

## UN/THAID

This exhibition brings together the work of five contemporary artists from Thailand who now live and work in Australia. Arriving in Australia independently of one another across the 1990s and 2000s, these five artists are based in the urban centres of Melbourne and Sydney and have continued their distinct individual practices since arriving in this country. The work on display in this exhibition is a diverse offering, including performance, painting, ceramics, sculpture, video and installation. Articulating multi-dimensional and layered histories, all of these artists are emboldened in their shared cultural experience of growing up in Thailand and then relocating to Australia while continuing to develop and refine their artistic practices. This exhibition features the work of Phaptawan Suwannakudt, Nakarin Aaron Jaikla, Bundit Puangthong, Pimpisa Tinpalit and Somchai Charoen. A Thai born Melbourne based artist, Vipoo Srivilasa has initiated and organised this exhibition because of his desire to provide visibility and voice for Thai Contemporary artists who have been working and living in Australia.

Based in Sydney, Phaptawan Suwannakudt is an experienced Buddhist mural painter who has translated this skill into creating beautifully detailed paintings. 'Chang' or elephant in Thai is Phaptawan's nickname. The name which her father gave her at birth after his own nickname. The Elephant and the Bush series was completed after residency at the Arthur Boyd properties in the Bundanon Residency program. In this series she put together the Australian flora and fauna and the Thai elephant. The work reflects her moving to the Australian society which she is to understand.

Performance artist Nakarin Jaikla's mesmerising video work series VOID uses the movement of the human body through dance to activate space. In VOID 4.1 Nakarin incorporates coloured pieces of fabric into his dance performance which is set in a small enclosed ceramic studio. The film is created by reversing the footage which gives the illusion that the fabric is initiating and directing the movement of the dancer. Narakin explains that 'VOID 4.1 combines the belief of Japanese Buddhist philosophy and Thai folk belief in the spirit. The movement of the fabric presents the energy of VOID element and the colours represent the spirit in the Thai culture'.

Melbourne based painter Bundit Puangthong brings together traditional and contemporary iconography creating a cacophony of colour and images. Inspired by both traditional Thai

painting as well as Pop art and graffiti, Bundit stylistically fuses together delicate linework with free form painting and stencil work, creating layered dreamlike worlds full of symbolic references to both Thai and Australian culture. The courage and confidence to undertake such large scale paintings is well informed by Bundit working as a sign-writer painting billboards as a teenager in Thailand and previously working as an art director on film sets.

Pimpisa Tinpalit is known for her large scale spatial and conceptual installations that transform the materiality of objects. The works for Grau Projekt is an installation featuring new works Silence 1.2.1 and Silence 1.2.2 that include 50 pillows and a queen size bed suspended from the ceiling with black rope. Like previous Silence works such as the installation Silence #1 1.2 at Lake Wendouree, Ballarat for the Biennale of Australian Art, 2018, the transformation of everyday objects we are familiar with into sculptural forms gives the viewer a silent space for contemplation, to be drawn into the feelings elicited by these objects, and to consider the meanings associated with translating these forms.

Sydney based ceramicist Somchai Charoen creates vibrant sculptures out of slip cast porcelain. Using ceramic slip cast moulds gives Somchai the flexibility to experiment with layering and repeating forms. His Jaegun vertical sculpture vases playfully stack arrangements of bold geometric shapes on top of each other. Some of the bases of these vases are coloured black while brighter colours, including orange, blue and greens are used to accentuate the multiple levels of the forms. Variations of the vases come in many colours and forms while some appear to lose their balance mid-way, tilting over with abandoned glee.

Danny Lacy  
Senior Curator  
Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery