

Transition: Representation and Identity” and the 2005 exhibition and symposium “Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues,” are noteworthy for the fact that they involved academics. [38] With these, it is possible to detect that symposia shifted from being forums for arts professionals to exchange ideas to being forums for academics to test ideas. What has been invested in the idea of Asian art is now in the process of reorganization to find its way into a broader sphere.

Conclusion

In this presentation I have traced the discourses related to Asian contemporary art as they have occurred over the last 30 years in Japan. The centripetal discourse of the 1980s for the pursuit of a unique Asian-ness changed in the 1990s to acquire an emphasis on difference with the West which in turn resulted in a focus on Asian art as something going beyond Western modernity. In the second half of the 1990s multiculturalism became the dominant discourse, before it was decried and replaced by heightened interest in artists as individuals or in hybrid culture. After 2000, in addition to institutional reformations, there has been a shift towards peer-to-peer communication to promote exchanges within the Asia region and yet another movement has appeared. It can be pointed out that the formation of a discourse in Japan regarding Asian contemporary art was linked to the West’s own growing interest in non-Western cultures. Likewise, that shift towards non-Western cultures can be seen as a result of the postmodern loss of the “grand narrative.” However, I think the feeling of “completion” hinted at in postmodernist arguments is unable to fully capture the sense of there being no ending in the still-changing discourses we have examined here today.

The endlessly changing nature of this discourse seems to be related to the endless nature of modernity. It was Jürgen Habermas who talked about the “Unfinished Project” of modernity. But the endless modernity we see here is not the Enlightenment movement based on rationalism to which Habermas refers. Rather, it is a cyclical movement whereby each discourse appeals reflexively to the context that engendered it and makes necessary corrections to that context. This is the phenomenon that Anthony Giddens calls “reflexive modernity.” You could perhaps call it the process by which the systems of modernity themselves become modernized. [39]

38 | *International Symposium 2002 “Asia in Transition: Representation and Identity” Report* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation Asia Center, 2003) and *International Symposium 2005 “Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues” Report* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 2006).

39 | Giddens, 139.

Giddens compares this notion of radicalized modernity to a “juggernaut.” Deriving from an alternative name for the Hindu god Krishna, the term is now used as a metaphor for an uncontrollable and destructive force (the British thought believers would throw themselves before a giant float on which an idol of Krishna sat). Giddens describes a reflexive modernity as a large uncontrollable force overflowing with exhilaration and hope, but also occasioning danger and risk. Of course, if you are talking about discourse on Asian contemporary art then modernity does not resemble a powerful force like a juggernaut. It is more like a ghost, that cannot be grasped, but that continues to exert an influence on us, indefinitely.

Translated by Edan Corkill

The Curatorial Turn in Southeast Asia and the Afterlife of the Modern

Patrick D. Flores

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Writing in the 1994 catalogue of the 4th Asian Art Show, Fukuoka, Ushiroshoji Masahiro imagined the beginning of a new time in the art of Asia:

—

The curtain is about to close on Asia's modern age, when learning from the "West" was insisted upon as an absolute value. In keeping with this, the framework of the "modern period" of Asian art is also being transcended. The advent of a new kind of realism proclaims the start of a new post-modern age in Asia. [·o·]

—



Patrick D. Flores

In the same season elsewhere, Jim Supangkat brought into play the term "postmodern" to characterize some of the works in the 9th Jakarta Biennale [FIG. 1], an act that was met with hostility by artists and intellectuals who were disturbed not only by the word but also by the power of the artist-turned-curator Supangkat to wield it. Certainly, the manner in which the discourse of postmodernity would be asserted caused significant anxiety. In Indonesia, critics asked how an incomplete modernity could have been superseded; and in Fukuoka, how the different art worlds between Japan and Laos could take equivalent turns towards kindred modernity and postmodernity begged to be adequately demonstrated.

The question of modernity is a complicated one, and equally so are the prospects of its end and transcendence by way of a post-ness. Ushiroshoji raised the theme of "realism as an attitude" to discuss this shift; and Supangkat explained that the modernity from which a new kind of art parted was not the modernity of the West. He conceives of modernism in plural terms, that is, multimodernism, and largely thinks of it as an ethical category, more aligned with emancipation and justice, and not necessarily with progress and innovation. It may be worth mentioning that as all this was gathering mileage, the First Asia-Pacific Triennial of

o1 | Ushiroshoji Masahiro, "Realism as an Attitude: Asian Art in the Nineties," *4th Fukuoka Asian Art Show, Fukuoka* "Realism as an Attitude" (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Art Museum), 38.

Contemporary Art opened at the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane in 1993. It heralded a convergence of the art of the region that was nominated as Asia-Pacific and reiterated the polarity of “tradition and change” as the governing dynamic of the enterprise, a self-consciousness of the “past” in the “present” as if modernity did not insist on tradition as a requirement of advancement.

This paper does not seek to exhaust all possible explanations of the translation of postmodernity in a particular milieu. It merely gestures towards certain directions it has taken in Southeast Asia through a specific intervention in the art world that the likes of Jim Supangkat had embodied and through a specific personage that had arisen from the 1970s through the 1990s: the artist-curator. This emergence is most productively viewed in relation to cognate modes of intervention initiated by Third World nation-states during the Cold War, among which was to pursue the project of national identity and cohesion, democracy, and progress within the framework of international free trade and industrialization. There was a fraught relationship between the efforts of artist-curators to configure alternative artscares and of nation-states poised to become modern and credibly international through art, between modernity’s guarantees of development and institutional critique, and in the wake of postcolonial revolutions and variations of nationalism. These instances of intervention generated their own spectacles because of the seemingly intrinsic inclination of nation and art to be visible and manifested, to be continually exposed. This visibility, manifestation, and exposure demanded a heightened level of representation and articulation. In this regard, a specific agency alighted and addressed this worldly desire, one who could produce art and with the same talent and acumen represent and calibrate its language to audiences within the art world and outside it, and one who was shaped by modernity and was exceptionally supplemented by breaching its boundaries.

Supangkat’s practice was a node in the network of similar schemes, ventures that to a substantial degree carved a subjectivity for the curator as a central intelligence and a virtuoso. We identify the trajectories of the careers of Redza Piyadasa in Malaysia, Raymundo Albano in the Philippines, and Apinan Poshyananda in Thailand, who were practicing artists before they curated, or better still, redefined “curation”;



FIG. 1
Exhibition view of the 9th Jakarta
Biennale, 1993–94

Supangkat and Apinan would in the end abandon their artistic calling altogether. In the 7th Gwangju Biennale [FIG.2], I had the good fortune to curate these four figures, with their works, the documentation of their curatorial projects, and the texts that they have written. It was a propitious opportunity for them to be situated within a current biennial system in search of historical contexts and in a larger history of contemporary art that did not necessarily originate in Europe and America though did not overcome the metropolis either. Finally, it was uncanny that the exhibition, titled “Turns in Tropics: Artist-Curator,” was installed beside the “Gordon Matta-Clark Retrospective: You Are the Measure,” organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, sparking a spirited conversation between methods of conceptualism, the production of collective space and community, and responses to internationalism: as Matta-Clark made inroads into structures presumably to be torn down to make way for skyscrapers of glass and steel in Manhattan, artists from Southeast Asia cut into the internationalist language of conceptualism to renovate the foundation of art and culture itself.

At this point, we lay out modalities in the practice of the artist-curator and set off speculations on how they might have refunctioned the logics of making art and confronting social forces:

First is the conceptualist disposition to be reflexive, to be self-conscious about the arbitrariness of language, its meaning and value, and the power to craft a negative critique and finally prefigure a condition in which the plural, the future, the different is possible beyond a range of typifications or typifying regimes: the West, modernity, nation, culture, religion, state, market, the canon. A key mode here would be the installation that is able to take in multiple interests: authenticity, locality, global discourse, ideological urgency. In other words, the artist-curator flourished within this schema because the artistic and the curatorial tended to come together in the installation, or the installative aesthetic. For instance, in making sense of the 1969 intra-ethnic riots between the Malays and the Chinese and the ethnic strain on Malaysian society, Piyadasa did *May 13, 1969* to reflect this predicament: “an upright, life-size coffin, draped with a black band and displaying fragments of the Malaysian flag. It was placed standing on a delicate reflective mirror.” [02] The overinvestment in the fantasy of some

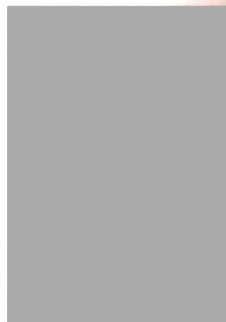


FIG.2
Catalogue cover of the 7th Gwangju Biennale, 2008



FIG.3
Redza Piyadasa, *Seated Malay Woman*, 1991, Singapore Art Museum

02 | Redza Piyadasa, *Masterpieces from the National Art Gallery of Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: National Art Gallery of Malaysia, 2002), 31.

factions to establish a Malaysian national identity centered on the *bumiputra*, or the indigenous polity within an Islamic ecumene, and subsuming the other ethnicities under its mantle, distressed Piyadasa and inspired him later to develop a silkscreen suite called the *Malaysian Series* [FIG.3]:

—

As a non-Malay artist with cosmopolitan inclinations, I could not but feel disturbed by these movements; there were also some liberal Malay artist friends of mine who shared my trepidations. Where was my place and my sense of identity in all of this? What was the future of modern Malaysian art if the open-ended, secularistic underpinnings on which it was founded were to be replaced? What about the multi-cultural realities of the true Malaysian situation? [•03]

—

For his part, Albano, working at Imelda Marcos's Cultural Center of the Philippines as the director of the museum beginning roughly around 1972 when Marcos declared Martial Law until the eve of the uprising against the authoritarian reign, tried to broaden the vocabulary of art by introducing everyday materials as art and contriving a platform for expression that was not accommodated in the market and by the conventional media of realism [FIG.4]. He called his agenda "developmental art," defining it in the context of his government's fast-action programs that were also characterized by the same term: "the building of roads,



FIG.4
Exhibition view of an exhibition curated by Raymundo Albano
at Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), 1970s

population control, or the establishment of security units [...] The implication of a fast-action learning method is similar to that of developmental art.” [04] Albano referred to the Exposure Phase, from 1971 to 1975, in which the “use of sand, junk iron, non-art materials such as raw lumber, rocks, et cetera” was deemed developmental. And, he continued, “people were shocked, scared, delighted, pleased and satisfied even though their preconceived notions of art did not agree with what they encountered.” [05] Albano himself was an artist of ample sympathies: abstract expressionist painting, printmaking, installation, performance, and photography. He also curated an array of exhibitions, from experimental happenings to survey and monographic investigations to diplomatic exchanges that Imelda brought into the country, from French photography to Russian socialist realism. In these two situations exemplified by Piyadasa and Albano, we glean two ways in which the artist-curator mediated the state and its apparatus of nation-building, and we realize how tricky the process was in insinuating the curatorial into the national, which meant both art making and exhibition making. In 2003, Apinan would be appointed Director-General of the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture under the Ministry of Culture, enabling him to parlay funds into contemporary art for ambitious projects like the first Thai Pavilion in Venice in 2003 [FIG.5], among other undertakings that positioned art tangentially with the prevailing neomercantilist program of the telecommunication tycoon Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and surely beyond its pale.

Second is an activist position to ventilate grievance, to express dissent, and propose an alternative. In this undertaking, the artist-curator became a zone of contact. He morphed into a maker of coteries, a coordinator of activities and events, a firebrand and vanguard. Supangkat was a prominent figure of the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia* (Indonesian New Art Movement) from 1974 to 1975 that challenged the protocols of the Indonesian art world and later the depoliticization of art during the Suharto regime; the latter tried to undermine and stigmatize social and political realism in the wake of the Communist purge attending Sukarno’s overthrow in the mid-1960s. His works such as *Ken Dedes* (wife of the Ken Arok, the founder of the Shinghasari Kingdom) [FIG.6], *Kotak X* (Box X), and *Kamar Ibu dan Anak* (The Room of the Mother and the Child) evoked a poetics of

04 | Raymundo Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” *Philippine Art Supplement 2*, no. 4 (1981): 15.

05 | Albano, 15.

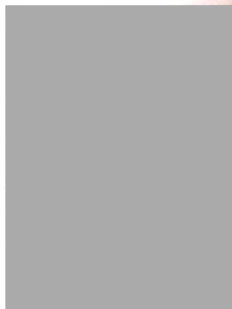


FIG.5
Catalogue cover of the first Thai Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 2003

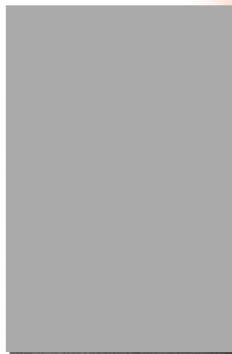


FIG.6
Jim Supangkat, *Ken Dedes*, 1975, Singapore Art Museum

constriction, how tradition in myriad guises—gender, religion, identity—repressed human energy at the same time that it created conditions of defiance through telling juxtapositions of, for instance, a 19th century princess and a half-naked modern-day woman. But while it was Supangkat who was the subjectivity of protest, Albano represented an institution that was the object of contestation from a surging movement that opposed the government of Ferdinand Marcos, as well as its elitist policy on culture that promoted internationalism and shunned overt social commentary. When the Cultural Center of the Philippines was opened by California Governor Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy in 1969, David Cortez Medalla, the avant-garde Filipino artist who would shortly attract a following in Europe, staged an impromptu performance of indignation.

Third is the capacity to produce knowledge and to disseminate it in public discussions and in writing that circulates in the popular press, art-world publications, and specialized academic journals. Here, the language of choice would be English, making the artist-curator decisively bilingual and accessible to a foreign audience. This textual and discursive production was salient because the artist-curator ultimately became an art critic and art historian and theorist as well. The essays and books of Piyadasa, Supangkat, and Apinan remain as the most referenced sources of Malaysian, Indonesian, and Thai modern art; and their curatorial introductions to exhibitions have served as measure of the length and breadth of the domain of their respective art worlds. The artist-curator did not only make art; he curated it and historicized it. It was in this milieu that the artist-curator became an ideal interlocutor in the script of an increasingly inclusive narrative of world art and global art history.

These modalities carve out the artist-curator as polytropic, mutating into multiple personas and carrying out overlapping responsibilities. This has implications in relation to the formation of a democratic habitus in which an emancipatory agency is ascendant and a liberal or socialist attitude towards renewal or amelioration is assured by the very curatorial ethic of creating what the philosopher Hannah Arendt calls the “space of appearance,” or a public sphere, or Giorgio Agamben’s “coming community.” The legacy of this order of things has been lasting as current and solvent curators in Southeast Asia have become charismatic

wunderkinds of sorts: intellectual, provocateur, organizer, polemicist, mediator, bureaucrat, ideologue, ethnographer, translator, harbinger, gatekeeper, innovator, networker, catalyst, platform maker, discoverer, impresario, and so on.

