

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **First Australia-Japan Visual Arts Planning Meeting held in Japan**

A major initiative for both Australian and Japanese visual arts leaders took place in Japan in late September and a list of recommendations for future action between the two countries has been released.

The key recommendations are a focus on, in priority order, artist exchange, exchange of professional personnel both within and beyond the museum, training, exhibition exchange, forums and a focus on our place in the Asia-Pacific region.

The agreed principles underlying these recommendations are a focus on people, "bodies not boxes", encouraging new approaches, working openly and with flexibility, building knowledge and enabling research, working across the sector and across disciplines and building on existing networks and relationships, in parallel with new initiatives.

"I hope that I may be able to work towards assisting to consolidate our Japanese relationships even more".

Tony Ellwood, Deputy Director, National Gallery of Victoria

The forum was held over two days, at the National Art Center, Tokyo, with 34 participants including directors of major museums in both countries, directors of special interest areas, including of new media programs, residencies and alternative art spaces, curators, funding agencies and artists.

The senior level of the participants on both sides - ranging from the Director of the National Museum of Art, Osaka, the Senior Curator of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo and the Director of the Arts Department of The Japan Foundation and their equivalents from Australia – and the frank level of discussion was remarkable, indicating the interest in both countries in engaging seriously in this area. A list of participants and the key recommendations are attached.

A second forum in Australia in 2008 is planned.

"I look forward to working on some projects with contacts made in the future."

Lesley Alway, Director, Heide Museum of Modern Art.

"It was an extremely interesting and useful trip with the potential for general development of professional activity in Japan, as well as more specifically in terms of the work we at Artspace are hoping to do over the next couple of years."

Blair French, Director, Artspace

The forum was organised by the Australia Japan Foundation, the Australian Embassy Tokyo, Asialink and the National Art Center Tokyo, with support from Arts Victoria, The Japan Foundation, and all delegates.

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