

November. This is in the Philippines. There is also the Chiangmai Social Installation, which happens on and off every two years. And maybe the Yogyakarta Biennial and also the Jakarta Biennial. We held the Bangkok Art Festival last year. But this was poorly funded. But so what? If artists are willing to come and cross over borders, and participate with the neighboring countries, I think this is a good sign, and credit should be given, say, to the Japan Foundation and APT where these artists actually meet, meeting and creating their own networks.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Thank you. Dr. Poshyananda has made some comments on how exhibitions should be. Some of his points were closely related to Mr. Tatehata's presentation. Mr. Nakamura, please.

Nakamura Hideki: Listening to this discussion, and the comments of Mr. Shioda, I also think that it would be difficult in the current system to take exhibitions organized by MOT to overseas venues.

Also, not that I criticize the organization, but the Japan Foundation's organizational structure is divided vertically, and organizing exhibitions in the way Dr. Poshyananda or Mr. Shioda suggests, would be very difficult with the existing structure. I think that the organization should have a more flexible structure if it were to realize those ideas. This may be a sensitive point, but this is my suggestion in response to Dr. Poshyananda's statement.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Let's set the domestic issue aside for the moment. Yes, Mr. Elliott.

David Elliott: I would like to pick up one thing that occurred to me and follows on from what Mr. Shioda was just saying. And I guess this has to do with the idea of the Mekong Biennale. A lot of the countries in which the Mekong flows are predominantly rural. I think one of the problems we have in talking about the art of Asia reflects what Mr. Mashadi was saying yesterday. The whole idea of modernity is connected with urbanism. And somehow, although we no longer talk about modernity in the same sort of story we once did, this heritage still continues. And we are now talking about contemporaneity. This term is much less loaded and more inclusive. You can be contemporary anywhere. It really doesn't matter. You don't really have to be in a city to be contemporary. I don't know, but Sarawak does not sound like such an urban place, but you could be working there and you could be working on the Internet.

N. Rajah: I am afraid there is a sort of illusion there, because where I live in Sarawak is quite urban. It's an urban jungle within a tropical jungle. The institution within which I worked is a federal institution—the university manifesto, our

infrastructure, our personnel. We are not really a rural kind of a grass-roots operation, getting online. This is the city; only it is dispersed. Still we are working on various projects that will make reality, this kind of idea, that there need be no difference between the urban and the rural by Internet and satellite links. But a lot of work, technical and infrastructure work, needs to be done before the Internet kind of thing can take off.

D. Elliott: It is just really making a point. Often when we are talking about contemporary art, we are thinking about cities. But a lot of contemporary art is not being made in cities. Whether it fits within what we think contemporary art is another matter, and one which is really out for this discussion. You were talking about how distinctions have traditionally been made between so-called craft and so-called art. Maybe, we are in a situation now where the need (for distinction) is not being made any longer. But that's an open question. I've organized exhibitions from both Europe and other places in the world like South Africa, which included things that are described and regarded there as a craft work, but they have been shown as art. These are the barriers which are moving all over the world. They are kind of important, because they also have a geographical implication between city and half-city or suburb, township, and country.

MC (T. Mizusawa): I think Ranjit Hoskote raised the issue of craft and also the issue of urban culture in his presentation on India. Would you like to make any comments on Mr. Elliott's point, Mr. Hoskote?

Ranjit Hoskote: Just to say that's precisely a conflict that can be dramatized in the context of the exhibition and of scale and degree. Rather than seek consensus on what can constitute the contemporary, maybe we need to bring in various versions of the contemporary and allow friction to take place there, because that will be one way of acknowledging that artists are differently located in any of these societies we are looking at. Maybe it's the way of exposing the machinery of privilege that exists in the society. And I tend to think that sometimes exhibitions of this kind across borders tend to fall into a kind of essentialism, if you like. While we are concerned to try and look at the best aspects of the society—I think that it's largely unconscious, but it does happen—I think we should be prepared to accept that many of the societies that we are looking at, also have negative aspects which are reflected in the arts that are produced there. But I am not too sure how this can be done. But I think a certain neutrality should be put in place by which this too can be exposed.

A. Poshyananda: Mr. Hoskote, I think that you mentioned Jyotindra Jain (Director of the Crafts Museum, New Delhi). I recall that he gave a very good paper in New York regarding the potentials of folk art and I have seen the kinds of art being

practiced in India. I would also like to mention the exhibitions of rickshaws at the Fukuoka Art Museum, and how rickshaws are displayed as mobile art objects. In the context of crafts and tourist art, I would like to give an example of works by I Wayan Bendi, who I selected for "Traditions / Tensions," where he actually created folk-like art for tourists. And we selected this work in the context of this exhibition for a New York audience. You can imagine how they reacted to that. It's low...not low... very low. But it's good that we could get that kind of reaction.

N. Rajah: I would like to add this note on the unification of art and craft on the platform of contemporary art. Since contemporary art institutions have been, throughout the twentieth century, looking at the artists who signed their work, the process of absorption reflects or manifests a kind of hierarchy for the appropriation of folk material. There are many examples of projects in recent exhibitions, where the contemporary artists who sign their work and whose photographs appear in the back of catalogues, have so-called "collaborated" with folk artists, panel painters, aboriginal painters, whatever, to produce magnificent pieces. Nevertheless, the people who get their picture in the catalogues and travel to Fukuoka, Australia usually are not the folk artists, but the mainstream artists who sign their names. So what Dr. Poshyananda just mentioned is an example of how a folk artist, along with his art, crosses over onto this platform. We should be careful to ensure that this will happen more and more, and less and less the other way, where a folk form is brought to this platform, without the person who made the objects. So, I think this is really crucial if we really talk about blending these areas — the elevation of craft. Some countries like Japan have a tradition of respecting their craftsmen even perhaps more than their upstart contemporary artists. But in developing countries, this is not so. Crafts have been lost. You know modern artists are high up, and craftsmen don't exist any more because they have not been respected. This is one thing which is important in this context.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Mr. Hoskote spoke of neutrality, but we face the problem of urban and rural, as well as art and craft being polarized and, although curation is the mediating process, the process itself is skewed because curation remains as an element of urbanism. We need to resolve that somehow. Mr. Hoskote, could you elaborate on that point?

R. Hoskote: I think we also need to look at the myths by which modernism in art operates. And one of these pervasive myths takes the modernist artist as a visionary. He has a vision, or she has a vision, while the rural / folk / crafts people are skill-driven. So, these collaborations are often seen as a marriage of contemporary vision and traditional skills. I think that is slightly absurd at the best of times. And that's something we need to address. Contemporary urban Indian artists might well

be in the tradition of Rothko, or in the tradition of Bacon if you like, and might well be repeating those examples uncritically. In fact, a number of contemporary artists might be, so to speak, using modernist skills, and not necessarily be possessed of their own vision. While someone from a backward site might well be very experimental in terms of skills and also be possessed of vision. So it's really a questioning, or a repositioning, of the way in which we look at these things, that we need.

D. Elliott: Can I just throw in something on top of that? When we talk about the so-called division between vision or a kind of strategic thinking about the total artwork on one side, and skills on the other, this is nothing new. I mean, in the history of Western art and pre-Renaissance and Renaissance art, the master had many people who actually helped him paint these frescoes that you see in Venice or Florence. There was a system, almost a factory system. You do not think Henry Moore actually made all his sculptures. He had a team of people who worked for him. This is an artist, like many traditional artists and modern artists, who have also been businessmen, entrepreneurs, organizers and factory bosses. So this is something which is quite implanted in the history of art, in Western art at least. This doesn't detract what you are saying at all. But it's just worth remembering, I think.

N. Rajah: Sorry, I cannot resist this point on Henry Moore, because I went to a talk at the British Council in Kuala Lumpur many years ago given by Moore's chief technician. Basically, in terms of the distinction that Mr. Hoskote made, all Henry Moore provided is a vision, and his technician was responsible for the rest from the little maquettes to enormous marble sculptures. I felt I was in the presence of the true Henry Moore at the end of that talk. The other guy (Henry Moore) just had one good idea that fit into British foreign policy at the time and the British Council promoted him, but this guy (the chief technician) made the works. So, he made the links between the image and its form and material. But nobody knows him. So, to say that this is an invasion of a Western tradition is correct. The distinction between craft and vision is the invasion. That's the distinction we are trying to break, I think.

D. Elliott: There may be a distinction between skills and vision, but how does this stand up when you think about Leonardo da Vinci, Sandro Botticelli, or artists like that?

