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Editorial
The "New Normal" The "Covid Culture"

Bussakorn Binson[+] Executive Director

This volume 20 of the Journal of Urban Culture Research was created in the midst of the of the Covid-19 pandemic. Here in Thailand restrictions began in March and remain in place today. This crisis has caused many changes creating a "New Normal" life of social distancing among other changes in society.

There is a strict campaign of "stay at home, stop the infection for the nation" repeated on the news in Bangkok. The use of masks in public and social distancing including a standard 14-day quarantine for those in transit. These changes and rules have had an heavy impact on the livelihood of millions of people in our society.

The government announced a lock down in the country for all shopping malls, restaurants, and pubs resulting in extensive unemployment. In the government sector, a policy of working from home has been put in place. Schools and universities offer online classes in place of classrooms to avoid face-to-face meetings to quash the risks of spreading the coronavirus. When the norms of the workplace and educational environment has been changed, a "New Normal" has taken hold in Thai society.

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A *new normal* phenomenon has occurred in Thai society, especially the occurrence of teaching and learning related in Art and Culture.

While the world is in crisis, art has a role to offer a "comforting massage" to all through either music, experiences or visually. An example is a new musical composition intended to be paired with a supportive massage as an expression of gratitude to medical staff who are bearing the heaviest load fighting Covid-19.

There are now lyrics to songs explaining how to wash your hands correctly, the necessity of washing hands more often, and how to wear a mask effectively, along with reminders for social distancing in public.

In many countries, music is performed from the terrace of the apartments. There are mobile musical bands performing on the streets at various points during different times of the day in order to deliver happiness to people staying at home.

Regarding the limitation of social contact, social media has been instrumental in bringing forth performances, including Thai music, folk, pop and classical. People get together to perform music using the Zoom conferencing program to put together an online ensemble. There are numbers of music video clips emerging to support a new way of life in line with government policies to avoid being victim of asymptomatic or super spreaders. Drawings and paintings are being displayed through virtual galleries. Graphic designs and animations also play significant roles in accompanying songs and performances. Visual arts and digital arts are coming forth being used for promoting health and related safety campaigns.

Though urban art and culture have been impacted by Covid-19 throughout the world, it is a good opportunity to initiate a "New Normal" *way of practice* for all artists and urban research scholars in this new era.

This volume is dedicated to all the Covid-19 caregivers and is this volume we have brought in a guest author to discuss the impact of the pandemic on art and urban culture in Thailand.

Turn the page to view the article by Alongkorn Parivudhiphongs titled *COVID-19 – You Can't Stop the Beat!*