

## **BRUISED**

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Thavibu Gallery

Thavibu Gallery has the pleasure of presenting the current catalogue and exhibition BRUISED by the Thai artist Thaweesak Srithongdee, also known as Lolay. The exhibition takes place in Bangkok on 17 September – 15 October 2011. The exhibition features a series of thirteen acrylic on canvas paintings.

Thaweesak is one of Thailand's most recognized artists internationally with frequent exhibitions abroad and participation in the Trienniale at Fukuoka, Japan in 2005 and the Bienniales in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2009 and Busan, Korea in 2010. He has taken part in the international shows with paintings as well as sculptures and video presentations. He also plays in a band and is a well known illustrator.

In the current exhibition, Thaweesak expands his fascination with the human condition to question our existence and ultimate survival. Bruises and scars bear the physical trace of individual fallibility, but they also provoke assumptions as to the history and determiners behind such inflictions.

The essay has been written by the critic and independent curator Steven Pettifor who is also the author of the book *Flavours – Thai Contemporary Art*.

I take this opportunity to thank Thaweesak Srithongdee for his collaboration and Steven Pettifor for his contribution.



Bruises and scars bear the physical trace of individual fallibility, but they also provoke assumptions as to the history and determiners behind such inflictions. In *Bruised*, the latest series of acrylic paintings on view at Thavibu Gallery by Thaweesak Srithongdee, the 41-year-old artist deepens his fascination with the human condition by questioning our existence and ultimate survival.

Coming from the southern coastal resort of Hua Hin, Thaweesak previously engineered a spurious race of Adonic, pectoral defined, super-beings that played with perceptions of body image. Composed atop readymade chintz fabric backdrops that imbued a deliberate kitsch quality, the flat synthetic figures were typically branded with the artist's trademark tiger tattoo. Manifested through paint, print, and animation, the familiar stylisation and artifice of his slick idealised figures has recently extended into impressive monumental resin sculptures.

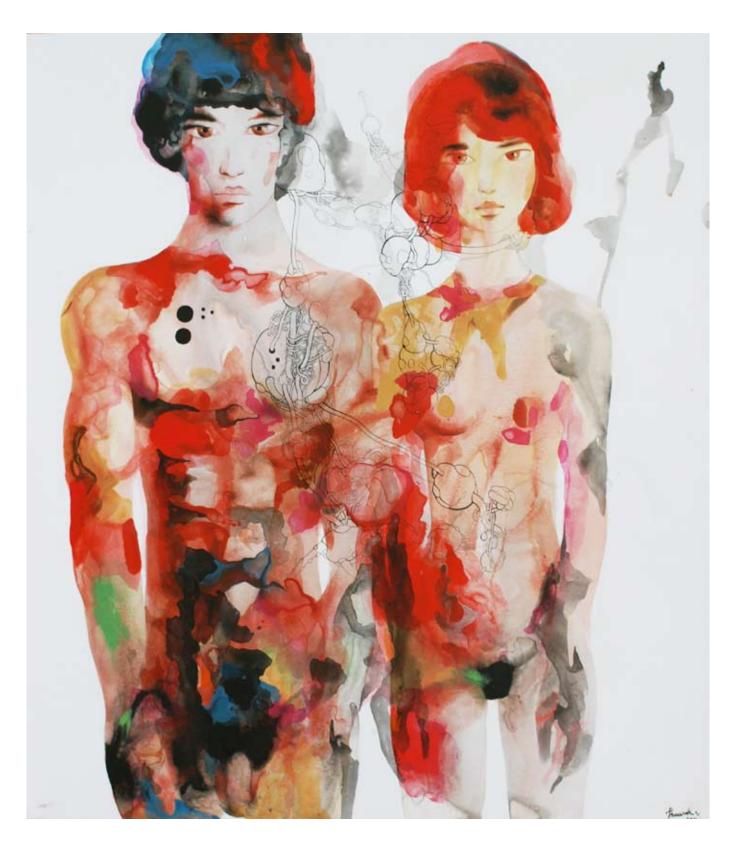
The naked doll-like caricatures appear proud in their physicality, but they also exude an air of modesty that borders on conservatism. The sexuality in *Bruised* is more emboldened than earlier series, and while perhaps not a conscious deliberation for the artist, Srithongdee's androgynous subjects could be read as symbolic to conflicting attitudes towards sexuality within Thai society.

