

*How Global
Can Museums Be?*

CIMAM 2015 Annual
Conference Proceedings

Tokyo
November 7–9
2015

Program

Saturday November 7, 2015

The National Art Center, Tokyo

Day 1. Is the museum still a place for debate?

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- Bartomeu Mari – President of CIMAM.
- Hans-Martin Hinz – President of ICOM.
- Arimasu Ikiku – Deputy Commissioner, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan.
- Tamotsu Aoki – General Director, The National Center, Tokyo; Chair of Japanese National Committee for ICOM and Chair of CIMAM Tokyo 2015 Executive Committee.

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Q & A with Patricia Falguières

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Perspective 04: Georg Schöllhammer, Editor, Curator and writer, Head of tranzitat.at and Founding Editor of springerin, Vienna. Hedwig Saxenhuber, Curator, writer and General Editor springerin, Vienna.

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Peggy Levitt, Professor and Chair of Sociology, Wellesley College and Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts.

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Panel discussion with perspective speakers

Q & A with Perspective speakers

Saturday
November 7, 2015

Day 1
Is the museum still
a place for debate?

Welcome speeches

— Mami Kataoka, Chief Curator, Mori Art Museum.

Good morning once again. We'd like to start the CIMAM 2015 Annual Conference. Welcome to Tokyo, we have such a nice weather today! My name is Mami Kataoka, I'm the one of members of the board of CIMAM and Chief Curator of the Mori Art Museum and I'd really like to welcome you all here. So, we'd like to have Bartomeu Mari, President of CIMAM begin the conference.

— Bartomeu Mari, President of CIMAM.

Good morning everyone.

It is a great pleasure in the name of the members of CIMAM board to welcome you to this 2015 CIMAM conference in Tokyo. In the coming days we will gather around presentations, debates, discussions about a wide range of things that are of major concern and interest to the community of professionals in the museum sector.

As in the past years, the contents of this program have been elaborated by the board of CIMAM with a strong, intense participation of our local hosts, the people at the Mori Museum, and Mami Kataoka in particular. Under the title *How Global Can Museums Be?*, the members of the board have tried to synthesize a program that highlights some of the questions, the issues, the challenges or the new fields of action that the museum world is living in today; the forces and interests that shape our world are happening faster and faster, with changes in our economic, technological, political, social, and cultural environments.

This conference will discuss, among other things, if and how a single, unique code of ethics—morality and deontology—can apply for the different regions of our globe. For example, if a single narrative or construction of discourses about modern and contemporary art can be constructed. The tensions between universal values and local realities we are living in are at the core of the motivations for this year's CIMAM conference.

2015 has witnessed events where tensions gave way to cases of crisis and deep conflict among the actors of the system. One of these cases, by the way, affected myself and the institution that I directed for the past seven years. The debate will address the nature of these critical situations in order to make this discussion of interest to all.

Also, this year we inaugurate a new chapter in our relationship between ICOM and CIMAM, with the status of Affiliated Organization to ICOM. The presence among us of Dr. Hans-Martin Hinz, President of ICOM, signifies the normal development of this process that confirms CIMAM's role as a dynamic contributor to the development of the

debate about the present and the futures of the museum as an institution dedicated to the public interest, the common good.

Working for the past years with Anne-Catherine Robert-Hauglustaine, Director General of ICOM, has been very productive and pleasurable and I should thank her and her team for their support and involvement in this transition process. This new status will allow our organization to receive the funds, which are essential to the sustainability of our association, of our activities, and will allow us also to hire professionals that carry out the day-to-day work in our office. Until now these professionals worked on a freelance basis that was costly and not very convenient.

I also wish to communicate that Jenny Gil, our Executive Director for the past years, left our organization and is working now in an art institution in the United States: I take this opportunity to wish her the best for her new career. Also those of you who come regularly to the conference will be missing Inés Jover, our right hand at the CIMAM office, but this is because of the happy event that she is about to give birth to her first baby.

Today, for this conference, Victoria Macarte is representing the CIMAM office here in Tokyo and I would like very, very, very, very specially to thank and celebrate the involvement of Natsu, Sumika, Ayako, and Julia from the Mori team, who made this conference possible and certainly will be the key to most of its success.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of the members of the Japan Executive Committee for the CIMAM 2015 Annual Conference and especially the Agency for Cultural Affairs under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in Japan as co-organizers for their valuable support, without which this project could not have been possible. Also, the Japanese National Committee for ICOM, the Japanese Association of Museums, the Japanese Council of Art Museums and the Japan Association of Art Museums for welcoming the international community of contemporary art museum professionals represented by CIMAM. I wish also to give our heartfelt thanks to Ishibashi Foundation, to Benesse Holdings, the Fukutake Foundation, the Shiseido Company, for being key partners and sponsors of this important meeting, allowing the highest quality in organization and programming. My acknowledgement goes also to the companies: Dai-Nippon Printing, Nihon Kotsu, and Yu-un for their generous support. A very special mention goes to Ms. Yoshiko Mori, the Chair Person of the Mori Art Museum, who is hosting this event; to Mr. Fumio Nanjo, the Director of the Museum; Mami

Kataoka of course, the Chief Curator of the Mori Art Museum for their dedication and commitment to this project. Also, as I mentioned, her team has been really crucial.

Our gratitude also should go to modern and contemporary art museums (the institutions that we are going to visit during these days here in Tokyo). Finally, I would like to give special thanks to very important partners of CIMAM and those are, first of all, the Getty Foundation in collaboration with ICOM, the Fundación Cisneros: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, and the Gwangju Biennial Foundation for their generous grants that allow members from different contexts to join this important conference: 28 professionals residing in countries with emerging economies or from Central America and the Caribbean and South Korea are coming with the grants provided by these entities.

I could not end these words without reminding you that more than twenty years ago in 1994, the first CIMAM conference took place in Tokyo and at the time Rudi Fuchs was the President of CIMAM, Mr. Toshio Hara was the Vice-President and Fumio Nanjo was the Secretary General. We have Fumio Nanjo and Toshio Hara these days with us. Thank you for hosting a CIMAM meeting again. I only hope that these days give place to a very productive debate within the CIMAM conference. Thank you very much.

— MK: Thank you, Bartomeu, and we have special welcome remarks from Mr. Hans-Martin Hinz, the President of ICOM.

— Hans-Martin Hinz, President of ICOM
Good morning, dear museum colleagues, ladies, and gentlemen. It is a great honor and pleasure to be addressing you here in Tokyo on the occasion of the annual conference of CIMAM. I thank you warmly for your kind invitation and take this opportunity to thank the co-organizers and supporters of this conference—most of all the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Government of Japan, the Japanese Association of Museums, the Japanese Council of Art Museums, and ICOM Japan as well as our host today: the National Arts Center which provides a wonderful backdrop for this meeting. My heartfelt thanks go to Mrs. Arimasu Ikiku, Deputy Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Mr. Tamotsu Aoki, Chair of ICOM Japan and head of the Organizing Committee, and Mr. Marí, President of CIMAM. I also wish to extend my greetings to you who have made the effort to be here today and over the course of the coming days. Perhaps some of you are coming to Japan for the very first time for what promises to be an enriching event.

I am particularly grateful for the support of the Getty Foundation, a partner of ICOM for many, many years. And Getty has provided the enabling of 28

contemporary art professionals from many countries to attend this CIMAM 2015 conference, so thank you for that.

The quest for greater inclusion and diversity is and always has been at the heart of ICOM's work. Facilitating the exchange between professionals from diverse regions of the world and various social and cultural backgrounds is a wonderful achievement. Contemporary art museums in my view have a particular mission to create dialogue between the past and the present, between the established and the experimental, all the while ensuring the accessibility of the institution to an increasingly diverse public. As such, CIMAM has worked hard to facilitate the exchange of information and cooperation, to ensure that the role of contemporary art museums in the social and cultural development is understood. The theme debated here today: "How global can museums be today?" in our globalized societies, contemporary and art museums face new challenges in the twenty-first century.

Today the production of art is an ever-expanding contemporary practice; new art museums are created in many parts of the world, yet what makes the very "stuff" of art is constantly being redefined. How then, can common ground be found in eliciting the very essence of art? The conference will be the occasion to discuss the identity of art museums and the role they are bound to play in this emerging pattern whereby the transformation of the art-production process entails new museum practices.

Beyond preserving the sense of history for the future, our preoccupation as museum professionals revolves in many ways around the following issues: What is the relevance of contemporary modern art museums and how can they make best use of the influence in society to broaden perspectives on fundamental and socially pertinent matters? What is the part they play in the discourse on social, political, and global concerns? Are and should art museums be more participatory in their own communities by bringing art into the public?

ICOM members will come together again in Japan some years from now for ICOM's focal event: the triennial general conference in 2019. Kyoto was voted as the host city and we are proud to be able to welcome participants in a city and country so steeped in history and tradition. I hope that this taste of Japan's thriving cultural scene will encourage many of you to return for this event in 2019; but in the more immediate future, ICOM is busy organizing the upcoming triennial conference in Milan in 2016. I would also like to take this opportunity to say that we would be delighted to welcome you in Milan next year in July for this forthcoming event in which the worldwide museum community—and we expect 4,000 participants—will share knowledge and experience, networks, and discuss the theme:

Museums and Cultural Landscapes, which has so much relevance for museums today. This theme will explore the concept of the context-oriented museum at the core of Italian museology, as well as the relationship between museums and a landscape undergoing constant change. I look forward to the pleasure of meeting many of you present here today next summer in Milan.

This CIMAM event highlights both the growing energy for cultural endeavors in this part of the world and the energy that characterizes ICOM's international and national committees, regional alliances and affiliated organizations alike, wherever they may choose to meet. The contents of the conferences and stimulating relevant themes selected are inspiring, as is the great diversity of horizons characterizing participants. I'm sure that the coming few days of presentations and debates alongside what promise to be fascinating visits and demonstrations will offer plenty of opportunities to learn, share ideas, and make useful contacts. I would like to thank you once again for extending this invitation for me to be part of this great occasion for the CIMAM community, in the meantime I wish us productive and enjoyable exchanges over the course of this meeting and I thank you very much for your attention.

— MK: Thank you very much. We have two more remarks, so we'd would like to welcome Mrs. Arimasu Ikiku the Deputy Commissioner of the Agency for Culture Affairs of the Government of Japan.

— Arimasu Ikiku, Deputy Commissioner, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan: Good morning, a very good morning ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to extend my gratitude for you to attend this annual conference of CIMAM in Tokyo 2015. I understand that approximately 260 people are attending from approximately 50 countries and on behalf of the Agency for Culture Affairs, I would like to welcome you all very warmly and I take this opportunity to thank everybody who made this opportunity possible. As was mentioned earlier, this is the second time that the CIMAM Annual Conference is held in Japan since 1994 and the last time it was the first time that the CIMAM annual conference was held in the Asian region, so it was an opportunity to renew participants awareness about Asia including an introduction about the situation of modern and contemporary arts in the Asian region and how active they are and how individual artists are in the Asian region.

Now, it's been 21 years since the last time we met in Tokyo and this time, as you may know, the global environment has become very complicated, surrounding arts and also museums, because of the diversification of international expositions and international art fairs and also global changes in politics as well as in the economy.

Based on these changes, the overall theme for this conference has been decided: *Is the museum still a place for debate?*—and over the next three days, important issues of critical importance will be presented and discussed and I expect that these manifold and active discussions will help further develop the art world, as well as the museums in the future.

Now, at our agency we try to actively communicate what is happening in contemporary art in Japan so we have systems to support the introduction and exhibitions of work of contemporary artists of Japan and also we conduct a research and studies to further promote this message from Japan by helping host international conferences. In order to further promote modern and contemporary art we will need to discuss and resolve common issues, and we need to do this more than ever.

In 2020 we will host the Olympic and Paralympic games in Tokyo and this is not just a celebration of sport but also a celebration of culture. So, as soon as the Rio de Janeiro games are completed next year, we will start to deploy many cultural programs including: fine arts, music, performing arts, dance, and traditional performing arts, and these programs will be extended throughout Japan.

It is extremely timely for us to be able to hold this CIMAM annual conference where international challenges are shared and debated and will be the core of the promotion of art in the modern and contemporary and art museums.

So, along with the conference program, I understand that we have a post conference tour where you have the opportunity to visit our representative museums of modern and contemporary art in Japan and that you'll be seeing some exhibitions, which are now in Tokyo as well and we have also invited curators from throughout Japan for this conference. So we truly hope that will serve an opportunity for you to exchange information and develop relationships with these participants so that you will further understand the current status of modern and contemporary art in Japan.

Last but not least, I would like to close my remarks by thanking everybody who has made this event possible, including the members of the Executive Committee for the CIMAM annual conference in Tokyo. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

— MK: Thank you very much. We'd like to then welcome Mr. Tamotsu Aoki.

Tamotsu Aoki, General Director, The National Center, Tokyo; Chair of Japanese National Committee for ICOM and Chair of CIMAM Tokyo 2015 Executive Committee: Good morning, distinguished guests, respected members of CIMAM, ladies, and gentlemen. It is such a great pleasure

and honor for us that the CIMAM annual 2015 meeting is being held at this National Center in Tokyo. It has been 21 years since CIMAM took place in Japan last time. As for the Japanese art museums, it is very important that we are receiving the CIMAM meeting in Japan.

About this Center: it opened in January 2007. The National Art Center, Tokyo is still a very young museum, we don't have any collections, instead we are organizing 2,000 square meters of galleries and we are having more than 2.6 million visitors every year—this is really the most visited museum in Japan.

Today, I'd like to talk about one of the activities of our Museum in this globalizing world. *Next Doors: Contemporary Art in Japan and Korea* is the exhibition, which was co-organized and co-curated by the National Art Center, Tokyo and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea. They cooperated to choose 6 artists each from Japan and Korea and showed their works in the exhibition. The exhibition was very well received in Tokyo and it will soon be opened at the National Museum of Modern

and Contemporary Art, Korea as of next Monday, November 9th.

As you might know, the political relationship between Japan and Korea has not been good; however there have not been any obstacles in our collaboration and cooperation with the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea. We have a very good relationship, respecting each other and working hard to organize the same exhibition together.

This is very small example—maybe you might know many examples—however in this world full of disputes and confrontations, I strongly believe that it is crucially important that art and art museums should cross over the boundaries and differences in nations, culture, region, etc. through collaboration and cooperation. Art appeals to people's sense and heart directly.

With CIMAM 2015 Tokyo, let's enhance the relationship and cooperation of art museums in the world and let's make people over the world know the importance of art museums is in this global era. Thank you very much.

Saturday November 7, 2015
Day 1. *Is the museum still a place for debate?*

Keynote 1. Patricia Falguières, Professor, School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS), Chair of the Centre National des Arts Plastiques (CNAP), Paris, France.

Short Bio: Patricia Falguières is a professor at the School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS), Paris. She has published work on Renaissance philosophy and art, classifications, encyclopaedias, and the birth of the museum, including *Les Chambres des merveilles* (Bayard, 2002). She was the editor for the French publication of Julius von Schlosser's classic book *Die Kunst—und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance* (Paris, Macula, 2012) and published a critical edition of *Inside the White Cube* by Brian O'Doherty (Paris, Zurich, 2008), as well as numerous studies on the history of museums and collections. In 2014, she published *Carlo Scarpa, l'art d'exposer*, a book by Philippe Duboy, within the collection she created for the Maison Rouge Foundation in Paris, France. She is currently working on Renaissance *Technè*, an approach to art as a mode of production, through Aristotelian ontology. Alongside Caroline Van Eck (Leyden University), she led the *Arts, invention, industrie* seminar at the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris, France and the *Gottfried Semper* conference. She has published extensively on contemporary art (monographs on Thomas Hirschhorn, Cristina Iglesias, Anri Sala, Mona Hatoum, Bernard Frize, Allora & Calzadilla, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Philippe Thomas, Julie Ault, Danh Vo, etc., and essays on Conceptual art and the relationship between art and theatre, among others). Together with Elisabeth Lebovici and Natasa Petresin, she runs the international seminar *Something you should know* at the EHESS. She is currently Chair of the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, France (CNAP).

Presentation: Debating on museums: What is the question?

The program statement issued by CIMAM's bureau raised my perplexity: *Is the museum still a place for debate?* Here, what puzzles me is "still."

Instead of "Is Museum still a place for Debate?" I would rather reformulate the question: *Was the museum ever a place for debate? Will one day the museum be a place for debate?* To ask if Museum is *still* a place for debate depends on a truncated historical perspective. It's reviving the *Golden Mythology* surrounding the museum's birth: the claim that it is one and the same with the *democratic values*.

This is a commonplace of so many books about museums: the museum being supposed to be a facility, an amenity of democracy, the emerging place where the very idea of the *public* came first: the *audience* of the museum being a prefiguration of the *public*.

We identify this topic: it's a slightly different version of Jürgen Habermas' classic work on the birth of the *public sphere*, the *public sphere* being "the society engaged in critical public debate": the topic is build up in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, published in 1962.

It was not difficult to transfer this thematic, built on the ground of the theater's audience, onto

the museum: the audience became the main topic of these investigations on the museum's history, which started in the eighties. From this perspective we can say that the major part of the museum's historiography is guided by the thematic built by Habermas on one hand, by the Anglo-Saxon constitutionalist tradition on the other. Such is the frame through which *free speech* was recognized the supreme political and philosophical value: a crucial value indeed, on which democracy is supposed to be built (this was demonstrated again during the recent debates on so-called "blasphemy"¹). Such is the ground for our question: "Is the museum still a place for debate?"

Was the museum ever a place for debate? Nothing is less certain. Were museums places for free speech? Was debate intended to be the museum's purpose? Was the museum bound to debate? I must admit that this idea reminds me the charming and so comforting eighteenth-century canvas by Zoffany showing well educated English gentlemen and Italian *virtuosi* debating on the good and the beautiful in the middle of the *Tribuna* of the Uffizi Museum in Florence. I'm afraid we'll have first to deconstruct this idyllic scenery. Let's remember two or three things that are relevant here.

Hardly created by the *International Museums*

¹ The discussion Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler, Saba Mahmood, *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury and Free Speech*, Fordham University Press, 2013.

Association (1902), the *Museums Journal* launched an international investigation on the pedagogical tools created by museums all over the world (*mobile museums* for instance), pedagogy being the main topic scrutinized by the directors of this new association of museum. Strangely enough, and quite untimely, kind of an answer came from the most prominent director of the Kunsthistorischen Museum in Vienna, Julius von Schlosser, who published, in Leipzig, in 1908, *Die Kunst und Wunderkammern des Spätrenaissance* [The Art and Wonder Rooms of Late Renaissance]. At the time, the book looked desperately disappointing. It provided an *uncanny* genealogy for the European museum, the *Kunst und Wunderkammer* of late-Renaissance princes in Central Europe: museums seen within this frame had nothing to do with any kind of pedagogy or usefulness. They were socially futile, the strange fruits of the fancy and vagaries of German princes, full of the remnants of the childhood of humanity. Schlosser's essay implicitly linked the museum to the rise and theoretical production of the very concept of *sovereignty*, at the end of sixteenth century, even worse: to this nightmarish figure emerging then in the darkness of political theory, the *despot*.² The whole book published by Schlosser was a particularly notorious and regressive version of the modern mythology surrounding the birth of the museum: the idea that the museum had been in Renaissance Europe, a factor of the (religious) secularization of European society. *The Art and Wonder Rooms of Late Renaissance* was a strange book, "uncanny" in the real meaning of the term: it was impossible to reintegrate it in a calm, appeased, and linear history of museums. This is precisely why it faded from memory for more than sixty years. Still, we have to take into account its awkward premise.

Let me add a word about the *institutionality* of the museum: what distinguishes a museum from a collection or a set of collections.

One of the great issues at stake in eighteenth-century Europe was the *perpetuity of foundations*. Who else than the Church could be responsible for the perpetual upkeep of donations, family chapels, education, funding, and fellowships, perpetual celebrations of a mass in memory of some dead ancestor? Or the upkeep of museums, since a *museum* was, strictly speaking, a foundation (the very name of *museum* coming from the perpetual college of fellows created in the Library of Alexandria by King Ptolemaeus)? Only the Church was seen as able to take care of these foundations *in perpetuity*. I won't go on on this topic.³ But let me

say that precisely this issue was a main driving force behind the solicitude of the State for museums as such: the issue being for the State to substitute the enduring power of the Church over time as keeper of families' properties. The everlasting debate found an end with *desamortizations* all over Europe: the confiscation or forced sale of the goods of the Church, among which pictures and sculptures that enriched the *museums*, let them be private or public, the "vente des biens nationaux" in revolutionary France being only the most spectacular version of that general European drive. The State became the one and unique guarantee and protector of foundations, museums being among them (as far as I know, this legal aspect of museum history has never been touched by historians or theoreticians of the museum idea).

What does it mean for us? It means that museums in Europe, since Renaissance, always had a privileged relationship to thesaurization, to heritage, to patrimony: the modern birth of the museum did have a strong and direct relationship to the creation of legal mechanisms, which allowed the creation of *previously unseen institutions*. More: we can say that the modern museum was a test bench for institutional creativity.⁴ This is why we should not confuse a museum and the collections included in it.

At that point we can ask: was the museum intended to be a place for debate? The answer is no. The distribution of parts in the bourgeois society of the nineteenth century was clear: the museum was not intended to be a public arena. Being a public arena was the part of the press, of the parliament, of the national assembly: the museum was not at stake. Even the university needed the whole nineteenth century to become a public arena. We should not forget, for instance, that in American universities, free speech was not officially guaranteed for professors until around the first third of the twentieth century, even if it had such champions as chief justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and philosopher John Dewey, who was the creator and the first president of the Association of American University Professors (Dewey had to draw up the argument that a professor was working for the community not

² See Patricia Falguieres, "La société des objets," introduction to Julius von Schlosser *Les Cabinets d'art et de merveilles de la renaissance tardive*, Paris, Macula, 2012, pp. 7–54.

³ I have exposed it in "Museum in the Making," in *Keys to a Passion*, Suzanne Pagé & Béatrice Parent éd., Paris, 2015, pp. 34–43.

⁴ See "Fondation du Théâtre ou Méthode de l'Exposition universelle. Les Inscriptions de Samuel Quicquelberg" (1565), in *Les Cahiers du Musée national d'Art moderne* 40 (autumn 1992), pp. 91–115.

for the trustees of the university).⁵ Did the agents working in museums get the same immunity? No. At a time when such luminaries of German universities as Theodor Mommsen were not only “public intellectuals” but active participants to the parliamentary life,⁶ the fate of curator Hugo von Tschudi illustrates the discrepancy between university and museum in Wilhelmine Germany, a country otherwise supplied, then, with all the amenities of a modern European democracy: Tschudi, the director of the National Gallery in Berlin was fired by the kaiser himself in 1908 for having acquired and exposed too many French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, Wilhelm II having been petitioned by a bunch of German artists, outraged by the untimely francofilia showed by a civil servant.⁷

Let me take another example from present-day democratic Europe. In France today, university professors are exempted from what is called “duty of reserve” or “obligation of discretion,” which forbids all civil servants to “use their function as a tool to make explicit propaganda” or openly discuss

in the medias the authority of their hierarchy.⁸ This is still not the case with museum’s *conservateurs*, as we can observe each time a polemic shakes the French art world—for them, to transgress the *devoir de reserve* without being exposed to an official warning requires a pseudonym or a pen name.⁹

Let’s get back to the question at stake: “Is the museum still a place for debate?” The question seems to consider that free speech is already assumed by museums *in abstracto* while forgetting that, as far as they are concerned, museum’s people, museum’s curators, are scarcely granted the immunity of free speech. And this institutional issue has scarcely (if ever) been sufficiently documented. However, it would be urgent to get a survey of the diversity of museum curators’ legal situations and an overview of the specific kinds of institutional tutelage and administrative supervision (supervision by the board of trustees, the public administration, or the political tutelage) that tie their hands all over the world. We can’t go on to count only with an exclusively north-American paradigm (the privilege given to the relationship of museums directors with trustees & sponsors) that shaped the whole of institutional critique and much of the museum’s historiography.¹⁰

So when we take for granted the museum as a place for debate, do we include the people in charge of it? Is free speech granted not only for artists and audience but for the museum’s curators too? Are these one and the same? (Here there is an unquestioned *glissando*.) We should not forget that a museum is never homogeneous; it’s not one lot, although so many studies published in the eighties

5 See Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club. A Story of Ideas in America*, New York, Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2001, pp. 411–33; David Rabban, *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years, 1870–1920*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 217 et suiv. The argument hardly resisted to the MacCarthyist era, as exemplified by the 1949–1950 “Loyalty Oath Case” in Berkeley University, and the subsequent resignation of the German refugee, Ernst Kantorowicz, who formulated the argument of the tenure being a magistrature in *The Fundamental Issue Documents and Marginal Notes on the University of California Loyalty Oath* (San Francisco, 1950), c.f. David Gardner, *The California Oath Controversy*, Berkeley University Press, 1967. (http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/themed_collections/subtopic6b.html); sur l’essor du Free Speech Movement contre la guerre du Viet Nam sur les campus américains à partir de 1964, c.f. David Lance Goines, *The Free Speech Movement : Coming of Age in the 1960s*, Berkeley, TenSpeed-Press, 1993 (http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/themed_collections/subtopic6b.html; <http://vm136.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/FSM/>; http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/uchistory/archives_exhibits/loyaltyoath/symposium/index.html

6 Cf Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen: Eine Biographie*, Beck, Munich, 2002; Theodor Mommsen: *Gelehrter, Politiker und Literat unter Mitarbeit von Henning Börm*. Josef Wiesehöfer (ed.), Stuttgart, 2005. The political commitment of university professors in Germany before the First World War aroused seminal essays by Max Weber “Wissenschaft als Beruf” and “Politik als Beruf” drafted in 1917, c.f. the clarification by Isabelle Kalinowski in Max Weber, *La science, profession & vocation, suivie de Leçons weberiennes sur la science & la Propagande*, by Isabelle Kalinowski, Marseille, Agone, 2005. The sociological approach of German university professors has been ignited by the now classic *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890–1933*, published by Fritz Ringer in 1969 (2nd edition Wesleyan, 1990); see Konrad Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism*, Princeton University Press, 1982. About the French model, see François Azouvi, *La Gloire de Bergson: essai sur le magistère philosophique*, Paris, Gallimard, 2007.

7 Cf Peter Paret, *German Encounters with Modernism 1840–1945*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 92–118; Johan Petropoulos, *The Faustian Bargain: The Art World in Nazi Germany: The Art World in Nazi Germany*, Oxford University Press, 2000, chap. 1, “Art Museum Directors.”

8 This restraint does not figure explicitly in the law and statute of civil servants (which would interfere with political and civil rights) but is drafted from jurisprudential activity (mostly by the Conseil d’État).

9 As we can see for instance with the “Storage War” that sets fire to the Louvre nowadays in the anonymous opinions published by the *Tribune de l’art*, <http://www.latribunedelart.com/reserves-du-louvre-a-lievin>

10 Of which one of the best models was delivered in 1975 by John Coplans in “Pasadena’s Collapse and the Simon Takeover: Diary of a Disaster,” *Artforum* 13, no. 6 (February 1975, now reprinted in *Provocations. Writings by John Coplans*, Stuart Morgan, ed., London, 1996, pp. 157–205 and <http://www.eastofborneo.org/articles/pasadenas-collapse-and-the-simon-takeover-diary-of-a-disaster-1975>. About the exclusion of Curator Edward Fry by the Guggenheim Board of Trustees preventing him to exhibit Hans Haacke’s Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971 (an investigation on the Real Estate strategy of the Guggenheim family), see Rosalyn Deutsche, “Property Values Hans Haacke, Real estate and the Museum,” in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, pp. 159–84; Frederic Jameson, “Hans Haacke and the Cultural Logic of Postmodernism,” in *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business*, Brian Wallis, ed., The New Museum, New York, 1986, pp. 38–51, reprinted in *Neo-Avant Garde and Culture Industry*, Brian Wallis, ed., Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 2000, pp. 204–41; Julia Bryan-Wilson, *ARTWORKERS. Radical Practice in the Viet Nam Era*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009, pp. 173–213.

do essentialize “the museum.” The ontology of the museum delivered by so many critical studies published in the nineties prevents us from seeing that each museum is torn between interests and positions, which are diverging, at least heterogeneous and in many ways antagonistic. It’s a battlefield, if a silent and bureaucratic one. But it’s rather difficult to gather information about it because the kind of knowledge assumed by those in charge of an institution like the museum falls within that area anthropologists call *tacit knowledge*. And because it requires historians to dive into the repulsive mass of “grey writings,” the bureaucratic archive.

Let’s get back to history and to the kind of “debate” we can associate with the museum. In the nineteenth century, debate—even artistic debate—took place mainly *outside* the museum: in the salons, in the academies, in shows and exhibitions, in stores and galleries, in the press.¹¹ The museum as an institution had to be considered independently from the exhibitionary function (this is why modernism had *parti lié* with the art market¹²). On the contrary, the museum was supposed to be a shrine, a sanctuary—an assumption made evident by the Greek temple architecture universally in use for nineteenth century museums as by the decorative apparatus devised by painters for its interior spaces.¹³ Not only because it should have received only *l’indiscutable*, the unquestionable, *l’intemporel*, what is assumed to escape from any debate: *masters* and *masterpieces* (such indeed is the power

of the *Canon*¹⁴). Every museum could not lay claim to these Olympian heights, and most of them had to be at ease with their local integration, in a pragmatic way, by favoring minor works of art, civic traditions, and local *petits-maîtres*.¹⁵ Triangular pediments and Greek colonnades did mean something else, something more general: the building of the museum, being the building of an institution, was an invisible process, whose steps whatever turbulent, even stormy they had been, had to be erased and forgotten. The anthropologist Mary Douglas helps us to understand this very period in an institution’s life: “the high triumph of institutional thinking is to make institutions completely invisible.”¹⁶ As Daniel J. Sherman brings it to life in his masterly study of nineteenth-century French provincial museums, it was impossible for those who were in charge of the triumph of the museum—the public figures who were in charge of the museum’s administration, of its purchasing and exhibiting arrangements—to take on a public debate on artworks in a political context. A city councilor of Bordeaux reports: “it’s very disagreeable to have to discuss the merits of a work of art in a public meeting.” They had to rely on advisory boards: the regular mechanisms of notability and expertise cleared them of that burden, the political debate: “the comforted bromide of ‘expertise’ always provided an antidote to any suggestion of politics,” as Sherman aptly concludes.¹⁷

As far as political space is equated with democratic debate, the museum was not then allowed to be a *political space*: to paraphrase a famous slogan by Gertrude Stein, I would say that “you could then be a museum or you could be political, but you couldn’t be both.” So we should not conclude that, a museum because it is accessible to the largest audience and/or is legally State-run, is a *public* or *political space*. In the nineteenth century, when democratic debate pervaded national assemblies, newspapers, streets, no part was granted to the museum.

11 On the wealth of exhibitions proposed in Victorian London by what is named then Show Business or Museum Industry see Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London. A panoramic history of exhibitions, 1600–1862*. Cambridge, Mass.-London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978; David Solkin, *Painting for Money. The visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century England*. New Haven-London, The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 1992; *Art on the Line. The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780–1836*, David Solkin, ed., New Haven-London, The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Courtauld Institute Gallery, Yale university Press, New Haven and London, 2001; Patricia Falguières, “Catlin, painting and the museum industry,” in *Gradhiva. Revue d’anthropologie et d’histoire des arts* 3 (2006), pp. 39–53 & 111–14.

12 Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon. Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, Cambridge University Press, 1993; Mixhael C. Fitzgerald, *Making Modernism. Picasso and the Creation of the Market for Twentieth-Century Art*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1995; Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Princeton University Press, 1996.

13 C.f. Daniel J. Sherman, *Worthy Monuments. Art Museums and the Politics of Culture in Nineteenth-Century France*, Harvard University Press, 1989; James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World from the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism*, Oxford University Press, 2000; Tempel der Kunst. Die Entstehung des öffentlichen Museums in Deutschland 1701–1815, Bénédicte Savoy (ed.), Philipp von Zabern Verlag, Mayence, 2006.

14 While in the 80s historians like Francis Haskell were radically historicizing it, cultural critiques were dismantling the authority of the canon and putting at stake its institutional setting, the museum, see Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art: some aspects of taste, fashion, and collecting in England and France*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1976; Francis Haskell & Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981; Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been no Great Women Artists?” *Art News* 69 (January 1971), pp. 22–39 re-edit. In *WOMEN ARTISTS. The Linda Nochlin Reader*, Maura Reilly (ed.), London, Thames & Hudson, 2015; Griselda Pollock & Rozsika Parker, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981; Griselda Pollock “About canons and culture wars,” in G. Pollock, *Differencing the canon. Feminist desire and the writing of Art History*, London, Routledge, 1999.

15 See Daniel J. Sherman, *Worthy Monuments. Art Museums and the Politics of Culture in Nineteenth-Century France*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., London, 1989, passim.

16 Mary Douglas, *How institutions think*, Syracuse, 1986.

17 Daniel J. Sherman, *Worthy Monuments*, chapter 6, p. 193.

For the museum, to win a part in the ongoing democratic debate supposed a breach: a breach in the organization of each place's purpose, a breach in the layout and the allocation of positions. This rupture in the institutional routine, bursting improperly thresholds and dividing lines, could find a spectacular expression. Sergei Eisenstein gave its most heroic imagery in *October*: the revolutionary mob storming the art collections of the Winter Palace in Petrograd in 1917. Revolution is the reshaping of what is understood to be a political space, that is to say moving and transforming the received borders between public and private, political, and individual. Such could be the condition to let the museum into the perimeter of political debate: the history of revolutionary Louvre exemplifies this dramatic (and ephemeral) accession of the museum to public debate.¹⁸ Still some other images come to mind when we try to figure out such a breach in the normal allocation of parts and roles—politics is always an event: politics happen, breaking in from the outside, obstructing the routine of everyday men's and goods management, adjourning it's time and space. It happens by revealing division and dispute.¹⁹ Some more images from nineteenth century heralded the admission of museum in the political debate that is the distinguishing fixture of the twentieth century. Some headlines, some captions: "Workers Visiting the Museum," "The Sunday Public Visiting the Fine Arts Gallery." This is the inaugural scene of the modern museum. But it's not properly "a debate": it's an "intrusion." The workers' bodies intruding in the museum's space became an issue; it indicated equality being reclaimed by those unexpected visitors, as much as class division splitting, from now on, the museum space. Equality and division: such are the two conditions required for politics to happen. It means that this intrusion of improper bodies in the museum reshaped and re-cut the material and symbolic space in which the museum as experience takes place. This was the *democratic* experience: the fact that anybody, without any kind of skill, privilege of birth, or richness, any kind of qualification, could get in. Here it's the "any" that is important: the any that is the singular mark of democracy. Unexpected subjects are entering in a very particular *sphere of experience*, where one has to be able to participate

in a singular space, in a particular sphere of sensible experience cut out from the social continuum (the sphere of art, the sphere of what Jacques Rancière calls the "esthetic regime"²⁰), this appeared to some as the key of the worker's emancipation. It means that esthetic autonomy did not appear, then, as adverse to political emancipation—it was just the contrary. For all great reformers who planned the new draft for the modern museum, esthetic autonomy was seen as the instrument of emancipation. It was essential for what I would call the modern *Museum Idea*. We have to underline it since many argumentations by sociologists and art theoreticians do acknowledge as "political" only what is explicitly *representing* a "political issue." What is important there is exceeding representation: it is the reshaping of what Rancière called the *partage du sensible*.

Let's make clear that this is not about "pedagogy." The modern experience of the museum (as its promoters thought it) was not a question of "workers' education." This was the program of the *School of Design* as Henry Cole conceived it, or the program of the Newark Museum dreamed up by Cotton Dana: their utility pedagogy is somewhat diagonal to the modernist ambition.²¹ Which doesn't mean that design or typography have been neglected by the modernist program, as the collections and exhibitions of so many museums, MoMA first, do give evidence: it's a peculiarity of the modernist program to never dissociate the purification of forms from the ambition to fix and give shape to the spaces of everyday life.²² But the way the visitors are summoned in those different kinds of institutions are quite divergent. The modern museum contains a specific area where the indeterminacy of objects and works is the rule.²³ Where objects are no more "addressed": they have lost their place, the

18 See Yveline Cantarel-Besson, *La Naissance du musée du Louvre*, 2 vol., Paris, RMN, 1981; Edouard Pommier, *L'Art de la liberté. Doctrines et débats de la Révolution française*, Paris, Gallimard, 1991; Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre. Art, Politics and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, University of California Press, 1994; Dominique-Vivant Denon. *L'oeil de Napoléon, catalogue de l'exposition du Musée du Louvre*, Marie- Anne Dupuy, ed., Paris, RMN, 1999 ; *Les Vies de Dominique-Vivant Denon*, Daniela Gallo dir., Musée du Louvre, Documentation Française, Paris, 2001.

19 Jacques Rancière, *La Mésestence*, Paris, Galilée, 1995; idem, *Aux bords du politique*, Paris, Gallimard, 2003.

20 See Jacques Rancière, *Le Partage du sensible*, Paris, La Fabrique, 2000 ; idem, *Le Spectateur émancipé*, Paris, La Fabrique, 2008.

21 See Elizabeth Bonython & Anthony Burton, *The Great Exhibitor: The Life and Work of Henry Cole*, London, V&A Museum, 2003; Carol G. Duncan, *A Matter of Class: John Cotton Dana, Progressive Reform, and the Newark Museum*, New York, periscope, 2010.

22 See Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display. A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1999; Jacques Rancière, "La surface du design," in *Le destin des images*, Paris, Hazan, 2003, pp. 105–22.

23 Samuel Cauman, *The Living Museum: Experiences of an Art Historian and Museum Director*, Alexander Dorner, New York University, New York, 1958; Monica Flacke-Knoch, *Museumkonzeptionen in der Weimarer Republik: Die Tätigkeit Alexander Dorners im provinzialmuseum Hannover*, Marburg, Jonas Verlag, 1985; Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display. A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1999; Maria Gough, "Constructivist Disoriented: El Lissitzky's Dresden and Hannover Demonstrationsräume" in *Situating El Lissitzky*. Vitebsk, Berlin, Moscow, Nancy perloff & Brian Reed, ed., The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2003, pp. 77–128.

site or the ritual that gave them meaning, the hierarchies they ornamented, and even their name. This aesthetic “secularization” started, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe, with antique marbles of vague identification, and decommitted altarpieces. This is why the modern project widely exceeds modern art: it launches a previously unseen kind of relation to what is identified as “art.” While we have forgotten it aroused, in Europe, much more reluctance than we think,²⁴ the process of secularization and esthetization (which is quite singular and problematical) still stir up strong oppositions, as substantiated by the conflicts taking place in Indian Museums²⁵—these “conservatories of religious pluralism.”²⁶ What we call the *White Cube* is the process of delimitation and containment itself, which gives rise to an indeterminate public: this was, for most of the political thinkers of art, from William Morris to Giulio Carlo Argan, the touchstone of the political implication of the modernist program.

In Italy after 1944, after the Second World War and twenty years of Fascism, the possibility of figuring out the museum as an *heterotopy* was pivotal for the emancipation program. Bringing together art historians, architects, museums directors, what we could be tempted to call a “modernist” or a “formalist” approach to art, but actually taking root in a political analysis of architecture, urbanism, and design, inspired a revolution in museology all over Italy. As art historian Giulio Carlo Argan wrote, all museums, let them be medieval or modern art museums, “were called to be a Bauhaus School”: the *life of forms* is a political one. It was the condition of reconfiguring the political space as a democratic one after twenty years of Fascism. A quite specific kind of *White Cube* designed then by architects like Franco Albini, BPPR or Carlo Scarpa, reconfiguring Italian museums, offered an alternative, a resolutely alternative one, to the American version of the *White Cube* and its purified formalism: it was the heart of an explicitly political agenda fiercely fought at the time by right wing and clerical parties.²⁷

24 See Quatremère de Quincy, *Lettres à Miranda sur le déplacement des monuments de l'art de l'Italie*, Paris, Macula, 1989.

25 Voir Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Post-Colonial India*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2004; Saloni Mathur, Kavita Singh (eds.), *No Touching, No Spitting, No praying: The Museum in South Asia*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2015.

26 Pour reprendre l'expression et les analyses de Naman P. Ahuja, “The Body Redux. A Curator's Post-Script on Exhibiting India,” in *Museums of the World. Towards a New Understanding of a Historical Institution*, K. Alqvist & L. Belfrage (eds), Stockholm, Axel and Margaret Axson, Johnson Foundation, 2015, pp. 81–107.

27 C.f. Patricia Falguières, “L'arte della mostra. Pour une autre généalogie du *White Cube*,” in *Carlo Scarpa, l'art d'exposer*, édition et commentaire Philippe Duboy, Paris, Lectures Maison Rouge / J.R.P. Ringier, pp. 6–45; idem “Politics for the White Cube: The Italian Way,” *Grey Room* 63, Spring 2016.

We are still far away from Zoffany's peaceful and exquisite British gentlemen *debating in the museum*. The museum is not the container of the “debate”: it is the limits of the containment, the topography of the new kind of public space it determines, which are at stake. And, as a consequence, the kind of objects it includes. The debate is necessarily as endless as is endless the process of emancipation itself.

One of the main limits of the habermassian paradigm is its fixity: the coordinates of public space are given once and for all, they constitute the ideal frame or arena of so-called *democratic deliberation* because its objects and its ends are already stabilized.

On the contrary, Jacques Rancière, Wendy Brown, Michael Warner, Judith Butler, and a few others (regardless to their differences), showed us that it is the determination of the topics and the ends of the democratic debate that are at stake, the (somewhat difficult and violent) demarcation of what is political or not. It's a frontline, a moving frontline, always submitted to new outlines produced by a multiplicity of conflicts: the public space is continuously to be produced.

The “Culture War” in the USA in the nineties showed it once more. The museum was then less a place for debate than a disputed place: the “debate” took place outside the museum, before its doors as much as inside. As feminist, Afro-American, Portorican, Chicanos, anti-Vietnam activists in the seventies, gay and lesbian, anti-AIDS militants in the nineties claimed against State censorship that “the private is political.” What, for the museum, was at stake during these two crucial periods? The reassessment, in a polemical way, of the universal: minorities introducing previously unseen issues in the public space—the public space being redefined by this very process as new political subjects appear through it. The museum is one of the test fields where one can check the broadening of the public sphere. The recurrent recasting of the border between private and public is the consequence of the action of a multiplicity of new agents (women / black women / homosexuals /...). It is a process with only provisional stabilization. A series of memorable exhibitions, mainly in New York, in the eighties and nineties, both illustrated and provided that process—*Americana*, at the Whitney Biennial in 1985, *If you lived here*, at the DIA (1987–1989) *Democracy*, at the DIA (1988), *AIDS Timeline*, at Berkeley (1989) then at the Whitney (1991)—taking the renewal of the emancipatory program linked to the museum as their topic.

If we are not conscious of the underlying contentiousness that produces the public space, if we think it can spare the museum, the museum being a place for consensus (such is the ideal vision of the

museum released by liberalism), we cannot understand what happens to “us,” what happens to the museum.

Allow me an historical parenthesis. We tend to forget that the first appearance of museums in Europe, at the end of the fifteenth century, was the by-product of the rediscovery of the very concept of *Public Space* as the Roman Law shaped it. The “signs” (*signa*) that was the way antic statues and marble inscriptions were named. Their gathering, from the *Quattrocento* on attempted to establish a specific kind of space: the public space, the *Res Publica* (literally the “public thing”), which is neither religious nor linked to the aristocratic genealogies. This was a long-distance run, starting in thirteenth-century Italy, with the rediscovery of Roman Law, and the major clashes between the Roman Church and those who pretended to revive Roman citizenship. The *museum* as such is both the relic and the substitute of that ambition. This is why, in spite of all, it *holds on* today.

Yet we are witnessing nowadays an incomparable shrinkage of the public sphere, at a global level.

We should not delude ourselves: all kind of power, even the most democratic ones, tends to rule getting rid of politics: appealing to the privilege of birth, God’s authority, science, wealth. The trend of all power is oligarchic. By nature it tends to infringe upon public space, to grab again to its exclusive account the signs and authority of the “public thing.” That trend is subjected to a spectacular and unprecedented acceleration. New forms of governance impose themselves in the name of expertise and efficiency. In “mature democracies,” the ideal of ruling without politics, without taking in account all those divisions that constitute a people, this ideal seems at hand. Every day we observe an impressive de-politicization of public affairs in the name of consensus. Economy, statistics, sociology... every kind of “science” is in use to objectify as an abstract whole the multiple disassembled facets which make a people. With the technocratic craft of political decision, all the old places of public debate (newspapers, university among others) become obsolete. As for the museum, you know very well and better than me how simple it is to weaken its purpose only by ordering new managerial criteria: for instance, under pretext of “democratization,” demanding attendance levels (an abstraction, “the public,” is then produced by the whole range of statistical and economic tools). Or by assigning the museum an unprecedented task: to become a *label*, a new kind of global economic player. This is what is at stake with *branding*. Note that this dismantling of the emancipatory mission of the museum is organized, in Europe at least, through the most ordinary ways of public accounting.

But the erasing of politics is demanded too by the boundlessness, the unrestricted of capital and wealth we name “globalization.” Of course the art market is its exemplary vector. In this planetary trend, the museum, today, has an equivocal part and plays double-dealing. On one side, the museum is a relic, a vestige of the public space in a time of de-politicization of ruling: this is why it retains authority and attraction. On the other side, it is more and more a local step in the international track through which values are ratified and produced. It is the most prestigious expression of the boundlessness of wealth (I don’t need to insist on it, it’s obvious). On the global map of speculative activity, the museum is both a signal and an accelerator of the speculative process. Its oligarchic dimension asserts itself in the showiest way: the importance awarded to “the collector,” promoted to the rank of main protagonist of the art scene is its most significant symptom.

Here the distribution of parts is quite blurred. Being “private” or “public” is not enough to tell the difference between the different options offered to the museum. The speculative process takes hold of public museums, although state or city supervision gets heavier and heavier in the museum, its staff, its management, the exhibitions produced. Testing the new ways of public management, the museum becomes a key facility for the process of “modernization” undertaken by more and more States: from now on the international accreditation of “newcomer” States requires the museum. In most cases, this accreditation coincides with the certification by and through the international speculative track. On the contrary we have seen the trustees of the Detroit Institute of Art supporting the director to resist the liquidation of a prestigious art collection in the name of economic rationality (the bailout of a municipal bankruptcy). And the spectacular proliferation of art foundations says nothing about the diversity of their ends: we cannot forget the part played by the DIA Foundation, in the New York of the eighties and nineties, when it came to devise a culture of resistance to the consensus. Today, so diverse and specific are the local situations that an analysis of these new institutions requires a case-by-case approach.

Assenting or resisting the enlistment of the museum under the flag and the pressure of neo-liberal “economic rationality,” this is the crucial alternative today. A tactical wavering between the two options is the daily bread of those in charge of museums all over the world.²⁸ This ambivalence is structural, as is evident from the hopes aroused by the creation of museums in countries blank of any

28 See Matti Bunzl, *In search of a Lost Avant-garde. An Anthropologist investigates the Contemporary Art Museum*, University of Chicago Press, 2014.

mark of democracy: quite paradoxically the planetary proliferation of museums can perfectly match with the progressive erasure of public space.

This is why the situation of museums, on a global scale, today, is unprecedented. I would not ask “Is the museum *still* a place for debate?” but, on the contrary, “The museum is about to be a place for debate.”

This means that we have to think over the now classic analyses produced by the “institutional critique,” by proposing new concepts and new issues. It will be done not outside but in the museum itself. I’ll suggest an alternative (let me try an anticipation).

Whether the museum assumes by project to work on the past dissents of art: to revisit the history of modern art from a non-consensual point of view, updating the potentialities of forgotten positions, of postponed or declined options, *etc.* Which means that museums staff have absorbed and implemented in the long run the critical contributions of the *pensée critique*, of institutional critique, of genre critique, of subaltern studies, *etc.*, which will feed the long-term project of the museum. It is already the case in more than one museum as testified by many exhibitions (like *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution* in 2007; *ACT UP NY: Activism, Art, and the AIDS Crisis 1987–1993*; *Manhattan Mixed Use*; *Principio Potosi*; *Un saber realmente útil*; *etc.*). In which cases the museum reinvents itself as a strong political spot by examining history from the point of view of its divisions and dissents, taking the chance of doing without consensus.

Whether the museum will be more and more confronted with the violence of regressive reactions aroused by the new ways of ruling without politics and the unrestriction of capital: the regressive anti-oligarchic reactions that, in the name of the ancestor’s religion, blood, soil, birth, race, prohibit any kind of politics.

