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## Womanifesto: A Biennial Art Exchange in Thailand

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# Womanifesto:

## A Biennial Art Exchange in Thailand

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**VARSHA NAIR**

“In the midst of the biennale craze, what is your take on the possibility of having one in Thailand?” I was asked in an interview for *DIAAALOGUE*, Asia Art Archive’s newsletter (January 2009). My response was: “There has been a biennale in Thailand since 1997—Womanifesto. I don’t think that has even registered in people’s minds [...] and way before this current ‘biennale craze’ took hold”.<sup>1</sup> In the same interview, I was also asked whether the art world still regarded women artists as “mere dabblers” and if this was still a common perception, particularly in Asia. I indicated how much remains to be done for women artists in the region, as well as the unwillingness to investigate the realities of what it means to be both women and artists. And if this is seen as dabbling, then surely it’s a good thing, for from 1997 to 2008 Womanifesto fostered creative connections locally and with the wider world, successfully foregrounding the creative struggle that comes from within women.

In 1995, when Womanifesto was conceived, I had just moved from India and started to live in Bangkok. Not knowing anyone and wanting to connect with artists and find a studio space to work in, I made my way to the print-making department of Chulalongkorn University’s Faculty of Fine Arts and was accepted as a visiting artist, where I continued exploring working with etching, lithography and other forms of print-making. I was soon told about

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a women's art project that was being planned and was introduced by a common friend to Nitaya Ueareeworakul, who invited me to participate in the exhibition. In one of our early discussions about the project, Nitaya pointed out that she was the sole remaining organiser and I instantly offered to join forces to help bring the exhibition together. Thus began our friendship and my long engagement with Womanifesto, an engagement that in many ways became meaningful in defining my own journey—settling down to live in Thailand and coming into my own as an artist, potentially one who could also conceptualise projects to bring people and things together.

### **Womanifesto Opened up Various Possibilities**

First of all it offered a rare platform where women artists could foster personal interactions between artists in Thailand and those coming from near and distant shores. Womanifesto became an exciting playground in which we could take the initiative as women and as artists, rather than being just passive players, to set up projects and make diverse creative processes and thinking visible. It was a kind of laboratory, one that was based on conviviality and hospitality, enabling participants to produce and show their works, and exchange and facilitate ideas. We started to don the role of planners to initiate and promote the staging of group events, from fundraising and documenting, to exhibiting works and conversing about our individual realities and art practices. As artist-organisers, our thinking behind Womanifesto was also to remain independent, without intervention in our planned projects from the funding organisations that supported us. Fed purely by our joint creative energy and excitement of working together, we attempted to find the most direct ways to realise projects even with the most minimum financial support. Thus, biennially, starting with the first exhibition in 1997, different projects were realised until 2008, when the last project, a residency programme was set up at Boon Bandarn Farm in northeast Thailand.

The first event, Womanifesto 1, was held in 1997, in which a group of 18 artists (9 from Thailand and 9 from Indonesia, India, Japan, Singapore, USA, Austria, Italy and Pakistan) participated. Coming together via personal connections and friendship, other larger art events in Thailand happening at that time such as the Chiangmai Social Installation and Asiatopia (since 1998), and independent art spaces such as Concrete House, had also fostered a meeting ground and provided a further point of contact. Many of the participating overseas artists at Womanifesto 1—Nilofar Akmut, Amanda Heng, Arahmaiani, Tari Ito—had previously presented their works in Thailand,

either at Chiang Mai or in exhibitions in Bangkok. With frugal funding, the exhibition featuring installations, paintings, sculptures and performances took place in two gallery spaces in Bangkok: Concrete House and Baan Chao Phraya Gallery. Our homes also became sites for informal discussions and gatherings, as well as places to stay for visiting artists. This rare opportunity to meet and converse was important for us. We realised how crucial it was to continue, to establish further events where for a period of time artists could assemble also to cook, eat and live together, and to reflect and share.

Driven by the confidence gained at the first event, Womanifesto II (1999) took the form of a more ambitious outdoor exhibition that incorporated an even larger number of artists. The participants for this and following events included some who had presented at previous events. We asked them to tap into personal networks and recommend others—artists introducing artists. A determined effort was made to include some of Thailand's emerging women artists and recent graduates; also considered were individuals who, having heard about Womanifesto, contacted us and showed interest to join in our future projects.

