

The Japan Foundation | Asia Center

2016

volume 02

Report
International Symposium 2015
THE 1990s
The Making of Art with
Contemporaries

Art102

Studies



About
The Japan Foundation
Asia Center:
Art Studies 02

On the occasion of the opening in early 2015 of the touring exhibition "Time of others," jointly held by the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (MOT), the National Museum of Art, Osaka, the Singapore Art Museum and the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, the Japan Foundation Asia Center hosted the International Symposium 2015 "The 1990s: The Making of Art with Contemporaries" at MOT. The documentation of the program is compiled in this publication as *The Japan Foundation Asia Center Art Studies Vol. 2*.

Interest in art from Asia in the US and Europe started with Japan in the 1980s, moved to China, Korea and South Asia entering the 1990s, and is now turning toward Southeast Asia. The histories and cultures of the region known as Southeast Asia were originally formed through abundant natural resources and the overlapping of diverse peoples, languages and religions. With many of its constituents having achieved astounding economic development since their formation as nation-states following independence from colonial rule, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, formed in 1967, is now driving regional integration into the "ASEAN community" while also respecting each country's diversity. The modernization of society that happened in parallel with

economic development, as well as the waves of globalization that accelerate that process, have brought about major changes to the cultures, societies and values of the region.

The Southeast Asian artists who are sensitive to these cultural and social phenomena have responded earnestly to such changes, and are engaging with actual society. This tendency is particularly strong in the practices of the artists of the 1990s. Introduced to Japan at the same time, their works were an exciting shock for local audiences, and became one end of the so-called "Asian art boom." At the symposium, the conditions for art in Southeast Asia in the 1990s were reevaluated from the standpoint of 2015 through the multiple perspectives of art professionals who were active at the time, as well as the presentations of new researchers and lively discussions.

As with Vol. 1, in preparing this volume we enjoyed the extraordinary cooperation of the symposium's participating curators and researchers, who contributed to the editing process by submitting their presentation papers and going over translations and edits. In conclusion, we would like to once more express our sincere gratitude to them here.

The Japan Foundation Asia Center
March 2016

Art
Studies

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02

THE 1990s: THE MAKING OF ART WITH CONTEMPORARIES

THE 1990s

Art
Studies

02

THE MAKING OF ART WITH CONTEMPO- RARIES

International Symposium 2015

Day 1 | May 23, 2015 | Saturday | 13:00–17:00

Day 2 | May 24, 2015 | Sunday | 13:00–16:00

Venue | B2F Auditorium, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Organizers | The Japan Foundation Asia Center, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

THE 1990s: The Making of Art with Contemporaries
Report

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Notes

This symposium was held on Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, May 24 in 2015 for two days at the B2F Auditorium of Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo as a related program of the "Time of others" exhibition, organized by the Japan Foundation Asia Center and Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo.

The symposium was assisted by Japanese/English simultaneous interpretation, conducted by Yokota Kayoko, Kobata Kazue, and Kobayashi Akiko.

This report consists of the presentation papers submitted and transcription of the discussions that took place during the symposium.

The original presentation papers were revised and finalized by the panelists after the symposium.

The Japan Foundation Asia Center is responsible for editing and finalizing the materials included in this report.

Position title/affiliation of the panelists are current as of May 2015.

The order of family names and given names of people spelled out in Japanese and English follow a set of standard rules applied by the Japan Foundation, except for those names that are artist names. As a rule, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese names are spelled out in the order of family name and given name.

THE 1990s

The Making of Art with Contemporaries

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Panelist Profiles

Position title/affiliation of the panelists and moderators are current as of May 2015.

Session 1 | Presentation 1

Gridthiya Gaweewong

Artistic Director, Jim Thompson Art Center

Born in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Received MA (Arts Administration) at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Gaweewong co-founded Project 304, a non-profit, independent arts organization in 1996. Her curatorial projects address issues of globalization, migration, and alienation raised by contemporary artists in and outside Thailand. Organized exhibitions include "Traces" (Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok, 2012), "Primitive" (Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok, 2011), "Between Utopia and Dystopia" (Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, 2011), "Politics of Fun" (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2005), and "Montien Boonma" (Galerie Beuderley, Paris, 1997). She is also involved with building networks among Asian and global art communities through seminars, conferences, and workshops in Asia and abroad. Lives and works in Bangkok.

Session 1 | Presentation 2

Flaudette May Datuin

Professor, Department of the Arts, University of the Philippines Diliman

Born in Los Baños, Laguna, the Philippines. Received PhD (Philippines Studies) from the University of the Philippines Diliman. Datuin pursued postgraduate work as a Visiting Research Fellow, University of New South Wales (2011-2013), Asian Public Intellectual and Asian Scholarship Fellow (2004-2005), and Australian National University Humanities Research Centre Visiting Fellow (2008). Major international exhibitions curated include "Nothing to Declare" (Blanc Compound, Yuchengco Museum, Vargas Museum, Manila, 2011), "Trauma, Interrupted" (Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila, 2007), and "Women Imaging Women" (Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila, 1998). These curatorial works emerge from research interests on female artists in Asia, contemporary art, trauma, art and healing, and art and ecology. Editor of *Alter/(n)ations in the Art of Imelda Cajipe Endaya* (University of the Philippines Press, 2010) and author of *Home Body Memory: Filipina Artists in the Visual Arts, 19th Century to Present* (University of the Philippines Press, 2005). Datuin also co-founded *Ctrl+P: Digital Journal of Contemporary Art* in 2006. Lives and works in Manila.

Session 1 | Presentation 3

Ade Darmawan

Director, ruangrupa

Born in Jakarta, Indonesia. Works as an artist and curator. Studied at the Graphic Art Department, Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) during 1992 to '97 prior to doing a residency at the Institute for Advance Art Studies and Research, Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten during 1998 to 2000. After returning from the Rijksakademie, he founded ruangrupa—an artist-initiative organization which focuses on the visual arts and its relation to the socio-cultural contexts especially in urban environments—with five other artists from Jakarta. With ruangrupa as a collaborative platform, he participated in the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of

Contemporary Art (2012), Singapore Biennale 2011 (2011), 9th International Istanbul Biennial (2005), and the 4th Gwangju Biennale (2002). From 2006 to 2009, he served as a member of the Jakarta Arts Council, and in 2009 he became the Artistic Director for the Jakarta Biennale XIII: ARENA, prior to being appointed the Executive Director of the Jakarta Biennale in 2013. Lives and works in Jakarta.

