



Queensland Art Gallery

Director: Doug Hall
Our ref: DIR
DH:am

Queensland Art Gallery
Queensland Cultural Centre
South Bank
Brisbane
Australia

PO Box 686
South Brisbane
Queensland 4101

Telephone 07 240 7333

28 October 1991

MEMORANDUM TO: All Staff
FROM: Director
SUBJECT: Asia-Pacific Triennial

This exhibition for 1993 is generating an extraordinary level of interest throughout Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

To keep staff informed of the exhibition's development, I have attached a copy of a bulletin for your information.

Earlier this month, Dr Turner delivered a paper at the annual conference of the Art Museums Association of Australia, in which the Gallery's programs were discussed. A copy of this is available in the Library for any staff member who would like to read it.


Doug Hall
DIRECTOR

Att.



Judy J.

Queensland Art Gallery

Director: Doug Hall
Our ref: DIR: CT.am

Queensland Art Gallery
Queensland Cultural Centre
South Bank
Brisbane
Australia

18 August 1992

PO Box 686
South Brisbane
Queensland 4101

Telephone 07 240 7333

MEMORANDUM TO: All professional staff

FROM: Deputy Director and Manager, International Programs

Attached are some briefing notes on the Asia Pacific Triennial for your interest and information.

Please note that these are for staff information only and not for public release. If you have public enquiries about the Triennial, please refer them to myself, the Asia Pacific Project Officer, or the Promotions Officer.

However, the information contained in these attached pages will, I think, brief staff and bring them up to date on progress with this project.

Caroline Turner
DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND
MANAGER, INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

ASIA-PACIFIC TRIENNIAL

The Queensland Art Gallery's Asia-Pacific Triennial is a project of international significance to Australia. It is the first major and ongoing exhibition to link the contemporary art of Australia, Asia, and the Pacific. Twelve countries and Hong Kong will be represented in the inaugural exhibition in 1993 - China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia. The Triennial will present the most recent contemporary art from these countries, including painting, sculpture, works on paper, performance and installation art. The Triennial is not attempting to exhibit traditional art but the most dynamic art of the region engaging in an international debate. We plan for over 180 works to be shown in the exhibition by 70 artists. Over forty artists, scholars and arts administrators from the Asia-Pacific region will attend a Conference and workshops organised to coincide with the exhibition. The Gallery believes that the Asia-Pacific Triennial will develop into a major forum for the exhibition, promotion and discussion of Australian, Asian and Pacific contemporary art. The project, which will bring together artists from Australia and the region, offers significant opportunities to increase cultural understanding, and establish the ground-work for further cultural exchanges. The Triennial aims to provide a forum for the exhibition of distinctive views in contemporary visual arts of the region and a key aim of the Triennial is to build a continuing dialogue and professional relationships based on mutual respect. The Asia-Pacific Triennial is a unique and ground breaking project which will see at least three major exhibitions (1993, 1996, 1999) held in Brisbane. These exhibitions will explore the contemporary art of Asia and the Pacific and will present, for the first time, Australian and Pacific art in that context. In initiating this event the Queensland Art Gallery acknowledges the necessity for Australia to forge closer ties with the region and also the dynamism of its contemporary art. The Triennial will raise the Australian public's awareness of Asian and Pacific societies through the little-explored avenue of their contemporary art and make those countries more familiar with Australian contemporary art practice. Because of its significance as the first exhibition to bring together the contemporary art of the region, the Triennial is already generating substantial international interest and coverage, not only within the region but in Europe and North America. The Queensland Art Gallery is undertaking this project with the strong support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Queensland Government and the Australia Council.

The 1993 Triennial will be the result of two and a half years of investigation by the Queensland Art Gallery into the art of Asia and the Pacific. In preparation for the exhibition, a national advisory committee has been formed consisting of: Doug Hall, Director, Queensland Art Gallery; Caroline Turner, Deputy Director and Manager, International Programs, Queensland Art Gallery; David Williams, Director of the Canberra School of Art; Neil Manton, Director of S.E. Asia and the Pacific of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Cultural Relations Branch; and Alison Carroll, visual arts consultant of Asialink, Melbourne. As well, individual selectors

have been appointed for each country. Queensland Art Gallery curatorial staff and selectors have at this stage of the project visited all the countries to be represented in the event. They have been assisted in selecting works by advisory groups of local scholars in each country. The Triennial, however, is not about "official" art and the final decision on selections is being made in Australia with a view to including the most interesting contemporary art of the region. As well as the exhibition catalogue, a separate book is also being produced with essays by leading scholars from the region. Substantial interest in the project has already been demonstrated from within the region.

