Project Assignment 2

1. DESIGN:
For this experiment, I will be asking other creative friends, colleagues and locals (who identify as musicians, actors, writers, artists, photographers, etc.) to consider different prompts – related to my artistic interest/exploration of storytelling rituals and create a response to these prompts. We will then meet together in a public or semi-public place to share responses to the prompt (or any other artistic creations or projects they would like to share for discussion or feedback to help them develop their work.) After sharing individual work the group is asked to consider two questions about each response – What do you connect with? (and) Where does it lead you? - At the end of the discussion another prompt and a new scheduled meet up will be discussed. (Possible survey after some trials)

a.
This experiment will be gathering a group of artistically inclined people living in Phuket to see what kind of story sharing will take place and/or what group projects or ideas the group would like to develop. This intention was greatly informed by the project: Creative Practices and Public Engagement by Daša Spasojevic and Ana Souto Galvan and how they use various storytelling methods to engage with community and have the public perform conceptually to co-create an identity of their neighborhood. Developing, for Phuket, *'A participatory methods' toolkit' … demonstrating the potential role that creative practices can have in bridging the gap between … social and political conditions in which places really matter for people. This should lead further to meaningful ways of improving places and communities in which we live"* (Creative Practices and Public Engagement by *Daša Spasojevic and Ana Souto Galvan)* I am taking many notes from their methods one for example: starting with a small local group first. I will start with a group of local artists that have some stake in an arts community in Phuket, or wish to connect, share work or experiment with other modes of engagement. This type of experiment can be redone or repeated, with the same group or other groups such as youth groups, tourists, local community members, community officials, unintended/unexpected participants, to continue to encounter how this method can best serve those different communities.

b.
This experiment is intending to get other artists meeting together in public to discuss arts. Meeting in a viewpoint to share viewpoints and change one way we normally interact with this space. And how we think we can interact as artists outside of the usual ways we meet or do not meet. Usually we will function within the studio, workshop, theaters and stages that are institutions of artistic practice but they are not always venues open enough to alternative projects or participants outside of artistic professional or stake-holders. At least that has been an observation of mine when trying to collaborate with established arts institutions. And leads one of my motivations to create artistic disruptions in public space to challenge the way arts are viewed as a touristic commodity and honestly engage locals and tourists in conversations that can lead to new expressions.
  "Art, against the everyday life becoming commonplace, can be understood as small tactics that demobilize the instituted social practices, creating tiny structures that branch into technocratic structures by changing its operation, hinging on the poetic details of everyday life"- (Art for a Sensitive City by Brigida Campbell)
        In Phuket there are many viewpoints - places where people gather but rarely interact with other groups outside of their tour/community. They often take pictures, sit or walk around with their own groups or simply pass through. These spaces are both for locals and tourists but rarely do they interact outside of consumer based transactions or guided tours. This experiment aims to create an
"'alternative tourism', broadly defined as forms of tourism that are consistent with natural, social, and

community values and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experience." (Tourist Cultures: Identity, Place and the Traveller by Wearing, Stevenson and Young) and see how it can inform or influence other types of engagements with shared touristic spaces. The space we will be engaging with is a very popular viewpoint centralized in Phuket- Khao Rang Viewpoint. It is very famous and well known. This is partly for practical reasons – a centralized place for all participants to meet. And partly to rethink why we go to these places and what we can do there together.

c.
The audience for this experiment is a creative group of people I started to bring together here in Phuket. I observed, on several occasions after hosting the Pop Up Phuket Open Mic, that there were many artists hanging around after the show and looking to make connections or "talk shop". This group was formed with the intention to bring artists together, outside of any affiliated institutions (but not disregarding those institutions – and working with them when necessary) to establish an artistic dialogue with this 'disparate arts community'. This was based on one of my assumptions that there is not exactly a place or group like this existing at this time (but I must admit it requires more research and context). Through discussions with artists about forming this group I have been lead to believe my assumption has some truth to it and others have been very supportive and interested in creating a group and meeting to co-create or share.
The experiment/performance is intended for this artist group and whoever they come with or choose to bring along. It will be a chance to see if these other artists will actively engage with my project in this way, if they interact with the prompt and share their response or bring something of theirs that they want to share. I hope any unintended audience members will question what we are doing, engage in the process and hopefully join the group or form one of their own. I'm curious to see how that part goes, especially.

d.
For this experiment – my previous research questions did not completely address what I planned to do with this experiment. I had to review the questions and make an alternative question. I am focusing on this new question below because it is starting to get more specific with who, what and where . . .

