



Korakrit Arunanondchai
Artforum, August 13, 2024
(author: Hung Duong)
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Korakrit Arunanondchai

Bangkok Kunsthalle

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View of "Korakrit Arunanondchai: nostalgia for unity," 2024, Bangkok Kunsthalle, Bangkok. Photo: Bangkok Kunsthalle.



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SHARE In his most recent site-specific installation, titled *nostalgia for unity, 2024*, Korakrit Arunanondchai conjures a subliminal realm from the burnt-down and abandoned Thai Wattanapanich building, previously a printing house that distributed Thailand's standardized textbooks. Intrigued by its symbolic status as a site of epistemic monopoly and intellectual homogenization, Arunanondchai has resurrected this space by alchemizing it with light, sound, and material, thus engulfing its skeletal debris in an ambience that fluctuates between that of a sacral altar and a psychedelic rave. The space's ground is covered in a tar-like mixture of soil and ash, crushed from the building's burnt pieces, rendering it a cold and fissured desert—a sensation heightened by the old gray concrete walls. A hazy mist infiltrated the belly of this beast, doused it in solar-tone orange light that temporally gestures toward dusk and dawn. Adding a final layer to this palimpsestic space, Arunanondchai installed a visceral soundscape of spatial-mic vibration and sub-bass that resembles heartbeats. These elements jointly immerse audiences into a cathartic state, melting their ego into the space's *rêve au soleil*.

Spiritual reincarnation and yearning for an elusive unity through collective movements have long been the conceptual anchors of Arunanondchai's practice, epitomized through boisterous performances and maximalist installations. Nonetheless, *nostalgia for unity* marks an aesthetic departure, employing spatial emptiness to nullify the building's dogmatic past. Adding delicate inflections to its barren interior, Arunanondchai has lined the ground's perimeter with a self-authored hymn to invoke the mythical phoenix's enlightening power, calling on viewers to question entrenched hierarchical structures and elevate our consciousness. Infused with Arunanondchai's verses, the once stoic institution has been transformed into a space of meditative contemplation—where knowledge implies curiosity, not subjugation. The printing house's holistic metamorphosis thus resembles the phoenix's rise from its ash, endowing us with an ephemeral sense of hope.