

LEARNING RESOURCE

This learning resource is suitable for children aged 12 and up.

Nguyễn Trinh Thi 47 DAYS, SOUND-LESS

Step into an expanded cinema exploring
relationships between sound, silence and nature

12 Jan – 14 Apr 2024
Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Commissioned by the Han Nefkens Foundation,
Mori Art Museum, M+, Hong Kong and Singapore Art Museum

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CONTEMPORARY ART IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Nguyễn Trinh Thi. Still of *47 Days, Sound-less*. 2024. Image courtesy of the artist.

the artist



Image courtesy
of the artist.

Nguyễn Trinh Thi is a Hanoi-based experimental filmmaker and moving image/media artist. Over the last decade, her artistic practice has consistently engaged with the history and memory of Vietnam.

Her practice currently explores the power of sound and listening, and the multiple relations between image, sound and space.

She finds innovative ways to connect cinema and the moving image with sound practices, performance and alternative forms of storytelling. For her montages, she draws on different media, from her own audio and visual recordings to found footage and still images from postcards, photography, newreels, Hollywood films and ethnographic footage.

the artwork



Nguyễn Trinh Thi. Still from *47 Days, Sound-less*. 2023. Image courtesy of the artist.

47 Days, Sound-less

2023

Video, two screens and mirrors

Video: three-channel projection, 16:9,

16:9 and 5:2 aspect ratio, black and

white and colour, sound (stereo), 30 min

Commissioned by the Hans Nefkens

Foundation, Mori Art Museum, M+ Hong

Kong and Singapore Art Museum

This is a video installation that explores the relationships between sound and silence, vision, language, colours and their absence.

The artist is interested in the connections between two Indigenous groups in Southeast Asia, the Ifugao people from North Philippines and Jarai people from Vietnam's Central Highlands, whose rituals both involving the buffalo. When she was planning a route to visit their villages, a digital map online returned a single route between the villages that required walking for 47 days.

The "Sound-less" in the artwork's title refers to its focus on combining the many layers of sound. It was Thi's tribute to Chris Marker, in particular his film *Sans Soleil* (1983) — which means "sunless" in French — whose films have greatly influenced her artistic practice.

Thi identifies "peripheries" — including natural landscapes used as backdrops, uncredited characters and soundtracks from American and Vietnamese movies — that reveal more-than-human perspectives. Offering new ways of looking and listening, *47 Days, Sound-less* invites audiences to reflect on the inseparable relationship between a place and its inhabitants.

Did You Know?

Thi's work draws inspiration from science-fiction novels written in the 1970s by American author by Ursula Le Guin, including:

- *The Word for World is Forest* (1972)
- *Vaster than Empires, and More Slow* (1971)

While images or footage of the natural landscapes in *47 Days, Sound-less* were sampled from various movies, such as *Dien Bien Phu* (1992) and *Rescue Dawn* (2006).

47 Days, Sound-less was produced with the support of the Han Nefkens Foundation, Mori Art Museum, M+ Hong Kong and Singapore Art Museum—Moving Image Commission 2021. The commission is a platform that aims to support contemporary artistic production within the field of the moving image. It is directed at artists of Asian origin, nationality or living in Asia.

