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Statement on Academic Freedom: The Editorial Collective

Sina Wittayawiroj

Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia,
Volume 5, Numbers 1 & 2, October 2021, pp. 375-379 (Article)

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/sen.2021.0015>

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Statement on Academic Freedom

THE EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE | SINA WITTAYAWIROJ

The editorial collective of *SOUTHEAST OF NOW: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia* is an independent body. Our editorial and academic decisions are made independently of our publishers, NUS Press.

The editorial collective joins readers, scholars, activists and others internationally in condemning NUS Press for its academically indefensible decision to cancel publication of *Coup, King, Crisis: A Critical Interregnum in Thailand*, a book edited by Pavin Chachavalpongpun, a respected scholar and Associate Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University.

The decision made by NUS Press to cancel the publication of this book is an affront to academic freedom. In response, and in solidarity with those effectively censored by this attack, the editorial collective has commissioned artist and illustrator Sina Wittayawiroj to make the following images.

We congratulate Pavin Chachavalpongpun and all contributors to *Coup, King, Crisis: A Critical Interregnum in Thailand* on the successful publication of the book with the Yale Southeast Asian Studies Program in 2021.

[Southeast of Now
Vol. 5, Nos. 1 & 2 (October 2021), pp.375–79]

BIOGRAPHY

Sina Wittayawiroj is an artist and illustrator based in Bangkok, Thailand. His works revolve around the issues of politics, censorship and other forms of suppression. In 2016, the passing of King Bhumibol led to the cancellation of his exhibition *Beat Around the Bush*, which was about the mysterious death of King Ananda, two days before the opening. The conversation between Sina and the gallery owner became another exhibition *This Show Is Cancelled*. In 2017, he burned all works that had been prepared for *Beat Around the Bush* and exhibited the ashes in *The Last Exhibition (Temporary Name)* before abandoning his art career. Sina returned with *I('m) HERE TOO* held at the protest site in Bangkok on 8 November 2020. He is the founder of a group “Democratic Illustrator” on Facebook and has been making illustrations for the pro-democracy movement ever since.