

Mapping Networks of Performing Arts Research in Bangkok: A Preliminary Survey of Some Artists' Performance Practices and Community-Building Processes In The Thai Capital

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Abstract

This paper explores artistic research in Bangkok as a heterogenous assemblage of specific methods and situated practices that contemporary performing artists develop in and through the performance projects and in relation communities of those who care about the nonmainstream performing arts in Bangkok. It will provide a tentative mapping of some parts of this assemblage tied to performance research and their supporting artistic communities of practice. This mapping emerges from direct observation, document research, interviews and surveys with artists, academics, and researchers in the performing arts. The paper first locates how some contemporary performing artists in Bangkok seek new insights and embodied ways of feeling and moving that to share with others. The paper seeks to locate the diverse, intertwined modes of knowledge making through performance practice by using of examples from various performing arts traditions and disciplines in Thailand's capital. It relates them to the communities supporting artistic research and links the work of artists, academics, cultural workers and community actors. Together, they work to organize, design, create, and evaluate performances in Thailand's capital in ways that engage, challenge, and form communities of those who care about the contemporary performing arts. The paper addresses how performance practice research done by artists, academics and cultural organizers engages and shapes communities and how communities affect research done in performance-making processes.

Keywords: Performing Arts, Artistic Research, Bangkok, Community-Building, Performance Practices, Devising Theatre, Object Theatre, Embodied Knowledge, Minor Theatre, Contemporary Thai Performance

Introduction

The ecosystem of Bangkok's contemporary performance culture is fragmented and fragile, but its challenges have also made it more flexible, resilient, and robust (Skar 2021; Esplanade 2024). After economic downturns, coups, and a global pandemic, the mix of old and new performers and groups has changed. The search for spaces, times, and funds to rehearse and to perform remains a persistent set of problems for performance-makers, and these problems have become more acute since the pandemic waned. The Bangkok performance scene consists of varied groups forming a heterogenous assemblage of artists who use specific methods and situated practices in and through performance as part of a social world of those who are interested in and who care about the performing arts.

Bangkok's non-mainstream performing artists regularly explore innovative ways to create new performances that resonate with audiences and push the boundaries of traditional theatre. This paper will consider just a few of the constellations of people and practices involved in this activity, relating them to the repertoires of artistic practice they use to create performances for audiences. While staging scripted plays remain a common mode of performance making, the collective character of performances means that how scripts are made and how they are staged is often quite open-ended. This has led to the use of devising

theatre as a dynamic and collaborative approach to performance-making common among many Bangkok performers. This process often involves various configurations of script development, object theatre, and movement improvisation among performance ensembles or collectives. These diverse practices and the artists who use them allow artists to work together in a fluid and organic manner, fostering creativity and experimentation.

When performing artists in Bangkok do their work, they do research. Their performance-making is a form of research and investigation since it allows them to *find out something* through and in their performance making. It forms a creative way to discover, investigate and *find something out* since it seeks to invent strategies for experimentation, extrapolating and naming potentialities and working with methodologies for further development. By shaping performances through processes of script making, devising, staging and rehearsals, performance makers become active researchers. They explore some unknown areas or issues that interest or concern them in the nascent performance, gather different types of materials and ideas tied to those areas or issues, developing a performance from that material to show or present to others as a new type of embodied, felt knowledge. While most performing artists' creative practices do not aim for scholarly output, they do aim to generate and show others new knowledge through the processes they use to create art, to record or keep their work, and to present or exhibit their work to others. In the performing arts, this artistic research involves exploring methods and practices that artists use to experimentally develop and present their performances.

This paper gives a preliminary and partial mapping of the working practices that some contemporary performing artists in Bangkok use to create their performances as part of what Gilles Deleuze called a “minor theatre.” It does not attempt to cover all of Thailand. It aims to contribute to the understanding of their creative processes in relation to how they explore the unknown on the periphery of large performance frameworks. By investigating the working practices of these Bangkok-based artists, we can uncover the range of techniques and principles that inform their artistic creation. This will both extend and enrich the field of artistic research. It views their efforts as part of a *community that is not one* – one that is “unavowable” (*inavouable*) for Michel Blanchot and “inoperative” (*désœuvrée*) for Jean-Luc Nancy.