The second event received some support from the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (BMA), which had started to fund projects in public places, in the aim of bringing art into the open and making it accessible to a wider audience. Initially planned as a two-week workshop culminating in an outdoor exhibition, due to insufficient funding the event was reduced to one week of talks by artists, work installations and an exhibition staged over one weekend in March 1999. The BMA offered the use of Saranrom Park, situated opposite the Grand Palace in the historical part of Bangkok. A rare patch of green, Saranrom Park was a popular spot where jogging in single file on designated paths was popular and where a daily pulsating aerobics session on a vast open stage starting at 6 pm sharp was well attended. For the 33 participating artists—17 from Thailand and 16 from Korea, Indonesia, China, Austria, Vietnam, Japan, USA, Pakistan, India, Australia, Croatia and Singapore—the location provided a ready audience.

The third project in 2001 saw a major shift in the way we conducted this and following Womanifesto events. Unlike the previous manifestations, which were held in Bangkok and exhibition-based, we started to establish platforms where not only artists, but also people from different disciplines and backgrounds, female and male, could join in. The decision to do so was to debunk the misconception that Womanifesto was simply about women addressing 'women's issues', when it really was about this and broader universal matters that are relevant to all humans. Furthermore, our aim was to bring all genders into conversation, conversations in this case initiated by

women artists and raising topics they wanted people to address. There was no discrimination against non-binary people—artists and lay persons alike were welcomed, as well as individuals from the gay and trans community should they wish to take part.

The premise of Womanifesto Workshop 2001, which I envisioned as a ‘picnic’ that would also involve the local resident community members, and the residency held in 2008, followed the approach of offering a platform that was not about an end result but more about the process. It was also about encouraging experimentation, bringing people together and letting things develop. Expanding the workshop idea, the aim was to provide a different kind of environment for artists to meet, converse and generate ideas for cooperation; it was a workshop in which they were *not* required to make their own ‘artwork’. This ten-day community gathering and activities were documented on video and resulted in a catalogue, with an informal ‘exhibition’ taking place on site on the last day.

At Boon Badaan Farm near Kantharalak in Si Saket province (northeast Thailand), a group of 18—artists, curators, art administrators as well as 5 student volunteers studying cultural management—were invited to interact and exchange with each other and with the local community, with a particular focus on craft traditions and handmaking processes. The aim was to share ideas, explore local materials, engage with traditional skills and art forms, and consider its use in the present way of life in the area. The participants were also asked to focus on the position of women in this rural community and the wealth of stored knowledge that has been handed down from generation to generation.

In organising such a workshop for the first time, the pressure and challenges we faced were mainly logistical ones, but coming up with solutions that included building basic bamboo huts to accommodate the participants, cooking with local produce, identifying herbs and greens on the farm that could be picked and so on, brought all involved into a close relationship with each other and with the daily life of the farm. A lively exchange was successfully generated and many of the participants ended up working collaboratively. Children’s workshops led by the artists were also set up, involving story-telling, sharing knowledge about local plants, pottery and video-making, thus bringing the younger generation from schools and villages around the farm into conversation. An open-day celebration took place on the last day of the workshop and was attended by many, including people from surrounding villages.

This emergence of conversations from participating in this extended ‘picnic’ brings to mind the *Salon*, a self-enabling, learning setting organised

by Jewish women in Europe in the 1800s. Elke Krasny explains in her text “The Salon Model: The Conversational Complex” how the conversations emerging out of this framing can be seen as ephemeral art works, “[...] that conversations can navigate the power/knowledge relations differently, and that conversations can, in fact, support agency, and create new knowledge, forms of solidarity, or living community”.<sup>2</sup>

Continuing to explore new ideas and spaces and wishing to engage with an even larger community of people, the fourth Womanifesto event in 2003 was planned as an international publication in print. This project began with an open call to artists and non-artists, male and female, from all walks of life to create work on the theme “Procreation/Postcreation”. Most of the works were sent via email. The material received was compiled and edited, and a publication in the form of a box was designed, with over 88 contributions, each on individual sheets of paper and with its own specific layout. “Procreation/Postcreation” was about collecting, archiving and documenting personal stories, old and new beliefs, medical facts, taboos, recipes, poems and more. Presenting thoughts, ideas and data from individuals and groups from across the globe, this project received an overwhelming response and 90% of the participants were previously unknown to us. The call for participation spread far and wide via personal email lists, web postings and in publications such as *n.paradoxa*, a UK-based international journal on feminist art. The project developed over a one-year period and was completed and launched in November 2003. The launch at Pridi Banomyong Institute in Bangkok took place over an evening where the contents of the box, along with video documentation of the 2001 workshop were installed in the exhibition space. Well-attended programme also included performance presentations by some of the participating artists.

In 2004 work began on creating a website to showcase Womanifesto’s past events and to plan the next one: No Man’s Land, a web-based project that would be launched in 2006. Taking as theme the borderless scape of cyberspace—yet another kind of no man’s land—75 participants from diverse places and backgrounds across the globe were invited to consider attitudes towards nationalism and generally what a no man’s land represented. Cyberspace was conceptualised simultaneously as a borderless zone, as the site of the border, and as the part of individuals that escape such definitions. The territorially imagined line of the border and its powers to include or exclude people, as well as its ability to simultaneously promote both unity and conflict were explored. The works included short video pieces, single or multiple still images, sound pieces and texts. Co-organising the project with Katherine Olston, who was based in Chiang Mai at the start of the project but

soon after had moved to Sydney, meant relying on the very same cyberspace to communicate over distance and time zones to bring the project together.

In October/November 2008, Womanifesto organised its first Artist-in-Residence programme, again at Boon Bandarn farm. The residency brought together eight women artists of different generations and backgrounds, including 70-year-old Khun Pan Parahom (now deceased), who had spent most of her life on the farm experimenting with the abundant vegetation to produce different colours to dye silk and cotton yarn that she then wove into cloth. Supported by the Office of Contemporary Art, Ministry of Culture of Thailand, we revisited this unique environment and location where the diverse visions of both the elders and a younger generation of people come together to ensure continuity of a way of life by once again linking artists with artisans and setting up a dialogue between the traditional and the contemporary. The extended time period also provided artists with the possibilities of learning about other art forms such as *Morlam* and *Pagnya*, music and oral poetry forms respectively, as well as vernacular architecture forms, and of getting involved with the seasonal farming/harvesting of rice. Also organised were workshops involving the artists on the farm and local university and school students, with an open day event on that last day presenting talks and works created during the residency.

For the participants, five weeks together on this remote farm, a mixed agricultural area with livestock and a forest, situated near Khayoong Creek, which begins at Preah Vihear Hill in Cambodia, required adjusting to present realities and finding a 'way of being' before one could dwell on anything else. This included dealing with natural elements, heavy rains at the end of the monsoon and an abundance of creepy crawlies. Added to that, as the residency began, the political scene in Bangkok was heating up and news being beamed on TV encroached on the calm of the farm. Tensions between Thailand and Cambodia relating to the disputed land around the Khmer-era Preah Vihear temple (the farm is located 36 km from the temple) came to a head and there was an exchange of fire between the two armies. Nevertheless, experiencing the meaningful interactions between the participants—those who resided on the farm, visiting students and artisans—and the overwhelming response from the community at the open day gathering, clearly demonstrated the importance of continuing with the residency programme and taking the dialogues and collaborations that were activated further.<sup>3</sup>

Khun Pan Parahom was among the few remaining elderly women who practised *Pagnya*. Reflecting on the six weeks spent with the other resident artists, she remarked, "I have never experienced being part of this kind of a project. I have gained a lot from other participants and their way of thinking.

I would like to make a work and add this knowledge to it—a cloth where each participant's presence will be in the piece. I am proud and happy that everyone comes here from different places to participate on this land. My life changed when I came here. This land, I feel, is ancient and it was fated that I be here. We are all here too, because it is meant to be”.

