



Ullens Center for  
Contemporary Art  
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

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**Exhibition Dates:**

21 August – 19 October 2015

**Exhibition Venue:**

Nave and Central Gallery

Press material also available for  
download from the UCCA website

## Korakrit Arunanondchai: 2558

Released on 20 August 2015

**“2558” amasses a gesamtkunstwerk of Korakrit Arunanondchai’s body paintings and a video-installation chronicling his Beuys-like mythology, opening with performances by Arunanondchai and collaborators boychild, AJ Gvojic, Harry Bornstein and Arunondchai’s twin brother, Korapat.**

From August 21 to October 19, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) continues an investigation into alternative temporalities with the second installment of the Secret Timezones Trilogy, “Korakrit Arunanondchai: 2558.” The young artist’s third institutional solo show and his first in Asia, “2558” amasses a gesamtkunstwerk of body paintings on acid wash denim and a video-installation chronicling his Beuys-like mythology snaking through the Nave and Central Gallery. For the opening ceremony, the artist boychild, who appears frequently in Arunanondchai’s works, performs along with Arunanondchai’s twin brother Korapat and several volunteers. The stage and lighting is designed by AJ Gvojic with sound production by Harry Bornstein.

Projected in succession onto the walls of the Central Gallery is a cycle of four films that form the core of “2558.” Beginning with *2012-2555*, named after corresponding Buddhist and Gregorian calendar years, each independently structured episode sees Arunanondchai, the Thai “denim painter,” progress towards self-actualization in an arch of death, purgatory in *2556*, and spiritual rebirth in *2557 (Painting with history in a room filled with men with funny names 2)*. Here, the artist’s narrative playfully deconstructs art world binaries—high/low, West/East—in a parody incorporating Duangjai Jansaonoi’s controversial “body painting” performance on *Thailand’s Got Talent*. This incident and famed Thai architect Chalermchai Kositpipat’s televised response are thoroughly recapped in *2556* and directly inform Arunanondchai’s execution of paintings in the Nave.

The fourth film, *Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3*, further situates the artist’s work within a unique cosmology, indoctrinating viewers with his rap star vernacular of philosophical musings on enlightenment. Heaven and Hell become diametrically opposed interpretations of a world created from the feedback loop of experience and synchronous digital documentation. A motif repeated throughout the film and carried over into the works of the Nave, the “search for Naga” is not simply a reference to an exotic symbol but an allusion to the pan-cultural Ouroboros, an eternally returning cycle representing his



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practice.

Together, the Nave and Central Gallery constitute the “body of work,” a notion further underlined by the human outline created from the layout of materials within the exhibition. While intended to be experienced as a whole, the two halves engage different discourses of representation, his films owing as much to the recorded anthropometries of Yves Klein as they do the modern music video. His paintings, emancipated from the walls of the Nave, result from a set of propositions interrogating memory and the objecthood of art. Arunanondchai often describes his canvases with the analogy “Ctrl z,” the “undo” feature of most software. Burned then re-stitched with photographic documents of the burning, these canvases compress time into one layer, paradoxically revealing the process of creation at the cost of concealing its effect. Appearing several times on-screen, the canvases are artefacts of his filmed performances—as are the clothes dressing the mannequins that people the exhibition space—which, in turn, are ritual re-enactments of a previously aired talent show. These repeated elements, which jump between the virtual and the real, form the basis of a collective memory extending into physical space, imploring the viewer through a gestalt effect to perceive his total work.

With the promise of infinite variation, execution, and revision, the shift towards digital modalities compounded with globalization implies a dual flattening in our perceptions of time and geography. In the first installment of the Secret Timezones Trilogy, the works of Ming Wong complied with an unfixed, heterotopian temporality, creating a space floating between past, present, and future satirically overlaid with a linear logic. “2558” offers another interpretation, opening an affective space in the museum where time melts away.

#### **About the Exhibition**

**Korakrit Arunanondchai: 2558** is the second installment of UCCA’s **Secret Timezones Trilogy**, a suite of consecutive solo exhibitions by contemporary Asian artists whose works reveal dislocated temporalities lying dormant behind mundane objects. The trilogy is curated by UCCA consulting curator Venus Lau, this exhibition with assistant curator Guo Xi. The final installment features work from Haegue Yang (30 October to 3 January).

The Presenting Sponsor is Domus Collection. The exhibition is presented in cooperation with MoMA PS1. The new media art production partner is CP Denmark and WTi Group. Exclusive sponsorship of sound equipment comes from GENELEC. AIR CHINA has provided airline sponsorship. The exhibition catalogue is published with support from Post Wave Publishing Consulting.

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The Secret Timezones Trilogy is sponsored by SEDANT•ZIQUE.

#### **About the Artist**

Influenced equally by an adolescence spent surrounded by Thai pop culture and an artistic training and career based in the U.S., **Korakrit Arunanondchai's** (b. 1986, Bangkok) practice mines globalized subjectivities for their underlying tensions. Rather than linger on geographically specific subject matter, he adopts denim—a fabric as universal as any in the world today—as a physical and symbolic means of intensifying these investigations.

Arunanondchai received an MFA from Columbia University. His major solo exhibitions include "Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3" (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2015); "2012-2555, 2556, Painting with history in a room filled with men with funny names and the Future (with boychild, AJ Gvojic, and Harry Bornstein)" (Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 2014); "2557 (Painting with History in a Room Filled with Men with Funny Names 2) (with Korapat Arunanondchai)" (Carlos/Ishikawa, London, 2014); "Letters to Chantri #1: The lady at the door/The gift that keeps on giving (with Boychild)" (The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, 2014); and "Korakrit Arunanondchai" (MoMA PS1, New York, 2014).

#### **About the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art**

**The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA)** is an independent, not-for-profit art center serving a global Beijing public. Located at the heart of Beijing's 798 Art District, it was founded by the Belgian collectors Guy and Myriam Ullens and opened in November 2007. Through a diverse array of exhibitions with artists Chinese and international, established and emerging, as well as a wide range of public programs, UCCA aims to promote the continued development of the Chinese art scene, foster international exchange, and showcase the latest in art and culture to hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

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