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## Ecrits de Sylvie

textes et entretiens sur l'art, le cinéma, la culture

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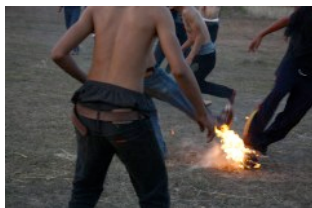
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**24.01.2010****Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul**

by Sylvie Lin

**Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Primitive, 2009**Courtesy Kick the Machine Films, Bangkok, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris  
Crédits : 2009 Kick the Machine Films. Photo: Chaisiri Jiwangsan

"I'm attracted to the spirit of the bygone era, the handmade quality. I think that even Warhol's machine-like approach was very human."

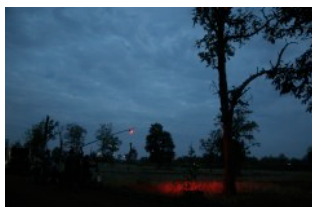
----Apichatpong Weerasethakul, extrait from the interview

**Q** *When you studied film in Chicago, you've been influenced by the avant-garde cinema, especially filmmaker such as Bruce Baillie and artists like Andy Warhol, Marcel Duchamp, etc. What do you see in their work ?*

**A** I'm attracted to the spirit of the bygone era, the handmade quality. I think that even Warhol's machine-like approach was very human.

**Q** *You began by making films before making video installations. Do you have different approaches when using different medium? What are the effects and possibilities brought by each medium?*

**A** I guess I answer this question differently each time I am asked. Sometimes I really loathe video, but sometimes I am in love with it. I have to make sure that I select an appropriate medium for each project. Since the image quality of film and video is becoming close these days, I focus on the process. For the making of a feature film I still prefer film because I enjoy the uncertainty of the film format while we are shooting. It's an internal relationship between me and the camera. It doesn't show me exactly what it records. For a video, it was more of an idea, a sketch, where the uncertainty lies in the relationship between me and what's in front of the camera. It's an external relationship.

**Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Primitive, 2009**Courtesy Kick the Machine Films, Bangkok, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris  
Crédits : 2009 Kick the Machine Films. Photo : Chayaporn Maneesutham

**Q** *Already in your films, the narrative is often in rupture, bifurcation and the time wavers between the past and the present, so does the situation sway between the reality and the imaginary. Do you think the installation to be a more sufficient means of such expression ? Can you talk about the Primitive Project in this regard ?*

**A** I like the aspect of the installation that allows you to approach the work in different ways. You are one of the characters. In the *Primitive Project*, the work is like a time capsule that contains imagined scenarios I filmed in a northeastern village. It's a documentation in a way and the audiences can edit the narrative(s) themselves. Whether it is reality or fantasy is irrelevant.

**Q** *The themes of your work revolve around two axis: that of the cultural heritage of Thailand and the political struggles there, especially since the military coup in 2006. The way you treat the subjects is often through a kind of 'reminiscence' to establish a kind of special link between the past and now. In many ways, the Primitive Project seems to be an allegorical work. Taking the Uncle Boonmee's story as its point of departure, it is developed into episodes which reflect obliquely the military turmoil in Thailand and the oppressed situation of the region via the natural phenomenon of Nabua ( the lightning strikes ) or the teenagers throwing objects.*

**A** few years ago, while I was at my home town of Khon Kaen, I was given a little book called *A Man Who Can Recall His Past Lives*. It's about Uncle Boonmee who recounts his multiple lives as humans and animals. I was

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