

SUBHUMAN

Komkrit Tepthian Solo Exhibition

SUBHUMAN – Komkrit Tephthian

The bloodless coup of 1932 was a turning point in Thailand's history that ended almost 800 years of absolute monarchy. King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) was forced to adopt a constitution and submit to the people's rule that led to the establishment of modern Thailand and beginning the civilian-military rivalry for control of the government of Thailand. Since then, Thailand has had twelve successful coups, and many more coup attempts; more than enough for multiple lifetimes.

In *SUBHUMAN*, Komkrit delves into a culture driven by grand narratives, the ruling elite, where the local narratives, the ordinary people are overpowered and usurped into one universal scheme, plutocracy (government by the rich) and cronyism (benefits for the rich only). This oppression evokes biases and wrong perceptions of individuals, in concert with the social stratification widening socio-economic disparities; where the middle class was nothing to speak of, and the poor were the majority. But, like the rest of the world, rising literacy of the populace and rise of the social media in Thailand, are few of the tipping points that begin to crack the veils blinding the masses. The unhappiness at the status quo due to the increasing awareness of Western ideologies, democracy, nationalism, and communism, coupled with the mismanagement by the absolute monarchy and the deteriorating economic conditions, triggered the 1932 revolution. Since then, many coups came and went. The 1970s coups that inspired students of that day to take a stand and demand greater say and democracy and the subsequent coup of student massacres and extrajudicial killings were the most discourses in the history of modern Thailand, which influenced Komkrit's art and believe. The current status in Thailand, motivates and expresses the ethos of his artworks in this series; hope for ripples of change that will reverberate the nation, rallying for change, rallying against the grand narratives to a new turning point in Thailand's history.

Today, Thailand has a new King, King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X). Still, one important lesson learnt is that people tend to forget and are easily manipulated. When enthusiastic Thais joined the coup in 1932, they believed that they were doing it "for Country". Today, whoever the "ruling elite" is, wants Thais to think that they should do it "for Democracy" to preserve the system. It sounds different and yet very familiar.



Golden Head (Red)
2020
43 x 23 x 25 cm
Stainless Steel, Marble,
Sand Stone & Slate Stone



Komkrit exquisitely crafted *Golden Head* probably started this new series of artworks. The golden ominous orb head resembles a broken relic; at the same time, the surface seems to be treated with a glossy medium to look contemporary and relevance of today. The crudeness of the form and the textured surfaces suggests a harsh narrative behind the object, in fact, it echoes the many conflicts between the civilian government, the military and the disposed monarchy; from the Thailand currency banknotes saga to the power struggles between the aristocrats and the new “common” elites and so on. The red-painted numbers, 193 and the staring eye on the head reinforces a feeling of ominous presence and a demand for attention, the lost years and looks like a blind orb from an indifferent world.



