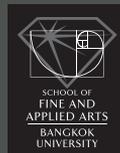




**RE-VISION BANGKOK: NEW MEDIA ART AND INTERACTIVITY  
5<sup>TH</sup> ASIA-EUROPE ART CAMP**

ORGANISED BY



RE-VISION BANGKOK | NEW MEDIA ART AND INTERACTIVITY  
5<sup>TH</sup> ASIA-EUROPE ART CAMP



BANGKOK, 21-30 MARCH 2008

RE-VISION BANGKOK, NEW MEDIA ART AND INTERACTIVITY  
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## THE ASIA-EUROPE ART CAMP PROGRAMME

With a focus on New Media Art, the Asia-Europe Art Camp is a leading initiative of the Young Artists Exchange Programme which serves as a platform for exchange and dialogue among emerging artists.

The Art Camp provides young artists with exposure on the development of new media arts in Asia and Europe through theoretical approaches and practical projects. The focus of the Art Camp is on the creative process and international exchange rather than the final artistic product. This exploration is conducted through a programme of lectures, workshops, discussions, and cultural visits.

The first Asia-Europe Art Camp was held in Paris (1-7 September 2003) in partnership with the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts and dealt with different aspects of contemporary art in Asia and Europe.

In order to give more focus to the Second Asia-Europe Art Camp, ASEF and Arts Initiative Tokyo (AIT), jointly decided

to articulate the Camp around the topic: “Art and New Technology”. The second Art Camp, (22 October - 2 November 2004) gave an insight of multimedia art in Japan, Asia and Europe.

The third Asia-Europe Art camp was held in Bandung, Indonesia, (4 - 12 August 2005) in cooperation with the Bandung Center for Media Arts. The camp was intensively focused on the dialogue of artists’ initiatives space and its relation with new media arts practices. Central points of the Art camp focused on the cultural implication that reconciles arts and technology.

The fourth Asia-Europe Art Camp held in Helsinki, Finland (12-20 June 2006) was organised around sonic awareness using emerging technologies. Utilizing soundscapes, Asian and European artists recreated personal experiences in the urban environment.

The fifth Art Camp was held in Bangkok (21-30 March 2008) and was concentrated around the topics of relational aesthetic and social interactivity.



# **PART ONE: ART CAMP**

CONCEPTS, FIELDWORK, PROJECTS



## INTERACTIVITY AND HYBRID MEDIA JERNEJA REBERNAK

The concept of this artistic exchange, Re-vision Bangkok - New Media Art and Interactivity is based upon the notion of Relational Aesthetics, coined by Nicolas Bourriaud, who considers relational artwork as being an encounter between the viewer and an object or space, in which human relations or behaviours are produced or represented. Thus the thread of the Art camp merged interactivity and locality via the concept of Relational Aesthetics, developing communication tools in the public spaces of Bangkok. Enlightened with local culture and daily life, twenty-two emerging media artists from Asia and Europe, whirled their flow of activities using media technologies, performances and participatory forms of collaboration.

The framework of the Art Camp created a platform enriched with an effusion of reciprocal knowledge, cultural exchange and quests for interactivity through urban public performances. The artist's attitude and interaction with site specific media and materials lead to multifaceted projects composed by re-envisioning the cityscape and its intertwined social

relations within the multitude of localities. Creating methodologies for addressing social dynamics through nomadic elements, the artists opened the public space as a continuum for social engagement via new media art.

Indeed, many narrative media forms fail to create actual relations with the public space and social environment, consequently the experience of the setting and the collective contribution in planning public art often results in predictable modalities. Utilising traditional technologies and forms that created interlinks between old and new media practices, the Art Camp resulted in an attempt to bridge the complexity of cultures and localities.

Interlinking cultural singularities and homogeneity with the everyday, where modern and traditional cultures coexist; artists from Asia and Europe shared and confronted their experience with the city milieu. Capturing collective performances through relevant technologies, the four group projects went further into highlighting unfamiliar and potential

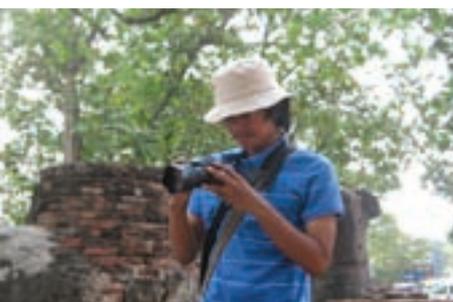
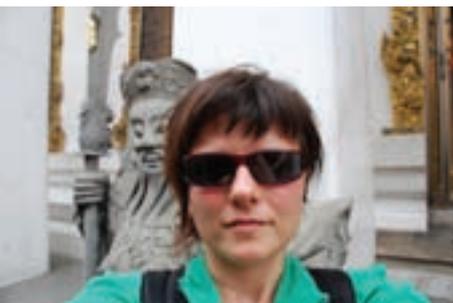
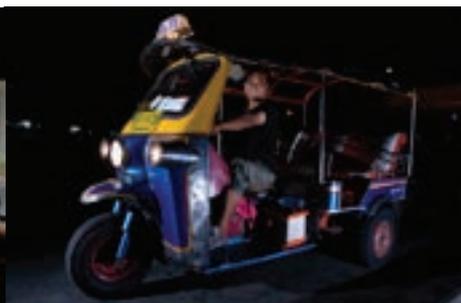
forms of interaction in public spaces. This progression led to the questioning of processes, transmission and display of conceptual art and performances in four different locations of Bangkok: Wat Pho, BTS, Siam square and Khaosan road. This process was supervised by Noraset Vaisayakul and David Kousemaker.

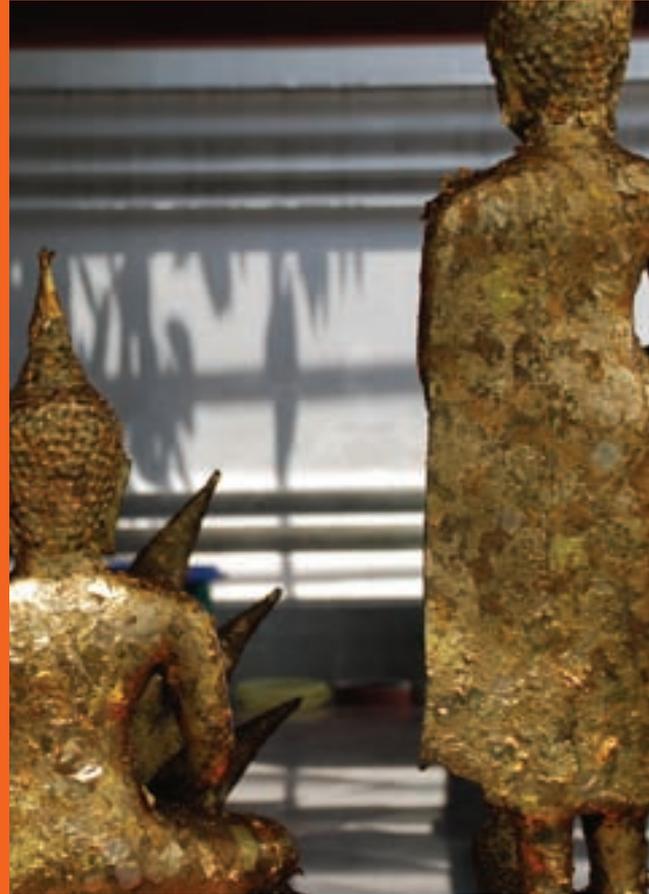
Relational art produces inter-subjective encounters, where meaning is elaborated collectively rather than in the space of individual consumption. The social assemblage of the city and the groups' cultural dynamics uncovered the essence and shape of interactions, methodologies of collaboration and practices; which validated the condition of re-visioning media tools along the cultural patterns of Bangkok. The Art Camp offered different perspectives for understanding the cultural fabric in relation to its locality. The cultural playgrounds between the participants from Asia and Europe unfolded the concepts of relational aesthetics and the urban landscape artistically and humanly.

The New Media Art Camp has pinpointed the rewarding practice of researching media art through collaboration be-

tween artists from Asia and Europe. Specific interventions into four unfamiliar localities outlined different cultural symbiosis and attitudes towards new media processes, revealing rituals of aesthetics that translated into action and performance. The flavour of nomadic methodology has progressed within the condensed experience of the Art Camp, not only as an artistic collaboration, but also as a cultural yarn practiced within the narrative of everyday dialogues and encounters.

As a continuation of this process, the documentation of the Art Camp will bridge the multidimensional revelations of four site-specific, interactive performances. Reflecting the genuine character of the participant's involvement in the fieldwork, the first part of this publication will not only display, but also reveal the discourse and dynamics of the Art Camp fieldworks. Following the second part of this publication, two lectures of the Asia Europe Art Camp flow into a discussion about the concept of media art in Thailand and media art education. The lecturers Chayanoot Silpasart and Keiko Sei are a reference to the progress of portraying new media art and technology in relation to Thai and Asian cultures.





# WAT PHO

Natchaphan Pisarnkorskul, Chung Ling Mok, Tan Dat Nguyen, Miha Horvat, Mihaela Kavdanska

*The Wat Pho group fieldwork produced a horizontal communication situation using audio-visual elements by way of a sitcom performance. Transcribed in its entirety at the end of this section, the sitcom defines the work flow of the Wat Pho group who emphasised irony as a tool to contrast local customs with the commercial atmosphere of Wat Pho.*

Located in the historical centre of Bangkok, in the vicinity of the Royal Palace, Wat Pho is a temple area connected to the everyday life of Bangkok. Paying an entrance fee and offering money in promise of luck and success has been ritualised. Thus, contrasting with the function of Wat Pho as a place for spiritual growth, Wat Pho is often associated with tourism. The disregarded link between religion and money visibly opened the necessity for discussion within the process of the group's relation with the Wat Pho locality. The group explored the two sides of the Wat Pho area: one being the visible, i.e. the brand of the famous temple of the 'Reclining Buddha' / the museum / the massage school, and the other side the invisible Wat Pho. The latter opening the spiritual side of the Wat Pho area. On the one hand reflecting the local people who practice their religion there and on the other highlighting the people who work on the premises of the temple.

