

## JAKKAI SIRIBUTR

## TRANSIENT SHELTER



Tyler Rollins Fine Art is pleased to present *Transient Shelter*, an exhibition of new works by Jakkai Siributr, taking place at our gallery in New York City from April 17 – May 31, 2014. Jakkai has long been known as one of Thailand’s leading artists working with textiles, producing meticulously handmade tapestry and installation works that make powerful statements about religious, social, and political issues in contemporary Thailand. A main preoccupation of his art is the interaction between Buddhism and materialism in modern life, and the everyday popular culture of Thailand. In recent years, he has incorporated other materials and media in his work, including industrial and found materials, sound, and video. For *Transient Shelter*, Jakkai has produced a series of self-portrait photographs that have him “embodying” the elaborately embroidered and ornamented uniforms that are also part of the exhibition, along with a video work. The exhibition is curated by Singapore-based researcher, curator and critic Iola Lenzi, who writes in the catalogue essay: “mining local icons of religion and entrenched cultural tradition, Jakkai produces an art of thoughtful resistance that allusively takes aim at meaningless hierarchies, ineffective systems, and empty gestures masquerading as consequential. In its questioning of overlapping fiction and truth, dance with image and reality, and to-and-fro between life and death, *Transient Shelter*, though starting with ideas rooted in Thai culture, speaks to a universal audience.”

The exhibition is a meditation on the transience of worldly success and the way the trappings of social status are often imbued with quasi-mystical associations that maintain a link with animistic beliefs. With the photographs, Jakkai adopts poses taken from portraits of his ancestors, many of whom served as royal courtiers and in some cases had their lives cut short by the sometimes tragic vicissitudes of Thai political history. Wearing Thai civil service uniforms (ranked from C-11, the highest category, down to C-2) decked out with awards, he evokes the type of formal portrait photographs that are included in the funeral books that Thai families compile to commemorate the lives of relatives, and that typically emphasize the deceased person’s social status. Jakkai has encrusted the actual uniforms with elaborate ornaments that are inspired by Buddhist amulets and animist talismans, hinting at the deep-seated beliefs that underlie current social conventions. With some of the portraits, Jakkai poses in front of dilapidated backgrounds, pointing to the process of decay and rebirth that alludes to the cycle of life and death, as well as perhaps the state of social breakdown in today’s fractious Thailand. The exhibition title itself suggests that social status, like everything else in life, is but a transitory phase. This sense is heightened by the short video work, in which a uniform jacket slowly moves under flowing water, accompanied by a soundtrack of a burning funeral pyre.

Jakkai’s work has been shown in a number of museums around the world in recent years. In the United States, his work was included in *Phantoms of Asia: Contemporary Awakens the Past* at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (2012), as well as the museum’s *Here / Not Here: Buddha Presence in Eight Recent Works* (2011). As part of the latter exhibition, Jakkai presented his interactive *Reciprocity* project in the Asian Art Museum’s Tateuchi Gallery; his work *Recession* (2010) subsequently entered the museum’s collection. In 2009, Jakkai’s *Lucky Ware* installation (2008) was featured at the Rubin Museum in New York City, and he was included in *Truly Truthful* in Miami. He has presented two solo exhibitions at Tyler Rollins Fine Art: *Temple Fair* (2008) and *Karma Cash & Carry* (2010). In Asia, Jakkai’s *Shroud* installation was recently featured in the exhibition, *Exploring the Cosmos: The Stupa as a Buddhist Symbol* (2012 – 2013) at Singapore’s Asian Civilisations Museum, which acquired the work for its permanent collection. In 2011, he presented a major exhibition of installations, sculptural works, and embroidered tapestries at the Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand (2011). He was a featured artist in the 2011 Chongqing Biennial and in the 2009 Asian Art Biennial at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, which acquired his work, *Suffrage* (2008). Other important collections of his work include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle, and the Vehbi Koç Foundation, Istanbul.