

# Conference Report

SEPTEMBER 2020

## Public Displays of Affection How Can Artists Rebrand Soft Power?

CONFERENCE HELD AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

# 03.03.20



**30** YEARS OF INSIGHTS  
CAPABILITIES  
& CONNECTIONS

The Public Displays of Affection (PDA) conference was supported by the Centre of Visual Art (CoVA) at the University of Melbourne, and the Master of Cultural and Creative Industries at Monash University.

## Asialink Arts, University of Melbourne

September 2020

### Authors

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With input from the Working Group

### Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Asialink Arts acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, and recognises their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and to all First Nations peoples across Australia and the Asia Pacific.



Image on cover: Pippa Samaya, *A Dedication to Touch, Trauma & Tenderness*, photographic still from video, 2019, Asialink Creative Exchange, Pickle Factory Dance Foundation, India.

Image at left: Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elder Ron Jones presenting the Welcome to Country at the Public Displays of Affection conference, Old Quad, University of Melbourne, 3 March 2020. Photo: Will Hunt.

All subsequent images: Participants in the Public Displays of Affection conference, Old Quad, University of Melbourne, 3 March 2020. Photos: Will Hunt.

### Asialink Arts

Uniquely Australian, Asialink works with diverse communities in Australia and Asia to build a strong, shared future for all.

Established in 1990 as a joint initiative of the Australian Government's Commission for the Future and the Myer Foundation, Asialink is hosted by the University of Melbourne.

Asialink Arts works as a cultural enabler, capacity builder, and conduit to the Indo-Pacific region for Australian artists and institutions, leveraging a legacy of three decades of practical experience, cross-sector relationships, and trusted connections throughout the region.

In 2019, Asialink Arts critically examined its impact, and refocused ambition and capacity to meet the demands of a rapidly changing region and diverse arts sector. Asialink Arts' new facilitation model is responsive, agile and dynamic, shepherding introductions, growing connections, fostering institutional partnerships, connecting artists and arts institutions to opportunities, and creating platforms for exchange.

Our new strategies include a shift from outbound residencies towards mutual exchange and partnerships based on reciprocity. We also proactively analyse barriers to engagement, and convene forums that bring cross-sectoral stakeholders together to identify practical, cooperative action to create new opportunities. Through our services, we are committed to measurably enhancing the agency of Australian artists and institutions to achieve their respective priorities for engagement with Asia.

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# Foreword

On 3 March 2020, during Asia TOPA, Asialink Arts convened a cross-sectoral conference titled **Public Displays of Affection: How Can Artists Rebrand Soft Power? (PDA)**. The conference brought together regional participants to discuss the role and impact of Australian arts initiatives across the Asia Pacific. Diverse perspectives—from artists, academics, diplomats, arts and cultural producers to arts leaders, government arts agencies and media broadcasters—highlighted the power of arts and culture in forging people-to-people connections and strengthening regional ties.

PDA aimed to explore the relationship of arts and cultural initiatives to soft-power agendas which, along with 'market' and 'audience development,' often underpin the Australian Government's investment in international arts activities. The title of the conference alluded to the discomfort many artists feel about the term soft power and hinted that international engagements might be recontextualised in

**'The title of the conference alluded to the discomfort many artists feel about the term soft power and hinted that international engagements might be recontextualised.'**

ways that reflect reciprocity and the more risky, visceral and organic characteristics of relationships. The conference posed the question: How are artists across the Asia Pacific bringing new meaning to soft power?

Why soft power? The **2017 Foreign Policy White Paper**—Australia's charter for pursuing 'its interests in a more competitive and contested world'—includes the nation's soft-power strengths, capabilities and opportunities. The White Paper defines 'soft power as the ability to influence the behaviour and thinking of others through the power of attraction and ideas.'<sup>1</sup> This means that soft power relies on influencing the perceptions and preferences of others across the full spectrum of a nation's output. The White Paper suggests that 'by using soft power to help shape our external environment, Australia can better pursue its interests internationally.'<sup>2</sup> This definition aligns with the concept introduced by former US Assistant Secretary of Defence for

International Security Affairs (1994–95), Joseph Nye. The term was first coined in his 1990 book *Bound to Lead*.<sup>3</sup>

**'In its White Paper, the Government advocates soft power's utility in shaping Australia's "external environment" and it is fair to say that some have interpreted soft power as a coercive force.'**

In 2018 the Australian Government launched a review of Australia's soft power 'to ensure Australia continues to build soft power and exercise influence effectively.'<sup>4</sup> In response, Asialink conducted cross-sectoral consultations that resulted in a series of recommendations. Asialink's

submission advocated for a policy of democratised, decentralised partnerships and collaborations.<sup>5</sup> It described long-term investments that foregrounded Asian diaspora leadership, coordination across state and federal governments and relationships driven by engagement rather than 'broadcast.'

