

Cinema and Thai Politics: 6th October 1976



The Terrorists

Causes and Consequences: Documenting 6th October

The massacre of students at Thammasat University in Bangkok on 6th October 1976 came almost exactly three years after the 14th October 1973 killings, when students had protested against the military junta. Forty-six people died at Thammasat, and their corpses were desecrated by a baying mob. The docudrama *Tongpan*¹ (1977) describes the event and its consequences in a melancholy epilogue: “a violent coup d’etat of a magnitude never before seen in Thailand brought to an end Thailand’s three-year experiment with democracy. An extensive purge followed the coup.”

By creating a culture of militarism, the Thai armed forces effectively legitimised their violent suppressions of civilian dissent. For example, *lakorn* (soap opera) series broadcast on state television are utilised for propaganda purposes: “lakorns have long been employed by juntas to instill within viewers a sense of nationalism and positive feelings towards the military.”² The short film *Official Trailer* subverts this by intercutting footage of the 6th October massacre with clips from the popular *lakorn* series *Love Destiny* (2018).³ Patporn Phoothong’s documentary *Silenced Memories*⁴ (2014) challenges the military’s “culture of impunity, the culture of acceptance of state violence, and the culture of silence” in its epilogue. However, its impunity makes the military a largely untouchable subject for filmmakers, and coded, metaphorical references are therefore employed. Anocha Suwichakornpong’s *Mundane History*⁵ (2009) and Prabda Yoon’s *Someone from Nowhere*⁶ (2017), for example, both use domestic settings as metaphors for the tensions between the military and society. Reliance on metaphor has its drawbacks, however: if the allusion is too direct, a work may be censored, though if the message is too subtle, the intended meaning may not be understood by the audience.⁷

The short film *Friendship Ended with Mudasir Now Salman Is My Best Friend*⁸ (2018) acknowledges this dilemma, challenging the audience to decode its rapid-fire montage of allusions. The film makes indirect reference to the 6th October massacre using animated clips, with the *Powerpuff Girls* cartoon characters replaced by pictures of Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit, the Red Bull logo, and the Scout emblem. These refer respectively to Nawaphon, the Red Gaur, and the Village Scouts, the three paramilitary groups that joined the police and army in storming Thammasat University on 6th October.⁹

The massacre began with a small group of students campaigning against coup leader Thanom Kittikachorn's return from exile. On 25th September 1976, the police hanged two anti-Thanom activists, and on 4th October 1976 a group of Thammasat students performed a reenactment of the hanging.¹⁰ The right-wing newspaper *Dao Siam* reported this performance on its front page on 6th October, with a photograph of a student posing as a hanging victim.¹¹ The image had been retouched, accentuating the man's resemblance to Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn (now King Rama X), and a banner headline accused the students of hanging the Prince in effigy.¹² The result was a devastating example of the power of propaganda, with the incendiary front-page condemnation of the students precipitating the massacre at Thammasat.

The mock hanging, and the media's misrepresentation of it, remain taboo subjects. Penek Ratanaruang's documentary *Paradoxocracy*¹³ (2013) describes the press coverage only in general terms, without specific reference to *Dao Siam* or the Crown Prince, indicating the episode's continued sensitivity. *Different Views, Death Sentence*¹⁴ (2011), a documentary commemorating the massacre, claims euphemistically that *Dao Siam* accused the students of expressing "severe ill-will to the Crown Prince." Even Thunskas Pansittivorakul's otherwise uncompromising *The Terrorists*¹⁵ (2011) refers only indirectly to "the hanging of an important person in effigy."

Thunskas analysed the massacre and its causes in *The Terrorists* and *Homogeneous, Empty Time*¹⁶ (2017). *The Terrorists* examines the demonisation of protesters in 1976 and 2010, when the government used scaremongering rhetoric as a pretext for military crackdowns. In both cases, the state defended the massacres as preemptive measures against supposed violent insurgencies. In 1976, an influential monk encouraged attacks on the students, whom he unashamedly dehumanised. *The Terrorists* quotes him justifying the killing of Communists: "It's the same as killing a fish to cook and offer it to the monks."¹⁷ The film develops this extraordinary pronouncement into an extended visual metaphor, with sequences filmed on a fishing trawler and at an aquarium. The short film *Don't Forget Me*¹⁸ (2003) also quotes the monk's "terrible words" and the drama *Time in a Bottle* (1991) portrays the resulting social vilification of the students: a doctor refuses to treat a massacre victim, leaving her to bleed to death.¹⁹

The Terrorists was made in the aftermath of the 2010 military crackdown, and the documentary is a passionate response to the cycle of recurring state oppression. Each of Thunskas's films is sexually and politically challenging, though *The Terrorists* features his most provocative sequence: a naked man is shown masturbating, while captions describe the 6th October massacre. The film then cuts directly from the masturbation to archive footage of the Thammasat victims' desecrated corpses, accompanied by a romantic song.²⁰ Outwardly, the man's orgasm and the military massacre have nothing in common, except for their shock value. However, for the director, one is a metaphor for the other: "that

massacre is like masturbation. Some people did it to make it better. They need to feel good and happy, but it's really cruel."²¹ His intention is not to exploit or eroticise violence, but to condemn what he views as the military government's quasi-sexual impulse to massacre its opponents.

Homogeneous, Empty Time explores the construction of Thailand's national identity, and the nationalist fervour stoked by state propaganda venerating the three pillars (nation, religion, and monarchy). It shows how such values are absorbed and passed from generation to generation, a result of media announcements that, according to Ing Kanjanavanit, "sicken the airwaves with constant saccharine exhortations to the people to love Nation, Religion, King."²² The film illustrates how military propaganda, disseminated via radio, television, and billboards, inculcates an irrational fear of any notional threat to the three pillars.