Here, censorship is a most signifying symptom. What is new about it is that the “want of censorship” now comes from groups or segments of the public as much as from State powers. We can observe it

all over the world, Europe included. And it is not a consequence of the sudden entrance of the museum in “different cultures” as is decorously said (we have to insist on it). In Europe for instance, the want of censorship has changed radically. It means that those who manipulate it have a complete command of the media and the media operations the “scientific production of scandals” requires.²⁹ From this point of view, the State may appear as the protector of both consensus and free speech. In France we saw it when, on the place Vendôme and the gardens of Versailles, two major works, two emblems of market values, were vandalized by extreme-right militants: the solicitude from the highest level of the State to the victims—Paul McCarthy and Anish Kapoor—was in inverse proportion to the consensual silence that has buried the Abu Dhabi stakes (the critical project of *Gulf Labor Coalition* is, in France, quite inaudible). Censorship and the manufacture of consent are two faces of the same coin, as the politics of terror led by the “enemies of democracy” is about to be the best tool of a neo-liberal consensus of planetary magnitude.

What is the alternative today? Whether the museum assumes the dissents by which public space is produced and recurrently reworked. And it becomes a political space (whatsoever objects and works exhibited in it, we have to insist on it). Whether it is destined to consensus, willingly or not. Willingly: museums will be more and more demanded to be regional itemizations of the unrestriction of capital, agents of the privatization of public space. Not willingly: the museum will be the target of the censorship operations the most regressive you can imagine—avoiding division and dissent never fails to bring out the most terrifying versions of the *Great Oneness*.

This alternative needs to be treated most urgently.

29 See Jeanne Favret-Saada dans *Comment créer une crise mondiale avec douze petits dessins*, Paris, Fayard, 2015; it is what the staff of the Mouseion in Bolzano in 2008 understood perfectly: summoned by the municipal tutelage to conceal the “Crucified Frog” by Kippenberger, which attracted the rage of Catholic militants, they decided to cover it with an editing of newspapers’ front pages about “the scandal.”

Saturday November 7, 2015

Day 1. *Is the museum still a place for debate?*

Perspective 01. Mika Kuraya, Chief Curator of Dept. of Fine Arts, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

Short Bio:

Chief Curator of the Department of Fine Art, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Mika Kuraya earned her MA at Chiba University. Her recent curatorial projects include: *Waiting for Video: Works from the 1960s to Today* (2009, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; co-curated with Kenjin Miwa), *Lying, Standing and Leaning* (2009, MOMAT), *Meaningful Stain* (2010, MOMAT), *On the Road* (2011, MOMAT), *Undressing Paintings: Japanese Nudes 1880–1945* (2011–2012, MOMAT), *Mud and Jelly* (2013–14, MOMAT) and *Takamatsu Jiro Mysteries* (2014–2015, MOMAT; co-curated with Kenjiro Hosaka and Tomohiro Masuda). In 2013, she curated Koki Tanaka's solo exhibition at the Japanese Pavilion of the 55th Venice Biennale, and was awarded the special mention. Recent critical studies include: *Where is Reiko? Kishida Ryusei's 1914–1918 Portraits* (*Bulletin of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo*, no. 14, 2010).

Presentation: A 45-year discussion: MOMAT's collection exhibition and Pacific War paintings

The title of this section is “Is the museum still a place for debate?” However, I would like to change it a little, to “Can the museum collection now be a place for debate?” I am discussing the issue in terms of “war paintings,” specifically the paintings made in Japan during the Pacific War.

Firstly, what are “war paintings”? In general, the term applies to a wide range of paintings with the subject of war in world art history. But in Japan the word “war paintings” specifically means paintings created between 1937 and 1945, from the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War to Japan's defeat at the end of the Second World War, produced under the control of the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy to extol the country's military effort. The paintings were displayed in exhibitions conducted by the military authorities and at the time attracted large audiences. When the war ended in 1945, the paintings were collected by the U.S. Occupation Army and taken back to the U.S. In 1970, the long lost paintings were found again in the U.S. After diplomatic negotiation between the two governments, 153 paintings came back to Japan. The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT) became the institution that keeps them and since that day MOMAT has remained the administrator of the paintings. Forty-five years after their return, displaying the war paintings remains contentious.

After the return of the paintings, MOMAT surveyed the 44 painters who were still alive. Some of them expressed hesitation about displaying their

work.

Then in 1977, after six years of effort to restore them, MOMAT planned to show approximately 50 works in the Collection Exhibition—its display of the museum's permanent collection of art—but the exhibition was canceled the night before its opening. This was supposedly at the suggestion of the Japanese government, but no official document exists.

Soon after the cancelation of the exhibition, MOMAT started to display two to three of the paintings in each Collection Exhibition, with four to five changing exhibits a year, which means eight to 15 works a year. In the 2000s, MOMAT planned to display all of the 153 works one by one in the Collection Exhibition, and this finished in 2008.

Even so, partially because of the impact of the event in 1977, there has been criticism for some years that the public has not been given a chance to see all of 153 works together as a special exhibition. The criticism includes diverse reasoning, such as “the people have the right to see national property” or “to study an important group of works in Japanese modern art history,” “to know and regret Japan's past,” and even “to glorify Japan's past.”

On March 11, 2011, Japan experienced a great sociological change with the Great Tohoku Earthquake and the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident. Taking this opportunity, many Japanese artists started to deal with the issues of the earthquake and the Fukushima accident in their work.

Following 2011, 2015 also became a year of sociological change. Seventy years had passed

since the end of the war and there had emerged a sense of fear of losing all the witnesses from the war, which means society as a whole will lose its memories of the war. At the same time, the government changed its interpretation of Constitution No. 9, which prohibits military action abroad, to allow for “collective self-defense” between Japan and her allies overseas. This ignited a furious debate. Once again the issue of war has become one of the biggest concerns for our society.

Reflecting on the Japanese artists’ change of attitude toward representing social issues, MOMAT Collection, the permanent collection exhibition at MOMAT, has held a number of large-scale exhibits over the past three years, such as *After the Quake: Thinking about Tohoku* (2014), *There’s Something Happening Here 1 & 2* (2013 and 2014), and *What are you fighting for?* (2015).

After the Quake was a special display of artists’ videos concerning Fukushima. *There’s Something Happening Here 1 & 2* traced from 1923—the year Tokyo was hit by the Great Kanto Earthquake—to 1945, through paintings, films, posters, and magazines. Later I will discuss this in detail, but these exhibits were all driven by the question: “Can the museum collection be a place for debate today?”

Now, let me talk about another special exhibition, “Foujita Tsuguharu: Complete Works from the Museum Collection.” It is currently ongoing and you may visit the exhibition on your Monday evening visit to MOMAT.

Foujita enjoyed great success in Paris in the 1920s, with works focused on female nudes and cats. He returned to Japan in 1933 and became a central figure in the production of war paintings. In 1949, he went back to Paris and died as a French citizen, changing his name to Léonard Foujita in 1968.

Let’s look closer at his most famous war painting, *Final Fighting on Attu* (1943). This work depicts an incident in which a Japanese garrison was annihilated by an American military attack on Attu, one of the Aleutian Islands. As the depiction of the soldiers is so gruesome, visitors often ask me, “Was this really a painting intended to uplift the wartime population?”

In fact, to understand the work, you need to consider several of the aspects it contains. One is how Japanese painters were learning from European art at the time. Of course, Foujita didn’t witness this mortal combat. He created the scene only with his imagination. For the poses of the soldiers, there is some evidence that Foujita referenced them from European masterpieces such as *The Battle at Pons Milvius* by Julio Romano (1520–1524), displayed in the Vatican. Foujita also borrowed compositional elements from French

painting, such as from *The Shipwreck of Don Juan* by Eugene Delacroix (1840, Musée de Louvre) for his *The Enemy’s Fate in the Battle of the Solomon Sea* (1943), although France was one of the Allies, and thus the enemy of Japan at that time.

From the 1860s on, Japan had started to modernize following the European model. The Japanese art world also tried to adopt European techniques, styles, and subjects. The Second World War was a challenge to Japan’s model in that sense. Similarly to Foujita, his fellow painters took this opportunity to study European traditional painting in further depth, execute better works, and surpass them.

The other aspect worthy of attention is the context in which audiences received the work at the time. Up until the Attu incident, it was strictly prohibited to report battles in which Japan was defeated. But in the case of Attu, even though the army suffered a defeat, the battle was widely reported in the press with messages such as “Do not be discouraged. We must work even harder.” The completion of the painting was also reported in the press and the work received a great deal of attention.

In this way, one of the characteristics of war paintings is their ambiguity as a visual message, compared to a verbal one. In the case of *Final Fighting on Attu*, it is unclear whether Foujita is praising or disparaging the war, whether he was forced to make the war painting by the military authority or was happy to pursue the project as a way to transcend European painting.

This ambiguity is an ideal place to begin a discussion with people with diverse opinions.

The exhibit attracted some interesting opinions. An artist, Mokuma Kikuhata, says that when he actually looked at the artworks with his own eyes he realized that even in the most grotesque scenes, Foujita depicts them with remarkably calm touches. In this, Kikuhata sensed Foujita’s pride at being a professional (*Mainichi Simbun*, October 7, 2015). An art critic, Yasushi Kurabayashi, also mentioned the current situation whereby people are starting to think that war is now inevitable, and that, taking this into consideration, showing these works and encouraging people to share the feelings prevalent in the 1940s could be very risky for society (*Gekkan Gallery*, November, 2015, p. 83). In questionnaires we have collected from audiences, a woman in her forties complained that by exhibiting the war paintings, other works lose their chance to be shown in the gallery. There was also an opinion from a visitor from New Zealand saying that he was disappointed to see that Japan is still glorifying its past.

We are coming to the end of today’s presentation. I would like to talk further about the significance

of museum collections and exhibiting permanent collections.

It was in 1872 when Japan's first museum in the European style opened its doors to the public. Since that day, there has been a strong belief in Japan that the museum is the place to enjoy special exhibitions, where you can witness treasures from somewhere for a certain period of time. These are some examples:

- Special Exhibits: *Venus de Milo*, 1964, The National Museum of Western Art 831,200 visitors
- *La Gioconda*, 1974, Tokyo National Museum 1,505,000 visitors
- *Masterpieces of Kosan-ji Temple: the complete scrolls of Choju Giga, Frolicking Animals*, 2015, Tokyo National Museum 203,753 visitors.

As the belief has survived some 140 years, Japanese audiences tend to focus only on special exhibitions. They overlook the collection exhibitions because it is "always there" and there's "no need to visit now." In MOMAT's case, the percentage of visitors who visit the permanent collection exhibition after visiting the special exhibition had been approximately 40 over the last ten years. Following changes to the way we organized the collection exhibition, the percentages increased to 50–52 percent in 2013.

Still, with three floors of the collection exhibition gallery featuring more than 200 objects, it is questionable if 50 percent should be accepted as adequate.

Japan has long been suffering from an economical downturn over these past 20 years. In many museums, the budgets from local governments have been reduced and at the same time, museums are requested to attract more visitors to increase revenue by themselves. As a result, a number of museums pay to bring in fixed shows of "stars"—from comics, TV programs, and films—created by commercial companies, dedicating most of their budgets to holding these as special exhibitions.

I don't repudiate these "star" exhibitions, and I have to admit that I usually enjoy special exhibitions very much. But in terms of sustainability, it will be difficult for Japanese museums to rely only on this model. In addition, special exhibitions require large budgets, often provided by outside sources like newspapers and TV companies, which makes it difficult to deal with controversial issues such as war and nuclear power. For collection exhibitions, we can distance ourselves from the necessity for

budgets, and present issues that are stimulating for our society. Here is another possibility. Within the past 45 years, the debate about war paintings has happened only in Japanese society. But now the numbers of tourists from abroad are increasing and in 2014 reached 13,410,000, the highest yet. The MOMAT Collection has also been affected by this: We often have hours when more than 50 percent of our visitors are tourists from abroad. I can assume many of them are from Asian regions, such as China, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

So how did these people receive a work like this? This is Foujita's *The Fall of Singapore (Bukit Timah)*, from 1942. Its subject is the fall of Singapore in 1941, the beginning of an occupation that lasted some three and half years. In the foreground, Foujita depicts the dead body of a British soldier and Japanese soldiers in combat. But what happened to the local people who presumably survived, depicted in the countryside in the background of the painting?

This question had not been raised in debate in Japan until today. But now we can start discussing with people from various regions.

For a long time, Japanese art history had been considered in the framework of Japan and Europe-America. This includes Foujita himself, as well as historians and critics of Foujita's works. Needless to say, Japan is not the only country that has the experience of opposing European countries or America from a peripheral position. Regions like Asia, East and North Europe, the Middle East, South America, and Africa all share similar experiences. Now not only the debate about war paintings but Japanese art history has to redefine itself in the broader context of world art history.

A work of art gains a variety of attention as time passes and society changes. It fits itself into different kinds of contexts. Compared to the temporal nature of special exhibitions, collections can be a place for works to wait, sometimes for years, for a new interpretation to come their way.

In my presentation, I only discussed the subject of war, but there are many issues that museums from other countries or regions can share, such as morality, religion, sex, and freedom of expression. For example, we can start by exchanging two or three works from each other's collections as long-term loans and studying the issues together, instead of working on touring special exhibitions. Collections can offer new possibilities for collaboration.

Thank you very much.

Saturday November 7, 2015
Day 1. *Is the museum still a place for debate?*

Perspective 02. Jack Persekian, Director and Head Curator of The
Palestinian Museum, Palestine.

Short Bio:

Born in Jerusalem in 1962, Jack Persekian has a career in art and music spanning more than 30 years. He started his professional life as a musician and band manager in the 1980s, before shifting paths slightly in the early nineties to open Palestine's first and only art gallery, Anadiel. Following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the mid-1990s, Persekian was put in charge of setting up the Ministry of Culture's Visual Arts department; alongside a group of artists and supporters, he then went on to establish the Al Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art in Jerusalem, of which he remains the Founding Director. In the year 1999, he directed and produced the millennium celebrations in Bethlehem, before leaving Palestine in the mid-2000s to serve as Head Curator of the Sharjah Biennial. Persekian continued in this role for two editions of the biennial, after which, in 2007, he was appointed its Artistic Director; he then became the Founding Director of the Sharjah Art Foundation in 2009. Upon his return to Jerusalem in 2011, Persekian helped establish a biennial in Palestine, Qalandiya International, acting as Artistic Director for its first edition in 2012. He was appointed Director and Head Curator of the Palestinian Museum that same year, and still holds that position in addition to his involvement with several other projects.

Presentation: Exploring the museum form

My immediate response to the question posed here is actually another question. "When was the museum a place for debate?" Indeed, has it ever been one? At the Palestinian Museum, we wrestle constantly with the problem of creating an institution that is not simply about presenting a single narrative or disseminating one editorial line. We are determined that our museum, which after all by its very existence represents a challenge to certain established discourses, should act not as a gatekeeper to culture but an open door. In other words, it should be a space in which it is truly possible for multiple voices to be heard, and in which a commitment to dialogue means a commitment to contestation, provocation, and criticism. But we do not think of this as an attempt to return to some golden era of the past in which all museums were like this: quite the opposite. For a museum to embrace real debate, which questions even those things we have learned to consider common sense, it must challenge the form of the museum itself. And so far from this being impossible in the current era, we are finding that in some ways it is more possible than it has ever been.

For instance, let's look back briefly at the history of museums. It is clear at once that they were not initially intended as spaces in which debate and dialogue could flourish. Most early public museums were established in Europe in the nineteenth century, and their purpose was explicitly to educate, inform, and discipline their publics. These museums

were monumental institutions, pillars and symbols of the power of the state. They contained artifacts from all over the world, carefully ordered and displayed for consumption. Such museums seemed to know and contain the world in its entirety, and the stories they told were of imperial might and grandeur—narratives of the power knowledge provides. Their concern, of course, was always the public good, but probably—hopefully—not the public good as we think of it today: their idealism was rooted in the paternalism and violence of the class system and the colonial encounter.

In the aftermath of the colonial period, many former colonies took charge of the museums left behind, and built new ones. In many cases, they followed the pattern of those that had come before them, but in some, an effort was made to take these structures that had represented or upheld oppression, and to remake them. Examples that spring to mind are the museums created by First Nation communities in Canada and Native American communities in the United States, or the alterations made to some museums in South Africa following the end of apartheid. These museums were providing space for the expression of cultures and voices that had never before been welcome in such institutions: the museum was now used to represent and legitimize not the power of the state or the elite, but the existence of the powerless and poor. The Palestinian Museum, as a national museum for a stateless people, is somewhat in this model. And perhaps most importantly, there has been a corresponding

shift in the way that more traditional and established museums operate. The sense that all museums must be self-critical, must provide space for all kinds of voices, is now an important part of museum practice—this conference, after all, is a perfect example. So the commitment to debate in museums actually springs from challenges to the way museums tend to function. And if we are to ensure that museums can actually sustain a commitment to debate, we have to keep challenging. Even if the logic museums have a duty to uphold a certain hierarchy is crumbling, there is another force to deal with: money. Museums that succeed—that survive—cannot, apparently, worry only about serving their publics. They also serve their funding bodies, and have to constantly brand and rebrand themselves in order to be financially viable. Many museums are thus in a precarious position, constantly navigating different claims in order just to stay afloat. For this reason, to commit to taking risks—to make one's institution into a place that seeks to question and challenge rather than to please—can seem daunting, even impossible. But I would argue that it is also the only way in which museums can stay relevant now, existing as we do in a period which, despite how far we have come, has its own problems: the importance of art and culture are constantly being doubted, and political upheaval and conflict have left many communities broken and in desperate need of spaces in which they can re-enforce their senses of identity.

At the Palestinian Museum, therefore, we walk a delicate line. We are vulnerable on two counts: first, like anyone else, to the requirements of our funders; second, and crucially, to the whims of the Israeli government, which is of course capable of restricting our activities and even shutting us down should it so wish. So on the one hand, we must often be diplomatic. We think carefully about how we discuss Palestine, the types of language we use, when and where and even whether we make certain points. But on the other hand, we know that if we are too diplomatic, or always diplomatic, we might as well not exist: there are things on which we cannot compromise, because to do so would be to compromise our entire mission, which is to empower the unheard voices of Palestinians everywhere. We cannot claim to stand with the diverse Palestinian population if we are not prepared to say and do the difficult things many of them would want and expect from us.

So we are working to find ways to do this. Perhaps most importantly, we are focusing on extending and expanding our international reach; and this attempt to become more global is not simply the result of a philosophical commitment to widening the purview of the institution, it is actually a response to a real and urgent need. The expansion

of global travel in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which so benefited early museums in Europe, had precisely the opposite effect on cultural infrastructure in those countries like our own that were annexed and occupied. Today, we are seeking not so much to expand our audience as to draw together the exiled and dispersed people who would have naturally constituted our public had the course of our recent history been different. We are cementing relationships with partner institutions abroad because Israeli travel and entrance restrictions make it difficult for Arabs and Palestinians in particular to reach our Museum hub in Palestine, and we need to find other ways to connect with these individuals. Our focus on online platforms and digitalization initiatives is in no small measure the result of the fact that even within Palestine, the limitations imposed on ordinary people's mobility throughout their own country make getting even from town to town, let alone outside the country, difficult and even impossible, meaning that we also need to be accessible from everywhere within Palestine.

Ultimately, our history of colonialism and settler-colonialism has meant that the Palestinian Museum must now serve a population that is dispersed and fragmented, existing either in the Diaspora, in refugee camps, or in the restricted and occupied spaces of its own land. The movement we are seeing on the museum scene at the moment, where institutions seek to globalize to suit a globalized world, opening branches in the Gulf and the Far East, creating brands with worldwide rather than national appeal, is thus something of which the Palestinian Museum—in some twisted and weird way—is also a part. We are a global museum, in the sense that we operate in more than one place in the world, and our key audience is one that is globally scattered. But the reasons for that scattering and for our need to operate globally are different. Globalizing, and seeking a global audience, is thus certainly a way we all expand and challenge the traditional idea of a museum, and widen the parameters of the museum as a forum for debate—but it manifests differently in different contexts. I actually think a major step towards debate in the museum world would be to acknowledge and discuss these differences.

In this sense, our determination to foster debate within the Palestinian Museum comes not in spite but because of our embattled position, as an institution trying to maintain its primary commitment to its public whilst also dealing with pressure to be competitive and legible on a globalised cultural scene, and with political and societal instability. In order to remain true to our principles, we have had to go above and beyond the typical work of a museum, whilst maintaining the parts of the museum

form—the construction of safe and protected space, the connotations of stability, the commitment to education and outreach—that are still useful to us.

So far, it is working. We'll see what happens in the future.

Saturday November 7, 2015
 Day 1. *Is the museum still a place for debate?*

Perspective 03. Brook Andrew, artist and lecturer: MADA (Monash Art, Design and Architecture), Monash University, Melbourne.

Short Bio:

Brook Andrew examines dominant Western narratives, specifically relating to colonialism, placing Australia at the center of a global inquisition. Apart from drawing inspiration from vernacular objects and archive he travels internationally to work with communities and private and public collections. Creating interdisciplinary works and immersive installations, he presents viewers with alternative choices for interpreting the world, both individually and collectively, by intervening, expanding, and re-framing history and our inheritance. He has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions at major institutions including Tate Britain (forthcoming); Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul; Künstlerhaus, Vienna; Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; and the Jewish Museum, Berlin. He has worked with collections from significant museums including: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia / Museo de América, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Madrid; Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux; Royal Anthropological Institute, London; Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge; and the Anthropology Department of the University of Vienna. He has received numerous fellowships and awards, and his work is held in collections throughout Australia and internationally. Brook Andrew is represented by Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels. He is a lecturer at MADA (Monash Art, Design and Architecture), Monash University, Australia.

Presentation: *Beware the ventriloquist: the everyday as political art and cultural nerves*

Photographer unknown
 Grandma Scott, Nan and aunts, c 1930.
 Erarnbie Mission, N.S.W., Australia.



Don't forget you're also white!

This is something my maternal Aboriginal grandmother said to me when I was 16 years old. She looked me straight in the eye, right into my mind and burnt it. Left an indelible mark to the day I die.

In many ways, my own grandmothers Aboriginal Wiradjuri and Scottish identity, and a fringe dweller of the Aboriginal Catholic Erarnbie mission, who then married (deleted own identity) her husband of Aboriginal Ngununawall and Irish, Scottish identity, had my mother who in turn married my father, who is of the Church of England religion coming from Scottish, Irish and Jewish ancestry.

As the artist Dor Guez expresses,

"What does it mean to be Italian, what does it mean to be Israeli, what does it mean to be Palestinian? Is there one definition or do we have different colours? I'm trying to question this formalisation of what identity is supposed to be, since none of us fit into the formal definition of a national identity."



Brook Andrew
Sexy & Dangerous c. 1996
 Duraclear of Perspex

People change their minds, even after forming alliances. I remember the photographic work I made in 1996 called *Sexy & Dangerous*. It was a harmful and exciting investigation into hidden ethnographic images from Australia. This image caused great excitement because of the initial circulation and recontextualisation of an orphaned ethnographic photo. Within ten years the same people who supported the work dammed me for making it—this unleashed complex grounds on protocols and the right to make, see and consume the past—built on trauma and fed by power to own history and silence the dead. Who has the power to distort and to risk—teasing alternative and hidden contexts?

In 2012, when the MCA Australia invited me to organize an exhibition on ATSİ artists, I was excited as it continued from a series of debates I organized at the MCA called *Blakatak*, but also perplexed. Curating in this context was not exciting for me—there were real curators doing this already—so I guessed this was an open invitation to experiment. My response was an international exhibition that dealt with issues I had also been struggling with, trapped within an often Eurocentric Western art

movement that any one remotely identifying as Indigenous or “other” was often relegated the “romantic” or “troubled” who fulfilled a particular visual, political and conceptual agenda, something not that different to recent colonial and imperialist projects. I was more interested in a level playing field.

I got to play, to experiment, and I thank the MCA for allowing me to do this. Walls were painted fluorescent flag-like style as an attempt to distract and create a happier mood amongst the often-confronting topics. My aim was not to fill a room full of “names” and confronting objects teleported from a post-colonial discourse or harmonize some sort of trendy “taboo” element of Western art tradition—the aim was purely an exercise in breaking a Western notion of taboo itself, simultaneously imbuing and massaging it with the relationship of how some one like myself who comes from a mixed culture—looks back at the world—sees how my own experiences have defined me and also the artists in *TABOO*.

In my mind, *TABOO* also represents the sheer cultural amnesia about alternative, hidden, and forgotten events, so much that when people see these images they do not always understand what they see or mean. I hoped *TABOO* was a place to shock this into existence—I was only interested in engaging people with new juxtapositions that often seem didactic. The accumulative effect of how certain objects and images resurface and come together with nuanced juxtapositions is inspirational to slowly chip away at dominant narratives. And for some these alternate juxtapositions are the realities of their lives. Today I will also touch on other exhibitions, research, community and personal experiences that chase each other and connect through diverse projects.

My first breakthrough is when I came across an English Victorian era watercolor by an unknown artist depicting a smiling golliwog and his crying blonde bride. Ecstatic with disbelief at this complex and beautiful composition, I wrote a note to myself:

With electric eyes, golliwog glances sideways to his love, unsure why she is crying.

In the far distance his siblings are in shock.

Maybe they can't believe his luck, or betrayal.

The bride is overwhelmed with emotion, probably grief and upset at being married to a golliwog.

Maybe she thinks he's going to eat her all up?

When I shared this watercolor with others, they were simultaneously shocked and pleased to experience its power—power derived from the taboo status of the golliwog and the historical xenophobia of the image. Possibly intended originally to educate English children about the dangers of interracial marriage and miscegenation, the watercolor has a different message today. For my

family, it was probably my own fathers' mother who's fear of the unknown demanded my parents have a separate engagement party, one that did not include my mothers very large "brown" and raucous gambling family.

A Ken Reinhard painting was selected for inclusion in the *TABOO* exhibition. I thought it was quite an interesting artwork, considering the barrage of exploitative images of women in magazines in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

For due diligence, the MCA set up informative protocol measures and collaborations with the local police department, the Aboriginal advisory committee and the MCA Board itself. This serious measure to assess possible public complaints or reaction, and to adhere to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols was helpful for their profession, albeit sometimes curious for me—I felt at times that I was renting an apartment and the owners were doing their yearly inspection. The MCA director, Lizz Ann, along with fellow curators and board members had a healthy and lengthy debate on the painting of Ken Reinhard.



Naughty Room of *TABOO*, 2012–2013
MCA

Eventually they firmly requested that this "ugly" painting was removed from the main gallery space into a newly created gallery space I affectionately called "the naughty room"—a room that was created to separate possible offensive artworks. This naughty room had a warning sign and the support of a full-time invigilator actively warning the public. This was one of the busiest rooms in the exhibition.



Naughty Room of *TABOO*, 2012–2013
MCA

Inside lay my own personal archive, exhibiting dead, racist, sexist, erotic, curious and other taboo and sometimes distressing but also funny themes.



Naughty Room of *TABOO*, 2012–2013
MCA

Titles of some archives include;

- *Aboriginal men in chains, Alice Springs* (date and artist unknown), silver gelatin photograph, collection of Jonathan Dickson
- *Papuan woman suckling puppies* (date and artist unknown), silver gelatin photograph, collection of Jonathan Dickson
- *Betting on Aboriginal girls fighting, Darwin* (date and artist unknown), silver gelatin photograph, collection of Jonathan Dickson
- *Exhumed mass graves, World War II, Former Soviet Union, 1945*
- Christian Boltanski, *Scratch* (1st edn artist book), Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, Cologne, Germany, 2002
- *47 bodies in Sarajevo mass grave, Yugoslavia Civil War*, press photograph, 1996

- *Anne-Marie Lunga, the first Native African Feminine radio announcer* (Radio Congo Belge Afrique), United Press Photograph, 1956
- *San Francisco Indian tells about removal from Island*, APWire Press Photograph, 1971
- *Bobby Rush of the Black Panthers*, press photograph, photograph by Joe Kordick, 1970
- *Groups protesting the granting of gay rights*, Chicago Sun-Times press photograph, photograph by R.B. Leffingwell, 1979



Naughty Room of *TABOO*, 2012–2013
MCA



Naughty Room of *TABOO*, 2012–2013
MCA

...also included was the personal archive of Sydney artist and rapper Khaled Sabsabi. This archive included a poster called *Palestine is my homeland*, a printed T-shirt with a portrait of Osama Bin-Laden, a balancing sculptural peace bird, assorted badges, a cassette tape of music, a gun bullet magazine, postcards, photographs, and rap notes.



Splinters of Monuments: A Solid Memory of the Forgotten Plains of our Trash and Obsessions, 2014
Installation view *Really Useful Knowledge*, curated by What, How and for Whom (WHW), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Spain. Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels

This archive installation was later included in the exhibition *Really Useful Knowledge* at the Reina Sofia curated by What, How and for Whom (WHW). This archive became a collaborative installation called *Splinters of Monuments: A Solid Memory of the Forgotten Plains of our Trash and Obsessions*, and juxtaposed through collaboration with the archives and artworks from the Museo Reina Sofia, Museo de América, and Museo Nacional de Antropología.

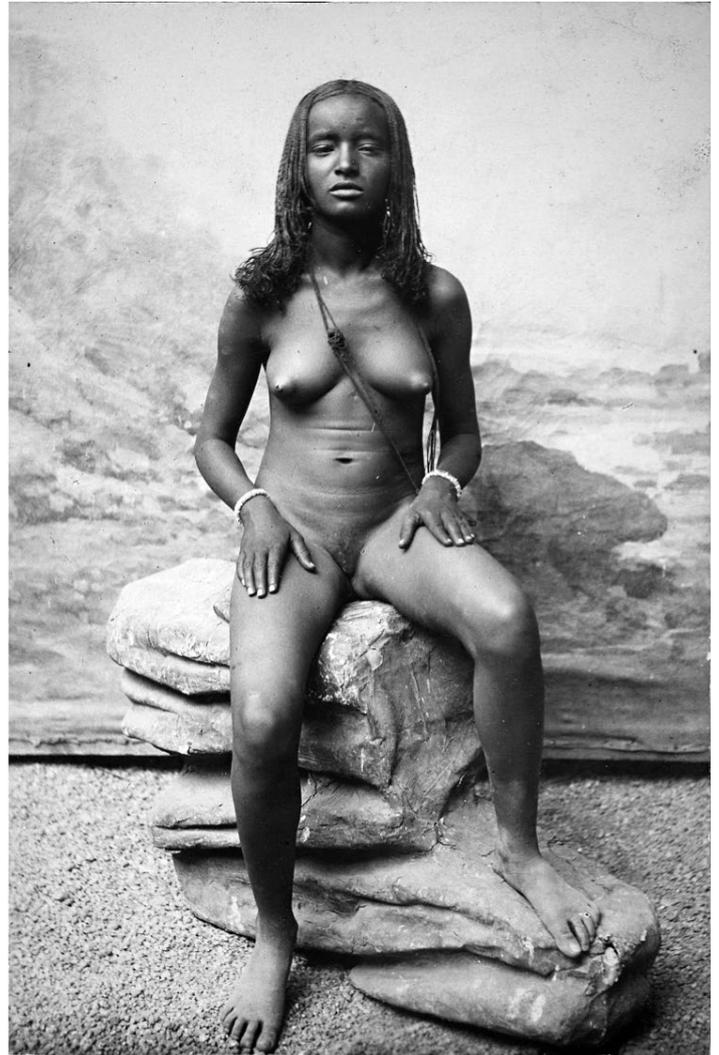


Splinters of Monuments: A Solid Memory of the Forgotten Plains of our Trash and Obsessions, 2014
Installation view *Really Useful Knowledge*, Curated by What, How and for Whom (WHW), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Spain. Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels.

The aim of these juxtapositions was to tease out parallels between the Spanish, British, and Australian colonial and consequential projects. My greatest personal doubt was whether or not the local Spanish crowd understood this seemingly diabolical didactic and smashing together of themes. I was relieved when the director of the Reina Sofia approached me and said, “Well, Guernica is upstairs, and this is here” ...then a local artist approached me to enquire on my placement of Diego Rivera’s 1949 painting *Flower Vendor*. I explained my intent of the installation and with some personal doubt of possible crossing some local taboo, I waited for a long 30 seconds before he and his friends responded with a long silent smile.

Another point on the exhibition *Really Useful Knowledge* is of course the well known protest when the International museum associations came to the defense of Reina Sofía after a provocative artwork drew fire from church groups... the matchboxes depicting, on one side, a burning church building, and on the other, the slogan: “The only church that illuminates is one which burns. Contribute!” As you all may know, this presentation of the piece by Mujeres Públicas, an Argentine feminist collective, was equated by one religious organization to a use of public funds by the state museum to “insult Christians.”

When I was recently asked to create an installation called *Evidence* at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney, I thought of Mujeres Públicas. The main aim was to cement connections between terrible conditions for illegal abortions in South America through their work and a surgical table—shown here part of the MAAS collection. Though I decided to only include objects from the MAAS collection. I still wonder how the Spanish church or indeed the Australian church will deal with a surgeon’s chair active c.1970s at The Bessie Smyth Foundation, Sydney, for under-aged abortions? This is a silent taboo, and as exhibition *Evidence* has just opened to the public, I wonder who will comment or protest... I do know of a Sydney designer’s great aunt worked as a nurse with the doctor who assisted under age girls, but the designer did not want to share this story publically.



African girl from *Framing the Native*, c. 1900

Returning to *TABOO*, my own concerns about what should go into the naughty room were different—though I appreciate that dedicated gallery made the exhibition more interesting.



Rugae of the walls of a virgin vagina,
glass scientific slide, c. 1870
Avoid Rape. Micky Allan, 1975, screen-
print

A Black Woman. Anton Kannemeyer,
2011, lithograph
African girl from *Framing the Native*, c.
1900

This portrait of a young naked African girl, from a suite of ethnographic nineteenth-century photographs strangely named *Framing the Native*, from the collection of Anthony d'Offay, was placed in the main gallery space of *TABOO*. It was shown within a 1970s slide viewer. It sat in a line of juxtaposed artworks and objects: a fashioned Perspex box with a scientific glass specimen slide titled *Rugae of the walls of a virgin vagina*, c. 1870; Micky Allan's 1975 screenprint *Avoid Rape*; and Anton Kannemeyer's 2011 lithograph *A Black Woman*.

I was curious why the Ken Reinhard painting was removed from this suite of works and hidden away.

The remaining collection of *Framing the Native* photos were projected on a wall in the naughty room. These slides are juxtaposed with a selection of found 1970s tourist slides of Malaysian farming families alongside Ken Reinhard's painting and a host of other more humorous works.

A complaint to the MCA on *TABOO*:

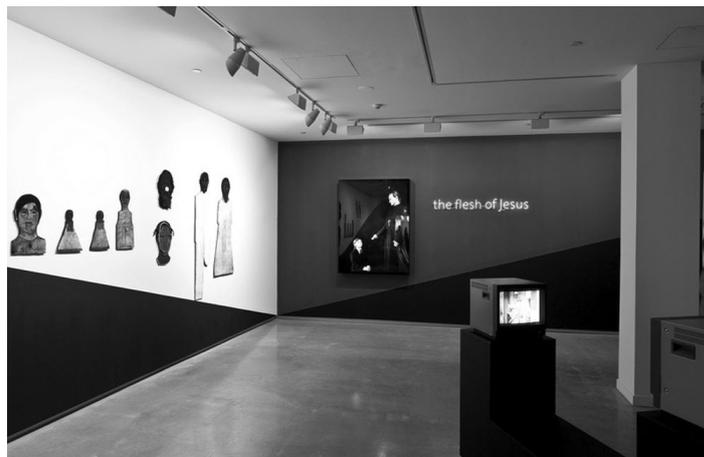
Due to my very emotive reaction to this exhibition, I feel that government bodies need to be made aware of the context and potentially litigious repercussions of displaying deliberately controversial works. On a general note, I am concerned that children have access to material, which contains nudity, sexually explicit, and racially discriminatory material... It is inappropriate for a government-funded museum to display politically motivated material, which is clearly of an offensive nature. Even if access to the offensive material was regulated, this would arguably constitute discrimination as a large number of visitors would feel unable to frequent the museum... I am also

concerned that in a time of scarce government resources, money is being diverted from community services to fund very questionable "art."



TABOO, 2012–2013
Installation view, the Museum of
Contemporary Art, Sydney.

One way of dealing with any visitor trauma was to cover the *TABOO* catalog.



TABOO, 2012–2013
Installation view, the Museum of
Contemporary Art, Sydney.

Jimmie Durham recreated an image he recalls as a young man in this work *The Meat of Jesus* (2012), commissioned for *TABOO*. This is probably a long-standing and entertaining interest for Durham, for it is his past interest in ideas of primitivism as a Cherokee man that ignited his keen engagement in the world that created such binaries, such as the civilized versus the uncivilized. This provocative association with male genitals could easily reflect current issues in contemporary Australia of 2012–2013, such as the Royal Commission into organizations including the Catholic Church in regards to institutional abuse and pedophilia.

In addition Jimmie, along with others from community to artistic and curatorial people like Jenny Munro, Alia Swastika, Joy Gregory, Gerald McMaster, and David Elliot were invited to contribute a piece of writing to the catalogue. Jimmie's was called *Lost my Job*:

My penis is bigger around than is normal. It is not especially long,

I think, even though I do not really know, but I know that it is unusually thick because I've not been able to fuck many women that I tried to fuck. It was too painful for them.

In about 1963 or 64 I had to be circumcised. I was living with a woman who had a kind of small vagina and my foreskin would tear painfully when we fucked.

During those days I was really poor, doing whatever job I could find, usually hard labor. After a long time with no job I found work in a bookstore—what heaven, what joy!

The bookstore was owned by a good guy. He was Jewish, and his son, who was about 19 or 20, not much younger than me, was learning the trade. The three of us worked together.

The stitches around my penis had finally healed. The healing process took longer than should have because I would get too many erections and tear the stitches (I was 23 or 24).

I thought that this was interesting. Probably especially interesting to Jewish guys, father and son. They did not ask any questions, as one might, in polite conversation, so I understood that perhaps I had spoken too much.

At the end of the week I was fired. No reason was given.



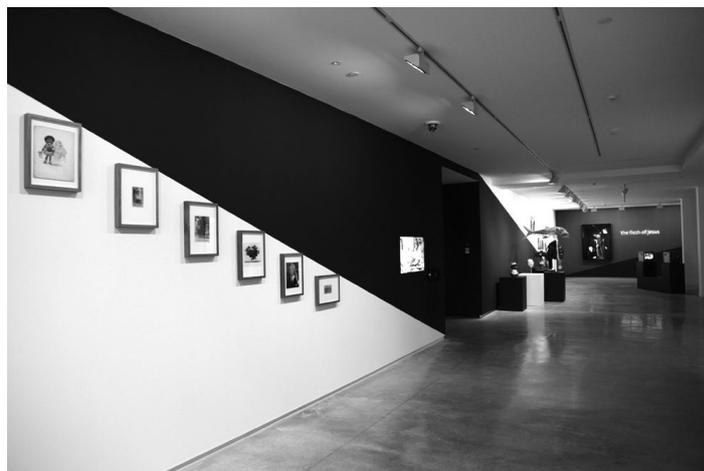
TABOO, 2012–2013
Installation view, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

A complaint to the MCA from a concerned member of the public who visited *TABOO*, clearly upset by the flag raising of Javanese artist Jompet's (Agustinus Kuswidananto) 2009 sculpture *War of*

Java: Do You Remember?:

Whether or not it was intentional, the MCA has caused me serious offence and humiliation. As a young British immigrant, I was subjected to painful bullying in school because I was a "pom." I still suffer from these scars. This exhibition has caused these feelings to resurface. As you mentioned, "context is important to the way in which people see images."

In my eyes, the placement of the army drums and red flags next to Anton Kannemeyer's work implies the MCA is claiming that the British are responsible for the sexual abuse of native Africans. The exhibition is endorsing racism against the British.



TABOO, 2012–2013
Installation view, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

In 2002 the director of the London based think-tank Demos, regarded as the avant-garde of the New Labour, suggested that the Queen should "embark on a world tour to apologize for the past sins of the Empire as a first step to making Commonwealth more effective and relevant."

During *TABOO*, a curator approached me and explained that the most shocking thing about the exhibition was that the only reason I could get away with painting the gallery and placing artists' works on fluorescent colors with hard edge black and white was because I was an artist.

Installation view of Juan Davilla's 2001 painting *The Ruins of Woomera Concentration Camp, South Australia*, and works by Anton Kannemeyer and Judy Watson work on the blood-type percentage in Aboriginal people.

Whilst chaperoned through the extensive offsite collections of the MCA, we stumbled across a solemn room. It was a ghost room. White sheets covered a group of little figures, like children. Under these sheets were dendroglyphs—carved trees—from New South Wales, Australia. These traditional

ceremonial and grave tree sections are infamous and part of the Australian Museum's collection since a party of men in collaboration with various museums and the Australian Army cut them down and hoarded them in 1949. I asked to make contact with the Australian Museum to have these important cloaked and forgotten cultural objects in *TABOO* but it was denied as too complicated, taboo, and unresolved—they still lay invisible. As Ronald Briggs from the Mitchel Library of Sydney explains:

“During the early 1900s a few white men became passionate about documenting and collecting the relics of what they believed to be a dying race... Some expeditions led to trees being cut down for preservation purposes.

Europeans also removed trees for less altruistic reasons. Because many settler landowners feared losing their land, they cut down and destroyed carved trees on their properties, thereby removing the evidence of previous Aboriginal occupation. Of course, some landowners cleared their land of carved trees in ignorance of their sacredness or significance to the local Aboriginal community.”

Through negotiating and research with community and institutional perspectives, the broader taboo subject about the visibility of dendroglyphs in exhibitions or indeed museums today is that there are conflicting opinions of their use and hence re-display for the public. Were the dendroglyphs now found in museums used for secret men's business or as grave trees? All in all, it is this unresolved and disputed silencing of their visibility which I see as the real taboo today—it is these objects that are absent from *TABOO* which is the real taboo. All in all, *TABOO* could have been an exhibition with wall labels, catalogs, fluorescent walls, but no objects and no artworks. But then most would not allow it.

To somehow persevere with this story of the dendroglyph carved tree has been a long and arduous journey. Last week, when my artist intervention *Evidence* opened at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to accompany the traveling Victoria and Albert exhibition *Disobedient Objects*, I came across a logbook that included a registered dendroglyph—carved tree—in its collection.

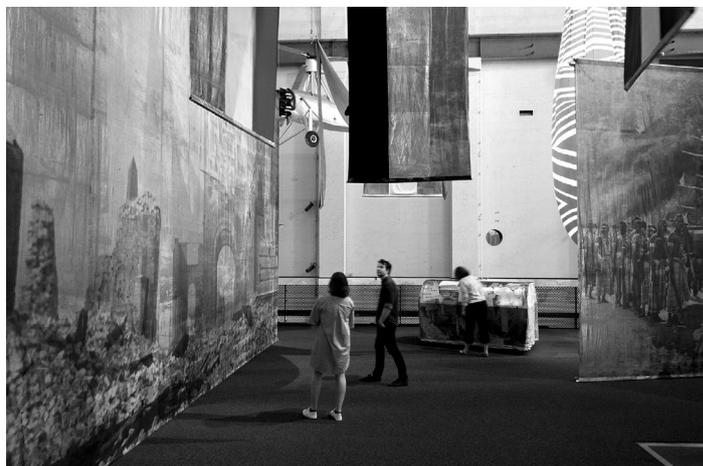
The collection managers were in disbelief as they did not know of its existence and were sure it did not exist. I insisted they look for it, find it, and transport it to a place I could view it. The dendroglyph finally came months later, shrouded as if a dead sacred and possible powerful and dangerous article.



Brook Andrew
EVIDENCE, 2015
Installation view the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney.
Photo: Christian Capurro
Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels

To the museums credit, they “allowed” me to show this important object—albeit in a cabinet with a shroud, but one that is gold. This glistening tomb-like cabinet has an image from Sydney printed on the shroud... it is an image of women protesting the Vietnam war.

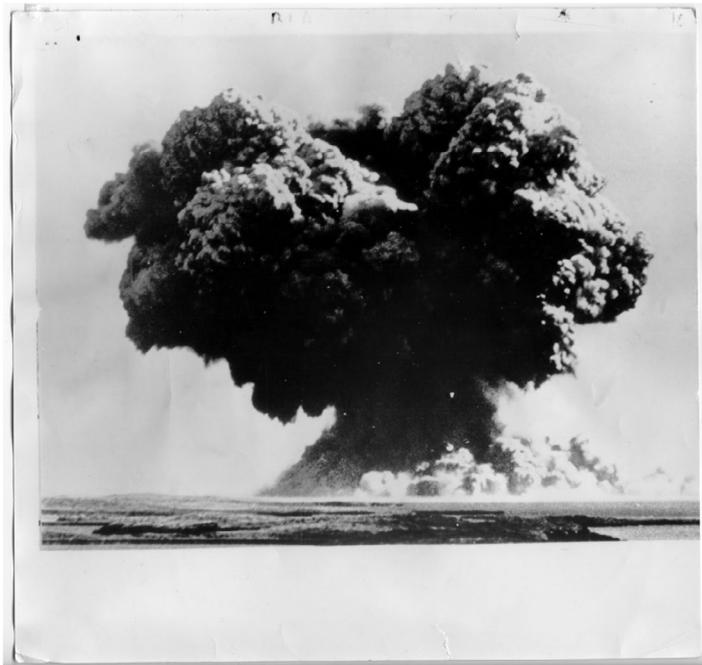
Now we wait to see how the communities react.



Brook Andrew
EVIDENCE, 2015
Installation view the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney.
Photo: Christian Capurro
Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels



Brook Andrew
EVIDENCE, 2015
 Installation view the Museum of Applied
 Arts and Sciences, Sydney.
 Photo: Christian Capurro
 Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries,
 Melbourne, and Galerie Nathalie Obadia,
 Paris and Brussels



Photographer unknown
Atomic explosion. First official photograph of the detonation of the British atomic bomb on the Monte Bello Islands Montabello, northwest coast of Australia. Press photo. Oct 3, 1952.

To end on *TABOO*... this press photo sat along side others in the entrance to the exhibition... also included were other press and postcard images like the previous seen image of the Queen curtsying.

What fascinates me so much about this image—is occurs when images of things are already taken up by other devastating events like the Second World War? How do nations with similar evidence negotiate an image such as this *British atomic bomb on the Monte Bello Islands* and Maralinga where Aboriginal people were still on the land when the British tested?

How can we distinguish or share who owns the image of a powerful event? What kind of taboos are activated when images are often associated with other traumatic events or new juxtapositions are created?

The problem I believe with the *TABOO* exhibition is that some events are not part of collective memory or information to create great controversy, if anything they create confusion. Possibly these are just faded moments that have a moment in the light.

Saturday November 7, 2015
Day 1. *Is the museum still a place for debate?*

Perspective 04. Georg Schöllhammer, editor, curator, and writer,
Head of tranzitat.at and founding editor of *springerin*, Vienna.
Hedwig Saxenhuber, curator, writer,
and general editor *springerin*, Vienna.

Short Bio:

Georg Schöllhammer is an editor, writer, and curator based in Vienna. He is founding editor of *springerin Hefte für Gegenwartskunst* and Head of tranzitat.at. He has worked internationally on cultural projects including documenta, Manifesta, the Biennials of Venice, Gumry, and Kiev, *Sweet Sixties*, *L'internationale*, *Former West*, the Vienna Festival, and the Vienna Fair. He is Chairman of The Július Koller Society. From 2004–2007 he was Editor-in-Chief of documenta 12 and conceived and directed *documenta 12* magazines. He is an international advisor to the Garage Museum, Moscow. Forthcoming exhibitions and projects he is (co-)curating include: *Július Koller*, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, MuMoK Vienna, 2016. Recent exhibitions include: *The Capital Of Desires*, The Armenian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture 2014; *A Parallel Modernity* in the framework of São Paulo Biennale 2014; *Report on the Construction of a Spaceship Model* (New Museum, NY, 2014, Gdansk, 2014); *Unrest of Form* (Vienna Festival, 2013); *Trespassing Modernities* (SALTGalata, Istanbul 2013); *Soviet Modernism* (AZW, Vienna, 2012); *Moments* (ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2012). Recent publications: *Ion Grigorescu, Diaries 1970–1974* (Sternberg Press, 2014), KwieKulik (JRP Ringier, 2013), *Moments—A history of performance in 10 acts* (Hatje Cantz, ZKM, 2013: co-edited with Sigrid Gareis and Peter Weibel); *Sweet Sixties* (Sternberg Press, 2014). Hedwig Saxenhuber is an editor, writer, and curator based in Vienna. She is co-editor of the arts periodical *springerin Hefte für Gegenwartskunst*. She was founding Artistic Director with Christian Kravagna at Kunstraum Lakeside in Klagenfurt from 2005–2015 and was also Co-artistic Director of VIENNAFAIR 2011. Her recent large-scale exhibitions are *Unrest of Form—Imagining the Political Subject*, with Georg Schöllhammer and Stefanie Carp (Vienna Festival, 2013); *Bad Script for a Retrospective*, Josef Dabernig, P74 (Ljubljana, 2011); *Grenzenlos*, an exhibition for the 20th anniversary of Kulturkontakt, (Vienna, 2010); *Art + Politics*, from the Collection of the City of Vienna (MUSA, 2008); *Parallel Histories, 6*, with Georg Schöllhammer (Gyumri Biennial, Armenia, 2008); *Valie Export* (Moscow Biennial, NCCA, 2007); and *Postorange*, Contemporary Art from Ukraine, (Kunsthalle Vienna, 2006). She has received several prizes for the Kunstraum Lakeside program. She is an associated member of the Vienna Secession.

