MA-LAI

PINAREE SANPITAK
We are pleased to present *Ma-lai*, Pinaree Sanpitak’s third solo exhibition with Tyler Rollins Fine Art, taking place from September 10 through October 24, 2015. Pinaree is one of the most compelling and respected Thai artists of her generation, and her work can be counted among the most powerful explorations of women’s experience in all of Southeast Asia. Her primary inspiration over the past twenty-five years has been the female body, distilled to its most basic forms and imbued with an ethereal spirituality. Her work in a wide variety of media – painting, drawing, sculpture, textiles, ceramics, performance, and culinary arts, to name but a few – is informed by a quiet minimalism that owes something to her training in Japan and sets it apart from the colorful intensity of much Thai art. Often called a feminist or Buddhist artist, she resists such easy categorizations, preferring to let her work speak to each viewer directly, to the heart and soul, with the most basic language of form, color, and texture.

The exhibition centers on a hanging fabric installation, alongside a related series of paintings and sculptures, all taking inspiration from *ma-lai* floral garlands, which play a symbolic role in Thai ceremonial occasions from birth to death, from exuberant celebrations to quiet personal contemplation. It is an art form originally taught to women in the Thai royal court, who created intricate designs of great refinement. Pinaree’s installation, with its large-scale garlands that are at once delicate and monumental, evokes the female body, intimately linked to a sense of the enduring bonds of cultural traditions, family, and spirituality. “*Ma-lai* is a subtle comment on the conditions of life, not only to cherish the wonders but also to pay respect to the struggles and losses,” Pinaree explains. “I started working with *ma-lai* over a year ago, finding a way to transform small fabric pieces into petal patterns, and it finally evolved into three different elements, starting with the geometrical construction of *ma-lai* in toile, then the organic paintings in acrylic with pencil and dried flowers, and the cast metal sculptures of my *breast cloud* forms connected with garlands of actual flowers. The ‘body’ of *ma-lai* transforms, portraying certain mindsets and emotions.”

Pinaree’s work has been featured in numerous museum exhibitions in Asia and Europe over the past twenty years, and she has participated in major biennials in Australia, Italy, Japan, and Korea. A selection of her works from 1995-2013 was recently seen in a solo exhibition at the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation in Sydney, Australia (2014). In 2013, she presented two solo exhibitions at US museums: at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, featuring her large-scale installation, *Hanging By a Thread*; and at the Contemporary Austin, with another large-scale installation, *Temporary Insanity*, which was also exhibited in the artist’s solo exhibition at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia (2012). At the 18th Biennale of Sydney (2012) she showed a large-scale installation, *Anything Can Break*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Subsequently on view at the Toledo Museum of Art in Toledo, Ohio (2014-15), the installation comprises thousands of origami “flying cubes” and breast-shaped glass clouds suspended from the ceiling, with musical motifs triggered by motion sensors in response to the audience’s movements. Stainless steel sculptures from her *Breast Stupa Topiary* series were featured in the group exhibition, *Female Power*, at the Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, The Netherlands (2013) and are currently on view in front of ILHAM art gallery in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
ARTIST STATEMENT

Ma-lai is a Thai word referring to flower garlands of various designs and intricate patterns. They play a symbolic role in all occasions from birth to death, from anxious times to comforting moods, from exuberant celebrations to quiet personal contemplation. It is an art form originating in the royal court, which “proper” Thai women used to be taught along with skills in reading, writing, cooking and such. Nowadays, we mostly get them from the flower markets or specialized florists.

I have gradually been working on outdoor pieces, such as Breast Stupa Topiary and The Hammock, in recent years and wanted to incorporate the garden, flowers, and scent in a very simple form. Ma-lai is a subtle comment on the conditions of life, not only to cherish the wonders but also to pay respect to the struggles and losses. In the past week, Breast Stupa Topiary has made another journey to a lawn in the center of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; a quiet pilgrimage. Two days later, in the aftermath of the bombing at a shrine in Bangkok, I am placing a ma-lai for comfort and peace. Such is the precariousness.

