

ICI

MCAD  
MUSEUM OF  
CONTEMPORARY  
ART & DESIGN

**APICHATPONG  
WEERASETHAKUL**  
THE SERENITY OF MADNESS

# APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL THE SERENITY OF MADNESS

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY  
ART AND DESIGN (MCAD),  
MANILA

OPENING RECEPTION  
17 February 2017  
4.00PM

EXHIBITION RUN  
17 February - 14 May 2017

#MCADManila  
#TheSerenityOfMadness

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

A leading figure in contemporary film and art, Apichatpong Weerasethakul has developed a singular realist-surrealist style in which he portrays the everyday alongside supernatural elements suggesting a distortion between fact and folklore, the subconscious and the exposed, and various disparities of power. His work reveals stories often excluded in history in and out of Thailand: voices of the poor and the ill, marginalized beings, and those silenced and censored for personal and political reasons.

Curated by Gridthiya Gawee Wong, this solo exhibition uniquely presents a selected survey of rarely-seen experimental short films and video installations by Weerasethakul, alongside his photography and archival material that explore threads of socio-political commentary. His passionate positions regarding class, labor, sexuality, science and spirituality have informed his practice from early in his career to the

present. Previously shown at MAIAM Contemporary Art Museum, Thailand and Para Site Hong Kong, the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD), Manila will be showing its third iteration which premieres the work, *"Invisibility"* in Southeast Asia and includes the video installations, *"Emerald"* and *"Blue Propeller"*.

*Apichatpong Weerasethakul: The Serenity of Madness* is a traveling exhibition curated by Gridthiya Gawee Wong and produced by Independent Curators International (ICI), New York. The exhibition and tour are made possible, in part, with the generous support from MAIAM Contemporary Art Museum, Chiang Mai, the ICI Board of Trustees and ICI's International Forum. The presentation at Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD), Manila has been organized in collaboration with Joselina Cruz. Additional support has been provided by the Royal Thai Embassy, National Book Store, Craftpoint Brewing Company, Premier Wine & Spirits, Inc., and Pacific Paint (Boysen) Philippines, Inc.

## COLLATERAL ACTIVITIES | PUBLIC PROGRAMS

**PUBLIC TALK WITH APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL**  
17 February 2017  
4.00pm

De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde SDA Theater, 5th floor

As a prelude to the opening of his solo travelling exhibition *The Serenity of Madness*, Apichatpong Weerasethakul will hold a public talk on 17 February, 4 pm at the SDA Theater. The focus of his talk will be his approach to filmmaking, and the work of memory, personal politics and social issues.

RSVP required (mcad@benilde.edu.ph)

\* Priority access to the opening reception (starts at 5.30pm) will be given to attendees of the Public Talk

**MASTER CLASS WITH APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL**  
18 February 2017  
3.00pm

De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde SDA Cinema, 12th Floor

Acclaimed Thai filmmaker, Apichatpong Weerasethakul will hold an exclusive master class on Saturday, 18 February, 3:00pm at the Benilde SDA Cinema.

Entitled *'HOME/WORKS'* the talk will be a first for the Philippines. After an introduction to his hometown in the northeast of Thailand (the site of much of his inspiration) the discussion will focus on a variety of projects, their processes and the technical aspects of the work.

This one and half hour talk will be followed by an extended Q&A and is limited to just 20 slots.

Registration Fee - ₱1000.00

Limited Availability

Pre-registration is required to guarantee your slot (cash payments will be accepted at the MCAD office, G/F DLS-CSB School of Design and Arts Campus, Dominga St. on or before 10 February 2017).