Presentation: The School of Kiev

— Georg Schöllhammer: Actually, I don't know why we are here. We are not running a museum, we are not working in a museum, we never have. Most of the time we have worked independently. We are curators and editors.

— Hedwig Saxenhuber: But we are grateful that we are over here, that we are invited. Thank you very much for inviting us.

— Georg Schöllhammer: But I think when we read the questionnaire that you sent out, it's a quite good reason for being here. The project that we are presenting today has been a very, very taking project. It is a biennale in a country that is at war or what the other side calls a civil war. It is a biennial in a country that runs through an economic crisis that

is one of the deepest crises in Europe. It is a country that had a history of being attacked, that has one of the bloodiest histories in the European realm in the last 200 years and it is not just that the holocaust was fiercest there. It is not just that the Holodomor that Stalin's killings have been the fiercest there. It is not just that it had Chernobyl in this country. It is not just that it had suffered a lot of divisions, a lot of national conflicts at its borders, and it is a country that has managed on the other hand to stay a nation that is not a nation, but a state that is multinational, that is now in danger.

Anyway, we are here, I think, as well not because of this complicity that is a global complicity, that is a complicity that has very much to do with that which the museum world is somehow engaged, how to negotiate, how to narrate, how to act and

counteract these different and conflicted histories, but we might be here as well because the project itself is linked to museum stories. It started some three years ago as the first biennale in a house that is the Arsenal in Kiev that's bigger than the Arsenal in Venice; an armory of the eighteenth century that aims at being the biggest museums complex of Eastern Europe, which started as a biennale. We have been asked to do the second biennale there. Then we have been fired an untimely four months before the opening of that biennale. The biennale had troubles because the press conference was at the first days of Maidan and we had to postpone it because we didn't want to get into an ugly—so to say—legitimatory struggle with the regime that was—so to say punished—and empowered and disempowered by the people, and then Crimea went to Russia, was occupied by Russia, and the war in the Donbass started, so there was always a trouble. Nevertheless then we got something like a mail of cancellation four months before the biennale actually would have had to open and we had prepared it. Why did we prepare in that house?

— Hedwig Saxenhuber: Let me only quote some sentences what we thought. Why hold a biennale at this specific moment that seemingly has other priorities? There was war. It was very dark moment to finance such an enterprise and we had no money and we had no institution. Why should the concept of an enlightened arena for art, public encounter, and learning together fit with this situation? We had other questions. In the given context, how could a short art [exhibit] propose something completely different, its own strategy deriving from its own logic. Shouldn't art be, in this case, subjugated to the political struggle? How could art force the resistance against hegemonic structures in which it itself participates? It was questions like these we found ourselves confronted with in this situation.

— Georg Schöllhammer: And we found ourselves confronted with cancelation, an untimely cancelation that had another reason that was partly coming from the museum's world. It was just the day after *Bartomeu Marí* resigned from MACBA for being accused of censorship and it's a very complicated case that we won't go deeper into here, but the director of this museums complex herself has been accused of censoring young artists. And she did not want to go maybe into the same trouble again as we as well had invited in [unclear] this artist and after this cancelation we had called our Kiev friends what to do. We didn't want to quit, we said it has to go on. We had the solidarity of a lot of our artist friends, but we stood with a budget of €15,000 on March 20.

So what to do? The third thing came up that museums are having to do more and more, namely to get the funds from different sources. We thought

about it, it would be easy to do get these funds—it would be easy to get these funds because everybody in Europe had the rhetoric state, the Ukraine actually was a European case and could show up as a European case. We ended up with getting not a single penny from the European Union and not a single penny from European bodies. We just got our money from very small foundations and nothing from the State. We didn't want to get oligarch money in Kiev, so we have been reliant on—material sponsoring debts, so to say—the base is the material base is that we did it, but the fourth—the fourth thing, actually, I think that has to do with the museums is that we thought about this biennale as having a different format, not just an art biennale. It would have to be slightly kind of cynical—cynical... and but to be something like that could grow into an institution. We did not call it a museum; we called it a school. I think this is a transformation that some at least post-colonial museums are trying to get into as well. Why a school? Not just because we thought of this case as a school for Europe, but because of the format of the biennale should be a format where the civil society or the society of Ukraine would be able to not just to look at art and see, so to say, the other that is proposed for the future by art, but engage itself in participatory actions, in learning classes, in teachings, in workshops that would be on stages in the middle of the biennale, so that would be staged in the middle of the biennale together with quite prominent intellectuals from all over the country and from all over Europe and wider European horizon and with artists from all around the world. They should produce in that biennale that happened as well and it happened through a third—a fifth thing that museums sometimes might not get, but projects like this get solidarity. We got the solidarity of most of the artists. They did not want to give us money. We got the solidarity of museum that supported us with material means and we got the solidarity of the institutional field in Kiev.

As the governing institution, the Arsenal had canceled all the smaller art institutions from the very conservative art academy, which is still a residue of socialist realist painting that's getting exported to the gulf and to Kiev—China from there to the most alternative spaces, including the National Art Museum, including state institutions like the National Art Museum, the National Museum of History, the Dovzhenko Film Archive, the National Library of Architecture, the City Gallery of Kiev, and so on, joined and then said we could have those places for free to substituted for the loss of that space. So we accepted that it was not just that we tried to find spaces for this biennale, the spaces came to us and they came to us through the whole institutional, so to say, non-institutional field that we did not even have address—addressed the meaning but to say okay

this is an act of civil self-organization, so we are going to join into that.

So we called this biennale, a biennale of schools, but the school should not be just learning classes and working classes but the schools should touch themes of thematic fields that would be—not just touching the crisis but wider instead would be embedded, so to say, an artistic narrative as well. The school of adapt. Adapted Europe was one of the main schools where we had political theory matching with art history and European history. What you see here, for instance, is a thing that we could manage to do it, it is an installation by Nikita Kadan. The Museum of History allowed us to enter their spaces. We convinced them, but it's true, they allowed us to enter their spaces and really let Kadan display, so to say, the section for recent history and what he did was not just to display missiles that come from the war on the staircase, but memory as some memorials, museum memorials and private memorials of the workers, steel workers museum in the Donbass coming from Russian, coming from Ukrainians, coming from Caucasians, and coming from Kazaks...

— Hedwig Saxenhuber: ...and Crimea.

— Georg Schöllhammer: ...and from Crimea as well. Then we entered new spaces, like an old Soviet warehouse that is in decay and that is getting transformed into a fitness [center] and restaurant, but carries a lot of memory. It's a beautiful modern Soviet building and there we told two stories. One was the story of the conflicting modernisms that had origin in Kiev. All of you know that Malay was born in Kiev, that Oleksandra Exter was born in Kiev, that Alexandra Dovzhenko lived and worked in Kiev, and that for instance Exter not just worked as a Constructivist painter and stage designer but she as well had classrooms in the countryside where she did sewing classes with young people. And in that we implemented something like this permanent workshop. In the Lavra Gallery, Swiss artist [unclear] really made a theme, an analysis of the virtual body in war and that parted, so to say, from the narratives of early Soviet cinema.

We started and we ended the section with Napoleon. That is the famous Napoleon Gate of the Louvre where the Enlightenment started and that is intentional... can shadow on the on the current... and it... and it has been confronted with this.

At the end of the section there was an installation by the German artist Ulrich Gleiter where he is quoting famous speeches of European solidarity about German politicians. The School of Lonesome was a different theme. We had talked to a lot of people in our travels that have worked on Geyser Park that had worked... that have acted on [unclear] of artists that have taken part in the uprisings in Brazil or in Greece, and they said there is a dramatic

moment of postwar revolutionary loneliness where you cannot act when, so to say, reality is coming back and the collective subject that you have created is gone. So we asked these artists and other artists to make melodramatic and psychodramatic [works] and worked around this idea of the subjective in the revolution and in crisis. What you saw before—can we go bak?—are sculptures by the 76-year-old Austrian sculptor, Hans Frank, who has been an influence on us well.

Frank never made it to the international field, but his reflections on the status of the subject are very deep. The next school that we had been implementing... and there is another School of the Lonesome that comes from the Spanish war, the civil war—the Dzekovs that Pedro G. Romero helped us to reconstruct where one form of punishment in the Spanish civil war was that the anarchists would punish the Francoists or the Falangists in the cloisters and in the sub-cells. They would build cages that they would decorate with abstract art. Abstract art would be a punishment and a torture, so this was another.

The School of Landscape tried to touch the broader issue and nationalism and landscapes are tied together, not just in European actually. Collective narratives and memories, but as well... it's some type of worldwide issue how a nation and a landscape worked and on the other hand the land is the most endangered thing at the moment because of it is a... a field of lot of project, which is a repeat from... a harvesting of genetic foods to geopolitics. So we confronting here for instance famous images that have been constructing the Ukrainian national landscape. The left one has been hanging in the office of the long-term secretary general of the Ukrainian communist party, so this was his Ukraine. Then there has been a painter from [unclear] and so and so on, so all of them have the museums and the school has constructed the gates on the Ukrainian land, which is still very formative in the new naïve nationalism that is coming up. At the moment, but we counter read with other more critical readings of landscape: for instance by Russian photographer Mikhail Tolmachev, who made beautiful landscape photography in photo-etching that is an evidence—secret security evidence technology—of the First World War. A footage that he found on Google from army stands, missiles, and cannon stands from both sides of the Donbass frontline, where he just selected a piece of landscape that is seen there and etched it. Taus Makhacheva, we produced it together with the Moscow biennales, so there are possibilities to coproduce. We had a lot of Russian artists that coproduce Taus Makhacheva. It is a beautiful piece together on breeching, so to say, a canon in Dagestan with the leftovers of the Soviet Museum of Dagestan. Then she built something like

a cage and filled it with these museums and we made this being shown by the performance of the Kiev Acrobat School.

The School of Imaging the evidence was an idea that Harun Farocki, a good friend of ours had brought to us. He said he would like to do something more—once more like what he did with Ujica after the Romanian revolution of film and the turmoil in Romania and the school that deciphers and re-reads the propaganda on both sides. Harun died, so we had to invite other people: [unclear] was here, Ruti Sela was here, [unclear] was here, Alexander Ujica was here, so they taught and they created footage with film students and journalism students in the Alexandra Dovzhenko Center in this school. This is for instance a thing that we found there in the archives. They are just transforming from a film factory to a film museum, very nice late Soviet films on psychological experiments and so—and this is the work in the studios that we have mentioned already.

So this is a [unclear], a Russian artist as well, and it narrates the story of his Jewish grandfather who has been driven out of Russia, driven out of Ukraine, driven back home. That's all in the Alexander Dovzhenko Center.

The School of Realism was another school that was very important. Realism is the governing, so to say, methodology, and the governing [unclear] in Ukraine, a beautiful work out of... done by [unclear] in the School of Realism.

It seems our time is limited. We have two other schools to tell you about and I think one is important because our colleague, Yulia Vaganova, is one of your travel grant fellows and she has helped us to do something beautiful in the National Museum of Art. I asked [unclear] if he would allow us to show Gogol's nose because Gogol is as well from Kiev and he did so and we thought of something that is very appealing to the masses. This has never been produced there. And then we found Yulia—together with Yulia one person, Petrushevski who was a Jewish, so to say, post-Constructivist painter in the 1920s and early thirties who portrayed the whole

Jewish milieu of Kiev and we made a portrait exhibition of this. Then one would enter Kentridge and all of the... most of these people would not have survived 36–37 and after Kentridge we would see Petrushevski after the war or during the war as a documentary realist in the service of the Soviet Army. There he did something that was really almost impossible, namely not to make in the [unclear] Great Patriotic War, not to make heroic images but really to depict things in the [unclear] realism.

We ended with the School of the Displaced because there is a lot of displacement around in Europe that I think we have to think about as well. When we think about especially European museums, they tend to ignore the knowledges that migrants bring to their countries. We have worked in the School of the Displaced with artists that themselves have been migrants and they worked hidden without the presence of the audiences in the refugee camps in Kiev.

That's all we could do. We had maybe 5% of the biennial—of the budget of a biennial. We had all volunteers. None of us has been properly bathed, but we have made quite some experience in Kiev that we have been happy to share with you here, though it may not have been something that you have been looking for in a conference that is really talking again and again about the crises of the museums.

Let me end maybe with a with a sentence I think the museum might be in: a crisis as you stated in your questionnaire, but if we think about letting the project reign instead of the institution—and the museum tends to do that—that might be dangerous for all of us. There are still some museums that think about themselves as institutions and we have to reconsider institutionality. I mean [unclear] is writing about the state, yeah. The next book by Negri and Hardt will be about leadership and institutionality, so there even the left understands that institutions are something to really reconsider as schools, as museums and as archives. Thank you for being able to talk to you.

Saturday November 7, 2015
 Day 1. *Is the museum still a place for debate?*

Panel discussion with speakers.

Patricia Falguières, Mika Kuraya, Jack Persekian, Brook Andrew, Georg Schöllhammer, and Hedwig Saxenhuber, moderated by Elizabeth Ann MacGregor.

Panel discussion:

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Okay, welcome to the panel discussion and we want to make sure that this is your opportunity to ask questions and, indeed make contributions from the floor so when we come to that—in about 20 minutes' time—just stick your hand up and they'll bring you a microphone. If you could say who you are and then address your question to any member of the panel or indeed if you would just like to make a contribution, that's fine too.

I'd like to start, though, by referring back to something that Patricia Falguières said about the way in which censorship nowadays is as much likely to come from the community as it is through power or government or somebody higher up. If we could kick off with that,

I'd like then to pick up what Jack said, to see if we can tease out of it a debate around this, because Jack, in his discussion about the Palestine Museum, has been doing what many of us talk about which is: how do we get new voices, new communities engaging with our museums. I'm just wondering, Patricia, whether you see that as a contradiction, that, as we open up museums, we are actually potentially opening up ourselves to voices who might also wish to censor some aspects of what we're doing?

— Patricia Falguières: Well, I think there is not much choice in the sense that the museum is actually producing the public space. So, it means that, since the border of public space is always moving, the museum has to let in new actors, new agents. It's obvious and it's an unending process. So, on the other side, it's quite different to say that it's communities who are producing most [...] of the demand for censorship because, precisely, these communities are demanding for censorship and not interested in getting in the public space and are trying to forbid the of the birth of the political space, for instance, or to forbid even the idea of politics, because it's always in the name of blood, of family ties, of ancestors, of religion. So, I don't see it as a real alternative.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: It is what it is. I

mean, Jack, you've experienced this in the public domain in Sharjah as well and I just wondered if you'd like to relate that to what you were saying about what you were trying to do in Palestine and how you think you might negotiate this question of the difficulties of opening up and at the same time having communities who might wish to shut you down?

— Jack Persekian: Well, the situation is definitely different as everybody knows and, actually, the question was always what's the purpose of opening a museum in the West Bank, in the city of Birzeit when you have three quarters of the Palestinian people who cannot actually access it even if they wanted. Many of you know that inside Palestine there are many communities surrounded, gated in, and they cannot cross over from one area to another and the diaspora which constitutes more than 60% of the population live in countries that have absolutely no access in Jordan, in Syria, in Lebanon. This is where the large concentration is...the question was always: "how do you deal with such an impossibility—and it was and so it is an impossibility—so, in one of the slides I was referring to this network and so we started imagining the museum as a hub, as a place where, we can produce some other work but a lot of it will have to do with the network of satellites where we are engaging and accessing these communities outside our territory and through that network—bridging this gap that has been there for more than 20 years, especially, you know, after the set up of the Palestinian authority after the Oslo Agreements and when the fragmentation started surfacing. So, this is one way to do it in each and every place the work differs and it's basically an engagement with that particular place so, it's a research place in Beirut, it's a community center in Amman, it's an exhibition space in London, it's a football club in Santiago de Chile and in every place there's this community—through this community we are eventually trying to access the world at large.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: So you've essentially reimagined the museum completely to become exactly this public space for debate and discussion around these issues?

— Jack Persekian: Yes, starting without a

collection, I mean, this is primarily where we... you—know this is our starting point where we don't have anything to say. This is who we are, what we are saying is that we will try to engage as much as possible from that community in order to generate or produce this knowledge and eventually representation. So, I think it's a blessing in disguise that we don't have a collection and we don't need to deal with a collection or a heritage. It's kind of an open platform that will enable us to eventually produce these narratives and produce different forms of representation of who are the Palestinians today and how we want to project ourselves into the future.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: So with regard to the War Paintings, we are talking about collections. I think it's very interesting we've got Jack saying, "I'm building a new museum without a collection" and your take very much outwards: "Let's return to the collections and see how collections can be a site for debate, perhaps going beyond with what a temporary exhibition, for example, can do." Do you want to expand a little on that?

— Mika Kuraya: First of all, through three presentations in this morning, I really realize how MOMAT is a conservative institution with a building, the collections and a certain kind of visitors from Japan and abroad and... what should I say?

The possibility of a collection exhibition. But, today many of the Asian countries try to make the new form of art museums. As Japan has 140 years of history of having the European system of museums, we're now trying to fit ourselves into the new context—especially in Asia, such as Singapore and Hong Kong. So, I'm just thinking of one of my ideas—or dreams—is making a long-term loan to the Asian museums like Singapore and Hong Kong and exchanging views in the long term, not in the format of large-scaled special exhibitions, but just making a loan of long term with two or three works at the same time and exchanging views little by little and creating a new understanding and common experiences between art, you know, between the museums in Asian regions.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: And do you see yourself doing this through exchanges or work or a public platform. How can you see this working going beyond the conventional exhibition mode, which is what I thought you were suggesting?

— Mika Kuraya: Maybe we can do research together. For example: only specifying and only focusing on one specific work and go deeper into the dialogs about the work or something... You know, I don't have, you know, a much greater idea at the moment but we can start a new format of exchanging views with the collections I think. And we can't of course make a loan to the institution without collections.

Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Indeed. And Brook, turning to you now, you rather mischievously pointed the finger at me about the naughty room and the way they got censored...

I think what I particularly enjoyed about working with you on that show was actually that the whole process of making the exhibition was the debate and that we didn't see the show as the beginning of the debate, the debate actually happened internally and you refer to the kind of processes. Would you like to just say a little bit more about that?

— Brook Andrew: Yeah, sure. I mean, I don't think it was a... It was very much a collective debate around that image and I think it's complex. I mean, when you're in a society like Australia it's complex. It's not America, it's not the same as America, it's not the same as Canada, it's not the same as other colonized nations and I think that people often think it is the same—and that's just lazy. But, you know, it was such an interesting invitation anyway because of the previous work that I've done with the MCA and that is whole a series of debates which are previously mentioned in the talk and there were four different days and I was not... it was a very mixed bag of people with different ethnic backgrounds and we debated issues that—I think—very much influenced what was to be. And so I'm saying that, yes, absolutely. I mean, I think that, you know, the [...] are fantastic and when you know [...], which I'm sure you all know it's coming, you say: "let's move that there, let's move that there, let's move that there." And these are significant artworks and works that need to be set up again so they're kind of the physical and kind of the... You know, the museum turns, I kind of suppose, "into a studio," and I think that's a really good thing because that's where it happens. It happens in the studio, things have to look unfinished and experimental to look right but it's about how we can massage that to create, maybe, different ways of viewing and in many ways we're all complicit in that, I think.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: I have to remember the thrill and the shock when you showed me that image of the golliwog and then the crying white bride on an iPad and then you said, "I'd like this on a poster," and I was like "I don't think we can do that, Brook," but it does raise that interesting question about context. That images that are shown in one context—as you said in the naughty room—or within the museum context can be mediated in a very different way from when they're put out there in the wider world without any context around them. Certainly, one of the issues that we faced in Australia with the [...] of the police of the word by Bill Henson, which was deemed to be, you know, images of underage girls in so called... well, could have been interpreted as pornography, was in fact...

the work itself in the gallery was not an issue but as soon as it was put on an invitation card and up the website, it immediately ignited this incredible political row that actually led to the issuing of guidelines to all museums about the showing of children in any form, which takes us back to Patricia's point about everything has frameworks that are just not always made absolutely visible.

Just to touch on Kiev, I'm very interested... I said to Georg & Hedwig, I'm just amazed that you can pull off a Biennale that was apparently canceled with very little funds and I'm interested in the kind of debate that it stimulated within the city. What impact did the cancelation have on the idea of the debate around contemporary art?

— Hedwig Saxenhuber: Should I start? I think that first it was very welcome into the city and... these people from there—because it was legal, it is a group of very engaged people who created a cultural research center and we invited them to work with us as analysts so it was from the beginning with people we trust and we could do it with them, so it was really going forward. It was...and from the outside, it was... the people liked it very much but in the country it was a shame too? Because somebody continues and don't have money and a state institution won't do it. It was not so easy for the director, I think, yeah? And I think now, the press didn't really announce it in such way we hoped, yeah? It was a little bit oppressed, but nevertheless a lot of people came and a lot of things are going on so, it was really... The young people... so many young people came everyday, we had three or four different events and lectures and something. It was really... yeah.

— Georg Schöllhammer: Well I think it worked. It worked like... as a separator, you know? You have to see that it's a very complicated space, a post-soviet space that is transforming. It's a very complicated space. The complexity is as well that it's not just transforming but it finds itself in a cagy political situation with all the European expectations and so on. Then you have a growing kind of romantic nationalism—I would say even romantic nationalism. You have a far right that is there and the governance of the country is divided. The governance of the country is institutional governance with a lot of post-Soviet institutions; even Soviet law is still there—it's still in power—and that is very slow. And, so to say, bureaucratic and... most of the public institutions are really suffering. They don't have budget, as well, They're fighting, so to say, for the economy of attention. On the other hand, you are having this one cent talk out and that as a direct [result], sent as responsible to the presidency. And then you have the oligarchs; you have three or four oligarchs. I mean, everybody, you know [S...?], who are doing something like an internationalist art Basel

Miami Beach or whatsoever. We've started to do something like that in the field, yeah? So the audiences are even separated... The attractions, so to say, the press or media could be directed to us because, first of all the media; either state media or, on the other hand, of oligarchs. For them it was not so interesting actually to talk about European politics, to talk about economics, to talk about, so to say, a not nationalist development of the state; to talk openly with Russians. I mean, what really was something like a miracle for me was that we had very good terms with certain ministries, and certain administrative, and so on and so on. And then we published the participants' list of the program one week before the biennale and we published, so to say, the speakers list and with a lot of Russians, with a lot of critical personalities we tried to keep, so to say, this dialog open, but across, not just this dichotomy, but to widen the dichotomy to other escapes with similar experiences from Yugoslavia to the Arab and South American space and suddenly there was a closure in this liberal field because politics could not stand that. We have done it as well in a time of elections. Nobody really could react to that. But, the miracle was, on the other hand that... I'm always very sceptical of social media organization, yeah? But it was totally social-media-organized. We had 100–200 people in the lectures almost every day and, if we had few, in the bookshop. So that's an experience that I have sometimes actually in such complicated situations; that social media—that we have to be critical about—have an effect in organising people. So, it has an effect, it has a lot of effect. It has less of an effect on the usual art field. I think it has an effect on the academy, on the museum of history, and it highlighted the beautiful work of the museum, of the visual arts that they are doing. But the old constellations trembled for a moment, and then they decide just to ignore it.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Is that better than being censored though? To be ignored... you get more press if you're censored. You get more press if you're censored? Yes, that's certainly true. There's nothing wrong with a bit of controversy. Don't they say all publicity is good publicity? Maybe—maybe not.

One of the things—I think Patricia said—it was to do with money and actually that now is kind of possibly one of the driving forces that will—possibly—you know, be when we have particular kinds of philanthropists or sponsors or different kinds of governments. And as all of our institutions—at these different stages in their developments—are opening up to different models of funding, I guess. Jack, you're entirely privately funded, coming presumably from the kinds of private money that is very much endorsing the vision that you've articulated. Do you see difficulties ahead with that?

— Jack Persekian: Absolutely. I mean, we come from a region where we don't have this kind of tradition and we don't have the infrastructure to pull that kind of money needed for such a project (on that scale). Usually we have in Palestine some 50 museums but they're all very small personal-initiatives, one room-two room maximum and normally very, very poorly funded. So, what we're trying to propose is something at a much higher level, something that can operate internationally and hence, we're not only building partnerships, we're also building a whole network of people who would eventually come on board as patrons, as people who would be helping us in subsidising us because there was some pressure to push us towards the government saying that, "Oh, if you go more towards the government maybe you'll find money there through international donors," and of course, to me that's a no-no because then you'll be tied to not only the policies of the government but also to all the whims and agendas of donor countries and we would like to maintain this museum as an independent entity, not tied to any party, not tied to any, affiliation. And hence, yes, it is really kind of building everything not only a building and a team but also building that whole philanthropy and tradition towards art and culture, because, in Palestine, what had sustained the Palestinian population through now 40-something years under occupation and more than 68 years from 1948 was the social institutions and grassroots organizations that worked in education, in health, and different kinds of more basic needs. Now we are asking this kind of money, money at this level for a museum and that's a new thing, but so far I think we've been doing good and

we still need this final push towards the opening, which as you saw is on the May 15. Everybody is invited—please do come! And that will give it more push and more meaning. With that, passing through this bottleneck and once we have an infrastructure on board where we have a small team that will follow up on the smaller donations rather than just on the bigger donations. I think we will have something interesting for everybody to engage with and enjoy.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: It strikes me that what you're really describing is a kind of a mixed model of funding where you're not relying on one source and I guess that's the old European model where 98% was funded by the state, which is now pretty much gone, it's gone. And we're now shifting to these other models and we're adjusting to the kind of checks and balances that you have to put in place around that.

— Jack Persekian: By the way, also the Israel Museum is also funded primarily privately from outside Israel and the money it gets from the Israeli government is comparatively very little. I think they get something like between 15 and 17% of the budget, while the rest of it is coming from all sorts of patrons from all over the world and that's why they have these kinds of chapters of friends of the Israel Museum in different places in the world. I think that's a very good model to also kind of look at and try to emulate.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: I think we should probably open it up. If anybody's got any... I'm sure you have burning questions. If you put your hand up, we'll bring a microphone to you. Somebody want to kick it off?

Saturday November 7, 2015
 Day 1. *Is the museum still a place for debate?*

Q & A with speakers.

Patricia Falguières, Mika Kuraya, Jack Persekian, Brook Andrew, Georg Schöllhammer and Hedwig Saxenhuber, moderated by Elizabeth Ann MacGregor.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Yes? From the front here.

— Hammad Nasar: I'm from Asian Art Archive in Hong Kong and it's actually just a follow up question to what Jack was mentioning and this model of the Diaspora funding the museum. And of course, I'm sure I'm not the only one who sees these striking historic parallels to the role of the Diaspora in what's happened within Palestine itself and I wonder how you're reflecting on that particular history and the way you think about the form of the museum itself.

— Jack Persekian: The original idea of the museum—which started back in '98, which was the 50th anniversary of the Nakba, the catastrophe of 1948, was about creating a museum of memory. I think they called it the Palestinian Museum of Memory at that time and that project stumbled a little bit during the second Intifada so it was shelved and in the mid 2000s it was picked up again by the same group, which is the Welfare Association and it's a group of business men and women who basically invest their money in helping Palestinians in Palestine and Lebanon in all sorts of different needs. As I said, more humanitarian work, more education and health and job creation. So, when the project was again tabled in the mid 2000s and people were questioning themselves: why do we need to always pitch our story against the Israeli story? Why do we need to always play upon this polarised position as it is presented in the media and everywhere in the world? Whenever I'm invited to do something, they have to invite an Israeli because there needs to be reciprocity as if our own existence depends on their existence or vice versa.

So that discussion led to them thinking that we don't need to start with a catastrophe, we don't need to create another Holocaust memorial for the Palestinians. We need to tell the story as it is, going beyond, before and after that moment. That is a very important moment, a turning point but nonetheless the history is much richer than that and to understand why we got to that point you need to go back and you need to learn about that.

So, the whole discussion revolved around how do we represent Palestine starting from today? How

do we kick off today? And that's why this model of Palestinians who live in the Diaspora, who actually were there at the very beginning asking for this memorial, eventually changed their mind and put their money towards this project which kind of broadens the subject and opens it horizontally; with a structure that I presented to you it tries to reach out to as many as possible, wherever they are and creates this platform for discussion. And hence, this model of fundraising or this crowd funding—which we don't have—and we need to create that system, nobody knows how to do that, we've never done this. We've always depended on either, direct money coming from, as I said, wealthy Palestinians or through international donors and donor agencies that have, kind of particular agendas and have operated in Palestine in different times. So, it's not only building the building or staffing it or programming it but also building the whole infrastructure, which is the funding and the know-how to do this and how to create such an institution.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: So will the museum be a white box?

— Jack Persekian: Well, it's interesting. I don't want to take the whole time discussing it. As we looked into the whole history and as we researched that history and we went through interviews—I think we've interviewed like 280 people—to try and link their stories to objects that they've cherished and to take these objects and put them into the museum as kind of the starting point, the kick off point for the museum, which does not have a collection as I said. When I eventually looked at the situation we live in, the impossibility of having this museum as is, in the current situation meaning that most of these objects and the stories they have collected cannot come to the museum because of the impossibility of importing them into that place. The impossibility of also, of people coming to that place for that opening because they cannot come, because of the travel restrictions, the visa restrictions that we have. It turned out that at the end, I would have an exhibition with only a few objects and the rest empty spaces standing in place of absent people, absent objects, absent history. And so my thinking led me to think

that the start of this museum would be an empty museum. So on May 15th, for those who intend to come, do not expect to see anything, it's just going to be an empty museum!

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Didn't this happen also with one of the Holocaust memorials in Germany? They opened with no exhibit. But I want to ask Patricia to pick this up because you have written about, you know, critiquing the idea of the white cube and the dominant way in...can institutions be neutral? Should they be neutral? Should they pretend to be neutral?

— Patricia Falguières: First we should re-read closely the text of Brian O'Doherty, of formal context about what has been said about them, and I remember Brian saying in a congress, "Finally, the white cube, we have it in our mind and we transport it," and this is really important because I think that a certain history of the white cube is written, but if you look closely to the work of Alfred Barr for instance as Richard Meier did two years or three years ago, we discover that, precisely, the program of Barr was far more complex and the white cube is the version of Clement Greenberg and so and so. I think there is an important new real association of the museum with the art historians working closely on this topic.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Question here? You got a microphone?

— Ann-Sophi Noring: [I'm] from Sweden from Moderna Musset in Stockholm. I think this issue about what one would presume to be the growing censorship from the communities is quite interesting and I would like you to all develop a little bit about this issue from your own experiences and also take into account self-censorship as Elizabeth mentioned, how you deal with images like the one you talked about and what does it make for freedom of speech in society today?

— Brook Andrew: Freedom of speech: it's such a funny thing. I think that only certain people of certain places have a freedom of speech. You know, it's interesting how we were also talking about building a museum. I mean, my mother's family—if I just want to focus on that, just for a little bit—I mean most aboriginal people, regardless if we look Japanese or Scottish or whatever we look like, which we look like very different things depending on where we are from. You know, most people are actually trying to get past the poverty line. Aboriginal people make up to 2.5% of the population, most people, do not have access to land, cannot continue culture, we don't have a museum, there's an international repatriation of Aboriginal human remains, and there's only starting now a conversation about whether that should go: let alone the freedom of speech as opposed to culture. But, that's not about guilt either; it's not about fear. It's just about the reality and I

think that when we hold up a mirror and we see coming back from Europe and the fact that all these faux-pas are happening elsewhere. It's complex and I don't think there are any answers but as far as freedom of speech, you know, I've felt sometimes I'm silenced sometimes from the wider community. Just about the trauma of the representation of the past, some people don't want to be reminded about that, yet everyone has a right to know even within their own families. So, I don't think it's as straightforward as in freedom of speech. It's a little more complex.

— Georg Schöllhammer: Well, there's an anecdote that I can tell from Kiev. There was one major debate with the Arsenal when Ion Grigorescu the famous Romanian artist wrote an email where he's deeply, really deeply democratic and on the other hand a deep orthodox thinker and he wrote an e-mail that just had the sentence: "There must be a right to separation." So, this was something that could not be taken by the Arsenal who is directly dependent on the president. But this anecdote is a wide anecdote because I think we tend to talk about censorship and the word is very, very often misused when we just tend to talk about political antagonisms, instead we have to work somehow through and we cannot expect that an institution like the museum that has a history of being a hegemonical institution, an institution narrating history and hence, construction histories, even an institution of exclusion is challenged once that cannot understand the history that wants to integrate and maybe then to give something back that we feel a censorship but we have to break it through, I think. But I think it's more antagonism. Censorship is always liked to powers, and I don't see for instance that the community at the moment is powerful enough to be a censor. When power comes with something like aggression, then it might be dangerous. Anyways, there are methodologies to deal with that. There are artists, maybe not the best ones but there is trauma therapy and whatever: crisis therapy and crisis intervention. So what can think about putting this... I would say the word "censorship" for me is a very strong word and we should leave it at home. The museums create political antagonisms and if there is a debate about the freedom of speech and maybe the different, so to say, viewpoints of what the speech act could be into a society and it could actually enact after the speech act, then we should properly be thinking that through so we Western Democrats [find it] quite easy to say "freedom of speech and censorship" and so on. I would not take the words so easily into my mouth. I think the museum must be a place of antagonisms and where antagonisms can be worked out and the museum must remain as hegemonical history and not think about "I'm being censored because of..." It has

integrated as well in the canons (the canons that has been accused it in the sixties and seventies and maybe that's one of the great things that it did. But it has to work with the antagonisms that even they have brought into the museum. So, if you're now going back to criticising the paradigms of autonomy and so on and so on. While we [were] like installing the different then I think this conflict is somehow still existing and you are right it has to be talked through.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: No? You've said everything to be said on that topic? Yes, yes. I mean, I think it is down to context and local context and you know, there are very interesting debates about what is and isn't appropriate to be shown in museums and for me the important thing is the debate, the debate that goes on in the process of deciding what you will show and that you take responsibility. Jack had a lovely phrase; you said we should operate with diplomacy. We don't often hear museum directors say that, actually. I don't think museum directors really admit that very often, but I think that is exactly what we all do. We operate with diplomacy and we balance, we chose the right language, we look for the balance that doesn't get us shut down but actually still allows us to put forward ideas and so on. Is that fair?

— Jack Persekian: From the context where I come from that's, I think, most of it is clear because, what we do is more of an act of resistance rather than you know kind of operating as a museum in a normal situation, so we need to duck whenever there's a certain attack and we need to maneuver in order to do things where, otherwise if you would go through the normal ways, it would never happen. The impossibilities, the obstacles, the restraints on freedom... It's not only about freedom of expression and whatever we do with a lot of work, you negotiate, you maneuver, you try to survive because such an environment it's fatal. It can be fatal.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: One of the wonderful things that we were hearing this morning also was ambiguity and about how you cannot exactly, you cannot tell what the response is going to be. I think you thought about four different reactions to the War Paintings and how you actually, you can't tell which person is going to have which reaction. How do you think from a museum's perspective you can actually embrace that and make it maybe even more explicit? Against the idea that the painting should not be shown because they were subject to one reading.

— Mika Kuraya: Talking about the censorship, many of the Japanese museums are funded by the government or local governments so in terms of censorship, we international museums do not have censorship from collectors or the board of trustees and the Japanese government is too large to care about what the National Museum is doing, so we're

free to do whatever we want to anyway but anyway, the biggest pressure for us is from the public. So, many of them agree to display the War Paintings but half of them are denying to display the War Paintings and we have to conduct the conversation between them. That's what I said about ambiguity this morning. Ambiguity can be a meeting place for people with different opinions and for the national museums it's much easier to do this but I think a more serious situation is for the prefectural or municipal museums, because many of them are under the control of the local organization of school education and social education. As the local government is smaller than the Japanese government of course, they easily attack the museums and several events occurred within these two or three years. Last year in one prefectural museum of art about the explicit of nudity, of male nudes. This year about the opinion on the school education system at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Contemporary Art, which you may visit... tomorrow or today. I'm just thinking that ambiguity could be a good place for starting dialogs between people with different opinions but this is much harder for us to conduct these kind of dialogs in Japanese society. One of the reasons, I think is our experience of 2011 earthquake. After the earthquake I realised that many of the artists were heading towards the social issues but at the same time people in general, I mean the audiences turned back into a more traditional notion of the artwork. It could ease your mind, to watch beautiful flowers of something like that. And we are in the situation on one hand, artists and the museum are in the direction of controversy. But maybe many of the people want to get back to a more comfortable notion of art. So that's about the censorship in Japan, I think. We are in a very different situation from your country, your country, and your country.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Any more? Here we are? Someone at the back there? Has the microphone?

— Carina Plath: I'm curator at the Sprengel Museum in Hanover and I have a comment to Mika's speech and a question to Patricia. So the comment is just: I was wondering whether Foujita... I'm sure you know the Otto Dix painting: the war triptych. There was actually a big discussion because it was depicting the war in the twenties already in a very realistic manner and there were German art critics really protesting against it and wanted it to be taken out of the public museum because they said, "It's really bad for us," and the politicians wanted it because euphoria in Germany was so big already in the twenties from the first war and then the Nazis in '33 really took it away, but it's a very interesting background for Foujita and I'm sure he knows because it was very close to the New Objectivity paintings in Germany, etc., etc. So I think it's a very

interesting story in terms of censorship and realist art in a way.

And to Patricia... I have the question, I found it very interesting what you said about institutional critique, because of course you know that for the Western-European institution it was a very easy way out. You would just invite Andrea Fraser or other artists and they would make a critical analysis of the museum and so, it became kind of fashionable. So, the question is, that I'd really like to comment on the need for a good critical analysis for museums... So, I guess my question is really like: who should best do this analysis? Who would be the best person to do this analysis besides yourself?

— Patricia Falguières: The fact is that of course, the institution was a nightmare in the seventies, like all kinds of institutions like the university. We have exactly the same trouble with the university today. It's the same thing as were fiercely critical of the university as an institution today, of course, understanding that universities all over the world are destroyed by neoliberality to say it a word which is ridiculous in a way but... that's what it is. So, it's the same for the museum. We need to rethink—absolutely—a real institutional critique not only because museums are targets today of the new way of governing, of the boundlessness of riches and so on but because a lot of responsible museum institutions have absorbed institutional critique. I've seen a lot of very good exhibitions everywhere in the world, which shows that precisely a new generation of curators, directors of museums, are perfectly aware of the hegemonic past of museums you were speaking about and they are absolutely credible in the intelligence of institutional critique. So, now we have to go a little deeper and to change the concepts and the way of analysis. And, this is the reason why I think a new art history is absolutely a challenge for everybody, not only for academics but for museums too and something has to be done in that field. We have we have great building sites to organize but I think this is what we have to do. If not we are lost.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: And I assume that when you say “we,” you mean all of us (curators, writers, artists or critics).

— Patricia Falguières: Of course.... everybody. So, this is really a collective building site and, for instance, when we see the emergence of the National Museum of Palestine. Of course it requires a new concept, new statement, new ways of analysis.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: And I saw another hand, on the front here, somewhere. Oh, over here, Lars?

— Lars Nittve: I mean I note, of course, that in the West we have a situation where interest groups are empowered in a way and, of course, therefore can

act in ways that they haven't been able to do before (to sort of block things or trigger censorship). I think we are in a part of the world where there are very few places where you actually don't have the old style, traditional, hard-core censorship happening on a regular basis. Things being removed from exhibitions, things not being allowed to be shown at all. I mean, I think that in Asia it's hard to count the countries that actually don't have censorship or the places that don't have censorship and we haven't really talked about that, because it's a very... we are in Asia right now so I don't know... Of course, the panel doesn't really represent—besides, of course, the Japanese colleague—that aspect. I mean, it would be interesting to hear if someone from Vietnam can talk about their situation for example. China of course is the more obvious example. But I just wanted to remind you about that.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Would anyone else like to respond to that... from the Asian perspective? Yes, Jo-Anne?

— Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker: Thank you. A question directed to Jack, actually. Jo-Anne from the Frye Art Museum in Seattle. And, in the States our work has been affected by the “Black Lives Matter” movement and the horrendous murders that have been taking place. And, in working with African-American artists, we're finding that some artists are saying: we no longer want to be associated with one narrative. Which is the narrative of oppression or the narrative of slavery but we want alternative narratives that present us as spiritual communities, as communities of strength. And the projects that we've been having, have been moderating, have been balancing somewhere between the two but not always comfortably and within the community of artists of color there's sometimes very strong disagreement over which path to take. I've heard a comment that you made about the issue of what narratives you want to present in your museum and I was wondering if you could speak about it a little bit.

— Jack Persekian: Well, precisely that. This didn't start with the Palestinian Museum project. This already started right... I would say... Okay, what triggered it was the first Intifada when—just to put it in a historical context—what the first Intifada did (which started in 1988) was to take the power from the politicians (the PLO at the time) and by the people in their own hands and when they went out on the streets and people started organizing.

Everything was closed for many years—actually three years. I was living there. So, people started organizing home schools, planting their backyards, boycotting Israel... and the artists who, before that had depended somehow on the political structure of the PLO, and who were subsidised somehow by the political entity but yet also directed by that, had liberated themselves and started doing

things that represented themselves and represented their own issues and represented their own thinking on, of course, the conflict and on their lives and other issues be it: women's liberation or... And from that time on there was a sort of liberation of the art movement and from then you started seeing art institutions popping up in Palestine in different places, artists' groups organizing and connections with the West or the rest of the world—but it started with the West—became stronger so, then you'd see curators coming and people from the outside being introduced to the art being produced in Palestine and hence, there was actually quite a strong push to the art scene.

So, what we're trying to do with the museum is something that is built on what happened in the past 20 years or so. So, what we're trying to do with the forms of representation, with the symbols of representation, with the story that you hear in the media or elsewhere is to try to bring about alternative takes on it through different projects, through different programs, by actually also connecting with places and people that otherwise didn't have a voice because there was a concentration, as I was saying. There was the Oslo Accords and the whole set up of the Palestinian Authority was to kind of zoom in on that kind of small geographical area and say to the people in the world that, well the whole story about Palestine is that: two spots of land—West Bank and Gaza—and you should really focus on those. So, the whole world was kind of pouring onto this particular place and trying to figure out their engagement with it. Where actually more than 60% or actually or even 70% of the Palestinian population lived outside those boundaries and they have as much as say in this as those living there and what the Palestinian museum is trying to do is trying to kind of bring as many on board and is trying to open that discussion and is trying think how can we take this one project—it's one among many others of course—one project as a platform or springboard towards the future. Yes, we will look at the past to learn from it and to understand the context of where we come from, but also how do we look at today? And how do we move forward from today?

— Ute Meta Bauer: We have now a number of people who really question also the narrative of the museum, but isn't the opportunity of a museum to be a repository to really collect art from its time from many different aspects even if it is antagonistic to allow a debate in the future. But what I think it's amazing with museums if they work are once in the collection even if they're not shown, they are in the repository and we can't ignore them and by this we can really build the repository of things and the future of things there are may be written out. We have to fill gaps, like women, diversity, etc. but still the museum has this amazing opportunity to be

really there ready for the future, to be a repository for debates that are deeply needed and I think it's less about censorship. To me it's really important: do museums still have the possibility of making acquisitions? Are acquisitions stopped by trustees? What is the possibility of really being what a museum can be (a repository and archive and creating art history)? I'm curious a little bit how you see that because you're all engaged in a museum or from the outside.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Mika, I think that sounds like one for you.

— Mika Kuraya: Yes—before—I was a very avant-garde kind of curator and I [...] collection at the beginning of my career but after I experienced a 11.3 earthquake and I watched many of the museums were devastated and lots of objects were gone, washed away by the tsunami. I started to rethink about the collection's possibility. You said that your museum has no collection and you have the exhibition with very few objects in your exhibition, but there needs to be a storage for your future collection to keep objects safely for years. And in terms of censorship I totally agree with you. If you collect some objects in your museum they can wait until they can be exposed to the audiences in a proper way or maybe a different way. So, that's my opinion and, yeah, I just want you to get back the discussion into the collection issue, back again. Thank you.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Brook, do you want to answer that one too... from an artist's point of view?

— Brook Andrew: The importance of collections? I think they're very important. Trying to put them together, isn't it? I know, clearly I'm very interested in different kinds of ways on how those objects are put together. And there's a huge debate in Australia about the many, not only artworks but cultural objects (historical) that are kind of spread all over Australia or over the world and people often talk about one keeping place. I kind of mentioned that before. You know? It's really complicated and I don't think there's an answer and I think it makes me think of the connections between people and communities and the real voice. It reminds me again of the freedom of speech question or about the, you know, about Palestine having a museum. But it's about the other... mess I suppose that some communities—which is a lot in the world and not part of that dominant narrative or part of that dominant discourse, or those kind of dominant institutional forces—and often they're kind fall into the sadness. You know, kind of a category like... So, before I was talking about the way African-Americans don't want to be kind of labeled anymore and so a lot of us don't want to be labeled. So I think that when it comes to collections and how they're actually collected, there's a huge contention in Australia for indigenous status. It's like: okay you are an

indigenous collection and therefore when we get so much money for that and it has to go in there and if they don't have the money, well someone else will put money for that. So really, this is kind of a contention of identity still, which is a constructive identity, which is not really the way in which communities or artists or maybe yourself deals with that and it's complicated. But, in saying that, it's also a really great place to be for an artist, because it means that you can play with that a bit and I know that, you know, institutes are there for that today but redefining what is the white cube or what is the museum and I think that the more the artists are allowed to take risks; I'm not just saying this because I was privileged enough to have those opportunities—because it is a privilege—so often curators or directors of museums go, “Here you go, do whatever you want.” I mean, it doesn't happen that often even though it was happening in Vienna around the sixties. Those museum interventions were for a particular aesthetic kind of interventions. But the kind of interventions that I suppose can happen, I think they're also quite scary and that involves collections.

— Guillermo Santamaria: I might be a little bit slow, sorry. There's this history... I'm from Museo Carrillo Gil [Mexico, City]. We had a big issue about two years ago concerning one of the collection pieces that was touched. It was displayed by Carlos Amoraes, a contemporary Mexican artist. It was one of these key pieces of José Clemente Orozco and he did something similar to what you did with Diego Rivera, which I'm not sure if it was a real Diego Rivera that we saw, an authentic or if it was a reproduction. By the way something like that in Mexico, something like that is absolutely forbidden, impossible! Such an experiment, such an ambiguous very subtle experiment is absolutely forbidden in Mexico as we experienced with Carlos Amoraes with just a little painting in the wall.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Guillermo, forbidden by whom? By the authorities? The funders? The public?

— Guillermo Santamarina: Yeah well, by the critics, by some academics, and of course by the authorities. What is crossing my mind is that some... in the ambiguity of the global condition, sometimes you can abridge your experiments some worlds not in your own context in this opportunity. And it seems like a very promising perspective for artists to do so, but it's very sensitive as well. As I see it, I try to do a Calder show in Mexico... in this small museum I was working in and to work a Calder show was a big issue. I mean, such a big thing to negotiate, not just with the Calder Foundation, but I did it without asking of course. I had the opportunity. I'm a little bit punkish, yes, but I did it. I think you're very punk and we don't want to know who was the responsible.

— Brook Andrew: Can I just add to that, though, that I was really disappointed because the painting I really wanted to secure to be in the show was Francis Picabia's *Revolution* you see and they wouldn't let me to show that because apparently it was a deposit from a private collector that I really knew.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Oh, there we go, is that censorship or is that negotiation... because the collector would have objected?

