



BFI GALLERY PRESS RELEASE

Apichatpong Weerasethakul: Phantoms of Nabua

*BFI Gallery, BFI Southbank, London, SE1
14 May – 4 July 2010*

Press view: Thursday 13 May, 5.30-6.30pm

Private view: Thursday 13 May, 6.30-9pm

Admission free

www.bfi.org.uk/gallery

This is the first London solo exhibition by acclaimed Thai filmmaker and artist **Apichatpong Weerasethakul** (b.1970) who creates work for both cinema and gallery exhibition with astounding results. Cannes Film Festival prize winner, and nominee for the 2010 Hugo Boss Prize, **Weerasethakul** has created *Phantoms of Nabua*, an ethereal portrait of a town in north east Thailand. The BFI Gallery presents the UK premiere of *Phantoms of Nabua* in association with Animate Projects. It runs from 14 May until 4 July 2010 and admission is free.

Phantoms of Nabua is described by the artist as 'a portrait of home... a communication of lights, the lights that exude on the one hand the comfort of home and, on the other, of destruction'. In the work teenagers play football at night illuminated by a rear projection of lightning and fireworks and a recreation of a fluorescent light pole from the artist's hometown. Even though these lights make the skin look pale and ghost-like, for Weerasethakul they also relate to home, to being home.

Phantoms of Nabua is a part of Weerasethakul's *Primitive* project created in what is now a sleepy village in the northeast of Thailand. But Nabua's atmosphere hides a history of violent clashes. From the 1960s to the 1980s Thailand's totalitarian government militia occupied this part of Thailand in order to curb communist insurgents. Filming these teenage descendents of the Thai rebel-farmers is Weerasethakul's poetic reflection on catastrophic political events as well as an exploration of personal politics and social issues. Focusing on concepts of remembrance and extinction, the atmospheric single screen projection transforms the gallery into a haunting and mysterious space.

Primitive is a multi-platform project which includes Weerasethakul's seven screen installation, an artist's book, a short film, and a feature film. Further details at: http://www.animateprojects.org/films/by_project/primitive/primitive.

Phantoms of Nabua was commissioned by Animate Projects, with Haus der Kunst, Munich and FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology), Liverpool. Produced by Illuminations Films, London and Kick the Machine Films, Bangkok.

About Apichatpong Weerasethakul

Apichatpong Weerasethakul was born in Bangkok, Thailand in 1970. He is an independent film director, screenwriter and film producer. His films have received numerous awards including prizes at the Cannes and Venice film festivals. His video installations and other works have attracted great acclaim at major international exhibitions, as did the installation *Primitive* when it was presented in Munich, Liverpool and Paris last year. His feature films include *Tropical Malady* which won the Jury Prize at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival, *Blissfully Yours* which won the top prize in the *Un Certain Regard* programme at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival and *Syndromes and Century* which premiered at the 63rd Venice Film Festival and, in a recent major poll, was judged the best film of the last decade. He lives and works in Thailand.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul in conversation Tue 25 May 18.20 NFT3 (time tbc)

Weerasethakul has emerged as one of the most successful filmmakers yet to work across exhibition platforms. His *Primitive* project represents one of the most exciting recent developments in art house filmmaking. The BFI is delighted to welcome the artist and his producers in conversation to explore this pioneering project.

About BFI Southbank

BFI Southbank (located between the National Theatre and the Royal Festival Hall) has the only London art gallery specifically dedicated to commissioning and showcasing artists' films and videos and the moving image in its most contemporary forms. There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Its world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire everyone.

The exhibition is supported by Arts Council England and Singha Beer.

Listing details:

BFI Gallery, BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, London, SE1 8XT

Gallery admission free

Exhibition open Tuesday to Sundays (and Bank Holiday

Mondays): 12 noon - 8pm

Tel: DAILY INFO: 020 7633 0274 BOX OFFICE: 020 7928

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Tube/BR: Waterloo www.bfi.org.uk/gallery

Currently showing at the BFI Gallery:

Mat Collishaw: Retrospectre, until 9 May 2010

Next show at the BFI Gallery:

John Akomfra: Mnemosyne, July – September 2010.

For further press information about BFI Gallery and images, please contact Alison Wright

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