



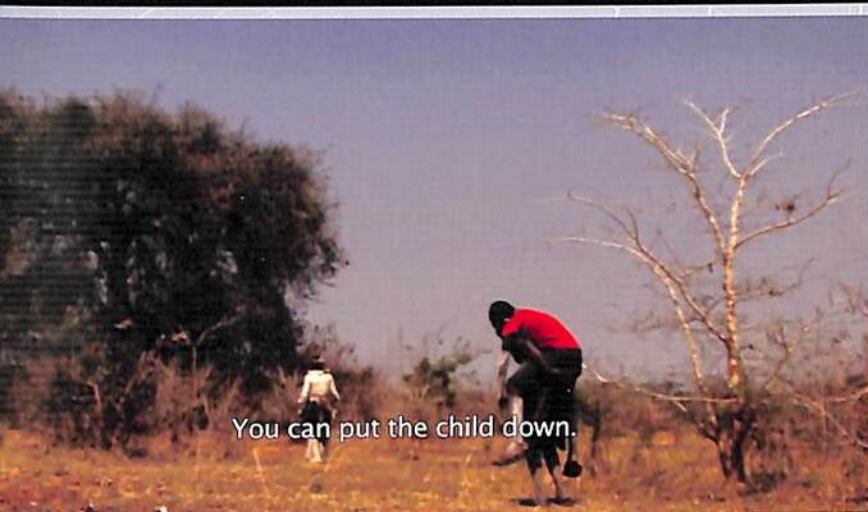
OPEN

SCREENINGS

Rama IX Art Museum Foundation

An Exhibition of Thai Documentary Films
February 27 - April 10, 2015

Organised by Suebsang Sangwachirapiban
The Art Center, Office of Academic Resources, Chulalongkorn University



จักรวาล นิลธำรง / Jakrawal Nilthamrong

"Hangman", 15 mins, 2012

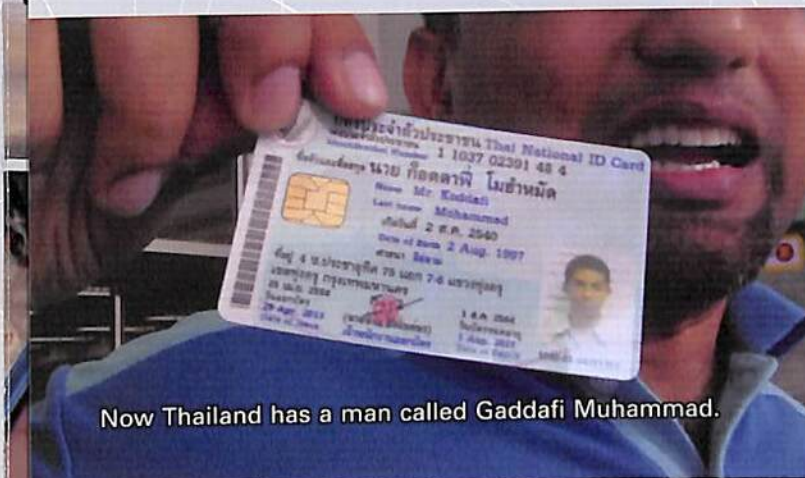
The two-channel video centers on a re-enactment of an execution in an infamous criminal case in 1979. The prisoner was a maid and nanny for a wealthy family who had been fired from her job. She decided to kidnap their son and held him for ransom. Unfortunately, the cash did not arrive. Enraged, the kidnappers turned on the boy and brutally stabbed him. The gang members were arrested and the maid was sentenced to death. The execution scene is based on the memory of a son of the late Chavoret Jaruboon, Thailand's last executioner who passed away just before the shooting of this film. After 33 years of the actual event, the execution scene of the female prisoner is constructed and performed by the son as his father. The film is a testament to the inextricable merging of real events and the distortions of memory as the son wonders the whereabouts of his father's spirit.