Examining how perceptions of heroism and tyranny alter according to one's viewpoint, in previous works Thaweesak portrayed specific historic icons such as Hitler, Ghandi, Einstein, and Darwin, whose residual energies he believes continue to leave indelible imprints upon society's present and future path. For *Bruised*, the individual is negated as the artist questions humanity's significance within the greater cosmos. Thaweesak also acknowledges the awesome power of nature and the devastation it dispenses upon us.

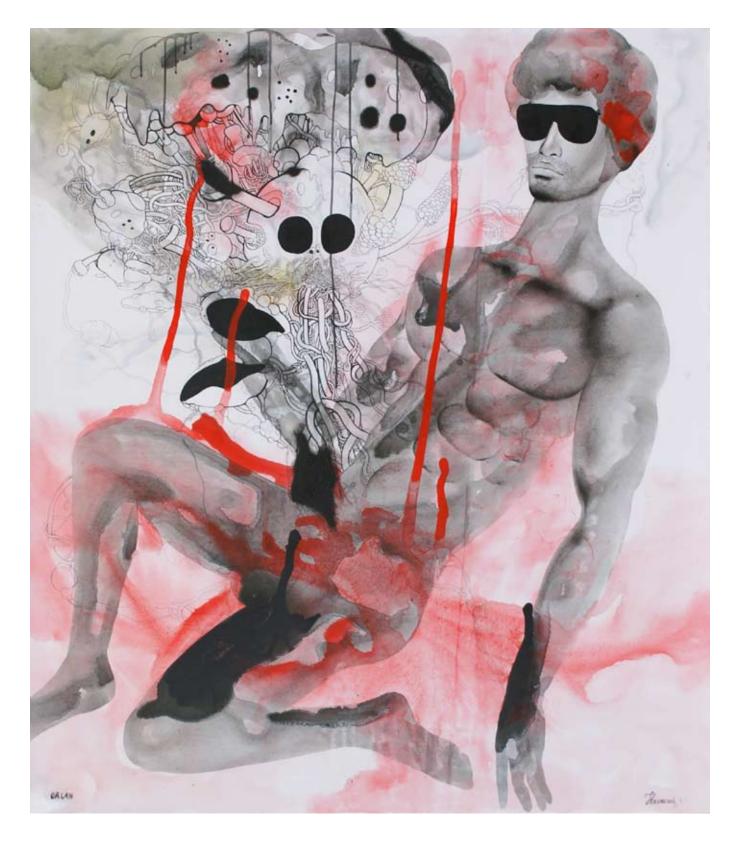
Visualising the contusion theme through water saturated bled colours atop bare white backdrops, Thaweesak enmeshes organic, sinuous imagery that slices beneath the pop-erotic flesh to reveal the organs and innards that control and sustain us. Brushed with a delicate linear accuracy, in the black acrylic illustrative compositions *Death* and *Water*, the artist constructs composite facial mug shots as archetypes to criminality, evil, and in the case of *Water*, destruction. By employing common characteristics and behavioural traits that hold negative associations, these metaphoric portraits play with stereotypes as well as touching upon racial bigotry.

A sole face distinguished among the human simulacrum is artist Joseph Beuys in the painting Experience. Recognised for his symbolic felt and fat iconography, the mythology surrounding the German artist's 1944 plane crash and rescue makes him an emblem of survival. Despite our seemingly inherent propensity for destructiveness and maliciousness, Thaweesak advocates that individual resolutions and actions are what ultimately define us within the species.

