

# **K11 Collection Show: Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3— A video installation by Korakrit Arunanondchai**

## **Online Learning Resources 網上學習資源**

K11 Art Foundation values nurturing curiosity and creative thinking in the young generation. The online learning resources for this exhibition revolves around a number of key art concepts and terms associated with the video installation, taking them as a starting point to inspire visitors to explore the artist's work.

The resources were created with the involvement of a group of passionate master's students, aiming to inspire observation and imagination.

K11 Art Foundation 重視激發年輕一代的好奇心和創意思維。是次展覽的網上學習資源以多個與作品相關的藝術概念和關鍵詞為切入點，啟發觀眾從不同角度欣賞藝術家的創作。

學習資源由一群熱愛藝術的碩士生參與設計，旨在誘發觀察和想像。

# Animism

## **What is the meaning of Animism?**

Animism is a belief system that perceives all things — animals, plants, rocks, rivers, weather systems and human handiwork — as animated and alive. This belief is often inherent to most indigenous peoples.

## **How does this concept manifest itself in the work?**

The artist's exploration of the relationship between Animism and contemporary society involves using multimedia approaches and artistic practices by integrating different elements. This includes depictions of Thailand's natural landscapes, such as forests and rivers, as well as elements like flora and fauna, which hold significance in the Animist faith. By incorporating these elements into their works, the artist aims to highlight the close connection and interdependence between humans and the natural world, as emphasised in Animism.

Anchored by a consistent cast of characters and drawing inspiration from Buddhism and Animist beliefs, the installation attempts to build something that feels like a living thing, breathing out inanimate objects and discarded memories.

# Denim

## **What is the history of denim? How did denim become popular?**

Denim is a sturdy cotton warp-faced textile, was first produced in Nîmes, France. It has been used in the United States since the mid-19th century. Throughout the 20th century, denim was used for durable uniforms. By the 1970s, denim jeans had become an integral part of youth culture. Today, denim is used to create a wide variety of garments, accessories, and furniture. Denim is a versatile fabric that has stood the test of time, holds a significant place in popular culture. Its symbolism goes beyond mere fashion, as it has become a powerful representation of rebellion, individuality, and cultural shifts.

## **How was denim used as a cultural symbol in the work? What is its relation to us and our society?**

Materials play a significant role in the artist's work; in this case, he sees denim as both representing unity and reflecting the dominance of western thoughts and perspectives in the context of globalisation. As the artist explains, "The fabric is a product of globalisation; it unites people through common experiences shared in a post-globalised world; it's American but worn by everyone."

Denim, like canvas, has a similar trajectory in terms of its widespread use and global presence. While canvas is traditionally associated with the foundation of Western painting and art discourse, denim takes on a different role as it becomes more of an entry point into global labour and trade systems. Due to the forces of globalisation, denim has become a ubiquitous material used in the production of clothing and other consumer goods. Its use in fashion and the global textile industry highlights its connection to labour and trade, representing a different aspect of the globalized world compared to the traditional role of canvas in Western art history.



# Fire

## Why do artists use fire in art?

For many artists, fire is a source of inspiration. The symbolism and representation of fire reveal its multifaceted nature. From destruction to rebirth, passion to purification, fire continues to ignite the human imagination, influencing creative expression throughout the ages. In contemporary art, the symbolism of fire has evolved, with artists exploring new perspectives and interpretations of its representation.

## How is fire represented in the work?

Fire serves as a significant component in the artwork. The presence of burn marks and ashes on the mannequins' attire is noticeable. Furthermore, the artist integrates the act of setting fire to his painting ablaze into the video. These elements are interpreted metaphorically, symbolising destruction, rebirth, and the recurrent pattern of history.

Water, earth and fire, as primary elements of nature, have a stake in *The Body of the World*—especially fire (a recurring motif since 2012), which burns the artist's jean paintings. It also contributes to the performativity in the work and energizes everything.

"I've been thinking about fire for some time and have been doing this [history painting] series for about ten years now. It's [fire is] the centre of human gatherings, and brings people together, raising a collective consciousness," the artist says, citing examples ranging from the bonfires humans have built since prehistoric times to how fire is used in protests in recent history. Fire represents "a promised change. Every revolution has a promise of a utopia or a better alternative; a promise which unites people."



# Globalisation

## **How was the concept of globalisation presented in the work?**

Denim, a ubiquitous symbol of globalisation, offers artists versatility due to its inherent mobility. Reflecting the artist's family history of immigration and their father's work in Thailand's Chinatown, denim becomes a connection to global movement. In the artwork, Manchester United, a renowned emblem of globalisation and unity, is depicted through a mannequin clad in their soccer uniform. This highlights the historical significance and worldwide reach of soccer.

