



Monsoon School #2 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. About Monsoon School

1.1 What is Monsoon School?

Monsoon School is an experimental laboratory for spatial practice, bringing together artistic, curatorial, architectural, research-based, and community-engaged approaches. It creates a temporary space for collective learning, field-based inquiry, critical reflection, and experimentation.

1.2 Is Monsoon School an art school, residency, or conference?

Not in a conventional sense. Monsoon School operates between a study group, field laboratory, workshop platform, and temporary learning community. It prioritises learning processes and methodological exchange rather than professional training, exhibition-making, or finished outcomes.

1.3 ‘What does *Field as Method* mean?

Field as Method approaches the field not as a bounded place to be documented, but as a shifting constellation of ecological, political, social, and more-than-human relations. It asks how distance, scale, and positionality shape what we observe, understand, and are able to act upon.

1.4 What is the difference between a site and a field?

A site may be a particular location, community, landscape, building, or set of conditions. A field extends across the relationships, movements, and processes connecting multiple sites. A site opens onto a wider field, while a field becomes perceptible through encounters with particular sites.

Yet site and field also function as methodological propositions that turn the inquiry back towards the practitioner. If a site informs what we see, the field asks from where and from what position we see. What remains outside our sites of knowledge and beyond our fields of vision?

1.5 Why does the programme take place in Chiang Khong?

Situated on the Thai bank of the Mekong River and facing Laos, Chiang Khong is part of a cross-border landscape shaped by ecological change, hydropolitics, community activism, and more-than-human

life. Participants will encounter this wider field through both the Mekong watershed and the intimate ecologies of Ban Muang Chum Community Forest.

Chiang Khong, however, is not simply a field site selected by the programme. Monsoon School #2 has been developed in partnership with the Mekong School and Chiang Khong Conservation Group, whose decades of locally grounded work—and longstanding collaborations with artists—offer much for us to learn from. We hope to build upon their sustained commitment, while finding ways for the programme to contribute to, rather than merely draw from, their ongoing work.

1.6 What forms of knowledge does the programme value?

The programme engages multiple ways of knowing, including local ecological knowledge, oral history, embodied experience, community-based research, scientific inquiry, artistic research, and observation across species and scales. It also asks what counts as knowledge, how it is produced, and who is recognised as a knowledge-holder.

2. Participation and Eligibility

2.1 Who should apply?

We welcome practitioners from Thailand and across Southeast Asia, including but not limited to artists, curators, architects, designers, researchers, writers, community organisers, and cultural workers whose practices engage with sites, landscapes, communities, or spatial methodologies.

2.2 Do I need to belong to a particular discipline?

No. Monsoon School is transdisciplinary, and applicants do not need to identify with a specific discipline. We are interested in how your questions and methods connect with the programme's concerns.

2.3 Do I need previous fieldwork experience?

No formal fieldwork experience is required. However, applicants should demonstrate experience developing an independent practice or inquiry and an openness to questioning how they observe, interpret, and work within unfamiliar contexts.

2.4 Can I apply as part of a collective?

Yes, but applications are reviewed individually. Each person must submit a separate application and explain their role within the collective or collaborative practice.

2.5 How many participants will be selected?

The programme will select 10 participants.

2.6 What language will the programme use?

English is the programme's shared working language, while interpretation may be provided for selected sessions conducted in Thai or local languages. Perfect or academic English is not required, but participants should be able to follow discussions, communicate their ideas, and engage in collective activities within a multilingual group from Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

3. Application Process

3.1 What should I submit?

Applications should include:

- A letter of interest responding to why you wish to join the programme at this moment in your practice and what you hope to question, develop, or learn. Maximum 300 words.
- A reflection on an artist, practitioner, collective, or project whose field-based approach makes you reconsider fieldwork, including its value, limitations, tensions, or ethical concerns. Maximum 500 words.
- A reflection on a moment when uncertainty, unfamiliar knowledge, or something you could not fully understand changed how you observed, worked, or acted. Maximum 300 words.
- A CV
- A portfolio or selected work samples.

3.2 Can I respond in a format other than writing?

Questions 2 and 3 may be answered through images, audio, video, or mixed media. Please include an accessible link to the files in your application.

3.3 Do I need to propose a finished project?

No. Applicants are not required to submit a finished project proposal. We are more interested in your questions, methods, critical reflection, and relationship to field-based practice.

