



Raising Awareness Through Art: A Qualitative Examination of European Elements in Thai Contemporary Art

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Abstract

Equality, Inclusion, and sustainability efforts are some of the omnipresent social issues we are facing. Being a leader on these issues and advancing discussion and awareness is, among other things, an important part of contemporary art. This paper analyses the strategies used in European contemporary art to address social issues, focusing on their applicability in Thailand. The study aimed to clarify the applicability of transferring these strategies to the Thai context, taking into account the potential challenges of direct adoption. To give a deeper insight into the European elements, a literature review was conducted, concentrating mainly on two factors, which were public installations and policies. In the Thai context, five interviews were conducted with experienced and knowledgeable curators and directors of arts institutions. Through the interviews, it became clear that adoption of European factors in contemporary art cannot be achieved easily. This is mainly due to a lack of art education and art appreciation in Thai society. First of all, art education has to be improved so that contemporary art can be given more attention in Thai society. The implementation of policies, particularly concerning tax incentives and further financial support, was also identified as an important factor for the future of contemporary art in Thailand.

Keywords: Contemporary art, social issues, Thailand, Europe, art, culture

การเสริมสร้างความตระหนักผ่านศิลปะ: การตรวจสอบคุณภาพขององค์ประกอบยุโรปในศิลปะร่วมสมัยของไทย

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อ้างอิง

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บทคัดย่อ

ความเสมอภาค ความรวมเข้ากัน และการพยายามในการรักษาความยั่งยืน เป็นบางประเด็นทางสังคมที่มีอยู่ตลอดเวลา การเป็นผู้นำในเรื่องเหล่านี้และการเสริมสร้างการสนทนาและความตระหนักเป็นส่วนสำคัญของศิลปะร่วมสมัย กระดาษวิจัยนี้วิเคราะห์กลยุทธ์ที่ใช้ในศิลปะร่วมสมัยของยุโรปเพื่อแก้ไขปัญหาทางสังคมโดยเน้นให้มีความเหมาะสมกับสถานการณ์ในประเทศไทย การศึกษาเน้นไปที่การชี้แจงถึงความเหมาะสมในการโอนย้ายกลยุทธ์เหล่านี้ไปยังบริบทของประเทศไทย โดยให้คำมั่นถึงความท้าทายที่อาจเกิดขึ้นจากการนำมาใช้โดยตรงในการให้ความเข้าใจลึกซึ้งซึ่งเกี่ยวกับองค์ประกอบยุโรป ได้ดำเนินการทบทวนวรรณกรรมโดยเน้นไปโดยส่วนใหญ่ที่สองปัจจัย คือ การติดตั้งสาธารณะและนโยบายในบริบทของประเทศไทยได้มีการสัมภาษณ์ 5 ครั้งกับผู้อำนวยความสะดวกและคณะกรรมการผู้มีประสบการณ์และความรู้ในสถาบันศิลปะผ่านการสัมภาษณ์ เป็นชั้นความชัดเจนว่าการนำแบบศิลปะยุโรปมาใช้ในศิลปะร่วมสมัยของไทยไม่สามารถทำได้โดยง่ายดังที่คาดเชื่อ สิ่งนี้เกิดจากข้อบกพร่องในการศึกษาศิลปะและการรับรู้ศิลปะในสังคมไทย จึงต้องมีการปรับปรุงการศึกษาศิลปะให้ดียิ่งขึ้นเพื่อให้สามารถให้การสนับสนุนที่มากขึ้นต่อศิลปะร่วมสมัยในสังคมไทย เครื่องมือนโยบายที่เกี่ยวกับการยกเว้นภาษีและการสนับสนุนการเงินเพิ่มเติมก็ถูกจำแนกไว้ว่าเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญสำหรับอนาคต

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Introduction

Refugee crises, environmental disasters and climate change are just some of the social challenges we are confronted with every day in the media and our private lives. One might also get the impression that news broadcasts and newspapers only contain negative

headlines. And with this overstimulation of social problems, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand, grasp and comprehend the diversity of opinions in a discussion on any social issue. There are different platforms that we can use to get a clearer picture of social problems, to stimulate discussions, and to

draw attention to certain issues. One of these platforms can be contemporary art.