By mapping these practices of Bangkok performance-makers with and for others, we also help to identify communities of those concerned with arts-based research in and through the performing arts. This can help to clear the ground for new understandings of how the performing arts relate to forming the creative and critical processes of community-making.

Literature Review

Contemporary performing artists in Bangkok are part of a wider arena of contemporary performance in Southeast Asia. The performances, forms and groups in the region have been studied, but few have focused on the performance practices that performance makers use to create their work and how they are tied to those who support and watch their work. Fewer studies still focus on groups in Bangkok.

Much previous research has examined how traditional forms have been appropriated by governments for nationalist agendas, apart from royalty or religion, as living symbols of national culture and heritage (Cohen and Noszlopy, 2010). Catherine Diamond (2012) has seen changes in traditional forms in Southeast Asia less as responses to the needs of artists and more as responses to foreign or commercial forces, noting that they often appear “not as legitimate innovations but as bastardizations.” Her book maps socio-political changes from traditional performance modes and modern hybrid theatres and spoken drama and explores the place of nationalism in performing arts as a “contemporary modernity” to question what it

means to be a part of an open globalized world and continuing to live in new and often repressive nation-states.

Based mainly in cities, much contemporary performance work in Bangkok, like Southeast Asia more generally, has appealed to university educated youth and has sought to be both locally grounded and post-national. Resisting the mainstream, these performance makers invent new frames for social and aesthetic engagement, effectively making a differing artistic response that seeks to undo ordinary modes of artistic production and to address what was of concern the immediate present. This makes their work “contemporary,” and often takes the form of critically responding to issues of power and inequality that stress affects emerging from local turmoil but connects to regional and global issues (Tan and Rajendran 2020). As part of the locally-grounded transnational focus, Matthew Cohen (2014) also notes “a new paradigm is emerging in which Southeast Asian theatre and performance are not being treated as the West’s exotic ‘Other’ or in relation to nation building but as a site drawing interested parties into a conversation regarding both local and global issues.” With more inter-Asian cultural exchanges, performance in Southeast Asia today – including Bangkok – is becoming a “site of intersection” for all communities from various cultures, so that its contemporary theatre is a conversation of local particularities and shared global concerns. (Tan and Rajendran 2020).

In Bangkok, theatre-making consists of multiple sequences of practices which often form an organizing frame tied to performance-making. These practices also form research repertoires for performance makers involved in them, offering them both a chance to explore new methods and themes and to experiment with new ways to help the artists and audiences access to experiencing something new or differently. Most performances still rely on three key processes – text-making, acting, and directing – to make the performance come to life. Artistic research in performance uses creative methodologies to explore and understand performance-related phenomena and may present findings as part of artistic works, showing their aesthetic dimension. It is a form of research that aims to create knowledge and potentially change the arts. Paul Rae sees performance research as “best understood in aesthetic terms more familiar to us from performance than from research...” and notes that “performance research activity can be described in terms of aesthetic presentation, conduct, and form” where “the aesthetic overlap of performance research and performance practice” is dominant. (Rae 2024: 319). Kanpong Thaweesuk pointed out how the PKDC “approaches art with serious intention through deep research and a genuine search for answers. They make work that connects the past and present, dares to question the past and imagines the future—all with authenticity.” (FB post, June 6, 2025 June 2025 Life Update).

Open-ended script-centered performance creation processes and related practices are still commonplace – and perhaps dominant – in the Bangkok performancescape, but other practices have also become focal points for performance making. A common set of techniques is tied to devising theatre, for which ensemble members, from actors to designers, take part in all or most stages of the creative process, from conception to presentation (Bonczek and Storck, 2012; Robinson, 2017). Devising often uses collective creation, where group members work to develop different parts or phases of the performance. It often features unpredictable and unplanned working methods, including script or movement improvisation, co-authorship, and sharing of creative roles.

Movement processes are often integral to devising theatre. These processes involve the exploration of physicality and movement to convey emotions, themes, and narratives and can make visually engaging performances (Jones, 2020). Artistic research examines these practices to understand how they contribute to the development of a polished and well-coordinated performance.