In its White Paper, the Government advocates soft power's utility in shaping Australia's 'external environment' and it is fair to say that some have interpreted soft power as a coercive force. Further definition of the term and an address in the forthcoming review to how soft power has been and will be employed in Australia's foreign policy

<sup>1</sup> Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, <http://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-eight-partnerships-and-soft-power/soft-power>.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4ca0813c-585e-4fe1-86eb-de665e65001a/fpwhitepaper/foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-eight-partnerships-and-soft-power.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4ca0813c-585e-4fe1-86eb-de665e65001a/fpwhitepaper/foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-eight-partnerships-and-soft-power.html).

<sup>3</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/soft-power-review/Pages/soft-power-review>.

<sup>5</sup> Asialink, Submission to Soft Power Review (Melbourne: Asialink Arts, October, 2018).

would provide clarity around the Government's intentions in our region. An alternative vision emphasising shared objectives and reciprocity might also be proposed to create positive perceptions and engagement from the region.

**'PDA left lingering questions of how we might magnify such conversations around "identity" and our "stories;" how we might amplify values.'**

Speakers and audience members at PDA were uncomfortable with both parts of the term soft power, and this created tension, and discussion. Some were challenged by the notion that arts and culture are somehow 'soft' and lacking in tangible, measurable impacts. Some expressed the view that 'power' connotes subversive influence, authority and dominance. There was, however, broad agreement that the term is useful in the context of negotiating government support and investment, and there was recognition of the opportunity afforded by soft power to widen the lens through which governments assess internationally engaged work.

It is possible that soft power is used as a catch-all term that oversimplifies complex dynamics and lacks the capacity to give equal weighting to diverse approaches. This applies to the projection of national identity, which in the White Paper is linked with the importance of being 'recognised as uniquely Australian.'<sup>6</sup> PDA left lingering questions of how we might magnify such conversations around 'identity' and our 'stories;' how we might amplify values that project Australia as a good neighbour; and how we might find new languages that express understanding through genuine engagement.



We share and seek out experiences to reduce uncertainty and develop innovations. However, as I write this paper, we all find ourselves in a place very different from early March 2020. Metropolitan Melbourne is currently experiencing a second lockdown due to COVID-19, and in other parts of Australia we carry on with caution and a new range of daily operating procedures. Any prospect of international travel shimmers mirage-like, with no date for the re-opening of our national border. Even then, for many of us in Australia, it is not the relaxing of border controls but the release of an effective vaccine that will once again enable international travel. Uncertainty has never been greater.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4ca0813c-585e-4fe1-86eb-de665e65001a/fpwhitepaper/foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-eight-partnerships-and-soft-power.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4ca0813c-585e-4fe1-86eb-de665e65001a/fpwhitepaper/foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-eight-partnerships-and-soft-power.html).

**‘The complex problems of a globalised world—climate change, diplomatic breakdowns, threats of military action—[have] brought our collective fragility into sharp relief. At Asialink Arts we ask what artists and cultural diplomacy programs can do to address these challenging issues.’**

With this, the pandemic has brought fear and misunderstanding, raising the veil on systemic racism and inciting nationalism. This challenging environment risks governments turning inwards rather than staying the course on deepening external ties with our immediate region. At Asialink Arts, as we transition through this crisis and imagine what is beyond, we are more certain than ever that the arts can play a significant part in bolstering Australia’s relationship with the Asia Pacific and expanding opportunities for innovation and recovery.