"Unreal Forest", 70 mins, 2010

The film is divided into two parts. The first part is a documentary about a Zambian filmmaker who is developing a short film. This part reveals the process in which the filmmaker has to deal with time and other restrictions when producing the film. The script of the short film is developed from his everyday life and is then turned into a fictional story, and the film has to be shot in a forest. The second part of the film shows Jakrawal and the crew help the filmmaker produce a film. They have to make this film from the story written by Thai filmmakers - a process set up by Dutch project initiators looking to discover new cinematic gems from Africa. Through the process of filmmaking, the ancient folklores, and the Zambian filmmakers' struggles, the viewers are taken on a journey that traces back to the historical roots connecting Africa and Asia in a never-before imagined way.

"Orchestra", 22 Mins, 2008

An artist undertakes an attempt to make a documentary. He looks with admiration at workers in a silk factory but does not forget to create art. With a sensitive eye for detail, the filmmaker made a small group portrait of five employees in a silk factory in his country. He gazed in fascination at the production process, but also how people live and dream. He sees the factory as an orchestra in which the machines and the employees are the instruments. A visual symphony. [Review by Gertjan Zuilhof]



กวีนิพนธ์ เกตุประสิทธิ์ / Kaweenipon Ketprasit

ก้อง ฤทธิดี / Kong Rithdee

ภาณุ อารี / Panu Aree

"เบบี้อาราเบีย" / "Baby Arabia", 73 mins, 2010

"Baby Arabia" follows one of the oldest Thai-Muslim bands specializing in the subcultural genre of Arab-Malay music - the bouncy ethnic cross-pollination of Arabian melodies, Malay throbs, Thai Luke-thoong kicks, and a bit of Latin tempo. We meet Geh, founder of the band who taught himself to play the accordion 35 year ago. Geh is joined by Umar, a former Koran teacher and now a guitarist with a knack for Egyptian numbers. Fronting their band is Jamilah, a husky-voiced, humble diva who teaches the Koran during the day and sings Arabic songs at night while wondering if the world of melody can be both faith-bound and joyously secular. "Baby Arabia" plays cover version of classical as well as contemporary Arab and Malay music (though the band members do not speak those languages) and they have been touring mosque fairs, circumcision rites and weddings at Muslim communities around Bangkok and the Central Region for three decades. Though some Islamic scholars question their brand of worldly merry-making, claiming that it is against the law of the religion, the humanizing power of music and irresistible exuberance of their songs provide a definitive counter-argument.

"กััดดาฟี" / "Gaddafi", 23 mins, 2013

This is a story of Gaddafi Muhammad, a 14-year-old boy in central Bangkok. His father, Chatchawal Muhammad, was (and maybe is) an ardent admirer of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the ousted and killed ex-ruler of Libya. Having named his son after the controversial figure in world history, Chatchawal has a second thought once the situation in Libya got bloody. Meanwhile, Gaddafi the boy is about to apply for his first Identity Card, which means that his unusual name will be officially recognized by the state.



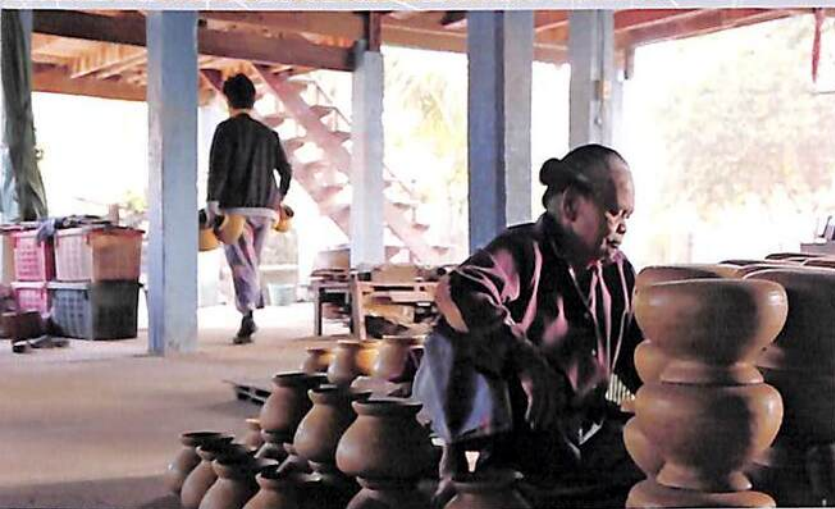
People in the world shall be grateful
มนุษย์ในโลกนี้ให้ระลึกถึงบุญคุณ

