



Fasang Navaaran

The Journey

Curated by Nim Niyomsin



Artist working in his studio

Detail of *Painting 0257* (2022)



The Journey

by Nim Niyomsin

The beauty found in the most basic elements and everyday materials underscores Fasang Navaaran's practice. Colors, lines, and forms are arranged to create a minimalistic yet fully complete work of art. Often, he incorporates found objects, such as discarded paper, postal boxes, and pieces of fabric. His art raises minor and simple items and allows them to reach their full potential.

The Journey sheds light on Navaaran's artistic practices over a twenty-year period, from his early professional career to the present. Works presented in this exhibition are in various materials and media. The majority of them are from his latest series, while others are works that can be traced back to the early 2000s.

Navaaran's aesthetic senses are fundamentally shaped by his background. In 1983, he attended the fine art department at the College of Technology and Vocational Education¹ as a freshman, prior to moving to architecture for the next three years. His college was in Nakhon Ratchasima province, his hometown in the Northeastern part of Thailand. Unfortunately, he was forced to leave school early due to financial difficulties.

To fully understand his situation, one has to look back at the period after he left school. That was when art education and exhibitions were centralized in

Bangkok. There was no social media or widespread use of the Internet. It was not just the financial support he lacked but an opportunity to be part of Thailand's art scene and information. Living far away with no means of transport limited his exposure to the latest news of what was happening in the local and international art industry.

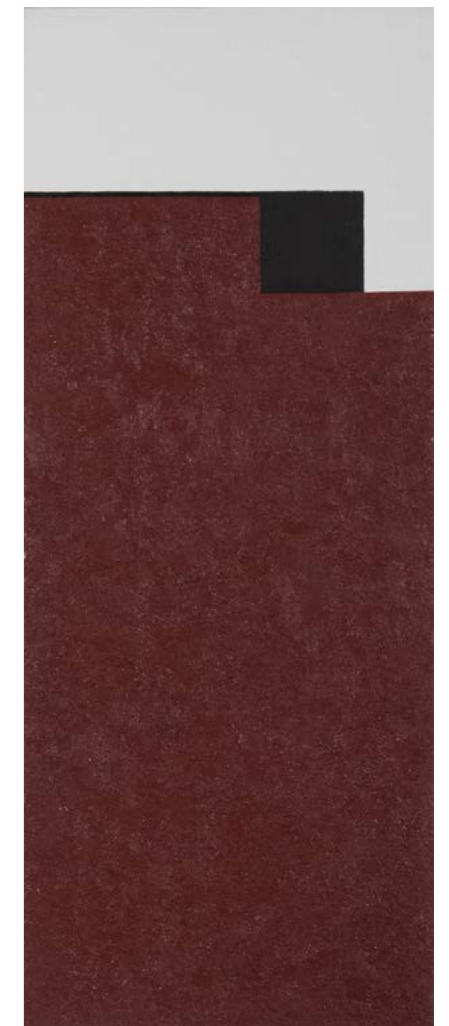
Navaaran's only guidance was from Tawee Ratchaneekorn², who is still his influence and inspiration. Ratchaneekorn is a painter, sculptor, and mixed-media artist. He was a Silpakorn graduate and one of a few contemporary artists who taught in the Northeastern Region. He also taught and helped found the Fine Art department where Navaaran attended.

It was at the university that he came across work by Frank Stella in the only contemporary art book amongst the few art books in the library. Stella's colorful geometric works spoke to him and immediately grabbed his attention. Another early influence was the late Chavalit Soemprungsuk, an Amsterdam-based Thai artist and a friend of Ratchaneekorn, who occasionally exhibited his non-representational art there. With these few influences, combined with his education in art and architecture, he started to form his own art practice.

Like many artists, Navaaran possessed an internal drive to create, despite a lack

1 Currently Rajamangala University of Technology Isan

2 Tawee Ratchaneekorn is a National Artist. He graduated from Silpakorn University, the first fine art university in Thailand, in 1960. In 1961, he started teaching art at the College of Technology and Vocational Education. He helped found its Fine Art department in 1966, along with another artist, Damrong Wong-Uparaj



Painting 0110

2005
Collage, fabric and oil on canvas
86 x 34.5 cm

of resources. He continued to produce artwork using any available means and materials. This led to his interest in everyday objects, which were affordable and accessible.

