

FINAL REPORT

Site -specific Installation Project: **"Memory could bring them back"**

Fukutake House Asia Art Platform, Setouchi Triennale 2013

By Nipan Oranniwesna

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Introduction

The important statement which everyone heard on the opening ceremony of Fukutake House, Asia Art Platform in last summer is "the use of contemporary art as important tool for social change". Looking back to the starting of Setouchi Triennale, direction and any activities followed that trend. It was also successful in term of numbers of visitors in local, from other provinces or abroad who visited the temporary and permanent works on The Seto Inland Sea.



Fukutake House (Fukuda Elementary School)

In 2013, Jim Thompson Art Centre (Artistic Director : Gridthiya Gaweewong) was invited to participate in the art project in Fukutake House Asia Art Platform, Setouchi Triennale 2013 along with six art organizations from Asia in from six countries. The art project consists of residency, art exhibition, chef

workshop and symposium. Every countries were assigned to select artists to create and exhibit his/her work under theme "How have we responded to globalization ?".

Participant organizations & Artists include:

- Jim Thompson Art Centre, Thailand (Artist: Nipan Oranniwesna)
- Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong (Artist: Jaffa Lam Laam/ Bo Law Ho Kwong)
- Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Korea (Artist: Choi Sun)
- The Substation, Singapore (Artist: Grace Tan)
- Institute for Historical Resources Management, Taiwan (Artist: Weiling Yang)
- Cemeti Art House, Indonesia (Artist: Irwan Ahmett)
- Asia link The University of Melbourne Australia (Artist: Jackson Slattery)

Under main idea umbrella of Setouchi Triennale 2013, varieties of activities in Fukutaka House Asian Platfrom will be presented at Fukuda Elementary School which was situated in a small town named Fukuda in Shodoshima island. This elementary school was closed for more than 4 years because of no students. Of course, the major problems are ageing populations and the effect of economic problem causing by migration of teenagers or working generation to work in large city.

Art projects and activities were reflected from visions in using art as tools to bond local communities in Shodoshima Island to visitors. Besides exhibition of works from selected chefs from seven countries, there will be food workshop by the coordination of chefs from six countries and communities in Fukuda. In addition, there will be new created art piece for permanent pavilion by Ryue Nishizawa, architect, as a new contemporary landmark. It will harmonize to existing background where art works were created and displayed between Fukuda school and shrine which is main local landmark. The structure of work will be large enough so that people could participate in.



Symposium : July 22, 2013

Project Description : “Memory could brings them back”

As the invited artist from Jim Thompson Art Centre to participate in this project, I went to Shodoshima to survey, research, collect information, take photograph, record video, interview local people as raw materials. Then, summarize to final proposal and travel to work again during the past July.

The 1st year classroom



After four years of operating termination, Fukuda Elementary School on my visiting date was full of visual and varieties of small objects of memory. From entrance of the main building, a sculpture of student carry books in one hand and point out with another one while large clock in front of the main building is still normally operated even though there is no activity. Photographs of teachers and students, activities, and student artworks still lined the corridor . The equipments are still in the classroom and ready to use. All of these pretends to inform the visitors that this area is temporary closed, waiting and ready to operate when the new batch of students arrive.

Similarly, the first year classroom which is on the ground floor and was the first room I visited, although desks and chairs are moved to clear the area, all equipment and furniture are still in place. They are large blackboard in front of the room, television hanging from the ceiling, speakers, slide screen, including notice board and student artworks in the past.

I am rather interested in this room specifically, especially wooden floor which indicates ages and evidences in its usages in the past. The room is clear with outside sun light. By the windows, there is only thin white curtain, fluttered by wind from outside. In my opinion, this window line indicated the connection

between the world in classroom and the outside world of mountain and village which make the room lively.

On the notice board at the back of the room, I saw a large paper full of school song lyric in hand written. The song is simple, designate, and imagine to live and activities of these students in the past. If we stayed until evening, we would hear the announcement from Fukuda city every six o'clock, beginning with melody and follow by warning students to go back home because it was late already.