From this cursory survey of the four artist-curators, [•06] we may offer some reflections on the discourse of postmodernity in Southeast Asia by posing four questions:

First: Was the postmodern a postcolonial political expression, largely a critique of Western universalism and a desire for equivalent modernities through a series of conversions within the discourse of modernity itself and vernacular understandings of it? Supangkat offers the concept of *kagunan* as a key to a construal of modernity:

—
The definition of *kagunan* set out nobility of character (in the moral sense) as the basis of sensibility [...] (1) cleverness (2) beneficial activity (3) the pouring out of intelligence/sensibility related to nobility of character, which produces the aesthetic/beauty as in a drawing or in a sculpture, musical composition and lyrics for songs. [•07]

—
Corollarily, as a contrarian impulse against the West, Supangkat curated in 1995 an exhibition titled *Contemporary Art of the Non-Aligned Countries: Unity in Diversity in International Art* commemorating the first meeting of the non-aligned movement in Bandung in 1955, stressing the viability of an alliance against the dominant axis in both geopolitics and art. In the same register, Piyadasa foregrounds a non-Western perception of reality, and characterizes it as mystical, mental, and meditative:

—
We are trying to force upon the viewer a consciousness that he is himself the result of a series of processes. The “objects” that we have chosen to display therefore encompass fragments of actual events. Any attempt to view them as essentially “physical” forms can only result in limiting oneself to an essentially “western-centric” view of reality that is founded on “Spatio-tempora/Sensorial” considerations. [•08]

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In this regard, Apinan’s practice is exemplary: an art historian with a doctorate from Cornell University, he did metacommentaries on the modernity of art and its institutionalization through ground-breaking

06 | For elaboration, see the catalogue of the 7th Gwangju Biennale titled *Annual Report* and Patrick D. Flores’s *Past Periphera: Curation in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Museum, 2008).

07 | Jim Supangkat, “The Emergence of Indonesian Modern Art,” Ushiroshoji Masahiro and Rawanchaikul Toshiko, eds., *The Birth of Modern Art in Southeast Asia: Artists and Movements* (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Art Museum et al, 1997), 228.

08 | Redza Piyadasa, *Towards a Mystical Reality: A Documentation of Jointly Initiated Experiences by Redza Piyadasa and Suleiman Esa* (Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Seni Negara, 1974), 21.

experimental video installations in the mid-1980s in Bangkok, with works like *How to Explain Art to a Bangkok Cock* (1985) and *Blue Laughter* (1987)^[FIG.7], and eventually became the first Southeast Asian curator to achieve cross-cultural reputation and to curate transnational artists of stellar status outside his nation and the Kingdom.

Second: Was the postmodern a post-avant-garde confirmation of the failure of art to be identical with the everyday, but one that was productive, as Supangkat would hint at, because it displaced the primacy of the aesthetic and valorized the cultural? He argues that the swerve towards culture would reclaim art as quotidian and common though not in the name of assimilation and not at the expense of the aestheticizing valence, the better for art to retain its reflexive, self-conscious, and thus, politicized character. Apinan formulates the phrase “tradition/tension” to remark on the confounding constitution of identity that is founded on “tradition,” prompting him to reconsider the “neotraditional” aesthetic in Thai modernity, which draws on the mural painting as its basic instinct, as a neoconservative ideology of which someone like Montien Boonma might have steered clear:

—

For various reasons, neotraditional artists attracted enormous attention, and as neotraditional Thai art garnered institutional recognition through prizes and financial rewards, it became closely associated with economic and political power [...]. Both producers and sponsors are oriented toward defending the concept of Thai-ness, claiming to be patriots who recognize the importance of the function of art as a vehicle of national consciousness. [•09]

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FIG.7
Apinan Poshyananda,
Blue Laughter, 1987,
Collection of the Artist

In the same indigenizing or provincializing vein, Albano wrote a seminal essay on installation in which he grounds the form in a native clearing.

—
If one were to consider a medium's intimacy to folk patterns, installations are natural-born as against the alien intrusion of a two-dimensional western object like a painting [...] It may be that our innate sense of space is not a static perception of flatness but an experience of mobility, performance, body-participation, physical relation at its most cohesive form. Thus installation is akin to fiestas and folk rituals, from all our ethnic groups. [·10]

—
In this scenario, "culture" is appropriated as both critical distance from a hegemonic norm and as instrument of the mystification of the people and their life world. This propensity, or as Michel Foucault would say, the indignity of speaking for others, is not without its peril. Kwame Anthony Appiah, in asking if the "post" in postmodernism is the "post" in postcolonial, conjures the specter of intellectuals and artists becoming "otherness machines," with the "manufacture of alterity" as their vocation, and so sustaining the orientalist paradigm and what Okwui Enwezor would call the "anthropology of the far." [·11]

Third: Was the postmodern a rupture of the modern and the origin of the contemporary, a gap crossed by the artist-curator who has declared himself independent? Or did it ensure the continuity of the modern in light of the persistence of the political economy underlying the production of art and culture in the present, validated by a biennial system of a primarily Euro-American curatorium. John Clark would warn us to be more circumspect in taking up this debate, suspecting that it might "involve an acceptance of a type of transfer of cultural capital to Euramerica almost on the terms that now govern economic exchanges." [·12] Does the postmodern then ratify the notion that the global is the only universal there is?

Fourth: Was the postmodern an encompassing condition of breakdown and collapse? If so, how did it feed into the improvisational and tactical structures of art worlds in Southeast Asia in which a modernist infrastructure could not be fully developed? This question inevitably takes us to the afterlife of curators in Southeast Asia, who have been increasingly drawn in various capacities, from native informants to

10 | Albano, *Philippine Art Supplement 2*, no. 1 (1981): 3.

11 | Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 2 (1981): 356.

12 | John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1998), 290.

pavilion commissioners, into the state and the market, the biennials and auction houses, in the atmosphere of either makeshift systems of artworld making or regulated mechanisms of gargantuan global exhibitions at the moment of neoliberalism's decadence and decline. In this arena, the hybrid artist-curator rises and falls, enters and exits as a trickster figure, tossing around ruses for things to happen, getting away and getting caught, treading on the edge of the ethical and the exotic, of what must be done right and what must be accepted as potentially incomprehensible and therefore worth the act and the artifice of curation.

Chinese Contemporary Art In Between the Global and the Local

Fan Di'an

Director, National Art Museum of China

When confronted with “contemporary art” many people experience a sense of thrill and, at times, a sense of confusion. The thrill arises when the artist manages to harness their individual creativity and keen sense of reality to produce works that are completely unexpected. Such works possess the power to break down our traditional aesthetic concepts, undermine conventional ways of thinking and create new forms of culture. Feelings of confusion result when one tries to imagine how difficult it would be to comprehend the fundamental characteristics of such dynamic contemporary art.

Much artistic international exchange is taking place these days. Almost without time lag the contemporary art of one country is appreciated around the world, and this tendency towards instantaneous global appreciation is becoming stronger. In Asia, the first 50 years of the 20th century saw each country influenced greatly by Western modernist art. The development of Asian countries' own arts occurred under the influence of that movement. In the second half of the 20th century, though, the modernization of Asian countries paved the way for Asian art more closely tied to local societies, politics and cultures. Asian art began to possess qualities related not only to “modern-ness,” but to “contemporary-ness” too. These days, economic globalism proceeds with ever-growing speed. I think something needs to happen to prevent further “cultural globalization.” Especially in the context of Asian countries, which each possess unique cultural traditions, we can not let local cultural traditions be discarded in exchange for the acquisition of “contemporary-ness,” or what you might call the trappings of contemporary society. That is to say, contemporary art is not only valuable in a global context. It is worth fostering for the good of local cultures, too. In the same way, I think the viewing, analysis and interpretation of a country's contemporary art should start with the present reality of that particular society and culture. That is to say,



Fan Di'an

contemporary art must be analyzed on the basis of each country's relation to the world; a logical and fair value judgment can only be made with reference to this.

