

# Visual Communication Design of Thai Movie Print Media

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the visual communication design of Thai movie print media since its beginning era in 1923 to 1990 prior to a turning point of print media design process from hand-drawn to computer graphic techniques. The qualitative research was applied through an interview with 5 print media specialists and sample group of 100 pieces of Thai movie print media produced during the captioned period. The findings revealed that the visual communication design of Thai movie print media comprised 1) illustration, 2) title and message, 3) color scheme, and 4) graphic and motifs.

The design direction of Thai movie print media could be divided into 3 directions based on the applied technology in each period; 1) the Early Period in which the photomontage technique was applied with primary colors, 2) the Second Period in which drawing and painting technique was applied with three-dimensional calligraphy, and 3) the Third Period in which the photo-retouch technique and computer-generated fonts have played a greater role.

The composition pattern of Thai movie print media since the early period till the third one could be concluded as follows: 1) Composition style with Geometric Form Pattern, 2) Composition style with Chaotic Composition Style, 3) Composition style with Idealistic Style, and 4) Composition style with Nostalgia Style.

In addition, the typography design for film titles were based on the following concepts; making the letter as an image. And adapting the image as a letter and adapting the image as a part of the letter.

**Keywords:** Visual Communication Design, Poster Design, Thai movie print media

## Introduction

The popular entertainment activities among Thai people regardless of how old they are is watching movie. There are wide varieties of movies such as romance, teen movies, family issues, tragedy, war movies, horror, comedy and animation. Furthermore, some foreign movies are widely welcome by Thai audiences such as films from China, Japan, South Korea, India, Hollywood, or independent movies (Bangchaeng, 1992). However, Thai audiences prefer watching Thai movies to others since they can perceive various feelings within one film, a particular identity of Thai film that matches with Thai emotional needs. This therefore can be inferred that the happiness from Thai movies is Thai aesthetics through indulging motion pictures or visual impression.

Thai film production had firstly been started by a foreign producer in 1923 and after that Thai film production house has been established together with related businesses such as cinema, movie media advertisement via radio, newspaper, leaflet and poster. The films during the early period were silent ones with a small proportion of voice-over (Thai Buntern, 2020). Should the audiences would like to have more understanding about the film's synopsis, venue and showtime, they need to see its poster attached in front of the cinema before the film started. With the expertise of poster designers in such a period, the splendid pictures with striking letter fonts and attractive color tone could substantially draw the audiences' attention. Film poster production design has therefore been favorable and well-practiced since then (Chatraput, 2004).

Thai movie print media design has been created based on visual communication principle same as print media one consisting of basic composition as follows:

1. Picture: to communicate essence, concept and imagination required to be presented and the picture was created through various techniques such as drawing and painting, photography and photo retouching through laboratory process and computer program.

2. Typography: to communicate essence, concept and details required to be presented through typography or text. The typography was created by various techniques such as writing, calligraphy, computer program.

3. Color Scheme: to communicate emotion, feeling in replacement of speech and as a symbol. Color is a composition of all things regardless of picture, font, graphic or motif.

4. Graphic and Motif: to be as a supplementary to enable communication of emotion, feeling in replacement of speech and a symbol as well.

### Research objectives

To explore the visual communication design of Thai movie print media.

### Conceptual Framework

The study was undertaken on Thai movie print media designed since the early period in 1923 followed with the second till the end of the third one in 1990 (Thai Film Reviews, 2021) prior to a turning point of print media design process from hand-drawn to computer graphic techniques.

### Research methodology

The qualitative research was applied with data collection made through an interview with 5 print media specialists and Thai movie print media designers. The sample group was 100 pieces of Thai movie print media since the early period of 1923 till 1990 and data collection sources were from Thai Film Museum (Five Star Production, 2021), old movie posters for sale and websites of old movie poster collectors.

### Findings

The key syntax of Thai movie print media consists of title, scenes from the movie, credit block, movie star names and photographs and song lyrics. Thai movie print media pattern is directly related to Thai social context and local culture whereas the art style applied to the posters were influenced by Art Nouveau and Art Deco inspiring Thai poster designers to deliver their unique designs on Thai posters. Addition to this, printing technology is also another element to help drive the development of Thai film advertisements to concur with the audience needs during such a period (Waijittragum, 2020).

