

# The Role of the National Art Galleries in Exhibiting Contemporary Art in Thailand

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## ABSTRACT

Contemporary art is always created by a society, since it is the product of a contemporary era which is always in a state of change. The creation of contemporary art is based on knowledge of traditional art and the expression of individual artists. Thus, there are various subjects, styles and techniques of contemporary art. However, all artworks have revealed the influence of common surroundings.

The study presents many aspects of contemporary art: its sources, messages, channels and audiences, and how the galleries exhibited their exhibitions and provided art education for the public.

The role of the national art galleries in exhibiting contemporary art in Thailand is the responsibility of the operations of the National Gallery and the Silpa Bhirasri Memorial National Gallery which is under the control of the Department of Fine Arts.

The National Gallery has exhibited various art styles: traditional art, contemporary art and others. The contemporary art in their permanent collection is mostly acquired through purchasing, loans and donations. Most of the temporary exhibitions display contemporary art, and above all that of Thai artists. The trend is to have more frequent temporary exhibitions as this increases of the numbers of visitors to the gallery.

In terms of the Silpa Bhirasri Memorial National Gallery, the study shows that it exhibits contemporary art as an element of a memorial exhibition. One particular exhibition of the art of Professor Silpa Bhirasri and his contemporaries is part of an installation based on the professor's office as it used to be. This is different from their usual style of art exhibition.

The study summarizes that the national art galleries in Thailand have exhibited the contemporary art together with other art styles and other objects. Most of the contemporary art exhibitions display the works of native artists.

The thesis concludes that it is a requirement of art galleries in Thailand to promote contemporary art, and suggests how to develop the exhibitions and how to establish a dynamic art gallery in the future, such as by art displays, art education and activities. It also proposes that the documentation of the gallery's operation should be undertaken and that the evaluation of and coordination with other art galleries and institutions is necessary.