## **Coming back to the money and religion issue:**

1. We are still critical, but now the point of view is more complex than just one point having negative connotation. We've assumed to play the role of spin doctors and spin first of all our attitude to the experiences we've had.

2. Spin: from loud speaker to microphone  
NO OUTPUT from us but to offer the possibility for an IN-

PUT, we turned the speakers we would have used for the performance into mics and recording devices.

3. Spin: from having the scenario of people walking around like living speakers, to people who have the choice to walk around, explore and find their own sounds which they consider to be meditative sounds.

During visits to the temple the materialistic side of the temple area was overemphasised. The practice of dropping coins in steel plates, tickling the visitor's ear, asking for the protection and auspiciousness pushed forth the question of the link between money and religion. Therefore the group came to the idea of having various sound performances in different situations in the different locations of Wat Pho, with sounds like field recordings (coins) or prepared material (remake of a song). The audible essence of Wat Pho captured by artists shall become a complex interface, which would yield a different dynamic of the landscape and experience of the area. The result of the group interaction consisted of an invitation for artists to capture sounds of Wat Pho and to transform them into sounds and music for meditation, where the group will, in the future, encourage artists from Asia and Europe to participate in a collaborative production of a CD compilation.

WAT PHO  
BTS  
SIAM SQUARE  
KHAOSAN ROAD

# SIT-COM

WAT PHO VIP SITCOM (COMEDY PLAY)  
<<RE-VISION OF WAT PHO VIP>>

## DO WHAT EVER THE SIGN SAYS

### Boards

- 1 (applause)
- 2 (happy scream)
- 3 (don't cover your eyes)
- 4 (left hand up)
- 5 (sit down)
- 6 (loud mhmhmmh)
- 7 (she talks for 15 minutes)
- 8 (it's the one)
- 9 (body and soul)
- 10 (who is toni?)
- 11 (stand up)
- 12 (commercial break)
- 13 (fasten your seat belts)
- 14 (?)
- 15 (loud yeah)
- 16 (hurray for art camp)

### New scene alias plane landing

**Miha:** Welcome to Bangkok international airport.

1 (applause)

**Jolene:** Prepare your passport, your visas and your money. Open your shirts.

2 (happy scream)

**Ae:** Try to enjoy the country, the people, food and massage. Try to be Thai.

**Miha:** I'm thinking about temples.

3 (loud yeah)

**Max:** If you're in the prepaid student situation without the hidden agenda, feel free and relax on the government expenses. Don't think and don't drink. Interact with technology that is there on the market to be bought or hack the splendid world of new media.

4 (cover your eyes...no)

### New scene alias Tuk tuk

5 (raise your left hand)

6 (sit down)

**Jolene:** This is for the tourist (repeats)

**Ae:** (face-left). You know what they told me here?

**Ae:** (face-right). What did they tell you?

7 (loud mhmhmmh)

**Ae:** (face-left). That if the food is not spicy it is

meant for the tourists.

8 (loud yeah)

**Miha:** I'm thinking about forms in art

**Max:** I think there is too much focus on conceptual stuff. I do appreciate the intelligent aspect, but those geniuses just show such damned simple forms.

**Ae:** People who are not exposed to the art world have no idea and cannot understand that kind of high conceptual art. I have a feeling that if we do that, we target a niche market and separate ourselves from the mass audience.

### \*\*\* Commercial Break \*\*\*

### New scene alias a café/dinner situation restaurant

**Jolene:** Have you ever been to Hong Kong?

**Ae:** No.

9 (she talks for 15 minutes)

**Jolene:** So, what's there for you to come here?

**Ae:** Have some lunch.

**Jolene:** Ever since arriving in Bangkok, having attended all the lectures and workshops, there is a weird thought which comes to mind. New Media is always about technology and technological stuff - the way people react and emphasize this is only in technical terms. From then onwards, it seems

that whatever is technically oriented becomes new & good. In a way, this leads to a tendency of people overacting with technology but undermining traditional craftsmanship, let's call that technique. For me, I am quite frustrated with the situation of having one new medium overtaking an old medium. Though the impact of crossing 2 media may not be paralleled, there should still be room for both of them to survive. One presentation refreshed me a lot. Putting traditional arts practice together with new media technology is definitely one of the ways out.

10 (it's the one)

**Ae:** Goes away to chat on his mobile, Jolene: Keeps talking to the air. If techniques and technology can work hand in hand to achieve something, augmented experience or physical outcomes could, therefore, be concluded.

11 (body and soul)

**Jolene:** (point to Mika's card and respond) Yes. That's true. For me, I am not good at picking up either craftsmanship techniques or new technology; I am in a way which is kind of like in the middle of both.

**Miha:** Ah, I saw the great history of temples in Ayudhaya and destructed temples there are like a visualization of unbalanced concept and form. The actual temples there in Ayudhaya are not interest-

ing to me compared to the Wat Pho, even if I know less about its history than the Ayudhaya ones. The Wat Pho architecture is so well protected, so beautiful and its form totally grabs my attention.

### New scene alias student dinner

**Max:** Toni told me that there are new kinds of oppression, a kind of immaterial oppression.

**Mika:** 12 (loud yeah)

**Miha:** Toni said, that exposed are the immaterial workers in the field of new technologies and new agendas and that this oppression comes out of global flexibility and wild mobility of the working market.

**Mika:** 13 (who is Toni?)

**Max:** But who is Toni?

**Ae:** What do you think about art?

**Jolene:** I consider art as a woman. The form is like her body and appearance. The concept is her mind and intelligence. And I think me and most people prefer beautiful woman. Movies, shows & magazine covers, hot women are the first choice. We do have to consider about the form.

**Miha:** A new guy who's repeating the old things. Almost like a monk with the mobile phone and with the knowledge of programming. The guy with all the answers and with the power to manipulate.

**Mika:** 14 (stand up)

**Max:** Sounds just like the drug dealer, who is controlling the situation, because he possesses all of the stuff.

**Mika:** 15 (sit down)

**Miha:** No. Toni is a loving man. He is sitting and smiling, enjoying and knowing. Not suffering and dying with a smile on some wooden thing. Not being in a kind of ego trip of his own great ideas and things to do. Walking around, producing sense.

**Mika:** 16 (fasten your seat belts)

**Max:** Toni also said, we have to look at the pacifistic army through the irony.

**Miha:** Is Toni critical?

**Max:** Who is Toni?

**Ae:** So you know what?

**Jolene:** Have no idea about it man!

**Ae:** From talking to you, I'm realizing that concept, form or whatever. Just follow the trend and learn to have fun with it. The people like concepts. Do it. They like creativity in the technology and new media, just go for it. Smart business, just satisfy our customers.

\*\*\* Commercial Break \*\*\*

New scene alias plane leaving



# BIOGRAPHIES

## “Ae” Natchaphan Pisarnkorskul | Thailand

Natchaphan is a 24 year old Visual Effect Artist based in Bangkok, Thailand where he graduated from Bangkok University in 2007. He is presently working with Cutting Edge Ltd. in the television commercial and filmmaker division. Natchaphan is interested in interactive design, music, diving and collecting 70's space age objects.

## “Jolene” Chung Ling Mok | China

Jolene C.L Mok is an artist and researcher based in Hong Kong. She takes photography, video and new media as her creative platform. She is particularly interested in active/participatory research/projects that highly emphasise interaction and collaboration among participants (in all contexts) to develop mutual educative relationships enabling all, including her, to learn and grow.

## “Max” Tan Dat Nguyen | Vietnam

Tan Dat Nguyen studied Bachelor of Design Multimedia Systems at RMIT International University Vietnam and has worked professionally with still images, interactivity, video, sound and animation including: photography, video, web page construction and 3D animation in his projects. In 2008, he exhibited for the first time in Ho Chi Minh City in a group photography exhibition called ‘Scratch Disks are Full’ as part of The Month of Images, organised by the French Consulate.

## Miha Horvat | Slovenia

Born in Maribor, Slovenia, Miha Horvat holds a BA of cultural anthropology from the Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana and MAF of New Media from University for Applied Arts, Vienna. Currently he's doing his MAS from philosophy and theory of visual culture at IHS Koper. Since 2000 he is a member of artistic alliance son:DA.

## “Mika” Mihaela Kavdanska | Bulgaria

Mihaela is an artist whose training is embedded in the extensive range of artistic resources of the late 90's. A Bulgarian artist, based in Bucharest since 1995, she holds a BA in Fine Arts (Painting) from The Art University in Bucharest. She is extremely interested in renewing artistic language and mastering both traditional and new media. She appeals to various mediums - painting, photography, installation, video, graphic design, interactive installations and projects as tools to convey artistic essence. Mika is also the founder of the AVmotional Festival, one of the most articulated hypostases of contemporary urban culture.



# BTS

Adithap Duksukkaew, Andreas Siagian, Branko Andric, Jette Hye-Jin Mortensen, Darragh O' Callaghan, Rares Kövesdi

*Through many divergences of opinion, perspective and concept, our group absorbed an invaluable learning experience during the process of the Art Camp. Now that all the different perspectives have been laid out, we have really had the opportunity to see and understand such different backgrounds and contexts working with art, rather than compromises; this can be a true beginning for new approaches.*

Using advanced technology, optimum infrastructure and high security systems, the Bangkok Train System (BTS) or “sky train” is one of the most advanced mass transportation systems in Bangkok. BTS allows masses of people to fluctuate extensively in relation to relative space densities. It also creates another variable consisting of a space shared by diverse cultures within a specific time. The understanding of sociology and psychology of the BTS is represented in our work by way of approaching new forms of space, time and environment. Through collaborative production in the context of media art and interactivity, our group researched different social and cultural issues.

