





Panya Vijinthanasarn

"Subversion of Mind": Contemporary Thai Paintings and Prints

Panya Vijinthanasarn comes from Thailand, a beautiful land many of us have enjoyed exploring. A prominent artist who is often called upon to be of service to his King and his country, Panya creates a distinct fusion of Thai and European cultures. His paintings and etchings dramatically reveal his concern for the plight of his people, especially in light of the Asian financial crises in the last few years.



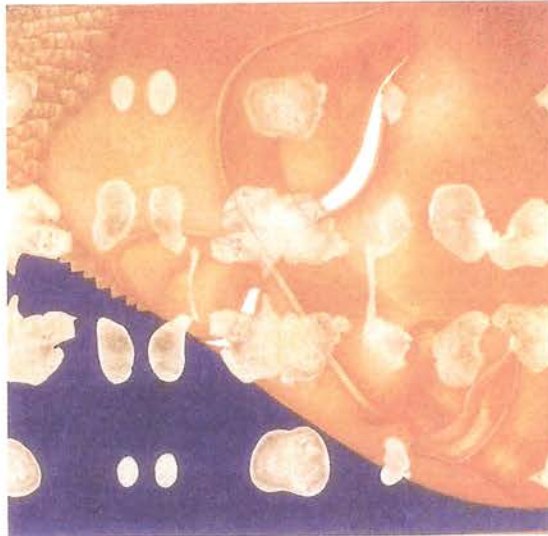
Through his art, Panya plants many questions in his viewers' minds. In the pressing rush for economic and political progress throughout Asia (i.e. "globalization" and "democratization"), how do people assimilate modernity with their ancestors' centuries-old values? How much of our native cultural heritage does each individual retain and carry forward? How can we balance our past with our present?

In the past, Thai temple mural paintings were vehicles to teach the Buddha's lessons to the masses. Today Panya uses traditional Thai techniques and symbols in combination with Western ones to show "contemporary dilemmas" for his viewers to ponder. "In my art I would like to draw people's attention to the need to be mindful or aware

of the condition of the mind and spirit," Panya states. Thus, many of the sublimely beautiful Buddha images he paints are distressed by spots of detritus.

As a child of five, Panya started to draw cartoons following his brother's example. "Every night after school I used to draw on the floor and walls with charcoal or small pieces of chalk which I used to salvage... There was no art teacher then." In his teens he attended classes for technical and commercial art. But he was challenged to learn more when he first saw abstract works of art. During the mid-1970s, Panya studied at Silpakorn University in Bangkok, where he now teaches and works to promote contemporary Thai art throughout the world.

At the Slade School of Fine Arts of the University College of London, Panya



studied printmaking in the early 1980's, and he was asked to paint the murals for Padipa Temple at Wimbledon between 1985-87. He was also commissioned to create murals for the Thai Pavilions at world expositions in Brisbane, Australia in 1988, and Seville, Spain in 1992. Since 1982, Panya has participated in numerous exhibitions in major cities around the world, including London, Beijing, San Francisco, Paris, and Canberra. But his busy schedule has permitted only three solo shows in Bangkok.

With the help of the Thai Government and the Thai Embassy in Japan, the Genkan Gallery is proud to present our first exhibit by a Thai artist. Come explore the vision of Panya Vijinthanasarn and expand your own vision by viewing the intriguing combinations of this leading contemporary artist. The Opening Reception will be held on Tuesday, May 30, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Please come meet Panya!

Note: The Genkan Gallery is also indebted to former TAC member Deborah Colton for her tireless work in making this exhibition possible.

