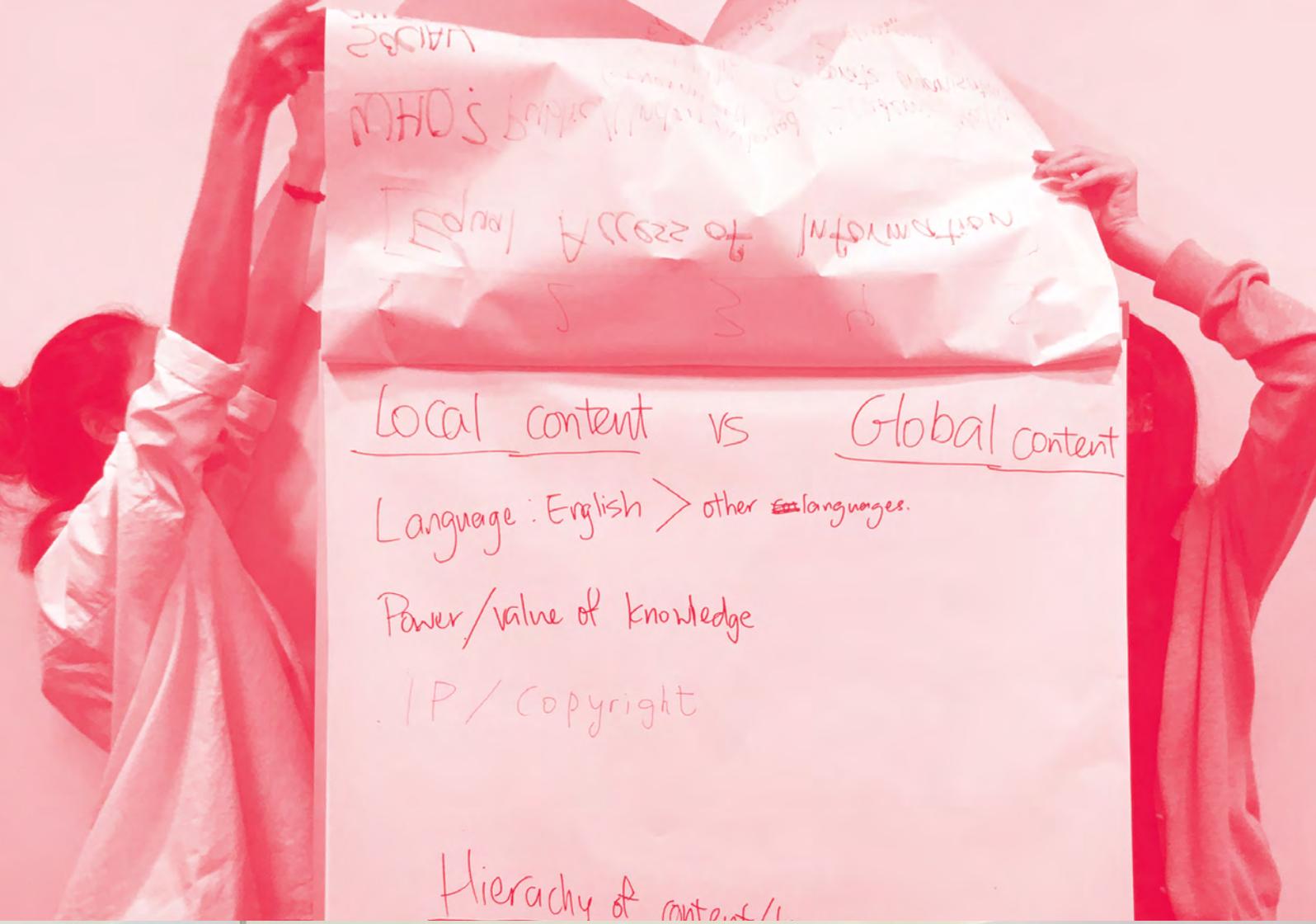


# INTERNET FREEDOM BEYOND WORDS

**CREATIVE  
WORKSHOP  
SUMMARY REPORT**  
May 2018

UNESCO  
Office in Bangkok



WHO'S... INFORMATION

WHO'S... INFORMATION

WHO'S... INFORMATION

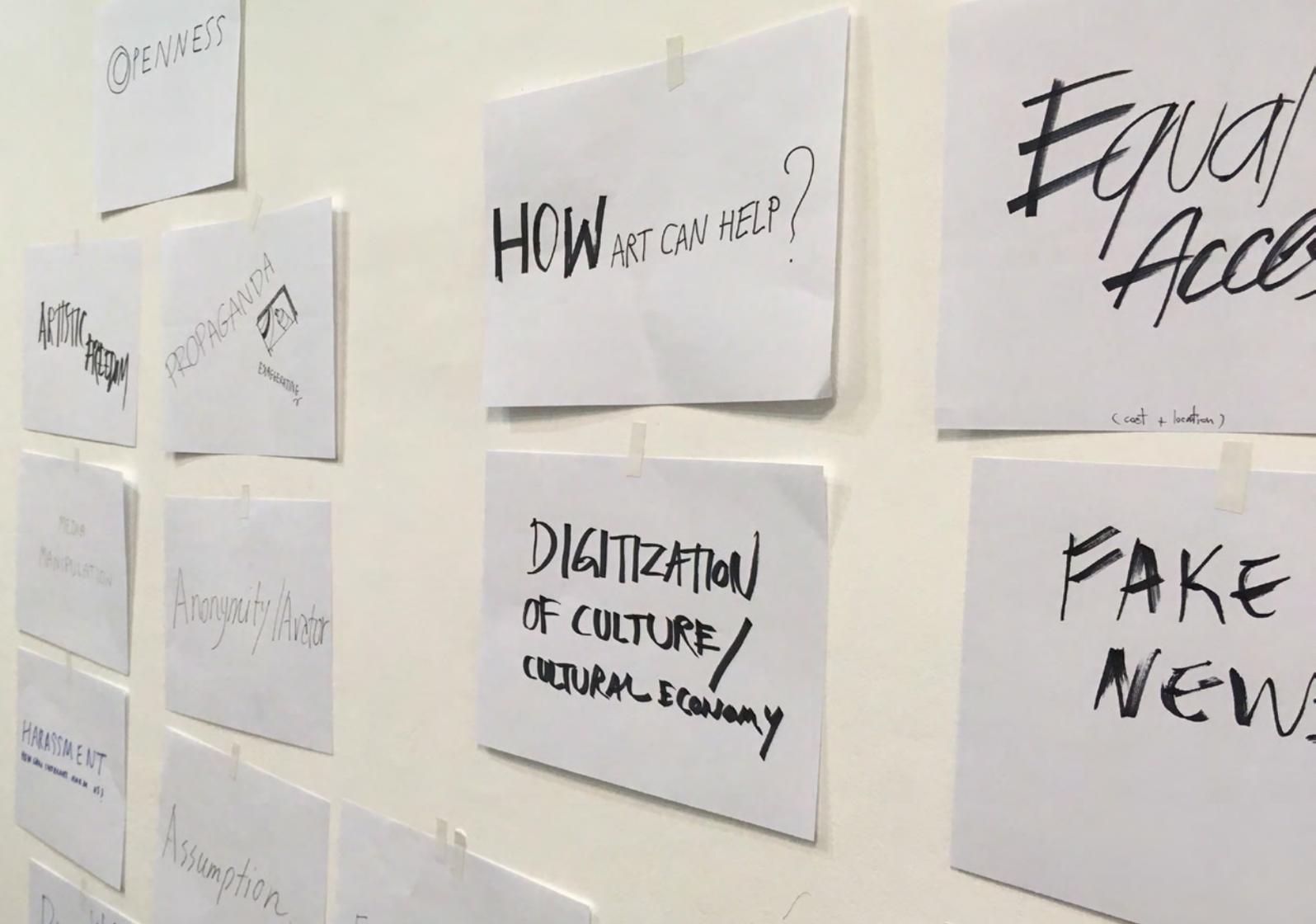
# Local content vs Global content

Language: English > other ~~en~~ languages.

Power/value of knowledge

IP/copyright

Hierarchy of content/...



OPENNESS

ARTISTIC FREEDOM

PROPAGANDA  
EMERGING

HOW ART CAN HELP?

Equal Access  
(cost + location)

DIGITIZATION OF CULTURE / CULTURAL ECONOMY

FAKE NEWS

ANONYMITY / ANGST

ASSUMPTION

MEDIA MANIPULATION

HARASSMENT

## **CONTEXT & BACKGROUND**

Coinciding with World Press Freedom Day, and in line with UNESCO's Internet Universality concept, this workshop was conceived to inspire visual artists and creative communication professionals in southeast Asia to bring their views on Internet freedom and human rights in a region where the concepts are increasingly being challenged.

Over a period of 3 days, 10 participants from diverse professional backgrounds and 8 students worked together to collectively reflect on a number of local situations and social transformations pertaining to the rights, levels of accessibility and openness, as well as the degree of participation toward shaping a more equal, safe and fair Internet space in the global era.