When looking at European literature on contemporary art and its potential for raising awareness of social issues, and stimulating debate, it becomes relatively evident that two key factors play a major role in that development. On the one hand, these are policies implemented either top-down by the European Union or its member states through public authorities or on the initiative of the cultural institutions. An important element for these policies to be implemented successfully is always that they are developed and established in cooperation between the authorities and institutions (OMC, 2012, p. 16). Additionally, installations often exhibited in public spaces aim to stimulate critical thinking and reflection on certain political decisions (Cheung *et al.*, 2021; Faiola, 2016; Gibson, 2016).

However, simply taking these two elements and assuming that they are also applicable in this manner and a similar way in other countries is not possible. Each country has different social problems to deal with and different governments and legal situations make it impossible to apply an identical template of European elements to other countries. As this research was conducted under the Cultural Management Programme of Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, the main focus of the work and the potential applicability of the European elements to other countries also relate only to Thailand and Bangkok in particular.

The research objectives are to explore the feasibility of integrating European strategies for social inclusion and art awareness into Thai contemporary art and to identify associated challenges and barriers unique to the Thai context. Additionally, the study aims to gain deeper insights into the practices and planning of Thai contemporary art, particularly concerning social issues, and assess the potential for a seamless transfer of European artistic elements. Furthermore, the study seeks to provide practical guidance to contemporary artists and art galleries in Thailand to enhance their exhibition preparation and realisation. Lastly, the study aims to provide policymakers and stakeholders with information on necessary measures for the future development and support of contemporary art in Thailand, with a particular focus on raising awareness of social issues.

To achieve these objectives, the qualitative research method was chosen, and a combination of literature research and interviews was implemented. The following literature review focuses on European literature on contemporary art. In particular, the focus is on examining the two main factors highlighted previously: Installations and Policies, as they are commonly mentioned in the European literature. Following the chapter on the literature review, the focus is shifted to the interviews conducted, which played a key role in this research project. The decision to include interviews emerged from a recognisable gap in the existing literature and research, specifically in the Thai context where comprehensive English-language resources

are limited. Recognising this lack, the research sought to complement the existing academic discourse by talking directly to individuals who are deeply involved in the contemporary art scene in Thailand. Accordingly, interviews were conducted with reputable directors and curators of Thai contemporary art galleries in Bangkok. These individuals brought a depth of knowledge and experience and offered invaluable insights into various aspects of the Thai art landscape. Through these conversations, I aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of contemporary art practice in Thailand, explore the nuances of curatorial decisions and exhibition realisations, and reflect on the possible integration of European elements into the Thai art environment.

In the following chapter, the statements from the interviews are examined in more detail, compared and evaluated in the context of the main topic. Lastly, the research findings are summarised, followed by a discussion of their usefulness and limitations. Moreover, recommendations for future research projects on this topic are given.

Literature Review

Public Installations

The impact of public installations in contemporary art has already been discussed by several researchers. In a recent article from 2021 titled “The Impacts of Public Art on Cities, Places and People’s Lives”, the impact of public art was analysed in more detail using eight categories. These categories include Society, Culture, Economy, Sustainability, Wellbeing, Wisdom, Innovation, and

Placemaking. In the culture category, the authors talk about how public art can help create a sense of belonging and promote cultural significance. In the section on society, the authors talk about how public art can contribute to collective remembrance and pride. It can also be used to advocate for social justice and allow people to interact and discuss social and political issues. Additionally, the sustainability chapter highlights the importance of public art in raising awareness of environmental issues and stimulating dialogue and discussion in the community (Cheung *et al.*, 2021). It is therefore not all that surprising that contemporary public art is also increasingly being used in Europe to draw attention to social issues.