3.4 What makes a strong application?

Strong applications demonstrate:

- **Relevance to the themes and methodologies of Monsoon School.** We want to understand whether participating in *Field as Method* would be meaningful for your practice: what questions, methods, or difficulties you are currently working through, and how the programme might help you develop them.

- **Clear motivation for joining the programme.** Why do you want to participate now? We are interested in what makes this programme timely in relation to the present stage of your practice, rather than a general statement of interest.
- **Critical reflection on fieldwork and one's own position.** We are not looking for the “right” theoretical language, but for an ability to reflect honestly on your own methods, assumptions, limitations, and position in relation to the people, places, and other forms of life you encounter.
- **Openness to uncertainty, experimentation, and collective learning.** Participants will spend many days and evenings together. The programme requires curiosity, generosity, and a willingness to listen, exchange, and work through unfamiliar ideas and situations with others.
- **Flexibility in changing field conditions.** Fieldwork may involve long days, outdoor activities, changing weather, unfamiliar routines, and moments of discomfort or inconvenience. Applicants should be prepared to adapt while communicating their needs and respecting those of the group.
- **Commitment to active and full participation.** The programme depends on everyone's presence and contribution. As only ten participants will be selected, accepting a place also means taking an opportunity that cannot be offered to another applicant.

3.5 What is the application deadline?

Applications close on 10 September 2026. (Time 23.59 ICT)

4. During the Programme

4.1 What will participants do?

Activities will include discussions, workshops, field observation, encounters with local knowledge-holders, community-based learning, documentation, and individual and collective reflection. Participants will work across Chiang Mai, the Mekong River landscape, and Ban Muang Chum Community Forest.

4.2 What is Thai Baan research?

Thai Baan research is a community-based approach through which local people document, analyse, and communicate knowledge formed through sustained relationships with their environments. The programme will consider how communities become active producers rather than objects of knowledge, and how their research can support advocacy and collective action.

4.3 What is the transcalar approach?

Introduced by Wo-Men Work, the transcalar approach draws on cinematic framing—moving between wide, medium, and close perspectives. Participants will examine how changing scale reveals different

relations, from soil, water, species, and sound to villages, river systems, infrastructures, borders, monsoon cycles, and hydropolitics.

4.4 Will participants produce artwork?

A finished artwork is not required. Participants will develop three field-based fragments across different scales using media appropriate to their practices. These fragments will later be brought together through sequencing, montage, and collective spatialisation.

4.5 Do I need filmmaking or photography experience?

No specialist filmmaking or photography experience is required. These media are introduced as tools for observation, framing, and thinking across scales rather than as technical disciplines.

4.6 Will activities take place outdoors?

Yes. The programme involves field activities, walking, observation, and working outdoors at different times of day. Selected participants will receive further information on conditions, preparation, and what to bring.

4.7 Do I need to attend the entire programme?

Yes. Participants must be available for all eight programme days, from 10–17 October 2026. As activities build upon one another through collective learning, partial participation is not possible.

5. Practical Information

5.1 When should I arrive and depart?

Participants should arrive in Chiang Mai on 9 October 2026 and arrange their departure from Chiang Mai on 18 October 2026.

5.2 Where will the programme take place?

The programme begins at deCentral Chiang Mai before travelling to Chiang Khong, Chiang Rai. Most field activities will take place in Chiang Khong, including along the Mekong River and in Ban Muang Chum Community Forest.

5.3 Is there a tuition fee?

No. There is no tuition fee to participate in Monsoon School.

5.4 What costs are covered?

The programme covers:

- Accommodation in Chiang Mai and Chiang Khong.
- A daily per diem.
- Return transportation between Chiang Mai and Chiang Khong.
- Programme activities.

Participants are responsible for their own travel to Chiang Mai before the programme and onward travel from Chiang Mai after it ends.

5.5 Do I need to arrange accommodation myself?

No. Accommodation in Chiang Mai and Chiang Khong will be arranged and covered by the programme. Further details will be shared with selected participants.

5.6 What should I bring?

Selected participants will receive a detailed packing list. In general, participants should be prepared for walking, outdoor fieldwork, changing weather, note-taking, observation, and documentation.

5.7 What happens after Monsoon School?

Monsoon School is conceived as a temporary learning community, but participants become part of a growing network of practitioners interested in spatial and field-based methodologies across Southeast Asia. The programme encourages conversations and collaborations to continue beyond its program days.

5.8 I have a question that is not covered here.

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