

Taona (M.L. Mingmongkol Sonakul) was born in 1971 in Bangkok, Thailand. Her parents got divorced when she was two years old, and she was raised both by her father and grandmother in the center of Bangkok and by her mother who moved outside the city. This contrast of hectic, urban life and quietness are reflected in Taona's photographic work.

Taona became involved with photography during middle school in Thailand. She was selected as an exchange student to study in high school in Washington State. Taona spent the following two years in private boarding schools on the East Coast, which gave her the opportunity to explore photography and film. She studied at the Rhode Island School of Design for one year before transferring to the San Francisco Art Institute, where she majored in fine art photography and minored in fine art film, graduating with a BFA in 1994.

As an undergraduate Taona was drawn to the work of Ernst Haas, the Austrian pioneer of color photography, and to the films of Krzysztof Kieślowski, the influential Polish director. In school, Taona was intrigued by Cubism, the avant garde art movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an interest which was to inform her photographic work. After graduating, she worked at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1994, Taona return to Thailand to direct and produce award-winning independent and studio films through her own production company Dedicated Ltd.

Taona's experiences in the film industry have been wide and varied. She is the first and only independent film maker in Thailand who has worked on short films, art and commercial feature films, and international co-productions. Her own films reflect an experimental approach while exploring accessible narratives. She was the first person to be honored as a Young Producer by the Festival of Three Continents in Nantes, France in 1999.

In 2006 Taona renewed her interest in photography, producing the series *Photocubism 1* and then *Photocubism 2* two years later. From working in film, the artist brought to photography a structure for the exploration of both content and process. As in the creation of a film with multiple images and points of view, Taona takes hundreds of photographs to capture her subjects in digital film, editing them into grids of related images.

Taona has exhibited her photographs at La Lanta Fine Art, Bangkok, Villa Duang Champa Hotel, Chang Mai, Thailand, The Objectifs Centre for Photography and Filmmaking, and Amara Sanctuary Resort Sentosa, both in Singapore.