After the first visit to BTS, we started a discussion with the topic of the transport system as the action or means of moving people from one place to another, linking one place to another by means of travel. The group found it interesting that everything in the universe is continuously moving in translation, rotation, revolution, transformation and evolution with no absolute reference system. The discussion started to get interesting as we began to have divergent personal ideas related to the undiscovered topics, elements of the BTS space that will respond to each implementation of their works; in relation to the technologies and practices, which facilitates art and culture production.

## Crossing Time

The Art Camp cultural visit to Ayyudhya generated interest of how dur-

ing the golden age, Thai people used water transportation as their main resource for the economy, socio-cultural exchanges, and military power. Our group initiated the concept “The past meets the present” where a visualization of water transportation is presented in the BTS for the audience of the sky train. Throughout the majority of Thailand’s history, boats have been the main form of transportation and people still use the “leaduan” (express boat), and the “lea kram fa” (crossing boat) for everyday transportation, however, cars, trains and scooters are increasingly shaping the connection to the city space. With this project, we wanted to combine the pace of traditional and new transportation, and give the BTS train the view and natural noises from the environment of the river. Hearing Thai people describe their view from the boats, captures the physical connection between vision, body, water, boat, motor and sound.

**Medium: 3 laptops, 3 looped DVD’s, 1 portable CD player, 3 performers.**

Trains are moving spaces sealed from the outside, on one hand a technological environment in a confined space, making the train move at a constant and smooth pace with almost no sound besides the pre-installed TV commercials. On the other hand, to experience the noisy, open boat, freely roaming the river, with a view of the river bank; creates a sense of being in a mixed gallery of contemporary Thailand.

The main aim of this intervention is to change the temporality of the BTS train. Efficient transportation has erased the journey as an occasion for sto-

rytelling, which the group revived for the BTS audience. The performers enter the train and sit down in a row on the seats. One of the performers starts the DVD/CD player. The sound is background noise of the river and people from Bangkok who still use the riverboats as transportation; describing how it is to take the boat and what they see whilst taking it.

### Space motion

The mind cannot be transported through physical movement. It can only be stimulated by the sensory perception that the body receives during movement and then via the interpretation of these sensations by thought itself. Through the duration of travelling to a destination, the public has to spend the time waiting. We observed how people who travel individually choose to busy themselves by listening to music, thinking or sleeping. It was interesting to note that their minds would wander about occupying another space different to their current physical space. Using audio and visual simulation, our team approached the people inside the train during transit.

### The performance

The performance was produced inside the BTS train, reflecting the way people unite under one destination and mode of travel regardless of cultural diversities. We wanted to create a link between different cultures and backgrounds, to show the bond that can be created within such a short period of time. Two people from different cultures, Jette Hye Jin (originally from Korea) and Darragh O' Callaghan (Ireland), came together in the centre of the train to create a dance performance routine. As energy was created between the two performers, interchanging, rhyth-

mic body motions start to simulate and develop in an organic manner, communicated only through eye contact. When the train stopped, so too did the performance actions, with each performer going their separate ways. This highlighted the transitional time spent on the BTS and the many walks of life that converge on the BTS. We found that the more intense the performance became, the more the audience engaged with the piece.

### “No Art in BTS”

These words were the expression of how our group encountered difficulties in using the facilities in BTS. There was an expression that we practically couldn't do anything in BTS due to the tight security system. But we could not accept this state of banning art production in BTS. If we wanted to use the audio/visual system inside of the train, a large amount of money should have been provided for renting the audio/visual system of the train. Beside the main function of the audio/visual system, announcing the arrival at a certain destination, the a/v system is also used for the advertising of commercial products. In addition to this, BTS also provides spaces for commercial advertisements at the stations.

The idea was to use advertisements as an element in approach to collaborative art production. The subjects used for the advertisements are the people using BTS; people who are so caught up in both the system and daily routine that they fail to observe the environment that surrounds them. We observed how people in BTS have become oblivious to other people, social issues and interaction with the environment. This advertisement idea also counters how the art production is made subconsciously by the people in BTS. Through the advertisement kit, such as stickers and flyers containing photography, the people using BTS will discover the pres-

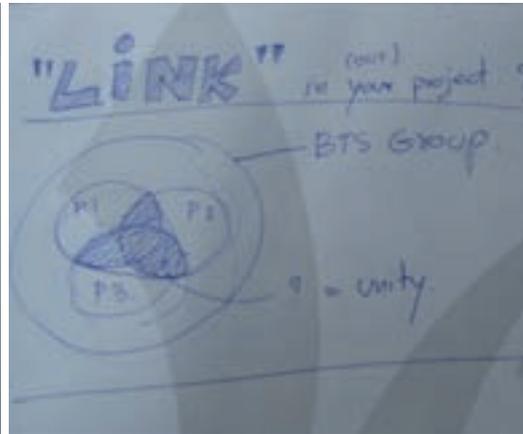
ence of something or someone in BTS that was otherwise hidden from them sub-consciously.

Additionally, it was fascinating what we discovered whilst observing the presence of interesting individuals in BTS during advertisement production. Through the use of photography, the group successfully captured interesting subject matter and succeeded in revealing BTS users. The observational experience gave the group a better understanding of the post modern society and culture of Bangkok.

The concept of the “No Art in BTS” performance is about three people creating a public performance through the advertisement of how they perceive the lack of

art in BTS. The advertisement composed of photography by Adhitep Duksukkaew (Thailand), Rares Kövesdi (Romania) and Andreas Siagian (Indonesia) draws attention to the people using the BTS system. The photography would be used for both video and printed material such as stickers and flyers. The “No Art in BTS” advertisements are meant to bring awareness to people that there are many interesting individuals in the space of BTS, which most commuters fail to observe due to their daily routines.

Three people as the main performers would implement the project. Two of them, using a portable television to display animation of the advertisement, while the other performer hands out the printed materials to the people in BTS.



WAT PHO  
BTS  
SIAM SQUARE  
KHAOSAN ROAD



# BIOGRAPHIES

## **“Job” Adithep Duksukkaew | Thailand**

Adithep (22) is a student of the Innovative Media Design, Department of Art and Design, Faculty of Architecture and he is based in Songkla, Thailand. He is interested in a variety of media such as interactive media, music and synthesis sound, films, and traditional art. Currently he is studying and experimenting on the role of social communication and the form of folk art called Nang-Talung, which integrates many art practices such as leather cutting, painting, performance and the art of speech, commonly practised in Southern Thailand.

## **Andreas Siagian | Indonesia**

Since 1995, Andreas Siagian (b. 1981) is based Yogyakarta, where he studied Civil Engineering at Atma Jaya Yogyakarta. He has worked on sub-culture media on building local creative communities where he has also contributed in establishing the electronic music scene. Currently he is actively involved in New Media Art projects and events with the House of Natural Fiber. Andreas also gives workshops and presentations related to New Media Art at the universities in Yogyakarta.

## **Branko Andric | Austria**

Branko has been based in Vienna, Austria since 1991 (b. 1983 Novi Sad). Studying media informatics at the University of Technology, his special interest in media theory and art gave him the motivation to study fine art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Department of Art and Digital Media. Branko participates in several cross-culture workshops in the field of film and video production and his latest works are inspired by the theory of space, film and media.

## **Jette Hye-Jin Mortensen | Denmark**

Artist, filmmaker, musician and activist, Jette was born 1980 in Seoul, South Korea. She lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark. Co-founder and member of the artist group “UFOLab” (Unidentified Foreign Object Laboratorium) with 5 Korean adopted artists from Denmark and Sweden, Jette has organised exhibitions, educational publications, TV programs and projects. A member of YNKB – an activist artist collective, she is the co-organiser of festivals, alternative TV, exhibitions and talks. Jette is also the owner of production company BamBoo Film.

## **Darragh O’ Callaghan | Ireland**

First approaching 3D, before then progressing onto lens based media, Darragh studied in the IADT Dun Laoghaire. Multiculturalism, immigration, and themes centred on the topic of “home” were all topics of research, which gave her the opportunity to interact with multicultural environments. She formed the Vid Kid art program, and participated in the ARC cultural development centres.

## **Rares Kövesdi | Romania**

Rares Kövesdi studies at the Theatre and Television Faculty of The Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania; majoring in Cinematography, Photography and Media. He is the author of numerous short and feature length scripts and is president of the Romanian Nisi Masa scriptwriting competition jury. His interests and activities successfully span over all the major fields of audio-visual production, from scriptwriting to directing, editing, digital effects and even stop motion animation. Whenever he needs to get inspired and refocus Rares returns to photography.



# SIAM SQUARE

Boonsri Tangtrongsin, Jazmi Izwan Jamal, Bat-Amgalan Lkhagyavaj, Adam Sharples, Maria Guiomar Côte-Real, Lisa Koiso

## Artwork Concept:

Our group investigated the multiplicity of Siam Square, exploring its farthest corners and getting behind the advertising and consumerist landscape of Siam, revealing the hidden variables of the shopping and entertainment centre of Bangkok. Reflecting the group's comprehension of the blend between traditional and modern influences in Siam square, the observations and discussions highlighted the differences between the giant billboards and rushed architecture of Siam, confronting it with the contemplative and noiseless character of its traditional and ritualistic landscape. We spoke to the head monk, Phra Ajjan Thavorn Jittathavorn, of the Siam Buddhist temple Wat Pathumwanaram Rajaworavihara, looked closely at the range of people in the district and attempted to develop an understanding of the lifestyles and dichotomies inherent in Siam.