Session 2 | Presentation 1

Dinh Q. Lê

Artist

Born in Hà-Tiên, Vietnam. Received his BA (Art Studio) at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his MFA (Photography and Related Media) at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Returned to Vietnam in 1994, and settled down in Ho Chi Minh City in 1997. Through his artistic practice, Lê constantly challenges how our memories are recalled in tandem with contexts within contemporary life, excavating history to reveal alternative ideas of loss and redemption. Recent solo exhibitions include "Dinh Q Lê: Memory for Tomorrow" (Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2015), "Project 93: Dinh Q Lê" (The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010-11) and "Destination for the New Millennium, The Art of Dinh Q Lê" (Asia Society, New York, 2005). Lê also participated in the 2013 Carnegie International (2013-2014), dOCUMENTA (13) (2012), and "Delays and Revolutions" (the 50th Venice Biennale, 2003). He co-founded Vietnam Foundation for the Arts (VNFA) and Sàn Art, the most active non-profit gallery and residency program in Vietnam, and is the recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Residency Program (2014) and the Visual Art Laureate for the Prince Claus Awards (2010). Lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City.

Session 2 | Presentation 2

Joan Kee

Associate Professor, Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan

Born in Virginia, USA. A graduate of Yale University, Harvard Law School and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, Kee holds the first academic position in North America specifically created for the study of modern and contemporary art in Asia. A contributor to *Artforum*, *Art History*, *Art Margins*, *Archives of Asian Art*, and the *Oxford Art Journal*, she co-edited an issue of *Third Text* on contemporary Southeast Asian Art (Vol. 25, Issue 4, August 2011) and edited a special issue on contemporary Asian art for *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* (Vol. 12, No. 3, Winter 2004). She curated "From All Sides: Tansaekhwa on Abstraction" (Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, 2014), the first major survey of *Tansaekhwa* (monochrome painting) outside Korea. Kee is the author of *Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), a finalist for the College Art Association's annual Charles Rufus Morey Book Award, given to an especially distinguished book in art history. She is also the co-editor of *To Scale* (Wiley-Blackwell, January 2016), a transnational

anthology of essays on questions of size and scale in the visual arts. Lives and works in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

Session 3 | Presentation 1

Ahmad Mashadi

Head, NUS Museum

Born in Singapore. Mashadi served as a Senior Curator at the Singapore Art Museum, which inaugurated in 1996, prior to joining the National University of Singapore (NUS) Museum in 2007. Curated and co-curated exhibitions at the Singapore Art Museum include "Telah Terbit (Out Now)" (2006), "Cubism in Asia" (2006), and "Modernity and Beyond: Themes in Southeast Asian Art" (1996). At the NUS Museum, Mashadi co-curated "Archiving Apin: Works and Documents from the Mochtar Apin Collection" (2013), "Camping & Tramping Through the Colonial Archive: The Museum in Malaya" (2011), "Jendela: A Play of the Ordinary" (2008), "Picturing Relations: Simryn Gill and Tino Djumini" (2007) and "WE" (2007). He also curated Singapore participations for the 26th São Paulo Biennale (2004), 49th Venice Biennale (2001), and the 10th Triennale-India (2000). Lives and works in Singapore.

Session 3 | Presentation 2

Alison Carroll

Founding Director, Asialink Arts

Born in UK. Earned two degrees in Art History from the University of Melbourne. Carroll has curated over 50 exhibitions, including "East and West" (Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 1985), the first major review in Australia of the meeting of Asian and European (and Australian) art. In addition to curatorial projects, She has organized many art exchange programs in Asia during her years running Asialink Arts, including a series of exchanges with Japan in the early 2000s. Southeast Asian exchanges were a focus of her work in the 1990s. She was appointed to the National Advisory Committee for the first three Asia Pacific Triennials of Contemporary Art. She has published many books, including *The Revolutionary Century: Art in Asia 1900-2000* (Macmillan, Australia, 2010), and also was the presenter of a television series on Asian Art, *A Journey Through Asian Art* (ABC TV), in 2014. Live and works in Melbourne.

Session 3 | Presentation 3

Kishi Sayaka

Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, Tsuru University

Born in Tokyo, Japan. Completed PhD programs at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Tokyo, and École doctorale d'histoire, Université de Paris. Kishi was a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Research Fellow prior to joining Tsuru University in 2006. Specializes in international cultural relations and sociology of art. Author of "Bijutsu ni okeru 'Ajia' no hyōshō—Fukuoka Ajia Bijutsukan no tenji katsudō [Representation of 'Asia' in the Visual Arts—Exhibition Engagements of the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum]" (*Kokusai bunka kankeishi kenkyū*, ed. Hirano Kenichirō et al., Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2013), "Yōroppa tōgō to bunka

seisaku—sengo bijutsu no sōzōryoku wa dō hensē shitanoka [The European Integration and Cultural Policy—Transformations in Postwar Art]" (*Gendai yōroppa no shakai keizai seisaku*, ed. Hirota Isao, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2006) among others. Lives in Tokyo and works in Yamanashi.

==

Moderators

Kamiya Yukie

Chief Curator, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art

Born in Kanagawa, Japan. Kamiya served as Associate Curator at New Museum, New York, prior to joining the Hiroshima MoCA in 2007. Curated exhibitions at Hiroshima MoCA include "Do Ho Suh in Between" (2012), "Simon Starling—Project for a Masquerade" (2011), "Tsuyoshi Ozawa: The Invisible Runner Strides on" (2009), and "Cai Guo Qiang" (2009). Kamiya also co-curated "Re: Quest—Japanese Contemporary Art since the 1970s" (Museum of Art, Seoul National University, Seoul, 2013) and "Under Construction: New Dimension of Asian Art" (Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, The Japan Foundation Forum, Tokyo, 2002–2003.)

In 2011, Kamiya was awarded with the Academic Prize from the Foundation for Advancement of the Arts. Served on the advisory board for Yokohama Triennale 2014 and PARASOPHIA Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015, and jury for "DAAD Artists-in-Berlin." She is one of contributors of *Creamier—Contemporary Art in Culture* (Phaidon, 2010) and *Ravaged—Art and Culture in Times of Conflict* (Mercatorfounds, 2014). Lives and works in Hiroshima.

