his own entertainment, or to show it to other people. I do not know the original intentions.

But I realized that it was a symbol of a Chinese woman. It's anonymous but also symbolizes femininity, exposed to the foreign photographer and to whoever had seen her image. Also, the Chinese government would think this was evidence to criticize the old, darker age, the pre-revolutionary age. When I finally painted her, I felt I reclaimed her. For the first time, maybe, she was given an identity and some dignity. When we watch other's suffering, like when we watch the Somalis starving to death or an airplane crash in the news, we say, "Oh God, that's terrible." There is something about this that is detached, and yet similar to, I hate to say, "enjoyment." But that's what it's about. There's something about this that is both horrible and satisfying. I feel it's up to the audience to read the paintings themselves. Depending on cultural and personal experience, each person probably will interpret the work differently.

Question : Referring to Mr. Tatehata's comment about the im-

possibility of translating the art, I am not sure if translation is necessary in looking at objects of art. For example, your art reminded me of the poems of Tao Yuanming. There is very self-inflicting gaze that I identify. I understand that you are currently in America. You called yourself a mongrel. That may be related to the very fact that you are currently living in America, a foreign land and that you now look at yourself closer than before. Do you think all that needs to be "translated," in other words, does your work need to be understood in our cultural context?

H. Liu : Yes and no. It depends on how you look at translation. For example, the ancient Chinese poems like from the Tang Dynasty or Japanese *haiku* are very hard to translate without losing their original meaning, power, charm, etc. But I think that visual language is different. I don't like to use the term "universal," but something similar to that is present in visual language. You need to look at visual art and use your eyes to appreciate it. But, for example, if I didn't tell you that some paintings I did are based on historical photographs of young Chinese prostitutes, the subject would look just like a young girl from, maybe, the turn of the century. I think you can appreciate it without such supporting information, but another layer of meaning is there which might be helpful in order to "understand." I think accurate translation is impossible. Information, not translation, might be a better word.

Question (A. Tatehata) : You have been trained in realism in China at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Whether or not you were trained according to your own will, this is a technique you have acquired. Now you are using it again to, perhaps, re-evaluate your own technique. Is it fair to say that you are using the technique you have acquired in China, so that you can re-evaluate that once again?

H. Liu : We all learn a lot of things. Some things we have learned actually became our burden. In China, we always say we have five thousand years of civilization. When I was trained there, I remember working on one model, a nude, for weeks. We always tried to get every single detail correct. I remember the Russian drawing textbook which explained that you should train yourself like the best camera in the world. Our professor always walked in and said, "The elbow... you didn't do it right. Look at this fingernail... all the details." When you focus too much on the details, you lose the whole. I was trained by professors to do accurate, perfect, realistic drawings and paintings but without any ideas.

So, I can still use my technique. I am a Chinese artist and I don't have to apologize for being trained that way. There's nothing wrong with doing realistic paintings. But art is about the ideas. We use things we have learned and learn something new, use it, for a new purpose. That is what matters.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : Thank you. We will take a break at this point.

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MC (T. Mizusawa): Now we'd like to resume. The next presentation will be given by Dr. Apinan Poshyananda who is a professor at Chulalongkorn University. He has been very active in organizing international exhibitions serving as a curator in almost all contemporary Asian art exhibitions where he has been working in one role or another. He was involved in organizing "Traditions/Tensions," which features five Asian countries. The artists in this show were grouped according to themes rather than national affiliation and this was a very incisive exhibition of contemporary art.

He is also a very excellent art historian and has written extensively on modern Thai art. He is an insightful, sometimes provocative, commentator who looks at culture from a total perspective including historical issues, current social conditions, and underlying political structures.

Apinan Poshyananda: With the recent increase of international exhibitions, never before have so many artists from so many countries shown in mega-exhibitions (biennales, triennials) in various cities all over the globe. These international art exhibitions are clearly exerting an effect on the art infrastructure in Asia.

The criss-crossing of borders in labyrinthine routes seems to confirm the effects of globalization and a new world order where periphery, marginality, and locality are given recognition and emphasis. However, the inclination to move to de-centered centers has revealed that the Third World is fraught with inequalities and contradictions among various religions, tribes, classes, genders and ethnicities.

Transnational economic trends have hierarchies. Economist and analyst Saskia Sassen has observed the new geography of power in the age of globalization with territorial organization of economic activity. While Masao Miyoshi has aptly questioned, "Is there a borderless world?" As in economic hegemony and globalization where transnational corporations are geared toward regional targets, many international art exhibitions aim to reflect the globalization of culture and breakdown of national borders. But with the mushrooming of the biennales and extravaganza shows, some urgent questions have arisen regarding purpose and underlying intention such as economic, political and social interests. Moreover, there are problems in respect of territorial exclusivity, cultural and artistic control through corporate-like organization, cultural diplomacy, selectivity and circulation of artists and art work.

I will offer a critique on these issues that might reflect the state and situation of contemporary Asian art in this symposium.

Let me recall the important discussion in the conference in 1994, "The Potential of Asian Thought." There were some extremely important topics discussed concerning the effects of modernization on Asian art. I also recollect that my paper, "Asian Art in the Post-Hegemonic World," which opened debate on Japan's role and cultural involvement in Asia as reciprocation of friendship and/or cultural hegemony and intimate manipulation, resulted in some intense heavy breathing, smoke puffing, air sucking by our Japanese comrades. I will not dwell too much on

this matter but stress that the intention or challenges that were made, were meant to be productive. I know that some of the points I left for contemplation in 1994 have been reconsidered and practiced in recent, successful art projects by our Japanese organizers.

I believe issues of cultural management and the role of aesthetic arbiters are vital and deserve space in our rethinking of Asian contemporary art. I will focus on the emerging roles of Asian artistic managers, or what I call "cultural sentinels," as follows.

One, transformation from behind-the-scene organizers to a more central role of central mediators. Two, selectors who frame taste or open up venues for new talent or marginalized art into the mainstream from A to B. Three, the role of transnational curators working in space of dissolved cultural frontiers. Four, the dilemma of representing Asian artists with "identity tags" and reciprocation with "foreign" audience. Five, the most important point: pan-Asian curatorial teams that advise and assist Asian artists in international art exhibitions. Here I will call for art institutions to be less institutionally-minded, and work seriously on a multi-lateral basis.

The first two points have been the recent phenomena in contemporary Asian art. The word "curator" which is a noun in English, in its museum sense, has recently become a verb. To curate, Asian curators have to be knowledgeable not only of their nation's art but of comparative works of artists at regional and international levels.

The desire to catch up with expanding internationalism has resulted in many Asian curators screening works in order to plug into the global art circuit. At the same time, many have reacted to the restrictive perimeters of the canon of Western modernism/postmodernism. Their response to the Euro-American paradigm allows space for Asian-centric discourse that encourages commonality and comradeship. By resisting the paradigm of the other ("them/white"), "we/us" Asian brothers and sisters, seek common ground for a beneficial course.

The new role for curators has resulted in networks where group ethnicity takes priority in regional art exhibitions. Here I define region to cover various areas, such as Southeast Asia, the Far East, the Asia-Pacific. Therefore the "inter" or "trans" national curators in this region are required to have vision in art that reflects distinctive characteristics. The trends are inclined toward issues that are shared among countries instead of uniqueness within a nation-state. For instance, multi-cultural identities and communities have been favorable themes.

I come to my third point. With transnational curators working in the space of dissolved cultural frontiers, such practices have been relatively new in Asia, with the exception of Japan. Curators from art institutions like Tokyo, Hiroshima and Fukuoka, have regularly visited Korea, China, Southeast Asia, in order to curate and collect materials and art works for their institutions and show works for "their" Japanese audience. Such endeavour has been beneficial for a better Japanese understanding of "their" Asian others.

But the one-way mirror where Asian art and artists have been

objects of the gaze and scrutiny of Japanese experts has altered. New gazers, such as those from Australia and Singapore, have added enriching vision and foresight to art in this region. Inevitably projects and exhibitions initiated from various art institutions have resulted in competition among curators. I find this to be availing as the standard of curatorship has elevated to surpass what has been "controlled" art projects designed solely to project an exotic vision of harmony and brotherhood such as those organized by the ASEAN visual art programs.

The north-south, center-periphery axis is believed, by many, to be more important today than the east-west axis. The equilibrium at the center has become more disequibrated and destabilized. It could be said that the center and periphery change determinations. As a result, Asian curators are encouraged to make peripheral formations become true centers, while the central formations peripheralize. Ours is the age of Third Worlds, minorities and multicultural voices, which seem to uniformly reject the Euro-American paradigm. But such repudiation has become too simplistic.

