



Southeast Asia Performance Art Symposium 24-27 November, 2005 Queens Gallery, Rachadamnern Rd, Bangkok

Rationale

Performance art is a recognized and valuable art form for social questioning and is part of the process of social change. In its various contexts, performance art reflects and interacts with political change.

More than ever before, performance art practice has enjoyed a tide of growing visibility within the various facets of contemporary art in Southeast Asia. This is due to pockets of individuals who work together to organize performance art festivals in their own lands and infrastructures. Close geographical proximity creates opportunities and attendances of performance artists at these regional festivals are now significantly higher. This breakthrough has grown to serve new impulses in the development of performance art practice.

Though the art form has been practiced over the last few decades, performance art, or Live Art as some call it, remains a conceptual platform in visual arts expression for the sheer reason that it is not easy to put this art form in a box. Its unpredictable nature and defiance of aesthetic form challenge the familiar appeal to embrace or access it, even within and by the art community itself.

These are exciting times, for the nature of performance art is continually undergoing creative shifts as performance artists experiment in making and experiencing performances. Technology, for instance, with virtual online performance art, allows greater accessibility and a challenge and re-thinking of the term "Performance as Live Art". Beside the use of the body, performance artists today use other media, such as photography, Internet and text, as part of their extensions in performance art practice.

This symposium will investigate the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of performance art and consider its role and contribution to change in Southeast Asia. It will identify and highlight the key challenges and opportunities arising as performance artists and organizations collaborate and network.

Aims

The three-day gathering aims to:

- explore the development of performance art in the region
- investigate how performance artists respond to political, social economic changes
- promote dialogue and find common ground and ways for performance artists to collaborate in the future
- document and archive the developments of performance art in Southeast Asia.

Welcome Artists

The Welcome Artists Party on the evening of 24 November will be hosted at The Jim Thompson House and the Southeast Asia Performance Art Symposium will be officially opened by the Governor of Bangkok, Apirak Kosayothin.

Key Themes

The symposium sessions will focus discussions around key themes:

25 November - Forces of Change

26 November – Context and Communication

27 November - Creative Space

25 November - Forces of Change

The Keynote Speech by Dr Apinan Poshyananda, Director General, Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, Ministry of Culture, Thailand on “Strengthening Regional Artistic Community” will be followed by sessions on “Political Context in Southeast Asia” and “Critical Art in Southeast Asia”. Performance art’s involvement in the democratic process, anti-war, anti-fascism and civil rights movements will be explored. Local and global constraints will also be discussed including the impact of taboos and censorship. The ways performance art can creatively express voices for freedom and against corrupted power will be investigated. Movements from colonialism to globalization around the region will be discussed in the context of tradition, culture and change. Views of traditional, modern and post-modern elements in performance art may inform this session.

26 November – Context and Communication

Sessions on “Traditions and Trends”, “Practically Under Pressure” and Genderly Undermind” will open discussions on expression, the ‘body’ and ‘tools/materials’ used by performance artists to communicate. Women artists will be highlighted along with gay and lesbian art. Commonalities of practice and themes will be explored and the ways performance artists communicate and work with each other and the public in various contexts will be investigated. Discussion will also consider at how communities and institutions grow and change. A session on “Taking Performance Art Forward” will open ideas enhancing regional communication and collaboration.

Process

Performances will be incorporated into the discussion program after lunch on all three days (25-27 November) and in the evenings from 7-10 pm at Santi Chaiprakarn Park on Phra Athit Rd there will be **Asiatopia performances**.

Rather than formal presentations, symposium guest speakers will engage in **facilitated dialogues** and there will be opportunities for full group involvement in discussions around key questions. Participants will also break into groups for more **in-depth discussions with report-backs**.

The ‘**Creative Space**’ on **27 November** will provide opportunities for spontaneous performances interpreting and reflecting on the discussion themes of the symposium, with **videos** from SEA countries and **networking sessions**.

An exhibit of performance art materials (photos, posters, reviews, etc) will be gathered from participants and on display at the Queens Gallery.

A **Performance Art Statement** will be drafted and following discussion and feedback, endorsed by participants on Day Three of the symposium.

Organizing Committee

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Chumpon Apisuk | Director |
| Josef Ng | Program |
| Thanom Chapakdee | Program |
| Thanavi Chotpradit | Program |
| Virginia Henderson | Coordinator |
| Chantawipa Apisuk | Administration |
| Sunee Pungpaisan | Assistant |
| Mongkol Plienbangchang | Production Manager |
| Padungsak Kotchasomrong | Technical |
| Kawin Traisaj | Assistant / Volunteers |

Volunteers

Utai Plaoterm (Net)
Sakamol Naksaenindra (Lek)
Patbapon Kumransuk (Nai)
Prasertpoom Sripranitanon (Num)
Prayuth Unutorn (Not)

Regional Advisory Committee

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Iwan Wijono | Indonesia |
| Mideo Cruz | Philippines |
| Khairuddin Hori | Singapore |
| Paisan Plienbangchang | Thailand |

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Bangkok Art and Culture Center Project

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The Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, Ministry of Culture
The Queen's Gallery, Jim Thompson Foundation, Chang Beer

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