

The Figures of (Sound/Noise) in the Thai Art Context

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Abstract

This study explores the evolution of sound art in Thai modern and contemporary art from the 1960s to the present. Early artists visualized sound using traditional elements, while the 1990s saw a shift toward media, video, and performance art, driven by global trends and new art spaces. The 2000s brought international recognition, with artists integrating interactive and conceptual sound elements. By the 2010s, those with music backgrounds introduced sophisticated sound systems and interdisciplinary collaborations. However, challenges persist, including inadequate exhibition spaces, limited funding, and a lack of technical expertise. These constraints slow down innovation and the broader recognition of sound art in Thailand. Addressing these issues through government and private sector support is crucial to fostering a more sustainable ecosystem for artists. Increased awareness and institutional backing will ensure the continued growth of sound art, allowing artists to explore new creative possibilities and expand their audience.

Keywords: *Sound Art in Thailand, Soundscape in Thai Art, Thai Contemporary Art, Thai Art History, New Media in Thai Art*

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Introduction

The 1980s marked the emergence of sound art as an integral part of the Thai art scene. Sound in artwork generally falls into two categories: 1) Sound utilised as an element within media art, and 2) Human sound occurring within performing art. In the post-2000 era, the number of artists presenting video art had significantly increased. Many artworks aimed to present their concept through sound, whether produced by humans, music, or experimental sounds. However, sound art remained relatively obscure, primarily due to its niche audience and its frequent classification as mixed media or video art. The popularity of sound art in Thailand has mainly been facilitated by music students and experimental music composers. Furthermore, sound art has yet to establish a significant presence in contemporary art discourse. Many artists produce sound artworks only for certain projects, with neither continuity nor the accumulation of experience in creating sound art. Academics and artists have noted six important factors that make the development of sound art in Thailand more difficult: 1) The requirement of a wide range of knowledge, including art, music, engineering, and other related fields, 2) The budget for creation, 3) The space suitable for the artwork, 4) Accessibility of technology and human resources to assist artists, 5) Funding support from both the public and private sectors, and 6) The difficulty of selling such works to art galleries, museums, and collectors. Raising awareness about this art form, its historical significance, and its innovative potential could lead to increased public appreciation. As more people understand its cultural and artistic value, there is a possibility of greater institutional and financial support for artists working in this field.

Sound in Modern Thai Art

From studies on the history of modern Thai art, it was found that sound was not used in art communication, whether synthetic sound or natural sound. Instead, only visual symbolic representations were used to evoke the auditory imagery, for example Sompot Upa-in's work *The Musician*; poster and ink on paper, in 1958, and *Unknown Title*; poster on paper around ca. 1960 (Kumpat, 2014:28-34). Upa-in was a painter who often presented conceptual works that related to subconscious feelings. *The Musician* was presented experimentally in the Cubist style, as if it was a new artistic approach in Thailand. It is obvious that many artists who have studied abroad or closely follow Western art news have been influenced in seeking to present new and experimental forms of expression. Both works by Upa-in communicated through the musical symbols, as well as musical gestures, and even the composition within the image imitates the composition of music. Comparable to the work of Wassily Kandinsky, who used movement and dynamics in his artistic elements, reflecting an attempt to express the communication of sound through a symbolic system in his paintings. Another example is Kiettisak Chanonnart's mixed media art in 1968, *Painting*, depicting the creation of sound in painting in Thai modern art. The image of the screaming man evokes the feeling of pain and the state of being psychologically pressured. He attached objects to the painting, which shares similarities with the assemblage art group artists, Robert Rauschenberg, Raoul Hausmann and Kurt Schwitters. This artwork by Chanonnart is often referenced as an assemblage and surrealism art piece in the early period of modern Thai art. Observation: The theme of the subconscious state appeared to be a trend in the Thai art scene during that period, and was used to communicate artistic concepts. Another example is Thawan Duchanee's *Vitruvian Man*; 1968 oil on canvas, 203 x 247.5 cm. Duchanee was a painter who often created a sense of sound through his paintings of humans and animals, until it became a significant characteristic of his works. *Vitruvian Man* featured a man and water buffaloes opening their mouths and making loud noises with all their might. According to a collector who studied said work, the artist

