

Chapter 2

Relevant Approaches, Theories, Documents and Research Works

The study on Mueang Fai System of Lanna aiming at attaining knowledge that can be implemented to the creation of contemporary art works is the research on approaches and theories from documents, text books, articles and other research works relevant to Mueang Fai System in Lanna. The contents are divided into 7 topics as follows:

1. Approaches Related to Mueang Fai Wisdom
2. Approaches Related to Contemporary Arts
3. Approaches Related to Structure of Visual Arts
4. Approaches Related to Nature-Blended Arts
5. Approach of Earthwork Art
6. Approaches Related to Shadow and Light in Arts
7. Relevant Research Papers or Works

2.1. Approaches and Theories Related to the Study

2.1.1. Approaches Related to Mueang Fai Wisdom

There have been many scholars having studied on and defined Mueang Fai or ancient irrigation systems in different ways, but in this paper, just some definitions that are relevant to this study are discussed. Vanpen Surarerks (1985) explained the significance of Mueang Fai systems in the northern part of Thailand that the irrigation arrangement can be most effective in agricultural management when it consists of 4 factors. The first factor is the terrain features of the area, which must be adjusted in order to facilitate water transfer and drainage throughout a year. The second factor is the physical features of Mueang Fai or irrigation system, which must be permanent and composed of ditch system to deliver and drain water, which is appropriate with the amount of water in the whole year through. The third factor is a Mueang Fai organization which must have the administration and management that are simple, not complicated. The organization should rely on Mueang Fai committee, justice, actions and focus on

collective benefits. Members of the organization should adhere to the rules with the possible least interference by governmental agencies. The fourth factor is water management. The government should have fixed and consistent policies in order to ensure effective water management. The governmental authorities should accept the rules and regulations as the members and the administrative members of the organization. There should be measures to boost the morale of all the people who dedicate themselves to water management (Vanpen Surarerks, 1985: A – B).

Concerning the congregation of communities in a Mueang Fai system, Uraiwan Tankimyong (1985) stated that the public organization in a Mueang Fai irrigation system is the congregation of agricultural workers and farmers on the bases of their mutual relations as users of water from the same source with leaders who have different levels of control and powers working together to sustain the system with the adherence to different criteria for different types of agricultural works and rights to own the land. For communities in a highland, a Mueang Fai organization has a simple structure, and the roles of the leaders and members are not much different from one another's. However, for communities on a plain, the organization tends to be more complicated in terms of labour force and resources mobilization system, and the categorization of activities (Uraiwan Tankimyong, 1985: 156 – 193). In spite of societal and economic changes, Mueang Fai wisdom still remains with the agricultural way of life. Even though there is the governmental intervention to water management, Mueang Fai can be adjusted and sustain the water management roles to a certain extent. Uraiwan Tankimyong (1985) explained that Mueang Fai wisdom can adjust and sustain until the present time because of 9 factors as follows.

The first factor is the creation of balance between rights and responsibilities. A Mueang Fai organization must have a system to fairly distribute benefits all members in a way that balances the benefits for each member with his/her responsibilities towards Mueang Fai organization. The distribution of rights and responsibilities mitigates the conflicts among members of the Mueang Fai organization.

The second factor is labour management that concurs with the production system. Activities designed by Mueang Fai organization are prepared to be concurrent to the agricultural activities of members so that members can prepare enough household

labour forces for both household activities and activities of Mueang Fai organization, the operations of the organization can be effective, and strong bonds among members can be tightened.

The third factor is the division of sub-groups in different sizes and with different components, which agree to physical structure and societal features of the Mueang Fai organization. The organization of labour forces in such a flexible way leads to unity and homogeneity of the organization.

The fourth factor is the emphasis on the building of balance between the group of users at the beginning point of the irrigation system and the group of those at the ending point of the irrigation system through the mechanism of water allocation and the mutual agreements between the two groups, which lower the magnitude of the conflict between the two groups. Whenever there is a conflict between the two groups, that conflict can be dissolved easily.

The fifth factor is the leader of the Mueang Fai organization, elected by members, who receives acceptance and collaborations from members, and makes the operation of the organization effective.

The sixth factor is the continuous learning and the dissemination of Mueang Fai irrigation-related knowledge from people of one generation to those of another in the consistent and continuous manner.

The seventh factor is the foundation on the self-reliance principles of the local communities, including the use of tools and techniques that are simple and suitable to the local environs.

The eighth factor is the planning and development of the irrigation systems of the communities for effectively and continuously delivering water to rice fields by adjusting the processes in order to solve problems that emerge from the consistent changes in the environs and production systems. System planning and development are based on the participation in the decision making process by all members, which makes the organization become democratic and accepted by all members.

The ninth factor is the collaboration of all members of the Mueang Fai organization in setting out rules and regulations of the organization to be implemented to the irrigation for the communities. The enforcement of rules and regulations are

accepted and adhered to by all members (Uraiwan Tankimyong, 1995 cited in Yot Santasombat, 1999: 151 – 152).

