

LIFEBOAT #2551 Contemporary media art from Thailand

Michael Shaowanasai is internationally recognised as one of the leading multi-media and performance artists to emerge from the South-East Asian region over the last decade. Shaowanasai's works such as *The Adventures of Iron Pussy* (co-directed with Apichatpong Weerasetakul) and *The Artists of the Moments* have developed a cult status as well as international distinction via major festivals such as the Venice Biennale 2003 and Berlinale 54. An active proponent of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender arts scene, his work has highlighted a number of social and cultural issues particular to his native country such as the sex industry and globalisation.

For his latest project at Gallery 4A, the artist will be curating an exhibition of 16 multimedia works which comment on the contemporary arts scene in Thailand at present. The project is entitled *Lifeboat #2551* and will feature the works of emerging and mid-career contemporary media artists. On the theme of the exhibition, Shaowanasai explains:

"Contemporary Thai media artists are like passengers in a lifeboat. Stuck together in a small vessel, they must work together to stay afloat and at the same time, they are trying to outlive one another. While lost at sea, they are waving and screaming in order to get any kind of attention hoping to be rescued. Some of them were fortunate and have been "scooped" by a passing European liner. The rest of them can only watch and hold on to what they have – their talents, their prides and their hopes."

Somewhat outcast by their fellow artists for choosing an artistic medium which still struggles for recognition amongst the popular mass, the media artists decide to take the future into their own hands, and 'go for broke' at sea.

Lifeboat # 2551 promises to highlight the new breed of South-East Asian artists who challenge the traditional way of seeing, creating and expressing their ideas. The exhibition will include one of Shaowanasai's own works.

Michael Shaowanasai has resided in Bangkok, Thailand since 2001.

Come and listen to Michael Shaowanasai discuss some of the ideas behind *Lifeboat #2551* on Saturday, 21 June at 2pm.

LIFEBOAT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: SATURDAY 14 JUNE, 2PM. A LIST OF LOCAL PASSENGERS HAVE BOARDED SHAOWANASAI'S LIFEBOAT TO RAISE A DISCUSSION ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CIRCULATION AND THE PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL ART SCENES WITHIN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS. CHAIRED BY DR THOMAS BERGHUIS, GUEST SPEAKERS WILL INCLUDE ARTISTS PHAPTAWAN SUWANNAKUDT AND KHALED SABSABI

PHUTTIPONG AROONPHENG /

TIN TIN COOPER /

SITTSAK JIAMPOJAMAN /

PREEYACHANOK KETSUWAN /

MOMOKOMOTION /

OLARN NETSIRI /

JAKRAWAN NILTUMRONG /

SAKARIN KRU-ON /

WIT PIMPAKUL /

SATHIT SATARASART /

PRAMOT SENGSON /

MICHAEL SHAOWANASAI /

SUCHADA SIRITHANAWUDDHI /

MANIT SRIWANICHPOON /

SUTTHIRAT SUPAPARINYA /

CURATOR: MICHAEL SHAOWANASAI

Momokomotion, still from *Toy*, 2008

