



# Journal of Urban Culture Research

Arts and Social Outreach –  
Designs for Urban Dignity

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# Journal of Urban Culture Research

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Cover image of Haifa, Israel from the Bahá'í Gardens provided by Alan Kinear.

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# Editorial

# Dignity

# Triumphant –

## *Building Partnerships for Change*

Kjell Skylstad\* Editor in Chief

What is the place of industrial culture in the total environment directly influencing the lives of a large part of urban and suburban populations today and affecting the wellbeing of the whole populace through its environmental and social impacts? Do we need to drastically expand our understanding of what constitutes urban culture in these time of rapid change? What partnerships are called for to complement our traditions of research and intervention? The Journal of Urban Culture Research in partnership with the Urban Research Plaza wishes to direct the special attention of researchers and activists to the industrial development following in the wake of the open borders corporate policies of “outsourcing,” directly impacting urban living conditions globally.

On April 24, 2013, an eight story communal building Rana Plaza in Dhaka City collapsed, burying alive and killing 1,129 factory workers who had been producing clothes for leading chain stores and companies world wide, like Benetton, El Corte Inglés and Walmart. They were caught in a death trap, working under condition that Pope Frances recently designated as “slave labor.” Commenting on the anniversary of the tragedy, Nazmus Sakib of the Open Democracy network writes “... can the giant brands and glamorous global fashion and passion industry deny the fact that these laborers, innocent sweatshop workers, laid down their lives just to allow the production and perpetuation of ostentatious fabrics and fads at a cheaper price....”<sup>1</sup>

This is just one example of the grim reality behind contemporary industrial culture in urban Asia today mainly resulting from the “outsourcing” policies implemented by a majority of Western corporations to circumvent labor protection laws in their home bases.

\* Dr. Kjell Skylstad, Professor Emeritus, University of Oslo, Department of Musicology, Norway



Is there a way to turn humiliation into lasting dignity? The fascinating story of the garment workers of the collapsed Bangkok Bed and Bath factory setting up their own production facility demonstrates how turning the tide is possible through building partnerships and solidarity for change.

In October 2002 the Bed and Bath factory became insolvent, throwing 800 workers out on the streets without promise of compensation. The jobless workers started a fight for compensation supported by an international solidarity campaign. Finally after four months they got not only just compensation, but their fight also resulted in a revised law from the Ministry of Labor on worker compensation for all workers in Thailand exposed to similar measures.

With this compensation and pooling together loans from the Government Savings Bank 40 former workers were able to start a small factory cooperative in Bangkok – The Solidarity Factory.

The Solidarity Factory started operating as a cooperative, where all workers are members and shared responsibility for production, marketing and finance. The working standards agreed upon included an 8 hour working day with 2-3 hours overtime allowance and equal wages for all. All profits from sales were to be shared between members.<sup>2</sup>

Commenting on the achievements of the Solidarity Factory, Doris Lee via the Asia Monitor Resource Centre in Hong Kong comments:

“Each day that they work cooperatively and survive by their own management, they demonstrate to the world the possibility of production without exploitation, the possibility and manner of implementing a democratically run workplace.”<sup>3</sup>

And the example is not unique. Simultaneous with the foundation of the Bangkok Solidarity Factory the economic crisis in Argentina had disastrous impacts on businesses and workers, with unemployment rising to 35%. It resulted in spontaneous workers actions to take over their workplaces and save bankrupt businesses. Within a short period more than 200 factories had been cooperatively organized with workers dividing work and profits equally. Still there are 150 remaining. Some like La Alameda, having continued operations from 2002 until now, are all based on three guiding principles:

1. Having a strong base in the community
2. Staying independent of political parties
3. Keeping the principles of democratic and transparent decision making<sup>4</sup>

All the while textile workers in Asia and Latin America continued to be exposed to inhuman working conditions by foreign companies bent on destroying trade unions, relocating their business to obtain cheaper labor and deposing of old workers who had served the company faithfully for many years. Forced overtime, sexual harassment, and hazardous working environments leading to frequent disasters followed in the wake of these policies.

In Thailand a crisis came in June 2009 with the layoff of close to 2000 workers from a company production facility Body Fashion owned by the world trade mark Triumph based in Switzerland. This happened after its trade union leader, Jitra Kotshady, in July 2008 had been fired for wearing a T-shirt with a political message on a TV discussion program that resulted in workers' protests and strikes.

Three months before the Thai layoff the Asia Monitor Resource Center had organized a meeting in Bangkok focusing on Asian workers situation in the face of the new economic crises. At this meeting a spokesperson from the leading Argentine collective textile factory La Alameda was invited to present their common experiences of crises leading to a weakening of workers rights and a democratic deficit. Learning about the experiences of the Bangkok based Solidarity Factory which by now had been renamed Dignity Returns, he proposed to form a global brand of workers cooperatives - No Chains - symbolizing the workers breaking away from the chains of exploitation of the international garment industry.<sup>5</sup>

By this important juncture an international support organization – the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) – organized 10 years previously by a coalition of trade unions and NGO's in 16 European countries, had taken important steps to support the fight of textile workers globally. Through invoking the ILO (International Labor Organization) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted in 1998, they demanded brand name companies follow the international standards for safe working conditions and livable wages. At the same time the CCC acknowledged the right of workers themselves to take the lead in organizing themselves, giving full support to the Bangkok Dignity Returns initiative.<sup>6</sup>

From its very start the Urban Research Plaza has seen as its goal to focus on the whole range of cultural and social conditions on which a livable city must be built. A vibrant urban culture can not exist if a large sector of its industrial base, even part of the so-called creative industries, still denies a large part of the city work force access to the most basic human needs. It is the express intention of the JUCR editors in conjunction with the URP Forum organizers to promote and call for needed research that can throw light on some of the most urgent challenges facing urban future development and result in corrective action and legislation.

### Endnotes

1. [www.opendemocracy.net/nazmus-sakit/rana-plaza-garment-catastrophe-one-year-on-who-needs-labor-rights-and-safety](http://www.opendemocracy.net/nazmus-sakit/rana-plaza-garment-catastrophe-one-year-on-who-needs-labor-rights-and-safety).
2. <http://archive.cleanclothes.org/campaigns/when-the-postman-rings/102>.
- 3-5. <http://blog.p2pfoundation.net/no-chains-for-the-thai-dignity-returns-sweat-free-garment-labnour-cooperative/2010/12/18>.
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# Guest Author

# Urban Dignity– Global Dignity

What Is It? How Do We Achieve It? (Part 2)

Evelin Lindner<sup>+</sup>

## Abstract

*Unity in diversity* is at the centre of dignity. It means that people of all classes and colors intermingle in a spirit of mutual care and respect. Traditionally, throughout the past millennia, *uniformity in division* has been practised almost everywhere on the planet: to strengthen their competitive advantage over enemy out-groups, in-groups maintained a strictly unequal domination of *higher* beings over *lesser* beings. Unity in diversity is a more complex concept as it requires the readiness and ability to consider everyone else as equal in dignity, and it calls for the skills to enter into dialogue with equals. As long as such a culture is not yet established, unity in diversity has the potential to trigger uneasiness, including feelings of humiliation, and can lead to attempts to cleanse and exclude diversity so as to return to the more familiar and less complex experience of uniformity in division. Urban contexts are prime experimental laboratories for this transition. For urban dignity to flourish and social and ecological sustainability to emerge, interdisciplinary dialogue is needed to overcome the traditional practise of domination over people and over nature. Urban dignity flourishes when the city is regarded in terms of a family that collaborates in mutual communal sharing and stewardship of their environment, while urban dignity collapses when priority is given to clambering for power and status, be it through overt oppression or cloaked as economic necessity. Artists can play a central role in creating conditions for social interactions of dignity instead of humiliation. Music, for instance, has the power to unite. One example was given by Oslo citizens when they reacted to the 22 July 2011 terror attacks in Norway by gathering in front of the courthouse singing ‘The Rainbow People.’

**Keywords:** Globalization, Dignity, Care, Diversity, Economy, Humiliation, Exploitation

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This is part 2 of an article that first appeared in volume 8 of JUCR, reporting from the 12th Urban Research Plaza's Forum held in Bangkok on March 3 - 4, 2014 and the Returning Dignity Conference at Chiang Mai University March 8 - 12, 2014. It picks up again with the question: Must we therefore forget about global citizenship of care and responsibility?

### Global Family Building

Let me share some of my personal experiences. During both conferences, we saw the film *Banaz: A Love Story*, by Deeyah Khan ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=VepuyvhHYdM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VepuyvhHYdM)). For many years, I have been working in situations where honour killing is practiced. Imagine a mother in front of you, crying, explaining that it is the family's duty to rescue the family's honour from humiliation, to save the family's body by 'amputating' a diseased limb. In this case, this limb is the daughter. She had been raped. She must be killed. While listening to the mother, you may feel your very humanity being humiliated by the mere suggestion that killing a raped girl could have any kind of healing effect. Now, what would happen if you expressed this feeling to the mother, bluntly, and called her a cruel, ignorant woman? She might feel humiliated by you, the decadent arrogant Westerner, who denigrates her culture.

What happens here? In the moral universe of honour and humiliation, the girl must die, in the universe of dignity and humiliation, the girl must live, and the discourse that addresses this irreconcilable difference is humiliating for all involved.

I ask: why do you think you are right? Did you grow up in a context that holds the ideals of human rights dear? Should you not respect this mother's culture? For her, love means having the courage of the surgeon who rescues a body through amputation. For you, love means giving trauma therapy to the girl. Can we create universal harmony by simultaneously offering respect for the girl to be killed and not be killed?

It has taken me a lifetime to develop the argument for why I think 'I am right' when I say that a girl who was raped must live and receive trauma therapy rather than be killed in so-called honour killing. And why and how, at the same time, the mother can and must be respected. Or why and how all people of this world can and must be invited to join in with their respective religious orientation, sense of patriotism and nationalism. Or why and how the love for nature can and must be both local and global. Or why and how dogma can be transcended through radical self-reflexive humility that, in turn, can open space for religious experiences that unite beyond dogma. The same goes for the philosophy of science, metaphysics, ontology and epistemology. Humility is helpful also with regard to human rights ideals. They are part of many philosophies around the world – *Ubuntu* in Africa is one example, the Karen wisdom of a Joni Odochaw another – and their roots go far back into Western and non-Western history.

Since the age of nine, such questions have been at the core of my life. As a child, I was unable to share my family's choice of religious dogma, because it forced me to separate those who are saved by God from those whose souls were lost if they

resisted conversion. I could not endorse eternal condemnation for non-believers, something even more far-reaching than killing an earthly body. What would be the path to global inclusiveness in this case? If not theism, then agnosticism or atheism? In my life, I came to transcend them all.

Why am I right? Because we live in unique historical times. Traditional strategies no longer work when reality has radically changed. We live in times of connectedness, where interdependence replaces the traditional dichotomy of dependence versus independence. Old Realpolitik is different from new Realpolitik.

Clearly, what is called globalization, in its origin, is largely a 'Davos' inspired project, creating new dependencies to secure investor confidence and shareholder value. The technology that now shrinks the world emerged from within the dominator model of society, which now manifests itself as an eerie return of colonization, only more indirectly and covertly, more efficiently co-opting its victims into becoming complicit in their own victimhood. Globalization, as it stands now, is far from a charitable project.

Yet, the same project also creates new interconnectedness, which carries the potential to undermine its original aims by opening doors for the solidarity of global partnership. The world shrinks, one single human family emerges, and its members increasingly embrace the belief that they deserve equality in dignity not just in rhetoric but in reality. They slowly realize that they are entrapped in contexts that are covertly rigged to create immense wealth for a few elites, and they learn that this entrapment is shamefully humiliating, rather than God's will or the natural order of things.

Clearly, donating more to charity is not enough. While I write this, a message comes in from NEF (the New Economics Foundation for economics, as if people and the planet mattered), announcing their new report, titled, 'Why We Need a New Macroeconomic Strategy' ([www.neweconomics.org/publications/why-we-need-a-new-macroeconomic-strategy](http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/why-we-need-a-new-macroeconomic-strategy)). But who shall work for new macroeconomic strategies? Politicians? Corporate leaders? The more a person has become powerful within a system, the more she will be beholden its existing status-quo pressures. Jan Servaes and Darrell Moen shared something very important in the Chiang Mai conference, namely, that academics are not necessarily listened to by politicians, also in UN contexts. Jan Servaes told us that he avoids being drawn into political pressures and he is very protective of his independence as an academician. This experience is shared by many members of our global dignity network. Not least my personal experience coincides with this insight. Who else shall work for new macroeconomic strategies? Bottom-up local initiatives that introduce alternative systems? If exposed to global pressures, the very space that is needed for diverse local expressions to develop is obliterated. Local versus global is a false choice: the local needs appropriate global frameworks to be truly local and diverse, to be sufficiently protected from global pressures that push it into uniformity (Lindner, 2012a).

Only a few people have the opportunity to step outside of these pressures. They therefore carry the responsibility to show that globalizing Wall Street frameworks is not the only alternative; there is another path, namely the globalization of frameworks of mutual care and stewardship. 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has,' the anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901–1978) is reported to have said.

Many believe that nothing can change before human nature matures, and that this will take too long. At this point, social psychology has significant insights to offer. It shows the power of framing. If social psychologists ask students to play the prisoner's dilemma game, and they tell them that this is a community game, the students cooperate. The students cheat on each other when told that the very same game is a Wall Street game. This is the power of framing: the same people can behave in radically different ways within different frameworks. Human nature is malleable, and 'good' frameworks bring the 'good' to the fore, and vice versa. This means that new frameworks can create a systemic push for our evolutionary inclinations to be social and this will motivate us to connect and collaborate for the common good rather than plundering it.

And here is more good news: Realistic optimism is justified. None of our forefathers were ever given a window of opportunity as unique and significant as presented to contemporary generations. The *ingathering* of humankind (a term used in anthropology) opens space to co-create a global culture of unity in diversity that has never existed before. None of our forefathers had access to the vast knowledge about the universe and our place in it that current generations possess. The picture of our Blue Planet from the perspective of an astronaut is something that none of our ancestors was able to see. The Blue Planet image alone provides a powerful framing for changing the game from competition for dominance to collaboration in partnership. It shows most vividly that one single species of *Homo Sapiens* is living on one single tiny planet.

Yet, we, the human family, so far, seem to be failing to understand how historically unparalleled this opportunity is. Even many of those who have the resources to see are overlooking the uniqueness of this opening. We are particularly overlooking the pivotal role that radical global citizenship of dignity and care must and can play.

Why are we overlooking it? Because many have a salaried employment that keeps them in a local context, or, at best, in a 'frequent traveller' bubble. We overlook it, because we hope that our politicians or at least the United Nations will understand and repair the global frameworks. We also feel that these frameworks are too complicated for us to understand anyhow. We hope that giving to charity will be enough. The practice of global citizenship of dignity and care is new and untested and requires the deep restructuring of our assumptions and personal lives.

I remember peace researcher Johan Galtung discussing why there are so few peace scholars in the world (Lindner, 2009b). At the Higher Education for Peace Conference, 4th–6th May 2000, in Norway’s far north, in Tromsø, he explained that only very few peace advocates truly live globally (as Galtung does) – most are bound to local contexts not least through such profane circumstances as having to pay off a mortgage – and this contrasts with those well-financed and well-travelled Pentagon experts who use the entire world as their basis for analysis and strategizing. In other words, the lens of the average peace advocate is too narrow, both with respect to geopolitics and historical trends, to outweigh those others who engage in traditional power politics.

I am among the very few who have tried to live truly globally, and I did so for the past forty years. I do not ask everybody to follow my path, yet, I call for humility when you listen to me. Lived global experience provides unexpected insights. A non-global citizen can only theorise about global citizenship, while I stand before the immense task of having to build a new world-view. Many assumptions which can be held dear locally, are being shattered by the practice of global living.

The Western culture of *separate knowing* (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997) aggravates this situation. Therefore I invite the reader to listen to my practice of global citizenship in the humble spirit of *connected knowing* (rather than only trying to find flaws to oppose). Peter Svenonius, a theoretical linguist who is also based in Tromsø, at CASTL (Center for Advanced Study in Theoretical Linguistics – A Norwegian Center of Excellence), explains that language was not created for the goal of communicating; rather, language was created for use in thinking. This is how I employ language, as a tool for inquiry, and I invite the reader to join in to the flow of reflection, rather than close the flow by judging with the aim to agree or disagree. I want to inspire, open space for new reflections, rather than engage in debate.

In my view, only radical global citizenship of dignity and care can overcome the *security dilemma* as well as the *commons dilemma*. Global citizenship of dignity and care can help the traditional world of ranked worthiness, or honour, to move to a world of equal dignity, and this includes a transition from what I call *honour humiliation* to *dignity humiliation*. Honour humiliation is part of humankind’s cultural adaptations to the security dilemma. Humiliated honour requires revenge and the show of strength to achieve victory over the humiliator. The script of honour humiliation is the script of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. Dignity humiliation, in contrast, calls for the *conscientisation* of Paulo Freire, to which Nelson Mandela so courageously dedicated his life (Freire, 1968; Freire, 1970).

The security dilemma is being described by international relations scholars (the term was coined by John Herz, 1950) and it means that in a compartmentalised world there is virtually no escape from the motto ‘If you want peace, prepare for war.’ Indeed, throughout the past millennia, arms races, fuelled by fear of attack, often triggered the war they intended to avoid. Only global citizenship of dignity and care can open space for Gandhi’s tenet that ‘There is no path to peace. Peace is the path.’

And the commons dilemma means that commons are always vulnerable to free-riders and plunderers (Hardin, 1968). Throughout the past three decades, the Wall Street with its culture of raiding has become the accepted global frame and it has become so strong that even the most well-intentioned politician is no longer free enough to push for community framings. Investor confidence is what counts, what must be served. All around the world, wherever commons are successfully protected and enlarged locally, they risk being invaded and raided from outside. Local community initiatives routinely falter when they collide with the larger global Wall Street frame. I see great civil society projects getting funded initially, but when they achieve real impact, funding is often cut. All around the world, I meet dedicated idealists who have given up, increasingly disillusioned, some end as cynics. Funds have their origins in the context of business, and ‘good works’ are expected to avoid hurting business interests. Even the most robust alternative initiatives, such as the Mondragon cooperatives in Spain, for example, are not strong enough in the face of an antagonistic global context (Gar Alperovitz in his talk at the Thirty-First Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures on 5th November 2011, in New York City). Non-profits are increasingly selling out their ideals to for-profit thinking. Even humanitarian aid has become a business.

Who are investors? Who are donors? It is naïve to treat donor and investor interest as a black box, as something that should not be questioned, because, supposedly ‘it is the freedom of the rich to do as they please with their wealth, and nobody can expect them to act against their self-interest and give their hard-earned funds to initiatives that hurt them.’ Consider the absurdity: ‘Why must not-for-profit organizations beg for funds from for-profit organizations to do so-called *good* work to offset the freedom of for-profit organizations to do *bad* work?’ (Lindner, 2012a:209). Only a massive bottom-up push can change this, a push from the consciousness and practice of caring global citizens who truly walk their talk. After living globally for almost four decades, I can attest that it can be done.

Maria Dahle is the Executive Director of the Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF), a non-governmental organization established in 1989 and located at the Human Rights House in Oslo, Norway. She reports first-hand how human rights defenders are increasingly being constrained by the influence of ‘bigger’ interests of the government/corporate nexus:

The 90’s were a ‘decade of hope’ for human rights. Around the world, civil society in general, and the human rights sector in particular, experienced an explosive growth. Since then, working with human rights has gradually required ever more specific expertise. In response, many organizations have become more professional. Their work is often donor driven, and therefore they have become more bureaucratic, less creative and spontaneous. Several of the human rights organizations, especially the international and those working in the capitals, have become part of a national and international elite and are often less connected – or not connected at all – to social movements. Hence, they lose support from their own people (Dahle, 2008:3).



In 2011, Maria Dahle continues:

Tighter restrictions on holding peaceful demonstrations and gatherings have been introduced, often with reference to the need for increased security. Our partners in the Human Rights House Network report also here on increased sophisticated administrative and bureaucratic harassment of NGOs and activists planning peaceful demonstrations in OSCE participating states. The new laws and regulations legitimize the police' excessive use of violence against the demonstrators and massive arrest of participants. Journalists on duty covering the events are often beaten, detained, harassed and interrogated by national security forces (Dahle, 2011:2).

Let me give you an example from my own experience. I spent four months in South America in 2012. Particularly eye-opening were my weeks in Marabá, in the state of Pará, Brazil, the sad 'cradle' of the industrialization of the Amazon. Pará is like another continent, compared with the rest of Brazil. It has the size of Western Europe and one landlord can own half a million of cattle. It has an inglorious reputation for its hired gunmen. The following article is illustrative: 'Brazil: Homage to the Victims of the Amazon in Washington, D.C.', in *Global Voices*, by Georgi McCarthy on 16th April 2012 ([globalvoicesonline.org](http://globalvoicesonline.org)).

My hosts were Dan Baron and his wife Manoela Souza, who live in a local community of about 30 000 souls called Cabelo Seco, at the confluence of two rivers, the Tocantins and Itacaiúnas rivers. Dan Baron and Manoela Souza are the artistic-pedagogic coordinators of the Rivers of Meeting project. Cabelo Seco is an extremely poor community. The roof above me, for example, leaked when it rained and I had to cover my computer and all other valuables with plastic sheets. Yet, poverty is not the only problem. Not only hired gunmen, also drugs are being used to weaken communities who stand in the way of 'progress', crack is given out for free until people are addicted, creating a toxic mixture of hopelessness and violence. Just when I was in Cabelo Seco, two people were killed in execution style a few houses away from where I was.

Music has the power to unite. One example was given by Oslo citizens when they reacted to the 22nd July 2011 terror attacks in Norway by gathering in front of the courthouse singing 'The Rainbow People.' Also Manoela Souza and Dan Baron give the community of Cabelo Seco strength through music and popular art. They have turned the living room in their little house in the middle of Cabelo Seco into the cultural centre of this community. See more on [www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/board01.php#dancohen](http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/board01.php#dancohen).