Concerning the Mueang Fai system in the society of the Northern Thai, Yot Santasombat (1994) proposed that a Mueang Fai is the culture that is related to water use which has been proved for many centuries. Mueang Fai is life, water system, power system, benefit sharing system, thinking system and idea that covers all the aspects of the social life. In addition, Mueang Fai is also a water management method that has multiple unique attributes. The first attribute is that Mueang Fai is a water management system that agrees to the nature and promotes the inter-relations among human beings, communities and the nature. The management of a Mueang Fai begins with the conservation of a forest that is the source of water in order to ensure the sustainability of water through the rules and regulations related to the management of forest and designated Mueang Fai, which are accepted by all the related communities.

The second attribute is that Mueang Fai is the water management system that emphasizes on justice and survival of all agricultural workers by creating the water allocation system that is fair for all upstream and downstream users. Thus, a Mueang Fai can ensure the stability of the production and the communities by protecting the weak and the poor in communities. Since all members of a community must work together to repair Mueang Fai, all community members have unity and strong bonds with one another. Mueang Fai is also a system that emphasizes on cultural sustainability which is created by the decentralization of power and the distribution of rights and benefits, not the rights to use and to deprive benefits from one another. Members of the Mueang Fai committee are elected by community members, and have the predetermined work terms. After the work term of a committee is over, the committee will be reviewed and examined by the community. Thus, this water system management can be viewed to incorporate the mechanism of consistent power decentralization, review and switching, and can be regarded to be a truly democratic system (Yot Santasombat, 1994: 77 – 78).

In addition, Mueang Fai system is related to the belief in spirits of forests and water. It is the wisdom related to nature and environment that suggests that human beings and the nature can coexist together and inter-dependent on each other. This

concept is a valuable fundamental idea of the society and culture that is precisely reflected through the ‘Ideal of Community Forest’ which is the conservation of forest on the bases of beliefs such as the belief in the sacred spirit of water guardian. Such beliefs symbolize the power of forest conservation and the foundation of the collaborations of communities to conserve their forests.

In the North of Thailand, there are thousands of forests that are conserved through the concept of community forest. Such forests are regarded to be jointly owned by all community members, not the government or outsiders. Therefore, community members are conscious in their basic rights to develop norms, traditions, practices and rules related to the administration, management and use of forests that have existed for several generations.

Community forests have long histories and widely spread in areas off communities in the northern part of Thailand. Members of each community may call their forest with different terms in accordance with their ethnics, or the utilizations or the locations of the forests such as ‘Pa Ton Nam (Forest at the Water Source)’ and ‘Pa Na Mu (Forest at the Front of Community)’. Community forest is a type of the locals’ traditional forest conservation that is closely linked to the culture of the production for living in the agricultural sector, with norms, traditions and beliefs in sacred deities being the foundations for the management of the system of the relations among human beings, communities and natural resources.

The beliefs in sacred spirits in forests lead to the traditions whereby forests are used with respect and gratitude to the forests which are believed to be the dwellings of sacred deities, as well as beliefs related to the sacredness of forests which can be generally seen in all ethnic groups in the upper northern part of Thailand such as the belief in Apamuhi or the sacred forest of Lisu people, the belief in Dong Seng Forest of Hmong people and the belief in the water guardian spirits who guard the water source forests of northern people in the city and S’gaw Karen people. Such beliefs have been evolved into the foundations of the moral powers related to the management and utilization of natural resources, which are directly linked to the forms of agricultural production processes. Furthermore, the main terrain feature of the North of Thailand is mountainous; hence, agricultural areas and farmlands are small plains in valleys; and

agricultural workers and farmers have to rely on water control and management for productivity. The contexts of such ecological environs make communities in the North of Thailand establish a Mueang Fai organization to manage water. Such an organization has become a medium that has the moral significance and implication from the conservation of the water source forests to the building of the security of the livings of community members. The importance of water to the production processes of a community leads to the emergence of power-related ideal for managing the relations between communities and water source forests in the form of the belief in water guardian spirits (Phi Khon Nam). Some communities hold the ceremony to worship the water guardian spirits every year in order to show their gratitude to the water guardian spirits who have taken care of water source forests and grant to communities the water for agricultural production process. All the aforementioned factors have turned a Mueang Fai organization the responsibilities of which are to guard and cherish water source forests into community organization that is strong and has political negotiation power in a high level.

Such aforementioned rites and beliefs have been building the moral bonds and inter-dependence between communities and forests for several generations until such bonds are precisely reflected in the form of the cultural value system such as the tradition of S' gaw Karen people whereby the umbilical cord and placenta of a newly born baby is wrapped by a piece of cloth, put in a bamboo cylinder and placed on a big tree in the area between the forest and the village (Yot Santasombat, 1999: 153 – 154).