### **Chronology of Events**

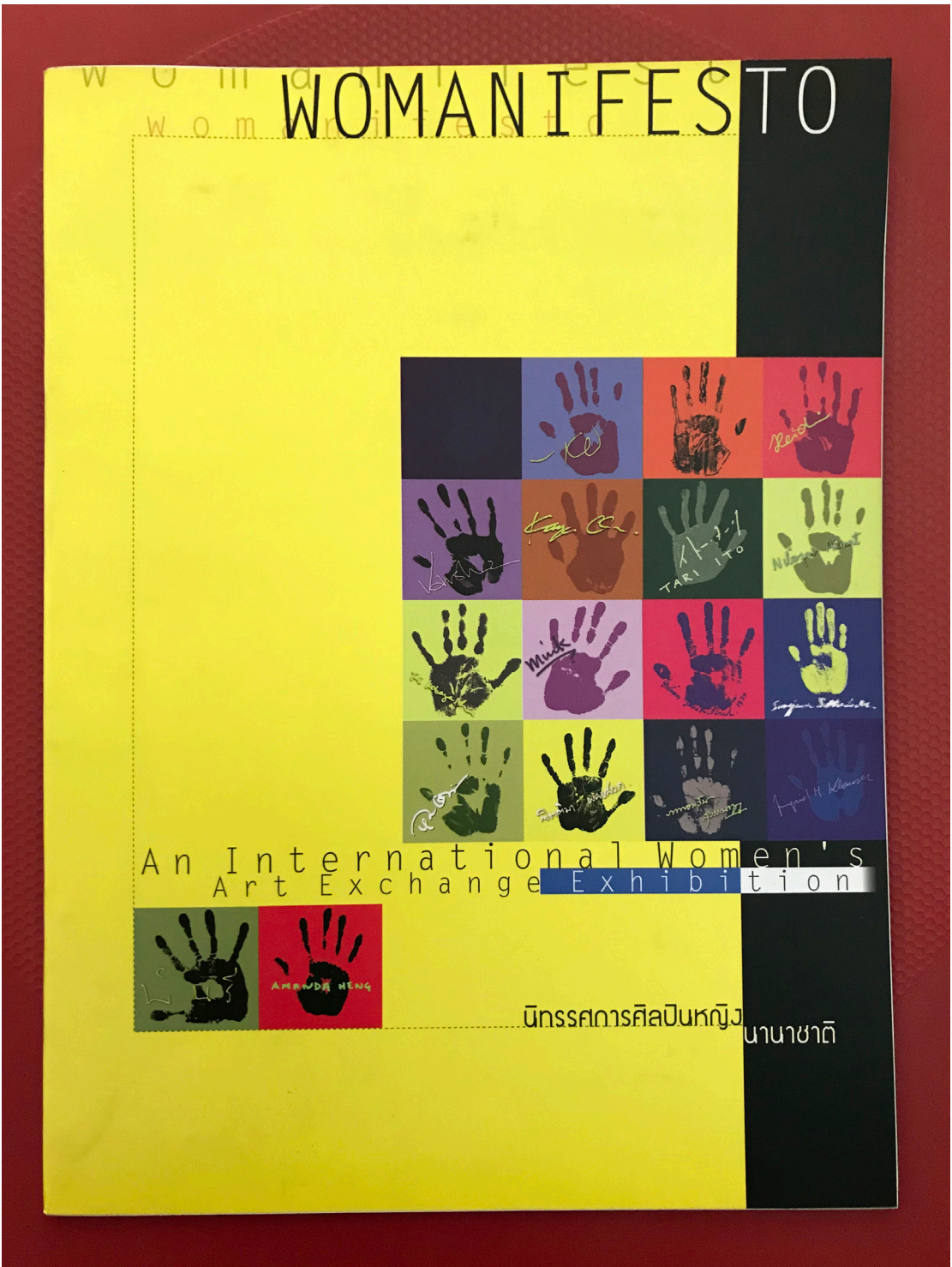
- 1997: Womanifesto. Exhibition at Concrete House and Baan Chao Phraya Gallery. (Organised by Nitaya Ueareeworakul and Varsha Nair. Advisors: Somporn Rodboon and Ark Fongsmut. Catalogue. Partially funded by Japan Foundation.)

*Planning of the first event started in 1996 with regular meetings between Nitaya and me in our homes and later at Baan Chao Phraya Gallery on Phra Arthit Road, of which Ark Fongsmut was the director. Communication with participating artists, gathering and editing texts, PR and logistical planning were handled according to individual abilities, with Nitaya handling Thai texts and Varsha, the English ones. In the months leading up to March 1997 when the exhibitions opened, we designed the catalogue, poster, exhibition layout and opening day programmes with Ark Fongsmut's input.*

- 1999: Womanifesto II. Exhibition held at Saranrom Park, Bangkok. (Organised by Ueareeworakul, Pantini Chamnianwai and Studio Xang. Catalogue and video documentation. Funded by the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority.)

*Charged by the excitement and energy of the first event, we ploughed on with planning the second one. We were informed that the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (BMA) was interested to receive a proposal from us for a project to be based in a public place, something that we were also keen on exploring. With funding ensured, we were able to consider inviting a larger number of artists. The key organiser was Nitaya, who was assisted by her partner Pantini Chamnianwai in their art space, Studio Xang. The event was also supported by Duanghatai Pongprasit, a member of Hers Group, a group of recent graduates of Silpakorn Art School, and the Empower Foundation, a non-governmental organisation involved in conducting education programmes for sex workers. I was involved in this early stage of*