TOP: Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Photo by Chai Siris.  
COVER: Apichatpong Weerasethakul, *Ghost Teen*, 2009. Vinyl print. Courtesy of the artist.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL** was born in 1970 in Bangkok and raised in the north-eastern Thai city of Khon Kaen. Working independently of the Thai commercial film industry, he is active in promoting experimental and independent filmmaking through his company Kick the Machine, which he founded in 1999. With Gridthiya Gaweewong he founded the Bangkok Experimental Film Festival in 1997, and presented it three more times through 2008. His work has been presented widely in art and film contexts internationally, including the Sharjah Biennial in the UAE (2013), dOCUMENTA 13 in Kassel, Germany (2012), Liverpool Biennial (2006), Busan Biennial (2004), the Istanbul Biennial (2001), and in solo and group exhibitions at art spaces including Haus der Kunst in Munich, Germany; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; New Museum, New York; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; and Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Weerasethakul's 2009 film, *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, won a Palme d'Or prize at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival. His feature films include: *Cemetery of Splendour* (2015), *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (2010), *Syndromes and a Century* (2006), *Tropical Malady* (2004), *The Adventures of Iron Pussy* (2003), *Blissfully Yours* (2002), and *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2000).

## ABOUT THE CURATOR

**GRIDTHIYA GAWEEWONG** founded arts organization Project 304 in 1996, and is currently Artistic Director of the Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok. Her curatorial projects have addressed issues of social transformation confronting artists from Thailand and beyond since the Cold War. Gaweewong has organized exhibitions and events including *Underconstruction*, Tokyo (2000 - 2002), *Politics of Fun* at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2005), the Bangkok Experimental Film Festival (1997-2007), (with Rirkrit Tiravanija) Saigon Open City in Saigon, Vietnam (2006-07) and *Unreal Asia*, Oberhausen International Short Film Festival (2010).

## PUBLICATION

In conjunction with the exhibition, ICI will publish **APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL SOURCEBOOK: THE SERENITY OF MADNESS**. The *Sourcebook* series is dedicated to contemporary artists' personal perspectives on social, political, and cultural issues. Each book, edited by a single artist, includes a collection of primary research materials and influences, such as rare archival documents, artwork studies, and excerpts of landmark publications, selected from the artist's own archive and annotated with personal commentary. The *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook* invites readers into Weerasethakul's intimate exploration of his influences—in his words, "like a stream of consciousness, suffocated by data."

[curatorsintl.org/exhibitions/apichatpong-weerasethakul-the-serenity-of-madness](http://curatorsintl.org/exhibitions/apichatpong-weerasethakul-the-serenity-of-madness)

Manila tour:  
[mcdmanila.org.ph/save-date-apichatpong-weerasethakul-serenity-madness](http://mcdmanila.org.ph/save-date-apichatpong-weerasethakul-serenity-madness)

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# VIDEO INSTALLATIONS



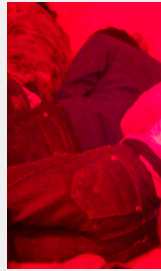
## **The Palace (Pipittapan Tee Taipei)**

2008  
5-channel video installation, Digital  
[Selected 3 pieces for the exhibition]  
Silent / Color  
Various Lengths

*The Palace (Pipittapan Tee Taipei)* is a site-specific project that Weerasethakul originally created in response to the National Palace Museum in Taipei's collection and architecture as part of the exhibition *Discovering the Other*. He explores spiritual elements of the art institution, which is filled with centuries-old ancient objects and artifacts. The artist saw the room in the museum as a witness of time and space:

"The culture, the languages, the forests, the animals, the treasures hidden in the vast tunnels inside the mountains. We are then forced to move to the Age of Enlightenment when Nothing is meaningful. But the spirits remain, the spirits of the artifacts. At this particular spaceship, outside there used to be two dogs. And it used to be something called the rain. The dogs were always under the spaceship's canopies and wings, sheltering themselves from the falling water. Now when the sky was empty because there was no sky, their spirits roamed the ship. They immersed themselves in the memories they hadn't experienced, until they got bored."

- Apichatpong Weerasethakul



## **Haiku**

2009  
Single-channel video installation, HD Digital  
Stereo (Shown here in silent) / Color  
1:58 mins

Weerasethakul has produced a number of shorts, feature films, and video installations. Over the years he has also made numerous video sketches and studies called "video diaries" with a portable digital camera he carries with him on a daily basis. Some of the videos featured here have later influenced his more narrative films such as *Tropical Malady* and *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall Past Lives*. In this video diary, Weerasethakul documents the set of *Primitive Project* in Nabua, particularly the scene when teenagers are hypnotized and sleep inside a time-machine.



