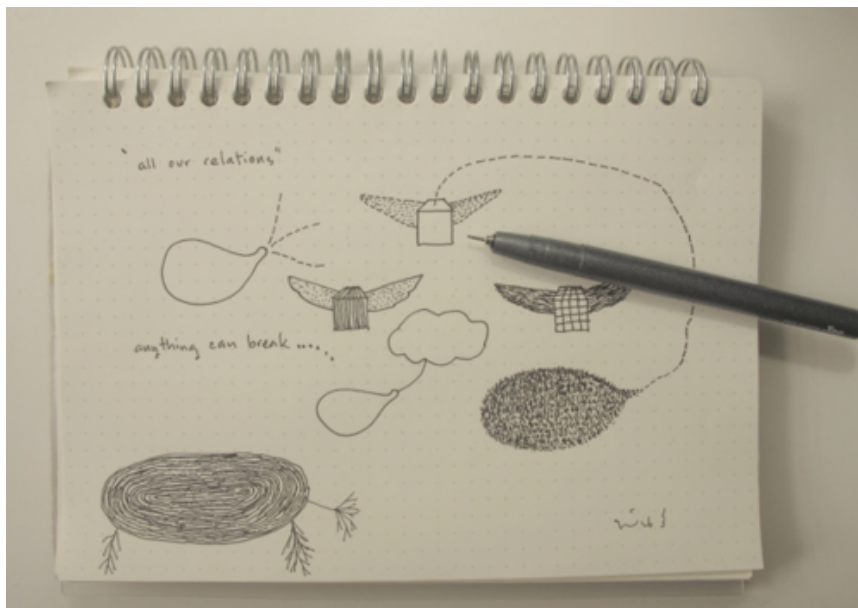


MOIRA ROTH'S GLEANINGS



GLEANINGS #15: PINAREE SANPITAK

10 April 2012 - Moira Roth's journal



I reread the brilliant 2004 catalogue essay, 'Breasts and Bowls: Metaphor and Meaning in the Art of Pinaree Sanpitak' by Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker, in which she writes:

'The mixed metaphors and veiled readings that are found in Sanpitak's art evolve naturally... To walk through the hanging panels of woven textiles, *Breast Stupas* (2000–01), each of which is distinct and has a stupa defined on it by drawn threads, is like wending one's way through giant prayer clothes on a quiet, personal journey of inner meditation and peaceful exploration.'



Pinaree Sanpitak, *Breast Stupas*, 2000–01

‘Artistic chameleon and feminist artist’ is the way Art Radar Asia aptly describes Pinaree Sanpitak in a review of ‘Quietly Floating,’ her first exhibition in New York City in 2010.

[Read the full review here](#) | [See more about the exhibition here](#)

And in 2011, in the context of Sanpitak’s simultaneous exhibitions in three sites in Bangkok with the collective title of ‘Body Borders’ - *Body Borders: Anything Can Break* was exhibited at the Art Center, Chulalongkorn University - she herself [explains](#) a central motif in her art:

‘The body, which has been a continuing focus in my work for the past 20 years, explores sensory experience and perception. Recently, my son’s interest in pursuing studies in fashion design has led me to look at the body through the ideas of adornment: How the body is epitomized or minimized. What matters to me is how the body becomes a site of transit, contemplation and understanding. The body - part or whole- ponders, wonders and challenges.’



Pinaree Sanpitak, *Anything Can Break*, 2011

I begin to sense the enormity and complexity of this piece when I read the lively blog account by [all\(zone\)](#), a Bangkok design company, about installing *Body Borders: Anything Can Break* in 2011 with its thousands of ‘Breast Clouds’ (made out of glass) and ‘Flying Cubes’ (cubes with wings made out of paper). all(zone) staff describe a meeting with Sanpitak, and then back in their office they work on an installation technique mock-up. ‘Basically we used a very common metal grid unit which street vendors used to set up their stalls as a main structure to hang the “Breast Clouds” and the “Flying Cubes”.’

Installing *Body Borders: Anything Can Break*, 2011, at The Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok

Thousands of origami ‘Flying Cubes’ were made in advance, but they needed to be arranged and hung on metal grids, so finally, with the winged cubes slightly swaying, the space looked like a bird farm.



Installing *Body Borders: Anything Can Break*, 2011, at The Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok

Then the all(zone) staff installed the panels on the ceiling and fixed the lights.



Pinaree Sanpitak, *Anything Can Break*, 2011 (detail)

'The sound interactive installation was very nice, too. Moving around the space as drawn by the slightly moving cubes and clouds, every few metres, the music changed, with many people in the space at the same time, the music was randomly mixed... the whole space became a forest of sounds, clouds and cubes.'



Pinaree Sanpitak, *Anything Can Break*, 2011 (detail)

Read more about the installation process <http://blogzone-allzone.blogspot.com/2011/11/57-body-borders-anything-can-break-by.html>

10 April 2012 - Email from Moira Roth to Pinaree Sanpitak

I know *Anything Can Break* will be installed in the newly reopened Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) whose ceiling height has now been doubled (the museum was closed for renovations when I was staying in Sydney a few weeks ago).