We learn that cultural hegemony comes in various guises. As recognized experts of art world establishments, curators are placed at the position where they act as catalysts and intermediaries of taste, as well as avant-garde concepts. However, there has been criticism of curators who place themselves at the service of elite audiences or specialized groups. Curators have been compared to brokers whose power and position allow them to mediate in areas of economic exchanges, namely cultural goods.

Naturally Asian curators who are involved in selection of artists at home to show abroad often face challenges regarding criteria, selectivity and personal preference. When artists are selected for international exhibitions and their works collected by cultural institutions abroad, recognition and price tend to rise. Here, many Asian artists are relying more than ever on curators to get their names plugged into the international art circuit (the same could be said vice versa). Because the tradition of curatorship in contemporary Asian art is relatively new, the curator-artist relationship still needs very much time for improvement.

My own recent experience in curating exhibitions between cultures has certainly been illuminating. I was fortunate to encounter the international art circuit as a curator to represent my country as well as a guest curator to show regional art (Asian art) in international exhibitions. My role as guest curator for "Traditions/Tensions" that opened in New York, organized by the Asia Society, has been reviewed extensively. Similarly, my position as curatorial coordinator for the Australian section of the Asia-Pacific Triennial in Brisbane has been written of elsewhere. Standing on precarious thin threads, my task in these two projects last year has taught me much about curating contemporary art between cultures. The complex process of transporting art originating from peripheral regions to New York helped to push the borders of contemporary art and challenge cultural frontiers. The strategy whereby a cultural institution, the Asia Society, patronized Asian art to be viewed by American audiences through an Asian curators' eye was an intricate procedure. As we know, change of fixated perception takes time, especially in the U.S., where lack of

knowledge and discourse on modern Asian art has caused discriminations of taste, artistic value and authenticity to be based on the relativity of American standards. In addition, "identity tags" of nations are still considered strongly. Despite discourse on multiculturalism, many American art critics could not grasp, for instance, the concept of an exhibition with five Asian countries (fig. 29).

My role for the Second Asia-Pacific Triennial (APT) was different but equally complicated. The task was to select Australian artists for the APT. Instead of an Australian curatorial gaze at Asian artists, mine was the reverse look at our distant neighbors. I had noted criticism in the First APT regarding lack of Aboriginal representation and involvement with the local art community. One of my aims was to consider Australian artists' position in this transnational regionalist blockbuster. Instead of established names, I focused on artists whose concern was class-based, race-based cultural difference. For instance, the project of the Campfire Group or works by an Aboriginal, urban-based artist in Melbourne, Destiny Deacon (fig. 30).

The process of political negotiation and debate over questions of cultural difference and heterogeneity has affected the art infrastructure in Asia as well as the Pacific. We have discussed this many times now. Who curates what? Who gets selected? Who selects the curators? Who in turn selects cultural goods to be exhibited between borders? Often the level of interest lies in what kind of exhibitions are represented rather than the artists. Cultural mediators, aesthetic arbiters, artistic directors, are becoming more prominent than ever in the international art scene. Inevitably these individuals have been scrutinized as cultural controllers or manipulators, or cultural brokers. If these individuals procure power in the international art circuit, it is pertinent to observe their future role and action in context of the regionalist perspective.

I refer back to my paper in 1994, where I extended my proposal for the future of working in multilateral partnerships. And this is my fifth point. This partnership can expand and disseminate the potential of contemporary Asian art to the fullest. It should be realized by now that art circuits, both at transnational global and local multicultural levels, consist of complex hierarchies. Although more doors and opportunities are open to artists from the Third World, many mega-shows still rely heavily on countries with available funds and financial support. The presence of Japanese and South Korean pavilions and the Taiwanese section in the Venice Biennale, for example, are obvious examples.

In the 1995 shows, Korean, Chinese and Japanese artists were featured prominently in exhibitions in Venice "TransCulture," "Asiana," and "Tiger's Tail." In biennales in Istanbul and Johannesburg, Japan and South Korea seem to represent Asia. Why then, in this new network of transnational curatorship and brotherhood, are artists from India, Pakistan and Southeast Asia still sidelined or selected irregularly?

The answers are multi-faceted. Plenty of talented artists but lack of cultural mediators; official red tape that blocks instead of encourages contemporary art; lack of expertise and available

materials for survey and selection ; lack of discourse and programs that promote contemporary art. The list goes on but the bottom line seems to be artists/curator relations with funding to back the project. When it comes to the practical side of organization fundraising, it tends to be confined within the scope of the nation-state. Many artists in biennales have to get expenses and costs covered by their own country. Presently, with the frequency of biennales all over the globe, countries with available funding tend to have the advantage.

Here is the time for cultural institutions such as the Japan Foundation, museums, ASEAN art and culture programs, and the Australian Art Council, to combine their efforts and improve the representation of Asian artist in international art circuits. To plan for regionalist shows every so often and congratulate each other for the success is no longer enough. To obtain a better discernment of contemporary Asian art, these works have to be seen and appreciated regularly outside the region. Biennales have their shortcomings but the presence of Asian artists are essential for maximum international exposure.

Proper organization of international art exhibitions for Asian artists needs to be achieved in the very near future. Financing and fundraising must be available for artists to apply when they are selected to represent Asia as a region. Transnational collaboration among art experts and "cultural sentinels" is necessary in order to properly reconsider the state of contemporary art in Asia.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : Thank you, Dr. Poshyananda. Does anyone have any questions?

Question (F. Nanjo) : I have been involved in work similar to that of Dr. Poshyananda, so I am in agree with him on many points. However, with regard to one of your concluding remarks, the suggestion that Asian curators and institutions work hand-in-hand to put Asian artists on the international circuit, why do you think such effort is necessary? Could it not be interpreted as a negative picture of another kind of hegemony, in other words, another kind of backlash against Eurocentricism? Some people in Japan may feel that such effort is not necessary.

A. Poshyananda : I don't ask everybody to agree with what I'm proposing. What I'm saying is that, at the moment, there are so many shows going on with great regularity, that you get a financial hierarchy. In fact, I want to reduce hegemony within Asia. At the moment, institutions are creating their own hegemony within Asia. I want to encourage museum officials and curators who are attached to institutions to be less institutionally minded and work more on a multilateral basis.

Now a lot of people say that this creates a new power game. But I emphasize funding only, not on decisions to select artists. Put a box here and put your yen, your Australian dollars, your bahts and rupee. Every year artists need to apply for financial backing. You get Istanbul Biennales, Johannesburg Biennales that announce the art extravaganza. They fax to some curators and say "Congratulations! Curate the show," but "Raise the money, get transportation, get the flights." The countries who can

afford that, can do so easily—Korea, Taiwan, Japan. But lesser countries like Thailand or the Philippines, Indonesia, miss out. I feel this is sort of a new power game. I'm suggesting that the selected artists can apply to get financial support from this new system. And the biennales are happening so regularly that it's every year.

Question (V.N. Desai) : To amplify what Mr. Nanjo has said, there is another way to look at this, which is not an alternative model of Asian or Asia-wide or APEC-like foundations to put up the money. You might have examples of international foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation or a comparable thing from Germany, etc., where people in the Euro-American world feel it's very important to actually encourage and look at the artists from those parts of the world that are not economically as privileged as some other parts of the world. Perhaps it is not to be seen as simply an alternative Asian model, but just another kind of an international body.

A. Poshyananda : I indicated this also. I mean I don't mind American dollars. I don't mind Deutsch mark. These institutions are willing to contribute from outside the region. The more institutions we have, the better, because at the end of the game, I feel that contemporary Asian art with quality should be seen outside the region.

Question (V.N. Desai) : It seems to me that that kind of a funding body should be also available for within the region. For example, let's assume that Bangladesh wants to organize an important exhibition but they don't have money, and they are trying to curate a show of something from Japan, but they don't want to go through the governmental bureaucracy. This kind of a model would allow a creation of an alternative system to a governmental bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is where so many countries find their difficulties.

A. Poshyananda : I think many of you here have heard of the social installation organized by some artists-run-communities in Chaing Mai, or the Mekong Biennale Project that have been in the minds of artists but never realized because there's no money. The "TransCulture" exhibition (1995) in Venice, curated by Nanjo Fumio, was very successful. It did not totally focus on contemporary Asian art, but at least it gave exposure to Asian artists to plug in. People complain about Venice Biennales every two years. But this is an arena where less recognized artists can be seen. We don't have to have the money to build our own pavilions, but we can rent such places as the Palazzo Giustinian Lolin.

Question : Overlapping with Mr. Nanjo's comment. What you propose can be turned into a totalitarianism, if not attended to carefully. For example, today's theme is "Asian Contemporary Art Reconsidered." Can we not start thinking about the issues without using the word, Asia? Mr. Tatehata referred to a "Western standard." Do we need a "Asian standard" to balance that?

Don't we have many centers other than these two, for example, one in Thailand, one in Japan, etc., if not to use the word multi-polarized?

I think grouping standards into "Asia" and "Western" is too limiting. Are there not many countries involved in the "Western standard?" Are we not talking about a whole region and its many cultures?

In other words, to "reconsider" Asian contemporary art, should we not consider the many centers and not limit ourselves to a polarized view? What is your opinion?

MC (T. Mizusawa): Do we need to think in terms of a largely polarized world view of Asia versus Europe? The questioner does not agree. His idea conflicts with your idea of establishing a support system for financial support, etc. to expose Asian art in the international arena and to create opportunities for many more audiences to see the art from this region. What is your position in promoting Asian art?

A. Poshyananda: I'm sorry but I feel that we have to look at things in Asian-centric terms at the moment. You may think that is too inconsiderate. But I feel, at the moment, that the Asian representation at international shows, especially outside the region, is not strong enough and, therefore, we need to look at it from a very Asian-centric viewpoint or Asian-Pacific viewpoint to form some sort of a force to go and get our act together and compete out there. It is a competition. I am saying that within the region, we have very enriching projects and we've come a long way within the past decade in Singapore, Brisbane, elsewhere. But outside the region, there is still some misconception about contemporary Asian art.

We need discourse, etc., but we can't wait for all that. It's happening out there every minute. The projects are out there, next month, next week. We need to combine forces and go and compete out there. It's a competitive world, I'm afraid. If we look at it in a very Asian, smiling, lethargic way, we will still be left behind and misinterpreted. I think Caroline Turner mentioned, for example, that in Documenta, or Münster, or Venice Biennale, few Asians are represented. I just feel that there is a need for this urgent course. Otherwise we're going to miss the boat. I'm sorry. It has to be Asian-centric, I'm afraid.

Question (I. Hariu): You mentioned that few Asian artists are represented in international exhibitions such as Documenta and other large scale international exhibitions. I'm all for what you said. I would like to touch on your statement about the roles of curators, especially, for the need for them to have the sensitivity and act with a transnational mind when they are on the frontier of dissolving cultures. My question is about this word "frontier." We have to look for many frontiers of new artists, new efforts in the arts. What do you mean by the "frontier"? If "frontier" is dissolving culture, then do we incorporate things like Creole culture—something that merges Europe and Asia. Or do you talk about the blurred boundary between art and non-art? You are talking about the eclectic, yes? Where and how do you define the frontier

that you are talking about?

A. Poshyananda: I mean multi-layered frontiers. It could be cultural frontiers as well as economic frontiers. But I feel that when we see the blurring of cultures within Asia, we have to be aware that the feeling or the concept that Asia is one, or a new "Asianism," can also be dangerous. If everything is blurred, the hierarchies that exist presently can be overlooked. I feel that the blurring of the barriers give us the opportunity to be present internationally.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Could you further describe your issue in the current context of Thailand, Thai's contemporary art and your activities in Thailand?

A. Poshyananda: I would say that the Thai art infrastructure is way behind Korea or Japan. We lack galleries, critics, academics, which puts us at a disadvantage, not only just compared to Japan or Korea, but to, for example, the Philippines. The Philippine art circuit is very rich, but also has the advantage of many languages. Thais tend to feel happy because they've never been colonized, and they do not have to learn English. This mono-culture feeling and attachment to the "three pyramids" of nation, religion and monarchy, have their own adverse effects.

Now, many Thai artists, as you know, have made their presence felt in Japan. And the Japan Foundation has given opportunities for Thai artists to be shown internationally within Asia. But I could name only a handful of Thai artists who have penetrated into the real global scene. And this is something that I feel is not connected to the artists talent, but to the fact that the circuit itself is not full. We still have to rely on a lot of Japanese support, especially in finance. Some artists have big dreams and many ideas. But they need financial support. It's not that Thai patrons are poor; they are extremely rich. But they look at certain kinds of art. The art that will reflect their nation, religion, monarchy. The art that is very nationalistic and somewhat neo-conservative. I'm not saying that those kinds of art are less good or have less quality than the works by artists who are more conceptual or artists who concentrate on other mediums, more ephemeral materials or installations. But if we're talking in terms of international art, that is the name of the game. International critics won't be choosing neo-traditional type arts for biennales or Documentas, or in other international shows. It is a kind of testing period. The good ones get recognized and they jump ahead, but there is a loophole here where a big contrast exists.

Five years ago, a lot of the artists felt that they needed national awards, a recognition within the country to have their names given to international curators. But at the moment, at the frontiers, international critics actually pass the loophole. They just come straight in to see the artists. Sometimes very, very young artists now are beginning to get recognition without having to go through the hierarchical power system in the Thai art scene. I think this is refreshing.

Question (J. Clark): Isn't this a problem with circulation of

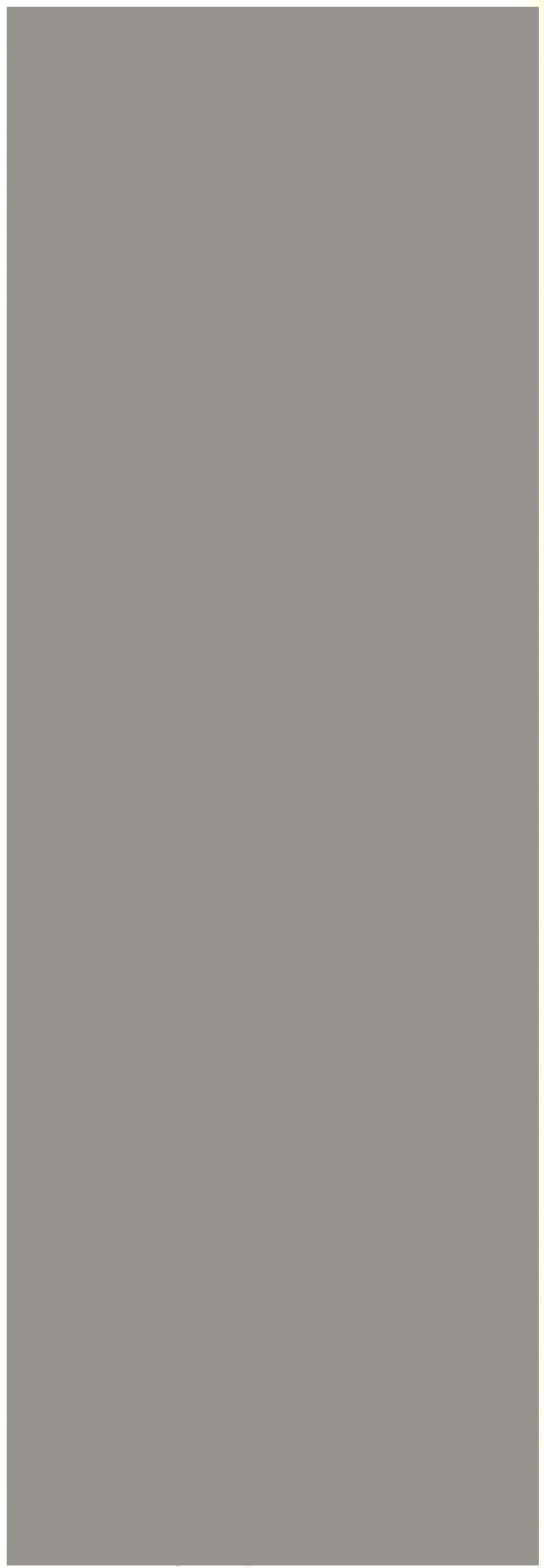
cultural and economic capital? If there's no support for artists from areas recognized at an international level in a world which is increasingly globalized, where economic decisions are made globally, which forces circuits of exchange at a material level, then at a symbolic level and at a cultural level. Other kinds of exchanges are taking place based on that circulation of economic capital. We won't actually have the input into those circuits of cultural capital, as seen in the material capital. This is a phenomenon on a cultural level which is a reflection of a material level phenomenon. What do you think about it?

A. Poshyananda : Let me put the two issues of cultural goods, economic capital, installations and quality in one. Okay? Cultural goods, or commodified objects get chosen, shown A to B, back to A, gets sold, price goes up. Installations, ephemeral materials, go and are used up. Nobody collects it. Nobody can keep it. No price. But is that so?