'Protecting' these pillars has been cited as justification for the demonisation of political opponents, from the unfounded *lèse-majesté* accusations used as a pretext for the 6th October massacre, to the anti-government campaigners who claimed in 2008 that, without their illegal protests, "the monarchy might collapse."²³ *Homogeneous, Empty Time's* interviewees, some with tears in their eyes, vow to protect the three pillars with their lives. Army cadets, for example, pledge their commitment to defend Thailand against its enemies, though they are unable to specify who those enemies might be. A Village Scout leader, wearing a bright yellow shirt, boasts of his brief encounter with King Rama IX: "I peeled a coconut for the King... And the King ate my coconut! A round of applause for me, please!" The assembled Village Scouts all pledge to defend the monarchy. Cut to: footage of Village Scouts and other ultra-nationalists attacking the students on 6th October. The film thus reveals the ultimate consequences of state-sanctioned nationalist rhetoric.²⁴

Homogeneous, Empty Time also shows the Village Scouts receiving their ceremonial yellow neckerchiefs, symbols of the monarchy's patronage of the organisation. Similarly, Chulayarnnon Siriphol's 'Planetarium', his science-fiction segment of the anthology film *Ten Years Thailand*²⁵ (2018), depicts a near future in which the country's leader and her minions all wear Scout uniforms and neckerchiefs, which are "symbolic of people's power, right-wing power."²⁶ In Chulayarnnon's dystopian vision, the entire country has been taken over by this royalist militia.

Several short documentaries have emphasised the human tragedy of the 6th October massacre. For her films *Silenced Memories* and *Respectfully Yours*²⁷ (2016), Patporn Phoothong interviewed elderly relatives of the students who were killed, presenting the victims as individuals rather than the battered corpses visible in news coverage of the massacre. In the intervening four decades since 6th October, the victims' families had rarely spoken about the massacre, though the director encouraged them to "break through the silence after all these years."²⁸ For her subsequent documentary, *The Two Brothers* (2017), she interviewed relatives of the two men hanged for protesting against the return of Thanom Kittikachorn. Again, their case had been forgotten for forty years, as Patporn's codirector Teerawat Rujenatham explained: "The truth of Oct 6 is still stuck in a different world."²⁹ Exceptionally, *The Two Brothers* also shows the *Dao Siam* front page that sparked the massacre.

The short documentary "*Red*" at Last³⁰ (2006) is told from the first-person perspective of one 6th October victim. The film begins and ends with a fictitious voiceover from the dead

man, and a survivor of the attack narrates flickering archive footage of the incident.³¹ The short film *Don't Forget Me* is a multilayered documentary featuring archive footage of 6th October and scathing political captions, accompanied by the plaintive title song³² and a narration appropriated from an ethnographic documentary on the nomadic Mlabri tribe. The voiceover describes the tribe's ceremonies and rituals, its tone and content providing an intentionally ironic counterpoint to the massacre footage.

Revealing and Concealing: Narratives of 6th October

The events of 6th October have also been represented in narrative films, most prominently *By the Time It Gets Dark*³³ (2016). In Anocha Suwichakornpong's film, a young director (Ann, a surrogate for Anocha herself) is making a biopic about a former student, who describes the 6th October attackers "dragging the dead bodies out to burn them." (Although the film was not censored on its original release, a screening to commemorate the massacre was blocked by the military government in 2017.)³⁴

As in *Mundane History* and *Someone from Nowhere*, key scenes in *By the Time It Gets Dark* are replayed to suggest history repeating: Ann's first session with the massacre survivor is later restaged, with the two women played by different actresses. Anocha self-reflexively questions the motivations of a director in tackling such a politically loaded event, as Ann confesses to her interviewee: "Your life is meaningful. A life worth living. Whereas me, I appropriate someone's life and turn it into a film." She also challenges the ethics of such appropriation, as another character advises Ann to let the film's subject write the script herself: "You should give it to her. She's a writer. And it's about her life, so it's her story." The film therefore acknowledges the inherent limitations involved in representing historical events in works of fiction.

By the Time It Gets Dark recreates a familiar photograph from 6th October, of a police officer³⁵ aiming his gun while nonchalantly smoking a cigarette, though it begins by subverting the audience's expectations. Students are shown lying on the ground, watched over by armed soldiers, though what initially appears to be a flashback to 6th October is, in fact, taking place on a movie soundstage. The sense of verisimilitude is further confounded when an offscreen voice (Ann, the director) instructs the soldiers to kick the students and point guns at them.

Other films that refer to the massacre use similar distancing devices. A short film by Manussak Dokmai (2010) includes photographs from 6th October shown on a digital camera's LCD screen.³⁶ In *Time in a Bottle*, the massacre is announced via a radio broadcast.³⁷ The Malaysian film *River of Exploding Durians*³⁸ (2014) shows 6th October newsreel footage via a projector, and features a brief play about the massacre by Malaysian students. The film's message is that Malaysians are permitted to study the historical controversies of other countries rather than their own, though this also applies in Thailand, as 6th October is omitted from the Thai national curriculum. *Young Bao*³⁹ (2013) and *Colic* (2006) both recreate newspaper headlines about 6th October, and *Colic* is one of the more unusual interpretations of the massacre: in this horror film, a general from 6th October is reincarnated as a newborn baby, and the restless spirits of his victims torment the infant and his parents.⁴⁰ The film suggests that, in the absence of legal accountability, karma is unavoidable. These representations of historical events, filtered through the news

media, reflect how most Thais experienced the events themselves: as passive media consumers rather than participants or eyewitnesses.

