

ENGLISH

# Mo num en ts

Som  
Supaparinya  
15 May – 14 Jun  
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Som Supaparinya:  
Landscapes of Memory in *MO NUM EN TS* (2025)

The film *MO NUM EN TS* (2025) by Thai artist Som Supaparinya brings together historical research and fieldwork. The work was produced as part of the Han Nefkens Foundation – Southeast Asian Video Art Production Grant 2024, dedicated to the memory of the artist Dinh Q. Lê, and developed in collaboration with the Jim Thompson Art Center, Thailand; The Outpost Art Organisation, Vietnam; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Denmark; and Rockbund Art Museum, China. Following presentations at the partner institutions, the work will enter the collection of Museion, Bolzano.

For more than two decades, Supaparinya has examined the landscapes of mainland Southeast Asia as sites where political ideology, ecological change, and historical memory intersect. Working across video and installation, and engaging with archives and fieldwork, her works often begin with the close observation of rivers, infrastructures, and the communities that inhabit these environments. In *MO NUM EN TS* (2025), the artist continues this long-term inquiry, turning her attention to the enduring impact of Cold War development projects across the Mekong region.

Born in Chiang Mai, where she is based today, and raised in Lamphun in northern Thailand, Supaparinya has developed a practice shaped by extensive fieldwork conducted throughout Thailand and neighboring countries, particularly along the Mekong River and its tributaries. Through this research, she traces how state-led development – especially large-scale infrastructure – has reshaped landscapes and everyday life across the region. Rather than reproducing official narratives of modernization, her work foregrounds the histories embedded within these transformations: altered ecologies, displaced communities, and the political forces that shaped them.

In *MO NUM EN TS*, Supaparinya reconsiders the idea of the monument through the lens of infrastructure. The film incorporates images of commemorative plaques and archival media coverage celebrating the construction of dams, highways, and electrical networks. Through revisiting and reframing these materials, the artist proposes that such projects function as monuments in their own right. Built during the Cold War within broader geopolitical and military strategies, these infrastructures were designed not only to modernize territories but also to secure political alliances, control resources, and assert ideological influence across Southeast Asia. The deliberately fragmented title signals a break with the conventional understanding of monuments as singular commemorative objects. Instead, the work points to infrastructure as a monumental form of power whose environmental and social consequences continue to shape the region.

Presented at Museion as a single-channel video projection, the film unfolds through a slow accumulation of images rather than a linear narrative. Supaparinya combines footage gathered during field research with archival material drawn from Cold War publications and propaganda sources. These materials once framed infrastructure projects as symbols of development and international cooperation, presenting technological transformation as evidence of progress. By returning to them today, the artist reveals the ideological frameworks that once justified large-scale environmental intervention.

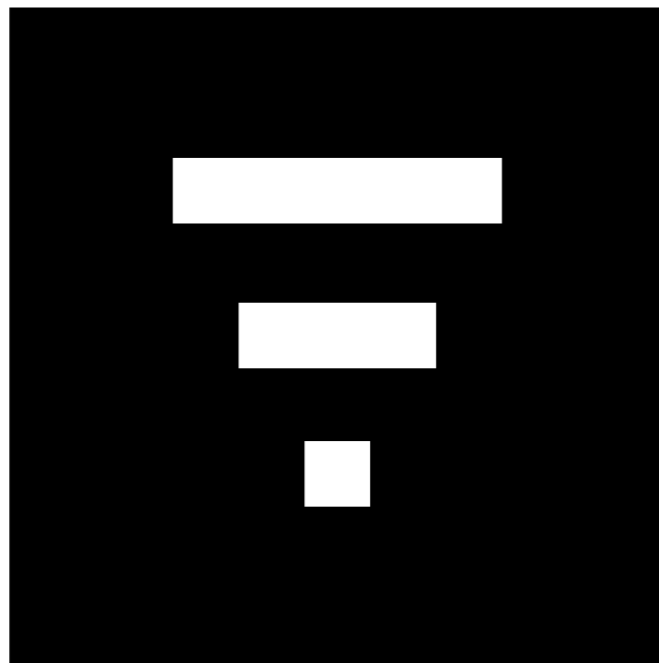
The visual language of the film is quiet and contemplative. Rivers flow steadily across the screen; roads cut through remote landscapes; reservoirs stretch across former valleys. These images are structured through a careful editing strategy that frequently divides the projection into a split screen or multiple frames. This compositional device echoes the artist's interest in the layered nature of historical narratives, allowing multiple temporalities and perspectives to coexist within the image.

Cold War histories cannot be understood through a unified narrative but emerge from overlapping perspectives, where state propaganda, local memory, environmental traces, and lived experience intersect. By distributing field recordings and archival material across the screen, the film resists a singular viewpoint, evoking the layered nature of memory in the region and suggesting that history exists as a constellation of partial accounts.

Despite the use of split screen, moments of visual continuity and equilibrium emerge. Images frequently align, allowing the viewer to perceive them as parts of a single extended landscape. One frame completes or expands another, creating a shifting panorama across the screen. This visual coherence reflects the deeper connections traced in the film: Territories that appear separate are linked through shared infrastructures, geopolitical strategies, and intertwined histories.