conveyed the message of liberation and emotional release through this painting. “Thawan had recently graduated from Europe and had gained enlightenment in various fields of art and science in the Western world. He portrayed himself through the image of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, which symbolised the knowledge of accurately determining human proportions according to anatomical principles.” (Vachajitpan, 2023). Duchanee discussed the discovery of truth in Thai society in this piece, the water buffaloes and a man on the back of one symbolising the agricultural social system of Thailand as well as rural life. Chang Tang, a self-taught artist with a non-art education background, depicted the sound symbolic system in his paintings through letters and the repetition of short words over and over. Examples of some of the words include; people, democracy, peace, mindfulness, and state religion. Tang was also interested in literature, politics, social change and philosophy. When considering Tang's series of drawings, it is prominent that the artist used handwriting, rough drawing, scribbling, or sometimes a systematic and proportional approach. The letters were like his speech, voicing his feelings toward social changes. The letters and words conveyed concentration, contemplation, and the artist's outbursts. The communication was sophisticated without the need for directness. It even prompted viewers to envision performance art through his rapid drawing. Many of Tang's works share similarities with those of the Mono-ha movement in Japan, despite him never being influenced by such groups.

The above examples show the attempt of modern Thai artists who were striving to experiment with Western art forms, by employing elements of art to develop the identity of modern Thai art, both in content and form, distinct from commercial art. Modern Thai art was described through the writing of Corrado Feroci (known as Silpa Bhirasri) (1959) about variety of expressions that related to nature, environment, landscape, human, way of life, change of lifestyle, westernisation, and universalism. In addition, the modern art style that is popular in Thailand include impressionism, cubism, futurism, expressionism, non-representationalism and surrealism.



Figure 1. Thawan Duchanee, Vitruvian Man (1968); Oil on canvas, 203 x 247.5 cm., Private Collection. Source: <https://anurakmag.com/art-and-culture/10/12/2023/vitruvian-man-version-thawan-duchanee/>.

The Art of Using Sound and Defying Norms

During the transition of modern Thai art to contemporary art, Chatvichai Promadhattavedi, the director of former Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art, established in 1974, said that Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art was a place for experimenting with various creative works, including modern art, experimental art, performances, music, literature, and poetry. It was an open space for new forms of art to showcase to the Thai public in ways that differed from state-affiliated art institutions. Most of the artworks focused on unconventional formats such as video art, art installation, performance art, and photographs. Young generation artists at that time had studied abroad. Artists like Apinan Poshyananda, Chumpon Apisuk, Vasan Sitthiket, and Kamol Phaosavasdi presented their artworks in a new direction that opposed modern art forms. The stage of experimentation was one of the activities that focused on experimenting with new art forms such as Happening, Music with Performance, reading the novel and so on. Chumpon Apisuk stated that the activities did not just take place in the art hall but also presented art in public spaces, facilitating the exchange of meanings and values of art.

In 1985, Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art held an exhibition showcasing an alternative art aesthetics by Apinan Poshyananda titled *How to Explain Art to a Bangkok Cock*. That exhibition presented new and shocking elements to the viewer, including video performances and public displays of turkeys and chicks. The sound from the video, the artist's live performance, and the loud chirping of the chicks echoed throughout the art hall, along with the sound of the viewers. "Debate about what is art and what is not art. Apinan had left trails of question marks, regarding the Thai art institution system, showing that it was in need of change and restructuring." The work of Poshyananda introduced new directions for art into the Thai art scene, focusing especially on factors that involved the application of sound and ambient noise. In the same year, 1985, Kamol Phaosavasdi presented *Song for the Dead* in the style of Arte Povera. His exhibition featured both installation and performance art. The installation comprised with waste, scrap metal, other materials, and photocopies of Marilyn Monroe (similar to the works of Andy Warhol in 1962). The live performance included sound made with abandoned metal scraps from Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University and the reading aloud of the postmodern art manifesto. The sound occurred during the live performance from the performer's movement, which involved beating the object, setting off the firecrackers, and splashing black paint on the images of Marilyn Monroe. The artist created sounds to evoke the viewer's feelings within the atmosphere determined by the artist. This influenced the interpretation of the artist's work. "It is a declaration of questioning and rejection of both traditional aesthetic norms and Modern Art." (Prompan, 2019) Studying abroad has influenced Poshyananda and Phaosavasdi's artistic creations, leading them to share a similar desire to communicate new forms of artistic ideas to Thai society.