Further to an analysis on characteristics of the sample group changed according to the applied techniques, in view of illustration creation, it is found that Thai movie print media can be divided into 3 patterns; the Early period: the photomontage technique was applied in white and black colors, the Second period: drawing technique was applied, and the Third period: the offset printed pictures were produced by a computer program (Puenpong, 2013) as per Table 1.

**Table 1.** Table 1 shows a number of the sample group of Thai movie print media categorized by characteristics changed in each period

Era	A.D. Period	Characteristics	Sample Group Numbers
1	1923 - 1960	Photomontage Technique	20
2	1961 - 1980	Drawing and Painting Technique	56
3	1981 - 1990	Photo-Retouch Technique	24

The development of Thai movie print media according to its timeline represented a difference of technique applied for scenes from the movie design that can be separated into 3 categories as follows:

1. During 1923 - 1960, the photomontage technique was widely used but due to limitation of printing technology, the letterpress printing with primary colors was then applied causing the whole picture to appear unnaturally (Thai Bunternng, 2020) as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** A sample of Thai movie print media with Photomontage Technique

Source: <https://thaibunternng.fandom.com/th/wiki/>

2. During 1961 - 1980, Thai movie print media designers having solid background in western art or modernism art started to deliver drawing and painting technique together with three dimensions typography and motif, frame and border including forming dynamic layout / composition to attract audiences on leading movie stars or highlight situations of the movie to be more attractive than other pictures of the same movie as shown in Figure 2.

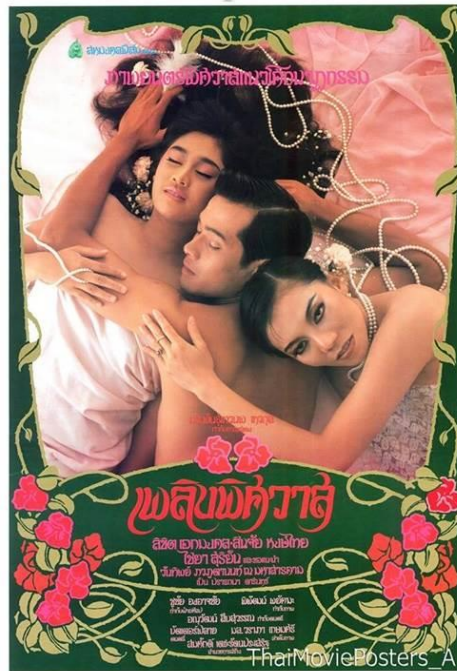


**Figure 2.** A sample of Thai movie print media with Drawing and Painting Technique

Source: <https://thaibunternng.fandom.com/th/wiki/>

3. During 1981 - 1990, the offset printing technology considerably advanced by which the printed picture could be similar to the photograph with high resolution and this technique was increasingly

popular among designers. Later, when the photo - retouch technique played a vital role of illustration creation in which designers could broaden their creativity beyond the realm of imagination, the drawing and painting technique has then become obsolete and eventually disappeared since then as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** A Sample of Thai movie print media with Photo - Retouch Technique  
Source: <https://pantip.com/topic/33064779>

Thai movie print media designers earned substantial income during 1957 - 1987 and most of famous ones possessed fine art and applied art skills that were a combination of aesthetic and visual communication. Those in such a period could greatly mark special recognition afford, for instant, Piak Poster, Thong Mee and Bunharn as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Well - Known Thai movie print media Designers  
Source: <https://thaibunternng.fandom.com/th/wiki/>

As watching a movie is Thai aesthetic entertainment, it can be said that Thai movie print media with the drawing and painting technique in such a period presented “Thai aesthetic mindset” that



communication style different from the western one (Chanthed, 2019) in which the poster emphasized on a few leading movie stars and space rather than placing irrelevant pictures. The research results review the popular patterns of layout and composition on Thai movie print media as are:

1. Composition style with Geometric Form Pattern. A small portion of Thai movie print media appeared within square form, rectangular form, triangle form in order to make multiple scenes in one image. Thai aesthetic mindset feast the audients with a massive of movie stars, as in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** A sample of Thai movie print media with Geometric Form Pattern

Source: <https://thaibunternng.fandom.com/th/wiki/>

2. Composition style with Chaotic Composition Style. A large portion of Thai movie print media appeared with a crowd of people, multi-layer of activities and scene in order to represent major story happened. It causes Thai movie print media is most important stimulate media to the audience. as in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** A sample of Thai movie print media with Chaotic Composition Style

Source: <https://thaibunternng.fandom.com/th/wiki/>

3. Composition style with Idealistic Style. During 1961 - 1980, Thai movie print media has most variety style and unique layout. A massive movie print media appeared in conceptual art and modern art direction. Graphic shape with influence from Western art style was popular among that period. as in Figure 7.