On the other hand, directors who depict 6th October without such distancing techniques run the risk of censorship. Films that capture the full horror of the massacre, either through realistic reconstruction or archive footage, have been cut or banned. When Ing Kanjanavanit appealed against the banning of *Shakespeare Must Die* (2012), the Appeals Court upheld the decision on the grounds that her recreation of 6th October could cause division in society.⁴¹ The film includes a reenactment of a notorious incident in which a man hits a hanging corpse with a chair, as depicted in a news photograph that symbolises the extreme violence and prejudice of the event.⁴² (*Friendship Ended with Mudasir Now Salman Is My Best Friend* references this photograph with an animated clip from *The Simpsons* in which Bart hits Homer with a chair.)⁴³ The censors recommended that Ing replace the sequence with a new ending, in which concerned citizens discuss the nature of violence; instead, she appealed against the ban to the Supreme Court. As Ing's producer, Manit Sriwanichpoom, says in her documentary *Censor Must Die*⁴⁴ (2013), the massacre remains a forbidden subject for Thai cinema: "October 6 returns to haunt us, to be used as a tool. To justify the ban."

The horror film *Haunted Universities*⁴⁵ (2009) also recreates the violence of the massacre, and was censored as a result: ghosts of 6th October students are gunned down by soldiers, one shot in the chest as he prepares to defend himself, and a second shot in the back as he tries to escape. Another horror movie, *Meat Grinder*⁴⁶ (2009), includes archive footage of bodies being burned on 6th October, though this was deleted in its entirety for the film's domestic release. (*Meat Grinder's* title was also changed, among numerous other revisions to the film.)⁴⁷

*Blue Sky of Love*⁴⁸ (2009), *Young Bao*, and Chatrichalerm Yukol's *Somsri*⁴⁹ (1985) also evoke 6th October, though they avoided censorship by toning down the horror of the event. *Blue Sky of Love*, a comedy, begins with a police officer's flashback to 6th October, showing the student protests though not the violent retribution. *Young Bao* shows students lying on the ground, with soldiers watching over them (a scene also recreated at the start of *By the Time It Gets Dark*). *Somsri* includes a contemporary sequence in which riot police beat protesters, followed by a match cut to a 6th October flashback of a woman being beaten, though this is seen in black-and-white and lasts only a few seconds. A film by Pundhevanop Dhewakul⁵⁰ (1986) also includes a black-and-white flashback: although non-diegetic gunshots are heard repeatedly on the soundtrack, the violence depicted is limited to hand-to-hand combat. The short film *Pirab*⁵¹ (2017) begins with a 6th October flashback in sound only, leaving the violence to the viewer's imagination. Thus, sanitised representations of the massacre—devoid of blood or death—are deemed acceptable, whereas real or realistic imagery is censored.

Hallowed Grounds: The Legacy of 6th October

Thanin Kraivichien, who was appointed Prime Minister after the 6th October massacre, overturned the liberal reforms of the previous regime. His intensified political censorship included literal book-burnings, which are dramatised in *October Sonata*⁵² (2009). He also revived an anti-Communist purge that had begun earlier in the decade. In Chatrichalerm

Yukol's *Grounded God*⁵³ (1975), a soldier refuses an order to kill Communists when he realises that they are loyal patriots, not the terrorists of propagandist misrepresentation. The 6th October survivor in *By the Time It Gets Dark* describes "the methods with which the government clamped down on what they called "the terrorists". They'd be thrown out of helicopters or set on fire in oil barrels." (The title of Thunskā Pansittivorakul's *The Terrorists* refers to the use of this term in demonising not only Communists but also 'redshirt' protesters.) Suspected Communists were indeed burned alive in red oil barrels, and Thunskā alludes to this in *Santikhiri Sonata*⁵⁴ (2019) with a caption describing the killing of subversives by "pushing them into a 'CXII Red Suitcase'".

Santikhiri Sonata was filmed in the villages of Mae Salong and Hin Taek, whose names were changed to draw a line under their sinister legacies. Mae Salong was renamed Santikhiri ('hill of peace'), and Hin Taek became Thoet Thai ('honour Thailand'), though they were previously sites of anti-Communist violence. The film highlights this violent heritage—"A lot of people were killed, including villagers"—and includes graphic photographs of victims caught in the crossfire of a 1982 military raid on Thoet Thai.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul made several films in and around the village of Nabua, a location with an equally loaded history to that of Santikhiri, as its inhabitants were victims of the anti-Communist purge. In his short film *A Letter to Uncle Boonmee*⁵⁵ (2009), a narrator recalls the area's past: "Soldiers once occupied this place. They killed and tortured the villagers and forced them to flee to the jungle." Apichatpong's *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*⁵⁶ (2010) was also filmed in the vicinity, and that film's most iconic image—a man-ape with glowing red eyes—also has a political subtext: the creature is Boonmee's young son, who became an outcast in the jungle, as did many Communists from Nabua and elsewhere. (*Pirab* dramatises a student's anguished decision to join the insurgency, allowing the audience to empathise with the young man's dilemma.) When the eponymous Boonmee confesses that he "killed too many" Communists, his sister reassures him that he did so "for the nation," a justification given by many who support the military regime, whether through apathy or deference. In fact, Apichatpong says that even his own family members are "totally submissive, no questions asked: disruption of the flow and unity is really a big deal."⁵⁷

On the surface, Chulayarnnon Siriphol's short, silent film *Planking* (2012) is merely a series of comic tableaux, in which a prankster lies incongruously on the ground. However, like Chulayarnnon's short film *Blinding* (2014), this is cinema as subversive performance art. The film has further layers of meaning, relating not only to 6th October but also to national identity itself. Each scene takes place at 8am or 6pm, when it is customary to stand while the national anthem is played; planking at those times is therefore an irreverent act of "disruption of the flow and unity" that Apichatpong described.

