

Photographer Manit continues to provoke with latest exhibition at H Gallery



"Goddess of Democracy" by Manit Sriwanichpoom is currently on display at H Gallery in Sathorn

The opening night of Manit Sriwanichpoom's latest dual photographic art exhibition of "Holy Machismo" and "Obscene" at [H Gallery](#) was a huge social event that attracted a diverse group of art fanatics. From young photographers such as Steve Pace and [Benya Hegenbarth](#) to Thailand's top national artists Jakkai Siributr and Ing Kanjanavanit, and even the owners of ultra-high-end art gallery Lotus Arts de Vivre and [Eat Me Restaurant and Gallery](#).

Some were sitting in a powwow circle on the patio, while others sat along the wall adjacent to the gallery, and many more were inside. As we entered the first section of H Gallery, we were greeted by a room full of blown up photographs of traditional Thai lingams that made up the "Holy Machismo" exhibition. If you don't know the significance of these phallic symbols, then you must make a trip to the local [Penis Shrine](#). In Thailand, these fertility symbols are actually used as sacred offerings to gain luck and prosperity. However, for those who lacked the cultural background knowledge it looked like we had walked into a Penis Twilight Zone with black and white images of blurred dicks staring back at us from every wall and every corner. There was no escaping the attack of the semi-distorted dicks! One photographed phallus stood out in particular and since it so closely resembled the Star Wars villain, we decided to call it the Darth Vader Dick. In fact, it was so popular that several people got their photographs taken with it as if it was a famous celebrity. We wondered what Darth Vader Dick's autograph would look like...

In the following room we found the "Obscene" photographic collection of Baroque nudes laced with bold red and blue colors of the Thai flag. Once again, the internationally acclaimed photographer and artist Manit Sriwanichpoom followed his usual path of creating works of art that tackle social and political issues. Past work "[The Pink Man Series](#)" confronted the subject of consumerism and "Protest" documented a part of the protes crisis in Thailand. Most of Manit's art work tends to evoke controversy. This time around, his Caravagesque photographs challenge the obscenity that is prevalent in the political system of Thailand. One of the photographs depict two women about to engage in a lesbian make-out session while their faces are covered in red and blue scarves. Another similar image shows one blindfolded woman pinching the other's nipple. These sexual connotations definitely reflect the theme of Manit's "Obscene" photographic work which deals with issues of power, greed, and lust.

Manit Sriwanichpoom's "Holy Machismo" and "Obscene" will be on display at H Gallery from now until July 30, 2012. H Gallery is open to the public daily between 10AM and 6PM except Tuesdays. The gallery is located on Sathorn Soi 12.