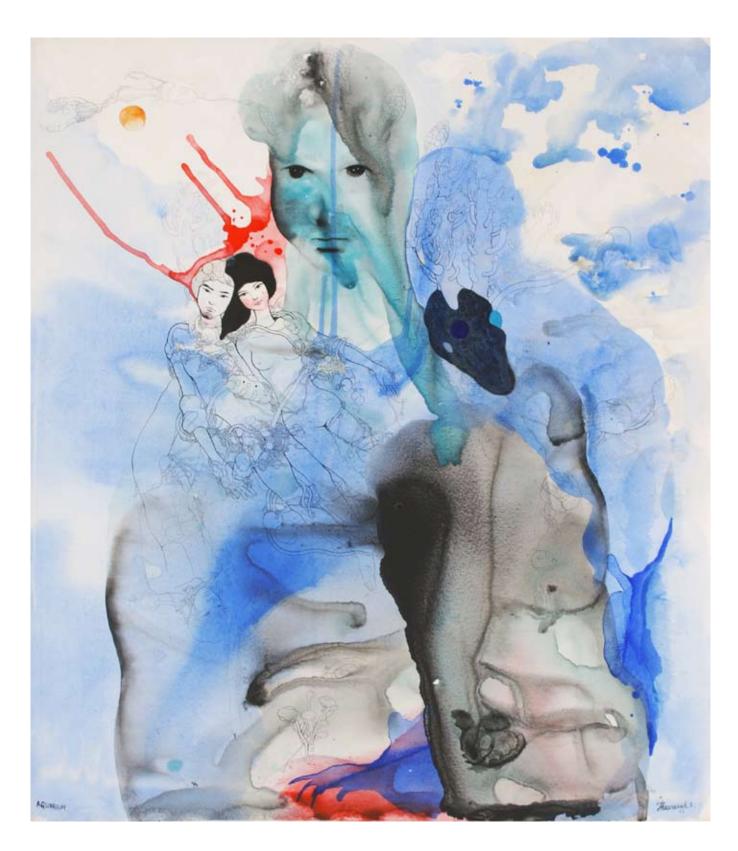
A barometer upon commercial culture, on the surface Thaweesak's art expounds a plasticised, and emotionally detached veneer. Influenced by mass media trends in animation and comic book art that so captivate urban Asian youth, his art holds a certain aesthetic kinship to the Superflat art of Takashi Murakami, Aida Makoto's anime paintings, or the twisted fantasies of Odani Motohiko.



**Love, 2011** | Acrylic on canvas | 130 x 150 cm



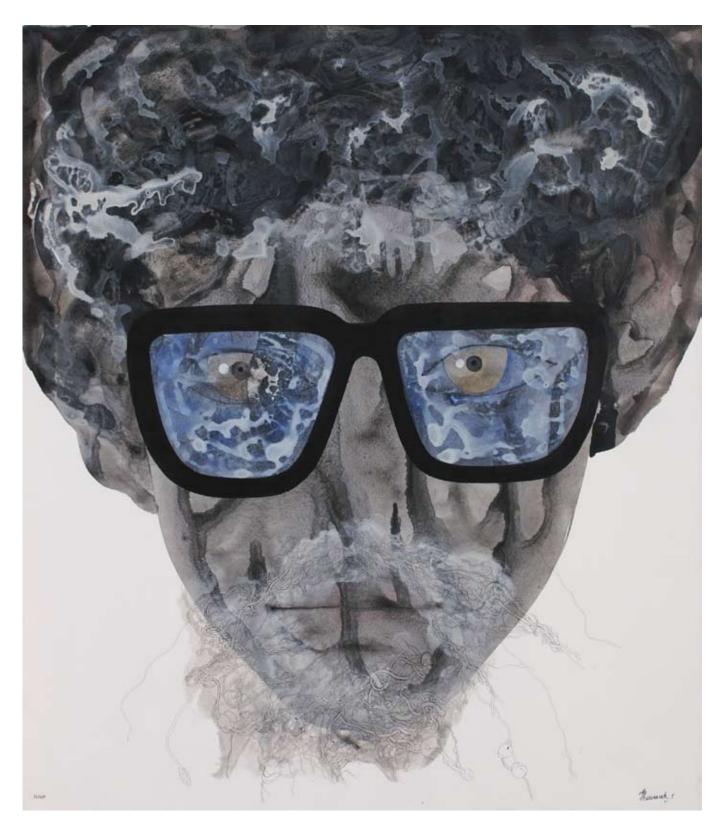
**Organ, 2011** | Acrylic on canvas | 130 x 150 cm