The ‘time of COVID’ has enabled Asialink and many other organisations and individuals to focus on the criticality of continuing cross-boundary connections. Mobility, global citizenry and, ultimately, our capacity to co-create, collaborate, share knowledge and leverage collective momentum are all at risk. The change in our capacity to address the complex problems of a globalised world—climate change, diplomatic breakdowns, threats of military action—has brought our collective fragility into sharp relief. At Asialink Arts we ask what artists and cultural diplomacy programs can do to address these challenging issues. Working to answer this question will help us highlight the true value of exposure to the new ideas and ways of seeing that art affords us and, by extension, our international relations.

The terms ‘resilience’ and ‘sustainability’ have resonated throughout the pandemic. Our overarching aim for PDA and future activity is to elevate the autonomy of the Australian arts sector to engage with Asia and build awareness of intercultural arts activity leading to new insights. Vital to this is our commitment to listen to our First Nations communities, as well as our migrant communities and neighbours. We advocate for policy shifts and increased investment in reciprocity and long-term relationships in the arts. By doing so, intercultural awareness and engagement will increase, and further regional opportunities for partnerships, new markets and audiences will develop. Most importantly, Asialink believes that perceptions of Australia will change.

With the circulation of this report, we invite stakeholders to contribute information, reflections and perspectives on issues raised. We welcome partnerships in gathering and documenting experiences and building a case for future investment that might prioritise organic, generous and experimental approaches.

This report is authored by Asialink Arts with the support and counsel of the conference Working Group: Danny Butt, Suzanne Fraser, Xin Gu, Katya Johanson, Justin O’Connor, Chaitanya Sambrani and Bala Starr. I thank them wholeheartedly for their generous and patient contributions. The report synthesises feedback from conference attendees through online surveys, video interview responses on the day and in subsequent conversations. We deeply appreciate all contributors’ expertise, time and commitment and we look forward to our ongoing conversations.

**Pippa Dickson, Director, Asialink Arts**



## 1. Report

With the circulation of this report, we invite stakeholders to contribute information, reflections and perspectives on issues raised. We would like to collaborate with you to develop agendas and frameworks for discussion using the development horizons identified at PDA. Please contact us to share your ideas and let us know how you wish to participate.

Concurrently with responding to your suggestions, we will arrange a number of initial roundtables in Victoria. Asialink Arts' brief is national, and we are seeking funding to establish similar programs in other states.

'At the Sidney Myer fund, we fervently believe that Australia's future lies in Asia, and generous engagement with the diverse and complex cultures of this region is our very best chance of securing Australia's economic and strategic well-being. It's also the way that we will grow into our own future cultural skins, drawing first on the very ancient and rich cultural history of this land's own Indigenous peoples, then on to the relatively brief moment of European settlement here, and finally coming to terms with our destiny, as a contributing member of the Asia-Pacific community of nations.'

Carrillo Gantner AC, arts leader



## 1.1 Summary of development horizons

1. Share resources and insights to develop intercultural capability.
2. Create space for critical discussion on soft-power values to recontextualise relations.
3. Collaborate on tackling racial injustice to highlight less-heard voices and build equality.
4. Acknowledging historical injustice towards First Nations cultures, prioritise an ethics of hospitality in relations across Australia and our Asia-Pacific neighbourhood.
5. Build ongoing conversations around cultural policy to reposition thinking on opportunities and investment.



6. Acknowledge the different accountabilities of artists and others to develop a nuanced understanding of potential roles in cultural diplomacy.
7. Connect existing networks to benefit artists engaging with the Asia Pacific.
8. Advocate for cultural diplomacy as a multifaceted process and encourage public and private support.



## 1.2 Development horizons

A number of planning initiatives and approaches to further work were proposed at the PDA conference and in discussions following. These development horizons, offered for consideration below, are directed at individuals working in intercultural engagement and Australian arts and culture organisations including museums, galleries, theatres, festivals, music industry bodies, writers' centres, art schools, institutes, Asialink Arts and more.

They are not intended to be prescriptive nor addressed sequentially. Each is supported by actions that are interlinked but not dependent on one another.

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### 1. Share resources and insights to develop intercultural capability.

Advocate academic and organisational research capacity in soft power, diplomacy and hospitality in the context of Asian arts and culture. Support bilateral and multi-lateral field surveys and mapping exercises.

