

Udomsak Krisanamis

A mindful mission

27. May – 31. July 2011

Kunstverein Freiburg is pleased to announce Udomsak Krisanamis' first solo exhibition in an institution in Germany. It will consist of an entirely new body of work. We will be showing ten paintings in Krisanamis' larger format (each 100 x 152 cm), and twelve smaller paintings (each 25 x 30 cm), fifteen collages/drawings, a series of of hundred wooden sculptures, and a "Country Club Shop" presentation. The artist is also planning to realise two wall drawings.

Krisanamis' work has always been energised by its contradictions. His obsessive, labour-intensive painting process develops a vocabulary that resists the easy articulacy of postmodern culture, and yet he often mixes that language with familiar pop cultural signs that dramatise the polarities between Eastern Asia and Western America, wealthy capitalism and poverty, local spiritualism and globalist secularism. A painterly language which depends on the gradual accretion of mute gestures is combined with found image seized instantaneously off the internet. Krisanamis embodies these contradictions in his personal life, dividing his time between Chiangmai and New York.

If Krisanamis' new paintings – densely layered with web-like skeins of acrylic paint – suggest artisanal labour, his new series of sculptures, in the form of enlarged golf tees, evoke the recreational activities of the wealthy leisure classes of the West. Upended, so they resemble mini rockets, they are also symbols of aggressive capitalism. The found photograph showing the entrance of a Golf Club in war-torn Kabul, in which an armed soldier stands guard, blends these themes into a sinister comedy.

A series of wall drawings quote provocative, newsy slogans in block capitals – "Global Investments" and "Tuscany-Style Condominium" – in the style of the headlines that are collaged onto the drawings. Krisanamis has made of sheets on packing cardboard. Seen in the context of the self-possession of his paintings, it is as though these loud proclamations were being shouted out in a language the speaker does not himself understand. The collages feature cut-out headlines surrounded by Abstract-Expressionism drips and splashes of paint. The gesturalism is characterised as melodrama and rhetoric by its proximity to the self-dramatising headlines.

The paintings, sculptures, collages and text-based wall paintings will be complemented by a new selection of the Quicktime films the artist first showed at Victoria Miro Gallery in London in 2008. These are short loops, shot on a consumer camcorder, or even a mobile phone. Filmed in New York and Thailand, their elliptical brevity contrasts with the slow time of Krisanamis paintings. They are playful and light, observant of the mysteries of everyday transience.

Udomsak Krisanamis (*1966, Bangkok, TH) has had solo exhibitions in institutions such as Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (1998/1999), the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (2000) and the Kunsthalle Basel (2003). His work has been shown in Europe and abroad in many significant international group exhibitions, and has been reproduced in several influential published surveys of contemporary painting. Located close to the borders of France and Switzerland, and coinciding with Art Basel, an international audience is expected to see his exhibition in Freiburg.