• Director of Japan Society Gallery (New York) from October 2015.

Doryun Chong

Chief Curator, M+

Chong was Curator at the Walker Art Center and Associate Curator at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, prior to joining M+ in September 2013. As the inaugural Chief Curator, he oversees all curatorial activities including exhibitions and symposia, acquisitions for the collection, as well as learning and interpretation programs. Exhibitions co-curated at MoMA include "Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde" (2012–2013), "Projects 94: Henrik Olesen" (2011), among others. Also curated exhibitions at the Busan Biennale 2006 (2006) and the Korean Pavilion of the 49th Venice Biennale (2001). Contributed to journals such as *Artforum*, *Afterall*, and *The Exhibitionist*, and also co-edited *From Postwar to Postmodern, Art in Japan, 1945-1989: Primary Documents* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2013). Chong is the recipient of the first ICI Gerrit Lansing Independent Vision Award (2010) and has also served as many prize juries including the Hugo Boss Prize (2015), Absolut Art Award (2015), and the Contemporary Chinese Art Award (2014). Lives and works in Hong Kong.

Hoashi Aki

Art Coordinator / Project Manager, Organizing Committee for Yokohama Triennale Office

Born in Yokohama, Japan. Received MA (Museum and Gallery Management) at City University in London. Hoashi has worked on contemporary art projects as a free-lance art coordinator, working on projects focusing on Asia at the Japan Foundation (1997–2010), public art projects at the NLI Research Institute (2000–2002), and as Director of the artist-in-residence ARCUS Project (2003–2007). She has been working for the Yokohama Triennale since the 4th edition in 2011, and is currently preparing for its 6th edition scheduled for 2017. She also works as Japanese / English interpreter and translator. Lives in Tokyo and works in Yokohama.

Symposium Program

DAY 1

May 23 (Sat), 2015 | 13:00–17:00

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13:00–13:05

Welcome Address by the Organizer

SESSION 1

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Globalization and the Expansion of the Alternative Art Scenes

–

Moderator

Kamiya Yukie

Chief Curator, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art

–

13:05–13:30

Presentation 1

Gridthiya Gaweewong

Artistic Director, Jim Thompson Art Center

Shifting Asian Contemporary Art Networks

–

13:30–13:55

Presentation 2

Flaudette May Datuin

Professor, Department of the Arts,
University of the Philippines Diliman

Off-Track

–

13:55–14:20

Presentation 3

Ade Darmawan

Director, ruangrupa

Homemade Structure and Small and Medium-sized Speculation

–

14:20–14:50

Discussion (Q&A)

–

14:50–15:10 | Break

–

SESSION 2

–

Artists' and Curators' Views: Foreign and Domestic Representations of "Asia"

–

Moderator

Doryun Chong

Chief Curator, M+

–

15:10–15:35

Presentation 1

Dinh Q. Lê

Artist

True Journey is Return

–

15:35–16:00

Presentation 2

Joan Kee

Associate Professor, Department of the History of Art,
University of Michigan

The Scale Question in Contemporary Asian Art

–

16:00–16:30

Discussion (Q&A)

–

16:30–17:00

Day 1 Wrap-up

DAY 2

May 24 (Sat), 2015 | 13:00–16:00

SESSION 3

–

Artistic Engagements of Public Institutions: The Visualization and Discourse of "Asia"

–

Moderator

Hoashi Aki

Art Coordinator / Project Manager, Organizing Committee for
Yokohama Triennale Office

–

13:00–13:10

Day 1 Recap

Kamiya Yukie

–

13:10–13:35

Presentation 1

Ahmad Mashadi

Head, NUS Museum

Contexts and Predicaments: Singapore 1996–2006

–

13:35–14:00

Presentation 2

Alison Carroll

Founding Director, Asialink Arts

The Political and the Personal: Australia's Experience in Visual Arts Exchange in Southeast Asia through the 1990s

–

14:00–14:25

Presentation 3

Kishi Sayaka

Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, Tsuru University

Cultural Diplomacy and Museum Management: Beyond an Imaginary Asia

–

14:25–14:40 | Break

–

14:40–15:10

Discussion (Q&A)

–

15:10–16:00

Plenary Discussion

–

16:00 | Closing

Day 1

Session 1

Globalization and the Expansion of the Alternative Art Scenes

After the formation of nation-states of the post-Cold War period and against the backdrop of economic development from the mid-1980s, Southeast Asian countries underwent rapid modernization which subsequently largely transformed the status quo of local art scenes. Having acquired objective perspectives towards their homelands and the will to propose new possibilities through the arts, artists who had trained overseas and others who had exerted their skills as organizers or curators returned to their respective countries. These practitioners established communities—or alternative spaces—which, despite their small scale, were highly active and mobile, and which became the impetus for new types of art that were open to communities and the society. These spaces simultaneously emerged in regional areas such as Baguio, Bacolod, Yogyakarta, and Chiang Mai, where artist-initiated festivals were established and, due to the flexibility which existing organizations lacked, quickly became hubs to connect art practitioners who shared similar values and social awareness. New spaces of expression were thus created—supported by networks which spread from the local to the global—which characterizes the art scenes of Southeast Asia today.

Taking into consideration the involvement of the arts in socio-political contexts of the early 1990s to 2000s in Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia, this session shed light upon the artistic endeavors of the time, where the three speakers presented case studies along with the social effects they caused for subsequent art practices.

Shifting Asian Contemporary Art Networks

Gridthiya Gaweewong

Artistic Director, Jim Thompson Art Center

A new world order emerged at the end of the Cold War with the geopolitics of Asia leading the way as an integral agent for change in the global landscape. In Southeast Asia, the birth of ASEAN in 1967 came about because of Regionalism, a movement instigated and steered by postwar American policy, focusing not only on political and economic collaboration but also on social and cultural interaction. The economic boom in Asia that started in the 1980s shifted the social strata to the next level. Thus the boom in art and cultural activities in the Asia-Pacific during the 1990s, the dawn of globalization, was not simply an accident.