พิสุทธิ์ ศรีหมอก / Pisut Srimhok

"บ้านเราอยู่ห้วยหินดำ"

"Our Home in Huay Hin Dam", 51 Mins, 2011

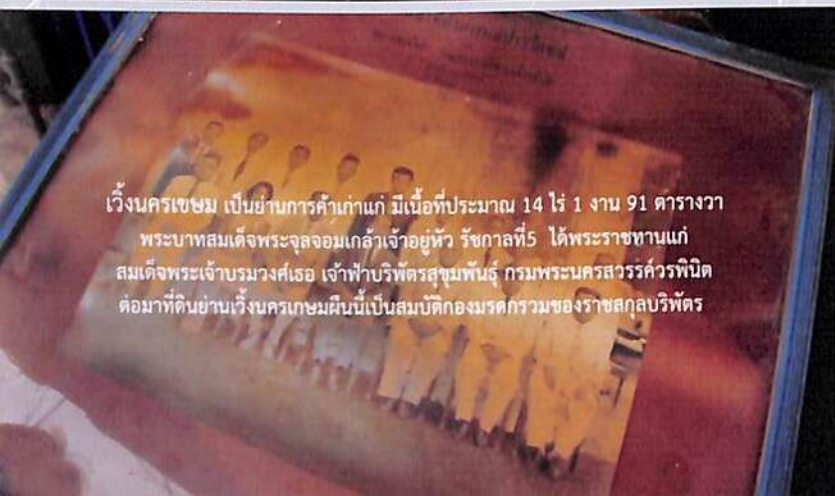
Huay Hin Dam is a Pwo Karen village whose livelihood is closely linked to their forest. There is no doubt that the forest is the lifeline of the community and the villagers there had to fight off modern investors who seek forest concessions as well as struggle with the outsiders' and the government' preconception about rotational farming. However, time has proven that the forest has been well protected by the villagers. Today, the community has been involved in the planning of forest resource management together with the local authorities and is learning to adapt themselves to the rapid and ever more aggressive changes in their social and economic structures.



"ลมหายใจหม้อดินเผาลองสระบัว"

"Breath of Pottery in Klong Srabua", 24 Mins, 2014

Once a necessity in the Thai kitchen, pottery has been replaced by aluminum, stainless steel, and electric pots respectively. Now, baked clay pots are only used for cooking medicinal herbs. As the use of pottery has been abandoned, most potters have left their profession. At the Klong Srabua community in Ayudhaya, there are two siblings who are the last generation of potters. The sisters vow to keep making pottery for as long as their bodies allow.



"จำฮะเฮง"

"Sum Ha Heng", 23 Mins, 2014

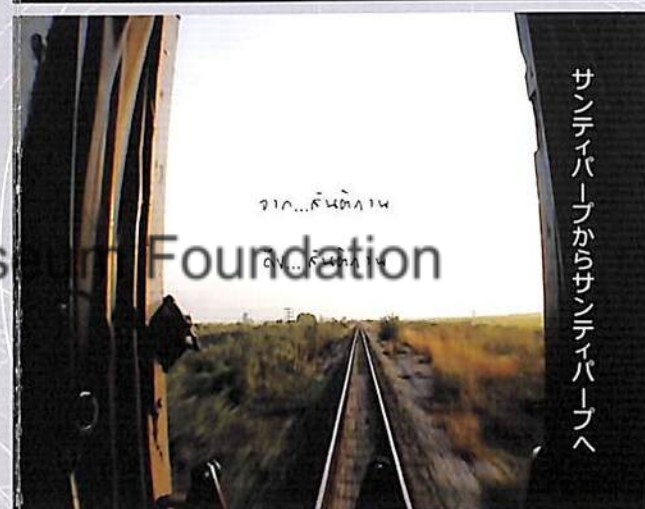
The people of the Verng Nakorn Kasem community suddenly face a big change following the news about the ownership transfer of the land on which they have been making a living for at least three generations. Uncertainty brings much worry as nobody knows if they can continue to live and do business there or have to move out to a new area. The Sum Ha Heng congee shop is among the many businesses facing this inevitable insecurity.