Chinese contemporary art is a phenomenon that was born within a giant nation. Not only is it extremely vibrant, but it is extremely complex. I always say that the appreciation and analysis of Chinese contemporary art is something that should be done from both the inside and outside. I think that only by mixing both of these perspectives is it possible for a verdict to approach the truth. This year marks 30 years since economic reforms were implemented in China. As is well known, since the opening of relations with other countries, Chinese society has undergone radical changes, and Chinese art is considered an important visual indicator that mark these changes. In fact, the single most important characteristic of Chinese art these 30 years has been this very dynamic process of change. Chinese art can not be categorized as belonging to any single artistic phenomenon.

I would like to look back at the three periods that have constituted these 30 years of Chinese contemporary art. In the first 10 years after the economic reforms, in other words, the 1980s, Chinese art broke down the consolidated art scene that had developed under the planned economic system instituted (with the establishment of the country) in 1949. Those artistic changes were propelled by the movement to liberate cultural ideological thought (the movement Deng Xiaoping launched in 1978 to clear away the legacies of the Cultural Revolution). Young artists began imitating Western modernism and developing various schools of art. The Chinese art world at this time was, generally speaking, working towards the liberation of art, individual expression and a revolution in artistic forms. The marks left by Western modernism during this time still run deep today. But the most valuable thing gained from this period was not achieved in the artworks themselves, but in the realms of thought.

Upon entering the 1990s, Chinese art encountered the Western cultural theory of "postmodernism." The most conspicuous characteristic of postmodernism was that it brought with it a way of thinking that said art does not end with revolutions in form, but is something capable of directly reflecting social realities. Chinese art in the 1990s expressed the contradictions between spirit and reality that had emerged during the early stages of the market economy, but in so doing the young artists

headed in two different directions. The first group of artists depicted the reality of their own lives and surroundings, thus reverting to an individual realism, while the second depicted historical political memories, using symbolist methods to criticize the system. Further, in the 1990s, the links between Chinese art and the art of the world became much closer, and hence the speed with which postmodernist ideas were able to penetrate the country accelerated.

In the 21st century, Chinese art entered a new age altogether. The cultural context of the present time is the collision and discord between globalism and local culture. In the midst of the tension born between these two powers, Chinese artists naturally began addressing the new themes that globalism brought with it, but those themes themselves were deeply connected with the reality in China. There are three points that I would like to discuss in relation to this.

The first is their view of reality within the context of rapid urbanization. As with Japan in the 1970s and 1980s, urbanization has been the chief indicator of societal development in China over the last 10 years. The response of artists to urbanization is one of the most conspicuous characteristics of Chinese contemporary art. For example, we have seen works of art that document and express transformations in the urban landscape, changes in human life resulting from social environments and connections between the self and the external world.

The second is the application of new media. Young artists began experimenting with various new media very early on. This has led not only to a diversification of artistic media, but to the birth of new artistic forms and the emergence of complex media languages and hybrid artistic forms.

The third is the application of traditional Chinese thought and concepts. Much of Chinese traditional culture belongs to the Eastern system of thought, and it includes also a particular world view and an understanding of materials. For artists these are not merely concepts, but artistic languages and techniques for artistic expression. They are also a means for a return from the global to the local and a new method for taking local issues to a global level.

These are the three primary characteristics of Chinese contemporary art, and they not only possess the attributes of the contemporary ("contemporary-ness," as I labeled it earlier), but of Chinese-ness, too.

Nevertheless, understanding of the changes occurring in Chinese art is insufficient among a number of curators, museums, commercial galleries and collectors overseas, who tend to focus simply on its ideological aspects. For that reason, the Chinese contemporary art that actually reaches a global audience is often limited to that which utilizes symbols or icons to convey political messages. This in turn led to the situation whereby some artists have been encouraged to make works purely to meet the needs of the international market. I believe that the ideological aspect is extremely limited and that exhibitions based on that aspect of Chinese contemporary art are in fact distanced from the reality and work of Chinese artists today. I do not think such exhibitions amount to meaningful artistic exchange between Chinese art and the world.

The Chinese art world is now aware of the situation involving symbolic and politicized art, and, through various types of exhibitions, is trying to highlight the true characteristics of Chinese art today. Let's look at some examples from this year. In Beijing, at the National Art Museum of China, to which I belong, a large-scale exhibition of media art, "SYNTHETIC TIMES—Media Art in China 2008" was held. In Shanghai, at the long-running Shanghai Biennale, cultural issues associated with urbanization are being explored. Meanwhile, the theme of this year's Guangzhou Triennale, held by the Guangdong Museum of Art, was "Farewell to Post-Colonialism" and it attempted to determine the possibilities for transcending the cultural ideology of postcolonialism. To finish up, I would like to introduce two exhibitions that the National Art Museum of China held this year in Germany.

The first was "Chinese Garden for Living: Illusion to Reality" at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. The Chinese garden constitutes an important part of Chinese traditional culture. Yet the development of cities in China is resulting in the rupture of connections with nature. In this exhibition attempts were made to transfer and apply the concepts and legacies of the traditional Chinese garden to contemporary architecture, painting and design. The show was also an exploration of the connections between humans in an urbanized environment and the greater world. For example, participant artist Xu Bing wrote a poem in the Tang style using characters combining the Chinese and English alphabets and then made a path out of those characters [FIG.1]. Lu

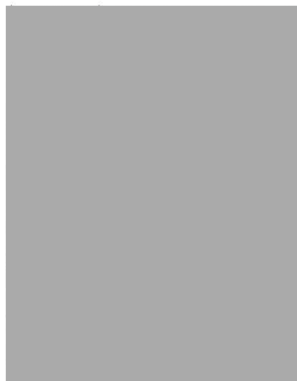


FIG.1 (left)

Xu Bing, *Ren Shen Dao Chu Zhi He Si*,
Installation view at Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 2008

FIG.2 (right)

Lu Shengzhong, *Landscape Studies*,
Installation view at Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 2008

Shengzhong created a *shan-shui* mountainous landscape on the spines of books lined on a bookshelf [FIG.2]. Visitors to the exhibition were able to remove the books from the shelves as they pleased. As they didn't necessarily return them to their original positions, the picture on the spines was gradually transformed. There was also an artwork that at first glance resembled a *shan-shui* landscape but was in fact a photograph of an urban construction site [FIG.3] and a work that expressed the similarities between the human body and the forms of nature [FIG.4]. There were other works that used the symbols of the Chinese garden in decorations, too [FIG.5].

The other exhibition was "Transforming Marks of Ink," which was held at Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and other venues.

It goes without saying that it would be a terrible shame were the *shan-shui* landscape tradition to be lost. However, as with *nihon-ga* in Japan, I

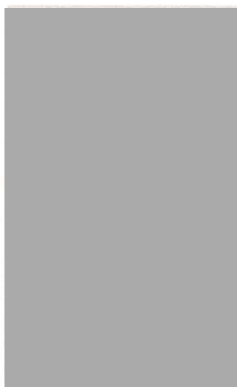
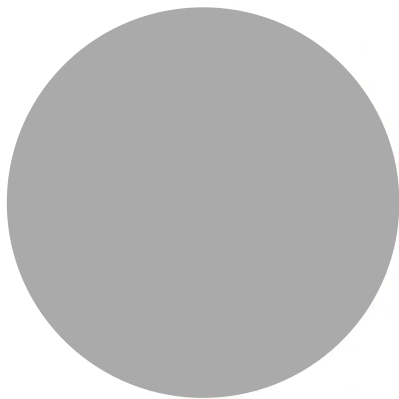


FIG.3 (left)

Yao Lu, *Xing Chun Gu Du*, 2006

FIG.4 (right)

Liu Wei, *Landscape*, 2004



FIG.5

Wu Haiyang, *Tian Xia He Fang*,
2006



FIG.6

Exhibition view of "Transforming
Marks of Ink," Staatliche Museen zu
Berlin, 2008

think for the *shan-shui* to maintain its cultural relevancy and be reborn as "contemporary art" it is essential that it acquire a new form and new approach to the expression of reality. In this exhibition the very act of exhibiting Eastern ink painting in historical Western museums presented a big challenge in terms of the exhibition design. The exhibition sought to show that Chinese artists are making ink paintings in many various ways. It also adopted a very contemporary method of exhibiting the works. For example, two *shan-shui* paintings were exhibited so as to form a *shan-shui* (or natural) environment, and there were also works that created different *shan-shui* landscapes by exhibition as installations [FIG.6]. There were large-scale paintings, too. Traditional arts exist in every country of Asia, and the task of saving them from extinction in the current global circumstances has become critical. However, traditional art forms must adapt if they are to survive. The two exhibitions I have discussed are but points of reference for discussion of the space between globalism and local culture that art inhabits today. It is in this "space between" that the most fertile soil for Asian contemporary art lies, and I think it is very meaningful that discussion on this issue takes place.