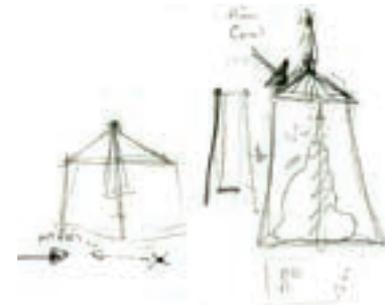
By utilizing a symbol of Theravada Buddhism, the umbrella-tent used by forest monks and which symbolises the Buddhist family, our team created mobile islands of contemplation which distort the occupant's view of the outside world and provide a personal space for contemplation within the busy streets. The end result is a 10 minute film archive of a performance on the streets of Siam aimed at bringing awareness to the loss of faith, generosity and contemplation that a busy capitalist, consumer based society breeds. Rather than being received as an iconoclastic act of subversion, the performance achieved an iconodule status by transcending spoken language; instead, communicating with the people directly, via pre-existing tradition and culture.

## Exhibition:

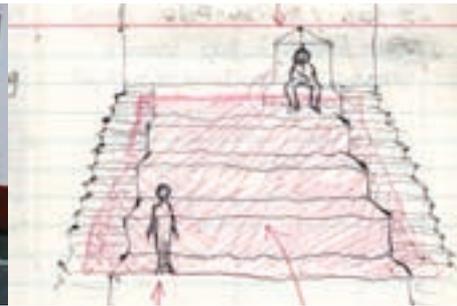
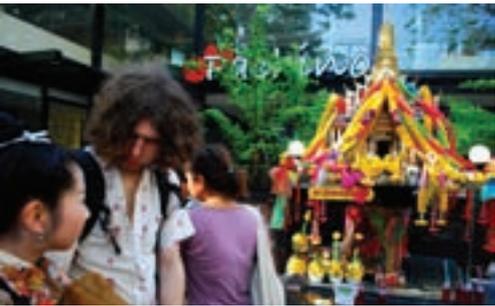
For the exhibition at Bangkok University, an umbrella tent was suspended from the ceiling onto a step of the event stair to give the audience the opportunity to experience the view from within the umbrella-tent. The archive film was projected onto a large screen and an additional performance was played out in front of the screen. Lisa choreographed the performance, also featuring Adam, which re-enacted the relationship between the temple and the people of Siam. Adam represented the temple and held an umbrella-tent in a stationary position while Lisa's physical performance moved about the space before final reconciliation between people and temple.

## Soundtrack:

Consists of sounds collected in Siam throughout the week; these were then arranged with very little processing (simple EQ) to build up a bed of ambient sound that would increase in intensity before falling away. This was produced with the exhibition in mind, with Lisa's performance responding to the evolving soundtrack.



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## INTERVIEW WITH PHRA AJJAN THAVORN JITTATHAVORN

We are a group of artists working in the 5th Asia-Europe Art Camp, called Re-vision Bangkok. The program includes artists from 19 Asian and European countries working together in the different districts of Bangkok. Our group is working in the Siam zone. After we surveyed the area, which is full of shops and people, we would like to find out about the core of Siam. We started to look at something more static that might give us deeper idea about Siam. Then we heard that this temple has been here a long time before Siam became a shopping centre. We think that it would be interesting to hear your perspective about Siam and also the relationship between the temple and the rest of the area.

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** I am going to answer only questions about the temple and Buddhism because that is what I really know about and it is not a monk's business to criticise society.

**Siam group:** When did the temple originate?

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** About 50 years ago

**Siam group:** Has the Siam area changed a lot since the temple was built?

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** Yes, of course. When the temple was built there were only trees around. Now, there are a lot of buildings instead.

**Siam group:** Do you think the temple has any influence on the Siam area?

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** Yes, I think so, because this is the only temple around here. People who live or work in this area usually come to this temple. If people want to go to other temples it would take a while for them to travel there.

**Siam group:** What do you think about the location of the temple that is now located in the middle of a shopping centre? I mean with noise and traffic. Does it affect the temple in any way or even the people who want to come here?

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** No, I don't think so. If people want to come to the temple they just come.

**Siam group:** Since a lot of youngsters come to Siam, do many usually come here?

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** Mostly, they come on school

trips, but to come of their own will, it is only a few. Most people coming here are about 30-50 years old.  
**Siam group:** Have you tried to encourage teenagers to come here?

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** Yes, we have, but it is still difficult to get teenagers to come here.

**Siam group:** Will you give up?

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** No, never. This is my job. I won't stop.

**Siam group:** Last question, we discussed in our group that when we enter into this temple area, it is such a large contrast from the chaos outside in Siam. Instead of being noisy and crowded, here it is quiet and relaxed. We were thinking of building something like a contemplation room in the Siam area so that people can really get in there and look at what is going on around them from the inside and be with themselves. What do you think about the idea?

**Phra Ajaan Thavorn:** For me, if you want to do something with a good intention, just go on and do it.

Bangkok, 27.03.2008

# BIOGRAPHIES

## Boonsri Tangtrongsin | Thailand

Boonsri (b.1978) graduated in Fine Arts from Bangkok University. For four years she worked as an art instructor at several schools in Bangkok and continued her art practices with a focus on sculpture and installation. In 2004 she studied classical animation in Sweden and continued her Fine Arts education on a Master level at the Malmo Art Academy (Sweden). Her projects are mostly about combining story telling and animation.

## Jazmi Izwan Jamal | Malaysia

Jazmi is a Malaysian based new media artist working as a freelance creative designer and sound artist. He studied Creative Multimedia, majoring in Digital Media at Multimedia University, Malaysia. His theories for success are “Creative, Experimental, Abstract, Simplicity, Aesthetic and FUN”. Jazmi is a member of the Experimental Musicians and Artists Cooperative Malaysia (EMACM). He performs using computer technology and sonic waves to create his sound and he is also one of the committee in local design community named “Kakireka”. His artwork is inspired by designers and artists around the world, especially Toshio Iwai, Joshua Davis, Camille Utterback and famous companies.

## Bat-Amgalan Lkhagvajav | Mongolia

Bat-Amgalan Lkhagvajav obtained his Bachelor in Radio Communication Engineering at the Mongolian Technical University of Science and Technology in 2004. Since then, he worked for the Multimedia Company for about 4 years and learned on his own about directing, camera work, editing and motion graphics, animations and visual effects. Currently he is working for an American NGO as a media consultant and is about to start directing his own films and video art works.

## Adam Sharples | United Kingdom

Adam Sharples is a media artist from Preston, UK. Conceptualizing aspects of nature & philosophy via installations, films and sound works, Adam communicates the (un)common connections between science & art, individuals & society, intellect & intuition, subject & object; and addresses these polarities in a variety of settings and contexts. Adam achieves this through a number of different methods and themes such as; acoustic ecology, feedback loops, found-sounds, user interactivity and relational aesthetics.

## Maria Guiomar Côrte-Real | Portugal

Maria is a student at the Fine Arts Academy University of Oporto, Portugal. In 2007 she studied conceptual art at the Fine Arts Academy in Prague. During her free time she works for an environmental association, is actively interested in issues of urban nature design and is concerned about environmental, social and cultural phenomena.

## Lisa Koiso | Japan

A Japanese artist, Lisa Koiso (b.1982) is alumni of Musashino Art University. She is working on performance art using woollen yarn installation sculptures, producing stage forms crossing performance and space. Lisa's works become spaces for mental sceneries ready to be explored through multiple senses. Her philosophy mostly concentrates on the theme of “Life”.



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# KHAOSAN ROAD

Preeyachanok Ketsuwan, Earl John Philip M. Drilon, Timo Toots, Birte Endrejat, Maris Lagzdins

*In my opinion, the majority of tourists come to Khaosan road because they want to visit and touch authentic Thai culture. The real conditions of what comes close to Thai culture will be the Phad Thai Trolleys, Thai Massage salons and even hill tribes who sell jewellery and wooden toys, but Thai people don't buy such items because it doesn't represent authentic Thai culture.* - "Kawtoo" Preeyachanok Ketsuwan

Khaosan road is a tourists' ghetto. Despite the crude, derogative, and exploitative connotations of that sentence, there is a sensitive eye and much vibrancy that could be discovered at this tourist squalor of contemporary Thai society. Electrical billboards and sizzling sounds begin at dawn and last until late night hours. The road itself is a plethora of touristic clutter: one shop/bar/restaurant/hostel situated one after the other with no particular order. This road is a very active and vibrant community in its own right; where local and foreign people alike commune and interact daily in a fringe habitat filled with commercialism, transience, relaxation, discovery, and amusement. With this in mind, constant change is a given, where transience becomes a vital part of a transition between people and the road.

Amidst this chaos, there is a pre-school hidden against a background of billboard clutter and commercial noise. This school, Phimarnvit, has been situated on this road since 1919, and is run by a Muslim family who has had a long enduring tradition of religious, political, and racial tolerance. The discovery of this school has given our group a fresher perspective towards the road itself, providing a contrast and adding significant meaning to the road. The fieldwork presentation of Khaosan road group was a result of the group's immersion with the school: interviews, befriending people, playing with the children, attending their ceremonies, as well as sitting in their classes. The simplified documentary on the school was a result of this immersion with the road; however was derived from a long group process that was as tumultuous as the Khaosan road itself. The process of documenting

the school and the process of working with the road is as important and interesting as the actual process of our group's individual conflicts and approaches towards the task given.