Womanifesto, 1997. Catalogue cover



Womanifesto II, 1999, gathering at home



Mella Jaarsama, 'From pets to pests', installation in Saranrom Park, Womanifesto II, 1999



On-Anong Klinsiri, 'Boudoir', installation in Saranrom Park, Womanifesto II, 1999



Sanja Ivekovic, workshop at women's shelter, Bangkok, Womanifesto II, 1999



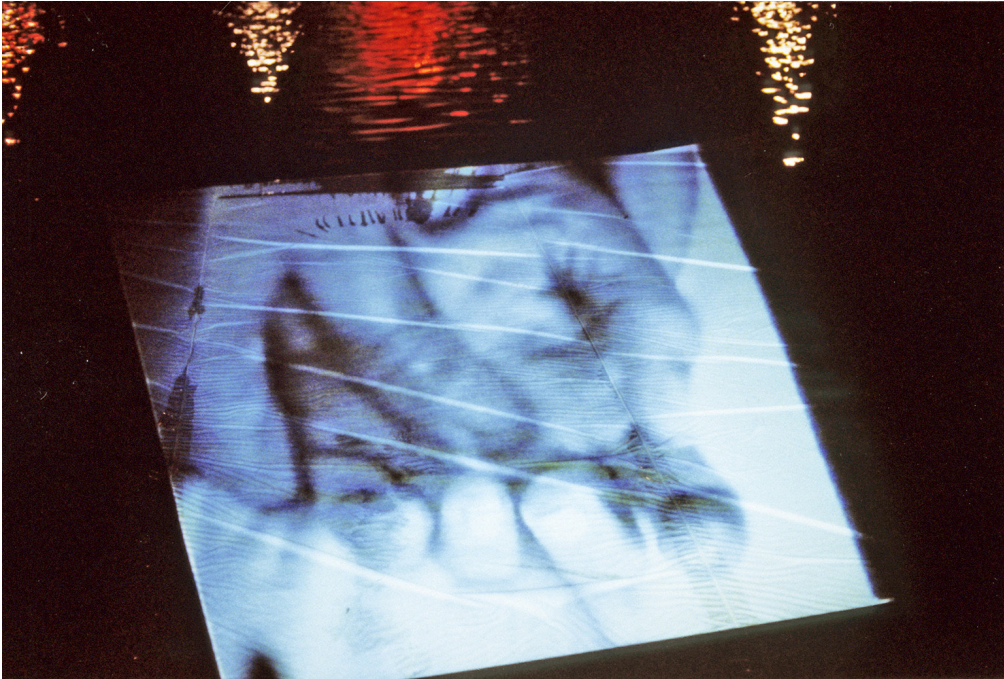
Sanja Ivekovic, installation in Saranrom Park, Womanifesto II, 1999



Sriwan Jenhuttakarnkit, light sculptures, Womanifesto II, 1999



Tari Ito, 'Me being Me', performance. Womanifesto II, 1999



Varsha Nair and Virginia Hilyard, 'Your hand opens and closes', Video installation, Womanifesto II, 1999



Womanifesto II, participants

*planning and later liaising with visiting artists, but not with other logistical matters such as working with the BMA, which required going back and forth with never-ending paperwork, all in Thai, so I was unable to help. The challenges were many, including paring down the event as the funding was insufficient, helping artists work and install works outdoors with unseasonal rain often interrupting the process. Also, funding by the BMA was only given long after the completion of the event, which meant dealing with the stress of finding monies beforehand. Nitaya borrowed the money from Studio Xang, money earned from teaching and conducting regular art classes and workshops for children at the Studio.*

*The general feeling after the event was of exhaustion, of missing the closeness and exchanges amongst the participants we had experienced at the first one, and of not wanting to gather a large group again. We even discussed not planning for Womanifesto to happen bi-annually, giving ourselves more time to regain energy and concentrate on our work and family life. This led to the idea of going on a 'picnic', away from Bangkok.*

- 2001: Womanifesto Workshop 2001. Community-based workshop at Boon Bandarn Farm, Kantharaluk, northeast Thailand. (Organised by Nair, Ueareworakul, Preenun Nana and Naomi Urabe. Catalogue and video documentation. Funded by Heinrich Boell Foundation.)