Furthermore, Yot Santasombat (1999) also proposed the issue of the restoration of traditional norms of communities in order to urge the members of communities to have conscious and participation, such as the rite to celebrate water guardian spirits (Phi Khon Nam) of people in Mae Sariang District, Mae Hong Son Province, the rite to bless the river by Nan Lover Group and the invention of new traditions such as the forest and tree ordination and the tree merit making. Such activities build the conscious of forest conservation and linkage to the utilization of earth and soil resources, which have two-way effects on water. In accordance with the opinion of Yot Santasombat, Mueang Fai system is worthwhile for the implementation of domestic

wisdoms in order to be agreeable to the contexts of the current era. Mueang Fais are closely related to the forest conservation by communities (Yot Santasombat, 1999: 15).

2.2 Concept of Contemporary Art

The creation of contemporary art works can be defined in different ways. In a book entitled 'Contemporary Art in Thailand', Silpa Bhirasri (1968) explained the concept of contemporary art that 'art' is meaningless although we do not understand or accept it, and such a definition applies to architectural works and paintings that are currently created for temples. Art is vital for human minds; thus, the expression of people in contemporary era is different from that of people in the past, and that is contemporary art.

Artists are more sensitive than other people in general. Therefore, artists are influenced by environs. At present, the environs, especially those in big cities are different from those in the past. Since artists are influenced by environs that are different from those in the past, contemporary art works have to be different from those in the past without the regard to the direct influences from foreign countries.

In general, people who strictly adhere to traditional art will not easily accept new types of art. This is an incomprehensible feeling. This feeling is going to fade away by dint of the preference to aestheticism which is caused from current environs, and the artists' feelings are the same. In order to reduce the anxiety, it must be understood that if Thai people (or artists from different ethnic group) do not plagiarize works by foreign artists, they can express any new feeling. This new style is an identity of an ethnic group, which incorporates natural feelings, weather, religions, feelings learnt from ancestors and other factors (Wibun Lisuwan, 2003: 392 – 393).

In a book entitled 'Comprehension in Art' book, N. Na Paknam (2003) explained that contemporary art is art at a place, which receives artistic influences from another place, but contemporary must be based on the prosperity of art at a place or the prevalence of a center of art. For instance, Bayon Art of the Capital of Khmer People in Cambodia, which had been the most prevalent kingdom in Southeast Asian in 18th Buddhist Century, spread to neighbouring kingdoms such as Siamese Kingdom. Therefore, Bayon art became the contemporary art of Siam. Likewise, artists around the

world have applied the style of cubism to paintings; hence, cubism is temporary art. In conclusion, contemporary art is the art that receives artistic and cultural influences from other nations through the art of the host nation. The contemporariness enables one to know the age of a contemporary art work.

At present, contemporary art is the fruit of the transformation of art from abstract works to art works that rapidly transform and vary with several factors. For instance, the advancement of scientific technologies leads to various techniques of art and many contemporary arts have evolved throughout the world. In addition, national arts that are developed through means of modern art can also be regarded as contemporary ones (Prayun Uluchada, 2003: 97).

In the book entitled 'Contemporary Art', Wirun Tangcharoen (1984) stated that arts that are in the same period of time and are related to concepts that are related to one another or take place in the same era are contemporary arts; however, it cannot be clearly indicated which exact era such arts are in. Thus, the mention of contemporary arts is the broad notion of arts; but the term 'contemporary art' must be used together with the term 'modern art'. These two words cannot be separated from each other. Modern art has the meaning that is similar to that of contemporary art because these two styles of art emphasize on the transformation of arts in the past to the present contents and concepts with the main focus on the western origins (Wirun Tangcharoen, 1984: 89).

In the 'Archive of Contemporary Art' book, Wibun Lisuwan (1995) noted that contemporary arts in the modern time have taken place within 25 years before only. Such arts are open wide and do not have limitations in terms of forms, styles and techniques for the expression of attitudes. Visual arts are categorized into 2 types, which are 2 dimensional arts and 3 dimensional arts rather than the categorization by types, such as paintings, architecture, printed images and mixed media, as in the past because the concepts of art creators nowadays are greatly advanced and widely open. There have been many arts with innovative concepts. Some arts have been popular for a short period of time before declining (Wibun Lisuwan, 1995: 39 – 46).

In the 'From Old Siam to Modern Thailand' book, Suthi Khunawichayanon (2003) suggested that the term 'contemporary art' is neutral, so it is widely used with

the connotation of arts that are newer and more advanced than, and clearly separated from modern art. The meanings of contemporary arts can be classified into 2 types as follows.

