

I always reiterate that the Asia-Pacific Commission is large and difficult. The barriers that stand in the way of easy cooperative work are those of: language (many beyond the official UNIMA languages); cultural; political and economic disparities. This diversity is also the bounty of the Commission. The distances involved, geographical and metaphorical, make organising the best kind of meeting, a face to face one—challenging. The world media speculate that we are moving into the Age of Asia, and prospects look better for the future.

We welcome Gaura Mancacaritadipura (Indonesia), and Mr Naka, Yasuhiko (Japan) to the Asia-Pacific-Commission. Also I Made Sidia (Indonesia) as a corresponding member. The Asia-Pacific Commission will always welcome active members.

Priorities of the Commission

- Documentation is identified as important in the changing and rapidly modernising region.
- Many puppetry practices and communities are vulnerable and in immanent danger of disappearing. They need support, preservation and development to keep traditions living in local communities, and not as cultural artefacts. (1)
- Ways to work through and across difference is also important, hence to have the commission in lively discussion.

I propose that the Commission for 2012-2016 have multiple projects in different stages of development so that output can be consistent, with tangible results and outcomes.

In 2008 – 2012 I demonstrated that the Commission budget can successfully be used for seeding money to attract extra funds to run significant projects. *See Project report below.*

- Research and feasibility, which includes researching, appropriate funding partners.
- Making project proposals strong through drafting as necessary to attract support of outside partners.
- Seeking and securing funding (researching potential sources to identify common goals)
- Execution and running projects which will be co-ordinated by the Commission members most appropriate to the project's origin/or location.
- Reporting and acquitting. The Commission needs to monitor and assess its effectiveness, and to ensure that funds are used for the stated purposes.

At present the project run as pilots, so that the Commission may learn what issues may emerge specific to Asia-Pacific conditions, and therefore how to deal with them when a fully developed process for opening broadly to Asia for applications. This will be addressed as a task of the Commission.

The projects under discussion are in different stages of development, and will have further elaboration. The proceeding work will be decided by the members of the commission. One will have received seeding prior to Congress.

- Documentation of puppetry in Myanmar (Burma). The CD Rom now exists, but adaptation to UNIMA languages is needed for wider distribution. Firstly, comparison with existing documentation, a marketing strategy, quotes for printing and distribution, and appropriate contracts to make clear the agreements and relations between UNIMA and the author. This may be contingent on demonstration of a commitment to UNIMA after over 6 years of discussion.
- Phase 1 of a documentation and potential India/Indonesia collaboration. – a large project broken down into several stand-alone Phases, with separate budgets and demonstrable outcomes. (*see Addendum 2- added here for its addressing of criteria as example*)
- To create and promote a Intangible Heritage Summit Conference working towards making a regular event, first developed in Asia, then expanding to Middle East and Africa.
- Organize a “Puppetry Summit Conference & International Puppetry Arts Festival oer showcase” in Asia or one of the Chinese cities in 2014 or 2015. In last few years, East Asia District included Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Okinawa in Japan, Seoul in Korea & Kaohsiung in Taiwan have built up

a network for Children's Theatre. To create a Children's Theatre Puppetry Seminar for those who work in children's theatre proposed to be held in Okinawa, Seoul or Kaohsiung in 2013-2014

- Initiate a "Puppetry for purpose Festival" in different countries in turn, working towards making it regular, working in conjunction with different committees for documentation, deep research and publication.
- Ideally, a follow up visit of the first Fellowship recipient, Selvaraja, in Chennai to check on how the experience of the overseas residency in Australia has changed or improved his life. Or if not, why not?

The seeding money will come in the way of a Fellowship, a work in progress (*draft in discussion – see Addendum 1*) In the future the Commission will place an open call for proposals. Some initial trial projects are to be run by invitation to educate the Commission about potential difficulties or problems that may arise in the diverse conditions of Asia, and how to deal with them.

The Asia-Pacific Fellowship has broad criteria. The main condition is defined by projects that advance one or more of the UNIMA Aims and Means, (as on the UNIMA website). Importantly it will stipulate what the funds can't be used for, such as, capital works etc following already existing funding models of many philanthropic sources. This leaves flexibility, but sets down a means for concrete goals. As Head of a Commission, if I am elected, having now demonstrated the possibility of running substantial projects with good proposals, I will act in an Executive Consultant capacity to ASSIST in Researching, and Securing Funding, and in the Preparation of Contracts for the commission projects. In this way the monies of UNIMA can be used to realise important and urgently needed work that is beyond the capacity of UNIMA alone, and does not rely on the generosity of the UNIMA members only.

