RECONSTRUCTING THAI AESTHETIC ON SHORT-VIDEO PLATFORMS: A COMMUNICATION ART PERSPECTIVE*

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Abstract

This academic article examines how Thai aesthetic sensibilities are reconfigured within short-video platforms under contemporary conditions of platformization and algorithmic circulation. Rather than treating short-video media as neutral channels for cultural dissemination, the article conceptualizes platforms as aesthetic infrastructures that actively reshape modes of visual expression, narrative rhythm, and affective engagement. Drawing on communication art theory (Dewey, 1934/2005; Silverstone, 1999), cultural reproduction (Williams, 1981), and platform aesthetics (Manovich, 2013; Couldry & Hepp, 2017), the article develops a theoretical argument illustrated through brief analytical examples from Thai short-video practices. It argues that Thai aesthetic is not diminished in short-video environments but reconstructed through processes of visual condensation, stylistic repetition, and affective

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anchoring. By reframing short-video platforms as sites of aesthetic negotiation, this article contributes to communication art scholarship and advances theoretical understanding of digital cultural aesthetics beyond representational or empirical paradigms.

Keywords: Thai aesthetic, Short-video platforms, Communication art, Platform aesthetics, Cultural reproduction

Introduction

The global proliferation of short-video platforms has transformed contemporary media environments by privileging speed, visual immediacy, and algorithmic visibility. These platforms do not merely introduce new formats of media consumption; they reorganize how cultural meaning is aesthetically produced, circulated, and experienced (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Manovich, 2013). Under conditions of platformization, cultural aesthetics are increasingly shaped by compressed visual forms, rhythmic repetition, and metrics-driven visibility, raising critical questions about the fate of culturally specific aesthetic traditions.

In discussions of digital media, short-video platforms are often associated with cultural flattening, aesthetic homogenization, or the erosion of traditional artistic sensibilities (Kraidy, 2005). Such perspectives implicitly assume that cultural aesthetics possess stable forms that are either preserved or lost when confronted with new media technologies. This article challenges that assumption by arguing that aesthetic traditions are not static objects but dynamic practices that are continually reconstructed through mediated form (Williams, 1981).

Thailand provides a particularly productive context for examining these dynamics. Thai aesthetic traditions emphasize relational harmony, rhythmic balance, symbolic subtlety, and affective resonance, features widely discussed

in Southeast Asian cultural studies (Geertz, 1973). When these sensibilities encounter short-video platforms characterized by brevity, repetition, and algorithmic amplification, they are neither simply preserved nor erased. Instead, they undergo aesthetic reconstruction shaped by platform-specific logics.

This article approaches Thai short-video practices from a communication art perspective, asking how aesthetic meaning is reorganized through mediated form rather than whether cultural authenticity is maintained. It advances a theoretical argument that short-video platforms function as aesthetic infrastructures that enable new configurations of Thai aesthetic sensibility. By doing so, the article shifts analytical focus from cultural loss to aesthetic transformation, contributing to broader debates on digital media, art, and cultural reproduction.

Methodological Orientation

This study adopts a theoretical-interpretive approach grounded in conceptual analysis within communication art scholarship. Rather than conducting empirical sampling or quantitative content analysis, the article develops analytical reasoning through interpretive engagement with media form and aesthetic structure. Brief illustrative examples from Thai short-video practices are employed solely as conceptual demonstrations to clarify theoretical claims, not as systematic empirical evidence. This positioning aligns the article with traditions of media aesthetics critique and cultural theory that prioritize experiential interpretation over representational measurement.

Thai Aesthetic and Digital Cultural Expression

1. Thai Aesthetic as Cultural Sensibility

Thai aesthetic has long been understood as a mode of cultural sensibility embedded in social interaction, artistic practice, and everyday life.

Rather than being defined by rigid stylistic rules, Thai aesthetic operates through relational balance, affective moderation, and contextual responsiveness. Visual harmony, rhythmic movement, and symbolic understatement function as key elements through which aesthetic meaning is experienced.