But what made contemporary art in Asia shift to the global art landscape? How did the invisible infrastructure of personal networks exist and play an influential role in this change? This paper explores the role of alternative spaces in the region over the past two decades. It tries to investigate how artist/curator collectives, DIY-approaches and grass-roots organizations were able to challenge the former art institutions in their own localities. What were their tactics and the rationale behind their initiatives in the broader context? Why did they fail or succeed? What factors affected the community and society at large?

Prologue: The ASEAN Government-to-Government Networks

In the Cold War period, Asian art networks were formed based on the official, government-to-government (G2G) connection. Prior to the setting up of ASEAN, a regional exhibition of Southeast Asian art was held in the Philippines. In 1957, the "First Southeast Asia Art Exhibition: A Southeast Asian Competition and Exhibition" was organized in Manila and chaired by the president of the Art Association of the Philippines. Malaya's Patrick Ng Kah Onn won the first prize, with the Philippines' Vicente Manansala coming in second. Other known participating artists included Dave Shanti (India), Syed Ahmad Jamal (Malaya), Simon Saulog (the Philippines) and J Sultan Ali (India).⁰¹

While the G2G networks allowed artists in the region to get to know each other, this was still at the institutional level. Since then, more than fifty shows have been organized by ASEAN-related committees and alternately held in different countries in the area. Most of the works which are related to ASEAN have been drawn from the mainstream art school's connections with the majority of participating artists officially selected from established schools.

In the 1990s, Japan and Australia played a competitive role in the region. Their foreign cultural policies to integrate themselves within the Asia-Pacific region led to the initiation of large-scale regional exhibitions such as the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale and Queensland Art Gallery's Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, respectively. These kinds of exhibitions allowed regional artists to be more fluid and mobile, and made crossing borders easier than before.

Within these exhibition-driven projects, the connection between artists extended to institutional and curatorial networks. That is not to say the official G2G networks disappeared. They still existed but only within the small circle of the "old boy network," government agencies, and established art schools. Sometimes, the same people were involved,

at least in the case of Thailand. The curators involved in the early versions of the triennales held in Fukuoka and Queensland worked only with the two major institutions, the Silpakorn University and the Chulalongkorn University. Two senior artists-turned-curators, Professor Somporn Rodboon and Dr. Apinan Poshyananda, became the main gatekeepers of the contemporary art scene in Thailand. Their roles were to introduce young artists to the international institutions, co-curate regional shows, and write catalogue, as well as introduce international artists and curators to the local art community by conducting workshops, lectures and studio visits. From the late 1980s to the '90s, both played a significant role in facilitating artists' mobility within the region and beyond.

01

Simon Soon, "Maps of the Sea."
<http://www.search-art.asia/attachments/files/MAPOftheSEA.pdf>
 (Accessed June 2015)

Thai-specificity: Alternative Networks

The collapse of the bubble economy in the region during the late-1990s could not stop the flux of the alternative art movement in Asia. The major international shows had created a momentum but there were no spaces for artists who dealt with global issues to show their works in their own countries. The alternative art scenes, non-profit art movements, and artist collectives in Thailand were different from those of the Western context. We existed as an alternative to nothing. Thailand lacked infrastructure, funding, institutions, and audiences for experimental, conceptual, and new art forms to develop. Alternatives spaces became unknown territory, presenting unknown art to imagined audiences.

Unlike the artist initiatives in Indonesia and other countries in Southeast Asia, it was the curators, administrators, and artists who initiated the alternative spaces in Thailand during the 1990s. In Indonesia, spaces like those run by *ruangrupa* were influenced by popular culture of the '90s, leftist politics, and a critique of the Suharto regime. With a strong spirit of resistance and striving for independence and democracy, the Indonesian art scene was full of energy and inherited the spirit of artist collectives that continued to exist since the '30s. In Thailand, the alternative spaces existed with different contexts and influences. It was to fill the gaps that occurred from the lack of infrastructures, to counterbalance the cascade of mainstream popular cultures and Hollywood influences.

Project 304 was initiated by author, curator, artist, and architect friends whom I met at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. These included film director Apichatpong Weerasethakul, actor-artist Michael Shaowanasai, and internationally known, mid-career artists based in Bangkok and Chiang Mai such as the late Montien Boonma, Kamol Phaosawasdi, and Chatchai Puipia, who sought to create a space that served artists and art communities that were interested in conceptual and experimental arts which addressed socially engaging issues. We worked with artists from all disciplines dealing with conceptual artworks, experimental films, video art, and so on, and focused on medium and time-based art. About Café was dedicated to contemporary arts, education, music, and fashion, headed by Klaomard Yipintsoi and her partner, a photographer, Noppadol Khaosamang. Both Project 304 and About Café were gathering places for the art community, and became the talk of the town. Tadu Contemporary Art Gallery worked with more traditional media and focused more on theater. Most of these spaces opened around 1996 and closed around 2002. The Tadu Contemporary Art Gallery still continues to run projects, and Project 304 has also continued its Bangkok Experimental Film Festival working with young curators including David Teh, Adadol Ingavanija, and Mary Pansanga. About Café kept its original space, although it is now rented out, while About Photography was passed on to Mary Pansanga to run her own Messy Sky / Cloud project.

Even though the alternative spaces were short-lived, the emergence of these projects and spaces in the 1990s shook up the art scene. They became another window to the world for young artists. The artists would be able to sneak outside the national networks and institutions, as well as the main gatekeepers' networks. The mushrooming of biennales in Asia was another factor that drew many curators to the region. A few art exhibitions and projects focusing on networks that deserve noting include "P_A_U_S_E," one of the Gwangju

Biennale 2002 projects, co-curated by Sung Wankyung, Charles Esche, and Hou Hanru. This project brought two hundred alternative spaces from Asia and Europe to self-curate their own exhibitions. This exhibition of exhibitions allowed artists who ran alternative spaces to interact, connect, and later collaborate with each other. It broke the conventional ground in networking and collaborating, placing it on a larger scale. Its impacts are still viable and significant today.