When millions of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries fled to Europe in 2015 to escape violence and war, the European Union faced many challenges in accommodating and caring for them. Also because of the long-running dispute between EU states, refugees were often left alone on their dangerous journey, which some of them did not even survive (UNHCR, 2024; Wagner, 2015). It is therefore not surprising that this crisis has also been taken up by contemporary artists and depicted with the help of public installations. Ai Weiwei was one of these artists. He had two installations in 2016, one in Berlin on the columns of the Konzerthaus and the other in the water basin of the Belfrage Palace Park in Vienna. For both installations, he used life jackets worn by refugees on their way to a sanctuary in Europe. In Berlin, he wrapped life jackets around the columns of

the Konzerthaus and hung a rubber lifeboat in the middle of the Konzerthaus with a sign saying “#safepassage”. Weiwei, who himself has always been connected to the issue of the refugee crisis and spent some time on Lesbos, the Greek island where many refugees arrived, to help and prepare a documentary about the crisis, wanted to put a big spotlight on the refugees and their lives (Azzarello, 2016; Stylezza, 2016; Faiola, 2016; Lansroth, 2016). For his installation in Vienna, he collaborated with the Belvedere 21 Museum of Contemporary Art and prepared the installation as part of its exhibition titled “translocation - transformation”. Weiwei arranged the life jackets on rings and made them look like lotus flowers floating on the water basin of the palace park. A total of 201 rings, each with 5 life jackets, were then formed into the letter “F”. Weiwei did not specify what the F could stand for, leaving the interpretation to the visitors and their imagination (Belvedere Museum, 2024; Gibson, 2016). There are two ways to look at this installation: on the one hand, the lotus flower-shaped structure of the rings is very beautiful to look at and the installation can also be part of the cityscape without deeper interpretation; on the other hand, Weiwei is of course once again criticising the treatment of refugees and wants to draw attention to the problematic refugee policy.

But refugees are not the only topic in public installations in Europe. Other issues that are often addressed in installations are environmental concerns and climate change. In 2014, Olafur Eliasson and Minik Rosing had their first public installation on this topic called

“Ice Watch” on which they placed ice blocks cut from the Greenland ice sheet in the shape of a clock in Copenhagen’s City Hall Square on the occasion of the UN’s publication of the Fifth Assessment Report on Climate Change. The second ice block installation was carried out in Paris in 2015 at the Place du Panthéon on the occasion of the UN Climate Change Conference. The third time this installation was used as part of an exhibition at the Tate Modern in London and in front of Bloomberg’s European headquarters in December 2018 (Eliasson, 2024a; Tate, 2024). Of course, the ice blocks look beautiful, and people can look at them without having to think about a deeper meaning. Nevertheless, the ice blocks are melting in the areas where they were placed, and not only there, but also in Greenland, where they were cut out. Eliasson and Rosing want people to understand this problem and the reality of increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, and melting ice in Greenland, but also in other places around the world. They bring the ice directly to the people so that they can physically experience the threat of climate change (Eliasson, 2024b; *Ice Watch Paris*, 2015).

Policies

Having demonstrated that installations are an essential part of contemporary art, we now turn to policies as the second important factor influencing contemporary art in Europe. Probably the biggest policy-related agenda comes directly from the European Union and is called the “Work Plan for Culture”. In a multi-annual work plan, the Council sets out the priorities on which the Member States of the

European Union should work. Under the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), a voluntary cooperation between EU Member States aimed at improving policymaking through the exchange of experiences between Member States, a working group composed of experts from different Member States in the relevant cultural fields works on the pre-established priorities, organises meetings and prepares reports on each priority, including a summary of the work carried out by the group, in order to support policymakers (OMC, 2012; European Commission, 2022b, p. 12). This work plan of course refers to the whole cultural industry in Europe and not only to contemporary art, but nevertheless, both contemporary art and contemporary artists are always somehow part of the process of working on the work plans and are influenced by the results and the implemented policies in Europe. For example, in the 2011-2014 work plan, priority areas included topics such as cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, accessible and inclusive culture, as well as culture and external relations. In 2019-2022, the work plan then included, for example, topics such as an ecosystem to support artists, gender equality, and international cultural relations (European Commission, 2022b, p. 1; EUR-Lex, 2011). All these topics are useful to move forward and discuss across the cultural sector in Europe, but also for the development of contemporary art and the inclusion of social issues and equality topics in exhibitions. Whether the reports produced by the OMC are then consistently used for policymaking in the member states is not entirely apparent.

A survey of member states on the implementation of the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 found that only a few of the reports are used later for policymaking (European Commission, 2022a, p. 12). Nevertheless, certain statements contained in the work plans have already been picked up. For example, the Bucharest Declaration of the Ministers of Culture on the role of culture in the future of Europe in 2019 contains several points that were already included in previous work plans, such as the need for innovative financing mechanisms, support for the mobility of artists and cross-border exchanges, and the need to implement measures to promote gender equality (European Council, 2019).