Object theatre also is tied to performance making and often tied to devising. Objects become key elements in the performance, as everyday items become symbolic or narrative tools. This practice encourages creativity and innovation, allowing performers to explore new ways of storytelling (Miller, 2021). Carrignon (2013) suggests that object theatre is like cinema, although film has the director and editor decide what's important to see by film editing, and the thing-placer or thing-mover has to draw audience's attention. Studies of object theatre argue that it enhances the visual and sensory aspects of performance, making it more engaging and immersive for the audience Ryöppy and Skouby, 2015; Grazioli, 2009; Foley, 2014; Martinez, 2015).

Previous literature also emphasizes the strong links between performance making practices and artistic research. Synne Behrndt and Jon Refsdal Moe (2021) argue that devised theatre are outcomes of complex research-based processes and that these processes show different ways in which contemporary practices and processes are research in and through action. In Thailand, this suggests that artistic research in devising theatre can lead to the enhancement of forms of feeling and living differently, as it allows artists to engage with their own experiences and insights in a meaningful way.

Methodology

To examine contemporary performing artists' practices in devising theatre, I combined qualitative and practice-based research methods. For qualitative research methods, I used interviews and observations to gather insights into the artists' experiences and perspectives on their theatre-making through collective script writing, physical theater and movement improvisation, and object theatre. These methods allow the discovery of nuances and complexities of the performance making process by Bangkok theater makers, and the collaborative dynamics among various artists. Interviews were conducted with several figures involved in the Bangkok theatre scene. (Placeholder1)

Describing the Bangkok Performance Scene

The current Bangkok non-mainstream performance scene consists of an interconnected web of scores people who are involved in making performances and more than 20 current performance groups, most of which are better thought of as artist collectives or performance constellations. The people involved in these constellations come from many different backgrounds, but most have graduated from university (often a university in Bangkok). While in university, many of them became interested in and involved in making and watching live performances. Universities have the benefit of enabling one to train in and perform in a variety of productions, and they also provide spaces for rehearsing and performing. For Bangkok performing arts constellations, outside of university, both space and time is scarce for performance making. Space for performers to gather and develop their productions, as well as perform them are difficult to find, and times for groups of performers to assemble to develop and perform a production are both hard to arrange. This tends to lead to small-scale productions, produced over a relatively short period of time, by complex webs of performance makers, often including rotating cast members. While often dealing with issues and topics outside of Bangkok, the theatre scene in Bangkok is Bangkok-centric, with most performance makers having lived in Bangkok for a long time. They are based on exploring both what to create and show and experiments with how to design and present it to others. Shortages of available spaces and times are connected to the ongoing dearth of sources of funding for many new projects, which typically come from multiple sources. While various government agencies or universities may support some new work, another key source of support is from national governments for international collaborative projects, or for commissioned work done for performance festivals or events.

Because Bangkok lacks spaces for learning or exchange, in a changing world, it is important to have sites where one can pay attention to the newly emerging ideas and neglected

parts of the past. Performances can create space for discussion by connecting performers and performances to different groups of people, even as a form of learning. Performances can also help people understand certain issues and ideas, and this understanding can generate real change in life. Performance making can help to create a performance community in Bangkok, focusing on kinds of performances that are rarely seen. In Bangkok, much mainstream theatre is not where you meet others for discussion. Going to a play is like going to a mall; you go there, watch a theatre piece and go home. There are other ways of viewing that can involve people more.

The lack of durable spaces for rehearsing and even for performing is a major limitation for groups in their performance-making activities. It affects the work they do at every stage and every level of their practice since the development of performance projects often require much negotiation, short time spans, and simple unelaborate stagings. Exceptions are projects that receive foreign support and funding. They form a repertoire of experimental means of aesthetic communication that works through various projects that work with words, objects and bodies in ephemeral spaces to create their performances.

A Heuristic Overview of Performance Making Practices

Performance-making is collective work that involves a process informed by diverse practices and techniques, aesthetic choices and economic context, as well as practical aspects apart from writers, performers and directors.