Peer-to-Peer Connections: Within and Outside Asia

The model of "P_A_U_S_E" reconfigured the artists/curators and organization networks. There began a shift from the G2G connections to more grassroots, Peer-to-Peer (P2P) channels. At the local level, many artist collectives and initiatives bonded and strengthened their ties between artists in the regions. For example the Philippine Arts Festival and Artists' Villages in Singapore—both of which regularly worked on AsiaTopia, a performance-based project in Thailand—conducted projects that reinforced relationships with local artists. In the 1980s, many networks tended to associate with each other based on technique, as seen in the cases of the ASEAN Watercolor Exhibition, International Print Biennale, performance and film festivals, and so on. The multidisciplinary approach grew popular towards the end of the twentieth century. One project initiated by Chiang Mai-based artists and art lecturers from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University (CMU), was the Chiang Mai Social Installation. An ad-hoc operation organized by artists, it was democratic, inclusive, and without selection. Instead, the organizers served as facilitators for artists who wished to work in any area around the city of Chiang Mai. This project became the catalyst for artists of this generation, with most participating in this important project from its birth in the early 1990s. The network, which expanded and ended in the late '90s, served to connect artists on local, regional, and international levels.

On the other side of the Chiang Mai Social Installation was a network of artists in the region, especially the Mekong area, which was initiated by US-based foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation. Many art and cultural projects were activated and promoted between Asian-American and American artists and artists based in the Mekong region. Funding from these two organizations encouraged artists to conduct research on and work within this area, while the Asian Cultural Council—also funded by the Rockefeller Foundation—supported Asian artists to work and pursue research in New York for at least six months. Another American foundation that supported the regional network was the American Foundation, which awarded grants to young curators and artists. Furthermore, the Fulbright scholarship provided funding for exchange programs between artists from the two areas. European organizations such as Heinrich Böll Foundation and Friedrich Ebert Foundation were actively engaged in socio-political projects and funded some art-related programs addressing such issues as globalization and identity, one example of which is the "Identities versus Globalisation" exhibition curated by Jörg Löschmann and held at the Chiang Mai Art Museum in 2004 and also traveled to National Gallery, Bangkok in the same year. The Goethe-Institut also supported the Asia Pacific Art Network project through its regional office in Jakarta, while Art-Connexion brought together local curators and artists to collaborate with German artists in its project, best described as "hit-and-run."

In Japan, the ASEAN Culture Center (later renamed and reorganized as the Asia Center) was established in the early 1990s by the Japan Foundation to promote understanding between Japan and the ASEAN countries. It created a strong momentum and provided artists, curators, and institutions in the region the chance to show, exchange, cross borders, and develop their engagements to the next step, thus advancing their careers. Examples included the solo exhibition of the late Montien Boonma at the Japan Foundation ASEAN Culture Center Gallery in 1991, and the group show "Under Construction: New Dimensions of Asian Art" held at the Japan Foundation Forum and Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery in 2003, the latter of which allowed me to travel and create a network of young artists and curators.

Many Asian artists attempted to create an Intra Asian network among artist-run or alternative spaces. This was an idea that was discussed for the last twenty years, brought to the attention of ResArtis—the global network of artists-in-residencies in which many alternative spaces participated—but, unfortunately, has never fully materialized.

More recently, the Korean government drew up plans to build the Asian Cultural Complex (ACC) in Gwangju to celebrate Asian culture and facilitate its art-space network through the Alternative Space LOOP. Meetings and discussions about the possibility of collaborating among networks were held, but while the ACC will open this September (2015), the network is no longer so active.

NOW

For the last thirty years, networks of contemporary art in Asia have been initiated and led by international agencies. The paradigm shift after the Cold War period triggered ASEAN and networks of artists from these countries to work together. This started from the institutions and government-to-government associations and spread to peer-to-peer connections. Later, it developed from the top-down, international agenda to a bottom-up approach.

What were the outcomes of this development, and how did it contribute to communities and societies at large? It enabled artists, institutions, and artists to access resources, produce new works, and reach out to a much wider audience that were previously beyond their own territory. Yet despite being inconsistent and unsustainable due to changes in politics and policies, and decline in funding, the networks did not collapse entirely. Names changed and agencies closed, but the spirit survived; networks gradually reinvented themselves and shifted their shapes to other forms and structures. One example of such shape-shifting is the Japan Foundation and Asia Center. The Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) program which provided grants for artists and curators in the late 2000s, has recently morphed into a series of curatorial workshops in the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. Regional and international networking and exchanges between alternative spaces and institutions were also reinvented. After the "P_A_U_S_E" exhibition at the Gwangju Biennale, the curator Charles Esche reactivated and reconnected the network in Yogyakarta for the "Fixing the Bridge" conference held collaboratively with the Cemeti Art Foundation in 2003. This was recently picked up again by ACC, the Korean government agency in Gwangju, under the Asian Arts Space Network (AASN) program facilitated by the Alternative Space LOOP.

Local initiatives that took up the bottom-up approach of the regional contemporary art networks were initiated and supported by international institutions. The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations closed their support to art and cultural programs and contributed their last financing to a local art agency in the mid-2000s. They poured the last portion of their funding into the Arts Network Asia (ANA) based in Singapore, whose committee was made up of many artists as well as curators. This organization provided grants to Asian artists to work, research, and collaborate with other Asian artists in the region. Hosted by TheatreWorks and directed by Ong Ken Seng who initiated the Flying Circus project, ANA brought artists from the region to attend workshops and funded residencies for international artists alike. This intensive network project allowed artists to experiment and exchange with their peers. Flying Circus traveled to different cities including Saigon and Yangon.

Towards the Sustainable Art Projects

Unfortunately, many of the projects were not sustainable and depended on funding from either governmental agencies or private foundations. Their dependence rendered them sensitive and fragile. Today, many art projects have started to configure new models to sustain their work, focusing on local audiences and contexts, yet remaining connected to

regional and global issues and the community. It is worth illustrating a few projects in the Mekong region that are working along these lines.

In Cambodia, "Rates of Exchange, Un-compared: Contemporary Art in Bangkok and Phnom Penh," an exhibition project co-curated by Australian and Irish curators, Roger Nelson and Brian Curtin, specializing in Thai, Cambodian, and regional contemporary art, was shown at the H Gallery Bangkok in December 2014 and at the SA SA BASAAC Art Project in March 2015. They invited Thai and Cambodian artists to undertake residencies in each other's countries for exchange and make works to show in both cities.

