

*A lower-decibel version of the present.*

When you encounter his works for the first time you are likely to be shocked by the worrying mundanity of its structural parts. His continuous choice of everyday objects as the appearance of his pieces of art is a well seasoned disappointment for any art hungry audience. Sathit's (artistic) practice is a disturbing glance into what a future without art as we know it might look like. Imagine a global society that has rendered this category obsolete. A realm where art and life have collapsed into one big consumerist mist – or finally have taken down all borders between them to melt into an emancipatory bore-out utopia of never ending happiness. What might be the actual case someday, now is sufficiently confusing – and the scenario we have to deal with for now.

Seemingly enlightened and mature, we still have not internalized the lessons art history taught us – albeit necessary to understand for what we are facing here. In particular this is the case regarding the first wave of conceptualism. One can blame the social changes which did not occur and all dreams of the 70s counterculture that have been zombified into late-capitalist society of today. A destiny shared by most art works of the time. You might be hardened by a thousand lessons in art history, but: Bars of hand soap, perfumes, lights, tables and massage parlours are still scary things to enter the realm of art.

Insisting on commissioning a carpenter in Germany to build a ladder from scratch whilst being advised by that very craftsman to just pick a cheaper one from a hardware store chain. Is not simply turning the knife around – instead he performs the stunt of sword swallowing, baffling our concepts of (economical) rationality and ideas of common sense.



*If you can paint, I can walk, anything could happen, don't you think?, 2013*  
wood, metal, paint  
approx. 175 x 150 x 40 cm

Home Stories, KfW Stiftung, Villa 102 Bockenheimerlandstr., Frankfurt  
photo © Jens Steingaesser



*promise of potential disappointment, 2015*  
hand soaps during the exhibition  
10 x 5 x 2.5 cm

Rundgang, Staatliche Hochschule für  
Bildende Künste

Another carpenter was asked to build a bench, he was restrained to certain times where it was definitely not appropriate to do so. As the job was done, there was no proof if he had clung to this order. A reminder for all of us that a crime even does not need to be committed to become reality. The vision and thoughts of it are already enough to transgress law and order.

Sathit might be the only artist you forgive when he displays bars of hand soap with 'disappointment' moulded into them as his contribution to an annual students' exhibition in Frankfurt's legendary art school: Städelschule. They look just like the average locally sourced soap bars from your hipster store. His works sometimes even look like found objects or even ready made – but they never are. He carefully tries to remove any sign of individual artistic gestures or handwriting.

Alike objects produced for a regular market his 'everyday objects' fill an existing or imaginary void of a 'needed' object in a specific context. This renders the conditions of their display painfully visible and adds a quasi legitimation by a fabricated (or real) use value to the existence of his artwork – while simultaneously refusing to deliver such in the first place. This abstract or real void in space (no matter if literal or not) is a crucial point for his artistic output. He seems to be almost apologizing for still producing art in this saturated world.

I have vivid memories of us rearranging our studio on the occasion of the previously mentioned student exhibition. At that time I had produced a series of sneaky paintings with the chapters of newspapers glued onto their left corners: 'Economy' 'Sports' or 'Feuilleton'.

In this context he decided to just clear his regular working desk, pile all his tools in boxes neatly underneath it and exhibit itself. Messing around with these two pieces we ended up

transforming the whole space into a mockup of a small commercial gallery inside art school facilities.

His work re-contextualised mine, and supported it's bleak humor, whilst his piece derived a darker notion of professionalism from what I had surrounded it with. A few years later this joke became uncannily real: He transformed a midsize gallery space by collecting all the ceiling lights under a custom built gallerist's table, quoting day and night from his hometown.

The dry and sometimes melancholic approach provides a hint towards Sathit as facilitator or exhibition maker. The same way he carefully rejects expectations that are placed on an artistic figure, he often neglects taking credit for his bunch of semi-curatorial projects and initiatives at all

One example of this diffuse role is his participation in the exhibition *COOP* curated by Muriel Meyer on the occasion of the Bangkok Biennial 2018. The general trope for this exhibition were (artistic) corporations and resulting questions of the role of authors and subsequently intellectual property itself. Instead of teaming up for another work of art he decided to take care of the exhibition facilities themselves, literally dusting the raw floor and thereby preparing the exhibition space for all of us participating. In fact, he was helping a lot more behind the scenes: brooming the space became a metaphor in itself.



*MUSEUM GLASS*, 2018  
non-reflexive glass  
36 x 14 cm

*COOP*, part of Bangkok Biennial, 3rd floor 469 Phrasumen Road, Bangkok, Thailand  
photo © Atelier 247



*It belongs to no one, 2014*  
installation  
dimensions variable

*It belongs to no one, theTip, Frankfurt am Main, Germany*  
photo © theTip

In the end this process materialised in a sheet of non-reflective so-called 'museum' glass on the wall. An all too literal contribution – turning his artwork into a footnote directing the reader into a void longing to be filled by guessing. A place where an audience is all too often gently guided to be left alone.