The artwork encompasses various elements of globalisation. Multilingual texts, including English, Thai, and French, are used by artists to showcase linguistic diversity and communication in the context of globalisation. Additionally, artists employ imagery and symbols to portray phenomena like cultural integration, migration, and urbanization that result from globalisation. These depictions engage in dialogue and contrast with Thailand's cultural, historical, and social reality.

The artist engages a myriad of subjects encompassing history, globalisation and animism through his multidisciplinary oeuvre. Seeking to bridge the gap between his Art practice in New York City and the context and belief system that formed his upbringing in Bangkok, Thailand.

# Mannequins

## **What is the artist's intention in using mannequins in his work?**

The artist utilises mannequins in his work to delve into themes of body, gender, identity, and consumer culture. The mannequin, with its standardized yet slightly detached appearance from real human bodies, serves as a catalyst for exploring the interplay between reality and fiction and provokes contemplation on the human body and image. This element assumes multiple roles and symbolic meanings within the artwork. It challenges traditional artistic representations of the human body and disrupts expectations of authenticity and physical perfection. Moreover, it deconstructs dichotomies present in the art world, such as the sublime versus the vulgar and the Western versus the Eastern.

## **What role and symbolism do mannequins play in the work?**

In the exhibition space, the mannequins and fabric characters adorned in fragmented clothing spattered with colour and denim, are replete with “performers”. This painted manifestation is a landscape and a stage which the viewer is free to explore.



# Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3

**Where, or what, is the 'room full of people with funny names'?**

The artist explains, "In naming these works, I'm referring to spaces or 'rooms' built from discourse or compartmentalisation. The Room of Western Art History. All these rooms! In the beginning, my work was very much about how to find or claim a space of 'painting' for myself, but it was never about making paintings on my own terms against a Western context and Western audience."

# Drone

## **What unique visual experiences and perspectives does drone photography provide to this work?**

Drone filming offers a unique and abstract perspective that deviates from the traditional viewing experience. By capturing footage from a higher and more distant vantage point, it allows viewers to transcend their usual perception and experience of the Buddhist scene in Thailand. This abstract perspective enables a broader understanding of the atmosphere and significance of religious rituals, providing a more objective and macroscopic view. This alternative viewpoint can evoke a sense of awe and contemplation, inviting viewers to engage with the religious rituals in a new and profound way.



## **How does the presentation of the artwork echo with the drone perspective?**

By creating an immersive environment that aligns the viewer with the perspective of the drone, the artist enables a deeper and more visceral experience of the concepts and emotions they seek to convey. The exhibition's environment and presentation style resonate with the visual effects of drone filming, collectively contributing to the overall atmosphere and meaning of the artwork. This immersive approach further enhances the audience's understanding and empathy towards the artist's exploration of the theme of Thai Buddhism. It allows viewers to engage with the artwork on a more personal and emotional level, fostering a deeper connection and resonance with the artistic intention.

The installation is made in two parts. The Body is composed of a large denim body painting, only visible in its entirety from a bird's eye view (or, from the perspective of a drone). It functions as a landscape and a stage for the audience. The Spirit presents a video, the artist imagines a conversation between a character called "Chantri", embodied as both a spirit and a drone camera, and the "Denim Painter", a fictionalised version of the artist.

The artist said, "It's only when you see the video filmed by drones that you realize that the entire first part of the show—one whole work—is actually below you, visible only from above. Everyone is walking on it, through it."

# Thai Buddhism

**What are the visual and conceptual connections in this work created by the artist by combining Thai Buddhist culture and other issues?**

Arunanondchai's work often links Thai Buddhism to other themes or issues, creating unique visual and conceptual connections. By blending Thai Buddhist symbols, rituals, and philosophical ideas with contemporary social, political, and consumer cultural issues, he breaks down the boundaries between tradition and modernity, creating a connection across time and space.

The artist's exploration of the relationship between tradition and modernity, East and West, and the individual and collective is a central theme in their work. By integrating the wisdom and teachings of Thai Buddhism into a contemporary context, the artist delves into the nature of human existence, the intricate dynamics between individuals and society, and the profound connection between humans and the natural, spiritual, and material world. This connection serves as a reflection on issues of cultural identity and globalisation, prompting viewers to ponder questions surrounding diversity and commonality. By bridging these seemingly disparate elements, the artist encourages a deeper understanding of the complexities and interdependencies that shape our shared human experience.