Importantly, Thai aesthetic should not be conceptualized as a fixed artistic canon nor as a homogeneous national style. Scholarship on Southeast Asian cultural expression emphasizes plurality, historical layering, and contextual variation across artistic and everyday practices. Thai aesthetic therefore encompasses diverse articulations across traditional, popular, and hybrid digital domains. It is best understood as a socially reproduced orientation toward relational harmony, rhythmic modulation, and affective attunement that adapts across communicative environments. From classical performance traditions to contemporary media expression, transformation occurs without dissolving experiential continuity.

2. Short-Video Platforms as Cultural Environments

Short-video platforms introduce a distinctive media environment characterized by temporal compression, visual intensity, and algorithmic circulation. Content visibility is shaped by engagement metrics, repetition, and stylistic recognizability. These conditions exert aesthetic pressure on cultural expression, favoring forms that are immediately legible and affectively engaging.

Rather than treating platforms as neutral distribution channels, this article conceptualizes them as cultural environments that actively structure aesthetic production. Platform affordances influence visual composition, narrative pacing, and expressive repetition, thereby shaping how cultural aesthetics are articulated and perceived.

3. Reframing Cultural Expression in Digital Contexts

Within short-video environments, cultural expression is reorganized to align with platform temporality and visibility regimes. This reorganization does not necessarily entail cultural simplification. Instead, it involves selective aesthetic emphasis that allows culturally specific sensibilities to persist in transformed form. Understanding this process requires a theoretical framework attentive to mediated experience rather than representational fidelity.

Beyond formal affordances, platform infrastructures are shaped by political-economic dynamics that influence aesthetic visibility. Algorithmic recommendation privileges engagement optimization, while monetization pressures encourage stylistic standardization and creator responsiveness to metrics (Gillespie, 2014; Bucher, 2018). Such governance produces hierarchies of circulation in which certain aesthetic articulations gain amplification while others remain peripheral. Aesthetic reconstruction therefore unfolds within asymmetrical conditions of visibility, economic incentive, and algorithmic filtering rather than within technologically neutral space.

Communication Art and Aesthetic Reconstruction

Communication art theory provides a critical lens for examining how meaning emerges through mediated experience. Rather than prioritizing information transmission or representational accuracy, communication art emphasizes form, rhythm, and affect as central to meaning-making. Media communication is understood as an experiential process in which aesthetic organization shapes perception and interpretation.

Applied to short-video platforms, communication art theory highlights how visual condensation, rhythmic repetition, and symbolic emphasis organize aesthetic experience. Short-video media compress complex cultural references into perceptually dense forms, inviting immediate affective engagement rather

than reflective interpretation. Meaning is encountered through sensory and emotional resonance as much as through symbolic cognition.

From this perspective, aesthetic reconstruction is not a loss of meaning but a reconfiguration of experiential conditions. Thai aesthetic sensibility is reorganized through mediated form, allowing it to persist within new communicative environments. Communication art thus offers a theoretical foundation for understanding how cultural aesthetics adapt to platform-driven media systems.

Short-Video Platforms as Aesthetic Infrastructure

This article conceptualizes short-video platforms as aesthetic infrastructures that shape cultural expression through structural and algorithmic mechanisms. Platform design privileges brevity, repetition, and affective immediacy, encouraging aesthetic forms that can be quickly recognized and easily circulated.

Within this infrastructure, aesthetic production is guided by patterns of visibility and repetition. Stylistic motifs, rhythmic gestures, and affective cues are amplified through algorithmic recommendation, creating feedback loops that reinforce certain aesthetic configurations. These processes do not eliminate cultural specificity; rather, they reorganize it within platform constraints.

For Thai short-video practices, this infrastructure facilitates the circulation of culturally resonant visual elements while reshaping their formal presentation. Aesthetic meaning is reconstructed through alignment with platform rhythms, demonstrating how cultural expression adapts to infrastructural conditions without dissolving into uniformity.

