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Alway, Asialink



This month of June, culture360.org presents the second selection of the series entitled Curating culture360.org. Selected content ‘curators’ review and reflect on the news, articles and opportunities from Asia and Europe they discover on culture360.org. The curators then present a personal content selection, following a theme or narrative driven by their own artistic interests and direction. culture360.org intends to publish Curating culture360.org every two months, inviting artists and cultural commentators from Europe and Asia in turn.

Valentina Riccardi asked Lesley Alway, Director of Asialink Arts to share her curatorial journey with Curating culture360.org #2.

My curatorial journey focuses on the ‘new models’ and the many projects and initiatives that strive to develop stronger people-to-people links between Asia – Europe – Australia. As we enter the so-called “Asian Century”, it is important to develop the next generation of cultural leaders with the skills, knowledge and confidence to work in this new challenging but exciting environment that is being created by the global shift from West to East.

EU2012: Year of Intercultural Dialogue

China and the European Union have launched a ‘people-to-people’ dialogue focused on education, youth, culture, research and multilingualism as a ‘third pillar’ to economic and trade and strategic dialogues. The issue of multilingualism, particularly with respect to Asian languages is currently a ‘hot

dialogues. The issue of **multilingualism**, particularly with respect to Asian languages is currently a **hot topic' in Australia** as we lag behind most of Europe and Asia in terms of language training and education. This is perceived as hampering Australia's engagement with Asia, although building understanding through 'cultural literacy' encompassing arts, history, geography and customs is seen as equally important to language proficiency. It is expected that new policy initiatives will be developed to support better language education in the future, with a strong emphasis on Asia.

New publication: Europe-China Cultural Compass

This publication offers advice and information on **cultural cooperation**. I was first made aware of this publication at the Ifacca Conference in Melbourne in late 2011 when Shen Qilan, one of the experts in the editorial team participated in an Asialink / ASEF hosted roundtable on cultural policy in the Asian Century. This publication will be a valuable addition to understanding cultural cooperation possibilities and opportunities for working with China. Australia is just completing two years of cultural exchange with China 2010-2012 that will culminate in a final reception and performance in Sydney on June 14. I look forward to reflecting on the outcomes and knowledge gained through this two year program in light of this new publication.

The Publication of ON-AiR / reflecting on the mobility of artists in Europe

This publication and associated materials are a **fabulous resource for both artists and residency co-ordinators** and managers. Much has changed in the residency space over the last decade and **new models** of residency are supplanting the older bilateral 'export' focused models with the emphasis on real exchange through collaboration, reciprocity and multilateralism. Asialink arts is exploring a number of these new models through a 'residency laboratory' and it is hoped some discussion of new models will be explored at the Res Artis conference in Tokyo in October 2012.

Facets 2012-2013: International choreography residency in Bangalore

Attakkalari Dance Biennale is on again in early 2013 and there is an opportunity to undertake an intensive choreography residency culminating in a premiere at the Biennale. I visited Bangalore in January of this year and was struck by the strong marriage of heritage and new technological developments that are reshaping the city. Australia has a special year of cultural exchange with India in 2012-2013 and an Asialink resident, Margie Medlin will be in residence with Attakkalari on a related project later this year.

The Bangalore Lysistrata Project: Indo-British Theatre Collaboration

It's all happening in Bangalore, with this project another example of '**collaborative productions**' that are now being developed, rather than 'presentations' of national culture that have been more common in the past. Australia's Brisbane's Powerhouse Theatre is also collaborating with an Indian Theatre Company. They have partnered with Abihinaya Theatre Research Centre from Kerala to develop and present Sagara Kanyaka in Australia and India. This project is an adaptation of Henry Ibsen's 'The Lady from the Sea'. It premiered at the World Theatre Festival in Brisbane in February 2012 and will tour to three cities in India as part of Australia's 'Oz-Fest' program in late 2102.

Art Mediation Resource / Manifesta Workbook

This publication is another great resource based on **new models of multilateral practice**. *Manifesta 2012* opens in Belgium, just prior to Documenta which makes for a handy itinerary in Europe this year. Manifesta was the **inspiration for Asialink's Utopia project** that aims to develop a roving multilateral Asian network of events, dialogue, publications and encounters. The next Utopia event will comprise a forum in the Sydney Biennale on June 29 and it will also participate in Res Artis in Tokyo in late October 2012.