It is interesting to see that Dan Baron, like Carina zur Strassen, and many other members in our global dignity network, share backgrounds that bridge several continents. People with such broad backgrounds seem to be particularly alert to the power of art. Carina zur Strassen, for instance, drew our attention to the 'Landfill Harmonic - An Orchestra for Kids with Instruments Made from Trash' in Paraguay, to be seen at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJxxdQox7n0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJxxdQox7n0).

I chose Marabá over Rio + 20 because I had understood that the voices of the people in the Amazon are not heard, even not in Rio or Brasilia, and I wanted to hear them and bring their voices to larger audiences. Just to give one example: I saw first-hand that the river ten meters away from the house where I stayed is being polluted with mercury; it is a dying river. Children in the Cabelo Seco community become blind because of the toxic particles in the water.

As it turned out, my presence in Marabá was extremely meaningful, much more than I initially thought. It made a difference that it could not have made in Rio + 20, where I was invited, too. Being alerted by my presence, the television came to interview us twice, my host and his community (see [youtu.be/a\\_y7G2KFeQo](https://youtu.be/a_y7G2KFeQo)). Sadly, my worries about Rio + 20 turned out to be warranted. Rio + 20 provided much too little space for real transformation. Nnimmo Bassey, chairman of Friends of the Earth International, summarized the event as follows: ‘Governmental positions have been hijacked by corporate interests linked to polluting industries.’

Pará is a lesson in predator economics, the Amazon is a frontier of raiding. The natural resources are being plundered and whoever stands in the way has to fear for their life. More than 1,500 Brazilians have been killed for trying to protect the Amazon rain forest over the past twenty-five years, and some 2,000 more have received death threats (see Comissão Pastoral da Terra, CPT, [www.cptnacional.org.br](http://www.cptnacional.org.br)). The brutality of this state-of-affairs in our world, clearly, is omnipresent on our planet; it is only more sharply visible at front-lines such as the Amazon. A consumer who revels in buying several cell phones, for example, usually spares herself the awareness that she uses up rare minerals that must be mined somewhere. The Amazon is one of the places where the mining is being done, and its ugliness and unsustainability is glaringly visible for those who refuse being complicit.

With respect to South America as a whole, the Paraguayan coup was illustrative: ‘How Agribusiness, Landowning and Media Elite, and the U.S. Are Paving a Way for Regional Destabilization’, writes Francesca Fiorentini on 4th July 2012 in Buenos Aires, see [war-times.org](http://war-times.org). Or, here is an example from the United States of America: ‘The Scam Wall Street Learned From the Mafia’, is an article that describes how America’s biggest banks took part in a nationwide bid-rigging conspiracy and systematically stole from schools, hospitals, libraries and nursing homes (by Matt Taibbi in *Rolling Stone Politics*, [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com), 21st June 2012).

Nowadays, raiding is increasingly being facilitated by public policy. The above-mentioned Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) happens at the highest international level. Similar trends can be observed at national and community levels as well. For instance, the same day I learned that the Brazilian Ministry of Culture no longer funds Living Culture projects committed to harnessing popular culture for the development of sustainable communities (as the project by Dan and Mano does) but only ‘creative industry spectacles’, I also heard that in Norway long-term services for drug addicts will receive less funding and that short-term interventions will be given priority. These are only a few of innumerable examples.

I see social cohesion being weakened by policy wherever I go. Solidarity is made ever more difficult, solidarity that could be a force for more caring and dignifying ways of relating to each other and our planet. Linda Hartling commented on 11th August 2012: ‘In some ways, I think predatory capitalism offers a form of psychological “crack” until individuals and corporations become addicted to predatory capitalism, which is insatiable and unsustainable.’

As it seems, we, the human family, have a responsibility to think deeper. French economist Frédéric Bastiat (1801–1850) said: ‘When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men living together in society, they create for themselves, in the course of time, a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it.’ Psychologist Seymour Epstein is said to have authored the following reflection: ‘There is a time for pessimism, that is, for considering worst-case scenarios in order to appropriately prepare for them. This does not mean one should not be hopeful, but only that one should be prepared for adverse outcomes rather than blithely assume that all will turn out well. Rather than being naively (indiscriminately) optimistic or pessimistic, it is better to be strategically optimistic and pessimistic.’

As remarked earlier, I posit that it is only global citizenship of dignity and care that can attenuate the security dilemma and open space for Gandhi’s tenet ‘There is no path to peace. Peace is the path.’ And local commons are lost without suitable global frames.

A turnaround is possible; here is more good news: All identifications are fickle, except one. Sociologist Norbert Elias said it already in 1939: ‘Only the highest level of integration, belonging to humanity, is permanent and inescapable’ (Elias, 1991:226-7). Examples from the Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda show the force of this identification: some people protected potential victims at great personal risk because they saw them as ‘fellow human beings’ (Lindner, 2000). None other than philosopher and economist Amartya Sen singles out shared humanity as the most basic of shared identities (Sen, 2006).

Like me, Elias laments that too few understand the unique promise of global identification: ‘But our ties to this all-embracing we-unit are so loose that very few people, it seems, are aware of them as social bonds’ (Ibid.).

Hank Stone, to whom I referred to earlier, calls for *radical humility*. He calls on us to reclaim our positive future by setting aside the comforting certainties we grew up with, and to observe the world around us with innocent eyes:

- Because we can ‘know’ things that are not true, we must respect reason and the scientific method of observation and testable hypotheses.
- Because honest people can disagree, we must dialogue with people with differing ideas to find the truth.
- Because there are limits to what we can know, we must tolerate ambiguity.

- Because we share one Earth, we must cooperate with individuals, groups, humankind, and nature. (Hank Stone in *Radical Humility*, philebersole.wordpress.com/2013/03/12/one-page-on-radical-humility/)

Stone reminds us that we have the unique opportunity, not least through the Internet, to become nodes in the web of the world and make ‘an idea whose time has come circle the world overnight.’ We can make a new story, and new institutions for our positive future, ‘because we get to choose the stories we believe.’ We can honour ‘the investment the universe has made in us when we humbly try to create a sustainable, just, and peaceful world.’

Stone asked me on 3rd April 2013 (in a personal communication): ‘Do you have a message in the spirit of outreach to people who don’t think your way? Our U.S. foreign policy of the moment seems to be taunting Iran and North Korea, as one might do to humiliate the other into precipitating a war, or something close enough to it to justify continuing high military spending. Have you arguments for people who think that way?’

What would you say? Perhaps the following summary of our analysis?

In old times, aristocrats humiliated each other’s honour and then went to duel. One died, the other survived. This was the way of honour. Honour had to be preserved, even if at the price of one’s life. Also wars were often conducted in a duel-like manner. Indeed, throughout the past millennia, arms races, fuelled by fear of humiliation and annihilation, often triggered the very war they aimed at avoiding. The security dilemma, as being described by international relations scholars, means that in a divided world there was virtually no escape from the motto ‘If you want peace, prepare for war.’

Today, duels are forbidden in most societies, however, the spirit of *honour humiliation* lives on, particularly in international relations. And it even becomes more attractive as arms sales promise to be ever more profitable. As reported above, the international sales of conventional weapons have risen by 17 per cent in the period 2008–2012 as compared to the period 2003–2007 (SIPRI, 2013, www.sipri.org). In that situation, it cannot come as a surprise that many conclude that the script of ‘one dies, the other survives’, if ever it promised wealth for the winner, has increased its attraction multifold today. Usually, people who hold such might-is-right views justify them by alluding to the supposed ‘killer ape’ nature of human beings and warn that soft-hearted liberals will only reap what they deserve, namely extinction.

Yet, today, ‘winning’ is no longer as sure a ‘winning strategy’ as it once was. We live in novel historical times and there are two counterforces. First, global interconnectedness is a counterforce, and, second, human rights values of equality in dignity stand in the way.

As to the first point, traditional adaptations no longer fit when new connectedness and interdependence replace the traditional world of dependence-independence

and domination-submission. As mentioned earlier, old *Realpolitik* is not new *Realpolitik*. If deadly cycles of humiliation could be suppressed with sheer force in the past, this is much less obvious in modern times. Remember the Danish cartoons. Remember cyber war. The world is now so interconnected and so vulnerable that a few aggrieved individuals can disrupt it in ways that were not imaginable before. In the past, the game of honour humiliation was played between a few aristocrats or diplomats on behalf of their masters; today the Internet draws the common citizen into this game. If leaders of movements or of nations, be it Al-Qaeda or Iran or North Korea, in their stand-off against 'the West', or Western leaders in their attempt to stay on top, create an arena for honour-humiliation scripts today, such aggrieved individuals may act out their fantasies of revenge in ways that make it irrelevant whether those leaders are only bluffing, and who has more weapons. Anders Behring Breivik, in Norway, for example, acted on fantasies of being a knight who rescues his people from unacceptable humiliation. Even if one believes that honour deserves to be paid for by life, or that profit from playing honour games is sweet, in a vulnerable interconnected world, inviting a broader public into games formerly played by a few elites, turns 'noble deaths' for a few into possible collective suicide. Games of honour humiliation, if they ever were meaningful, lose this meaning in a vulnerable interconnected world filled not only with ready-to-use weapons but also with easy-to-follow manuals for the construction of weapons of mass destruction. No fence around the gated communities for those who profit from such strategies in the short term can be high enough in the long term.

As to the second point, increasingly, a sense of what I call *dignity humiliation* is emerging all around the world. This means that not only is our world more interconnected, it is also in the process of losing its faith in the virtues of domination and submission. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) begins: 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.' Humiliation was seen as a prosocial tool to humble underlings in the English language until 1757. From then onward, humiliation acquired the taste of being antisocial, to *humiliate* meant to mortify or to lower or to depress the dignity or self-respect of someone (Miller, 1993). Dignity humiliation is more intense, more painful, than honour humiliation. Dignity humiliation becomes particularly intense when human rights are preached with noble words that create high hopes, only to turn out as empty rhetoric. And the instrumentalization of honour humiliation for profit and for new forms of domination – war on terror as excuse for undermining civil liberties, for example – is a particularly obscene form of dignity humiliation.

In conclusion, not only is it ethically preferable, it is also practically unavoidable, if humankind wishes to survive, to globalize the insight that the dominator model of society needs to transform into the partnership model, globally and locally.

### Global Unity in Diversity

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 was a great achievement for humankind. Article 1 begins: 'All human beings are born

free and equal in dignity and rights.’ Up to now, there has been a strong focus on freedom and rights. Not that this is unimportant. Yet, freedom, rights and dignity can slide into opposition. Dignity must guide the definition of freedom and rights. Therefore, in my view, the time has come to think more about dignity. What is important is a dignified world, both socially and ecologically, or what philosopher Avishai Margalit calls a *decent world* (Margalit, 1996). For Amartya Sen the ‘ability to go without shame’ is a basic capability (Sen, 1985; the *capabilities approach* was developed by philosopher Martha Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). Sen identifies freedom’s constitutive and instrumental roles (Sen, 1999). Only when freedom is defined as a level playing field protected by appropriate frameworks can the common good for all be protected. A culture that defines liberty as unrestrained freedom, including freedom for dominators to make might right, tends to keep those dominators in power and dooms the broader masses to the role of exploited victims (Lindner, 2012a:11).

My favorite motto is *unity in diversity*. Most people misunderstand this motto as a zero sum game. They think that more unity means less diversity, and vice versa. This misunderstanding stems from within the dominator model, because this is indeed what happens there. The strong-man at the top will portray unity as uniformity and will suppress diversity for the sake of uniformity. North Korea is a contemporary example. Dominators will treat diversity as dangerous division and take this as an excuse to impose uniformity. Dominators will exercise their ‘right’ to enforce uniformity, and they will call this uniformity unity. It is also true that diversity has the potential to destroy unity. This happens when diversity turns into division. A misunderstood concept of freedom can be the cause. When freedom is defined as limitlessness and is allowed to undermine unity, this can unleash destructive social division and ecological exploitation. Religious fundamentalism, supremacism, hubris of all sorts, while using the banner of freedom, tend to be divisive.

Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss developed the notion of the *depth of intention*, or the *depth of questioning*, or *deepness of answers*, ‘our depth of intention improves only slowly over years of study. There is an abyss of depth in everything fundamental’ (Naess, 1978:143). If we follow Næss and enquire deeper, we understand that it would be a grave mistake to believe that unity’s only and true meaning is uniformity and diversity’s only and true meaning is division. The opposite is true, if we think through it: uniformity is not the same as unity, and, albeit diversity can be divisive, it must not necessarily be so. In my view, the misinterpretation of the concept of unity in diversity is among the saddest casualties of what I call the single largest ‘master manipulation’ ever perpetrated in human history, namely the introduction of the dominator model of society, with its *ranking of worthiness*, in contrast to equality in worthiness or *equality in dignity* (Lindner, 2009a, chapter 8). Unfortunately, the culture of ranked worthiness has characterized human history and affected most world regions since the onset of the *Neolithic Era*.



On my global path, I meet widespread fear that global unity will lead to the dissolving of diverse cultural identities into oppressive global uniformity. This fear stems from within the dominator mind-set and is blind to the fact that it is precisely the current lack of global unity that has produced global uniformity: not just the cities of our world today all look the same, *McDonaldization* is everywhere (Ritzer, 1993).

Let me ask: Are we not proud of the name *Homo Sapiens* that we have given ourselves? Does not *sapiens* mean wise and knowledgeable? Is not creativity a core characteristic of our human species that we are proud of and cherish? Is not the diversity of cultural expressions a prime manifestation of human creativity? Should we not unite to protect this diversity? If we think through it, as soon as unity is grounded in our shared *sapientia humana*, it becomes a win-win game: more unity means more diversity. More unity means more attention to diversity and more cherishing and nurturing of diversity.

In sum, unity is *not* necessarily the same as oppressive uniformity, and diversity is *not* the same as unrestricted freedom for divisiveness. It needs competency in *nondualist* thinking to grasp that unity in diversity can be a synergistic win-win game. Nondualism means separation *and* connection; agreement *and* disagreement; one *and* two. With unity in diversity, both can grow if kept in mutual balance and magnified and celebrated simultaneously. Both can mature if we unite in acknowledging our shared humanity on a tiny planet, if we recognise our core assets, namely, the creativity manifested in our diversity. Unity is when we acknowledge our shared humanity on a tiny planet; unity is when we respect that we all are equal in dignity; unity is when we understand that this dignity is enriched by the creativity manifested in our diversity; unity is when we draw on our diversity to create a sustainable future for our children on planet Earth. If nurtured by enough people, a unity-in-diversity identity that is global in scope can foster a global unity-in-diversity culture and co-create institutional frameworks to support it. Unity in diversity is the stark opposite of dissolving diverse cultural identities into global uniformity; it is the opposite of getting uprooted or homeless. It is the building of a more secure sense of home, a home of which we are joint stewards, a home of local diversity in global unity.

Unity in diversity can be operationalized by ways of *subsidiarity*. Subsidiarity means that local decision-making and local identities are retained to the greatest extent possible, while allowing for national, regional and even international decision-making when needed. The European Union uses the subsidiarity principle. Governance systems for large-scale environmental problems, for instance, can only be effective through the subsidiarity principle or *nesting principle* advocated by political economist Elinor Ostrom (Marshall, 2008).

Unity in diversity can also be operationalised by ways of nesting anthropologist Alan Page Fiske's basic relational models mentioned earlier. All of Fiske's universal forms of social relations need to be nested into new global superordinate institutional structures: Communal sharing must take precedence, with authority

ranking, equality matching, and market pricing serving it. Incidentally, indigenous psychology can be of help here (see Sundararajan, 2012). Co-creating new global framings of communal sharing for our world, a new level of global cohesion – community game frames rather than Wall Street game frames – this is the single most important common superordinate goal and joint task for humankind to attend to at the present historical juncture.

Will this create social cohesion at a global level? Or is it inherently impossible? ‘Multiculturalism has failed’ is the verdict in some European societies. Psychologist John Berry explains that ‘one difficulty in discussions of the meaning of multiculturalism, both in Canada and internationally, has been the simple equating of multiculturalism with cultural diversity’ (Berry, 2013:4). In Berry’s view, the success of Canadian policies, in contrast to those in Europe, stems from the fact that Canada places joint value on cultural maintenance (the diversity element) and equitable participation (the intercultural element). ‘The Canadian policy has always been more than just the recognition, promotion and celebration of cultural diversity; intercultural sharing, equity and inclusion have been seen as being essential elements in the policy’ (Ibid.) In Berry’s view cultural pluralism – many independent cultural communities in a society – is not enough; intercultural interaction and equitable participation in the larger society is needed. What is necessary is a move from *ethnicity multiculturalism* (with a focus on cultural diversity), to *equity multiculturalism* (focus on equitable participation), to *civic multiculturalism* (focus on society building and inclusiveness) and finally to *integrative multiculturalism* (focus on identification with the larger society) (Fleras, 2009).

Global social cohesion can be attained if we create the right conditions through global integrative multiculturalism as suggested by Fleras. Findings show that individuals have no problems in holding multiple and mutually compatible collective identities. Diversity and cohesion can go hand in hand. It is the context that makes the difference. An international study of immigrant youth found that national identity and ethnic identity go well together in ‘settler societies’ such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA, in contrast to societies such as France, Germany, Norway, Portugal and Sweden, where young immigrants feel they have to choose between possible identities (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder (Eds.) 2006). In other words, the relationship between individuals having dual identities (that is with one’s heritage group and the national society) and social cohesion, depends on the way a society deals with cultural diversity. ‘In societies that promote multiculturalism, these dual identities are secure and compatible, and do not undermine social cohesion. In contrast, in societies that are either new to dealing with cultural diversity, or where such diversity is not recognized or accommodated, there is a negative relationship’ (Berry, 2013:25).

A Scale of Global Identity has been developed by Salman Türken at the University of Oslo, together with Floyd Rudmin from the University of Tromsø, on the psychological aspects of globalization. They found two clear orthogonal factors, one is ‘cultural openness’, and the other ‘non-nationalism’ (Türken & Rudmin, 2013).

Anthropologist and philosopher Benjamin Lee speaks of *critical internationalism* (Lee, 1995). The field of *indigenous psychology* is on a similar path (Sundararajan, 2012). It asks mainstream psychology to muster the self-reflexivity of competent multiculturalism to see itself in a new light, namely, as an indigenous psychology rooted in the historical and cultural context of Europe and North America (Gergen et al., 1996). The *view from nowhere* that natural sciences claim (Nagel, 1986) must transmute into *local views from somewhere*. A synergy of multiculturalism and internationalism can create bridges between one somewhere and another somewhere. Together, the local construction of meaning and global consciousness can use *multiple somewheres* to arrive at shared visions and goals (Taylor in Lowman, 2013:52-3). I call this *harvesting* from all world cultures (Lindner, 2007).

### Global Citizenship of Dignity and Care: A Personal Practice

For almost forty years, I have ‘tested’ the hypothesis of whether it is possible to approach all human beings on this planet as my own family. I can attest that there is a profound human eagerness to connect, if met with respect. These are ‘thick attractors’, to use the language of *dynamical systems theory* (Coleman, Bui-Wrzosinska, & Nowak, 2008).

I understand that many people become fearful in a world that turns ever more unpredictable and confusing, or liquid, to use Bauman’s above-mentioned term. Yet, I can attest that true global living provides the stark opposite of fear, namely a sense of security, trust and confidence. I am embedded in many cultures on all continents, far beyond the ‘Western bubble’, and this gives me great confidence. I was born into a displaced family, into an identity of ‘here where we are, we are not at home, and there is no home for us to go to’, and I have healed the pain of displacement by living as a global citizen (Lindner, 2012b). Our forefathers were continuously surprised by new discoveries and fearful of the unknown. They imagined that demons populated far-flung continents. It was taken to be true, for instance, that people with dog heads inhabited the Earth, so-called *cynocephaly*. Entire books were written on the question as to whether these dogheads had souls and were worth being Christianized. In contrast, I have the comforting lived experience of how small planet Earth is and how social human nature is. There are no dogheads around.

I am deeply connected to our environment at a planetary level. I am an avid learner, and the planet is my university. Therefore I am a co-founder of the World Dignity University initiative. With great delight, I listen to Indian educator Satish Kumar calling for a more holistic approach to education, connecting our hands, hearts and heads (TEDxWhitechapel, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAz0bOtfVfE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAz0bOtfVfE)). Kumar acknowledges that the words *ecology* and *economy* come from the same Greek word: *oikos*, meaning *home*. Ecology is the study of our home and economy is its management. Kumar faults our education systems for the pervasive lack of a genuine understanding of nature, which is contributing to the gross mismanagement of our planet.

Kumar would have loved what we learned about the Lazy School at the Ngak' Nyau (Karen) village of Ban Nong Thao. Joni Odochaw and his family helped us better understand the dilemma that education, TV, and the digital world can either be beneficial or destructive to sustainable ways of living. As Peter Dering, the first student of the Lazy School, formulated it on 13th March 2014: 'our vision must be to expand community learning to include modern knowledge through technology, rather than lose community learning!'

After our visit, we sent the following 'Proclamation on Rural Resilience' to the United Nations:

The Millennium Development Goals have achieved many of their aims. Now we look to the future for the next period of sustainable development goals. We miss an important perspective that we feel should be accounted for so that the spirit of sustainable development is in accordance with current thinking and includes all the peoples of the world.

As a result of two conferences focusing on dignity and humiliation, which included two field trips to the northern parts of Thailand, we urge to explicitly include rural communities within the future goals. We want to particularly highlight that indigenous peoples commonly live in rural communities and that they are neglected by the general thrust as it is now.

We call for a Sustainable Development Goal on Rural Resilience or Rural Renaissance. We strongly feel that indigenous peoples' values and skills with respect to nature are crucial for human survival on our planet. Indigenous peoples have the right to be seen and heard, and the world needs to listen and learn from them. It is critical to include the wisdom of women, men and children from these communities in goal setting and achievement. A transparent, open and inclusive process with indigenous, rural and marginalized groups is therefore urgently needed to work out the concrete details.

Suggested areas to be focused on:

- **Education**

Education systems need to be adapted to value and formally recognise experiential and indigenous wisdom, learning and knowledge. It is imperative that education systems be adapted to allow indigenous and rural people to maintain their cultural traditions and practices in harmony with their local environments. In developing and developed countries our world has become globally connected. Many local villages cannot function within the global village. Their cultures are being exterminated by the larger modern world. Many innovations carry a dilemma that requires more attention. Education, TV, media and digital facilities, for instance, can provide opportunities for better global cooperation to protect the diversity of indigenous cultures, or they can wipe it out.