N. Rajah: The Renaissance was the beginning of this degeneration. Look before that, to the Gothic cathedrals and you find no signatures.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Now we are getting into a debate of a larger issue, related to the medieval revival, perhaps. How we regain our cultural depth of craftsmanship, as was manifested

by the anonymous craftsman movements, like the Mingei, is an issue of medieval revival or medievalism spawned by our modernist conscience. This issue continues into the contemporary age as it becomes entangled with the issues of today.

But in talking about Asia, I think we are talking about a rich tradition in crafts as our cultural background. I think many of us are trying to find a circuit that can connect the crafts to contemporary expression in a constructive way. Can I ask Mr. Ushiroshoji to comment?

M. Ushiroshoji: My discussion may be biased, but let me get back to the discussion on Henry Moore, since I have done some research on him. In Henry Moore's case, as Mr. Rajah described, Moore had strong control over the work. Moore, as if he were God, instructed the technician and did not allow the technician to add any creativity.

Comparing Henry Moore's approach and the collaborative projects taken on by the Asian contemporary artist is probably not appropriate. The most typical example of an approach taken by an Asian contemporary artist would be the project of the late Roberto Villanueva that took place during his residency in Fukuoka. We had arranged for college students to come as assistants, but he preferred not to call them "assistants," and insisted on calling them, "collaborators." I remember how he, from the beginning to the end of the process, continued to take the same attitude towards his "collaborators," and included their ideas in his work.

This is why I think the Moore analogy is not appropriate.

MC (T. Mizusawa): I think in Villanueva's case, his aim was to explore the skills and the potentials of the craftsmen from Baguio, who were the anonymous technicians from a specific locality, and take them into his work.

Nanjo Fumio: Listening to the discussion, I felt that the artist-collaborator relationship must be defined individually, and should not be generalized as an Asian or a European thing. There is no one correct relationship because it is something that determined by the artist's style. In some cases, the relationship might be equal, and in others, one-sided.

Another point is that in the age of technology, the artists cannot work with high technology on their own. It is inevitable that they collaborate with many people. The same could be said for public art where the artist needs to place orders to a factory and collaborate with different technicians. There are probably many of these cases, more than we actually know in which artists involve technicians in the process of creating their work. I do not think that anything is wrong with such arrangements and, since the practice has continued for a very long time, I do not find it to be any big issue.

But if we were to focus on this specific point, I can recall an idea that once came up, which was to plan an exhibition

entitled, "Artist as Director." The exhibition concept was to explore the idea that the artist is a director, that he presents a vision and involves others to work for that vision. At the time, we discussed how such an exhibition might be interesting.

This brings us back to the question on the definition of art. Let's say the craftsman uses his skills to work with the artist. Many of the people in Asia might think that craft is part of art. The problem we have in discussing this topic is that we do not share a common definition of art, and therefore, we cannot reach a conclusion.

But the solution is not to have a dictator define the meaning. I think there is a meaning in discussing the meaning of art in a symposium like this, or through the process of "discoursing," and exploring what art is in Asia. I apologize for being so rhetorical, but we need some grass-root-type of exhibitions as well as international ones. Both of them are important, and one cannot be prioritized over the other. We need different types of exhibitions to suit different contexts and to meet various goals.

The fewer the number of exhibitions, the more important each one would become. I think it is important to organize an exhibition for a certain context, and to follow up on that with another one, but from a different perspective. By continuing this process and accumulating the experience, we can probably find a way for "discoursing." As Mr. Supangkat said, there is a context that could be developed through organizing various exhibitions. But can we actually develop this in Asia? The problem we face in Asia is that we do not have enough financial resource and museums. But if we organize different types of exhibitions, we should be able to weave a new context as if we were weaving a big piece of cloth. It is as if we are weaving in the different threads to eventually create a bigger picture. The image portrayed in the bigger picture may be very similar to that of the West, or perhaps, different, or may be something that crosses with the West in some parts.

In any case, it is our responsibility as art professionals to organize various exhibitions, form a discourse, and devise our own context.

H. Nakamura: Related to Mr. Nanjo's comment, I would like to comment on the issue of craft. I think that art and craft are put into separate categories in Japan, too. For example, at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, arts and craft are divided into two separate faculties. Contemporary art may need to approach craft as a way to, perhaps, deconstruct the existing word, "craft."

For example, even amongst those working in the field of craft in Japan, there are many of those who create works that are quite different from traditional ones. Also, there are contemporary artists who take particular interest in the object, for example, the Mono-ha artists. These artists are in a way dependent on anonymity and focus on both anonymity and individuality. Therefore, I do not think that we need to

distinguish craft from art so completely. Instead of pushing craft aside under the category of traditional craft, we need to deconstruct it. When I visited Roberto Villanueva and the Baguio Arts Guild in the Philippines, I saw an approach that cannot be categorized under art or craft and such an open approach can be potentially one direction to take. I think we should overcome the dualism that distinguishes craft from art. Mr. Nanjo, what do you think about this?

F. Nanjo: Exactly so. If I may further comment, in Japan, we have the traditional type of Japanese painting called *nihonga*. *Nihonga* artists use traditional pigments to paint, but some of them are very contemporary in their expression.

I have not researched this area thoroughly, but I think this is also related to defining art. For example, if a person with a vision is to collaborate with another person who has the necessary skills, I think that the person with the skills would represent craft.

If we were to tear down the wall between art and craft, whether or not a craftsman has a vision or a concept would depend on the individual. By the same token, even if the person claims to be a contemporary artist, without a vision, the person could not be categorized as such. The premise of this discussion is that we agree on the definition of an artist as a person with an insightful vision.

On the other hand, if we were to agree that a person with the skills, and not necessarily a vision, is an artist, anybody with the craftsmanship of creating beautiful objects would be defined as artist. Then, all craftsmen would be artists.

This is why we need to discuss what an artist is in the context of Asia.

Shimizu Toshio: Mr. Nanjo's opinion is based on the assumption that there is a concept for "art," and, likewise, an idea of an "artist." It was only during the Meiji Era that this concept was introduced to Japan. I once organized an exhibition that presented very old crafts from fourth and fifth century China and contemporary art in the same space. In the exhibition beautifully crafted objects that were originally created for the dead in fourth and fifth century China and that were discovered in tombs were exhibited. By exhibiting these with contemporary art, I was trying to explore the quality of a craftsmanship that had been acquired through years of training, and how contemporary art can actually come close to that quality. I strongly felt that such observation was very important. In working with these Chinese objects, I understood that some art would survive for a hundred or two hundred years and some, very short-lived. This idea carries weight today.

My point here is that although we, including myself, tend to create a category called "contemporary art in Asia," there is no such concept in Asia. What Mr. Elliott said about Asian

contemporary art and how it is part of the urban culture, for example, is a very European concept. Also, the discussion on the relationship between craft and art and how the distance between them can be eliminated came up as a result of taking in the Western ideas.

I had an experience two years ago in which I had an opportunity to speak to young curators in Bangkok and Jakarta at a seminar on the theme, "What is Museology?" I asked them to describe their image of an ideal museum. I asked this question both in Bangkok and Jakarta. I was struck by the response particularly from the Thai curators because they were hardly concerned with any grand building or a collection. Their idea was to take the artists into a residence program in a regional community or a rural village, and to have them create works through their experiences living and working with the local community.

In understanding their thoughts, I realized that the idea of contemporary art in the way we understand it is not valid.

As Mr. Supangkat mentioned, we need to be more serious in thinking what we are trying to achieve here in Asia, and to question what it is that exists in Asia. Contemporary art theories would probably not be able to provide all the answers we need in Asia. What is happening in Asia cannot be all explained by the Western theories. Unfortunately, any element that does not fit the Western theory is often thrown away.

For example, I once tried to hold an *ikebana* exhibition in Japan, but experienced a strong resistance. As in this case, there are various forms of expressions in Asia that cannot be supported by contemporary art theories. We need to be aware of this point, or else we fall into the trap of discussing whether or not craft is contemporary art. Once you fall into this trap, it is difficult to get out of it.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Mr. Tatehata, please.

Tatehata Akira: Related to the comments from Mr. Shimizu and Mr. Rajah, I would like to get back to the issue on craft. As sensed in Mr. Shimizu's comment, when we discuss the issue of craft and contemporary art, our thoughts seem to be regulated by moral concerns in judging the fairness or the unfairness of dividing the two. We must think about the reason why it is inevitable for art and craft to become polarized. Mr. Nakamura used the word, "deconstruction," to solve this problem, but the reality is that there is a clear distinction between the two even if we do deconstruct craft.