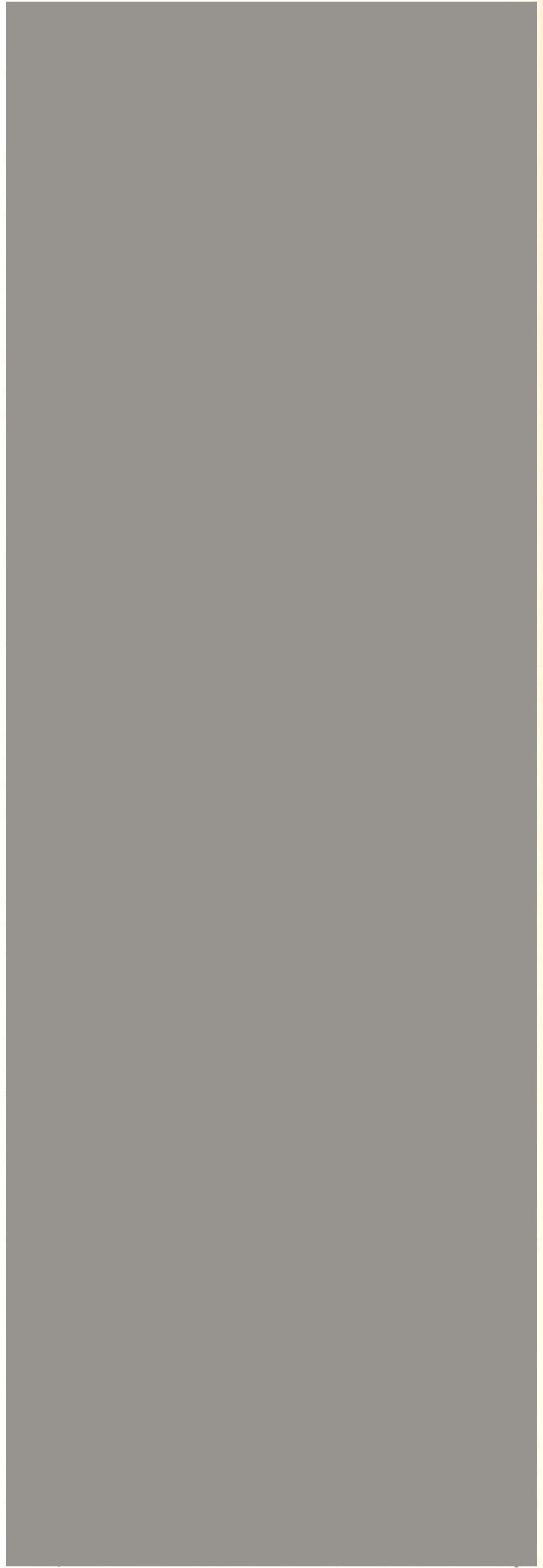
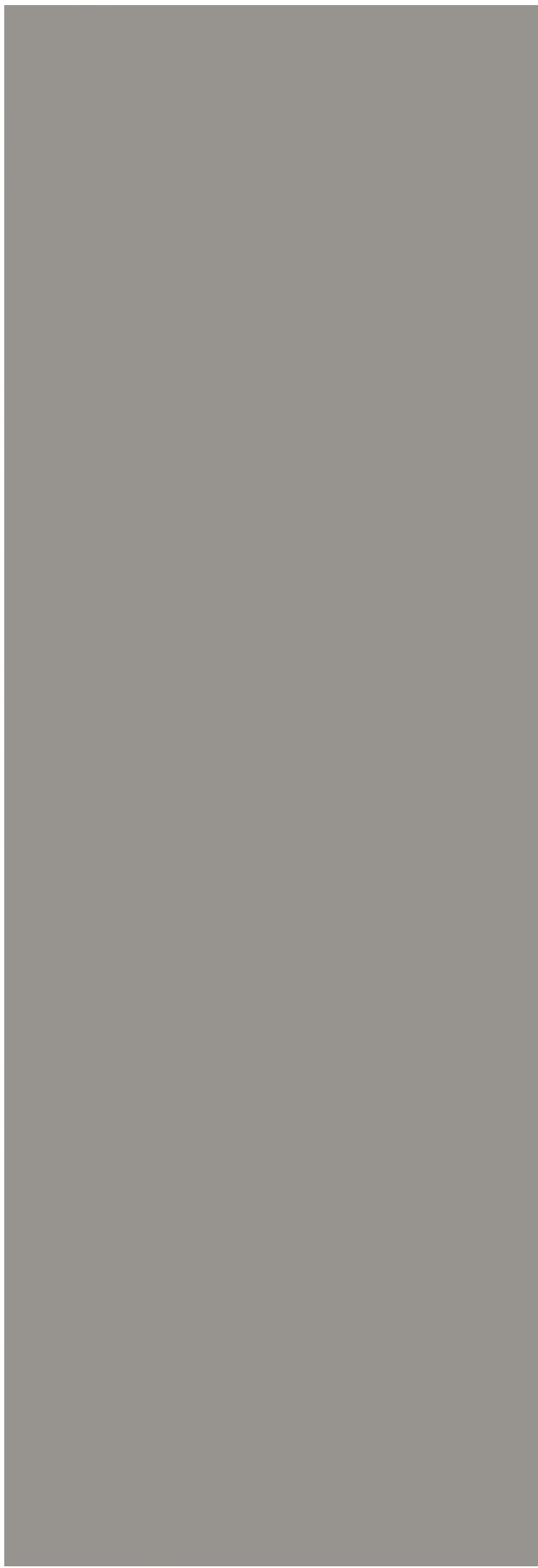
In the international art circuit, is it not true that an installation artist get selected and flown to those places? They pack their bags. They say, "I'm going to use the materials at those venues," and go. We may think that installation may not be collectable. But some installations are collectibles. And many installations have a very high price. When artists catch on, some of them change media from painting or sculpture to, suddenly, installation. When they get more and more recognition, they negotiate better and better with museums and institutions and the planning gets to the point where the idea is sketched, presented to the curators at those museums and institutions, and the curators there make those ideas their own. It is a two way thing. The curators actually create the installations and the artists actually go and make it. And the museums buy it. So here you see an example of commodified goods through installations.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : I would now like to introduce the next speaker who is a Japanese artist, Murakami Takashi. His work has been shown widely, so I am sure that many of you know him. He was resident in New York between 1994 and 1995, and participated in the Second Asia-Pacific Triennial held in 1996 at the Queensland Art Gallery, and also joined the conference held during the exhibition. I believe that he has had various experiences as an artist, and would be able to point to the Asian context as well as the role of contemporary art in the society. Welcome Mr. Murakami.











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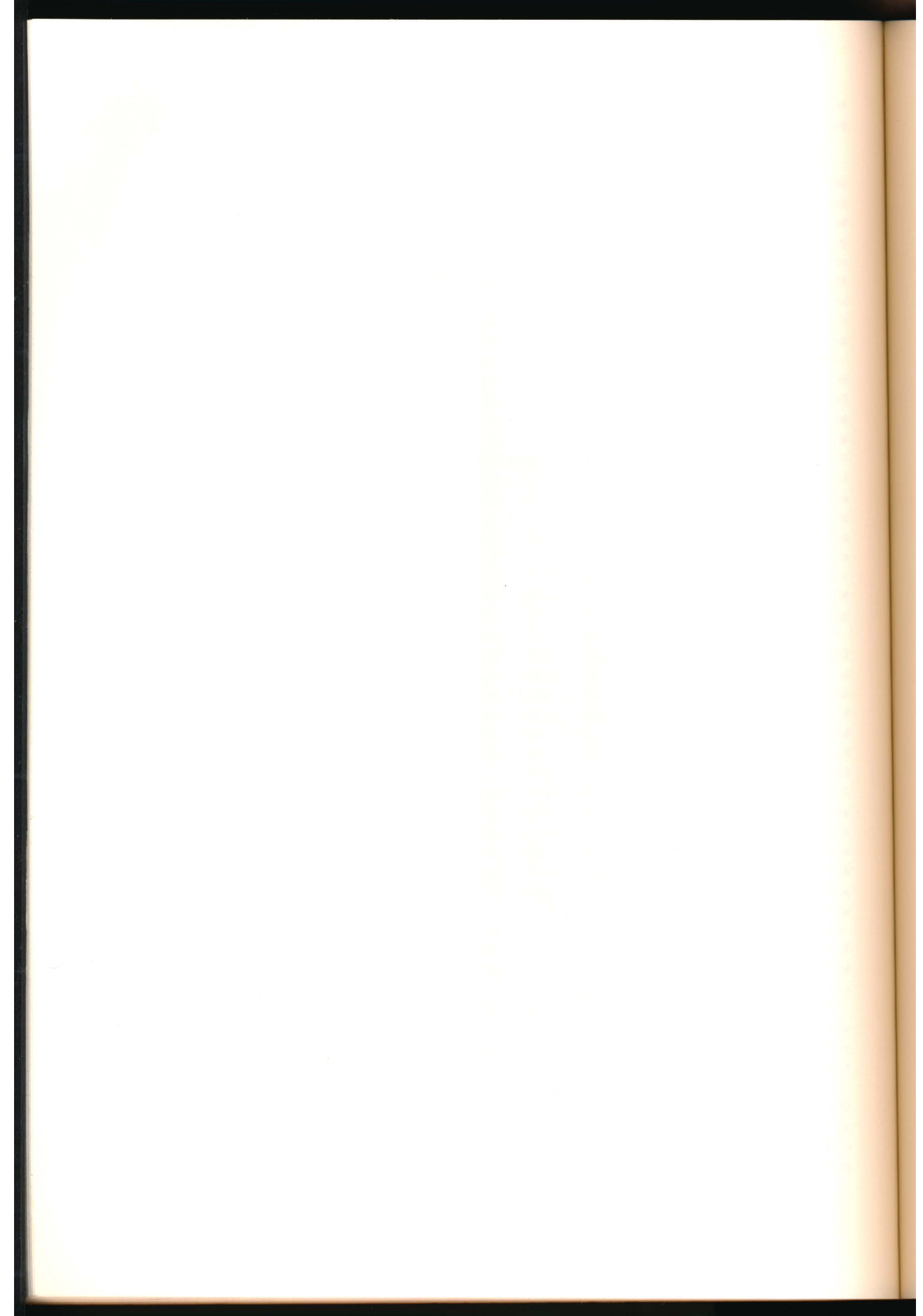
MC (T. Mizusawa) : Thank you, Mr. Murakami. Are there any questions about Mr. Murakami's work or his activity?