Entrance to the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

I vividly remember Gerald McMaster at the Biennale press conference in February describing the theme that will loosely unite all the selected work – including *Anything Can Break* – at the MCA: ‘Possible Composition, the bringing together of disparate elements in new and unexpected combinations.’ In her essay in the forthcoming Biennale catalogue, Catherine de Zegher explains further that the notion of ‘composition’ (derived from the Latin *componere*) comes from the writings of Bruno Latour, the French sociologist and anthropologist: ‘he considers it as a “putting together” of diverse elements in which their heterogeneity is retained.’ <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/>

What inspired you to create (to quote again from de Zegher) the milk-bearing breasts and water-laden clouds that (together with the sound components) make up *Anything Can Break*?

10 April 2012 - Email from Pinaree Sanpitak to Moira Roth

Let me begin by explaining that since 2000 my work has become more and more interactive and, at the same time, continues to incorporate a wide range of material – crossing over the gender line and attempting to explore the humour, the fragility and the vigour of the senses through sight, touch, sound, scent and taste.

Here is some background on the evolution of *Anything Can Break* over the last few years.

It began in October of 2007, when I was invited to make a proposal for an art space in Le Muy - in the south of France, near the coast - perched on a mountainside facing a valley. I was working on my ‘Breasts and Clouds’ series at the time and with glass masters in Murano (Italy), so I immediately thought about the concept of clouds and fragility.

During the August 2007 Bangkok exhibition, called ‘Breasts and Clouds,’ I did paintings of these subjects.

See more here:

<http://www.rama9art.org/artisan/2007/july/breasts/index.html><http://www.rama9art.org/artisan/2007/july/breasts/index.html>

I had asked a group of artists, writers, and musicians to select music inspired by these paintings.

The audience could then choose to listen to the sound tracks if they wished from the i-pods provided. There were about 5 ½ hours of recorded music and I found it so interesting that people were willing to spend much time listening. I also thought a lot about their choices of the music. It was almost like a new way of thinking about art criticism. How many people actually read art criticism, while music is so fundamental to all? People relate to music in their own way, like they do to food.

Thus through the process of making *Anything Can Break*, I realised that the work's core was not that different from that of my previous project [Breast Stupa Cookery](#). Instead of chefs responding to and interpreting the work through their food and cooking, now there is interaction with music.

At first my vision was that all the hanging objects would be made in glass in the shape of *Breasts and Clouds*, but then I began developing another form that I called 'Flying Cubes.' I was inspired initially by seeing these shapes in origami at the counter of a restaurant in Tokyo and the restaurant owner gave my son and me one each as a souvenir.

Over the years, I kept re-folding these origami pieces - I didn't quite know what to make from them yet, and so this was a way to try and understand why I was so drawn to them. Then everything fell into place.

The first time was when I created 'scarecrows' - made out of rattan - for a charity project in the rice fields in Chiang Mai, where they hung on swaying bamboo poles scattered in the paddies. I made them during an unsettling time for me, both within and in my surroundings, and this work helped get me 'grounded' again.



Pinaree Sanpitak, 'Flying Cubes' project in Chiang Mai

These 'Flying Cubes' - in the original paper form - fitted perfectly with the glass breast clouds. (I finally found a Thai glassmaker who was able to make the glass pieces. Although totally different methods from the masters in Murano, it worked because they were much lighter and had the perfect finish in the way it was to hang).

I hadn't exhibited for some time in Thailand (which I consider a very important venue as it is my home base) so I came up with the idea of a show in early 2011 of all my new works including paintings and the rattan flying cubes along with *Anything Can Break*. I was fortunate enough that the three spaces I approached could accommodate me in such a short notice, and that is how the three-venue *Body Borders* came about.

14 April 2012 - Email from Moira Roth to Pinaree Sanpitak

I know today that you will be travelling to New York from Thailand for the opening of your 'Hanging by a Thread' exhibition on 19 April. I have just read the Tyler Rollins Gallery's [description of this](#) and am, as always by your work, deeply moved.

'Entitled *Hanging by a Thread*, the exhibition centres on an installation of the same title that is the artist's response to the recent flooding in Bangkok, where she lives and works. Using traditional Thai printed

cotton *Paa-Lai* fabrics of the type that were included in the royal sponsored relief bags, Pinaree has constructed a group of woven hammocks that will be suspended in the gallery from slender threads. These quiet, cocoon-like forms evoke a sense of nurturing, refuge, and contemplation, as well as the precariousness of life. Pinaree explains that “the *Paa-Lai* hammocks represent the situation of precarious times balancing traditional and modern values. The hammocks are presence of the body, bare and contemplating. The body waiting to slow down. The body floating. The body just hanging by a thread. Thus a situation I believe we all share.”



Pinaree Sanpitak, *Hanging by a Thread*, 2012

15 April 2012 - Email from Moira Roth to Pinaree Sanpitak

I greatly look forward to seeing *Anything Can Break* installed in June at the [Biennale of Sydney](#).

Perhaps when you arrive in New York (if you are not too tired) you could quickly send me some sort of response as to how you see the connection of *Anything Can Break* with the Biennale’s theme of ‘[all our relations](#).’

17 April 2012 - Email from Pinaree Sanpitak to Moira Roth

