

Session 3: The Arts in the Age of Globalization

In this session, we would like to discuss the potential roles of art – art in a broad sense, taking in the fertile realm of popular culture in addition to more traditional categories such as painting and literature – in the age of globalization. Can art help us develop our capabilities to communicate cross-culturally and work together for common goals, thereby enabling us to surmount our political and economic differences? If so, how might it do so?

More specifically,

Has globalization changed the nature of art?

Has advanced information technology transformed art? Have inexpensive and high-speed media changed the way we produce and appreciate art? To what extent has the easier access to art produced elsewhere changed the nature of art? How far will this trend continue?

How do traditional and contemporary arts interact?

In the irreversible tide of globalization, ethnic and traditional arts are being exposed to contemporary trends to a greater degree than ever before. Is this a threat or a chance for the ethnic and traditional arts? What impact has globalization posed on the nature of the fusion of contemporary and traditional arts? Has this interaction opened new horizons for artistic creation, or does it represent a cul de sac? How has such interaction forced traditional arts in different regions to change? Has it produced fusions among different traditions? Examples of the latter might be found in “world music,” in which we frequently see hybridizations of different musical traditions. Could this experience be translated into politics and economy?

Has globalization narrowed the difference between pop culture and high arts?

Pop culture has often been treated as “low culture,” but it is far too important in terms of the cultural aspects of globalization to be dismissed. Does pop culture - comics, animations (to cite only Japanese examples, Pokemon, Dragon Ball, etc), martial arts, etc. - change our concept of art? Does contemporary pop culture offer a new way for young people to channel their energy and vitality? Does it offer opportunities to express nationalism in a healthy way? Does creativity in the area of pop culture provide us with alternative visions of the future? Can pop culture bring young people together cross-culturally?

Art is not static but dynamic. Art evolves. But has the essence of art changed? Or are the changes limited to methods of expression and the speed of distribution? Whatever the nature of the changes, the availability of new ways of producing and consuming art has the potential to foster cross-cultural communication and bring young people together despite numerous differences. What kind of events, facilities, programs, etc. should national and local governments, businesses and civil society organizations support in order to promote the function of art as a catalyst of cross-cultural communication?