

Regional Museum Exchange

presented by Honorable Pauline Crowe Naftzger

On behalf of the U.S. CULCON panel, I would like to propose that CULCON focus attention on exchange of art collections and exhibitions at the regional museum level, with an emphasis on sending American art to Japan. Very little American art is exhibited beyond the major cities of Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, although there are superb local museums, especially in prefectural capital cities.

CULCON has a long history of exploring museum exchanges, indeed a standing subcommittee focused attention on issues surrounding this subject for many years. Much of the attention of the subcommittee was directed at increasing the number of exhibitions traveling to the other country, with an emphasis on increasing the number of smaller host cities.

As you already know, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission is a funding agency of the U.S. government that is closely associated with the U.S. CULCON panel in both membership and mission. In fact, all of the U.S. panelists here are members of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission. In recent years, particularly since 1991, the Commission has worked especially closely with CULCON, to the extent of staffing the U.S. CULCON secretariat.

The Commission's programs of funding include, among others, arts exchange. Commission's funding priority in the arts highlights contemporary art forms, especially collaborative projects and those that reflect the depth and breadth of America's multicultural society. Also, given the singular growth of interest in the arts in the growing regional center of Japan and the United States, the Commission gives emphasis to exchanges of performances and exhibitions outside the major metropolitan areas. In effect, the Commission's ongoing program in the arts is extremely compatible with CULCON's historical and proposed present interest in regional museum exchange.

I am pleased to announce that the Commission approved funding in September for a project to expand exhibitions of modern American art in Japan. The project, administered by the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, under the direction of Mr. Gerald Yoshitomi, aims to establish direct relationships between visual arts organizations in the United States and Japan. The project will include workshops in Japan between American and Japanese arts administrators, a tour for these administrators of local arts venues and productions of a directory in Japanese and separately in English of potential venues, organizers and collections in Japan and the United States. This project would be a major concrete step toward achieving CULCON's proposed goal.

Furthermore, resources that identify regional museums in Japan and the United States are already available; CULCON would not need to commission this work. International House has published, and continues to update, a guide entitled *Roberts' Guide to Japanese Museums of Art and Archeology*. The guide contains detailed descriptions of 347 museums in Japan that are indexed by type of collection and location. There is an abundance of resources on American regional museums.

Stimulating the flow of American art to regional Japanese museums would be an extremely worthwhile CULCON project. The project already underway by the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center is an important first step in this effort and need not be duplicated. Therefore, I would like to propose that instead of launching a full-fledged effort of its own, CULCON issue a statement of support and encouragement for all activities that work toward the goal of increasing the flow of American art to regional Japanese museums.