

# INFUSING CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SUAN SUNANDHA PALACE INTO CONTEMPORARY COSTUME DESIGN

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is a creative research paper aims to study the watercolor paintings of Khun Kha Luang, a cultural capital of Suan Sunandha palace, for use in contemporary costume design. The research process being collected and analyzed watercolor paintings, documentary information, interviews, photographs, designing costumes inspired by watercolor paintings, then having experts evaluate their creations. According to an analysis of 131 watercolor flower paintings, there are single-flower and compositional drawing styles, with most paintings being roses and orchids. Therefore, it has adapted and used the pattern of roses as inspiration for the design. As a result of creations, it was found that roses are most commonly used in design. The resulting color scheme is Thai tones consisting of: Pink and red with a cockatoo, claw red, septum white, leaf green, crow's egg green, defense blue, and indigo, etc. The design approach that inspired the watercolor flower paintings of the Suan Sunandha Palace can be used in contemporary costume design and can create added value from the cultural capital of Suan Sunandha.

**Keywords:** Flower painting in watercolor, Costume Design, SSRU Theatre, Suan Sunandha

## INTRODUCTION

Suan Sunandha Palace is a historical landmark. The physical appearance is a garden and a palace similar to a villa, with a total of 32 villas, which are the residence of the queen, prince and daughter. His Royal Highness Princess Wimada Theo, Saisawalphirom Krom Phra Suttha Sininat Piyamaharaj Padiwarada in charge of all possibilities. Every villa has beautifully planted flowering plants and leaves [1]. The Wimada Theo Palace is like a small forest park. His Royal Highness Princess Wimada Theo, Saisawalphirom Krom Phra Suttha Sininat Piyamaharaj Padiwarada was also an excellent botanist. All kinds of trees, whether flowering plants, leafy plants or fruit trees [2]. In other words, the area around the villa is planted with almost all sorts of flowering plants that are beautiful and kaleidoscopes. The main flowering plants are roses and orchids of almost all species, which are now important learning sites in Thailand's history. Whether it's about culture, food, the people of the palace. From costumes to art, to floral paintings. Especially orchid species with watercolors, it is one of the hobbies that the royal commissioners of the Suan Sunandha Palace were interested in practicing. By inviting teachers from Poh Chang School, the art institute at that time to teach along with other learning

areas, most of the flower paintings are real flowers planted in Suan Sunandha Palace. It conveys beauty in a realistic manner according to natural archetypes, both shapes and colors. When the drawing was finished, it was brought up to offer to His Majesty the King. If His Majesty saw that it is not as beautiful as the real thing, His Majesty will let it continue to be drawn, until it pleases. His Majesty will guide and criticize each image. Skilled commissioners include, Mr. Commissioner Amorn Rattichunchot. Each watercolor painting indicates the type of flower in English and Thai in handwriting. There's always a date and a picturer's signature, but it's a pity that some of them aren't clearly visible, as they're over 100 years old. At present, it is preserved and kept at the Wimada Theo Palace, Sai Sutthanpadon Building Museum, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. So, it can be said that this commissioner's watercolor painting is the cultural capital of Suan Sunandha that has a very powerful historical value. Including the botanicals of the Suan Sunandha palace, the culture of the palace lifestyle, the linking art of fine arts.

Meanwhile, from the past to the present, costumes are part of the expression. It represents the identity, class, status of the wearer and indicates the values of the era. This is observed by the use of materials for sewing shapes, as well as the colors chosen for the costumes. Currently, costumes are developing rapidly and there are novelties in design. It also uses the aura of costumes of different eras or uses the surroundings such as legends, narratives, floral paintings, animal figures, etc. as inspiration for creating works. The dress code is adapted to the wearer as well as the popularity of society. Nowadays, dress has a simple approach that emphasizes a wide range of wears, especially contemporary dresses that adapt to the popularity of the fashion cycle. It adapts to the popularity of the dress code during each season or according to the variety of cultures that change with the times, according to the weather, beliefs, society, and the history of the place. Thus, costume can be considered as a form of the object language, and a person's dress code is interpreted, evaluated, and judged. For example, people prefer to wear costumes in black to pay homage to mourning. Grief mourns those who have passed away. However, wearing black also has different meanings depending on the social and cultural context [3]. Based on impressions of cultural capital, the flower paintings of the Suan Sunandha Palace and the design of costumes led the researchers to be interested in studying and analyzing the watercolor flower paintings of the Commissioner of the Suan Sunandha Palace, leading to the discovery of contemporary costume designs that further expanded cultural capital and created added value.