1. The broad meaning is the direct implication of the term ‘contemporary’ depending on the governing criteria, for instances, contemporary contents that are reflected or expressed, contemporary art types or contemporary era such as the case where the artists who create art works are still alive but the works have no contemporariness at all. Such art works are regarded as contemporary ones. Likewise, arts in Ayutthaya period were also contemporary ones in Ayutthaya era.
2. The narrow meaning is specific. This means each individual has his/her own brief understanding what contemporary art is in his/her own mindset. However, arts have to be contemporary with that individual. It can be said that, in the light of this meaning, the term ‘contemporary art’ is used in order to avoid the use of the term ‘modern art’ or ‘modernism’. It can be said that the meaning of contemporary art is different from that of modern art but the two terms may share some similarities in accordance with the understanding of each individual. In other words, the term ‘contemporary art;’ is used for addressing art that is against the ‘post-modernism’. Nevertheless, it also cannot be exactly stated that contemporary art is included in ‘modernism’. Therefore, contemporary arts may be or may not be post-modern arts whilst when one mentions post-modern arts, one may understand that such arts are contemporary ones.

An art type can or cannot be regarded as a contemporary one depending on each individual who views it, what components are focused on and what the standards of that individual are. For example, a foreigner who views a newly created traditional painting the creator (artist) of which is still alive as a modern art work, not a

contemporary one, but will refer to arts in general as contemporary ones (Suthi Khunawichayanon, 2003: 140 – 141).

2.3 Concept of Structure of Visual Art

The creation of visual art works can be considered with the structure of visual art, which Suchat Thaotong (1993) proposed to have 5 components, namely, balance, proportion, harmony, rhythm and dominance of art works. However, this is no fixed rule that should always be followed because the arrangement and creation of an art work are solutions to problems, which are adjustable in order to create the harmony of the work in the possibly highest level.

Balance

Balance is equivalent to equilibrium and repose meaning equality or the weighing to ensure equality. Such equality may not be truly equal, but in human perceptions, it means the arrangement of compositions of an art work to be balance, still or sustainable. Considering bodies of men and women, one will realize that the body has balance because the right side and left side of a body are the same, which agrees to the law of balance. It is also apparent that most objects in the nature have right side and left side that are balanced with each other in a systematic manner. Kirati Bunchuea, writing an article about beauty in the nature, explained that balance does not mean symmetry. For instance, the arrangement of leaves on both sides is not symmetric but puts similar weights on both sides. Balance can be widely seen in the nature such as a case where a person walking across a wood plank over a river trying to balance himself. Balance can be categorized into 2 types as follows.

1. Formal or Symmetrical Balance: The balance of this type can be easily noticed in the nature, such as the balance of the right and left sides of a human face, and can be found in a great number of art objects such as pagodas, chapels and stupas. The balance of two sides creates the feeling of stability, rigidity and formality.

2. Informal or Asymmetrical Balance: In the balance of this type, the right side and the left side of an object are different from each other but they can

balance through the arrangement that does not adhere to the rules but is adherent to the principles of arrangement as follows:

1. Central Balance,
2. Axial Balance,
3. Linear Balance,
4. Spatial Balance, and
5. Dynamic Balance.

In the asymmetric balance, the difference between the two sides is well- proportioned in order to create the feelings of stability, and rapid and strong movement. The balance of this type can be classified into 2 sub-groups as follows.

(2.1) The balance where forms and shapes on two sides are different but the weights are similar like a person who uses a carrying stick with differently shaped containers on both ends, who can balance the stick. This principle is applicable to art works such as drawings and paintings. An artist may draw a picture of a natural view by adding a small hut on one corner and adding a tree in the same size as the hut in the opposite corner in order to balance the picture.

(2.2) The balance where forms, spaces and weights on both sides are not equivalent to each other, like a carrying stick with different weights on both ends the balancing point of which is shifted to the heavier side.

Proportion

Proportion means the size dimension of length by height by dept, which is the average rate of each proportion in a visual art work that must match with the proportion of a rectangle. Originally, the commonly used proportion has been 3:4 which means 3 portions of width by 4 portions of length. This is a beautiful and balance proportion from the proportion of the front scene of the Parthenon in Greece.

Proportion is the relation among all compositions of a form. If the relation among compositions of a form is balance, the entire form will look beautiful. The

proportion can be a 2D or 3D geometric form or fixed form. The proportion can be classified into 2 types as follows.

1. The proportion that is perfect by itself is a form the components of which are balance with one another in the perfect manner. Such perfection is independent and unrelated to any other thing. Examples of this perfection are modern sculptures and architectures such as works Constantin Brancusi in the set entitled 'Chickens and Birds in the Air' and works by Watruba, an Austrian architect, such as Holy Trinity Cathedral which is inspired with architectural works in cubism. This cathedral is a big concrete structure with free form like it is a pile of cubic tubes that are placed upon one another like a sculpture.

2. The proportion that is perfect when composited with other things is a form that is created from the relations of all components in an object and created from the comparison with other objects or forms. The object itself does not have independent perfection because it has to be composited with other objects or forms. For example, in an object, we see its width and length (2D) or width by length by depth (3D) in order to know its proportion. When that object is placed at a place or in another object that has its own proportion, we will compare the two objects in order to understand the proportion from the comparison. For instance, when a chair that has perfect proportion among its width, length and height is placed in different rooms with different proportions will have different proportions with those rooms.