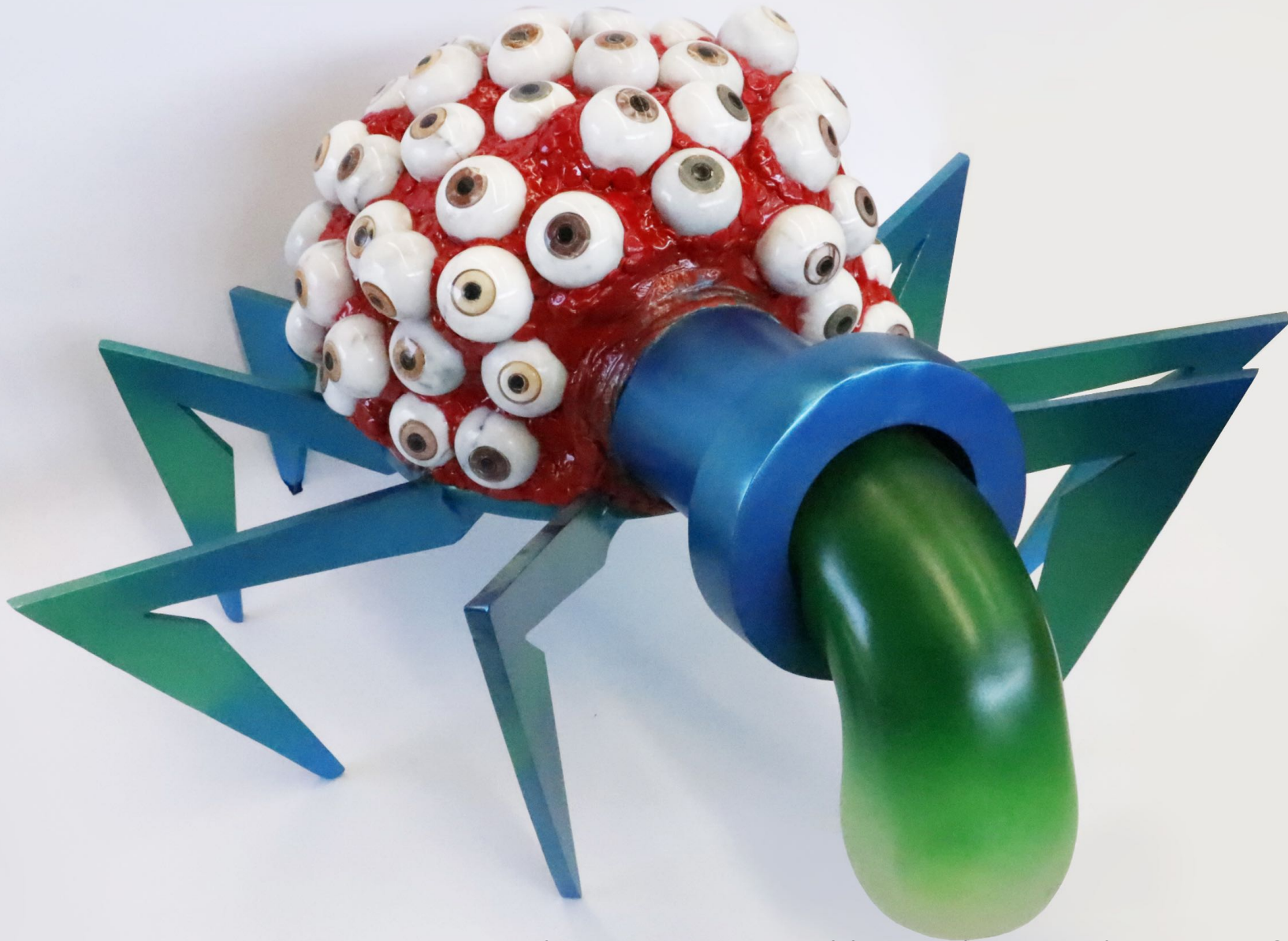
Golden Head (Blue)
2020
46 x 25 x 25 cm
Stainless Steel, Marble,
Sand Stone & Slate Stone



Golden Head (Green)
2020

52 x 30 x 29 cm

Stainless Steel, Marble,
Sand Stone & Slate Stone



I Shoot What I See, 2020, 70 x 60 x 36 cm, Steel, Epoxy Putty, Marble, Sand Stone, Slate Stone & Alabaster



Komkrit's playful ethic is evident in this work, "I Shoot What I See", the sculpture seems to mimic a creature with eight legs, like a spider, the bunch of eyes juxtaposed on the red mass is head and a blue chromed taper for a gun or a lens. It seems apparent that the artist is trying to create a hybrid of form and narratives; organic versus geometric, grotesque versus cute. Dig deeper, at one hand this sculpture represents the ever-presence of the current military government spying on its people, the eyes in the sky conspiracy theory - to oppress democracy, the freedom of speech and the people. On the other hand, this sculpture represents the resistance of the populace, the age and power of the social media, the change the citizens want in freedom and liberty – a new socio-political fabric.



Forgetful, 2020, 31 x 62 x 28 cm, Fibreglass & Resin



Narcissus, 2020, 63 x 63 x 24 cm, Fiberglass & Military Helmet



Dream

2020

28 x 30 x 40 cm

Military Helmet, Epoxy Resin &
Glass Sphere



UFO
2021
100 X 60 X 80 cm
Tractor Body Parts,
Deformed Bar & Marble



Three Pillars

2021

122 x 155 x 96 cm

Stainless Steel &
Steel Pipe



Komkrit Tephthian (born 1985, Suphanburi) lives in Bangkok, Thailand. Received his BA in Department of Fine Arts at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (2007) and MA in Sculpture (2015) at Silpakorn University. He has participated in many international exhibitions and conferences; as Bangkok Art Biennale 2018 (Thailand), ASIA NOW, Paris Asian Art Fair 2018 (France), Art Central Hong Kong 2018, etc. He is also a special lecturer at Department of Fine Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang.

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