However, it is not only the European Union that is working on the implementation of equality or sustainability measures in culture-related fields. Several member states are also working on their own cultural policies. In the Netherlands, for example, there has been a “Code for Cultural Diversity” since 2009, which is to be implemented by cultural institutions and aims to promote diversity and inclusion in all cultural sectors. The code was developed by the cultural sector in a bottom-up initiative. It is particularly important because the cultural sector in the Netherlands has so far mainly reflected only a certain part of the society, as the audience, viewers, and buyers are mostly white Dutch people. However, this does not reflect today’s Dutch society, where in 2015 one in eight people was of non-Western origin. Since cultural institutions are for everyone and should be used by everyone, the Code was introduced to reflect the reality of the

Dutch population also in the cultural sector and to promote equality and inclusion (UNESCO, 2024; CodeDI, 2024, p. 3; The Code, 2024).

Interviews

In order to gain a better understanding of contemporary art in Thailand, particularly in Bangkok, and to assess the applicability of European elements such as policies and public installations, interviews were conducted. The decision to conduct interviews resulted from the necessity to address the lack of existing literature, particularly the limited English-language resources available in the Thai context. This qualitative approach aimed to complement the academic discourse through direct contact with individuals who play an important role in the contemporary art scene in Thailand. Reputable directors and curators of Thai contemporary art based in Bangkok were interviewed to gain insights into the current landscape and future development of the field. These interviews served as a platform to explore the perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders and shed light on the potential integration of European practices and the unique challenges in the Thai context.

In total, five interviews were conducted with contemporary art curators and gallery directors based in Bangkok, all of whom also have extensive experience in the international art world. These interviews were conducted with the following individuals:

1. Jongsuwat Angsuvarnsiri - SAC Gallery Director

2. Pawit Mahasarinand - Former Director of the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC)

3. Luckana Kunavichayanont - Former Director of the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC)

4. Pacharaporn Tantatanai - Project Coordinator and Curator at the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture (OCAC)

5. Nawanwaj Yudhanahas - Project Coordinator and Curator at the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture (OCAC)

The interviews were either conducted online via Zoom or in a personal meeting with the interviewees in the respective Gallery they are or have been the director.

The interview questions I asked my interviewees were mostly identical, with only minor changes depending on their job experience, expertise, and the area they work in. In the beginning, I wanted to know from my interviewees what their career paths are so far, their backgrounds and what they have already worked on. Then I asked them for a short introduction to the gallery or office they work or have worked in. After that, I first asked about their personal opinion in general, about the importance of contemporary art galleries and art nowadays, and then continued with a question about the state of Thai contemporary art in comparison with other Asian countries and Europe. Following this, I asked my interviewees in more detail about the process of selecting particular artists, how they work with them and their artworks, and what

practices and factors they involve and use to address social issues.

After these questions, I went on to ask more specifically about the practices used for contemporary art in Europe. I first gave a brief overview of the European practices and then asked more specifically whether these practices are or could be applied in Thailand. First, I asked about the policies that are implemented in Europe to create a more diverse and socially inclusive art world. I wanted to know if such policies also exist in Thailand, how they are implemented, what involvement one has as a director or curator of contemporary art, and how successful they are. If there are no such policies in Thailand, I asked instead if they would also like to have such policies and how they should be implemented.

The second question about European practices was about installations. Again, I asked whether they are also used in Thailand as a way of drawing attention to social issues. I asked to what extent installations can also be used in Thailand, for example, how directly the artist's message and opinion could be communicated and how publicly this could be done. I also asked about what problems could arise in the exhibition of such installations. I then went on to ask which topics could be exhibited not only as installations but in contemporary art in general, and which might not be, and also how my interviewee would plan and prepare the exhibition to make a particular social topic and the artist's message clear to visitors.

My last two questions were again more broadly focused, asking both about the extent to which visitors to contemporary art galleries are made aware of certain issues, what my interviewees think the future of contemporary art in Thailand looks like, and what practices and changes might be needed to continue to raise awareness of social issues and attract visitors.