The 2-minute trailer seemingly familiarises us with the family-run school and its daily life. In many ways it is a rough sketch of a myriad of possible pages, chapters, stories, and relationships between the school, its inhabitants and the road. This sketch was done with the intention of expanding and evolving the initial result (the trailer and the various collected documentation) into a full-blown documentary about the school and its relationship with the Khaosan road community.

## The Khaosan Road School

The Phimarnvit school follows the lineage of family tradition of passing the school duties from one generation to the next. Mrs Lalita Phimarnvit, the head dean is a judge and an educator. Which one she considers as a profession or a passionate hobby from the two, I don't know. The school itself is a small, dilapidated, primary school offering the usual prescribed curriculum in Thailand. However, what sets it apart is that it offers various interestingly peculiar classes such as: foreign language classes (English, Japanese, Chinese and Italian), they do short time workshops like massage, hair braiding, and henna tattooing. These extra classes are taught by

a unique set of volunteers, usually travellers themselves in Khaosan, though some are professional tutors or teachers, who are eager enough to offer their skills with minimal or no salary at all. As my group mate, Birte, puts it: “The very remarkable thing about this school is the children participating in each others religious practices. In my opinion it’s the base for freedom and wisdom, and it seems to be one of the most modern pedagogic systems. You can feel this spirit in the way the family runs this private (self paid) institute. It certainly points out that in the middle of a commercially established place someone is giving an impressive example of non-commercialisation and taking the chance of a situation by involving the development, instead of just resisting the pressure of commerce and the backside of globalisation. In this very place the most valuable good is handed over sometimes even without payment.”

In one sense, one could see the school being an “island of its own,” though this label would do them no real justice since they are active members of the community. How then would one explain the extra-curricular classes offered? The school seems to have evolved through the years roughly at the same pace as the road’s evolution, inspired by its surroundings; keeping themselves updated with the advancements of trends and tourism of Khaosan road. However, the documentary trailer on this school let alone the sudden shift of focus towards the school and not the road, was a surprising turn in our group’s tumultuous process of finding the right solution amidst our varied and different initial approaches towards the Khaosan road.

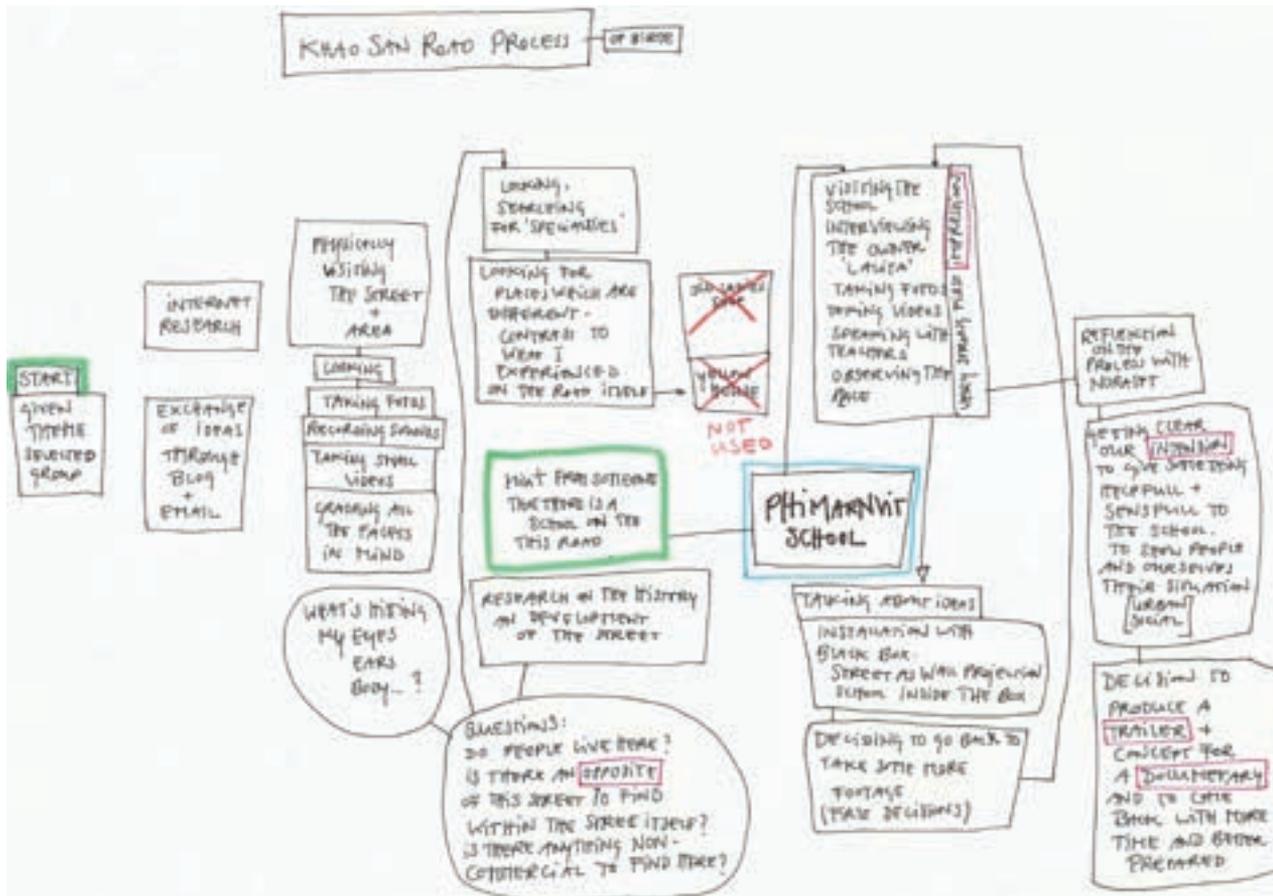
### The Process

I think it is best to talk about the context of the presentation through the process on which the series of events that led to it, in retrograde. By turning it upside down, I attempt to avoid straying too far away

from the main result, also to discover things as opposed to narrating it chronologically.

The trailer for the documentary was a result of a sudden decision we as a group undertook in the very end. Having already enough footage and sound bites to make a trailer, we were clear that we were going to forget all previous ideas and plans we all had with this footage we collected. We decided to “forget about a final result or an art piece” and present a socio-cultural documentary film instead. We decided that we should also “try to get to know more about the people’s motives, focusing on the connection and how they affected each other.” It was not just a simple socio-cultural documentary; we wanted to make it more intimate and personal, between us, the documentary filmmakers, and the people who populate the school.

The day before the public presentation at Bangkok University, we had a pivotal group meeting with Noraset, the artistic advisor, who wanted to check up on our progress before the presentation. We presented him the idea of what we would be doing: a video installation that would show a visual contrast between the school and Khaosan road. Simply put, there would be a black box with a small LCD screen and headphones that would be positioned in the middle of the exhibition space. The video playing inside the box would be footage showing daily life in the school. The exhibition space would then consist of 3 projections of footage on the walls and the floor, familiarising the audience with 3 different angles of Khaosan road. The exhibition space with the black box would be filled with the recorded ambient sound taken from the road, bombarding the viewer with its noise – both visually and aurally. This would be an explicit contrast between the school and the road that we all wanted to explore. There had been unsettled disagreements whether or not to present the installation in a gallery or a non-gallery space, within Khaosan road itself. But the gallery exhibition was too unfeasibly expensive to pull off; we revised the idea by involving performance



and intervention, by taking the black box and deciding to exhibit it in the road itself; literally getting people's attention towards the existence of the school. In turn, elements would be added or taken out with the installation idea, without resolution. It was inevitable to realise that our attempts on this project were merely superficial, and did not prove anything significant, but just presented contrasts and comparisons, and failed attempts on placing depth and meaning. This realization would change all our ideas and tighten our knots as a group.

From the beginning we all had different approaches and ideas and couldn't really agree completely on what to do with the Khaosan road project, even from the beginning. Hence, we re-assessed the material and data we had collected, and decided to forgo all initial ideas and make a documentary film trailer instead.

Initially Maris and I suggested leaving out the school. Birte was bent on discovering the 'opposite' of the road within the setting itself, by observing and researching the road's historical and present contexts. Preeyachanok was more concerned on challenging the road's "fake Thai-ness", since she had mixed feelings towards the road and had a completely different point of view –that of a citizen of Thailand. I was more interested in leaving out socio-political issues and focus more on the psycho-geography of the road, by seeing the road as an important trading stop, like on a trade route (except it pertains this very strong notion of touristic trade), and how it unites and dislocates groups of people and how they relate to each other, also on finding new ways of awareness on urban landscape. Timo and Maris were more open to discovery and receptive towards the road by having little preconceptions towards it.

After having spent days researching and being in Khaosan road, we all had mixed half-baked ideas and proposals with potential, but all proved to be dead ends. It took us a longer time to figure out what to

decide on doing than researching and collecting data on the road. Until we discovered the school, then Preeyachanok proposed an idea for a 'black box' video installation which we focused on realizing first of all; consequently one thing led to the other – the rest is history.

It is also important to note, that we are not documentary filmmakers. We come from different backgrounds and have different aesthetics and methods. Preeyachanok studied traditional Thai art in school and is more interdisciplinary in approach; Birte is mostly into process-based installation and performance; Maris is a photographer and designer; Timo is into programming and interactive installations, and I never formally studied art, but have a self-taught multi-faceted interdisciplinary media art approach. We had come to a point where all rivers merge towards the ocean. Diversity has proved its worth, the process towards things have made us forget our own individualities, our aesthetics and jumped into a thing with which we were all unfamiliar. I think it all came to point in one direction by unforeseen circumstance. There is merit to that discovery. It was as if we were all unconsciously mapping out our differences and these connections were unconsciously done with a logic we couldn't foresee. Like Khaosan road or any other road, the road is a pathway for connecting different points on a map.