For example, in the "Art in Southeast Asia 1997: Glimpses into the Future" exhibition at the MOT, Moelyono exhibited a very large work that consisted of batik and Islamic calligraphy. Although both of these materials were not created by him but by the craftsmen in his community, the credit was given to the artist. This may not have been what the artist had preferred, but in the current museum system, he does not have control

over such things.

Furthermore, Moelyono was invited to Japan on this occasion. In taking Mr. Rajah's point, should not the collaborators also have been invited and given the same recognition as Moelyono? I think such a question is based on good morals. Let's say the collaborators' names were also listed on the panel. Would that be the solution? I don't think that that would provide any fundamental solution to the issue at hand.

Putting the artist's name on the panel is an issue that extends beyond the issue of the museum system. Anonymity and signature are related to the issue of art as a commercial product and an element of economic activities. Let's say, we try to improve the system based on our good morals in the age of late capitalism. Then we might list all the names of the craftsmen on the panel. Alternatively, we may choose anonymity, as if we were handling objects from the Bronze Age in China. I think continuing such an approach would not be justified, because the choice is made based on the emotional intention of being fair.

So, the reality may be that, in certain regions, artists are usually in the cities and the folk artists, in the rural villages. This may be not so in the region where Mr. Rajah comes from, but I think this situation is reality in many of the regions. At one point, all of the artists in a region may decide to work in an urban environment. If such is reality, how useful or effective can morals be? Would we be able to resist this change with our artistic morality?

If we were to discuss the craft issue in the framework of fairness, we would have to expand the discussion to economic and political problems. It would be dangerous to discuss the issues only in the art world, or at the museum or art critic level. Without working on the greater superstructure, trying to resolve the problem just within the context of the art world could be dangerous.

Ahmad Mashadi: I have a short comment to make on art and craft. Actually, I am not very sure if the division or conflict between art and crafts should be an issue in contemporary art. I think what should be remembered is about the evolving relationship between artist and artwork and audience. The evolving relationship problematizes the issues of the nature of art, the issues of art as object and its functions, the issues of the subject and issues of the audience and its activities. Therefore, as long as the value of the artwork can be related to reexamination or revision of such relationships, I think all the extended issues, the hegemony in some instances, can be better understood, and appreciation of craft or folk art should not be a problem. I think what we call artists is still a modulating idea. I think it would be honorable of artists, of course, to credit his collaborators and, of course, honorable of curators to explain the actual context of such collaboration.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Thank you. Mr. Tani, please.

Tani Arata: Concerning art and craft, which we have been discussing for some time, I would like to hear the opinions of those of you from Asia. I am interested in finding out how art is translated in each of your languages. For example, in Japan, as pointed out by Mr. Nakamura and Mr. Nanjo, art is not understood in the way Westerners view the concept of art.

It is a language, which has been created as a result of public policy. Also, the word, "painting," translated as "*kaiga*" in Japanese, was created after modernization began in Meiji era and did not exist before then. Until then, the two characters used in "*kaiga*," the "*e*" and "*ga*" were used separately, and not as a compound. The same can be said for Japanese words such as "*chōkoku* (sculpture)" and "*kōgei* (craft)." As for sculpture, we had a tradition of woodcarving, but not that of modeling. All of these words were created when the Meiji Government established the new arts policy, acquired the concept of what Westerners considered to be "art." Art was transferred to Japan as a technical skill and was translated in that context.

It was, of course, part of the Meiji Government's strategy.

I would like to ask everybody, how the word "art" is understood in your country, and how it is different from that of the West.

MC (T. Mizusawa): I believe attempting to strictly define the terminology in different languages would take much time and the discussion could get complex. I would like to actually invite Mr. Leng to make some comments on China which has a long history in crafts.

Leng Lin: Although I have been given this opportunity to speak, I have not given that much thought to this issue on art and craft. I am afraid that this topic is not quite in line with the main theme of this symposium.

On the issue of craft and art, of course in China, we have many different traditions in the crafts. In thinking about the two, we must first understand the clear difference between them in terms of their social functions and the communities they serve.

In China, we have traditional painting, traditional craft, but also art, which was imported during modernization. Our word for "art" is a translation of the Japanese word that translated the English word, "art." Unifying "art" in the modern sense with traditional crafts or painting has been an issue since the beginning of modern age is an issue that has yet to be resolved.

In China today, contemporary art and traditional art are in a competing relationship. Currently, contemporary art seems to have an advantage because, in my opinion, it responds or reacts better to the current problems than traditional art. Unfortunately, traditional art has not been able to define its position in relation to current issues. It has also not been able

to innovate in its traditional skills.

I would like to suggest that we return to the main theme of our discussion today.

Related to the concept of Asia and art, Mr. Elliott mentioned how we are losing Asia as the "other," but first of all, I think the point is when and how did we become conscious of this concept of Asia? For example, the Japan Foundation Asia Center was founded with a clear objective. Through its activities and history, I am sure many things that deviate from the original objective surfaced on the idea of Asia, including the difference between Asian countries, which perhaps are more apparent than that between the West and Asia.

Miki Akiko: Mr. Leng commented that, as we may be deviating from our original topic, we should get back to discussing the issue of contemporary art in Asia. But I disagree that the issues we have been discussing today, including that of crafts, are not related at all to the issue of contemporary art, because I think that they are, in fact, closely related to Mr. Leng's question, "What is Asia?" What is "Asia" and what is "contemporary" in the context of contemporary art in Asia? I am sure many of us, not being able to ignore this question, have thought about it, too. But I think the fact is that we often use the concept of Asia without having had a thorough discussion.

This seems to be our underlying problem. It is also related to the language of criticism and discourse, as Mr. Supangkat has pointed out. We often use the language of criticism in discussing Asian contemporary art without giving it enough thought. We need to reexamine, not only the definition of the concept but also, the language of criticism.

I think this is the same problem that Mr. Tatehata had brought up when he referred to "the oblivion of identity," the phrase Minamishima Hiroshi used at the 1998 AICA (The International Association of Art Critics) Japan Congress. The word "identity" is used far too readily and far too easily.

MC (T. Mizusawa): I understand Mr. Leng's dissatisfaction, but as Ms. Miki has pointed out, when we discuss Asian contemporary art and think about its definition, we often find that, for example, we have difficulties in seeking the point that connects art and craft, specifically because the context is Asia. This is probably why I had encouraged people to comment on the idea that such a distinction is blurred in the context of Asia.

We are running out of time. We will come back to the issue of how, although we are living in Asia, we don't really understand Asia, rather than discussing the issue of how it is not understood by the West. I hope Mr. Leng will understand our concerns. May I have Mr. Shimizu comment on Mr. Rajah's presentation?

T. Shimizu: I found Mr. Rajah's presentation very interesting, particularly, in the analysis he presented at the very beginning

of how Asia and the world are changing. Until the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the world was focused on the Cold War between the East and the West, and, in a way, the concept of Asia was forgotten for the while, or at best, given meaning only in the context of the Cold War. But things have changed today. Today, in a world where the United States is the only superpower, the American audiovisual culture, or the movies, have a tremendous influence on Asia, but its art has a relatively small influence. Nobody is that impressed by being exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

In such a world, everybody is competing for regional hegemony through various international exhibitions. This competition is very new and everybody is fighting for a small-scale hegemony. How does an artist like yourself (Mr. Rajah) find a way to operate in such a historical context? Your answer was to work with the Internet and digital art.

But we have to keep in mind that there will always be artists who will not be able to use the digital space provided by the Internet. Artists dealing with forms of art other than digital media have to think about how they would place themselves in the new hegemony.

One more point. I agree that the artists in Asia have strong capabilities in the new media, but I am not sure that they come by this talent naturally. You are quite optimistic in describing how Asia is not completely modernized and taken over by the contemporary art system, so that it is still possible for Asian artists to work anonymously. You stated that we, in Asia, are good at interactive thinking. This may be true, but in looking at Europe, or the United States, a large volume of capital and human resources are being invested to educate their artists. At MIT, for example. Since Asian artists will be placed in this global arena, I think that we will see a new competition.

N. Rajah: Definitely. But I would like to first give a quick and practical solution to what I think is a problem that has become evident after ten years of wonderful, successful Asian, Southeast Asian, Asia-Pacific exhibitions sponsored and patronized especially by organizers in Australia and Japan. Asian art is now on a platform that it was not on ten years ago. The problems that have been emerging in the process of getting here are what I try to address. I think the most important sentence in the first half of my presentation is my comment on "neocolonial curatorial hierarchies." I don't want to go into it, and have a discussion about it. I just want to immediately propose a solution.

