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Comment

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Comment

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I have no expertise to comment on some of the things talked about here, but I have 27 years of experience in a museum, and so I can comment on biennials. The word itself has become a popular word with much use.

I don't have extensive experience with biennales, but I have assisted the Venice and Sao Paulo special biennials in showing Japanese work. I was the Japanese curator last time and will be again next March.

Currently, a triennial is being held in Yokohama. International exhibitions are in fact being shown in all parts of the world. Although much effort is made to show special elements of regions, it turns out that individuality gets overwhelmed by the overall global trends.

This loss of individuality is somewhat natural. The shared "language" of internationalism seems to overwhelm the individuality of many artists or locales. The problem is that this language assumes a global, common one, although it represents only the modern Western language. So what is the value of holding an exhibit in non-Western regions if local individuality is not going to be apparent? Internationalism pursues the commonalities, or universalities, not the individualities, of the person, state, region or artwork. With internationalism at work, individuality cannot be exercised at all. Western values are thereby adopted as universal or international values of the world. The fact is that Western civilization created the paradigms of this modern era. It is propagated that there was some sort of science at work, that the choices made through internationalism could produce universal truths. In the process, individuality disappears.

Probably the sudden interest in African and Asian art, for example, can be cited as being due to the fact that people are now looking for the things that have been abandoned or overlooked by internationalism.

At one point in *Lost World* by Michael Creighton, which is now a movie, it's written that "the mass media absorbs diversity and makes every place in the world the same. Bangkok, Tokyo, London, you just see McDonald's and Benetton. Across the street you see GAP." He laments this modern, current world unified by media and capitalism.

Recently we use the term globalism instead of internationalism to indicate that we are all part of something bigger, which is a small part of even something larger (universe). Through space travel, we recognized in speech too that earth is a part of the universe. But now people think of mankind as people who share the same destiny on the

same boat. In this kind of context, difference is not absolute. So on the surface, globalism seems similar to internationalism. It is used in the same way as internationalism. On the other hand we are now hearing "glocalism," which means that thinking locally leads to a global view.

The term "localism" used to be used negatively, but its value has been reversed because it emphasizes individuality. I think that the word implies that individuality can be shared by mankind, I think.

What we now need is a new kind of paradigm to replace Western modernism. That is to say, we need to restore the philosophy and joy of art, and restore the myth that has been lost by modern people. We should base the new paradigm upon the pre-modern art and historical and cultural traditions of the region that was abandoned by Western modernism. Then focus could be placed upon the art which is closely linked to life and religion before the era when art became a specialized discipline, for the sake of art.

In 1997 in Gwang Ju, South Korea, an international biennale focused on shamanism, which was what created modern Korean thinking. Now that we have been modernized today, getting back to pre-modern art is a major challenge. We cannot go back to the past, but it should be possible for us to recreate it. We should accept modern civilization, but we should also be willing to criticize modern civilization, to secure what it has taken from us.

After listening to the speakers today, I've been given many ideas for consideration. And I now recall how in Primal Spirits held at the L.A. (California) county museum, the American curator wanted to focus on the animism of Japan, and thereby choose the artists. There was criticism from other Americans about this, and in addition, Japanese artists who exhibited their works expressed their dissatisfaction about how they were positioned in that exhibition.

On reflection, I wonder why people felt dissatisfaction. Japanese artists said they were being evaluated on different grounds from those for modern Western artists. Yet they were not intimidated by the Western modern values, however. Perhaps the Japanese can even be proud of this.

Perhaps the issue is really, do you value something new, or something old and indigenous? Authenticity alone is not that big of a problem. A value system is what we're really getting at, more than authenticity. Do people value art that is modern or pre-modern?

As Mr. Richards explained about his experiences in the first and second biennales in Johannesburg, I found that I have more interest in the works exhibited at the first biennale.

My last point is that modern and traditional art should not be in such an antagonistic relationship to each other.

We still have traditional art, Japanese traditional painting, and *togei* pottery. But what I think is traditional and indigenous might be denied by Mr. Ikwuemesi, for

example folk art or popular art. From the Western viewpoint, some of those folk artworks could not be classified as fine art. Yet, Japanese traditional art was given a certain value in the world. It used to have function in people's daily lives, and that has been lost. My point is that I value that kind.