This first workshop edition successfully highlighted the concerns and aspirations of creative professionals as well as their unique perspectives on sensitive issues related to communication and information in southeast Asia.

An exhibition of the creative works will take place at the end of September 2018, during the International Day for Universal Access to Information.

# WORKSHOP APPROACH

## CONTENTS & METHODOLOGY

The workshop concentrated on the following activities in order to define a local understanding of the concept 'Internet Freedom' and UNESCO's ROAM principles:

- Local context analysis of real life situations and social changes related to Internet usage and its impact in the region.
- Sharing of individual perspectives on the Internet Universality concept notably in the context of creative practices.
- Creative ideas and solutions that can support the development of an open and free Internet.
- Reflection and analysis to elaborate a better understanding of local situations and possibilities for change.

Each session was carried out through group works while encouraging interaction, collaboration and participation.

## EXERCISES

Participants used 'design-thinking' to identify specific issues related to the subject of Internet freedom and their own concerns about rights, openness and accessibility.

They included:

- The identification and mapping of key issues associated to the ROAM (rights, openness, accessibility, multistakeholder participation) in order to assess the participants' level of understanding and get an overview of their concerns, views and aspirations.
- A 'Problem definition' exercise to analyze each of the ROAM principles through social and cultural factors in the southeast Asia context in particular.
- The identification of the causes and consequences attached to the problems identified.
- A thematic connection of the key issues in order to form the 'umbrella themes' of the exhibition.

[See exercise templates](#)



## PRESENTATIONS

During the opening session, each participant presented an image of their choice, linked to the topic of Internet freedom and freedom of expression. A number of images were directly linked to censorship and media control in the region.

[See images](#)

(1)

### **The Role of Artists and Designers in Society**

This presentation highlighted the role previously taken by visual artists and other creative people to positively influence society and push ideas to enable an open, equal and free society.

[See PDF presentation](#)

[Read presentation summary](#)

(2)

### **Information / Representation / Expression**

This session explained three different communication approaches and their differences in conveying a message.

- Information as facts about a particular situation, event, context.
- Representation through images or narratives describing a specific issue through a chosen perspective.
- Expression about a particular event or situation.



# WORKSHOP RESULTS

## Awareness of participants

The workshop discussions revealed a lack of awareness about human rights among the participants. They also worked to clarify a number of universal concepts, including openness and freedom, which were perceived as threats, perhaps due to the current political climate in southeast Asia.

Many participants conveyed a feeling of pessimism in connection to the possibility of changing local situations (i.e. censorship, social hierarchies), and viewed freedom and human rights as being "idealistic" concepts.

The workshop also highlighted the fact that social engagement remains limited among the general public and creative professionals in the current Thai context, because of a limited awareness about human rights. The participants felt the issue to be a persistent problem but were unsure about the potential solutions or actions needed to instigate change.

It is hoped that the exhibition and related events will work as potential catalysts for building awareness and stimulate a stronger sense of engagement through networking among the creative communities in Thailand and southeast Asia.

## Findings

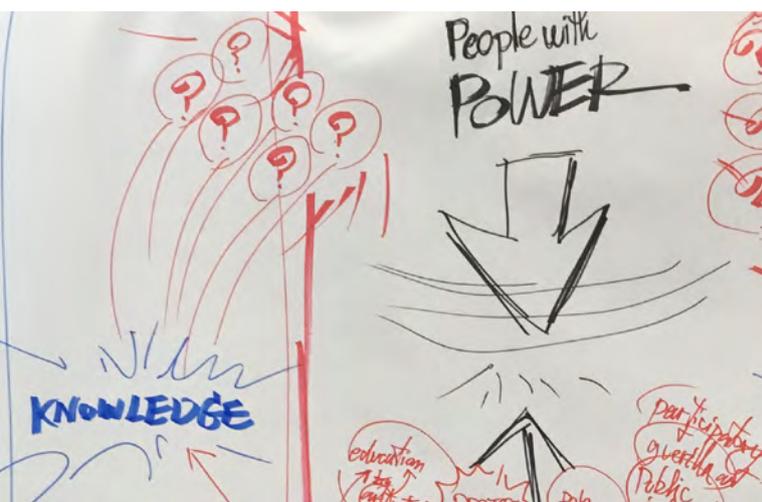
Group exercises led to the identification of key concerns and challenges in the Thai and Asian contexts.

Censorship and self-censorship were mentioned at multiple times, with participants citing examples of their own behavior online, especially on social media networks. Cautious behavior when posting online is a common attitude adopted by them. The possibility of a 'culture of freedom' was questioned in the context of a 'culture of fear' that is prevalent in southeast Asia.

