

Contemporary Art Biennials and Hegemony in Thailand - Notes from a Laboratory

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Abstract:

Thailand today provides an excellent laboratory for studying the political nature of contemporary art biennials. As is well-discussed in the literature, power relations in this country have since long been structured by a hegemony centred on dominant views of nation, religion, monarchy, and notions of 'Thai-ness.' In this setting, according to artist Mit Jai Inn, "art has become a tool for the institutionalisation of the values of the 'good' people". In recent years, an influential alternative view of contemporary art grounded in Thai corporations emerged as well. Meanwhile, there is also a relatively small world of independent art spaces organising 'counter-hegemonic' events. In this constellation, Thailand was late in joining the international biennial craze. However, 2018 suddenly saw first iterations of the Bangkok Art Biennale, Thailand Biennale, and Bangkok Biennial. How do these biennials relate to Thailand's hegemony? And which strategies are employed for support or resistance?

Bart Wissink is associate professor urban studies and urban policy at City University of Hong Kong. His research centres on issues relating to urban governance and social justice, with a focus on cultural commoning in recent years. With Lara van Meeteren, he has a research-based practice that interrogates the social role of art and independent contemporary art organising in East and Southeast Asia. They co-created coming soon • เวิร์ก ๗ นี้ for the 2018 Bangkok Biennial (www.comingsoonbkk.com). In the context of the 2020 Bangkok Biennial, together with Ariane Sutthavong and Sina Wittayawiroj, they founded the inappropriate BOOK CLUB, an ongoing common discussion-based initiative focusing on art and politics (www.facebook.com/inappropriateBOOKCLUB).



26 September 2022 (Monday)

4:00-5:30pm

Room G5-216

5/F Yeung Kin Man Academic Building

City University of Hong Kong

How to attend this seminar:

Via zoom

<https://cityu.zoom.us/j/95463680006?pwd=VWxSTk8yMkxIVzdGNy92SnIXYWYrUT09>

or in-person (pre-registration and visitor QR code are needed)

<https://forms.gle/rY3NP519Dupu8P6k7>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the seminar.



All are welcome

Enquiries: please email to searc@cityu.edu.hk