

Som Supaparinya: *MO NUM EN TS*

The Jim Thompson Art Center



Som Supaparinya, *mo num en ts* (still), 2025. Video installation, dimension variable. Courtesy of the artist.

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Som Supaparinya
MO NUM EN TS

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Jim Thompson Art Center proudly presents *MO NUM EN TS*, a solo exhibition by Chiang Mai-based artist **Som Supaparinya**, curated by **Gridthiya Gaweeewong**. This exhibition is presented as part of the **Han Nefkens Foundation—Southeast Asian Video Art Production Grant 2024 In memory of Dinh Q. Lê**, and in collaboration with Jim Thompson Art Center; Outpost Art Organisation, Vietnam; Museion, Italy; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Denmark; and Rockbund Art Museum, China.

Continuing her long-term research-based artistic practice into the entanglements between history, the environment, and political ideology, Som Supaparinya's new body of work investigates how the destruction of nature is not merely a byproduct of "progress" but a direct consequence of ideological and discursive forces. These include propaganda disseminated by both the Free World and the Communist bloc, each seeking to legitimize large-scale development projects across the region.

In her newly commissioned video work, *MO NUM EN TS* (2025), Supaparinya examines the cultural dimensions of Cold War propaganda through media materials produced by the United States Information Service (USIS). Juxtaposing these archival images and sounds with contemporary landscapes in Thailand, the artist evokes what she calls a "post-propaganda era" inviting viewers to reflect on how Cold War ideologies persist within everyday life. Central to the work is the question of "symbols of progress" such as the Bhumibol and Pak Mun Dams—structures that, despite their environmental costs and inefficiency in power production, continue to stand as monuments to the ideology of development.

This new commission will be shown alongside a reworked version of her earlier installation, *Paradise of the Blind* (2016/2025), part of her ongoing Banned Book Project, which addresses censorship across Asia and Oceania. By presenting both banned and "non-banned" books together, Supaparinya exposes how mechanisms of control operate not only through prohibition but also through selective permission, revealing how power shapes knowledge and public understanding under the guise of freedom.

Together, these works create a space for audiences to reflect on the layers of power, knowledge, and invisibility within history, particularly the ways in which ideology, memory, and the landscape of nature intertwine and continue to echo in the present.

About the artist

Som Supaparinya was born in Lamphun, lives and works in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Studied Fine Arts at Chiang Mai University. After graduation, she went to study Media Arts at Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig, Germany. She is a pioneer in multichannel (4-ch in 1995) and synchronization video installation (2012) in her region. She created her first video and sound arts in 1995 with cassette recorders, Handycam Video 8, and VHS cameras. However, her works encompass a wide variety of mediums such as installation, created and found objects, still and moving images, which have been produced mainly with a documentarian and experimental approach. The works focus on the impact of human activities on other humans and landscape through political, historical, and literary lenses. The changing landscape (by various means) motivated her practice. Her works are stories on noodle cultures, the change of riverscapes, cityscapes, routes, electricity generation, resistance sites, wars, and banned books.

International art festivals and biennials; *Koganecho Bazaar 2011* (Yokohama, 2011), *Yebisu International Festival for Art & Alternative Visions* (Japan, 2012, 2018), *EVA International* [Ireland's Biennial] (Limerick City, Ireland, 2018), *12th Gwangju Biennale* (Gwangju, South Korea, 2018) *Cairo Biennale 13* (Cairo, Egypt, 2018), *Biennale Jogja Equator #5*, (Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 2019), *Thailand Biennale* (Korat, Thailand, 2021-2022), *10th Asia Pacific Triennial*, (Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane, Australia, 2021-2022), *Documenta 15* (Kassel, Germany, 2022), *reconnecting.earth (02-03)* (Biennale de l'Art et de la Nature Urbaine)—*Beyond Water* (Genève, Switzerland, 2023, and Stadtgalerie Kiel, Germany (2024), *Bangkok Art Biennale: Nurture Gaia*, (Bangkok, Thailand 2024-2025).

Recent exhibitions: *Collapsing Clouds Form Stars*, a Mini Retrospective of Work by Som Supaparinya (Ver Gallery, Bangkok, 2025). *The Shattered Worlds: Micro Narratives from the Ho Chi Minh Trail to the Great Steppe* (BACC, Bangkok, April-July 2025), *The River They Don't See* (Kestner Gesellschaft, April-Nov, 2025), and *Sea Art Festival* (Busan, Korea, 2025).

Upcoming shows: *Melted Stars* (DAAD Gallerie, Germany, 2026). She is the winner of the Han Nefkens Foundation—Southeast Asian Video Art Production Grant 2024, which commissioned her new work, followed by exhibitions at Outpost, Vietnam; the Jim Thompson Art Center, Thailand; Museion, Italy; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Denmark and Rockbund Art Museum, China.

About the curator

Gridthiya Gawee Wong (b. 1964, Chiang Rai, Thailand) holds a Master of Arts in Art Administration and Policy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a Doctorate in Fine and Applied Arts from Chulalongkorn University. She co-founded Project 304, an alternative art space in Bangkok, from 1996 to 2002, and has curated numerous exhibitions addressing social transformation since the Cold War. Notable projects include *"Under Construction"* at Tokyo Opera City Gallery and *"Politics of Fun"* in Berlin, collaborating with various regional curators. Gridthiya curated Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *"The Serenity of Madness,"* which toured internationally, and participated in the 12th Gwangju Biennale's curatorial team in 2018. In 2023, she co-directed the *"Open World"* international exhibition, at the 3rd Thailand Biennale. Her upcoming projects including, *"I understand everything,"* a retrospective of Almagul Menlibayeva, Almaty Museum of Art, Almaty, Kazakhstan and *"Living with Elastic Time"*, Invited Country Pavilion, Cheongju Craft Biennale, South Korea in 2025. A 2018 fellow at the Center for Curatorial Leadership at MoMA, she has served on the acquisition committee for the Singapore Art Museum since 2020. Gridthiya received the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2023 and the Audrey Irmas Award for Curatorial Excellence in 2025, and she currently works as the Artistic Director of the Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok.

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