— Brook Andrew: No, apparently. I'm not sure, but my personal view, the silent view, was that the Picabia was complicated because he was French-Spanish and we talked about the revolution and maybe in some ways it was easier to speak about you know...

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: A Mexican? That gives us a whole other dimension to think about. In the middle, there.

— Bo Ding: [I'm from] China. I just want to briefly respond to the gentleman's question about the censorship in China, maybe by short stories. A young elephant was chained to a wooden stick on the ground and the elephant is too young to get away from the chain and when they grow bigger and older, it's very easy for it to get away from it but it stopped trying. Despite the scientific accuracy of the story, we could all see the meaning behind it. So the issue here is not only about what we are not allowed to say but also about what we are allowed to say. For instance, the statement that China is a censored country, is too safe to make that kind of statement right? But what is the real situation here? As the institution changes, it's hard to actually keep up with it and keep observing what's really happening. So, to get back to the question for the museum being a place for debate, I think it's actually important to see whether it could be a place to be brave and to be confronting the reality constantly. You know, that's just a small comment I want to make.

— Unidentified questioner: Hello. I don't really have a question; I just would like to comment on the subject of decision and the case of MACBA. The question of being a place for debate lies in the heart of curatorial practice for me, especially in the context of Turkey where democratic channels of self-expression are weak. As some of you may already know, the government was elected again last week and this is the coming the 4th period in power and they're getting more authoritarian—like everyday—and suppressing any oppositional action. So it's a fundamental question for me to think about possible ways to trigger a debate around exhibitions. So, under these conditions, if you're using like a critical discourse or, say, including some works in the exhibition that transgress the social norms, you have to develop new strategies. You can delay the exhibition, you can change the works in the

exhibition or you can't look for some other ways to show the works.

If you think this from the point of institutions, they are surrounded by different parameters and network of relations. For instance, art patrons can be one element for the financial resources, the state can be another element, or say: where is public? There can be people with more conservative tendencies that you cannot ignore as an institution because you have to be as inclusive as much possible and at some point all of these parts have different expectations and you have to meet them in order to keep the institution alive.

So as an institution you have to keep the balance among these different parts and make the institution a space of negotiation for different values, different ideas. And in this process of negotiation, modification in the exhibition is understandable and justifiable but at the same time you shouldn't forget that you are responsible to the artists as well as anyone you include in the exhibition and during the preparations. So, however you do it, you have to do this articulation like in the beginning and throughout the preparation. Not during the exhibition or not a day before the exhibition. This decision should be made since the beginning, and as I said, you can't change the work, you can't do anything, because there are different parameters around you. What happens if you don't do this with time? It obviously becomes a serious problem as we've witnessed recently in the case of MACBA. You lose the trust of the artists, you lose the trust of certain public, and you also may lose the trust of young colleagues like me. So I think this transparency and responsibility and the trust are important parts of professional ethics and these ethics of profession is most of the time ignored because of the market forces and for political reasons. I think we should just try to institutionalize these ethics as much as we can.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Thank you. Could you just say who you are?

— Unidentified questioner: My name is [...] and I'm from SALT Istanbul.

— Brook Andrew: Thanks for that. I just wanted to respond to you and I think that as an artist, coming from a community that's not always green and working within collections and having access to things that maybe you can always show. I think perhaps it's the power of collaboration and I'm not just saying that to kind of diffuse anything. If anything, collaboration is powerful. It doesn't necessarily mean that you can always show what you want to show but it's the way in which things are done. And I was, you know, it's funny but I was speaking with the director of arts space in Auckland, and.... I saw him the other day and I was like, "You know I'm going to talk today," and I was a bit nervous so, what do you think? And of course he's from Istanbul and

he says, "Well Brook, you know? You know the thing that is needed here is a museum of democracy. You know, that kind of looks at the inner history of journalists who were murdered internationally as well and, you know, these are great ideas and I think that this is from a curator and a director and in some ways he's like an artist and I think that artists are like directors and curators and curators and directors are like are like an artist. And I think that it's the same with communities and that the more collaborate together to form voices, that's not about censorship, that is about, you know, shared responsibility. I think that's something that's worth doing.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Someone down the front here?

— Calin Dan: I'm the director of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Bucharest. I wanted to connect two points here: one made by George and the other made by our colleague from Mexico City. It was very interesting what he said, that by globalizing you can shoot out interesting artists somewhere and give them a turf for some things that couldn't be said at home. I will flip this and get back to the person you mentioned, Ion Grigorescu, the Romanian artist with a well established international reputation and I would say that indeed he was much more active starting immediately in the 1990s outside of Romania that in Romania. So much that he had very important installations and exhibitions in big museums in Europe. He never had a relevant or retrospective show in Romania and when we discussed it recently he said, "Well, we could try something, but, you know, most of my work was already sold outside Romania," so there would be really a problem to do something that unless we to put together some complicated logistics. So, I think that there is also that obviously we are going to turn back when we talk about censorship. We're going to talk about the economic dynamics, we are going to talk about exoticism, we are going to talk about the export-import. So maybe those are things that could be addressed as well.

— Georg Schöllhammer: And could be addressed in terms of the collections because if we have the same power complications working in the collections. You know, there are collections that have been built up for a long time... modern museums that can no longer compete because the market doesn't let them compete and there is a kind of an international, so to say, harvesting institutional field that is really trying to get hegemonic and there are small compounds that tried to work together, we exchange but what we're losing in most of the field it's something like locality. While using locality and we're always thinking about translatability and translatability is an issue that is not always given and that's something that has to do a lot with the other subject that we are talking here: about the

globalizing art world. What we're seeing around is actually, we're seeing spreading out and not just in the museum world, it's especially in the curatorial world, in the self-organized world, in the center world. Mainly a generation of young curators that have trained in one of these hegemonic museums or curatorial courses and they come back with a certain methodology, with a certain frame of methodology.

Their first treasure is usually either something like a local—either local archive, or local artist or local, so to say, constellation that they make their case, a local case that then can be transported internationally. But, the local is not transparent, the local is totally opaque and it's full of internal power relations that cannot be so easily translated. And we are getting into an internationalism that is almost like the universalist—modernist—internationalism that the new avant-gardes fought against, talking about the specificity of the art work, because on one hand we're seeing sameness in exchange, which is good because if there is an internationality at hand that was always working in the art world, but we are suppressing specificities—not local specificities but untranslatabilities that we cannot handle and that's why I think it is important what you said Ute.

These things are getting collected but not in the globalized methodology that you have to. You have to localize it within a certain limit that your museum is in and you have to risk that then you're out of business because if you don't collect what others would like to lend, so you're not the one that can borrow and so on and so on so, there's a "circulus vitiosus" that's full of hidden relations. When you think about the collections, you should rethink collections and collectability. Not even collections. We should not always think about transmissions but we should think about intranslatabilities as well.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Fantastic linking us into 3D, I think.

— Unidentified questioner: I didn't say just only for Turkey. It was like a more general statement like you insert through the case of Istanbul though I departed in my comment from the undemocratic conditions in Turkey. It was a general comment including the case of MACBA. This is the first thing, secondly, I 100% agree that it is a collaborative work and that the director, the curator, the artists all should collaborate together, but these parts should be together since the beginning, not one of these parts should intervene like the later state of the preparations. Thank you

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: I think that's the important point is that we're discussing this idea of the process and the debate as we were discussing happening well in advance. So it's not the moment where you open the show and then there's these

other voices coming in. But the debate happens in our case—as Brook knows well—right through the museum, right through the host staff and the education staff and so on and so forth, and maybe that sounds bureaucratic but if you don't take everybody with you—especially when you're going to show controversial material—then, you have no chance.

We had 80,000 people through this exhibition and had two complaints and it was pretty full on in many ways as you saw. I think Patricia summed it up very well: strategies that are actually dealing with these kinds of debates, then you can actually cut through. It doesn't happen all the time and of course there are always going to be external complaints and then, someone mentioned the good side of social media. I think the down side of social media can be that they amplify something that is actually not that significant and that museums—I'm thinking here of Sydney Biennale—take fright because they see something building up and they see it as if it's going to be much more frightening and the reality of it is that it isn't. It's just a lot of noise on social media and I think that we really need to be careful not taking what's put on social media as something we need to immediately respond to.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Somebody at the back there?

— Abbas Nokhasteh: Thank you. Hi, [I'm] from Openvizor. I just wanted to ask a question to Georg about the work in Kiev and what propelled you to—I mean, there are some reasons that you already mentioned—regarding propelling you to go from Biennale to school, or schools, and I think that's very much something in mind with all sorts of projects of developing institutions outside of the building. So, what I wanted to ask was: what really made you do that? What did you learn from what it's like to propose, participate, and experience these kinds of elements of school outside of the Biennale?

— Georg Schöllhammer: Well, complicated question, I'm still tired... And we will see, but what the real compelling thing is what one saw the needs of a society that is traumatized, that is getting traumatized by the media for instance, that is self-traumatized by social media. And that is traumatized by this international discourse about the societies in Ukraine. They have a totally different desire and the desire is not just consumerism but the desire is to imagine different futures, not just for them, not just for the state of the country and for that what an institution could be. The institutional, the academic field, for instance, in Ukraine is still very, very conservative academia, most of the academia, and there's the intrusion of private American and European universities where people are sending their children, so there is a gap in between and these people took the chance to have

quite a serious set of lectures and practitioners in short-term courses to use it like an open university. So I think this was another point that was really compelling in the Biennale. But what Ute said is really true and you should not think about just doing that without thinking about the capacities of the artwork that is opaque itself, that is sometimes not touching an issue, that is sometimes autonomous in another way; maybe not in that way. The speculative realist would like us to see every object but that was very important for us: not to cut it away, not to cut practices off but to let this tension, this ambiguity between these two fields, act, I would say, enact.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Thank you, couple more. KC.

— Kian Chow Kwok: I believe that when we speak about community, we have to include a meeting like this, which is an international meeting. There is a global community, a museum community, which is also an important and integral component of any local community. As we discuss about specificities, we look at funding model, we look at local context and so on. Let us not forget the fact of us being here at the CIMAM conference, that represents a certain voice, a certain platform that would operate at a local level. Hence, museums, you know, as a community is an important facilitator if you like, for local debate and we know that for censorship to take place, because you know, there have been [...] by some local communities, local groups, constituencies and so on. The fact that they become something that is turning into a [...] action of censorship is due to the kind of underlying political market forces or other power structures in play. Therefore, the museum as a group or community, is always in dialog, in negotiation with the general framing of the local community as we understand it in terms of specific locality.

As we discussed here—I'm a board member of CIMAM—and I'm reading an e-mail from our colleague, who could not make it here because he could not get the visa to come to Japan in time to be present here, but nevertheless Abdellah from Doha is listening in and he's sending an e-mail to say that, "I hope, given the topic that we are discussing today, that museums should continue to be a place for debate. We should at least end with a note of confidence to say that the museum is a place for debate." We can discuss a lot about technical aspects about how this takes place. You know, whether within the museum, or outside the museum or, whether in the exchanges with artists, or whether within the museum's programming, so on and so forth. But, as we deconstruct how some of these values are based in specific cultures, be it American or whatever. Some of these maybe because of the institutional history of museums that we're not very reflexive about. Whatever it is, let us remember that

it is through working in museums, through working with artists the kind of inter-subjectivity that we realise that actually determined the kind of values about openness that we have. So we can critique our own history, we can critique the specificity of where some of these values may come from and how they are tied through different political powers or different regions in the world. But there's no getting away to say that we are very open in the way we like to look at cultures. The museum has a very fundamental role in facilitating exactly that kind of understanding. Thank you.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Thank you, we've got time for one more.

— Hyunjin Kim: Thank you for the speakers today and I was hearing your presentation today but we're talking about censorship but I think that the big problem in Asia is also that there is a highly big bureaucratic censorship that operates self-censorship instead of all of the institutions and agencies. And, I mean, it was quite surprising to see the War Paintings yesterday and what Mika was mentioning but I was really perplexed and ambiguity is really the ideal place for possible media explanation, actually. And also, recently in Korea, there is this... they've been censored by listing artists names and it's on the parliament issue and is now on the process of the principal trial. So, I think I have to really emphasize that the self-censorship is also the place to judge, you know, in a democratic society and shouldn't be just raising the law and by the way.

— Elizabeth Ann MacGregor: Thank you. Yes, complex issues. I think about what Lars referred to in terms of local context is clearly very significant. I think KC just summed it up very well for us, and our Turkish colleague also. The need for acknowledging both local contexts and strategies and also the need for collaboration and debate right through the process of all our working museums, not just putting on exhibitions but public programs all the other debates that goes around it and I'd like to echo what KC said and Abdellah from Doha resoundingly said. I do believe that museums are a place for debate, however we'd like to describe what a museum is. It certainly must be a place for debate and that debate goes right through the institution and goes right through the entire workings from strategy right through to practice. On the board we've been discussing whether we could come out of this session with some kind of guidelines or universal principles. My feeling is that is a resound "no." But what we should come out is precisely what I think Patricia summed up so well for us, which is the need for good strategic approach for strategies to deal with these situations as they occur and to think through, with knowledge and an awareness about our own local context. How we can deal with self-censorship? How we can deal with power struggles? How we

can deal with community responses to what it is that we do? At the end of the day I think we are all incredibly lucky to work in an amazing sector with

fantastic artists. So please join me in thanking all of our panellists today. Thank you.

Sunday
November 8, 2015

Day 2
How has modernism been
perceived globally?

Sunday November 8, 2015

Day 2. *How has modernism been perceived globally?*

Keynote 2. Shigemi Inaga, Professor, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Nichibunken, Kyoto; Post-Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Sokendai, Hayama, Japan.

Short Bio:

Shigemi Inaga, Professor, International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken), Kyoto, as well former Dean of the School of Cultural and Social Studies, Graduate University for Advanced Studies (Sokendai). Born in 1957, Shigemi Inaga grew up in the city of Hiroshima. Graduating from the Masters course of Comparative Literature and Culture in the University of Tokyo (Komaba Campus), he obtained a Ph.D. at Université Paris VII in 1988. Assistant at the Department of Liberal Arts (1988–1990), he served as Associate Professor at Mie University (1990–1997), before being appointed to his current position in 1997 and obtaining full professorship in 2004. His main publications include *La Crépuscule de la peinture; Lutte posthume d'Édouard Manet* (1997); *The Orient of the Painting, from Orientalism to Japonisme* (1999); and *The Painting on the Edge, Studies in Trans-national Asian Modernities* (2013). Academic proceedings he has edited include *Crossing Cultural Borders* (1999); *Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts in the 21st Century* (2005); and *Questioning Oriental Aesthetics and Thinking* (2010). Professor Inaga is also co-editor of *Vocabulaire de la spatialité japonaise* (2013) and recipient of the Suntory Academic Award, Shibusawa-Claudé Prize and the Ringa Award for the Promotion of Art Studies (all 1997), as well as the Watsuji Tetsuro Culture Prize (2001).

Presentation: Haptic sensations beyond the visual culture: Redefining "modernity" in museology so as to readjust the digitalized global scale model.

Summary

The talk is expected to focus on the ways modernity has been perceived globally. Yet the task contains two basic preliminary questions: What does "modernity" mean and what is indicated by "global"? Without entering into philosophical discussions, the paper will examine firstly some concrete cases where the dichotomy between "Western modernity" and "non-Western tradition" causes conflict. Secondly, it will analyze "globalization" from a critical point of view. "Critical" here implies the questioning of the overwhelming schema of "the West and the Rest"; an opposition that excludes, by definition, third parties, i.e. the realities of non-Western modernity. Is it, then, our purpose to search for "other histories" vis-à-vis the so-called mainstream history of modernity? How to integrate the formers to the later? Or do they remain incompatible with the later? Does the alternative mean alternation or alteration? Do any attempts at non-Western modernities lead us to outreach or outrage? Is this all a question of geography or geology? How about the ecological conditions if "modernity" is a kind of

atmospheric disturbance in global cultural history? How to survey, then, the collisions of "the West and the Rest" in a global weather forecast under the current climatic change? If the metaphor of hydrodynamics is relevant, can we really rely upon digital technology-based AI innovations? To which destination can modernity lead us, at the price of analogous and haptic thinking, at the risk of forgetting its origin from "digitus"?

Here are some of the questions I want to address within the 60-minute time limit.

Visibility in question

Let us begin with a specific topic. The museum as an exhibition space puts special emphasis on visibility and visual perception. The pursuit of visuality has been made at the detriment of other senses. Among other senses, the auditory is often integrated into audio-visual video projections. Fortunately, several museums' restaurants are eminently more popular than their special exhibitions. But is the museum a place to satisfy our palate and olfactory appetites? And it is rare that we appreciate the perfume in art museums. Yet the most segregated among the five senses must be the tactile one: in most museum exhibitions it is forbidden to touch the exhibits. Among Japanese public museums, Shizuoka Prefectural Museum, which is famous for its August

Rodin collection, must be one of the rare exceptions: it provides visually disabled visitors with special corners to directly touch several sculptures. But more often than not, touching exhibits is not allowed for safety reasons: either to protect the exhibits from possible damage or to avoid unexpected injuries among visitors. As a result, the gaze is intensified so as to compensate for the lack of tactile experiences. This is somewhat like the opposite of the lobster, whose lack of eyesight is replaced by tactile antenna. Yet the visual cannot perfectly replace the lack of tactile. We are no longer allowed to make the synthetic experience of synesthesia that previous art lovers could enjoy in their private spaces. Just take the case of tea ceremony. Tea bowls should be appreciated not by visual observation from a distance alone; you first have to feel the warmth of the liquid within the bowl and smell the tea, before then tasting the bitter green liquid by touching the fringe of the bowl with your own lips. In the case of the tea ceremony, the drinking of the tea is but a small part of the entire process of appreciating art that invites you into the inner space of a tea house: strolling in the garden, admiring the flower arrangement, judging the choice of the pieces of artwork in the alcove (tokonoma) for decoration... The sound of the boiling water and the smell of the tatami mat as well as the sound of the wind outside the tea-room, and even the rhythmic hopping cadence of the birds on the roof... All help the visitor to deepen and attune his or her aesthetic sensibility, so as to prepare themselves for the approaching ceremony. You may be astonished to notice that in the calm of the tea house your senses are intensified to such an extraordinary degree of hyper sensitivity that even a tiny metal pin dropped in the corridor outside the tea room makes you an astoundingly loud sound in your ear. Those tea bowls and other utensils must be feeling sorry and sad for themselves once they are put behind the glass of the museum display cases. How unhappy they must be, deprived of the chances to be touched and cherished by the tea masters. We now understand what kind of cruelty we are committing in museum management by segregating these items from their beloved users and isolating them in the treasury we call museums. Immanuel Kant was entirely wrong when he declared that aesthetic value resides in the lack of practical usage. Contrary to his assumption, "disinterestedness" (Interesselosigkeit) here means the death of aesthetic values. Deprivation from the everyday context of practical usage does not necessarily guarantee treasured objects a higher ranking in artistic appreciation. Far from it, conservation in a museum and enshrinement behind a glass showcase may well be synonymous with the death sentence for the heretofore cherished objects. For the sake of conservation, the objects

are taken into custody; the safety of the objects is secured at the price of the tactile experience. Losing the chance of direct contact, they are doomed to lie lifelessly in a cemetery, which we arrogantly and proudly call the museum. This is, in brief, how Okakura Kakuzo, also known as Tenshin (1863–1913), the famous author of *The Book of Tea* (1906) and the first curator of Asian Art in the Boston Art Museum, perceived Western modernity. Modernism means here the forced integration of non-Western items into Western museology and the reclassification of non-Western cultures through the template of Western aesthetic categories. In the heyday of imperialism, Okakura uttered a warning against the hasty standardization of artistic values. The current era of globalization may also mean the unification of international measurements and enforcement of a hegemonic global standard. 2015 marks the seventieth anniversary of Japan's defeat in the Second World War. In this commemorative year, should we repeat Okakura's warning, delivered at the beginning of the twentieth century, already one hundred and ten years ago? "The average Westerner [...] was wont to regard Japan as barbarous while she indulged in the gentle arts of peace; he calls her civilized since she began to commit wholesale slaughter on the Manchurian battlefield¹." In this "dusk of humanity" (the last phrase of *Awakening of Japan*, published in 1905, under the Russo-Japan War), Okakura cherished in a tiny cup of tea the hope of seeing "a cup of humanity." Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished curators gathering here from art museums all over the world, let me ask this question: How can we treat this "cup of humanity" properly? This is the question I wish to share with you. Tactility and blindness Two weeks ago I was invited to Jeju Island in Korea. There I could visit Jeju Provincial Art Museum. At the entrance of the building there was a huge concrete wall with strange silver bowls forming several groups of dots. I wondered for a while, trying to guess what they were. Finally I noticed that they were huge braille points, that is, letters prepared for blind people. With this recognition, then, another question came to my mind: Who on earth can read this Braille? Needless to say, they were too big for blind people to touch them and perceive the meaning. Most ordinary people, that is, people without a visual impairment, would not be capable of deciphering the characters, either. For whom and for what use were these letters inscribed on the wall, then? I may be wrong but I came anyhow to a

1 Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea*, 1906; Stone Bridge Classics, 2006: p 6.

provisionary triple observations.² Firstly, the things and objects used by humans have their proper size and measurement. Unless we respect them, they are doomed to uselessness. Our perception is inevitably conditioned by this measurement and our sensations are rigorously subordinate to these conditions. Secondly, without respecting this proper measurement, a tactile experience cannot be superimposed on a visual experience. What we can perceive by touching cannot always be perceived visually, and vice versa. The out-of-scale Braille eloquently conveys this message. By observing babies we recognize that the coupling between touching and seeing is orchestrated progressively so as to adjust kinesthesia. The failure to acquire this skill may cause a serious disability (as in the case of cerebral palsy). Thirdly, however, the message conveyed by the enlarged Braille letters is itself handicapped, due to their hypertrophy, since most viewers who can visually perceive the work do not recognize the message. What they could recognize at best is their own lack of literacy in Braille. They (including myself) would understand that they could not understand the inscription. On the contrary, those who lack the ability to perceive visually are not able to gain access to the message conveyed tactilely simply because they are out of proportion. Those Braille letters too large to touch are, by definition, untouchable. What would be the lesson these overgrown letters give us? This artwork, by its very uselessness due to its lack of proportion, had the merit of showing us the meaningfulness of proper measurement. Am I now subscribing to the very opinion of Immanuel Kant I have just criticized? By their uselessness, the over-sized Braille letters made visible what had remained otherwise invisible; they made perceptible what usually remained unperceivable or unperceived. The insensitivity of the visually-able, "ordinary" observer is revealed by this unreadable Braille letter panel: viewers now recognized how arrogant their "normal" visual experience would have been. People without a visual impairment noticed their own hidden and blind arrogance by noticing their own lack of literacy in raised dots. I personally have to confess my own disability, as I am not capable of "reading" raised dots as letters by touching them. I always find it extraordinary that people with a so-called "visual impairment" or "disability" can distinguish and recognize each of these cells of dots as letters. Transmission and linkage

Let me develop one more observation on the

merit of touching, the feeling of tie.³ This is also an ordinary experience in the tea ceremony. We can use the bowls and utensils, which our ancestors used even several hundred years ago. We can share the same tactile experience that the tea masters and even founding fathers would have made several centuries before us. Five years ago, in 2010, there was a marvelous exhibition at the Kyoto National Museum, *The World of Buddhist Kasaya*. Kasaya means the garments worn by Buddhist priests. The Japanese subtitle for the exhibition was actually used as the main title in English: *Transmitting Robes, Linking Minds*. In Japanese there is a poetic rhyming of "ko" and "tsu": koromo o tsutae, kokoro o tsunagu.⁴ However, linking the minds of generations by transmitting robes is not a custom limited only to Buddhist practice. Also in the West, hand-woven bridal lacework, for example, is transmitted from grandmother to mother and from mother to daughter for their wedding, generation after generation. The textiles for the special purpose used in the hand-woven pieces are painstaking prepared and "manu"-factured with care. The amount of earnest labor as well as the precious time spent for the confection are accumulated, concentrated, and literally woven into the textile, making it a privileged outcome of devotion, one that is worthy of transmission from ancestors to posterity. To some extent this veneration of transmitted treasures resembles the treatment of sacred relics in Christianity, especially in the Catholic Church. And yet one basic difference remains. In the case of Christianity, if I am not mistaken, it is rare that believers directly touch the relics; they are enshrined in a crystal case for beholding and veneration. In the Buddhist practice of transmitting kesa garments from master to disciples, touching and wearing the historical relics constitute one of the essential factors for guaranteeing the link between generations. Some fragments of the ancient garments of the priests are known to have been recycled into the cloths (shifuku) used to wrap the tea caddy or the tea bowl. Wrapping the precious objects by the ancient cloth transmitted from the ancestors also has meaning. The cloths are named shifuku, which also coincidentally is a homonym for "beatitude" (Dan Fumi, a famous Japanese actress and initiator of the tea ceremony, even developed the idea of ai no shifuku: "cloth dyed by indigo (ai)," which evokes "the beatitude of love (ai)."⁵ The careful preparation of the garment for the tea set is no less important than the ceremony itself,

2 The author of the work is Ko Sangum, and the inscription is from a poem by Lee Senjin praising his beloved land and the seashore. The work was installed at the inauguration of the museum in 2009. It turned out, however, that even the museum curators do not know how the original poem is abridged in the braille point version. My thanks to Lee Kyunghee, Lee Yunhee and professor Lee Eung Soo for providing detailed information about the work.

3 For the Japanese notion of "touching," see Sakabe Megumi, "Quelques remarques sur le mot japonais 'fureru'," traduit en français par Kazuo Masuda, in *Aesthetica et Calonologia, Festschrift for Tomonobu Imamichi*, Hokuseisha, 1988, pp. 227-38.

4 *Transmitting Robes, Linking Mind: The World of Buddhist Kasaya*, Kyoto National Museum, 2010.

5 Dan Fumi, *Dan Fumi no Cha no Yu Hajime* (Initiation to the Tea Ceremony), Fujin Gahô-sha, 2008, pp. 100-01.

and much more time-consuming. The manual stitching labor is painful at first but absorbing. To “take time” in Japanese (*tema o kakeru*) contains the words for “hand” (*te*) and “interval” (*ma*), both spatial and temporal, implying the importance of repetitive manual operation conducted with meticulous attention and care. Wrapped by hand in garments with historical value, the tea bowls surely feel “the beatitude of love.” The same is true for the wooden box that contained the bowl. Being the eyewitness of the destiny of the bowl it protects, the box accounts for the occupant’s historical background (famous bowls have individual names and are almost personified) as well as the vicissitudes it has experienced until now. The old half-broken boxes are often as precious as the things it contains. The handwritten inscription on the box is the calligraphic record of the master’s hand, and it also serves as the diploma of authentication. (We should remember *en passant* that calligraphy in East Asia is often no less important than treasured painting or sculptures, as it holds and carries the author’s individual spirituality in the title of a fully fledged artist belonging to the literati class. But this high appreciation of the calligraphy in the East Asia is not easily understood in the West, partly because of indecipherability and partly because of the relatively low social status of calligraphers in the West, who were regarded either as scribes or as craftsmen of illumination.) In the Victoria & Albert Museum (excuse me for naming it), as well as in many old Western museums, however, the boxes were often thrown away and lost long ago, the garments were stripped off from the tea sets and classified separately in the textile section (without specifying its usage), and the caddies were put in the lacquer-ware collection (together with other lacquer-ware for different purposes), while the tea bowls were forced to “undress” and reveal their naked skin to the curious observers (who peep into the glass showcase, without being able to touch them). The original integrity of the objects is dismantled and lost once for all, a forced sacrifice for the benefit of “rational classification” and for the profit of dis-contextualized visual scrutiny. Though it may sound like a caricature, this is the reality of modernism in museum display. (It is only in postmodern practice that the original state of non-Western cultures has been partly re-contextualized and restored, as it was once intended by the Japanese at the Phoenix Pavilion in the Chicago World Fair in 1893.) It is often said that wrapping is only a practical matter so as to facilitate the transportation of objects. Once the transportation is completed, it is enough to remove the wrapping and throw it away so as to take the object out of it. The term “exhibition” in English or “Ausstellung” in German literally reveals this fact: the wrapping itself cannot

constitute in any sense a work of fine art, nor does it participate in the appreciation of art. It is superfluous and not worthy of preservation.⁶ And yet here again I have one intuitive question to this self-evident practice in modernist museology, which I may call the ideology of exhibitionnisme, to borrow the French connotation of the term. As Jacques Derrida has finely analyzed, *ergon* (an art work within) is not self-standing without its garment and support of the *parergon*.⁷ Is exhibiting the naked work to the curious gaze the best and the brightest way of museum exhibition? Is uncensored nudism the best policy? Is the (voluntary) nudity or the (forced) nakedness (to reuse Kenneth Clark’s terminology) of the exhibits the only and the ultimate purpose of display in a museum?⁷ Jacques Derrida, *La Vérité en peinture*, Flammarion, 1978, esp. pp. 63–135. Exhibition and veiling of ghosts Sekine Hideo, the artist internationally renowned for Phase-Earth (or Topology-Earth, 1968), exhibited several years ago at the Kyoto University Museum a vase-like stone object with the inscription: *kore wa mata nanika to mireba omou tsubo*. The translation of the title is close to impossible because of the multiple examples of wordplay, embedded in deep cultural layers. My friend Timothy Kern managed to translate it as follows: If you’re wondering what this is, it’s my *omou-tsubo* (thinking vessel, or conniving) in which you are already trapped. Indeed this vase-like object is not a vase; if you try to see what it contains, you are already duped. The “container” is made of solid black andesite granite. Its outer appearance seems like a hallow vessel, but actually is solid block of a stone.⁸ If the viewer mistakenly thinks there is an empty cavity inside, then it truly is the *omou-tsubo*, the trick of the conniving artist. This fake container cannot contain anything except the deception of which the viewers are the predestined victims. This is by itself an ironic message to the exhibition: What on earth can the exhibition contain in the space of an exhibition hall? And this ironic rejection of “containing” was by itself “contained” in a glass case in the museum. After the end of the exhibition, at the moment of removal, a professional photographer purposelessly put sheets of shadow screen cloth nonchalantly on this glass case. It so happened that the trick pot was half concealed by this unintentional veil. I still remember the thrill I could not help feeling when I absent-mindedly glanced at the object in the

- 6 One funny anecdote will suffice Robert Rauschenberg’s artworks were once almost put in the waste box during unpacking, when the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan, was preparing, ironically enough, a show named *ibunka e no manazashi* (*Les Regards portés aux cultures des Autres*) (*The Gaze on Other Cultures*), 1997.
- 7 Jacques Derrida, *La Vérité en peinture*, Flammarion, 1978, esp. pp. 63–135.
- 8 Inage Shigemi, “Spirits emanating from Objecthood—Or the Destiny of Informed Materiality,” in *Monokeiro*, Bigaku Shuppan (Japanese-English Bilingual edition), 2010, pp. 64–82.

glass box by chance, half hidden under the shadow of the sheets carelessly laid on the glass case. The object was living! It is true that veiling tends to give an illusion that a hidden object has some secret, mysterious, or magical power not to be easily revealed to people without initiation. Yet I wonder if it is really and simply an illusion. One should also admit that a similar—somewhat mystical—effect could not be obtained were it not for the removable textile veil: a solid iron coffin cannot contain any mystery. The location of the show was also not innocent. Kyoto University Museum is a kind of mausoleum of objects, both natural and human. In the main entrance, we see in the natural history section a fossilized head of an elephant from an extinct species (excavated by Heinrich Edmond Naumann, 1854–1927) and an ancient sarcophagus at the entrance of the human history section. The pair reminds us of the fact that the museum is itself a huge tomb, a coffin or a casket or rather a morgue, a container where the dead bodies of nature and human history are displayed, like cadavers for inspection. It was in this universe of the dead that we decided to organize an exhibition of contemporary art. By law (*de jure*) the museum should not contain animate objects. And yet the resurrection of the dead was happening around the fake container, the *omou-tsubo* or “thinking vessel.” Secretly, *en cachette*, and without our knowing it, the inanimate turns into the animate, in the glass showcase, half concealed by the photographer’s masking cover sheet. The fake container, which cannot contain anything, was the generator of this inside-out operation. I don’t care if the thrill that suddenly gripped me was real or illusory; yet, the fact remains that an exhibition can offer some unexpected effects by not revealing objects under a spotlight, but rather hiding them from the observers’ gaze. Many ethnological and art museums are said to be haunted, and stories are frequently told—at least, behind the scenes—that ghosts have been seen floating in the storage rooms. It is not my intention not to deny or clarify such “irrational” hearsay. And yet, it should not be forgotten that the museum also contains, without noticing it, the hidden side of invisible mysteries that modernism—or the naïve belief in the progress of science and visibility—has suppressed under the realm of the dead. The use of lighting for the sake of visual displays has also intensified the dark side of the invisible world. What has been oppressed and repressed by the mains current of Western modernism is now secretly resurfacing, launching covert resurrections in museums without being obviously noticed. Is it a form of revenge? Or the objects imprisoned in the darkness of storage fighting back? Ise Shrine made its sixty-second transfer in 2013. The shrine may be regarded as a reservoir of the imaginary ancestral

spirit, a specific museum of the nation’s dead (be it illusory, political, or whatsoever). As is well known, the wooden container has been demolished and the structure moved back and forth between the neighboring places at intervals of two decades ever since the shrine’s inauguration in 690. Any material continuity is rejected by this periodical dismantling of the architecture; only the spiritual content is supposedly transmitted from generation to generation through the ritual of succession. The sanctuary is haunted by the spirits, according to native belief. The empty vacant place (named *Kodenchi*), located beside the current wooden pillars and the thatched roofs, indicates the lost origins as well as the coming (not yet realized) future. The periodical repetition and reproduction evokes the image of the double spiral of DNA, reproducing itself as a token of the succession of life by way of metabolism.⁹ Here lies also one ultimate strategy of invisibility. The lack of visibility and the rejection of visuality in the spiritual dimension engender an illusion of impenetrable mystery and intimate secrecy within the invisible empty space. According to one English guidebook edited by Basil Hall Chamberlain at the end of the nineteenth century, a frustrated English tourist is said to have complained that at Ise Shrine “there is nothing to see, and they [i.e. the native Japanese] would not let you see it.”¹⁰ It is in this tautological black box of double negation that the mysteries dwell and they are secretly whispering and watching us, without revealing their presence to visibility. Instead of revelation or exhibition, why not make an investigation into what is hidden or not exposed if we take up the task of globally questioning Western modernism? What has Western modernism failed to grasp? What is left out of the criteria of Western modernism when it imposes a measurement globally? I remember visiting Marcel Duchamp’s *Posthumous Work in Philadelphia* for the first time in 1979. Many visitors then still did not notice that behind the dirty wooden wall in front of them there was something hidden. The shabby wall has a peep hole, from which they were invited to have a look at Duchamp’s last work, *Étant donnés*. Duchamp’s intentional tactic of hiding his secret is highly individual and mischievous. To what extent is Duchamp’s final work comparable to the sanctuary of Ise Shrine? If the former hides the sex of a naked young girl (obviously a hidden reference to Gustave Courbet’s *Origine du Monde*), the latter is equipped with a no less intentional but fully institutionalized and awfully austere void, the realm of nothingness. Utsuwa or container-receptacle Shirakawa Yoshio, a contemporary Japanese artist famous for his

9 See more in detail, Inaga Shigemi, « La vie transitoire des formes », in Jean-Sébastien Cluzel (ed.), *Le sanctuaire d’Ise — Récit de la 62e reconstruction*, Editions Mardaga, Oct. 2015.

10 Basil Hall Chamberlain, “Ise” in *A Handbook for the Traveller in Japan*, 3rd ed, 1891.

documentation of Dada in Japan, once made a tactful exhibition. He placed Marcel Duchamp's *Fontaine* side by side with the lavatory reserved for the use of the imperial family during their visit to the Riverside Pavilion Rinkokaku in the city of Maebashi. According to Shirakawa, the juxtaposition is justified as both Marcel Duchamp and the pavilion were "born" in the same year of 1887. This contemporaneity in contingency leads us to a couple of questions with regards to the globalization of modernism. Let us now briefly examine the notion of the artwork (putting the "autonomy of art" into question) as well as that of the copy and the readymade (the myth of "originality vs. copy" de-mythicalized). Apart from being a domestic tool for everyday life, the porcelain "urinal" is also a receptacle or container, a functional object to catch liquid excretion. Usually, it is not merely because of its indecent role that the urinal cannot claim to be a piece of fine art; rather, porcelain wares are treated in a derogatory fashion as its functionality and utility deprive it of autonomous status as an aesthetic objects. The same is true of ceramic wares for domestic use: So long as they serve practical purposes, they are classified as applied arts, in an inferior and subordinate category in social hierarchy. Pitchers, dishes, or vessels have not been qualified as highly as sculpture. So long as they are useful, an object cannot be regarded as a piece of fine art. And once it becomes useless, all of a sudden it can claim the right to be treated as a work of art.¹¹ This aesthetic hierarchy, which again Immanuel Kant justified in *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), has been maintained from the era of high modernism up until the advent of postmodernism, despite the advent of the design age since the mid-1920s. Western modernity has not questioned the classical hierarchy of fine arts. The supremacy of painting, sculpture and architecture was maintained even during the height of modernism under the regime of colonial empires. Furthermore, the bifurcation between the fine arts and applied arts has been replaced during that period by the differentiation of design from the decorative arts. (It is suffice to think about the ideology put forward by a Le Corbusier or an Adolf Loos, who both manifested vehement hatred toward anything "decorative," while "tribal arts" from Africa and Oceania still suffered from the hierarchical discrimination in the category of "primitive art.") However, this scheme cannot be automatically and unconditionally applicable to non-Western cultural spheres. Let us take up the case of Yagi Kazuo (1918–1979). A representative avant-garde ceramist, Yagi could not get rid of his origin as "the maker of rice bowls" (*chawanya*) as

he pejoratively identified himself. His generation was strongly inspired by the American-Japanese sculptor Isamu Noguchi in the 1950s. And yet, Yagi did not stop asking the question whether or not the empty cavity remains inside the ceramic piece (*uchi wa utsuro ka?*). Western sculptors do not care about the void within their sculptures. In bronze casting, the empty cavity is devoid of any significance; in marble curving, only the surface of the mass determines the value of the piece. Moreover, any sculpture worthy of the name should emanate a self-standing message of its own so as to be evaluated. So-called ceramic art in the West tried to follow the same way, liberating itself from the constraint of the manufacturing industry. To be socially recognized as a ceramic artist, one was expected to rid oneself of the yoke of the craftsmanship of "arts and crafts."¹² However, for the Japanese ceramic artists of Yagi's generation, the same emancipation from the material was identical with the self-negation of one's previous career as a craftsman. Accordingly, his ceramic creation, deeply inspired by Joan Miró (1950s), or Lucio Fontana and Marcel Duchamp (1960s), and in acute concurrence with Jasper Johns (1970s), forces him to constant self-mutilation. He confesses that creation means for him inflicting new wounds on himself; his works covered with cicatrices, one after another. This passivity (to infliction) must be double: So as to emancipate himself, he had to be passively exposed to the influences of Western modernism, coming from without; and the very emancipation causes mental as well as physical injuries within. It was in this double bind—i.e., attachment to, and detachment from, the ceramic ware craftsman—that Yagi searched for the ultimate limit of the genre, which has been called "sculpture" in the West. His historical work *The Walk of Mr. Samsa* (1954) marks his take-off from traditional ceramics. Faithful to the convention, Yagi first makes a spherical vessel, shaped by the potter's wheel. But he brutally cuts the raw vessel horizontally into a wide cylinder. The circular band without the bottom is simply useless, as it can no longer contain any liquid. Then, contrary to the usual horizontal position of the wheel, Yagi raises the circle to a vertical position so that it can roll around like a caterpillar track. To this monocycle, the ceramist adds, like a parasite, multiple open tubes that, again, no longer play any practical role. They are neither vases for flowers, nor earthenware drainpipes. They reject any rational explanation of their being there, except for the fact that they eventually serve as legs to prevent the vertical wheel from falling down sideways. As if to

11 Cf. Inaga Shigemi, "Either Useful or Useless: Reviving Inventiveness." *7th Kitakyushu Biennale*, Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, March 31, 2003, pp. 13–19.

12 Inaga Shigemi, "Les Traces d'une blessure créatrice: Yagi Kazuo entre la tradition japonaise et l'avant-garde occidentale" *Japan Review*, No.19, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2007, pp. 133–59.

turn this absurd metamorphosis of ceramic ware into a disguised avant-garde sculpture (which Yagi calls *obuje yaki* or “object coming out from the kiln fire”), Yagi borrows the title from Franz Kafka’s famous short story about a man who finds himself transformed into a cockroach, against his will.¹³ To become a Western style sculptor was synonymous for Yagi to becoming a cockroach. Yagi has to destroy the notion of the container in ceramics so as to absorb and contain the modernist notion of artistic autonomy; this “receptacle” of the Western idea of modernism, named Mr. Samsa, is achieved when the very receptacle—*utsuwa*—has lost its practical function as a receptacle. Nevertheless, the emptiness within the ceramic piece remains intact, working as the generator at the core of Yagi’s creativity. Vessels are receptive and made of a passive disposition as container. And yet, the containing capacity may manifest itself positively, activating and animating the autonomous plastic form. Yagi’s struggle consisted in this inside-out code-switching: from the passive voice of receptivity (by a ceramic craftsman) to the active voice of aggressive affirmation (by a ceramic artist), the ceramic ware had to undergo a drastic metamorphosis, a transformation. At the historical crossroads of modernism and tradition, and at the chiasma of Western and Eastern values, Yagi witnessed the major transubstantiation ceramics were experiencing in the 1950s up to the end of the 1970s. Up until his death in 1979, his career as well as work is the incarnation of this overwhelming transition, where the borderline of *ergon* and *parergon* was constantly in mutual erosion. How to evaluate his work? Here lies one of the tasks that museums in the era of globalization have to carry out. Utsushi beyond the dichotomy of original vs. copy This brings us to the dichotomy between the original and the copy. More often than not, the avant-garde of non-Western nations has been accused of being the secondary and inferior copy of the Western original. If the West is capable of creating the prototype of an avant-garde, the non-Western Rest of the world is only allowed to reproduce secondhand, ready-made copies. As in the cases of Japonisme and Primitivism, the Western re-appropriation of non-Western sources has not been criticized, although the non-Western sources, be they Japanese, African, or Oceanian, could not claim to be the original or the originator of the Western avant-garde. The mechanism is quite simple. In the case of the Japanese avant-garde, what can be recognizable (and recognized) as

13 Inaga Shigemi, “Modern Japanese Arts and Crafts around Kyoto, from Asai Chu to Yagi Kazuo, with special Reference to Their Contact with the West, 1900–1954,” Inaga Shigemi and Patricia Fister (eds.), *Traditional Japanese Art and Crafts in the 21st Century*, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2005, pp. 47–72.

avant-garde—according to Western criteria—is as a matter of course automatically classified as its secondary imitation. And the products not to be classified (or classifiable) in the Western theoretical drawer are lumped together under the label of “traditional” works. Thus the non-Western world is logically deprived of the right to create an authentic avant-garde work of its own (and of its own right).¹⁴ This is not a caricatured sketch of what happened at the *Le Japon des avant-garde* show at the Centre Pompidou in 1986–1987.¹⁵ The frustration at this Western-centrism (which was still dominant in the second half of the 1980s, during the worldwide bubble economy) seems to have erupted on the occasion of the *Primitivism in 20th Century Art* exhibition, held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1984. Yet it is not my intention to blame (in the manner of James Clifford) the West for the economic usurpation, the symbolic monopolization, and the aesthetic self-appropriation of non-Western “others” onto this unilateral balance sheet (which obviously lacks any bilateral balance at all).¹⁶ Nor am I eager to disagree with Susan Vogel in her stern distinction between the ethnological museum and the art museum for the sake of promoting African contemporary art(s).¹⁷ Here let me introduce some basic vocabulary in the Japanese language. In old Japanese *utsutsu* or *utsushi* means “the real,” but *utsushi* also designate “copy.” The term *utsushi* is also close to *utsuro*, “void” or “vacancy.” A receptacle is called *utsuwa*, suggesting the vacancy (*utsu*) of the container (*wa* or *ha*). The vacant concavity is a necessary condition for transporting liquid, grain, or any other solid materials. The verb “transmit” or “remove” is called *utsusu*, which would be impossible without the vessel (*utsuwa*). It must be already evident that these three notions—“real” and “vacancy” (*utsushi*), “vessel” (*utsu-wa*), and “removal” or “transport” (*utsusu*)—share the same etymological root. The semantic associations are no

14 Inaga Shigemi, “L'impossible avant-garde au Japon,” (1987), in Alain le Pichon et Moussa Sow (ed.), *Le Renversement du Ciel, Parcours d'anthropologie réciproque*, CNRS éditions, 2011, 369–380. An English translation is in *doxa*, issue 09, May, 2010, pp. 82–89.

15 A similar tendency can clearly be observed in the field of philosophy. See Inaga Shigemi, “Philosophy, Ethics and Aesthetics in the Far-Eastern Cultural Sphere: Receptions of the Western Ideas and Reactions to the Western Cultural Hegemony,” Inaga Shigemi ed., *The 38th International Research Symposium: Questioning Oriental Aesthetics and Thinking: Conflicting Visions of “Asia” under the Colonial Empires*, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, March 31, 2011, pp. 31–45.

16 James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture, Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Harvard University Press, 1988.

