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Apichatpong Weerasethakul wins the Palme d'Or at Cannes



Uncle Boonmee who can Recall his Past Lives, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, photograph © Nontawat Numbenchapol, courtesy of Kick the Machine Films and Illuminations Films

"I tried to offer a different kind of film, a film that pushes back the limits, that challenges the public so as to make cinema go further," Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

Animate Projects is thrilled to congratulate Apichatpong Weerasethakul on winning the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival 2010, for his film Uncle Boonmee who can Recall his Past Lives (Lung Boonmee Raluek Chat).

The feature film was conceived as an integral part of the Primitive project, which includes: a seven screen gallery installation, Primitive; an online film and gallery installation, Phantoms of Nabua; and the short film A Letter to Uncle Boonmee.

Animate Projects is proud to be co-commissioner of the installations and short films, with Haus der Kunst, Munich, and FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology), Liverpool, and to have worked with producers Simon Field and Keith Griffiths from Illuminations Films, London and Kick the Machine, Bangkok.

Notes to editors:

Primitive project

Primitive is a multi-platform project by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Commissioned by Haus der Kunst, Munich with FACT Liverpool, and Animate Projects. Produced by Illuminations Films, London with Kick the Machine, Bangkok.

Primitive was shot in the border town, Nabua, where the Mekong River divides Thailand and Laos, an area with a long history of racial migration and slaughter. It was also a 'red zone' where the Mao-influenced Communist party moved into the mountain range and the Thai government targeted local communities as communist sympathisers. Nabua has an ancient legend about a widow ghost who would abduct any man who enters her empire.

The Primitive project re-imagines Nabua, the 'widow town', as a town of men, freed from the widow ghost's empire, and features the male descendants of the farmer communists - teenagers that will lead a journey, fabricate memories, and build a dreamscape in the jungle. Visit: animateprojects.org/films/by_project/primitive/primitive

Uncle Boonmee who can Recall his Past Lives (Lung Boonmee Raluek Chat)

Suffering from acute kidney failure, Uncle Boonmee has chosen to spend his final days surrounded by his loved ones in the countryside. Surprisingly, the ghost of his deceased wife appears to care for him, and his long lost son returns home in a non-human form. Contemplating the reasons for his illness, Boonmee treks through the jungle with his family to a mysterious hilltop cave -- the birthplace of his first life... A feature film by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, visit: animateprojects.org/films/by_date/2010/uncle_boonmee

Apichatpong Weerasethakul talks about Uncle Boonmee who can Recall his Past Lives in a video interview on Animate Projects' online magazine, APENGINE - apengine.org/2010/04/apichatpong-weerasethakul/

Phantoms of Nabua

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 available to view online at animateprojects.org/films/by_date/2009/phantoms

The installation of Phantoms of Nabua is at the BFI Gallery, London, until 3 July. Previous presentations include Wexner Arts Center, Ohio; MOCCA, Toronto; Musee d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris; and at the exhibition Animism, Extra City/M HKA, Antwerp. For the BFI Gallery exhibition, visit: bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi_southbank/exhibitions/bfi_gallery

A Letter to Uncle Boonmee

A personal letter describing Weerasethakul's Nabua to Uncle Boonmee. A slowly moving camera glides through the deserted houses. The voices of three young men are heard. As evening approaches the sky turns dark.

The short film, A Letter to Uncle Boonmee, won the Grand Prize at Oberhausen Film Festival in 2009 and has since been screened at festivals across the world. It can be seen online exclusively at mubi.com/films/4093.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul

Apichatpong Weerasethakul is a singular and distinctive artist and filmmaker. All his films and artworks are set in his native Thailand. Often non-linear, and with a strong sense of dislocation, his works deal with memory, subtly addressing personal politics and social issues. Working independently of the Thai commercial film industry, he is active in promoting experimental and independent filmmaking through his company Kick the Machine.

His films have received numerous awards, including two prizes from the Cannes Film Festival. His feature *Syndromes and a Century* (2006) was the first Thai film to be selected for competition at the Venice Film Festival. Alongside his other feature *Tropical Malady*, *Syndromes and a Century* has been found at the top of several polls as among the best films of the last decade.

His video installations and other works have attracted great acclaim at major international exhibitions such as the Istanbul Biennial, the Taipei Biennial, and the Busan Biennale.

In 2007, the Thai Ministry of Culture awarded Apichatpong with one of Thailand's most important awards for visual artists, Silpatorn. In 2008, he became the first artist to receive the Fine Prize from the 55th Carnegie International, USA and last year he was nominated for one of the art world's most prestigious awards, the Hugo Boss Award, with the winner to be announced in autumn 2010.

About Animate Projects

Animate Projects commissions artists to make work that explores the relationship between contemporary art and animation for broadcast, gallery, cinema and digital exhibition. Over 100 groundbreaking films can be viewed on animateprojects.org, alongside interviews with artists, essays and other background material. Recent projects include: *Primitive*, a multi-platform project by Apichatpong Weerasethakul; *Shudder*, new works for gallery and online by artists Edwina Ashton, Ann Course and Barry Doupé, co-commissioned with The Drawing Room; and *APEngine*, an online magazine supported by the UK Film Council.

Animate Projects is funded by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Visit us at animateprojects.org

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Animate Projects and the Primitive project

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