If you look at the list of artists in the show in Brisbane or the one in Fukuoka, and work out the percentage of local, meaning Japanese or Australian, to foreign artists, and get a figure and compare that to another statistic—working out the numbers of curators from Japan or Australia against the number of curators from outside, you will see the root of the problem that can be addressed quickly. Also, if you try to work out the positions of foreign curators within the central

committees that make decisions. "Foreign" means outside of the host country. Increase these numbers and we will be working towards a better Asian solution for the future.

It is also very important to ensure that the art brought together from the outlying regions to grace the centers of art also tours the regions from which it has been gathered. Otherwise, the rich countries with better infrastructures will be simply consuming our art without giving anything back. When planning grand regional shows funding must be set aside for such touring. There are already examples of this. Being truly multinational, corporations, for all their faults, have shown the right attitude when organizing regional exhibitions. The ASEAN Art Awards have brought about an unprecedented awareness amongst Southeast Asians of the art of their neighbors.

Indeed the Internet is my niche. You can say it's my hustle. It is the only space I could find for myself after struggling in the London art scene, then going home and being isolated from the Kuala Lumpur scene in Sarawak. I found the Internet and haven't looked back. So I don't privilege it as a medium of art over the others, but I do feel that the future as a whole is going to be digital. For those in the parts of the world that cannot afford it and are left behind, this is a big problem which I address at the end of my paper. I think you made a point about this, and I acknowledge the problem there.

The final point I would like to make is that there is something happening here, which has to do with globalization after the fall of Soviet Union and the rise of the United States. The United States rules the world, but China is waiting to come in the next round, next millennium. I would say, in a very paranoid fashion, the East Asian and Southeast Asian financial crisis can be related to some of the invisible agendas of foreign powers. Nothing can be proved. But nation status is under threat and "Asia" could be a point of resistance for us. More importantly, a kind of benign nationalism could be the way to resist the dominance of multinational corporations.

If we look at art arenas, the kind of things we see in Fukuoka and Brisbane, these are the kind of art arenas which come from the nation-states. It's government-funded or city government-funded. It's the old paradigm. If you want to see the future, you will look at the relationship between Fukuoka, Brisbane, or the Singapore Art Museum and corporations. Look at the ICC (NTT InterCommunication Center). Look at the ASEAN Art Awards. Look at the art exhibition that was mentioned by Mr. Mashadi. Corporations are coming into the game, and perhaps in the future, they will have the funds, resources and the ability to dominate. This is just a word of caution. I don't know what to do about this, but I see national institutions having less money than before. In my country, the National Art Gallery can only do so much, but corporate sponsors can do much more. So too in richer countries this could be the scenario. Globalization is really happening at every level. Technology is also happening at every level. I just think that we have to be aware of this. I believe that technology

is an antidote to some of the problems of modernism. But, it's also deeply enmeshed with the problems of capitalism and other forms of global hegemony. I am not promoting it without awareness of these problems.

A. Tatehata: I have a very simple question.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Yes, Mr. Tatehata.

A. Tatehata: You spoke of the Asian solution in the first half and of globalism in the latter half of your presentation.

At the end of your text, you conclude with an agenda in using new interactive arts "to take Asian Art beyond the present hegemonic regionalism and to transport us to a truly global paradigm in Art." You also state that "our Asianness will prevail even where it is not expressed explicitly" and that "we should aim to determine the center." Just by looking at the text, I find these two ideas to be paradoxical. I would like to understand how these two are related. I would appreciate your elaborating on this point.

N. Rajah: Perhaps there are problems here that I cannot resolve in my answer. But the idea about Asians aiming at defining the center is not so much to dominate the center. Generally, there is a mainstream in which developing countries are welcome to participate but are always marginalized. So, East-West dichotomy is too simplistic, but you know, it's helpful in the fight to get into the mainstream. And normally, you get into the central area through the channels on the side in separate Asian shows and Asia-Pacific shows. But at the same time, the host countries like Australia are engaged in the international mainstream. It's a double entry system. I think Dr. Poshyananda was talking about this system earlier. And we've already sort of talked about merging these two.

My point was simply that in the new media art, there is a danger that the same thing will happen again, that, you know, we look for the "digital *wayang kulit*" or the "virtual temple." It's happening. Whilst people who do work that does not look Asian or specific to where they come from will be excluded. People who make work that address the structure of technology, from their Asian or Malaysian or individual point of view may be excluded, and people who can make things that signify their origins will be included in the mandala of the digital art — on the edge of course. So this is what I was trying to say. Let's work against this. I would say that in Asian art, we imitate nature in the manner of operation, not so much in its visible forms. And I hope that, with new technology, the manner of operation is the main thing — programming and networking. I hope people don't look for tokens — Asian, or Malaysian, you know. So this is the first point.

It wasn't so much that we should dominate the center. But that we should help determine the future global culture, if that is at all possible. I'm quite skeptical. People have commented

about my optimism. I'm not optimistic. I am maybe trying to show a way forward. But I'm quite pessimistic particularly about the technology gap and manpower gap and great global agendas, you know. It's very frightening.

Have I resolved the contradiction between global and Asian? I think I have. I have answered your question. I would like to just extend it, saying that in a country like Malaysia, we have state-of-the-art technology coming in without a multimedia super corridor. But we don't yet have artists you will see at the ICC in Tokyo. We have the same corporate giants coming in that sponsor art in Germany, the United States, and Japan. Can we convince our government to convince them to give the same support to our technologically motivated artists that they give in their home countries? So, the first thing is to convince our government about this, but they have a different agenda. Business comes first, quite rightly in a developing situation, and therefore multimedia applications are more like Hollywood than ICC. We have a notion of art built in. We have a multimedia university, but the primary focus is on economically viable projects.

So this is an additional comment. I am not sure if I'm still answering your point.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Thank you. Finally, we would like to invite comments about Mr. Tatehata's presentation from Mr. Tani.

A. Tani: I just would like to make a very brief comment. You have pointed out the problem of curation and the domination that results from curation. I would like to ask what your experience was as a curator, for example, at the National Museum of Art, Osaka. It seems that you are critical of yourself.

A. Tatehata: It is true. I believe you are asking me how I see the structure of dominance as a former curator of a museum. I gave my views based on a self-evaluation. I curated an exhibition of contemporary Korean art twenty years ago at the museum where I was working at that time. I also curated an exhibition of Indian contemporary art here at the Japan Foundation Forum last year. I have had opportunities to curate several other exhibitions focusing on a particular country. I made an effort to be neutral as possible as a curator in all of those occasions.

But the reality is that I could only select maybe twenty artists at most. In the last Indian art exhibition, I only had eight. In such a case, it is inevitable to look for a cohesive theme or a context that holds the exhibition together. To make a selection to support the theme is my responsibility as a curator, but regardless of the theme, the audience would only see the exhibition as a direct reflection of the contemporary art scene from India. Some art critics or curators may recognize my taste or biased view, but the general public would hardly take that into account.

Such is the dilemma I always face. But, if there were to be a very neutral and objective context, that would only be boring and something of a cliché. Therefore, I go ahead and present my biased views, and do not avoid organizing exhibitions of this type. But at the same time, I think that an alternative approach to the museum-led, exhibition-led approach should be available in an age when the latter is dominant. I was not rejecting my own actions but trying to give a better view of what other alternatives can be considered.

A. Tani: I see. I have another question. You are saying that in any type of curation, a collective identity, or a communal identity would dominate, and so as an alternative, you advocate focusing on the particularity of the individual artist and organizing one-person shows. I think you are mainly concerned with Asian artists here.

I think your suggestion of one-person shows goes against many of the proposals that have been made here on what sort of exhibitions are desirable for the future. I would like to ask what type of one-person shows you are proposing. Would they be held in a museum, or, for example, in an alternative space?

A. Tatehata: I think it is true that a reactionary return to modernism is hidden in one-person shows. We discussed the Henry Moore shop earlier on. In his case, we are attributing all the problems in art to one great artist. So, that is a reactionary return to modernism that is undesirable. I am not saying, "Collective identity is wrong. One-person shows are the only way. Reduce all criteria to the uniqueness of the great artist." In relative terms, there are far too few one-person shows compared to group shows. For example, the Asia Center has organized many group exhibitions, but only one solo exhibition, that of Fang Lijun.