Consult with directors, museum curators, theatre producers, academics etc. in Australian and Asian organisations. Gather primary information about what informs decision-making when it comes to programming Asian content in Australia and Australian content in Asia.

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### 2. Create space for critical discussion on soft-power values to recontextualise relations.

Identify organisations that are effectively facilitating Asian engagement. Support analysis of how that effectiveness is being achieved and by whom. Support research into how successful strategies, tactics and models could be applied to expand future growth.

Promote research into Asia competency and efficacy in the Australian arts and cultural sector.

'We rely on our network. The Japan Foundation has been working with overseas organisations for more than 30 or 40 years. We already have a good network in ASEAN countries. So, we know the artist professionals and the organisers and sometimes the budget goes up and down. But we try our best to maintain the network even if we don't have enough budget.'

Keiji Shono, Assistant Managing Director, The Japan Foundation Asia Center

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### 3. Collaborate on tackling racial injustice to highlight less-heard voices and build equality.

Elevate and celebrate Australian First Nations and Asian Australian artists in Australia's cultural diplomacy and support their active engagement with Asia. Provide appropriate payment and administrative support.



Invite Australian First Nations, Asian Australian and Asian artists and arts workers to co-create and host a majority of public-facing activities in a spirit of creativity, inclusivity and community belonging.

Openly invite First Nations governance to guide projects. Support Australian First Nations people in key roles.

Strengthen ties with First Nations communities and people of colour and engage with them in debates, proposals and decisions.

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#### **4. Acknowledging historical injustice towards First Nations cultures, prioritise an ethics of hospitality in relations across Australia and our Asia-Pacific neighbourhood.**

Consider the meaning of 'hosting' in Australia and listen to First Nations experience. Hosting is not simply a matter of good manners; ensuring that our partners feel safe, welcomed and encouraged to speak and act freely is necessary for soft power to be of mutual benefit.

Advocate the power of invitation and the ethics of hospitable practice.

Promote both the constant invitation of Asian artists and cultural representatives to Australia and investment in caring, generous reception and hosting responsibilities.

Model and showcase positive examples of hosting practice including maintaining engagement post-event.

**'But we have to look at collaboration, we have to look at working with other people. We can't be in competition with Radio New Zealand, we're both public broadcasters with very limited funding. It doesn't make any sense for us to be in competition. We can work together to better serve the region, and we're currently exploring how we do that. How could we work better together? Because that way, we can make the resources go further. We can get out and tell more stories about the region.'**

**Matt O'Sullivan, Managing Editor Asia Pacific, ABC News**

## 5. Build ongoing conversations around cultural policy to reposition thinking on opportunities and investment.

Prioritise government funding to convene a series of regionally interconnected conversations/roundtables with Asia with broad Australian representation.

Communicate what we mean by 'culture' in our soft-power conversations. Asian societies usually understand culture as 'a way of life' whereas in Australia the concept of 'cultural industries' or 'creative industries' dominates.

Involve independent artists in the conversation by curating a program of artist commissions for roundtables and new meeting frameworks. Ensure clear understanding of roles in associated processes.



## 6. Acknowledge the different accountabilities of artists and others to develop a nuanced understanding of potential roles in cultural diplomacy.

It is useful to have artists, people from government, the corporate sector, business world and higher education in the same room from time to time, but the arts and cultural sector and its stakeholders alone are diverse; agendas abound.

Declare the ways in which soft power is linked to arts and cultural activity through the work of artists (as individuals) as well as institutions (as mediators).

Foreground—at arm's length—the artist's perspective, experience and innovation while bringing the 'production infrastructure' and diplomacy along in a respectful way.

Strategise different activities that can continue to be driven within the institution (for example, Asialink Arts) alongside others led by artists, in full public view.

Distinguish between types of activity; respect creative sovereignty.



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## 7. Connect existing networks to benefit artists engaging with the Asia Pacific.

Consult with artists and arts workers to identify priorities for increasing capability, encouraging ambition and elevating outreach.

Leverage Asialink Arts' existing cross-sectoral networks to make introductions, create opportunities and facilitate partnerships between artists, mediating institutions and enablers of Asian engagement.

