Thotsateap Tata

G’SEIN

In a world where things often seem unfair, time is the only thing that gives justice to everyone. It moves past us all equally, leaving behind changes and different understandings.

Explore the past and present works of Luang Jhae(Ladyboy Monk), the ahead of his time artist. People have called him that for over 20 years because of his controversial photos that sparked public debate.

For the past decade, Michael has kept observing, studying, and interpreting the world with honest eyes. The art in this exhibition isn't just a collection of pieces. It's proof of time's journey, leaving behind his thoughts, feelings, and questions, at this perfect moment to look back and witness the changes.

The photographs in this exhibition make us question the essence of photography. They reveal surprising truths but sometimes presented in unfamiliar perspectives. What enduring value and communicative power will the works in this collection retain? Has the time come for this collection to be 'G'SEIN'?

The title "G'SEIN" is a clever play on words. In Thai, it sounds like both "Kasien" (เกษียร), referring to milk in Sanskrit and "Kasian" (เกษียณ), which means to retire. This duality suggests a powerful transformation and a challenge to the idea of art ever truly "retiring" or becoming irrelevant.

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When choices aren't many, perhaps just two, like a coin flip, instead of many like a dice, our journey begins with a series of masks. These masks once challenged social norms and diverse identities. But as the artist enters a new phase of life, these masks may no longer just be about playing a role or hiding the truth. Instead, they've become symbols of accepting the body's natural course and a deeper exploration of self. Bringing these masks back today opens a new conversation about the relationship between the self that once was and the self that time has created. And for those looking on, how the self beneath the mask appears will depend on how they see Michael Shaowanasai.

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From the complex identities we create, we're led to question the source of unseen power. Decisions leading to violence are often presented under the guise of authority and justified reason. Yet, if we look deeper, we might find that behind grand actions affecting countless lives, there could be hidden vulnerabilities of ego, insecurity, or even the incompetence of those in power. This is much like "Tiny cock trying to run the show" which can lead to unexpected results.

This series of works allows viewers to step into a role alongside the presented image. The message on the shirt is a Russian phrase that translates to "I started the war because I have a tiny cock." This reflects how those in power, in various contexts, might actually hide weakness or flaws within themselves. This work prompts us to question visible power versus hidden power: which is the "truth" and which is the "illusion" created to dominate society?

Or, what if we consider 'tiny cock' not as a flaw that needs to be hidden? What does that mean to you?

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What appears to be a Buddhist monk or statue, completely covered by cloth or monk robe, and bound with ropes in a manner similar to Shibari. The entire image remains blurry, as if we're viewing it from too far away, or perhaps something is obscuring it. And it's this very blurriness that makes us even more curious about what lies hidden beneath that obscurity.

As we walk through the exhibition room, it's as if we're tracing the endless, cyclical journey of humanity through time. We might just happen to realize that the present is barely different from the past.

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Our exploration of time continues, with undeniable evidence of change appearing. Whether intentionally or not, someone has left something behind. proof of growth, proof of time passing.

Pubic hair, once a symbol of fertility and youthfulness, has now turned completely white. This challenges the strict ideas tied to youth and physical perfection. The artist is brave (or reckless) enough to openly present a part that society usually considers most private and often keeps hidden. This isn't just a physical unveiling. It's also an exposure of inner feelings, pushing the boundaries between art and obscenity or between what should be shown publicly and what should remain private.

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From mysterious body fragments, we're led to a familiar image, yet seen from an angle we've never encountered before. Luang Jhae appears to walk past us, leaving behind only the view of his back, a posture that hints at the passage of time. In his hand, he holds a symbol of the modern world, privacy, a hidden persona that exists alongside his well known public image.

His previous works (Portrait of a Man in Habits) often directly confronted the viewer. This image, however, shows him with his back turned. This isn't an act of evasion, but rather a lead into a new dimension of perception. And because of this familiar image, even from behind, we still clearly recognize Luang Jhae.

The artist clearly intends to communicate his true self, to tell stories he's always told. This communication might invite viewers to question their old ways of thinking or to expand their ethical boundaries.

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From the blurry image, we step closer, facing a clearer reality. This time, every detail is sharp, and the "invisible hand" holding the rope also becomes visible.

This might be what Luang Jhae has guided us to see. a step by step revelation of hidden truths. The artist is questioning. Are the things we hold as spiritual anchors or symbols of spiritual freedom actually being bound, controlled, or distorted by various factors? Perhaps we need this kind of clear visual 'confirmation' before we'll accept that these things are truly happening. Or maybe it's simply that we can't easily believe in what we can't see until we witness it with our own eyes.

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Once the truth is revealed and we've received 'confirmation' with our own eyes, the exhibition journey leads us to a work that ultimately reflects back on the artist himself. It's a picture of Michael Shaowanasai in a neat shirt and tie, with a white liquid stain on his head.

We might choose to interpret that liquid as milk, due to our familiarity with its purer connotations. However, for some, avoiding the thought that it could be semen might reflect a direct clash with what society considers taboo. G'SEIN becomes a straightforward confrontation between what is revered and what is revealed, between a constructed image and an unveiled reality, and between power and human liberation.

This is where the word "Kasien" (เกษียร), milk in Sanskrit, deeply aligns with "Kasian" (เกษียณ), meaning to retire. The works in this exhibition continue to challenge the idea that some things should "retire" or expire from public view. Instead, they affirm that what comes from the human body, even if judged by society, can never "retire" from our reality. It's an essential part of existence, important enough to be questioned and presented.

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In the end, after we've been immersed in and enriched by the thought provoking content throughout this journey. No matter how much the exhibition might have struck our hearts or stimulated our minds, once we walk out of the room, we might completely forget the essence we've gained. And return to what society does best... finding fault.