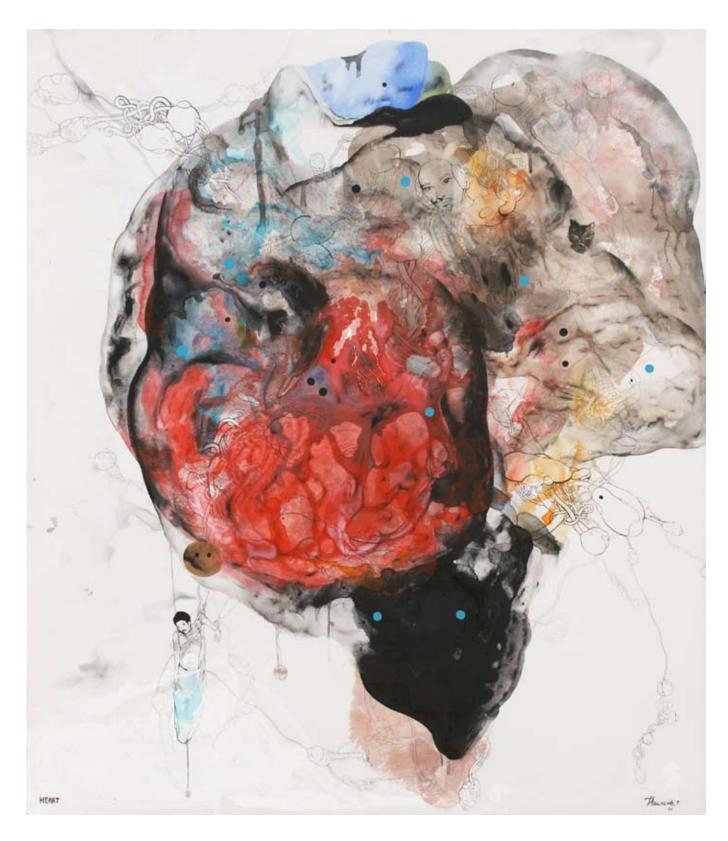
**Aquarium, 2011** | Acrylic on canvas | 130 x 150 cm



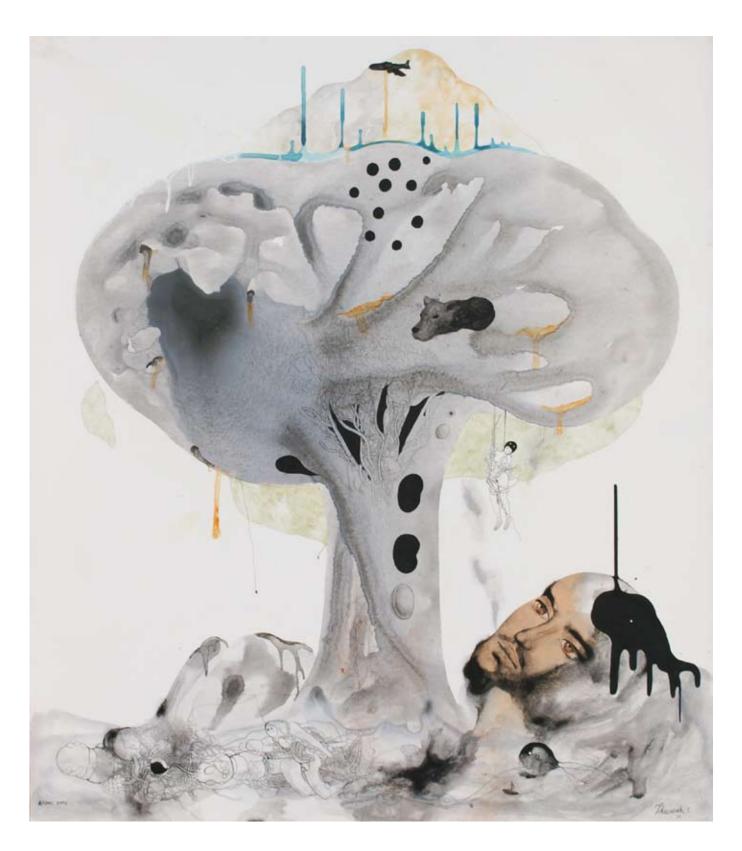
**Cold,** 2011 | Acrylic on canvas | 130 x 150 cm