I recorded all the interviews in audio format and then transcribed them to make it more convenient to work with them. In the following, I will highlight the similarities and differences in the interviews and draw a conclusion for contemporary art in Thailand and its work with social issues.

Interview Results

The interviews conducted with curators and gallery directors in Bangkok aimed to highlight various aspects of contemporary art in Thailand, with a focus on understanding the applicability of European elements such as politics and public installations. This chapter presents the findings from these interviews, which offer valuable perspectives from key members of the contemporary art scene in Thailand. The five interviewees were selected based on their extensive experience and deep involvement in the contemporary art scene both domestically and internationally. Each interviewee brings a unique perspective and expertise to the discussion, enriching the scope and profundity of the insights gathered.

In this chapter, based on the interview questions, the answers of the interviewees are

analysed in more detail and are compared. Firstly, the general opinion on the importance of contemporary art in Thailand is addressed. Following this, the answers to the questions on the first factor for drawing attention to current social problems, the policies, will be looked at in more detail. Here, the focus was particularly on whether policies similar to those in Europe also exist in Thailand and how they are implemented. Subsequently, the question was asked how new policies could be introduced in Thailand. The results of the questions on public installations are next explored in more detail. These questions included how these installations could be exhibited and what topics could be covered. Lastly, necessary changes for the future of contemporary art, which the interviewees considered necessary, will be briefly outlined.

Looking at the responses on the importance of contemporary art in general, it becomes clear that all interviewees see it as an essential element to foster discussion and stimulate people to think. Contemporary art becomes a kind of safe space in which everyone can freely express their opinions and views and in which democratic discussions can take place. This is especially important in Thailand, as the SAC Gallery Director Jongsuwat Angsuvarnsiri, former BACC director Pawit Mahasarinand and curator Pacharaporn Tantatanai made clear in their interviews, stating that people in Thailand often avoid confrontation and discussion, as they are very much oriented towards harmony and unity. Therefore, this safe space of contemporary art could be a way for Thai

people to express their opinions freely, but there are also other problems. For example, as Pawit Mahasarinand points out, many Thai people do not see contemporary art as part of their lives, either they do not think they understand it, or they are generally afraid of all topics related to art and culture and avoid it. A circumstance that should be addressed with new measures in the future, what these could be, will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

When we talked about the policies, all the interviewees told me that there are no policies at all. For the two former BACC directors and the SAC Gallery director, possible policies should be implemented in a bottom-up initiative, or at least not decided solely by the government. All three, as well as curator Pacharaporn Tantatanai, recognise however that the best way to implement policies would be to draft them in cooperation with the government so that all institutions involved are on the same page, there is agreement and there can be no misunderstandings and other problems. Pawit Mahasarinand, however, believes that policies alone are not essential for the time being, as contemporary art's future should first be about approaching every person living in Thailand and encouraging them to visit art and cultural institutions. Nawanwaj Yudhanahas from the OCAC, on the other hand, does not think that policies are absolutely necessary, as it is much more about the mindset of the artists and curators to realise a project than about specific policies. She is also the only one to mention a top-down initiative by the OCAC in

terms of policy implementation in contemporary art. The fact that her answer here differs significantly from the other interviewees could be because her background is in architecture while the other 4 have a deeper insight into contemporary art in galleries and have often managed several exhibitions themselves and are or were directors of art institutions.

Interestingly, although the interview questions were mainly about social issues and the question about policies also revolved around social and equality policies, almost all interviewees prioritised tax relief and financial support for exhibitions as the most important policies that the government should implement first in the future. This could be an indication that financial problems in particular play a very important role in Thai contemporary art, perhaps linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, but in the interviews with the two former BACC directors, it also became clear that financial difficulties were a decisive factor in the preparation of exhibitions at the BACC even before the pandemic.