17 Cf. Inaga Shigemi, “Bricolage: Towards a Scripture: A Proposal of a New Concept,” *Critical Interventions (Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture)*, Number 9/10, Spring 2012, pp. 49–62.

less unconvincing.¹⁸ It must also be indicated that during the medieval era in Japan, the idea of the “real” (utsushi) began to connote apparently the opposite term of “absence.” Under the influence of Buddhism, *utsushi-mi*, or carnal existence in the sense of incarnation, became interchangeable with *ushishi-mi*, or the body devoid of the soul. *Utsusemi*, literally a cicada’s empty and semi-transparent shell, happened to have a similar pronunciation, and it strongly evoked the ephemerality and the transience of our existence. The “real body” (*utsushimi*) and the “cast-off skin” or “slough” (*utsusemi*) are nothing but two sides of the same coin. Indeed, the “real” and the “phantom” may be the face and reverse sides of the same substance in the process of the interminable transmigration of the soul. Our body is an empty vessel, like the cicada’s empty shell, in which the soul dwells for a short moment of physical existence before departing to the realm of the spirits. This is neither “original” nor “unique” to Japan: Similar ideas are also known to be developed among the Pythagorean School in ancient Greece. (*Soma sema* in Greek means “the body is the tomb.”) The brief etymological and semantic exercise above will allow us to propose a new model. This model would serve, if not to entirely “invalidate,” then at least to “eviscerate” to a certain degree, the Western binary opposition between the original and the copy. In fact, the pair of *utsuru* (intransitive: remove, change, shift, mount, catch, spread) and *utsusu* (transitive: copy, imitate, reflect, infect, depict) cover a huge semantic field, embracing such notions as copy, duplicate, replace, exchange, succeed, and even possess and haunt. In traditional Kabuki theater, an actor is part of a family lineage of performers and is highly praised when he accomplishes the art of his predecessor. *Gei ga utsuru*, or “the art of the predecessor is copied-transmitted-mounted,” implies an almost magical sense of reincarnation or possession, as if the actor were haunted by his ancestors’ spirits. We can certainly detect here a possible alternative (among others) to the Western obsession with the original and the originality. Let us return to the vessel or *utsuwa*, the container of the spirit. Among ceramic craftsmen, there was a conviction for a long period of time that the technique of *utsushi*, or the art of making the perfect copy of ancient masterpieces, was worthy of the highest praise. Many of the technical achievements that had allowed the realization of marvelous pieces of ceramics or porcelain were already lost; and the later generations remained incapable of (re-) producing pieces of the same quality with incomparably distinguished aesthetic value. Transmitting this

18 Inaga Shigemi, «Réceptacle du passage: ou la vie transitoire des formes et ses empreintes: vers un nouveau paradigme de la transmission spirituelle des formes physiques», Preface pour un catalogue de l’exposition, du 20 au 24 janvier 2015, Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris.

lost secret to the present time was what *utsushi* meant for ceramic craftsmen. This high reputation of *utsushi* seems to have been destabilized by the drastic paradigm shift during the period of rapid Westernization, which took place in the second half of the nineteenth century in Japan. With the creation of new patent regulations in 1885, technical secrets have been progressively registered as legal patents. The patented pieces naturally gained authenticity. This shift in the legal system inevitably induced a deterioration of the status of *utsushi* in the market as well as in society at large. The once-prestigious *utsushi* or copied pieces may now be persecuted as shameful fakes. An *utsushi* may face accusations of forgery or fined as counterfeit.¹⁹ The famous Einin vase scandal, which happened immediately after the Second World War, may be understood as one of the major aftereffects of this change in value. The copies (*utsushi*) that a ceramist produced to show his excellence in skill were circulated in the antiquarian market as genuine historical pieces. The question of their authenticity led to a scandal implicating an eminent potter and a high-ranking connoisseur. Looking backward from now, however, it is curious to note that they eventually gained greater world fame and authority thanks to this infamous incident. Conclusion We have briefly examined some of the basic criteria behind modernism in museology from the perspective of globalization. Firstly, in opposition to the supremacy of the visual, I have proposed the rehabilitation of the tactile and haptic experience. Secondly, we have detected “aspect blindness” in visual literacy, to use Wittgenstein’s term, in the case of an enlarged braille points sculpture. Thirdly, so as to become aware of our own mental “blindness” we have searched for the possibility of linkage with ancestral spirits through contact with transmitted material. In this linkage, we remarked on the important role of textiles with the tactile sensation. At the same time, fourthly, the relevance of concealing instead of exhibiting was put forward as a possible alternative in display management. For this purpose, a fragile cloth is more efficient than a solid metallic lid. As a logical consequence of these investigations, we have picked up the notion of *utsuwa*, or receptacle-container, as well as that of the *utsushi* forms of transmission, which encompasses the gap between the original and the copy. On the one hand, because of its passivity and lack of autonomous *Gestaltung*, the vessel concave container has rarely been recognized as fine arts in modernist Western art museums. On the other hand, the binary hierarchical opposition between the original and the copy has prevented many non-Western creations from obtaining status in Western mainstream museology

19 Cf. Inaga Shigemi, “A Pirate’s View of Art History” in *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, Dec. 2014 (to be published).

and art historical writings. However one should remark that the “original” cannot be an isolated phenomenon but can be ratified only retroactively. In fact an “original” cannot be recognized as such unless it serves as a “prototype” followed by a “series” consisting of its reproductions and epigones. An “original” cannot claim itself as such without leaving a margin for its own ready-made duplications that are destined to prosper in the posterity.²⁰ Let me finish by manifesting my concern at digitalized visualization. With the progress of digital engineering, the tactile experience is rapidly shrinking. The marvelous ability of the hands endowed the human species, was eloquently praised by Henri Focillon in his *Éloge de la main* (1943).²¹ But in the last seventy years, we have already lost much of the potential for shaping forms manually. I am curious if the 3D printer can really replace the ability of human hands. It is true that the keyboard system has contributed to some extent to increased finger dexterity, so as to compensate to some extent for manual regression. But the currently dominant fingertip input of keyboard letters will be replaced before long by oral input. And oral input will sooner or later be taken over, in turn, by direct brain command (which is partially realized already). Hands and fingers will be completely “liberated” from the labor to which they have been preoccupied since the emergence of the human species. Yet this “progress” implies a fatal loss. Already half a century ago, as early as 1964–1965, André Leroi-Gourhan warned of this tendency toward the atrophy of our hands at the dawn of the computer technology.²²

Let us recall one thing. “Digital” does not in any way mean a binary numeral system. “Digital” derives from *digitus*, namely the ten fingers of which our hands are composed. The decimal numeral system would perhaps have been inconceivable if the human species were not equipped with ten fingers. Ironically enough, current digitalization is contributing to a separation of our thinking from our body. The flooding of educational manuals contributes to the incapacitation of manual skills, while not really compensating for the very loss. Whatever the technical progress, our hands and fingers remain the most privileged and irreplaceable haptic contact point with the world. Losing our tactile perception of

the world would mean the negation of the biological base of the human species. What would happen when human intelligence loses the command of our hands and fingers? One of the most urgent crises we have to face in terms of dehumanization is creeping into our own hands and fingers. Can museums in the globalized age assume the role of checking and reorienting the one-sidedness of Western modernist endeavors in art and technology from the past century? Let us remember that we are at the centennial of the First World War, which was the initiator of modernism in art.



Visitors touching the reproduced S-D model of the Statue of Monk Kukai (774–835), *Kukai and the Beauty of Esoteric Buddhism*, Special Exhibition. Shizuoka Prefectural Museum, 2015, *The Shizuoka Daily News*, Sep. 3, 2015

20 For the problem of “*la répétition et la différence*” (Gille Deleuze) in artistic creation in East Asia, see Inaga Shigemi, “Kegon/Huayan View and Contemporary East Asian Art: A Methodological Proposal,” *Cross Sections* Vol.5, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, March 20, 2013, pp. 2–25.

21 On Focillon’s essay, see Inaga Shigemi, 241–265, “Arts et métiers traditionnels au Japon face à la Modernité occidentale (1850–1900): A l’écoute d’Henri Focillon: quelques observations préliminaires,” Miura Atsushi (ed.) *Trajectoires d’allers-retours, 150 ans d’échanges artistiques franco-japonais*, Sangensha, 2013, pp. 122–34.

22 André Leroi-Gourhan, *Le Gest et la parole*, en 2 vols., Albin Michel, 1964–1965, vol.2, p. 62.



A work by Ko Sangum after the poem by Lee Senjin, Entrance, Jeju Provincial Museum, 2008.
Photo: Shigemi Inaga on Oct. 2015



Storage Room, Ethnologisches Museum Dahlem, Berlin.
Photo: Shigemi Inaga, Dec. 2013



Ise Shrine, interior, 61st transfer in 1993.
Local Guide magazine, *Iseshima*, special issue, 1993



Tea Caddy Natsume, fully "dressed" for their "trip" for the tea ceremony.
From *Initiation to the fragment of tea caddy garment*, Tanko sha, 1996, p. 3



Yagi Kazuo, *Le Promenade de M. Samsa*, 1954



“Utsuwa” or “vessel” as a vehicle for the transmigration of the souls
 “Utsushi”—replacement-copy-translation-metaphore-succession-possession-haunting.
 And “utsusemi” —“real carnation” interchangeable with “utsusemi” or cicada’s empty shell”

Sunday November 8, 2015
Day 2. *How has modernism been perceived globally?*

Perspective 01. Hammad Nasar, Head of Research and Programs,
Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong.

Short Bio:

Hammad Nasar is a curator, writer, and Head of Research and Programs at Asia Art Archive (AAA), Hong Kong, where he oversees a broad array of initiatives, many in partnership with leading institutions, including the Clark Institute, Hong Kong University, the Paul Mellon Centre and MoMA. Formerly based in London, Nasar co-founded the non-profit arts organization Green Cardamom, and has curated more than 30 exhibitions and programs internationally. These include: *Lines of Control: Partition as a Productive Space*, Johnson Museum, Cornell University (2012) and Nasher Museum, Duke University (2013); *Beyond the Page: The Miniature as Attitude in Contemporary Art from Pakistan*, Pacific Asia Museum (2010); *Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*, Whitechapel Gallery, and Fotomuseum Winterthur (2010); *Safavids Revisited*, British Museum (2009); and *Karkhana: A Contemporary Collaboration*, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum (2005) and Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (2006). Nasar plays an advisory role for a number of arts organizations internationally. He also serves on the Editorial Board of Tate's journal, *Tate etc*; and is a jury member for the V&A Museum's Jameel Prize, and Art Basel's crowdfunding partnership with Kickstarter.

Presentation: Pedagogy, bureaucracy and fashioning a rooted modernism

i.

"How has modernism been perceived globally?"

The theme for today's session, hints at an idea of the "modern" as something fully formed: developed in the avant-garde centers of Paris or New York and then paraded out to "provincial" Asia; to invite responses that are at best "belated" or at worst "derivative."

I will resist the urge to explore this cul-de-sac of definitions, accusations and polemics to make two points. First, that modernism has to be *constructed* or *fashioned*, before it can be perceived. Second, that these constructions are not stable.

Like the grand mud mosques of Timbuktu that need to be repaired after every rainy season, modernism too has to be constantly re-fabricated. This fashioning and refashioning often relies on annotating existing accounts of a diverse set of historically specific artistic practices to make new propositions for "global" art and its histories.

Calligraphic Abstraction, *Dansaekhwa*,¹ Ink

Art, Living Traditions, *Saqqakhaneh*.² Miniature: these are practices incubated in the gentle warmth of contemporaneous conversations from Seoul to Lahore to Guangzhou to Khartoum to Baroda. These conversations epitomise the work of what Antonio Gramsci termed "organic" intellectuals: artists feeding off each other's energy to indulge in formal experiments, or students extending their teachers' intellectual projects.

Some of the more recent instances of artistic interest in past practices are not singular occurrences, but resonant echoes of earlier twentieth-century efforts rooted in the nation building agendas of independence or in the collection building efforts of cosmopolitan centers.

This talk is a tentative outline of one such trajectory: that of miniature painting in postcolonial India and Pakistan's most influential art schools—the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda (Baroda); and the National College of the Arts (NCA) in Lahore.

This is a story that is transnational through its very conception, and forks to reflect the vagaries of South Asian nation building, and institutional contexts. What is more, it is centered on the role of the art school, and more specifically artist/teachers,

¹ See Joan Kee, *Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method* (Minnesota, 2013), on Korea's *Dansaekhwa* monochrome movement. Both spellings, with a 't' and a 'd' are commonly used.

² See Shiva Balaghi and Lynn Gumpert, *Picturing Iran: Art, Society and Revolution* (London, 2002) for more on the *Saqqakhaneh* movement, sometimes referred to as "spiritual pop" in Iran.

in shaping a geographically rooted engagement with the modern and the pre-modern, to fuel a wide-ranging contemporary practice.

While both institutions have important museums—the Baroda Museum and Lahore Museum—associated with them, we will limit our present considerations to the art schools themselves.

ii.

India's early twentieth-century Bengal School, with its positive assertion of difference from European modernism in the use of that quintessential "Oriental" form, the Indo-Persian miniature, is an exemplar of the nation-building modern pointed to earlier. In direct conversation with broader political currents, and part of the *swadeshi* (indigenous) movement in art in colonial India, it inspired a generation of creative practitioners to reconnect with tropes and the "spiritual" grounds of Indic civilizations. These tendencies arguably reached their zenith at the Kala Bhavana in Santiniketan, the experimental art school associated with the Tagore family, in the first half of the twentieth century.³

Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New Indian Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal 1850–1920* (Cambridge, 1994). This was also the site where the Japanese scholar Okakura Kakuzo (1862–1913) engaged with Indian intellectuals, including members of the Tagore family at the dawn of the twentieth century. His ideas, succinctly, if rather glibly, captured in the opening statement, "Asia is One," of his influential *Ideals of the East* (1903), also left a legacy in terms of encouraging the Tagores and their milieu to look East as well as West.

K.G. Subramanyan (b. 1924) is a notable example of the Santiniketan brand of artist-thinker. As a student at Santiniketan, he imbibed both an attention to craft practices, and a framing of art as a dialog with wider society. He developed this further in his own artistic practice across a wide range of media, exemplified by his privileging of the mural: site-specific carrier of narrative in the public realm, and the platform for a participatory pedagogic practice where Subramanyan collaborated with both students and artisans.

Arguably, Subramanyan's most significant role was in shaping both the curriculum and the ethos of post-independence India's first art school at Baroda (established in 1950).

Baroda propagated a modernism anchored in an active engagement with craft and rural creative practices—labeled the "Living Traditions of Indian

Art"—and was a significant influence in shaping the practice of more than two generations of Indian artists associated with the school.⁴

Alongside his role at Baroda, Subramanyan also served as a consultant for the All India Handloom Board (1961–1966), and joined the Board of the World Craft Council (1975). His involvement with these institutions presented him many opportunities to master that quintessentially modernist form—the memo.

Essays, manuscripts, diaries, and sketchbooks, documentation of correspondence and proposals sent to government form part of the more than 40,000 documents digitised by AAA since 2011 from the personal archives of four influential art practitioners—Subramanyan, Jyoti Bhatt, Ratan Parimoo, and Gulammohammed Sheikh—who taught at Baroda since its establishment.

The current digital archive includes artwork images, exhibition folders, art magazines, and photo-documentation of the "Living Traditions of India." Some of this material is already available on Asia Art Archive's website, and more of it will be made available over the course of next year.

iii.

India's independence from British rule in 1947 was also the moment of British India's partition, and the creation of Pakistan as a home for South Asia's Muslims. Pakistan too felt the Bengal School's long shadow, for which the artist Abdur Rahman Chughtai (1897–1975) served as a mediating force.

The art historian Iftikhar Dadi has described Chughtai as a self-fashioned "modern" artist.⁵

This conscious alignment with a nationalist agenda was well served by his grasp of the miniature's suitability as a carrier of narratives. And the narratives Chughtai wanted to attach to his art were those of the Mughal courts: a paradoxically nostalgic optimism through which to frame the art of a newly independent Muslim nation, but aligned to a longstanding religious identity on which the claim for nationhood was being made.

Chughtai taught, from 1915 to 1924, at the Mayo School of Art in Lahore. A colonial-era school established alongside the Lahore Museum in 1875, as part of the efforts of Britain's Department of Science and Art to "reinvigorate the existing

3 Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New Indian Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal 1850–1920* (Cambridge, 1994).

4 Geeta Kapur, *When Was Modernism*, pp. 87–144 (New Delhi, 2000) for a consideration of his practice; and Nilima Sheikh, 'A Post-Independence Initiative in Art', in *Contemporary Art in Baroda*, ed. G. Sheikh (New Delhi, 1997) pp. 53–144 for a look at his role in Baroda as artist and teacher. Subramanyan wrote prolifically on tradition and modernity, and a selection of his texts can be accessed from <http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/CollectionOnline/SpecialCollectionFolder/2144>

5 See Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, pp. 46–92, (Chapel Hill, 2010) for a detailed account of Chughtai's life and work.

artisanal groups” of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, and then train them for industrial design.⁶ Its first principal and the curator of the Lahore Museum was John Lockwood Kipling, made immortal as the curator figure in his son Rudyard Kipling’s classic novel, *Kim*.

The Mayo School was restructured to more fully address modern art, and renamed the National College of the Arts (NCA) in 1958, and moved from the Department of Industries to Education in 1963.

Miniature painting has been included in the NCA’s syllabus since the 1920s.⁷ Baroda also had some engagement with miniature painting since its inception. But in both instances miniature practice was not central to the pedagogic or artistic experience. This changed through the personal endeavour of two inspirational artist-teachers: NCA’s Zahoor-ul-Akhlaq (1941–1999) and Baroda’s Gulammohammed Sheikh (b. 1937).

It has often been noted that London, blessed with the bounty of miniature albums the Empire “collected” over two centuries, is a good place to study miniature painting.

And it was in London in the late 1960s that both Sheikh (1965–1966) and Akhlaq (1968–1969) made a study of the Victoria & Albert Museum’s (V&A) nonpareil collections of Indian miniature. They were both students at the Royal College of Art, not far from the V&A, and through a mixture of observation, practice, and cogitation, fashioned new artistic trajectories for themselves with a deep and multi-faceted engagement with miniature painting.

On return to Pakistan and India, they were highly influential in transmitting their personal engagements with miniature painting in different ways.

IV.

Sheikh’s practice before and during London was in a recognisably international modernist vein, and as the art historian John Clark has pointed out, more De Stijl, or the School of London ala Kitaj and Hockney, than of the Emperor Akbar’s court.

But his work changed in London, as the luxury of distance opened up new windows of engagement with the miniature tradition, and he gave himself permission to tap different histories—Western modern and Indo-Persian miniature—to shape a singular practice that captured these multiple trajectories.

Living in India means living simultaneously in several times and cultures... The past exists as a living entity alongside the present, each illuminating and sustaining the other. As times and cultures converge, the citadels of purism explode. Traditional and modern, private and public, the inside and the outside are being continually splintered and reunited.

—Gulammohammed Sheikh.⁸

Sheikh’s multi-faceted engagement with the history, form, and possibilities of miniature practice is evidenced in his work, his writings and his influence on his peers and students. Sheikh’s work reveals an obvious relish in miniature’s capacity for carrying multiple narratives. He consistently nestles these multifarious stories in fragments of the picture plane of miniature’s unfolding perspective (as opposed to the Western single point one): all made possible by what the scholar Anna Sloan has called miniature’s “architectural space.”⁹

As an accomplished poet and writer, his own investment in writing and the form of the book also provided him multiple trajectories through which to engage the miniature’s forms, tropes, and formal devices.

And he built up his analytic understanding of the miniature through his study, his writing on the subject, and the central role miniature played in his teaching. (As a quirk of fate—he came back to Baroda to teach art history—as the painting chair was already taken.)

For many of his peers and students, Sheikh’s engagement with miniature painting, often served as a “catalyst” for their own practice.¹⁰ Most obviously Nilima Sheikh (b.1945), Sheikh’s wife, who supplemented her formal academic study at Baroda, with learning miniature technique from painters in the traditional ateliers of Jaipur and Nathadwara, and has remained committed to this relationship between text and image.¹¹

Bhupen Khakhar (1934–2003), the subject of a forthcoming exhibition at Tate Modern and commonly seen as India’s first Pop artist, was persuaded by his friend Sheikh to come to Baroda in pursuit of an artistic career. Khakhar shared Sheikh’s intense interest in both miniature and so-called “Company Painting”—the name given to paintings produced under the patronage of the East India

6 Arindam Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of its Global Reproducibility*, p. 73, (London & New York: Routledge, 2007).

7 Virginia Whiles, “Revival or Re-invention” in *Karkhana: A Contemporary Collaboration*, ed. Hammad Nasar, p. 28 (London & Ridgefield, 2005). For a more detailed account, see Virginia Whiles, *Art and Polemic in Pakistan*, (London, 2010).

8 Gulammohammed Sheikh in catalogue for the exhibition *Place for People* (Bombay & New Delhi, 1981).

9 See Anna Sloan, “Miniature as Attitude”, in *Beyond the Page: Contemporary Art from Pakistan*, eds. A. Dawood & H. Nasar, pp. 26–45 (London & Manchester, 2006).

10 Nilima Sheikh, “A Post-Independence Initiative in Art”, in *Contemporary Art in Baroda*, ed. G. Sheikh (New Delhi: Tulika, 1997) p. 60.

11 Ajay Sinha, “Envisioning the Seventies and the Eighties”, in *Contemporary Art in Baroda*, ed. G. Sheikh (New Delhi: Tulika 1997) p. 192.

Company in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, often by miniature painters formerly employed in Mughal-era courts. They would hold long discussions on the currency of these historic practices to their own modes of working. Khakhar's depiction of space, and his almost colonial interest in capturing everyday scenes, is infused with this interest.

A more recent example is the artist NS Harsha, who studied at Baroda in the 1990s, and whose work ranges across painting, sculpture, installations and large-scale site-specific and community-based practices.

He combines the different streams of practice found in the works of Khakhar, Sheikh, and Subramanyan—miniature, Company School, murals, and popular vernacular art forms—to construct a personal idiom very much in the spirit of Sheikh's earlier articulation of living in India being living simultaneously in several times and cultures.

But while this deployment of miniatures' spatial and narrative-carrying capacities are much in evidence in the individual practices of artists close to Sheikh, it has not led to the study and practice of miniature painting becoming central to pedagogy in Baroda.¹² In fact, Sheikh's attempts to formally introduce the "Living Traditions" into Baroda's pedagogy, for which he submitted a syllabus, failed.

In Baroda, the impetus from miniature painting was instead absorbed into one influential strand of a wider practice of narrative painting centred on the human figure, most cogently articulated by the critic Geeta Kapur.¹³

V.

Zahoor-ul-Akhlaq, like Sheikh, was deeply impressed by the V&A Museum's collection of miniature paintings. But unlike Sheikh, his interest was much more in the formal properties and tropes of miniature than its narrative possibilities: its use of borders and framing devices, its application of paint, its brushstrokes, its capacity for subtle experimentation.

In parallel with developing his own interests in exploring the relevance of formal features of miniature painting for his own painting practices, he used his position as Head of Fine Arts at the NCA to institute a full-fledged Miniature Department.¹⁴ He encouraged a young miniature painter, Bashir

Ahmed (b.1954)—who had trained with Sheikh Shujallah, who in turn had trained with Haji Mohammed Sharif, and could trace his lineage of practice back to the artisanal ateliers of the Mughal courts—to give the formerly artisanal practice, an academic overhaul. Under Akhlaq's watch, miniature practice was afforded the same academic standing as painting, sculpture, or printmaking.

In the hands of a generation of artists trained at the NCA since the establishment of this department in the 1980s, miniature painting has become a bona fide "ism."¹⁵ Miniature has moved beyond its tropes, to become an *attitude*.¹⁶ One characterised by a rejection of "the tyranny of binary choices" to embrace both: the "monumental and intimate; exquisite craft skills and expressive gestures; reference and irreverence; history and contemporaneity."¹⁷

It has resulted in innovative explorations of process, reflexive use of the performativity of artistic labor, riffs on the specificity of materials, a promiscuity of visual references, and sophisticated modulations in the modes of address.

NCA alumni of the 1990s and 2000s have continued to be fueled by it as a source of both formal innovation and point of departure. Long after the death of the father figure Zahoor ul Akhlaq (1999) and the retirement of Bashir Ahmed.

Shahzia Sikander, the New York-based pioneer of NCA's miniature department, has moved from personal narratives of domestic space to theatrical installations recalling Mughal gardens to ambitious digitally animated meditations on the postcolonial condition.

Imran Qureshi, widely recognised for his dramatic site-specific installations, such as those at the Sharjah Biennial (2011) or the roof of New York's Metropolitan Museum (2013), has continually, and with considerable wit, engaged with the miniature portrait as a narrative form with which to address the art world.

Nusra Latif Qureshi has pushed her work with the tropes and language of miniature and Company painting, into large-scale photo-based works to "distinguish between what was and what remains; viewing history as a collection of fragments con-

12 G. Sheikh did submit a proposal for an MA course on the Living Traditions of Indian Art (copy in G. Sheikh's archives digitized by Asia Art Archive — not yet available online), but that had no specific mention of miniature painting.

13 Geeta Kapur, "Partisan Views About the Human Figure" in catalogue for *Place for People* (Bombay & New Delhi, 1981).

14 For Akhlaq's engagement with miniature practice see Simone Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan: History, Tradition, Place*, pp. 40–82 (New Delhi, 2015). For his pedagogic intervention, see Whiles, 'Revival or Re-Invention' in *Karkhana*.

15 Hammad Nasar, "The 'Expanded' Field of Contemporary Miniature" in *Nafas*, May 2010, http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/nafas/articles/2010/contemporary_miniature

16 The idea of miniature as an attitude was explored in the exhibition *Beyond the Page: Miniature as Attitude in Contemporary Art from Pakistan* (curated by Hammad Nasar with Anna Sloan and Bridget Bray) at the Pacific Asia Museum in 2010. An earlier version of the exhibition (curated by H. Nasar) was realised in two parts at Manchester Art Gallery and Asia House, London in 2006, and accompanied by a catalogue (London & Manchester, 2006).

17 Hammad Nasar, "Imran Qureshi" in *Vitamin D2: New Perspectives in Drawing*, eds. Garrett and Price (London, 2013)

stantly rearranged to construct new narratives.”¹⁸

Aisha Khalid’s early, more overtly feminist, paintings have morphed into a wide ranging practice across painting and sculptural installations that range from geometric abstraction to explorations of domesticity, pain, and ornament. Hamra Abbas’s sculptural interpretations of miniature echo Takashi Murakami’s engagement with Manga—they have both given a graphically rich book-related practice, three-dimensional form. Khadim Ali has mined the Persian epics directly to reveal the co-option of mythical heroes in the violent politics of West Asia.

Noor Ali Chagani, whose graduation project (“Be a Part of It”) comprised, repairing the walls of the NCA with his own miniaturised bricks is a wonderful metaphor for the engagement with tradition.

At their most efficacious, these artists and their many peers and students have developed practices in critical dialogue with their past without being limited by its strictures. Their brand of contemporary miniature, and analogous practices such as ink art, with their capacity to traverse time, space, and hold multiple narratives, serve as nurseries from which the possibility of new

“universals” can grow.¹⁹ By advancing propositions that can escape their geographies of origin and offer possibilities of framing practices elsewhere, they extend our ideas of what and where the global can be: beyond the esthetic regimes that dominate most visible platforms of circulation in an increasingly flattened art world today.

In the story of miniature practice at Baroda and the NCA, all this started with one proposal being rejected. One accepted.

Sometimes the memo can be an artist’s longest lasting legacy.

Which takes us back to our topic for today—how are we to write new art histories?

I would argue for histories of excess:

1. Art histories that exceed lives of the artists—due attention to art ecologies; to institutions—where pedagogy, circulation, exchange, patronage play a key role
2. Enmeshed art histories that exceed the nation. Okakura in Santiniketan. Markand Bhatt and the Barnes Foundation. Gulam and Zahoor in London. Indus Valley & Baroda.
3. Art histories that are collaborative and can exceed disciplinary bounds—that can work across gaps in language, history, geography, and discipline.

¹⁸ Hammad Nasar, “Reflexive looking: An expanded notion of self”, in *Beyond the Self* ed. Clark and Mahoney, pp. 60–61 (Canberra, 2013).

¹⁹ I am grateful to Pheng Cheah’s talk, and as yet unpublished paper, *Asia as Question: Asian Studies in Postcolonial Globalization*, for this formulation. All references to the “universal” refer to the mostly European post-enlightenment concepts that have shaped modern and contemporary art practice.

Sunday November 8, 2015
Day 2. *How has modernism been perceived globally?*

Perspective 02. Slavs and Tatars (Payam Sharifi), Artists, Eurasia

Short Bio:

Founded in 2006, Slavs and Tatars is a faction of polemics and intimacies devoted to an area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia. They have exhibited in major institutions across the Middle East, Europe and North America, including Tate Modern and Centre Pompidou, as well as the 10th Sharjah, 8th Berlin, 3rd Thessaloniki, and 9th Gwangju Biennials. Select solo engagements include MoMA, NY (2012), Secession, Vienna (2012), Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2013), Dallas Museum of Art (2014), Kunsthalle Zurich (2014), GfZK, Leipzig (2014), and NYU Abu Dhabi (2015). The artists' publications and lecture-performances, on topics ranging from Slavic Orientalism to the metaphysics of protest, are central to their research-driven practice and have been presented extensively at leading universities, museums, and various institutions. Slavs and Tatars have published several books, including *Kidnapping Mountains* (Book Works, 2009), *Not Moscow Not Mecca* (Revolver/Secession, 2012), *Khhhhhhh* (Mousse/Moravia Gallery, 2012), *Friendship of Nations: Polish Shi'ite Showbiz* (Book Works, 2013), *Mirrors for Princes* (NYU Abu Dhabi / JRP|Ringier, 2015), as well as their translation of the legendary Azeri satire *Molla Nasreddin: the magazine that would've, could've, should've* (JRP|Ringier, 2011). Slavs and Tatars were nominated for the *Preis der Nationalgalerie* 2015.

Presentation: Not Moscow not Mecca

We are particularly seduced when opposites attract. When it came to secularization, communism and capitalism put aside (however briefly) their thuggish ideological spat and engaged in a storm of make-up sex called modernity, from whose last remnants we are still suffering. The founding trio of modern social sciences, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber, all saw modernity as necessarily secular, the inevitable evolution from what they considered pre-modern, traditional, religious society.¹ The disenchantment or de-divinization of the world, which Schiller lamented, has found its echo equally in revolutionary (Bolshevik) communism and late capitalism. If grass-roots, syncretic Central Asian Islam—out-financed, out-bureaucratized, and out-muscled by the USSR—could so effectively resist seven decades of systematic repression, what can it teach us today, in an early twenty-first century swimming against the rising tide of a faltering economic liberalism?

It would be foolish to believe that the approximately seventy years of revolutionary communism, with their strict prohibition of religion, have nothing to do with contemporary Muslims in the Middle East holding their noses up at their Central Asian

coreligionists. During the Soviet era, sacred shrines from Ashgabat to Kashgar were desecrated: Mosques were destroyed or turned into gymnasiums, libraries, workers' clubs, and the like. Organizations with names halfway between a Russ Meyer B movie and a Richard Dawkins foundation—Союз воинствующих безбожников (translated alternatively as "The League of Militant Godless" or "The Union of Belligerent Atheists") to name just one—were founded to combat what the Bolsheviks considered Islam's backwardness. It sounds somewhat familiar: one dares not delight in imagining how today's Islamophobes on the right would feel about sharing their zeal with their former enemies, the revolutionary communists.

Yet, it was precisely this prohibition and suppression that has created a fluid, complex, syncretic approach to Islam—as opposed to the often rigid, Gulf-centric understanding of the faith. Today, against the backdrop of a supposed Cold War supposedly pulsating in the Muslim world, one that pits the Sunnis of the Arabian peninsula against a rising Shi'a crescent of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, it may be best to choose not to choose between the Wahabbism of the one and the theocratic Imamism of the other. In this context, Central Asia's syncretic indigenization of the faith offers a rare alternative.

Big and small, government-sanctioned and grass-root—an ecosystem of shrines (avliyo in Uzbek) dot the urban and rural landscape of the steppes. Resting places of saints, a spring of holy

¹ "This type of dichotomous formulation is expressed as feudalism and capitalism in Marx, mechanical and organic division of labor in Durkheim, and traditional and legal-rational (or modern) in Weber." Mark Saroyan, *Minorities, Mullahs and Modernity: Reshaping Community in the Former Soviet Union* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p 18.

water nestled in the cliffs bordering Afghanistan, even a petrified tree can serve as sites of pilgrimage, or ziyorat. Pilgrims offer alms, in the form of food, water, or clothes. Some come to make a prayer and move on—either to the next shrine or back to their everyday life. Others return in the evening to pick up the produce and clothes that have been basking in the blessed aura of the shrine.²

In the active and powerful role played by women, the shrines testify best to the progressive muscle of Central Asia's approach to Islam. They inevitably welcome women more than mosques where, unless there is a separate, designated space for prayer, become essentially off-limits to females. During the repressive prohibitions of the Soviet era, the continuity of the faith largely fell on the shoulders of women. Given their more prominent role in the private sphere, women were deemed the guardians of traditions and religious honor, especially when faced with a hostile state. One man explains away the tension between the public allegiance to communism and private practice of Islam along gender lines: "I am a communist. I cannot fast or pray at work. But my wife and *kelin* [daughter-in-law], they are sitting at home, so they must fast and pray! So we will not suffer from sins. We are a Muslim home!"³ At the shrines, elder women known as *otin* or *bibi-otin* often perform the recitations observed at life-cycle rituals. These *otin* are responsible for the transmission of religious knowledge, act as teachers to younger women in the community, and pass on their own religious expertise to their daughters or daughters-in-law, in an exemplary demonstration of the chains of transmission we discuss later below

In an attempt to shed light on the resilience of the Muslim Kazakhs of Turkestan, Bruce Privratsky talks about landscape's power to trigger a collective memory. During seventy years of Soviet rule, the hagiography of one's ancestors and elders was stored in a kind of dreamscape, collectively practiced every time one passes a place of ziyorat.⁴ In Central Asia, by outlawing the shrines and places of popular worship, the authorities unwittingly made

the past a foreign country—more sought after, more delectable, more relevant than they could possibly have imagined. To visit the tombs of one's ancestors was the equivalent of breaking through the Iron Curtain and going abroad. Most importantly, the prohibition of Islam in Central Asia coincided with an increased access to printing presses around the Muslim world. In Central Asia, instead of being swept up in the tides of doctrinal, scriptural discussions of theology, Islam was elaborated as a practice of community, retaining a significantly oral character. In effect, it was the de-modernization of the faith during communism that allowed for its particular suppleness. Contrary to what one would expect, Islam regressed where it was given free reign. Where it was outlawed, it progressed.⁵

Long live the syncretics

According to lore, it is not heaven's light that illuminates Bukhara, Central Asia's most storied city, but rather Bukhara's light that reaches the heavens. From astronomers to religious scholars, from doctors to saints, there is clearly something in the water of this Silk Road stalwart. Perhaps we would do well to redirect our thermal imaging resources away from military surveillance and criminal investigations to more metaphysical matters, namely, this city on the steppe where the number of holy souls per square meter gives Moscow's billionaires a run for their money.⁶

When the Muslim world is defined or imagined today—by the West or by Muslims themselves—it often includes countries from North Africa to South East Asia, strangely skipping a heartbeat over the former Soviet sphere. Like a functionally planned highway, the newly minted acronym MENASA (Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia) takes a detour around what, until relatively recently, provided the pulse of the greater Muslim community.

Yet, Bokhara is arguably the fourth holiest city in Islam, after Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. Its name—*Bokhara yeh Sharif* (Holy Bukhara) is renowned around the Muslim world. The founder of the Mughal, Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur (1483–1530) claimed that *Ma wâra al nahr* was

2 The relatively recent arrival of these nation-states to the world stage has seen a scramble to create a compelling and distinct national identity, one that goes beyond the twin totalizing phenomena of the past (the USSR) and the present/future (Islam), see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006; orig. ed. 1983). After the fall of the Soviet Union, various efforts were made, in vain, to import a more strict—whether Wahhabite or other—Islam to Central Asia, for example, through the donation of text books and financing of mosques.

3 Gillian Tett, "'Guardians of the Faith?' Gender and Religion in an (ex) Soviet Tajik Village," in *Muslim Women's Choices: Religious Belief and Social Reality*, eds. Camilia Fawzi El-Solh and Judy Mabro (Oxford, 1994), p. 144.

4 Bruce Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan: Kazak Religion and Collective Memory* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001).

5 Pointing to the Safavids and the current Islamic Republic of Iran, Dabashi argues quite convincingly that Shi'ism thrives as a religion of protest but loses its *raison d'être* once it achieves power. Hamid Dabashi, Hamid., *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2011).

6 "Bukharans take pride in recounting the story of how, when the Afghan mujahidin took Soviet soldiers as prisoners during the Soviet invasions of Afghanistan in 1979, they would always ask them where they came from. If they came from the Christian parts of the Soviet Union—from Russia, Belarus, or Ukraine, for example—they were executed; if they were from Central Asia, they were released. And if they were from Bukhara, the Afghan mujahidin would not only set the prisoners free, they would even show them reverence and respond with an *omin!* (amen!)." Luow, *Everyday Islam*, p. 63.

home to more Islamic leaders than any other region. Among the most authentic Hadiths (brief accounts of the Prophet's sayings, which are second in importance only to the Qur'an) are those collected by Muhammad al-Bukhari, a son of the eponymous city. The founder of the largest Sufi order (or tariqat), Baha-ud-Din Naqshbandi, also hails from Bukhara. The neighboring Khwarezm Province is home to the founder of algebra (Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Kh-wārizmī), the astrologer who discovered that the earth revolves around the sun (Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī), and the polymath whose Canon of Medicine was the standard text in Europe and the Islamic world until the eighteenth century (Ibn Sīnā).

The mosque on Mercer

A couple years ago, when we first caught wind of a DĪA Sufi mosque with Dan Flavin commissions in downtown New York, the story, like all good ones, immediately cast a lingering spell. After all, wasn't Flavin particularly averse to any spiritual reading of his work, despite the undeniably hypnotic aura of his light fixtures? And if anything New York in the early twenty-first century has shown us, it is the alchemic paroxysm that results from putting the word "mosque" anywhere near the word "downtown."

Founded in 1974 by Heiner Friedrich, Philippa de Menil, and Helen Winkler, the DĪA Art Foundation burst onto the scene with a deceptively simple model—one artist, one work, one space, forever—an approach whose radicalism has only increased with time. Or as Heiner Friedrich himself put it best: "Art goes up, comes down, goes out the door, gets in the truck, goes to Europe—like clothing! Like chattel! Change the pattern. Bring the art to the place, simply adorned, and let it speak over time. That's the true commitment." Colliding the hopeful naiveté of a child with the more esoteric, metaphysical, if not activist role of art, the DĪA brought us such legendary sites of art pilgrimage as Walter de Maria's *The Lightning Field*, Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, without mentioning its key role in the Judd Foundation in Marfa, Texas.

The DĪA is in some sense the natural if eccentric progeny of the Menil. Emigrés from Vichy, France, Dominique de Menil née Schlumberger and John de Menil moved to Houston, Texas, the US headquarters of Schlumberger, an oil parts manufacturer, and founded the Menil Collection. Consistently cited as one of the best private museums in the world, the Menil is home to some 17,000 pieces housed in a modest building designed by Renzo Piano.

The Menil Collection also includes the Rothko Chapel, an octagon-shaped non-denominational prayer space designed by Philip Johnson, replete with 14 black but colored Rothkos; as well as the Cy

Twombly gallery. The excellent tome *Art and Activism: Projects of John and Dominique de Menil* tells the compelling tale of how the couple originally came to collecting through their tripartite interest in modern art, activism, and spirituality, via the aid of a Marie Alain Couturier, a Dominican priest who believed in art's sacred role.

In 1979, in keeping with her parents' spiritual soul-searching, Philippa de Menil, along with Heiner Friedrich, changed their names to Fariha and Heider, respectively, and converted to Islam. Shortly afterwards, they turned an old firehouse on 55 Mercer into a Sufi mosque or *khaneghah* (a space for meditation or prayer, literally, "a house of present time"). In the main rooms, glowing seamlessly next to Persian rugs were installed a series of specially commissioned Dan Flavin pieces.

Plus ça dérange, plus c'est la meme chose. When the Museum of Modern Art, that temple of high modernism, invited Slavs and Tatars to their Projects series, we couldn't think of a better Trojan Horse than this episode to address the elephant in the room, its deafening silence matched only by its obscene heft: the role of the sacred, the *wholly other*, as Rudolf Otto would put it, or the mystical in the otherwise white-washed story of modernity. Artists and intellectuals are equally gripped by a secular rage to know it all, quarantining if not dismissing that which we cannot understand, describe, or explain away. It comes as no surprise that discussions on the Bauhaus somehow skip a sacred heart beat over the role of mysticism in the movement's early days, from Itten to Kandinsky. Leaders of civil disobedience such as Martin Luther King and Gandhi are seen as secular political heroes, forgetting the significant role of faith in their respective struggles.

In the early 1980s as today, the mere mention of Islam rubbed an entire nation, not to mention the New York art world, the wrong way. Coming on the heels of the Iranian Revolution and the US hostage crisis, the conversion of America's modern Medicis into Muslims must have seemed like a betrayal to the Materialists on the Hudson. As it goes with the best of stories, the DĪA mosque was in some sense too good to be true. After a mere three years, thanks to a board-room putsch that saw Dominique de Menil join DĪA, Heiner Friedrich was removed from the board, Philippa de Menil withdrew from daily involvement in the organization that she had co-founded, and the Sufi *khaneghah* was shuttered.

The stories of the DĪA's largesse in its heyday have become part of art world lore: entire buildings in the city subsidized for studio use, teams of assistants and archivists paid for the likes of Judd, Flavin, John Chamberlain and LaMonte Young. One particular episode has stuck with us. Legend has it that the entire first class cabin of Lufthansa's Frankfurt–NY flights were regularly booked for whirling dervishes

to come Stateside to perform at the mosque in Soho. What could be more enchanting and dream-like than peeking through the curtains from the cramped quarters of economy and catching a glimpse of a group of white-robed men twirling over and over on the same spot, thousands of meters in the air? Is there a better use for that strangely coveted contemporary commodity, legroom? Surely,

such an apparition would make even the most die-hard Islamophobic New Yorker reconsider...

(Excerpts of the transcript have been previously published in *Slavs and Tatars' Not Moscow Not Mecca*, *Secession/Revolver*, 2012 and *Pin-Up*, issue 12.)

Sunday November 8, 2015
Day 2. *How has modernism been perceived globally?*

Perspective 03. Eugene Tan, Director of the Singapore National Gallery, Singapore.

Short Bio:

Eugene Tan is Director of National Gallery Singapore. He was co-curator of the inaugural Singapore Biennale in 2006 and curator for the Singapore Pavilion at the 2005 Venice Art Biennale. He has also curated exhibitions including *Of Human Scale and Beyond: Experience and Transcendence* (2012), *The Burden of Representation: Abstraction in Asia Today* (2010), *Coffee, Cigarettes and Pad Thai: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia* (2008), as well as exhibitions of Lee Mingwei (2010), Jompot (2010), Charwei Tsai (2009), and Nipan Oranniwesna (2009). His previous appointments include Program Director (Special Projects) of Singapore Economic Development Board, Director of Exhibitions at the Osage Gallery (Hong Kong, Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai), Director for Contemporary Art at Sotheby's Institute of Art, Singapore, and Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore.

Presentation: Re-writing a national art history: National Gallery Singapore

Today, the situations that national galleries—from Southeast Asia to Western Europe—find themselves in are not just complex: they may even seem contradictory and paradoxical. Whether founded recently, or a century ago, the national gallery is under pressure to confront not only globalization, but contemporaneity. While many of today's dynamic museums are not necessarily positioned as national institutions, the problems faced by these national institutions can be a good starting point for thinking about the challenges facing all museums in the twenty-first century.

Today's art museums function as anchor points in the fast changing cultural landscapes of our contemporary societies. In particular, the national gallery highlights the inherent tensions in mediating between the presentation of the art historical development of a country and the nationalist imperative to represent the nation through art. This is further complicated in Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, where nationalism and nationhood have served as important themes in artistic modernism, at the same time as the modern art of Singapore has served as a space to potentiate individual expression.

How can national galleries, which are tied to national histories, tell stories of art that are fully responsive to the changing contemporary conditions of art today? Do they transport audiences back in time or do they bring heritage forward to the present? How are the public functions of these institutions changing? If, the publics for today's museums are regional and international, how then

do national galleries position themselves as connecting points for regional histories? What does it mean to go beyond a "national" art history? Does it mean the development of a regional, international, or global perspective? What does it mean to stake a regional perspective in contrast with a global one?

Taking the National Gallery Singapore—the country's newest museum that will open later this month—as a case in point, this paper will propose how a "national" art history can be rewritten and how the presentation of this rewriting of "national" art history is an important part of the global conversation of art today.

I will outline how the National Gallery Singapore addresses some of the key challenges that face many museums of the twenty-first century through its exhibitions and programs. The National Gallery Singapore aims to re-examine Singapore's art historical development, going beyond a "national" art history towards the creation a platform for regional perspectives and global conversations.

The National Gallery Singapore has been converted from two National Monuments, the former Supreme Court and City Hall, which were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. When we open in two week's time, on November 24, our highlight will be our two permanent or long-term exhibitions: one that tells a history about Singapore art and the other about Southeast Asia art. Through these two galleries, the National Gallery Singapore aims to examine the shared historical impulses in the region, highlighting the complexities and relationships between national and regional art histories. This is further complemented by projects that contextualize these developments within a wider global context.

These permanent exhibitions at the National Gallery Singapore are something new for a

Singapore-based art museum. In addition to bringing a sense of history to the art scene, which has been lacking, what they also offer is an opportunity for a dialectical approach towards curating art history. Over time, the propositions set forward by the earlier exhibition hangs will change, as we will respond to the critical discussions within the institution and very importantly that the institution has with other art historians, critics, curators, and artists. The permanent exhibitions of the National Gallery Singapore also set a new precedent for national museums in Southeast Asia, given the scale and depth of these exhibitions. Each of these exhibitions will feature around 400 works, dating from the nineteenth century to the present and will be the most extensive surveys of the art of Singapore and the region to date.

The inaugural exhibition in the Singapore Gallery begins with two questions: “What is your name?” and “Where do you come from?”

These questions, posed in Malay, are found in a painting by Chua Mia Tee, entitled *National Language Class*, painted in the year 1959. Chua was part of a generation of young artists who were actively involved in the independence struggles of the 1950s.

In 1959, the year when the painting was completed, Singapore had gained self-government. Malay would be declared as the national language to unite the different ethnic groups in Singapore through a common Malaysian identity.

Siapa Nama Kamu?—which is Malay for “What is your name?” and which is the title of the inaugural exhibition in the Singapore Gallery, actively courts an analysis of how art and identity operate through inclusion and exclusions, representation and de-representation, and the accumulation of art historical memory in museums. As it operates within this exhibition it is an intimation of what is shown, how it is shown, but also maybe what is not shown. *Siapa Nama Kamu?* is then both a question and an invitation.

In the painting, a group of Chinese students are seated around a table, learning the national language from a Malay teacher. Behind him hangs a blackboard, on which the two basic questions about identity and belonging were written.

Like the title, the exhibition is a query, one into the art history of Singapore.

The exhibition therefore foregrounds the consideration of the parameters of personal and national identity in art—and reflexively—the writing of a national art history in a country that is barely 50 years old. While Singapore has been an independent nation for fifty years, she has been a site for the production of art for much longer. And the history of modern art in Singapore that *Siapa Nama Kamu?* represents begins in the nineteenth century and

continues till today.

It is interesting to note that Chua was a member of the Equator Art Society, of which Chua was also a member and whose contributions to Singapore’s art history has never been fully acknowledged because of its affiliations to left-leaning political groups.

While the Singapore Gallery will present about 400 works, I would like to speak about two works, the first work, as well as the very last work that visitors will see.

The first work that the public encounters in the Singapore Gallery is this print from 1865, which depicts the surveyor G.D. Coleman, whose work was supposedly interrupted by a tiger, which is said to have leaped out of the jungle. It serves to introduce the exhibition and the first section, to represent the interactions between the colonial encounter, arrival of ideas with migrants, and local motifs and its impact upon how Singapore came to be visualised.

The print is a dramatic recreation of an incident involving George Coleman, the first Government Superintendent of Public Works. One day reported in 1835, Coleman, along with his group of Indian laborers, was conducting a road survey when a tiger attacked. The incident is captured here at its most climatic moment. The tiger is depicted striking out in mid-air, flanked by the men recoiling in surprise, limbs flailing in all directions. It gives the surveyors a downright scare, knocking them off their feet and toppling over the group’s survey equipment.

Besides being a dramatic and, possibly, exaggerated account—we are unsure if this encounter with a tiger ever happened—the print also reflects a marked shift in visual narratives. While some earlier colonial depictions tended to portray panoramic, picturesque landscapes, here we begin to see a closer, intimate encounter with the native land, one that depicts Singapore as a dangerous place where tigers roam the land.

Likewise, Lim Tzay Chuen’s project *Mike*—presented as part of the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2005—highlights the possibilities of the impossible. His project involved bringing the Merlion, the National symbol and monument of Singapore, over to Venice. He sought to challenge the notion of national representation and national boundaries in art.

Like the first and last work presented in *Siapa Nama Kamu?*, the aim of the exhibition is to create a discussion about art in Singapore. How it has changed, who are its artists, and where do we even begin. How we understand its art in a larger regional context?

My discussion of our Singapore permanent exhibition shows how we are trying to move beyond a national narrative for art history. But the answer is

not simply to move toward a regional perspective. For—what does a regional perspective mean? If trying to define Singapore as a nation is complicated, then trying to define Singapore as part of a region called Southeast Asia is no less complex.

In January 2015, the National Gallery Singapore held its first public forum, “Is Singapore the Place for Southeast Asia?” One of our speakers was Nora Taylor, who teaches art history at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and researches Southeast Asia. Taylor is one of the first scholars in the United States to study the history of modern art from Southeast Asia. Like many in her generation, she began in Area Studies—because art history departments at the time didn’t engage in Southeast Asian modernity. If they engaged Asia, it was ancient China, Japan, or India. Taylor has written how art historians have previously focused their attentions on individual countries within the region rather than Southeast Asia as a whole. Ten years ago, scholars would argue for the recognition of the “other modernities” that contrast hegemonic notions of Western modernity. Today, however, researchers and practitioners have begun to move beyond the opposition of East versus West and engage in an inter-regional conversation.

I mention professor Nora Taylor, because her own career is an indication of how the field of Southeast Asian art history is a relatively new field and has evolved considerably within a generation. Of course, Sociology and Cultural Studies are other fields that have also tackled the question of Southeast Asia as a region, and it is important to learn from those fields. Let me, for instance, cite two examples from the beginning of the turn of the twenty-first century, that show a discursive move away from the binary opposition of East versus West to an emphasis on inter-regional conversations.