Artworks in Thailand that incorporate sound are mostly found in the form of media art, video installations, and art installations. These works prioritise the selection of sound and noise, as well as site-specific considerations, which support the communication of ideas by contemporary artists. Phaosavasdi, a media artist, is an example of an artist who incorporates sound alongside his visual works, emphasising the image and presenting a new experience for the viewer, first seen in his work *Song for the Dead* in 1985. This was accomplished through the process of recording natural sound, acoustic sound and experimental sound, as seen in *Between Hopeful and Hopeless* in 1998, *Quiet Storm* in 2005 and *Sparrows* in 2011. He

continued to incorporate sound into his artwork, leading up to his work *Sweet Boundary in the Light Tube* in 2018, at 'Bangkok Art Biennale 2018,' the 1st edition.

If we consider the development of the history of Thai art, we will find that external factors have both directly and indirectly affected the development of the perception and creation of art. Chumpon Apisuk, the pioneering performing art artist and the founder of the 'Asiatopia Festival' which started in the mid-1990s. The festival has invited Thai and international artists to perform for the Thai viewer. He was both the festival organiser and an artist himself. Apisuk intended to use sound in most of his performances, whether through vocalising from reading, tapping, moving or interacting with the sound equipment such as a microphone. We can also understand his ideas through the way he incorporated the sound. The transition period from modern Thai art to contemporary art, there was an increase in using real sound to create artworks, in the form of media art, video art, and performing art. The influence of Western art, including the avant-garde art group, conceptual art and postmodern art, came to Thailand's art society. Meanwhile, traditional Thai artists continued to prioritise art competitions and art trading. Thai artists began to question the Thai art industry about the influence of Thai art school and art competitions that largely determined the success of professional artists.



Figure 2. Kamol Phaosavasdi, *Song for the Dead* (1985); Installation and performance at Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art, Collection of Artist. Source: Artist's archives.

Early Contemporary Art and the Sound of Change

Montien Boonma, one of the pioneers of contemporary Thai art, played a crucial role in the development of Thai contemporary art, both on a national and international scale. Many academics consider his innovative use of materials and communication techniques, which

carry a sense of Southeast Asian identity, to be significant. If we thoroughly consider Boonma's works, it is found that his sound environment and ambient sound were his primary tools for conveying the concept of the art work. This can be compared to the use of olfactory experiences, which are widely accepted in the art world. *Lotus Sound*; 1992, terracotta bells, gilded wood was first exhibited at 'The 1st Asia Pacific Triennial.' This piece by Boonma paradoxically evokes sound through silence, using the viewers' recalling of the sound of large bells sizing 300 x 350 x 300 cm. Above this tenuous structure hangs gilded petals of the lotus flower. The artist aimed for the viewer to imagine the blooming process, evoking the sound of lotus blossoms by observing the terracotta bells installed in a curved wall-like formation, along with the blooming lotus petals. Boonma was an expert in using space, from in between, inside out to outside in. His concept was related to the truth of nature, spirituality, peace, emptiness, and enlightenment. The development of the sound sculpture *Rock Bell Garden* in 1994. It was made from bronze and stone in Tachikawa. This outdoor art installation consisted of a stack of brass bells arranged in a circle, surrounded by a circular passageway. The straight approach to and circular movement through the work resembled circumambulatory movement typical of Buddhist stupas. The viewer can use small stones to strike the bells and create sound. Boonma's main concept was self-contemplation, and introspection. The artwork *Rock Bell Garden* activates in two parts at the same time: imagining the sound from within the mind, and creating sound from interacting with the artwork. In 1995, Boonma developed the application of sound in the artwork, *Salas for the Mind* made with steel graphite accompanied by two separate audios. The work utilises the symbols of question marks and works with the concept of emptiness (being and nothingness). The artist installed small stereos with speakers inside the two pieces of artworks, editing the sounds of chanting, Hong-Kwan (a ritual to call back the spirit), the Pali language, and chantings in a northern dialect together. The artist edited the audio down to just the sounds of breathing and vocalisation, making it impossible to understand the content but allowing the viewer to perceive the feeling of breathing in and out (Nongbua, 2024). This artwork discusses philosophical Buddhist concepts about the view of life, ignorance, questioning what happens around us, uncertainty, and impermanence. The sound in Boonma's contemporary artwork is varied and flexible, with no fixed rules. However, he considers what is best suited for communicating the intended concept, creating a new experience for perceiving contemporary art.

