



Monsoon School #1 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. About Monsoon School

1.1. What is Monsoon School?

Monsoon School is an experimental laboratory for spatial practice. Drawing from architecture, urbanism, design, social research, and socially engaged art, the term *spatial practice* refers to ways of working that approach space not simply as a physical location, but as something shaped by social relations, political forces, cultural imaginaries, historical processes, and ecological conditions. Monsoon School brings together artistic, curatorial, architectural, and research-based practices that investigate how sites are produced, inhabited, contested, and transformed across these intersecting dimensions.

1.2. What do you mean by “site”?

A site can be understood in many ways. It may be a specific location, neighborhood, or community. It may also be a river system, an ecological condition, a historical event, a political structure, a form of labor, an infrastructure, or a network of relationships extending across multiple places. We encourage applicants to think broadly, and to challenge, what constitutes a site in their own creative practice.

1.3. Why is it called Monsoon School?

Monsoon School takes the monsoon as more than a climatic phenomenon. Across South and Southeast Asia, monsoonal cycles have historically shaped agriculture, labour, migration, settlement patterns, and everyday life. The School approaches the monsoon as a methodological metaphor and lived condition through which ecological, historical, and social relations are continuously negotiated. Rather than treating environments as static backgrounds, Monsoon School asks how practitioners might work with changing conditions, uncertainty, interdependence, and adaptation.

1.4. Is Monsoon School an art school?

No. Monsoon School is not an art school in a conventional sense. It is a temporary platform for collective learning, experimentation, and exchange. Rather than focusing on technical training or professional development, the program creates a space for participants to reflect on their own methods, engage with different approaches to practice grounded in particular site, and learn through discussion, fieldwork, and collective making.

1.5. Is Monsoon School a residency, festival, or conference?

Monsoon School operates somewhere between a study group, workshop platform, field laboratory, and temporary learning community. It does not prioritize exhibition-making, public programming, or the production of finished outcomes. Instead, it creates conditions for participants to collectively examine methods, test ideas, and develop forms of practice that may continue beyond the duration of the program.

1.6. What does “Site as Method” mean?

Rather than treating a site as a backdrop for artistic production, Site as Method asks how the conditions of a place can actively shape and inform ways of thinking, researching, making, and collaborating. A site is not understood as a fixed location to be represented or interpreted. Instead, a site is approached as an ongoing learning process formed through the relationship between ecological, social, political, historical, and material worlds.

1.7. What is the difference between Site and Field?

While the two terms are closely related, Monsoon School approaches them through different scales and forms of engagement.

In ‘Monsoon School #1 - Site as Method’, participants investigate how knowledge, practice, and method emerge through sustained attention to a specific site. We consider site as a particular context through which artistic inquiry begins. It may be a location, community, building, landscape, archive, infrastructure, or a set of social and ecological conditions.

Field refers to a broader terrain of relationships, movements, and conditions that exceeds any single site. Rather than focusing on a fixed location, a field may encompass river systems, migration routes, infrastructures,

supply chains, political histories, ecological processes, and other forms of circulation that link multiple places together. In ‘Monsoon School #2: Field as Method’ (open call launching in August 2026), participants trace these connections through fieldwork, encounters, and situated forms of learning, exploring how knowledge emerges through movement across sites, scales, and perspectives.

Rather than existing as separate categories, site and field continually inform one another. A site opens onto a field, while a field becomes recognizable through particular sites.

1.8. What kinds of knowledge and practice does Monsoon School value?

Monsoon School recognizes multiple forms of knowledge - from embodied experience, local and folk knowledge, ecological knowledge, oral histories, collective memory, explorations of material and its meaning, and interdisciplinary research. Participants are encouraged to think across these different modes of knowing and working, and to reflect on how they shape one another.

Monsoon School welcomes a wide range of practices, including artistic, curatorial, architectural, research-based, publishing, collective, community-engaged, process-based, and output-driven approaches.