## **TON**

2004  
Single-channel video installation  
Silent / Color  
11:32 mins

Before Weerasethakul makes a new feature film, he conducts thorough research related to the topic of his interest. For his feature film, *Tropical Malady*, Apichatpong asked his colleague Ton to visit the army in the Kaeng Krajan Dam area to study the lives of soldiers and their daily routines. This video documents Ton during his research trip, which later became a reference for the main character in *Tropical Malady*.



## **Velocity**

2016  
2-channel video installation  
Sound / Color  
3:34 mins, 0:26 mins



## **An Evening Shoot**

2009  
HD Digital  
Dolby 5.1 / Color  
10:56 mins

One evening, a group of teenagers gather at a house near a rice field. They dress up as soldiers, supposedly for the shooting of an unknown movie. Their target is a young man who miraculously returns to life after being shot. Here, the shooting of a film and the shooting of a gun are used to explore the fragility of life.

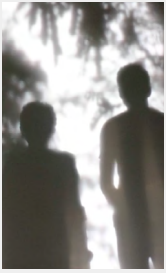


## **Fireworks (Archives)**

2014  
Single-channel video installation, HD Digital  
Dolby 5.1 / Color  
6:40 mins

While continuing to collaborate with his favorite actors, *Fireworks (Archives)* chronicles the animal sculptures at the Wat Koo Kaew temple in Non Khai, a small town on the border of Laos and Thailand. Luang Pu Bunleua Sulilat, the founder of this temple, created statues based on fantasy, folk tales, as well political myths to unravel his belief in Buddhist teachings about love and life, as well as legends and reincarnation. He was later accused of being a communist during the Cold War period in the 1960s and sought exile in Laos. Oppressed by the center, and treated unfairly, the vernacular sculptures show signs of his resistance. Filmed in the dark night, the actors take photographs while lighting fireworks, playing with light and shadow and indexing memories as archival. *Fireworks (Archives)* invites us to experience walking through the temple grounds alongside the actors in a very intimate way. This piece was first exhibited at kurimanzutto in Mexico City and is the first in a new series titled *Fireworks*.

# VIDEO INSTALLATIONS



## **Invisibility**

2016  
2-channel synchronised video installation  
Silent video but use live sound from the shutters / Color  
12:29 mins

*Invisibility* displays Apichatpong's continued interest in the issue of perception and memory. The installation takes a thread from his recent pieces, *Cemetery of Splendour* (2015) and *Fever Room* (2015-2016), both of which feature the same actors. Here he takes them deeper into an imaginary world and ponders the future of shared consciousness. The videos depict a landscape where the protagonists are confined to a room, along with the viewers. With no way out they infiltrate each other's dreams.

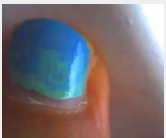
*Invisibility* mirrors the troubled state of Thailand's politics. It proposes a decayed vision of the future where one needs to constantly evade reality. The viewing experience shifts between seeing and not-seeing, fact and fiction, space and void.



## **One Water**

2013  
Single-channel video installation, SD Digital  
Stereo (Shown here in silent) / Color  
1:11 mins

Tilda Swinton, a British actress and friend of Weerasethakul, organized *Film on the Rocks*, a film festival in The Maldives where she invited the artist to take part in the project. While he was with her, Weerasethakul asked Swinton to recall her dreams in front of his camera. *One Water* portrays a poignant friendship between the actress and filmmaker, who continue to collaborate today.



## **Blue Propeller**

2013  
Single-channel video installation, SD Digital  
Silent / Color  
0:33 mins



## **Fireworks Sketch (Frog)**

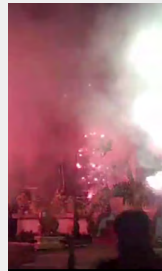
2014  
Single-channel video installation, Digital  
Sound / Color  
1:50 mins



## **Father**

2014  
Single-channel video installation, SD Digital  
Silent / Color  
14:07 mins

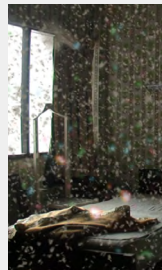
The original footage in *Father* was shot in 2003 by Weerasethakul's brother when their father was undergoing kidney dialysis. Forever stuck in his memory, the artist reuses the footage here as well as in a prominent scene in his feature film *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*.