Determination of Proportion

Apart from compositions in a picture, to draw a picture must consider the space of the frame to see whether it is well proportionate with the picture or not. Thus, to determine the proportion, artists must answer the following questions.

1. How can we make the proportion interesting?
2. How can we create beautiful dimensions and forms?
3. How can we organize the dimensions into categories and in a ratio?

Rules of proportion cannot be interpreted into a fixed formula. An artist has a task to consider what size looks beautiful and appropriate to each work of each type. To be good at considering such matters, one must rely on experiences and his part works.

In order to create the as many compositions as possible, the artist has to design many compositions and select the best one that has beautiful proportion and interval.

Harmony

Harmony is the synchronization of all the essential bases that are mixed together, without giving the discord feeling, as a structure of a visual art style that is important and widely used in creating the art works that have unity with one another.

Harmony must be kept in moderate levels because if the level of harmony is too high, a work will look less interesting or more boring. On the other hand, if the level of harmony in a work is too low, the overall look of the work will look strange. The most appropriate way is to create the harmony in the major part of a picture and the contrast in the minor ones. For example, an artist may use colors that are agreeable to one another to color most parts of a picture and use contrast colors in small parts of the same picture. The perfection in visual art cannot be exactly measured with figures, but it is the agreement and harmony from the use of similar compositions such as ones with similar forms or similar colors to create the following attributes:

1. Harmony of Size;
2. Harmony of Form and Shape;
3. Harmony of Line;
4. Harmony of Texture; and
5. Harmony of Colour.

Rhythm

Rhythm means the intervals within relations among lines, shapes, weights and colours. Rhythm that is consistent and continuous will make a work stand out and solve the problems related to the repetition of the image. We can notice a rhythm from the continuity in the nature such as the movement of waves in the sea that go up and down continuously in their rhythm and the continuous rhythm in performance art that show the movements of arms, hands, bodies and feet that synchronize with the rhythm of music in the perfect manner. The significant effects of rhythm to visual art works are as follows.

1. Rhythm of lines, colours, light and shadows makes a visual art work out-standing and easily comprehensible.
2. Good rhythm creates interestingness and liveliness and can sometimes reflect the movements and feeling expression.
3. Repetitive rhythm creates harmony such as the rhythmic and repetitive placement of the similar decorative items in a room, which makes the decorative style look beautiful.

Arrangement of Rhythm

Arrangement of Rhythm is a rule that can be implemented in order to solve the problem of repetition or to make the composition of a picture look lively and interesting. The arrangement of rhythm is done in 2 ways as follows.

1. Repetitive Rhythm is the use of shapes, forms, colours and lines repetitively until they form a beautiful pattern such as Thai motifs that consist of repetitive forms and lines.
2. Progressive and Continuous Rhythm is the increase of lines, dark and light colours and sizes in the continuous manner such as to arrange from small sizes to bigger ones. This kind of rhythm can be seen in the nature such as the rhythm of waves that run towards to the shore where they, from huge waves, become smaller, and dissolve. Likewise, this kind of rhythm can be seen in visual art works such as in a picture of a clump of big and small trees aligned in the justified interval, which look disciplined and creates depth of the picture.

Dominance

Dominance of art works is created from the emphasis on or support for certain bases of arts to be more outstanding than others. Such emphasis on the highlight in a visual art work is tremendously vital because it attract people's attention and makes the work interesting. This concept can also be seen in daily life, such as when one wants to highlight something in one's speech, one will raise one's voice. Also, an important

statement in a message may be highlighted with bold alphabets, big sized alphabets or an underline in order that it will stand out. All the aforementioned cases are examples of the emphases.

Highlighting the Focal Point in Visual Art Works

Highlighting of a focal point is always applied to the creation of visual art works such as paintings, sculptures and carving, by using different colours or creating the highlighted spots to stand out such as to have vivid colours or to be in big size. However, such emphasis must be concurrent to the objectives and the works must be displayed in the way that they can be easily looked at and understood. Furthermore, they have to look beautiful. Thus, the artist must think how much a spot should be emphasized on and what place in a frame that the focal spot should be placed in order to make the entire work beautiful and interesting. There are many ways to highlight a focal point as follows.

