

Poor response to Triennale

By **RATNOTTAMA SENGUPTA**

NEW DELHI, February 9.

IT may be time for India to do some rethinking about holding an international art event like the Triennale which is to open here next week. An Asian focus might help in fostering fellowship among the eastern countries, and curb alien influences, besides saving the country from the humiliation of being accorded a low priority by many western countries.

This is being advocated by a section of the art community within the country, because of the poor response to India's invitation to participate in the Triennale. Of the 96 countries invited, only 38 are here. This may be higher than the total of the last Triennale, which stood at 37. But three years ago, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Uzbekistan and Russia were all part of one country, USSR, it must be pointed out.

In fact, the response at home also seems to be lukewarm, and the total of entries - foreign and Indian - stands at a third of the previous Triennale, it is learnt. However, the Indian entries are of a fairly high standard, according to the three-member jury which met last week to select the winners.

HURDLES: The short time the organisers of the event got to prepare for the Triennale, and the rising cost of insuring a work are being cited as reasons for this fall

in participation. "While we had at least nine months to prepare for the Triennale in 1991, this time the proposals sent to the ministry in '92 were okayed only in September," informs Mr B.P.Kambhoj, secretary, Lalit Kala Akademi. "And we got the staff (for Triennale) only in January," he adds.

The international exposition of world art, supposed to be held

erally held. However, the international jury agreed that the real reason for this was the arrogance of the developed nations which accord a low priority to the Indian event.

The print installations from Netherlands, "which is to be directly pasted on the wall like any ordinary poster," is cited by the jury as a glaring example of this. The jury comprised Mr Doug Hall, director of the Queensland Art Gallery, Australia, Mr William S. Libberman, curator of the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and the reputed Indian artist, Mr Satish Gujral.

It also seems symptomatic that while an expert from Australia was invited to be in the jury here, India was not even extended an invitation to participate in the Asia Pacific event held in Sydney last year, as an art critic pointed out.

PARTICIPANTS: European countries like Germany, Sweden and Italy are conspicuous by their absence at the Triennale which will be inaugurated by the President of India on February 16. Also missing this year will be Pakistan, which had participated for the first time last year. Neighbouring countries Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Mauritius have also decided to stay away. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, China and Iran are among the participants while Panama and South Africa are fresh participants this time.



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every three years since 1968, "to provide a forum to creative artists of the world to share their endeavours and ideas," has to get a fresh sanction from the government each time.

The participating countries are advised to insure their exhibits comprehensively, informs Mr Kambhoj. Since the insurance charges have gone up, particularly in the developed countries, participation has fallen, it is gen-

Triennale winners selected

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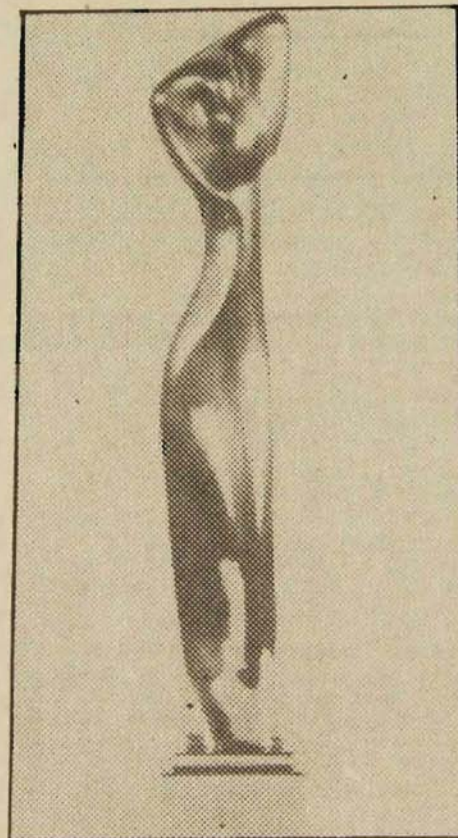
NEW DELHI, February 10. The nine winners of the 8th Triennale India awards have been selected from an incomplete list of entries from 27 countries in addition to India, the host country. This was announced at a press meet here today.

The jury members, Mr Doug Hall from Australia, Mr William Libberman from USA and Indian artist, Mr Satish Gujral, had to select the awardees, without seeing the entries from 13 of the 39 countries participating in the Triennale. Works from countries like USA, Canada, Switzerland, Uzbekistan and Ghana had not reached Delhi when the jury met last week.

The meeting of the jury had already been postponed once because the works had not arrived. December 30 was the last date for sending the works, informed the secretary of Lalit Kala Akademi, and the jury was earlier scheduled to meet on January 18.

UNAVAILABLE FOR VIEWING: In certain cases the works had been received but were unavailable for viewing. Japan, for instance, wanted the works to be opened by their own man who is to arrive here today. France did

not want all its entries to be considered for competition. Whatever the reason, the non-availability of all the entries certainly hampered the selection, admitted Mr Gujral when con-



tacted. "From the brochure we could see that the American entry was a work of great merit" he said, regretting that it had not arrived.

On their part, many of the countries did not know that the jury would decide on the award even before the Triennale opened, said Mr Willem Oorebeek, participating artist from Netherlands who was present this morning. This points to lapses in the functioning of the Akademi which does not have a permanent cell working round the year to take care of the nitty gritty of organising an international art event.

Three Indian artists, Naresh Kapuria, Prem Singh and Rajendra Tiku are among the nine winners of the Triennale awards. Peter Atkins (Australia), Boyd Webb (UK), Karin Birgitte Lund (Denmark), Sukamoto (Indonesia), Mansoor Ul Karim (Bangladesh) and Pimenov Vladimir (Russia) are the other awardees. The jury has withheld one award this year, and made no honourable mentions.

Each of the nine awardees will get a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh or its equivalent in foreign exchange. However they will not get the (14-carat) gold medal usually given. In its place they will receive a brass trophy modelled on a sculpture by Sankho Chaudhuri, executed by Ram Sutar. The awards will be given at the valedictory function of the Triennale, in March.