His major break happened when, by chance, a gallerist came to his hometown and encountered his work. This discovery resulted in almost a decade of numerous solo and successful shows in leading Bangkok galleries beginning just a few years prior to the start of the new millennium. For Navaaran, this accomplishment was important, not because of the success itself, but because it allowed him, for the first time, to have a considerable budget to produce works of art. It gave him more freedom in terms of colors and materials used.

Having exhibitions in Bangkok also allowed him to explore its art scene and resources. He saw work by the late Montien Boonma, who was a pioneer in using non-art materials in his sculptures and installations. He also discovered artworks by Robert Rauschenberg, Gene Davis, and other international artists from art bookstores.

Only a few pieces from this time are still available. *Painting 0110* (2005) represents work from this period. He applied layers of thick oil colored over a collage of fabric scraps. The simplicity of its colors and geometric forms accentuates the texture of a surface.

Toward the end of this period, he experimented with natural materials such as wood and sand. Those works depicted a more organic shape in comparison to the previous symmetrical forms.

His focus has always been solely on making art. When the first gallery that represented him closed, followed by the other, he found himself with no main outlet for his creativity. However, this didn't deter him, and he spent this time exploring, experimenting, and creating new sets of work. He was not to know that it would take another three years until his next exhibit.

The break from the art market for a short period proved beneficial. With no commercial pressure, work during this time had become more daring, comprising many unconventional materials such as mailboxes, sawdust, metal containers, and water hoses. He acquired most of them from the local scrap shops. Another major development was his exploration into site-specific installations, which started to appear in several of his solo and group exhibitions in various locations from 2011 onward.

In 2013, Navaaran was invited to participate in *Biennale Internationale d'Art Non Objectif*³, Pont-de-Claix, France. The curator discovered his work online and selected a set of works made from cardboard boxes and other materials. *150-2013* (2013) was part of this series comprising a cardboard box, scraps of wood, and a bag strap. All materials are readymade. This piece presents key signatures of Navaaran's work, with a composition that is clean and simple, exposing each object's physical qualities.

The Biennale was another leap forward for his career. As his specific art genre was not shared by many of his local contemporaries, and there were few he

could discuss his work with, being part of the non-objective art group⁴ linked him to artists worldwide with a similar outlook and approach. This experience and exchange helped form his artistic stance and understanding. It also acted as a confirmation, and he became more focused and gained confidence in his art.

Nothing has ever come easy for Navaaran. His work seemed ahead of its time and with no gallery representation, it took some time to become appreciated. This resulted in a brief period after the Biennale where he didn't exhibit. But a gap between exhibitions does not mean a gap in making art. He continued to work daily, discovering new techniques and expression, and reaching maturity in the non-objective field.

Since 2017, he has participated in exhibitions in Thailand and abroad, including part of a group show in Poland and France. He was also one of the guest artists in an exhibition⁵ at the Museum of Contemporary Art Bangkok.

Painting 0201 (2017) and *Painting 0202* (2017) displayed a more complicated pattern than what we normally find in Navaaran's work. He combined various techniques from the past, using a collage of fabric scraps, sand, and oil paint. Remarkably, these two-dimensional works seem to contain movements, with crisscrossed vertical lines in various thicknesses and color schemes. Other pieces are simpler, which can be seen in the following series.

In *Painting 0204* (2018), in addition to the usual straight line and geometric form, Navaaran employed curved outlines and

3 Why not - part 1, Biennale Internationale d'Art Non Objectif 2013 at Les moulins de Villancourt

4 Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/biennalepontdeclair> He also uses other social media to connect to other artists

5 Messages, March - June 2021, Museum of Contemporary Art Bangkok. An exhibition of work by the late Chavalit Someprungsuk. Navaaran is one of the guest artists. Others are Angkrit Ajchariyasophon, Jitsing Somboon, Wasinburee Supanichvoraparch, and Pannaphan Yodmanee



150-2013

2013
Cardboard box, scrap wood and bag strap
38 x 15 x 7 cm

rounded shapes to create a minimal piece. This results in a set of work that seems softened, more fluid, and organic.