Question : You have described your activities as "show business." You need to attract an audience for your business. But has the Japanese art world not been a business before? I think it has. It has been centered on the large exhibiting societies which act like groups organized on a regional level to support the Liberal Democratic Party. So the art, be it antique or contemporary art, has always been a commodity.

So why is attracting an audience your only measure of success? You sold your balloon as an art work, not as a toy in the toy section, in the same way as crafts would not be sold in the dish-ware section. Your interest in the mass audience and otaku audience is at the opposite pole from the museum system. Why are you so concerned with the power structure of contemporary art alone?



Question : If you work with the masses, you would become restricted by the market and capital. Isn't this the reality? Aren't the curators having difficulties attracting audience even if they have a good show? Art is not suited to serve the masses, is it?



Session III

MC (T. Mizusawa) : This is Session III, the Plenary Session. In this two day meeting, the first day dealt with reports from museums and the second day, today, we have discussed critics and artists, or issues concerning critics and artists. We have listened to curators as well as museum administrators and also to artists to see how Asian contemporary art is understood or dealt with by critics and artists, and a number of issues were raised in relation to that.

Rather than trying to confining the discussion to themes or topics related specifically to those two areas, I would like to invite two people, first of all, to give us their general comments. Mr. Nakahara Yusuke is the first person we are going to ask to give his impression about the two day meeting. Mr. Nakahara is a well known art critic in Japan and so he does not need to be introduced. While he has been very active as an art critic, he has also been very active in promoting exhibitions to introduce contemporary art, artists and their work to audiences within Japan as well as abroad.

At the time of the first Documenta in Germany, Werner Haftmann was, in a way, the curator of Documenta. In those days however, people were not so conscious about curatorship. Haftmann's authority as an art critic actually determined the content of Documenta. In that sense, because of the less established nature of curatorship in those days, it seems that it was the art critics who were playing important roles, even in Germany, where there is a longer history of curation and curatorship. So the two areas were intertwined in promoting contemporary art in different countries.

Mr. Nakahara has been promoting contemporary art—not only the art of Japanese artists, but also of artists belonging to neighboring countries, Korea, Taiwan, and so forth. He is also very knowledgeable about the contemporary art scene in Western countries. I wonder how he looks at the past decade where there has been so much attention being focused on Asia and its contemporary art. I also would also invite Mr. Nakahara to give his thoughts on the presentations we have been listening to yesterday and today.

Nakahara Yusuke : As Mr. Mizusawa has said, I have been interested in the art of Korea, particularly its contemporary art, for some time. And I organized several exhibitions, in the mid-seventies as I recall. At that time, the words "Asian art" were not generally used. Today, as evidenced by the title of this symposium, the phrase Asian contemporary art is evidently in common use.

I do not especially want to quibble about words, but I would like to present an idea that I have held to for some time. In my way of thinking, "Asian art" is not a valid concept. Of course, there are works of art made by artists living in the countries that

are part of the region known as Asia. European art is, I believe, a valid concept in terms of history and esthetics. Asian art does not exist in the same sense. There are reasons, though, for wanting to say, or wanting to have others say, that it does exist.

As Dr. Poshyananda reported today, there is an art based on a European or an American paradigm. So isn't there a possibility of an art based on a different paradigm in Asia, which could be identified by the words "Asian art"? A desire for this possibility is the basis for using the words Asian art or Asian contemporary art. However, if we ask whether there is art being made in the countries of Asia today which deviates or completely differs from the European or American paradigm, I would not answer in the affirmative.

Dr. Poshyananda also suggested that there is a need to gain more international recognition for Asian art, understood in a simple way rather than as I have discussed it, even if there is some misunderstanding. This year, there was very little art from the countries of Asia, Westernized or not, in the established, large-scale international exhibitions like the Venice Biennale, Documenta in Kassel, or the Lyon Biennale in France. He proposes that we make a more active effort to get so-called Asian art seen in these places and makes suggestions for increasing solidarity among curators and obtaining financing.

This view of Asian art is related to the commonly acknowledged problems facing the contemporary art being created in Asian nations today. Asia also includes countries like Nepal and Mongolia. Dr. Poshyananda is concerned about more aggressively promoting Asian art, the art from all these countries, in international exhibitions in countries outside of Asia, mainly, I think, in Europe and the United States. And he speaks of what needs to be done for this purpose.

I have also entertained hopes for realizing the possibility of the first type of Asian art, that is, an art coming out of Asia that is produced in an entirely different context than the art of Europe and the United States. The word "post-modern" has often been linked to Asian art in recent discussions, although I did not hear it in any of the statements made yesterday or today. This entails a view of Asian art as the creation of art apart from the European paradigm, post-modern art being understood as a departure from European traditions. I must admit to having been interested in this possibility myself, but now, I think that this way of thinking is not very productive. Also, although I am certainly not against having Asian art shown more frequently in international exhibitions in a variety of non-Asian places, I do not expect much of international exhibitions like those in Venice and Kassel. I do not think it likely that these international exhibitions will become more actively engaged in showing Asian art in the future. That is one point.

My second concern is an issue that was raised yesterday, the

problem of museums. Mr. Tatehata has referred to this already today, so I hope this is not too repetitious. The art museum is an institution that was created by European modernity. A very large number of public art museums has been built in Japan, but this is not the case in most of the other countries of Asia. That why we had the report on the Singapore Art Museum.

I believe it is correct to say that the Asian nations have been late developers with respect to the institution of the art museum, whatever form it takes. If they go on to build them now, however, they will only be perpetuating an institution exactly like the museums that arose in Europe. And, as has been pointed out, this is where the art of Asian countries will be put, where it will be exhibited and collected. The basic format of these practices of collecting and exhibiting will be fundamentally the same as in the museums of Europe or the United States. Exhibitions will consist of paintings on the wall or works placed on the floor, including installations. Generally speaking, since the art worlds of most Asian countries are latecomers in many areas, including museums, there is a desire to remedy the situation or improve it as quickly as possible. My question is whether this is a proper issue for "Asian contemporary art," the theme of this symposium.

No matter how it is stated or explained, it seems that what is being proposed is to create an art world in each of the countries of Asia with the same structure as that of the American or European art world. We are being asked to band together for this purpose, which makes strategic sense, and do it in the name of Asian art.

I think there is another possibility with respect to this problem of museums. In the art world of Europe and America, and I think this is partially true of Japan as well, contemporary art is changing in ways that make it less compatible with the institution which we have known as the art museum. To take an extreme example, how should we deal with someone like the Japanese artist Kawamata Tadashi, whose work has no connection with the museum. Certain types of installations do not depend on museums. They have moved out of the museum and left it behind, and it is very likely that more works of this kind will be produced in the future. The same tendency is being seen in Asia as well as in Europe and America. Because of this, building European-style museums, forcing art into them, and focusing on the kind of art that can only be displayed in a museum may not be the most appropriate way of handling the art of Asia. I see this as a problem.

Yesterday, we heard about the rickshaw painting from Bangladesh at the Fukuoka Art Museum. I suppose that you could place this sort of thing in the context of art if you wanted to, but why is it necessary to insert it into the system known as the museum in order to show it to people? If it is something that is part of everyday life, is there any good reason for showing it as a relic or a special art object. Frankly, I have difficulty understanding this.