- **Economy**

Market forces and capitalism need to be mitigated to avoid that a modernist perspective from urban areas overwhelms and destroys what is of value in indigenous spaces. Ecological sustainability is enhanced by local production and consumption. Women, men and children need have the chance to be meaningfully included in making decisions that affect them and their localities. To allow this to be effective, capacity building and resource allocation need to be included into policy planning. People from businesses, NGOs and governments are called on to collaborate to build local capacities for people to voluntarily form entrepreneurial entities such as cooperatives, companies and NGOs without prohibitive costs or bureaucracy.

- **Governance**

Most important is that governance in peripheral and rural regions is strengthened and capacity built so that indigenous and rural people are able to walk with two legs, we were told: One leg in modern society, and one leg in traditional, rural, indigenous societies with due respect for cultural aspects like minority languages, songs, stories, poetry, dress and other customs. Rural regions are vulnerable when atomized as small villages and communities are therefore in real need of support to form networks, agglomerations of villages and other structures that allow autonomy and self-supporting ways of being in governance and in service provision.

On behalf of the international participants of the 12th Urban Culture Forum, titled Arts and Social Outreach - Designs for Urban Dignity, at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, 3rd - 4th March 2014, and the 23rd Annual Conference of the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network and the World Dignity University initiative, titled Returning Dignity, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, 8th-12th March 2014 Chiang Mai, Thailand, 14th March 2014, Sincerely, the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network ([humiliationstudies.org](http://humiliationstudies.org)) and World Dignity University initiative ([worlddignityuniversity.org](http://worlddignityuniversity.org)).

The goals of the Lazy School resonate with the Life University or Learning Institute For Everyone (LIFE) that Kjell Skyllstad shared on 11th March. The Inpang Community Network started out in 1987 with a group of village leaders in a number of villages in the Sakon Nakhon Province in Northeast Thailand:

In order to break the cycle of debt from cash-cropping, the farmers began to transform their farm landscapes from more costly, high-input, chemical dependent monocultures to diverse agroforestry systems that included rice for consumption as well as a wide variety of woody perennials. From a small group of twelve members, the Inpang network has grown to over 4000 members in five provinces in northeast Thailand, with linkages to many other farmer groups throughout Thailand. Inpang members grow hundreds of native woody perennial species as seedlings aimed at promoting the use of forest products from on-farm sources, rather than harvesting and collecting from the natural, protected forests in areas such as nearby Phuphan National Park ([www.apn-gcr.org/resources/archive/files/4442bc808a35003c1838c6793d0b2692.pdf](http://www.apn-gcr.org/resources/archive/files/4442bc808a35003c1838c6793d0b2692.pdf)).

The Learning Institute For Everyone informs as follows:

These days it seems people all over the country are facing problems concerning debt, family, and their very own livelihood. It is as though their community is about to fall apart; people are unable to solve the myriad of problems they are besieged with. Despite the above situation, we have discovered that there exist a good number of people who have been able to solve their debt and other problems by themselves. We have also come across many communities that have not collapsed; on the contrary, they are strong and able to support themselves. More than just a few are outstanding to the point that many people from all over the country and from abroad have made an effort to pay them a study visit ([www.life.ac.th](http://www.life.ac.th)).

To come back to the earlier mentioned Paulo Freire from Brazil, one of his insights is that we need to recognise that education is ideological (*Ensinar Exige Reconhecer Que a Educação é Ideológica*) (Freire, 1996). In this spirit, Freire quotes 18 statements which reflect what peace linguist Francisco Gomes de Matos from Recife, Brazil, calls communicative dignity:

The instances of communicative humiliation pointed out by Paulo Freire can also be considered violations of the human right to cognitive dignity. Here are two dehumanizing statements, mentioned by Freire: *Você sabe com quem está falando?* (You can't talk to me like that! Do you know who I am? (implicit: how important I am?) *Você não precisa pensar. Vote em fulano, que pensa por você!* (When you vote, you don't have to think. Vote for candidate X, who will think for you!)

Paulo Freire's examples are revealing of the types of communicative humiliation to which people may be subjected. Although some of the statements may be said to originate in Brazilian culture, they may also be found in other cultural contexts, since they convey dehumanizing, offensive attitudes. In short, Freire's work is also precursory to what is now called Peace Linguistics (learning to communicate for the good of all humankind) (Peace linguist Francisco Gomes de Matos, in a personal message to Noam Chomsky, shared with Evelin Lindner, 30th April 2013).

The Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS, [www.humiliationstudies.org](http://www.humiliationstudies.org)), of which I am the founding president, is a seedbed for a more dignified and dignifying global community (Lindner, Hartling, & Spalthoff, 2011). This effort has many aspects. For our annual conferences that we hold (since 2003), for instance, we have developed a *dignilogue* approach. We started out with the *open space* technology of Harrison Owen, 2009. Open space offers various roles to participants. The 'bumble-bees', for example, provide cross-pollination by moving from flower to flower, while those who remain in place guarantee the continuity and stability needed for the conversations to flourish. Both roles are important for a successful process.

Likewise, the world needs both, people who stay and people who move. To invite everybody into *global family building* means taking the best from sedentary life and merge it with global life designs. At the moment, unfortunately, there is a lack of



the latter. At the current historical juncture of global crises, we need more bridge builders, people who work as ‘unifiers of diversity.’ I am a global bumble bee. I engage in the cultural diffusion of the unity-in-diversity principle, and I strive to manifest it in every aspect of my life. I have no base of my own. The planet is my home, and the human family is my family. Wherever I go, I search for three gifts: (1) a loving context in a family home (this is the most important aspect for me; I avoid hotels, since they alienate me into a ‘guest role’ while I want to be ‘family;’ there is no need for me to ‘be on my own’ or ‘undisturbed’), (2) a mattress (I work with my laptop on my knees, I avoid desks and chairs), (3) if possible, a reliable 24-hour online access (I am the web master of our HumanDHS website, and the nurturing of our work is done via email; I need to work through up to 250 emails per day; see more on [www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin.php](http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin.php)). We invite our HumanDHS network members to declare their homes to be Dialogue Homes and these homes are also my homes (see [www.humiliationstudies.org/intervention/dialoguehome.php](http://www.humiliationstudies.org/intervention/dialoguehome.php)).

*Sunflower identity* is the name I coined for my personal global unity-in-diversity identity (Lindner, 2012b). Through my global life, the core of my identity (the core of the sunflower, so to speak) is anchored in our shared humanity, not just in theory but in practice, and more securely than any human identity ever had the opportunity before. The reason is that the technological tools to reach the limits of our globe are now more advanced than ever. And, as mentioned above, my experience has shown me that it is psychologically perfectly feasible to relate to all human beings as fellow family members and that most people are able to respond in kind.

At the periphery of my identity (the nested petals of the sunflower, so to speak), it is profoundly enriching to find safety in learning to ‘swim’ in the flux of diversity rather than to ‘cling’ to fixed positions. The mastery of movement provides a greater sense of security than fortress walls. Rather than seeking safety in one particular local culture, what fulfils me, is safety through the building of loving relationships globally. It is a pleasure to continuously pendulate in the spirit of nondualism, to have a *protean self* (Lifton, 1993) and to be a *voyager* (Matsumoto, Yoo, & LeRoux, 2005). A voyager uses the challenge of cultural diversity and intercultural conflicts for forging new relationships and new ideas, while *vindicators* vindicate their pre-existing ethnocentrism and stereotypes.

I call for the field of *intercultural communication* to expand toward *global interhuman communication* and to ‘harvest’ those elements from all world cultures that foster relationships of loving mutuality and respect for equality in dignity – be it from the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* or indigenous knowledge about consensus building (Lindner, 2007). ‘Democracy’, as it stands now, is too rigid, easily fostering confrontation rather than cooperation, and this, in turn, undermines sustainable consensus building. There are many alternative cultural practices and concepts around that merit further exploration if we want to improve democratic practices – from *ho’oponopono*, to *musyawarah*, *silaturahmi*, *asal ngumpul*, *palaver*, *shir*, *jirga*, *minga*, *dugnad*, to *sociocracy*.

Creativity will be central to building a sustainable future for the bio- and sociosphere of our human family. Art is a field that fosters creativity and can help shift paradigms. My life design represents a creative experiment for a future world culture of truly shared humanity and equality in dignity. I am a nurturer of a global family where everybody is invited to become a collaborative leader. I do so in practice, not just in theory. My life could be called ‘a piece of social art’, an artistic experiment in serving humankind as a paradigm-shifting agent.

Wherever I go on the planet, I meet people of means, people with privileges, be it that they were born into a citizenship that provided them with a passport that offers easy access to the rest of the world, or be it that they enjoyed a higher education, or that they accumulated material wealth. Even the most well-intentioned people of means tend to believe that their reality is normality for the majority of everybody else. They may have a theoretical idea that other people live under dramatically different circumstances, yet, they do not truly realize it. The widespread belief in a *just world* causes people to blame the victim and this intensifies this disconnect. As I see it, this disconnect endangers the survival of humankind on our planet more than anything else. Those who have the means to bring about deep systemic change are not sufficiently motivated to do so, whereas those who have the motivation lack the resources. Both, motivation and resources are being wasted. The world is full of misinvested wealth on one side – charity may make things worse rather than better – and disappointed motivation on the other side. Since it is the powerful who have more influence to shape the world, their narrow perspective is mirrored in the overall short-sightedness with respect to how we humans arrange our affairs on our planet.

To remedy this situation, it is not sufficient for the wealthy to take regular vacations in extensions of their own bubbles elsewhere on the planet, however far away. Traveling to the Cambodian killing fields to play golf on the nearby golf course does little to elicit deeper understanding. What is important particularly for those with access to resources, in my view, is to make an effort, at least once in one’s life time, to seriously look beyond one’s own bubble of living. Any school, any higher education institution, ought to have in their curriculum an adaptation of *Blood, Sweat and T-shirts*, a TV documentary series broadcast in 2008. Young British consumers aged between 20 and 24 lived and worked alongside Indian garment workers making clothes destined for sale in British high-street stores. The series was followed by *Blood, Sweat and Takeaways* in 2009, which addressed the food production in Asia, and *Blood, Sweat and Luxuries* in 2010, which targeted the production of luxury goods in Africa.

As mentioned earlier, the *contact hypothesis*, or the hope that mere contact will foster friendship, is not necessarily warranted. Contact can also create enmity. The aim of *global citizenship of dignity and care* would be more modest, namely to transcend the self-righteousness that emanates from isolation and to create the first step to global dignity and care, namely humility.

### What is Needed?

My question: Why is Thailand so willingly selling out its soul and its resources to unsustainable global strategies? Thailand has never been colonized, why now? I urge Thailand to draw on the wisdom of their traditional communities, and to lead the world toward a dignified and dignifying future. Today's local challenges are embedded into global systemic frameworks of humiliation and only a coordinated effort by the world community can solve this problem. Let your wise elders such as Joni Odochaw speak to the entire world. People like him are the most valuable resource that Thailand possesses, and the world is in need of this resource, in dire need to listen to voices of wisdom.

Whoever wishes to become a global citizen like me has to nurture a considerable amount of courage and curiosity. The radical realism of idealism is not for cowards. One needs to be able to stand in awe and wonderment before our world. One has to leave the Western shopping-mall Kindergarten bubble behind and discover the immense creativity and diversity to be found in the so-called poor regions of our world, be it its indigenous populations or its favelas. One needs exceptional patience, integrity and authenticity, together with a great amount of dignified humility. One needs to radically walk one's talk, while seeking safety in 'swimming' in the flow of life rather than 'clinging' to illusionary fixities. One needs to strive for a degree of humiliation awareness that is unprecedented, since misunderstandings can cause deep wounds of humiliation, and misunderstandings are much more likely to occur when people from different cultural backgrounds meet than when people with homogenous backgrounds get together: 'I clearly show you my respect!' may be easily misunderstood as 'He clearly shows me his disrespect!'

Last but not least, one needs neither hope nor optimism. What is needed is love. Not love merely as a feeling, but love as a decision, as a choice to always keep stretching out one's hand prepared for loving mutuality. As in Martin Nowak's notion of *supercooperators* (Nowak & Highfield, 2011), as in Gandhi's notion of *satyagraha*, a term that is assembled from *agraha* (firmness/force) and *satya* (truth-love) (Lindner, 2010).

Here is an important human weakness to be aware of as we walk: I call it our human inclination for *voluntary self-humiliation* (Lindner, 2009a, chapter 8). Political scientist Robert Jervis explains how 'over the past decade or so, psychologists and political psychologists have come to see ... that a sharp separation between cognition and affect is impossible and that a person who embodied pure rationality, undisturbed by emotion, would be a monster if she were not an impossibility' (Jervis, 2006:643). Beliefs can be understood as feelings, as lived and embodied meaning (John Cromby, 2012). Here is the weakness that can trap us: Beliefs serve two goals, first, our reality testing and understanding of the world, and, second, our psychological and social need to live with ourselves and others. The problem here is that both can end up opposing each other, and this can lead to disastrous consequences. Our emotional desire for belonging and recognition may cause us to neglect responsible reality testing. For the sake of belonging, we

may be satisfied with loose observations and superficial opinions and turn them into the firm justifications and staunch beliefs that our peers hold, as mistaken as they may be. We may create unnecessary conflicts, even catastrophic conflicts, while leaving necessary problems unaddressed. A glaring example for the potency of this trap, and why it is so important to be aware of it, is Thailand's neighbor Cambodia. Nicos Poulantzas (1936-1979), a Greco-French political sociologist in Paris, was one of Pol Pot's teachers. He was horrified when he saw what he had set in motion. He was so dismayed that he committed suicide (personal communication with Kevin Clements, August 21, 2007). Pol Pot had turned Poulantzas' academic reflections into rigid ideology, ruthlessly implementing it in Cambodia, and in that way he created immense unnecessary suffering.

Radically new approaches to learning, the making of meaning and knowledge are required. The founder of the field of peace education, Betty Reardon, would have loved speaking with Joni Odochaw. These are her words: 'What we do know, we do not know in a way that serves our needs. So, we need to know in different ways, and we need to build new knowledge through new ways of knowing. The new knowledge is in the area of designing new realities, which is likely to be done by speculative and creative thinking that would be communally shared and reflected for common formulation that would be tested in a continual process of social invention' (Betty Reardon in a personal conversation, 6th July 2010, Melbu, Norway).

The world is the best university, the best arena for new approaches to meaning making. The reason is that 'disorienting dilemmas' are prime opportunities for learning: they unsettle fundamental beliefs and values and bring about transformation (Mezirow, 1991). Meeting people with different cultural backgrounds introduces such disorienting dilemmas. I sometimes choose to offer disorienting dilemmas from my side. I do that, for example, when I reply to the question 'Where are you from?' by saying 'I am a member of our human family, like you – I am from planet Earth, with all its diversity, which I cherish' (or something in this line). I introduce disorienting dilemmas to promote a new global dignity culture, and also the launch of the World Dignity University initiative answers this call.

I admit that it is not easy to become comfortable in the constant flow of Matsumoto's practice of being a voyager. It is a complex task to continuously balance unity in diversity, with unity encompassing all of humankind and its ecosphere. Yes, it is extremely fulfilling, and it heeds the window of opportunity that we, the human family, are being offered by history. A sense of inner coherence, belonging and meaning can be achieved by finding the level of fixity for which one has the emotional and intellectual resources and then stretching it. As a trained medical doctor and psychologist, I see that the Western approach to healing is a limited approach; focusing on the removal of symptoms is not enough (Lindner, 2000, Lindner, 2006). I work for prevention, for the healing of humankind's predicament through a transition toward meaning, synergy and balance, self-reflexive and self-reflective process, connectedness, wholeness and sharing.

I invest every minute of my life in nurturing a global movement of citizens who aim to build global institutional frameworks that end practices of humiliation and enable equality in dignity to flourish globally, which, in turn, will make it possible for local frameworks of equal dignity to thrive also. As reported earlier, so far, I observe that even the noblest local initiative falters after a while, namely, when it collides with global pressures.

My forty years of global experience show me that my vision of a future world culture of dignity is feasible. I can attest from personal hands-on practice that it is possible to overcome what divides us, and that we can side-step what forces us into uniformity. We can define ourselves as members of one single human family, a family who shares responsibility for our home planet with all its cultural and biological diversity.

I suggest that we all can benefit from trying global citizenship of dignity and care, be it by means of geographical or virtual travel. Theorist Kurt Lewin famously said that ‘There is nothing so practical as a good theory.’ After forty years of global experience, I suggest to complement this insight with another one: ‘There is nothing so enlightening as a good practice.’

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# Youth ARTivism:

## *Fostering Civic Engagement Through Public Art*

Anjuli Solanki<sup>+</sup> Alexis Kane Speer<sup>++</sup> & Helen Huang<sup>+++</sup> (Canada)

### **Abstract**

The Sustainable Thinking and Expression on Public Space (STEPS) Initiative's Emerging ARTivist program provides a platform for young people from some of Canada's most diverse and low-income communities to animate public spaces in their communities. This program has not only improved the urban experiences of local City of Toronto residents, but has built the capacity of youth as civic leaders engaged in urban design issues; empowered to transform their urban environment.

Alongside their award-winning youth led arts collective (the Toronto Emerging ARTivists), the STEPS Initiative has led the installation of several large-scale permanent art, including the World's Tallest Mural, transforming Toronto's skyline, and a 400 linear foot Fence Reclamation Project along a pedestrian corridor.

This paper will discuss lesson learned by STEPS, in their engagement of youth and residents of all ages in the conception, planning, and implementation of these projects.

**Keywords:** *Public Space, Public Art, Urban Planning, Youth Engagement, Placemaking, Community Engagement*

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## Introduction

Public spaces have an essential role in building communities and mitigating societal polarity. The Toronto based, Sustainable Thinking and Expressions on Public Space (STEPS) Initiative's Emerging ARTivist Program provides a platform for young people from some of Canada's most diverse and low-income communities to animate public spaces in their communities. This program has improved residents' experience in the city, and has taught youth to be civic leaders engaged in urban design issues.

Along with the Toronto Emerging ARTivists (TEA), The STEPS Initiative has led several large-scale permanent art installations in some of Toronto's most dense and low-income neighbourhoods. In 2012, their Fence Reclamation Project, transformed nearly 400 linear feet of fencing along a high-traffic pedestrian corridor in Thorncliffe Park. More recently, STEPS led the "World's Tallest Mural" project, which transformed a concrete apartment building into a vertical canvas. In both communities showcased in this paper, STEPS worked with local young people for over a year to develop these youth-led high impact public art projects. These two case studies, illustrate lessons learned by STEPS in their engagement of youth in these unique public realm projects.

### Giving Context: The City of Toronto, Canada

Canada is the world's second largest country by total area, but over 80% of Canada's population live in urban areas (Statistics Canada 2009). With 3 million people, Toronto is Canada's largest city, and claimed by some to be the most multicultural city in the world (Galanakis 2013; City of Toronto n.d.). According to the 2011 National Household Survey, almost 50% of the population is foreign born. These figures do not account for the vast number of area residents who were born in Canada, but whose parents were born abroad.

With a dense and growing population, it is essential that Toronto's new immigrants ("newcomers" as they are called in Toronto) feel they are reflected in the city's public spaces. However, as recognized by Galanakis (2013) and Hulchanski (2007), that even though Toronto is proud of its rich multiculturalism it is experiencing increased social and spatial polarization between rich and poor residents. Hulchanski's study, based on income change from 1970 to 2005, indicates that central areas well served by public transit is composed primarily of higher income residents, with a diminishing middle class population residing in the city's outskirts, and a growing lower income racialized population in northeastern and northwestern areas of the city (2007). This trend is reflected in the Thorncliffe Park and St. James Town communities that STEPS has engaged in public art projects.

### Why Are Public Spaces Important?

People-oriented public spaces are, in many ways, the heartbeat of people-oriented cities. Accessible and welcoming public spaces allow residents to feel like they are valued members of society. This is the essence and goal of "placemaking" - the transformation of public spaces to have meaning and relevance for the communities that they serve.

City-building practitioners have begun to focus more on the role and importance of “placemaking.” In 2006, the City Repair Project noted the following:

“Placemaking’ has recently become a popular idea because we have few ‘places’—we just have lots of space. It’s the act of creating a shared vision based on a community’s needs and assets, culture and history, local climate and topography. The practice is as much about psychological ownership and reclamation of space as it is about physically building a place. In a context of isolation, placemaking is a reminder that we still share common interests and the power to manifest them. Great places are produced by the people who use them; the community is the expert while professionals are respected as resources (2006,15).”

One of the ways that this can be done is through involving the surrounding community in transforming their public spaces -particularly community members who often have the least agency or decision-making involvement. Resident connection, investment, and involvement in a public space is what makes public spaces meaningful and culturally accessible for the surrounding community (Relph, 1976; Madanipour, 2010; Low, 2000).

#### **Why Are Public Spaces Even More Important For Some?**

As public space is an important venue for civil society, it must cater to the needs of disenfranchised groups such as, visible minorities, new immigrants, or youth (Amin et al, 2000; Mandeli, 2010; Zamani, 2010). Public space provides a venue for groups to organize and to share experiences and stories that are forgotten, overlooked, or intentionally hidden. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that public spaces are designed in a way that reflects the desires of a multiplicity of users. This can be done by involving the community in being active in the planning and revitalization of their public spaces - so that public spaces are visually, structurally, and culturally meaningful to the users’ communities.

#### **Public Art as a Catalyst**

Large metropolitan cities are noisy places - not just physically, but in the sense that there are many competing groups and voices. It is therefore important to find a commonality, where people feel that they are actually recognized members of society; where they feel that they can be a part of the space, and welcomed to participate (The City Repair Project 2006). Public art not only beautifies a city, but as the STEPS Initiative has found, it can also be a creative way to engage people in discussing issues of importance to them.

Community focused public art is an effective way to engage young people. Youth often struggle to find their own space in the city, and might otherwise not be compelled to engage in civic issues. Public art is a medium that inspires them to take action in their own community. This is also reflected in the City of Toronto’s 2006 INVOLVEYOUTH2 report:

“Youth engagement programs and approaches contribute to the development of youth by fostering active citizenship. They instill a sense of social responsibility that

will follow youth into adulthood. Programs achieve these aims by providing opportunities for capacity building and leadership, and by encouraging youth to develop a sense of self-awareness that is connected to a broader social awareness (1).”