Sociologist Ananda Rajah, in 1999, wrote the essay “Southeast Asia: Comparatist Errors and the Construction of a Region,” where he argued that the problem is “not whether we can or cannot identify Southeast Asia as a region”; the problem is that “we lack a conceptual framework, if not a theory, of *regions as human constructs*.” The “errors” of Rajah’s essay title have to do with how “comparative methods imply systems of classification”—to think of Southeast Asia as a region is necessarily to think of other regions with which to compare it to—and yet, in the case of Southeast Asia in particular but also more generally, the category of “region” is, in the first place, not adequately developed. His point is that we should not focus on the question of a Southeast Asian regional *identity* in comparison with other identities; rather, we should be looking at *interactions* of “inter-subjectivity over geographical space and time”. As Rajah reminds us, such interactions were not and are not self-contained—regions

are interpenetrated systems.

The journal *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* was founded in 2000 by the National University of Singapore sociologist Chua Beng Huat and Taiwan National Chiao Tung University cultural studies scholar Chen Kuan-Hsing. They deliberately used the term “inter-Asia” rather than “intra-Asian” for the title of their project. The term “intra-Asian” would have arguably put the emphasis on articulating what an Asian regional identity might be, whereas “inter-Asia” redirects our attentions to the interactions of an interpenetrated system. Rajah, Chua and Chen are all in a sense arguing that we will not uncover some underlying essential identity of Southeast Asia. What we are doing is constructing the region, constructing its complex and layered meanings, as we look at the historical inter-connections. And this is what we hope to do with our other permanent exhibition—of art from Southeast Asia.

The aim of the Southeast Asia Gallery and its inaugural exhibition is to provide a regional narrative of modern art in Southeast Asia from the nineteenth century to the present, highlighting the richness and diversity through shared historical experiences, as well as the key impulses to art making across the region. For the first time, there will be a long term and comprehensive exhibition devoted to the historical development of art in Southeast Asia from a regional perspective. While the current understanding of Southeast Asia is through the economic-political configuration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the 10 countries that it comprises, it is also acknowledged that this approach encompasses its complexities and limitations. Therefore, it is also the aim of *Between Declarations and Dreams* to complicate this understanding of the region and of regionality, to address how we understand “Southeast Asia” as a geopolitical entity, as well as, an imaginary and by consequence, the art produced within this context.

The title of the exhibition, “between declarations and dreams” may be credited to one of Indonesia’s most cherished poets, Chairil Anwar. In his poem of 1948, *Krawang Bekasi*, Anwar laments the massacre of villagers in West Java by the Dutch colonial forces, giving vent to the desire for national independence at the time. This line may also be said to encapsulate the experiences of many artists in the region, caught as they are between declarations and dreams, the personal and the political.

The exhibition unfolds over four main sections that highlight the main impulses to art-making in four imbricating time periods:

1. Nineteenth to early twentieth century (Authority and Anxiety)—The narrative begins by exploring the role of art production in asserting cultural authority in a period of

immense social instability brought about by widespread colonization of the region in the nineteenth century. They include works by artists, such as Raden Saleh from Indonesia and Juan Luan and Hidalgo from the Philippines.

2. 1900s to 1940s (Imagining Country and Self)—This section then highlights the period when art academies as well as formal and informal structures like exhibition societies and spaces were first established in the region, giving rise to the new modern identity of “professional artists.” Interest in synthesising the new mode of representation with local aesthetics can be found across the region at this time, which also marked the beginnings of a conscious reaction against academic training and practice.
3. 1950s to 1970s (Manifesting the Nation)—This is organized along the different perspectives on the art produced from the decades of decolonisation and nation-building to the Cold War period. Artists were often pulled by the two forces—one responding to the needs of the new nation, and the other to the increasingly shared global artistic trends.
4. Post-1970s (Re: Defining Art) —Works from the last section mark a turn against conventional and academic definitions of “art,” as well as new social commitments with interest in gender, class, identity, and institutional borders.

To bring this paper to a close, launching a national gallery in the twenty-first century means confronting many challenges and opportunities. At the beginning of my presentation, I asked a series of questions:

How can national galleries, which are tied to national histories, tell stories of art that are fully responsive to the changing contemporary conditions of art today? What does it mean to go beyond a “national” art history? How should one re-evaluate the role of national galleries, and how might they re-invent themselves?

It is clear that I cannot provide the full answers here in a twenty-minute presentation. Rather, from the perspective of National Gallery Singapore, the answers will come, not only in how we make our exhibitions and conduct our programs, but in how we look back and reflect on what we have done, and how we evolve and innovate.

Singapore will now have a national gallery with two major permanent exhibitions—one telling a story of Singapore art, and the other telling a story of art from the region, from Southeast Asia. The term “permanent” is not quite right. And the terms “nation” and “region” are also not straightforward. What is exciting about these permanent exhibitions is not only that they tell fascinating stories that complicate our understanding of what it means for Singapore to be a nation, and what it means for Southeast Asia to be a region—but that these stories will unfold and evolve.

As these stories evolve, we hope that the National Gallery Singapore will also create a shared sense of continuity. As humans, we don’t just tell stories, we tell the stories in series, changing them along the way. Storytelling is serial by nature. The stories we tell about art, about how art tells a story of a nation, a place, region, or a corner of the world—what these stories do, above all, is not answer our questions, but keep the questions open, and keep them interesting.

Thank you.

Sunday November 8, 2015

Day 2. *How has modernism been perceived globally?*

Perspective 04. Mariana Botey, Associate Professor Modern/Contemporary Latin American Art History, Visual Arts Department, University of California San Diego (UCSD), San Diego, California.

Short Bio:

Mariana Botey is an art historian, curator and artist born in Mexico City. She is an Associate Professor in Latin American Modern/Contemporary Art History in the Visual Arts department of University of California, San Diego. She received her Ph.D. in Visual Studies from the University of California, Irvine, in 2010. Her book *Zonas de Disturbio: Espectros del México Indígena en la Modernidad* is published by Siglo XXI Editores. From August 2009 to August 2011 she was academic director for the graduate theory seminar *Zones of Disturbance* at the University Museum of Contemporary Art (MUAC) in UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico) and a research fellow at the CENIDIAP-INBA (National Center for Research, Information and Documentation of Fine Arts). Her experimental films and documentaries have been shown at the Guggenheim Museum; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; San Diego Museum of Art; Museo Carrillo Gil, Mexico City; Red Cat Theater at the Disney Hall, Los Angeles; and Anthology Film Archives in New York, among many other museums, galleries and festivals. Since 2009 she is a founding member of the editorial and curatorial committee of *The Red Specter* and, since 2011, of *Zona Crítica*, an editorial collaboration between Siglo XXI Editores, UNAM and UAM. Other publications include *Estética y Emancipación: Fantasma, Fetiche, Fantasmagoría* (Siglo XXI Editores, 2014) and *MEX/LA: "Mexican" Modernism(s) in Los Angeles, 1930–1985* (Hatje Cantz, 2012). She lives and works in San Diego, California and Mexico City.

Presentation: Amerindian inscriptions in the avant-garde: A global perspective

Introduction: A comparative perspective.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the CIMAM Board Members for their kind invitation to participate in this year conference. It is a wonderful experience to be among such an exciting group of colleagues and to visit Tokyo. I cannot think of a better location for us to re-think, and renovate the coordinates of art from a global perspective.

I am given the task of contributing a brief perspective on the question of: *How has modernism been perceived globally?* The question entails two subjects: "modernism," that is, a historical formation that narrates the development of art, while it qualifies it as a singular phenomenon—not "modernisms" in plural, but "modernism" as a universal and totalizing historic destination—an entelechy. In philosophy this means a complete and final form: the actualization of an idea or concept that was only a potency and fulfilled its destiny as an historic concrete reality. The other subject: "the global," which again is a singular or totalizing conceptual description that subsumes us in a single system; a fully integrated cartography. But let us remember

some history here (my materials today are deeply "imbricated" with history) modernism was a term that in fact participated in the nineteenth and early twentieth century projects of Internationalism, the avant-garde, and the making of a cosmopolitan subjectivity. (Modernism was perhaps preparing us for the Global?) The question today traps me in a double bind, but one that gives only a single, homogenous, and unified narrative: to borrow Etienne Balibar's formulation, both modernism and the global "*Speak the Universal.*" The materials I am presenting today are part of a project that wishes to occupy this double bind as a critical task. The theoretical fiction of the universal lurks with its Hegelian spectral (perhaps even ugly) face and calls for resistance and opposition from a colonial or postcolonial perspective. However, the path of resistance seems futile if it does not follow a deconstructive strategy of displacing the terms of the discussion from within, rather than from without. I will be engaging in a difficult exercise: presenting a history of modernism from a dislocated angle or position, pushing against the grain of the historical given, testing the possibility of a global art history of the modern era as precisely a place for contesting the "potentiality" in its assumed common sense destination as a unified and transparent prescription for modernism—claiming that in fact this narrow

assumed definition of the copula modernism-global is yet to find its complete form, description, or destination.

What I will be presenting today is a very fast and cursory overview of a large continental project that looks for a long temporal arch connecting a significant set of canonical figures and idioms in Latin American modernism. The specific grid of the organization of materials that follows is the outcome of years of research documentation and thinking the indigenous in the art history the Americas; that is, the Amerindian as inscription, visualization and allegory in the modern era art of the hemisphere: its representation, misrepresentation, and non-representation. The hypothesis was constructed as a mapping of a set of constitutive displacements in the avant-garde and modernisms that inverted, re-appropriated, and swallowed the “native” as a strategy for critical forms of postcolonial political discourses and art practices; the findings of this investigation complicated the question as they presented a constant movement of dislocation; a need to develop a practice of reading “under erasure” and the discovery of a large depository of evidence supporting the main premises. What I am presenting today is the process of two years of intense collaborative research by a large group of investigators and specialists in the United States, Peru, Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil that includes Norman Bryson, Natalia Majluf, Renato González Mello, Andrea Giunta, Amy Galpin, Gustavo Buntinx, Jesse Lerner, Roberto Amigo, and Laura Malosetti. With a generous research grant from the Getty Institute we were given a unique opportunity for conducting field trips to visit the special collections of national and regional museums, as well to visit private collections, document archives, compile bibliography, do studio visits with artists, and conduct regular meetings as well as two large group seminars.

Indigenisms: Amerindian Imaginaries in the Avant-Garde and Modern Era, 1800–2015 is an art exhibition and publication that proposes a systematic critical revision of the discourse of the art history of the modern era in the Americas by bringing to the center—as an organizing principle—an expanded understanding and critique of the notion of *Indigenismos*. This exhibition gives a trans-historical and trans-continental account gathering an unprecedented collection of art works that document and indicate that the problem of the representation of the Amerindian—be it as a phantasmagoria of the past, or as singular social, cultural, and political phenomenon of the present—articulates the possibility in which the image of the indigenous as the subject of art becomes a reversing mirror whereby the entire process of modernization and the modern are inverted and

“problematized.” Challenging a traditional interpretation that confines the representation of the Amerindian past to a development of the ideological construction of the nation-state and, as such, a minor and political genre (realist, official, functional as propaganda, and driven by its social content) and because of this narrow definition, existing isolated from the crux of modernist and avant-garde transformations.

The core group of hypothesis guiding this project—at this point shaping in the form of an exhibition and publication—presented a challenge to established metropolitan narratives of the history of modernism and the avant-garde by presenting a comparative reading. After two years of intensive and focused research the team of curators, scholars, art historians, artists, and art critics has uncovered enough evidence to mark that the constant iteration of the problem within representation of indigeneity and the indigenous is a persistent *zone of disturbance* across the region following a complex exchange of circulation and contact across borders, political contexts, art movements, and schools. *Indigenisms* from a comparative perspective proposes a moving away from the interpretation of the separated and discrete “national and regional schools,” to expand the definitions of *Indigenismo* and *Indianism* towards the many avant-garde and modernist idioms that thematically or formally imagined the *Amerindian Continent* as the cornerstone of their programs for a “new” esthetics. At the same time, the project seeks to address a new perspective on the history and current formation of Latin American art, by a critical revision of one its most recurrent, rich, problematic, and singular manifestations. An expanded use of the notion of *Indigenisms* as a catalyst for the art of the modern era in the Americas brings a new ground from which to generate a fluid network of intersections and displacements in our understanding of the development of a unique and original form of aesthetics and production of cultural meaning in the region. The materials that I am presenting today are only a very small selection from the documented and studied art works in the archive of the *Indigenismos* that we are compiling and organizing. Focusing in Peru, Mexico, the United States, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil, thus far the research project presents a collection of examples advancing a localization of singular difference intercepting and disrupting the unfolding of modern and contemporary esthetics in the Americas. The conceptual and speculative experiment was originally to posit the indigenous, as a spectral or “phantasmatic” presence in the art of the Americas, after looking at over 3,000 objects, somehow the stakes seem higher and we would like to claim that, indeed, there *is a ghost haunting the history of the avant-garde*.

*Historical perspective
The nineteenth century*

The temporal arch of this exhibit follows a historic scheme that situates an early transformation occurring at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Early representations of Amerindians in the European Art of Latin America and the United States circulated as a hyperbolic apparition conceived through a European lens and commonly used as propaganda depicting the indigenous populations as “uncivilized,” “primitive,” “heathen,” and subject of conquest and expropriation. As the nineteenth century progressed, artists in Latin America and the United States would move away from this perspective, although still offering a construction of Otherness that often expressed a complex and ambiguous relation that fluctuated in registers ranging from the idealized forms of neo-classicism, romanticisms, and the sublime pastoral to ethnographic and archeological representations that were recorded with rational and scientific purposes. In the Latin American context, the cultural work that would be performed by the scenes and figures of indigenous life was tied to the need to produce imagery conducive to the sense of national identity. Yet for the idea of independence from Spain to succeed, there had to be a radical alteration in the existing representation of indigenous peoples—a reworking of older visual forms and scenes that can be located approximately in the period from the 1840s to the 1860s. For as long as most of Latin America was ruled by Spain and Brazil by Portugal, indigenous cultures and peoples remained subject to a positioning as the “unassimilable” Other to ruling. The assumption of a fully independent cultural identity could only take place when their respective societies undertook the step of embracing the pre-Columbian “Other” as *us*, as part of a new and composite national community. *Indigenismo* should not be thought of only as a certain repertoire of subjects, genres, and iconographies. What counts far more is the overall position of *Indigenism* in the surrounding culture, as an art able to supply the means for individual viewers, in the diversity of their different occupations to come together as a national public and to reflect on the shared histories, vicissitudes, and values that membership in their new society entailed.

This part of the exhibition provides the historic ground for understanding the fascinating and rich development of the “genre” of *Indigenism* in the academic traditions of the nineteenth century. Constructed following an argument that traces the notion of an intrinsic relation between the cultural and political aspirations of the emerging modern societies in the region and the dialectics of a historical moment oscillating between *Empire and*

Emancipation, the paintings, rare documents and sculptures in this section weave together a vital set of hypotheses for our show: *Indigenism* as a genre is a considerable departure from previous “exotic vanquished” representations of Amerindian people, it is an *overcoming of Orientalism*, which inaugurated a charged space of visualization and image making acting as a cipher and allegory for a political critique of colonialism and nineteenth-century imperialism and, in the case of Francisco Lazo and Paul Gauguin—Peruvian on the side of his maternal grandmother, Flora Tristan, the feminist socialist writer and activist was a Peruvian member of the Creole intellectual class—the future of these forms of image making is announced igniting the spectrum of temporality that the avant-garde will nurture and disseminate, one that appropriates images of a pre-capitalist past to its own critical perspective of modernity.

Twentieth century. Modernisms

Drawing from the intricate set of cultural, social and political mediations at stake in the previous transnational dissemination of *indigenisms* in the nineteenth century—as a shared field of visualization for the singular and situational conditions of each historical and regional case—the “genre” of *Indigenism* turns, by additive intersections and further international exchanges, into a form of fluid cosmopolitan avant-garde that insisted on creating a “nativistic” or “original” art of the Americas by reifying and departing from the set of repertoires, forms and tropes of previous generations. At the outset of modernism and the proliferation of avant-gardes, *Indianist* and *Indigenist* idioms and forms are wide spread in revival architecture, decorative arts, ballet, music, sculpture, public monuments, painting, and literature. The turn of the century is defined by a two-way system of appropriation and re-appropriation of *Indigenist* motifs and themes that produce a set of Deco and modernists styles based in Amerindian-revivals. The case is wide spread with repercussions in all countries and showing variations that moved across different art movements and schools. Our exhibition dedicates central and extensive parts of its presentation to the representation of this moment with a rare and emblematic collection of art works and documents across these different schools and styles. Closing the first part of the century, the centrality of the thematic and formal iteration of the Amerindian comes to a critical mass in the many debates and manifestations that Surrealism brought to the New World. Our exhibition closes the section of the first part of the twentieth century documenting how the many, and occasionally conflicting groups, within Surrealism in Latin

America and the United States, were engaged in an intense exchange and discussion on how to posit the Indian culture and civilization as a horizon of artistic experimentation and a space for a dissident or Other social imagination.

At the outset of the twentieth century the proliferation of avant-garde tendencies in the International arena mine a burgeoning of Indianist and Indigenist idioms and forms in a wide spread phenomena of revival architecture, decorative arts, ballet, music, sculpture, public monuments, painting, and literature producing a set of Deco and modernist styles based in Amerindian-revivals. Following Andrea Giunta's cogent formulation of the three strategies of the Latino American avant-garde: *inversion, appropriation of the appropriation and swallowing* this part of the exhibition is the largest, making the case for a wide spread iteration of the Amerindian imaginaries as core source of inspiration and stylistic inscription and reinscription in the modernist turn. A particular emphasis is given to the display of a collection of paintings, prints, photographs, and publications that exemplify the consolidations of the Indigenista early avant-garde schools in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico. The objects in this section also expand to incorporate the apparition of the *Antropofagia* movement in Brazil, the Constructivist abstract experiments of the School of the South with Joaquin Torres-Garcia underlining the Inca and Quechua sources that were central to his unique form of Constructivism and abstract experimentation. Further, the *Indigenista* routes that connected Cuzco to Rosario, traveling down the Rio de la Plata, redressed in Ricardo Rojas's figure of the *Eurindian Civilization* enacted as an alternative imaginary to the formation of the modern in Argentina. Here a significant current of *Americanist* art explored and conceptualized the roots of its aesthetic manifestations in connection to imaginaries of telluric geography and landscape that were expressed as a social narrative in the political notion of the "popular" and populism. Again in these examples of the local art movements were linked in an extended cartography by their attempt at reaching for the indigenous core as the essence of a localized and unique character of America the continent as a political and cultural horizon. The powerful works of Antonio Berni, Sesotris Vitullo, Alfredo Guido, and Getrudis Chale exemplified the centrality of this artistic program in the Southern Cone region. Moving north again, this section gives a careful survey of the formation and importance of the Taos School, reframing it in the hemispheric context and advancing a dispute over the isolation of the "international" tendencies of modernism that became dominant in the next decade in the United States. As a counter point, and expanding on the

historiography and representation of that moment in the United States, we present a set of documents making a case for Siqueiros's *América Tropical* and early work by Gunther Gerzso in the U.S. as valuable interventions in the public sphere that revolve around a reformulation of latent violent inscriptions contained in the Amerindian as a system of allegorical visual constructs. Finally, the centrality of the Amerindian comes to a critical mass in the many debates and manifestations Surrealism brought to the New World; documenting how the many—and occasionally conflicting—groups were engaged in an intense exchange and discussion on how to posit the Indian culture and civilization as a horizon of artistic experimentation. Our exhibition closes the section of the first part of the twentieth century with Diego Rivera's proto-conceptual interventions in relation to collecting and mining the past which will be explored and exhibited with a special collection of documents from the archives of the Anahuacalli, his archaeological and ethnographic research in preparation for the murals at the National Palace, as well as his involvement in *the affair of Ixcateopan*. As an epilogue—the evidence gathered to that moment suggests a form of cultural travestism operating as an allegory for Indigenism, as an artistic and cultural strategy. We have collected a small essay of historical photographs to make this point. We close these first two parts of our exhibition with a reflection on the problematic and quite extraordinary ways in which artist and social groups often dressed as Indians—advancing a sartorial perspective on modernist aesthetics.

Twentieth century. Neo-avant-garde. The Cold War era

The postwar years were defined by intensification of the political meaning and destination of art. The case of indigenisms is interesting as it was clearly under attack in its canonical early twentieth century forms (Mexico, Central America, Peru, and the Andean region). However, rather than disappearing it moved into experimental new forms, mediums, and languages. Our exhibition follows a Constructivist form of engagement with land and archeology as inverted (buried) cartographies that were core elements of the forms of abstraction developed after the Indianist investigations of the School of the South. The path from geometrism, to abstraction, to land art, Minimalist, Pop, and Conceptual redresses the Amerindian imaginaries working through them as radical dislocations from the excessive formalist and neutral prescriptions of high modernism. The strong selection of works from this historic moment are posited as working through the Amerindian in the shape of trace, body, erasure, telluric

abstraction, land, Other, self, populism, counter-culture, agrarian revolution, psychedelic experience, ethnography...

The return of the avant-garde in the postwar years is presented in our exhibition as a return of the indigenous, represented by a selection of works from emblematic artists in Latin America and the United States that return to the Amerindian inscriptions as key localizations from which new languages and art-systems emerge. The indigenous as a return in the art of the Americas leaves traces of signs and remnants that deeply question the positioning of art within a social and political context marked by the Cold War, military regimes, counter-culture, mass culture, revolutionary politics and identity, and gender politics. The abstract experiments of Gerzso, Szyszlo, and Paternosto exemplify the many instances in which abstraction visualizes the ancient Amerindian structures and cities as mythical systems for an inverted architecture, and an inverted territory. Body trace and document figure as (re) inscriptions of archaic systems that beget technological dislocations in the chosen works of Katz, Smithson, Downey, and Larrain. The conceptual erasures, sedimentations and poetic short-circuits of Camnitzer, Vicuña, Meireles, and Bedoya return to a phantom of the indigenous as a critical zone of disturbance and critique of capitalist modernity. The indigenous as an insurgent and political subject at the center of history is, in its maximum embodiment in the populist and revolutionary politics of agrarian reform and the Zapatista uprising, represented by the work of Jesus Ruiz Durand, NN, Turok, and Salgado. The traces and sediments of this indigenous manifestation of radical politics turn into the documental and poetic forms of ethnography recording the self and the Other as a border where desire and alterity merge and sway in the photography of Iturbide and Andjar, as well as in the

performative ethnic irony of Luna, Valadez, and Gomez Peña. This third part of the exhibition presents a wide range of experimental practices in film, art, and counterculture that perform a radical ethnography via the inscription of indigenous psychedelic experiences and the return of the native turns into a concrete new art form with the emblematic early pieces of Jimmy Durham.

CODA: Contemporary disseminations.

We close our exhibition with a contemporary CODA section that presents a group of artists from Brazil, Peru, the United States, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Mexico who are currently creating work that engages and elaborates many of the forms, themes, and subjects of Indigenisms. The contemporary examples follow the dissemination of the historical formation of Indigenisms in the avant-garde and modern era, bringing to the foreground a political and critical deconstruction of the indigenous as a subject, and the Amerindian as an imaginary inscription and construct. With work from Sam Durant, Coco Fusco, Leonilson, Anna Bella Geiger, Dr. Lakra, Alfredo Marquez, David Zink Yi, Ruben Ortiz-Torres, Jesse Lerner, Eduardo Abaroa, Mariana Castillo Deball, De la Torre brothers, Wendy Red Star, Vicente Razo, Olivier Debrouse, and Giancarlo Scaglia, among others, the exhibition turns the question of the representation of the Amerindian and its history as a key localization of contemporary art practices and culture. The contemporary section emerges almost without transition, demonstrating that a formal, political and critical deconstruction of the indigenous as a subject and the Amerindian as an imaginary construct persists as key localizations to the practices of contemporary artists and popular culture.

Sunday November 8, 2015
Day 2. *How has modernism been perceived globally?*

Panel discussion with speakers.

Shigemi Inaga, Hammad Nasar, Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars],
Eugene Tan, and Mariana Botey, moderated by Frances Morris.

Panel discussion:

— Frances Morris: I'm afraid we've gone seriously overtime, so we've got slightly less time for discussion than we might otherwise have had, but I'm sure it will be extremely intense. We have just had a pre-discussion about what we might talk about and we thought about clarifying some terms, but after spending ten and a half minutes just on the first particularization, we thought it might be better to start in a different way, so... I thought we could pick-up on this idea of "ghosts," and very simply ask our perspective contributors to elaborate on what kind of ghosts they have seen in their own countries. So perhaps we could begin with... why don't we begin with Mariana... on ghosts.

— Mariana Botey: Yes. The original conceptualization of the project that I was presenting was constructed precisely as the notion that "the indigenous" was in fact a phantasmatic apparition, a sighting within the canonical history of modernism, and there was the idea, in fact, that the indigenous... And I think in this Latin America may be a little particular, because the process of colonization in the sixteenth century does imply a radical holocaust to the "civilizational" processes of the Americas before the arrival of... a real destruction, a massive genocide, a destruction of all the epistemic system, so it's what we would call in psychoanalytical terms a "foreclosure" of the indigenous civilization. So, the indigenous in this speculative critical mode that the exhibition is interrogating is conceived as a phantom, as precisely that return of the real, or the return in the real, of that which has been foreclosed, and this was important because it created a sort of phantasmatic sovereignty, a phantasmatic sense of a parallel or second civilization occupying that. I'm saying this because sometimes people think the exhibition is about indigenous art, right? But the exhibition is actually about *mestizo*, creole, European being kind of visited by the... It's a phantasmatic imaginary construction, it's not the art of the indigenous people; it's the imagination, this phantasmatic presence that has to do with issues of mourning, the destruction of this civilization, and a

sort of incorporation of the indigenous that is not properly understood in its structure, so it returns as a return of the repressed. So it's a technical notion of "the ghost" in psychoanalytical-historical terms but it really works like that. First we thought it was a ghost in the archive, and we were looking at "ghosts" in the archive, but eventually as we were doing the research we uncovered so many iterations, so many objects, so many places where it was appearing, that by now I have to say that I don't know any more if he's a "ghost" or I'm dealing actually with a particular concrete formation of modernism that takes the figure of the indigenous as a sort of cultural transvestism, for example.

— Frances Morris: Can I just pick up on that? How does that relate? You talked about "Deco" cannibalism. How does that idea of indigeneity relate to the kind of Brazilian notion of *antropofagia*, in a kind of absorption of modernity?

— Mariana Botey: Yes, exactly, because the notion in ritual *antropofagia* across the indigenous systems in the anthropology and the studies about this, the precise organization of the sacred operation of *antropofagia* as part of a specific ritual, is a technology of dealing with ghosts and dealing with the dead, and basically you eat your enemy in order to incorporate the power of the enemy, right? These are cultures that are not based on the notion of rejecting the "Other," but radically incorporating the "Other" because the "Other" has to be, you know, incorporated. So, eating the enemy is a way to incorporate the enemy; so we conceptualized the whole *indigenista*-transvestite-modernism as a sort of *antropofagia* of French *pompier* painting, of neo-classical art forms of historical paintings in the nineteenth century, those paintings in which it looks like a strange combination between French painting from the nineteenth century and the classical forms, but it's Atahualpa and it's Cuauhtémoc, so it's a sort of *antropofagia* of modernism, in which some sort of phantasmatic formation is generating an identity that belongs to the Creole, to the *mestizo*, and eventually becomes a form of populist radical politics; so, it's a ghost but it operates in the political as a real important catalyst for the possibility of imagining a community, so it has that double formation.

— Frances Morris: Okay, it's getting complicated. [Laughs]... Hammad.

— Hammad Nasar: Thanks. It's complicated... I'm going to complicate it further, because you asked "in your country," and I'm going to say I have at least two. I was born in Pakistan but I live, you know, mostly in Britain, and I'll then sort of try to address both through, and actually looking at the idea of exhibitions that haunt, and this particular exhibition also addresses some of the concerns we were talking about today. It's called *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Art in Post-War Britain* and was curated by Rasheed Araeen in 1989 at the Hayward Gallery. A few months ago I presented a paper that argued that this particular exhibition is haunting British art history, and the last sighting was actually at Tate Britain, the *Migrations* exhibition, and the subtitle of that *Migrations* exhibition was *Migrations into British Art*, and then the idea is that if you can migrate into an art history, does that mean that it has migrated out of elsewhere; and there's this idea that, you know, ghosts haunt a place because their spirit is not at rest, and for those who know and love Rasheed Araeen, this is definitely a spirit that is not at rest, and it's a question of trying to sort of inscribe within art history, and if that inscription is not acknowledged, the ghost still haunts; and of course the issue now, and I think this is where we get into the tricky questions of global and local also, is the kind of artists that were in the "other" story—people like Rasheed Araeen, Li Yuan-chia, Francis Souza, David Medalla—what happens when Eugene and his team start writing the history of David Medalla, the Southeast Asian artist. Or the Sharjah Art Foundation or the VM Gallery in Karachi start writing the story of Rasheed Araeen, the Pakistani Muslim artist dealing with modernism, or Li Yuan-chia's story is written by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum as you know, "the father" of Conceptual art in Taiwan—of course he's a guy who left in '56 and never went back... What happens is you start over-writing the stories that for British art were not written in the first place, so does that mean that those hauntings will continue forever, or is the collection the way that you bust this ghost?

— Frances Morris: Well, maybe somebody will want to come on back on that when we open up the discussion, but maybe we should then turn to Payam and talk about ghosts. Where are the "ghosts" coming on the edge of empire?

— Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars]: Well, I can't say that Russia is my country, because it's a country that I have spent many years in and studied in and like very much, but I have three countries that have a kind of war with each other: Iran, Russia, and the United States, so, either the historical enemies, current enemies, or this idea of anthropophagy is quite... I think the idea of really adopting multiple

identities as a way of resolving the question of identity politics... because I find identity politics extremely tiresome and reductive. Are you a British-Pakistani artist? Are you an Iranian-American artist? Are you a Palestinian-Canadian artist? I think that each of those contain much more complexity than we like to allow. Let's take Russia, for example. What is interesting about Russia's "ghosts," of course, is its question of empire and the large questions of whether Russia is an empire, a traditional colonial empire in the understanding of colonialism and Orientalism, as it was described by Said. Well, yes and no. Unlike England and France, Russia's colonialism was not to far-off places, to people that it didn't know, so they didn't go across oceans or across lands, but actually they went across a border and colonized people that had previously colonized it just three or four centuries earlier. So that deflates the kind of civilizing mission that you have, the messianic mission that you have accompanying the narrative, of this kind of deadly combination of knowledge and power that Said so potently described. Also Bolshevism, of course, even though they did extent some of this colonial empire, the colonial policies of the Russian empire, it had to pay lip service to anti-imperialism, they couldn't just... They had at least fake it to a certain degree, so what they did was to immediately train local scholars in Kyrgyzstan, in Kazakhstan, in Uzbekistan to become scholars in their own right, so there was an empowerment that you didn't find early on, and also finally the Russian "Orientalology" was inspired by German Orientalism. German Orientalism, of course, was divorced from colonialism for a very long time, much more esoteric, much more theologically driven, about finding out the original language of the Old Testament. So, what's interesting for me and for us about Russian Orientalism is that Russia itself is both "self" and "other," its history is a constant kind of schizophrenia of looking west, looking east, looking inwards, but it can't separate one from the other, that allows for a complexity, a theoretical complexity that French Orientalism and British Orientalism simply do not.

— Eugene Tan: I think we have a few "ghosts," as well, in what we are trying to do, both in our telling of Singapore's art history as well as Southeast Asia. With regards to Singapore, I'd say some aspects of art history that till now we haven't been able to tell, such as... I was telling you about the Equator Art Society, for example, that Chua Mia Tee was a member of, and they were effectively ignored from art history because of their affiliations to the communist party at the time. As you know, Singapore was undergoing the Malayan Emergency against the communists in the 1950s and sixties, and because of that, their contributions have been largely ignored, and they were the first artists who

saw the social role of art, that art was able as a means to kind of affect social change. The other was taking out history going back to the nineteenth century, a time when art was largely made by Europeans and British coming through Singapore, but they in themselves brought new ideas of visual representation to Singapore, and hence also changed how art was produced. And then, more recently, how artists in Singapore are looking towards the international or the global; but, as Hammad pointed out as well, we're also considering the role that diaspora artists such as David Medalla and Kim Lim play in our whole art history and... yes, exactly what kind of role did it play in linking our art histories as well?

— Frances Morris: Can you say just a little bit more about how you would integrate David Medalla back in your narrative?

— Eugene Tan: Well, he left the Philippines for London in the 1960s, but at the same time he still continued to have strong links to Southeast Asia, to the Philippines, to many countries, and I suppose it's through those connections that he also played a role influencing some of the practices that we see today. Likewise for Kim Lim. She was involved with the Alpha Gallery in Singapore in the 1970s, so through these connections she brought this element of the international to Singapore as well.

— Frances Morris: But how would you frame that context of a kind of... through the individual artist having an influence or just the artist being a conduit for a kind of connectivity to another regional practice?

— Eugene Tan: It's really through individual practices and connections. I think that is what is really lacking in the study and understanding of Singapore and Southeast Asian art. As I mention, it's still relatively in the research field and there are these individual connections and links, and the impacts that subsequently must be researched and explored.

— Frances Morris: Back to the man who invented "ghosts." Having heard the presentations from our colleagues, were there any points of particular sort of synergy you felt in relation to some of the provocations that you have put out there?

— Shigemi Inaga: I would say anyway it is my proposal to try to find out once again the "lost ghost," and it's already quite successful listening to our presenters, so I'm more than delighted already, and because I talked too much this morning, so I'm not going to repeat it. But still, a friend of mine who is Japanese and who has been teaching for a long time—almost thirty years in Vancouver—, once said to me that in Canada the native people have so many, you know, interesting art works... Probably you know Claude Levi-Strauss, for example, made a book on that, *The Masks...* and other things... But he

added that the spirits were gone; in the museums only the form remains and the "living speak" was somewhere lost. And probably that was the starting point of my own reflections and in a museum, not only the display but also in the museum's stories as I said, and the things are there, but the spirits are hidden, and still they're sleeping or they are watching us, probably. And there is the witnesses and we have already heard that "ghosts" are everywhere, and how to make the resurrection would be a good subject-matter I think, and especially in recent years in Asia, especially in the film industry there are many ghost films, ghost movies. I'm wondering why in the last ten years, and some of them get the highest prize in the Western film festivals, and even the Christian people from a Christian country really appreciate that resurrection of the ghost. So, I'm also talking about... Mariana talked about the foreclosure and so on... This is a psychoanalytical idea, but something has been repressed for a long time in modernity, and... yes, Payam quoted the name of Norman Brown and it's also quite suggestive, and something is hidden, but something is waiting for us to listen, so this is the starting point and I think everything is connected.

— Frances Morris: In the abstract in the booklet you talked... You sort of ventured the notion that modernism itself... what we continue, or maybe we don't, but until recently we have certainly from a perspective of Western Europe taken this sort of hegemonic master narrative and everything springs from it and comes back to it, and of course that is something that we now broadly question today, and we're questioning it finding new terms and new frames of reference, but you venture in your abstract to suggest that maybe modernity itself is just kind of an atmosphere disturbance in a kind of bigger global history, and I kind of like this idea that we may be returning to something, not just moving on, and that has something to do with the talk about facing backwards to face forward, as some kind of sympathy with that idea that modernism is something maybe not so deeply rooted.

— Shigemi Inaga: Yes, the metaphor of "disturbance." That metaphor anyway comes from the typhoon, the cyclone or... in the United States what is it... the hurricane. And, as you know, if this kind of air disturbance begins, at its center there is a huge eye, a blind eye, the hole, but still it is a kind of originator of all the energies in a configuration of all the powers that are circulating around designating that hole, which is vacant, and probably that's where the spirit is haunting.

— Frances Morris: Well, I think, on that amazing moment where there's a black hole, we need to open to the discussion to all of you. So, please, your questions.

Sunday November 8, 2015

Day 2. *How has modernism been perceived globally?*

Q & A with speakers.

Shigemi Inaga, Hammad Nasar, Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars], Eugene Tan, and Mariana Botey, moderated by Frances Morris.

— Michael Levin: Thank you. What I would like to share with you is my experience about modernism. I also happen to be born in Asia, just the other side of Asia, in Jerusalem, and at a certain moment I was invited to do an exhibition of modernism in Israel. To my great surprise I found out that Tel Aviv has the largest concentration of early modernism in the world, and when I did an exhibition for the museum as a freelancer—that was before I became Chief Curator and Director of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art—I was very hesitant about it and it was a very modest exhibition, but it traveled to New York, Berkeley, the São Paulo Biennial, and Buenos Aires. As a result of that, it took me another nineteen years to get the recognition of UNESCO [to make] Tel Aviv a World Heritage City. This was very important because the people of Tel Aviv couldn't care less about it. The fact that I claimed that was a large concentration didn't mean anything; only when the New York Times quoted me, suddenly it became a fact, and as my grandmother used to say: "Everything that is written in a newspaper is true." So, to my great surprise, it was much harder to convince the people of Tel Aviv that the houses they're living in were worthwhile preserving; they demolished a lot of them and it was a surprise for them to discover they are a laboratory of modernism. Tel Aviv is the eighth monument in the twentieth century that was recognized by UNESCO and that's a fantastic example where UNESCO was so influential in preserving the heritage of what was left. Between the twenties and the thirties, six thousand buildings were built in the international modernist style, and this has to do with the fact that there was no tradition, because the people who lived in Tel Aviv came from different countries, had no tradition, and therefore modernism appealed to them because it was linked with the modern world. I was myself born in a modern building and for me it was vernacular architecture. I took it for granted that this is how architecture, modern architecture, is, how architecture looks like. So, to be honest, without UNESCO recognition many of the buildings would have been demolished, and luckily also when UNESCO recognized the White City of Tel Aviv—White City is a pure invention, because there is no white city and there is no definition of where it starts

or where it ends—but if it had not been for UNESCO, we used to save some of the most important buildings because in a lot of them floors were added and therefore they could not be considered worthy of recognition. So, I think it's a challenge. I mean, we take it for granted that modernism is so important, but without UNESCO it would not have happened.

— Frances Morris: Would anybody like to comment? I mean, Hammad, as he was speaking I was thinking about your notion of sort of rooted modernism, a modernism on values, heritage, and modernity.

— Hammad Nasar: Yes, I don't have very much to say about UNESCO, I'm afraid. There are other people better qualified, but this idea of the root I find interesting, and I think in particular to ideas of the contemporary. Thankfully we are beginning to move away from what I call the "unhinged" contemporary, a contemporary that is free floating; even sort of art fairs now have modernist sort of parts or divisions, so there is this interest coming back, but quite often these hinges are invisible, so one of the things that for us and—let me speak for myself—, that I find very interesting is to say, "Well, what are these hinges and can we make them visible?" And quite often this idea of "indigenism," this was also very, very prevalent and much discussed in multiple languages in India, for instance, and when we start using words like "modernism"—and let me sort of take it back to the example of India—there is one of these sort of the most circulated art historical texts on India is one called *When was Modernism in Indian Art?*, and it's written by another formidable critic-curator-writer, Geeta Kapur, and at the moment we're doing a project that is looking at art writing in India in thirteen languages across a hundred years, and in sort of flippant moments and never to her face because Geeta Kapur is a very formidable lady, so don't tell her. It's often described—the project that we're doing—as trying to put a parenthesis in the title of her book, to say, "When was English-speaking Modernism in Indian Art?" Geeta trained at the RCA, actually at pretty much the same time as Zahoor—who I was just describing. She's writing in English from a cosmopolitan center, New Delhi, but speaking for a vast, you know, continent of a country, and if you then

think about these thirteen languages, and there could be many—Malayalam, Gujarati, Assamese, Urdu, Bangla...—modernism or those ideas of modernism would have entered these languages at different times and different spaces, and if they could speak to the English language modernism, what would they say and how would they complicate that story? And of course they then begin to exceed these boundaries of nation, region, so if you're going to look at Bangla writing, well, of course you'll have to go to Bangladesh, so one of the other ghosts that we all live with—I think, you know, that the gentleman from Israel is an example—is the ghost we create through nation-making, through partitions, so the ghosts with in fact the story that I share of India and Pakistan, those stories are largely unknown to each other, so the art histories of India are so really blind to the art histories of Pakistan, although they're coming so much out of that same source, and I think that active creation of strangers through partition is something that is... I mean, it would be interesting to think about... Well, there isn't a National Gallery of Malaysia, but let's say, if there were a National Gallery of Malaysia with the same ambition and resources that there is in the National Gallery Singapore, what would be their imagination of Southeast Asia?

— Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars]: I would like to add just also to that, when we speak of modernisms of language there's also a further complexity, which is the modernisms of alphabets of those languages speaking, and we often think of alphabets as neutral agents that somehow have always been part of that language, but in our region, which has changed alphabets three times: the Muslims of the former Russian Empire and Soviet Union changed from Arabic script to Latin in '29, Cyrillic in '39 and back to Latin in '91, so you have three generations that are kind of immigrants in their own language, and you could look at this idea of a script world also, not just a language-driven regionalism but a script driven one. It's something we can see in the region as well, whether it's between Urdu and Hindi, or whether it's between—even in Slavic languages—between kind of the Catholic Western-facing Slavs, the Cyrillic Catholic Latin-based Western Slavs, and the Cyrillic Orthodox Slavs historically.

— Mariana Botey: I mean, this jurisdiction, this universal jurisdiction of language, a sort of imperial jurisdiction—and UNESCO is a form of, you know, global jurisdiction in a sense—, I think it's interesting thinking of Geeta Kapur and, you know, the project we're doing is very much work through working with Spivak, very close to Spivak, and it was never conceived only as Latin American, we know that this indigenous is also in the *geist* of the subaltern, right? And the problem of subalternity, and a problem of precisely a universal speaking, right? I did quote

Balibarsin speaks the universal and the universal is precisely what we are trying to dislocate as a speech, in the notion of a globalization where precisely this subaltern formations stay. Now, we're in the inside modernism, which is obviously a construction of the particular European, so how you sort of make a creole, a vernacular, a translation, which should be a mistranslation and should be a key to showing that the mistranslation of both structures, so the nineteenth century paintings are also very interesting because they were forever kitsch abject objects hidden in the national museums of all the Americas, right? Because they were neither the good proper French painting, nor a true representation of the indigenous, so it was from that kind of notion of them as abject bad language, a precisely subalternity that is trying to speak the universal and rather than speaking the universal, radical, eventually dislocates the whole system of representation and creates the zone of disturbance in this notion of a universal jurisdiction through language that it was Latin, but then eventually became Italian, which was the speaking of the people, a vernacular. So, perhaps these dislocations of the modernist language through these different localizations, in the formation of two hundred years going back to big history, will actually become themselves a sort of, you know, new sovereign language in a full sense. So, this talking bad the master language, talking back to the master in a different language is in a sense where is also articulated forming these kinds of materials, because it's the singularity that appears.

— Shigemi Inaga: Just adding to what has been said. There is a very famous contemporary Chinese artist by the name of Xu Bing, you know all, and he made a fake Chinese characters and he made his debut in the international art market. Why was he accepted? Simply because his calligraphy is not readable. You understand? If it's readable then it's in the Chinese character sphere and he could not have gone out of that regional market, because his characters are illegible, unreadable, that he could emancipate to the global market, and of course now he's saying that his own invention can be deciphered and people can learn it, because it's [faithful?] to the principles of the Chinese character, the combination of elements you can write to have some literacy in a sense. This is one of the strategies that he very carefully kind of created, so as to break the boundaries of the practical language.

— Frances Morris: I think it would be interesting... Oh, there's a question here, and then one here.

— Carina Plath: Yes, thank you. There's also like a nice story of the Welsh[-born] sculptor, Richard Deacon, who got an invitation from Beijing to show him, but he didn't lend to the show and nor did his galleries. So they just redid Richard Deacon's

sculptures and he was fun enough that he went. I don't know if there was a conflict, but it could be an interesting economic conflict. You know, the Chinese made a perfect imitation of Richard Deacon's work and Richard Deacon has the humor to go to it, but in case they would sell it for the price of a Richard Deacon it would be, like, interesting, so... I don't know if it happened. But my question is really towards conflicts and I would like to ask Slavs and Tatars about which conflicts you are kind of experiencing when you do your work, because it's very provocative. What kind of conflicts you get doing your shows in the different areas where you are showing? Thank you.

— Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars]: Well, let me maybe just tell the story of the 10th Sharjah Biennial, since we have some important members of that biennial team here. It was a biennial that was much spoken about because the issue of censorship, and the Mustapha Benfodil's piece was censored right next to our pavilion. Our pavilion was called "Friendship of Nations: Polish Shi'ite Showbiz," and it traced the unlikely points of convergence between Iranian and Polish history from the seventeenth century to 2009, including, as a way to look at it, essentially Iranian protest movement, Green Movement. If Poland's Solidarność had battled communism effectively, then what could it teach Iran's struggle with the counter-partner of the political Islam? And ironically, in 2009, while we were doing this research, in fact many Poles were translated for the first time into Persian, from Zygmunt Bauman to Miłosz to Kolakowski, etc. So, a dealt with the notions of protest, ideas of Shiism in a country that was overwhelmingly Sunni, and opening the day that the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, sent troops over into Bahrain, an overwhelmingly Shiite country, and yet nobody raised an issue during these three months, in spite of the fact that next door there was a very provocative piece that was censored. And what's interesting about that is... there's a kind of fetishization of conflict in our milieu that... And we've been accused, for example, by some saying that, you know, that they hope that Slavs and Tatars could do work that would be more censored in the Emirates, in Russia, and I find this to be somewhat a very outdated vision of politics, in a sense that it's politics that "speaks at you" as opposed to "speaking with" an audience—so there it already loses a sense of generosity. You know, we started as a reading group, so the idea of a level playing field, we're not pedagogically more experts, we're not "speaking at people," we're "speaking with people," hopefully, so I don't really consider the work to be overtly political in a sense that... Of course, it's political in a sense that in so far as anything that we do, the subject matter is very political, but part of the reason was that I think that

it didn't look like art, let's say, it looked like a folk museum and I think that what—to come back to Professor Inaga's talk—what's interesting about craft and folklore is that it counters the narrative of art and social contemporary modern art, because it decouples innovation from individualism, so innovation is not about individuality, but about the collective or even anonymity, right? This idea of repeating your masters for ten years before you dare to make a single contribution, and that's something that you find in practices, whether it's, again, sort of a *dikra*, the *zikra* or Buddhist practices, this is something that comes from a resolutely anti-modernist approach to time. So, we unfortunately have tended to kind of put our step in a kind of proverbial sheet, in terms of exhibitions and rights, I mean, we worked in Manifesta, despite the fact that many of our colleagues were pulling out, and we don't necessarily believe in boycotting, in so far as the bigger challenge is to really say yes and then say no while you're saying yes, so to really engage but engage with the complexity of the matter and not try to brush it under the carpet. So, whether it's in the Emirates, whether it's in Russia, these issues are not very different from those we have to deal with in New York or London or Berlin, to be honest. It's simply acknowledging that complexity.

— Olga Sviblova: [I'm from] from Russia. I think it was very important expression "English-speaking world modernism," and we were talking today about modernism, it's not by chance that we started with this whole story of the Latin American presentation from the moment when national arts found identity. So, I think what we have to be in the contemporary art world... It's a very fashionable discourse today what it means the relationships between international and national context. So if you're not local, you could not find your place in the international context, but how do we read this idea of local art? How do we translate the local context? And we touched this theme a little in the panel discussion yesterday. A few days ago, I was in Mexico and in a beautiful museum, University Museum. I saw a piece of contemporary art they did to remember the local artists and it was a great piece. It was just writing: "if you don't know the English language, you're not a contemporary artist," and I think it was a quite great presentation. It was a show about younger local artists who explain exactly what's the way to be visible and to be understandable. So, if we begin to have the migration from local context to this, I can tell the word "imperialism" in the contemporary art. I hear a lot about Russian imperialism. We talk about the colonial style everywhere in the world, we have the same things in the fields of contemporary art today, and it's exactly the game: How we want to see this local context? Without these new forces,

new vitamins, the general global art market couldn't be blocked today, but when these flowers arrive to this big machine, English-speaking global context, it's totally transformed to another product, and they live there and they can write the book for the young artists who understand very well when they write, "If you don't know the English language, you're not a contemporary artist." So that's this innovation, but that's the way how artists start to be seen. So, how do we understand when we describe with the same words "avant-garde," "modernism," totally different processes. You started today... If we talk, for example, about the history of Russia, now we talk about the beginning of the twentieth century; for the Latin American you started much earlier, modernism started much earlier. So, how do we understand who is writing today the history? And that was your question also; if somebody stopped, if this institution stopped to write the history; or this artist, if he will be in the history of contemporary art. Yesterday, we saw Niki de Saint Phalle from one of the biggest collection of this artist in Japan. For example, I didn't know that Niki de Saint Phalle was so present in Japan, but what was the visibility of Niki de Saint Phalle in France and in Japan? How she was understandable if she didn't arrive? The artist didn't arrive for the biggest collection—and that's the topic of our discussion yesterday—, if we then have the museums who collect the same things, we arrive for the museum of contemporary art at the end of ages. What we're looking at? The same names? Quite the same pieces? And like this, was not the history of contemporary art very quickly conceptualized? And it's quite difficult later to rebuild this, to put us in the bricks of this building. So who made the signature like our posters today, the blue posters to go to the performance to the museum? Who tells us today what the history of contemporary art means? What it's not? We might respect the algorithm, we know the law, we know the rules of the game. If these rules, if contemporary art we need because we need the freedom, but the law that we constructed in our world is the same law like the political systems, like economical systems, so we need to be proud. These rules of the games that's totally against the freedom... We need artists because we would like to find the new drops of freedom, but when we work with the history of art, we totally put them to the clean structure. We don't give the visibility of the freedom, so that's just the question: How do we deal with this structure, not structure, freedom?