REPORT – Asia-Pacific Project 1– International Collaborative Research.

The "Phenomenology of Puppet" project set out to achieve multiple aims to make the most of resources generated. I ran it – it was a project of mine. This could be perceived as a conflict of interest, but in the absence of other proposals or dialogue from the commission members, and in recognition of the project's strength, I proceeded with it. It was a valuable experience and brought back rich insights for the Commission, UNIMA and the world.

It advanced UNIMA Aims and Means:

- By encouraging contacts and exchanges between puppeteers from all nations and continents, using all possible means of communication;
- By extending historical, theoretical and scientific research;
- By keeping alive traditions, as well as encouraging the renewal of puppetry;
- By participating in the work of international organisations with similar objectives. (additionally, national and municipal).

In summary:

The project was

- a pilot for an Asia-Pacific Fellowship, which was awarded to A.Selvaraja, traditional Indian puppeteer,
- to advance innovative formal theoretical and practice research and
- to gather first hand knowledge of the situation and predicaments that traditional puppeteers face in Asian locations, to better understand how to educate western people's of these details, and to work out best ways to help and support them.

The Residency: Traditional Indian Shadow puppeteer, A. Selvaraja spent a 12 week residency in Australia to participate as a volunteer collaborator in a formal research project of the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne. During this time, based in the regional city of Ballarat, we initially used our puppetry as the beginning of a conversation. I was to test whether puppets really could communicate across cultural barriers, such as language. I approached the question using a method grounded in the philosophical discipline of phenomenology, which privileges lived experience, embodiment, and looks at the detail of human perception. This is to discuss the very notion of cultural difference, identifying points of commonality. A first hand account of the challenges the modern world presents to traditional performers in the 'so-labelled' developing world was called forth, as I came to know my fellow artist and of his very different life and beliefs. The residency provided Selvaraja with new experiences, to take or leave as his choice, but also to provide him with space for reflection about what his tradition means to him. The contemporary performance produced from the residency provided an example of how different puppetry forms can sit together and provide layered and multiple readings that address immediate cultural themes and the philosophic. It was a performance that shared an internal coherence that we extracted from our shared experiences. The documentation provides a mapping of the process, and therefore a way of framing analysis. If I answered the original question it was not in the way anticipated, the project revealing my own assumptions about traditional Asian puppeteers. However, working together in the studio revealed puppetry vocabularies we both understood without recourse to any but minimal and bare use of spoken language. The research provided a new direction for theoretical discussion of puppetry that has not previously been addressed in detail, which does not shy from alterity, or the idea of working with traditional artists on new work/new stories. They also belong to the present world and have the ability to be creative in it, and comment on it. Not unlike the original Prague Circle with their formative contributions about puppetry coming from linguistics, (Boatie, Veltrusky, and Jakobsen) the research is innovative. A podcast of one talk given at the Australia India Institute is available at <http://www.aii.unimelb.edu.au/category/tiffintalks/page/2> A Completion Seminar is scheduled at the 4th National Puppetry Summit, 5-8 July 2012, Melbourne, Australia, which is also heralds puppetry being resumed in the VCA college. On passing examination, I seek a publisher for the dissertation.

1) See Jennifer Pfeiffer in "Globalisation and the UNIMA Asia-Pacific Commission", *Australasian Drama Studies*, 51 - Puppetry and Visual Theatre in Australia and New Zealand special issue (2007): 104-18. which details the development, functions and weaknesses of the UNESCO International Conventions for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Financial report,

Breakdown:

Since commencement

\$AUD/Euro @ 30 June 2010 @ exchange rate 0.689	
2008 (research setting up project and select partner, India)	
Macgeorge Bequest Award	\$6000 (4134€)
2009 (Archival Research)	
UNIMA Australia Handspan Grant	\$2000 (1378€)
Institut de la Marionette (Charleville inc accommodation at Villa'd'Aubilly)	\$1773 (1221€)
2010 (Project)	
UNIMA (Fellowship for Selvaraja)	\$2898 (2000€)
City of Ballarat	\$8,500 (5857€)
Australia India Institute	\$5000 (3445€)
<u>My own contribution over the 08-10 period.</u>	<u>\$4000 (2756€)</u>
\$30, 014	\$30,171 (20,791€)

I add, I did not have connections with the other funders. The award of funds came on the strength of the proposal, good timing, and matching goals.