Artist, musician, poet, and political activist, Vasan Sitthiket often creates artwork that criticise society, economics, religion, and frequently the Thai art industry. As seen in *How To Make A Good Art For Get Win Award*, a 17.13 min video made in 1993, Sitthiket criticised the 'National Art Exhibition' (from National Art Competition) during that time period. This competition had an impact on an individual's ability to become a professional artist and to later transition into the role of an art teacher at an educational institution. The artist recorded a video of himself giving lectures on how to win awards, as well as techniques for combining different artistic elements that the judges preferred to create a new artwork. This video features interesting sound techniques, such as the well-structured tone of voice of the lecture, the sound of tapping on the blackboard, the sound of chalk writing on the board, and the reading of the script at the end of the video. Although this artwork takes the form of video art, the viewer would still be able to understand the content and appreciate the sound aesthetics perfectly even if the visual component was removed. In 1995, the music album *Vasan Sitthiket and Ebola Record* featured 11 songs about the effect of the

political changes in 1992's *Bloody May/Black May*. Sitthiket criticises politics, failed states, corruption, and encourages the younger generation through the blues and folk music that he loves. His sound has a unique identity, characterised by the vocal, emphasis on heavy sounds, repeating song lyrics, and even some improvisation. Interestingly, the artist described his songwriting as follows: "I've written this set of songs over time for political activism, to be sung alongside my fellow countrymen during protest marches, whether passing by Sanam Luang, the parliament, or Government House, and Chutha Sucharit's Ruang Phueng shop in Chatuchak Park." From this statement, it can be understood that Sitthiket's work has the characteristics of provoking a sense of political participation, creating excitement, and interacting with the viewer.

In addition to these two artists, there are also live performances by artists that fall under the similar use of sound art. Reading for *Three Female Corpses*, a performance by the female artist, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, in 1997, is an example of using sound in artwork through reading. This work has made a significant impact on the Thai art scene. The objects that she used in her works for conveying artistic messages challenge the viewer's perceptions, ethical standards, traditional beliefs, and creates a sense of discomfort. The artist slowly read the traditional Thai literature piece, Inao (The Creation of Emotion in Inao of King Rama II) in front of 3 corpses. This piece of literature deals with themes of love, loss, desire and feminism (Fuhrmann, 2015:10-17). She read aloud in front of the corpses in a natural tone, with no sense of panic or worry. Her gentle and soothing voice allows the viewer to imagine the drama. Simultaneously, the viewer watches the video of lifeless bodies, evoking a parallel image between the present world and the afterlife. Those who know Rasdjarmrearnsook personally would recognise her ability to use idioms that require careful consideration from many perspectives, as well as her unique use of voice which has been refined over years of practice. Rasdjarmrearnsook had several other literary reading series, such as Lament in 2000, *Reading for Female Corpse* in 2001, *Thai Medley I, II, and III* in 2002. Around 2005, the artist shifted from passive reading to a simulated interactive format by teaching art and art history to the deceased, seen in her work *The Class* and the series *The Death Seminar*. The voice she used for narration, questioning, and repetition was gentle, friendly like a teacher would be when teaching a student. The way humans use their voices is actually a key tool in sound art. As we observe the various tones of voice used in the readings of manifestos by Futurism and Dadaism artists, or the act of speaking out to present ideas, we can discern how each tone present in the works of Sitthiket, Phaosavasdi, and Rasdjarmrearnsook contributes towards distinguishing the meaning of the work and conveying a range of emotions, including harshness, heaviness, depression, loss, hopelessness, and gender.