*The initial idea was to have a small group of 8 or 10 get on a train and go somewhere rural, preferably within a community of artisans, see what we find and start conversations based on that—a kind of 10-day talkfest around friendship, fun, learning and exchanging ideas, and not necessarily about making our own art to exhibit.*

*We thought of northeast Thailand as Nitaya hails from Udon Thani and provided a connection with the region, and Thai artist Maitree Parahom, a friend of Nitaya, invited us to visit his family's farm near Kantharaluk in Si Saket province. On our first visit to Boon Bandarn farm, we spent a few days acquainting ourselves with the surrounding villages and communities, and meeting and talking with his parents about Womanifesto and setting up a workshop engaging artisans from the area. They welcomed the idea and Khun Pan Parahom, Maitree's mother, was particularly encouraging. Meeting her, seeing her way of being and living, was very inspiring, and we immediately decided to base the workshop there. Maitree had experimented with constructing*



Boon Bandarn Farm, Womanifesto Workshop 2001



Surojana Sethabutra, kiln firing on Boon Bandarn Farm, Womanifesto Workshop 2001



Womanifesto Workshop 2001, participants



Karla Sachse and Khun Pikul, Womanifesto Workshop 2001



*mud huts on the farm, and there was the large family house, but clearly we needed to build more accommodation and living facilities. We discussed the possibility of building simple bamboo huts with thatched roof—local materials that were in abundant supply—with the help of people on the farm. We also agreed that a central large sala space was needed, which would be the gathering point for all activities. All of this, we were aware, would require funding. So who to approach and how to go about to get funding?*

*The government had just set up the OTOP initiative (to start in 2001) and we approached a political candidate of the party then in power. She showed interest but asked if we could change our project to be based in her constituency in Bangkok instead. We said we could consider that in future, but for now we needed funding for the project to be based in Isarn. Clearly, decentralising and wanting to base activities on a farm and in Isarn—an area that is mostly looked down upon as being poor, with people from the region seen as having little culture—was not seen as being of value. Nitaya and I were introduced to Heike Loschmann, director of the then Chiang Mai-based Heinrich Boell Foundation. In line with the Foundation's aims of supporting artists working away from the centre and in rural communities, she offered us full funding for the 2001 workshop.*

2003: Procreation/Postcreation. A limited edition publication. (Organised by Nair and Nana. Funded by The Rockefeller Foundation.)

*By 2002 Nitaya was married and living in Kantharaluk and pregnant with her first child. This development and the life change she faced of having a baby in her life, led to the ideas behind Procreation/Postcreation. It was also clear that she would not be actively involved in organising, so we decided to set up a project that would not involve physical gatherings but would instead gather diverse expressions in the form of a publication. Preenun Nana, also based in Bangkok, stepped in to help. Rosalia Sciortino, director of The Rockefeller Foundation's Bangkok office, had approached us to find out what our next project was about, as the Foundation was interested in supporting Womanifesto. She also encouraged us to set up a website, for which we were offered separate funding.*

*We sent the Procreation/Postcreation project out as an open call, not knowing what the response would be like, whether we would get enough works to make a publication. As it turned out, there were so many people wanting to be part of it and from all corners of the*



Bops. Drawing for Procreation/  
Postcreation, 2003



Procreation/Postcreation. Launch of publication at Pridi Banomyong Institute, 2003



Esther Ferrer. Performance at launch exhibition. Procreation/Postcreation, 2003



Wandering Moon. Performance at launch exhibition. Procreation/Postcreation, 2003



Procreation/Postcreation, Publication project, 2003

world—from Mongolia to St Vincent and the Grenadines. Each day (back in the dial up days!) started with the excitement of checking emails to see the responses and receiving most of the works digitally. The compilation of works started to build up over a period of a year and we then decided on what form the publication would take.

The launch of the project was planned at Pridi Banomyong Institute and again we were not sure how many would attend. That evening we had over 300 people attending. Besides exhibiting the contents of the box and installing videos, some artists presented performances, including Esther Ferrer, who had no previous connection with Womanifesto but who had arrived that evening for Asiatopia, which was opening in the following days.

2005/6: No Man's Land. A web project. (Organised by Nair and Katherine Olston. Adviser: Keiko Sei. Funded by Heinrich Boell Foundation.)

In 2004 work started on setting up the website. This took a year or so, and in the process, it became clear that the next project should be web-based. No Man's Land was by invitation and the list came together via our (Keiko, Katherine and Varsha) personal connections. We approached Heinrich Boell Foundation again and were successful in getting funding.



[www.womanifesto.com](http://www.womanifesto.com)

No Man's Land. Web project, announcement postcard designed by Jerome Ming, 2006

- 2008: Womanifesto Residency 08. An artist-in-residence programme in Si Saket province, northeast Thailand. (Organised by Nair, Ueareeworakul, Phaptawan Suwannakudt. Funded by Office of Contemporary Art, Ministry of Culture of Thailand. Documented via video and photographs.)

