

AICA JAPAN CONGRESS 1998

Symposium "TRANSITION: Changing Society and Art"

■ Colloquium I *Memories and Visions : From Tradition to a New Identity*

Session 1 : *The Dialogue Between East and West*

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Interactions Between Australia and Japan : Artists, Art, and Aesthetics

This paper would consider the links between Australian and Japanese artists, art and aesthetics that have influenced both countries. Memories are in the relationships and friendships between Peter Rushforth and Col Levy and Japanese ceramicists, their visits to Japan and their role as influential teachers in Australia. The collection of Japanese ceramics donated by a Japanese corporation to the Newcastle Regional Gallery as a result of their business links with BHP was also significant in the development of a knowledge of traditional Japanese aesthetics by an Australian audience. Other bequests by the Ken Myer Foundation of traditional and contemporary Japanese art to the Art Gallery of New South Wales have also been influential in exploring cultural heritage.

In the field of sculpture and installation the sculptor, Ken Scarlett who organised the Continuum exhibitions of Japanese and Australian artists in Tokyo and Melbourne was important in developing links between artists. The installations explored both heritage and identity and were important in developing an understanding of the role of tradition in Postmodern culture. Peter Callas, and other Australian video artists have frequently worked in Japan and their work reflects their engagement with both the new technologies and the current work in Japan. Zones of Love an exhibition of contemporary Japanese art was well received at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney because Australian audiences responded to the quirky humour in the work.

The Asia-Pacific Triennial at the Queensland Art Gallery has been important in bringing Australian and Japanese artists, critics and curators together to discuss contemporary issues in art. The vision that the paper explores are future possibilities for interactions between Australian and Japanese artists and audiences.