I chose first year classroom as the space to exhibit my work "Memory could bring them back" because of its environment and touchy experience along with left-over equipment and items in the classroom.

Japanese film : "Twenty -four Eyes"



When talking about Shodoshima island, besides its renown in olive (sometimes known as "Olive Island"), Shodoshima is also famous as the background for an important Japanese film; *Twenty-Four Eyes* / 二十四の瞳 (1954, directed by Keisuke Kinoshita) based on the novel by Sakae Tsuboi. Set in the rural island community spanning decades of Japanese history, from 1928 through world war II and beyond. *Twenty - Four Eyes* was based on the relationship between teacher and her twelve students regarding live, ideology, selected path, no option and live condition during the war.

This Japanese film allow us to touch the character, attitude, way-of-thinking, and ideology of Japanese people in their humanism, honesty, peaceful, etc. including the beauty of island which might compare with island as Japanese nation.



The most important scene in this film for me is the scene about the dialogue on “hope for the future” when the teacher asked students to write a story on that subject. Even though it stimulated sad feeling, it was the important question which is the main idea of the film.

Because of the area relationship between the present 1st year classroom of Fukuda school and the classroom in the movie along with reminding of Shodoshima island, I had an idea to create memorized vision of the film again in the classroom in Fukuda school

Site-specific

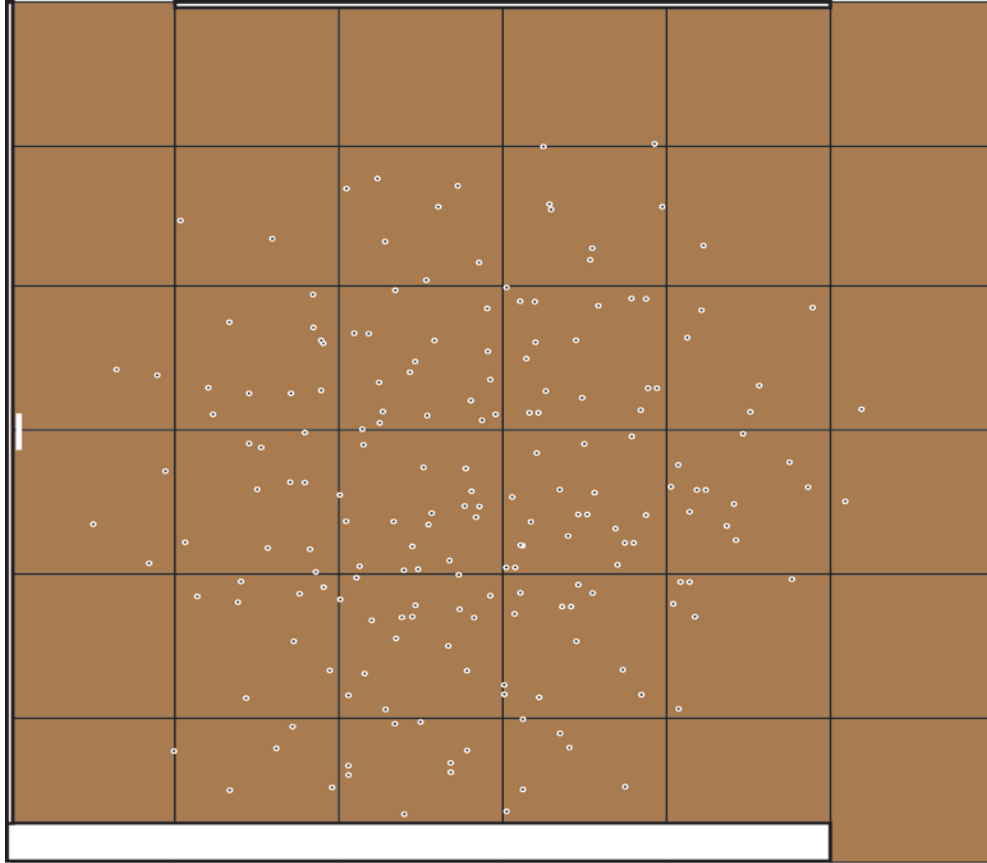
We might say that “Memory could bring them back” work is site-specific task where the past meet the present. Base on existing classroom structure, equipment, furniture, and other parts as basic fundamental, the adjustment, addition tasks was done to create work which consists of three main elements;

- 1st element: Textual work on the blackboard



Regarding to the important scene in the film Twenty-Four Eyes, I create a phase “Mirai no Kibo” in kanji character which means “hope for the future” in English by carving the wood and dye in white, then install on the middle of existing blackboard in the room.