# The Total Work of Art (Gesamtkunstwerk)

## What is a 'Gesamtkunstwerk'?

Gesamtkunstwerk is a German word, meaning literally 'total work of art', was originally intended to mean that all types of art, including painting, music, architecture, literature or performances could be collated into one interrelated subject, project and study, so that an overarching design schema would cover all elements of a creation.

A total work of art, a sumptuous aesthetic journey, a complete artistic creation which, through prodigious efforts, embraces visuals, experience and performance. These are the ideals at the heart of the Gesamtkunstwerk. The term was popularized by the German composer Richard Wagner in 1849. It signifies the idea of creating a synthesis or fusion of these disciplines to achieve a cohesive and immersive artistic experience.

## How is Gesamtkunstwerk reflected in the artwork?

This video installation encompassing sculpture, film, performance and painting explores the togetherness of humans, machines, and spirits in 21st-century Bangkok, a city where animistic tendencies and the desire for modernisation co-exist in everyday life.

It is the artist's attempt at a Gesamtkunstwerk, where the past and the future, the spiritual and the profane, and tradition and modernisation collapse into a single organism that can be felt and experienced as a whole.

# 萬物有靈論

## 什麼是「萬物有靈論」？

「萬物有靈論」是一種信仰體系，主張所有的事物——動物、植物、岩石、河流、天氣系統、人造的手工品，都有靈性生命。這種固有信念通常來自土著原居民族。

## 這個概念如何在作品中呈現出來？

藝術家透過將不同的元素融合在一起，並運用多媒體和藝術實踐，探索「萬物有靈論」與當代社會的關係。這包括對泰國自然景觀的描繪，如森林和河流，以及在「萬物有靈論」信仰中具有重要意義的動植物等元素。通過將這些元素融入他的作品之中，藝術家旨在強調人類與自然世界之間的密切聯繫和相互依存，正如「萬物有靈論」所強調的那樣。

裝置作品以固定的人物為基礎，並從泰國佛教和萬物有靈論中汲取靈感，試圖創造一種彷彿有生命的東西，呼出非人類的物體和被遺忘的記憶。

# 牛仔布

## 牛仔布的歷史是什麼？它是如何流行起來的？

牛仔布是一種堅固的棉質經面紡織品，最初在法國尼姆生產。美國自 19 世紀中葉起就開始使用牛仔布。在整個 20 世紀，牛仔布被用來製作耐用的製服。到了 20 世紀 70 年代，牛仔褲已成為青年文化不可或缺的一部分。如今，牛仔布被用來製作各種各樣的服裝、配件和家具。牛仔布是一種經得起時間考驗的多功能布料，在流行文化中佔有重要地位。它的象徵意義超越了單純的時尚，因為它已經成為叛逆、個性和文化轉變的有力代表。

## 牛仔布在作品中如何被用作一種文化符號？它與我們自身和社會有什麼關係？

物料在藝術家的作品中發揮著重要作用。在這種情況下，他認為牛仔布既代表團結，也反映了全球化背景下西方思想和觀點的主導地位。正如藝術家所解釋的那樣，「牛仔布是全球化的產物；它透過在後全球化世界中分享的共同經驗將人們團結起來；它是美國的，但每個人都穿。」

牛仔布和帆布一樣，在廣泛使用和全球存在方面有着相似的軌跡。傳統上，帆布與西方繪畫和藝術話語的基礎有關，而牛仔布則扮演著不同的角色，因為它越來越多地成為全球勞動力和貿易體系的入口。由於全球化的力量，牛仔布已經成為一種無處不在的材料，用於生產服裝和其他消費品。它在時尚和全球紡織工業中的應用突出了它與勞動力和貿易的聯繫，與帆布在西方藝術史上的傳統角色相比，它代表了全球化世界的一個不同方面。



# 火

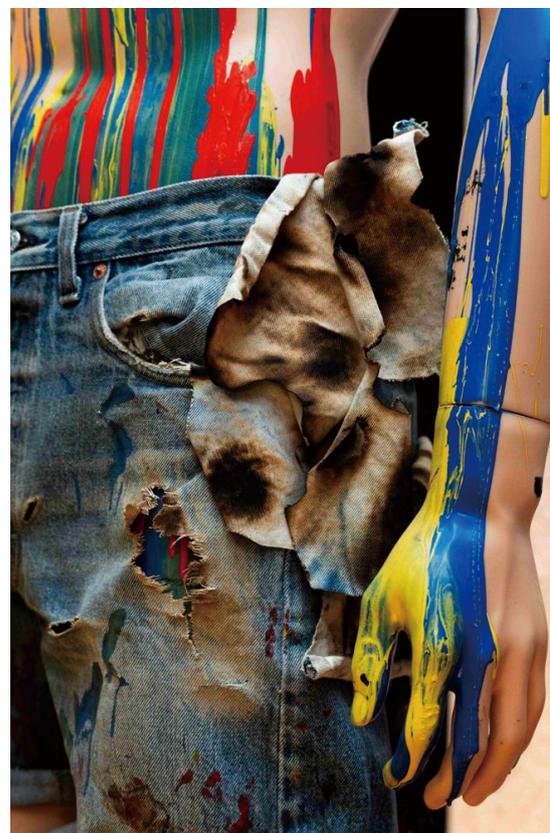
## 藝術家為什麼使用火作為創作元素？

對許多藝術家來說，火是創作的靈感泉源。火的象徵意義和表現揭示了它的多面性。從毀滅到重生，從激情到淨化，火不斷點燃人類的想像力，影響著各個時代的創意表達。在當代藝術中，火的象徵意義不斷演變，藝術家們不斷探索新的視角和對其表現形式的詮釋。

## 作品中是如何表現火的？

火是這件作品的重要組成部分。人體模型的服裝上有著明顯燒過的痕跡和灰燼。此外，藝術家還將點燃畫作的畫面融入影片中。這些元素象徵著毀滅、重生和歷史的循環。水、土和火作為作品中代表自然的主要元素，與世界的主體息息相關——尤其是火（自 2012 年以來反覆出現的主題），火燃燒了藝術家的牛仔布繪畫，同時有助於作品的表演性，為一切注入活力。

「我對火的思考已經有一段時間了，並且創作這個《Painting with history...》系列已經有大約十年時間。它（火）是人類聚會的中心，它將人們聚集在一起，提高集體意識，」藝術家說，並列舉了從史前時代以來人類生起的篝火到近代歷史中如何在抗議活動中使用火的例子。火代表「承諾的改變，每一次革命都預示著烏托邦或更好的選擇；一個團結人們的承諾。」



# 全球化

## 全球化的概念如何在作品中呈现？

牛仔布作為全球化無處不在的象徵，由於其固有的流動性，為藝術家的創作提供了多功能性。牛仔布與全球運動的聯繫，反映了藝術家的家族移民史及其父親在泰國唐人街的工作。在作品中，穿着曼聯隊服的人體模型描繪了象徵着全球化和團結，突顯了足球運動的歷史意義和全球影響力。

作品包含了全球化的不同元素。藝術家使用多語言文本，包括英語、法語，以展示全球化背景下的語言多樣性和交流。此外，藝術家運用圖像和符號來描繪全球化帶來的文化融合、移民和城市化等現象。這些描繪與泰國的文化、歷史和社會現實進行了對話和對比。

藝術家透過他的多元題材作品，涉及歷史、全球化和「萬物有靈論」等眾多主題。尋求彌合他在紐約的藝術實踐與他在泰國曼谷成長的背景和信仰體系之間的差距。

# 人體模特

## 藝術家在作品中使用人體模型的意圖是什麼？

藝術家在他的作品中利用人體模型來深入研究身體，性別，身份和消費文化的主題。人體模型以其標準化但與真實人體略有分離的外觀，作為探索現實與虛構之間相互作用的催化劑，引發了對人體和形象的思考。這個元素在藝術品中扮演着多重角色和象徵意義。它挑戰了傳統的人體藝術表現，破壞了對真實性和身體完美的期望。此外，它解構了藝術世界中存在的二元對立，如崇高與庸俗，西方與東方。

## 人體模特在作品中扮演了怎樣的角色和象徵意義？

覆蓋著沾滿顏料的碎片牛仔布服飾的人體模型象徵「表演者」，在展覽空間內構成一道風景、一個舞台，讓觀眾自由探索。



# Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3

**《room full of people with funny names》  
是指哪裡， 或代表什麼？**

藝術家所解釋，「在命名這些作品時，我指的是透過話語或劃分而建構的空間或「房間」。西方藝術史的「房間」。所有這些房間！一開，我的作品主要是關於如何為自己找到或主張一個「繪畫」的空間，但從來不是按照自己的方式針對西方背景和西方觀眾進行繪畫。」

# 航拍機

## 航拍機拍攝為作品提供了哪些獨特的視覺體驗和角度？

航拍機拍攝提供了一種獨特而抽象的視角，偏離了傳統的觀看體驗。通過從更高和更遠的有利位置捕捉鏡頭，它允許觀眾超越他們通常對泰國佛教場景的感知和體驗。這種抽象的視角使我們對宗教儀式的氛圍和意義有了更廣闊的認識，提供了更客觀宏觀的視角。這種另類的觀點可以喚起敬畏和沉思的感覺，邀請觀眾以一種新的和深刻的方式參與宗教儀式。