## **OBJECTIVE**

Study the watercolor floral paintings of the Royal Commission, a cultural capital, Wang Suan Sunandha, used as a creative design guide to contemporary costumes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This creative research includes research tools: 1. Documented data collection; recording sounds and pictures, fieldwork background studies of watercolor flower paintings. 2. In-depth interviews from curators and luminaries.

The researcher has three stages of creative operation: 1. Pre-production, to collect documentary information field visits, analysis, synthesis of data, brainstorming meeting with the research team to find design guidelines. 2. Production, the process of design development consists of 3 steps as follows: Personality design, Key Art, and Creative Design. And the final 3. Post - Production, summary of work and suggestions.

## RESULTS

### Key design ideas (Key Art)

Watercolor painting uses watercolor as a writing device. Pigments dissolved in liquids Most of what is written is paper. Aesthetic composition for 2D visualization. The watercolor paintings of the royal commissioners in Suan Sunandha Palace use watercolor techniques to convey the beauty of the flowers. There is a total of 131 watercolor paintings, the appearance of watercolor paintings is light, transparent, not opaque, the texture of the paper can be seen. The appearance of color permeability with perfect harmony.

Identity, a unique feature that indicates or is indicative of a person, society, and community. It creates a feeling of goodness for the beholder, which creates the charm of the palace girl. As the saying goes, "Beauty like paintings " the researchers analyzed from Shigenobu's theory of communication personality (Color Image Scale) [4]. This is because personality traits are shaped according to tastes and life forms, each group has a small personality that has the same meaning. It is appropriate and can be applied in costume design. There is also an image that can clearly indicate personality, which can be used to conceptualize, design using the mood and tone of the watercolor paintings.

Flowers are colorful and aromatic, and they are also hidden by their deeper meaning and elegance. Flowers painted by the Commissioner stem directly from the perseverance of those who have not studied art. Instead, they can paint beautifully and convey beauty in a realistic manner.

Therefore, the main idea in the design is to pay attention to the beauty of watercolor painting, flower painting, the attributes or identities transmitted through the use of watercolors lead to the creation of a personality in costume design.

### The uniqueness of watercolor paintings

Watercolor paintings of the Commissioner are activities in free time, in the afternoon to the evening of the commissioner. The Commissioner Wimada Theo is responsible for writing watercolors depicting flowers in accordance with the will of Lord Wimada Theo. These watercolor paintings use watercolor techniques to convey beauty in a realistic way. If anyone has a look at each other, they appreciate the craft. Each picture indicates the name of the flower in English and Thai in handwriting. There's also a date, month, year, and the painter's signature, but it's a pity that some of them don't appear clearly. This is likely due to the disappearance of these images, as these images are 100 years old. Watercolor paintings can be divided into: 1. Watercolor paintings with background images 2. Watercolor paintings with flower-specific characteristics 3. Watercolor paintings with compositions.

Watercolor paintings with compositions that emphasize the strength of the image. The variety of elements of the triad figure builds well into the design. The vases contained in the

picture also represent the culture that has come into play in society. The popularity is expressed through the use of consumer goods.

**Figure 1**  
**Watercolor paintings with compositions**



We chose white roses and compositions in vases because of the white color of the roses, purity, innocence and youthfulness. Combined with the use of cool colors, the harmony of the artistic composition. Then, researchers chose this watercolor painting. The selected image is organized into watercolor paintings with a decorative style.