Through this approach, *MO NUM EN TS* moves beyond a simple critique of development. Instead, it reflects on how landscapes themselves become archives of historical change. The redirection of rivers, the flooding of forests, and the relocation of villages appear not as singular events but as gradual transformations whose traces remain visible in the terrain.

Across her practice, Supaparinya has consistently demonstrated how artistic research can illuminate the connections between local histories and global forces. In *MO NUM EN TS*, these connections emerge through a careful weaving of archival fragments, fieldwork, and cinematic observation. Rather than commemorating the triumph of progress, the work reveals landscapes as living monuments – sites where history continues to unfold.



### Biography

Som Supaparinya (b. 1973, Chiang Mai, Thailand) lives and works in Chiang Mai. She holds a BFA in Painting from Chiang Mai University and a Meisterschüler degree in Media Arts from Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig, Germany. A pioneer of multichannel (since 1995) and synchronized video installation (since 2012) in Thailand, Supaparinya has worked extensively with video, installation, and found materials. Her practice merges documentary and experimental methods to address the impact of human activity on both people and landscapes through political, historical, and literary lenses. Her works engage with topics such as changing riverscapes, electricity generation, sites of resistance, and censorship.

Supaparinya's projects have been exhibited at major international platforms including the Gwangju Biennale, 2018; Cairo Biennale, 2018; Biennale Jogja Equator #5, 2019; Thailand Biennale, 2021–22; the 10th Asia Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, 2021–22; and documenta 15, 2022. Recent exhibitions include *Collapsing Clouds Form Stars*, Ver Gallery, Bangkok 2025; *The Shattered Worlds*, Bangkok Art and Cultural Centre, 2025; *The River They Don't See*, Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover 2025; *Sea Art Festival*, Busan, 2025; and Video Art Festival, Busan, 2025.

Supaparinya is the recipient of the Han Nefkens Foundation – Southeast Asian Video Art Production Grant 2024, in collaboration with The Outpost Art Organisation, Vietnam; Jim Thompson Art Center, Thailand; Museion, Italy; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Denmark; and Rockbund Art Museum, China, which commissioned the film *MO NUM EN TS*.

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and Contemporary Art  
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Som Supaparinya  
*MO NUM EN TS*  
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Texts:  
Bart van der Heide, Han Nefkens  
Editing introduction  
and biography:  
Sriwhana Spong

Graphic Design:  
Matteo Campostrini

### Connecting People Through Art

Growing up in a quiet suburb of Rotterdam in the 1960s, I often felt alone. Perhaps it was because I was different – physically, but also in the way my mind worked. While my classmates played football, I would go to a museum on my own and spend hours standing in front of a single painting. I imagined conversations with the woman depicted there. I wondered about the life she lived, the people she might meet. That early curiosity about what goes on inside other people's minds became a private game. Walking through the streets, I would step into the heads of passers-by. I imagined their homes, their breakfasts, the way they looked at the world.

At school, instead of listening to the teacher, I gazed out of the window at the planes crossing the sky. I imagined myself inside one of them, looking down at the boy at his desk. The plane would take me to distant places – countries with palm trees and unfamiliar languages. There, among strangers who were curious and kind, I felt I would belong. Even then, I sensed that being an outsider abroad is less painful than being an outsider in the place where you are meant to belong.

At the time, I did not know that these fantasies would one day become reality. A turning point came on a spring day in Paris in 1999, when I encountered an exhibition by the Swiss video artist Pipilotti Rist. I was absorbed by the universe she created. Through her work, she felt close – present. In that moment, I understood that I wanted to be part of this world. Through art, I could finally enter the minds of others and experience the world as they do, just as I had imagined as a boy.

From the beginning, I felt a strong need to share the art that moved me. I began collaborating with museums, placing works I acquired there as long-term loans or gifts. Soon, my involvement expanded to supporting the production of new work. In 2009, I founded the Han Nefkens Foundation, dedicated to supporting video artists through grants and commissions. Beyond providing financial support, we offer artists platforms around the world to present the works they create with us.

Today, we collaborate with more than forty-five museums and art institutions. I travel often, encountering people from many different cultures – much as I once imagined I would.

The Southeast Asia Grant is particularly close to my heart. It was established with the encouragement and support of the Vietnamese artist and dear friend Dinh Q. Lê. Dinh was a pioneering artist, co-founder of Sàn Art, and a vital presence in the Vietnamese art community. His ability to bring people and ideas together, his generosity, and our shared commitment to supporting video art were essential in shaping this grant.

Dinh took part in selecting the first artist, but he passed away in 2024. For this reason, we dedicate the grant to him.

I know he would have been deeply pleased with the choice of Som Supaparinya. Her sensitivity, attention to detail, and engagement with land – both locally and globally – would have resonated with him, just as they will with audiences around the world when *MO NUM EN TS* is shown.

*Han Nefkens*

Produced by:

**Han Nefkens  
Foundation**

Institutional partners:



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