Art should sometimes be viewed as a map -- mapping out different connections, movements, routes, ins and outs of traditions; locations and dislocations between various histories, cultures, contexts, and traditions. Like vital trade routes, things have the power to cross-pollinate and fertilise each other, expand the reach and deepen productions with the increased richness that comes with drawing new and unexpected connections. Mapping exploits contrast, digs-up unexpected links and builds spontaneous bridges into the unforeseen. Maps encourage boldness. They're like cryptic love letters. They make anything seem possible.

On behalf of Khaosan road group, *Tengal, Manila 2008*



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# BIOGRAPHIES

## **Preeyachanok Ketsuwan | Thailand**

Preeyachanok finished her first major degree in Traditional Thai Art from Silpakorn University in March 2008. She is the only student in her department who focuses on interdisciplinary art. She explores Thai feminine culture, which has been handed over from one generation to another, from her mother to herself, being the source of limitations in her beliefs and way of living. She uses various art media including photography, VDO, 3D objects, and performance. Other than exploring feminine culture existing in Thai society, she is interested in working with local communities.

## **“Tengal” Earl John Philip M. Drilon | Philippines**

Tengal is an interdisciplinary artist, based in Manila, Philippines, working with sound, music, video, film, performance, and computers. He curates, organises and performs in various new media shows in the Philippines. He founded and organises SABAW –a Manila-based artist initiative and non-profit platform for all kinds of information and communication carried via modern electronic media. SABAW also represents a cross-section of new media artists, performance/interdisciplinary artists, and contemporary musician-composers who find it difficult to release their material through more conventional channels.

## **Timo Toots | Estonia**

An Estonian artist, currently on an exchange in Iceland, Timo is a Computer Science university dropout. He realised that the school of informatics was using the right tools, but in the wrong way. He found the output to his ideas through art and photography was his first medium, which enlightens his mode of observation. Since then Timo has been working through several mediums via interactive installations, mostly stimulating the viewer and the artist to transform roles.

## **Birte Endrejat | Germany**

Born in 1979 in Langen / Germany, Birte studies Fine Arts at the University of the Arts, Bremen since 2004, in the class of Professor Katharina Hinsberg and Professor Yuji Takeoka. Her work focuses on installation art in combination with action or performance. During her studies she actively participated in the international projects “Bremen-Nagoya art project”, including two exhibitions, in Nagoya/Japan 2005 and Bremen 2006 and in Switzerland for the “dazwischen projekt #1 and #2” 2007-2008 including a collaboration project between Lahore / Pakistan, Cambridge / USA and Bremen / Germany, 2007-2008.

## **Maris Lagzdins | Latvia**

Maris is based in Riga, Latvia, studying his final year at the Art Academy of Latvia in the Department of Visual Communications. Maris is also working as a freelance artist/designer and photographer; he has taken part in various art projects and workshops in Latvia and abroad.



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**PART TWO: REFERENCE**  
LECTURES, EXPERIENCES

## FROM MESSAGE TO MEDIA: THE POSSIBILITIES IN THAI CONTEMPORARY ART BY CHAYANOOT SILPASART

### :: What is Media art?

When we discuss the term media, it can be used in a variety of contexts.

In the area of communications, media refers to the channel that connects or something used to communicate, which is where its context links with the word 'message'. From the perspective of art, we might say that art is a process which has its own certain language. In this sense, art can be a communicated or conveyed artists' idea, what I call 'message', through their chosen medium – for example, painting, sculpture, photography, or video. This message is conveyed to the public through visual language that is understandable to others or that art is capable of communicating. Artists are always looking for new forms in which to express themselves and their artistic vision and some of them see new media as a potential method. In other words, when artists recognise the potential of new media to convey their ideas in striking new ways; they would use technology in a greater role in changing how artistic media is used.

Today new media has opened up big opportunities for artists to express things perceived through the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. This is why art is stimulating and exciting. The new media respond fully to the human imagination. The technology and editing techniques employed thrill us in completely unexpected ways. In short, new media has pushed art into areas where it has never ventured before. Apparently, the term of new media was discussed at a seminar at the Ogaki Biennial in Japan (a new media international art exhibition, showcasing new media artwork including interactive digital-based and installation art, such as electronic media sounds, censorship, etc.). It was found that new media art from Asia had particular characteristics and possibilities that distinguished it from Western media art. In the West, media art is based on scientific and technological developments that have grown out of integrated bodies of knowledge; including science, engineering, communications, history, sociology and art. It was also noted that no single definition was possible to describe what media art is; since culture and language affected how these new media were employed in different countries. In other words, the notion of what new media is can expand to take in social and cultural differences that correspond to our own definition of the term. The answers to these questions reveal the specific characteristics that make it impossible to compare the work of a Thai artist with a Western artist because they are grounded in different contexts.

Despite the influence of Western concepts on Thai artists and their implicit participation in today's globalised culture, we cannot expect Thai artists to work entirely

within a Western framework because Thai culture is not grounded in science and technology. Thailand is an agrarian culture, not an industrial one, and therefore its art is different from the West. Thai artists stand in the shadow of Westerners; who have already developed a certain expertise. Thai artists will not grow and cannot expect to join the ranks of the Western new media movement. That is to say we cannot define media art in the same way it is defined in the West because the manner in which we use these media is different. This then explains the fact that what is meant by the term media art varies from one region of the globe to another. As a result, one of media art's defining characteristics is the interaction between the individual, society and culture; and the knowledge of the latest technological innovations of today's digital age.

### :: The Relationship between the Self, Culture and Technology and Its Influence on the Creation of Media Art

These three elements: the self, culture, and technology, all play key roles in the creation of art. The most fundamental of these is the self, as most art is derived from the artist's attempt to find an answer to a question he or she poses. The form that this answer takes is determined by culture and the available technologies.

In other words, human identity is grounded in culture, which provides a frame of reference for who we are or who we choose to be. The self is a reaction to our



Pornataweesak Rimsakul - courtesy of "From message to media" exhibition catalogue, Bangkok University Gallery

external stimuli; it is not integral in and of itself because we are always reacting to things around us and to the thoughts and ideas of other people. For instance, our interest in technology, or our liking for one thing over another, is explained by the environment in which we live and by our experiences in the culture in which we are born and raised.

Art, therefore, is a vehicle or a material that facilitates the communication of a message. It is itself a message. It is the intention of an individual to do something that provokes some sort of response or reaction from society. In other words, art is an expression of the artist's intention to communicate a message by means of a medium he or she has determined as best suited to that message and in a context shared by the artist and others. In brief, the artist's "self" is constructed as a result of interaction with the external environment where art is an individual's intention to communicate something and where culture provides a point of reference in the matter of perception and taste.

Therefore, with regard to media art, what we must keep in mind is the evolution of technology and its role in facilitating the production of a work of art.

As for media art, it is grounded in digital technology, an ever expanding area of invention and exploration. Today's cutting-edge technologies represent a wide-open new avenue or alternative for artists. A considerable number of artists recognise some of the possibilities afforded by these technologies and have chosen to employ them as a means of conveying their messages.

New media has opened up unlimited new horizons for the expression of original perceptions and insights. They have created a new space for art that is a reflection of the modern world. The development of motion pictures, striking special effects, the incorporation of sound, touch and smell; development of technologies that move the viewer and other innovations, excite artists eager to "think outside the box."

New media has become an important part of everyday life, with an unending stream of new technologies always in the pipeline. New or more sophisticated versions of computer programs enter the market almost every year. In fact, just keeping up with the latest developments can be an exhausting endeavour. Perhaps this explains one of the more recent phenomena in the field of media art – the emergence of artist teams.

In some cases artists don't need to have a thorough understanding of a particular kind of software since the software changes so quickly. An artist who is seriously intent on working in media art and who wishes to have a true understanding of the processes involved in the making of his art will almost surely need to work in

collaboration with people from other fields of expertise, such as engineers and media scientists. This is why much of the media art produced these days is the result of teamwork; it can hardly be made by a single individual. In those cases where an individual does work alone, the process is likely to be slow and out-of-date, given the accelerating pace of technological development, particularly over the past two or three years.



Apinan Poshyananda - courtesy of "From message to media" exhibition catalogue, Bangkok University Gallery

Dansoung Sungvornveshanpan has made an interesting observation: "Thai media art appears to be a kind of hybrid. Our basis of understanding is different, and as a consequence, Thais aren't able to make the same connections because they don't share the same technological roots as people in the West. What happens is that we use technology in a strictly practical way; we take what's readymade and tend to ignore the information system that drives the technology forward. In the West, artists and people with technical expertise tend to work better together, maybe because the different kinds of knowledge they have are linked into a common system. But because Thais are only users, we have tighter limitations. What we value about new media is the convenience, so we don't look much beyond just using it. That's why new media in Thailand has so many commercial applications. It has become associated with the entertainment industry."

We might say that media art in Thailand has its own distinctive range of styles and forms which vary according to the interest, experience, knowledge and use of the individual artist. There is also another relationship between art and media – a relationship of use and being used, whereby the medium is the tool which the artist chooses to use. As a result, "media" becomes "one dimension of use," and new media are now linked to the culture, technology and ways of using and thinking that characterise the contemporary world. The use of media and the resulting products give rise to a kind of dialogue, in which the starting point is the artists' thought. And they seek the channel that responds best to their intended message.

LECTURE: MEDIA ART  
BY KEIKO SEI



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The more I examine media art the more I understand how this genre of art involves the public within itself – due to the fact that it is sometimes included in “communication art” as the curriculum suggests. This distinguishes media art from most other genres of art - painting and sculpture; for example, do not include the public in their original material forms.