1. The emphasis with certain outstanding colours is to colour the overall picture with colors that agreeable or harmonious with one another but the highlighted spot is coloured with different colors that stand out.
2. The emphasis with lines, forms and sizes is to use the fundamental components of art to highlight the focal point such as to use most lines in a picture to lead eyesight to the focal point, to use forms that highlight the focal point or to make the highlighted components bigger than the rest. One of the best specimens of this technique is the 'Last Supper' painting by one of the greatest artists of the world Leonardo Da Vinci.
3. The emphasis with decoration is to decorate the highlighted spot to be beautiful such as the decoration of the entrance gate to a house or the decoration on the face.
4. The emphasis with appropriate space is to set space around the highlighted spot to be flat, neat and noticeable. Thus, appropriate spacing is important because it highlight an object to be outstanding. The size of space varies depending on the materials

used. For instance, the more a spot is to be highlighted the more space around the spot there is. Thus, the 5 structures of visual art are principles applied to the creation of visual art works in different types in order to create effectiveness or beauty and appropriateness. Such principles are directions for practices on the basis of probability. Artists can always adjust their works in order to suit certain attributes and activities (Suchat Thaonthong, 1993: 67 – 80).

2.4 Environment Art Approach

The style of environment art has been precise until it has become a branch of contemporary art after 1960. One of the main artists who have introduced the style of environment art is Allan Caprow who was a significant leader of the happening art style, who initiated environment art style also. Happening art and environment art are much similar to each other but environment art emphasizes on the use of wide space in order to generate clear 3D perspectives and scenes that allow the installation of several art objects in the space in order to turn audiences into coordinators or participants in the creation of works, using movement, visions, audibility, touch or even smells to trigger olfactory sense, with the purpose to enable the works to trick or force audiences to participate in events like a game (Kamchorn Soonbhongsri, 2011: 644).

2.5 Approach Earth Work or Land Art

Approach of earth work or land art is similar to environment art in term of the use of nature as parts of a work. However, the differences are in terms of concepts and ideals. Environment art emphasizes on the expression of emotions with excitement, joyful and sarcasm, and the audiences' participation to the creation of games. On the other hand, earth work or land art has a more extensive scope for the creation of works with the ideal of minimal art that does not focus on shapes and forms that have details but focuses only on disenchantment, and avoids the influences from technologies of industrial culture in order to get close to the originally natural state. Artists in this style create their works in wide space. Instead of allowing environment to occupy the space,

artists use almost the entire space as parts of their art works. Their expressions are to create objects that arouse audiences' feelings of fascination. Examples of works in this style are works in 'Box in a Hole' project by Saul Levitt, 'Mile Long Drawing' project by Walter De Maria, which consists of two white straight lines aligned parallel to each other to the horizon of Nevada Desert, and 'Wrapped Coast' project by Christo and Jeanne-Claude in 1968, which is a project by which a sheet of fabric was used for wrapping a rocky mountain along the southeastern coast of Sydney for the distance of 56 kilometers. The fabric had aroused the audiences' feelings very well. The bright sunlight over the soft and unstable surface of the fabric made the coast look different because the opaque filament created the unfamiliar scene of the coast (Michael Lilac, 2007: 32).



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Figure 2.1 Christo and Jeanne-Claude's Work, "Wrapped Coast" (1968)

Technique: Coverage with Synthetic Fabric,

Size: 92,900 Sq. Km., Length: 56 Kilometers

2.6 Concept of Light and Shadow in Art Works

The creation of works by Preecha Thaothong (1979), which are paintings in the 'Forms of Light on Shadow Space' project has suggested the concept and discovery on 'light and shadow' that the phenomenon of light and shadow will be complete when it has 3 factors, which are, the light from its origin (sun), an opaque medium (wall or any object that blocks the lights creating shadows) and object on which the light is on (a screen to receive both light and shadows such as a wall of a temple where the phenomenon of light and shadow is). All the 3 factors are inter-related and inter-dependent to one another as causes – effects. None of the three can be missing. In his work, the artist assumes that the form of light on the temple wall is a floating form whilst the dark shadow on the wall represents the space. The forms of light and the spaces of shadows are the positive and negative meanings. The forms of light that are occupying less space in the frame trick audiences to imagine that the forms of light are freely floating on the dark endless space. However, both light and shadows in different directions, areas and amounts are the results from light from the origin, opaque objects and screens. Works of light and shadow create the feelings of calmness and concentration (Preecha Thaothong, 1979: 11 –12).

