



Peaceful Chaos - Thai Contemporary art through the lens of Fukuoka

11 May [Thu] - 25 Dec [Mon], 2017

Asia Gallery

Approximately 600 years ago, in the Ayutthaya era, the Kingdom of Thailand today was called Siam. Trading ships traveled frequently between Siam and the Kingdom of Ryukyu, which was then an independent state. Japan continued a trading relationship with Thailand through Ryukyu until Sakoku (isolation) policy of Tokugawa feudal government was implemented. In the late 19th century (Meiji era), two countries both experienced modernization and launched a formal diplomatic relationship through the Declaration of Amity and Commerce between Japan and Siam in 1887. This is considered as the first diplomatic relationship that the Japanese government signed with the Southeast Asian country. Since then, two countries have developed a close friendship in various fields. The year 2017 marks the 130 years anniversary since the 1887 declaration.

In the field of art, Fukuoka Art Museum is a leading institution that introduced Thai contemporary art in Japan. *Contemporary Asian Art Show 1980*, the first international art exhibition in Japan that specialized in Asian countries, exhibited the works of five Thai contemporary artists. This marked the first time that the Thai contemporary art was publicly introduced. This exhibition continued until 1994 under the title, *Asian Art Show*, and was carried on into *Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale* by Fukuoka Asian Art Museum after its inauguration in 1999. This exhibition introduces Thai contemporary art that Fukuoka has encountered through the works exhibited in these exhibitions.

◆Rise of New Traditionalism◆

Theravada is a school of Buddhism that literally means “school of the elder monks” and places emphasis on ordination and its doctrines. As a major religion in Thai, Buddhism plays a central role in people’s life and culture since the ancient time. Thai art has also been influenced by Buddhism and the “new traditionalism” in the 1980s produced the works based on Buddhist stories. This section introduces the work of Panya Vijinthanarn, a leading figure of this movement, and others as well as the sculpture of Khien Yimsiri who brought the expression of Buddha statues of the Sukhothai dynasty (13th–15th centuries) into his art.

◆Accelerating Industrialization◆

While agriculture has formed Thai’s economic basis, the accelerating industrialization penetrated from the capital Bangkok to the vast agricultural area. This section introduces the works of Supachai Satsara and Vichoke Mukdamanee who depicted the distortions caused by rapid economic growth using industrial products and wastes as their medium.

◆Humanity in the Age of Mass Consumption◆

In the 1990s, Thai experienced economic crisis due to the expansion of the free market and capitalistic system. People’s suffering in the military coup also accelerated the instability and chaos of the country. In response to such social conditions, the Thai artists sought to draw out the people at the center of the crisis. Among them, Manit Sriwanichpoom critically depicted the Thai’s consumerism culture and capitalistic society using various methods.

▼Panya Vijinthanarn (Thailand) *The Journey of Soul*
acrylic, metal, gold leaf and silver leaf on canvas (2001)



List of Works

▲Surasit Saokong
Serenity
oil on canvas (1983)

▲Surathin Tatana
The Birth of Buddha
acrylic, gold on canvas (2004)

▲Khien Yimsiri
Musical Rhythm
bronze (1949)

▲Preecha Thaotthong
Light on the Wall
acrylic on canvas (1980)

▲Panya Vijinthanarn
The Journey of Soul
acrylic, metal, gold leaf and silver leaf
on canvas (2001)

▲Supachai Satsara
On the Road Again
number plate, asphalt on board, metal
plate, cement, rubber boot (1992)

▲Vichoke Mukdamanee
Modern Existence
paint on metal (1986)

▲Chatchai Puipia
Round Figure
mixed media (1990)

▲Manit Sriwanichpoom
This Bloodless War
gelatin silver prints (set of 6) (1997)