Like *Santikhiri Sonata* and *A Letter to Uncle Boonmee*, *Planking* also evokes specific episodes from Thai history by appropriating politically charged locations.⁵⁸ For example, one sequence was filmed at the Thammasat University football pitch, where hundreds of students were forced to lie during the 6th October massacre (as restaged in *By the Time It Gets Dark* and *Young Bao*). The planking man in Chulayarnnon's film, adopting an identical pose on the same ground, provides a jarring reminder of the area's violent past. As the director explained, reenacting the event in the present day also alludes to the military's continuing interventions in Thai politics: "I think it's a good place to make a connection

relating to history and the current situation.”⁵⁹ The short film *Re-presentation*⁶⁰ (2007) makes a similar point, intercutting between archive footage of 6th October and present-day images of the same locations. Likewise, *Homogeneous, Empty Time* and Taiki Sakpisit’s *A Ripe Volcano*⁶¹ (2011) include sequences filmed at Bangkok’s Royal Hotel, which is associated with both 6th October and the subsequent ‘Black May’ massacre of 1992.⁶² *Homogeneous, Empty Time* reveals the building’s grim function in relation to 6th October: “They hid the bodies of dead students in this hotel.”

In Chulayarnnon’s ‘Planetarium’, citizens in a dystopian future demonstrate loyalty by standing to respect their leader. However, a group of rebels show their resistance by lying down: again, planking became a visible expression of nonconformity. In ‘Catopia’, Wisit Sasanatieng’s *Ten Years Thailand* segment, almost everyone has (CGI) cat’s heads, and the few remaining humans are hunted down and killed, echoing the 6th October massacre and the subsequent anti-Communist purges.⁶³

Prabda Yoon’s short film *Transmissions of Unwanted Pasts*⁶⁴ (2019) anticipates an equally dystopian future, in which images of 6th October and other military massacres—broadcast via satellite—are deleted by the military to erase such events from the collective public memory. The engineer who discovers them excitedly suggests that researchers could use the satellite data to study this secret history: “They might discover many new things, things that they were previously unaware of, or things that were never documented.” Her boss has other ideas, however, and three soldiers destroy the transmissions. Prabda’s film was made in response to the state education system, which he describes as “pretty much propaganda, because they don’t tell you the things they don’t want you to know or to remember. So there is that censorship always in Thai culture and society.”⁶⁵ However, although the legacy of 6th October has been whitewashed by successive military governments, it continues to be memorialised by cinema.

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Notes

- 1 *Tongpan* [ทองปาน] was directed by Euthana Mukdasanit and Surachai Chantimaton.
- 2 Kittinun Klonyai (2017)
- 3 *Official Trailer* [อนุสรณ์สถาน] (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THhBOiMvAp4>) was directed by Veerapong Soontornchatrawat. *Love Destiny* [บุพเพสันนิวาส] was directed by Pawat Panangkasri.
- 4 *Silenced Memories* [ความทรงจำ ไร้เสียง] was directed by Patporn and Saowanee Sangkara.
- 5 *Mundane History's* Thai title is *เจ้ากกระจอก*.
- 6 *Someone from Nowhere's* Thai title is *มา ณ ที่นี้*.
- 7 Graiwoot Chulphongsathorn (2010) wrote: "if the films are too opaque then the communicative power of cinema has not been utilized. The hidden idea, then, is impotent." Thanavi Chotpradit (quoted by Ariane Kupferman-Sutthavong) made a similar observation in relation to political art: "The authorities won't get it. However, this is a limitation in itself. If nobody understands your work, then what's the point?" (2018; *Life*, p. 1).
- 8 *Friendship Ended with Mudasir Now Salman Is My Best Friend* [มิตรภาพสิ้นสุดกับ Mudasir ตอนนี่ Salman คือเพื่อนที่ดีที่สุดของฉัน], directed by Tewprai Bualoi, was shown on an iPhone at the *Internet Universality Beyond Words* exhibition at the Thailand Creative and Design Center in Bangkok, from 28th September to 14th October 2018. It includes extracts from Charnvit Kasetsiri's documentary *14 ตุลา* ('14th October', 1993) and the *Tom and Jerry* cartoon *Jerry's Cousin* (1951, directed by William Hannah and Joseph Barbera). Thành Huy's *Vietnam War in a Nutshell* (2018) also reappropriates animated clips for political satire, including the same *Tom and Jerry* extract (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNcUnQlAF1E>).
- 9 The massacre has also inspired numerous works of visual art. Sudarat Musikawong (2010, p. 22) calls art about 6th October "trauma art" and Phatarawadee Phataranawik (2016, p. 12B) examines art that "attempts to address the terrible truth" about the attack. Chokechai Takpoe painted a student's head riddled with bullet holes, 'ก่อน-หลัง ตุลาคม 2519' ('before-after October 1976', 1976); reproduced in Sudarat Musikawong (2010), p. 31. In Pratuang Emjaroen's painting 'Sacrifice (Fasting Buddha)' ['บำเพ็ญทุกรกิริยา'] (1976), the Buddha has a black hole in his shoulder, representing a bullet wound; reproduced in *Pratuang Emjaroen: Traces and Trails* [ประเทือง เอมเจริญ "ร้อยริ้วสรรพลีสรร" ตำนานชีวิตและสังคม] (2015), pp. 142-143. Pratuang's 'Seine Stone' [sic.] ['ก้อนหิน เสนีย์'] (1976) includes a portrait of Seni Pramoj, who was Prime Minister at the time of the massacre; *ibid.*, p. 148. Piles of skulls in Pratuang's 'National Fanatic' ['บ้ำรักชาติ'] (1976) and 'Red Morning Glory and a Rotten Rifle' ['ผักบุ้งแดง ปิ่นเนา'] (1976) also refer to the massacre. The former is reproduced in *Spirit of Art: A Retrospective 1963-2005* [จิตวิญญาณศิลปะ คัดสรรผลงานจิตรกรรมระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2506-2548] (Pratuang Emjaroen, 2005), p. 47. The latter, reproduced in Apinan Poshyananda (1992, plate 51), features a despondent caption: "When people take up arms to slaughter one another / The nation is left with devastation and chaos" (*ibid.*, p. 167). Apinan (*ibid.*, pp. 171-172) describes another painting inspired by the massacre: "Santiphab Nakhao's *6 October* (1979) is a powerful image of a fat man sitting in an armchair atop a heap of lifeless bodies." Sinsawat Yodbangtoey staged a performance art event at Thammasat University's 6th October monument, documented in a series of photographs titled *1976 October 6*; reproduced in *Memory / History / Democracy* [ความทรงจำ ประวัติศาสตร์ประชาธิปไตย] (2019; untitled).