## 作品的呈現方式如何呼應航拍機拍攝的角度？

通過創造一個身臨其境的環境，使觀眾與航拍機的視角保持一致，藝術家能夠更深入、更本能地體驗他們想要傳達的概念和情感。展覽的環境和呈現風格與航拍機拍攝的視覺效果產生共鳴，共同促成了藝術品的整體氛圍和意義。這種沉浸式的方式進一步增強了觀眾對藝術家對泰國佛教主題的探索的理解和共鳴。它允許觀眾在更個人和情感的層面上參與藝術作品，與藝術意圖建立更深層次的聯繫和共鳴。

作品分為兩部分。「The Body」由一幅巨大的牛仔布繪畫組成，只有從鳥瞰（或從航拍機的俯視角度）才能看到全貌。它既是一道風景，也是一個舞台，讓觀眾自由探索。「The Spirit」是一段視頻，藝術家想像牛仔布畫家與虛構角色 Chantri 之間的對話——牛仔布畫家象徵藝術家本人，而 Chantri 則是一個棲身於航拍機的靈體。

如藝術家所言，要欣賞這個作品的全貌，必須要從高處俯瞰從上方才能看到其整體。在整個展覽空間中，觀眾會發現佈滿手印和原色手勢標記的牛仔布畫布，是藝術家用自己的身體作為畫筆創作的。這種繪畫表現形式形成一個景觀，同時也是一個可以讓觀眾自由探索的舞台。

藝術家說，「只有當你看到航拍機拍攝的影片時，你才會意識到整個展覽的第一部分——整個作品——實際上就在你的下面，只有從上面才能看到。每個人都在它上面行走，通過它。」

# 泰國佛教

**藝術家將泰國佛教與其他議題結合在一起，創造出怎樣的視覺和意念層面的聯結？**

他的作品中常常將泰國佛教與其他主題或議題進行聯結，創造出獨特的視覺和概念層面的聯結。他通過將泰國佛教的符號、儀式和哲學觀念與當代社會、政治、消費文化等議題相融合，打破了傳統和現代之間的界限，產生了一種跨越時間和空間的聯結。

藝術家對傳統與現代、東方與西方、個人與集體關係的探索是其作品的中心主題。通過將泰國佛教的智慧 and 教義融入當代背景，藝術家深入探討了人類存在的本質，個人與社會之間錯綜複雜的動態，以及人類與自然，精神和物質世界之間的深刻聯繫。這種聯繫是對文化認同和全球化問題的反思，促使觀眾思考圍繞多樣性和共同性的問題。通過連接這些看似不相干的元素，藝術家鼓勵我們更深入地理解塑造共同人類經驗當中的複雜性和相互的依賴性。



# 整體藝術

## 什麼是「整體藝術」？

「Gesamtkunstwerk」一詞是德語，意思是「整體藝術」，本意是指所有類型的藝術，包括繪畫、音樂、建築、文學或表演，都能夠整理成一個相互關聯的主題、項目和研究，從而形成一個總體設計模式將涵蓋創作的所有元素。

一件完整的藝術作品，一場華麗的美學之旅，一次完整的藝術創作，透過付出巨大的努力，擁抱視覺、體驗和表演。這些都是「整體藝術」的核心理念。該術語由德國作曲家理查德·瓦格納於 1849 年普及。它意味著創建這些學科的綜合或融合，以實現有凝聚力和身臨其境的藝術體驗。

## 「整體藝術」在作品中是如何體現的？

這件錄像裝置作品結合涵蓋雕塑、錄像、表演及繪畫等藝術形式，以現今曼谷為背景，探索在這個既信奉萬物有靈，又同時追求現代化的城市中，人類、機械及靈體共生共存的關係。

這是藝術家嘗試創作「整體藝術」(Gesamtkunstwerk)的實驗，將過去與未來、肉體與靈魂、傳統與現代融為一體，帶來完整的沉浸式體驗。

# References

## Animism In The Arts of Southeast Asia

by Dr. Victoria N. Scott

## Blue Jeans: The Art of the Ordinary

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## From Gesamtkunstwerk to Music Drama

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## From sparks to fire: the permanent aesthetics in Latin-American protests

by Simone Da Silva Ribeiro Gomes

## Global Denim

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## Interview With Korakrit Arunanondchai

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## Introduction to The Sensorial Experience of the Drone

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## Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3 (Trailer)

by Korakrit Arunanondchai

## Sitting On The Edge of Wonder. Art and Animism in the Service of Person and Planet Healing

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**Situating the Immersive Experience: Exploring Intermedial Situations in Art/ Cinema Installations**

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