I started working with ma-lai over a year ago, finding a way to transform small fabric pieces into petal patterns, and it finally evolved into three different elements, starting with the geometrical construction of ma-lai in toile, then the organic paintings in acrylic with pencil and dried flowers, and the cast metal sculptures of my breast cloud forms connected with garlands of actual flowers. The “body” of ma-lai transforms, portraying certain mindsets and emotions.

A gesture of respect. A memory. There is struggle but hope.

Pinaree Sanpitak
August 2015
VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION AT TYLER ROLLINS FINE ART
Ma-lai: mentally secured
2014-15
toile
15 pieces
dimensions variable
Ma-lai Connected
2014-2015
cast aluminum, stainless steel wire, flowers
two pieces: 10 x 21 ½ x 9 ¾ in. (25.5 x 55 x 25 cm); 10 ½ x 24 ½ x 11 in. (27 x 62 x 28 cm)
Edition 3 of 8, 2 AP
Ma-lai Connected
2014-2015
cast aluminum, stainless steel wire, flowers
two pieces: 10 x 21 ½ x 9 ¾ in. (25.5 x 55 x 25 cm); 10 ½ x 24 ½ x 11 in. (27 x 62 x 28 cm)
Edition 4 of 8, 2 AP
Ma-lai Connected
2014-2015
cast aluminum, stainless steel wire, flowers
two pieces: 10 x 21 ½ x 9 ¼ in. (25.5 x 55 x 25 cm); 10 ½ x 24 ½ x 11 in. (27 x 62 x 28 cm)
Edition 5 of 8, 2 AP
Ma-lai Connected
2014-2015
cast aluminum, stainless steel wire, flowers
two pieces: 10 x 21 ½ x 9 ¾ in. (25.5 x 55 x 25 cm); 10 ½ x 24 ½ x 11 in. (27 x 62 x 28 cm)
Edition 6 of 8, 2 AP
Ma-lai Connected
2014-2015
cast aluminum, stainless steel wire, flowers
two pieces: 10 x 21 ½ x 9 ¾ in. (25.5 x 55 x 25 cm); 10 ½ x 24 ½ x 11 in. (27 x 62 x 28 cm)
Edition 7 of 8, 2 AP
Ma-lai 1
2015
acrylic, pencil, dried flowers on canvas
51 x 51 in. (130 x 130 cm)
Ma-lai 2
2015
acrylic, pencil, dried flowers on canvas
51 x 51 in. (130 x 130 cm)
Ma-lai 3
2015
acrylic, pencil, dried flowers on canvas
51 x 51 in. (130 x 130 cm)
Ma-lai 4
2015
acrylic, pencil, dried flowers on canvas
51 x 51 in. (130 x 130 cm)
Ma-lai 5
2015
acrylic, pencil, dried flowers on canvas
51 x 51 in. (130 x 130 cm)
Ma-lai 6
2015
acrylic, pencil, dried flowers on canvas
51 x 51 in. (130 x 130 cm)
Ma-lai 7
2015
acrylic, pencil, dried flowers on canvas
51 x 51 in. (130 x 130 cm)
Ma-lai 8
2015
acrylic, pencil, dried flowers on canvas
51 x 51 in. (130 x 130 cm)
PINAREE SANPITAK
SELECTED BIOGRAPHY


EDUCATION

1986 BFA in Visual Arts and Communication Design, School of Fine Arts and Design, University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015 Ma-lai, Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, NY. Anything Can Break, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH.


2013 Hanging by a Thread, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, CA. Temporary Insanity, AMOA-Arthouse (now known as The Contemporary Austin), Austin, TX. Temporary Insanity, Goyang Aram Nuri Arts Center, Korea.


2011 Body Borders, The Art Center at Chulalongkorn University, H Gallery, and 100 Tonson Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand.