-In what ways can artists enhance or engage with existing touristic spaces (viewpoints) to transform these public spaces into ritualistic places where new myths and realities can be told, shared and developed?-

I expect this artist group to meet, share and enjoy this alternative connective experience together. I imagine it will be a bit awkward (if only just for me as an organizer) because there are not many (if any) meetings like this on the island and it will be working in an unaccustomed way from usual arts practices here – which is usually defined by being 'commercial' and working independently or with a 'group' or 'scene'. As leader I am expecting to be a bit disorganized, forget something important or be more soft spoken than I normally might be- but after some practice and trial and error – I hope that I can repeat this experiment with more precision, confidence and ease.

e.
Experiment #1 Plan – "Step by Step"
Step 1:   Gauge interest in forming a creative group. Talk with other artists about it and discuss possibilities.

Step 2:   Form a creative group aimed at sharing artistic work, giving feedback and working collaboratively on future projects. The group does not need to be too large to start. At least 10 different creators from various practices to make sure some people can come to story shares. The number can grow and commitment is not mandatory and members can stay engaged however they can manage.

Step 3:   Designate a time and place to meet together. The meetings will last 1.5 - 2 hours (unless people do want to stay longer.) and consist of a check-in portion where people can just chat and get to know each other, a sharing portion and a discussion portion. Depending on the amount of attendees, these times will mostly be divided evenly but more time might be needed for sharing and discussion. The meeting date/time will be determined by the group members availability and will most likely happen in the evenings or weekends because more people are 'free' at those times. For this first experiment we determined that Friday evening about 6PM was the best time for most of the group. The group was given a few places for meeting – public/semi-public places that are easy for everyone to access. The group settle on Khao Rang Viewpoint for its variety of meeting spaces, centralized location and overall beautiful setting.

Step 4:   Share Question #1 from Questions/Prompts list for group to create responses in advance.

Step 5:   Meet at designated time and place to share responses or other work that the group would like an active audience to experience. Ask the group if recording or documenting is alright. Bring recording material, writing material, notecards and questions on notecards (as a visual for group members to reference)

Step 6:   Actively engage (listen/participate) in each others work.

Step 7:   Discuss each others work and respond to questions in a positive and constructive way.

Step 8:   Discuss future prompts. And/or discuss how to establish a storytelling ritual.

Step 9:   Designate the next time and place for a future meeting. Returning to the same space or venturing to another? Why?

Step 10:   Hugs and goodbyes and off to create again. Together or apart – how ever it works best.

f.
Realistic Agenda – "as real as can be"
First or two week: Steps 1-4. Allow time for people to join a group chat and respond to the first prompt. I need to prepare a list of prompts and questions for the group!

Second week: Step 4 (if not yet completed) Designate a time and place for the group story share within the next week!

Third week: Steps 5 – 10. Meet! As organizer I need to arrive **early** to make sure people have a recognizable 'person of contact' and so I have time to set up recording equipment.

Following week: Reconfirm or repeat Step 9 to make sure the story share can become a group ritual.

g.
To document this experiment, I plan to record the session in two ways – voice and video, as well as, take some pictures of the space. The voice recording is very important to me to make sure there is a decent audio of the session. Sometimes phone cameras or gopros do not pick up the audio as well as professional recording material and it is crucial that the sharing and discussion part are audible and clear. Why? To make sure the different responses, feedback and discussions are able to be heard and reflected on later by any group members (present or absent). All participants will be asked for permission when being recorded. Afterwards I will be writing a reflection on how the experiment went and how to move forward. I think I will try to utilize anonymous surveys in future experiments to get more (honest) feedback that participants might feel less open to share while being recorded. I think that this first experiment needs to be more relaxed in how it is documented to help the group form more organically and comfortably without feeling that they need to perform for a camera or future audience.

2. EXECUTE:

Check! We did one and more to come . . .

3. DOCUMENT

To frame this experiment and document how it went, I will be including a script of its intentions and form, a recording of the session and reflective comments about what worked well, what can be changed or finessed for future experiments and what came out of this story share. This will be documents on my exposition on the Research Catalogue . . . asap!

I will also be posting – in an accessible google drive folder – all of the contact info, documents, questions, photos, recordings, videos, etc. for the group to access, alter and add to, so that all of the process is available for them to participate and form – collaboratively.