I would like to see more one-person shows at the Asia Center or at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. There should be more of these at commercial galleries, too, although I know that funding could be an issue. There are too few exhibitions of Asian art held in Japanese public museums. Commercial galleries are based on economic principles, so a moralistic motivation would not have much effect, but they should be at the forefront in introducing emerging artists. So, I think that they should make an effort to hold many more exhibitions, be they supported through corporate sponsorship or voluntary activities. I think that one-person shows could be organized in smaller spaces other than museums. I don't think my idea is so unique. This is just common sense.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Since we are running short of time, I would like to end the comments on individual presentations.

Mr. Tatehata, you have said that in organizing one-person shows, you "want to examine the fundamental figure of the 'other'," but what do you mean by the "fundamental figure of the 'other' "? It seemed to me that your presentation was a

confession of your faith as a curator. What exactly is this "fundamental other" that you hope to encounter?

A. Tatehata: Specifically, this refers to the artist. Artists, of course, have regional and collective identities. But we expect them to also be independent, idealized figures, "others" who are fundamentally embraced by the society, but are definitively different and removed from it. The artist is a romantic figure. I am not suggesting that artists should be defined only by these attributes. Artist should perhaps have the ability to reveal the contradictions in society or make fundamental criticisms of it.

But I personally expect art to play a heroic role and have the ability to present values that deviates from the norm. This may be a romantic notion that I have of art. It applies to any art, be it from Asia or any other regions. I think art has the capacity to meet such expectations.

MC (T. Mizusawa): I see. We have repeatedly used the word "other" in our discussion. Mr. Leng also used that word in the context of Asia being the "other" within Asia. I wonder if anybody wants to comment on this? Yes, Mr. Shimizu.

T. Shimizu: Becoming aware of the "other" is to become aware of oneself. Asia was something that the Europeans looked at from the ocean, during their voyage through the Middle East to Asia in the Age of Exploration. They saw the coastline of the continent, but not the inland. Even to me, someone who lives in Asia, Asia was the "other" until a certain time in my life. In the case of Japan, we needed to establish an identity in counterbalancing the Western powers. The identity of Japan and of Asia led us to war, but it was a necessary step at the time. I think that the issue of the "other" is about identity.

I went to Singapore on research several years ago. I met with young artists who would ask me for advice on identity. "What is my identity? I don't know," they would say to me. Usually, artists start creating their work without giving any thought to identity. They become aware of the issue of identity when it is inevitable to think about it for political or economical reasons. Exploring their identity means recognizing the "other."

As the concept of Asia had not been presented by others, we were forced into defining it through the encounter with the West. That is where the issue of identity came into play, I think.

H. Nakamura: On the subject of the "other" mentioned by Mr. Shimizu, I think he may be talking about a slightly different idea from my concept of "inner other," so I would like to explain what I meant by my phrase.

What I meant by the word, "otherness," was the notion of looking at oneself from a distance. I share the views of the three speakers, who are concerned with a highly localized or

peripheral activity, which, at the same time, could be global, universal, or even central. This may sound paradoxical, but I think this is an important concept. We are concerned with this one specific point in time which could be described in the context of central or global, if were to look at it from a distance. This is the notion that I tried to describe in my words, "inner other." My choice of words was rather abstract, but I wanted to add this point to highlight the difference from Mr. Shimizu's point.

MC (T. Mizusawa): As we are running out of time, may I ask Mr. Supangkat to comment on the future prospects of contemporary art in Asia, including the issue of mutual understanding between countries that was raised by Mr. Leng.

Jim Supangkat: I would like to respond to the problematic of identity discussed by Mr. Nakamura and Mr. Shimizu. To me, identity is not related to what we want to be. In my opinion, the identity of art in Asia depends on the mediation of art discourses in Asia that in the end results in a clear understanding of how art is generally perceived in Asia. The outcome could be a totally new discourse based on identification of matters that exist in the process of mediation today. Regional art activities in Asia provided materials for identification. To me this approach is different from the search to find a concept of Asian art. In my view, efforts to find a concept of Asian art always have the risk being caught up in considering too much "linear knowledge" of Asia. It is inevitable that the "formulation" of Asian art at the end is very much colored by Western interpretations and stereotypes on Asia.

To me contemporary art discourse is more a "strategic" format in the context of finding what art means in Asia because the discourse gives us opportunity to go in many directions. In my opinion contemporary art discourse is not a format that should be used to identify contemporary art in Asia. The format should be open for interpretations and, if necessary, be used in the opposite way or even upside down. Thus, in the context of Asian contemporary art, discourse is not only useful for identifying contemporary art but also modern art. In Indonesia, the understanding that contemporary art rejects modern art resulted in an awareness that there is no clear comprehension at what modern art is in Indonesia. Thus, instead of considering modern art to be dead, contemporary art discourse in Indonesia has made an effort to identify modern art.

As matter of fact, it is difficult to identify modern art in Indonesia through commonly known theories of modern art. There are too many differences in the development. In finding a way to comprehend modern art, the identification of modern art in Indonesia opened a new discussion on the modernization process in Indonesia, triggered by an awareness that modern art is a phenomenon of the modern

world in Indonesia. Nevertheless, it turned out that there is no clear understanding of this modernization process. In the narrative of the nation, modernization in Indonesia started in colonial times nearly at the same time as the emergence of the nationalist movement. Polemics that tend to understand that the process of modernization emerged between 1930 and 1950 are problematic due to the ambiguous stance that accepted and at the same time rejected modernity. Resistance was based on the perception that saw modernity as Western culture, as Western culture at that time was considered identical with colonialism. Later the efforts to understand modernization were colored by East-West dichotomy.

The reluctance to comprehend modernity has its impact in the comprehension of modern art. Instead of studying theories of modern art, the effort to understand tends to deny the concept of modern art and even reject the fact that art practice is actually a fine art tradition. Despite the fact that this kind of effort failed to bring a clear understanding of modern art, as well as modernity in a particular space, the failure could be considered as material for identifying the dilemma of modernization. A notion of history as rupture resulted in an awareness that even modernity is a limited phenomenon, let alone the understanding of modern art and the philosophical basis of art practice. Within this kind of condition how should we comprehend contemporary art and see its prospects?

In my opinion art practice in Asia faces the same question. This is why I see the significance in finding a platform for identifying the dilemma of modernization in Asia. The clues that should be considered are the encounter of Asia with Western culture and the encounter of Asia with Western modernity in the early twentieth century. Just to show some examples, the encounter with Western culture in Indonesia occurred in the eighteenth century and had already developed substantially by the nineteenth century. In Japan, it occurred in the Meiji Restoration. The encounters with modernity in the early twentieth century in Japan and Indonesia are different stories. Twentieth century modernity emerged in Japan and in Indonesia in the middle of conflict between Asian nations and Western colonial powers. It was far from being a peaceful encounter as was previous East-West acculturation.

In finding this platform, facts that have been overlooked should be considered. For example, the East-West dichotomy that spread throughout Southeast Asia has its origin in the conflict between Japan and the Western countries in China before World War II. The East-West dichotomy in my opinion reflects efforts to find a model of modernization that is not Western. In a way this exertion required a change of perception of events in World War II, even a totally different point of view. I have to admit this is a difficult task due to the fact that World War II and the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia is still considered as a stigma on Japan in Southeast Asia, as well as in Japan.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Thank you. I think the point was that the issue of identity involves looking at the history of developing identity.

The advent of modernity in Asia and Japan led to greater awareness of identity and also shook it up. The development of identity was not simple, but a complex process. I feel that if we do not have an accurate understanding of this development, we cannot objectively understand what we have now as identity.

A. Tani: I would like to suggest that we have another session of "discoursing" on how modern Indonesian artists, such as Soedjojono or Affandi, raised their awareness.

I can draw an example of a Japanese modern artist's activity to elaborate on the issue of modernity and the issue of individuality raised by Mr. Tatehata. Takamura Kotaro, a Japanese sculptor, was strongly influenced by Rodin. He advocated the idea of "*rigun-sei*," or diverging from the group. He chose to explore the path of individuality. As he tried to consciously follow this path, he was eventually overwhelmed by the "*kyotai*." "*Kyotai*" means hollow body. Similarly, Yorozu Tesugoro called himself "a sphere within nothingness." Yoshiwara Jiro, one of the members of the Gutai group, painted works of black and white circles with a calligraphy brush, creating an image of a black hole and a white hole.

