

Final Project – Visual Arts Performance Analysis

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The Making of “Hand Fans”, A Visual Art Performance at the Umbrella Factory, Chiang Mai, Thailand: A brief Analysis

Thailand is a very artistic country as it is famous for its artistic works. There are many art galleries and factories where these arts are produced. Many of these are community based while others are done individually or in a family environment. Like elephant dung paper factories there are Saa Paper factories where artistic umbrellas and hand fans are produced.

This analysis on the making of “hand fans’ is based on one of such factories that we visited. We will discuss about its performance foundation categories and performance features in the following paragraphs. This analysis is limited to just observation and informal interview from just one factory.

1. Performance Foundation Categories:

1. Location

This art performance took place in the umbrella factory called “Umbrella Handicraft Centre” outskirts of Chiang Mai. It is located beside the road that goes to Bor Song/Sang Kampong from Chiang Mai. It is a beautiful campus where this factory is setup. You can observe a nice process umbrella and hand fan production, starting from the making of Saa paper to its final painted umbrellas and hand fans.

2. Time

We went there on 4th Dec during the noon time. I guess that most of this work is done during the day and may be some care taking stuffs are happening in the nights. When ask how much time it takes to see a product (lets say one umbrella), they replied as one hour or so, but since they work in bulk so there is no time frame.

3. Participants

There are several performers working together to achieve one of these products, each doing their part. Around 20 of them working toward the end product, few working for Saa paper production, few make bamboo spokes, few glue the paper on the bamboo fan frame, few to the colors on it, and few paint beautiful picture on it. It will be good to also know about the whole crew that is working behind these products. Other participants present on this performance are the audience that comes to see the performance.

4. Shape

The performance or the production of these fan takes a number of stages and shapes through the process. Beginning from the paper making till its final shape as a hand fan there are lot of process involved and it everything work together for a beautiful hand fan to hold in our hands.

5. Material culture

There are several materials used to produce a hand fan, they are; bark of the Saa tree, Bark boiling equipments, water, bark smoothing/beating wood, paper making fiber and frame, bamboo spoke, bamboo cutting equipments, screws, glue, painting equipment like brush and different color etc. People are also dressed with

cultural/traditional costumes, seating on a small stool or chair and working basically on a bench. I also observed that there was an actual fan in the performance area.



6. Space

This factory has a working space or area where the performer or fan makers have their own specified area. The campus itself looks spacious and the display of final products are located in different area from the actual producing or working area. The visitor can easily walk around to see the process of these artistic hand fan production.

7. Frame

Nothing much was observed or know as to why and for what purpose these fans are created. But one things was very obvious that it was to keep the art tradition of the people. And also people buy these to use it as self fan. I also think people just keep

these painted fans at their home just for beauty. And also it is used as trade as many people buy and sell and earn money.

8. Relationship to Genre

This is very much related to the umbrella making, and so it falls under the handicraft of Northern Thai people. It is a visual art with is always accompanied by different movement. I do not know if people sing song or dance while making these hand fans!

9. How Significant is it?

I do not know how significant is these fan production for Thai people, but I am sure they make money out of it for their livelihood. There are different purpose behind these performances but its significance depends on the situation.

2. Visual Art Performance Feature Categories:

1. Visual Grammar:

Before talking about the visual grammar of this beautiful hand fan it is good to observe deeply at it for a while. We will discuss about its various visual elements or the building blocks of visual messages like Line, Shape, Value (light and dark), Color, Texture, Form, and Space.



Line: There are different kinds of lines seen in this piece of art. There are 17 straight bamboo spokes jointed together by a screw. It also has curved, horizontal, round lines on the overall look of the piece.

Shape: When it is stretched it forms a 180 degree shape, with a signified shape as rainbow or something like half circle. It is a flat object with different edges and colors.

Value (light & dark): The overall value of this fan is light with very little dark area on it. It matches with the bamboo itself and so seems to be a lighter object.

Color: It has many different colors; yellow, green, white, light blue, tints or shaded colors with blending colors for the most parts. The yellow colors stand out to be the brighter or major color in this piece of art.

Texture: The texture or the sense of feeling it gives to me at first sight is the softness. It does not look like a rough or hard painting.

Form: It is a flat thin object and so not much height and depth is seen. Its width and length is like 2/3 meters.

Space: There are empty areas seen in this particular piece. Space are found on the upper and lower part of the painting.

2. **Design and Composition**

Unity: The visual message is from this art has a good unity as the color, picture, shape really are in harmony.

Balance: There is certainly a good balance on the painting itself as it shows houses, trees, mountains land etc on the both sides. It also has a nice length and width which can be divided in two similar parts. The balance is also seen among the bamboo spokes as they are similar in size and length.

Rhythm: It gives the viewer a smooth and soft rhythm as the painting and overall structure looks very pleasant.

Proportion: the proportion of color, sizes of bamboo spokes, and overall shape of this art are very much accurate.

Emphasis/Variety/Contrast: In this fan the emphasis is given more on fan compared to the actual fan frame of bamboo spokes.

Pattern: The sizes of the bamboo spokes are same and look like lines that repeated. Also the color combination of the overall paint also seems to be repeated.

3. **Further Questions to ask**: Few questions that I would like to ask to know more detail about the hand fan are given below:

- a. What are few purposes of making these hand fans?
- b. Who buys them in bulk and for how much do they sell?
- c. Do they have any other art forms that co-exists this performance?

- d. What are other products do they produce along with hand fans and umbrellas?
- e. How big in number is the entire crew member for these productions?



Hand Fans: A Visual Art performance feature domains

- Visual grammar:
- Design and composition
- Saa Paper making procedure
- Saa paper making equipments
- Bambo spoke and its making process and equipments
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Visual

Audio

- The participant talking or interacting with others
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- The process of making Saa paper, bamboo spokes, gluing them together, painting

Movement

- The performers and audience talking
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- Hands and body movement
- Audience walking, observing
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