There was also a consensus on the question of installations. Public installations can be shown without problems in Thailand and also in very public places. The only prohibited topics are for example those that criticise the king or the monarchy. More than once I also received the answer that public installations should not only be set up to shock or to generate attention but should first of all be beautiful to look at because hundreds of people walk past them every day, which should require a certain aesthetic. In the examples already mentioned with the

lotus flowers made of life jackets or the Ice Watch exhibition, we can see exactly that. The installations look good on their own and can be exhibited without thinking about a deeper meaning. I first discussed the problems of why public installations are not more common in Thailand with SAC Gallery director Jongsuwat Angsuvarnsiri, and my other interview partners also largely confirmed his statements. For him, the issues were the lack of knowledge about how public installations should be done, the fact that Thai artists simply lack the budget to create a beautiful installation and the lack of financial support to bring such a project to a successful completion. Pawit Mahasarinand, on the other hand, did not see the problem in the possible lack of budget to set up the installations, but instead brought up the problem that Thais, in general, would not understand the installations due to a lack of art appreciation classes or because they believe that art is not part of their lives and that after setting up the installations, no one would take care of the repair and maintenance, because either the money would not have been distributed or no one would think about maintenance. Former BACC director Luckana Kunavichayanont also mentioned the second factor, referring in her example to sculptures in parks that are not paid much attention to anymore. Once again, lack of funding and support as well as insufficient or inadequate art education can be identified as problematic issues for Thai contemporary art and its development.

Not surprisingly, these were then also the two most important factors when it came

to the question of necessary future changes in Thai contemporary art. The need for better art education was mentioned by all five interviewees. Better art appreciation teaching with more discussions and debates is considered a very important factor according to the interviews. Contemporary art education should also be linked to other subjects to show Thai people that it is useful in daily life and that there is no need to be afraid of it. More than once, art education in Europe, for example in the United Kingdom or Germany, was mentioned as a positive example. At the same time, the lack of study trips to museums or art galleries was mentioned, which are relatively common on the curriculum in many European schools but are rarely done in Thailand according to the interviews. Curator Nawanwaj Yudhanahas in particular mentioned study trips as an important part of education. Due to her long stay and degree in London, she has a more specific insight into the curriculum in the UK.

Also mentioned was the need for more media coverage of contemporary art by the SAC Gallery director and curator Pacharaporn Tantatanai. Luckana Kunavichayanont reiterated the need for policies, especially those that would provide more support and financial assistance, for example in the form of tax incentives, for the arts community in Thailand. Additionally, in some interviews, the complex bureaucracy was identified as a contributing factor to problems in Thai contemporary art. Jongsuwat Angsuvarnsiri, for example, talked about how public installations often do not get set up because

there are many bureaucratic hurdles to overcome first, and Pawit Mahasarinand talked about how many different sectors and ministries in Thailand do not really work together, which means problems with funding or project preparation.

In this chapter, insights from interviews with curators and gallery directors in Bangkok were presented, offering valuable perspectives on contemporary art in Thailand. The interviewees, selected for their extensive experience and involvement in the art scene, offered diverse insights into the importance of contemporary art, the challenges of implementing policies, the potential of public installations and the need for future change. Their perspectives emphasise the importance of contemporary art as a platform for discussion and expression in Thailand but also highlight areas for improvement such as arts education, financial support and bureaucratic reform. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the contemporary art landscape in Thailand and provide a foundation for further research and development in this area (J. Angsuvarnsiri, personal communication, September 29, 2022; L. Kunavichayanont, personal communication, October 18, 2022; P. Mahasarinand, personal communication, October 12, 2022, and October 23, 2022; P. Tantatanai, personal communication, October 20, 2022; N. Yudhanahas, personal communication, October 18, 2022).

Conclusion

This paper was intended to identify elements of contemporary art in Europe to draw

attention to social problems and transfer them to a Thai context to analyse their applicability there. The first step was to analyse literature in order to identify European elements. Here, policies and public installations in particular stood out as important elements. In Europe, a great deal of effort has already been made to integrate these two aspects in the context of social problems in order to draw attention to them. These two factors were then applied to Thai contemporary art. As there was a particular lack of extensive and accessible English literature in the Thai context, interviews were conducted to fill this gap and gather insightful knowledge about Thai contemporary art. These interviews were conducted with reputable directors and curators of Thai contemporary art based in Bangkok to gain insights into the current landscape and future development of the field. These interviews served as a platform to explore the perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders and shed light on the potential integration of European practices and the unique challenges in the Thai context.

