

Galleries go with the flow

By Peter Anderson

In the past six years something has changed in the Queensland art world. Back in 1993, when the first Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art opened, few other galleries made a serious attempt to link their exhibition programmes to the Queensland Art Gallery's new international project.

In 1996, for the second Triennial, there were only a couple of linked shows, as well as the Coronation Motel Art Fair organised by art dealer Peter Bellas. Local galleries seemed politely hesitant about getting involved, as if drawing attention to their activities might be seen as something of a faux pas — a case of having invited international guests into your home and then talking only about yourself.

This year it's a different story with what amounts to a defacto contemporary visual arts festival springing up around the Queensland Art Gallery's significantly expanded APT programme, which includes artist talks, performances and screenings. Of course, there is the exhibition itself, and this combined with the satellite shows will give locals and visitors a chance to see what is probably the most concentrated programme of contemporary art activities ever staged in Brisbane.

One of the things that has added to the sense that south-east Queensland is in the middle of a contemporary visual arts festival is, in fact, the coincidence of the APT and... well... a festival: the Multi-media Art Asia Pacific (MAAP99) festi-

val, which focuses on virtual and multi-media art. In fact, there's quite a bit of "virtual sharing" taking place between the two projects.

But there is much more to it than this, with public galleries, commercial galleries and even some artist-run projects making an effort to tie their particular activity to the Triennial.

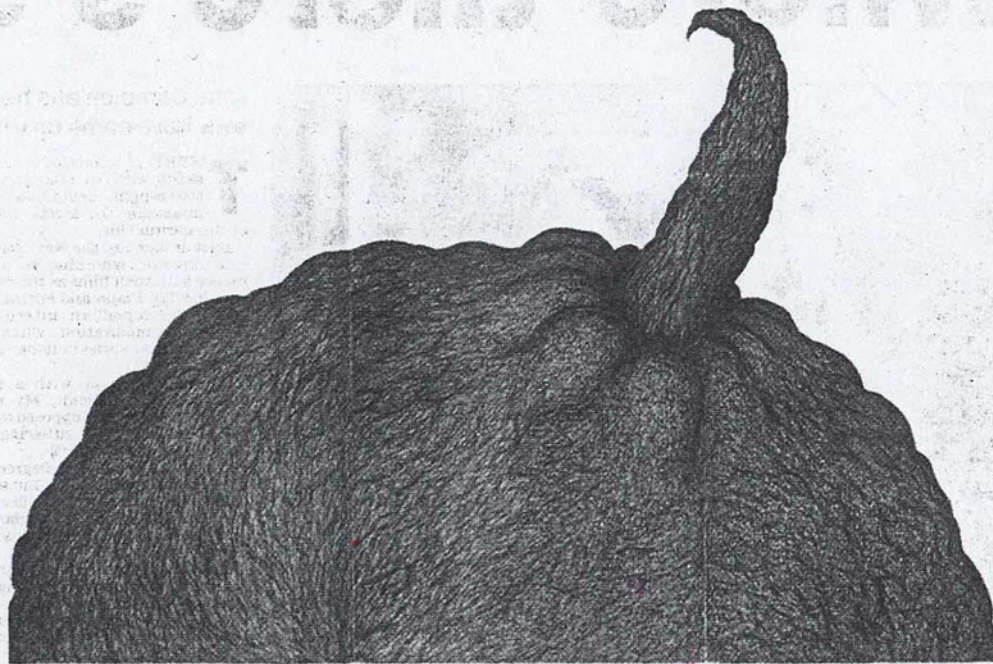
Sometimes the links are fairly clear, with exhibitions or projects that might be seen to build on the Asia-Pacific cultural focus of the APT, while in other cases the link looks more like it results from careful decisions about location and scheduling.

While one of the exhibitions that opened last weekend at the Noosa Regional Gallery, *Imagined Spaces* — a joint exhibition by artists in residence Rekha Rodwitiya and Surendran Nair — certainly looks like it fits the Asia-Pacific theme, Luke Roberts's *Mu Consciousness Raising Exercises*, might seem to fall outside these conceptual boundaries. But it doesn't.

If anything, it highlights the quite complex issues that this year's Triennial seems to be raising about the cultural foundations of art practice, and their links to geography.

For while the work of Rodwitiya and Nair seems firmly rooted in an Indian cultural heritage, Roberts' focus on the mythical lost continent of Mu leaves us wondering just how tied to particular geographic locations contemporary art practice might actually be.

And, of course, there's also the fact that Roberts was one of the Australian artists who participated in the 1996 APT.



FRUITFUL links... Yao Jui-Chung's *Beyond Blue Sky* 1997 is part of Face to Face: Contemporary Art of Taiwan.

On the southern coastal strip, the Gold Coast City Gallery is showing *Face to Face: Contemporary Art from Taiwan*. This exhibition has been developed by curator Sophie McIntyre for the Gold Coast City Gallery as the first of a series of exchanges with the Taipei Fine Arts Museum.

With a focus on the work of eight Taiwanese artists working in a variety of media, the exhibition is scheduled to tour southern states, before returning to Taiwan in 2000.

Another touring exhibition, *The Rose Crossing*, at the Brisbane City Gallery, takes various forms of cross-cultural exchange as its focus, featuring 13 Australian artists, about half of whom are of Asian origin.

Similar issues of cultural exchange are taken up in Smith+Stoneley's ambitious *Via Satellite* project. However, the focus is primarily on the influence of travel

within the Asia-Pacific region on the work of Australian artists.

In addition to a substantial exhibition of paintings, installations and other works at Smith+Stoneley's Newstead gallery in Brisbane, the project features a number of satellite venues, including the window of Ultra Suite, a Fortitude Valley fashion boutique. In many respects, while this project includes artists from outside Brisbane, it is probably the most consciously "local" response to the APT.

Interestingly, a number of galleries in the Fortitude Valley area have developed something of a focus on Pacific or indigenous Australian art. For example, at the Craft Queensland Gallery is *Carried Lightly*, an exhibition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fibre work from north Queensland. This exhibition provides an introduction to the complex overlaps between objects made for art, ceremony and simple daily living.

At Gallery 482 is *Bro's*, an exhibition of recent works on paper by Michael Tuffery, Sheyne Tuffery and Patrice and Raphael Kaikilekole, bringing together a group of Pacific Island brothers who live variously in New Zealand, the UK, New Caledonia and France.

A number of projects that may well appear to be quite tangential to the concerns of the APT have also been scheduled to open while the bulk of Triennial visitors are in town. Interestingly, some of these deal with Brisbane's current art and architecture obsession — and a couple have been strategically sited to make the most of the APT crowd, in Merivale Street, South Brisbane. At the Australian Institute of Architects is *Techne*, a project which features collaborations between seven artist/architect pairings. A few doors up the road is *dCONSTRUCTIVISM: life back into art*, which includes work by 15 artists from Australia, Europe and the USA.

APT AND MORE

Asia-Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery (07) 3840 7333; <http://www.apt3.net>

MAAP festival. Various venues & online (07) 3391 3569; <http://www.maap.org.au>

Bellas Gallery: Gordon Bennett, cnr James & Robertson Streets, Fortitude Valley (07) 3257 1608.

Brisbane City Gallery: The Rose Crossing, City Hall, King George Square, Brisbane (07) 3403 8888.

Craft Queensland Gallery: *Carried Lightly*, 381 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley (07) 3250 1290.

Global Art Link: *The Road to Cherbourg* — The art of Vincent Serico, d'Arcy Doyle Place, Nicholson St, Ipswich (07) 3813 9222.

Gold Coast City Gallery: *Face to Face* — Contemporary Art from Taiwan, 135 Bundall Rd, Surfers Paradise (07) 5581 6567.

Institute of Modern Art: Tracy Moffatt. Cnr Ann & Gipps Streets, Fortitude Valley (07) 3252 5750.

Institute of Architects: *Techne 70*, Merivale Street, South Brisbane (07) 3398 3641.

Metro Arts: *Space Affects* — The art and architecture of James Birrell and Gail Hastings, 109 Edward St, Brisbane City (07) 3221 1527.

Noosa Regional Gallery: *Imagined Spaces & Mu Consciousness Raising Exercises*, Pelican St, Tewantin (07) 5449 5297.

Smith+Stoneley: *Via Satellite* — 20 artists, five locations, 11 Stratton St, Newstead (07) 3852 1650.

Soapbox: *Installation practices and artists*, 95 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley (07) 3257 5072.

60 Merivale Street: *dConstructivism* — life back into art, 60 Merivale St, South Brisbane (07) 3262 4870.

Fireworks Gallery: Michael Nelson Jagamara, 678 Ann St, Fortitude Valley (07) 3216 1250.

Gallery 482 — Bro's, 482 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley (07) 3254 0933.