In Manit Sriwanichpoom's *Horror in Pink* [ปีศาจสีชมพู] (2001) series, an incongruous pink man is inserted into news photographs of 6th October; reproduced in *Phenomena and Prophecies* [ทำและทาย] (2011, pp. 60-67). Similarly, for his *Selfie Series* [เซลฟี ซีรี่ส์] (2016), Chumpol Kamwanna recreated 6th October photographs, depicting himself taking selfies in each painting; reproduced in Phatarawadee Phataranawik (2016, p. 12B). An exhibition of art influenced by 6th October, *Flashback '76: History and Memory of October 6 Massacre* [อดีตหลอน ประวัติศาสตร์และความทรงจำ 6 ตุลา 19] (2008), included Vasan Sitthiket's video 'Delete Our History, Now!' ['อำนาจ/การลบทิ้ง'] (2008), in which he digitally erased photographs of the massacre, as they are erased from national historiography (exhibition catalogue, pp. 10-11); and Manit Sriwanichpoom's *Died on 6th October 1976* [ตาย 6 ตุลา 19] (2008), autopsy photographs of massacre victims soaked in blood (exhibition catalogue, pp. 13, 15-16).

- 10 Choomporn Thummai and Vichai Kasripongsa were hanged from a gate in Nakhon Pathom. Jirapatt Aungsumalee's painting 'ประตูแดง' ('red gate', 2019) shows the outlines of their two bodies hanging from the gate; reproduced on the artist's Facebook profile (https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2326997440898830&id=100007657908937). The reenactment was directed by Viroj Tangvanich.
- 11 The student was Apinan Buahapakdee.
- 12 The publication of the *Dao Siam* [ดาวสยาม] photograph was highly inflammatory, as David Morell and Chai-anan Samudavinija wrote (1981, p. 274): "Faculty members later were divided as to whether or not the image had been deliberately contrived, but the effect was the same regardless of the motive—popular outrage." The continued sensitivity of *Dao Siam's* reference to the Crown Prince is also indicated by a reference to the photograph in the *Bangkok Post*: "it appeared to bear a resemblance to a royal family member. It was accompanied by a headline that led to public misunderstanding." That description, by Soonruth Bunyamanee (2016, p. 4), is typical of the understatement and evasion employed when the issue is discussed. For more analysis of the photograph's impact, see: ประวัติศาสตร์ที่เพิ่งสร้าง ('recently created history'; Somsak Jeamteerasakul, 2001), pp. 149-154.
- The *Dao Siam* front page is rarely reproduced in its complete form, as the combination of the headline ("แขวนคอหุ่นเหมือนเจ้าฟ้าชาย", 'hanging the Crown Prince in effigy') and photograph is still considered highly provocative. The headline was included in พลิกแผ่นดิน นประวัติศาสตร์การเมืองไทย 24 มิย 2475 ถึง 14 ตค 2516 ('overturning the history of Thai politics from 23rd June 1932 to 14th October 1973'; Prachuap Amphasawet, 2000), p. 548, though the photograph was blacked out. A reproduction of the front page was removed from an exhibition at Thammasat University in 1996, on the day before the show was due to open, and a question mark was hung in its place. The headline was shown at an exhibition at Thammasat on 6th October 2018 [ครบรอบ 42 ปี 6 ตุลาคม 2519] ('42nd anniversary of 6th October 1976'), though the photograph was cropped out. When the headline is quoted online, the word 'prince' (เจ้า) is sometimes omitted. Exceptionally, the complete front page was shown uncensored as part of a Thai political history series, ย้อนรอยประวัติศาสตร์รัฐประหารไทย ('tracing the history of Thai coups'), on the satellite television channel DNN; the episode, '6 ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๙ จากนองเลือด สู่อำนาจ' ('6th October 1976: from bloodshed to power'), the seventeenth in the series, was broadcast on 12th April 2011 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ealiHqQhek4>). The *Dao Siam* front page is reproduced, along with other newspaper coverage of the massacre, in *Prism of Photography: Dispersion of Knowledge and Memories of the 6th October Massacre* [ปริซึมของภาพถ่าย: การแตกตัวขององค์ความรู้และความทรงจำว่าด้วยเหตุการณ์ 6 ตุลา] (Thanavi Chotpradit & Kornkrit Jianpinidnan, 2019), pl. 261.
- 13 *Paradoxocracy's* Thai title is ประชาธิปไตยไทย.
- 14 *Different Views, Death Sentence* [sic.] [ต่างความคิด ผิดถึงตาย ๖ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๙], produced by Suthachai Yimprasert, was released on DVD. A documentary commemorating the massacre's twentieth anniversary, ชำระประวัติศาสตร์ ๖ ตุลา ๒๕๑๙ ('settling history: 6th October 1976', 1996), concludes with a caption calling for an end to state violence against civilians; it was released on VHS as ปณิธาน 6 ตุลา วิถีคนกล้าแห่งยุคสมัย แม้ 20 ปี ล่วงไป ไม่เคยจากความทรงจำ ('6th October resolution: a time of bravery'). Yuenyong Opakul's solo album ข้าวสีทอง รำลึก 20 ปี '6 ตุลา' ('golden rice: remembering 20 years since 6th October', 1996) also marked the twentieth anniversary of the massacre.
- 15 Its Thai title is ผู้ก่อการร้าย.
- 16 *Homogeneous, Empty Time* [สูญกาล] was directed by Thunskha Pansittivorakul and Harit Srikhao.
- 17 The monk (Kittivuddho Bhikku) made the comments in an interview with the magazine จัตุรัส ('square', 29th June 1976). Artist Sutee Kunavichayanont carved the quote onto a school desk for his 'History Class' ['ห้องเรียนประวัติศาสตร์'] installation (2000), inviting viewers to make tracings of this and other carved texts and drawings, all of which represented historic events excluded from the national curriculum; reproduced in *Concept Context Contestation* [โมโนทัศน์ บริบท และการต่อต้าน ศิลปะและส่วนรวมในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้] (ed. Iola Lenzi, 2014), p. 148. Sutee also created a Calligramme of the quote, in the shape of a Buddhist sitting in the lotus position; reproduced in *October 1973 to October 1976: A History of State Violence in Thailand* [ตุลา-ตุลา สังคม-รัฐไทย กับความรุนแรงทางการเมือง] (ed. Charnvit Kasetsiri & Thamrongsak Petchlertanan, 2018), p. 227.
- 18 *Don't Forget Me* [อย่าลืมฉัน] was directed by Manussak Dokmai.