Figure 3. Montien Boonma, *Lotus Sound* (1992); Terracotta, gilded wood, 390 x 542 x 117 cm. (irreg.), Collection of Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art. Source: <https://collection.qagoma.qld.gov.au/objects/14328>.

Active Interactive 2000's

The interpretation of sound in artwork does not only consider the physical aspect; the process of breathing, focusing on the breath; inhaling and exhaling, is also related to the idea of using the human voice in contemporary art. Sutee Kunavichayanont is a contemporary artist known for his interactive artworks, such as *The Myth from the Rice Field (Breath Donation)* in 1998. In his piece *The White Elephant* from 1999, viewers were encouraged to participate by blowing air into human-shaped and elephant-shaped balloons. These balloons would only fully inflate with the help of the viewer's breath. The elephant balloon, symbolising the Thai nation, lays flat on the ground, which would only take on its full shape through the participation of the audiences. Considering this perspective of using sound, the audiences become the performer. The act of blowing air into the balloon, the sound of breathing, and the effort involved become significant parts of the concept behind creating the work. Similarly, the idea of giving, sharing, and donating breath to something is linked to Buddhist philosophy. In addition to using breath to directly impact the artwork,

there is also the exploration of the shapes created by breath, seen in *Into the Wind* in 2015 by Witaya Junma. Junma encourages the viewers to blow their breath into a wind speed measuring device. The artwork resembled a large blower, enabling the wind to blow soap bubbles according to the viewer's blowing. If the viewer blows for a longer duration, the bubbles will be larger. This is similar to when artists want to turn sound into a physical form or a group of sound sculptures. Even though the sound heard in this piece may be just a soft blowing sound or the sound of breathing, the artist reveals the invisible mass of sound, air, vibration, and waves into a shape that the viewer can experiment with by blowing air in various ways.

Pinaree Sanpitak is a female artist who communicates the issues of feminism, motherhood, the relationship between her and her son. Her *Flying Cubes* in 2011, at The Art Center Chulalongkorn University, was a large sound installation, consisting of origami paper, blown glass pieces, speakers, and motion sensors. It was considered an important artwork and has been experimented with in various aspects, including the materials used, installation of the work, software design for viewer interaction, and educational activities with visually impaired students. Hundreds of flying cubes origami pieces were hung from the ceiling, along with blown glass in the shape of a woman's breast. Sixteen speakers and motion sensors were installed. The sensor detected the movement of viewers as they entered the area. The music selected by the artist was linked to her emotions and relationships, including classical music and modified noise. As a large number of viewers entered the area at the same time, the sound would rise together, forming a new piece of music. This piece was the first time the artist experimented with using sound in her work, providing a new awareness in sound art through the synchronisation of sound with the movement of the viewers. Amrit Chusuwan, is another artist who often creates media art that challenges the viewer's perception of sound. Materialised was mentioned in the exhibition catalog 'From the Message to Media,' as "a piece of video art which used a simple technique of recording sound from an exhibition entrance and replaying it within the exhibition ." Chusuwan often uses sound recordings in a spatial sense to convey the significance of space in site-specific art and to explore people's interactions with space. 'In the Beat Solo Exhibition' at Tadu Thaiyarnyon Contemporary Art in 2014, the visuals and sound used were linked to the concepts of rhythm, life, and consciousness. While the viewers might not directly interact with the works in the exhibition, they still had the opportunity to examine the correlations between visuals and sound. For example, in the work *Drummer*, viewer would notice that the audible rhythm didn't synchronise with the presented visual image. The artist wanted this work to get the viewer to consider consciousness and contemplation in each moment.