**Figure 7.** A sample of Thai movie print media with Idealistic Style  
Source: <https://thaibunternrg.fandom.com/th/wiki/>

4. Composition style with Nostalgia Style. The concept of Thai aesthetic mindset has been repeated in a massive Thai movie industry. Along with countryside scene, rice field, mountain and creek. It is a normal image to represent rural lifestyle appeared in many Thai movie print media. It is seemed to be a popular concept for Thai cinematography. as in Figure 8.

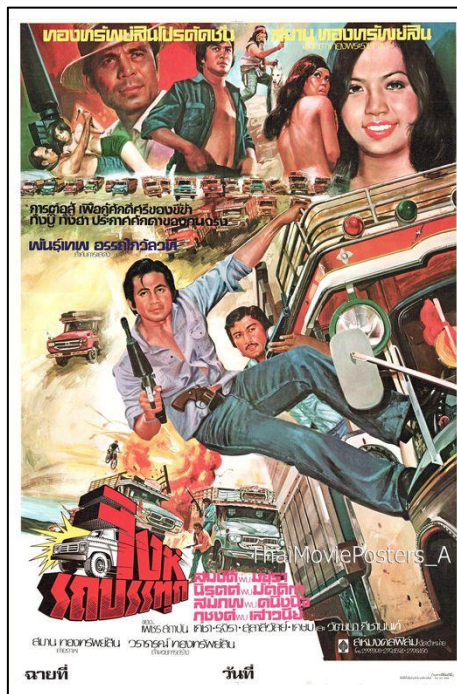


**Figure 8.** A sample of Thai movie print media with Nostalgia Style  
Source: <https://thaibunternrg.fandom.com/th/wiki/>

The typographic design played a tremendous attractive selling point of the poster whereas the title used simple words or in a short and concise phrase with clear meaning reflecting the whole feeling of the film without any complication and interpretation required. The typographic design techniques popularly used, for instant; making the letter as an image. And adapting the image as a letter and adapting the image as a part of the letter as in Figure 9. And 10.



**Figure 9.** A sample of typographic design with making the letter as an image  
Source: <https://thaibunternng.fandom.com/th/wiki/>



**Figure 10.** A sample of typographic design with adapting the image as a part of the letter  
Source: <https://thaibunternng.fandom.com/th/wiki/>

## Conclusions and Discussion

Thai movie print media have been developed for over 70 years in parallel with print media creation techniques and graphic design originating from western countries in Europe. The key elements of Thai



movie print media design therefore concur with the international design process comprising storytelling photography in line with the calligraphy of the title and descriptive texts under attractive bright color tone whereas the most popularly applied techniques in recent age were graphic and motifs.

Thai movie print media patterns were differentiated based on technology applied in each period. In early period, it was photomontage technique applied with primary colors, followed by drawing and calligraphy technique in the second period whereas the photo-retouch technique by computer program was applied at present time that was in line with Sukwong (1982) and Thanawangnoi (1998) and Waijitragum (2020)'s opinion.

Along 70 years of Thai movie print media development, the layout/composition on posters were in diversified patterns as follows: 1) Triangle Shape, 2) Diagonal Leading Line Pattern (Dynamic Gaze), 3) Crowded Pattern, 4) 3- Dimension/Distance Pattern, 5) Fantasy/Surrealism Pattern, 6) Thai Local Identity Pattern, 7) Geometric Form Pattern, 8) Text as a Hero Pattern, 9) Frame/Border Decoration, and 10) Fragmented Pattern.

Moreover, the typography design for the movie title was under the concept of the followings: 1) Making the letter as an image, 2) Adapting the image as a letter, 3) Adapting the image as a part of the letter, and 4) Adjusting the word as an image that was in line with Shahid (2021)'s study.

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