When Bangkok performance-makers develop their work, they consider it using a range of terms, such as “this story” (*rueng ni*), “this dance” (*ram ni*), “this piece” (*chin ni*), or “this piece or work” (*ngan ni*), or sometimes the English term “this work.” Producers and artistic directors may call their efforts “projects,” but this merges onto the most common terms in Thai – “*ngan*” (a project). If the project will likely end up as a theatrical play and is centered on a script, *lakorn* (play) is most common, while those using working mainly with dance movement and soundscapes may call their work *kan sadeang* (stage show). Somewhat originally and perceptively, one theatre-maker (Parnrut) sees her script-centered work as a dialogue or an “ongoing conversation” with her collaborators, one that can develop a conversation with both the wider theatre-making and theatre-going community.

Performance makers in Bangkok use a large repertoire of practices to develop their work. Broadly, these practices focus on working with scripts, bodily movement and objects to create performances. Groups that form and take on names form a constellation of people whose skills and interests usually draw on all practices from this repertoire but often focus more on one type of practice more than the other two types. This is schematically represented by Figure 1 below.

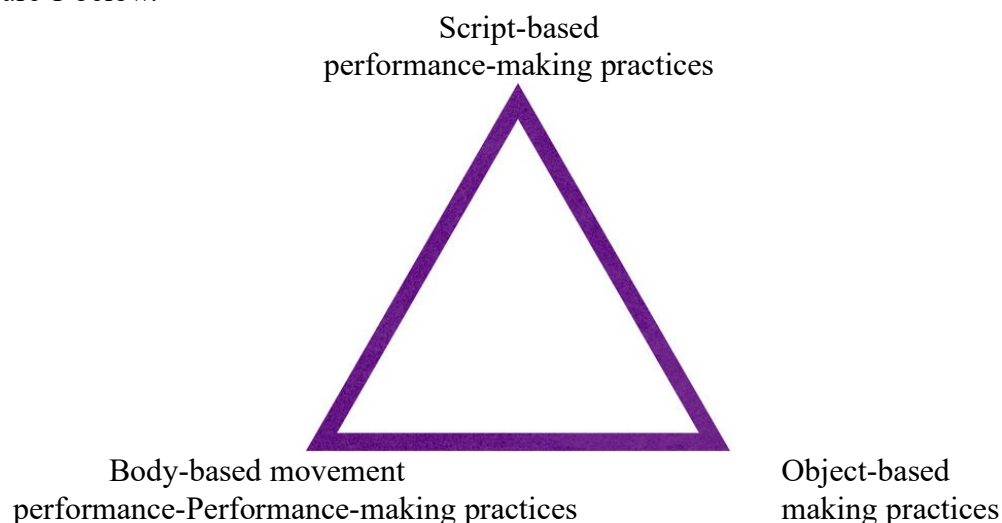


Figure 1: A schematic presentation of the repertoire or toolbox of performance-making practices used by nonmainstream theatre-makers in contemporary Bangkok.

Although theatre-making is often seen to be based on written scripts, something true in Bangkok's theatre scene, too, what counts as a script varies considerably. It may include original old or new Thai plays, faithful translations, loose adaptations or hybrid blends or mixes of plots, characters, and ideas, from many different plays. In developing their scripts, some often develop scripts on their own, like Nikorn Sae-Tang of 8X8 Theatre (founded in 1998), Damkerng Thitapiyasa, who worked with Parnrut Kritchanhai, in the New Theatre Society (founded in 2009?), while other contemporary theatre-makers develop their work through collective practices, such as Jarunun Phantachat (Jaa) and Dujdao Vadhanapakorn (Dao) of B-floor (started in 1999). Wichaya Artamat has also had more than a decade of script-making as part of his performance-making practices, starting with New Theatre Society but, from 2014, as part of ForwhaT Theatre, often working with Pathipon Adsavamahapong (Miss Oat).

