



BRUISED
Thaweesak Srithongdee

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FOREWORD

Jørn Middelborg

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 Triennale at Fukuoka, Japan in 2005 and the Biennales 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.

BRUISED

Steven Pettifor

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



War, 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, Gwangalli Beach & Busan Museum of Art, **Korea**

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Singapore Art Museum
Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan



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