2009 Breasts, Clouds and Vessels, Gallerie Alain le Gaillard, Paris, France.

2007 Breasts and Clouds, 100 Tonson Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand.


GROUP EXHIBITIONS


2012 18th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia.


2010 Artists Scarecrows Rice Paddy, Chiang Mai, Thailand. roundabout, City Gallery Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand. THAI-YO, Bangkok Art and Culture Center, Bangkok, Thailand.


Breast Stupa Cookery with Higashiya and Le Bain, Le Bain, Tokyo, Japan.

2006

Artery, The Gallery and Concourse, Singapore Management University, Singapore.

Breast Stupa Cookery / Artery Exhibition Opening, SMU Singapore Management University, Singapore.

Tout à Fait Thai: Thai Art Festival Paris 2006, Mairie du 6 e, St. Sulpice, Paris, France.

Breast Stupa Cookery / Soi Project / Thai Art Festival Paris, Mairie du 6 e, St. Sulpice and Restaurant Le Trois, Paris, France.

Little More Sweet Not Too Sour, 100 Tonson Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand.

Pink Bras Alert! / Breast Stupa Cookery, Charity in an A-B-C Cup - Fund raising campaign for The Queen Sirikit Centre for Breast Cancer, Bangkok, Thailand, The Sukhothai Hotel Ballroom, Bangkok, Thailand.

2005

Thai Festival, Auditorium Parco Della Musica, Rome, Italy. 600 Images / 60 Artists / 6 Curators / 6 Cities, Bangkok / Berlin / London / Los Angeles / Manila / Saigon.


Soi Project / Yokohama Triennale 2005, Yokohama, Japan.


Breast Stupa Cookery / Pic-Nic in the Room, Jardin de Bagatelle, Kawazu / Urasenke Tea Ceremony / Art-U Room, Tokyo, Japan.

Breast Stupa Cookery / Lotus Arts de Vivre – WPO Offsite Event, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand.

2002

36 Ideas from Asia – Contemporary South-East Asian Art, Singapore Art Museum European Touring Exhibition.


The 2nd Women's Art Festival, East Asian Women and Museum, Fukuoka, Japan.

2001

A Shriek from an Invisible Box, The Meguro Museum, Tokyo, Japan.

AsiaArt 2001/Labyrinths – Asian Contemporary Art – Biennale d’Arte Contemporanea, Contemporary Art Museum of Genoa, Italy.

2000

Glocal Scents of Thailand, Edsvik Konst & Kultur, Solentuna, Sweden.

Euro Visions, Art Gallery of the Faculty of Painting, Sculpture and Graphic Arts, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.


1999

Women Imaging Women: Home, Body, Memory, Main Gallery, Cultural Center of the Philippines [CCP], Manila, The Philippines.

Alter Ego - Thai - EU Contemporary Art Project, Art Gallery of the Faculty of Painting, Sculpture and Graphic Arts, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Womanifesto 2, Saranrom Park, Bangkok, Thailand.

Festival der Geister / Asian Spirit and Ghost Festival, Kunsthaus Tacheles, Berlin, Germany.

“Beyond the Future” The Third Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia.
2008  Lucas Artists Programs, Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, CA.

2003  Pacific Bridge Residency Program, Oakland, CA.

2001  Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA.


1999  Printmaking Workshop - Northern Editions, Northern Territory University (NTU) Darwin, Australia.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Nasher Museum of Art, Durham, NC, USA.
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle, WA, USA.
Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia.
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan.
Seinan Gakuin University, Fukuoka, Japan.
Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan.
Earl Lu Gallery, La Salle – SIA College of the Arts, Singapore.
Singapore Art Museum, Singapore.
Lenzi-Morisot Foundation, Singapore – France.
Bangkok University, Bangkok, Thailand.
Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.
Misiem Yipintsoi Sculpture Garden, Thailand.
Ministry of Culture, Thailand.
The Queen’s Sirikit Centre for Breast Cancer, Bangkok, Thailand.
Vehbi Koc Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey
The Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, CA.
ILHAM Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.