His recent works appear very sharp and clean, accentuating the combinations of forms and colors. He opts for acrylic paint to create smooth textures on canvas. Inspired by and extending his interest in objects and installations, he perceives his two-dimensional work as site-specific. Each piece of artwork in Navaaran's latest series (2022-the present) acts as a composition of objects. They form a conversation amongst each other and the space. This allows for more flexibility and an open approach to creating and displaying these works of art.

Starting as two sets of works, *Painting 0256-0260* (2022) has emerged as five separate art pieces, proving the open-ended process of his artistic creation. Colors and forms are arranged and displayed in a way comparable to a music composition which sets a rhythm and melody for the space.

Navaaran likes using a monochromatic scheme or creating a new hue by mixing a small amount of another color with the main base color. *Painting 0255* (2022), a set of 2-piece canvases, is a great example. This technique gives his work depth and adds dimension to the viewer's field of vision.

One of the earliest works in this new series, *Painting 0254* (2022) is comprised of green and blue, with the addition of grey, black and white. The shade of grey is one of his favorites and appears in many of his artworks from the very start of his career. These monochrome colors can be base colors or applied to highlight the shape, form, and space of the surface.

201-2022 (2022) consists of black and white on canvases. These two colors act in opposition, and the arrangement of canvases creates a visual illusion and impact. In addition, Navaaran cleverly includes a wooden piece to heighten the work's attribution as an object.

The Journey presents Navaaran's artistic career and his persistence and drive to create, even in the face of adversity. The exhibition follows each significant step of his discoveries and developments. Viewers can trace the artist's latest series back to earlier works and follow his artistic path. For Navaaran, being an artist is not a choice. It is a calling and necessity. Each art piece, its method, and the material used, reveals and reflects each stage of his life as an artist.