Body-focused movement performance-making practices include practices that put the human body at the center of storytelling process, often tied to contemporary dance and physical theatre. Among Bangkok-based performance makers, this includes Pichet Klunchun and the PKDC (Pichet Klunchun Dance Company, founded in 2005), Crescent Moon (Space, in Bangkok 2005-2017) projects led by Sineenadh Keitprapai (Nad), and the mime trio of Ratchai Rujiwipatna (Nging), Nuttapol Kummata (Ta), and Thong-glur Thongta (Glur), who worked together since 2000 and under the name Babymime since 2005, as well as Jitti Chompee's work as choreographer of 18Monkeys Dance Theatre (founded in 2010). Many B-floor projects led by Teerawat Mulvilai (Kage) and others are also movement-based, and one-time member Kwin Bhichitkul has worked in dee ng Theatre (founded in 2014) which makes bodily movement central to its performances. Even the multi-talented performance-maker Nikorn Sae-Tang (8X8 Theatre) depends heavily on movement to tell his stories. While overlapping with techniques and practices used in physical theatre, such as Anne Bogart's Viewpoints, Jacques Lecoq's movement and mime techniques, or Laban Effort Qualities, many Bangkok performers use practices derived from classical Thai dance, other types of traditional dance in Thailand, and butoh.

Beyond script and body movement as sources of their performance-making, several newer theatre-makers in Bangkok have also been using objects, masks, puppets, visuals and technological systems as part of their working process to explore new ways to communicate their ideas and sensibilities. This includes Nikorn Sa-Tang, who works with neutral and character masks and objects in many of his works, the mime artist Nuttapol Kummata (Ta) who left Babymime in 2020 to form TaLent Show, often working with Nattaporn Mayped Thanhahuad (May). B-floor projects also often rely on the use of visuals and objects in their productions. More recently, Wichaya Artamat has made pieces organized around objects, as well as video and voice recordings to communicate, including live recordings that show those objects. Pichet Klunchun has not only long danced with masks in his engagement with *khon* (classical masked dance), done spontaneous painting onstage, moved with large snakes, but has begun working with images and video recordings of classical dance along with AI systems in newer work.

The performance work by these artists using the above repertoire of practices, often done as part of a constellation or ensemble, does not only form *communities of performance practice* for the duration of each project. It also establishes *communities of performance viewers* when they perform before audiences. Since the nonmainstream theatre community in Bangkok is not large but highly committed, and since rehearsal and performance spaces and meeting times are at a premium, many of the projects assemble an ensemble using the same people of the theatre *communities of theatre practice*. Using mostly Bangkok-based

performers and mostly the Thai language and cultural materials tied to Thai society, politics and culture, these working practices and those who create and perform them likewise create a wider *Bangkok theatre community* that constitute the Bangkok performance scene. These performance projects are often built of practices, materials and ideas that resonate with people in Bangkok, many of them are connected groups and stages outside of Bangkok, both in cities like Chiangmai and Hua Hin, but also in cities like Khon Kaen and Chiangrai. These translocal connections to other parts of Thailand include performances outside of Bangkok and also transnational ties to international performance networks. These connections include parts of the Bangkok performance-making scene part of both larger translocal and transnational theatre assemblages.

Mapping Performance Making Practices in Bangkok

This section of the paper will locate what some performing artists in Thailand do to seek new insights and embodied ways of feeling and moving that to share with others. The focus in this paper is on the work of Pichet Klunchun, Nikorn Saetang, Jitti Chompee, Jarunun Phantachat, Wichaya Artamat, Parnrut Kritchanhai, and Peangdao Jariyapun. These performing artists experiment and explore ways to identify and refine and communicate live forms of feeling and living differently. Their work emerges as part of practices that are at work in creating spaces that are dynamic, open, and evolving, and which often lack an institutional or discursive home. Their diverse, intertwined modes of knowledge-making through performance practice are involved with various constellations of nonmainstream contemporary performing arts traditions and disciplines in Bangkok are tied to nascent communities supporting artistic research and links the work of artists, academics, cultural workers and community actors. As part of these performance assemblages, they organize, design, create and evaluate performances in Thailand in ways that engage, challenge, and form communities of those who care about the performing arts.