Aesthetic Reconstruction in Thai Short-Video Practices

1. Visual Condensation

Thai aesthetic in short-video practices is frequently expressed through condensed visual symbols and gestures. Complex cultural references are translated into immediately recognizable visual forms, allowing aesthetic meaning to be perceived within limited temporal frames. This condensation enhances legibility while maintaining affective depth.

Illustratively, Thai short-video production frequently condenses culturally dense visual references into brief symbolic frames. Circulating content often incorporates stylized hand gestures derived from classical performance traditions, ornamental gold motifs associated with temple architecture, or abbreviated visual references to Buddhist iconography. These elements appear not as extended narrative exposition but as rapid perceptual cues embedded within seconds of visual display. Platform temporality thus encourages symbolic compression while preserving affective recognizability, demonstrating how condensation enhances legibility without eliminating cultural resonance.

2. Stylistic Repetition and Rhythm

Repetition functions as a central aesthetic mechanism in short-video platforms. Thai aesthetic elements are reproduced through recurring visual motifs, rhythmic movements, and audio-visual cues. Rather than signaling aesthetic reduction, repetition operates as a mode of cultural reinforcement that enhances visibility and recognition.

Stylistic repetition is observable in recurring rhythmic patterns across Thai comedic and performative short-video genres. Loopable audio cues, choreographed gesture sequences, and humor timing structured around culturally familiar pacing are repeatedly circulated through algorithmic amplification. Repetition reinforces recognizability and visibility, transforming aesthetic recurrence into a mechanism of platform-native cultural

reinforcement. Rather than indicating simplification, rhythmic reiteration sustains communal familiarity while aligning expressive form with infrastructural circulation logics.

3. Affective Anchoring

Affective resonance remains central to Thai aesthetic reconstruction. Short-video practices emphasize emotional cues, facial expression, and bodily movement to anchor aesthetic meaning affectively. This anchoring allows Thai sensibility to persist through experiential engagement rather than explicit cultural explanation.

Affective anchoring is evident in emotionally calibrated performance styles emphasizing facial micro-expression, bodily softness, and relational warmth common in interpersonal or family-oriented short-video narratives. Emotional cues function as experiential entry points through which viewers engage aesthetically prior to symbolic interpretation. Platform environments privilege immediacy of affective resonance, enabling Thai sensibilities grounded in moderation and relational tone to persist through embodied performance rather than discursive articulation.

Discussion: Rethinking Digital Aesthetics

The analysis presented in this article challenges deterministic narratives that associate short-video platforms with cultural degradation. Instead, it demonstrates that digital platforms function as sites of aesthetic negotiation where cultural sensibilities are actively reconstructed. Thai aesthetic persists not through preservation of traditional form but through adaptive reconfiguration aligned with platform logics.

From a communication art perspective, short-video platforms reorganize the conditions of aesthetic experience. Meaning is produced through form, rhythm, and affect rather than discursive explanation. This insight extends

communication art scholarship into algorithm-driven media environments and underscores the relevance of aesthetic analysis to digital culture studies.These dynamics resonate with broader theories of symbolic hierarchy and cultural circulation within mediated fields (Bourdieu, 1993; Appadurai, 1996).

While reconstruction highlights adaptive continuity, it is equally necessary to recognize selective visibility and potential marginalization. Platform infrastructures privilege certain stylistic intensities, temporal pacing, and expressive formats that align with algorithmic circulation priorities. Consequently, slower contemplative forms, regionally specific expressions, or less metrically engaging aesthetic articulations may experience diminished visibility. Reconstruction therefore operates alongside processes of filtering and hierarchy, indicating that digital cultural transformation involves both persistence and uneven amplification.

Conclusion

This article has argued that Thai aesthetic on short-video platforms should be understood as a process of aesthetic reconstruction rather than cultural loss. By conceptualizing platforms as aesthetic infrastructures and applying communication art theory, it has shown how culturally specific sensibilities adapt to contemporary media conditions.

The theoretical framework developed here contributes to broader discussions of digital aesthetics, cultural reproduction, and mediated experience. Future scholarship may extend this approach to comparative cultural contexts or explore how audience engagement further shapes aesthetic reconstruction in platformized media environments.

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