So, consciousness of the "other" emerged among modern Japanese artists at very early point, but the word "otherness" first came to be used by large numbers of people around 1970. So, it is quite a new issue. Until then, even though modern artists did make an effort to raise awareness of this problem, they repeatedly failed to create an Asian form of sublimation or an alternative structure. Finally, at the very last stage of modernism around 1970, when the various forms of modernism began to be criticized, the issue was clarified.

So, as with Yorozu Tetsugoro, Takamura Kotaro, or Kishida Ryusei in Japan, I am sure there are modern artists in each Asian country who were influenced by the West, but at the same time, tried to overcome Western influence.

MC (T. Mizusawa): Thank you. If we were to continue comparing historical incidents, we would need more time. I think I would like to leave that issue aside for now. Mr. Nanjo, please.

F. Nanjo: One last comment. Mr. Tatehata confessed his longing for a hero, but I felt that his expectations of artists resemble the Western longing for an exotic Asia. This expectation creates the stereotype of Asia. This stereotype eventually becomes the identity, an identity that is different from the actual identity. We see a gap between the two.

So how can we define identity? Although I raised the issue of defining art and Asian art, I do not expect to find answers.

We may not find the answers, but we would need to know if the definitions are the same as those of the West. This point is important in thinking about the future of art in Asia, as Ms. Miki pointed out, but at the same time, I don't think that anybody can come up with a conclusion. So, how do we search for the identity of Asia? I nearly came to a conclusion during my last comment, We need to continue our discussion, and organize exhibitions to depict Asian identity, although it may not be defined by a single authority. I hope things will turn in this direction.

In order to avoid making mistakes, we should avoid labeling and classifying Asian identity so easily. Instead, I think we should look at Asia as a gigantic tank full of artistic resources. There are cultural resources here which have not yet been thoroughly researched or discovered. Only part of them are known. We need to discover them. And we need to create new art based on this vision of Asia and, in some sense, on contemporary conditions. We can present our new discoveries to the world, and share our cultural asset, with the West, instead of competing against them. This is the kind of approach that is necessary.

N. Rajah: I have a word of caution about this notion that emerged in the last paper about heroes and solo shows, and taking off from "White Hole" and "Black Holes." I would like to include "Brown Holes" and "Yellow Holes" and refer to the Malaysian situation. Now, we have a multi-ethnic country with communal politics that involve very different sensibilities and different agendas in art. When we look at the "White Hole" and the "Yellow Hole" by which I mean European perspective and the East Asian perspective, they seem to have picked out, as important work coming out of Malaysia, works by artists from marginalized communities, making radical and critical statements about the mainstream society. If I asked you to think of who is the most important Malaysian artist in the last few years, I am sure we will all think of the same name. The Central Curatorial Committees seems to have preferences for certain people. They override the regional curators' suggestions. I have experienced this myself more than once. So, the word of caution is, if you are making heroes, let not the kingmaker be from the host country, but let the kingmaker, the curator, also come from the same place as the heroes! That's it.

MC (T. Mizusawa): That ties in with the idea that exhibitions should be shown in all the countries from which the artists originate.

Let me sum up. It is difficult to summarize everything that has been said but my general impression of this symposium was that we are now at a stage where we need to think very carefully about the terms Asia, contemporary, and art, one by one, rather than take them together as a solid unit that has tremendous power to move us.

As Dr. Poshyananda pointed out, even if we were to introduce Asian art in the international contemporary art circuit, we should not present it as a monolith, but as something with varied aspects and a porous surface. We also need to look at Asia with fresh eyes. As Mr. Nanjo suggested, we need to work in many different ways, with words and discourses and with different kinds of exhibitions in exploring Asia further. We should see Asia as containing rich hidden resources.

Although Mr. Leng resisted the discussion on art and crafts, the issue of craft, and the issue of technicians and anonymous professionals who do not appear in the art circuit, were raised by many of the panelists, which implies that we need to reexamine the nature of art. Mr. Supangkat, suggested that we need a historical approach in exploring the idea of identity. We need to carefully examine the process in which identity was established in art in order to understand contemporary art better. This is related to Mr. Tani's comment, too.

We need to stop looking at Asian contemporary art as a monolith, and have a closer look at its individual parts. In doing so, we can perhaps find a light that illuminates the "Black Holes" from within and makes it shine.

I would like to conclude this session. Thank you.

Toward an Anonymous Individuality

Mizusawa Tsutomu

Chief Curator, Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura

I recently heard a story from a Japanese sculptor who lives in Yatsugatake that made a strong impression on me. He was participating in an event in a provincial city in Japan where artists had gathered from all over Asia, and he was given the opportunity to take part in a discussion where the topic was "the forest." He naturally assumed that the discussion would center on ecology and the need to return to nature. However, almost all of the artists from Southeast Asia spoke about memories of war. To them (although there were some difference in response depending on the generation), the "forest" was a site of slaughter and violence.

I do not intend to go into the issue of victims and victimizers during the war, but I would like to point out how something that seems as universal and unchanging as "the forest" can also be extremely "historical." Art, one of the most self-conscious of human activities, is naturally much more historical than the forest. This "history" cannot be exhaustively analyzed according to the modern Western model of history. In fact, many Western historians, beginning with the pioneering School of Annales, have already made this point. We should remember that the West's own self-awareness of the fracturing of its once solid cultural identity has been a precondition for the recent dialog between the West and Asia. The West has taken the lead in this, and the peculiarly modern state of Japan, which has arrived at its own strange form of late capitalism, has followed the West's example. Because of this background, it would seem that this rapprochement is itself reconstructing and reinforcing the dualistic opposition between the West and Asia, and this suspicion puts a damper on the dialog. The idea that Asia is unified in relation to the West is already a privileged concept, and it clashes with the experiential reality of the many different Asias that actually exist.

This symposium was an opportunity to objectively examine the present conditions of Asia through art on the basis of our experience of the overheated "Asian contemporary art boom" which made such a dramatic appearance in the early 1990s. Rather than an opportunity for affirming solidarity, it was an occasion for "turning our eyes to individuality" (Tatehata Akira), for speaking out forcefully about the differences that are a product of different histories. This recognition of present reality is to be welcomed.

Session III saw further exploration of issues that emerged in

Sessions I and II. The content of each presentation has already appeared in printed form and speaks for itself, so in this report I would like to concentrate on the problems that emerged in the course of the discussion.

Apinan Poshyananda is a curator based in Thailand who has been an active presence in the international art world, and his presentation focused on art politics. In the first symposium, "The Potential of Asian Thought" in 1994, he pointed out the dangers of great power hegemony in any cultural program led by Japan. In the second, "Asian Contemporary Art Reconsidered" in 1997, he stated a need for international curators stationed on "dissolved cultural frontiers" to promote the talent of Asian countries in the international art circuit. On this third occasion, he rejected Pan-Asianism, the idea that Asia is one, as authoritarian and repressive, portraying the divisions between Asian countries as being "porous." His ideal strategy is to have contemporary Asian art flying in formation behind the lead of Japan and Korea like a flock of geese, constantly providing feedback to each other as they advance into the international art world. This represents a change in emphasis, reflecting the political savvy of a leading curator responding to the changes in the image of Asian art that have occurred recently on the international scene. The value of Asian art is now seen variously as oppositional, representative, and regionally dispersed.

The second speaker, Niranjana Rajah of Malaysia, suggested that we should take an optimistic view of the potential of the Internet for crossing regional boundaries in overcoming the time lag peculiar to Asian art. During the discussion, David Elliott commented that there was no longer a need to tie "modernity" to the city, and Mr. Rajah agreed that the urban-rural duality has been rendered meaningless. He then asked the important question of whether there ever was an essential difference between traditional crafts, often thought to be associated with rural communities, and contemporary art, considered a product of the city. Although I served as the chair, I am afraid that I was not successful in guiding the discussion effectively. However, I believe it is significant that the many differences in outlook came out clearly. I would like to list some of the main points that were made. "The conflict between traditional crafts and contemporary art can be dramatized in the context of the exhibition, given that a certain amount of neutrality is guaranteed" (Ranjit Hoskote). "Contemporary art always poses the danger of creating a kind of hierarchy for the appropriation of the folk arts" (N. Rajah). "There is a need to look at the myths by which modernism in art operates; the myth that take modernist artists as a visionary and craftsmen as skill-driven people" (R. Hoskote). Unfortunately, the panelists did not pay much attention to this last statement. Ushiroshoji Masahiro made a related comment, noting that "the late Roberto Villanueva called his assistant a collaborator," but the discussion did not significantly diverge from the basic assumption of modernism that the artist is the visionary.

However, there were other comments that deserve mention. "There is a need to deconstruct the word 'crafts'" (Nakamura Hideki), and, "We must question how much contemporary things can embody the beautiful forms found in ancient crafts" (Shimizu Toshio). Nanjo Fumio accepted the premise of a conventional division, saying, "It is all right to have exhibitions at grass-root level and at international level." Tatehata Akira avoided the problem by relegating it to the hierarchy of genres: "It comes down to an ethical problem of art giving sufficient consideration to craft." As the chair, I felt that these approaches were not sufficient and that a "conflict" between art and craft could be creative. I suggested this possibility to Leng Lin, the panelist from China, a land of marvelous crafts, but was sharply rebuffed. "They serve entirely different ends. Craft cannot renew tradition and has nothing to do with art." Mr. Leng's contention that there is no reason to discuss the problem of craft in this sort of symposium drew a positive response from some people in the audience. This sort of disagreement was probably the greatest characteristics of this symposium.

In a debate over abstraction at the beginning of this century, Max Beckman raised the objection that "painting is falling into craft." Franz Marc wrote a famous rebuttal, saying, "It is necessary to think about the long and deep relationship between art and craft." Since then, it is the avant-garde has been the most active force seeking a positive relationship with craft. The productivist creed of the Russian Constructivists in the 1920s, the dream of art and craft coming together in anonymous production, is an extreme example of this tendency. There is a view of history which holds that the avant-garde's attempt to return to "everyday life," an attempt to divest itself of the elitism entailed in its origins, led to the cul-de-sac of proletarian art and Socialist Realism, and that the result was a futile ideological struggle. However, this view is simply part of the fraudulent claim of the "victory of capitalism." Contemporary art that does not search for a path to "everyday life" ends up wasting its energy producing things that are ever more "interesting," with harmful results to art. Even if this art takes an oppositional pose, it is ultimately following the logic of capital and always runs the risk of arriving at nothing but a higher level of kitsch, which reinforces this logic.

The third speaker, Tatehata Akira emphasized the importance of the artist's individuality. On the basis of his experience as a curator he proposed giving more importance to one-person exhibitions in the future rather than group exhibitions organized around certain countries or topics. Commenting on this presentation, Tani Arata raised the doubt that Mr. Tatehata's position might be "reactionary." Mr. Tatehata said that he was fully aware of this danger, but that he was simply making a "common-sense" proposal to give more balance to exhibitions by using different formats. However, if one-person exhibitions are simply scattered and

unrelated and do not have some sort of mutual connection or consistency, they cannot become part of a significant cultural program. Unless we address the problem of how to construct such a program for the art of Asia, we will be left with a mishmash of vague generalities. Mr. Tatehata's conclusion that the purpose of an exhibition is to "encounter the fundamental other" is open to the criticism that it takes us from a point of convergence back to the bad old elitism of the avant-garde. Although this possible objection occurred to me as chairperson, no one raised it during the session.

At the end of the overall discussion, Mr. Leng raised the question, "Are there not greater differences within Asia itself than between Asia and the West?" Jim Supangkat and Tani Arata addressed the issue of identity, the counterpart of otherness, touching on examples of the art of Indonesia and Japan in its historical development. Their final comments made it clear that a stricter use of terminology makes historical differences more evident and highlights the points of divergence between cultures.

My general impression of the symposium was that it showed a need for getting under the surface rather than floating along on top of it. As John Clark of the University of Sydney pointed out repeatedly at the previous symposium, it is impossible to understand the nature of contemporary art as anything more than fashion without a keen awareness of art's historicity. The "rich resource" (as F. Nanjo calls it) of Asian art is not something waiting on a store shelf to be sorted out. We need to gain a better understanding of its precious diversity, which has been formed according to profound historical laws, through more diligent study and research, an effort will that will also illuminate its contemporary values. The values of contemporary Asian art do not need to coincide with what is considered "high quality" in the West. The "resources" of Asian art are in danger of exploitation through too much feedback from the international art market and its "art game." The countries of Asia are losing the memories of anonymous people who have disappeared into the "forests," the achievements of anonymous craftsmen who have reached unbelievably high levels of formal beauty in their work, and the traditional arts and crafts that have been passed down by anonymous people over the years. The West has developed some resistance to the destruction of anonymous tradition, and it may be going ahead even faster in Asia, where there is little organized resistance to it (or a complete lack of any kind of deterrent). The contemporary art of Asia must once again search for a path to anonymous individuality on the level of "life" in order to revitalize itself. I would like to see this symposium as a first step in that direction.

(Translated by Stanley N. Anderson)

座談会 / Roundtable Discussion

90年代のアジア現代美術を振り返って
Looking Back at Asian Contemporary Art during the 1990s

座談会

「90年代のアジア現代美術を振り返って」

出席者:

デヴィッド・エリオット
(ストックホルム近代美術館館長/スウェーデン)

アピナン・ポーサヤーナン
(チュラーロンコン大学アカデミックリソースセンター副館長/タイ)

建畠 哲
(多摩美術大学教授/日本)

Roundtable Discussion

"Looking Back at Asian Contemporary Art during the 1990s"

Participants:

David Elliott
(Director, Moderna Museet, Stockholm / Sweden)

Apinan Poshyananda
(Associate Director, Centers of Academic Resources,
Chulalongkorn University / Thailand)

Tatehata Akira
(Professor, Tama Art University / Japan)

座談会

90年代のアジア現代美術を振り返って

デヴィッド・エリオット



建島 哲



アピナン・ポーサーヤナン



アジアの国際展ブーム

建島 哲: きょうは、90年代のアジア現代美術を取り巻く状況について振り返ってみようという趣旨で、皆さんにお集まりいただきました。この10年間にアジアの現代美術は大きく様変わりしました。作品そのものもちろん変化しましたが、それを取り巻く展覧会や美術館などの制度の整備も急速に進んでいます。例えばブリスベーンのアジアパシフィック・トライエンナーレ、台北ビエンナーレ、光州ビエンナーレなど、アジア域内で大規模な国際展が行われるようになりました。もちろん日本の活動が低下したわけではなく、今年は福岡にアジア美術館が開館してオープニングに第1回福岡アジア美術トリエンナーレが開催されたり、2001年には横浜トリエンナーレも予定されていたりと、新しい動きも出ています。しかしそれにも増して、日本以外のアジアでの動きが活発になってきました。まず、こういった国際展の動きについて、お2人にお聞きしたいと思います。

アピナンさんは、アジアセンターが最初にアジア美術に関するシンポジウムを開催した1994年当時、日本が一手にアジアの現代美術の紹介を取りしきっているような状況に対してかなり警戒心を示されていましたね。その後の変化をどうぞご覧になりますか。

アピナン・ポーサーヤナン: そうですね。あの当時は作品選びに関して、日本と東南アジアのキュレーター間の情報交換や相互理解は殆どありませんでした。たくさんの展覧会が日本人のキュレーターによって行われていましたが、彼らがアジアへ行って好きな作品を選び、それを日本の観客に向けて日本の「他者」として提示する場になっていたように思います。すべて日本側がコントロールしていました。私はそれを東南アジアの側から見ていて、我々にも一言あるし、作品選びの理念も持っているということを言いたかったのです。

しかしあれから状況は随分変わりました。お互いの理解はずっと深まりましたし、日本で美術展を行う際に共同キュレーションも行われるようになりました。

建島: 日本以外のアジアでの活動が活発になって、相対的に日本のプレゼンスが小さくなったとも言えますね。

ポーサーヤナン: そうですね。アジアの中にもいくつか拠点となる場所が出てきて、殆ど毎年どこかで国際展をやっているような状況になりました。現代美術がひとつの文化産業になってきたとも言えるのではないのでしょうか。現代美術に対する需要が高まったおかげで、アーティストにも選択の余地がでまし

た。つまり、作品を日本や欧米まで持って行って展示しなくても、他のアジア域内でいろいろな機会を選べるようになったのです。これは、これから出てくる若いアーティストのためにも喜ばしい傾向だと思っています。

建畠: ヨーロッパからアジアの現代美術に注目して来られたエリオットさんは、このアジアでの国際展ブームをどうご覧になりますか。

デヴィッド・エリオット: これはアジア美術が発展していくための大切なプロセスだと思います。アジアの現代美術はこの10年くらいの間に、作品はもちろんのこと展示の仕方も随分洗練されたものになりました。外から持ってきたものをただ並べるだけというのではなく、良い作品を展示するために継続的に関わっていくというコミットメントの姿勢が見られるようになったことが一番の変化で、これはとても大事なことだと思います。例えば、アフリカではまだこういう動きはありません。