The credibility and reliability of information were presented as major issues affecting societies in the region and beyond. Participants spoke about the key responsibility of individual users/content creators and the importance of awareness-raising about good practices. The responsibility of large companies and governments was on the other hand viewed as more suspicious and difficult to rely on.

Cultural representation, visibility and hierarchies were highlighted as growing Internet-related issues in the global era. The need to prevent cultural stereotypes and the limited access to content coming from least developed countries as opposed to Western countries are a few of the concerns that were addressed during the workshop.

Changes in human relationships and social behavior online were shared as affecting casual relationships, generation gaps, and self-perception.



## Exhibition Thematic Areas

4 key themes for the exhibition were identified through discussions and in-depth analysis with the participants:

### (1)

#### Human interactions and relationships

- How Internet has changed the way people relate to each other.
- Proximity / Distance: how people see one another online.
- Culture of freedom vs. the culture of fear.
- Internet as a means of communication: is it now easier to communicate than before?
- Beyond borders: the relationships that are only possible because of the Internet.
- Freedom of interaction: how people behave online.
- Self-perception and perception of others: the selfie.
- Generational gaps and the Internet.

### (2)

#### Time and space

- Speed on the Internet: fast vs. slow.
- Distortions caused by the Internet and their consequences on society.
- Real or fake: how the Internet re-defines communication and information.
- The speed of information: how much is consumed and shared online.
- Creating online: how does the Internet impact creative practitioners and culture?
- Work or leisure: the place of the Internet in our lives.
- Privacy and safety: the situation in Thailand and southeast Asia

### (3)

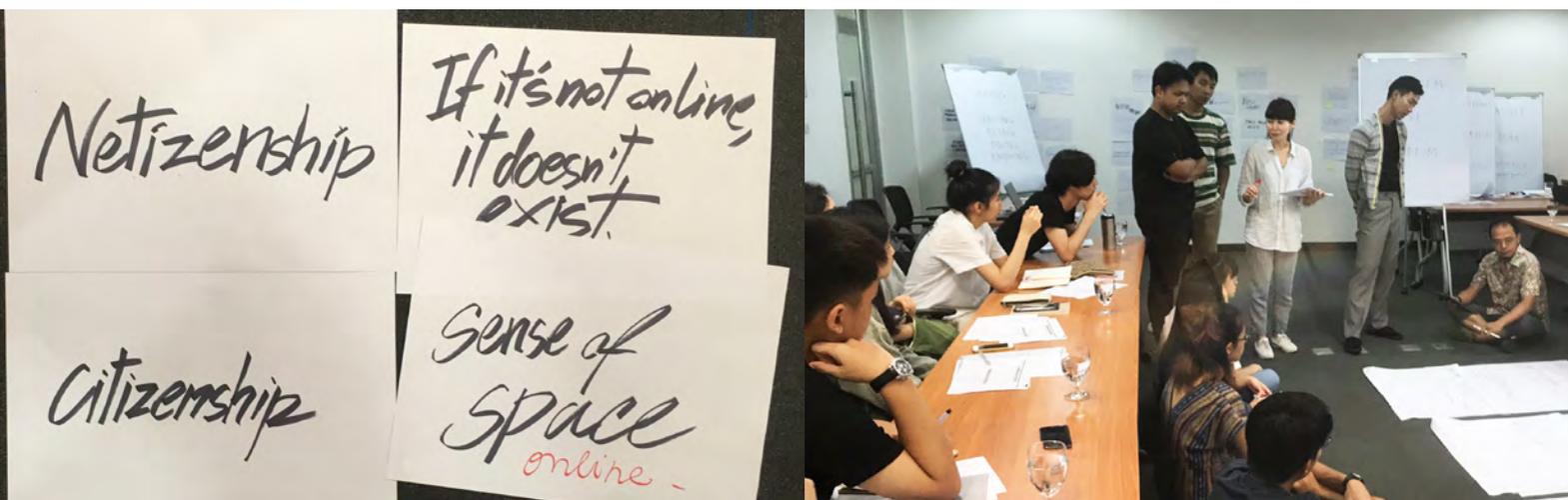
#### Cultural representation and visibility

- Local vs. global: the hierarchy of 'visible' and 'invisible' cultures.
- Finding local information: how does the Internet affect the access to local information?
- Stereotypes: does the Internet simplify and standardize the world?
- Credibility and authenticity: the necessity to have a critical eye.
- Shift of values: has the Internet changed fundamental cultural values?