## **Ashes**

2012  
HD Digital, Shot with Lomokino, 35 mm still films  
Stereo (Shown here in silent) / Color  
20:18 mins

In collaboration with Lomo, an Austrian camera company, and Mubi, a global film website, Weerasethakul was invited to make a work to launch the new Lomokino, a portable motion picture camera. *Ashes* juxtaposes the intimacy of his daily routine with the destruction of memories and his observations of the dark side of Thailand's social realities.



## **Emerald (Morakot)**

2007  
Cinema version and single-screen installation, Digital  
Dolby 5.1 / Colour  
11:50 mins

In *The Pilgrim Kamanita*, a Buddhist novel written in 1906 by the Danish writer Karl Gjellerup, the protagonists are reborn as two stars and take centuries to recite their stories to each other, until they no longer exist.

*Morakot* is a derelict and defunct hotel in the heart of Bangkok that opened its doors in the 1980's: a time when Thailand shifted gears into accelerated economic industrialization and a time when Cambodians poured into Thai refugee camps after the invasion of Vietnamese forces. It was a hosting time. Later, when the East Asian financial crisis struck in 1997, these reveries collapsed.

Like Kamanita, the unchanged *Morakot* is a star burdened with (or fueled by) memories. Apichatpong collaborated with his three regular actors, who recounted their dreams, hometown life, bad moments, and love poems, to re-supply the hotel with new memories.

# PRINT



## Ghost Teen

2009  
from the *Primitive Project*  
Vinyl print  
3900 x 5000mm



## TEEM (The Vapor of Melancholy)

2014  
Lightjet Print on Duratrans, Lightbox  
800mm x 1200mm

Produced as part of the video series, *Fireworks (Archives)*, *The Vapor of Melancholy* depicts Weerasethakul's partner in bed, caught exhaling smoke and surrounded by exploding fireworks. A cosmos-like phenomena engulfs his body, concealing an otherwise mundane activity of breathing. This intimate portrait manifests a marriage of intoxication and dream.



## Primates' Memories, Mr. Electrico (For Ray Bradbury)

2014  
Lightjet Prints on Duratrans, Light Box  
1000 mm x 1500 mm

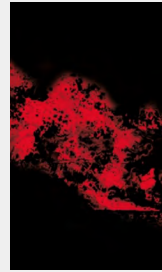
This light box series is part of *Fireworks (Archives)* and includes two photographs: *Primates' Memories* and *Mr. Electrico (For Ray Bradbury)*. The flashes of light were captured on camera and then digitally painted, creating fictional topographies. This manipulation was inspired by recent MIT molecular research in which light and color were used to artificially activate a memory. At the same time, *Primates' Memories* 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 favorite writer's memory. In 1932, a young Ray Bradbury met with circus performer Mr. Electrico who could endure fifty thousand volts of electricity. The man claimed that Ray was a reincarnation of his friend who died in his arm fourteen years earlier. "Live Forever" the man whispered to Ray and forever became the author's driving force.

# ARCHIVES



## Film posters

*Mysterious Object at Noon*  
*Blissfully Yours*  
*Tropical Malady*  
*Syndrome of the Century*  
*Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*  
*Cemetery of Splendour*

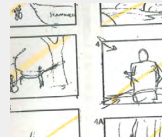


## Reference and facsimile books

*Bradbury Stories: 100 of His Most Celebrated Tales*  
2005  
Ray Bradbury  
Paperback publication

*The more things change:*  
*The 5th Bangkok Experimental Film Festival*  
2008  
David Teh  
Paperback publication

