

SENSORIUM

Contemporary Art and the Sensed World

360°

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31 July – 22 October 2014

ARTISTS

1. Bui Cong Khanh
2. Lavender Chang
3. Tad Ermitaño
4. Li Hui
5. Alecia Neo
6. Goldie Poblador
7. Pinaree Sanpitak
8. Eugene Soh
9. Linda Solay
10. Melati Suryodarmo
11. Mark Wong

CURATORIAL TEAM

and artwork captions written by:

Lead curator Joyce Toh (JT)
with Tan Siuli (TSL) and Rachel Ng (RN)

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Graphic designer: Quinny Vu
Printer: alsoDOMINIE, Singapore

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Sensorium 360° is an exhibition of Southeast Asian and Asian contemporary art that calls upon the complexity of the human senses and explores how sensory experiences locate us in understanding the world and knowing the self.

In the sphere of visual art and daily life, vision and sight tend to dominate our perception, yet other senses are equally indispensable in enabling us to apprehend the world within and without – taking in its pleasures and pains, even as we filter, and absorb, data and information. These physiological capacities are also sources of creativity for other fields such as music, gastronomy or even perfumery, and contemporary artists, in crossing disciplines, have often drawn upon the sensorial spectrum.

While the five senses of sight (ophthalmoception), hearing (audioception), taste (gustaoception), touch (tactioception) and smell (olfacoception) are the most commonly known, other identified senses include the body's ability to detect movement (kinaesthesia) and position (propioception), pain (nociception), balance (equilibrioception), and even time (chronoception). Less easily explained but no less compelling is the 'extrasensory' perception of the 'sixth sense' – intuition or premonition.

The exhibition presents several newly commissioned works and loans from artists from Singapore, Southeast Asia and beyond, with many of the works focusing on one specific sensory experience. In unfolding the varied phenomenological dimensions of the senses and our sensibilities, *Sensorium 360°* seeks to highlight different facets of the sensorial experience: its relationship to well-being and health; synaesthesia (how one sense translates into another); how sensorial perception may trigger other aspects of human cognition (e.g. memory), or even serve as an entry point into realms beyond the physical world, such as spiritual contemplation.

Spanning the fields of art, phenomenology, philosophy and cognitive psychology, *Sensorium 360°* is a visual art exhibition that moves beyond vision to 'see' the world through the other senses, and to experience it in-the-round.

Pinaree Sanpitak

noon-nom

2001 – 2002

Organza, synthetic fibres, 55 pieces

Installation dimensions variable, approx. 80 x 80 x 80 cm (each)

Singapore Art Museum collection



Filling an entire room, *noon-nom* invites the visitor to not only touch the artwork, but also *be touched*, by getting up close and personal with a familiar form that is nurturing, sensual, and sacred: the human female breast. These rotund, soft sculptures covered in organza are part of the Thai artist's ongoing and extensive body of works across different media and genres – including a food performance – that centre on the human corpus as a vessel and mound. In so doing, she questions prevailing attitudes towards the female breast in order to reassert its significance as a natural form that symbolises nourishment and comfort, as well as signifying the potency of the sensuous and spiritual feminine body.

For babies, suckling the breast provides succor and sustenance; moreover, the physical contact is vital in forging the intimate bond between mother and child. During a baby's early stages, senses like sight and hearing are not fully developed yet, and haptic communication is one of the most important ways a child receives information about the world. Indeed, the spinothalamic nerve tract – which conveys neurological information to the brain about pain and touch – is amongst the earliest to develop in the human embryo, and newborns are already able to discern differences in the texture, shape and weight of objects.

By creating a physical and metaphorical space where participants can freely interact with the tactile sculptures, *noon-nom* underscores the importance of touching and feeling as a means of reconnecting in human relationships. (JT)

Pinaree Sanpitak (b. 1961, Thailand) is regarded as one of the most internationally recognised artists of her generation from Thailand. Working across a variety of media that includes painting, drawing, sculpture, textiles, ceramics, performance and culinary arts, Pinaree Sanpitak has constantly examined the feminine form and experience, in a practice spanning over 20 years. In 2013, her works were featured in solo exhibitions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, United States; the Contemporary Austin, Texas, United States, as well as in the group exhibition 'Female Power', at the Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, The Netherlands. Her work has been presented in numerous museum exhibitions in Asia and Europe, and she has participated in major biennales in Australia, Japan, and Korea. She lives and works in Bangkok, Thailand.



Image courtesy of the artist