Advocate the value of artists' ground-level artistic achievements, experimental projects and community engagement with the Asia Pacific beyond the usual arenas to develop new stakeholders. Approach Australian and Asian diplomatic, corporate and business networks; utilise the links between these networks to expand the network.

Extend online and social media content to include Asia-related arts and cultural work by independent artists, groups and companies.

'How about this for power? The power of genuine respect, trust and affection, whose only reward is the establishment of goodwill and the joy of the common expression across common existence. A soft power which seeks to dissolve power differentials. The soft power of not wielding power at all. Checking privilege or assumption and inequalities and assuming the humility of learning from another. A soft power that undermines national interest and privilege to seek to build a local, national and international cultural commons that affirms the humanity of all involved. Something that we will maybe need in a pandemic or a global climate emergency.'

Madeleine Flynn, audio conceptual artist

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## 8. Advocate for cultural diplomacy as a multifaceted process and encourage public and private support

Advocate the efficacy of soft power in international relations.

Support research to inform and build on the priorities of government bodies, foundations, councils and institutes in order to better support artists' and arts workers' endeavours.

Advance understanding of the history of Australian artists engaging with Asia in the context of geopolitical events; build varied narratives of engagements.

Sustain the public profile of significant activities over time within and beyond the arts and cultural sector.

Soft power defines 'cultural investment' in terms that extend beyond funding models. Explore the tension in the conversation around funding to better understand stakeholders' perspectives.



## 1.3 Challenges of pursuing soft power in the Asia Pacific through arts and culture

The PDA conference identified a number of key challenges facing Australia's closer engagement in Asia through arts and culture. These include:

- The disconnect between arts sectors, in particular artists and the small to medium sector, and government soft-power objectives.
- The degree of 'Asia capability' in Australia.
- Racism as an ongoing problem across Australia and Asia, which stymies the public's appetite for positive international relations.
- The often overlooked opportunity to acknowledge the diverse Asian diasporas in the region.
- The limited expectations of the role and influence of cultural activities from government, the corporate sector and business world.
- The lack of an Australian cultural policy.
- The neo-colonial mindset among some Australian artists and arts workers engaging with Asia.
- The preference for Euro-American culture over Asian, Latin American, African and Middle Eastern culture in the majority of mainstream institutions.
- The lack of distinction between contemporary Australian cultural activities and 'Western' culture from the perspective of Asian societies.
- The arts and cultural sector's lack of a sophisticated understanding of government relations (terms, history, politics) as they relate to cultural activities.
- Loaded and ambiguous terminology: 'soft power', 'exchange', 'mobility', 'partnership' carry different meanings for artists, academics, business people, government representatives etc. Differences in usage can create stumbling blocks to dialogue.
- The arts and cultural sector's tendency to focus on funding to the exclusion of other types of solutions.
- Independent artists' perception that governments, institutions and agencies instrumentalise artistic projects. Discussions became 'murky' where this is deemed anathema to artists' interests.



**'That business, tourism, politics ... all these outcomes hang in the balance on the strength of the reputation that we have with others.'**

Louise Partos, Executive Officer, Artback NT

# 1.4 Issues arising

Some of the issues which featured significantly in PDA discussions include global citizenship, cultural diplomacy policy and community attitudes. Following are some key observations from participants, grouped under broad themes.

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## Global citizenship, hospitality and hosting

- We must imagine Australia's engagement with Asia as interlinked with the ethics that guide the way Australians live in the world.
- The brutal history of Australia's treatment of First Nations people, the impact of British colonisation and past conflicts in the region require unambiguous cultural address. Without coming to terms with history, we have no 'face' (culture) to show the world. Reconciliation is a vital step.
- Australians have much to learn from First Nations peoples and Asian societies about hosting and being good guests.
- Australia risks confusing Asia with China and, reflecting the problematic relationship between the two countries, retreating from Asia engagement. Will hard or soft power or the relationship with China dominate Australia's future in Asia? Are there geographies in Asia that present alternatives? What role will arts and culture play in creating a notion of 'regional community' and building the confidence that underpins the idea of a small 's' 'security community'?

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## Racism and systemic injustices

- We must take immediate, direct action against racial injustice while developing longer term strategic initiatives to eliminate inequality in Australian communities.
- The voices of First Nations communities and people of colour must be championed.
- How might we partner with Asian organisations to create cultural forums aimed at dismantling racism, xenophobia and hierarchies of exclusion across our region?