*CUJO*  
Issue 2, 2009  
Publication  
480 pages



## Original film scripts

Prints for lightbox

*Tropical Malady*  
*Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*



## Selected polaroids

Prints for lightbox

*Mysterious Object at Noon*  
*Blissfully Yours*  
*Tropical Malady*



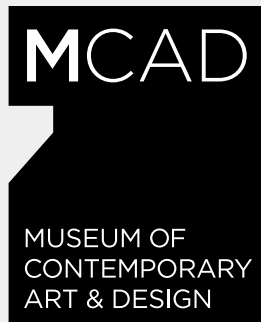
## Like the Relentless Fury of the Pounding Waves (Mae Ya Nang)

1994  
Originally 16mm, re-edited on transfer to digital in 1996  
Mono / B&W  
22:37 mins

This is one of the first experimental films Apichatpong Weerasethakul made while studying filmmaking at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he began to find his own voice and visual expression in the filmmaking process: a shifting focus of images and sound with a non-linear approach. In this work, the narrative form is broken, sometimes improvised and sometimes rigidly structured, which expresses his interest in mood and ambience rather than in plot. Using footage from his everyday alongside the popular radio drama by Katethip Company, *Mae Ya Nang (The Guardian Goddess of Boats)* as a background, the work explores memory, myth and reincarnation, tropes that continue to appear in his more recent works.

# PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

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Housed within the stunning architecture of the College of Saint Benilde's School of Design and Art (SDA), designed by local architect Ed Calma, the **MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND DESIGN (MCAD)** is the only space in the Philippines that approximates an international contemporary art museum and gallery space.

Located within an art college, MCAD's programmes are molded in line with the school's courses: film, fashion design, animation, multimedia art, photography, arts management, production design, technical theater, architecture, as well as music production. In step with this, MCAD produces outstanding exhibitions with world-wide standards by collaborating with professional artists and curators, both local and international.

MCAD provides the experience and exposure to contemporary art works, usually only found outside the country. Its contemporary art exhibitions, projects, as well as other cultural and art-inspired undertakings showcase the possibilities of technology and new media through its internationally-designed programme of contemporary art exhibitions enhanced by an ever-widening educational platform.



**DE LA SALLE-COLLEGE OF SAINT BENILDE** is a learning environment that nurtures students to develop their interests and passions, and trains them to become professionally competent in established industries and emerging fields of specialization.

At Benilde, learning in its many forms is encouraged. Spiritual creative pursuits, artistic endeavors, service to the community, awareness of environmental issues, and concern for the common good are all part of the Benildean education. The College's learner-centered philosophy is founded on the belief that each student is endowed by God with talents and gifts that should be understood, appreciated and nurtured.



**INDEPENDENT CURATORS INTERNATIONAL (ICI)** is a curatorial organization devoted in presenting, discussing, and contextualizing contemporary art amongst a vast, ever-changing international backdrop. Established in 1975, ICI weaves a global network of 1000 curators, 2600 artists, and 550 art spaces, both established and budding. Through the exhibitions, art events, programs, and publications that it has produced, ICI continues to hone and inspire innovative movements that propel the development of contemporary art.

ICI has reached 55 countries, holding exhibitions, distributing publications, and initiating programs in around 400 cities. Curatorial Intensive, the curatorial training program of ICI, has seen over 360 graduates based in 64 countries. The ICI network is continuing to grow and collaborate with emerging and established names and institutions in contemporary art.

# APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL THE SERENITY OF MADNESS

## OPENING RECEPTION

**17 FEBRUARY 2017  
4.00PM**

## EXHIBITION RUN

**17 FEBRUARY -  
14 MAY 2017**

IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

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## SPECIAL THANKS

### PROJECT MANAGER

Justin Felix Pascua

### EXHIBITION VOLUNTEERS

David Laboy  
Bianca Santos  
Erico Carlos  
Shannon Balangue  
Rodora Garcia

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Aji Manalo  
Patrick Sunico  
DLSU Library  
DLS-CSB Learning Resource Center  
DLS-CSB GASD-Engineering  
DLS-CSB Music Production Laboratory  
BenildeFilm

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Bon Corachea



## MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday to Saturday  
Sunday

10.00am - 6.00pm  
10.00am - 2.00pm

## MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND DESIGN

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