- 19 *Time in a Bottle* [เวลาในขวดแก้ว] was directed by Prayoon Wongcheun. The students were also demonised in films such as Supan Prampan's *เก้ายอด* ('nine peaks', 1977). In one sequence, the Hindu demon Tossakan is superimposed over footage of student protesters from 1976, as he mocks the students and denounces them as agitators.
- 20 Linda Napapan's single *คนร้อยเล่ห์* ('trickster') was released in the 1970s. As Arnika Fuhrmann (2016, p. 192) writes, "the director juxtaposes explicit images of male bodies and sex scenes with cases of repressive state measures that do not at first seem related to sexuality."
- 21 Interview with Thunskha Pansittivorakul in Bangkok (1st May 2017).
- 22 Ing Kanjanavanit (2011), p. 19; Ing's essay 'Poses from Dreamland' [ท่าโพส จากแดน ช่างฝัน] is included in *Phenomena and Prophecies* [ฟ้าและทนาย] (2011).
- 23 Sondhi Limthongkul, quoted by Nattaya Chetchotiros (2008), p. 3.
- 24 *Homogeneous, Empty Time* also serves as a counterpoint to films such as Supachai Tosampan's *ท้องนาสะเทือน* ('shaking the paddy fields', 1976) and Sombat Methanee's *หนักแผ่นดิน* ('burden of the land', 1977). As Rachel V. Harrison (2010, p. 197) explains, action movies such as these celebrate the Village Scouts as national heroes, functioning as "a vehicle for anti-communist propaganda."
- Sombat's film took its name from an ultranationalist song (written by Boonsong Hakritsuk in 1975) played on military radio stations in the period leading up to 6th October. The song denounced anyone who did not affirm their loyalty to the nation, religion, and monarchy as traitorous 'scum of the earth', and its repeated broadcasts fomented anti-Communist violence. A *Bangkok Post* editorial called it "the most hateful song in Thai political history" (2019, p. 8). Despite (or because of) the song's incendiary legacy, army chief General Apirat Kongsompong ordered all military radio stations to resume playing it on 18th February 2019. The order was later rescinded, though the song was played on that day over the public address system at the Royal Thai Army headquarters in Bangkok.
- 25 *Ten Years Thailand* consists of four segments: Apichatpong Weerasethakul's 'Song of the City', Wisit Sasanatieng's 'Catopia', Aditya Assarat's 'Sunset' (filmed in black-and-white), and Chulayarnnon Siriphol's 'Planetarium'.
- 26 Interview with Chulayarnnon Siriphol in Bangkok (14th December 2018). Nutdanai Jitbunjong also alluded to the role of the Village Scouts in the 6th October incident: visitors to his installation 'A Massacre' (2018) had their hands stamped by two Girl Scouts. (The installation consisted of a folding chair hanging from a noose, in reference to Neal Ulevich's photograph of a 6th October victim's corpse being battered with a folding chair.)
- In 2010, the government organised 'Cyber Scout' camps at which young volunteers were trained to monitor the internet for *lèse-majesté* content. Thongchai Winichakul (2014, p. 99) notes the appellative and ideological similarities between the Cyber Scouts and Village Scouts: "In July 2010, the Democrat-led government launched a new programme called "Cyber Scout" to recruit young people to help the government watch out for the alleged dangerous activities on the internet and report to the police. The name "Cyber Scout" is a reminiscence of the royalist right-wing movement, the "Village Scout", that was active in the 1976 massacre."
- 27 *Respectfully Yours* [ด้วยความนับถือ] (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig2DCytG8_Y) was first shown, in a shorter version, in 2016. It was also shown at a discussion about cultural representation of the massacre, 'The Forgotten', which took place as part of 'The Strange Facts of an Estranged Land' event at the 13th International Conference on Thai Studies, on 17th July 2017. *Respectfully Yours* and Patporn's subsequent film *The Two Brothers* [สองพี่น้อง] (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbQ9817ZZII>), codirected by Teerawat Rujintham, are part of Documentation of Oct 6 [บันทึก 6 ตุลาคม], an online archive of materials relating to the 6th October massacre, curated by Puangthong R. Pawakapan (<https://doct6.com/>).
- 28 Patporn Phoothong, quoted by Kong Rithdee (2017a), *Life*, p. 1.
- 29 Teerawat Rujenatham, quoted by Kong Rithdee (2017b), *Life*, p. 1.
- 30 *"Red" at Last* [มันส์ เคียร์สิงห์] was directed by Suchart Sawasdsri.
- 31 The eponymous victim is Manus Siansing, whose nickname was Daeng ('red').
- 32 The song is by Chatree, from their album *ชะตารัก* ('love destiny', 1981).

