

kurimanzutto

fireworks

apichatpong weerasethakul

may 20 - june 14, 2014

tuesday to thursday from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

friday and saturday from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Bangkok, 1970) grew up in Khon Kaen, a city located in the Northeast of Thailand. He studied architecture at Khon Kaen University and continued his studies with a masters degree in Visual Arts in Film at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

He has been working in film and video ever since the nineties. In 1999, he founded *Kick the Machine*, a company outside of the commercial film industry in Thailand, dedicated to the promotion of independent and experimental film. It also produces the work of other filmmakers and supports local film festivals. Apichatpong's work is recognized for exploring the limits between documentary and fiction with themes such as memory, politics, social order and the science of sleep.

Having presented *Primitive* at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) in 2011, he will now present his most recent work *Fireworks*, at kurimanzutto.

In Apichatpong's cinema and visual art, memory is often juxtaposed alongside ephemeral elements such as light and phantoms, suggesting the malleable nature of history and storytelling. In recent years, Apichatpong has created experimental and hybrid narratives focusing on his native land of Northern Thailand, fusing the memories of others with his own. In this same vein, his new ongoing project, *Fireworks*, explores Thailand's political situation through the use of pyrotechnics.

The video installation *Fireworks (Archives)* featured at kurimanzutto is the first of the series. It functions as a hallucinatory memory machine that catalogues animal sculptures from the *Sala Keoku Temple* in the Northern region where Apichatpong grew up. The temple's wayward statues featured in the piece convey the spirit behind the kind of revolts spurting from the charged political climate in Thailand. According to the artist, the northern region's arid land and the political oppression from Bangkok have driven people to dream beyond their everyday reality. Here, Apichatpong's regular actors blend in with the illuminated sculptures of beasts in the middle of the night, commemorating the land's destruction and liberation.

Primates' Memories and Mr. Electrico (For Ray Bradbury) are two illuminated photographs that similarly explore positive and negative spaces. Inspired by the recent MIT molecular research in which light and color are used to artificially activate a memory, these photographs depict flashes of light that have been frozen and then digitally painted, creating fictional topographies. While *Primates' Memory* echoes the current color-coded conflict in Thailand's streets where violence and revelry coexist, *Mr. Electrico (For Ray Bradbury)* is drawn from Apichatpong's favourite writer's memory about a circus performer who could endure fifty thousand bolts of electricity.

On the Other hand, *The Vapour of Melancholy* shows Apichatpong's partner resting in bed, exhaling a cloud of smoke surrounded by exploding fireworks. This intimate portrait manifests a marriage of intoxication and dream, a scene in which a cloud of smoke and sparks engulfs his body, concealing an otherwise mundane activity.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul has been awarded with numerous prizes for his work. In 2008, he became the first artist to receive the 55 Carnegie International *Fine Prize*, USA. In 2010, he won the *Palm d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival for his film, *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*. In 2011, he received the *Officiers de l'ordre des arts et des lettres* in France. In 2013 he won the *11 Biennial of Sharjah* and the *Fukuoka Prize (Arts and Culture)* in Fukuoka, Japan, 2013.

In 2009 his film *Primitive* (a seven screen video installation) was premiered at the Haus der Kunst in Munich and at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris. In 2010 this same film was shown at the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) in Mexico City and at the New Museum in New York. In 2012, he participated in *dOCUMENTA (13)*, Kassel, Germany.

He currently lives and works in Chiangmai, Thailand.