After allocating 2000 Euro seeding to the project in Nov '09, I raised the money in around six months.

The UNIMA Allocation was used for seeding money, and for Selvaraja as a 'Fellowship', above his voluntary presence. It has been paid in full. There was initial debate about what he should do with this fee. In consultation with the NFSC (National Folklore Support Centre) in Chennai, it was agreed that Selvaraja must have the freedom to do with it as he chooses. Together we had made a plan of possible activities for him to make his puppetry practice more sustainable. These must remain suggestions only (*See Addendum 3 –Plan Diagram*).

It is difficult for outsiders to comprehend his situation at home, even for me, the tensions that exist between development/social mobility and tradition (low social status), what is desired from what is possible, and at times conflicts of desire.

UNIMA Asia-Pacific Fellowship

DRAFT

Aims: The UNIMA Asia-Pacific Fellowship is to support professional development in puppetry to puppeteers, or to those who use puppetry in their work, from the Asia-Pacific region. The puppeteers can be traditional or contemporary, but traditional puppeteers are encouraged to apply. A specific project or purpose is required, which may include travel, residency, research, cultural exchange, international collaboration. The Fellowship

Criteria

- Activities must be clearly defined.
- The Fellowship is to support professional development and personal research for any project that directly involves puppetry. The Fellowship is only to support such activities.
- The Fellowship is not normally used to purchase infrastructure. (This is negotiable if a convincing case can be made as to how it will benefit a puppetry practice, and why it is necessary). The Fellowship cannot be spent on: major capital expenditure, including the purchase of real estate, the purchase and refurbishment of buildings, and purchase of major equipment and vehicles.
- The Fellowship payments MAY be paid in several instalments, each requiring a report to successfully receive the next endowment, depending on the approved program of activity, and negotiated agreement.

YOU MUST:

- Use the Fellowship in the 12 months from the Award of the Fellowship. Any unused amounts of the Fellowship must be returned to UNIMA.
- Acknowledge the support of UNIMA in all promotional material associated with the project.
- Satisfactorily account for how the grant is spent (if you do not you will be required to return all monies for which you cannot satisfactorily account).
- Provide artistic and financial acquittal reports at the end of the project. Acquittal is a formal condition of funding. If you do not provide a satisfactory report at the times required, UNIMA will not make any further payments that may be due to you, and you will be ineligible to apply for further assistance.
- UNIMA may ask you to pay back all or part of the funding provided to you. It may take action to recover any unspent or misspent funding as a debt due and payable.
- Comply with all applicable laws.

Reports are used by UNIMA to fulfil obligations of accountability to the French government. They are also essential to the development work of the UNIMA Asia-Pacific Commission. The reports help us evaluate the achievements and effectiveness of the Fellowship, and ensure our policy development is consistent with the experience of artists in the field.

The Fellowship may be considered part of your income in a financial year and may be subject to tax. You must determine your own taxation liabilities. We suggest you consult your financial adviser.

In the shadows of time
A research, documentation and cross cultural art exchange residency project
***Raavan Chhaya* of India and *Wayang Kulit* of Indonesia**

Objective

The project “In the shadows of time” (henceforth-**ITST**) will be an audiovisual documentation and cross cultural exchange between ancient art practice forms of shadow puppetry from two countries in the Asia Pacific region, India and Indonesia. It aims to explore interactions through last 1,400 years between traditions of *Raavan Chhaya* of Odisha province in east coast of India and *Wayang Kulit* of Java Island in Indonesia.

The project framework

ITST aims to facilitate collaborate two ancient puppetry traditions of *Raavan Chhaya* and *Wayang Kulit*. It includes conducting detailed research and audiovisual documentation on each art form, cull relevant material from folk and archival material, to understand unique technique and style in each of these forms.

It will eventually lead to residency workshops between selected traditional performing troupes from both the forms in their respective villages to come with a collaborative piece of narrative. The idea is to delve and let the performers explore each others’ art forms to seek new ways of collaborations in the present times. The entire process will be documented in 3 phases through Photography and Audiovisual recordings. The project outcome will be in form of a book and a documentary film that will showcase developments at the workshop interweaving historical facts, myths and folklores to showcase the legacy of both the forms along with the performance itself.