If, in Asia, we choose to pay attention to art that does not take the form of painting or sculpture, forms which are produced with techniques which are fundamentally European, or to everyday tools or equipment created locally, I think we need to rethink the idea of the museum. It should be possible in Asian countries to conceive of a new type of art museum, which is different from

the European kind, where objects other than paintings or sculpture can be displayed. That is, they do not have to be forced into the mold of art to become objects which people can see and appreciate. I think it is necessary to give more thought to this issue. Since the various regions of Asia have been late in building art museums, it is still possible to think flexibly about them. Simply stated, those are my views.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : Thank you very much. Mr. Nakahara has just said that he does see great possibilities for promotion of Asian art through increased entry and participation in large Western exhibitions. And he also mentioned that because Asia is behind, a latecomer, in terms of establishing art museums, maybe we should take advantage of that fact to pursue a form of art museum which is very different from the European and American models.

I now would like to invite the next speaker from Korea, Dr. Lee Yongwoo, to speak. The 1995 Kwangju Biennale was directed by him. He was the artistic director and he achieved a major success with the Kwangju Biennale. And he also curated "Tiger's Tail" in the 46th Venice Biennale. So we would like to hear from him what his impressions are and also, to tell us his thoughts about the current Asian contemporary art situation. So Dr. Lee Yongwoo, please.

Lee Yongwoo : The panelists' talk and proposals for the last two days have focused on four points.

First, how Asian art has been introduced to, and appreciated by, the Western art world, as well as in Japan and in Singapore. Second, what is the relationship between the art of Asia and that of the West, and the influence of Western art in a central role to the peripheral regions? Third, what is Asia's challenge to Western modern and contemporary art, and how does it interpret it as a counter-culture? And last, how we could define an authentic form of art and cultural identity which separates the Asian art form or Asian art from others?

These approaches have great importance in overviewing the vast history of art in general and mapping a historical, authentic and critical topography of the context of Asian art. It is my impression that this gathering is greatly interested in the exhibition of current art including international biennales and forms of Asian contemporary art. This brings an active curatorial perspective and a multi-dimensional aspect to Asian art which seems to be a solid assessment of the context of Asian culture.

This meeting is as much for analyzing exhibitions already held, as for the discussion itself. Furthermore, we have a great task of challenging and receiving production and consumption in the contemporary art world. The subtle manipulation of culture in the name of globalism is still going on and the political gesture of differentiating the characteristics and identities of culture still continues.

As the theme of this symposium is "Asian Contemporary Art Reconsidered," I was expecting limitless, endless debates on identity. The term "identity" is not originally Asian, but derived from the expansionism of the West. In yesterday's presentation,

Dr. Desai discussed how Asian art has been received by the Western art world. Many experiences tell us that quite often our Western colleagues, who have a lack of proper understanding of Asian art, tend to easily make unsubtle comments and use relatively critical expressions, as Dr. Desai pointed out: "Too political"; "Doesn't have character"; "Context is not relevant or different context from the Westerners"; "Too naïve"; "Extremely traditional."

These comments have been brought forth by Western art critics when several institutions in the United States initiated Asian art exhibitions in the 1980s. Since then these expressions have changed, the only difference being that the word "exotic" is now diversified. Dr. Desai introduced many examples from the "Traditions/Tensions" exhibition review. But we should never overlook the many people in the Western audience who have a deep appreciation in viewing Asian art beyond the Western prism. We have to admit that Asian art has a strong attachment to political and cultural identity and autonomy. Actual understanding will be possible when one comprehends the history of Asia and differentiates pre-modern from modernism in art.

In this aspect, I would like to know Dr. Caroline Turner's point of view, as she mentioned that their "objectives should be artistic and scholarly and not political," and that "Art is fundamental to society. It can be applied distinctively. To substantiate this view, let me take an example. The audience of the Documenta this year will agree that the event was a kind of revival of overt Eurocentrism. I'm not referring to the fact that the Documenta did not invite a single artist from Japan or Korea. Those artists were excluded because in the artistic director's view, the context of contemporary art of Korea and Japan was not identical with that of Europe. This kind of biased view does not reflect, for example, post-colonialism or post-Marxism, neo-Marxism, nor is it indulgent toward Korea or Japan, countries which have never been colonized by Europe. The artistic director mentioned that the exclusion was specifically based on the reason that Asian contemporary art is different from that of Europe. We might accept this opinion, but at the same time, we cannot help questioning what she really means. I would say that this reflects the lack of understanding of the development and interaction of contemporary art in the 20th century. The same artistic director often likes to refer to globalism. This term was mentioned in the exhibition catalogue, "Book", over and over again. It was apparent that she limits the word "global" issues to only political, social and environmental concerns. It was clearly a cry for the recovery of European centralism and cultural supremacy.

As we all know, Documenta is an art event sponsored by Sony, a Japanese company. But there's no place for Asia in globalism when it is approached by such a clever and prejudiced viewpoint. I'm not saying that art buyers should advocate cultural equilibrium as in the Olympics or the United Nations. I'm wary about the cultural folly of totally disregarding the culture of Asia, based on the arbitrarily viewed difference of cultural context. As we all know, Asia is the region where more than half of the earth's population resides, and which accounts for 30% of the world GNP. In my view, the cultural communication, mutual influence

and the development of humanitarian art through the meeting of heterogeneous things are not to be treated lightly, because they may offer a sound approach to globalism and cultural identity.

The multi-strata structures of art displayed in biennales are related to the characteristics of Asian culture. They are also related to the questions of mapping the topography of contemporary art and how to approach art. Let us think, for instance, about the display in the Japanese pavilion of the Venice Biennale by Rei Naito. The display received only one visitor every five minutes in the beginning, and later every three minutes, so that the meeting of the work and the sole visitor might result in the consummation of the former. This suggests an Asian-motivated and induced approach. We try to live in the philosophy of Lao-tzu instead of living or learning about Plato's theory and enlightenment in school. I'm not suggesting we should reject Western culture, but that we should use the excellent creative mythology lying dormant in us. I am discussing rather than analyzing here.

An exhibition made on the basis of reciprocal discussion is a good example of reception through understanding of the Asian cultural context and its realization.

As we've been talking about the context of Asian culture and the viewpoint of the West, I would like to mention something about the Kwangju Biennale 1995 in Korea, in the context of encountering heterogeneous cultures and fusing "otherness" in a project where I was involved as the artistic director. As the artistic director of the Kwangju Biennale, I emphasized several points to produce a challenging cultural event.

First, I proposed to open the Biennale's door widely to the Third World which has had little place in the Western art world. Second, to invite artists of the younger generation in order to exclude the usual participants or usual customers of the biennales, and to invite a variety of performing arts to encourage the participation of the masses in the event. Next, commissioners were appointed, one for each of the participating regions—Asia, North America, South America, East Europe, Western Europe, the Middle East and Africa—to select participating artists. This arrangement was based on the concept of collaborative creation in moving towards a goal. The names for Western Europe and Eastern Europe were later changed to Europe One and Europe Two at the suggestion of the Eastern Europe commissioner.

As a result of the collaboration of the commissioners, the Biennale turned out to be a diverse demonstration of 20th-century art, ranging from folklore and aggressive art to high-tech digital art. The Biennale was lively, ignored the refined characteristics of establishment art and challenged the formatic boundaries of existing art. Consequently, the contextualized typification of the biennale was somewhat lost, and traditionalism, historicity on-site, was revealed relatively.

This comprehensive art festival was produced in place of a biennale culture of highly intellectual games accompanied by political gestures. It was not to be considered a success or a failure. It was a unique example of dialectical debate on regionalism and globalism. Some say it was a great success in being different from existing biennales, while others say it was an art festival of low quality and an amusing art event. In the first year of the Bi-

ennale, 1.6 million visitors attended. The second Biennale was opened on the first of September and runs through November this year. The second Biennale, called "Unmapping the Earth," is addressed to the politically and conceptually mapped art environment of the earth. I do not think that the first Biennale represented absoluteness in Asian art nor did it have a very unique context, distinct from other international art festivals.

The Asian region is very sensitive in interpreting its relativity to the West as mutual understanding and complimentary concept. In this age of globalization, each region seeks its own identity in the context of globalism. All this complicated cultural strategy is applicable to every art genre. 20th-century art has been especially characterized by excessive logical reasoning in the process of specialization and we are accustomed to theory-tailored art. Among today's presentations, Dr. Clark has unfolded the discourses of the last thirty years and focused on the stance of Asian art in the course of modernism and pre-modernism, or deconstruction. I also appreciate the focus of Professor Tatehata who pointed to the vigilant nature of installation, a fashionable genre since the 1970s. The burden of expansion of scale. The West could have difficulty in organizing exhibitions of Asian art, with regards to what curatorial categories to follow, the selection of artists, the securing of funds, public relations, etc. Asian art institutions are also experiencing difficulties in planning exhibitions of Western art. Effective education and the grafting of cultures requires more than the showing of the works of masters established in art history.