**Figure 2**  
**Color composition analysis, inspiring watercolor paintings**



Designing in an extension of cultural capital, pulling color pairs and using Thai colors is important to further the use of Thai colors. "Thai Tone" is what was conceived, with every color being unique. Thai colors often appear in ancient Thai paintings. A distinctive feature of Thai watercolors is their dull shades. Thai tones are formed by modifying or applying chemicals to form a color. The Thai tones that appear in the image that are used as inspiration for the design. The color of the rose is painted with pure white. Green leaf in the rosette of leaves. Indigo is the color used to paint the background of the accent image to make the rose stand out more. The septum white vase is one of the shades of Thai white. Using the intensity and output techniques of color makes the image more dimensional.

**Figure 3**  
**Thai tone wheel**



When applying watercolor paintings of the commissioner compared the color pairs according to the meaning of color in color psychology with the use of Kobayashiki paint of Color Image Scale by Shigenobu Kobayashi. Senses and concepts that present a color scheme, each of which can be interpreted as a descriptive word applied to the design, can be separated into 3 key words: 1. Romantic, 2. Elegant, 3. Chic, to be part of the concept of design.

**Figure 4**  
**A series of color pairs of watercolor paintings of The Commissioner based on Shigenobu's theory.**



Flowers and young women are things that have been in tandem for generations. Women are all charming and beautiful. In its own way, it's the young man's destination, like the flowers that are the bee mass. White rose means love that is only altruistic and love that is only fulfilling happiness. With the cool color of the white squash flowers. Cool colors give a sense of politeness, calm, mysterious, and coolness.

From inspirational images the key words used by the researchers to guide the design include purity, romance, elegance, contemporary, and abstract meaning in presenting the person through the choice of color schemes in a variety of ways that reflect the personality meaning in costume design.

**Figure 5**  
**Design**



From the fifth image, it is the commissioner's use of watercolor floral paintings to create and find ways to design contemporary differentials. The assembly is made up of the beauty of a girl, flowers and the introduction of Shigenobu's theory of personality. From design images The communication of the flower's identity, young woman and elegance were good by choosing the color scheme of the roses as a communication and trying to create a Thai-toned identity. For example, the colors of roses such as pink-red kramut flower and claw-red, or the

colors of ornamental leaves or vases such as septum white, carcass green, egg crow green, defense blue, and indigo, blend in and contrast with the color of the main rose. In addition, more diverse costume concepts have been expanded, such as applying The pattern of the royal costume in the reign of King Rama V, VI and the retro costumes of the Suan Sunandha palace master influenced by Western costumes to the design and bringing them to luminaries to review the work and give advice. Luminaries agreed that the texture of the painting, the transparency, the dimensions of the water color should be adapted more and further developed in the future. It can also be further extended to create an identity in the design of fabric patterns, designing other fashion and lifestyle products in addition to contemporary apparel design.

## **CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK**

The most common painting characteristics include paintings of single flowers as roses and orchids. The researchers chose roses as inspiration because the physical characteristics of roses are complex and interesting, able to communicate the personality of women who are more beautiful, gentle but covertly stronger within themselves than orchids. Coupled with the introduction of Shigenobu's theory of personality, who analyzed watercolor flower paintings, found that the main category of persons, Romantic, could communicate in accordance with the proper use of roses. At the same time, the use of roses in the form of single flowers comes to design. The researchers applied the coloring by using the identity of Thai tones that are interesting to represent Thai and Suan Sunandha palaces in the design, such as choosing the colors of roses, soft white and pale white. And also choosing colors from the colors of leaves and vase containers such as white septum and leaf green to create a design highlight. However, the researchers found that there was still a lack of elements in the section that would complement the design concept. Then the researchers chose to use floral painting styles with composition as the main design concepts to make the design more dimensional to create both the texture and color dimensions of the work.

Suggestions and extensions for the usefulness of this creative research include:

1. Analysis of Sunandha palace's watercolor flower paintings In order to find ways to design contemporary costumes, the concept of creating styles and styles of costumes should be expanded to a greater variety.
2. Tools used to record watercolor painting, when processing a drawing. It is worth finding a color value that is as close to the actual image as possible to create a unique identity of color in Thai style in order to create added value in the future.
3. Take a watercolor painting that is the appearance of another flower to be inspired to design more diverse costumes.

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