

COMPLETION REPORT

Museum and Art: The Promotion and Revitalization of Connectivity in Japan-ASEAN Relation in the Context of Global Service Economy

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In the mid-2010s, the museum sector in Japan contributed to promoting and revitalizing cultural connectivity and relations between Japan and ASEAN. Key mega projects were the ‘SEA Project’, the exhibition SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now’ and “Awakenings: Art in Society in Asia 1960s - 1990s” funded by the Japan Foundation Asia Center and carried out by Mori Museum and the National Art Center in Tokyo. The exhibitions formed parts of Japan’s plans for celebrating the upcoming the ASEAN’s 50th anniversary in 2017.

The initiatives reflect several exciting developments in Japan-ASEAN cultural relations. Against the backdrop of the Abe Doctrine, the ‘Cool Japan’ scheme and the rise of urban tourism policy, Japan’s cultural diplomacy became more closely integrated with upgrading the cultural economy for global city competition on regional and global scales. Moreover, Japanese institutions contributed to a new narrative of ASEAN/Southeast Asian identities through the museum and art scape. Thus, the Japanese perspectives define what constituted and represented ASEAN/Southeast Asian art. Finally, people-to-people contacts emerged in the liaison between multiple actors in cultural diplomacy and service economy platforms. These direct contacts inspired curators and cultural workers from Japan and ASEAN to acknowledge diversified perspectives and embrace everyday life in the rapidly changing Southeast Asia with fresh perspectives on regional commonality beyond nationalism and the emphasis on particularity.

Cultural diversity has increasingly been deemed cultural capital for global city competition, as evident in the cases of Europe, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea. Japan’s integrated cultural diplomacy-cultural economy approach will likely benefit from dialogues and policies promoting diversity and cultural rights for developing its cultural economy and urban tourism. For the years to come, it is an open question whether the advancement of people-to-people contacts, and the promotion of diversity already made in the sphere of museum and art will further revitalize Japan-ASEAN relations in the post-Covid-19 pandemic.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Some parts of this project have been used for producing a 25 minute-TV documentary “Some One” episode 1 for promoting rights and sustainable multicultural society for educational purposes. The documentary has acknowledged the funding support of the Sumitomo Foundation, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBbe-P2maP0>

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

Parts of this research outcome has been revised in the format of an academic article and is waiting for comments from scholars in related fields. At present, the working title is the same as the research project, but minor changes may occur upon receiving the comments. It is expected to be in print in 2024.