Arnont Nongyao is an artist who has created sound art since studying at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University. Nongyao is interested in using sounds in various forms, such as music experiments, soundscapes, music, chance music, sound sculptures, sound performance art, etc. We can interpret the sound and noise in many of Nongyao's works from data sources, as well as from his creation of new sounds. His knowledge and musical skills enable him to convey meaning, evoke emotion, and facilitate interesting ways to communicate. *Mix Tape as Wall (The musician don't know the band)* in 2013, was Nongyao's work which allowed the viewer to participate in creating sound. Nongyao brought magnetic tape from various sources to create a high relief sculpture attached to the wall. The viewer

was able to use a head tape cassette pen, a device that the artist invented to create sound (referred to Nam June Paik's *Random Access Music» Exposition of Music – Electronic Television*, 1963). The interest in Nongyao's experiment lies in the unique way he creates awareness for the viewer about what sound art is. His work *UnStoberry (this is not stoberry)* in 2016, at The Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, also allowed the viewer to participate. When the sensor detected movement, the CCTV image in the exhibition would vibrate, and the real-time radio broadcast from the National Broadcasting Services of Thailand would be interrupted by the vibration. This caused the sound and the image of the news being broadcasted to constantly shake, making it difficult to understand the content that was shown.. The artist's experimentations with creating distortion in his works parallel the idea of distorting the truth. We can interpret the concept of the hidden agenda in this work by how it mirrors the way governments present facts through state-controlled news. *Chat...Naa (next life)* at 'Bangkok Art Biennale 2018,' was a continuation of creating interaction between the viewer and the work. Nongyao used the vibrations and projecting images of the transitioning hole, which resembled a channel leading to an unknown future. The viewer can interact with the work, in order to interpret the meaning of an uncertain life in the future.

Twilight, created in 2018, at Khao Khanab Nam's small bat cave Tha Pom Khlong Song Nam (Two Water Canal) and Noppaharat Thara Beach, at the '1st Thailand Biennale Krabi 2018,' was a sound art piece by Jedsada Tangtrakulwong, another site-specific piece that conveys the notions of meaning, perception, and the experience of sound (the sound installation). The artist recorded sounds from three sources: the sound of bats flying out of their nest in large numbers at twilight to find food, the ambient sounds of nature and living things in the area, and the sounds of long-tailed boats. Each sound was installed in a unique area, and would be triggered when the sensors detected the viewer's movement. When the sounds from different areas came together, they formed a new sound. The piece created a theatre of sounds, which the artist used to reflect on nature, humans, and technology.



Figure 4. Jedsada Tangtrakulwong, *Twilight* (2019); Sound art and sculpture on a long-tail boat, Collection of Artist. Source: <https://jedsadatree.blogspot.com/2019/02/>.

Musician Plays Around the Sound Art Installation

Since the 2010s, musicians, composers, and sound engineers have played an increasingly significant role in the art scene and sound art in Thailand. Groups of music students or music graduates are interested in this art form. They have a creative process that differs from contemporary artists (visual artists). Contemporary artists are more interested in meaning, behaviour, or aesthetic processes, while musicians have an understanding of the complexity in using instruments, sound quality, editing, and the scientific significance of sound. The two groups of artists have different thought processes, yet they share a common purpose: to create sound or noise for communication, whether it is art or not. In 2014, the 'Young Curatorial Workshop' by Japan Foundation together with BACC organised training for new curators. The judges of the project, Gridthiya Gaweewong and Jakapan Vilasineekul, were interested in projects that curate sound art works, since Thailand still lacks artists who explore this approach. This indicates that not only is there a lack of artists creating sound art works, but also a lack in curators who study sound art. Kamonpond Wongcharoenchai selected artists, Eyedropper Fill, Tokin Teekanun, Wannarit Pongprayoon, Vuttiiphong Mahasamut, Siwanut Boonsripornchai and Nattapol Rojjanarattanangkool under the exhibition name 'Turning Tweets Pulse.' Most of the works presented the concept of the meaning of life and hope from the past, present to the future through musical sounds, synthetic sounds, and natural sounds (Sangwachirapiban, 2015:77).