The discipline of media art therefore includes observing and understanding the public, in addition to studying and grasping all the features of media with which an artist chooses to work. In order to observe the public, it is necessary to show them media art to see how they respond, so this is a somewhat self-reporting discipline with which artists must be engaged.

On one day in November 2007, I had a chance for such an observation, when I was invited to talk for Thai bloggers at their forum - the aim of which was to promote the idea of citizens’ media. Responding to the objective of the event, I chose some examples of media-activist-art- type of projects.

The four projects that I presented were:

“Safe Distance” by kuda.org, New Media Centre in Novi Sad, Serbia, 2002

A video tape showing the head-up display of a US air force plane during NATO air strikes against Federal Republic Yugoslavia in 1999. The plane was shot down and the video depicts the last minutes of the plane and its pilot. The video was discovered near the plane’s crash site, and kuda.org made it available to everybody by distributing this video for free.

“RT-32 Acoustic Space Lab”

A multimedia exploration of the VIRAC radio telescope; a 32m dish antenna in Irbene, Latvia. The DVD I presented contains the history and detailed technical data of the telescope, which was a top-secret Soviet era military object. Discussions on its conversion to scientific and civilian use and documentation of the international symposium, ACOUSTIC.SPACE.LAB, on sound art using radio and satellite technology, which took place in August 2001 at the site of the RT-32 with the participation of thirty artists, radio amateurs and community radio activists from

all over the world.

“SPIN” by Brian Springer, 1995.

This project is a collection of satellite “feeds” (raw video material sent by satellite from one TV station to another) that Brian Springer collected during the 1993 Presidential election campaign. “Spin” is derived from “Spin Doctor = media advisor”, a professional that turns dirty political reality into media-friendly language and advises politicians on what to say to the media. Springer set up satellite dishes at home, scanned channels, and collected almost 500 hours of footage of the election campaign, which he edited to create different versions of the work. From this extremely valuable educational material we can discover how American politics is determined by these spin doctors and the media. The tape was not broadcast by major stations in U.S, but was shown on British TV and at a number of film and video festivals. There was a legal case as a result of showing off-the-record type materials of Presidential candidates, Larry King and other media figures, but Springer avoided any legal issues, because the project was unprecedented.

“K4(C3 I)” by Ingo Guenther, 1987.

In 1984 the German artist Ingo Guenther and his colleague Peter Fend founded the “Ocean Earth Construction and Development Corporation”, which worked on raising awareness of the monopoly and manipulation of information by governments and corporations, and the possibilities of accessing such information. It bought satellite pictures from commercial companies to use and deliver them for various purposes, in this case to create an art installation (“C3 I” is derived from Command Control Communication and Intelligence). The pictures taken from satellite K4 are projected onto the surface of a marble stone cube. The pictures show secret or previously unknown sites such as military-related facilities in different countries. When the project was presented at “Documenta 8” it was installed in a bunker-like environment.

The bloggers claimed that they didn’t understand any of these projects. They said that this could either be because these projects originated in “exotic” countries or perhaps because they seem to be art, a genre the bloggers were not familiar with.



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The bloggers who were simultaneously writing reports on the event in their blogs even threw out their keyboards and said “This part is impossible.” I was intrigued by the response of these bloggers, and started to think that some information was missing in their process of understanding what they had seen - but what? Education of art? Education of media activism? Or the notion of an independent media project?

I thought by understanding the missing part, we could get some ideas on what art, media, and activism means for different people. Thus, when I was invited to speak to participants of the Asia-Europe Foundation’s Art Camp, I decided to make further observations using the same materials. Before and after showing the four projects, I asked the participants the following questions:

Do these projects share anything in common? If so, what is it?

Why do you think the bloggers didn’t understand these projects?

Why might these projects be considered art?

Do you know of any projects similar to these projects?

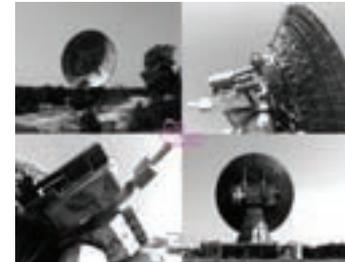
Participants from both Asia and Europe quite actively responded to these questions. The environment of art, with the event intended for art students and artists, and also located in an art school, may have helped the audience define what they saw, easier than they would have in another environment such as the bloggers’ forum. Their constant quest for “what is art” may also have contributed to their curiosity on the enigmatic nature of these projects.

In short, what is common in these projects in my mind is “liberation” and in this case, liberation of information. This “liberating” aspect, as well as how the liberated information is presented, makes these projects art.

Media art emerged during the latter half of 1960s. It began by releasing media from presupposed, prefixed, and preset use into an area of total freedom. Without this first step there would be no way for any artist to conduct any experiments on or in media. This is a critical question for artists when they use media technology in art;

are our ideas free? Are we able to free media? And if media involves the public as I first stated, liberating media also means liberating the public.

These four projects even go steps further by liberating information. The information that these projects deal with is not usually accessible - or is believed to be not accessible - by the general public. Some “secret” information and data is possessed by military, some by government, some by corporations, and in some cases, by public imagination. These projects release the information to the public, presenting it in a creative manner, and encouraging the public to use the information for whatever purpose. They make no conclusions, but inspire the public to get closer to the information. How these projects liberate materials and media, how they treat these materials and media, and how they communicate with the audience, all provide us with important points of discussions on art, let alone on media literacy.



Courtesy of RIXC - Riga Centre for New Media Culture

Education of media and art (or media art) is fragmented in most countries but particularly in Asia, it is regarded with confusion and suspicion, mainly by the authorities but by some citizens as well, when we think about the “liberating” aspect of the genre. Recently I met a Korean student who said that he had started to study art after finishing his educational studies since he believed that the art field would be more liberal in the deeply conservative society of his country, a society he felt troubling. Even that was not free enough for him. Frustrated, he decided he had to study once again and he did, this time studying media art in Germany. Coming this far, there is no turning back. This student’s long journey of internal struggle and how he can turn this personal struggle into a communication with an audience, would eventually determine the quality of his art. How much emphasis is put upon the freedom of thought in art education in Asia - this is not something that is measurable. Each art work clearly demonstrates it. Therefore the more I find freedom of thought in art works the more I see the public, i.e. society, changing. Thus, observing public becomes even more pleasurable.

# RESOURCE PERSONS BIOGRAPHIES

## Chayanoot Silpasart | Thailand

Chayanoot Silpasart is a lecturer at the Department of Visual Arts, School of Fine and Applied Arts, Bangkok University. She obtained her Master Degree in Contemporary Art Theory from Goldsmiths College, UK. In 2007, she has curated two exhibitions displayed at Bangkok University Gallery (BUG): “School of Bangkok: Who and Where Are We in This Contemporary Era?” exploring the terms of identity in the process of globalization. Following her research on media art in Thailand from 1985-2005, she presented the variety of new media and historical prospect under the title “From Message to Media”.

## Noraset Vaisayakul | Thailand

Noraset Vaisayakul graduated in Printmaking from Silpakorn University, Bangkok. He was the first selected Thai artist to attend the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam (2003-2004) where he worked with a variety of media: Installation, Conceptual and Digital Based. He also worked as Tech-assistant at Project304, an alternative art space in Bangkok. Now, he is a Media Art instructor in the Department of Art and Design, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok, Thailand. He exhibited an Interactive installation at PSG art gallery, Silpakorn University (2006) and participated in the Asian Group Show in Karlsruhe, Germany (2007).

## Keiko Sei | Japan

Keiko Sei is a writer, curator and teacher of media art and independent media. Her curatorial projects include: “Media Are With Us! ~ The Role of Television in Romanian Revolution” international symposium (Hungary) and book (Germany), “Age of Tesla” (Germany), “Eastern Europe TV & Politics” (U.S.A.), “Politik-um/New Engagement”(Czech Republic). She ran organisation for independent media in Japan, was head of video atelier at Technical University in Czech Republic, and recently worked as editor for Documenta 12 magazines as well as organiser of various programs for d12’s Asia Week, and this year she will be guest professor of media art at Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe. She is author of book “Terminal Landscape”(Czech Republic) and publishes articles in publications worldwide.

### Josef Ng | Singapore

Josef Ng is a Bangkok-based art consultant/curator in Tang Contemporary Art. Prior to his present position, he has been working as an independent critic and curator in the Southeast Asia region. He has co-organised Asiatopia 2, an international Performance Arts Festival in 1999 and 2002.

Examples of art shows curated by Josef include solo exhibitions for Thai visual artist Manit Sriwanichpoom at Atelier Frank & Lee and Plums Blossom gallery, Living out, Hiding In - a conceptual photography exhibition featuring Mainland Chinese and Thai photo-artists, Thai Fragments - the Thai showcase for the Malaysian Video Awards and Memories Fly - a site-specific video installation for Thai artist Kamol Phaosavasdi and etc. Josef also acted as a curatorial advisor on Thai art for Asian Comment, a public art project in Copenhagen, Denmark. In 2005, he was part of the organising committee for the 1st South East Asia Performance Art Symposium (SEAPAS) in Thailand. In the context of Relational Aesthetics, some of the known artist in this field that he has worked with include Rirkrit Tiranvanija, Navin Rawanchaikul, Sakarin Krue-on, Chinese conceptual artist Yan Lei and Qin Ga, etc.

### David Kousemaker | The Netherlands

David (b.1971) developed his fascination with the more interactive aspects of media at the Art and Technology department of the HKU (Utrecht School of Art). After receiving his MA he co-founded Blendid, an interaction design collective that develops physical interactive objects, installations and environments. He has exhibited at several international media art festivals such as Digifest (Canada) and STRP (Netherlands) and is contributing to Synthetic Times - Media Art China June 2008. Along with his creative work, David has been lecturing, tutoring and conducting workshops on tangible interaction for several years.