A key feature of the performance in Bangkok is efforts to reconnect with hidden histories, revitalizing cultural memory and advocacy for agency, even as artists extend beyond the local to incorporate aspects of the global through their digital, technological and environmental concerns. Many of the performance projects that begin among performers or performance groups in Bangkok start with facts or experiences that are difficult to understand enigmas or puzzles in contemporary life or in their artistic practice.

In broad terms, those involved in theatre-making in Bangkok often start with an internal, often inarticulate, experience, feeling, irritation, tension or conflict that relates to an experience of something unsettling or confusing in their lives or in the world around them. They seek to explore and articulate this experience or feeling and to experiment with ways to make a performance. As connected to or part of an ensemble of those involved in performance-making, they turn to other people, spaces, and forms of support for them to develop their ideas.

To do this, they start exploring and experimenting, using a wide variety of forms of early research for discovery and focusing. These range from reading other plays or news or history, to looking on YouTube for related material, to writing out ideas in familiar theatrical forms, in stream of consciousness form, or bullet points, to sketching out images, to taking pictures or filming, or to move according to learned forms or to experiment with new types of movement, or moving in new spaces, to playing with objects and things that they find or that are around them. While these efforts are often individual efforts, they also connect to other people, things, spaces and bodies. Through this preliminary, exploratory searching, the performance makers considered are seeking not only what they want to communicate or tell,

but also how they want to tell it. Importantly, they are also already part of an assemblage of invention that involves them in a web or a network of practices.

Whatever approaches to this preliminary research used, the performance makers considered often end up with one of three major starting points for them to start articulating their project: focus on a script, focus on objects, focus on moving bodies. Since each of these focal points has a material and a shareable component, and is already part of an assemblage, each can be used to involve others, too, in its development. And just as scripts are never separate from objects (costumes, props) or bodies (as characters), so too are objects never apart from scripts or bodies, and bodies connected with scripts and objects. They form an open and flexible repertoire of practices that depend on the project, its space and time for rehearsal and performances, funding, as a collective research project for creating new collectives.

Toward a Minor Theatre: Situating the Bangkok Performance Ecosystem

The interconnected web of Bangkok contemporary performance-makers, together with their creative practices and the innovative performances they make, along with the audiences who view them, form a performance assemblage (Eeg-Tverbakk, 2023). Centered on nonmainstream performance making, this assemblage also has features of what Gilles Deleuze has called a “minor theatre” (Deleuze, 1993)

The Bangkok performancescape forms an “assemblage” or a dynamic composition that gathers together different elements into a performance making process. This web or network of people, spaces, scripts, modes of improvisation, movement techniques, and object practices form a kind of diverse unity that emerges in its specificity by its interconnections. The Bangkok performance assemblage is open and does not form a totality but constitutes a collection of different parts, like the diverse parts of an ecosystem. By exploring and experimenting, many parts of the performance assemblage in Bangkok seek to create *affects* for performers and their audiences. Their aim is less to produce performances as recognizable objects that repeat what is familiar than to push themselves and their audiences to *feel something new or different with their whole (individual and collective) self* through their encounters with live performance. Deleuze sees the performance encounter as offering the corporeal transformations of (human and inhuman) bodies in connection with one another *as* a kind of thinking that is nonrepresentational and unconscious, one that is felt and embodied *as affect or sensation*.

The Bangkok contemporary theatre as assemblage takes the form of *minor theatre* (Deleuze 1993) as an effect of the work of Bangkok’s contemporary performance-makers. As marginalized minor groups of performers who work outside or beneath mainstream commercial theatre, they are aware of and resistant to the constraints and opportunities of this *major theatre* and the more general *world of mainstream entertainment*. Thanaphol Accawatanyu (2024) characterizes the distinction like this: “The underground and independent scene is really separate from the commercial and mainstream scene. They don’t watch our shows, and we don’t watch theirs.” Minor theatre uses performances to collectivize a new sensibility and subjectivity and to call into being new kinds of community. Minor theatre contains the possibility to express and to communicate another potential community, to forge the means of another awareness, another attunement, and another sensibility (1975: 32). For Deleuze, this minor theatre sets out to invent new values and facilitate the creation of a community who have hitherto been missing, not to mark out the conditions of an oppressed minority. Rather than focusing on representation or interpretation, minor theatre focuses on experimentation as a creative act of becoming.

