

A Community art project: The art creation process for conserving the beauty of Chiang Khan way of life and culture, Leoi Province



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Abstract

A Community art project: The art creation process for conserving the beauty of Chiang Khan way of life and culture, Leoi Province aims to design art activity process that engages local community expressing their community values, representing Chiang Khan cultural heritage and wisdom in order to conserve Chiang Khan way of life in form of artworks. Then exhibiting the art exhibition collaborated with villagers and artists. The survey research was conducted by walking through the community, dialoguing with villagers, recording videos and photos. The participatory research was also applied with the three selected sample groups to organize them joining the three activities. The groups were divided into three generations and they were asked to create artworks through three art activities process. Each process allowed participants to express their emotion, memories and future impression of Chiang Khan Community in form of painting and writing. The result shown that there were different perspectives and reflections from different age groups. Nostalgic feeling of old day way of life was stated in the elderly group while working group wanted to involve with community conservation activity due to outside investment threats. They would like to see an appropriate management system to be organized to Chiang Khan Heritage in modern day.

Children who lives among changing period love to protect their own local culture and natural environment of Chiang Khan district.

Methodology

The creation art processes were designed as a tool to communicate and transfer the experience, thought and feeling of the people in the community. The survey research was conducted by walking through the community, dialoguing with villagers and recording photos, videos at the same time. The participatory research was also applied with the three selected sample groups to organize them joining the three activities. The groups were divided into three generations and they asked to create artworks through three art activities process. Each process allowed participants to express their emotion, memories and future impression of Chiang Khan Community in form of painting and writing. The result shown that there were different perspectives and reflections from different age groups. Nostalgia feeling of old day way of life was stated in the elderly group while middle age group wanted to involve with community conservation activity due to outside investment threats. They would like to see an appropriate management system to be organized to Chiang Khan Heritage among modern day. Children who lives among changing period love to protect their own local culture and natural environment of Chiang Khan district.

Background

Chiang Khan district, Loei province, is located in the Northeast of Thailand where located along Kong River as a borderline between Thailand and Lao PDR. Chiang Khan is around 48 Kilometers far from the main city. The Chiang Khan area is approximately 2.7 square kilometers where its lies parallelly along Kong River. There are nine villages consist of; Phonchai temple, Sri koonmueng temple, Santiwanaram temple, Pha Klang temple, Mahatart temple, Pha Tai temple, Sri Panommart temple, Tha Kok temple and Rajchakarn village. The number of population is 4,567 which is 1,208 households. According to Chiang Khan location, it was used to be a route of distributing goods and travelling of Thais and Laos people.

In the colonial period, Chiang Khan used to be Lao PDR's capital city where situated in Wat Mahatrat temple and moved once into Phonchai temple. During the reign of King Rama IV, Thailand lost some part of the land (Middle part of Lao PDR in present) to be French colony. Afterward Vietnam War had occurred. Vietnamese escaped to the peaceful, secured country and widespread in the Southeast Asia and The US. Thailand is the most attractive place for living for all immigrants.

As mentioned above, there was a cultural diversity merging in Chiang Khan district reflecting on house building style, handcraft and food. Therefore, It inspired conservation idea by utilizing art as a tool of reflecting thought and feeling of people who lives in Chiang Khan in order to represent Chiang Khan identity and raise awareness of villagers both insiders and outsiders. Eventually, it would be part of Artist's drawing installation to fill up any aspects of Chiang Khan community. In addition, it would be a voice of community to awake villagers and tourist conscience to respect and protect community cultural heritage.

Problem Statement/ Statement Significance

The creation of art activities process to raise awareness of Chiang Khan stakeholders

Objective / Aim

1. To collect and represent Chiang Khan cultural heritage and wisdom in order to conserve Chiang Khan way of life in form of artworks.
2. To design art activity process that engages local community expressing their community values.
3. To establish community ownership and install art exhibition both villagers and artists.