- ³³ *By the Time It Gets Dark*'s Thai title is ดาวคะนอง.
- ³⁴ A screening on 6th October 2017 at Warehouse 30 in Bangkok was cancelled due to military pressure.
- ³⁵ The photograph, depicting Lt Col. Salang Bunnag, is reproduced in *Chronicle of Thailand: Headline News since 1946* (ed. Nicholas Grossman, 2009), p. 212.
- ³⁶ Its title is นครพนมมือบ้าง นครไม่พนมมือบ้าง ('Nakhon Phanom: some pray, some don't').
- ³⁷ Similarly, 'Oc(t)ygen' (2015), a single by rapper Liberate P, begins with a radio broadcast from 6th October (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nd79Y70xH2Q>).
- ³⁸ *River of Exploding Durians* [榴莲忘返] was directed by Edmund Yeo. The sequence relating to 6th October is available online (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6beD5YmmtQ4>).
- ³⁹ *Young Bao* [ยัง'บาว คาราบาว เตอะมูพวี] was directed by Yuthakorn Sukmuktapha (credited as 'R-Jo'). The film features a mockup of a newspaper headline: "Almost 100 people have been effected from 6th Oct In Thailand" [sic]. 'Almost 100' is arguably an exaggeration, as the official death toll was forty-six, though it is consistent with unofficial estimates.
- ⁴⁰ *Colic* [เด็กเห็นผี] was directed by Patchanon Thammajira. The General is Arun Dvadasin, who was killed during an attempted coup by the 'Young Turks' against Thanin Kraivichien on 26th March 1977.
- ⁴¹ *Shakespeare Must Die*'s Thai title is เชคสเปียร์ต้องตาย. The verdict was announced on 11th August 2017.

⁴² Neal Ulevich's photograph of the man preparing to hit the hanging corpse has lost none of its potency, as Kong Rithdee has written (2016; *Life*, p. 1): "The importance of Ulevich's picture as a historical record is immense, becoming even more so over the decades as society has gone through other clashes of ideologies, leaving more dead bodies on the street." It was also used as the cover photograph for the Dead Kennedys' single 'Holiday in Cambodia' (1980). Ulevich, quoted by Kong Rithdee (2016; *Life*, p. 1), has described how images of the massacre taken by Thai photojournalists were censored: "police had raided Thai newspapers seizing film of the events. Foreign agencies were not visited."

For her *Where Are They Now?* [ไทยมุง] series (2008), Ing Kanjanavanit painted portraits of onlookers in the background of Ulevich's photograph (reproduced in *Flashback '76*, pp. 1-3, 6). Kosit Juntaratip recreated the photograph using his own blood ('Thammasat Hanging'), for his *Allergic Realities* exhibition (2016; exhibition catalogue, unpaginated). Vasan Sitthiket's *Blue October* [ตุลาลัย] (1996) exhibition included the painting 'This Is the Buddhism Country' [sic.] [นี่แหละหนอเมืองพระพุทธศาสนา] (exhibition catalogue, p. 26), a recreation of Ulevich's photograph with gold leaf applied to the victim as a mark of respect. Anonymous artist Headache Stencil isolated the man holding the chair for his stencil 'Beautiful 6th Oct' (2019), reproduced in *Guru*, vol. 14, no. 10 (8th-14th March 2019), p. 6. A painting by Ekalux Julskont (2019) featured the man holding the chair superimposed onto a large leaf. Ekalux also printed the man and his chair onto a roll of toilet paper, for his installation *กระดาษชำระประวัติศาสตร์* ('the purifying paper of Siamese history', 2017). Tawan Wattuya painted the man holding the chair, and the hanging corpse, in two untitled watercolours, reproduced in *Tawan Wattuya: Works 2009-2019* [ตะวัน] (ed. Myrtille Tibayrenc, 2019), pp. 210-211. The man with the chair appears in Chalernpol Junrayab's satirical comic-book series *The Amazing Thai-Land: surrounded by politicians in 'When I Was Young I Like Marvel Comic' [sic.]* (vol. 1, 2018; unpaginated), next to a dancing woman in 'Thailand History X' (vol. 2, 2019; unpaginated), at Thammasat University in 'The Killing Fields' (ibid.), and in front of the *หนักแผ่นดิน* ('burden of the land') film poster in 'Hard Song' (ibid.); reproduced on the artist's Facebook profile (https://www.facebook.com/pg/TheArtDistrict86/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1417728105040570).