### Jerneja Rebernak | Slovenia

Jerneja Rebernak is interested in radical and media education and the cultural impact of technologies in everyday life. Her ethnographic research "Do it yourself media education in India" critiqued the top down approach of ICT in the field of development and focused on grassroots communication tools in India. She holds a BA in Communication Science, University of Ljubljana (2004) and a MA research degree in Media Studies, University of Amsterdam (2007). She contributed for Radio Oltranzista and Cinema Solubile projects, a series of radio broadcasting and instant video making events. She joined the Cultural Exchange department at the Asia-Europe Foundation in June 2008.

# EXPERIENCES

## ARTISTIC ADVISORS

*Its tempting to speculate that media artists, working in a field where vocabulary and definition are in constant flux, might be particularly well trained to deal with the challenge of cross cultural collaboration. The most remarkable thing of the Asia-Europe Art Camp was the energy and dedication felt during the discussions. There was a huge mix in the individual work and in the medium the students were choosing to express themselves. From their work alone it was hard to tell where each one was coming from and their talents were not manifest by geographical lines.*

*The four projects were an impressive result from the unique combination of individual talents and personalities. To witness the four groups connect together to work on common goals was an overwhelming experience. During the art camp process, each of the 4 project groups had its own dynamics; however, they remained aware of the need to concentrate on the final results and to compromise in service of the public presentation.*

David Kousemaker

*The online communication had worked well in a way, but in fact, we needed to break the ice a little bit more. It is very interesting to see how people deal with each other differently through both “Visual Reality” and “Reality.” In the workshop from Blendid on “Interactive media,” the artists were also relating to the idea of “parallel worlds.” Furthermore, I still believe that we have learned a lot from each other—not only between Asians and Europeans, but also among our neighbor countries. In addition, we have learned from ‘ourselves’ and from ‘others’, humanly and spiritually. To put it simply, say, we cannot live alone on this planet, and we need to know each other more deeply through spiritual ideas to be able to deal with good and bad issues in this complex world.*

*To provide an overall picture of this 5th Asia-Europe Art Camp, several keywords might be necessary to be mentioned here: Conflict, Unity, Possibility, Limited, Combination, Links, Eastern Attitude, Western Attitude, Digital, Analogue, Conceptualise, Technical theme, Language, Religion, Crowd, Noise, Quiet, Temple, University, Bureaucracy, Tropical, Lost, Found, Idea, Electronic, Computer, Timing, Interactive, Activity, Party and Friendship.*

Noraset Vaisayakul

## PARTICIPANTS

*Besides the wonderful people I met and the friends I made, which is in and by itself a very rewarding and intense experience, the cultural and artistic notions that we exchanged have led in my case to a better understanding and appreciation of the Asian culture and to the development of the desire for future exploration and collaboration.*

Rares Kövesdi

*The Art Camp experience has been a reaffirmation that human contact and active inclusivism is so important, not just between friends and family, but with all people regardless of culture and race. It is sometimes easy to forget this when we are so often bombarded with information to the contrary in the media. It is perhaps ironic that I come to this conclusion at a media arts event. The most significant lesson learnt at the Arts Camp is knowing when there is too much media and not enough contact between the people of an environment. This feeling was reflected in the work we produced in Bangkok.*

Adam Sharples

*On arrival at the art camp I was sceptical about how artists from Europe and Asia could come together and form a body or piece of work, considering the cultural diversity and barriers in communication. This doubt was also shared among other participants in the camp. The opportunity to view, debate and analyse other peoples works from Europe and Asia, opened up various routes to formation of ideas and critical discussions. It was realised that although people came from different backgrounds, societies, traditions and customs, we all had the same objective that is to deepen our responsiveness of cultural diversity in our practice. This ASEF camp not only opened up my method of practice but also the means in which I undertake my research. As a result of the camp I have received a residency in Germany, collaborations in the form of exhibitions and screenings with like minded artists, but most of all I have formed friendship with people from throughout Asia and Europe.*

Darragh O' Callaghan

*Every single individual is equipped with a different technique, mindset and talent; but dependant on one's ability a decision cannot necessarily manifest these degrees of variation. What is needed is a set of chemical reactions brought along by different conclusions made by individuals from different contexts through their specific cultural practices. Cross-cultural interaction and collaboration brings in a much wider variety of possibilities and opportunities.*

"Jolene" Chung Ling Mok

*Yesterday evening was already that next day's morning, I had great dialogue, a discussion with Max, my new roommate from Vietnam. About life and art, about perfect creation, about content and form, about body and a soul, about idealism, realism,*

*Duchamp and Descartes, about ideology, systems, nature, culture and human, about post-colonialism and problems of philosophy.*

*Somebody said to me, that produced situations should not be changed. Not only that I disagree with this, I don't even understand this idea, this concept. What interests me is what in fact are today's produced situations and what does it mean to change them? What can we do, if we cannot change and don't want to change them?*

*How could this momentary collaboration give results for new methods, strategies of a group, of a team work? What are different directions of a dialogue and communication and how is evaluation, analysis of this situation possible? How do people meet each other? What's the scenario, the technical, the method of meetings? What is the content of them?*

*Constant rethinking, re-contextualizing and concentration on prepared laboratorial situations, can lead to a good connectivity and to a new readings of positions that don't know for each other, that don't understand each other's contexts, that are thrown into a boiling pot, where now and future discussions begin.*

Miha Horvat

*It was a great experience for me encountering diverse people involved in the Art Camp. In such a short amount of time, I've acquired many references, knowledge and friends, which influenced my artistic development and learning process. I'm grateful I've had the chance to share thoughts and ideas with participants, advisors and also officials. I believe Art Camp has created a new starting point for limitless creations through collaborations for Asia and Europe artists in the context of Media Art.*

Andreas Siagian

## ORGANISERS



THE ASIA-EUROPE FOUNDATION (ASEF) ADVANCES MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF ASIA AND EUROPE THROUGH INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL, AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES. THESE EXCHANGES INCLUDE CONFERENCES, LECTURE TOURS, WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS AND THE USE OF WEB-BASED PLATFORMS. THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT OF ASEF IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT BI-REGIONAL NETWORKS FOCUSED ON AREAS AND ISSUES THAT HELP TO STRENGTHEN ASIA-EUROPE RELATIONS.

ESTABLISHED IN FEBRUARY 1997 BY THE PARTNERS OF THE ASIA-EUROPE MEETING (ASEM), ASEF REPORTS TO A BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPRESENTING THE ASEM PARTNERS. ASEF IS THE ONLY PERMANENT PHYSICAL INSTITUTION OF THE ASEM PROCESS. SINCE 1997, THE FOUNDATION HAS INITIATED PROJECTS ENGAGING 14,000 INDIVIDUALS FROM ASIA AND EUROPE. ASEF WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS TO ENSURE ITS WORK IS BROAD-BASED AND BALANCED AMONG THE PARTNER COUNTRIES. [HTTP://WWW.ASEF.ORG](http://www.asef.org)

THE CULTURAL EXCHANGE DEPARTMENT (CE) SEEKS TO PROVIDE YOUNG ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS WITH A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT FOR DIALOGUE THAT CAN EVOLVE INTO POSITIVE ARTISTIC INTERVENTIONS, DYNAMIC CULTURAL NETWORKS AND CULTURAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN AND BETWEEN ASIA AND EUROPE. CE'S AREAS OF COOPERATION ARE YOUNG ARTISTS' EXCHANGE (NEW MEDIA, PHOTOGRAPHY, DANCE, MUSIC, COMIX) ORIENTED PLATFORMS AND NETWORKS (MUSEUMS, INDEPENDENT CINEMA AND AUTONOMOUS CULTURAL CENTRES), DIALOGUE ON POLICY AND CULTURE, AND A VISION FOR AN ASIA-EUROPE CULTURAL PORTAL (CULTURE360). [WWW.CULTURE360.ORG](http://WWW.CULTURE360.ORG)

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SCHOOL OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS, BANGKOK UNIVERSITY AIMS TO BE THE LEADING ART AND DESIGN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN THAILAND. WE DEVELOP OUR CURRICULUM AND OUR "CREATIVE SOCIETY" COMMUNITY TO BE MOST BENEFICIAL TO OUR STUDENTS IN ALL FOUR DEPARTMENTS: INTERIOR DESIGN, COMMUNICATION DESIGN, VISUAL ARTS; AND TEXTILE AND FASHION DESIGN. OUR PROGRAMS PLACE EMPHASIS ON INCORPORATING BOTH CREATIVITY AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND RESPONSIBILITY AS A MEMBER OF SOCIETY. BY COLLABORATING WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, OUR PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES INCLUDE ART AND DESIGN EXHIBITIONS AT BUG (BANGKOK UNIVERSITY GALLERY), AN ARTIST IN RESIDENCY PROGRAM, RESEARCHES IN ART AND DESIGN FIELDS, TALKS AND SEMINARS FOCUSING ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES, AS WELL AS STUDENT AND FACULTY EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. OUR ALUMNI ARE PROMINENT ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS IN VARIOUS ART FIELDS.

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Twenty-two emerging artists from Asia and Europe merged interactivity and localities with new media art in creating a series of collective public performances and interventions in Bangkok. Focusing on social interactivity, the 5th Asia-Europe Art Camp explored the possibility of connecting new media art practices to the Relational Aesthetic concept, seeing the artwork as an encounter between the viewer and the object. The Asia-Europe Art Camp promotes dialogue for emerging artists to learn more about each other's contexts, cultures and get inspired during a week of lectures, workshops and cultural visits.