STEPS’ youth focused programs has instilled a sense of leadership, and fostered confidence amongst the young people they work with. This work has been recognized by the youth that have been through STEPS’ program, but also by local residents, teachers, community stakeholders, as well as by the City of Toronto and the countrywide arts and culture organizations.



Figure 1. Youth painting the “World’s Tallest Mural”– a public art project in St. James Town. Photo: Vera Belazelkoska.

#### **Introduction to The STEPS Initiative:**

The STEPS Initiative is a community-based organization that bridges the gap between the cultural, social and environmental sectors. STEPS does this by building the capacity of Torontonians to creatively transform public spaces in their communities. STEPS’ community programming provides a platform for urban residents to lead initiatives that physically change spaces in their local community. This process validate their experiences, the community’s cultures, histories, as well as concern for social, environmental and design issues. While STEPS’ programming has not been exclusively limited to youth, the most successful programming has been youth-driven, focussing on lower-income newcomer racialized youth in the Toronto area. This has resulted in positive changes to their neighborhood public spaces, as well as a build up in youth’s confidence and interest in civic issues.

#### **The Emerging ARTivist Program:**

STEPS’ greatest capacity building endeavor to date has been the Emerging ARTivist Program. This workshop and capacity building program for young people has resulted in several large-scale youth-led projects. It has also led to the incubation of an award-winning youth-led arts collective called the Toronto Emerging ARTivists (TEA).



Figure 2. Engaging youth from Thorncliffe Park to discuss local public space issues, locations, public art methods and styles (Photo: STEPS Initiative).

### The Emerging ARTivist Program

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As part of the program we collaborate with an interdisciplinary group of artists, who work alongside local youth to co-facilitate public art workshops with young children. The artists bring the technical skills, while the youth bring the local knowledge to make the workshops relevant for their younger peers. Workshops have included collage, sculpture, performance, graffiti writing, and storytelling and have included activities ranging from public space walks where children identified areas where they felt safe or unsafe to creating elaborate performances for the wider community on local environmental issues. By the end of the workshop series, both local youth and their younger peers are much more familiar with their local neighbourhood, their neighbours and the role they place in making it a more vibrant place to live. Urooja, a girl aged 16 shares, "Through STEPS, I learned a lot about the history and about the community from other people. I learned a lot of things that I didn't know before."

In addition to having a greater understanding about how they can affect change in their own neighbourhood, this process works to build links between the different youth and children involved. As youth participant Sara, a girl aged 17 expressed, "STEPS really helped me a lot by giving me the chance to meet great people. All these artist and other youth in my school that I never knew but now I know them and I just got a chance to meet a lot of people and I learned from them and I hope that my knowledge helped them."



### Community Profile: Thorncliffe Park, Toronto

Thorncliffe Park has a population of nearly 30,000 people living in 2.6 square kilometers. Most residents are recently arrived immigrant families of South Asian descent, with many being female headed households living on a low-incomes. In densely populated high-rise living quarters, safe and vibrant public spaces are incredibly important, yet there are few in the area (Keung, 2010). These spaces have the potential of encouraging residents to build networks and relationships and to feel they have a space within their new home country.

Thorncliffe Park has one of the youngest populations in Toronto, and arguably North America (Toronto Community Health Profiles 2011; Dempsey, 2012). With such a young demographic, it is important to engage young people, especially racialized newcomers, so they feel that they can contribute to their new community. One area that is often overlooked is the engagement of young women in the community. The need for programs that engage young women in Thorncliffe Park is expressed by Maheen, 20; “We need to do things that encourage women and youth to participate. Art can do this - it can have components that speak to women and youth.” Not only does STEPS’ program engage this demographic, it provides a creative outlet, and proves that young women can play an important role within their community.

### Thorncliffe Pathway Reclamation Project

In 2012, with the help of STEPS, local youth from the Thorncliffe community reclaimed a high traffic but derelict pedestrian corridor. This site was plagued by litter, poor lighting, and a general lack of safety. Even though everyone in the community regularly passes through this pathway, it was clearly neglected, reducing users’ feelings of safety.

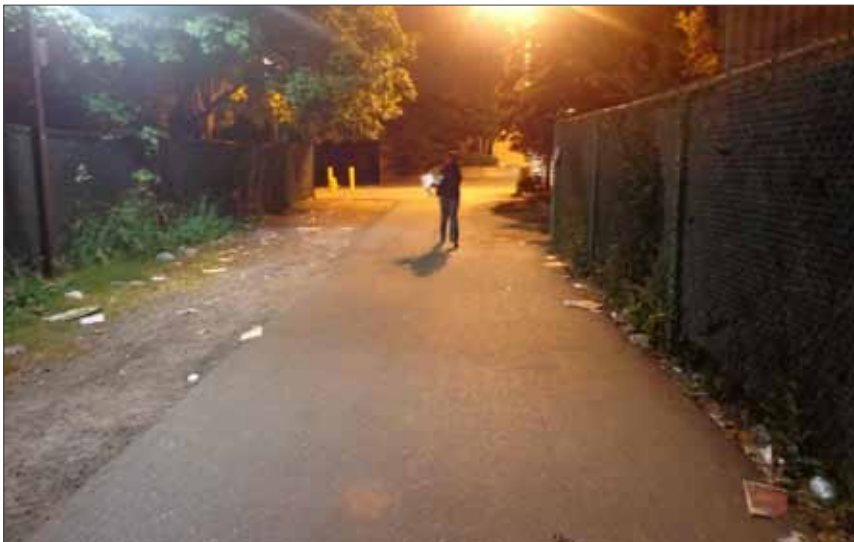


Figure 3. Prior to the Fence Reclamation public art installation, the space looked dark, unwelcoming, littered, and visibly uncared for (Photo: STEPS Initiative).



### The Process

Under the mentorship of two STEPS artists, youth participants led the process of a mixed media public art installation from conception through design and installation. Collectively the youth and artists transformed 400 linear feet of chain link fence. Designs included a celebration of imagery common to textiles found around the world, having primarily drawn inspiration from South Asia, where many local residents originate. As lighting along the pathway and within the park was ill maintained, and environmental stewardship was an important component for the youth, images of trees and light fixtures, that mirrored the area's broken ones were included.



Figure 4. Thorncliffe Park pathway – youth installing art works, left and a section of the art installation, right. Photo: Alexis Kane Speer.

The artwork has since transformed the pathway into a place celebrated by locals. The design also drew attention to the lack of lighting and additional lighting has been installed along the pathway and in the adjacent park. In order to ensure that the project reflected the community, youth incorporated the input of local residents gathered at community events. As a result the project received a lot of favorable feedback and the youth were viewed as positive contributors to the community. As Tavila, a local resident shared, “I love what you guys did to the pathway. It feels cared for. It changes how you feel walking through, it makes it way better, and how the illustrative lighting on the fence made the actual lighting in the park get fixed... it is a great accomplishment.”

This project showcased the importance of youth leaders in the community. As a result these young people were invited by the City of Toronto to provide input to the revitalization that is occurring in the neighbourhood. After the success in Thorncliffe Park, STEPS introduced the program to St. James Town. The broader

community was tasked to develop a public art project that provided youth with leadership skills while improving the community's public space.

#### **Community Profile: St. James Town, Toronto**

St. James Town, like Thorncliffe Park, is an extremely densely populated community, with 30,000 people living in less than two square kilometers. The neighborhood suffers from issues of overcrowding, deteriorating housing stock and a lack of amenities, and has been plagued with violent crime (Toronto Centre Plan, 2005). Low-income immigrant residents and families make up 64% of the population (Sun, 2011), yet it has been applauded as one of Toronto's most diverse neighborhoods with representation from over 50 language groups and many ethnic communities including Bangladeshi, Chinese, Ethiopian, Filipino, Korean, Indian, Nepali, Pakistani, Somali, Tamil and Eastern European. Due to the limitations in space and services, residents are quite involved and desire better quality housing and services, including more quality public spaces, as lacking such spaces can have negative impact on residents' health (Sun, 2011).

#### **St. James Town's World's Tallest Mural**

In the summer 2013 STEPS produced the "World's Tallest Mural" in St. James Town on the high rise building, 200 Wellesley Street East. The building has 800 apartment units with approximately 1500-1700 people living in the building.

#### ***The Process***

In 2012, STEPS brought its Emerging ARTivist programming to St. James Town. In partnership with the local high school, STEPS recruited a group of youth who worked alongside artistic mentors to deliver public art workshops to their younger peers. The following year, STEPS received funding to develop a large scale and youth-led public art project. This project engaged hundreds of local residents over a two-year period, and saw thousands of residents join in celebration upon its completion.

In developing the mural alongside collaborating artist facilitator, Sean Martindale, there was a strong desire to add colour to the many grey high rise towers in St. James Town. The youth settled on visually exploring themes of diversity, accessibility, local knowledge and culture, safety, and happiness. They wanted to bring positive attention to the neighbourhood, capturing the myriad of hidden ethno-cultural stories and creating a space for interaction and engagement for local and residents citywide.

The 200 Wellesley Street East Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) apartment building was selected as the site for the mural for a variety of geographical and social reasons. The location allowed for the creation of an iconic work at a height that is visible from around the downtown core. The building also suffers from a negative history; a significant proportion of its residents live in poverty, many of which live alone while dealing with mobility challenges, or mental health and addiction issues. In 2010, a fire displaced 1,200 residents; drawing attention to the many challenges that residents of the building face.

The mural's design incorporates the image of a phoenix, wrapping around the south facade of the building, starting at ground level and weaving up the entire height of the 32 story tall building. The design emphasizes a feeling of soaring to represent the positive attributes that resonate with the youth's desire to address the negative stereotypes and misconceptions about St. James Town.

While the drafted design was a youth-led collaborative project, the broader community was consulted during several stages of the project's development and creation. The lower sections of the mural were painted by residents showcasing the diversity of the community and their experiences. These portions consisted of detailed images playing with cultural patterns found in traditional fabrics, typography and artworks as well as inspired and designed by local community members during consultation sessions and community paint days.



Figure 5. "The World's Tallest Mural" in St. James Town, Left. Close up of the lower part of the mural with participants reviewing all of their hard work, right. Photo: The STEPS Initiative.

The project has helped to revitalize the neighborhood and to bring positive attention to the community. The youth involved gained valuable experience, developed artistic skills and were exposed to a variety of career opportunities outside of standard cultural professions. Stephen, a local high school teacher noted the impact of this program on the youth, stating:

"STEPS' grassroots approach to building community through teamwork and collaboration as well as harnessing and focusing the creative passions of youth on positive contributions in their own communities is commendable. Consequently, STEPS' Emerging ARTivist Program and its explicit mission to engage our students and provide opportunities for them to take on leadership roles and mentor future generations in the community has our full support."

As with Thorncliffe Park, the skill building workshops, and mentorship that STEPS provided taught youth about the creation, design, coordination, facilitation, and production of a large scale mural project.

The mural continues to have a positive impact on St. James Town and the city by uplifting community spirit among local residents, increasing positive attention to the neighborhood, and creating a high quality public space. The project was motivated by the youth's strong desire to improve their community, both in spirit and appearance. The sheer scale of this mural project has also offered a unique opportunity to “put St. James Town on the map.”

### **Conclusion: The Impact of Community-Led Public Art**

From the feedback we have received from participating youths and the wider communities, these projects have had a profound impact. Not only have these public art projects resulted in increased visual vibrancy in the community's public spaces, but they have also empowered local youth, and increased pride in the wider community for the places where they live.

Youth participants became more confident and interested in being involved in their communities. More importantly the wider community has acknowledged these youth as change makers in their own right. When interviewing community members about the project, we were overwhelmed by the positive reception from the surrounding communities. Sara a girl aged 17 said, “My teacher is really proud and impressed by the work that we did! He told me that we have done something really great for the community.” These changes in public perception shifts how young people are viewed, and sees them as being part of a solution in improving their neighborhood, rather than being a community problem.

Since STEPS supported these projects, the youth from the arts collective The Toronto Emerging ARTivists (TEA), have continued to build their capacity through public art projects within their community. Through the projects that the youth have been involved in, they have become more confident in their ability to take on leadership positions and are less afraid to get involved in other programs, and community initiatives.

“Getting involved with TEA and STEPS, really opened a lot of doors for me, through it I felt more confident in getting involved in other programs, got an internship with Manifesto (another arts organization), and started exploring other options for myself post high school,” says Idris, a boy aged 18.

These projects illustrate that with some support and inspiration, residents can be empowered to discover their own leadership capacity to transform their own communities. It indicates how public art is one tool that can be to articulate the voice of those leaders

STEPS experience shows the value of having embedded programs, within a community to better understand their dynamics and urban planning challenges. With



both communities, STEPS spent over a year within each community identifying stakeholders, holding skill-building workshops with local youth, and participating in community events before the public art installation took place. This gave STEPS a solid understanding of what was important to community, the type of spaces desired, and key concerns of the community. Recognizing the importance of involving young people in city building, STEPS worked with youth to explore the challenges and opportunities of each community's public spaces. STEPS also worked with artists and urban planners under the direction of young people to develop and expand each idea, providing artistic mentorship and expertise.

STEPS process lays the foundation for continued civic engagement. Through the vehicle of public art, young people are shown that their voice matters. Access to extracurricular programs, and networking with local stakeholders, and decision makers such as city councilors, as well as leading public presentations, equip participants with confidence and valuable networks both within their community and externally. Lastly, STEPS' process shows how by community engagement, urban planning projects can better reflect local needs and aspirations, thus making the impacts longer lasting, and more locally relevant.

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# The Forgotten Heritage of the Rattanakosin Area

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## Abstract

In order to safeguard the vanishing traditions and the history of a city, it is necessary to document and record the forgotten heritage. The aim of this study is to raise public awareness of the cultural significance of the Rattanakosin area including ancient *wangs* (mansions) and shophouses endangered by the development of urban projects and the lack of good management leading to their deterioration. This includes Crown Property Bureau's assets of historical buildings on Rattanakosin Island. The research results show that heritage buildings are being demolished and replaced by modern concrete structures. The main conclusion drawn in this paper is that: *If the heritage buildings continue to be replaced with present day structures, in the near future the entire history of the Rattanakosin area might be lost.*

**Keywords:** Conservation, Development, Rattanakosin Island, Architectural Heritage, Urban Management, Urban

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## Introduction

“Heritage: A Gift from the Past to the Future. *Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations* (World Heritage Information Kit, 2008:5). The “past” is the Foundation of the “present” which leads to the growth of the “future” if nothing is left of the “past.” How can the “future” survive? (Shinawatra Weerapan, 2002:7).



Figure 1. Wang Bang Plu was the palace of H.H Prince Prompong Artiraj and is in poor condition due to a lack of awareness and maintenance. Image courtesy of the Thai Fine Arts Department.

## Background and the Significance of the Research

It is now widely accepted that the term tangible cultural heritage which originally applied to archaeological sites and great works of art is now used to support preservation in both urban and rural settings. In Asian cities where high development pressure and rapid urbanization prevail, many cultural heritage sites are being degraded or even destroyed at a faster rate compared to other regions (Feilden, B. M. & Jokileto, J., 1998:11).

Bangkok is one of Asia’s most challenging cities, a city of contradictions, both presently and in its past. (Marc Askew, 2002, p.1). Manuel Castells has argued that “... cities, like all social reality, are historical products” (Castells, M., 1983, p. 302). As a part of the evolution of the city many sites on Rattanakosin Island are especially significant as it lies in heart of Bangkok. Congruent with the meaning of Rattanakosin (Island of Indra’s jewel) it and the adjacent area is home to the Temple of Emerald Buddha, the Giant Swing, the Temple of Dawn and Sanam Luang (the public square adjacent to Wat Pra Kaew and the Grand Palace). This region has figured prominently in various chapters of Thai history and now stand as significant living cultural heritage sites in Bangkok.



Figures 2. Looking west from the Golden Mount, one sees few differences over a century other than that most buildings have grown a story or two taller. The row roofs reflect an ancient law still in effect that buildings in the vicinity of royal palaces cannot be higher than seven stories. To the right of center, the Grand Palace crowns the horizon; Wat Arun raises on the left. Near the center of the photograph is the Giant Swing and Wat Suthat. Source: “Bangkok Now and Then” by Steve Van Beek, 1999.

When the word of Rattanakosin comes to mind, most people would simply refer to the Grand Palace, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Sanam Luang, Wat Pho and a few more tourist spots in the heart of old Bangkok.

Some would also include places like Banglamphu, Ratchadamnoen Avenue, the Brahman Giant Swing, the bustling Pahurat retail node, the Sam Prang community, and the abundant and unique architecture and cultural legacies of old neighborhoods. The architectural heritage of mansions (in Thai the term is *wang*) has been mostly destroyed, either because they were thought unsuitable for adaptive reuse or merely to give way to new buildings, as they were considered too old. There are other areas within Rattanakosin which display what might be called peripheral architectural heritage but where living heritage still survives. Much of this has been lost and is mostly ignored in public policy, which fails to acknowledge that Rattanakosin area is not only Wat Pra Keaw and Wat Pho. Thailand’s capital city has many gems shrouded in obscurity due to mismanagement. However, because of this lack of adequate public awareness and concern, the loss of such heritage is likely to continue unless in-depth study and conservation programs are established. This historic city has become more or less “frozen” and is on the road to decline. Therefore preservation efforts are need to be introduced as soon as possible, safeguarding the cultural environment of this historic city as well as its monuments.



Figure 3. Some buildings on Rattanakosin Island are becoming part of the forgotten heritage. Photographs by the author.



Figure 3 cont. Some buildings on Rattanakosin Island are becoming part of the forgotten heritage. Photographs by the author.

The aim of this research chronicles the status and what we presently know in order to raise public awareness of the cultural significance of the Rattanakosin area. Focus areas are as follows:

- To study the origins of the forgotten heritage of the Rattanakosin area.
- To study the important factors that account for its being abandoned in public policy.
- To determine who are the significant stakeholders and their present actions.
- To explore the management of these historical cultural heritage site.

There are several issues included in this study. However, the main focus has been to determine how to manage and conserve the forgotten heritage of the Rattanakosin area.

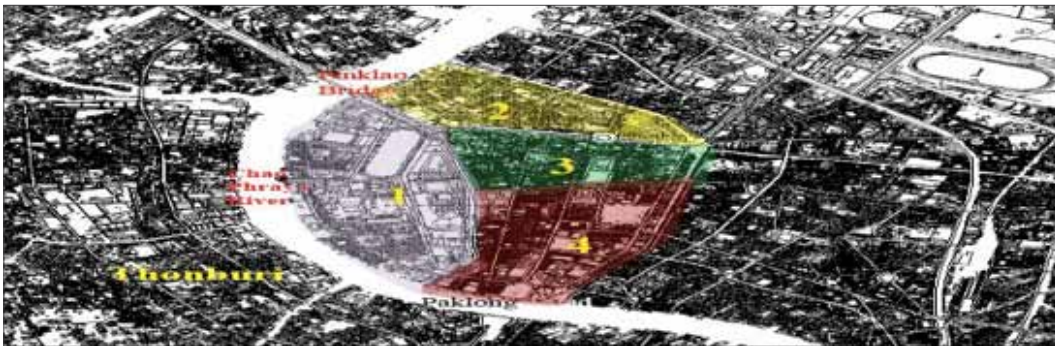


Figure 4. The study area. Source: GIS database 2006, Department of City Planning, BMA.

The total land area of Rattanakosin Island is 4.1 square kilometers, which is divided into the Outer and the Inner areas of Rattanakosin Island. While both Outer Rattanakosin and Inner Rattanakosin consists of *wangs*, temples, ancient remains, old neighborhoods and unique shophouses, this study focuses only on the properties of the Crown Property Bureau's assets (CPB). The CPB manages all the King's properties as a semi-governmental agency that has responsibility for the preservation of a variety of cultural heritage sites.

Especially, today the traditional and functional whole of historic towns are often threatened, especially in developing countries. Historical structures and sites are



threatened not only by pollution, but through developmental changes and infrastructure (roads, mass transits, etc.) are factors that lead to ongoing destruction. Bangkok is one of the cities is affected by this development trend.

In Chin Huo Xiaowei and Qixiaojin described their experiences in the conservation efforts of an old district called Shangxiahang in Foochow city. They examine not only the value of historical buildings, but also tried to recover the memory of the area with the local community. They noticed that even with a minimum change in façade, life styles were altered and memories were finally lost.



Figure 5. The heritage buildings with altered structure to fulfill the growing needs of its occupants in the Bangkok old town area. Photographs by the author.

In a study by Mrs. Tania Ali Soomro, conservation architect of Heritage Cell, Department of Architecture and Planning, NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan, she includes recommendations to document and record endangered heritage

In her case study of the historic core of *Karachi* (*Karachi*, is the most populous city of Pakistan). She describes how it was initially divided into several quarters (the word “*Quarter*” refers to an historic area) and how it grew as a fortified wall city currently know as the “*Old Town Quarter*” during British rule. The main conclusion drawn in this paper was; “*If the heritage buildings were continued to be replaced with present day structures, one day the whole glorious past of the historic core may be lost.*” Hence, she defined the term “*forgotten heritage*” as referring to an elapsed memory that has been overlooked or ignored over an incalculable stretch of time. Therefore preserving a heritage is essential as it entails fortification of a dying trend effected by changing cultural patterns. In the example mentioned above, it can be seen that many urban areas in the world face demolition. The best way to solve the problem is through conservation, preservation, protection, restoration and put in place legacy management resulting preservation for future generations. Where-with, the heritage city becomes a site of collective urban memories thereby conserving the roots of the urban community.

Hence, the term “*forgotten heritage*” refers to the loss of memory through urbanization and the risk for cultural heritage to be devalued and abandoned – fading away as spirits and forgotten.



Figure 6. In this picture of a Crown Property Bureau structure, the building is in very poor condition due to lack of awareness and preservation by the tenant and the CPB. It represents a loss of an old memory and heritage. Photograph by the author.

The first conservation of a historical district in Thailand began in 1976 in Bangkok’s core area Rattakosin by the National Authority.

Policies and laws related to monuments and sites on Rattanakosin Island are protected under the Monuments and Sites, Antiques, Art objects and National Museum Act enacted in 1934 and has been updated several times. Since the master plan for conservation and development of the Rattanakosin area was implemented in 1980, the focus has been on the national monuments situated near the Grand Palace rather than the living heritage. The master plan neglected inclusive collaborative interaction between the local residents and stakeholders, both government-to-government, local-to-government and local-to-local.



Figure 7. Logos of conservation organizations responsible for the Rattanakosin area.

Figure 7 shows the active organizations involved in architectural heritage management. They are comprised of governmental agencies, private organizations, and volunteer organizations. The Crown Property Bureau is especially influential and involved in the Rattanakosin area management decisions. Each organization follows its own agenda, policies and priorities while adhering to national policy and

legislation issued by various governmental departments – it is not surprising that conflicts may arise.

### History and Urbanization of the Rattanakosin Area

During the Ayutthaya period the Rattanakosin area, which was known as Bangkok was located along the Chao Phraya River as shown in Figure 13. After the loss of Ayutthaya to Burma in 1767 when it had been damaged beyond restoration, His Majesty King Taksin established Thonburi as the capital during the Thonburi Period. By the end of the Thonburi period, this region was home to the Royal Palace and in the Thatian area the Chinese and Vietnamese communities were located.



Figure 8. Plan of Bangkok during the Thonburi period (1761-1782). Source: Silpakorn University Magazine in 1982, Drawing by the author.

The town of Ayutthaya became an archetype for Bangkok in the Rattanakosin area where its beauty and grandeur was replicated in detail including not only its urban plan, but also mirrored its three types of palaces: the Grand Palace, Bavorn Sathan Mongkol Grand Palace (*Wang Na*) and Bavorn Sathan Pimuk (*Wang Lang*).

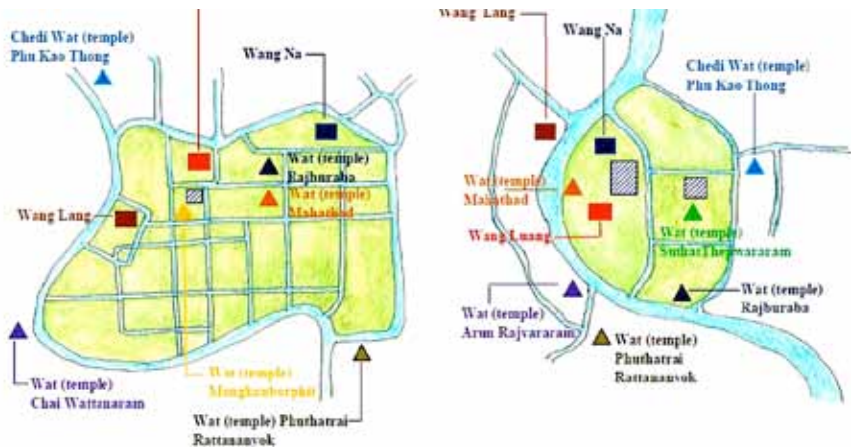


Figure 9. Ayutthaya on the left compared to the Rattanakosin area (Bangkok). Drawing by the author.

The location of Bangkok and its palaces was selected for protection following military strategic guidelines during the reign of King Rama I based on the *Nak Nam* treatise on war strategy. Consequently, the location of palaces was based on their need for protection, i.e. near a fort, moat and waterways.

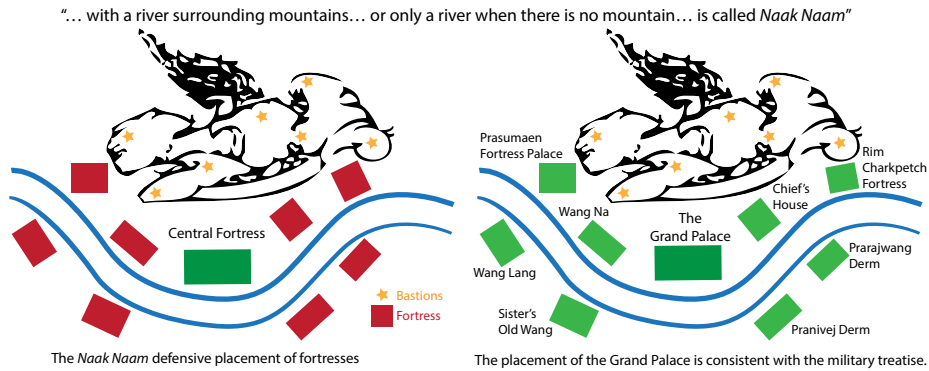


Figure 10. Ayutthaya on the left compared to Rattanakosin (Bangkok) on the right in plan view. Drawing by the author.

### The Palaces and Wangs in the Reigns of King Rama I-III

In the early reign of King Rama I, palaces were located within cities. The Grand Palace and Bawon Sathan Mongkhon Grand Palace followed the pattern of Ayutthaya with the Wang-Na mansion in the North, the Wang-Luang mansion in the center and the Wang-Lang mansion in the South. During the latter period of King Rama I, he built palaces around the Grand Palace when his sons and grandchildren were old enough to leave. Later, during the reign of King Rama II, he built more palaces for his sons to prepare the government for the reign of King Rama III. Therefore, during the reign of King Rama III he commanded the construction of many more palaces for his sons to reside. Some princes received a new palace while others located to the palaces built during the reigns of Kings Rama II and III. It should be noted that the naming of palaces changed during the reigns of Kings Rama I - III when they were named according to important fortresses, canals, and bridges located nearby.



Figure 11. Phra Sri Rattanasasdam Temple or Wat Phra Keaw in the Grand Palace (Wang Luang)  
Source: Phra Barom Maharajawang and Wat Phasri Rattanasasdam Book, Drawing by the author.



### The Palaces and Wangs During the Reigns of King Rama IV-IX

Then, King Rama IV gave palaces to his sons by both building new palaces and renovating older ones. Besides, land was prepared for palaces during the reign of King Rama V, but it was particularly King Rama IV who built many palaces not only within the Greater Bangkok area, but also in the provinces for different purposes. During the reign of King Rama IV most palaces were built for his sons and they were still located within the city walls which extended from the old inner city moat to the east city walls. There were many palaces built during the reign of King Rama V aligned with initiated improvements in economic, social and political life. The reforms included the selection of palace locations off of Rattanakosin Island and the introduction of architectural styles from the West. Then with King Rama VI, who only had one daughter the construction of palaces was minimal. Most palaces were renovated and no new palaces was established in Bangkok as he preferred building in the provinces instead. His only palace built in Bangkok was the Phrayathai Palace, which was located in a former King Rama V farm. When he passed away, King Rama VI's mother, Queen Sri Patcharintra resided there until she too passed away. King Rama VII had no offspring. King Rama VIII passed away before marriage and King Rama IX has resided in the Jitlada Villa Royal Residence until now. From the reign of King Rama VI until now, personal palaces of the royal kin are more like homes than palaces. Also, of all the palaces built during the King Rama I period are still utilized by the current King and there is only one Grand Palace left. The rest of them were all demolished and out of the approximately 130 palaces for the royal kin there is nearly no trace left. Most were transformed to be governmental offices or leased to private organizations, while the remaining palaces are supervised by the Crown Property Bureau.

### Wangs in Danger

The *wangs* located on Rattanakosin Island and some properties of the Crown Property Bureau have suffered from from the effects of the environment. These represent the lack of awareness of the buildings' cultural value and historical heritage. Consequently, they are at risk for being completely forgotten.



Figure 12. Shows three wangs in danger. Left - Wang Krom Luang Prajak Silpakom. Center - Wang Krom Phra Sommut Amornphan. Right - Wang Preang Nara. Photograph by the author.

### Analysis of the Cultural Heritage of Rattanakosin Island

From a review of the history and urbanization of the Rattanakosin area. It is disappointing that historical buildings and places have been forgotten for a number of reasons. First there is the lack of documentation and an understanding of their

architectural value, especially in the case of industrial structures. Such heritage is frequently threatened by rapid economic expansion and social transformation. It was realized that some of the older buildings on the island were already destroyed as they were unsuitable for adaptive reuse or merely to give way to new facilities. Some of the old palaces and old shop-houses should not be left to deteriorate further as they still reflect historical and architectural value as symbols of Thai history. Conservation status is rarely conferred on buildings that deserve preservation, let alone achieving registration status. These structures need to be actively included in a coordinated program of historic preservation.



Figure 13. Wang Saphanseaw no. 5 or what is also known as Wang Krom Luang Prajak Silpakom depending on ones source. It lacks a proper sign due to the lack of verifiable evidence. Photograph by the author.



Figure 14. Wang Krom Phra Sommut Amornphan has been overshadowed by buildings and clutter by the people who live near this historical building. Photograph by the author.

### How Does Heritage Become Forgotten?

The disappearance of the *wangs* has several causes and this article would be incomplete if it was only concerned with preservational awareness. The causes are as follows:

- The building was ruined through lack of maintenance and/or climate
- Removed to build a temple
- Removed to build infrastructure
- Removed to build the Royal Field (Sanam Luang)
- Removed to build a new royal garden
- The building has burned
- The building has changed ownership
- The building was significantly altered to serve another function
- The significance of the name and place has been forgotten

As an example, some *wangs* were sold to be demolished to build a shopping center or commercial buildings, such as the shopping area in the Wangburapa district that used to host *Wang Burapa*.



Figure 15. Wang Burapha in 1946, left. Source National Archives of Thailand. Wang Burapha in 2014, right. Photograph by the author.

For other *wangs* occupied by heirs of the royal family, almost none are now utilized as a palace. There are only a few *wangs* whose main buildings still remain, but many are used by the public as offices. Thus, it is unfortunate that most *wangs* built since the early Rattanakosin period have been demolished. Not only is there no historic evidence but also there is no plaque to introduced these heritage sites to the new generation or tourists. Some *wangs* remain presently, however neither the public sector or government, especially the Crown Property Bureau, has no clear policy in place to improve nor solve the problems. From my interviews, I found issues of conflict such as between the tenants and the Crown Property Bureau on issues ranging rental rates and upkeep. At Wang Preang Nara there is a case of dispute regarding rent and their own improvement plans. Also the Wang Krom Lung Prachak Silpakom remains in a very poor condition with the CPB having no restoration plans even though its location is right behind the well-maintained Rattanakosin Hotel. The CPB has a lack of information and therefore no details are available for many similar properties. Additionally, Wang Krom Phra Nares Worarit located at the office of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of



the United Nations is rented from the Crown Property Bureau. The author was not allowed to take photographs around the building even though a research project letter from Silpakorn University was presented.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The contribution that Rattanakosin area represents should not be easily forgotten, especially the old *wangs* and shophouses. However, when the researcher began to study the area for conservation and development potential, it was found that the glorious past of the district was almost buried by dust.

A possible step towards creating better planning can be thought from two perspectives; a material one and a spiritual one as shown below:

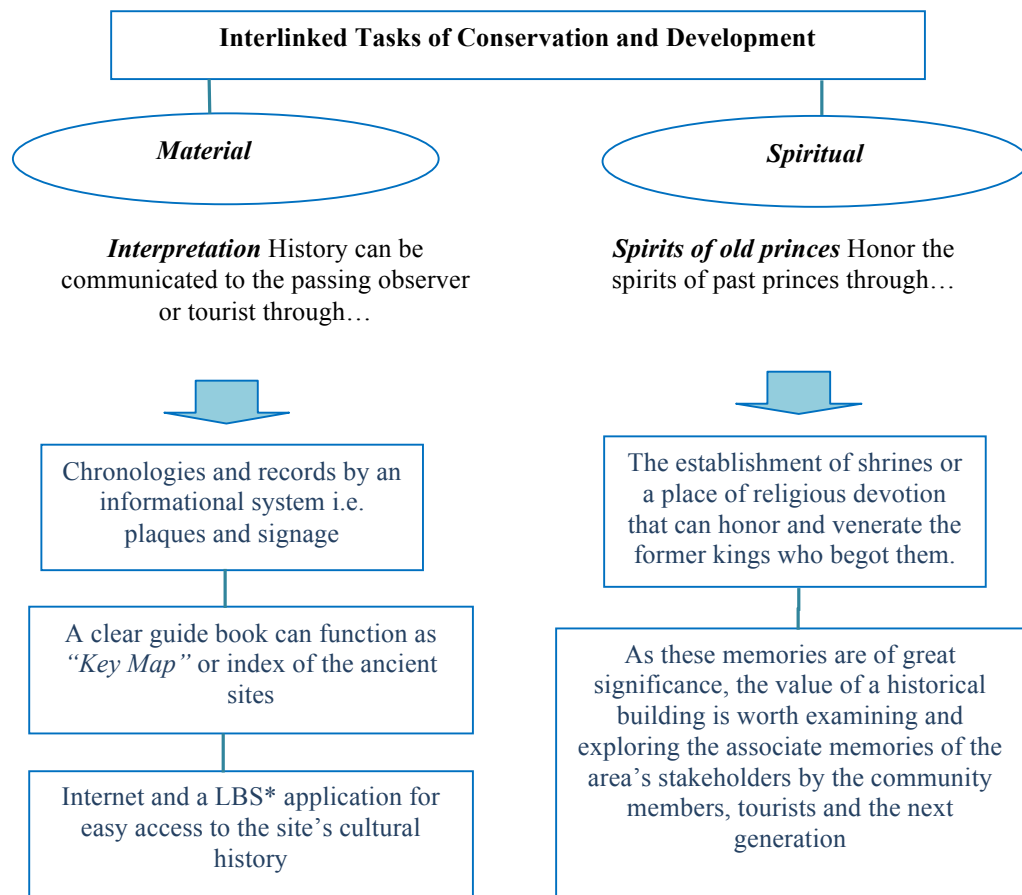


Figure 16. A diagram explaining the planning for conservation and development of the cultural heritage in the Rattanakosin area. \*LBS: The Integration of Location Based Services in Tourism and Cultural Heritage applications.

We need to reiterate the significance and value of the architectural and cultural heritage on Rattanakosin Island to the *wang's* tenants, the locals and stakeholders, especially for the next generation to ensure their preservation. These two interlinked tasks involve the awareness of their heritage and of the design and planning and for best practices ensuring sustainability.

This includes the process of maintenance for preservation in the planning and design which is far more difficult than the job of labeling, signage, and mapping. Besides, with the internet and LBS (Location Based Services) applications in the future the residents, stakeholders, tourist along with the Crown Property Bureau can all easily access to the cultural heritage of this district. The researcher hopes that this may enhance the preservation of historic buildings that are currently neglected, especially the Crown Property Bureau as the owners of these valuable historical structures. However, to improve the environment of a historic area in an inner city like Rattanakosin Island, the public sector is not able to accomplish real success without the cooperation of private parties. For this teamwork to succeed mutual understanding is needs to be encourage. On a more spiritual level there is a need for shrines to honor the royals that begot them. Furthermore, with rapid economic development and globalization, our important tangible and intangible heritage is at risk for being lost or abandoned. Today the young generation seems to be attracted to foreign culture more than their own. To protect Thai heritage, we have to acknowledge the lack of cultural values, but also discover ways to disseminate, protect and present our heritage for future caretakers – the next generation.

Finally, from my review of this topic, I have learned that no matter how much time has passed, the value of Thai architecture through the eras instills a legacy of ideas and art that never fails to charm and impress visitors. If we plan and manage our architectural heritage, there is beauty that may increase and not merely fall away as ruins and traces of the old leaving one to only find it in museums.



Figure 17. The Chao Phraya Palazzo Hotel before restoration and renovation.

The Chao Phraya Palazzo Hotel dates back to 1923 when Bangkok had an influx of Italian artists working under the commission of King Rama V. Praya Chollabhumiphanish - a noble of the Royal Court Custom Department was assigned to design and build this mansion. It was originally named “Baan Bang Yee Khan” and is typical of the Palladio inspired architecture of this period. Its location right on the bank of the Chao Phraya River made it an observation station for the owner’s formal custom duty as well as his home.



Figure 18. A rendering of the present day Chao Phraya Palazzo Hotel. From [www.prayapalazzo.com](http://www.prayapalazzo.com).

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# The Creation of an Integrated Set of Musical Instruments *for Mentally Disabled Children*

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## Abstract

The research aimed at creating an integrated set of musical instruments for mentally disabled children as off-the-shelf instruments may not always be suitable in terms of weight, size, shapes and may entail complicated playing methods. Additionally, four Thai songs were composed for this set of instruments and the results in terms of perception and reactions to the elements of music, i.e., rhythm, melody, and sound were examined. The resultant set of instruments can be described as follows: The set takes the form of a towable rectangular cart stylized as a colorful, playful animal and is comprised of five different types of musical instruments. It includes those that can be struck, blown, plucked, bowed, and shaken with most of them being removable. Depending upon the manner used, the instruments can be played by as many as eighteen children simultaneously. The four compositions utilize Thai traditional melodic scale with short and repetitive melodies. With experiential samples from eight mentally disabled children, the results reflect a positive perception and reaction to rhythm, melody, and sound.

**Keywords:** *Mentally Disabled Children, Integrated, Musical Instrument, Thai Musical Instruments, Music Perception, Recognition and Response*

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## Introduction

Mentally disabled children are defined as those who have less or slower development than the mainstream population in terms of skills and abilities such as: adaptation to society, communication, use of public services, self-care, self-control and academic learning. According to the intelligence quotient (IQ) test, mental disability can be classified into 4 functional levels: 1) IQ 50-70: high, 2) IQ 35-55: medium, 3) IQ 20-40: low, and 4) IQ 20-25: very low. Mentally disabled children are in general, deficient in at least two of the skills areas mentioned above (Binson, 2010:83). Previously, some research has found that music helps improve these skills; thus, musical instruments, music and songs can play a key role in their skill development. However, there remains a lack of suitable musical instruments designed especially for those with disabilities.

Presently, the musical instruments utilized in teaching mentally disabled children are conventional ones such as traditional Thai instruments and Carl Orff's musical instruments. However, since these instruments were created for mainstream population groups they are in most cases not suitable for mentally disabled children in terms of weight, size, shapes and entail complicated playing methods. Furthermore, some of their sounds can be very high pitched, like the Thai fiddle *Saw Duang*, and the Thai gong set known as *Khong Wong Lek* which can unnecessarily upset disabled children who tend to be very sensitive to such frequencies (Sumrongthong, et al., 2004). In addition, due to their cultural context disabled children may feel alienated from unfamiliar songs using Western scales.

For the above mentioned reasons, this research aimed at creating an integrated set musical instruments for mentally disabled children utilizing the Thai pentatonic scale. This means a scale consisting of Do, Re, Me, Sol, La out of the Thai Diatonic scale which has seven equidistant tones (Do, Re, Me, Fa, Sol, La, Ti). It was observed that mentally disabled children tend to be drawn towards sound producing instruments and respond with various movements such as tapping, applauding and other bodily motions or singing which are considered expressions of creativity. It is believed that these reactions can be utilized as a supportive contribution to their social adjustment.

## Music for Mentally Disabled Children

Today music is recognized for its potential to assist in the acceleration of child development, whether they are mainstream or disabled. Consequently musical instruments too, can play an equally important role in facilitating physical, mental, social, and intellectual development. According to the research of Marie Foregard, et al. (2008) in the book titled "Practicing a Musical Instrument in Childhood is Associated with Enhanced Verbal Ability and Nonverbal Reasoning," practicing playing music is associated with improvements in child development both directly and indirectly. Musical training may enhance auditory discrimination, motor skills, vocabulary and non-verbal reasoning. Therefore, many music scholars have been considering the incorporation of creative musical concepts in promoting childhood development – leading to the invention of innovative music processes and the creation of new musical

instruments exclusively for children. Based on these precepts, John R. Sosok, Brooke Abercromble, Brad Emerson, and Adam Gerstein invented an educational music instrument for children. Their instrument is a musical toy that allows one or more musical passages to be played and longer ones to be assembled. It consists of a base with a signal processing unit and five receivers along with five “building” blocks that are inserted into the receivers. When the blocks are engaged by the receiver, a musical sequence, or passage, is played. The musical sequence is dependent upon which block and which face of the block is engaged by the receiver as different block/face combinations produce different musical sequences. Thus, the resulting musical sequences played are location and orientation dependent. Apart from the invention of musical instruments for children, certain musical instruments are now being developed specifically for mentally disabled children. These type of instruments can be an effective key in assisting and enhancing their development.

The use of musical instruments is a central component of many clinical music therapy practices, and recent technological advances and modifications to instruments have enhanced their accessibility and versatility as a therapeutic medium. Examples of wonderful technological advances in musical instruments from recent literature include the integration of microprocessors with Internet connectivity that offer a much wider selection of user input methods including: voice recognition, eye-tracking, gesture-tracking together with magnification and amplification usability improvements to aid individuals with sensory (e.g. hearing or vision) or motor deficits. Such modifications have the potential to transform music therapy and education for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities (Yuezhou Yu, et al., 2004). Customized and modified music instruments can aid children’s accessibility to music and more importantly they can enhance the development of children with disabilities.

### Research Tools, Design, and Methods

The content of this research project consisted of the construction of a set of integrated musical instruments for mentally disabled children and the composition of specific repertoires together with the procedures to evaluate them. The data collection method used the qualitative approach paired with participant observation. The usability and effectiveness of the instruments with the new compositions was also conducted.

### Tools and Measurement

In this research project the following tools and measurements were employed:

1. Interview form: This form was used to record responses from music teachers, disabled children specialists, the children’s parents and psychologists.
2. A perception and reaction to musical elements evaluation form: This form was completed by observers and was developed and approved by three experts. It is comprised of nine questions that rate children’s perception and reaction to musical sounds, rhythm, and melodies with each parameter divided into five levels. The results obtained were later evaluated into individual assessments.
3. A questionnaire surveyed the level of satisfaction in using the integrated set of

musical instruments. It was completed by five music activity experts familiar with working with disabled children.

4. The integrated set of musical instruments itself.

### **Construction of the Set of Integrated Musical Instruments and New Repertoires**

1. The designer applied a collection of related concepts of toy making for 4-5 year olds i.e. employing bright, vivid colors, animal motifs, tow ability, with the enjoyment of assembling and removing parts to develop a safe and integrated set of musical instruments for Thai children with disabilities utilizing the Thai pentatonic scale in the key of C (Do Re Mi Sol La). Different instruments were included so that each sound producing method namely: struck, blown, plucked and bowed, was represented.

2. Four specific musical pieces were composed for the set of instruments where each one offered a different aspect of traditional Thai music. i.e. disjunctive melodic progression, repeated melodies, gap-fill (with melodic gaps that provides opportunities for performers to fill them), and improvisation (that allowed for individualized improvisation over an ongoing rhythmic foundation).

### **Testing with the Integrated Set of Musical Instruments**

Before testing began, parameters were set regarding perception and reaction to musical elements: rhythm, melody and sound, by observing different musical skills, i.e., listening, singing, physical movement, instrument operation, musical creation and musical notation comprehension. The children would, in turn, express their perception and reaction through clapping, tapping, singing, and physical portrayal of a musical piece through patterned and free form movement as well as patterned musical instrument operation, repertoire-related creativity and other expressions. Eighteen 30 minute test sessions were conducted with mentally disabled children studying at the Panyawutthikorn School.

### **Research Population**

The sample was eight mentally disabled children, 8-10 years-old with a functional age of 4-5. The group had been tested and confirmed by a psychologist as having intelligence quotient scores between 50-70, being non-sound sensitive and without multiple handicaps.

### **Research Process and Methods**

The research proceeded as follows:

#### *Step 1 – Research Preparation and Creation*

1. Examination of documents and related research.
2. Presenting the research proposal to the Committee for Human Research Ethics Screening, 1st Division, Saha Sataban Institute, Chulalongkorn University to receive official research ethics approval.
3. Interviewing specialists and other disabled-children-related caregivers. This included two music therapists, two disabled children specialists, two parents of disabled children, and a psychologist. The data obtained were then used as

preliminary research support for the design and construction of the integrated set of musical instruments for mentally disabled children.

4. Communicating with the administrator of Panyawuttikorn School for permission to acquire a sample group of their students and data collection.
5. Observation of the behavior of the Panyawuttikorn School's sample group during five sessions of music activities. The sample group was then subjected to a series of inquiries regarding perception and reaction to the activities as well as musical instruments.
6. Conducting four test sessions of traditional Thai musical instruments with the sample group under the supervision of a special education expert, a music activities specialist and teaching staff to determine the sample's perception and reaction levels for the musical elements: sound, rhythm and melody. These results then served as a source for the design and construction of the integrated set of musical instruments for mentally disabled children.
7. Recording the observations of the sample group on the observation form that covered perceptions and reactions to musical elements: sound, rhythm, and melody.

#### *Step 2 – Construction of the integrated set of musical instruments*

1. Designing the integrated set of musical instruments.
2. Preparation of raw materials.
3. Construction.
4. Composing the four musical pieces for the set of instruments.

#### *Step 3 – Testing the sample population with the integrated set of musical instruments*

1. Testing the integrated set of musical instruments with the sample group at the Panyawuttikorn School over five 30-minute sessions; to determine their perception and reaction to musical elements: sound, rhythm, and melody. Each sample member would rotate to play the different types of musical instruments in the set. These tests were conducted under the supervision of a special education specialist, a music activities specialist and the teaching staff.
2. Recording the observation results on the observation forms for the sample group regarding perception and reactions to the musical elements (sound, rhythm, and melody).
3. Inviting five disabled children specialists to observe the sessions and complete a questionnaire concerning the satisfaction levels expressed through the usage of the integrated set of musical instruments.

### **The Integrated Set of Musical Instruments**

The appearance of the integrated set of musical instruments is shown in Figure 1 and takes the form of an imaginary pink creature measuring 40 x 60 x 30 cm in width, height and depth respectively. It is constructed primarily of rubber tree wood and can be towed into class with its attached-retractable cord whose handle is a MP3 player/recorder. The main body is a rectangular box-like form from which different instrument types can be drawn out and played through plucking, bowing, striking, blowing, shaking or striking a resonant key. Each individual instrument has been tuned to match the traditional Thai pentatonic scale, consisting of the notes: Do, Re, Me, Sol and La. Each tone is represented by a color: red, orange,

yellow, green, and blue respectively. This integrated set of musical instruments can be played by 18 children simultaneously.



Figure 1. The Integrated Set of Musical Instrument for Mentally Disabled Children.





Figure 2. Close-up of five small hand shakers that are easily available to children when the cart is wheeled into the classroom as announced by the rotating sound makers integrated into its wheels. Additionally, the shakers serve as color-coded handles for levers for playing the xylophone instead of the included mallets that require more coordination.

Figures 1 & 2 features the integrated set of musical instruments which is comprised of several types that create sounds via a variety of methods. For the struck instruments, there are two xylophones with five aluminum bars producing the notes: Do, Re, Me, Sol and La. The xylophone keys can be struck by pressing down the handles located on both side of the box or by using a pair of mallets. There is also a removal circular drum with a cowhide head held in one side of the set. The plucked instruments has 5 stainless steel wires suspended along its body and tuned by bridges to produce the notes: Do, Re, Me, Sol, and La. Similarly, the two bowed instruments are essentially identical to the plucked instrument, but are played with a bow. The wind instruments are wooden flutes drilled with two holes, which produce three notes: Do, Me, Sol. The ten shakers are filled with plastic beads and can serve as color-coded handles for learning the notes of the xylophone when not utilized by larger groups. Traditional xylophone mallets are included as well. The wheels of the set contain colorful plastic beads which produce sounds and provide visual enticement for the children when the set is being rolled into the classroom. Apart from these instruments, there is an MP3 player with a built-in speaker and recorder for looping capability and four specially composed pieces recorded for this set of integrated instruments.

The melodic movements of the four musical pieces are limited to the C pentatonic scale and the compositions are noted down for all the instruments. The length of each composition is about 2-4 musical lines, using short and repetitive musical passages. Each piece contains different features such as disjunctive



melodic progressions, repeated melodies, jagged melodic progressions, constant rhythmic patterns, syncopated rhythmic patterns and/or dialogue-like melodic progressions. The tempo of the repertoires varies from slow to medium to fast, along with melodic variations that include non-melodic gaps to allow the players to improvise their own melodies to encourage their creativity.

### Findings

This integrated set of musical instruments was designed with the purpose of integrating both theoretical and practical concepts of Thai traditional music into educational and recreational activities of mentally disabled students. With its toy-like appearance, the set was found to easily arouse children's attention and keep them engaged in musical activities without feeling forced or under therapeutic treatment. The instrument's "tow ability," a characteristic of toys for 4-5 year-olds, helps strengthen gross motor skills as children walk with or tow the instrument. Furthermore, with its toy animal motif it can capture children's attention. The set's instruments are five different types of individual musical instruments that can appeal to children's changing interests. The integrated instrument serves as an all-in-one musical tool that can be played by as many as 18 children simultaneously. Apart from musical aspects, this study aimed to improve other capabilities of the children. For example, the inclusion of different geometric shapes for the individual instruments and various parts encourage development of the children's capacity to observe figures and estimate size. The decision to vividly color-code the different notes reinforces color distinction and aids in tone awareness and recall. The incorporation of different instruments and their differing playing techniques assist in improving fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. The sizing of the set of instruments were intentionally proportionate to the level of physiological development of the sample group to ensure the instruments were accessible without incumbrances.

### Discussion

The integrated set of musical instruments was designed to enhance the musical, physical, emotional and social development of children with mental disabilities. As the set is a flexible classroom tool, it offers more opportunities for expanding its role as developmental goals arise. There are many music-based activities related to subject-based learning it can support as well as social interaction and language use. The instructions of how to play could also be varied according to the number of participants and the classroom situation. One way to utilize the set is with small groups for activities to encourage socialization and interpersonal communication. Regular musical activities within classroom can be used to promote a stronger sense of camaraderie and teamwork in the classroom as they assist each other in practice sessions. The instructor can encourage individual expression while modeling a sensitivity to group dynamics and mutual respect for other's creative participation. This set of instruments offers another opportunity for children to learn about teamwork and how to negotiate with others.

Additionally, it is recommended that the children be urged to learn to play a variety of instruments once they have mastered a tune with their first one, as

it is important to provide exercises that encourages a range of hand and limb coordination, muscle development and a sensitivity to cadence.

Even though the set's intended use is with mentally disabled children, it offers an easily approachable collection of instruments in a portable storage unit for mainstream classrooms as well for basic musical skill development.

The author is aware that this set of instruments is a prototype and needs further refinement to increase the sound quality of some of the instruments.

### Conclusion

The integrated set of musical instruments for mentally disabled children was created as a prototype to serve as a model for further consideration into the development of more musical instruments for children with disabilities. Its construction and guidelines for use combines the concepts of traditional Thai music, sound, and tuning with color coding for developing both hand-eye, hand-ear, and eye-ear coordination of the target population via the pathway of enjoyable musical experiences. Additionally, its toy-like appearance serves to draw children's attention in using the set in a positive way. The integrated set of instruments has undergone seven reviews by specialists leading to improvements and revisions resulting in its present configuration and feature set. The four musical compositions intended for use in conjunction with it were composed using Thai traditional music principles. They are melodically restricted within the pentatonic C scale (Do, Re, Me, Sol, and La). Each composition consists of short melodic phrases of repetitive notes with a unique identity. The tempos of the pieces vary, but they are also arranged to afford children opportunities for repetitive reinforcement, melodic variation, and free form rhythmic creativity. The test results of the sample group showed overall positive results in terms of perception and reaction to the musical elements, namely: rhythm, melody and sound. Moreover, this integrated set of musical instruments was designed to suit the needs of children with mental disabilities to enhance their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development through group musical activities.

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# Manipulation: Jan Švankmajer's Animation Technique

*and Criticism on Civilization*

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## Abstract

“Manipulation” is an important concept in the films of Jan Švankmajer, an influential Czech surrealist filmmaker. As a surrealist artist who aims for the liberation of humans from any kind of restraint, he insists that people should resist all kinds of societal manipulations. His insistent exposure of manipulation can be seen as a protest against its concealment as a convention. However, the idea of manipulation has more ambiguous meanings in his films. Švankmajer brings inorganic objects to life through careful manipulations, such as stop-motion animation, while applying the same techniques to humans to disrupt their identities. Consequently, both humans and objects are represented as puppets: humans as quasi-objects and objects as quasi-autonomous things. These hybrid puppets expose the contradicting nature of human beings, perpetually in the tension between freedom and restraint.

**Keywords:** *Czech-Slovak Surrealism<sup>++</sup> Manipulation, Puppets, Stop-motion Animation, Surrealist Film, Jan Švankmajer, Animation*

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<sup>++</sup> In more recent years, the term Czech-Slovak Surrealism is being used more than the older Czechoslovakian Surrealism after Czechoslovakia split into two countries: Slovakia and the Czech Republic in 1993.

## Introduction

This paper examines the films of Jan Švankmajer (1934-) and the concept of manipulation, which plays a significant role in his works. Švankmajer is a Czech visual artist who has created many provocative artworks in various media, including mixed-media sculptures, collages, and assemblages. He is most renowned as a filmmaker, especially for his unique visual style and use of stop-motion animation. The worlds his films depict are inhabited by bizarre images of creeping inanimate objects, raw meat crawling in mud, or violently transfigured human bodies made from clay. He is regarded as a “cult director,” and he has influenced other filmmakers such as the Quay Brothers, Terry Gilliam, and Darren Aronofsky.

Extraordinarily creative visual expressions reinforced by a technique of stop-motion animation are the hallmark of Švankmajer's films. His creations emerge from a combination of his Czech cultural background and his involvement with the Czechoslovakian surrealist movement since the late 1960s. Though surrealism tends to be thought of as an outdated art movement, it provides a wide-ranged artistic field of collective and individual experiments that bridge inner reality and social reality by disturbing conventional systems of representation. In Czechoslovakia, where artists were under severe pressure of censorship from the Communist government, the surrealist sphere allowed acute critiques of power in society and of every kind of convention. The Czech surrealism is much older, beginning in the late 20s.

Švankmajer's films are among the most marvellous products of Czech-Slovak surrealism. In recent years, Švankmajer's place in visual art history and many themes associated with the elements in his films have been discussed. Nevertheless, the concept of manipulation and its role in his work does not seem to be fully appreciated, despite its significance to his creations. Manipulation is the key concept that connects Švankmajer's personal motifs – fantasies and anxieties in his childhood, his interest in the tactile, a disgust for food and eating habits, and the latent life in inorganic objects – and transforms them into a sharp critique of social reality. It is a theme in which he has been interested more than anything else (Švankmajer, 1997). This paper examines the meaning of the concept in his films and elucidates part of his surrealist critique of social reality as the modern circumstances surrounding human beings.

After a brief explanation of the circumstances of the Czech surrealist movement to which Švankmajer belongs, I will examine his individual films and statements. His conviction that all sorts of manipulations must be resisted characterizes most of his work in not only narrative but also filmmaking style; his work often disrupts cinematic conventions through manipulation in filmmaking. For the most part, he treats manipulation as a heavy limitation of freedom, but another viewpoint on the issue can be seen in his use of stop-motion animation.

## Czech-Slovak Surrealism

Švankmajer's expressions are primarily informed by surrealism, a European modernist art movement. Although surrealists have created significant works, particu-

larly in the realm of visual art, the movement is a complex one that also includes literature, politics, and philosophy. In fact, surrealists can be said to engage almost every issue of social representations by introducing dreams, the unconscious, and disruptions of signification into their creative activities. The movement began in Paris around the 1920s with the poet Andre Breton and his colleagues and since has spread around the world, even to non-European countries such as the United States, Japan, Egypt, and Turkey. Czechoslovakian surrealism in particular has a long, unique history. Members of the avant-garde Devetsil established the first Czechoslovakian surrealist group in the 1930s. This first generation included poet Vítězslav Nezval, art theoretician and designer Karel Teige, world famous painter Toyen (Marie Cermínová), and her partner visual artist Jindřich Štiyský. Though political shuffling within the country has led to some breakups and reunions, Czech-Slovak surrealism continues to be active, and members produce significant artworks, literature, and collective experiments which are published in their periodical ANALOGON. Additionally, they often collaborate with surrealist groups and individuals in England, France, Sweden, Spain, and Greece. In February 2012, they held a large exhibition in Prague titled *Jiný Vzduch* (Other Air), which summarized their activities and collaborations with other European surrealist groups over the past 20 years; Švankmajer was a participant in this exhibition (Srp, 1996).

Švankmajer and his wife Eva joined the Czechoslovakian surrealists in 1969 after meeting Vratislav Effenberger, a poet who was a central member of the group. Since then, surrealist ideas, sensibilities, and their spirit of resistance have played crucial roles in Švankmajer's work. His way of adapting his dreams, childhood experiences, and fantasies into his work stems directly from typical surrealist methods. He describes surrealism as "a journey into the depths of the soul" (Hames, 2008:112). By using a surrealist approach, his rather personal motifs are sublimated into sharp critiques of civilizations, societies, and the human condition. To understand such critique in his work, it is necessary to consider the idea of manipulation, a concept rooted in his childhood memory and his circumstances during the Cold War era, which consistently plays a significant part in his filmmaking.

### Narrative on Manipulation

In Švankmajer's view, "manipulation" means every kind of binding force that controls human behavior. He insists human beings are fundamentally manipulated by society, advertising, their suppressed desires, and belief in fate (Akatsuka, 1999). He believes that humans must resist all types of manipulations, and these ideas deeply affect his work. In his films, the protagonists do not seem to control their own behavior; rather, they move as if by some other force. Particularly in feature films such as *Lunacy* or *Little Otik*, his protagonists, who are fated to a dark ending, have stiffened facial expressions and always seem seized with tension.

The most apparent example of a manipulated protagonist is seen in Švankmajer's second feature film, *Faust*, created in 1993. Manipulation is the central theme of this film. Its protagonist, a seemingly ordinary Czech man played by Petr Cepek, is caught as a living puppet within the Czech puppet play of Doctor Faust. The city of Prague is fantastically intermingled with the play. The protagonist goes from



backstage to a crowded pub through a restroom; a puppet representing the devil runs back and forth between the stage and the crowded street. Particularly in the latter sequence, a devil is released and summoned repeatedly by a clown who is a servant of Faust, and he must repeatedly come and go between the stage and the street. Drama and reality are combined in the film, so the protagonist never can stop being a puppet and leave the stage; that is, he can never escape his manipulated circumstance. He tries to exit the stage, but he is always surrounded by people conspiring to bring him back as a living puppet. Ultimately, the protagonist is freed from his manipulated circumstance only by death in a car accident.

The narrative of *Faust* illustrates the manipulative power of human relationships in urban, civilized life. Urban life is a play, and the actor's role is assigned through his relationship to other members of the community. At the same time, a kind of transcendental power is implied as an unseen puppeteer, possibly the "manipulations of society, suppressed desires and belief in fate" that Švankmajer has described. In any event, Švankmajer shows the tragic aspects of an urban man who cannot escape his manipulated circumstances.

### Manipulation and Filmmaking Processes

Švankmajer's concern with manipulation is also seen in his stylistic approach to filmmaking. In general, manipulation is an indispensable part of making a film. Its structure is achieved through many sorts of manipulation, including cinematography, editing, and script development. Every shot is constructed through manipulation, but most films conceal the manipulative processes to keep audiences unaware of what happens to create a particular scene. If films fail to conceal such processes, audiences stop being immersed or engaged in the movie experience.

Contrary to this entertainment approach, Švankmajer often seems to deliberately expose traces of the cinematic process. His trademark style of montage, seen in *Conspirators of Pleasure*, *Picnic with Weissmann*, and many of his early short films, combines extraordinary close-up shots and fragmented cuts. These techniques prevent spectators from experiencing normal, sequential space-time continuity in the film. His disruptive combination of excessively emphasized surfaces of objects hangs the film unsteadily between the real and the artificial, between a lifelike experience and a product of precise manipulations. Exposing manipulative processes of filmmaking goes against filmic conventions. For instance, montages such as those in Hitchcock's films, in which a sequence progresses from a long shot of a town to the interior of the protagonist's room, provide a traditional system of "reading" filmic images that allow film viewers to remain unaware of editing processes. Švankmajer's montages deviate from these conventions, leaving spectators in an uncertain state. They are forced to see significantly vivid textures of objects while also being acutely aware of the editing manipulations that construct the scene. Švankmajer's cinematic construction can be regarded as a protest against the social conventions that conceal manipulations among human beings. Moreover, from the filmmaker's statement that human beings must resist all types of manipulations, his thematic concerns such as that in the narrative of *Faust* can be seen to echo this assertion.

Cultural and ideological circumstances in Czechoslovakia are clearly related to his attitude. Under the totalitarian state, artists were officially forced to adhere to a socialist ideology, while surrealists such as Švankmajer continued to resist until democratization. In those days, the group was forced into clandestine activities under the severe censorship of communist government after the failure of the liberalization movement of the 1960s. Public gathering was almost impossible in that era, but Švankmajer and his surrealist colleagues maintained their collective games and spontaneous experiments secretly, until the democratization came in 1989. These games were a central activity of the group, and their keen artistic resistance of cultural suppression (Fijalkowski, 2005:5). Under such circumstances, Švankmajer would have been deeply aware of the power of a system of civilization that suppresses and manipulates its own people. Such power is exercised not only by the nation and the government but also by ordinary citizens.

Švankmajer's creations could be interpreted to simply intend to release human beings from such manipulation, but an examination of his famous images of living objects demonstrates that the situation is far more complicated.

### Living Objects and Puppets

Švankmajer stated that every object has its own life, and he invokes these lives through the stop-motion technique; in his own words, to let them speak (Richardson, 2006:128). Some of his short films show animated objects brilliantly moving and playing, independent from their utility to the human hands from which they originate. In *Picnic with Weissmann*, created in 1968, a desk bulges with a ball, two chairs play soccer, and a hungry pair of pyjamas hunger relaxes on a bed. In 1971's *Jabberwocky*, a chest runs down on a hill, and a pocketknife hops and dances on a table.

These objects' unrestrained behavior keenly contrasts with images of people, who look inert, suppressed, or manipulated, such as those in *Food*, created in 1992. The film is divided into three sections, each named for a meal. "Breakfast" is the story of men who are used as a machine to serve a meal. In "Lunch," a rich man and a poor man eat their clothes as well as the table and chairs. "Dinner" features people who eat their own body parts. Humanity is deliberately disrupted through these dark, shocking narrative strands. Many filming techniques are used, including clay animation, but the most notable thing is that the actors are shot in stop-motion (or pixilation) throughout the film, making them look like soulless bodies moving robotically.

As an animation technique, stop-motion cannot be achieved without delicate manipulative processes. Things are shot frame by frame with minute shifts made by the operator's hand. Thus, images constructed with stop-motion have definite signs of disconnection between each frame, which can be seen as marks of manipulation. Furthermore, with this technique of manipulation, objects seem to come to life, whereas people turn into objects. The distinctions between living things and artificial ones and between objectivity and subjectivity are disturbed here. As a result, Švankmajer's concept of manipulation takes on a more ambiguous mean-

ing in his use of animation. At this point, the idea of a puppet, a thing situated somewhere between the human and the artificial, supplies a helpful construct.

“Puppet” is an important motif in both surrealism and the traditional Czech art world. Puppet theatre played a crucial role in protecting the Czech language and culture during the Habsburg reign (Hames, 2008:84). Many companies and theatres of puppetry still exist throughout the Czech Republic. Moreover, puppets, as a mystical mimic of human figures, have been a subject of keen interest by modernist artists. Their ambiguity has also fascinated surrealists for some time, as evidenced by the display of objects and assemblages of mannequins as far back as a 1938 Paris surrealist exhibition. Even Švankmajer started his career in puppet theatre; he was a graduate of the Department of Puppetry at the Prague Academy of Performing Arts. His interest in manipulation stemmed from an encounter with a small puppet-theatre kit in his early childhood; he later said that this encounter went on to influence his entire oeuvre (Akatsuka, 1999).

Since his first film *The Last Trick* in 1964, Švankmajer has used many kinds of puppets. Examples include the manipulated protagonist in *Faust. Lunacy*, released in 2005, has a suggestive sequence of meat puppets that dance on a traditional Czech-style stage. Aside from these direct examples, Švankmajer seems to treat everything in his films as puppets, quasi-objects and quasi-humans, through his stop-motion technique. He makes the objects more alive and people more inert by treating them as puppets. In other words, there are no simple humans or objects in his films. Instead, he depicts images of hybrid puppets manipulated by invisible strings: witness Little Otik, a tree-root monster shaped like a baby, something between a human and an object.

Thus, manipulation illustrates a paradox of life in that it serves as a fundamental restraint to humans but at the same time breathes life into inanimate objects or rather enables them to be seen as alive among people. It also demonstrates a fundamental problem of the human condition, namely that manipulation enables life, meaning that human life can never be free of all manipulative power. Perhaps such an idea may be related to the idea set out by Michel Foucault of bio-power, a kind of manipulative power that enables people to live in civilized society. Švankmajer’s use of animation visually exposes such contradicting circumstances of human life in a civilized world through a surrealist lens.

This discussion raises important questions: Is it possible to achieve liberation from manipulation? Can we reach a state of freedom? What is freedom? What is liberation? The surrealists of the 1920s seemed to believe in a state of ultimate freedom that would be brought about through all kinds of expression with unrestrained imagination. However, in 1994, Švankmajer wrote in his diary, “Freedom doesn’t exist. There is only a process of liberation, but we can never escape from our tragic fate. Liberation just makes our tragic fate coherent, and makes our life sufficient, enjoyable and meaningful” (Švankmajer, 1997). Though he seems more pessimistic than the Parisian surrealists, his attitude can also be seen as appropriately directed toward postmodern realities. The total revolution never seems

to be possible, but negotiations and even betrayal are still possible. In this way, Švankmajer's ambiguous "puppets" also seem to betray the manipulative circumstances around themselves and to drive the process of liberation.

### Conclusion

Through images of hybrid-puppets and his construction of animated films as a hybrid puppet theatre, Švankmajer draws vividly upon the contradictory relationship of living things and manipulative powers in society. In this way, his work becomes a critical exposure of social conditions of human beings involved in a never-ending conflict between manipulation and freedom. He visually and violently forces his audiences to be aware of this circumstance of life and asserts his strong refusal to surrender to manipulation.

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# Video Art: Everyday Fear within the Three Southern Thai Provinces

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## Abstract

The objective of this project was to create a form of video art and utilize it to instill a social awareness of living everyday in fear as experienced by women who lost their husbands through the insurgency in Thailand's three southern provinces. The overall objective of this video was to portray the personal and social atmosphere in terms of way of life, culture, and identity. The video is ten minutes long and consists of three stories: First, the ambience of the rubber plantation illustrating the unique culture in this region; Second, the tea drinking tradition of Thai Muslim men; Third, women suffering the loss during the insurgencies. Together the three accounts depicts how the lives of these women became a life of enduring suffering and loss. It is online at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-5pqeQKpiI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-5pqeQKpiI).

**Keywords:** *Video Art, Three Southern Thai Provinces, Insurgency, Thai Muslim , Al-quran, Thai Buddhist*

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## Introduction

The researcher conducted qualitative research by collecting data from field trips in the three southern provinces for one month; interviewed 18 women to understand their perspectives, feelings, and emotions of living in the region; and spent 45 hours documenting and recording. The creation of the ten minute video serves to depict the personal accounts and social atmosphere. The reproduction of stills and videos from this perspective were blended with traumatic and nostalgic reflections as representation of their daily, personal reality.

The issue of this violent insurgency in the Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces is known throughout the world and has been continuing for more than 200 years. The conflict originates from the legend of Pattani guerillas fighting with the northern Muslim Malayans – namely those from Kedah, Kelantan, and Terengganu against the Thai (Siamese) government, since the early Rattanakosin era.

Since 2004, the crisis in the three southern provinces has triggered changes and brought about adverse effects on the economy and way of life and has garnished close governmental scrutiny. Despite continuous efforts to solve the issue by increasing the capabilities of the personnel in the area and by allocating a huge amount of public funding into the region, the loss has not declined and the quality of life has severely deteriorated. Lives and properties, as well as security has been so severely ruined such that the issue has become a national problem.

The cause and the solution still remains to be understood and addressed. Citizens, state officials, including the insurgents, continue to lose their lives every day. People live under the fear of being injured not knowing when or who will be the next victim. The news of attacks on civilians are reported daily. The cruelty remains aggravating. The government set forth a policy by sending military and police into the area. Check points are set up in faraway places, villages, districts, and even in urban areas, with no positive change as police and soldiers are still being killed everyday. This situation has led to the researcher's awareness that people do not want be close to soldiers and the police for fear that they will also be injured. Such thoughts causes the belief that wherever there are police, it is unsafe. The researcher has gone to these areas and experienced the depressive fear in peoples everyday lives. The insurgents have set their targets in advance and will only attack after they have singled-out and selected the target. These targets are not only government officials. However, killing also goes on without selecting specific targets resulting in fear, confusion, disharmony, and at times mutual accusations between Buddhists and Thai Muslims. As the violence continues so does the degradation of careers and the general economy resulting in recession.

## Insurgency and Social Degradation

According to the Population and Housing Census 2000, Islamic domestic citizens account for 4.56%. This population uses the local Melayu language and follows Islamic cultural precepts. Their way of life is different from the rest of the Thai population. Muslims follow the laws based on the Al-quran, which is not only a religious scripture with prayers and cultural teachings, but also a set of ordinanc-

es governing faith, religious rites, economy, law, government, medicine, business, science, diplomacy, society, culture, and verses asking for blessing; in other words, it is a textbook for leading ones life from cradle to grave, and even to the afterlife, known as Akirah. Muslims consider the Al-quran as a constitution for living and every deed must comply with it. The Al-quran plays a vital role in life and Islam influences all customs and traditions. The Al-quran itself is a set of strict laws that everyone needs to learn and follow. Every Muslim is a priest. Declaring oneself a Muslim is achieved through simple words stating that one has no god other than Allah Mahamad of the god Allah. Muslims do not revere holy images or pictures. Islam promotes the learning of a domestic language. There are ordinances in the Al-quran which state that education is essential for Muslims. They hold that those who learn the language of another group will be safe from being deceived and secular education is recommended. Therefore, religion is not the cause of the violence in this region, although it is somehow associated with it as this has been claimed by certain groups to legitimize their actions (in Thai, Matichon, 2004).

Thai Muslims believe now they are being threatened by the insurgency as it directly impacts their well-being and mental health. It has brought forth an pervasive fear among themselves, Thai Buddhists, and government officials. In general, attitudes and behaviors expressed between the majority of Thai Muslims and state officials are negative, which resulted from delicate misunderstandings of the following factors:

The number of Muslims in Thailand accounts for 3.69% of the total population. This leads to fear and concerns that the majority will threaten their culture.

A lot of Thai Muslims and government officials in this region are not fluent in the local Malay language leading to misunderstanding and misinterpretations resulting in fear.

3. Some government officials do not comprehend the core and principles of Islam and the related local traditions. They undervalue the feelings of Muslims towards the preservation and continuation of their religion and culture.

4. The lack of safety and the violence of the insurgency even when committed by a minority as well as the propaganda based on religious differences as the basis for selecting targets; affect the national security and unity. These issues causes widespread fear, distrust, and leads to retaliation.

5. The attitudes and actions of some low-ranked state officials who do not fully understand or fail to comply with state policies have exhibited inappropriate conduct leading to negative attitudes among the people.

6. Slow economic development and lack of social opportunities in this region are why Thai Muslims and especially some leaders, feel the government is not being sincere. In addition, there have been limitations for some Thai Muslims in new

economic development venture where the terms and conditions produce conflicts with their traditional way of life. This limits the effectiveness of government's attempts at reconciliation (in Thai, <http://dc.oas.psu.ac.th/dcms/files//03884/ch3.pdf>).

Today, the fear and the unfair treatment continues engraving fear into the hearts of Thai Muslims, even though improvements have been made. Furthermore, attempts made by the government to improve public relations cannot reach the people through differences in communication practices and language. Ideas are set forth, news, and information are given and yet negative criticism persists. These result from the a failure of law enforcement to comply with the rule of law safeguarding people's basic rights and freedom. For example, the arrest of suspects precedes evidence, or there is an unlawful exercise of authority, such as kidnapping, making threats, and mistreatment. These factors are structural problems in the entire judicial process and have caused violent reactions in the region as the local population functions as a network ready to retaliate to these actions by authorities.

### **The Religious, Cultural, and Political Complex**

Police Lieutenant General Dr. Peerapong Manakij, national security specialist, stated the following:

This war represents a war of belief, rooting from ethnic and religious differences, which led to the complex of terrestrial occupation. Problems were set up on the basis of the big perspective to derive the most efficient solution. The first perspective deals with management where the government will participate more actively in the development, that is, the incessant insurgency in the southern provinces from the important incidents affecting the issue in the southern border provinces which started during 2004. Such incidents include a gun robbery on the 4th of January, the killing of Buddhist monks on the 2nd in the same month, the violence on 28th April, and the Tak-bi incident on 25th October, as well as countless subsequent incidents which seem to have no ending. All the incidents continuously impact and expand into the vicinities in Songkhla and Satun, for example. Nevertheless, past governments, including the current one, have stressed on the solution to this issue by announcing the southern Thai provinces issue a national agenda, and passed policies and allocated budgets for the development and the solution to the southern insurgency to their fullest extent. In terms of the effects of the insurgency, Narathiwat seems to suffer the most frequent and is the most severe area, with the most casualties. The tragedy has engraved a profound lesion in the hearts of the local people, some of whom have died, while others lose their breadwinners. There has also been a rise of more than a thousand orphans. According to the study of the social, life, and economic aspects in the south. The broad conclusion reveals that the gross domestic product (GDP) in the south ranks the lowest in the country. Most people in the south hold an agricultural career, except for those in Phuket whose income is derived principally from tourism. The economic growth rate is also the lowest too. Apart from the conflict, the southern region also faces a higher rate of big disasters when compared to other regions of the country. As for overall education, southern residents are of a

higher average than the rest in other regions. Yet, by considering the three provinces – Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat – in detail, the average value seems to be declining than the country's average education. So do their technological competency and prospects to continue high school studies, which are possibly next to zero. The relative quality of life makes overall health unpleasant, and this is even worsened by the conflict of insurgency in the three southern provinces. There have been rising mother-child problems. The government, however, never abandon its southern people. It can be said that the government has allocated even more budget to the south more than to the rest of the country, because the south is threatened with more problems than the others. Such problems include education, public health, quality of life, and transportation, all of which make the government have to allocate an even higher budget to the South, especially when the war of belief in the three southern provinces began to simmer (Manakij, 2011:14-6).

Based on the viewpoint of Lieutenant General Dr. Peerapong Manakrit, Islam is not only a religion but also the highest charter of Muslims. This reflects that religion and culture are inseparable. It can be seen that while Islam culture defines a social boundary for Muslims, it alienates them from others in general. The characteristics which differentiate Thai Muslims from others are the religion of Islam, their language, and dress code. These are the origins of their unique culture, sufficiency-life goals, and easy-going lifestyle. However, development data in the area is hard to obtain. Moreover, their population is limited by declining education levels. This gives rise to the vital issue of how their traditional identity can be preserved.

Thai Muslims in the three southern provinces want to preserve their identity by using their local Malaya language and Islamic religion and culture congruent with being a good Muslim. In another aspect, the authorities tries to use state mechanism to merge Muslim society into a single Thai society through bureaucratic processes. For example, there are attempts to reform Islamic education and to change local Malayan names to Thai ones. For this reason, certain groups in the area refused to accept the Thai language, which indicates that the Thai government has failed to understand Islam as these types of methods would ruin the traditional Muslim identity – thereby becoming a root cause of more conflict and violence.

This Buddhist-Muslim dichotomy have turned people into opponents and propaganda through media has tended to deepen the conflict. Yet, the eyes and the verbal communication between conversation partners reveals ongoing distrust. Many past insurgencies were seemingly aimed by terrorists to injure and cause a deep wedge shaped wound leading to even more fear among the people. At the same time, waiting for those in power to solve the issue seems futile. The terrorists meanwhile, keep holding on to their tools of success – death and disaster.

### **A Holistic View Towards the Southern Insurgency**

The conflict in these three southern provinces has developed into the issue of who benefits? Conditions were set and led to long lasting battles; words became actions, starting from light to grave ones, and eventually ended up with the unimagi-

nable decision to use weapons and cruel death. This dilemma falls even deeper into a religious trap. Despite the attempts made by many parties to find peaceful way to end the southern blaze, the terrorists still have never been clearly identified. Their motivations are also unknown. The more violence is used to realize a solution, the more violence will be returned as a mirror reflecting back the same. Buddhist and Islamic leaders have to show their followers how to avoid falling into the trap of violence. Peaceful communities need to be able to bear witness to the disharmony of residents base on differences in religion without escalating to violence.

Teera Mintrasak, the governor of Yala province and a Muslim, once analyzed the three southern province issue holistically. He stated the problem has three levels:

1. Structural: Poverty, unemployment, education
2. Social: Drugs, contraband, weapons, and prostitution
3. Soul: Religious beliefs, Identities (Teera Mintrasak is referred to in Nararatwong 2008:91-2)

The most important problem is related to the soul in terms of belief and faith. This is because religion has transformed a fight of might into a battle of ideology. Teachers of religion may distort the thoughts of youngsters, causing the problem to spread; leading to guns serving as a means of judgment and a way to stir fear and disbelief.

The problem in these three southern provinces is very challenging and tough to solve by the governmental agencies. Local violence has become an universal issue. The insurgents stick to their old method of fighting via violence and ruining towns, cities, and governments. They keep on inserting fear into the local residents and took advantage of Muslim festivals to build up unrest through terrorism. Their strategy is aimed to psychologically rouse the people. The government, in the meanwhile, attempts to seal off the area and set up checkpoints, which has not proven effective, as losses through sabotage, car and motorcycle bombs, and other explosions continue on. Bombs are buried or hidden in different and random places. While arson and murder threats remain powerful tools.

Soraya Chamruchi (2012) studied the insurgency in this region and found there were tens of thousands affected. With closer scrutiny the human and social loss, from 2004-11, there were at least 4,455 children left without one or both parents. Women became widows and had to struggle for life alone in fear. Again based on the statistics from 2004-11, there were at least 2,220 widows in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat.

The severity of the scale of violence continues to aggravate daily life and causes widespread personal and psychological loss. The insurgency affects both the community at the individual, community and country levels. The root causes are comprised of the following seven elements:

1. The capture of important religious leaders without due process of law by successive governments.
2. and communities. The pronunciation of the Malayan language is deemed closest to that in the Al-quran and is used in deeper study of religion.
3. The closure of the traditional religious school, Por Nor, which is an academic institution in Muslim society for centuries. Instead, people are forced to learn Thai, taught in the Buddhist style, which frightens Muslims with its compulsive nature.
4. The prohibition of speaking Malayan at school. Some Muslims refused to go to state schools as they do not want to change their faith.
5. When Muslim women are forced to wear short hair, uncover their hair, wear skirts in place of a sarong, and while men are forced to change from white or black hats to helmets, and sarong to shorts or jeans. Traditionally Muslim women must dress appropriately covered to avoid unwanted sexual attention.
6. The change of local religious names to Thai names causes fear and difficulties when interacting with the state as they do not know Thai. This has been going on for almost 60 years yet never forgotten by Thais who love justice. These processes are still forced upon these underprivileged people.
7. The drastic fear of forced religious change. Drastic in Islam means the fear in a change in ones faith (Akidah) and means they become an unorthodox. What is worst, it is next to the risk of falling into hell as the Muslim way of life is filled with faith and belief in the existence of the afterlife as one of their strongest beliefs.

The administrative policy in the three southern provinces is an occupant policy rather than administrative one. Almost all administrative officers sent to the area are unaware and ignorant of the importance of the social, economic, and educational traditions of the local people. Failure to understand the differences has resulted in an image of the rebellious local Muslim. It is necessary that the government take the following into consideration and revise accordingly:

1. Using force in the problematic southern area by the government does not only hurt the local people, but also represents the wrong solution. Setting a simple target may seem an effective strategically to frighten ones enemies, but it is not always the right choice. The true goal is to get into the hearts of the people with a different culture to make them feel that they are not aliens in this country. This is only the beginning part of ones experience towards a solution.
2. Dismantling communities by implementing divisive policies through various tactics such as imposing outside values into the area and moving people from northeast Thailand to create more Buddhist communities.



3. Sending government officers to the area disproportionately and without considering their capabilities, potential, and their understanding of cultural differences. They may pressure, take advantage of, or insult the locals, or even worse they may lack the ability to realize economic, social, and educational development objectives. This has been going on for 30-40 years and creates negative and adverse atmosphere in the communities. Consequently, many migrate to Malaysia for work.

4. Sending armed troops to search peoples' houses, causing frightened villagers, children, and women; operations to suspiciously search through Por Nor schools and forcing students to give their fingerprints for fear that some of them may be involved in gun robberies and school arsons. This hurts the students' hearts and made them move to other schools. Such memories will be passed on from one generation to another endlessly. Searching for villains or illegal items in Muslim communities by using sniffer dogs must be done with caution; Muslims do not fear dogs; yet, where dogs walk past, their footprints and saliva stains must be cleaned with pure water seven times. The foulness caused by dogs negatively affects their religious practice which is a core part of their community's path.

6. It is important to know that Muslims in the south support the authorities to solve the problem. Most people wants the country to be happy and peaceful, but the government must act with understanding, caution, and determination to preserve the rights and the dignity of Thais as guaranteed by the constitution, not by emotions. This crisis is grave and Thais may not be aware of once this problem arises, the loss of local intellectuals and of those who wish the country to be prosper follows.

Many people fear the authorities so much that they run away from traumatic interrogation experiences and leave their families behind. Currently, there is news in which families of convicts are pressured. For example, some governmental agencies pressured people even if they held official positions. Some Muslim officers are satired and accused of school arson, which caused interruption in many students education. These Muslim officials were accused of being terrorists. These type of events have been going on for a long time and the policy to resolve the conflict in the southern area is still far from being resolved. The government needs to seriously rethink and redesign policies and enforcement that leads towards peaceful solutions. The Office of the National Security Council has established a strategic committee for developing a peaceful solution and their suggestions should be adopted.

Many past traumatic memories remain vivid in the community, such as the attack against Muslims who were at their morning prayers in Dusongngor, and whom all later were accused of being arsonists of the Baluka Samor in Bajor district. In 1975 five villagers at a hillside temple in the same village were killed which led to a large protest in Hari Raya. There was a bomb thrown into a crowd causing the immediate death of 13 in front of the Pattani town hall on December 13, 1975. The secret killing of individuals and denouncing the dead who may or may not have been terrorists. These are memories among the people and continue to case ongo-

ing pain of loss. Teachers, community leaders, Muslim officials, and local people find it hard to find a way to resolved this situation.

Therefore, to establish a quality media platform to reinforce the understanding of events for the locals and the nation one cannot only focus on what modern equipment to use, but it also must stress the importance of nation's diversity of its people and their culture. So, now, the only way out of the conflict appears to be one based on religion. Most religions shines the light to soften the hearts with its teachings and embraces the hearts filled with loss with its strength so that people can once again rise to face life's challenges and somehow transcend the loss of their beloved.

### **The Researcher's Fear**

The impact of the insurgency in this region is continuous and has caused immeasurable losses of not only life but of culture and community. It is undeniable that fear prevails as it is only a question when and where violence will occur. Will it ever pass and end is the question. Even if some families have relocated, they still fear the past or what is yet to come. The researcher is also one of those with the fear that an incident could strike at any time, regardless of ones awareness of the news on ones phone, radio, TV, or in the newspaper. When thinking of my homeland, my parents, or relatives layers upon me a palpable sense of fear. This form of loss has happened to the researcher and has brought an even more unpredictable sense of fear and concern about other consequences.

The researcher recorded an incident that took place on March 25, 2010 as follows:

The roaring sound of six gun bullets burst into the midst of a rural area not far from the Muang district in Pattani province. People who were shopping for dinner after praying to Allah for his kindness immediately closed their doors, not knowing if the incident was good or bad. It is almost assured that one of the households will be in tears from a loss. Such incidences cannot be laid aside or forgotten in a short time or maybe never. The six bullets riddled in the bloody body of the man lying in a car-less, silent street from no apparent reason. Death and fear now dominates the heart of a small-bodied woman, his wife, who from then on carries the full burden to provide for her three children. This incident was the most heart-shaking experience of the researcher's extended family as she had lost her uncle who was like her second father in raising and teaching her. The unprecedented grief from this loss through violence was so immense that fear laid its hand everywhere. In his Muslim burial ceremony, our pouring tear stains seemed that they would never dry and would be engraved in our hearts relentlessly.

The huge burden upon the wife who is forced to become the family's sole leader requires her full strength to support them. She has to raise and teach her children to be valuable assets in the society and to not be angry with what had happened. It is very difficult to fulfill the loss of her husband in less than one days time. It is a very heavy burden as the pain in one's heart never disappears. A mother is her children's first teacher and a root in society. The awareness of the impact of the

insurgency in this region on widowed women and their need to play an additional role in assisting with conflict resolution seems to be neglected as no one is interested on how much the crisis affects women. Even in times of peace, women have had to bear gender discrimination and a lack of security in life. However now in the present situation they also experience the revenge between some people in the area and the authorities. This is the evil game of the terrorists. Women who lose their husbands and have to raise their children on their own keep experience an increasingly difficult life. In spite of the laws of social equality in this region, Islamic women do not often call for their own rights or compensation for the losses they have suffered. These women have become silent and have tended to keep everything in their hearts; yet, most never want to revenge as they tend to remind themselves that everything is destined by God. They only live in fear on and on.

Based on the full story from this region and the experiences of the researcher is also a Muslim woman that has been affected by these cruel incidents feels the need to pass on these stories of fear and human rights abuses.

Some of the mitigating factors include the social conditions, a low educational background, and incidences of premature and forced marriages. These Muslim women's stories need to be reflected back to society to illustrate how they are suffering from mental pain, loss and live their lives in fear. Whether villagers, teachers, nurses, or merchants, the whole community are all humans living under fear. The researcher has chosen to collect research data from women aged from 25 to 45 years as this age group is the time centered on hopes, dreams, and family building. For this region it is also a period with the highest prevalence of lost husbands. Meanwhile, women aged over 45 have adult children who are independent meaning less burden to their mothers. Thus, it can be said that women between 25 and 45 have had more dreams broken and are more likely to have fear dominate their lives.

#### Objectives of the Video

To promote social awareness of the daily lives under fear and the impact of the insurgency on the stability of the individual, the society, and the country, the researcher would like to utilize video art as her artistic medium to vividly reflect the way of life of those living with loss through these women's personal stories. The video reflects the attitudes and the culture of the local people through stills and video while expanding the social role of art. The purpose of this video art project was to communicate and convey the truth as seen from the perspective and attitudes of the researcher by utilizing the portrayal of the five senses namely: visual, sound, smell, taste, and touch. It will also appeal to ones imagination to heighten the understanding of these women's traumatic experiences.

The researcher presents this creative research project *Video Art: Everyday Fear Within the Three Southern Thai Provinces* to address the problem of the lack of public awareness of the personal effects of violence on women and the resulting trauma as well as the familial and economic struggles it causes. It details how the insurgency continues to exacerbate the region's living conditions while the general

public isn't aware of the pain of those who have lost everything ranging from their loved ones, privacy and property. Some say the effect of these losses will never fade away and the broken-hearted will never be healed. The locals still fear and wonder why and how long they will be victimized as they remain unsuspecting targets. What exactly is the cause of the insurgency? This question has been raised time and again by many and their various answers have offered no pathway towards resolution. The one thing that keeps the local people alive is their religion, which they hold onto. Their religion is the key to their survival.

The never-ending loss causes fear in the locals because of its unpredictable and mostly random nature. Humans and animals instinctively protect themselves all the time and thus can become overly cautious (fearful) just to ensure their survival. Excessive fear can have a detrimental effect if one cannot put it aside. Excessive fear is not self-protective and it happens without conscious control and is paralyzing. If fear is limited, not excessive, it can be beneficial, as it is a basic human emotion and is involved with a self-protection mechanism by our body and brain as they work together. Therefore, if we have an appropriate level of fear it can serve a valuable function of self-protection.

### Conclusion

The insurgency has been disrupting the peaceful lives of the residents in the three southern Thai provinces and appears aggravatingly unstoppable. Whether this grave issue has its roots in religious, social, or political issues the loss has become an unavoidable part of their lives. Fear has long dominated nearly every single person, family, and community. The researcher is one of those affected who has a beloved relative. This tragic loss has remained in her heart. With this ongoing situation the researcher has decided to utilize media to create a form of video art to convey all the essentials garnered during the course of her interviews and research needed to comprehend this situation. The researcher hopes that this research will be of benefit to those who wish to do more in-depth research and/or educational projects in this region with the goal resolving the crisis to assist in creating long lasting happiness of the people who share the same nation.

### Suggestions for Future Study and Research

The project titled *Video Art: Everyday Fear Within the Three Southern Thai Provinces* enables the researcher to discover the approach to create a video that conveys the fear of those who lost their beloveds so as to induce a broader awareness. The researcher has developed storyboards and taken stills, audio samples and videos of which all can serve as examples or guidelines for others concerned with improving this region's quality of life. Although those who are involved or strive to sort out this insurgent crisis may have a different understanding and perspective from Islam or may not understand the way of life of Thai Muslims but communication through the art of video and its related techniques can provide an understanding of the unhappiness in the lives of those in this region. Such understanding is essential, as the issue in Thailand's three southern provinces is complicated and influx. It is important to closely examine the problems in this area as the problem is entrenched and protracted. The researcher as the creator of this video, was

inspired by the fear in her hometown and was motivated to complete this project with the aspiration to be of benefit to those who would like to further study this subject.

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# Case Study

- The Art Museum Propelling City Development –  
Oslo as a Creative City  
Stein Olav Henrichsen (Norway)

# The Art Museum Propelling City Development

*Oslo as a Creative City*

Stein Olav Henrichsen<sup>+</sup> (Norway)

## Abstract

A new boost in art infrastructure in the Norwegian capital Oslo will have a great impact on contemporary city development, and the important question is how this impact can be used to help build a sound society where democracy, human rights and financial development can prosper, and where conflicts can be discussed and solved in a non violent order. The answer depends on the ability of the institutions to play a relevant part in contemporary core problems and ask: what are societies main challenges, and how can we help solve them? In the further development of art institutions, they will have to strengthen their role as an attractive, accessible and vibrant part of society by inspiring creative and constructive critique in addition to their traditional tasks. Art institutions will have to bring important contemporary issues such as human rights and dignity, migration, poverty and crime up for reflection and discussion. By investigating and act on the human condition, peoples lives and society development art institutions can and should make an important difference.

**Keywords:** *Art Institutions, Art Infrastructure, City Development, Societies Challenges, Urban Renewal*

## Introduction

Being the capital of Norway, Oslo just reached 680,000 inhabitants. The city, which is located between vast wonderful woods on three sides, and by the beautiful fjord to the south, grows relatively fast by 15,000 new inhabitants annually.

This is related to three factors; high birth rate, Norwegian centralisation and immigration. The migration in Europe is today the biggest since the huge movement of peoples around AD 600, and this is certainly felt in Oslo where people are coming from all over the world to start a new life in a country that experiences an unusual economic bloom.

The challenges facing the Oslo municipality connect to growth and migration, are supplemented by traditional challenges connected to human welfare and economic growth. Art and culture has always been an important part of the city's development, which was emphasized in 2008 with the opening of the new opera at the waterfront.



Figure 1. Central Oslo with its new Opera house and showing the location for the new Munch Museum.

The city profits from being the Norwegian capital in the sense of representing national as well as local interests. The new opera house clearly reflects this by being fully financed by the state budget.

The decision to locate the opera building in a part of the city historically occupied by industry, came after a long discussion on city development, and started a very interesting turn in opening up the sea to the city, whereas the woods had before been city landmark and identity number one. The new opera where you can walk up to the roof like a hill or a snow-clad mountain, quickly became popular and is now the most visited spot nationally.

Building the opera became part of a radical new city development plan, involving the development of a whole new part of the city facing the sea, opening up the seafront to the city inhabitants. Amongst the new buildings being planned in this area was a new city library and a new museum dedicated to our great painter Edvard Munch called Lambda, named after the 11th letter in the Greek alphabet.



Figure 2. *The Scream* by Edvard Munch, by many referred to as the world's most known and commented image.

The new library, which expects 2 million visitors annually, is designed by the Norwegian architect Lund Hagem, and is located just behind the opera. The architecture reflects the contemporary role and philosophy of a modern library fully equipped for the digital future and modern human behavior.



Figure 3. The library with the opera to the right.





Figure 4. Inside the library.

The new Munch museum - designed by the Spanish architect Joan Herreros - is also an example of a modern architecture that reflects contemporary museum philosophy, and fulfils everything an audience might expect from a visit to a museum.



Figure 5. The new Munch museum on the left of the Akerselva river outlet.

The museum is located in front of the opera building seen from the fjord, and is also placed where the river *Akerselva* runs into the fjord: a very beautiful location with plenty of space around and a fantastic view to the city and the sea.

All three buildings have a very central place in the city close to other cultural historic institutions and sites, and a stones throw from the central railway station, Norway's busiest traffic point serving 680,000 travellers on a daily basis.

To top this vibrant city development on the east side of the city, there will soon be two new museums for the visual arts on the west side of the fjord: The newly constructed *Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art*, designed by *Renzo Piano* and the new *National Museum of Visual Art* with the old city hall to the right



Figure 6. The new Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, designed by Renzo Piano.



Figure 7. The new National Museum of Visual Art left, with the old city hall right.

Developing three new museums for the visual arts at the approximate same time, means an enormous lift for the status of art, and shows clearly that the society including private institutions are willing to invest dramatically into new infrastructure for art and artists, and of course promote city development.

Even if the three museums have their specific and separate profiles, there will be a great deal of collaborations creating a new international focal point in the European art environment.

So what will these institutions give back to the society in order to defend such an extensive investment? All over Europe there is an ingrained belief in art and culture as tools for urban and social development. But hardware alone solves no problems. We also need people. We need the software. We need to know what will go on inside these institutions that lifts society. The answer depends on the ability of the institutions to play a relevant part in contemporary lives addressing core contemporary problems.

Let's see what the Munch Museum will represent as a modern art institution propelling city development.



Figure 8. The Opera house on the left with the Munch Museum on the right.

In addition to 3,500 works by Norwegian modern painters, the Munch Museum will house 26,000 works by Edvard Munch; 1,185 paintings, 4,500 drawings and 20,000 graphic works in plus 12,000 original texts, letters, library, lithographic stones and work tools: a waste collection – probably the biggest collection by one artist in one museum in the world.

The requirement laid out by Munch's testament to the city municipality when he donated all his works to the city, was to Preserve, Research and Present the collection in a separate museum. Even though in 1963, at the 100 anniversary of Munch's birth, a new museum was built it is now over 50 years old and is currently being substituted by the new museum.

When it comes to *Preservation*: our aim is to keep all Munch's works in mint condition for the future. Our aim concerning *Research* is to further develop knowledge and understanding for the art of Munch in order to maximize his relevance and strengthen his presence on the world's art stage. In addition to a new collaboration with the University of Oslo, the Munch Museum also plans to create a New centre for Munch research collaborating with universities and art institutions all over the world promoting advanced studies of Munch and his works. When it comes to presenting the works of Munch, our prime aim in the new museum is to create great art experiences and hopefully make an impact on the lives of visitors, which certainly happened in the old museum.



Figure 9. Today's Munch Museum.

To make ourselves relevant to a local population, we will in addition to our huge collection also present other important artists and participate actively in developing the contemporary art environment both nationally and internationally through all kinds of artistic activities. In short create connections between contemporary art, art history, and our common cultural heritage.

In competition with other activities in town we will in the future have to segregate and diversify communication. We will focus on children and young people, use extensively modern communication techniques, modern exhibition curation and planning that supports the design and development for a total art experience.

Our dreams is: To Create A Vibrant and Living Museum

- that takes care of - and builds on - heritage
- that defines contemporary life
- that forms the future

Our challenges in this respect are basically related to five possible problems: popular ignorance, possible marginalization, commercialisation, lack of resources due to financial regression and the possibility of being understood as a mausoleum (been there - done that) rather than a modern and vibrant museum.

How can we meet these challenges? We will have to make ourselves relevant to contemporary society

- by making an impact
- by being at the core of social development
- by being at the core of the future





Figure 10. Starry Night (Stjernenatt) by Edvard Munch.

In more practical terms this could mean that we have to participate in the whole social ecology. We will have to develop methods for making children from an early age understand and take an interest in the arts. This can be achieved by developing methods to help children understand that they can become artists themselves and that art is communication. We have to participate in talent development and professional training to bridge the gap between higher education and the professional artist. In other words, create possibilities and spaces for young artists supporting young voices and young expressions.

Furthermore we will have to participate in bringing up and help solve contemporary social challenges not only as artists, but as art institutions. How to increase physical space for a wide range of expressions, promoting human dignity, addressing poverty and social differences promoting care of the elderly and disabled along with human rights in all of its forms – and possibly a whole list of other aspects of the human condition.

As institutions we can bring these issues up to the surface; discuss, reflect, create movements for change. In addition to our traditional tasks, we will have to be an attractive, accessible and vibrant part of society. We can inspire creative and constructive critiques. We can set the agenda for the future.

In our new museum we have emphasized the importance of having spaces for cafés – restaurants – libraries – bookstore – concerts/art activities – lectures – workshops – activity rooms in order to be open to the public basically all day (and most of the night) in order to merge ourselves into contemporary society, and contemporary lives.

We will put great importance on collaboration with other parties and institutions locally, nationally and last but not least, internationally. We will collaborate with kindergartens and primary schools, higher education, local art institutions, local culture institutions, international art institutions, and to a wide degree other formal and informal social institutions by investigating and acting on social developments in how to make a difference in peoples' lives.

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# Review

- Book Review  
Royal Porcelain from Siam – Unpacking the  
Ring Collection  
Kjell Skyllstad Editor in Chief

# *Book Review*

# Royal Porcelain from Siam – Unpacking the Ring Collection

Kjell Skjellstad<sup>+</sup> Editor in Chief

In 1904, during the last years of the reign of King Chulalongkorn the Great, Theodor Ring, a Norwegian naval officer and adventurer called in 1897 by His Majesty to serve in his Royal Navy as part of the transformation of Thailand to a modern state was promoted as Commander of the Maha Chakri, King Chulalongkorn's Royal Yacht.

In that same year a large shipment arrived from Siam destined to form the core of the treasures of the newly opened Ethnographic Museum in the Norwegian capital (now Oslo University Museum of Cultural History) The sender was that same Theodor Ring and the content nothing less than 250 pieces of exquisite Bencharong Royal Porcelain, used in the household of the Royal family and Thai nobility since the Auythaya period nobility. Commander Ring left his post in 1906 but later met King Chulalongkorn at a dinner given by the Norwegian King at his palace the following year. It is not reported if King Chulalongkorn saw the collection during his Norwegian sojourn.

The King had himself donated a collection to England in 1876 and another Norwegian explorer Carl Bock known for his Thai travelogue "Temples and Elephants" (1884) had donated a smaller collection to the Museum a few years later. Both of

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these collections however lay hidden from the public eye in the museum vaults. On the initiative of Professor Bussakorn Binson of the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University and the author a Family Day of Thai Culture was arranged a few years ago when some choice pieces of Thai porcelain were also put on display.

And so through the initiative of Professor Jend Erland Braarvig of the Oslo University Department of Culture Studies meeting in April 2012 with His Excellency Mr. Theerakun Niyom, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Kingdom of Norway and shortly afterward with the Anne Haabu, Conservator and Martin Hager-Saltnes, Museum lecturer a unique project was launched. It would include close cooperation between Thai and Norwegian researchers in the fields of cultural history, leading up to an exposition in 2013-14 and the publication of the present volume.

And here it is – a broad documentation in 4 chapters on Bencharong, its history and characteristics, collectors and collections of Thai artifacts in Europe, motives and influences, and the fascinating history of creating the exposition itself. Three Thai researchers have been involved in the project:

- Prapassorn Posrithong, former Curator and Director of the National Museum Division of Thailand and Assistant Director at the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Center.
- Arthid Sheravanichkul, Ph.D., Lecturer at the Department of Thai Studies, Chulalongkorn University.
- Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, Ph.D., Director of the South East Asian Ceramics Museum at Bangkok University.

A model project of building research partnerships across continents inspired by a deep commitment to serving the cause of intercultural understanding has resulted in a publication worthy of the glorious art genre it has set to portray. It should be noted that the complicated enamel technique itself crossed the continents, being discovered in Europe, developed in China and perfected as an art form in its essence incorporating Thainess in King Chulalongkorn's Siam.

Editors: Anne Haabu and Dawn F. Rooney  
 Royal Porcelain From Siam – Unpacking the Ring Collection  
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## Journal Policy

### About JUCR

The Journal of Urban Culture Research is an international, online, peer-reviewed journal published biannually in June & December by the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts of Thailand's Chulalongkorn University in conjunction with the Urban Research Plaza of Osaka City University, Japan. JUCR offers its readers two categories of content. One is a window into the latest international conferences and reviews on published books, websites, and other media. Secondly its main core is a range of articles from researchers in the international community.

### The Aims of JUCR

This journal on urban culture aims at establishing a broad interdisciplinary platform for studies of cultural creativity and the arts that brings together researchers and cultural practitioners to identify and share innovative and creative experiences in establishing sustainable and vibrant, livable communities while fostering cultural continuity. The journal embraces broad cultural discussions regarding communities of any size as it recognizes the urban community's rural roots. JUCR encourages researchers and the full range of artists in visual arts, creative arts, music, dance, theater together with those in urban studies and planning to seek cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural practices.

JUCR has the objective of stimulating research on both the theory and practice of fine and applied arts in response to social challenges and environmental issues as well as calling for solutions across the creative realms. Moreover, JUCR supports advocacy processes, improvements in practices, and encourages supportive public policy-making related to cultural resources. JUCR intends to offer readers relevant theoretical discussions and act as a catalyst for expanding the knowledge-base of creative expression related to urban culture.

### Review Process

1. JUCR promotes and encourages the exchange of knowledge in the field of fine and applied arts among scholars worldwide. Contributions may be research articles, reports of empirical studies, reviews of films, concerts, dances, and art exhibitions. Academic papers and book reviews are also acceptable. Articles are typically only considered for publication in JUCR with the mutual understanding that they have not been published in English elsewhere and are not currently under consideration by any other English language journal(s). Occasionally, noteworthy articles worthy of a broader audience that JUCR provides, will be reprinted. Main articles are assessed and peer reviewed by specialists in their relevant fields. Furthermore to be accepted for publication, they must also receive the approval of the editorial board.

2. To further encourage and be supportive of the large diverse pool of authors whose English is their second language, JUCR employs a 3-stage review process. The first is a double-blind review comprised of 2-3 international reviewers experi-



enced with non-native English writers. This is then followed by a non-blind review. Thirdly, a participative peer review will, if needed, be conducted to support the selection process.

3. All articles published in the journal will have been fully peer-reviewed by two, and in some cases, three reviewers. Submissions that are out of the scope of the journal or are of an unacceptably low standard of presentation will not be re-viewed. Submitted articles will generally be reviewed by two experts with the aim of reaching an initial decision within a two-month time frame.

4. The reviewers are identified by their solid record of publication as recommended by members of the editorial board. This is to assure the contributors of fair treatment. Nominations of potential reviewers will also be considered. Reviewers determine the quality, coherence, and relevancy of the submissions for the Editorial Board who makes a decision based on its merits. High relevancy submissions may be given greater prominence in the journal. The submissions will be categorized as follows:

- Accepted for publication as is.
- Accepted for publication with minor changes, no additional reviews necessary.
- Potentially acceptable for publication after substantial revision and additional reviews.
- Article is rejected.
- A notice of acceptance will be sent to submitting authors in a timely manner.

5. In cases where there is disagreement between the authors and reviewers, advice will be sought from the Editorial Board. It is the policy of the JUCR to allow a maximum of three revisions of any one manuscript. In all cases, the ultimate decision lies with the Editor-in-Chief after a full board consultation.

6. JUCR's referee policy treats the contents of articles under review as privileged information and will not be disclosed to others before publication. It is expected that no one with access to articles under review will make any inappropriate use of its contents.

7. The comments of the anonymous reviewers will be forwarded to authors upon request and automatically for articles needing revision so that it can serve as a guide. Note that revisions must be completed and resubmitted within the time frame specified. Late revised works may be rejected.

8. In general, material, which has been previously copyrighted, published, or accepted for publication elsewhere will not be considered for publication in the main section of JUCR.

9. The review process shall ensure that all authors have an equal opportunity for publication. The acceptance and scheduling of submissions for publication in the journal shall not be impeded by additional criteria or amendments to the procedures beyond those listed above.

10. The views expressed in articles published are the sole responsibility of the authors and not necessarily shared by the JUCR editors or Chulalongkorn University.

### Submission Requirements

- Worthy contributions in the urban culture arena are welcome from researchers and practitioners at all stages in their careers. A suggested theme is announced prior to each issue.
- Manuscripts should generally not exceed 7,000 words including the abstract and references. Tables, figures, and illustrative material are accepted only when necessary for support.
- Manuscripts need to use our template for submission. Please download from our website's submission guidelines page. Details are described in the top half of the first page with sample text following. Documents not using the template will be returned for reformatting.
- All manuscripts are required to include a title, abstract, keywords, author's byline information, an introduction and conclusion section along with a Chicago formatted reference list. Manuscripts with existing footnotes and in-text references may retain them as a resource for readers, but are not required. Footnotes are to be relocated as non-standardized endnotes listed before references.
- Manuscripts should have all images, figures, and tables numbered consecutively. Reference lists need to conform to The Chicago Manual of Style ([www.chicagomanualofstyle.org](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)) as detailed in our template. We recommend the free online formatter for standardizing ones references. See [www.bibme.org](http://www.bibme.org).
- Each author should send with their manuscript an abstract of 150 words or less together with a submission form providing their biographical data along with a maximum of six keywords.
- All manuscripts submitted for consideration need to be accompanied by a completed and signed Manuscript Submission form found on our website.
- Authors authorize the JUCR to publish their materials both in print and online while retaining their full individual copyright. The copyright of JUCR volumes is retained by Chulalongkorn University.
- Authors should strive for maximum clarity of expression. This point cannot be overstated. Additionally, authors need to bear in mind that the purpose of publication is the disclosure and discussion of artistic knowledge and innovations that expands the realm of human creativity and experience.

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## Criteria and Responsibilities for Editorial Board Membership

### Overview

The Editorial Board is comprised of members who have significant expertise and experience in their respective fields. Editorial Board Members are appointed by the Executive Director with the approval of at least 60% of the Editors and Editorial Board.

### Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for appointment shall include:

- Demonstrated scholarly expertise and ethical leadership in an area not over represented on the existing Editorial Board.
- Published three or more papers in scholarly publications.
- Demonstrated excellence in the review process, based on independent evaluations of the Editors and Associates.
- Stated commitment to contribute to issues affecting the management of JUCR.

### Responsibilities

Members of the Editorial Board are directly accountable to the Managing Editor.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Provide input on editorial needs and review manuscripts as requested.
- Complete assigned reviews in a timely fashion. Offer mutually respectful and constructive review of manuscripts to assist in providing the highest quality of papers.
- Maintain confidentiality and objectivity with regard to manuscripts and the JUCR review process.
- Participate in the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of JUCR so as to help sustain the highest level of excellence.
- Once appointed to the Editorial Board, members are encouraged to submit at least one paper during their tenure.

### Nomination Process

Nominations are submitted in writing (via email or post) and addressed to the Editor in Chief or any member of the Editorial staff. Candidates/applicants must submit a CV including a statement addressing her/his interests and suitability for Board membership. JUCR assumes the general readership would be able to identify the candidate by her/his reputation for scholarship in an established line of inquiry.

When a candidate is approved by majority vote of the current JUCR board members, she/he will be invited to serve by the Editor in Chief for a specified term of three years. The Dean of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in turn will finalize the appointment. Continued membership of the Editorial Board will be reviewed every three years by a member of the Editorial Board with a decision about candidates submitted annually. The number of Editorial Board members will not exceed 20 unless otherwise agreed upon.