ポーサーナン: ただ、光州ビエンナーレにしろ台北ビエンナーレにしろ、それ自体が巨大なイベントですから、そこには自ずと危険性も生じます。これらのイベントは大きなパッケージで、アーティストや作品はその一部に過ぎないのです。時には、現実的な条件を満たすというだけで作品が選ばれることもあるし、観客を楽しませることができるといって選ばれることもあります。国際展は今やエンターテインメント産業のひとつで、観客はチケットを買ってエキゾチックで奇妙な作品を楽しみにやってくるわけです。そのため、アーティストが国際展の需要に合わせて作風を変えてしまうことさえあります。

建畠: 確かに国際展の影響が作品に反映されているのではないかと思いますね。例えばアジアの現代美術の中にインスタレーションが定着していったのは、国際展の殆どがインスタレーションが中心になっているからではないでしょうか。移動可能で安価な素材を使って、数週間で組み立てられるような規模のインスタレーション作品がアジア現代美術の中に定着していったのは、国際展の影響ではないかと思うのです。

ポーサーナン: もうひとつの問題は、展覧会を開催する側が一手に作品を選んでしまうことです。共同キュレーションという方法が取られることもありますが、やはり最終的なコントロールや決定権は-host国が握っている。そして東南アジアや南アジアのアーティストは巨大なマスタープランを構成するための部品に過ぎなくなっています。展覧会が東南アジアに巡回してくる

ことはまずありませんから、開催地に招待されたアーティストにしか、そのプランがどんなものであったかはわからない。そういう不均衡があります。

そういう意味では、文化的ヘゲモニー(覇権)の危険性はまだ残っているとと言えるでしょう。「情報は最大の武器である」と言いますが、アジアの美術に関して一番多くの情報を蓄積しているのが日本、その次がオーストラリアです。台湾や韓国のキュレーターが東南アジアに調査に来ているのを見たことがあります。ということは、彼らは欧米や日本からの二次情報に頼って展覧会をやっているということなのです。

ただ、そういう危険性を孕みながらも、国際展には大きな意義がありますから、今後も活発になって欲しいと思います。

欧米におけるアジア美術の認識

建畠: 今年6月からイタリアで行われているヴェネツィア・ビエンナーレでは、ハラルド・ゼーマン氏のキュレーションによる国際企画展「ダハルトゥット(アハルト・オーバーオール)」が大いに注目されています。とりわけ中国のアーティストが20数名も出たということで非常に大きな話題になったわけですね。これは、ヨーロッパのアジア現代美術に対する認識あるいは需要が、「次は中国だ」という表れなのでしょうか。

エリオット: 実のところ、あのアジア美術の展示にはがっかりしました。まるでこの10年間アジアには中国以外の美術がなかったとも言えるように、その他のアジア諸国に対する考慮は何もされていませんでした。あれはたぶん、これから国際社会の中で中国が台頭してくるだろうから20世紀最後のビエンナーレでは中国をやろう、という政治的な判断だったと思います。美術とは何の関係もないところから出てきたのだと思いますが。

建畠: エリオットさんはヨーロッパでアジア美術の紹介に尽力してこられたわけですが、一般にアジアの現代美術はどのように受けとられているのですか。

エリオット: 残念ながら、ヨーロッパではまだアジア現代美術を取り扱った美術展は殆どありませんし、議論も起きていないのが現状です。中国、日本、インドという個別の国を取り上げた美術展ならたくさんありますが、「アジア」を扱ったのは、97年にヨーロッパを巡回した「Cities on the Move」展が唯一だと思います。

建畠: アメリカではどうでしょうか。ポーサーナンさんはアメリカでもキュレーションをやっておられるので現状をよくご存知だと思います。

います。

ポーサヤーナン: 昨年の9月から今年1月にかけてニューヨークのアジア・ソサエティ・ギャラリーで「Inside Out」展が開催され、中国、香港、台湾の現代美術が展示されていました。これはニューヨークで始まってアメリカ国内を巡回し、今はメキシコでやっていると思います。この美術展はビエンナーレのように特定のテーマを設定してやっているのではなく、最新の作品というよりはこの約10年間の中国の作品を美術史として紹介する、という性格のものでしたが、アメリカにとっての「他者」を提示するという役割を果たしたと思います。

その前に、私が96年に同じくアジア・ソサエティ・ギャラリーで「Traditions/Tensions」展をやった時は、インド、タイ、インドネシア、フィリピン、韓国だけを取り上げたので、「どうして5カ国しか取り上げないのか」、「どうして中国と日本がないのか」という質問を随分受けたのですが、あの美術展の狙いは中国や日本以外のアジアにも現代美術はあるということを示すことだったのです。先ほどエリオットさんもおっしゃっていたように、欧米の人が中国だけを指して、あるいは東アジアだけを指して、「これがアジアの美術だ」とするような認識は本当に変えてもらいたいですね。

ディスコース(言説)の必要性

ポーサヤーナン: 欧米のキュレーターがアジアを固定観念で見してしまう理由のひとつに、彼らがアジア美術のことをよく知らないという事情があると思います。それは文献が少ないため、美術展のカタログはよくても断片的なものでしかありません。ですから、国際交流基金でアジア現代美術の発展史がわかるような文献を編纂してはどうでしょうか。そうすればアジア美術に対する見方も変わるだろうし、キュレーションも変わるでしょう。

エリオット: ただ、日本で文献なりディスコースを作るためには、現代美術に関する理論的な枠組みがないことが問題になるだろうと思います。日本とオーストラリアの違いはそこで、オーストラリアではディスコースの一部として理論が活用されていますから、いろいろなアーティストの作品をこの枠組みに当てはめて議論することができる。それに比べると、日本ではある言葉が何を意味しているのか自動的に理解できるような言語基盤がないため、議論するのが難しいのです。例えば、シンポジウムで日本人パネリストが使っていた「内なる他者」という言葉も、理論ではなく詩的センスとしては理解できるのですが、一体理論的にどういう意味なのかは殆どわかりません。

建畠: 共通の言語的な基盤が必要だということはそのとおりでしょう。けれども、悪くすると誰がその言語を牛耳るかというヘゲモニー争いになる恐れがあります。それは、ヨーロッパにニューヨークスクールが台頭してきた時に、欧米のモダニズムの中でも起きたことでしょう。ですから、日本が共通の枠組み作りで邁進した時に、相当な反発がアジアのほうから起きるのではという心配もあります。

エリオット: 理論の役割は、「こうでなければならない」という決まりを作るのではなく、違ったアプローチが議論できるようフォーラムを作ることですから、ヘゲモニーとは何の関係もないと思います。そしてその理論が不適切だったらいつでも修正することが可能です。

私たちが議論している「アート」という言葉にはとても広い意味があります。歴史的に私たちはそれを現代美術、伝統美術というように分けて考えてきたわけですが、今そのカテゴリー分けを見直そうとしている時に、理論は必ず必要になるのです。現代美術とは同時代の美術ということだと思いますが、その中には西洋スタイルの現代美術もあれば伝統美術もある。これらのことをひとつの言説の中で議論することのできる方法を見つけなければならないのです。伝統的な作家のものであっても斬新な良い作品なら現代美術作家の優れた作品と同列に見るべきでしょうし、なかには文化人類学的な面白さはあっても有機的な美という意味では既に死んでしまっている伝統美術もあるでしょう。

ポーサヤーナン: つまり、ディスコースによってそういう分類を打ち壊すことができるということですね。「アジア美術」と呼ばれるようになる前は、いろいろなものがぐちゃぐちゃに存在していたわけですが、私たちはそれを西洋のディスコースに当てはめ、ヴィジュアルアート、ファインアート、工芸、ローアート、ハイアートなどと分類してきました。だから例えば私たちはヴィジュアルアートについてはかなり知っているかもしれないけれど、音楽については何も知らない。分野のクロスオーバーをもっと推進するべきですね。

アジアで求められる美術館とは

建畠: 話題を美術の基盤設備の話に移したいと思いますが、我々はアジアの美術を成長させるためには美術館の整備が必要だと信じてきたわけです。ところが日本の例を見てみると、過去20数年の間に美術館の数は圧倒的に増えたはずなのに、20年前と比べて現代美術が一般にも支持されるようになったとか、あるいは傑出したアーティストが出るようになったとはあま