Through the interviews, it became clear that a direct adoption of European elements into contemporary Thai art poses considerable challenges. The interviews reveal that existing problems in Thai contemporary art, such as administrative hurdles and financial limitations, prevent straightforward adoption. In particular, the lack of art education is a recurring concern, with limited opportunities for discussion and under-appreciation of art being prevalent. Moreover, financial constraints and bureaucratic complications hinder the growth

and development of contemporary art in Thailand. Amidst these challenges, however, possible solutions also emerge from the research and interviews. Suggestions include promoting art education and European-style study tours to integrate art into daily life and increase its relevance for all Thais. Furthermore, increased media coverage of contemporary art is seen as crucial to promoting appreciation and accessibility. Only with a solid foundation for art appreciation and accessibility can contemporary art raise awareness of social issues in Thai society, for which public installations could then also be an important factor. Addressing the financial challenges in the contemporary art sector requires policy interventions, with tax relief and financial support identified as key priorities in the interviews. By overcoming these financial hurdles, the Thai contemporary art scene can flourish and make a meaningful contribution to social discourse.

Despite the valuable insights provided by the experienced curators and directors interviewed, the practical implementation of their suggestions remains uncertain. As curator Pacharaporn Tantatanai noted, the process of introducing and implementing measures can take decades, and previous efforts by the BACC have faced difficulties in cooperating with government authorities. Nevertheless, this research certainly proved rewarding. The interviews have provided a compressed overview of contemporary art practices in Thailand and a deeper understanding of the challenges not only in adopting European elements but also in addressing broader issues

within the contemporary art landscape. The paper emphasises the complexity of integrating foreign practices into Thai contexts and highlights the multi-layered nature of the challenges facing contemporary art in Thailand. While this study may not bring immediate changes in cultural policy, it can serve as a catalyst for cultural practitioners and arts activists to advocate for ideas that can advance the long-term development of contemporary art in Thailand.

Naturally, there are also some limitations to this work that need to be taken into account. These limitations result primarily from the limited time available to conduct this research. First of all, the study only deals with two elements of contemporary European art, which were analysed in more detail using examples from specific countries. Whilst these elements are examined in depth, it is entirely plausible that other factors can be more specifically applied to the Thai context. In addition, it should be noted that the factors presented may not apply to all European countries and that certain obstacles need to be addressed before implementation. Due to the limited availability of English-language literature in the Thai context, the study also relied heavily on interviews to gain insights into contemporary Thai art. Relying on interviews may have limited the breadth of perspectives and frameworks explored in the study. Furthermore, only curators and directors of contemporary art from Bangkok were interviewed, meaning that the perspectives of cultural practitioners from other regions of Thailand were not

considered. While Bangkok's central role in cultural decision-making was evident in the interviews, exploring the views of cultural professionals from different regions could provide valuable insights into regional differences and challenges. Furthermore, due to time constraints and scheduling difficulties, the interviews were limited to three cultural institutions in Bangkok: the SAC Gallery, the BACC and the OCAC. Although these interviews provided valuable insights, it is important to recognise that there are numerous other institutions in Bangkok and beyond that can provide different perspectives and enhance the analysis.

For future research, it would therefore be interesting to first examine the European factors in more detail, possibly highlight other factors, and look at their success or possible problems in multiple individual countries. For contemporary art in Thailand, it would be interesting to get more insights and perspectives of cultural professionals from different regions in Thailand. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of art education in Thailand could provide valuable insights into the factors that influence the development and perception of contemporary art. Exploring the role of arts education in developing the appreciation and understanding of contemporary art among the public would contribute to a better understanding of the broader cultural landscape. By examining the curriculum, educational approaches and resources available for arts education, researchers can identify areas for improvement and opportunities to increase the integration of

contemporary art into the educational landscape. In general, a larger number of interviews spread across cultural institutions throughout the country would be an important component for future research. In addition, interviews with government representatives should also be conducted. The proposed suggestions from the interviews with the cultural representatives could then be taken up and discussed. This could lead to a deeper understanding of the problems of contemporary art in Thailand and provide a different perspective, from a political

rather than a cultural viewpoint.

To summarise, while the adoption of European elements into Thai contemporary art presents challenges, strategic measures such as improved arts education, media coverage and policy interventions offer pathways for growth and development. By embracing these challenges and adopting innovative solutions, the Thai contemporary art scene can promote social awareness and contribute to the social discourse.

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