สันติภาพ อินกองงาม / Santiphap Inkong-ngam

"JUST A SECOND; The Khong Legend", 51 mins, 2003

"The Khong Legend," 2003, a low-budget independent film, conceived by Santiphap Inkong-ngam, in collaboration with artists from six countries in the Mekong region, is inspired by the theory of relativity as it does not base on one particularly story. It is considered as a geographically and mentally journey along the river. The project is supported by Art Network Asia

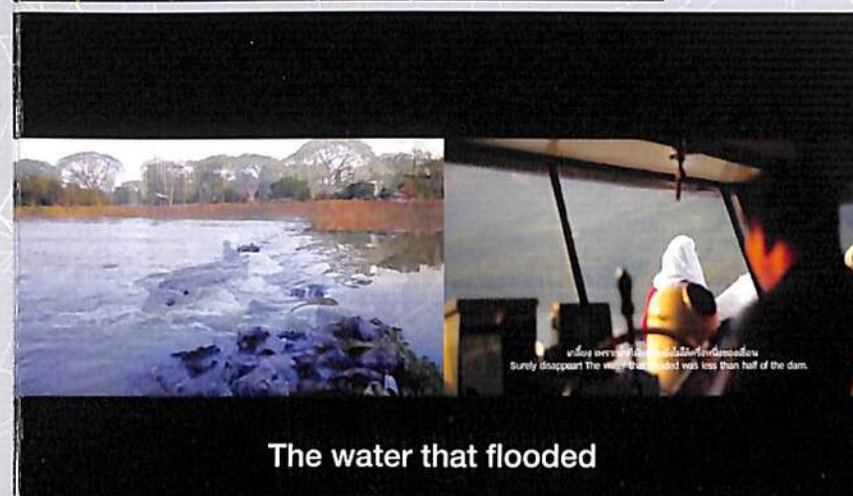


"จาก...สันติภาพ ถึง...สันติภาพ"

"From... Santiphap To...Santiphap", 9 mins, 2006

"Santiphap" is Thai for "peace." Santiphap Inkong-ngam's "From Santiphap to Santiphap" is a "prayer" for peace narrated by people named Santiphaps, who exhort the viewer to "contribute good intentions" while hazy, idyllic scenes of water, sky, and trees unfold. The nature of these good intentions is left obfuscated by a lushly romantic aesthetic, which visually immerses the viewer in an amorphous natural world, where we do not have to bravely examine the economic and historical conditions that obstruct meaningful definitions of peace.

สุทธิรัตน์ ศุภปริญา
Sutthirat Supaparinya



"My Grandpa's Route Has Been Forever Blocked",
15 mins, 2012

In this documentary, the viewer is taken on a journey down the Ping River, a waterway that has historically been used for trade. It reflects upon the evolving river-scape comparing the river of now to that of the one that existed during my grandfather's time. In 1958, the Bhumibol Dam was built, effectively changing the landscape. The film takes the viewer on a journey down the present Ping River in an attempt to understand the past and observe issues in the present. Using an innovative split screen technique, the video invites viewers to reflect on small weirs, floodgates, and dikes lying sequentially from the source of the river to the Bhumibol Dam while taking the viewer on a boat cruise to contextualize the impact of changes on the river.

The water that flooded

Open Secrets features eleven documentary films by seven filmmakers who are well known both in Thailand and abroad. Their films address some of the obscure, but critical, social phenomena and changes revolving around our natural environment, belief systems, ways of life, local history and social behaviors that took place in Thailand in the past decade.

The title of the exhibition is a metaphor for the revealing of overlooked or ignored issues that have been carefully selected for discussion and questioning. These are the truths that have been hidden from the eye of society, especially in an urban setting where focus is always placed on the self.

Each documentary is a result of its maker's investigation of hypotheses that are based on direct experience and collection of facts that beg reflection. Each offers a door of exploration for the viewers to open and witness what they probably have yet to realize or think about.

The visual experience created in this show also reflects the esthetic development of Thai documentaries from 2003 to the present. These films have their own unique storytelling, employing narrative tools and techniques distinctive to each filmmaker, all promising stimulation to the Thai film industry and engaging dialogue with the audiences.