Maytee Noijinda, a musician from the rock band; Modern Dog, has an interest in creating synthetic sounds, as evidenced by their presence on many of his albums. Noijinda also has interests in creating art, specifically paintings and sculptures since the 2010s. He had not created any sound art because he wanted to study new processes that were different from what he did as a profession. Noijinda often performed synthetic music with Yuree Kensaku and other artists during the opening of art exhibitions. In 2019, *Thru Air On Key Strings*, marked his first solo exhibition, presenting an interpretation of sound art aesthetics. Most of the works focused on creating experimental sounds, using electronic sounds to communicate beyond auditory perception. It consisted of a reinterpretation of John Cage's best known work, 4.33. Noijinda's creative process presented experiments in many forms, such as setting up 25 speakers for each of the 25 notes, making note score music into images before inserting and creating new synthetic sounds, and using AR to help viewers play images and sounds. Another musician who plays a role in experimental music and literature, reflecting society, politics, and culture is Tul Waitoonkiat (Tul, Apartment Khunpa), a professional musician who is interested in art, culture, literature, and DJ. Waitoonkiat often participates in experimental music performances at art events or literature readings, with a variety of tones like the Fluxus group.

Sirasar Boonma, a music composer and one of the founders of the Hear & Found Group (<https://hearandfound.com>), together with Pansita Sasirawuth, believe that sound can stimulate imagination better than visual. The process of Boonma's work includes the recording of sound in the environment, taking the form of a sound documentary. His work that gained interest received support from the Japan Foundation, *Sound of the Soul* in 2022, explored the lives of 8 ethnic groups in Thailand by recording conversations, sounds in the environment, and music, conveying stories in 5 formats: 1) Local language greeting sounds 2) Audio from an Interview about the rights and the value of cultural diversity 3) Lifestyle sounds 4) Tribal music sounds from all over Thailand 5) Natural sounds. Sirasar's works use local sounds to discuss the lives, culture, and beliefs of ethnic groups whose existence

is often ignored, lacking the rights they should receive from the state. *Sound of the Soul* exhibition, was not only presented through sound, but also through images from documentary films, performances, and lighting in the exhibition enhance the overall experience. This collaboration of various media helped expand the scope of interpreting the value of ethnic groups.

Khetsin Chuchan, a new generation artist who recently graduated in music from abroad, is 1 of 8 artists selected from the 'EARLY YEARS PROJECT #7: A change In the paradigm,' 2022, presenting the work *Dusk Chorus* in 2023, which was a study on the sound of birds in Bangkok. The sounds of birds varied each day. If considered in detail, the sounds of the birds in each evening and night are never the same. The artist aimed to explore the same concept with humans, exploring the identity and behaviour of humans during the same period. He recorded the sounds of other human activities from evening to night, along with the sounds of nature, showing that both humans and nature have different activities during the same period. The work was presented in the form of a sound installation, featuring a designated seating area for the viewer and a simulated evening light. This setup encouraged viewers to imagine a parallel world between nature and humans.

Pakorn Musikaboonlert and Pachara Chirativat are the founders of Viveka + Vehement, both with backgrounds as sound engineers, sound designers and movie soundtrack composers. Musikaboonlert is particularly interested in how sound interacts with humans, experimenting with synthesising new sounds to create new meanings, and creating sounds to understand human life. The latest work of Musikaboonlert in the 'BANGKOK 242 exhibition, Fabric of Time: Bangkok City's Vibration' in 2024 (Music composition + sound manipulation), he studied and arranged the sounds that occur in Bangkok. Each area has its own distinct sound, reflecting the behaviour of its people, forming a cityscape of sound. Musikaboonlert studied the waves, vibrations, and atmosphere captured in the sounds he recorded from each area at different times. He then synthesised these sounds, creating sounds with new meanings related to the urban context. He captured the atmosphere of the area by taking a photograph, experimenting with the B_8 second speed shutter technique to reflect the passage of time. This series of sound installations and photographs represented a space that doesn't need only visual imagery for description. Instead, the incorporation of sound enables humans to evoke more memories and feelings of the space.

Conclusion

In the 1960s: artists in the modern Thai art era, especially painters, used art elements to create waves, vibrations, frequencies, pitches, tones, forms and colours to visualise sound in art. This aimed to stimulate the imagination of symbolic sound. Aside from the aforementioned artists Sompot Upa-in, Kiattisak Channonart and Thawan Duchanee, artists such as Inson Wongsam explored the sound of forest in his sculptures. In addition, Tawee Ratchaneekorn and Angkarn Kallayanapong often created paintings along with poems and literature. Chang Tang, a self-taught artist studied the approach of creating art by himself, presenting the concept of sound through repeatedly writing words text or word, resembling the echo of a sound. The works in the abstract expression group reflected the sound of criticism on society, politics, religion and way of life. The change in aesthetics of Thai art during that period was shaped by artists, academics, collectors and other relevant people who either graduated from abroad or studied trends from overseas. Additionally, there were new forms of art spaces available at that time, such as the Student Christian Center (SCC) Ratchathewi HQ and Silpakorn University.