*After completing the web project, we wanted to find a long-term home for Womanifesto and decided to establish a residency programme. Nitaya by now was a mother of two. Still based in Kantaraluk, she was ready to be involved in organising projects again. Also our wish after the 2001 workshop was to continue the dialogue we had started on Boon Bandarn farm with the surrounding community, so we decided to set up there. We asked Phaptawan to join as organiser and participant, and together we came up with a proposal for the residency. We decided to invite artists—local and international—who had worked within communities, had a specific connection with the region, and came from different generations. These included 70-year-old Pan Parahom and Naruemon Padsamran, a young graduate (BFA, Maharakham University) who had participated in the annually held Brand New project in 2007.*



Nitaya Ueareeworakul at Khayoong creek on Boon Bandarn Farm, Womanifesto Residency, 2008



Womanifesto Residency, open day, 2008



Khun Pan Parahom and Onanong Klinsiri, Womanifesto Residency, 2008



Khun Pan Parahom dyeing yarn, Womanifesto Residency, 2008



Khun Pan Parahom



Performance workshop with students of Maharakam University, Womanifesto Residency, 2008



Tie-dye workshop with students of Maharakam University, Womanifesto Residency, 2008





Workshop by Naruemon Padsamran, Womanifesto Residency, 2008



Workshop group, Womanifesto Residency, 2008

## **Appendix: List of Participants**

### **Womanifesto, 1997**

**Participants:** Amanda Heng, Arahmaiani, Heidemarie Laimanee Gauss, Ingrid H. Klauser, Jittima Pholsawek, Kanya Chareonsupakul, K.O. (Karin Obal), Khaisaeng Phanyawatchira, Mink Nopparat, Nilofar Akmut, Nitaya Ueareeworakul, Phaptawan Suwannakudt, Pinaree Sanpitak, Sriwan Janehuttakarnkit, Surojana Sethabutra, Tari Ito, Tei Kobayashi, Varsha Nair

### **Womanifesto II, 1999**

**Participants:** Amanda Heng, Chen Qing Quing, Dawn Laddawan Passar, Doungatai Pongprasit, Jarunan Phantachat, Jittima Pholsawek, Kanya Chareonsupkul, Khaisaeng Phanyawatchira, Kim Hea Sim, K.O., Ko Hyun-Hee, Mayumi Hamada, Mella Jaarsma, Morakot Ketklao, Nguyen Dam Thuy, Nguyen Thi Chun Giang, Nilofar Akmut, Nitaya Ueareeworakul, Onanong Klinsiri, Pinaree Sanpitak, Sanja Ivekovic, Saraswati Gramich, Sermsuk Thiensoonthon, Surojana Sethabutra, Tari Ito, The Wandering Moon, Varsha Nair, Virginia Hilyard, Watcharaporn Srisuk, Yuvana Poonwattanawit

### **Womanifesto Workshop, 2001**

**Participants:** Hiroko Inoue, Lawan Jirasuradej, Karla Sachse, Maritta Nurmi, Naomi Urabe, Narumol Thamapruksha, Nilofar Akmut, Nitaya Ueareeworakul, Preenun Nana, Surojana Sethabutra, Varsha Nair, Yin Xiuzhen, Yoshiko Kanai

### **Procreation/Postcreation, 2003**

**Participants:** Ann Gollifer, Alicia Villarreal, Bangkok Writers Group, Beatriz Albuquerque, Benjamas Phuprasert, Bernd Reichert, Beauty Suit Team, Bops (Caroline Sardine), Carola Willbrand, Cecilia Casamajor, Crescent Moon, Cristina Gonzales Dominguez, Dana Squires, Darlene Lee, Dida Papalexandrou, Doris Hinzen-Roehrig, Dragana Zarevac, Duangatai Pongprasit, Edie Kurzer, Edouard Mornaud, Eduardo Magno Enriquez, Elisabeth Steger, Elaine Vis, Estelle Cohenny-Vallier, Esther Ferrer, Guda Koster, Hasi, Hayriye koç, Hazel Cumberland, Inari Virmakoski, Ingrid AR, Jana Francova/Jan Bruzenak, Jiratti Kuttanam, Jocelyn Ortt-Saeed, John Hopkins, Jolanda Schouten, Jittima Pholsawek, K.O., Kai Kajlo, Karin Meiner/Manfred Hammes, Karen Demavivas and Brynna Tucker, Karla Sachse, Khaisang Phanyawachira, Kirsten Justesen, Lilian Nabulime, Liliane Zumkemi, Lisa Jones, Liz Bradshaw, Madhulika Ghosh, Marcela Jardón, Margaret Nagawa, Martine Stig, Miguel Jimenez, Mink Nopparat, Mona Bur, Monthatip Suksopha (the wandering moon), Nabwong Chuaychuwong, Natale Platania, Nilofar Akmut, Nitaya Ueareeworakul, Nguyen Thi Quang Vinh (ahn tran), Padmini Balam, Pam Patterson, Pamela Lofts, P.C.T., Petra Putscher, Petra Vander Steen, Phaptawan Phaptawan Suwannakudt, Pinaree Sanpitak, Preenun Nana, Riketa Mamaj, Renata Otero, Roland Bergere, Ruth G. Cervantes, Savitri Damrastharm,