ลิขสิทธิ์มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่
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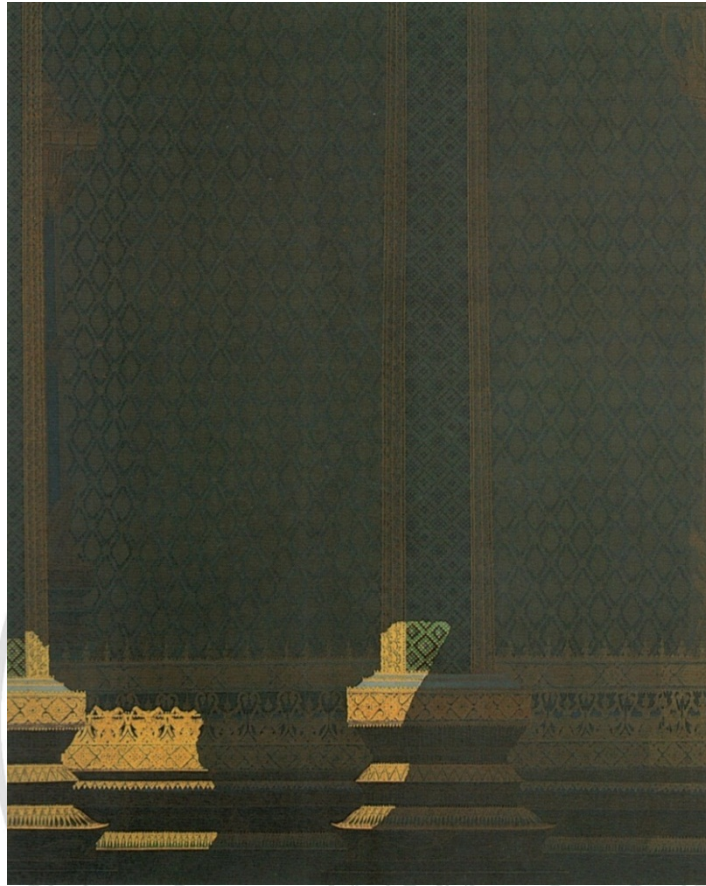


Figure 2.2

Preecha

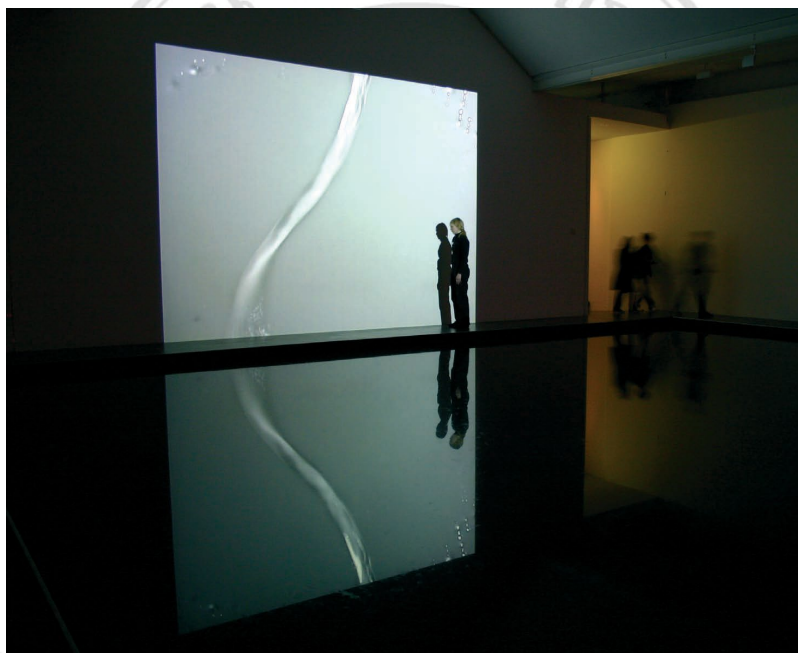
Thaothong 's Work, "Forms of Light on Shadow Space 1" (1979) Technique:
Acrylic Colour on Canvas,

Dimension: Length 170 CM × Width 140 CM.

Another approach is to use water as the content for the presentation of issues related to water and its movement through the work by Elizabeth Ogilvie in the "Bodies of Water" project, which was displayed in a gallery from 2005 to 2006 in England. The artist designed the exhibition room to contain water inside the building and built a water tub in the room that is installed with a video screen. Water and lights were controlled with an electronic system. Water was used as a medium. Audiences would experience the dripping of water into the tub and the light projected as shadows on walls of the room. Video media were also used with the light and shadows on the walls. Audiences could walk around the tub while listening to the live music and enjoying the contents on

the walls. Water dropped into the tub and light tricked audiences to imagine on the meanings of the work in several dimensions.

This work by Elizabeth Ogilvie presents the sketching from water to create new experiences for audiences from their observation on water that had movements and reflections like ideas of people that vary depending on their experiences. The work allowed the audiences to stay in unfamiliar environs that were caused from time and place. The movements of water in this work gave to audiences new experiences from the survey on the most valuable resource of human lives (Elizabeth Ogilvie, 2005: 32 – 35).



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Figure 2.3 Elizabeth Ogilvie’s Work: “Bodies of Water” (2005)
Installation of PVC and Wood Tub, Technique: Water, Light and Video Control with
Electronic System Dimension: 5 M. Height × 23.5 M. × Length 15.5 M. Width



Figure 2.4 Elizabeth Ogilvie’s Work: “Bodies of Water” (2005)
Installation of PVC and Wood Tub, Technique: Water, Light and Video Control with
Electronic System Dimension: 5 M. Height × 23.5 M. × Length 15.5 M. Width