A transition of contemporary era: artists often presented the use of sound in the form of media art, video art and performance. The pioneer group of mixed media art was Apinan Poshyananda, Chumpon Apisuk, Vasan Sitthiket and Kamol Phaosavasdi who changed the perspective of Thai art, opposing the traditions of Thai art and academic aesthetics, in aspects of form, education, expression and value of art (high/low art in Thai contextualisation). There was also a group of artists who expressed themselves in an experimental way, such as Performance art and Happening art. They chose the way of reading out loud to express themselves on specific issues, such as opposing political change (October 16, 1976 - Black May 1992), educational institutions, and culture. Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art played a significant role in facilitating this change. It was a place to cultivate and give artists an opportunity to show their art experiments, while art spaces under the supervision of the state and educational institutions still supported traditional art and traditional aesthetics. During this period of time, there were many artists, academics and art historians who graduated from abroad. Therefore, there was an expression of Western art, spreading the trend of postmodern art to Thai society. This led to the rapid development of Thai art, which was considered an evolution of Thai art and art history.

Opening the door to the world: the 1990s was a turning point of contemporary Thai art. Thai artists were increasingly invited to exhibit their works internationally, across Asia, Europe, Australia, and America to important festivals and institutions, such as Fukuoka Asia Art Museum, Asia Art Society, Queensland Art Gallery, 'Istanbul Biennial' and so on. Experimenting with new forms of art became very popular from the influence of Montien Boonma, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook Kamol Phaosavasdi and Vasan Sitthiket, progressive artists who were continuously invited to exhibit their works on the international art stage during that period. Artists adopted a combination of using sound in both physical and symbolic ways to create artwork. It was discovered that conceptual art had an influence on the creation of artwork. After the year 2000, artists who used sound in their works began to create more interaction with the audience (interactive aesthetics). Artists such as Amrit Chusuwan, Pinaree Sanpitak, Sutee Kunavichayanont, Jedsada Tangtrakulwong, Arnont Nongyao and Witaya Junma created synthetic sound, experimental sound and recordings of surrounding sound. They were interested in interpreting the meaning of sound, analysing the visual and sound aspects of *Musique concrète* (meaning 'concrete music') as well as experimenting with changing the way they communicated their art with the audience. Creating this form of art requires knowledge, skills and techniques from experts. Many artists began to work with experts in other fields, which led to the shift away from artist self-centredness.

In 2010s: artists with backgrounds in music conservatories began to use contemporary art to communicate their works of experimental music, synthetic sound and live performance. These artists could access quality tools and equipment. They had more knowledge and understanding of music theory and other resources than artists who studied art. Visual artists or art graduates prioritised the significance of meaning, the process of creating sound and aesthetics over aspects of sound quality, techniques and complexity of sound system. However, artists in the field of professional music often worked with experts in multidisciplinary fields. Maytee Noiinda, Sirasar Boonma, Pakorn Musikaboontert, Khetsin Chuchan, Kamonpond Wongcharoenchai, Tul Waitoonkiat are examples of a group of artists who played an important role in the future of sound art. They created works that were different from artists who studied art.

From data collection interviews with sound art artists and related personnel, it's evident that Thailand still lacks support in three areas: 1) Suitable spaces for presenting Sound Art, whether it's the size of the venue or the readiness of equipment. 2) Funding to support research and experimentation. 3) Human resources, specifically experts who collaborate with artists. These factors need to be addressed in order to further develop sound art in Thailand. Without proactive measures to support sound artists, Thailand risks stalling the progression of this unique artistic discipline. To move forward, collaboration between government agencies, private institutions, and independent artists is essential in establishing dedicated sound art spaces, funding initiatives, and skill development programs. These steps will not only sustain the existing sound art community but also inspire the next generation of artists to explore and innovate in this field.

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