Rather than prioritizing a particular knowledge as discipline, method, or outcome, the program is interested in how a practice is informed by an understanding of a site. This understanding may emerge through long-term engagement with a place, community, landscape, archive, ecological condition, infrastructure, or field of inquiry.

2. Participation and Eligibility

2.1. Who should apply?

We welcome applications from practitioners working across disciplines, including but not limited to: artists, curators, architects, designers, researchers, writers, community organizers, and cultural workers. You do not need to identify with a specific discipline to apply.

2.2. Can I apply if I am from Southeast Asia, yet based outside Southeast Asia?

Yes. While Monsoon School is primarily designed to foster exchange among practitioners in Thailand and Southeast Asia, applicants from Southeast Asia, yet based elsewhere, are welcome to apply. Please note that participants are responsible for organizing and financing their own travel and accommodation.

2.3. Can I apply as part of a collective or collaborative project?

Yes. We welcome applications that emerge from collective or collaborative practices. However, applications are reviewed on an individual basis, and each participant must submit a separate application form. If your proposal is connected to a collective project, please indicate your role and relationship to the broader collaboration in your application materials.

2.4. Are there scholarships or travel support available?

deCentral is unable to provide travel or accommodation support for participants. However, we are happy to provide letters of invitation or supporting documents for participants seeking external funding.

3. Application Process

3.1. What should I submit?

Your application should include:

1. Letter of Interest (max 500 words): A short introduction to your practice, interests, why you would like to join the program and what you think the program could help you think through questions in your practice.
2. Project Description (max 10 pages): Please describe a project, inquiry, or site-based investigation you would like to develop in relation to the Monsoon School's conceptual framework. The proposal does not need to be fully developed or resolved. It only serves as a way for us to understand how your practice relates to the questions and methodologies explored through Monsoon School.
3. CV
4. Portfolio (optional)

All application materials should be submitted in English.

3.2. Do I need to have a finished project proposal?

No. We are less interested in fully developed proposals and more interested in how you think, observe, and respond to a site. Your application may begin with a question, an ongoing project, a research interest, or a methodology you would like to test.

3.3. What makes a strong application?

There is no single model for a successful application. But we are interested in applicants who demonstrate curiosity, attentiveness, and a willingness to engage and critically challenge how they work and respond to particular site, whether through artistic, social, ecological, historical, or research-based approaches.

Strong applications will illustrate:

- * An interest in site-based inquiry and methodology
- * Openness to experimentation and collective learning
- * Thoughtfulness about one's own position, context, and way of working
- * A desire to test questions rather than present fixed answers

We do not expect fully resolved project proposals. Instead, we are interested in how you think through a question, situation, or site, and how Monsoon School might contribute to the development of your practice.

3.4. Do I need to apply to both modules?

No. Each module has its own open call and selection process. Applicants may apply to either module depending on their interests, availability, and practice. The open call for Monsoon School #2 will be launched in August 2026.

3.5. Do I need prior experience to apply?

Monsoon School welcomes practitioners at different stages of their careers. While extensive professional experience is not required, applicants should have experience developing their own practice, whether through artistic, curatorial, architectural, research-based, community-oriented, or self-initiated projects.

We are particularly interested in applicants who are already engaging a specific site, question, community, landscape, archive, ecological condition, or field of inquiry, and who wish to further reflect on or expand this engagement through the School.

3.6. What kind of proposals are Monsoon School looking for?

We are interested in proposals that emerge from a continuous curiosity toward a particular site or condition. The proposal does not need to present a finished project or a clear outcome. Instead, it should help us understand how you approach a question, what site or context you are working with, and why it matters to your practice. Applicants are encouraged to identify a specific site, condition, relationship, or inquiry they wish to develop during the program, rather than proposing broad themes without a situated context.

3.7 Do I need to propose a site in Chiang Mai?

No. The site, question, or inquiry proposed in your application may be located anywhere. Monsoon School provides a framework for reflecting on and developing site-based methodologies, rather than requiring participants to work on a specific site in Chiang Mai.