The curator's statement is as follows:

"Rates of Exchange, Un-Compared" is the concluding event in a six-month series of symposia, gatherings, and artist residencies that steadfastly skirts a particular way of looking at and conceptualizing contemporary art from these two cities. Ideas of the nation-state, comparative histories, and the economic and institutional currency of geography, among other typical or potential frameworks, are held in critical relief. As the title suggests, this project considers the cost[s] of distinct frameworks for approaching and disseminating knowledge of contemporary art; instead, the project explores unpredictable relationships between artists as part of a discursive inquiry into current art from both cities. ⁰²

Both curators are working as scholars, writers, and independent curators based in the area. Their attempt was to compare Thailand and Cambodia who have always had a love-hate relationship in terms of social values, politics, belief systems, as well as economy. Focusing on fragmented experiences and networks between artists from two countries, the curators noted:

... Nevertheless, the project refuses any claim to represent or address similarities or differences between Bangkok and Phnom Penh; in short, it insists on the critical value of their remaining deliberately "un-compared."

"Rates of Exchange, Un-Compared" activates connections between artists, curators, and galleries from Bangkok and Phnom Penh. Participants are at different levels of their careers, work in varying contexts, and carry diverse ambitions. A premise of the project is that dialogue between them has been slight to date. But "Rates of Exchange, Un-Compared" insists on the multiplicity of meanings inherent not only in a given art "world" and geographical location but also within artists' practices. ⁰³

At the institutional level, Bangkok University Art Gallery (BUG) initiated "Brand New," an annual program to support young artists. Initiated by art historian Ark Fongsamut, this project provided the platform for young, newly graduated arts students to have their first solo shows in galleries around the city. BUG invited regional and international curators to select the works from potential artists to include in their solo show. It was an interesting project, one that empowered young artists to begin their careers as professional artists.

The Jim Thompson Art Center initiated a series of regional exhibitions, such as "Traces" (2012), "Transmissions" (2014), and "Missing Links" (2015), to explore issues in the contemporary Southeast Asian context. We invited artists to work with us, and share experiences between themselves and their audiences. We plan to do more in-depth and extensive shows with individual artists in the future. Many of the exhibitions we organized have also traveled in the region; among them "mnēmōnikos: Art of Memory in Contemporary Textiles" traveled to Hong Kong University Gallery (2014–2015), and "Safe Place in the Future (?) Dystopia Now Utopia Never" toured to the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) in Manila (2013). These exchange programs have become significant. Most of the projects are the consequences of both personal and curatorial networks, supported by their own institutions.

In 2013, the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC) organized a regional show, "Concept Context Contestation: Art and the Collective in Southeast Asia." The show toured to Hanoi upon collaboration with the Goethe-Institut and aimed to exhibit the connections between the social ideologies and expressive languages of Southeast Asian art, revealing artists' critical views of society and their political narrations. The guest curators were Iola Lenzi (Singapore), Agung Hujatnikajennong (Indonesia), and Vipash Purichanont (Thailand).⁰⁴

Beyond the Regional Network: The Global South

In Saigon, Dinh Q. Lê, Tiffany Chung, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, and his Vietnamese-American friends co-founded an independent contemporary art space, Sàn Art, in 2007, now directed by a young and energetic Australian curator, Zoe Butt. Butt initiated "Conscious Realities," a three-year project carried out through lectures, workshops, and a residency programs, inviting intellectuals, artists, writers, and other cross-disciplinary cultural workers to Ho Chi Minh City. This dialogue focuses on the shared histories of the Global South, engaging the diverse reactions to those histories and the lessons to be learned in thinking laterally across these communities. These necessary dialogues are too often overshadowed by the vertical discourse in which cultural work from formerly colonized people is posited in relation to former colonial powers. "Conscious Realities," therefore, imagines the primacy of lateral dialogues between Southeast Asia, South Asia, Latin America, and Africa.⁰⁵

Shifting the direction to the Global South is equally interesting, as proven by the Yogyakarta Biennale—for each edition of the Yogyakarta Biennale, they focus on one country in the tropical area, such as India, Egypt and Nigeria—and it attempts to connect with these tropical countries. The expansion of local-to-local and regional networks has already shifted from the North to the Global South, from Intra Asia, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, meaning that the network of contemporary art is no longer only confined to Asian territories.

02

SA SA BASSAC media release on "Rates of Exchange, Un-Compared."
http://silaka.org/wp-content/files_mf/1422069687mediarelease_RatesofExchangeUnCompared_SASABASSAC.pdf

03

Ibid.

04

"Concept, Context, and Contestation," *Hanoi Grapevine*.
<http://hanoigrapevine.com/2015/06/exhibition-concept-context-contestation-hanoi-art-and-the-collective-in-south-east-asia/>
 (Accessed June 2015)

05

Sàn Art, "Conscious Realities."
<http://san-art.org/conscious-realities/about/>
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Off-Track

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Imagine yourself visiting Baguio, Northern Philippines, and Bacolod, Central Philippines in the 1990s. Let's say you're a curator/researcher wanting to know about artist-run initiatives and organizations in the provinces of the three major islands of Luzon in the North, where Baguio is, the Visayas in the Center, where we find Bacolod, and Mindanao, in the South. In the '90s, the standard curatorial itinerary goes like this: get off the plane, hop into a taxi, go straight to the galleries, meet the gatekeepers who will point you to artists; look at slides and catalogues, go to artists' studios (only when there is time) then hop back on the plane. We call this "parachuting." Curator descends from the sky, stay for a while, get what they need, then fly back. As I have written more fully elsewhere this standard curatorial route does not work, especially in places outside Manila.⁰¹ You have had to get off this beaten track.

In Baguio, the best place to start is not the galleries or the artists' studios (unless you had prior appointment with the big names of the group), but a restaurant called Café by the Ruins. It is a one-stop shop, so to speak. You will most likely find the artists congregating there, and if not, they will point you to them with phone numbers, directions to houses, and even tell you where they will be immediately found if they are not home. You will also get a glimpse of Baguio's history just by reading the information printed on the menu and learn that the Café stands on a property on which the house of the first American civil governor of Benguet province once stood, and was reduced to ruins after the 1944 carpet bombing, which nearly destroyed this hill station for American occupiers. After reading this brief local history, one chats with the manager and other "locals" who happen to be hanging out and one learns that the history of the Café intersects with your object of inquiry: the Baguio Arts Guild (BAG). They share founding members; they share spaces. The Café became a hub or meeting place for visual artists, filmmakers, anthropologists, writers, musicians. And through the years, the two groups have given life to some of the most high-energy but low cost contemporary art events in the country, if not in Southeast Asia.