Methodology

Participatory research was applied to the community. Data collection was obtained by designing art activity in three stages – it is started from simply to difficult stage. The participants were selected by difference villages and three generations;

1. The number of children and youth group is 62, age 9-30 year
2. The number of middle age group is 63, age 31-50 year
3. The number of elderly group is 12, age 51-85 year
4. Four unknown age



Fig 1: The all group of participant

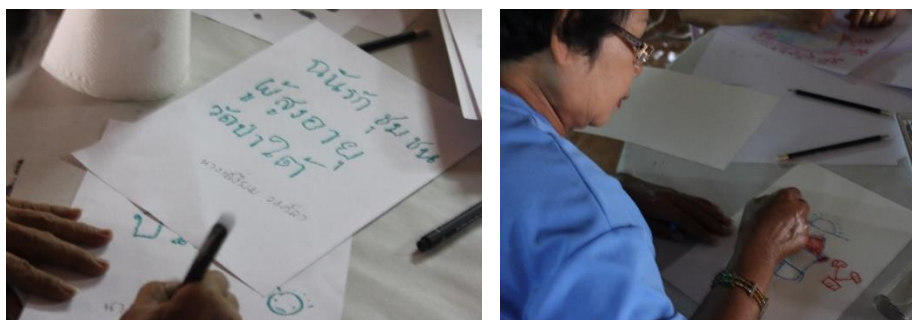
The three activities were:

1. Hand printing: It was very easy to stimulate and motivate for starting the activities with a simple thing. They used their hand print to represent their identity. This activity convince some villagers who worried about their art skill to enjoy doing the artwork.



Fig 2: The first stage of art activity

2. Chiang Khan individual's appreciation writing: There were three guiding questions of how appreciation, old day impression and what do they want to deliver their message to future generation.



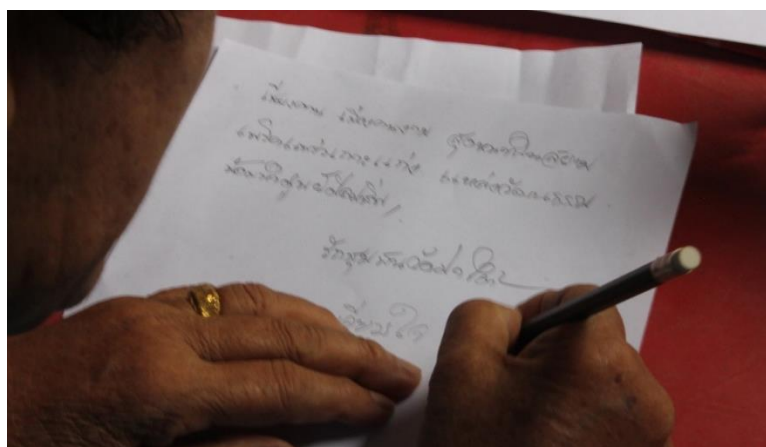


Fig 3: The second stage of art activity

3. Drawing or painting: They were requested to draw or paint what they felt proud and impressed to express publicly.



Fig 4: The third stage of art activity

There were two sets of art creation, the number of the artworks were 90 pieces of the villagers and 31 pieces of the artists



Fig 5: The sample of Sirikoy's artwork



Fig 6: The sample of Tippanet's artwork

Conclusion and Significance

The observation shown that most of generation felt bond in cultural and the way of life value. In the meantime, they had faced the effect of change from external investment and latent population which also made the villagers feel quite anxious of the negatives following effects in the future.

At the beginning of the activity, there was a difficulty of organizing workshop to a middle age group due to most of them were busy about their business. They felt uncomfortable to participate the activity. However, after orienting the art project, they participated willingly with care of their village.

The result of villagers' artwork can be analyzed to three main points as there are shown below,

1. Different perspectives from three generations

1.1 Elderly – the nostalgic feeling with the past memories were mentioned on their artworks. On the other hand, they felt pleased about a tourism business that has been

running through community economics. They had a better life quality and being positively about numerous tourists which induced fruitful income.

1.2 Middle age – The relationship and community value were concerned to this group because of the conflict of business competition among community as well as investors. They would like to conserve and protect Chiang heritage value that will be handed to the future generation.

