

Online Petition to save the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History

Call for Support

- Save the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History

1) Background Information

According to the announced plan of the city of Ashiya in Japan, the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History will either be privatized, sold, or closed by 2006, as a drastic measure to restructure the city's budget.

Since its opening in 1991, the museum has been promoting the Gutai as part of their mandate to support local art movements. Most alarmingly, the city council has yet to demonstrate a plan for preserving the museum's important collections and archives on the Gutai, among other collections.

(The museum's website is http://www.ashiya-web.or.jp/museum/f_top.htm).

The current restructuring plan encompasses wide-ranging budget-cuts in education, welfare, and culture, including the closing of hospitals as well as the museum. The city council will begin deliberations on the issue beginning on December 2nd. As the insiders' voice will be suppressed by the council, any kind of "external pressures" we might be able to exert on the council will help the museum.

Therefore, under the auspice of PoNJA-GenKon (Post-1945 Japanese Art Discussion Group/Gendai Bijutsu Kondankai), we urge you to sign the online petition and/or write to the city council to protest the city's plan to privatize, sell, or close the museum. (The full petition text is pasted at the end of this e-mail).

Your immediate action is required, for we would like to forward our petition to the city council before the December 2nd meeting. We set a preliminary deadline for November 25th, but your continuing support as well as your action after this date will still be appreciated as we continue to monitor the situation and support the

museum in every way possible.

Reiko Tomii, Ph.D.

(independent scholar and owner of PoNJA-GenKon)

Midori Yoshimoto, Ph.D.

(Gallery Director/Assistant Professor,

New Jersey City University)

Ming Tiampo, Ph.D.

(Lecturer, Art History Department,

Carleton University, Ottawa)

Hiroko Ikegami

(Ph.D. candidate, Yale University)

2) Ways to Help

A) Sign the Online Petition

Petition Deadline: 11/25 (first collation), petition site effective until 12/31

1) Go to

<http://www.petitiononline.com/ashiya/petition.html>

and our petition should appear.

2) Click "click here to sign the petition."

3) Enter necessary information.

4) You can preview your information before submission.

Notes on "Email Address Privacy Option": In this petition, you may choose from the three levels of "Email Address Privacy Option." We encourage you to choose "Available to Petition Author," which will allow us, the petition authors, to send you information about the museum in the future.

B) Forward this e-mail to potential supporters for signing the petition

C) Talk to your senior colleagues (museum directors, curators, academic advisors, professors, etc.) and ask them to sign the petition and/or write a letter (see D below).

D) In addition to signing the petition, sending a physical letter (snail mail/fax/e-mail) will add volume to our voice.

1) You may use the petition text, pasted below, write your own letter, or add your own comments to the text of the petition.

2) Address the letter jointly to:

Mr. Ken Yamanaka, Mayor of Ashiya

Mr. Shozo Tsuzuki, Chair, Ashiya City Council

3) Always include "Title" and/or Subject line:

Save Ashiya City Museum of Art and History

4) Send

e-mail to: info@city.ashiya.hyogo.jp

fax to: (011) 81-797-38-2170

snail mail to: 7-6 Seidocho, Ashiya, 659-8501 Japan

5) Please copy your letter to Curatorial Dept., Ashiya

City Museum of Art and History at

e-mail: asbihaku@ares.eonet.ne.jp

fax: (011) 81-797-38-5434 (museum)

=Petition Text=====

Mayor of Ashiya

Ashiya City Council

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology

We, the undersigned, are writing to protest the Ashiya City's plan to privatize, sell, or close the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History.

Since its opening in 1991, the museum has been instrumental in promoting Japanese modern and contemporary art as well as preserving Ashiya's local history. It has, however, always had an impact beyond the local, extending into the international. The museum has been a crucial voice in articulating a place for Japanese modern and contemporary art on the world stage by functioning as the archive and international center of academic research for Gutai, the foremost avant-garde art movement of post-1945 Japan.

We adamantly oppose Ashiya City's plan to privatize, sell, or close this museum. Ashiya City will be harming its international reputation as a cultural city by closing the city's most active cultural institution. By silencing or crippling the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History's ability to disseminate information and scholarship about the Gutai, the city will also be squandering one of the most powerful tools of cultural diplomacy that has projected the image of Japan as a dynamic, creative, modern and international culture: the Gutai.

We implore Ashiya City to find an alternative to save the museum and its current functions intact. In its process of

restructuring, Ashiya City should reexamine its priorities and acknowledge the importance of the Ashiya City Museum in putting the city on the world map, and its critical role as the custodian of Gutai history.

We strongly urge Ashiya City to give serious consideration to this statement and sincerely hope that the city will reconsider its plans for the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History.

Reference:

ANN: Online Petition to save the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History. In: ArtHist.net, Nov 18, 2003 (accessed Feb 11, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/26040>>.