

Colourful Journey through Asia

アジアの旅に出かけよう!

Monday 5 December 2005 – Tuesday 31 January 2006
Asia Gallery B

Sightseeing in Asia

Since the time of Marco Polo, many Westerners have longed to visit Asia – even now many tourists come for the strong sun, the fair skies and abundant oceans as well as for exotic places and landscapes still now. They enjoy buying souvenirs at each place and more recently they shop expensive brand-name products at the duty free shops. As the income from tourism becomes one of the most important revenue sources for a number of Asian countries, artists such as Manit Sriwanichpoorn have started to comment on the tourism as a symbol of consumerism.

Asian artists visit tourist attractions in the world.

Whilst Europeans and Americans travel around Asia, it was not all that common for Asian people to travel to Europe or US for sightseeing even if they had emigrated to or studied in these countries. Some of the Asian artists dealt this unilateral conception of Asia as a “tourist spot” and tried to visit very typical sightseeing spots in Europe and US as artwork. Tseng Kwong Chi took photographs at these places to generate a viewpoint of gazing back. In the photographs made by Wang Junjieh, “Great Wall” and “Shanghai” seem representing very expected landscape of famous places. But he is one of the new generation artists who try to express the reality ironically by indicating these landscapes as virtual.

Journey in search of the self

Asian artists have made journeys in their region not only geographically but symbolically in search of their identity as Asians tracing their passage after independence from colonial rule. It may have been their ethnical identity in the country of birth or their identity as, for example, a woman living in an Asian context. These artists juxtaposed their lives with their physical journeys. We as the viewer may be able to find ourselves in Asia through the journey to Asia.