

Lawan Jirasuradej— Reflection on Womanifesto

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Lawan Jirasuradej, *Hands in the Coop*, 2001.
Installation view. Photographer: unknown.

It was in 2001 when I returned from the United States that a friend introduced me to Varsha Nair, one of Womanifesto's organisers. She invited me to participate in the 'Womanifesto Workshop 2001'.

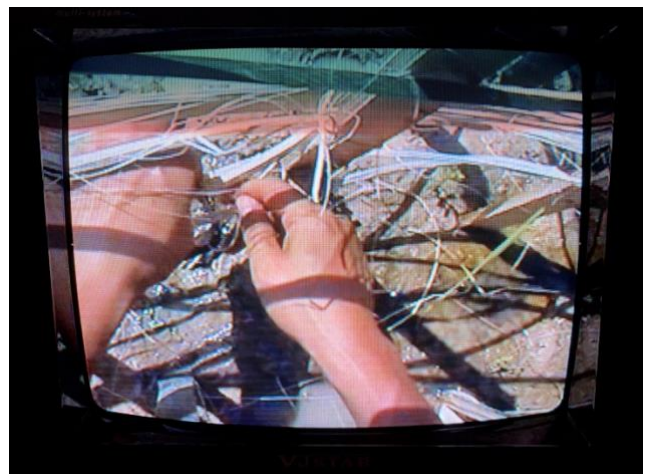
My initial thought was unconfident as I saw myself a filmmaker—documentary maker to be specific—whereas Womanifesto participants were mostly trained in visual arts. I had just spent almost two years finishing my documentary through several artist residency programs in the U.S. and got a glimpse of how visual artists worked as well as mingled with them. It seemed there was a line between film and what is commonly known as 'art', even though we all made creative works. Varsha, however, was so encouraging and said you could come and do no work. It's a deal!



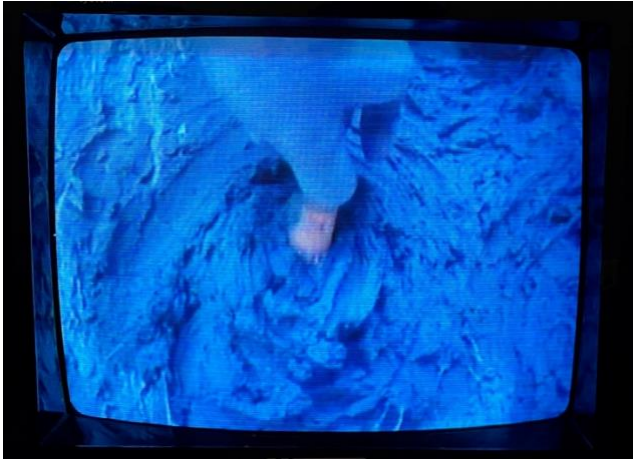
Lawan Jirasuradej filming *Hands in the Coop*. *Hands in the Coop* — Preparation (Set of 5 Photographs). Asia Art Archive (AAA), Womanifesto Archive, Photographic Documentation, 2001 Womanifesto Workshop, Artists and Projects.
<https://aaa.org.hk/archive/263617>, accessed 2 November 2025.

At the end of the Womanifesto Workshop 2001 I did make an hour-long video loop showing in a chicken coop, hence the title *Hands in the Coop*. The idea was as simple as the space, since I could not find a hall suitable for screening!

I like to take pictures and brought with me a mini-DV digital camcorder, which was a fairly new technology at time. For the length of the Workshop I just roamed the farm observing people—artist participants and craftspeople—working together, and took in-camera-editing video until the tape finished.



Lawan Jirasuradej, *Hands in the Coop*, 2001. Video still.



Lawan Jirasuradej, *Hands in the Coop*, 2001. Video still.



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Lawan Jirasuradej, *Hands in the Coop*, 2001. Video still.



Lawan Jirasuradej, stills from *Hands in the Coop*, 2001, reproduced in 'Womanifesto Workshop 2001' Catalogue. Asia Art Archive, Womanifesto Archive, Publications, Catalogues.

<https://aaa.org.hk/archive/257371>, accessed 2 November 2025.

The minute I looked into the coop and saw how neatly mother hens crafted their space, I was amused by the absurdity of the theatre to be and our many debates on arts and crafts in rural setting. Karla Sachse, an artist from Germany, complimented at the open house that now I could make art, yet I had no clue.



Lawan Jirasuradej, Hands in the Coop, 2001.
installation view. Photographer: unknown.



Lawan Jirasuradej, Hands in the Coop, 2001.
Installation view. Photographer: unknown.

Varsha continued to invite me to the following Womanifesto events, 'Procreation/Postcreation' and 'No Man's Land'. I accepted the invitations without understanding the true manifesto of the group. I got the ideas, did the research, but lacked the skills to execute them into what was considered art forms, and found myself in ambivalence. I decided to use an old film I made while studying for the 'No Man's Land' project to save face.

Some long time ago I looked through the box set of 'Procreation/Postcreation' artworks again, the project for which I did not deliver, but became fond of the final published product. It dawned on me that Womanifesto can be anyone from anywhere. Their artworks can be done with brilliant art skills or simply a child drawing or writing. Being a Womanifesto is undoubtedly to express

oneself in your creative values and interests.
Had I understood this before... :)