Dialogue across the equator at the Jogja Biennale

This interview with Alia Swastika from Indonesia and Suman Gopinath from India explores the rationale of the 11th Jogja Biennale held in late 2011 which attempted to develop a new model by exploring Indonesia's relationship with one other country – India. I recently met with Alia in Australia who was visiting as part of the 'Next Wave' Festival and was able to gain further insights into the process of the Jogja Biennale and also the forthcoming Gwanju Biennale for which she is also part of the curatorium. I understand there will be some Australian artists participating in Gwanju 2012. Natalie King, Director of Utopia@Asialink visited the Jogja Biennale as her Utopia Project is also exploring new models for multilateral regional engagement.

Cultural Policy Update: Supporting the Arts in Spinning Times

This publication includes a chapter on *Arts Support Australia* which has developed **new models for funding the arts through philanthropic support**, which is becoming an increasingly important area of arts funding. A recent report by Harold Mitchell was commissioned by the Federal Government as part of its development of a new National Cultural Policy for Australia. This new policy has been delayed – but this is potentially good news as one of the rationales for the delay was the need to take into account another national policy under preparation, the *White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century* due to be released in July. Asialink has been actively advocating the need to link the two so that Asia features prominently in the new proposed new National Cultural Policy.

Vivid Sydney / International Festival of light – music- ideas

This festival opened on May 25th and runs until June 11 and is once again a ‘**new model**’ festival that **celebrates the ‘creative industries’**. An ‘engaging Asia’ symposium will take place on June 4. Sydney has certainly ramped up its profile as a cultural hub with the re-opening of the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Sydney Biennale about to get underway in late June, a new Sydney Contemporary Art Fair scheduled for April 2013 and the recent announcement that Sydney will feature as one of the international ‘city’ pavilions as part of the new Shanghai Biennale that launches on October 1, 2012.

Organisations – Asialink Arts

Reviewing the entry reminds me that we must update this profile with our current strategies and programs that are based on developing new models of cultural exchange with Asia focusing on **partnerships, collaboration and reciprocity** as well as developing the new generation of ‘Asia capable’ arts and cultural leaders. Our core programs of artists residencies, exhibition touring, writing exchanges and Utopia are complemented by an increased role in policy advocacy to prioritise cultural exchange with Asia and explore multilateral networks between Australia, Asia and the rest of the world, particularly Europe.

The following links relate to some of the **key organisations, events and publications** mentioned in the narrative above. I hope you enjoyed the journey with me.

Additional links of interest / relevance:

- Asialink news article on Australian cultural policy for engaging with Asia:
<http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/closer-cultural-ties-with-asia-can-help-to-foster-regional-harmony-20120415-1x1g4.html>
- Australia in the Asian Century Policy paper: <http://asiancentury.dpmc.gov.au/>
- Australian National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper: <http://culture.arts.gov.au/discussion-paper>
- Utopia@Asialink: http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/our_work/arts/utopia
- Sydney Biennale: <http://bos18.com/home?gclid=CK2Gh83kqbACFUyHpAodMBodUQ>
- Res Artis:
http://www.resartis.org/en/activities_projects/meetings/en/meetings_projects/meetings/general_meetings/2_tokyo/

- Powerhouse, Lady From the Sea: <http://www.brisbanepowerhouse.org/events/view/the-lady-from-the-sea/>



Lesley Alway has been Director / CEO of Asialink Arts since June 2010. She is an arts

manager with experience in cultural organisations in the government, non-profit and private sectors. Between 2008-2010, Lesley was the Managing Director of Sotheby's Australia. Her previous roles include Director / CEO of Heide Museum of Modern Art in Melbourne, Director of Arts Victoria and Director of Artbank based in Sydney. Lesley's academic qualifications include a BA (Hons) in Fine Arts and BEd from the University of Melbourne, and an MBA from Monash University.

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The Asialink Essays | publication

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