Asian curators are pressured by increased debate on deconstruction or de-interpretation, alternative interpretation of identity, and furthermore, political and nationalistic pressure from the people. The problem is that excessive text-oriented or doctrinal approaches may stand in the way of understanding for both the West and the East. A popularized and receipt-centered approach may also be dangerous. The curator is a mediator who brings together a nationalistic, traditional and regional view, and end-of-the-century global cultural phenomena.

Naturally, Asian efforts to revive its cultural tradition will continue and Western globalism and aesthetic methodology will continue to have their influence, using their persuasive power. They sometimes clash but this is symbiotic. In other words, globalism in the East and regionalism in the West will continue to co-exist. What we must be wary of is the phenomenon of polarization and the sense of supremacy and centralism in the structure of hegemony.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : The 1.6 million people you attracted to the Kwangju Biennale is a startling number. How is contemporary art perceived by the Korean audience? And how was the Kwangju Biennale received in that context?

Y. Lee : The audience record of 1.6 million was unexpectedly enormous. I don't think the success of a biennale can be judged by the number in the audience, or the kind of prevalent issues and style of the art form presented. During the Biennale, I checked audience reception through interviews. I met a farmer from the

area who was looking at the piece made by Cuban artist, Alexis Leyva Kcho, whose concept was to use 50,000 empty bottles and to put them on a very small, wooden boat. Since Korea and Cuba do not have diplomatic ties, we could not get any pieces from him in Cuba so I asked a Korean beer company to donate 50,000 empty bottles. He eventually won the grand prize. Farmers and art lovers alike came to see the first Biennale. I had also invited the MBC TV company as a sponsor and had a thirty-minute-show everyday, targeted especially to housewives, to introduce the Biennale. If the audience did not understand the context of the Biennale or contemporary art, at least they had great interest in visiting or trying to understand the arts.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : We have heard two different views from our two commentators. Mr. Nakahara made an objective but slightly cynical remark and Dr. Lee shared with us his experience with the Kwangju Biennale. Their approach to Asian contemporary art is very different. Mr. Nakahara had made a point on grouping contemporary art as "Asian art" and manipulating the notion of a monolithic Asia. He questioned the purpose of grouping this region as "Asia."

When we say "Asian art," we should accept such a term to put the region into a global context and to win recognition in order to circulate its art around the world because of the way culture is manipulated in such circumstances. It should be accepted in order to promote the fundamental idea of communication. I would like to ask the panelists how they view the current environment for Asian contemporary art.

I would like to start with Dr. Turner. There is also a question from the floor to Dr. Turner concerning her experience with the Asia-Pacific Triennial :

"When you stage your exhibitions at the Queensland Art Gallery, do you not sleekly package the Asian art in an accessible way for the purpose of communicating and enlightening the audience, eliminating its fervor or even crudeness. If so, are you not vulnerable to the charge of failing to convey the real essence of Asian art?"

C. Turner : Certainly, the term "Asian contemporary art" is one that we begin to use as a convenient terminology. But the purpose of the First Asia-Pacific Triennial was to demonstrate to our audiences that there is no such thing as an immutable Asia. It was the diversity which we stressed in our exhibition. We have continued to stress the diversity, but now we are moving to a situation where we can talk about what is held in common.

I was very struck by Mr. Nakahara's comment where he talked about the creation of a "non-" or "de-" European art. I am also not certain of the future, but I am certain that we need to construct a language that is non-European in talking about the art of this region, even if we don't see it as one single thing. We need to develop and have a language that is not Euramerican-centric.

We are presenting the art in a way that is particularly different from some of the ways the artists have worked within their community. The success of our exhibition staff in working with the artists is one of the most significant things about the Asia-Pacific

Triennial. We have the artist come, sometimes, for nearly a month and work with the exhibition staff. Although not all the artists can come, a very large proportion of the artists do come. Whether this process is about losing the real essence of the art, I do not know. The artist is our partner and, therefore, we are not displaying the art just on our own as Western curators.

I would like to comment on one thing about Professor Lee's comment where he asked what I meant about our aims being artistic, not political. I meant this in a very large and general sense because we all know that there are endless possibilities for political relationships within the arts. One of the things that is coming out of the art of this region is a rejection of the type of art and the type of political features of this art which we can now see, in retrospect, as an aberration of the Cold War in many ways. I was also talking about our own objectives in Queensland, Australia. When you set out to do an exhibition to change the way that people in your own country see the region that they live in, you have to be very careful about what your motivation is and to try to make that artistic rather than political.

MC (T. Mizusawa): I would like to get back to Mr. Nanjo's question on the notion of "quality" in art. An art museum would have to guarantee art by its quality. But is not the traditionally defined standard of quality destabilized when it is applied to Asian art? In other words, what is the criterion of value, and does that criterion become shaky under prevailing circumstances? This would mean that change is expected in the approach of art museums.

Mr. Nakahara also touched on the alternative to the existing museum model. Do you ever think of an alternative to an art museum, as you work in an art museum?

C. Turner: Mr. Nakahara's idea is important and it also came out of Mr. Ushiroshoji's comments which I was very interested in.

In Queensland, we hope to be in a position to develop a new type of art museum because we are very hopeful that our government will announce a major new building extension to be devoted to modern and contemporary art of the next century. We are having many discussions among our staff about what sort of museum we are going to have and are interacting with the architects even before it is built. We are still working on the answer but suggestions, from Mr. Ushiroshoji and Mr. Nakahara, about the need to talk about a new type of art museum, are engaging many of us. We not only discuss a new type of museum, but new approaches to exhibitions and types of exhibitions that will be inclusive and perhaps will include other types of art. In Australia, we have had some challenges to the art museum posed by Aboriginal art when we ask whether Aboriginal art should be kept in art museums or in Aboriginal keeping places, and how the ceremonies and spiritual aspects of that art can be incorporated. I don't believe we have all the solutions to these issues.

I have observed the media divisions starting to merge and blur. It seems extraordinary to me that the great art form of the 20th century is the film and yet most art museums do not collect film.

Likewise, performance is so integral to understanding many types of art, including that of Asia. My own belief is that a new type of art museum will also depend on how it defines art.

MC (T. Mizusawa): I would like to ask Dr. Clark to talk about the overall situation and issues related to Asian art.

J. Clark: I think that the point which was made yesterday has to be taken up again. It's a point that was raised by Graeme Murray. The fact that 19th-century Japanese photography can also be Western. And I actually have a question about that. I think that is a very fundamental issue.

As you have noticed, neither Dr. Turner or myself use the word "Western," but instead, use "Euro-American" or "Euro-american." I think Dr. Turner has the same way of thinking. The idea of the "West" with Western Europe and of creating specific nation states, special infrastructures and systems, have created a definable culture and civilization. The products of this civilization have been technology and culture, which have been separated. Art has been separated as something which belongs to something separate from the sciences from the 18th century to the 19th century. The separation between technology and art or fine art has been a process which really touches upon the formation of the modern nation-state.

Such understanding, after the end of militaristic colonialism here in Asia, has led to our choice to use Euramerican rather than Western. To regard "Western" as synonymous with "modern civilization" has perhaps been a better way to understand this. As we have already heard many times in this symposium, it is to define the types of art. After the War, everything has been described as being an imitation of the West.

The civilization that has created this type of art and the technology that is being created by the Western civilizations still have a sense of superiority. This superiority is actually very clearly visible when you look at the situation in Australia which is being created by Caucasians as an example. Civilization and cultures can be disseminated as with technology. I believe it is also possible to go back in time to the 19th century, when Australia itself was a colony. The Australians have that extremely bitter past. The issue we are touching upon right now is the culture created from a different context than what's being created from the Western civilization.

The so-called "Western" way of thinking is actually a way of thinking which has augmented the superiority exhibited in the way of thinking of the Westerners. If you say that 19th-century photography is Western in nature, it is true that photography in itself is a Western technique. But in 1842, the record shows that photography was already being carried out in Asia. The oldest photograph probably dates back to 1857 and this phenomenon is not limited to just the Japanese. In the 1860s, the Indians already had Indian photographers along the Chinese coast. Many Westerners took photographs and the Chinese learned not just the technology—the technique of photography—they actually acquired the visual perception that they evolved, separately from the Western way of perceiving things, on their own. Perhaps, we

are falling into this assumption that what is cultural cannot be disseminated.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : Are you saying that cultural modernity in the European sense differs from country to country?

J. Clark : Yes. The European formation of modern states, such as nations, peoples, societies, structures and institutions, are usually understood as disseminators of technology and science. The content which is considered to be cultural has traditionally been regarded as being something that cannot be disseminated, something which cannot be transported. What we often consider and describe as being "Western" is actually a part of human civilization which has been discovered in the process, as seen in the example of photography.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : So, you are saying that culture is disseminated?

J. Clark : Yes.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : And an example can be seen in the example of photography?

J. Clark : Yes.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : So, in the cultural dialogue, the technique of photography, for example, is completely transmitted along with the visual discourse, enabling local visual expression. Photography in China is Chinese, photography in India is Indian, photography in Japan is Japanese. To look at these phenomenon in a 19th-century, colonial framework and to see them as European influences in Japan, for example, is not always correct.

J. Clark : Well, between the code and the technology of culture, the technique or the technology itself can be disseminated. Mao Zedong said that what is Chinese reflects the essence, and what is Western can be utilized. This is a knowledge structure which has been transmitted in a way that allows the Westerners or the Europeans and Americans to confirm and reaffirm their own superiority. I think this structure is implicit within our discussion.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : I'd like to ask Mr. Tatehata about this.

A. Tatehata : I think it's a very important statement which has just been made. Up to now, multiculturalism had been discussed in the context of regional issues or understanding regional issues, but Dr. Clark has taken a historian's perspective. The historical perspective takes a different approach to understanding cultural exchange, where the cultural diversity is not discussed in the context of ideology but based on historical facts, such as when, where and how photography was disseminated. If we were to lose sight of historical facts, we would be vulnerable to being persuaded by the ideology of that particular time.

The point made about curators, that they need to acquire a

breadth of knowledge and collaborate with historians should be taken seriously. We need to assess the historical facts in dealing with contemporary art, or we are in danger of not finding firm grounds and thoughtlessly treading on the thin surface of some type of idealism.

Dr. Lee has made interesting points relating to Documenta and the fact that it professed to voice globalism, when in reality there were only two Chinese artists, and the majority of the artists were from Europe and America. The existence of Euro-centric globalism is not an issue if it were limited to the West. The exhibition itself was of quality. This issue of "quality," as Mr. Nanjo pointed out, is debatable, but I would like to simply define it as a Western standard for now. The problem of that particular Documenta was that it did not project any vision for the future. If such a vision was not the goal of the Documenta, then again, maybe it is something that we do not need to debate.

One thing that is clear, though, is that we, in Asia, need not so readily establish a globalism for us to compete with the Euro-american model of globalism. Regionalism or nationalism, for that matter, is easily induced by imagining or creating a common enemy. Such a polarized view of the world, planting a second pole to compliment the other, is hazardous and we should avoid defining the world in terms of dichotomy. Instead, the dialectic approach to regionalism and globalism seen in the first Kwagju Biennale is more important.

We must always have a global perspective but, at the same time, should not forget regionalism. If we were to rely solely on regionalism, disregarding any other perspective, then the Kwangju Biennale, for example, would become something that sees Europe or Documenta as the enemy. We do not support such a power structure. We are looking for a multilateral approach in place of the bi-polar approach.

Mr. Nakahara pointed to the issue of museums. I think his theory is based mainly on installation works, in a context where we have installations that are no longer produced or exhibited in the museum context. This is not an issue limited to the arts in Asia, but if it were to be a unique problem of Asia, are we to respond to that by building an alternative museum model? It is not really a matter of having to choose between the two.

Creating an Asian-type museum may be an option, but the very words "Asian museum" seem contradictory. It would be necessary to discard the whole concept of the art museum as such. Even though the museum is not everything, I do not think we should dump the concept. Building many more museums in Asia in the future should play an important role in promoting contemporary art.

A museum, being a museum, would continue to be an institution that presupposes the existence of a civil society. What happens if that civil society is underdeveloped or premature? Then we would face problems as we do in Japan today, where we find many museums that serve a society lacking a mature individuals or self-assertive citizens. If there were to be more museums to be built in our region before a civil society develops into its full maturity, we are bound to face many more problems.

So, a museum must be a project for enlightenment. It might

sound rather condescending but education, enlightenment and outreach are all necessary. Just because the Asian region does not have the historical background of Europe, where museums are rooted in a bourgeois society, does not mean that they are unnecessary or that there is no basis for them here.

We must work things out in this gray zone. We should not put too much effort into sorting out this issue. In other words, this paradox inherent in thinking about museums in Asia will remain.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : Since we have many participants from museums, we tend to give a lot of weight to the museum factor. But actually, as Mr. Murakami has revealed, contemporary art exists in a variety of sites, even in markets that are amorphous, elusive, and difficult to grasp.

Contemporary art does not necessarily align itself with the cultural policies of institutions. It is purely by chance if it does so. Political interest may motivate taking control somewhat. If we try to exhibit contemporary art in a museum built for a mature civil society, what are we doing by imposing that European institution on Asia where such a civil society is underdeveloped?

This is too big a problem to solve easily, but there are a number of possibilities that are still inherent in the way art museums operate. We are trying to introduce Asian art into the existing art museum framework so that we have many people come and see and understand and expand their knowledge about it. We use different discourses to explain the context. Through enlightenment and education, we take art from the place where it is made and circulate it. As more money is brought into play, the more Asian contemporary art will be picked out and displayed. But is this what we want? Ms. Hung Liu emphasized that the artists also choose and select. She emphasized that quite a bit at the very beginning of her presentation, that artists also choose. The artists' right to choose is an essential point. Is there anybody who would like to comment on this issue?

I. Hariu : Yes. During that previous session, I asked Dr. Poshyananda his definition of the frontier, knowing all too well that it's not a question that can be answered in a brief statement. I thought about the answer myself as I listened to his response.

It may be important for several countries to cooperate to promote Asian artists at international exhibitions. But even if we can have a couple of additional artists from Asia participate in internationally-recognized exhibitions, I don't think it's that important.

If we can promote artists representing a paradigm, a value system which is non-European or a strategy, in search of a better word, and if the artists can present their work in a manner that the message is heard and appealing, then Western or European or non-Asian exhibitions and their curators would choose these artists.

Rather than trying to come together economically and politically to promote Asian artists, maybe we should work in each of our countries to create a new paradigm within Asia.

The paradigm that I speak of has been questioned in the last two days. Bangladesh rickshaw painting, which is not considered

art, but rather a mundane, everyday object, was exhibited at the Fukuoka Art Museum. We should look at many different kinds of artistic expression—the new mass culture contained in Mr. Murakami's animation or Yanagi Yukinori's work using ant farms in the shape of flags, modernism, Japanese exhibition groups, etc.—and through criticizing them, we should go beyond them. We want the artists to develop strategies and values by synthesizing all of these elements. The strategy can be formed in one country or can be an end-product of collaboration. In any case, we don't have a strategy that can compare to that in the West. China might have had one a long time ago, but not in our contemporary world. I believe it's more realistic and significant to have people involved in the art world in Asia to come together and help promote that kind of new paradigm, rather than trying to come together and work to have several people participate in exhibitions. That is the frontier I am thinking of.

V.N. Desai : In thinking about some alternative to the West, there is also an evolving sense of museums in America. The hybridity is as much a part of America as hybridity is a fact in many of the Asian countries. The challenge is not to equalize those terms and expressions of hybridity, but to understand the nuances of the hybridity in their specific context so that we can begin to think about the so-called globalizing world that we live in. If we can come to terms with that, we would not be constantly talking about an alternative Asian model to the Western model, because in reality, such a polar situation simply does not exist. We, in America, recognize that the historical mode, that came out of the late 19th-century model, is going to have to undergo drastic changes. So we're all evolving in different ways.

My question is, where do you see Japan? We either question the notion of Asia, or try to get some alternative to the West. But I don't get a sense of where the Japanese see themselves in this dialogue. Where do you see yourself when you are thinking of Asia? You see yourself in it, out of it? Where does the Japanese art establishment see itself vis-à-vis the rest of Asia?

MC (T. Mizusawa) : I think that was a very important question. I also feel that I have to try to prepare an answer to that. But as the MC, I would like to refrain from making any comments. Mr. Ushiroshoji, could you perhaps try to respond to that?

M. Ushiroshoji : Well, I think that my presentation yesterday was my own answer to that question, but maybe I did not elaborate enough on this issue.

We are in the process of opening our Asian gallery to map Japan in the framework of Asian art. As Mr. Nakahara has rightly pointed out, the exhibition of the rickshaw paintings from Bangladesh is something to consider. That particular exhibit was part of a special exhibition of the Asian Art Show, an attempt to present an art form that is different from the type of art usually called contemporary art which is influenced by Europe and America. That is why we included the works in the Asian Art Show.

We aimed to discover a new framework in this exercise, but