If your research happens to coincide with an event (such as the 1999 BAF: International Baguio Arts Festival), you will have to bear with the confusion and make-shift conditions, and if you were coming from more structured research environs like me, you will have to abandon your academic approach to participating, experiencing and assessing such events. As I have written in an essay, one has to focus instead on those strands that grab one's attention on a more visceral and "human" plane, like in my case, sampling the local cuisine.⁰² Today however, with benefit of hindsight and the concept of "Art Practice as Research" suggested by Graeme Sullivan in his book of the same title, I realize that in making sense of artist-run initiatives, especially those outside imperial Manila, one also has to bring into question the concept of the artist as a solitary figure working solely and exclusively in his or her studio.⁰³ In the regions, the artists' studio practice is inseparable from their cultural and research work, which as Sullivan suggests is as much intellectual as it is imaginative and affective and that this intellectual and imaginative work bears close similarity to what academics in the fields of humanities, social and physical sciences do. It is just that the primary take-off point or platform of artists is the studio, which now extends to various sites—classrooms, the streets, even cyberspace, among others. As Sullivan puts it, "The critical and creative investigations that occur in... places where artists work, are forms

of research *grounded in art practice.*" (emphasis in italic by the author) ⁰⁴

Art is not just a "tool" or handmaiden to a certain ideology, advocacy or purpose, but a methodology in itself, with specific and independent modes of seeing, doing and feeling, from where new knowledge springs. The artworks that artists produce transcend their status as objects or collectors' items; they are inseparable from the artists' process and practice as cultural workers, a phrase that also implicates their roles as organizers, collaborators, educators, administrators, writers, theorists, quasi-ethnographers, healers, curators and in some cases, as owners of gallery and other spaces such as the Café by the Ruins, where artists can congregate and discuss ideas, make and sell art, with varying degrees of success and failure.

Whatever the eventual fate and however long or short the life span of artists' initiatives, the outcome is one of "progress," to borrow Christo and Jean-Claude's assessment (via Sullivan) of their own projects. Attitudes change, views broaden and awareness is awakened for all people involved—participants, observers, organizers, alike. The long and bumpy road—from conception, to endless negotiations with a range of agencies and persons up to final realization—is creative and educational. "The pattern of planning, reviewing, managing, adapting, analyzing and revealing is characteristic of the transformative nature of visual arts research," writes Sullivan. ⁰⁵

Drawing on this concept of progress, this paper will address the question: How do artists/researchers/cultural workers from the regions outside Manila contribute to the local and international art scene? For purposes of brevity and focus, I will frame my answer through Sullivan's three themes that capture this new dynamism in the field of Art Practice as Research. They are as follows: "Making in Systems" which is largely exploratory, "Making in Communities," which is "reinterpretive" and communicative and "Making in Cultures," which is critical and ultimately transformative. In brief, Sullivan defines them as follows:

- "Making in Systems" are complex and exploratory in nature as artists open up new visual forms and structures that are both grounded within discipline knowledge and skills, but also transcend these boundaries to intersect with other domains of inquiry.
- "Making in Communities" is "reinterpretive" in character and mobilizes the communicative capacity of the visual arts to make new connections among individual ideas, public issues and broader histories.
- "Making in Cultures" capitalize on the immediacy of a critical art practice and investigate ways of challenging perceptions through visual encounters.

These themes are highly interrelated, as the following account will show.

Off-Line: Making in Systems

Under the theme of "Making in Systems" artists as Researchers / Cultural Workers change our image of place, those that fall off the rigid lines and grids of our imagination for example of Baguio and Bacolod. Through Bacolod, we negotiate the Visayas as a heterogeneous group of islands—Panay and Guimaras, Negros and Siquijor, Cebu and Bohol, Samar and Leyte. In the work of Visayan artists, the romantic notion of a group of islands huddled together happily, like a "string of pearls in the orient," is dispelled. Instead we see in their practice an intense engagement with social issues related to "urbanization, ecological disaster, and identity through a range of artistic options, from social realism to satire, and on to magical realism." ⁰⁶ Although some artists have explored the international language of interdisciplinary media, a sense of tradition pervades the works, realized by "rendering of local color, appropriation of native materials (such as coconut wine as pigment) and accessing, both indigenous mythology and political mythmaking." ⁰⁷

Similarly, the artist-organizers of the BAG brings to high relief a notion of Baguio as locus

01

Flaudette May Datuin, "Land, Locality and Communion," *Pananaw 4: Philippine Journal of the Visual Art / Luzon* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2002), pp.34–40.

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02

Ibid.

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03

Graeme Sullivan, *Artist Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts* (California, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005).

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04

Ibid., p.xi.

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05

Ibid., p.149.

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06

Patrick Flores, "Via the Visayas," *Pananaw 3: Philippine Journal of Visual Art/ Visayas* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1999), p.11.

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07

Ibid.

of multiple, often contradictory positions, not a harmonious “melting pot” where local color, indigenous trinkets and various cultures meld and blend in a comfortable mix. Artists involved in cultural work are then compelled to confront the environmental and cultural realities of Baguio as a tourist spot, as point of convergence for ever-shifting populations, and as a rapidly modernizing, but not necessarily modern, fully functional and liveable city —because the natural and built environments are rapidly deteriorating. ⁰⁸

Place here is not simply “local color;” sense of place is not simply appreciation of the novel and exotic, but a rootedness in a particular historical moment. Region is not site of essential aesthetic, but “place,” that conditions art and is conditioned by art’s capacity and potential for transgression and transformation. The artist as cultural worker is not a static cipher of racial and gender identity but an embodiment of flux and mobility facilitated by commerce, trade, tourism, migration, education, and especially in this case, national and local artistic exchanges (congresses, collaborative projects, workshops, etc.).