— Frances Morris: Olga, can I just interrupt you for one second? Could you just frame your question in just a very few words? Because I think some of that was lost in the delivery.

— Olga Sviblova: I want to know how today we write the history of contemporary art. Where is the law and where is the freedom? How do these two

realities deal one with another?

— Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars]: Is the question whether the English language is necessarily limiting the freedom of contemporary art? Well, okay... So, I mean, I can only speak from my perspective. Our work is a constant struggle against the hegemony of English, we do research in Russian, Polish, Persian, French, those languages we can. I don't know many artists who do research in five languages, so we try our best to do that, but English, yes, it's a transactional language, it's not the most suited for all the purposes, but is... At certain countries they're at disadvantage because of English... Let me just speak about Russia, because I think that, to be honest, as much as a Russophile as I am, I think that the country is underperforming significantly in contemporary art, and the reason why is that it hasn't invested in education, and that's why a country right next to it, like Poland... It's not because Poland is an Atlanticist country that is somehow always at the behest of America—and believe me, I can criticize Poland's politics with the United States—, but it's not because Poland is an Atlanticist country that it has a much stronger tradition of... or kind of larger number of artists that are engaged today in making contemporary art, it's simply because there's an investment in education, and in Russia there still isn't an educational model for artists that has moved beyond anything that was done a hundred years ago. And that's astounding to me, that all this money in such a wealthy country is spent on exhibiting. And the same thing happens in Central Asia. Central Asia, after the fall of communism, all these NGOs come in—Hivos, Soros...—and they give money to this generation of central Asian artists that are shown everywhere. Great artists—Aharonov,* Arbusin,* Olivierkov*, etc.—but the next generation sits there and says: "What about us?" Because none of that money was spent on education. It's nothing new, it's not rocket science. So I think that's one important element in contributing to the writing of contemporary art history: educating young artists in their own country, so they don't have to leave to be educated, like Taus, for example, or like Arseni, for example, or like others.

— Hammad Nasar: If I could add sort of two comments, one is referring back to the work that I showed of the youngest artist, Noor Ali Chagani, these little bricks in the wall, and Noor Ali... Well, he speaks English perfectly, you know, perfectly well, can be understandable, but in a way I'm interested in this particular group of artists who sort of think in Urdu, and this idea that, yes, you know, that's not their first language and that particular work is interesting to me also because it is literally embedded in the wall, inside, it is as local as it gets. That work cannot travel. Those images don't really

travel unless people like me show them elsewhere, so that is work that is speaking to a very, very specific place, and I think it's a good example of that specificity that through being so local and through specific can actually transcend that place geographically and through time. And while we're then looking at that local, I think we shouldn't ignore the other local... Britain, for instance. One of the things that... I'm sorry if I start like advertising projects, but one of the projects that we just started with the Paul Mellon Centre for British Studies in the UK is called "London, Asia," and it posits the idea of London as an Asian city for the generation of art history and visual culture, so to think about it as a... not about exchange, but actually intermeshing, so people like David Medalla, what he did for London and for the art scene in Britain... I mean, Britain, to be perfectly frank was a minor player in the story of modernism, and sort of the injection of, you know, dragging Britain to contemporary time was largely thanks to people like David Medalla, and Rasheed Araeen, you know, and we can think of many others, and Ligia Clark, and I think those stories, so it's not just about writing this new stories in Lahore or in Biskek or in Kuala Lumpur, it's as much about writing new stories within Britain or London or New York.

— Frances Morris: Okay, so those are respondents for that, I'm sure you all agree... Should we begin at the back with Suhanya?

— Suhanya Raffel: [I'm] from the Art Gallery of New South Wales, from the Pacific end of the world, and I just wanted to say two things. One, a question to Hammad, with the project with Geeta and modernism and the parenthesis and the other languages, but also to... And it links to my next comment, and this is about Yothreenda Jane's* work with the other masters, and these are the artists who are known as Arvasi* artists within the Indian context, artists who are coming from a tradition that is in a very different relationship to modern India, and is there and is recognized within the dialogs of art, so I'll just park that to one side and then come from the Australian perspective. We had Brook Andrew speaking yesterday about aboriginal voices, and to know that in the context of our museum work in Australia that the voice of aboriginal artists, first nation artists, are vital to our histories and how we speak about our history, and to know that the museums in our part of the world are engaged in those projects, as intrinsic and embedded to thinking about what is artistry today and how are we contemporary today. So, I'll just leave those two thoughts and hand back to you, Hammad. I mean, you have spoken about the other story. What about the other masters?

— Hammad Nasar: Well, in some ways the trajectory that I was sort of just sketching out very briefly today about the living tradition of Indian art, in some

ways speaks to that story, about the investment in this group of artists' teachers through this idea of the living tradition. I haven't read enough of Yothreenda Jane to see how sympathetic or not he would be to that formulation of living tradition, but I think there's efficient common ground. The first of the projects as part of this "London, Asia" thing with the Paul Mellon Centre is actually a conference next summer in London, which looks at how South Asia has been exhibited in Britain over the last century, and the interest in that is coming out on how that has been framed. So, for example, right now there is an exhibition at the BNA that has a title called "Festival of India," and if you quickly google Festival of India—somebody will do it right now—, I'm sure... I don't know how many entries you will get, but there have been many, many festivals of India in Britain, and I think one of the questions is why does that framing continue and what does it reveal, and I think one of the things that we need to question with exhibitions, with collections, is... You know, in your beautiful museum in Sydney, and what you just said about the importance of the aboriginal story, but if you just stay outside the museums all you see is names of dead white guys, none of whose work is actually inside the museum, so my sort of question to you is... You know, when you build the extension, whose names would you put on that extension?

— Frances Morris: Would you like to answer that?

— Suhanya Raffel: I'll just let others know the Art Gallery of New South Wales is a museum that was built in the mid-eighteen hundreds, 1871, and it's almost an identical copy of the Scottish National Gallery. In fact at the time, when it was being built, the architect Walter Vernon had... You know, his original idea for the building was an indoor Saracen piece of architecture, but the trustees at the time felt that that was certainly not what they wanted, and they directed Vernon to look at the Scottish National Gallery Building, which he then proceeded to copy in beautiful Sidney sandstone, and you have a neoclassical façade and, as Hammad said, with all these names of artists that again the then trustees believed were the masters of art at the time, and these are people like Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto, and so on. As Hammad said, we don't have any of those particular artists inside, and perhaps that's quite a good thing. Underneath those names, on the façade of the building are these blank recesses that were meant to be filled with reliefs of these artists' work, which were never done, so it's really a wonderful metaphor for what maybe... You know, thinking about the Palestinian museum that you actually don't fill it with something because it is much more alive by not doing that. We are at the moment in the process of expanding our museum and we're working with the Japanese architects Sanaa to make this expansion, hopefully opening in 2021, and the

architect chair that has been proposed by Sanaa is diametrically opposed to that sandstone piece of architecture that Walter Vernon gave to the people of New South Wales. This proposal is much more... It's an architecture that responds to the site, and the site in many dimensions. Topographically it is a complex site that goes down to Woolloomooloo Bay and so it's a sort of wonderfully, beautifully designed cascading pavilions. What will go inside, that's a debate that we are all engaged within the most productive way, but without question the first sets of galleries that have been agreed on are aboriginal galleries, because if we are saying what is a twenty-first-century gallery in Sidney today, it has to begin with that story of who we are. But also a city, Sidney is a city well run for people with a bond somewhere else, it is one of the most diverse cities in Australia, culturally diverse, diverse in languages as well, so there's no question that Pacific art, Asian art, and the contemporary voices of those artists are part of that new building, without question. The names are going to be inside of the building, not outside. Thank you.

— Hammad Nasar: I think what would be really interesting... I think that's great and I think we are all going to look forward to that gallery opening, and I think it's also a wonderful opportunity for these new histories to be written. You know, are those histories going to be written in compartments or are they going to talk to each other? Will they be enmeshed? And how does that enmeshing take place and take physical form? I think it's one of the real challenges that we are all facing...

— Suhannya Raffel: I think the enmeshing has already begun. For us we have begun to play with the collection and to think about those ideas as on the floor, and the first place that we began to do that playing and the enmeshing is with the Asian collections, knowing that there are so many Asian artists working in Sidney, and in fact Khadim Ali is now a trustee on our board at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, so we have begun that process of thinking about who is making the art, what is the story that is being told, how is contemporary art speaking to this history and in which way, and it's through the collection that those stories are being developed.

— Frances Morris: Well, there are some other hands. I don't know how to choose. Calin Dan had a question first. You want to do it? And then we'll move on.

— Unidentified questioner: Let me get back first to this issue of the language and then address the expected question, because if we're talking without a question I see that there is a nervousness on stage. Okay, so I'm afraid that I agree with what you said about the transactional dimension of English language, this is an obvious thing, but I also understand a bit the gracelessness coming from that side

when a question implied that that is also a hegemonic dimension. I'm afraid, at least in the part of the world where I'm functioning, which is Southeastern Europe—former communist block—there is this kind of hegemonic dimension that applies in a very funny way. All the young artists, all my former students, are talking through their art only in English to a local audience, which happens to be a Romanian audience, which happens to be a Latin country where, of course, the middle class speaks English, but I find it to be a ridiculous trait, and whenever I address it publicly or in private with the people in question I never get any reaction. It's like I'm not there, so that's something very hegemonic, and there is this guy, Mladen Stilinović, whose work I revere, who put it very simply: *"If you don't speak English, you don't exist as an artist."* And now the thing I wanted to extent to you in a sense. What struck me this morning, especially in the first three interventions, was a sort of continuum of preoccupation—subterranean, I would say—for spirituality, the values of the spiritual, I wouldn't call it religious, I would call it spiritual, and for me it was evident that in one way or another you were part of this pedagogic turn from the postwar atheistic way of looking at modernity and at modernism, towards something that I think happens right now and which is a critical turn, as I said, towards the values of the spiritual that were repressed. I think we grew up in the last decades in a sort of a Euro-Atlantic complex of interpretations where anything that was dealing with the spiritual was a bit suspect, it was a bit new-agish maybe—we don't like that. So, what was my question, actually? I have a question. I believe in the march of this development, and for me it was just a confirmation that this is happening—and I was telling Frances previously during lunchtime—, that it is no coincidence that three people in one morning are talking in a way that for me is obviously aiming at that. And it's obvious for me also that last year at CIMAM's conference. Two years ago that wouldn't have happened. So probably there's a sense of urgency, I think, in that sense. By the way, next year, 2016, Dada: Dada was the spiritual revolution, it's the centenary of spiritual revolution also, I think, so do you think that better than talking about the ghosts we could talk about the skeleton in the closet that could be the spirituality of modernism or modernity? That's the question actually.

— Frances Morris: Who would like to take up on that?

— Shigemi Inaga: It's waiting for the spirituality that I began the story with ghosts, of course, so thanks for your following. For "the spirit" I can make another one-hour lecture, so that's why I hesitated. Turning back to English, for example, several years have already passed since a Chinese artist—I forget his name— put on one side E.H. Gombrich's short

story of world history, art history, and on the other a Chinese painting history, put together in a wise box with the result of a tabula rasa. Thirty years have passed, and we are facing to this reality. It's quite obvious that within twenty years English will no longer be the most dominant language in the world; Spanish speaking population will be much larger in the United States, for example, so probably we are quite unfortunate in this contemporaneity to be forced to speak English, and it's a kind of legacy of the British Empire, it's quite obvious, and I'm trying to rewrite all the world history in the last five hundred years, but it's another story once again, but because the Japanese can properly speak Japanglish, the Hindish is everywhere, so we're speaking English, but English is no longer one unique language. I stop here.

— Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars]: Just to add on to that and on this point back. You know, Russian is also still the second most widespread second language in the world. I guess what I would hope is that... Maybe we talked about this early amongst ourselves, perhaps is a way to address this definition of modernity without always referring to Western modernity, maybe these networks can happen across. So, for example, Russia vis a vis Iran, both of these countries are constantly looking to the West; well, maybe they should look to each other because they happen to be neighbors, right? Teheran's capital was founded only a hundred forty years ago because of Russian encroachment onto the Caucasus, so their history is much more linked than either is linked to the United States, which they're both obsessed with, and which for me, or let's say the Western model is kind of outdated... This obsession with the Western model is an outdated one... To the question of "the spirit," I think to this idea of embracing those things that are your enemy, or embracing your antithesis, or embracing those things that are difficult... I think that the spirit by its very nature, the spiritual, like you said, the metaphysical, the terminology we have is so icky, it's so compromised, we don't know a way to even speak about it without sounding *hippie-ish* or *new-age-ish*, and I think that's part of it, it's actually not meant to be spoken about as much as it's meant to be experienced, so I think it doesn't mean that you have to just be there, but it means that you have to engage with knowledge in other forms, other affective non-enlightenment forms of experience. And some people do write about it very well, like Rudolf Otto, who writes about the "holy other"—both "holy" as an H-O-L-Y but also W-H-O-L-L-Y, the "wholly other"—, but the fact that this wouldn't come up in Doha is not a coincidence. I think that what unites this spiritual context and brings them together, whether it's Turkey, Middle East, United States, Europe, and perhaps Japan, is that there's a

kind of polarization of the intellectuals on one side, who are completely secularized and who look down upon the religious people, and the religious people who look down upon the intellectuals as somehow decadent people. So we have to somehow bridge this gap as societies, otherwise we're just speaking to ourselves essentially, both as artists, as curators, as museum people, but just as human beings as well, I think.

— Eugene Tan: I'd like to follow what you're saying. The work of scholars I was talking about earlier in terms of Inter-Asia, people like Chen Kuan-Hsing, for example, his Asia's method argues for how we should be looking within Asia at each other and how we understand each other rather than comparing ourselves constantly to the West, you know. I think that's a very useful way for us to understand this idea of regionality and particular the countries within Southeast Asia as well, particularly.

— Hammad Nasar: I think one of the things, other than spirituality, I think is an issue of confidence, and a sort of... I see some of the... Especially in some of the young artists, there's a certain confidence in wanting to claim things as a legitimate tool or part of a practice that I would say maybe five or ten years ago they wouldn't. At the moment I sit on a jury for a... a word given by the BNA, so I can't give names right now, it's not yet been announced, but it was very interesting to see the names of the artists who are... because they have to nominate themselves, they have to submit, so some of the artists who are part of the sort of circulating global biennials are happy to nominate themselves for an art prize that has "Islamic" in its title. You didn't see that five years ago, and I find that very interesting, not because they're certainly, you know, praying—I don't think they are—I think it's just a question that they're happy to be able to claim that cultural connection, and I think it was that idea of unearthing, of looking at that hinge, and it can be cultural rather than necessarily faith-based that I think the contemporary is beginning to engage with. And I think it's about time because this... To the relationship between, you know, faith and art, again is a bit of a disturbance. Until about a hundred and fifty years ago, the only art was, you know, faith based art, and then over the last century it's about word, so perhaps, I think, one of the issues—and that links to language also—is: Does the language keep up with talking about these ideas? And that can be the actual vocabulary; so in Urdu, which is my mother tongue, but in which I cannot function professionally, certainly in a panel discussion like this, because simply some of those words don't exist, so they have to be invented, and I think in this sort of critical discourse that's also one of the problems. I think you raised this problem in Hong Kong in your talk, that you cannot rub together five names of people who

are writing interestingly about, you know, religion as a critical enquiry. So I think that requires a certain critical investment.

— Mariana Botey: Well, this makes much sense in the regions from where you're talking, but I would like, in this particular set of notions floating there, to separate Latin America in its colonial history from that particular formation, because the significance of "the Other" and "the postcolonial Other" in the Latin American process actually has a real radical engagement with the principles of the Enlightenment, with the French Revolution, with the notion of Jacobinism, with the notion of the International Socialist, so the materials I presented are precisely not a notion of a ghost as a... Is the ghost almost in the Marxist sense, the ghost as an objective phantasmatic reification of material historical process. We need to think of Benito Juárez in Mexico. The people who actually generated the gender of these indigenous paintings were the intellectuals that were all of them of indigenous in origin and had been educated in the principles of the Enlightenment, and very much were translating their subaltern oppressed conditions to precisely a project of universalism and engage that particular form of discourse as the perfect anti-colonial struggle, because of course the localization was that the Christian Church was actually the dominant land-owner force from which they needed to emancipate themselves, so the enemy was the Church. So, this is a form of postcolonial Other experience that is radically secular and radically engaged in these principles, and I think... You know, I get a little... I'm interested about narrating the history of the cosmopolitan and the modern from this very complex history in which each one of us participated since the sixteenth century, and claiming the particular space within that complexity. To posit is difficult in Latin America because basically the systemic organization of the sacred and the ritual was so destroyed that when we claim that is religion, when we claim that is spiritual, we're actually naming with the master language a set of concepts that require a far more complex analysis. So, we do some study of actually, you know, Náhuatl, Quechua, Guayaqui concepts, and they are radically against the form of spirituality. You know, that monotheism... if anything, if we were to return to religion we would become pagans and begin to sacrifice and eat you in a very nice *mole*, so it's a slightly more humorous, right? I'm going to claim that Latin America and the materials I show are precisely this schizophrenic mistranslation that is, in my opinion, actually the dominant narrative of capitalist modernity, because capitalist modernity was formed by precisely all these colonial experiences and because the so called "primitives" were constantly taking the language of the master, appropriating it and

probably being the most fast at being modern. So, going back to Olga, we have other internationalist radical networks, you know, Diego Rivera and Eisenstein, some interest in those histories, these other alternatives, because I'm interested in the problem of the dialectic between emancipation and empire and I claim—and I'm horribly dialectically Hegelian on this—that these things go together, that the moment you don't have empire you will not have revolution, and the moment you don't have revolution you don't have empire, and I think that particular tension is in a sense part of what art as a criticality is. So, I'm thinking more in terms of the presentation of Patricia yesterday on this notion of the public space of the museum as a history of a secular, it's a secular apparatus, so changing it may happen and I'm open to it, but, you know, I think the tension is a lot more complicated, in particular from the particular history of Otherness in Latin America.

— Frances Morris: Thank you. I know there are lots of other questions, but we have about ten minutes, so, Benjamin, you had a question; Lewis has one; this one over here... So we just try to phrase some last questions.

— Benjamin Weil: Hello. Just I was thinking, listening to all that's been going on, this whole notion of anti-modernism that was appearing in your talk, is that an interesting concept sort of use, sort of trying some...? I mean, I don't know, it has not left my mind, so I was just wondering if you or anyone else could address this idea.

— Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars]: Unfortunately there's identity politics at place, so when you say anti-modern it's more political than when I say it because people imagine it to be against modernity, which is not against modernity, it would be idiotic to be against modernity in that sense but perhaps...

— Hammad Nasar: I would resist the urge to summarize.

— Frances Morris: Thank you. Next question.

— Guillermo Santamarina: This is probably coming out of this sphere, but I want to reach at least a comment on the biggest fear, which is technology power and how it is perceived in the modern globalized world. Power, technology, artists' practice, and of course museums—museums in the "other" world which are absolutely not in the conditions of... I mean, in a handicapped condition, handicapped conditions, of course, and something that we can... I mean, it's impossible not to be fascinated and on the other hand to avoid new technology.

— Frances Morris: Eugene, do you want to respond to that?

— Eugene Tan: Well, I think we as museums have to recognize how audiences are going to be experiencing or expecting to experience a museum, given

the prevalence of technology today, and how that technology can potentially detract from the experience of the art that we are presenting. Certainly we're trying to use technology in a way that doesn't detract but at the same time provides a way in for audiences and visitors. We're not so familiar as is the case in Singapore and Southeast Asia to active this in museums and scene art. We're doing this through multimedia guides that users can download and apps that visitors can download to their smartphones and provide more information about artworks. It helps them to navigate the museum, but not actually replace the experience of the art itself, so we're taking away all the monitors that we have, that we sometimes see in museums.

— Frances Morris: I'm not sure that was what you meant about technology, but maybe that's another debate that we should come on to tomorrow since we're so running out of time.

— Guillermo Santamarina: But we have to remember that's how many, especially new generations, understand the avant-garde, and that's how a wide population of this world follows art and follows culture.

— Frances Morris: You want to respond?

— Payam Sharifi [Slavs and Tatars]: I think perhaps we can link it to the previous question in the sense that, if museums are supposed to replace or have—whether they like it or not—taken the role of modern day cathedrals, spaces of education and entertainment, it is clear they're fulfilling that function, but a space of reflection? I would argue in many museums is difficult to create that space of reflection because... there's nowhere to sit in a museum, first of all. Museums are places where you pass through, you can only sit in front of masterpieces or in the café, so if you actually want to reflect upon or consider a piece, museums aren't the most inviting spaces. I think it says a lot about our culture, that cultural spaces aren't the most inviting, whereas a ministry of finance is not a place you want to hang out, but in a museum... I don't know if the question perhaps is on how can technology make it more inviting or more welcoming, as opposed to simply accommodating.

— Peggy Levitt: Thank you. Thanks a lot for your great presentations. I'm... from the United States. I think that so much of what you have said is about challenging the global canon and creating a new set of common intellectual threads, and I'm wondering if we could take a page from the global literary world, and the idea of... I'm thinking about how somebody goes from being a national author to a global author, and what's the role of translation in that, because I thought it was really interesting what you said about you writing in a made up language that was untranslatable. So, is there a way that we can insinuate ourselves in that translation to bridge these power

hierarchies? And then the second question is about the presentation about Indian art and the innovation building on tradition, and I just wondered how much the government was in there fomenting sort of certain kinds of craft production to be marketed for export, for tourism, you know, as the years went on, and how that intertwined with the art that you were talking about.

— Hammad Nasar: Should I address that first? Okay... Very quickly in a big way, it was not just India, of course, I was also talking about Pakistan, and just its name and the National College of Arts would tell you that there was an intent, but I think... In Urdu there is no difference in the word between "craft" and "art," they are both آرٹ [fun], so the "artist" and the "craftsman" is میں آرٹسٹ [fankaar], and I think that sense, in some ways, people play with, people abandon, and then people go back to as a sort of servers of purpose, and I think that's interesting and it's in play, and you can also see them play in Slavs and Tatars' work, they're working with that. On language, I'm not sure... I mean, I think also what you're bringing in is also economics, which is the one thing we haven't talked about. Oh, my God, a two hours panel discussion and nothing on money! Great! But we then have to also then think about the models of capitalism that allow art to circulate, that allow print to circulate, and if you go back to people like Eric Hobsbawm, whose charge against the avant-garde... And I think you were on the theme with him, I remember, on a radio show, no? Well, he was basically saying art has completely failed, it has not been able to revise its business model behind creating these, you know, fake singular objects that have value, whereas print, music, they're so over it, they have figured out a model, and I think, you know, on making those comparisons, we'll have to address that model.

— Frances Morris: Lewis, you want to have the last word?

— Lewis Biggs: Thank you. I'm... an independent curator. I just wanted to say, to pick up on Shigemi Inaga's wonderful talk. I thought you had two ghosts in your talk, two main ghosts, and forty years ago, fifty years ago, the art world, I remember, was not dominated by English, and many artists went into the art world precisely because they thought they could communicate universally or internationally through esthetics, not through language, so this relates your point, Hammad, about craft and the importance of craft. But the second ghost in your talk, Shigemi Inaga, was craft basically, the use of esthetics, and I'm surprised in a way that the panel has not thought to talk as much about the return of this ghost as the return of spirituality, because they seem to me to be importantly linked.

— Shigemi Inaga: Thanks very much for the comment. Yes, for arts and crafts probably we have

to set another panel for next year or, I don't know, in three years. Some of you are gathering once again in Kyoto. Kyoto is really the capital of arts and crafting in Japan, and not only in Japan. A few texts are coming from the Philippines and Taiwan, so it will be a good occasion for you all, and thanks again for the story of the ghost. To be very short, I'm going to be anti-modern in the sense of Antoine Compagnon, but I will be a moralist and that probably is the best way to answer to the previous question. Finally, in the case of, for example, Singapore, Singapore is really an artificial city, but it's really a core of the world transactions and how capitalism is taking over the Eastern source of prosperity and how would be the world of art there. It's very important, not only for Southeast Asia, but also in Asia and the transactions between the East

and the West as a whole. And Australia of course is connected with that, so of course the British Empire, ex-British Empire is on the way, constructed in this crossroad. In a sense, we're in a global age and a postmodernity and a postcolonial situation must be reconsidered from that point.

— Frances Morris: Well, I think it is remarkable in an age dominated by discourses around globalization and money, an age of austerity for much of us, to go for two hours with hardly mention of money or globalization, with focus really on, I think, regional enmeshing and trans-historical narratives. Can I just ask you really to thank our five amazing, fascinating speakers for a really interesting discussion.

Monday
November 9, 2015

Day 3
Is there a global
audience?

Monday November 9, 2015
Day 3. *Is there a global audience?*

Perspective 01. Bose Krishnamachari, President and co-founder,
Kochi Biennale Foundation, Cochin, Kerala, India.

Short Bio:

Artist and independent curator, Bose Krishnamachari's diverse artistic and curatorial practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture, design, installation, and architecture. He has exhibited in several important solo and group exhibitions, including *Bombay Maximum City*, Lille 3000, Lille, curated by Caroline Naphegyi, 2006; *The Shape That Is*, Jendela and Concourse, Esplanade, Singapore, 2006; *Indian Art*, Swarovski Crystal World, Innsbruck, Austria, 2007; *Gateway Bombay*, Peabody Essex Museum, 2007; *India Art Now*, Spazio Oberdan, Milan, 2007; *Indian Highway*, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2009, Astrup Fearnley Museum, Norway, 2009, Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark, 2010, Lyon Contemporary Art Museum, The Fondazione MAXXI, Rome, 2011, and the ARTZUID Amsterdam, 2011. His curatorial projects include the seminal exhibition *The Bombay Boys*, New Delhi, 2004; *Double Enders, A travelling show*, Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore and Kochi, 2005; *AF-FAIR*, 1X1 Contemporary and 1X1 Gallery, Dubai-2008; Guest Curator, Indian pavilion, ARCO, Madrid, 2009; and the traveling project, LaVA (Laboratory of Audio Visual Arts), 2007–2011. In 2009, he created Gallery BMB in South Mumbai with a vision to bring the best national and international art to India. He was artistic director and co-curator of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2012, India's first Biennale; Director of Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2014; and is President of the Kochi Biennale Foundation.

Presentation: Kochi-Muziris Biennale: Creating audiences

A biennale in India

The temporality of a biennial, as perhaps distinct from other art institutions, means that it is lighter, quicker, has the ability to respond—has a responsibility—to its time. As this timely response, Kochi-Muziris Biennale is a gathering of contemporary art, and a meditation on the contemporary.

Perhaps the format itself has gained its significance from the biennales in the South. The above-said temporality and fluidity of the form of the biennial has meant that it has been used to circumvent the weakness of traditional art infrastructures (the absence or weakness of museums, galleries, etc.), to become occasions for other models of art-making, for art to be a means of exploration of the historical spaces and of the time it occupies. Therefore, São Paulo, Gwangju, Havana, Sharjah, Dakar, to which we may add Kochi.

Kochi

A biennale like Kochi-Muziris Biennale is not simply a platform for the presentation of art that is being produced today, but also for the production of forms

of contemporaneity. In the standard portrait, the South is full of rivers and palaces; full of nature and pasts. Kochi-Muziris Biennale becomes an occasion to produce a distinctive contemporary that refuses the representation of the centers of power. Okwui Enwezor, after visiting the 2014 Kochi-Muziris Biennale, observed that it was a location from where one could “think the South in a deep way from the South.”

Kochi becomes an ideal host for such an exercise, because here can be read a model for another cosmopolitanism. Kochi has been home to over 30 different communities who speak over 15 different languages who have been living there for centuries now. Kochi's cosmopolitanism is one that does not effect a flattening of differences, but signifies a multiple existence. Where traditions are not circulated as inert relics of the past, but are alive and active. Such a co-existence of many temporalities is a feature of the contemporary that the Biennale seeks to extend.

Creating Audiences

We did years of work prior to the first edition of the Biennale to let ourselves grow in Kochi. We've had people—who are not artists but who have lived in Kochi and know its rhythms and its textures—on the

decision-making team of the Biennale. We've been received by schools and by cultural organizations in Kochi in their enthusiasm to learn about new developments in art. Workers' unions in Fort Kochi and Mattancheri have extended their complete support for building the Biennale. Most importantly: we've seen ourselves and we've received reports from artists and curators about the remarkable number of local people visiting and discussing the Biennale.

Happily, we can also report that the word 'biennale' has, in fact, passed into the Malayalam language and popular imagination here. We have not asked people to come and see art. Kochi-Muziris Biennale has been an invitation to the political-cultural disposition of the Malayalee. The state of Kerala in India has had a rich tradition of public action involving esthetic interventions, and the Biennale is in participation and extension of that. We have sought to be an intervention not in contemporary art, but in the cultural milieu of India.

This is why the Biennale has been conceived not as a periodic event, but as a concert of actions. Kochi Biennale Foundation operates 365 days a year, developing and executing programming that includes research and artistic residencies through the Pepper House Residency, educational interventions through the Students' Biennale, the Post-Graduate Residency Program, and the Master Practice Studios, public conversations and discussions through the Let's Talk series, infrastructural and creative support for lens-based practices through KBF Media Labs, and the Artists' Cinema program, to mention some.

Of course, contemporary art is not something people are familiar with in Kerala and in India, if it is at all anywhere. The Biennale and its content is new and strange. We have depended on the hospitality of Kochi again for receiving this format, this activity. There is a sense in which, even as the Kochi-Muziris Biennale draws its energy from several traditions and projects, its newness means that it does not have a readily available addressee. The Biennale is an exercise that must suggest the community of people that will experience it.

Culture as Catalyst

Culture is always a big catalyst for the local economy. Kochi-Muziris Biennale has itself boosted Kerala's tourism, which is the biggest contributor to Kerala's economy. The two editions of the Biennale have seen almost a million visitors. Interestingly, the Biennale in Kochi has also precipitated an increase in visitors at art events in locations in West Asia, where there are large working populations from Kerala.

Of course, economics cannot be the reason for art. As Brian Eno said in his John Peel lecture, art is anything or everything that you don't have to do. Yet it is central to everything that we do—from the way we cook our food and eat it to our hairstyles, our dressing and the way we like ourselves to be seen. It is central to our existence, and therefore we need our galleries, museums, and biennales. Allow me to conclude by repeating one of God's unheard proclamations: Let There Be Art.

Monday November 9, 2015
Day 3. *Is there a global audience?*

Perspective 02. Wong Hoy Cheong, artist, George Town, Malaysia.

Short Bio:

Wong Hoy Cheong was born in George Town, Malaysia. He studied at Brandeis University, Harvard University and University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is a visual artist, educator, and social activist. As a visual artist, he has exhibited widely, including Mori Art Museum, Guggenheim Museum, Hayward Gallery and Kunsthalle Wien, as well as the Venice, İstanbul, Lyon, Liverpool, Gwangju, and Taipei biennials. As an educator, he has given lectures and/or tutored at institutions such as Harvard University, Oxford University, National University of Singapore, Goldsmiths College, and Australian National University. He was awarded the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Creative Fellowship (2011), named as one of the ten trailblazers in "Mavericks & Rebels" of Asia by *Newsweek* (2000) and art and culture "Leaders of the Next Millennium" by *Asiaweek* (1999). He is also a founder member of SUARAM, a human rights organization and a founder-director of *Institut Rakyat*, a policy think-tank. His work in politics and the community engages with issues of local democracy, social housing, policies, and sustainability.

Presentation: In search of new strategies, places, and communities: the local-global dialectic & other digressions.

The title of this talk has somewhat been changed. The content is somewhat the same, but in the past two days I have sort of re-jigged the presentation in response to the trajectories, the ideas, and the issues debated and presented here. So I am an artist and I may presume my role here is like an interloper literally sneaking in from the backdoor, hoping to add a different dimension, a counter point, and a different way of responding to issues as a practitioner and hopefully, as well, that it might have some resonance and relevance to your practice as cultural managers, producers, and also consumers. So I unabashedly as an artist present some of my works, but they are not in a linear order, they are ideas and hopefully I have given it enough critical distance and reflexivity to have some relevance as well. So I will begin by showing three of the last works I did before I migrated to a different arena of work.

The 2007 İstanbul Biennale: I think some of the issues we discussed here were about understanding local context, global issues, and this was a commissioned work by the İstanbul Biennale. It was a dream project for me to work with the Roma community. I always wanted to run away with the Roma when I was a kid. So when I went to Sulukule to İstanbul and worked with the Roma community there, it was a dream. I spent four months with them developing a project and as we know the Roma community is one of the most disenfranchised in Europe and perhaps in the world.

The 2008 Taipei Biennale: Again I went to

Taipei and did some research and understood that, especially in Asia, Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers or maids support the countries, support the economy, support the families, all the way from Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan to Saudi Arabia. I spent some time with the Filipino and Indonesian domestic workers and made a work about them being superheroes. The one you see in the subway station is called *I Dream of Jeannie*, so it was a Filipino maid as a Jeannie. The second one is *Storm*, washing the car, and *Supergirl* flying the children to school.

The third work is in Lyon: I spent some time again doing research in Lyon, particularly in the *banlieue* and met up with some of the Algerian migrants, who again were disenfranchised. And I will talk about other things as I show a series of slides.

I engaged with local context and issues and tried to retrieve local histories and marginalize stories. There's sort of a perverse voyeurism to all this and should I return to some sense of the modernist eye. So questions abound. Where are the Roma, Indonesian, Filipino women, Algerian women in the *banlieue* I was working with? How do these people figure in the postproduction of my works? In the lives and troubles of the works far beyond their lives and communities? What does it mean to work with local communities and issues, and then translate and transpose that process that experience into an artwork within the confines of a white cube? Was it enough to show these works to cultural producers, managers, and consumers? What about the global audience, what about the local audience, what about the communities themselves? So these were the thoughts that plagued me and in 2010 I

decided to leave the art world and since then I have been sort of out of the art world and today is one of the few occasions where I become an interloper back into the art world.

I will talk about some of the things that shifted—that made me migrate to a new arena of work. One was Sulukule in Istanbul. When I was in Sulukule I realized that the community, the district, part of it in the world heritage zone, was going to be demolished. Since 2010 the majority of the residents have been evicted and they had been sedentary Roma for a few hundred years. That sort of disturbed me. While I was working, I was looking at housing issues and what happened. I made a work with children and then showed this work all over the world including Mori Museum, but then these people I worked with: where are they? They are sort of stuck in my mind since 2007. So 2010 to 2015 I have been working on what I call community or social housing projects. One urban regeneration, I worked with local council to look at this low cost flat again is in the zone of conflict, 2002 as you can see people were killed in ethnic clashes and just recently, a couple of months ago, a group of politically motivated Muslims demonstrated in front of a church and forced the priest to take down the cross at the top of the church. But then the chief minister intervened and then they went back up.

So I went into the community with the support of the local council and I was naïve, one of those naïve probably righteous artists who went to a community wanting to do good and worked with the residents there. We had focus groups. We discussed what were the needs of the residents and then we came up—working with some architects and artists—we came up with a master plan.

We did workshops with children about playgrounds and then we worked with adults on issues that were important to them with their community as well as creating new social spaces. So we came up with a little plan. There are more details, which I won't show, but these are some of the interventions we wanted to do. We got some of them done. We put in new windows because this building was so badly made that every time it rained heavily in tropical countries like Malaysia water would seep through those windows and enter the apartment. This window prevented water from going in. We repainted it, we resurfaced the road and in the midst of this we found a bigger problem, which we were not aware of. The sewage underneath in the courtyard started overflowing. It was a structural problem with the building and we didn't have the budget. In order to do that we had to support the building, dig up the courtyard, put in the new sewage system and pipes and then continue with the rest of the project. It was left hanging, the residents were angry that we didn't have enough budget. So

this was a failed project.

The next project I worked in 2012 and is still ongoing, is a more successful project. Having learnt from the first project I worked again in high-rise this time, 22 stories, low cost social housing, rented to an urban poor, multiracial community, a site of conflict that the local council didn't want to deal with and asked if I could devise a program to work with the community, which I will talk more about later.

Third project, another failed project, was *Journey of Harmony*. I worked with the think-tank, sponsor of the funding organization helping the city and the local council of Penang George Town, where I come from, and where I am living now. Penang George Town is a UNESCO World Heritage site and I worked in the core zone. The street called Jalan Kapitan Keling is quite long but within five kilometers there are five eighteenth- to nineteenth-century religious sites. Ethnic and religious issues abound nowadays in Malaysia and elsewhere. One of the objectives of this group is to work with the communities and find out what they want and how to interpret this for themselves and the public and find shared values, which was one of the most complicated things because there is a lot of politicking, a lot of fractured communities, and fractured relationships.

What happened? I was a salesman selling the project. We did surveys with worshipers. We stood outside the religious sites and we did surveys: 150 in each site and found out what were the issues, what they wanted, what were the common values, whether they went to the other sites and then we had focus groups with the religious community and then we came up with a design plan using an abandoned phone booth. We came up with five common values through discussions and focus groups: water, lunar, sharing, light, and flora—and we started designing. In the midst of it all the state government together with a funding group, Think City, decided to sign an agreement with the Aga Khan Trust for 3-year collaboration. All projects on the street were abandoned because a new master plan was going to be made. So after spending about US \$100,000—again, another failed project and the community was actually quite angry.

Let me go into detail on these two projects. Sulukule, why did it make me migrate to a different arena? When I went into Sulukule the first time there was a huge meeting, fiery meeting between United Nations UNESCO, the municipal council, the Roma community leaders and NGOs negotiating over whether it should be demolished and the council had earmarked buildings for demolishing. And some of the Roma had already started living in tents—and this was a target group I wanted to work with. I got permission from the religious leader, Imam Asem, and was honest with him that I will be there for three

months to spend some time with the community and if they would give me permission to work there and develop an art work.

I had a methodology very pedagogical, but completely decontextualized, so it had to be thrown out. Moved by the situation there, the children and myself as a facilitator did interviews on the issues of eviction, issues of housing with the adults. But then it didn't seem honest because the children played and we opted to play. Instead of playing with politics we played football, we played drums, we played games, we even played in sites of demolition and then we made the art work for a film, video, and some photography for the Istanbul Biennale. In the meantime, the site was slowly being demolished. I went back to look for my Roma friends two weeks ago, but most of them are gone, kids are either late teenagers or some of them are adults now. Imam Asem was away, but I met up with these children and the road you see there—Cinarli Bostan—where we used to play, now it's got a barbed wire, fake leaves, and hounds.

Second project: *Gender Responsive Participatory Budgeting in Social Housing in City Council*. After the first failed project of urban regeneration I became a consultant for the local council, devised a program, which consisted of four phases. First survey, second focused groups, third voting your needs after the focus groups, and then planning and implementation. First phase who are we? With funding from the local council within two months of survey, we went from house to house finding out who are the residents, what were the needs, who had jobs, who didn't have jobs as you can see in the statistics. There was complete data on demography. After that we decided to divide the community into five target groups, children, teenagers, female, teenagers male because it was a gender project, so we wanted to divide the community: disabled, youth, women and men. We did focus groups for another two months, I think about 50 focus groups and then we came up with some common needs after listening to the community: security, building maintenance, these were the six issues that emerged or the main issues there were more than that. Then, during phase three we devised the system where people could register like a normal voter registration list because we had the demography of every unit. The residents of every unit, they came, registered, picked coupons and they voted what were their needs. The only art thing I did was to design those banners. They voted for what they needed over three days. This social housing had over 2,000 eligible voters. Anybody above 10 years old could vote for what they wanted. So I was very nervous that we might not get the community to come up. But we were lucky, about 69.5% came out to vote and building maintenance won the majority of votes.

Then we went back with the residents to the council and reworked the budget it was increased by 400% from about US \$100,000 a year to about \$400,000 a year to improve the quality of life there.

One of the first things that the residents were complaining about was the maintenance of the building. We really needed cleaners, and originally the cleaners were hired. They came to clean the place and then left. The assumption was that if local residents who are underemployed take up these jobs, they would do a much better job because they are stakeholders in the community and indeed there was a difference. But the workers developed an entrepreneurial sense: they went from unit to unit, 500 units in total. They asked each unit to give them \$5 a month and they would take your personal rubbish out. We started with five apartments and then it started growing, they started making actual money and in the end even registered that community as official cleaners. Now they have certification to take on other cleaning jobs.

They voted on what they can build with the funding we had we created offices for the four organizations, a Buddhist association, an Islamic center, a women's center, and a residents association. In the past five years all the art indicators that I have been familiar with kept dropping and the political indicators—necessity of policy making, of working with communities, of having different arbiters, different legitimizers, different funders—started moving up, and I just went to list down some of the divergent context. When I moved from the global art context to the local art context working with communities these were the transitions, so the arbiters completely changed, not curators who were telling me what is right, what is wrong, not museums funding me. It was the local councils, I had to negotiate with councils and politicians and residents.

Previously some of the projects I did were framed as participatory art, socially engaged art, but now the kind of things that I have been doing is called participatory democracy, sustainable development. I used to make artwork that circulated the globe and now the kind of work that we try to produce as a team is to improve the quality of life. Previously in white cubes and now in basketball courts, playgrounds, car parks, community spaces. Previously to a global art audience and now to very local and very parochial residents mainly and the local community on streets. Previously, languages like the ones we have been using for the past two days about modernism, about postmodernity. Today, when I work there, I use technocratic and sociological language. Previously, I worked with file cut pro and Photoshop, now I work with SPSS, Social Science Statistics Analysis for Social Science. Previously we talked about making works, now we talk about building “stakeholdership.” We talk about

acting laws, we talk about strata titles, about things that I have never talked about and am learning to talk about. And yet we have been debating here today about global housing, local housing is such a global issue, it affects every community, everywhere in the world, but is also a very local concern and a very urgent one. Is that a kind of dialectic or a dichotomy?

To end I will leave you with a kind thought or three interjections and ruptures. First, let me read you something from a mentor of mine, Paulo Freire, those friends from Latin America, South America, will probably know him. He is a very famous educator who influenced me and I had the privilege of a doing a workshop with him when I was much younger.

Paulo Freire is an educator who was interested in literacy and his work in literacy in Brazil particularly with the disenfranchised community made him an easy target. I think in the seventies he was exiled because he was associated with the left and lived abroad for many years and only went back in the eighties. And when he was in Geneva, he received a letter from his hometown, Recife.

I quote: "I all of a sudden like magic recall into time and almost saw myself again as a child in my backyard full of trees learning to read with the help of my mother and father, writing phrases and words in the ground shaded by the mango trees. In that

afternoon it was as if I had discovered that the longing I was feeling for my homeland had begun to be prepared by the lived relationship I had with my backyard. The way Brazil exists for me could not have been possible without my backyard to which I later add streets, neighborhoods, and cities. Before I could become a citizen of the world I was and I am first a citizen of Recife. The more rooted I am in my location, the more I extend myself to other places, so as to become a citizen of the world. No one becomes a local from a universal location. The existential road is the reverse. I am a citizen of Recife, I am first from Recife, from Pernambuco, a north easterner, afterward I become a Brazilian, a Latin American and then a world citizen." First, this is a thought that I leave you with. Second, I am playing you a video.

And one final thought, you can read it:

"What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter, an art which could be for every mental worker, for the businessman as well as the man of letters, for example, a soothing, calming influence on the mind, something like a good armchair which provides relaxation from physical fatigue." — Henri Matisse

Thank you very much for your time.

Monday November 9, 2015
Day 3. *Is there a global audience?*

Perspective 03. Peggy Levitt, Professor and Chair of Sociology,
Wellesley College and Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts.

Short Bio:

Peggy Levitt is Professor and Chair of the Sociology Department at Wellesley College and Co-Director of Harvard University's Transnational Studies Initiative. Her latest book is *Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display* (University of California Press, July 2015). She was the CMRS Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the American University of Cairo in March 2015 and a Robert Schuman Fellow at the European University Institute in Summer 2015. In 2014, she received an Honorary Doctoral Degree from Maastricht University, held the Astor Visiting Professorship at Oxford University and was a guest professor at the University of Vienna. She was the Visiting International Fellow at the Vrije University in Amsterdam from 2010–2012 and the Willie Brandt Guest Professor at the University of Malmö in 2009. Her books include *Religion on the Edge* (Oxford University Press, 2012); *God Needs No Passport* (New Press 2007); *The Transnational Studies Reader* (Routledge 2007); *The Changing Face of Home* (Russell Sage 2002); and *The Transnational Villagers* (UC Press, 2001). She has edited special volumes of *Racial and Ethnic Studies*, *International Migration Review*, *Global Networks*, *Mobilities*, and the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. A film based on her work, *Art Across Borders*, came out in 2009.

Presentation: Artifacts and allegiances: How museums put the nation and the world on display.

(Talk based on book with same name published by University of California Press, 2015.)

You just have to walk down the street in any immigrant neighborhood—Washington Heights in New York City, Kruetzburg in Berlin, or the Bijlmer in Amsterdam—to realize that big changes are underfoot. No doubt many of the businesses you pass will have to do with migrants' homelands, be they travel agencies; ethnic grocery stores selling sorely-missed fruits and vegetables, phone cards, and videos; or stores that wire money to relatives back home. This is because more and more people continue to vote, pray, and invest in businesses in the places they come from at the same time that they buy homes, open stores, and join the PTA in the countries where they settle. Putting down roots in the place where you move while continuing to remain active in the economics and politics of your homeland isn't just for poor or working class migrants. Think of the many highly-educated, highly-skilled professionals that populate the boardrooms and bedrooms of the world's cities and suburbs. More and more, they too buy homes, raise their children, invest, and cast ballots across borders.

As a matter of fact, one of out every seven people in the world today is a migrant and these

individuals send a lot of money back home.

According to World Bank projections, international migrants were expected to remit more than \$550 billion in earnings in 2013, of which \$414 billion will flow to developing countries. In 24 countries, remittances were equal to more than 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2011; in nine countries they were equal to more than 20 percent of GDP. In countries like Mexico or Morocco, these contributions are one of the principal sources of foreign currency, and governments—now dependent on them—want to make sure the money keeps flowing. Migrants are also a tremendous source of ideas, know-how, and skills, and some governments try to systematically harvest these *social remittances* as well. To keep migrants close, they offer tax and investment incentives, allow dual citizenship and the expatriate vote, or even create special passport lines for “returning” emigrants at the airport. To keep money coming, they put programs in place to boost migrants' contributions to development.

At the same time, and as a result, we live in a world of heightened diversity. Because people from a wider range of countries, with different legal status and levels of access to benefits, travel to a greater variety of places, new patterns of inequality and discrimination are emerging. This new complexity layers onto existing patterns of socioeconomic diversity, residential segregation, and social exclusion. In a special section entitled, “The World in One City,” the *Guardian* newspaper called London,

“the most cosmopolitan place on earth” where “[n]ever have so many different kinds of people tried living together in the same place before.” In 2005, people from more than 179 countries lived in the city. How people answer the question “who are you?” is complicated. They say I am Jamaican and American or Indian and British at the same time that they claim to be Londoners or New Yorkers. They may say I am a Muslim, a professor, or an environmentalist, thereby staking claim to a place by virtue of their sense of membership in a religious, professional, or activist tribe.

These dynamics challenge basic assumptions about how and where inequality is produced, family life gets lived, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship actually get exercised. New social safety nets are needed to respond to people’s heightened mobility and multiple allegiances based on a different set of assumptions about how livelihoods and social security are organized and who the winners and losers are. But first, we need a different vocabulary that allows us to articulate a different understanding of the nation that does not necessarily stop at its geographic borders. We need new ways of understanding identities that are not based on a zero-sum game—that increasing numbers claim to belong to several groups at once and that which takes precedence is likely to change over time. We need new tools that help instill the willingness and skills to engage with difference across the world and across the street. That is where museums come in. They are one of many messy arenas where these aspirations, skills, and political projects might take shape and where we might make sense of the relationship between people and culture on the move.