Original text in Chinese

Translated from Japanese into English by Edan Corkill

Discussion

Hayashi Michio | Moderator (MC)

Kajiya Kenji + **Patrick D. Flores** + **Fan Di'an**

Kuroda Raiji | Commentator

MC | We shall now start the discussion. But, first, I would like to invite Mr. Kuroda Raiji to comment on the presentations. We can follow up on his comment in our discussion later. I will try to also leave time for questions and answers, so I hope that many questions will be raised from the floor.

Mr. Kuroda, please.

Kuroda | Hello. My name is Kuroda Raiji and I work for the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. Since today's presentations were very rich in content, I will not have enough time to present all my thoughts and comment in response, so I would like to focus on the four points that I have already laid out in the handout booklet. I would like to particularly focus on the first point mentioned.

Two years ago, I had an unusual opportunity to go to Sweden and visit Stockholm. Since it was one of the rare opportunities for me to visit such a place for business, I decided to ask people living in Stockholm, where they thought was the beginning of Asia. One of them answered, "It's anything beyond the Finnish border." I instantly wanted to object and point out "Hey, that's too vast." Well, this episode exemplifies a case in which Asia's image changes depending on who talks about it to whom. Today's three presentations discussed the discourses on Asia in Japan, Southeast Asia, and China, but I think we should have had someone to discuss South Asian perspective. There is "Chalo! India" exhibition that opened at Mori Art Museum just yesterday, and the Japan Foundation Asia Center organized the exhibition, "Private Mythology: Contemporary Art from India," ten years ago. When we talk about Asia in Japan, we tend to focus on the discussion in the contexts of East Asia and Southeast Asia. But India or South Asia should not be ruled out. So if anybody could make contributions in this area, I welcome them and

hope to hear from them later.

First of all, Professor Kajiya's presentation was brilliant, but I would like to point to one issue that he missed but one that, I feel, needs mentioning. This is not to say that Professor Kajiya had not considered it, because he probably has. But I would say that it was more urgent back then than now; that is, the issue of tradition.

For the 3rd Asian Art Show, Fukuoka at Fukuoka Art Museum (1989), under the theme "Symbolic Visions in Contemporary Asian Life," Ushiroshoji Masahiro proposed to select contemporary artworks that referenced traditional arts and culture. Professor Patrick Flores had touched on dealing with tradition in his presentation. As mentioned as the third point in my comment paper, I consider installation as a style that has been applied in the Philippines as something that not only incorporates socio-political elements, but also applies a range of traditional cultures. It is particularly so, when it makes references to the traditional rituals and festivals, including the traditions of live performances and three dimensional spaces. This is because installation and its style have the advantage of being able to integrate these elements. Since I wanted to remind you about the issue of tradition, I was glad that Mr. Fan Di'an was able to pertinently ascertain the contemporary aspects of traditional arts and culture.

Next, we face the issues of modernism and postmodernism. How is modernism to be defined? To put it rather simply, modernism is about a unilateral take on the progressive view of history. In comparison, postmodernism, again roughly put, does not only resist a unilateral take on its progressive view of history, but also resists the attitude that pursues ideas that are novel. It asserts that the past, as well as tradition, continues to subsist in the contemporary times.

If postmodernism were understood as such, tradition, inevitably, becomes an open reference point. And perhaps, the same understanding could be applied to architecture. As obvious as it may be, when we used to discuss the uniqueness in Asian art, turning to the issue of "tradition and contemporary" was the modus operandi. Not that Mr. Fan's assurance and emphasis on this point encourages me to say so, but I would like to point out that the issue of "tradition and contemporary" is certainly not an old problem. It is still an important problem and

qualifies to be closely examined.

There is another point I would like to make. Professor Kajiya's presentation, roughly summarized, discusses the shift from a kind of essentialist and collective perspective on Asian art to a more individual, as well as a diversified and leveled one. This shift is a turning point for the way we discuss the matter, because a transcendent mediator would not have any role to play in this context. I think he is precise in his observation.

But then, on the other hand as Professor Kajiya pointed out, nations have competed to win the hegemony over Asian art. Apinan Poshyananda had once alluded to this during a conference in Japan.

In fact, I am very doubtful as to whether or not we could legitimize such discussion on the super-hierarchy. For example, when we take a look at the Asian Art Museum Directors Forum, which was held in Tokyo this week, the first one was held in China at the National Art Museum of China, hosted by its director, Mr. Fan Di'an, and the second one in Singapore at the Singapore Art Museum, hosted by its director, Mr. Kwok Kian Chow. Following this year's conference in Tokyo, it will be held in Korea next year and India in the following year. It looks as if the nations are taking turns, raising their hands because their neighbors are raising theirs.

But having had some years of experience in dealing with Asia, I know that the standards are set by those artworks that circulate internationally. Yet, in reality, there are artists in Asia who still do not have the freedom of expression, access to financial resources, exhibition spaces, supporting audiences, storages for maintenance, or any form of supportive media. Despite such adverse environment, they continue to find ways to express themselves. I am specifically referring to countries like Vietnam and Myanmar here. In short, there is disparity in power among the countries in Asia.^[101] Although such disparity have always existed, there is a new twist now because, it is not only until recently that a very few but some artists have been able to achieve an exceptionally successful career in the international art world. For example, Subodh Gupta, who will be discussed in tomorrow's presentation, has been hailed as "The Damien Hirst of Delhi" on the cover of the English magazine *Art Review*. There are artists like Gupta on the one hand, and many others who are not

01 | The Asian Art Museum Directors Forum is being hosted by those countries that have power. [Kuroda]

02 | From Tanigawa Gan's
"Kosaku-sha no Shitai ni Moeru
mono [The Bud that Shoots from
the Corpse of the Manipulator],"
Bungaku, June 1958.

granted the same level of success. So information and resources do travel through horizontal communication channel, but since there are several layers that cover the different parts of the region, the circulation tends to stay in one specific layer and does not vertically cross over the different layers. Mr. Fan pointed out that the way Chinese art is understood by the world outside China is different from the way it is understood inside the country. The system that supports artworks to circulate internationally does that necessarily match the one that supports the local production and distribution of artworks.

Professor Flores has suggested a name that is interesting and cynical, but also poetic, to describe the role of the curator: curator as a trickster. Actually, curators have to take on such a role. If you allow me to jump into a different context, I would like to refer to a well-known idea of *kosaku-sha* (manipulator), introduced by the critic/poet Tanigawa Gan in 1958. According to him, a manipulator is "an indomitable intellectual toward the mass on the one hand, and a critical mass toward the intellectuals, on the other." [-02] He goes on to say that a manipulator has a dual mission akin to a *nue* (an imaginary creature that appears in Japanese legends known for its feature that combines different animal parts). Curators today must play a role like a "manipulator" and commit to working with the gap that exists in the system; the gap may exist between the international art and local art, or between the intellectuals and the mass.