Our definition of art and artist is similarly rethought, not just in surfacing hitherto invisible voices, but in presenting examples of changing the methods and ethos of art making by engaging in inter- and multi-disciplinary projects that encourage connection and conversation. As Norberto “Peewee” Roldan puts it in a conversation with Karen Flores:

—
We needed a movement, a structure and a venue for discussion for our advancement. And we were not getting it from CCP and other Manila-based institutions. So, by being organized, we were gaining our own strength. ⁰⁹
—

Collaboration and openness to exploring other ways of making art could also reduce dependency on the patronage of the State and the market. For example, the VIVA EXCON (Visayan Art Exhibit-Conference)—credited as the first regional congress on the visual arts in the Visayas and the longest running such program in the regions outside Manila—was first held in 1990. It was sponsored by the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), but was put together by funds pooled by artists who compose the BAA or the Black Artists in Asia (Norberto “Peewee” Roldan, Nunelucio Alvarado, Charlie Co, Dennis Ascalon, among others). Since then, VIVA EXCON was held five times for a period of ten years, at one point even going international, with foreign artists participating, and in another, in 2010, was even appropriated and renamed as the Visayas Biennale, complete with conference and multi-venue exhibits. In its latest incarnation in 2014, it reverted to VIVA EXCON.

Such off-Manila initiatives take place almost independent of the State, without or with funding, which is often minimal. They have developed their own spaces and their own markets, often capitalizing on the key members’ visibility in the nation’s chief cities (Cebu, Manila, Baguio, Davao, Puerto Princesa) and in the eyes of national and international curators, collectors, writers.

In/Sight: Making in Communities

From the above account, it is clear that “Making in Systems” intersects with the theme of “Making in Communities,” which emphasizes and underscores the need for education in the arts (in theory and practice) for both artists and their audiences. Such a process always needs a forum or venue, as shown by the BAF and the VIVA EXCON. These forums gathered artists, writers, teachers, critics and patrons and local communities in an atmosphere of mutual learning. This kind of learning is enabling for all participants while they go through a process which results in art and artists gaining competence to communicate to their various audiences. Through these gatherings new knowledge is gained and new connections are forged with various other organizations elsewhere in the country, thus multiplying the expansion and renewal of vocabularies and knowledge exponentially.

In practice however, the effort to push the enterprise of art away from the narrow confines of the “fine arts” is fraught in settings as complex and as diverse as Baguio and Bacolod,

not to mention Luzon and the Visayas. How do artist-educators make art more accessible to the uninitiated public, and yet remain firmly conversant with the exacting and highly specialized—at times well-nigh idiosyncratic—language of contemporary art? Roldan asks, for example, “From what perspective does art practice spring in every island, or what constitutes contemporary regional art? And more important, I guess is how relevant are we to our communities?”¹⁰

Off/Sight: Making in Cultures

It is in this surfacing of issues, and continuous reflexivity and auto-critique that artists working within the domain of “Making in Cultures,” a theme which compels the artists to confront, reflect on and negotiate the many tensions in the course of organizing, creating and researching: that between individual creativity vis-à-vis collective struggle; that between personal needs and the demands of organizing; that between tradition and modernity, authenticity and artistic license. “Of course,” Roldan clarifies, “we don’t expect VIVA EXCON to provide all the answers, but at least it helps to bring the issues into our consciousness.”¹¹

One issue has to do with sustainability. The International BAF, as it was conceptualized and initiated by its founders (the late Santiago Bose, among them) is practically defunct but has morphed into many different forms. On the other hand, its counterpart in the Visayas, the VIVA EXCON is still going strong; the last one was held in 2014. From these experiences we ask: Can collaborations between artists and local community sustain local art making without the aid of State and the market? What is the State’s role if any—in fostering what Patrick Flores describes as the “climate for the kind of art that may not necessarily be attractive to the market?” Some of the art that emerges from the artist as cultural worker are potentially “anti-establishment.” Can the State support the arts without necessarily compromising the latter’s ideals? If not, how can artists avoid being dependent on the State?¹²

Another issue has to do with the representation of place and identity given the nature and processes of collaborations on various levels. While VIVA EXCON and BAF showed some of the ways by which artists can collaborate on a regional level, and beyond to the national and international level, they also recognized the many perils that such engagements entail. For instance, the tendency to present an “essential” Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao aesthetic or style or voice when representing one’s place is a very real trap that artists can fall into, as I wrote in an essay about Mindanao artists.¹³ Visibility also results in “jetsetting,” superstar artists, who may be deprived of the time for continuous immersion, informed reflection and rigorous spadework that cultural work demands. On one hand, being recognized in the metropolitan centers had provided as earlier pointed out, more venues for education, exposure and networking. On the other hand, “recognition” can also restore the center-periphery map, with the metropolitan centers remaining firmly as frame of reference and careerist aspirations.

Doing cultural work is indeed fraught with traps and artists-researchers and cultural workers must not lose sight of the landmines that litter the landscape. At the same time, we keep the gains and triumphs firmly in sight, as we assess the contributions of the regional artist to the overall contemporary scene, as follows:

- The construction of new artistic personas, particularly that of the Cultural Worker.
- The renewal and enrichment of artistic vocabularies in terms of the local and the vernacular, and openness to collaborative and interdisciplinary art-making.
- Documentation and research and the rich database that results in such spadework.¹⁴
- The rethinking of art-historical, discursive and artistic methods in the metropolis.

Between Cracks

The summation looks very tidy and encompassing, but I assure you, it was far from tidy in practice and in the make-shift conditions of ragtag events. Off the beaten track, I have

08

Datuin, “Land, Locality and Communion.”

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09

Karen Flores, “Of Art and Association: Two Artists Meet,” *Pananaw 3: Philippine Journal of Visual Art / Visayas* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1999), p.36.

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10

Ibid., p.41.

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11

Ibid.

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12

Patrick Flores, “Central Station,” *Pananaw 4: Philippine Journal of the Visual Art / Luzon* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2002), p.13.

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13

Flaudette May Datuin, “Beyond the Tribal: Rethinking Mindanao,” *Pananaw 2: Philippine Journal of Visual Arts/Mindanao* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1998), pp.16–29.

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14

Ibid.

An example of such exhaustive spadework can be seen in Norberto “Bert” Monterona and Abraham “Abe” Garcia’s legworking in Mindanao.