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## Australian cultural policy

- Engagement with Asia would be enhanced with a clearly articulated Australian cultural policy.
- Our identity and sense of belonging as Australians needs to be further developed. An underdeveloped cultural identity cannot be successfully 'exported' through soft-power programs.
- The ongoing struggle to articulate cultural policy challenges individuals and communities who believe explorations of culture should register meaningfully in the national conversation.
- We should work to develop the language, terminology and frameworks required to strategically communicate cultural values across the region. But national clarity around the same issues is a necessary step.



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## Scope and time frame

- Feasibility is key for small to medium arts and cultural producers. Specific initiatives should concentrate on what can be realistically achieved in the next 12–18 months.
- Asialink Arts' brief is national and longer term.

## 1.5 Immediate opportunities

Following are some key opportunities identified in post-conference feedback (including online surveys):<sup>1</sup>

- The conference enabled artists, arts workers and representatives from government, the corporate sector, business world and institutions to directly address one another—a rare opportunity.
- Asialink Arts is well-positioned to map the context, stakeholders and advocates in the field. Its role as convenor carries significant potential.
- Networks of relationships across tiers of government, higher education, the corporate sector, business world and independent agencies could be made better available. Artists often do not know which agencies outside the arts and cultural sector are open to working with them nor how to pursue these 'external' resources. Similarly, business and government can appear unsophisticated where they pursue arts and cultural activities without being well-informed.
- The international connections could be made more widely available. This could extend to advocacy. For example, communicating news of arts and cultural projects in the region while emphasising their role in international relations.
- As a mediator, Asialink Arts has the capacity to empower artists to take roles at the centre of the conversation and amplify the effect of their work.

## 1.6 Summary of interview responses on the day of the conference

The following comments have been extracted from vox-pop videos available on YouTube. See appendix for links.

- Outside institutions of [soft] power, there is a community in the arts that is pursuing long-term, empathic relationships that will get us through this difficult time—Amanda Haskard.
- We're not doing soft power or cultural diplomacy very well at a government level but we're doing it well at an artistic and organisational level. We still lack a single agency whose prime purpose is to capture the potential of Australian culture abroad (an equivalent of, for example, the Goethe-Institut). We need to coordinate our efforts better—Carrillo Gantner AC.
- Soft power (influencing through non-coercive means) relies on the power of attraction—Cynthia Schneider.

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<sup>1</sup> 27 post-conference surveys were returned (7 from speakers, 20 from other attendees).



- There are small as well as large lessons we in Australia can learn from Asia—hospitality and hosting, for example—Katya Johanson.
- It's the strength of people-to-people links that is the key to soft power. They give us the depth of relationships and understanding—His Excellency Mr Kwok Fook Seng.
- Is soft power investing in riskier, emerging practices? If we invest in ground-up initiatives we build trust, understanding and commitment and demonstrate that we care about the art and the artists—Kristi Monfries.
- I've been inspired by artists from the region who are fearlessly political, interrogating cultural identity, unafraid of geopolitical issues, showing us diverse perspectives on their own context—Kate Ben-Tovim.





# 2. Appendix

## 2.1 Conference program

### Public Displays of Affection: How Can Artists Rebrand Soft Power?

Old Quad, North Wing (Building 150), Parkville Campus, University of Melbourne  
Tuesday 3 March 2020

#### 9:00 am Welcome

Conference MC—Ali Moore

Welcome to Country—Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elder Ron Jones

Welcome to the conference—Penny Burt, Group CEO, Asialink; and  
Pippa Dickson, Director, Asialink Arts

#### 9:20 am Defined by Our Actions: Image, Identity And Influence

Introduction—Ali Moore, journalist and broadcaster

Ali Moore in conversation with Matt O'Sullivan, Managing Editor  
Asia Pacific, ABC News

Konfir Kabo, Managing Partner, Kabo Lawyers, CEO, Aksara Group,  
and patron of the arts

Louise Partos, Executive Officer, Artback NT

Q and A

#### 10:20 am Not an Abstract Matter

Introduction—Ali Moore

Madeleine Flynn, audio conceptual artist; Tim Humphrey, audio  
conceptual artist; and Jihyun Kim, visual-media artist  
with Korean translator Somi Kim