Financials

Seeking UNIMA Asia-Pacific Fellowship for Seed funding – 2000 Euro

Probable partners in this project

Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Ministry of Culture, Governments of India and Indonesia

Grant bodies from United Nations focusing on cultural preservation and exchange

Television Channels such as NGC, Discovery and History

Corporate bodies having interest in both the countries such as Birla, Tata and Sinar Mas

Project advisor

Dadi Pudumjee

Leading Modern Puppeteer from India

President, UNIMA International

Proposed by

Shankhajeet De

Independent Filmmaker

Course Director, Department of Film & Video Production

Sri Aurobindo Centre for Arts & Communication, New Delhi, India

Outcome of the project for archive and dissemination

ITST would document styles of art practices in terms of recurring themes & narratives, performance tools, styles, social hierarchies, group dynamics, similarities, dissimilarities and most importantly emerging collaborative trends. Being quite dependent on oral narratives for perpetuation, concerted effort would be made to document these knowledge transfer practices through audiovisual recording and photography. Reproduction of pictures and transcript material will be used to publish a book for archival purpose. The Audiovisual material will be used to produce a creative documentary film for dissemination. This can be telecast in the public television of both the countries, aired in global satellite TV channels and sent to film festivals for critical appreciation.

Project Phase Details

- Phase I Identifying traditional *Ravan Chhaya* & *Wayang Kulit* traditional groups to represent and participate in this project. Conducting primary research and documentation on both the art forms. Identifying socio-cultural & geographic position through interviewing performers. Document the above mentioned through professional still photography and low quality audiovisual recording. Produce 10 minute films on each of them from the recorded material focusing on performances related techniques and link it with the other. Develop a report for each of them on the contemporary practices, socio-cultural relevance, livelihood, historical perspective by using material derived from current research as well as available archival material.
- Phase II Making detailed broadcast quality audiovisual documentation on both the art forms for unique techniques and styles. Delve into construct of traditions in each, linking it to their livelihood, intergroup dynamics and historical perspectives through current folk as well as archival material. Make two documentary films showcasing each of the art forms. Develop e-project reports for the same.
- Phase III Organise art exchange residency workshops for both the groups in each others' country. Facilitate a production integrating narrative traditions and/or styles from both the art forms as deemed fit by participating performers. Making detailed documentation of the entire process of this production. Produce an engaging documentary film on this collaboration by integrating historical and cultural linkages of both the cultures through visual recreation. Publish a book on learning on traditions, their historical linkages and outcomes from planned collaboration.

Conforming UNIMA Asia-Pacific Fellowship requirements

The phase I of the projects seeks

UNIMA Fellowship Aims: The project deals with making research and audiovisual documentation of two styles in shadow puppetry from the Asia-Pacific region. *Ravan Chhaya* and *Wayang Kulit* are both traditional forms of shadow puppetry. The phase I of the project requires my travelling in India, and to Indonesia with video and still cameras from my workplace, New Delhi.

The project **ITST** conforms to the following categories of the following UNIMA **Aims and Means**

- By encouraging contacts and exchanges between puppeteers from all nations and continents, using all possible means of communication;
- By extending historical, theoretical and scientific research;
- By keeping alive traditions, as well as encouraging the renewal/revival of puppetry;
- By participating in the work of international organisations with similar objectives.

Duration 6 months

Tangible outcomes still photographs of the performance in both art forms
Audiovisual documentation of performance and technique of 10 minutes on each of them
Two reports in approximately 5000 words with photographs on each of them.

Budget € 2,000

Projected Expenses involved: in €

Visit to Odasha No. of Days -7

Expense Head	Cost
Travel from Delhi to Odhasha	250
Lodging and boarding at Odasha @ 15 per day	105
Local Coordinator for @ 15 per day	105
Audiovisual recording equipment @ 20 per day	140
Total	600

Jakarta and Java Island No of Days -8

Expense Head	Cost
Travel from Delhi to Java Island and Visa	700
Lodging and boarding in Java @ 20 per day	160
Local Coordinator for @ 15 per day	120
Audiovisual recording equipment @ 20 per day	160
Total	1140

The cost incurred in editing the audiovisual material

260

PLAN – suggestions for
puppetry development