If museums in the past helped create national citizens, in today’s global world, what role do museums play in creating citizens? What kinds of citizens do they create, what kinds of objects and stories do they use to create them, and who gets to decide? How do developments in the global museum world at large affect local practices? What is it about particular cities that helps explain the answers? What do we learn about nationalism in a country by looking at its cultural institutions?

To answer these questions, I visited a variety of museums around the world. My story is based on firsthand conversations with museum directors, curators, and policymakers, their descriptions of current and future exhibits, and their inside stories about the paintings, iconic objects, and sometimes “quirky” benefactors that define their collections. In the United States, I compare museums in allegedly parochial Boston with their counterparts in the so-called center of the cultural universe, New York. In Europe, I focus on Copenhagen, Gothenburg, and Stockholm, former bastions of tolerance that have

become, to varying degrees, hotbeds of anti-immigrant sentiment. I then ask if museums in Singapore and Doha create Asian or Arab global citizens. How does the tension between globalism and nationalism play out outside the West? Taken together, these accounts tell a fascinating story of the sea change underway in the museum world at large and about how the local and the global come together in different cities and nations. I want to share some of what I found with you today.

The differences I discovered in how institutions do “nationalism” and “globalism” have a lot to do with their histories. Museums are constrained by the limits of their collections and their curators’ fields of expertise. They cannot do more than what their showcases, storerooms, and bookshelves allow or what they are able to borrow. They also have to do with whether they are public or privately funded—with the extent to which they are one of several tools governments use to pursue social goals or whether they are primarily answerable to donors and visitors whose race, ethnicity, and class change over time. They have to do with scope, whether they began life as museums of art, created to preserve and display humanity’s greatest treasures, or museums of artifacts, either collected and displayed to preserve national traditions or to teach visitors about worlds beyond their own.

But these differences also arise from a city’s cultural armature—its social and cultural policies, history, institutions, and demography. Part of this armature is created from the deep cultural structures in place in each city—how old ways of thinking and doing still leave their traces in the bricks and mortar of today. These deeply rooted ideas about community, equality, or the collective good do not disappear but rather continuously echo in the ways things get done today. Differences in museum practice also arise in response to demographic diversity—who is part of the nation and who can become so—and the institutions and policies or the diversity management regimes in place that regulate membership. As one Danish curator told me, “As citizens of Denmark we need to know about the world and that is why we need to display the ‘Other.’ Because ‘the Other’ or the non-Dane or immigrant has not been considered part of the Danish nation, museums display difference in a context where similarity is the starting point. In the United States, because the national story is about being a country of immigrants, the point of departure is difference—displaying immigrant artifacts shows us *America* and possibly ‘the world.’”

To varying degrees, museums operate within transnational social fields—multi-layered, unequal networks created by individuals, institutions, and governance structures. More and more, the things on display, the museum professionals who put them

there, the financial and administrative arrangements that make it all possible, and the visitors who enjoy the fruits of these labors are connected to people, objects, and politics all over the world. Museums, therefore, are increasingly sites of encounter where global approaches to diversity, education, art, and management bump into regional and national history, culture, and demography.

Assemblages are the contingent clusters of people, technology, objects, and knowledge, which circulate through the social fields that museums inhabit, coming together in different constellations depending on where they land. Multiple assemblages inform and are informed by my story. One key cluster are what we might call global museum assemblages—changing repertoires of ways to display, look, educate, and organize objects, that get “vernacularized” selectively each time they come to ground. The Masters in Fine Arts, Museum Education, or Curatorial Studies programs are part of these assemblages. It inheres in the gift shops, gourmet restaurants, and blockbuster exhibits museum visitors around the world now expect. It seeps into the stone of iconic museum buildings, designed by a select group of “starchitects” whose work features prominently around the world. It is regulated by institutions of global governance, like the International Committee on Museums. The art fairs and biennales mounted throughout the global north and south, and the cadre of artists they anoint, Discussion of cases: Gothenburg, Boston, Doha

also inform it. The different strategies and materials that art, ethnographic, and cultural history museums bring to their work shape the kinds of assemblages they influence and are influenced by.

A transnational class of museum directors, administrators, curators, and educators, some of whom circulate regionally, if not globally, form part of these assemblages but also carry pieces of it with them when they move from post to post in their laptops, suitcases, and portfolios. These professionals, like their peripatetic counterparts in business, religious orders, and higher education, engage with the places where they work with varying degrees of intensity. Some “parachute” in during a crisis, find out what they need to know, fix the problem, and quickly move on to their next challenge. “Spiralists” stay longer but they also eventually move on to a new post within a few years in contrast to “long-timers” who settle almost semi-permanently. No matter how long they stay, though, the members of this transnational museum professional class are guided by an overarching backdrop or regional storyline that shapes what they do as they reshape it through their work.

And finally, the differences that I found also reflect how a city or nation understands its historical position on the global stage and its aspirations for the future—where a country is in the arc of its nation- and empire-building projects and the kinds of citizens it believes it needs to achieve them.

Monday November 9, 2015
Day 3. *Is there a global audience?*

Perspective 03. Anton Vidokle, artist and founder of e-flux,
New York / Berlin.

Short Bio:

Anton Vidokle is an artist, born in Moscow and currently based between New York and Berlin. His work has been exhibited internationally, including documenta 13, Venice Biennale, Lyon Biennial, and Tate Modern, among others. As a founder of e-flux he has produced *Do it, Utopia Station poster project*, and organized *An Image Bank for Everyday Revolutionary Life*, as well as *Martha Rosler Library* and *Unitednationsplaza*. Other works include *e-flux video rental* and *Time/Bank*, co-organized with Julieta Aranda. Vidokle is co-editor of *e-flux journal* along with Julieta Aranda and Brian Kuan Wood. Vidokle was resident professor at Home Workspace Program (2013–2014), an educational program organized by Ashkal Alwan in Beirut where he initiated the exhibition *A Museum of Immortality*. Most recently, Vidokle has exhibited films in the Montreal Biennale (*2084: a science fiction show with Pelin Tan*) as well as *This is Cosmos* (2014) at the Berlinale International Film Festival, the Shanghai Biennale, and Witte de With in Rotterdam.

Presentation: A museum of immortality

NB. As this is a visual poem, original font and spaces must be respected.

*A Museum of Immortality
(final version for a reading)*

1. The museum is the last remnant of the cult of ancestors.
2. One cannot annihilate the museum: like a shadow, it accompanies life, like a grave, it is behind all the living.
3. Each human bears a museum within himself, bears it even against his personal wish, as a dead appendage, as a corpse, as reproaches of conscience.
4. People lived, ate, drank, judged, decided cases, and put those that were settled into the archives, not even thinking at the time of death and losses.

It turned out that putting matters into the archive and transferring all the remains of life to the museum was a transfer to a higher order, to a domain of investigation.

The highest degree of this will be attained when resurrection immediately follows death.

The museum is not a court, for everything that is deposited in a museum is there for

rehabilitating and redeeming life, not for judging everyone.

5. The museum is the collection of everything outlived, dead, and unsuitable for use. Precisely because of this it is the hope of the century.
6. The existence of a museum shows that there are no finished matters.
7. This is why the museum provides consolation to everyone who is afflicted with mortality: because it is the highest level of development for society.
8. For the museum, death itself is not the end but only the beginning.
9. An underground kingdom that was considered hell is merely a special department within the museum.
10. For the museum, there is nothing hopeless, nothing that is impossible to revive and resurrect.
11. Only those who wish revenge will find no consolation in the museum, which is powerless to punish: because only life can resurrect, not death, not deprivation of life, not murder.
12. The museum can and must return life, not take it.

12. When the museum was a temple supporting the life of ancestors (at least in people's understanding), then people's will expressed in this temple (even if it was an imaginary action,) was in agreement with reason that justified it and acknowledged this imaginary action as real.
- At that time reason was not separated from memory, and the act of commemoration, nowadays just a ceremony, had a real meaning.
- Memory was not just preservation, but a restoration, (even though only imaginary and conceptual,) serving as a real guarantee of preserving the common origin: brotherhood.
13. When reason is separated from the memory of the fathers and mothers, it becomes merely an abstract exploration of causes of phenomena: philosophy.
14. When reason is not separated from the memory of the departed, it is not the seeking-out of abstract principles, but of ancestors.
- Reason, directed in this way, becomes the project of resurrection.
15. Linguistic investigation supports this original unity of capabilities: one and the same root appears in words that express memory and reason, and soul in general, and finally the human as a whole.
16. Psychological investigation also supports the unity of memory and reason, attributing the processes of knowledge to the law of memory, of association, turning will into the regulator of action.
17. We can say that museums were born from memory: from the whole man.
18. The purpose of the museum can be nothing other than the purpose of the circle dance and the ancestral temple: the sun-path, returning the sun for the summer, awakening life in all that had faded in winter.
19. The action of a museum must have power that really returns, gives. This will be, when the museum creates tools that regulate the destructive, lethal forces of nature.
20. The past is the subject of history.
21. An observatory observes the world that is merged with the memory of the dead, of the past.
22. The beginning of the observatory was the sundial.
23. Primordial man probably told time using his own shadow.
24. In later times, in urban life, the sundial replaced this way of telling time; it was an instrument for measuring one's actions and one's life experience.
25. This is why clocks became an attribute of death.
26. With the help of the sundial, humans also created a calendar in which they marked off not only the times of nature's rebirth and fading, but also the days of the passing of fathers and mothers: the days of commemorating ancestors (holidays).
27. That is why a museum, as a formation of memory of parents and grandparents and of everything that is connected with them and with the past, is inseparable from the observatory.
28. The educational significance of observatories-as-schools demands that idle gazing be turned into obligatory observation, so that the sky has as many observers as there are stars in it.
29. One must raise one's eyes to the sky; one must turn contemplation into observation.
30. The observatory is related to the museum as the external senses are related to reason: to reason that cannot be separated from the memory of the ancestors, and contains within it one indivisible whole.
31. The museum, unifying the sons of man for the universal investigation of the sky or universe, is related to the observatory.
32. The museum is not a depository of mere chronicles and photographic snapshots of the sky.
33. For an astronomical observatory there is no past, as there is no past for the movement of the solar system, which is a continuous event revealed by the changing position of the stars;

- which is why it is necessary for astronomers to remember, to hold within themselves, the positions of the stars entered in the very earliest of chronicles.
34. Here memory is merged with reason, and the past with the present to such an extent that the death of the observers appears only as a changing of the guards who organize the regulation of the world and open the way for the establishment of control over the world.
35. The powerlessness to establish control has deprived humans of the opportunity to hold and restore life.
36. There is no past for natural science, as it is only a human representation of nature, or a project for controlling it, enacted in the shape of a museum by the whole human race.
37. The museum is a historical enterprise not only in the sense of knowledge, but of action.
38. However, a museum with just an observatory, which provides only reconnaissance, still remains an organism without active organs: without hands and feet.
39. Humanity on the whole is yet incapable of restoration of life and free movement in space, unless we accept as such the movement of the earth, happening independently of mankind.
40. This organism (a museum with an observatory) will remain without hands as long as the city and the village remain separated, because the natural-historical museum will remain outside of the natural, and memories preserved in the museum will not be a true, material resurrection, nor will they be a regulator of nature.
41. It is because of the separation of city and village, and concentration of all mental life in the cities, that nature seems elusive to us; while we blame nature for hiding from us.
42. Wouldn't it be fair to say that we do not discover nature for lack of time, occupied with manufacturing and everything connected with it?
43. Due to our business we cannot prepare observers and investigators, because from childhood we enslave them in the factory in order to satisfy our most trivial desires.
44. It is equally unfair to say that nature, having attached us to earth, makes us powerless to establish control.
45. Astronomy will be transformed into astro-control, and the human race will become the astronomer-controller, which is its natural vocation.
46. Constant discord gave the question of the world and society a primary place, and overshadowed the fundamental, universal question of death.
47. History, having as its subject the eternal discords, separated into an individual science
- But as long as it speaks of man as creator of discord, as long as it looks at the life of the human race only as it is now, only as a matter fact, not asking the question of what it must be: meaning a project of future life, humanity will not discover either in astronomy, or in cosmic art, or in world regulation, its common purpose.
48. In order to have internal peace, without which external peace is impossible, we must not be enemies to our ancestors, but really be their grateful descendants.
49. It is not sufficient to limit ourselves to only internal commemoration—merely a cult of the dead. It is necessary that all the living, having united as brothers in the temple of ancestors, or the museum, transform the blind force of nature into one that is directed by reason.
50. Because the energy of cosmos is indestructible.
- Because true religion is a cult of ancestors
- Because true social equality means immortality for all
- Because of love, we must resurrect our ancestors
- From cosmic particles, as minerals, as animated plants
- Solar, self-feeding, collectively conscious
- Immortal
- Transsexual
- On earth, on space ships, on space stations, On other planets.

Monday November 9, 2015
Day 3. *Is there a global audience?*

Panel discussion with speakers. Part one.

Bose Krishnamachari, Wong Hoy Cheong, Peggy Levitt, and Anton Vidokle, moderated by Kian Chow Kwok and Marcela Römer.

Panel discussion and Q & A with speakers:

— Kian Chow Kwok: Thank you for coming back early, and we could start again at two o'clock for this. I'm sure you enjoyed the presentation of the video. Now we are back to the classroom and let's continue with our discussion. It's sort of an occupational habit that, you know, you will respond to things with images, so what I've done is I picked up three images from my phone as my response to try to frame the discussion this afternoon.

Now, the first image... this is on the way to Kochi Biennale, you see this poster—you're probably familiar with this one, Bose: "Invest in the Biennale city." Now, this reminds us, of course, of our concerns—not only this morning but also the last two days—about those enabling factors such as a funding structure that would make a museum or an art project possible, and it was in closing after discussion yesterday when Frances said that it was amazing that for over two hours we could do one whole discussion without mentioning two words: one is globalization and the other one is money; unfortunately these two words are very much part of the discussion this afternoon.

My second slide is from Penang... I'm sure if they served desserts in heaven it would be this one, it's called Cendol, it's rich in coconut milk and it's absolutely the most wonderful thing that you could have in Penang. Now, Hoy Cheong was showing, of course, the different McDonald's items going to different local cuisines and making a "mcdonaldization" of local cuisine, but you were reminded yesterday in the presentation that, in the tea ceremony for instance, eating of course or any experience has to be a total experience, it's not just visual but it's also, how you feel with it, what is the ritual around it and human relations and if not social relations around that whole experience; and therefore, in showing Cendol, even if we do a McCendol, it would not be the same as this dessert that is served in heaven.

Now, the third one is about the currency of the word "contemporary art" and I took this picture in Zanzibar where there's a gallery, and it says, as you can see, "all our artists are featured in contemporary art books"; and this is globalization for you that even

as we talk about, as Peggy mentioned this morning, the transnational network of museum or culture or curators and, you know, museum directors, like ourselves here, having the opportunity of coming to Tokyo to discuss about all this, but, you know, we have to still go back to the question "is there a global audience?", which is the theme of this afternoon's discussion. So we extended the whole idea of museum to, of course, you know, the Museum of Immortality, but of course at the very end of the presentation it says that that museum does not exist. So where are we as a museum or as any kind of art programming? Where do we exist and how do we relate to the global? And again, the question: Is there a global audience? So, can we start the discussion this afternoon? Thank you... Yes, Enrico, I believe.

— Enrico Lunghi: Yes. Thank you. Thank you for all the speakers and the contributions. I don't have any answer to the question, but just as a starting point I can only talk about... or to give a starting point or comment to this. I think we all work in different situations, that's obvious, as Peggy showed us very well how in different situations the responses are different, but also how you can read the museums differently, or what is shown in the museum, or even what a museum does, can be read differently according to the different contexts, cultures, and so on. I can only talk about my experience. I was born in Luxembourg, one of the smallest cities and capitals in the world, which faced dramatic changes in the last hundred years—like many cities, of course, but in Luxembourg, since it's so small, the changes are perceived very directly and what's happening in the city, in the country, everybody is really experiencing it or, I would say, it's on the body. And what's happened, for instance, in the contemporary art field in the last twenty years is that there are two institutions that came up there—one is the Casino Luxembourg contemporary art center, that was founded and opened twenty years ago, and the other one is the Mudam contemporary art museum that opened less than ten years ago. So what happens now is that we start to say that we have thirty years of contemporary art in Luxembourg—so ten plus twenty is thirty—and what happens also is that a big part of the Luxembourg

population, which is very small—when I say Luxembourg’s population, it’s global population, because we have in the city 100,000 habitants and 70,000 are not Luxembourgish, so that’s in the capital of Luxembourg—and even the national language of Luxembourg is spoken by a minority of Luxembourg’s population, this is global in the whole country, so that’s a very particular situation, and with this ten plus twenty years of contemporary art in Luxembourg what one could observe—it’s only one way of seeing it, of course, but I think it’s an observation that could be done—is that this population in Luxembourg is maybe closer to contemporary art than many others in big cities, because almost in everyday life it’s almost impossible to escape from what Casino and Mudam do in the city... It’s talked about it a lot when there is a show that maybe has some public discussion and there were some in the last twenty years—that a big part of the population participate in it, and so it happens that some artist... I will just take one example: Sanja Ivekovic, for instance, the Croatian artist is known by almost everybody in Luxembourg, because she did a project that made a big public discussion and every newspaper, every television, every radio was talking about it during two months, so you would enter the bus and a lot of people were talking about this project of Sanja Ivekovic, for instance.

You see... what is a global audience I really don’t know, but I think that the more time you work in one place and the more you try to communicate this work to a diverse public—because the public is so diverse—you can construct something like a common ground of how you can discuss about art, but then again, everybody perceives it differently, and it’s totally different to our perception as professionals, in one way or another, [compared to] what people who come to visit the museum perceive, and being very often, even Sundays, in the museum and trying to talk to the people in the museum, you can find out that from three persons everybody sees something totally different in the same art piece. And I don’t know how to change this—or if I want to change this, I think that’s the thing. So, what a global audience is, I don’t know, and just to comment, I like the title *How Global Can Museums Be?* but all the discussions that we heard and that were very interesting these days, my question to myself is that I don’t know how global I can be “myself,” so it’s difficult to answer this question, I think, because everybody has a different experience of that.

— Wong Hoy Cheong: For me in my mind, my interpretation of it when I use the word “global,” I think of the Venice Biennale, I think of the impossibility of finding a hotel at a cheap price, I think of the swarms of people that fly in like for three days or four days in June, and all the locals hate it. I mean, they make money from it, but they really don’t like

the swarms of people. That for me is global as opposed to, let’s say, a tiny little show somewhere in Malaysia where it’s a local audience. The people in that small town, they will turn up, but you don’t expect people flying from all over the world, so that’s my sort of own interpretation of the local vs. the global.

— Peggy Levitt: I think it’s a really provocative question, and I’m reminded of the conversation we had this morning about when there’s an elephant in the room you have to eat it in small bites. I don’t know how else to take this on, so I think the question becomes: where is the audience and who is the audience? And it reminds me where we ended up yesterday about technology, because the audience—whoever you can reach—is not just the people thinking of museums. So, the Peabody Essex Museum, for example, that director would say that the audience is not just the people who come through the door, but the audience who sees the traveling exhibits and then the audience who goes on to the website to see all of the exhibits. So, where is the audience and then who is the audience? There’s a constant tension there between talking to your neighbors, you know, the people who are your everyday constituents and then talking about the people who come to your city and are visiting, and how do you talk to them both at the same time. So, I think what I saw is similar to what Richard Wilk describes as “structures of common difference,” so what you see are similar structures around the world, filled with different things. So structures of how to do certain kinds of museum work, but what’s the content, what’s in them, looks different in every place.

— Jaroslaw Suchan: I have a very particular question, but I think the answer could help us to understand what we are as a museum or what we should be. The question is to Wong Hoy... You left the field of art, but do you think that any experiences and expertise you collected as an artist help you right now in your work for the communities? And there would be a second question that somehow mirrors the first one: What do you think, what can we learn as a museum from your practice?

— Wong Hoy Cheong: Yes, it’s a complex question, and I have various feelings about it. People have told me—when I’ve done a sort of a variant of this talk—that the whole social housing project is just another council developmental project, which is fine, but the Istanbul project was definitely more meaningful to some people. So, when I went into Istanbul I framed myself, or I was framed, as an artist. When I work in social housing or an interfaith project, I’m framed as a community worker, and in fact most of them don’t even know I’m an artist or was an artist. So, bringing the experience... Yes, I suppose, for one thing I could—I mean, in a very sort

of silly manner—do the banner designs, I could do some basic graphic work for the campaigns and what we were doing, to bring in a kind of perversity, if you like, a kind of way of looking at things in a skewed manner a technocrat counselor or politician might not see. So, just to give you an example, in the participatory budgeting project I merged two forms: one is gender responsive budgeting and participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting emerged from Porto Alegre, in Brazil. This kind of methodology has been taken on by cities all over the world, from Birmingham to New York City; it's becoming quite an important way for local councils to deal with communities. So I took on the methodology and I took on a different gender methodology and I combined it with a sort of more performative methodology and sort of made up this gender responsive budgeting. And because of its uniqueness, just to show-off a bit, it won a prize in Porto Alegre as one of the most interesting participatory budgeting projects by local councils, and it's not within an art context, it's a prize within working with communities through local councils. So, I do feel I'm bringing a different perspective, that's one. Second question, whether it has any relevance to a museum... It's very difficult because when it's framed by a museum, basically it's framed by four walls, it's framed by the cube, and I'm saying that we bring it out of the cube, so how does that fit into the museum? Do you mean that museums shouldn't exist? I don't think so... Should museums do more projects out of the museum? I really think so, because it's a whole different experience for both artists, for the museum and for the community when the projects exist within the art space; and sometimes it's not that you don't want to do it, it can be something very simple. I was talking to Lewis now about it... I did a project in Liverpool and I wanted to put the project within the space, and that space didn't have disabled facilities, as simple as that, and we couldn't do the project there, it had to go into a cube. So... Yes, that's how I feel. Thank you.

— Peggy Levitt: So, there's a project that has been going on for a long time at Harvard called the Cultural Agents Project—directed by a woman named Doris Sommer—, and the whole idea there is to sort of insert cultural catalysts so that people start seeing things in different ways, and it's just the slightest shift. So from her perspective a teacher or a police officer or, you know, anyone can be a cultural agent, because you do something that makes somebody wake up because there's some kind of surprise, and then they see their environment in a different way. So I did find some examples in my peregrinations and one that comes to mind with your question was the Queens Museum, that, you know, really doesn't have a big collection and did not have a big visitor base, but started hiring community

organizers to go out to the immigrant community, because that's who is around where the museum is located and they kind of do art installations or performances that have something that's recognizable to the community so that they can enter but also be stretched, and then the community organizers say, "By the way, there's a museum down the street and we offer English as a second-language classes, and we offer space for you to have your Taiwanese dance performance for your kids..." And that's the way that art and museums are intertwined, and activism.

— Hammad Nasar: Thank you for your perspectives. I wanted to try and pick one or two things from them and encourage a conversation amongst you. One was this provocative idea of art as technology that Boris Groys articulated, and this idea of that it being capable of changing the material condition of humans. And Bose's presentation... you were talking about how you and your team are trying to introduce precisely that: art as a technology, so you showed examples of the children's biennial or the student biennial, and this idea of injecting or inflecting the everyday... And then, Hoy Cheong... I think what you are doing in some ways is actually using the technology of art. I think the question, then, in order to try to connect them, is what is the audience? Or is that the wrong word? Because certainly you're not talking to an audience, Hoy Cheong, you're talking to people, and thinking about how their lives can change positively, through some of the techniques that may borrow from the undisciplined field of art, and therefore the question then becomes: Is "audience" a too single-dimensional word for us to be thinking about for today's museum? Connected to that, the question to Peggy would be... It was fascinating looking at your... and I have to go and get the book, but one of the things that was playing in my mind was: What if you applied that to the academy? So the kinds of things that you were talking about and many of the same places also have branches of NYU, you know, the audience of the academy is also in a consumerist mindset, you know, you put your credit card first when you apply for many of these institutions... Is there any sort of thing that we can learn from each other?

— Bose Krishnamachari: I think, you know, when I say Kochi-Muziris Biennale... Muziris—many people don't know—is a kind of mythical tongue, or it used to be. Recently, eight years ago, that area was excavated, in a place called Pattanam... And Muziris vanished in 1341, almost like a tsunami or Katrina kind of situation... So that place used to be for the Muziris a kind of trading port. The study states that the bottom of the excavation, if you dig one meter, you find a thousand years of history, and if you dig one more—two meters—you find two-thousand years of history in Pattanam. It's almost like that

place was, you know, three thousand years ago, thirty-four to thirty-seven countries used to have trading relationship with Muziris. When Muziris vanished, Kochi arose as a kind of kid, so for us it's a kind of backbone. Muziris is our backbone and Kochi became more meaningful because, as I mentioned, another cosmopolitanism existed there, it was globalized long before we were talking about globalization, or globalized within that small radius that existed. So I think what we have done is put a seed in that cosmopolitan area, and it is fortunately blooming, and there is a kind of magnetism or something like that happening to that area. I think it's an ideal location, because it's Kerala. I don't know whether you're familiar with Kerala. It's known as one hundred percent literate, most of the educated people travel around the world, work... You know, I would like to say that even the study says that the remittance amount coming to Kerala is from the UAE, and when we look at it seventy percent of the people are working from Kerala moved from Kerala to work in the UAE, and that place was built by the workers from Kerala and from India, and Pakistan now, from Bangladesh and other places. Anyway, it's a kind of interesting thing that I would see everywhere... Everywhere there is a museum existing, everywhere there is a kind of university existing... Local could be "glocal," global... I see everywhere there is a possibility of engagement with the work that we do, so I see there is... It is what we are looking at in the first question, I mean, there is as a kind of people from everywhere, there is a kind of blood relationship with everyone and everything.

— Kian Chow Kwok: I suppose that earlier globalization, you know, that you are trying to reenact—or recall at least in memory—is part of the global. This is where we insert the word in a kind of historical time frame, and this will allow the city to relive that early globalization... Hoy Cheong.

— Wong Hoy Cheong: Globalization... I think sometimes we use the word as if it was just born, but globalization has been happening, in a way, for many thousands of years. I mean, I had the privilege of going to the Afrasiab Museum in Samarkand, and in this museum they rediscovered a mural, a fresco, from the seventh century, and a sultan was sitting in the center, you had a boat from the Tang dynasty, you had Turkish people, you had Iranian people, you had Koreans, and they are all gathering in Central Asia! I mean, how global can that be! But, fast-forward to today—and you talked about technology—the notion of global is local, and local and global. I mean, I have written a paper about it and I called it "The Foldedness of Experience." We sit today here with our phone, smartphone, and we tweet, we do Whatsapp. We are connected to a different world that is timeless, global completely, and then pull back—almost like an alienation in fact, back to the

present, and we constantly go to and fro, between the present (local) and the global—and this "foldedness" of experience is almost like a part of our fingers and proclivities now... We all have Google genes in us, everything we just Google, so technology has really shifted our notion of what is local and global... You know, in this twenty-first century the "foldedness" of experience has run so deep that we cannot separate that anymore. That's my personal feeling. And then, audience. There's no one audience, there's audiences or communities or target audiences. It's never a homogeneous audience... And, again, I think of target communities, target groups, because even in art you think of your target As museum managers and professionals you think of your target audience, you think of how to frame things, so we are constantly thinking of an audience but at the same time it's not an homogeneous or sort of amorphous audience, [but] we always have "audience" in a very specific manner in our mind. That's what I think, and when you work in a community you must know your target audience or your target community or group; if not, your project will go nowhere.

— Marcela Römer: Anton, hello! E-flux... is it global?

— Anton Vidokle: If you say so... I mean we are located in Manhattan, in the Lower East Side, in a kind of older and small building. On the ground floor there's a religious bath that belongs to a kind of very conservative Jewish association; it's a purification bath. So, yes... what can I say?

— Kian Chow Kwok: Peggy, do you mind if we hold on the question of the university, because I think what we're pointing to here is something of a higher order. We tend to refer to global as something that is a kind of higher conditioning, that will allow institutions—including both museums and universities—to operate in certain ways, or at least influence the directions of these institutions. So, we are talking now about this question of boundary. We are saying that, yes, we question what is the boundary of art and how it stands into the social; are art and social, two separate categories or do they flow into one another? That's certainly a major concern here, and also then we ask ourselves about art institutions, which may include museums, biennales, and even art practices... How would that relate to this broader culture, which must be perceived in a context of the global? So I want to pick up one expression of yours, Peggy; you said: "it depends on how you want to use the museum." So, there is this sense of "user" here, and this user probably may not be so much in terms of museum curators and directors and other museum colleagues, it could be maybe perhaps more city administrators, you know, politicians and so on, who will determine the use of museums; therefore, what

that suggests is that there is a kind of a higher “ordering” because of the ability to mobilize resources and with museums and projects getting larger, and therefore the user who determines how museums may be used may be set at a very different register. So perhaps we could pick up that one because we are so concerned about the whole question of structure, and also the community of museums, you know, globally, as we are trying to make a sense of it here. Lewis... there was an earlier question by Lewis. Would you like to comment first?

— Lewis Biggs: I did come under certain pressures around funding from my board as a museum director and then as a biennial director. Of course the people who give you money want to use you and your organizational abilities to do something that satisfies their ambitions. “Whoever pays the piper calls the tune,” as we say in English. The argument usually, whether it’s a board or a city council or a regional funder, their interest is in bringing more money to their area, or bringing fame, because fame produces tourists and tourists produce money, so this is the logic. It’s very understandable, and we all know it very well. The argument that I always had to have was: If you make your place wonderful for people who already live there, then it will also be interesting for people to visit, and this is turning the normal political and monetary logic on its head, but again we have a phrase: “Charity starts at home.” If you can make a wonderful place for people to live and work, then the chances are that it will also be a good place for other people to visit. If your city remains a problem for the people who live there, then it’s not going to be a particularly pleasant experience for people who are going to visit it. So, I think whether it’s Liverpool or Kerala or Folkestone or New York or Teheran, there is an obligation on institutions, such as museums or biennials, to sort out the problems at home first, and I think art is useful in that context, mainly for its intangible presence, not through its tangible presence. So, we all know that the real value of art, the real impact of art, happens in people’s heads and in people’s hearts; it doesn’t happen in a museum or in a biennial, it happens through what people remember afterwards; what they talk about with their friends after sometimes many years of the experience that they had. So I think that museums and biennials even, and all of us could concentrate more fully on the “intangible heritage,” as UNESCO defines it, which in my mind includes social institutions and social organizations as the form in which art takes place.

— Albert Heta: Hi, I have one question and maybe one observation that are simple I think. The first one is to Peggy, if I can address you like this. So you showed a few museums that you selected for your research. I’m just interested to know based on which

methodology or based on what were these museums selected, because the selection excludes pretty much the whole world besides the West and the institutions that are heavily influenced by the Western models of building a museum... And the other to Wong Hoy Cheong... About your projects related to, let’s say, fixing problems that are caused by someone else. The last remark that art has the biggest influence in the experience that people have in their heads, and in their hearts and minds, is contrary to the work that you are maybe currently doing, because right now you’re trying to fix immediate problems, right? And I think these are also what you’re trying to compare in your big table, so whether we should try to stick there and to point out problems that exist around and our failures of mostly authorities, let’s say, people that are responsible for them, that are paid for those duties that they are not performing, or we should find a way to go and intervene, basically, to fix those problems. And by doing it, I think that you, of course, resolve the situation, a given situation that you locate, but you also limit your possibility or the possibility to address more problems or to highlight more problems and to call for responsibility for, let’s say, for other structures in the society to address those immediate problems. To compare, just last night on Youtube someone posted—on Facebook actually, an NGO, I think it was in San Francisco or something like that—recycling all the buses that are used to provide showers for homeless people, and it’s a quick solution, right? But there’s no more than this bigger influence that art usually has after making, highlighting problems and calling the authorities responsible for the failures of the administration of, let’s say, cities, localities... Not only like in Istanbul, but all around us. Thank you.

— Wong Hoy Cheong: First of all I would like to pick up on the notion of fixing the problem and also pick up on what Hammad said about improving the lives of people. When I mentioned “quality of life,” I meant it in a very abstract sense. What I’ve learned actually from many failed encounters is that if you go in as a do-gooder—usually socially engaged art tends to do that, going in as a do-gooder—you can encounter these kinds of issues that I have learned. Rather than do good, do no harm, and this is the first thing I have learned from all the failed projects: just do no harm to a community. If it improves their lives, good; but just make sure you don’t leave the community more fractured, fighting among themselves, and there is no one party to blame when you work in a community. Communities are not homogeneous, or at least the ones I’ve worked with, they’re incredibly fractured by ethnicity, by religion, by even small social class divisions—the shopkeeper vs. the jobless person—, so these divisions can fracture a community incredibly deeply. So, when you work

within a community, just try not to do harm. That's what I've been trying to tell myself about not fixing the problem, but just make sure that if you can heal some of the fracturing it is good enough; whether art can come in later, perhaps like what Lewis said, the lives improve or if there's less fracturing, less ruptures and less anger, perhaps it's better; and sometimes it's not the authorities' fault, it's the *ennui* in the fractured community itself. So it's not simple, I cannot... I mean, with five years of projects and working with communities, I've learned at least that it's very difficult. They don't need you, you need them; so don't go in there pretending you are doing good, because a lot of communities have been marginalized so long, they really don't care whether you go in or not. They will get by—they are resilient.

— Peggy Levitt: Thank you for these questions. In terms of the sites that I studied, there are two pairs for each nation-building stage, so Sweden and Denmark are sort of over empire and the United States is at its peak or in its decline depending upon your politics, and then Singapore and Doha are using museums to stake a more global claim. So, those are the two cases that are outside the West, and I would certainly be happy to continue this work in many other places around the world... To think about how museums are being used by governments, there's also a parallel with the pairs, because there is a... You know, in the United States there was

a sense that museums shouldn't be doing any kind of social work and that, you know, they are for... some people would argue, like James Cuno of the Getty, that museums are about enlightenment values and preserving—like old mission statements on museums from the eighteenth hundreds. But I think in Sweden I heard a level of comfort with the idea of museums for social engineering, so museums are like hospitals and schools that just use different tools to achieve art goals. And then I think in Singapore and Doha you have museums being used to not only create certain kinds of nations, but also reposition, rescale the nation higher regionally if not globally. That gets back to the question about the academy and all of what we are doing, so I keep on thinking of the next book you are going to write, so I keep thinking of what if we compared, you know, how do art... Is it easier for artists from different countries to become globally prominent than authors from different countries, than intellectuals from different countries? And what does that say about how these different countries are? Where they are in relation to this kind of global thing that we are all talking about? Isn't there a sort of a regional version of that relationship between the national and the global that influences how much one gets to contribute to that global assemblage and then how much that global assemblage influences you back?

Monday November 9, 2015
Day 3. *Is there a Global Audience?*

Q & A with speakers.

Bose Krishnamachari, Wong Hoy Cheong, Peggy Levitt, and Anton Vidokle, moderated by Kian Chow Kwok and Marcela Römer.

— Unidentified questioner: I would like Anton and Peggy to elaborate a little bit about the distinction between museums and art museums. Anton, in your film you speak about museums as graves of memories, and, Peggy, you talked about museums as tools, and I would like to know if you have thought a little bit about are there any distinctions.

— Anton Vidokle: I'm still getting my head around all of these ideas, you know, and when they kind of came across I thought often of this incredible generation of writers quite recently, as I said in the beginning of my talk, you know, most of this material was really heavily suppressed, it did not really start circulating until sometime in the seventies and very few people knew about this, but from the perspective of thought there are no real differences between art museums and natural history museums and, you know, museums of whatever, because in the end it's kind of like there is a very nice anecdote or analogy that Boris Groys sometimes makes about maybe it's a hypothetical scenario that you have some kind of a situation in some village or some remote place that has a kind of a religious practice, that they have this kind of precious object, a kind of an idol, and they have some kind of a ceremony where once a year they, let's say, pour milk on this object to actually do some kind of offering for the gods or to venerate their ancestors or whatever. It's a gesture of respect, but if you look at it like if you were a Martian that just arrived in this field and you look at what they're doing, they're actually kind of destroying this beautiful object, they're putting things on it that will have organic molecules, that will rot, that will eventually destroy this object. So, sometimes it's very difficult to say what you're actually doing, you think you're putting together an art collection, you think you're trying to build up global audiences, you think that you're trying to rewrite the history of art; in fact you may be collecting some kind of samples, cultural samples that could be used in the future for some kinds of purposes that seem to be completely fantastical right now. So, it's kind of a very interesting way to think about museums and to think about art, because we don't... You know, we have a lot of

intentionality, but sometimes it's very, very hard to see what it is that you're actually doing.

— Peggy Levitt: As I said in my talk, I learned that all different kinds of museums have a window onto the nation and onto the globe, even if it's more explicit with some than with others, and part of that has to do with their scope—what they started out life doing—, and then part of it has to do with the role that they play in the institutional distribution of labor, but even if it's solely an art museum I still think I saw many institutions struggling with this challenge of making themselves more welcoming and accessible to a broader audience, and in that way helping to tell a different kind of story about what the nation is.

— Anton Vidokle: I mean, I think it's also important to think about the origin of the art museum, because, you know, art museums didn't come into existence until quite recently, it was actually in the days of the French Republic, and it actually starts as displays of kind of objects looted from Egypt and other places that were kind of invaded and colonized, right? These objects were taken away, re-contextualized radically and then, for lack of a better category, they were presented as "artistic" artifacts. So this is the beginning of our profession, let's say, this is the beginning of our field, so it's very difficult to draw the separation between an art museum and a museum of natural history, because art in itself is such a recent category that was created in a rather artificial way, and of course it has a lot to do with nation building, because, of course, these early museums in France and these early displays were part of what actually forged the Republic.

— Kian Chow Kwok: I think it's very interesting that this discussion now is sort of speaking up again on the earlier discussion in the morning during the General Assembly about ICOM and CIMAM, and there were certainly sentiments that, you know, by being not part of ICOM, does it mean that as a kind of museum community we are lesser in terms of being able to be more persuasive and to have more audience—or call them participants, or call them partners or whatever—making more a... However, the fact that we have mentioned that different cities,

different places, there is at least a confluence of ideas that we need to draw in more audience, and that's the important part. In other words, the importance of museums, at least conceptually, is on the rise, that there is a desire on the part of many interests and sectors of society wanting to develop more museums and wanting more audience. Now, this relates to another question that is, you know, what we were talking this morning, that organizationally you know that ICOM and CIMAM may not be more suitable in terms of a very centralized overall umbrella of having CIMAM and ICOM. However, in terms of spirit and intention, in terms of purposes, it may work better just as in many cultural institutions these days that go through privatization, restructuring, or whatever you call this, which is an organizational issue as opposed to intentional and outcome-focus issue, and we are probably going to agree that until it sounds an echo on how the museum community, you know, as a kind of a global network is becoming more ambitious, more purposeful in what we are doing, and more, you know, important in different communities by the way they so much support whatever, you know, different political instances or whatever, in wanting to see more audiences come into museums, and therefore we are trying to struggle precisely with that problem. So, on the one hand we have the question of what is the boundary or what is the category of definition of the museum, and of course art, and on the other hand we are trying to make sense of this general meaning of the museum, the possibilities of the museum, and I think having great faith in exactly that, in wanting to develop museums, and art museums in our case, you know, to further possible dimensions. So maybe that could be, you know, this is just my reading on where we are. Perhaps you want to comment on this one.

— Unidentified questioner: Thank you. I do have a question that's related to boundaries, but it's not directly related to your last remark. My question is for Bose. In your video presentation I was quite struck by Okwui Enwezor's comment that Kochi Biennale seems to be a means of rethinking the South-South relationship, and of course we've been looking at the globe, but we have the realities of the Global North and the Global South, so I wonder if you could speak about the significance of the Biennale for Global South audiences.

— Second unidentified questioner: Before Bose's answer to that question, I thought I wanted to add one more to you, talking about global audiences, and you raise that global audiences by organizing biennales without having more contemporary museums, so I was interested in how you think of the relationship between the necessity of the museum for Kochi and after having two great biennales.

— Bose Krishnamachari: Thank you. The Global

South to the South, and after seeing the Biennale Okwui said that, you know, and you see the North in the First World, you know the First World and the Second World, you know, Third World. In the Third World we would like to start something like that, we need to educate our local public. I'll connect both questions. In my experience, how we started this biennale is kind of like many people dream in a way. We used to have the first triennale in India. It was a bureaucratic thing in Delhi, which was started by incredible minds. It was part of nation building in the Nehruvian time, and Dr. Mulk Raj Anand and Octavio Paz, the Mexican ambassador, used to be there at the time it was started, and they wanted to make an infrastructure, we didn't have anything as such, but unfortunately the academies, you know, we call it Lalit Kala Academy, Fine Arts Academy, their programming on how to set up a biennale is almost to send out invitations to embassies and consulates, and the consulates, you know, send out their representative. It was not really curated program exhibitions. Anyway, in 2005 onwards we don't see any triennale in India. While I was a student in Bombay, the two biennales or triennales I could see... I wanted to see, because I was curious to know what was happening around the world. You know, also an interesting story about Kochi-Muziris Biennale comes from the Cultural Minister of State. We sat in Bombay and he asked me what would be the best thing to do to raise awareness about culture, and I suggested with Riyaz Komu had call for the meeting with this... Riyaz is also from Kerala, he was born there but often lives and works in Mumbai. So that was in May 2010, and that's the time we started, you know, one night over dinner we suggested it would be a great idea to start the biennale. In 2005 lot of people like Vivan Sudaram, Geeta Kapur, and other great minds and artists, tried to start a biennale in Delhi in 2005, which unfortunately the State did not support in any way. There are many anecdotes on how we understood the local. I used to go to many biennales and many exhibitions... I would like to say this anecdote because from there I relearned how to start it. I visited the Biennale, an opening day of the Biennale; there were lots of kids who were playing in front of the museum and the kids, I just ran up to them and I asked, "What do you guys know about what's happening? There are many people like getting into that space. Any celebration, any party, whatever..." So, unfortunately, that was a kind of thing I felt that these kids didn't have any clue of what was happening next door. So that's the moment I realized it is important to make awareness through education, you know, through institutions, children's programs, working on the roads, and whatever, you know, we had people, local communities, and also interest. There are more than thirty-five communities

living in one small area of five kilometers in Kochi, and the different kinds of language that people speak. It's an incredible place, you know, four hundred and fifty years of history with the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, but they never ruled the Kochi, the maharaja always said that history would damn or dwelled with them. And, you know, that's the only place, when the Jewish community was slaughtered everywhere else in the world, there were two hundred families safely living in Kochi, so it's an incredible place, an ideal place to start something like that, you know. I realized a kind of long strip but one hundred percent a true State, and each and everybody is very much aware now in a day-to-day life. Before we opened the Biennale there was a lot of controversy because it was started from the State, the State was giving us a little less than one million dollars to start the Biennale, but what we have done the first thing is that we created... We had to create... You know, if you want to exhibit art we need to create some museum spaces, we didn't have many spaces. The academy had around eight thousand square feet of exhibition space, and two galleries existed in that area, very small spaces. So half of the money we spent creating one of the best places in India academy, on spaces we returned back to the State, so we have maybe less than half a million to start our Biennale. There was lot of controversy. We live and work in Mumbai, successful as an artist, but, you know, people said that "these people are corrupt" and whatever, and anyway we went on working on our Biennale and educating people. The first edition, before opening, people didn't know what is a biennale, people thought it's a barking dog or whatever it is called.

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— Marcela Römer: [...] so all the time we are in discuss with all my team. I work with seventy people—curators, educational team—and all the time we discuss, all the time together work in the museum together; of course, I'm the director, I suppose I have the power? I don't know. I suppose all my team have the power, because all my team work with me together, so in the moment we have problems, I suppose the big problems, I put my face with the big problems, the money problems or the political problems, and answers are difficult, we need to think all together, we are here to think all together and debate all together. What can we do? We have the panelists, have special cases about something in the art world, but all the day when we work in the museum we have different problems. If you're in Europe, I suppose you have different problems than I have in South America. So, I insist, the first problem in South America is the money and political, both are very... are brothers, those are brothers. So, CÍMAM is a platform to talk about this.

Please, don't shut the mouth. Talk now.

— Marja Sakari: Okay, I'm from KÍASMA, Finland, and actually about the educational part of our job, so now we are very happy and lucky at KÍASMA, because we have an artist who has an exhibition that is called *The School of Disobedience*, and actually we have there some classes and actually the things that are taught are mostly empathy, understanding others, respecting others, and so on and so on, which are also, I think, the task of museums to do. So, of course, the educational part of our job is very crucial and also, as we are working with contemporary art, which is always something new that people are never used to seeing, or I suppose we want to show things that have never been seen before, so that's also quite a difficult task: how to teach people to understand, or I don't know whether we have to teach anybody or if it's just the privilege of our audiences—our global and local audiences—to have the possibility to come and see the exhibitions that we propose them. We can't oblige people to come and see, but we can try to make it easier for people to understand and to appreciate or to come to our museums, so, for example, in Finland we don't have so many immigrants. Now it's changing, the situation is changing, and actually we have decided that we will have free entrance for all the new comers in Finland, so I think that's one way to really give the opportunity for all people to come to visit our museums, but of course it's not the only possibility. That's my comment. Thank you.

— Unidentified questioner: Yes, I share the concerns of course of education and also of how ethical we can be in our work. I have just two comments for something we try to do, and again Marcella said something very important also to me—it's that we do things together, with the teams, as representative, as director I represent an institution of the work of all those who work with me, it's not me alone who does that. But two points very important for me are maybe... Well, including this educational and this ethical thing, it has to do with time. I think that, as Marja just said, contemporary art is something that many of us deal with and has this thing that it's innovative, it's going with our world and changing very rapidly, but this rapidity is something that is against many of the values that we want to share and to promote. Education needs time, ethics needs time, so how can we compose with this innovation all the time we need to show new artists, new works and so on, but we forget sometimes to deal really with this: again, it needs time. So, we always have this contradiction and this tension to work with. And there is another notion I want to introduce; it might seem very romantic, but I think that... I talk for myself, because I don't want to... I don't know if everybody would share this, but through the exhibitions I try to give a notion of

beauty, because I think also beauty, and beauty in a very non-aesthetical or formalistic sense, but a sense of how an attitude towards beauty, and yesterday the talk about the tea ceremony was really going into that. I think when people come also to the museum, and also to a contemporary art museum that can share, that can deal with a very contradictory and up to date notions, we can do it in... or it's possible, or I try to do it, in giving also the sense that you can take distance from all what is happening and this can also be something that can be shared and discussed, of course, in very different ways, but... So, it's just a notion I want to introduce.

— Marcela Römer: Thanks, Enrico. Beauty and death are sisters too... take care.

— Unidentified questioner: I just wanted to pick up on something Hoy Cheong ended with, which I found particularly bleak, emulation the very... I think... I mean a positive presence of your projects and the kind of usefulness of what you're doing. You made a comment about the marketplace determining what constitutes value in art, and I think it's maybe something that I would like to throw out as an important subject maybe for the next CIMAM conference, because I think all of those... We are all engaged in trying to negotiate contemporary art, either locally or regionally, or, in a transnational context, but we are also trying to rethink the histories of our places and how they connect with the rest of the world, and I don't think there's any curator in this room who thinks that they are doing it guided by the marketplace. The marketplace might be determining the monetary value of art, and it's a scary and compromising challenge for us, but I would like to contest that we are engaged in something a little bit more fundamental.

— Anton Vidokle: Well, you know, statistics were just released that ninety percent of the exhibitions or artists exhibited in museums in the United States are represented by ten galleries in New York. Ten galleries represent ninety percent of art that has been shown in the United States' museums of modern and contemporary art. Now, how can you say that at least the North American museum establishment is working separately from the market?

— Question: I think we could have a very good debate about this, because I don't... I mean, I agree with the statistics, but I don't necessarily agree with your conclusion that that means that is the history that we have in front of us, so let's return to that...

— Anton Vidokle: The history we have in front of us? I think in front we have a future—history is behind us!

— Kian Chow Kwok: How do you want to do with the closing?

— Moderator: I would just like to maybe close this session three *Is there a global audience?* once, and then using the rest of our time to just summarize the

three days. So, can we thank the panel on the stage?

Colophon

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