

# Case study

## Tess Maunder

### Details

**What:**

Tess Maunder attended the prestigious Independent Curators International (ICI) course in Tokyo. The Curatorial Intensive theme, *What does it mean to be international?*, examined the current state of the Asian contemporary arts scene within the larger global context.

There are currently only 257 alumni of ICI's Curatorial Intensive program, based in 54 countries worldwide and Tess was the only Australian invited to attend the course.

The 10-day intensive course involved an extensive amount of research and pre-reading leading to discussions and networking with artists and other international curators.

The course culminated in a day-long public symposium at the Mori Art Museum where the participants presented on the exhibition and project proposals they developed through the program.

Delegates were allocated into groups and presented to the group on their chosen topics. Tess delivered a presentation about the web publication that she co-directs with Laura Brown called *The Maximilian*. The publication provides an online writing and curatorial forum about Australian and international art.

**When:**

October to November 2013

**Where:**

Tokyo, Japan



Tess Maunder speaking about her project proposal at the culminating symposium at Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. Photo courtesy of Independent Curators International.

**Arts Queensland contribution:**

\$2980– Individuals Fund

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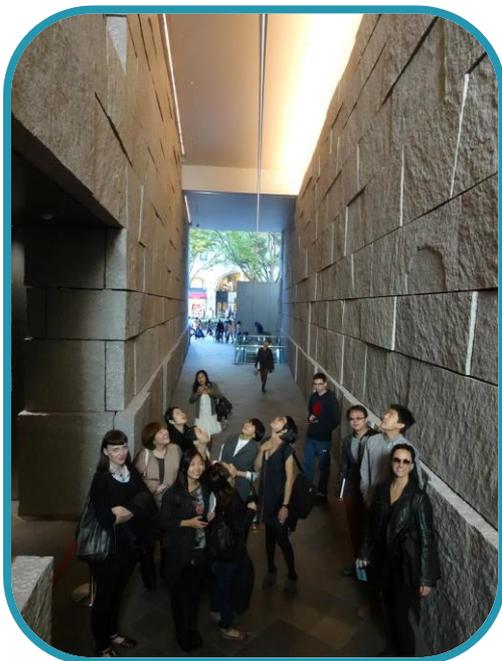
**Links:**

Tess's bio on ICI website:

<http://curatorsintl.org/collaborators/tess-maunder>

## Outcomes

- Tess is now an alumnus of ICI – to be part of this prestigious network will provide her with exciting opportunities for international collaboration on future projects. This was made possible through her participation in the ICI Curatorial Intensive.
- The Intensive is heavily theoretically based – equivalent to Masters level study. Tess significantly expanded her knowledge base through seminars, site visits, individual meetings and roundtable discussions led by a group of international professionals.
- The international theme of the Intensive enabled Tess to learn more about the logistics and policies of working within an international context.
- Tess now has a new network of international peers who she knows and trusts through her participation and networking at the Intensive. This network will be invaluable in planning future projects.



Site visit with ICI participants to Omotoesando Sahsya Kanetanaka (cafe designed by Hiroshi Sugimoto). Photo courtesy of Independent Curators International

## Learnings and reflections

Participation in the ICI Curatorial Intensive helped Tess realise that while Australia's geographic isolation is a challenge for forging an international career, it also brings opportunities to be a 'pioneer' and undertake innovative projects from a unique perspective. Tess noted that Brisbane's international reputation is building and that it has the potential to be a significant arts hub:

*The Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) is internationally recognised as a leader in the exhibition and collecting field. Not just GOMA, but the whole Brisbane cultural ecology is growing in international recognition, and investments in this and other pioneering ventures will enable Brisbane to further leverage its position in the international spotlight.*

Notably, Tess and the other curators at Independent Curators International studied in context the exhibition, *Roppongi Crossing Out of Doubt*, which was co-curated by Brisbane's own Reuben Keehan (Curator, Contemporary Asian Art, QAGOMA).

Tess found the course workload intensive, but as expected she learned a lot in a short amount of time, and it was therefore very efficient in terms of time and cost. However, in retrospect, Tess would have allowed more time, funds permitting, to take in more of the culture of the destination.

Tess was billeted with locals who own a commercial gallery, Misako and Rosen, in Tokyo. This afforded her the opportunity to visit the gallery and learn about how it is run but also to absorb an understanding of the Japanese way of life. Tess would wholeheartedly endorse staying not only with locals, but other local industry peers, to anyone considering a similar program of overseas study.