Minor theatre is thus a type of research that recognizes the contingency and multiplicity - the hybridity - of all cultural performances. Rather than stress 'national identity and cultural authenticity' as opposed to global uniformity, minor theatre highlights the multiplicity or many-layeredness of its own cultural-historical formations. So minor theatre emerges from complex and multiple connections established between local and international forces and conditions and focuses on new ways of becoming, on relations, on what happens between: between actions, between affections, between perceptions. This locates minor theatre in a logic and an aesthetics of “and” and “in-between” that creates new configurations of language, movements and objects to perform a kind of living reality, experienced as a creative combination of forms, people, performance styles, and things.

Conclusion

This paper has explored – in a preliminary way – the heterogenous assemblage of methods and situated practices used by a few performance-makers in Bangkok. The artists developed these methods and practices in and through their distinctive working processes with other performance-makers and in relation communities of those who care about the performing arts. Developing productions involve creating focal points for artists developing performances that center on mainly on scripts, on bodies in motion, or on objects for many performance makers considered here refer to working with some form of scripts, objects and bodies in developing their work, but some focus more on scripts, some more on objects and some more on bodies as starting points and reference points in their theatre-making process. The ensemble of those involved for a given piece varies from project to project. While this work is typically collective in its development, often one or two people are commonly initiators of and deferred to in the development of the performance.

The performance-making repertoire aims to explore and experiment with modes of communicating sense-based and embodied perceptions and experiences through practices that center on scripts, bodies, and objects as the starting point and centerpiece of collective performance devising processes. They include using existing scripts, script adaptations, individual script development, collective script-writing, devising theatre, object theatre, viewpoint methods, movement improvisation, and the performance-making practices of *khon* (classical Thai masked dance), Anne Bogart's viewpoints, *butoh*, and Jacques Lecoq have significantly expanded the possibilities of theatre. By examining the works of specific authors and practitioners, we can gain a deeper understanding of these practices and their impact on contemporary performance.

The performing artists in Bangkok seek new insights and embodied ways of feeling and moving to share with others. Their artistic research emerges as they experiment and explore ways to enhance forms of feeling and living differently. This paper maps their work onto practices and spaces that are dynamic, open, and evolving, but which often lack an institutional or discursive home. The paper seeks to locate the diverse, intertwined modes of knowledge making through performance practice by using of examples from various performing arts traditions and disciplines in Thailand. It relates them to the communities supporting artistic research and links the work of artists, academics, cultural workers and community actors. Together, they are involved in organizing, designing, creating and evaluating performances in Thailand in ways that engage, challenge, and form communities of those who care about the performing arts. The paper addresses how performance practice research done by artists, academics and cultural organizers engages and shapes communities and how communities affect research done in performance-making processes.

These performance assemblages often work on topics and themes that engage how the political, historical, cultural, and social past silently affects present conditions and how people

– and live performances – communicate. The performance assemblages also form a diverse, complex but committed community. The interconnected web of Bangkok contemporary performances form what may be called, per Gilles Deleuze, a “minor theatre.” The Bangkok contemporary performance community – both of performers and as audiences – is a community that is not one. It is an example of what Maurice Blanchot terms an “unavowable community,” which is marked by difference, alterity, and variety, or perhaps what Jean-Luc Nancy calls a “disavowed community,” which for him is a community based on the human passion for sharing in the here and now. In dialogue with those two connected concepts, *the contemporary theatre community in Bangkok is not one*. It forms a diverse ensemble of those engaged as a theatre-making assemblage that is minor.

Performing arts practices in Bangkok evoke and invoke silenced voices of those who are politically oppressed, economically disadvantaged and culturally neglected. But the performing arts also have the potential to both confront the life, culture and politics of today, and to provoke and dislocate audiences from their settled modes of representational “reality.” In so doing, their performance practices can rupture the appearance of normality and make spaces for social and political alternatives, modes of political agency, and communities since such a space can offer opportunities for differences to emerge.

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