- **2nd element: Floor Installation**



The work in this element refers to island area of Shodoshima along with the memory of my six year in Japan for art studying. I had touched and been familiar with “spending daily live on the floor” like Japanese. In order to do so, I wanted to create a work that visitor could feel the floor and its territory.

I constructed the new wooden floor similar to the existing one in both style and size on top of the existing floor. I created the resin beads to memorize and signify to the island which is in the middle of the sea as mention before.

The resin beads is created by drilling the new floor into more than 500 small circles (15 mm. diameter, 2 mm. depth). Then, decorate the appearance to look like water drop on the floor. Photographs of scenery, environment of Fukuda and Shodoshima along with my activities with the community were installed in those holes. I took the photographs by myself. More than 500 of them were printed at small size (25 x 35 mm.), then cut into 15 mm. diameter circle which fit to the hole on the floor and install them all in the holes.

After installed photographs, I steadily dropped epoxy resin on top of the pictures in those holes. Waiting until the epoxy is dried, drop epoxy again in several layers. The process of dropping and waiting to dry was done simultaneously with molding the epoxy to have mass and volume like natural bead. The property of epoxy with creating of mass and bulge volume like bead, after waiting to dry, is like convex lenses to zoom in the photograph in the holes and make them look clearer.

In this part of work, the visitor could walk/lean/look in the area by taking-off the shoes and walking barefoot on the work.

- **3rd Element: Moving Image**



The main and most important objective of this project is to engage the local community, starting from exchange conversation in attitude and vision in community, memorize and expectation in the future, to the

participation in several dimensions of the work. In order to widely disclose the area of work in this element, I started by asking for interview and video recording three groups of people, mainly focusing on their experience in Japan.

- **Group 1** : Four Fukuda school alumni in several generations;
 - Nunjiro NAKAJIMA
 - Yasutada KUMASAKA
 - Yoshikazu HAMA
 - Minoru MATSUMOTO
- **Group 2** : The Japanese who lives in Thailand more than 20 years;
 - Noriko SUZUKI
- **Group 3** : Thai/ former Thai student in Japan
 - Dr. Nanchaya Mahakhan, Professor in Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Burapha University, used to stay in Japan as Thai students in Japan during major earthquake in Kobe

The main questions in this session are three parts of continuous questions which are;

- Past experience
- Present occupation and living
- Idea and expression to the future.

The summary of this element is interview video footage of 6 Thai and Japanese and shorten to 58 minutes video document and loop presentation on the existing television in the classroom.

Feedback:

It is interesting that what Fukutake House tried to do could get participation from community, especially Fukuda community. It could indicate in the joint meeting with community volunteers who participated in project presentation of artist from each country to understand contents and idea of work in each project. They also participate with the artist in case the work needed fully participation. At the same time, during my stay and work in this area, there were several visit, occasional discussion by people with all ages.

Before official opening ceremony, there were official press conference and curator talk to several media. In the same day, the exhibition was opened to local in special case. When the exhibition was official opened, there were many visitors from numerous places and expected to have satisfaction number of visitors here and in the ceremony.

Summary

In my opinion, Fukutake House Asia Art Platform, Setouchi Triennale 2013 is one of the most innovative art projects. Its interesting point is it specifies clear vision of management to high value of contemporary art, especially in the visual of art function which is not separated from social. The ceremony is not to find any conventional standard in finding relationship between art and people (or community) but they try to learn the varieties of different in culture of each other by concentrate in process rather than outcome, to find solution rather than to generate answer.



Memory could bring then back

2013, floor installation, video, texts

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Curated by

Gridthiya Gawee Wong

Presented by

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