CD and cassette editions of *Gigantrix Extinction* (2012), an album by Killing Fields, feature drawings by Dissolute inspired by Ulevich's photograph; the album includes '6th October', a song inspired by the massacre. The EP *สามัญชน* ('commoner', 2019), by The Commoner, also features a drawing of the hanging corpse from Ulevich's photograph, by Chuveath Dethdittharak. The hanging corpse appears in the animated video for Dogwhine's single 'Democracy' (2019), directed by Jung (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cc3aEWwO04I>), from their EP *Dog of God*. Pongsit Kampee recorded a song about the massacre, '6 ตุลาคม' ('6th October'), on the album *ตุลธาร ๑๔ คน ๑๔ เพลง ต้องห้าม* ('October: 14 people, 14 forbidden songs', 1997). Rap Against Dictatorship's video for their single 'Which Is My Country' [ประเทศไทย] (2018) recreates Ulevich's photograph, with the hanging corpse represented by a battered mannequin (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZvzLiGUtw>). The music video, directed by Teerawat Rujintham, was remade in an animated emoji version for the Media Arts and Design Festival 2018 at Chiang Mai University Arts Center. The video for their single 'To Whom It May Concern' [ถึงผู้มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้อง] (2019), directed by Kasiti Sangkul, features folding chairs and a noose, in another reference to Ulevich's photograph (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1A1KUuVNI>).

⁴³ The clip is from an episode titled 'A Milhouse Divided', broadcast on 1st December 1996.

⁴⁴ *Censor Must Die*'s Thai title is *เซ็นเซอร์ต้องตาย*.

⁴⁵ *Haunted Universities* [มหาลัยสยองขวัญ] (2009) was directed by Bunjong Sinthanamongkolkul and Sutthiporn Tubtim.

⁴⁶ *Meat Grinder* was directed by Tiwa Moeithaisong; its original title *ก๋วยเตี๋ยว เนื้อ คน* ('beef noodles') was changed to *เชือด ก่อน ชิม* ('slice before eating').

⁴⁷ The film's Thai and international versions are compared on the Movie Censorship website (<https://www.movie-censorship.com/report.php?ID=451668>).

⁴⁸ *Blue Sky of Love* [ฟ้าใสใจขึ้นบาน] was directed by Kreckchai Jaiman and Napaporn Poonjaruen.

⁴⁹ *Somsri*'s Thai title is *ครูสมศรี*.

⁵⁰ The film's title is *ช่างมันฉันไม่แคร์* ('forget it, I don't care').

⁵¹ *Pirab* [พิราบ] (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjnprnAMgWc>) was directed by Pasit Promnumpol.

- ⁵² *October Sonata* [รักที่รอคอย] was directed by Somkiat Vituranich, with cinematography by Teerawat Rujintham. Elliott Kulick and Dick Wilson (1996, p. 27) discuss Thanin's censorship: "His repressiveness ran to sending Special Branch policemen to the liberal bookshop to take away 45,000 books to be burnt."
- ⁵³ *Grounded God's* Thai title is เทวดาเดินดิน.
- ⁵⁴ *Santikhiri Sonata's* Thai title is สันติคีรี โชนาตา. Artist Pin Sasao's installation 'ถังแดง: ความตายของบิลลี่' ('red barrel: the death of Billy', 2019) used a mannequin and a red barbecue to symbolise the oil barrel killings; reproduced on the artist's Facebook profile (https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2455907084732796&id=100009405846636).
- ⁵⁵ *A Letter to Uncle Boonmee* [จดหมายถึงลุงบุญมี] was part of the *Primitive* series (2009), which also included the captivating short film *Phantoms of Nabua* [ชื่อว่า ผีนาบัว] (http://animateprojectsarchive.org/films/by_date/2009/phantoms).
- ⁵⁶ *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* [ลุงบุญมีระลึกชาติ] won the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 2010.
- ⁵⁷ Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul in Chiang Mai (27th June 2016).
- ⁵⁸ The seemingly tranquil landscapes in Pachara Piyasongsoot's exhibition *Anatomy of Silence* [กายวิภาคของความเงียบ] (2018) also represent politically charged locations. His *Nabua* [นาบัว] series includes 'No Happiness Other than Serenity' (2018), whose ironic title refers to a slogan painted on the gate of a Nabua temple used as a detention centre for suspected Communists in 1965 (exhibition catalogue, p. 10). His *Sequence* [ผลสืบเนื่อง] series includes 'What a Wonderful World: Parallel Side of the Red Gate' (2018), another deeply ironic title, which depicts the view that the two anti-Thanom activists saw as they were hanged from a red gate in 1976 (ibid., p. 15). 'What a Wonderful World' was inspired by the documentary *The Two Brothers*.
- ⁵⁹ Interview with Chulayarnnon Siriphol in Bangkok (14th December 2018).
- ⁶⁰ *Re-presentation* [ผีมะขาม ไฟฟ้า ประชาธิปไตย ในคืนที่ลมพัดหวน] (2007) was directed by Chai Chaiyachit and Chisanucha Kongwailap.
- ⁶¹ *A Ripe Volcano* [ภูเขาไฟพีโรธ] was directed by Taiki Sakpisit and Yasuhiro Morinaga.
- ⁶² The video for the band Amata's single 'The Devil of Time' [ปีศาจร้ายแห่งกาลเวลา] (2019), directed by Matichai Teawna, also includes footage of 6th October and 'Black May' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4A-ELHsVrQg>).
- ⁶³ 'Catopia' is a dystopian version of Wisit's *Citizen Dog* [หมานคร] (2004), in which city dwellers grow tails.
- ⁶⁴ The film's Thai title is วงโคจรของความทรงจำ.
- ⁶⁵ Prabda Yoon, quoted by the Institute for Ideas and Information (2019).