**Human, 2011** | Acrylic on canvas | 130 x 150 cm



**Heart,** 2011 | Acrylic on canvas | 130 x 150 cm



**Atomic Bomb,** 2011 | Acrylic on canvas | 130 x 150 cm



**Experience,** 2011 | Acrylic on canvas | 60 x 80 cm

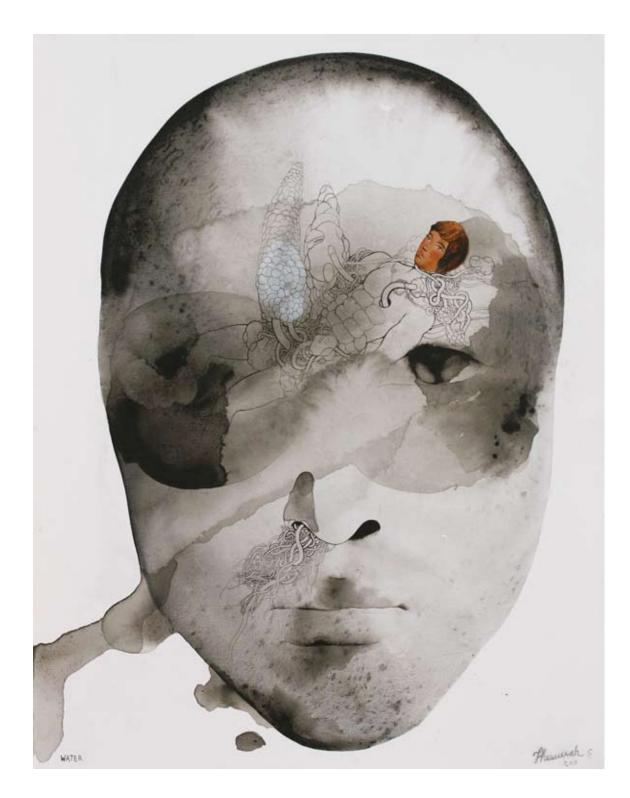


**Mountain In My Mind,** 2011 | Acrylic on canvas | 50 x 70 cm





**Sex,** 2011 | Acrylic on canvas | 70 x 50 cm



**Water,** 2011 | Acrylic on canvas | 90 x 70 cm



**Death,** 2011 | Acrylic on canvas | 90 x 70 cm

## **CHRONOLOGY**



### Thaweesak Srithongdee

Born 1970

Master of Fine Arts (Painting) from The Faculty of Painting, Sculpture and Graphic Art, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, 1996

#### **SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

1997: Dream at The Promenade Hilton Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

2000 : Thaweesak Srithongdee at Rob Jurka Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2001: Drive my Car at Atelier Frank and Lee, Singapore

: A Taste of Thailand at Asia Contemporary Art, London, **United Kingdom** 

2002: Trance at H Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand

2003: Neo-Morph at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand

2004: Groove at H Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand

2006: HERO The Existence & Initiation of Heroes at Plastique Kinetic Worms, Singapore

: FLESH at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand

2008: STRAWBERRY at J Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand

: SOLDIER at D Gallery, Phuket, Thailand

: FREEZE Lithograph at 44 Art Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand

2009: Happyland at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand

2011: LOOP at YAVUZ Fine Art, Singapore

: Bruised at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok

#### **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2000 : Art Twente Fair at Hengelo, **The Netherlands** 

: Art Forum in Berlin at Berlin, **Germany** 

: Lured Love Power at Tadu Contemporary Art, Bangkok, Thailand

: Black Gray White at the National Museum, Bangkok, Thailand

2001: Kunst Rai 2001 at Amsterdam, The Netherlands

: Scopolamine Project at Tadu Contemporary Art, Bangkok, Thailand

2002: Four Shows at Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

2003 : Allegory and Boxed ii at Plastique Kinetic Worms, Singapore

: Next Move at Earl Lu Gallery, Singapore

2004 : ASIAN POP at Art Seasons Gallery, Singapore

2005: The XI Triennale-India 2005

: Asian Art Festival 2005 at Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

: The 3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale at Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, **Japan** 

2006 : C21 Parallel Realities: Asian Art Now at Blackburn & Art Gallery, United Kingdom

: SOI Project (Tout a` Fait Thai 2006) at St. Sulpice, Paris, France

: FT3D Project at Japan Foundation Bangkok, Thailand

2007: SHOW ME THAI at Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Japan

: Hero, Thai Dragon at International Film Festival Rotterdam 37th, The Netherlands

2008: Four Shows at Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

: Traces of Siamese Smile: Art + Faith + Politics + Love at Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok, Thailand.

2009 : Fluid Zone at Jakarta Biennale XIII 2009, Indonesia

2010 : Lowwrong at Creative House Bangkok, Bangkok, Thailand

: Multimedia-Multivisions at ARDEL Gallery of Modern Art, Bangkok, Thailand

: Dollar 009 at Busan Biennale 2010, Gwanggalli Beach & Busan Museum of Art, Korea

#### MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Singapore Art Museum Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan



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