Important themes emerging from the art include ecological degradation, urbanization and its effects within traditional societies, tradition and change within rapidly diversifying economies, religious revivalism (eg. Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia) and a search for cultural identity in the face of internationalism in art. The political issues are less overt but much of the art is socially and politically aware and artists treat issues such as "power" and the position of women in society.

One significant factor in the exhibition and associated publications is the coverage not only of contemporary Asian art but also of contemporary Polynesian art (New Zealand: Maori and Samoan), Melanesian art, (Papua New Guinea) and the Aboriginal art of Australia.

Queensland Art Gallery
August 1992

- B4. Describe the likely benefit of your project
- . International cultural interchange of ideas
 - . Increased knowledge of the art of the region in Australia
 - . Increased knowledge of Australian contemporary art in the region
 - . Increased knowledge of Australian contemporary art internationally through book, catalogue and interest generated by an event of such international significance
 - . Promotion of Australia as an important site for presenting the art of the region
 - . Exchange between artists, leading potentially to new ideas in art practice

- B5. How does the project relate to your organisation's purpose and history, or to your organisation's exhibition's policy?

The Queensland Art Gallery has a major commitment to Australian visual art and to international projects and exchange. Since opening in the new Queensland Art Gallery in 1982 the Gallery has achieved a reputation for the quality of its international exhibitions and the Queensland Art Gallery is playing an increasingly important role in initiating and bringing to Australia significant international exhibitions. The Triennial reflects the Queensland Art Gallery's strong commitment to contemporary art and builds on successful exchanges developed by the Queensland Art Gallery with Japan (the first major exhibition of Contemporary Australian Art to go to Japan in 1987; the first major exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Art to come to Australia in 1989).

- B6. Give details of facilities and other support your organisation will provide

The Queensland Art Gallery has made a major commitment to this project, including giving over two thirds of Gallery spaces to the exhibition, substantial financial commitment, curatorial and other professional expertise, in-house design and editing of the catalogue, and set up of the exhibition. The full resources of the Queensland Art Gallery are being committed to the success of the project. (See attached budget and summary of financial and other commitment to the project.)

- B7. Briefly describe the marketing and promotion strategies planned for this project

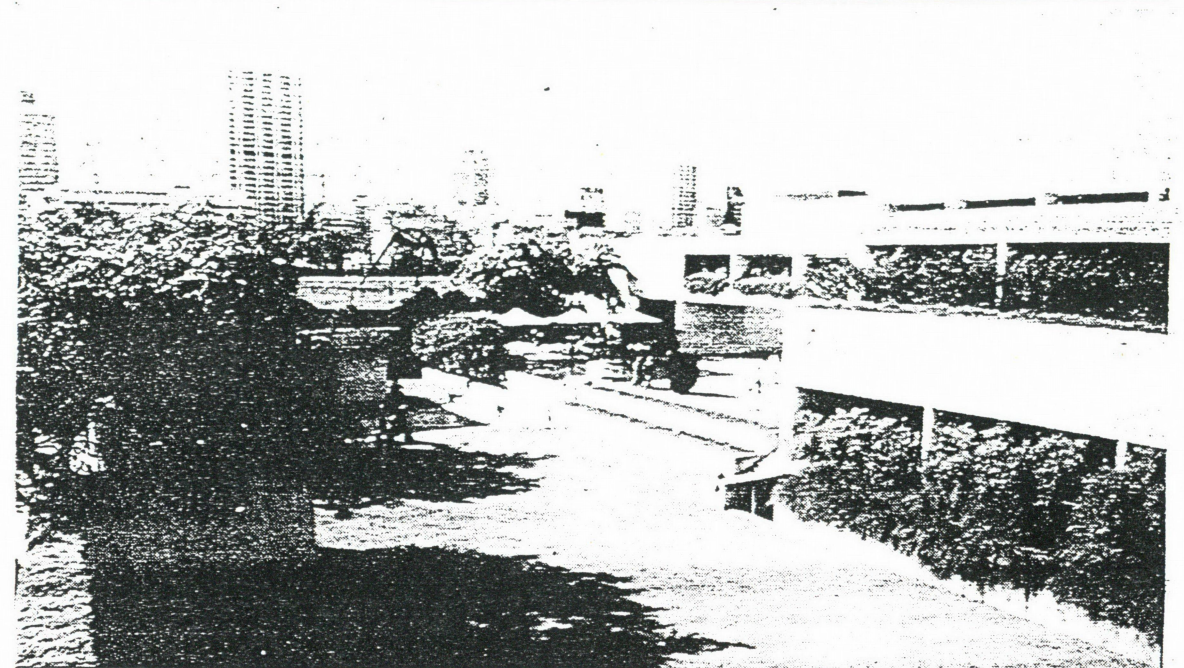
The Queensland Art Gallery is working with other institutions at Government and non-Government level to promote the project widely throughout the region. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has provided strong support through overseas posts. The Gallery has published a Bulletin in five Asian languages which has been widely distributed in the region and substantial coverage of the event has already been achieved internationally. (See attached marketing and promotional strategy.)