Sejla Kamberic, Shalini Patel, Srinidhi, Steven Pettifor, Susan Beatty, Tamara Moyzes, Tara Morelos, Tei Kobayashi, Tina Gonzales, Varsha Nair, Virginia Hilyard, Wantana Kitipornpisarn, Yoshiko Kanai

### **No Man's Land, 2006**

**Participants:** Ana Bilankov, Andrew Burrell, atelier thingsmatter, Barbara Lattanzi, Beatriz Albuquerque, Chakkrit Chimnok, Chaw Ei Thein, Doris Hinzen Roehrig, Dragana Zarevac, Emma Lawton, Estelle Cohenny-Vallier, Farida Batool, Felipe Aguila, Graciela Ovejero, Hsu Su-chen, Irene Leung, Jerome Ming, John Hopkins, Judy Freya Sibayan, Kai Kaljo, Karin Meiner, Karla Sachse, Kash Gabriele Torsello, Katherine Olston, Kirsten Justesen, Konrad Karcher, Lawan Jirasuradej, Liliane Zumkemi, Manit Sriwanichpoom, Manu Luksch, Marketa Bankova, Martin Zet, Mella Jaarsma, Mideo M Cruz, Mona Burr, Nilofar Akmut, Noor Effendy Ibrahim, Orly Dahan, Pamela Lofts, Patricia Reed, Phaptawan Suwannakudt, Pinaree Sanpitak, Pisithpong Siraphisut, Preenun Nana, Prevett and McArthur, Reiko Kammer, Renata Poljak, Renate Koch, Roland Bergere, Sara Haq, Shane Solanki, Silvia Pastore, Sue Hajdu, Susanne Ahner, Suvita Charanwong, Suzann Victor, Tejal Shah, Terry Berkowitz, Trupti Patel, Varsha Nair, Wen Yau, Yoshiko Shimada

### **Womanifesto Residency, 2008**

**Participants:** Graciela Ovejero, Liliane Zumkemi, Onanong Klinsiri, Naruemon Padsamran, Pan Parahom, Phaptawan Suwannakudt

## **BIOGRAPHY**

**Varsha Nair** was born in Kampala, Uganda and studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayaji Rao University, Baroda, India. Straddling multidisciplinary collaborations, her work encompasses various approaches and genres including making, writing and organising projects. Co-organiser of Womanifesto, an international art exchange in Thailand, where she has lived since 1995, she has also exhibited internationally, including at Chulalongkorn Art Centre, Khoj (New Delhi), Tate Modern (London), HKW (Berlin), Art in General (New York) and Lodypop (Basel). She has published her writings in various art journals such as *n.paradoxa*, *Art AsiaPacific* and *Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art*, of which she is Editorial Board member. Nair is currently invited by Lucerne School of Art to mentor Masters students and set up the Masters Dialogue Program.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> “Interview with Varsha Nair”, *Asia Art Archive* (1 Jan. 2009), <https://aaa.org.hk/en/ideas/ideas/interview-with-varsha-nair>.
- <sup>2</sup> Elke Krasny, “The Salon Model: The Conversational Complex”, *Feminism and Art History Now: Radical Critiques of Theory and Practice*, ed. Victoria Horne and Lara Perry (London: I.B. Taurus, 2017).
- <sup>3</sup> Ten years have passed since the first residency programme in 2008. Along with our personal commitments—work, bringing up children, day-to-day living, caring for ailing parents—all of which needed to be attended to as a priority, in the years following the residency, Nitaya and I attempted to secure funding to continue with the programme, but our attempts to get local organisations and institutions to back projects were not successful.