Painting 0201

2017
Collage, fabric, sand and oil on canvas
156 x 121.5 cm



Painting 0202

2017
Collage, fabric, sand and oil on canvas
140 x 116 cm



Painting 0204

2018
Oil on canvas
150.5 x 200 cm



Painting 0256

2022
Acrylic on canvas
118 x 195 cm

Painting 0257

2022

Acrylic on canvas
80 x 80 cm; 80 x 33 cm



Painting 0258

2022
Acrylic on canvas
100 x 50 cm; 53 x 20 cm



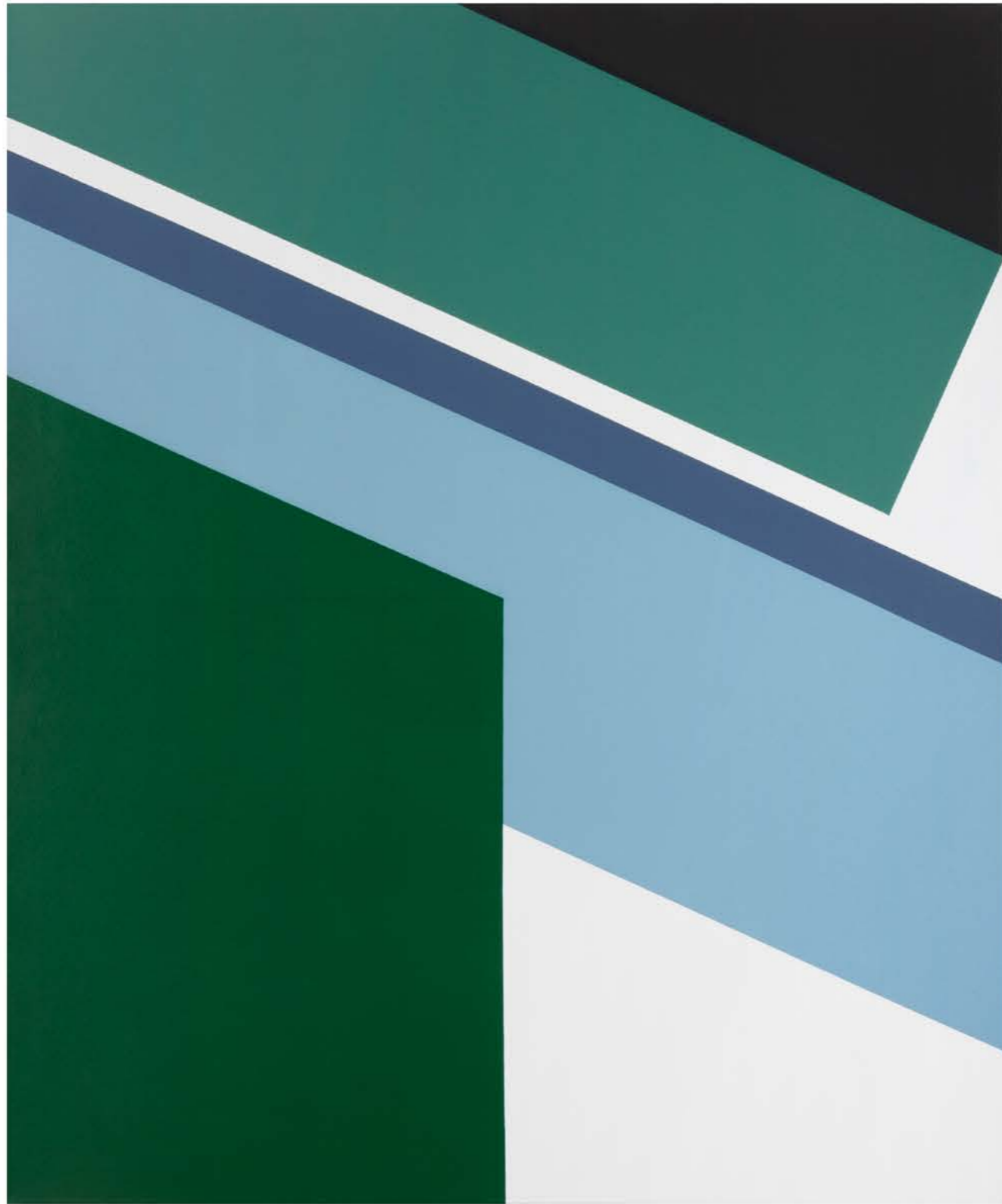


Painting 0259

2022
Acrylic on canvas
74 x 67 cm

Painting 0260

2022
Acrylic on canvas
53 x 20 cm



Painting 0255

2022
Acrylic on canvas
120 x 100 ^{cm}; 120 x 100 ^{cm}



Painting 0254

2022
Acrylic on canvas
90 x 40 ^{cm}; 180 x 150 ^{cm}



201-2022

2022
Acrylic on canvas and wood
175 x 33 x 7^{cm}





Fasang Navaaran (b. 1967, Thailand) works in mixed media, painting and installation to create abstraction. He attended the College of Technology and Vocational Education (currently Rajamangala University of Technology Isan) in 1983 and studied in Painting and Architecture.

The combination of colours, lines, and forms is the essence of his art. Navaaran perceives beauty in its simplicity. The sincerity of his work is revealed by the display of the materials' natural substances. Often, found objects and colour hues are constructed and arranged into geometric forms. The appeal of his work is not in its order but in its harmonious composition.

Navaaran has participated in many group and solo exhibitions in Thailand and abroad, including *Message*, Museum of Contemporary Art Bangkok (2021), *Form and Intent*, Abstract-project, Paris (2019), *painting*installations*objects*, Gallery Kierat, Szczecin, Poland (2017), *Are Different*, Marsi Gallery, Bangkok (2013), *Biennale Internationale d'Art Non Objectif*, France (2013), *A moveable model*, Hof Art, Bangkok Art and Cultural Centre (BACC)(2011), *Appropriate*, H Gallery, Bangkok (2008), *Swirling, Gusty Wind*, Gallery 55, Bangkok (2005), *ARTSingapore 2002* and *Stream of Survival I*, Gallery 55, Bangkok (1999).

Navaaran currently lives and works in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

Education

1983 Painting and Architecture, Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Thailand

Solo Exhibitions

- 2023 *The Journey*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Bangkok, Thailand. Curated by Nim Niyomsin
- 2017 *Work on paper*, ART CAFÉ by Brown Sugar, Bangkok Art & Cultural Centre (BACC), Thailand
- 2011 *A moveable model*, hof art, Bangkok Art & Cultural Centre (BACC), Thailand
- 2008 *Appropriate*, H Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2006 *FOUND*, H Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2005 *Swirling, Gusty Wind*, Gallery 55, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2003 *Stream of Survival III*, Gallery 55, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2002 *Time & Space*, Gallery 55, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2001 *Stream of Survival II*, Gallery 55, Bangkok, Thailand
- 1999 *Stream of Survival I*, Gallery 55, Bangkok, Thailand
- 1998 *Stream of Survival*, Art House, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand

Group Exhibitions

- 2023 *ART SG*, Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Singapore (with Richard Koh Fine Art)
- 2022 *Hotel Art Fair*, The Standard, Bangkok Mahanakhon, Bangkok, Thailand (with Richard Koh Fine Art)
- 2021 *Message*, Museum of Contemporary Art Bangkok, Thailand
- 2019 *Form and Intent*, abstract project Galerie, France
- 2018 *AR-T-chitecture*, TH Gallery and Café, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand
- 2017 *Painting*installations*objects*, Gallery Kierat , Szczecin, Poland
- In white*, Graze Galeria, projektantów, Poland
- 2013 *International Biennial of Nonobjective Art*, City Pont de Claix, France
- Without an answer*, Jamjuree Art Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- Are Different*, Marsi Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2012 *In the peace*, People's Gallery, Bangkok Art & Cultural Centre (BACC), Thailand

Projects

- 2017 *Untitled@korat*, TH Gallery and Café, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand
- 2012 *Time & Space*, TAEWIT STUDIO, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2008 *12 STAGES*, Six Thai artists and six German artists



Nim Niyomsin (b.1980, Thailand) is an independent curator currently based in Bangkok, Thailand. She received a Master of History of Art from Birkbeck, University of London (2009), and a Master of Business Administration, Southeastern Louisiana University (2003). She also enrolled in curatorial and art courses at the Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. Niyomsin specialises in contemporary art, photography, and public art events.

Prior to working independently, she worked in galleries in Bangkok, the Artist Pension Trust, and Horniman Museum and Gardens in London. She curated her first shows of Thai artists in several art spaces in London.

Moving to Bangkok, from 2014-2017, she worked as the Marketing Department Manager for international art and culture at the Emporium & EmQuartier, organising public and international art festivals and other cultural events. She then decided to focus on art and curating and became a full-time independent curator.

Seeing the underlying division in the local art scene, her challenge lies in curating the shows of artists who may not usually work together. This also includes a collaboration with others from non-art sectors. Another aim is to encourage artists' careers and curate shows of talented and underrepresented artists.

Niyomsin has been working as a curator for many art institutions and international organisations, including of Museum of Contemporary Art Bangkok, Ratchadamnoen Contemporary Art Center (Bangkok), Tang Contemporary, PhotoBangkok, HOP - Hub of Photography (Bangkok), 1PROJECTS (Bangkok, Singapore), 333Anywhere (Bangkok), Subhashok The Arts Centre (Bangkok), Objectifs - Centre for Photography and Film (Singapore) and Forty7 Gallery (London). She has written for magazines such as Fineart Magazine (Thailand), Why Magazine (England), and the Bangkok Trader.

She currently lives and works in Bangkok.

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Curator profile image is courtesy of MOCA Bangkok

A digital catalogue for “*The Journey*”,
A solo exhibition by Fasang Navaaran
Curated by Nim Niyomsin

Essay by Nim Niyomsin
Artwork photography by Thanarath Siripidej (Win)
Design by Nor Harith

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18 February - 25 March 2023


Cover page: Detail of *Painting 0255* (2022)



ABOUT THE GALLERY

Founded in 2005, with spaces in Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Singapore, Richard Koh Fine Art is committed to the promotion of Southeast Asian contemporary art on regional and international platforms. Centred around a core belief in developing an artist's career, the gallery looks to identify understated, albeit promising practices, and providing it opportunities to flourish. Through its regular exhibition cycles, print & digital publications and cross-border gallery collaborations, Richard Koh Fine Art engages the art community with the aim of developing regional and intercultural dialogue.


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