- B8. Are there other activities planned to coincide with the project, such as openings, lectures, forums, etc.

A major conference will be held in Brisbane at the time of the exhibition. It is planned this will be in association with Griffith University. Artists, art historians and critics from Australia and the region will take part. An artists' camp is also planned for Australian and visiting artists. A series of workshops and artist-in-residencies will take place in Brisbane and elsewhere. A video of the exhibition will be made and plans are underway for a support film and video program. The Queensland Department of Education has formed a committee with the Gallery to place a kit on the Triennial in every Queensland school. (See attached Education program summary.)



Consultative Committee members responsible for the Asia-Pacific Triennial. From left: Carroll, Dr Turner, Hall, Williams, Manton. Photo courtesy of the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.



External view of the Queensland Art Gallery with the city of Brisbane in the background. Also to be seen in the foreground is the Gallery's sculpture garden.

Triennial expo to forge closer Asia-Pacific ties

By REDZA PIYADASA

THE Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, Australia, is currently in the midst of making preparations for the First Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art to be held in September 1993. It will mark the first time that such a prestigious exhibition will be held in a major Australian art museum. The show will bring together the works of artists from 12 countries: Japan, Korea, the Republic of China, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Australia, and the British colony of Hong Kong. Some 150 works of art will be shown.

The first Triennial will be followed by a second in 1996 and a third in 1999, to close the 20th century. These latest Queensland developments will certainly contribute further to the new and healthy interactions already beginning to take place between Australian artists and those of the Asia-Pacific region.

As part of the ongoing preparations being made, three members of the five-member Consultative Committee responsible to the Queensland Government recently visited Malaysia. Fifteen Malaysian artists had been short-listed and they were visited in their studios and interviewed. The team visited Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

That the Australian and New Zealand artists will be showing together with Asians is indicative of a need for both sides to re-define relationships and perspectives ... There are indications that the 21st century will, quite possibly, be called the 'Pacific century'.

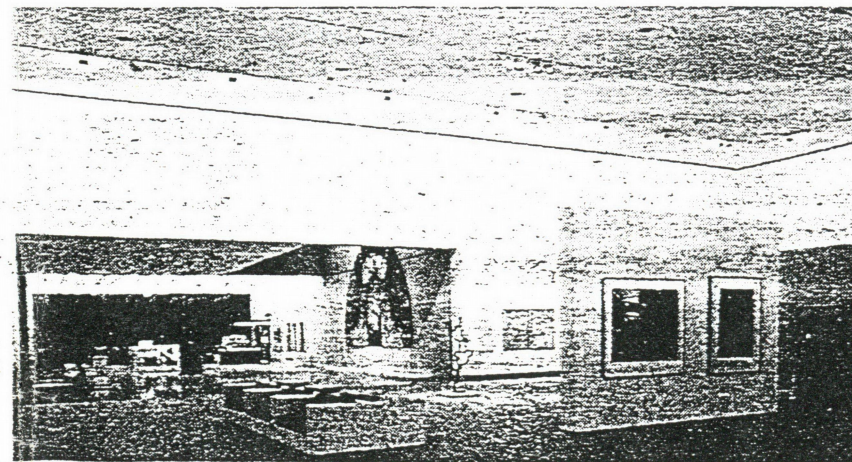
The team members included Dr Caroline Turner, deputy director of the Queensland Art Gallery in charge of foreign programmes; Mr Neil Manton, of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra; and Mr David Williams, director of the Canberra School of Art.

This was the team's second visit to Malaysia. An earlier visit last year included the other two members of the Consultative Committee — Mr Doug Hall, director of the Queensland Art Gallery and Ms Allison Carroll, connected to Asialink, a body that promotes cultural exchanges with Asian countries. On this second trip, the team was also accompanied by Ms Robyn Bondfield, regional services coordinator of the Queensland Art Gallery.

During the team's stay, visits were made to the National Art Gallery of Malaysia. The team liaised with the gallery's acting director, Puan Wairah Marzuki,

who provided the team with the gallery's assistance and facilities.