1.3 Children – This group felt proud and appreciate the Chiang Khan way of life and natural sceneries along Kong River, historical houses, temples and extra ordinary generosity of villager.

2. The process of art activities

Among the three generation, it is found that the elderly group had a difficulty of writing and drawing because of embarrassment and lack of literacy ability. Also, during the artwork presentation, some of the elderly group cried. They had a nostalgic feeling which would not possible to return back again. Some of participants were eager to draw the artwork but some were quite difficult to do the same thing but after they work, they felt very enjoy and could not stop their expression.

3. The artworks exhibition

During the research time was the touring season which was the negative effect to induce a limited numbers of the villagers to join the activities because most of them were very busy for income earning activities but this caused the positive effect at the same time to encourage the tourists to join the activities and showed the art works publically. The tourists had a chance to show their opinions and appreciated the villagers' feeling. This unexpected situation allowed the teams to adjust the process by changing the tourists' role from audiences to be art creators and exhibited their artworks right away. In the future the local government agencies should contact the old houses' owners who love to conserve for public utilization to renovate old houses to be used for a local museum for art works exhibition or invited rotating exhibition from outside community which should be sponsored by the involve stakeholders.



Fig 7: Art exhibition on public street

Bibliography

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EDUCATION

Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand M.F.A. in Painting 2005 Final Collection: Spiritual Articles – Bas relief paintings of ancestral artifacts

Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand B.F.A. in Painting (Second Honours) 2003 Final Collection: Atmosphere of Faith – Paintings depicting the serenity & mystique of Chinese Temples

College of Fine Arts, Bangkok, Thailand High School Diploma 1999

RESEARCH FUNDING

The national research of Thailand, the drawing series of Chiang Khans historical houses

National Science & Technology Development Agency, Thailand: Rural Development Cluster

Research Funding Creation of Multi-media Learning Resources from Traditional Karen Stories (1.25M TB) 2013

National Science & Technology Development Agency, Thailand: Rural Development Cluster

Research Funding GABA Rice Branding Studies for Community Enterprise (100,000 TB) 2012

AWARDS

Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives: on the Occasion of His Majesty the King's 84th Birthday Outstanding Painting Award 2012

The Senate of Thailand: on the Occasion of His Majesty the King's 84th Birthday Outstanding Painting Award 2011

Thai Kom Foundation in Inspiration from His Majesty the King's Music Honourable Mention 2007

The Royal Bangkok Sports Club Outstanding Academic Performance Scholarship 2004-2005

Silpakorn University: Young Thai Artist Honourable Mention 2005

UNFPA: Art to Promote Teen Health Honourable Mention 2003

Teaching EXPERIENCE King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi – Department of Media Arts Lecturer – Design Fundamentals 1 2012 – present

Develop and implement syllabus and course materials.

Lecturer – Principles of Anatomy Drawing 2010 – present Develop and implement syllabus and course materials.

Lecturer – Painting 2009 – present Develop and implement syllabus and course materials.

Lecturer – Drawing 2009 – present Develop and implement syllabus and course materials.

Lecturer – Composition Art 2009 – present Develop and implement syllabus and course materials.

Bangkok University – School of Fine Arts and Applied Arts Lecturer – Creative Drawing 2010 Develop and implement syllabus and course materials.

Lecturer – Color of Art 2009 Implemented pre-developed syllabus and course materials.

Selected Exhibitions Tourist Information at Chiang Khan District, Lei Province, Thailand Impressions of Chiang Khan 2010

The Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

The Light Bulb, an Illustrated Story 2009

Group Exhibition: Artitude 56 Hof Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand Spiritual Artifacts 2007

Group Exhibition: Silpakorn University, Sukhothai, Thailand Nostalgic Sukhothai and Srisachanalai 2004

Art Competition: TOSHIBA, Bangkok, Thailand Bring Good Things to Life 2004

Art Competition: Thai National Assembly Democracy Day Art Exhibition Liberty of Thai People 2003

Group Exhibition: Atelier Art Gallery, Bangkok Thailand Painting #56 2001