As informed by the title of the symposium "Count 10 Before You Say Asia," Professor Hayashi suggested that we take as much time as possible to count down the numbers. His suggestion, in conclusion, forces us to think about the gap between the international and the local, the gap within the local, and other gaps that exemplify the problems prevalent in Asia. The problems will remain unresolved as long as the gaps remain. So, I have pointed to two issues, one on tradition and the other on the gaps that exist in and outside of Asia. In addition, I feel that it is necessary for me to touch on the issue of the art market, because the outrageous inflation of the prices also reveals the issue of Asian-ness. This issue could be discussed in the same way that we discuss to whom and to what are we presenting our views on Asia. But in this context, it is not only about to whom Asian artists are creating works or we are appealing Asian art, but it is also about identifying "who" is buying

“which works” from Asia. The popular works are probably those that carry qualities that signify Chinese-ness, Philippine-ness, or Japanese-ness. I imagine that such qualities add value to turn the works into popular commodities. So, we should not limit ourselves to discussing the values of Asian-ness only in historical and political contexts. We should also look at them in the contexts of commodification and marketability.

MC | Thank you for your comment. I think Mr. Kuroda’s comment was unique, based on the long years of experiences of being involved in the arts in Asia. He pointed to various issues, but particularly, on the issues on tradition and modernity, and also on the gap inside and outside of Asia. I would like to comment on these issues myself and then invite others to join in.

I agree that the issue concerning tradition and the modernity remains to be a fresh topic for discussion today. I also agree to the observation of the role of the curator as trickster, who works in the gap between the inside and the outside. But when we discuss these issues, it is very important to discuss at what level we are identifying the units of culture.

The most problematic issue of the term “multiculturalism” is the fact that it includes the word “culture.” For while using the term “multiple,” we lose the opportunity to question the supposed unity of each culture. The culture is imagined either as “mono-” or “multi-.” In other words, the insensibility of the word “multiculturalism” assumes that the arts could be grouped by nations, and described as, for example, Chinese, Japanese, or Filipino. So, when we discuss the inside as opposed to the outside, we must first ask whether or not we could readily resort to the easy categorization by nations. [03] By understanding that culture is something established by different collectives existing at different levels, we realize that talking about art as being Chinese or Japanese, inhibits or suppresses the discussion on various cultures “within” that culture.

Finally, in addressing the issue of the art market, raised by Mr. Kuroda, if the national label, as in Chinese-ness or Japanese-ness, or a label such as Asian-ness adds some surplus value in marketing art as product, people would incorporate it as much as possible. That would certainly allow the concept of nation, region, and Asia to be perceived as singular,

03 | When multiculturalism is applied to a national cultural policy, a similar problem arises. Without any deliberation, the cultures within a country are grouped by ethnic groups. The problem of the multiplicity inside each ethnic culture tends to be neglected. [Hayashi]

unified, and flat. Hence, the pressure to make the products successful may accelerate the speed of reducing the cultures of nations or regions to overly simplified units.

I would like to now hear from others. Professor Kajiya presented a hopeful view of Asia, where the horizontal peer-to-peer communication is developing, and where a democratic system is emerging to support the production and distribution of the artworks in Asia. Mr. Kuroda agreed to half of what Professor Kajiya presented, but he also reminded us that there is a competition of power within the vertical hierarchical system. If so, the question of who dictates the hierarchy also has to be considered. But first, I would like to ask Professor Kajiya to respond.

I also found Professor Flores' observation on the installation very interesting. I understood that Piyadasa of Malaysia and Albano of the Philippines both worked with installations, but in extremely different and opposite ways. So, I would like Professor Flores to elaborate on this matter and introduce to us in what ways installation functioned for these artists. Professor Kajiya touched on how there was once a discourse on Asia that qualified installation as something Asian and how it was once convincing and accepted as postmodern. So, in relation to this kind of discourse, installation and its function are matters that demands closer examination.

Furthermore, in relation to the global art market, the position of Chinese contemporary art is something that calls for attention. Mr. Fan introduced artworks by those artists who work with the contemporary method of Chinese traditional ink painting. It was presented as a process that negotiates with the global market trend. I wonder if those artists are strategic and self-conscious in employing such style as a sign of Chinese-ness to add market value to their works. I also wonder if some are conscious that these elements could strategically help them to productively betray the expectations from the global market. Since artists and curators are required to take a strategic attitude when presenting themselves outside their local context, I wonder what the process of negotiation could be.

Kajiya | Thank you. I would like to respond to the issue on tradition and the horizontal communication channel pointed out by Mr. Kuroda.

First of all, my presentation was based on analyzing the discourses related to Asian art. Discourse analysis is not just about reviewing what had been said at a particular moment. It is essentially about identifying the fields that made the discursive exercise possible. This method follows Michel Foucault's theory described in *Archaeology of Knowledge*.

In the 1980s, the word Asia had centripetal effect on the discourse of the time. That is how the discussion started. By the 1990s, concepts to counter Western modernism such as Asia, as well as contemporary or premodern emerged and established two opposing values.

Western/modern values were set on one side, different values that exemplified something non-Western or not modern gained currency. As mentioned by Mr. Kuroda, the issue of tradition surfaced in the early 1990s, when these new ideas were developing.

With regards to the description of horizontal communication, I originally used the term "peer-to-peer communication," but modified it before my actual presentation, because Mr. Kuroda had pointed out that the term was not clear enough. Peer-to-peer, as some of you who are familiar with computer language may know, is a term that is used in describing a network protocol, in which the client computers communicate to each other without going through the centrally-controlled server. For example, the file-exchange software Winny works in a peer-to-peer communication network. By using this term, I meant to describe a type of communication that does not look to transcendent values. Of course, gaps exist between countries and cultures, but the West or modernism's role to mediate those gaps seems to be diminishing. So, when I talked about horizontal communication, I did not mean to rule out the fact that the gaps continue to exist.

MC | Thank you. We should take a look at each issue more closely. I wonder if that is true that there is no mediating agent in the peer-to-peer communication model. What about the market? We need to come back to this issue later. But let me turn to Professor Flores. Do you have any thoughts on the installation issue?

Flores | I can answer the question by locating installation as form in three contexts, at least in terms of its practice in Southeast Asia.

The first context would be the conceptualist language, conceptualism as a movement not only in Europe and America but I think it was a global movement, as was proposed by the exhibition entitled "Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s," that was held in 1999–2000 at the Queens Museum of Art in New York, with Okwui Enwezor involved as one of the international co-curators. So, the conceptualist language in Southeast Asia could be seen in that context, as part of the history of modernism as an advance beyond high modernism. That's one context.

Second context would be the ability of installation to reference the local, local culture, everyday life and indigenous resources available to the artists. And it was not only the local that it was able to reference, but also the urgent. So, installation was able to politicize expression as can be seen in the works of the Piyadasa and Supangkat. They were able to respond to certain social situations in the most cogent and urgent manner through installation. And sometimes it could be very immediate, as could be seen in the response of Piyadasa to the 1969 inter-ethnic riots in Malaysia.

As part of a certain agenda of representation, it is able to represent a certain culture. And it would be interesting, for instance, to know from Caroline Turner, installation was also a prominent form in terms of the works that were represented at the First Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art. So this might have something to do with, on the one hand, representation, and also on the theme of the Triennial, which was "Tradition and Change." So that could have something to do with that theme.

And then, finally, it could also be seen as part of a curatorial impulse on the part of artist-curators, the ability of installation to produce a space, an environment and, inevitably, a public sphere. So this was an extension of their conceptualist practice, but at the same time, the origin of a curatorial direction.

So, in conclusion, the installation was an index of the contemporary on the one hand, but it was actually not seen as foreign; it was seen as something intrinsic and, therefore, authentic to the culture. This would be expressed most forcefully by Raymundo Albano, who would see it as part of a culture of the folk and of rituals in society. Of course, that is

also a problematic formulation, but it was expressed by Albano.

MC | Thank you. By the way, there is something that I did not understand in your presentation; that is, your evaluation of Albano's installation. Did you mean that installations, in the case of Albano, could be exploited as an ideology-manipulating model that harmoniously combine the local symbols and "authentic" national images in the same space? If so, would the installation not only refer to the daily life of the local environment, but also to the national ideology that enables manipulation?

Flores | It could refer both to the local and also to the progress in terms of the development of artistic language. And this dovetailed pretty well with the policy of the Marcos government in terms of culture, that Philippine culture was traditional and had a civilization and, at the same time, progressive and international. So that was what the Cultural Center of the Philippines was all about.

MC | In the context of postmodernism, installation functioned to open up the field of artistic production from modernist reduction to pure form to referentiality, that is, to the desire to incorporate the local lifestyles and contexts. It used mixed media to visualize and document the lives of the locals at multiple levels. As Professor Flores pointed out, while it was a useful media that embodied a certain kind of reality, its role remains ambiguous. As in the case of Albano, it could manipulate and endorse a certain image asserted by ideologically constructed communities such as the nation state.

To expand our discussion further, I would like to throw in the topic of realism. Professor Flores had touched on realism, and Professor Kajiya also referred to "realism as an attitude," a phrase originally proposed by Ushiroshoji Masahiro. In the 1990s, the individuals and their realities were emphasized in the contexts of Asian postmodernism and Asian contemporary art. How was realism related to the artworks, and what was the position of the individuals? We should consider these issues next, because it would involve the problem of the global market, too. So I am throwing in this topic to be discussed in details later.

I would like to ask Mr. Fan about the Chinese-ness in Chinese art. How does this quality affect the way Chinese art is presented in the global context? Could you comment please?

Fan | As Mr. Kuroda pointed out, I agree that the commentaries made by the three presentations have many commonalities.

I would be very interested in exchanging ideas on how realism, as a powerful expression, could exert its effectiveness in contemporary art. But I will not touch on that now, because the question is on the Chinese art market. The way it is attracting a lot of attention, it is inevitable that it becomes the focus of our discussion.

The art market and, particularly, the prices of the artworks are important factors that affect the contemporary art today, and this is especially true for the Chinese artists. Since China entered the market economy only a short while ago, the market price functions as an index that directly measures the success of the artist.

I think we should examine this problem from two sides. For the last 100 years, the presence of the Chinese art market was nearly nil in the international art scene, and nobody was interested in the artworks from China. By the 1970s, there were Japanese artists who had succeeded in attracting the attention of the international and domestic market. But unlike the Japanese, Chinese artists did not attract any attention from the beginning to the middle of the 20th century. But eventually, the world started to turn their eyes to China and now China has a place in the agenda. So now, young Chinese artists have a market, and this fact has introduced a new concept to their art.

But, many artists are being spoiled by the market and its price. Many of them do not have artworks in stock in their studio, and are working hard to meet the demands. So they would be working on pieces now so that they can meet their commitment to delivery next year or the following year. From this point of view, I would say that the current economic crisis is actually welcoming. In other words, the crisis will force the Chinese artists to get back basics, back to their genuine interest in art and creativity.

MC | Thank you. Could I verify something? You said that the artists may

recover their genuine interest in art because of the impact of the current economical crisis. So are you implying that many commercially successful artists are now producing hand-to-mouth, while consciously incorporating marketable symbols and other elements to respond to the market's demand for Chinese-ness?

Fan | I think you have summarized what I exactly wanted to say. Yes, that is my point. And this phenomenon is not only seen in China. It is common in many other countries in Asia.

As Mr. Kuroda mentioned, we as critics and curators must pay attention to those artists who are presently overlooked.

MC | Mr. Kuroda, do you have anything to say?

Kuroda | I wonder how the issue of realism relates to the discussion on the concept of Asia we are discussing in this session.

MC | Related to the concept of Asia, and keeping in mind what Ushiroshoji Masahiro calls "realism as an attitude," I see the individual as an issue. The discourse concerning the individual is, as Professor Kajiya pointed out, something that emerged to oppose the kind of essentialism, or a view that tries to draw together commonalities among the disparate cultures in Asia in the 1980s. The discourse contends to focus on the role for the individual. And I wonder what "realism" means in the context of the assertion of individuality? This is what I wanted to verify.

In the discussion, we tend to take for granted the concept of the "individual" as naturally given. But, my feeling is a bit different. This may be broadening the context too much, but I feel that the issue can also be related to the current crisis of the financial market. The arts of the modern times and their freedom of expression have always been related to the idea of the individual. On the other hand, modernity, as in the theory of Max Webber, would be the period in history when bureaucratic rationale was dominant. For Marx it would be the "economy" as base-structure which dominated the "system." So in the traditional thinking about modernity, an efficient and rational (universal and anonymous) "system" has always been there as a dominant trope, but on

the other hand, as if to counter-balance it, art has always been associated with the individual. The arts have been discussed more or less within this paradigm of individual versus the system. I think we have inherited this paradigm. The reason I mention this is because I see a deep irony in this whole structure.

Asserting the identity of the individual and listening to the political voice of the individual are exactly what modernity as a system aspired for. In that sense, individualism is essentially the product of modernity. The dichotomic structure of the individual versus the system probably is also its outcome. So, before challenging modernity as a system, we need to ask if the concept of the individual can be the reliable foundation of that challenge.

For example, let's say that we try to create a kind of public domain, similar to Hannah Arendt's "space of appearance" as described in Professor Flores' presentation. Arendt, roughly speaking, does not take the individual for granted. She first posits the existence of the other, and the other is what enables the individual to be by receiving it. In this case, "appearance" of the individual depends on the fundamental "exposure" before her/his establishment.

So, a statement or an expression of an individual is always "pre-occupied" by the other. Individuals expose themselves in the sense that their meaning is always already in the space of misunderstanding. Therefore, by enduring the space loaded with this possibility of misunderstanding or miscommunication, they would be able to conceive a public space.

In short, this is what Arendt is saying.

As a result of modernity, the individual as an autonomous being is accepted as an ideal unit/subject for expressions (unquestionable foundation). If you look at the situation in Japan now, it is bloated out of proportion now and individual interests are encroaching and occupying the public space. If postmodern is about such encroachment of the public space by private discourses, then, the question is, "How do we secure the public space?" Professor Flores' reference to Hannah Arendt's "appearance" or the word "exposure" reminds us that securing the "space of appearance" is an urgent matter. Professor Flores, what is your opinion?

Flores | I think I raised the term in relation to the ability of the curator

to configure a space for people to come together in relation to the production of the art. On the other hand, it was also, I think, in relation to the desire of the nation states to which they belong to be represented elsewhere. So maybe this is where your notion of the other comes in, that when there is an utterance or act of speech there is an assumption of some kind of reciprocal conversation across a certain locality. So, yes, the space of appearance was essential in the curatorial practice, because curation is about visibility. And so, the curators were able to guarantee that possibility of visibility through certain projects that went beyond the traditional spaces of, let us say, the museum. There was an extension into everyday life, into new spaces outside of those contexts. The subjectivities and identities could find visibility in that arena.

And maybe just to give another twist to this, in the Gwangju Biennale, Okwui Enwezor would like to recover the Biennale as a space of appearance and also spectacle as something not always negative. He thinks that it could be redeemed as a space of visibility. So, he would reformulate Paulo Freire's phrase, "pedagogy of the oppressed" into "the spectacle of the oppressed" through the Biennale. It's a complex, complicated formulation, but he was able to put it out there as part of the attempt to renew the potential of the Biennale as a space of appearance.