As yet, a final selection of the six local artists who will be participating in the Triennial has yet to be made. Dr Turner stated that further discussions will have to be made in Brisbane before the final selection. For the most part, the team is looking for contemporary works produced during the last three years. Dr Turner said: "The emphasis will be on the contemporary and not necessarily the historical. The historical aspects will be covered by a separate publication to be released during the Triennial which will carry major scholarly essays on the overall artistic developments in each country with relevant illustrations. We have chosen a writer in each country to present the historical overview and the publication will thus constitute a major documentation of the modern art developments of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. A separate exhibition catalogue



Interior view of one of the galleries of the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.

will be published covering the artists and art works that will be shown at the Triennial."

The Queensland Triennial exercise comes in the wake of a number of recent developments which have, to date, paved the way for a closer and more meaningful interaction between Australian and Asian artists and art institutions. It is worth remarking that, even as recently as a decade ago, there were no interactions whatsoever and a general degree of ignorance seems to have prevailed between both Australians and Asians. I would not be wrong in suggesting that the white Australian artist, by and large has viewed himself as essential-

ly a "European" despite the exotic and colourful attempts to project an "antipodean" identity in some quarters.

And, for the Asian artist, being connected to what is referred to as the "Third World", meant that he needed to be more evolved before he deserved to be looked at. Modernity and artistic "originality" were deemed very much the white man's prerogative and the overbearing umbrella of the so-called "Euro-American" art historicism certainly helped reinforce such pre-conceived assumptions. The sad thing was that, for a long time, we Asians also believed it! Call it the result of

cultural imperialism, if you like.

It is perhaps ironic that up till very recently, Asian and Australian artists remained oblivious of each other's developments but were very knowledgeable about the goings-on in the Western art capitals of Paris, London, New York and Berlin. We may blame all this on an overwhelming dominance of the Euro-American art critical establishment and the myths and often inflated reputations generated from the powerful art centres of the West. Further, the hype and the crass commercialism of the well-organised Western art market, linked to a complex network of prestigious Western art mu-

seums, seemingly scholarly art journals and the bombardment of glossy art books on Western artists, had mesmerised us into believing that everything that was worthwhile was actually taking place in the Western art "centres". We were unwittingly lulled into believing in the brilliance and "originality" of those Western artists and art movements that had been legitimated by the Euro-American stamp of approval.

I remember reading the polemical writings of John Berger during the 1960s, and feeling that he was nearer to what my reality was about, but then in those days he was dismissed as a bothersome crank, when the sacrosanct "abstractionist-reductionist" philosophy in modernism was all the rage. Every one seems to be a "Post-Modernist" and a "Deconstructionist" these days. Some things can seem to change, hopefully!

In the context of the 1990s, we are perhaps fortunate to be allowed a more comprehensive understanding of the Euro-American dominance and also, the dilemma that we found ourselves in. And those of us who are far-sighted enough are working to correct the picture, rather the story of art's confrontation with modernity — a story that is, in fact, about a global phenomenon that has yet to be properly explained

and more meaningfully understood. The picture of modern art that has been projected by the Western art establishment, to date, certainly needs to be reworked and made more real to the 20th century.

It is, perhaps, in this light that one should view the viability of the First Asia-Pacific Triennial of contemporary art that will open in Brisbane in 1993. It marks the first time that a major art museum in Australia has bothered to relate itself to creative contemporary artists working within the Asia-Pacific basin. That the Australian and New Zealand artists will be showing together with Asians is surely indicative of a need on the part of both sides to re-define relationships and perspectives.

More significantly, the Queensland Art Gallery will be legitimating the serious artists of the Asia-Pacific region and also their artistic productions. The Queensland Art Gallery will be officially recognising artistic traditions, not from the so-called "centre" but from the "periphery". But then notions pertaining to the "centre" and the "periphery" are also determined by political and economic considerations and the story of Asia's re-emergence has only just begun, as we are about to close the 20th century. There are indications that the 21st century will, quite possibly, be called the "Pacific century".

Library Staff



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1 October 1993

MEMORANDUM TO: All staff

FROM: Deputy Director and Manager, International Programs

SUBJECT: Philippines artist - Nune Alvarado

The Philippines artist, Nune Alvarado, is organising a small benefit art show for Roberto Villanueva at Bob Mercer's house on this Saturday afternoon (2 October) at 4.30 p.m.

Bob Mercer's address is: 61 Norman Street, East Brisbane.

All are welcome to attend.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Caroline Turner'.

Caroline Turner
DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND
MANAGER, INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS