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applies them to his films. He is also very alert and sensitive to society and tries to faithfully represent it in his films.

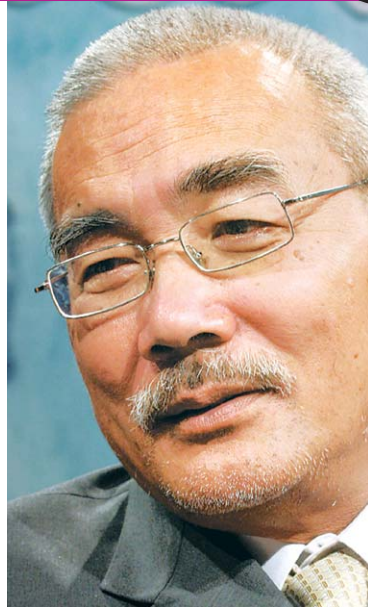
He started his career directing a television drama in 1967, and started his career in filmmaking 1971 with his debut "Mun Ma Kub Kwam Mued" (Out of the Darkness), the story of an alien coming to Earth with a meteorite.

The movie was the first Thai science-fiction film.

His second film "Khao Chue Karn" (Dr Karn), in 1973, is about an idealistic newly graduated doctor, who devotes himself to work in a remote area and fights against the prevalent corruption.

Released the same year that the October 14, 1973, uprising took place, it is acclaimed for a social reflection hardly ever seen in Thai films.

His work always pays attention to the masses and his films are stories about unspoken issues.



His works are rarely about the elite of society. He loves portraying underprivileged people who are living unnoticed, both in urban and upcountry areas.

His style is distinct from the general trend of popular Thai cinema, mostly consisting of melodrama and action flicks.

A popular plot, for example, would be the story of the protagonist separated from his wealthy family by some villains, growing up in hardship in a remote area before finally being reunited with his family.

This kind of plot provides an escape for the audience from the daily real-life struggles, but Than Mui believes in letting his audience face the truth.

To make his films more realistic, Than Mui goes to the actual locations, researches the idea well, then comes up with a plot, which he scripts into a powerful film.

He portrays environmental problems in "Uka Fah Luang" (Before the Storm), a hit man's life in "Mue Puen" (Gunman), and an activist teacher in the Klong Toei slum area in "Kroo Somsree" the idea for which was based on the real life of teacher Pratheep Ungsongtham.

Than Mui was selected as National Artist of Performance Arts in 2001.

In 2006, he was honoured with the lifetime achievement award at the Thailand National Film Awards.

Besides directing films, Than Mui has been an influential figure, who has been fighting for the advancement of Thai film industry, particularly on the issue of censorship.

He was able to bring together Thai directors in his biggest film, "Suriyothai", and his upcoming "King Naresuan" has been made in celebration of the 60th anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to the throne.

While working on "Suriyothai" he had to fight cancer, but he kept the cameras rolling.

At 64, he has many projects still to complete, including the mega trilogy of the Thai classic action adventure "Phet Phra Uma".

"A film-maker never really calls it a wrap," he said.