John Young Zerunge AM, artist

Kristi Monfries, creative producer, curator and co-artistic director,  
Volcanic Winds; and Antariksa, historian, researcher and  
co-founder of Kunci Study Forum & Collective

Q and A

#### 11:10 am Morning Tea

#### 11:30 am Realities and Visions for Cultural Diplomacy

Introduction—Chaitanya Sambrani, art historian, curator and senior  
lecturer, Centre for Art History and Art Theory, ANU

Lyndon Ormond-Parker, ARC Research Fellow, Indigenous Studies  
Unit, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health,  
University of Melbourne

Katya Johanson, Professor in Audience Research in the School of  
Communication and Creative Arts and Associate Dean  
(Partnerships and International) for the Faculty of Arts and  
Education, Deakin University

Jing Han, Director, Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture,  
Western Sydney University

Q and A

#### 1:05 pm Neighbourhood Watch: What Can Cultural Diplomacy Do?

Introduction—Ali Moore

Carrillo Gantner AC, arts leader

His Excellency Mr Kwok Fook Seng, High Commissioner  
for Singapore

Keiji Shono, Assistant Managing Director, The Japan Foundation  
Asia Center

Q and A

Introduction to parallel breakouts sessions by Su Baker AM,  
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Community and Cultural Partnerships and  
Director of the Centre of Visual Arts (CoVA), University of Melbourne.

#### 2:05 pm Parallel Breakouts Session 1: Mapping

Group 1—International investment in the arts and artists:  
challenges, models, opportunities

Group 2—Cross-cultural alliances, co-creating and co-  
commissioning: perceptions, partnerships, risks

Group 3—Regional architectures and institutions for co-operation:  
frameworks, agencies, allegiances

#### 3:00 pm Parallel Breakouts Session 2: Future Actions

Group 1—International investment in the arts and artists:  
challenges, models, opportunities

Group 2—Cross-cultural alliances, co-creating and co-  
commissioning: perceptions, partnerships, risks

Group 3—Regional architectures and institutions for co-operation:  
frameworks, agencies, allegiances

#### 3:45 pm Reporting

Introduction—Su Baker AM

Rapporteurs share each group's findings

Summary—Su Baker AM

Q and A

#### 4:25 pm Strategies

Pippa Dickson, His Excellency Mr Kwok Fook Seng, Kristi Monfries,  
Justin O'Connor, School of Creative Industries, University of South  
Australia; and Cynthia Schneider, Co-director, Laboratory for  
Global Performance and Politics, Georgetown University, and  
former US Ambassador to the Netherlands

Closing and thanks—Penny Burt

#### 5:00 pm Drinks—special guest speaker Cynthia Schneider

## 2.2 Conference resources

Program, speakers and breakout session facilitators and rapporteurs: [Asialink Arts website](#).

Vox-pop video responses on the day of the conference: [Asialink Arts on YouTube](#).

Provocations (published pre-conference) and audio recordings of the conference: [Asialink website](#).

## 2.3 Working Group

Pippa Dickson, Director, Asialink Arts, University of Melbourne

Bala Starr, consultant, Asialink Arts, University of Melbourne (from January 2020)

Fayen d'Evie, former Manager, Research and Development, Asialink Arts, University of Melbourne (until February 2020).

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Danny Butt, Associate Director (Research), VCA, University of Melbourne

Suzanne Fraser, Coordinator, Centre of Visual Art (CoVA), VCA, University of Melbourne

Xin Gu, Director, Master of Cultural and Creative Industries, Monash University

Katya Johanson, Associate Dean, Partnerships and International, Deakin University

Justin O'Connor, Professor of Cultural Economy, School of Creative Industries, University of South Australia

Chaitanya Sambrani, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Art History and Art Theory, Australian National University (from June 2020).

### Snapshot of conference participation

- 150 people from 7 states and territories attended
- Of 31 speakers, including breakout session facilitators and rapporteurs, 17 were women, 2 were Australian First Nations people and 10 were Asian or Asian Australian
- 3 speakers lived outside Australia
- 11 speakers were academics, 13 were artists or arts workers and 3 were employed by national government agencies.

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