In addition, there is the presentation of issues that are related to environment and society in the ‘Pa Ton Nam: Road Show Artist to the Origin of Water to Promote Conservation and Rehabilitation of Forests in the North of Thailand’ project which was

inspired with the draught of the forest for 2 years or during 1992 and 1993 in the North of Thailand. That draught affected agricultural areas and water users. However, in 1994, there were floods over residential and agricultural areas of the locals, causing a great deal of damage and loss and some people perished because of the flood. Thus, artists, academics and people working on conservation, through the coordination by Social Research Institute and the Northern Development Foundation (NDF), gathered together to hold the road show project to survey and study on the problems related to the communities around the forests that are the origins of water with the aim to apply domestic wisdoms to rehabilitate forests that are the sources of water. Artist, academics and university students, 38 in total, worked together to create paintings and mixed media art works that presented the issues of water in the North of Thailand in order to reflect the true incident that had took place to forests and communities. The worked aimed at creating the awareness of problems, which would lead to the work to solve problems by communities and the promotion of water conservation in the North of Thailand. Artists worked by discussing with the locals the issues related to forests, changes in the nature and the socialization process for applying domestic wisdoms to promoting the co-existence between communities and forests, which led to the creation of paintings, sculptures and mixed media art works in the ‘Humans and Forests’ Exhibition, which aimed to make the audiences and urban people who used resources from forests and water aware of the problems related to the use of water and forests (Forest Loving Community Fund, Northern Development Foundation 1996: 31 – 39).

2.7 Related Documents and Research Works

The studies on the Mueang Fai wisdom and water management in the past had reflected many issues related to the societal changes in the North of Thailand through the water user organizations and system of commercial agriculture. Vanpen Surarerks (1980), having studied on the problems and solutions to disputes related to water management and water use for agricultural purposes based on governmental and local irrigation systems, discovered that the governmental irrigation system is big and occupies several types of terrains, which led to the problems related to the errors in the irrigation structure and the difficulties for the management of water delivery. In addition, the in-charge authorities had insufficient public relations works and lacked of

attention and justice. Consequently, there was no trust between the authorities and water users. On the contrary, a local irrigation system of Mueang Fai is small and has the structure of the organization that is simple and effective in water management, which includes public relations works, coordination, maintenance and justice because there are regulations, rules and agreements among all members. Thus, members trust leaders and committees selected to work on water management. The relationships among members who are water users in a Mueang Fai system are positive and lacking of disputes. Problems can be easily solved because of the societal foundation by which all members are inter-dependent (Vanpen Surarerks, 1980: A – B).

Furthermore, Vanpen Surarerks (1985), having studied in the evolution and the management of irrigation systems in the North of Thailand, discovered that there are 3 factors that have affected the water management by a Mueang Fai organization, which are, the population growth that has led to the expansion of land use and irrigation system, which eventually leads to the complexity in a Mueng Fai organization, the economic growth that has affected the communities and led to the intervention into the management of water resource by the state, and the changes in policies and taxation, which have led to the acceleration of agricultural production for commercial purposes and turned ancient style irrigation systems into new ones that are permanent and do not require regular maintenance (Vanpen Surarerks, 1985: A – B).

Meanwhile, Porntip Tianteerawit (2000) had studied on ‘Irrigation Systems: Water Management by Communities’ with the focus on 4 irrigation systems in Chiang Mai Province, namely, Fai Phaya Kham, Fai Nong Pla Man, Mueang E-ka and Mueang Chao Dara Rasami, and found out that the overall Mueang Fai system agrees with the production and has been effective for a long period of time. The shortage of labours in agricultural fields and the expansion of the governmental irrigation system affected local irrigation systems. Nevertheless, the water management, rules, regulations and agreements on Mueang Fai are good models for the water management by small groups. Mueang Fai is a domestic wisdom that has been conserved by communities. Farmers can use water to the fullest extent during the harvest season. The water management committee runs water management and schedule the days for delivering water into agricultural fields. Members participate in the maintenance of Mueang Fai and have to

comply with rules and regulations related to water use. However, there is an issue about the water retention by private sector because rules and regulations of a Mueang Fai cannot be applied to non-member individuals or organizations (Porntip Tianteerawit, 2000, 39 – 42).

The complication of water use problems tends to rise as years pass by. Local communities face with higher and higher levels of intervention into their water use by the government and private sector, as mentioned in a research work by Phonphilai Loetwicha and Aroonrut Wichienkeo (2003) on ‘Communities and Villages in Khan River Basin’, which focused on additional issues related to Mueang Fai systems and agriculture under the societal changes in villages in Khan River Basin. It was discovered that communities could manage their bodies of knowledge which they had inherited from their fore-runners, and could be categorized into 7 systems, namely, a family and relative system, a household system, a temple and temple network system, a Mueang Fai system, a marketplace system, Poi Luang (ceremony) system, and a mourning system. All the aforementioned systems are bodies of knowledge that are based on history and culture of each community, capitalism system and state system that have directions that make bodies of knowledge and knowledge management collapse (Phonphilai Loetwicha and Aroonrut Wichienkeo, 2003: 252 – 278).

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