This is an archetypal example of him working behind the scenes. In 2014 I visited him for the first time in Bangkok, and ended up smuggling his works out of Thailand in my personal baggage (No, I did not pack everything by myself). He became the first artist to be presented in my micro-gallery 'TheTip' in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Until now there is nothing exceptional to this, but a few years later, we were joking about TheTip becoming a decent blue chip gallery with a second branch far away from home – and close to emerging markets.

A while later, after being introduced by him to Henry, and subsequently Bow from Tentacles / N22 they sent me a photograph of an exact copy of the existing 'gallery space' in Frankfurt am Main. This neat plywood construction was unloaded from a pickup truck, and became the beautiful twin of it's sister in Frankfurt. I had to poke him to do the first show. The second premiere show of TheTip with the artist (and this time even the 'director' – me – of the very gallery) not being present (again). Until this day – as planned – the main part of Sathit's installation remains as the regular ceiling light of the gallery. As well as the fruitful exchange, friendship and hospitality of my hosts.

There is a mysterious aura around Sathit which I have learned to appreciate over the years. In fact, all of you should be wary if you're talking to the 'real' Sathit. There is a history of others filling out his role in artworks as well as social situations. Disguising and dissolving the role of exhibition maker, artist and private individual is a hint towards the intersection between the curator and artist Sathit. Our paths crossed a few times, as in the past we have exhibited and curated each other as well as collaborated as artists – and now it's time to get down to business.

Sathit's art-paraphernalia, which frequently contributed to group exhibitions could be considered the Fosbury flop of institutional critique. Pieces of non-reflecting glass (as mentioned above), gallery signs (no matter if designed by him, or taken down by him), floor-plans, plinths and other common inhabitants of exhibition spaces are produced and twisted by him.

Those boring things all over sudden start developing a life on their own, but this is not just a slightly darker version of 'Toy Story'. It is a necessary reminder that all of these things, which we are so used to, are not passive tools of display. They are just in a state of apparent death – all those little rascals are very busy reproducing ideology!



*Sonnenuntergang in Berlin (pedestal for Schnute sculpture model)*  
2020  
transparent Plexiglas 120 cm diameter, cleaning part of the  
architecture

*Musée sentimental de l'ours de Berlin, Bärenzwinger*  
photo Katja Kynast ©



*It is what it is (a pedestal for Tobias Rehberger), 2017*  
wood, glass, fabric, marker on pillows  
200 x 200 x 25 cm

*Home of the brave, Städelschule Absolventenausstellung, MMK*  
Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main  
photo © Axel Schneider

Graduating as Meisterschüler of Tobias Rehberger, he provided a pedestal for one of his professor's framed drawings. A vitrine-sofa hybrid invited you to slouch around the master's piece whilst still being in one of the central rooms of Frankfurt's Museum of Modern Art. Sathit tackled the teacher-student relationship not for the first time (no wonder as he knows both sides of the game) and has exhibited other former teachers of him in an art school context flipping their relationship 180 degrees.

Speaking of relations, his work should be regarded as interactive. Yet we are dealing with a direct physical contact, another trick from his artistic toolbox. Receiving a Thai massage or washing your hands with a bar of soap are rather intimate encounters with art and artists. Not to mention providing custom made fragrances for actors to wear during a film shoot. The dry appearance of his work is thwarted by your interaction with it. Borders between 'his' objects, other people's (and art institutions) property and you as the visitor are contrary disputed territories. The same time you're completing his works you are partly destroying them by putting them into a practical use. No matter how you turn it: Sathit is idle and smart at the same time. By providing art paraphernalia to exhibitions you are not only commenting on the still existing rigid regime of display, but rather generating a nice setting for exhibition makers to experience the Stockholm syndrome.

In this turbulent political world Sathit's safehouse can be accessed also via another key: His use of language, or more precisely the (ab-)use of languages. In a sometimes absolutely irresponsible manner, tongues get played out against each other. It might be the forcing of a press release in a deliberately flat english, or the reckless literal translation of a proverb to reveal and conceal in one language - what is available to the speakers of the other. There are Rumours that he has been a close recipient of Daniel Birnbaums seminars on Wittgenstein, so don't be surprised if his works are often heading even further into the bermuda triangle of the linguistic turn.

The most carefully concealed aspect of his work is the political. He consequently resists any temptations of revealing hints and becoming all too illustrative to an outside world – thus to the well informed eye it is utterly visible. This mixture of fearlessness directly to the point, and clandestine hide-and-seek is the humble but serious political artist Sathit. Never a preacher of fuzzy nostalgia or apocalyptic dystopianism simply a person refusing a clear agenda. He is closer to activism than a lot of activists. His cold blooded humanism is something that has driven me on the verge of despair in several discussions. Being realistic is a hard thing to endure, at least for me.

Lars Karl Becker



*Fluss ohne Wiederkehr, 2017*  
free massage for blood circulation, carpet, polystyrol  
ca. 140 x 200 cm

Rundgang, Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste  
photo © Diana Pfammatter