### (4)

#### Understanding

- Education about the Internet.
- Trusting the machine: is the Internet a threat or an opportunity for humanity?
- Improving the use of the Internet: what are the possibilities for a 'responsible Internet'?
- Who's in charge? Responsibilities related to Internet governance.
- Universality: to what extent can concepts of universality apply in the region?
- To care or not care: the responsibility of the netizen.



# CREATIVE CONCEPTS

Following the workshop, the participants started developing their exhibition pieces incorporating one or more of the thematic areas as well as some of the ROAM principles.

The ideas currently developed offer a wide range of perspectives about the Internet as a space, a tool, a network, and as a global platform that shapes and transforms local contexts.

## Human Interactions & Relationships

*Non-human presence on the Internet.  
The impact of artificial intelligence on human interactions.*

Medium: print

Sub-theme: rights

*Mototaxis in Bangkok  
Apps transforming informal networks.*

Medium: image + text

Sub-themes: accessibility, openness

*Cyberbullying: life stories.*

Format: image + text

Sub-theme: rights

*Erasing information: Human interactions and the clash of opinions online.*

Medium: multimedia / interactive

Sub-themes: rights, openness

## Space & Time

*Internet Poll*

*Monopoly on information access and visibility at the global level.*

Medium: screen + print

Sub-themes: relationships & interactions, rights, accessibility, openness

*Multiple personalities:*

*Side effects induced by the virtual space.*

Medium: book (print) / illustrations

Sub-theme: human interactions, rights

*The spread of local information through online networks in Thailand.*

Medium: 3D objects with printed images

Sub-themes: accessibility, openness

## Cultural Representation & Visibility

*Languages and their impact on information access and dissemination.*

Medium: book + print - may include interactive component for the website

Sub-themes: openness, accessibility

*Internet subcultures and the universal language of memes.*

Medium: multimedia

Sub-themes: understanding, openness, accessibility

*Invisible culture, past and present.*

*Thai folk music and its (non)-presence online.*

Medium: object

Sub-theme: accessibility

*Internet usage among traditional craft communities in Petchaburi and Ratchaburi.*

Medium: image, text, video

Sub-theme: accessibility

## Understanding

*Offline / Online.*

*The Internet as a platform for solving personal issues through public exposure.*

Format: real documents (letters), text

Sub-themes: rights, privacy

*Can Internet Freedom be achieved in Thailand?  
Interviews and insights on human rights and freedom of speech in Thai society.*

Format: video / online streaming

Sub-themes: rights, multi-stakeholder participation

# PARTICIPANTS

## Selection Process

Out of [40 submissions](#), 18 participants including 6 students from the School of Architecture and Design (SoA+D at KMUTT) were selected based on their skills, experience, motivation and availability.

*All participants are Thai except for 1 person from Singapore and another from Taiwan.*

In alphabetical order:

### **Hao Pei Chu**

Visual artist

### **Jitsiree Thongnoi**

Freelance Journalist

### **Kuan Chun Liu**

Visual artist

### **Paphop Kerdsup**

Design Editor Art4D

### **Ponjira Jirawechkigkul**

Graphic designer

### **Nippita Pongern**

Student at CommDe  
Chulalongkorn University

### **Sarawut Chutiwongpeti**

Visual Artist

### **Siriwat Pokrajen**

Documentalist SEAMEO SPAFA

### **Suthasiny Sudprasert**

Student, School of Global Studies  
Thammasat University

### **Tewprai Bualoi**

Art Event Organizer

### **Wee Viraporn**

Graphic Designer

### **SoA+D**

at King Mongkut's University of Technology  
Thonburi (KMUTT)

### **Kentaro Hiroki**

Chair, Communication Design Department

Prospective students:

**Aonree Thawatpongsri**

**Kawin Suwannatrai**

**Kewalin Prasertsith**

**Pimnara Sintaveevonge**

**Praiya Sathanasaowphak**

**Tanyathorn Lertruangpunyavut**

# WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

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## **3 MAY 2018**      *SUBJECT*

09 AM	World Press Freedom Day Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand
02 PM	Introduction to the workshop & participants presentation
03 PM	The role of art and design in society
04 PM	Group discussion

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## **4 MAY 2018**      *CONTEXT*

09 AM	Understanding the ROAM principles Mapping local concerns
11 AM	Local context analysis (group work)
02 PM	Identifying and organizing issues by thematic areas
04 PM	Group discussion

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## **5 MAY 2018**      *IDEA*

09 AM	Organizing content to form a narrative structure Steps toward producing an exhibition
11 AM	Information / Representation / Expression
02 PM	Identifying thematic areas based on previous sessions
04 PM	Exhibition title Choice of thematic area for each participant Structuring a timeline leading to the exhibition

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