MC | I think this is related to the trickster role that the curators take on. What should be noted in Professor Flores' comment is, how making large-scale international exhibitions, like biennials, successful is not merely about creating spectacular events.

Turning exhibitions into a spectacle is in fashion now. This mode dominates the biennials and triennials scene today. But we should not be easily satisfied by consuming the spectacular space. We should be concerned with the ways in which we would sustain the encounters and networks that have spawn from this space. From the mid-1990s onward, biennials and triennials have been organized in various cities across Asia. In parallel to these events, there was an interest in disseminating the concept of multiculturalism. Yokohama Triennale is on show at the moment, but we do question what these exhibitions are about. There are so many of them. Maybe Mr. Kuroda could comment on this current trend.

04 | As a result, art eventually becomes a member of the of the entertainment industry. [Kuroda]

Kuroda | I have also had some reservations about international exhibitions turning into a spectacle. This problem should be discussed in a broader context. We had earlier discussed how art is turning into a commodity. Similarly, art is now turning into entertainment. [04] Many exhibitions are now turning into amusement parks, and I have a feeling that they appreciated more than others, while others tend to be serious and understated.

In the end, if there is a gap between the international contemporary art scene and the local audience, entertainment or amusement would be the only solution to fill this gap. Something marketable would be useful. If we were to look back at what Tanigawa Gan's said about bridging the gap between the intellectual and the mass 50 years ago, the solution in today's context would be to incorporate amusement parks and spectacles. During the 1st Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, which was mentioned in Professor Kajiyama's presentation, I had high expectations, because, at the time, there were artists in various corners of Asia who had the courage to practice art in order to communicate with people of different backgrounds. However, after 10 years, this trend is diminishing, and spectacle and amusement are prevailing. I have not found any solution to turn this situation around.

The 4th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale will take place from September through November in 2009, so I hope you will all come to see us then. Our budget is small, so you cannot expect a spectacle (laugh), but you will probably see an international exhibition that's different from the others.

MC | Thank you. Mr. Kuroda and Mr. Fan both discussed the appraisal of artworks. If the value standard continues to rely on a set of rules determined by globalization and its singular market, we would need to produce a discourse that counters it, if that is at all possible. For example, Chinese art faces the problem of the gap between the inside and the outside. I wonder if a different type of discourse is being developed to evaluate those artists who have stayed locally in China. If we were to create a separate evaluation system, what media would be most suitable to enable this? I would like to see if there are any more comments.

Fan | We are living in an age of globalization. Information from around

the globe is available to us. Even in China, we can gather substantial information from various sources. So, some people have been utilizing information to analyze and measure the values themselves.

The Chinese art market has been growing rapidly in the last two years. Some people call it a historical miracle. For example, in Beijing, we see a new gallery opening every week. Of course, some people say that, by next spring, there will be one closing every week.

Many people are interested in investing in artworks and they push the prices up in the market. An artwork is seen only as an investment and the market is controlled by its own rules.

Under the current circumstances, art institutions, such as the museums, galleries, art schools, as well as art critics, have become critical in exerting their academic expertise and providing the mass with various channels and perspectives on understanding art. Following the trend is too limiting.

The same could be said for large-scale exhibitions such as biennials and triennials. These exhibitions could present new art movements and could provide us with very stimulating and challenging views. But not all the works that are included and exhibited are masterpieces. The works may be highly conscious of the contemporary trend or enlightening in its concept, but they may be simply too formalistic and devoid of lasting values.

We should all be watchful of the current situation, where we are forever looking for new concepts and languages, instead of preserving art with values. Hegel once portended that arts and culture ultimately remains only in the form of speech. He warned that it will not remain in a tangible form. We should be careful so that we do not end up as Hegel had predicted.

Hegel said that the arts would eventually be taken over by philosophy. But I believe that both the arts and philosophy is necessary.

MC | Thank you. Mr. Fan suggested that an educational process could be a productive counter action. The situation in Japan is similar to China. To counter the unified system to measure the value of artworks, I, for example, who writes critical essays on art, try to work in the fields of education, small-scale media, small-scale exhibitions and others, to keep

05 | It is a structural problem of the system that nobody is, in fact, able to feel that she/he is a "player." Everybody including successful ones is destined to feel that she/he is "played" by the center-less mechanism of the system. [Hayashi]

distance from the global market. I have been trying to build a network with members working in these contexts, but I feel as if have been losing every battle I have fought so far. I am conscious of the fact that my activities, by nature, do not develop into large-scale movements, but the current pressure of globalization is much larger than I had imagined. It is ironic to see that most people cannot participate as "players" in today's globalized world. [05] I would like to see if Professor Kajiya has anything to say about peer-to-peer communication or horizontal communication as a way to counter globalization.

Kajiya | Peer-to-peer communication is actually not an alternative way to counter globalization, but is something that has been enabled by globalization. Peer-to-peer was meant to describe a process which disintegrates the existing infrastructure that integrates different values and cultures. So, it is, in fact, an aspect of globalization.

In my presentation, I used the term, "reflexive modernity," which means a process of modernizing the factors on which modernity is based. Modernity is something that is based on some premodern values, such as capitalists versus workers and women staying home. "Reflexive modernity" is an argument that emphasizes modernity's aspect of dismantling its premodern bases that make modernity itself possible. So, I do not think globalization will continue to set its standards based on the market value. I see this process as ongoing, where the values are being constructed and deconstructed along the way.

MC | You are saying that modernity is an auto-regulatory system, so we do not have to be so pessimistic, right? I think that is one way of dealing with the situation, and Anthony Giddens, which Professor Kajiya quoted, is one that takes this position. In some cases, the discourse on postmodernism becomes apocalyptic, because it views the system as having a complete control over the individual. But Giddens and Professor Kajiya assert another view; that modernity is not as bad as people claim it to be. Unfortunately, we do not have time to discuss this specific issue. But it is something that we need to keep our minds on. Professor Flores, I wonder if you would have any positive views particularly on the biennial system, and on contemporary art which is

presently caught up in the global financial market.

Flores | I think I have no straight answer to that, but I really would like to share what Vasif Kortun, Director of Platform Garanti in Istanbul, said at the Asian Art Museum Directors Forum Tokyo 2008. He thinks that there is a post-neoliberal moment—we're already living in a post-neoliberal period and that neoliberalism, as the main logic of globalization, has actually ended with the collapse of the American economy, which has also affected the global financial system. So, I think with the collapse of that kind of system, there will be new attempts to regulate economic systems that used to be liberized because of neoliberalism.

To which direction that kind of re-regulation will go would be subject to question. And the end of neoliberalism also has to be part of the question. But I think it's a productive and a provocative concept to think about, that we are actually on the cusp—that's what he terms it—on the cusp of a post-neoliberal period. So I don't know what kind of system will replace that neoliberal system. Will it be a return to the old liberal system? Or will it be a new system altogether? But I think that's one way of answering the question in terms of if there is hope. Yes, there is hope because there has been a collapse.

MC | Mr. Fan had suggested that the current financial crisis may bring some hope to the world of contemporary art. Is there anybody else who may have questions to each other?

Kajiya | I have a question for Professor Flores. Your presentation was on the role of the "artist-curator" who emerged from the between the 1970s to the 1990s. They took on a dual role then, but I wonder what kind of curation was practiced before they appeared in the front stage.

Flores | Well, the curation in Southeast Asia before the emergence of the artist-curator was shaped by the institutions of the museum. So, the curators were mostly based in the traditional museum setting. That was the space that controlled the exhibition of art. I think that's my straight answer to the question. But this is not to say that artist-curator totally