3.8 What level of English is required?

Participants should feel comfortable participating in discussions, workshops, and collaborative activities conducted in English. As Monsoon School brings together co-facilitators and participants from different countries and contexts across Southeast Asia and beyond, English serves as the shared working language of the program.

4. During the Program

4.1. What will a typical day look like?

Activities may include: study groups and discussions, workshops and presentations led by facilitators, site visits and walks, collective reflection sessions, independent and group research, hands-on making and prototyping and open studio presentations. Some activities will take place outdoors and involve walking or fieldwork.

4.2. What does collective learning mean in Monsoon School?

Collective learning is central to the program. Participants are not expected to arrive as experts. Instead, Monsoon School creates a temporary environment in which facilitators and participants learn together through discussion, observation, experimentation, and exchange.

4.3. Will participants produce artwork during the program?

Not necessarily. Monsoon School prioritizes process, inquiry, and experimentation over finished outcomes. Participants may produce sketches, prototypes, models, maps, texts, conversations, field notes, or other forms of response. The emphasis is on developing methodologies rather than completing a final artwork.

4.4. Is Monsoon School focused on art-making?

Not exclusively. While artistic production may emerge during the program, Monsoon School is equally interested in research, pedagogy, curatorial practice, architecture, writing, mapping, documentation, collective inquiry, and other forms of knowledge production and practice. Participants are invited to engage with a site through the methods most relevant to their own practice.

4.5. Will there be physical things produced as a consequence of Monsoon School?

Yes. Monsoon School includes collective making sessions supported by Sher Maker Studio. Participants should be comfortable engaging with hands-on activities and working physically within workshop and outdoor environments. No specialist construction skills are required.

4.6. Do I need to stay for the entire program?

Yes. Participants are expected to attend the full ten-day program. Because many activities build collectively over time, partial attendance is not recommended.

4.7. What roles do the co-facilitators play at Monsoon School #1?

Monsoon School #1 brings together four co-facilitators: Exutoire, NOIR ROW ART SPACE, LIR, and field-0, each contributing distinct methodologies and approaches to site-based practice.

While all co-facilitators contribute to the School's learning environment, they engage participants through different formats and modes of exchange.

Exutoire leads the collective learning process across the ten days through study groups, workshops, discussions, and collective making. Drawing on their experience in critical spatial practice and pedagogy, they facilitate conversations around site investigation, situatedness, methodology, and collective forms of practice.

NOIR ROW ART SPACE, LIR, and field-0 contribute through a series of Open Studios centered on their long-term projects and site-based methodologies. Through project materials, documentation, archives, research processes, and reflections on practice, they share how particular methods emerge from sustained engagement with specific social, ecological, historical, and political contexts.

Sher Maker Studio participates as co-host of Monsoon School #1. Beyond providing workshop space, tools, materials, and technical support, Sher Maker shares perspectives drawn from vernacular construction, folk knowledge, and place-based architectural practice in Northern Thailand. Their studio serves as a space where ideas, observations, and questions generated throughout the School can be collectively tested, materialized, and realized through making together.

Together, these different contributions create a learning environment that combines collective inquiry, methodological exchange, field-based reflection, and hands-on experimentation.

5. Practical Information

5.1 Is there a tuition fee?

No. There is no tuition fee to participate in Monsoon School. However, participants are responsible for organizing and covering their own travel, accommodation, meals, visa and other personal expenses incurred during the program.

5.2. What materials do I need to bring?

Selected participants will receive further information before the program begins. In general, participants should be prepared for fieldwork, note-taking, walking, discussion, and collaborative making activities.

5.3. What happens after Monsoon School ends?

Monsoon School is conceived as a temporary gathering. While the program concludes after ten days, participants become part of a growing network of practitioners interested in site-based methodologies across Southeast Asia. The School aims to encourage individual pro-activeness in pursuing ongoing conversations, collaborations, and future encounters beyond the duration of each module.

5.4. I have a question that isn't covered here.

Please contact the Monsoon School team at: info.decentral@central.co.th or through deCentral's social media channels.