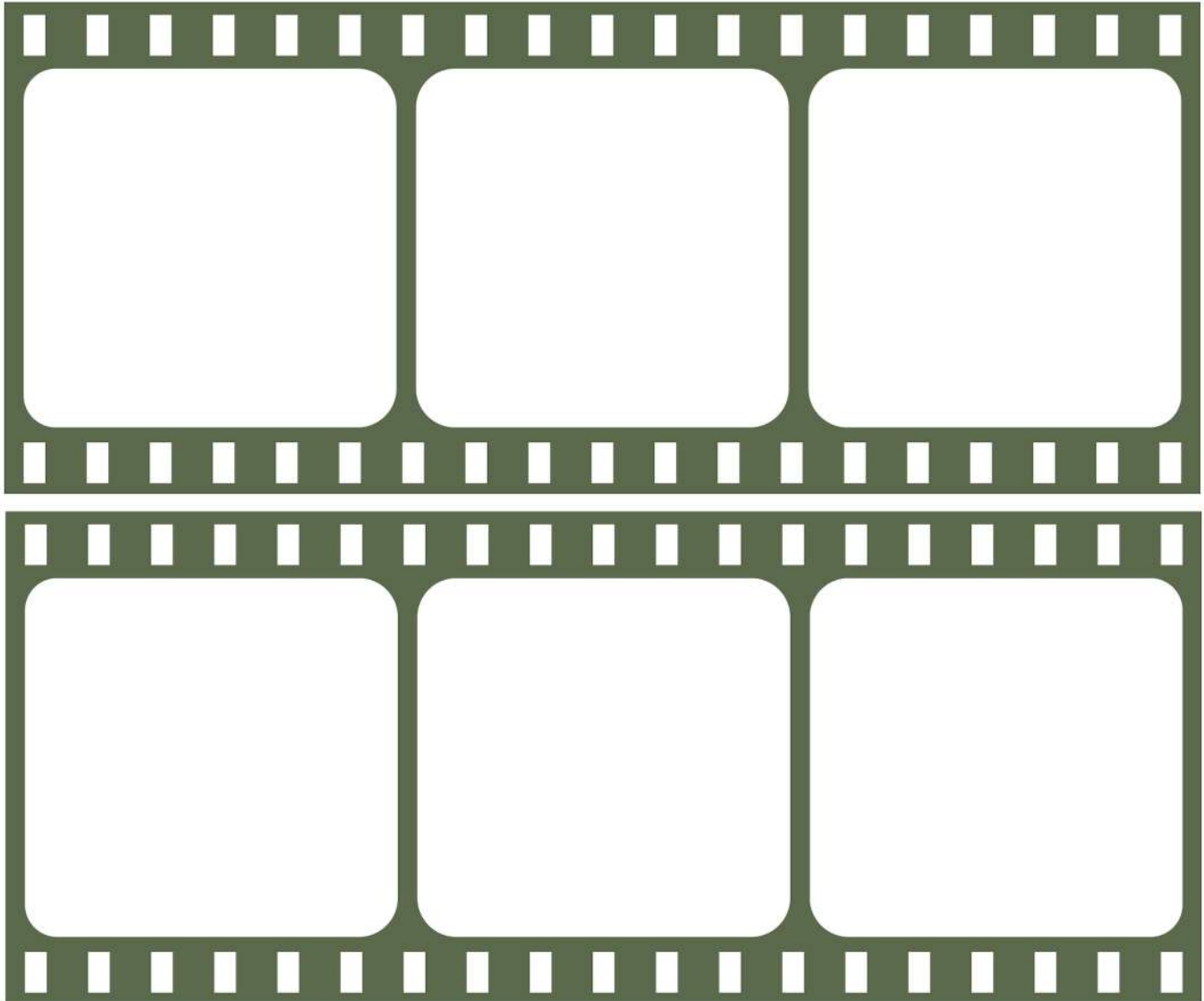
? Think!

The artist uses the term “expanded cinema” to describe this artwork. Expanded cinema refers to multi-media performances or installations that have participatory elements which challenge the relationship between the spectator and the video or film. It is the experience of entering a different environment when one steps out of the film's sight line. Moving images on the screens are projected onto the mirrors, which are reflected onto the surrounding walls, creating a world of its own. Backdrops and environmental sounds, which usually take a backseat in movies, are the focal point of this artwork.

- How does your viewing experience of this artwork differ from that of a movie screening at your local cinema? Consider how you view either one and how the videos are projected. (Hint: Look out for the projectors and mirrors.)

 **Activity!**

Choose a park or nature reserve in Singapore. Pay it a visit or recall your last visit there. List your observations of and reflect on its sights and sounds. Draw some scenes in the film strip below that you would project onto screens so that the audience can relive your experience.



The form consists of two identical horizontal film strips. Each strip has a dark green border with white sprocket holes along the top and bottom edges. The interior of each strip is divided into three equal-sized, rounded rectangular frames, all of which are currently blank white space for drawing.

The information is accurate at the time of print.

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