

(Site) Specificity II

PRIMA SAKUNTABHAI (MFA '17)

Fall 2016

The CCA Fall 2016 Library Exhibition program presents the work of Prima Sakuntabhai (MFA '17) at the Meyer Library on Oakland's campus. The work on view combines image, text, and ephemera collected during the artist's time at the SOMA SUMMER 2016 artist residency in Mexico City. Prima spent two months this past summer in residence at SOMA SUMMER in dialogue with a community of international artists and contemporary art practitioners from Mexico City.

The conceptual foundations of architecture and ruin are critical to the narratives Prima constructs. Layering of image, text, and oration are fused in the artist's practice with auto-topographic storytelling, while simultaneously making visible the erasure of cultural histories in Mexico City through the construction of site. The re-framing of 70's vernacular architecture, by visualizing the stylistic appropriation of Mayan Aztec motifs by European Art Deco in *(Site) Specificity II*, reveals a transparency in cultural boundaries that are open and closed. The shifting boundaries evaporate as a result of their permeability, and historic materiality no longer can be seen growing upwards; rather a burial of cultural history is only visible through the construction of sites of erasure. Like the territories in Prima's investigation, the form of this installation is permeable and the foundations of architecture and ruin are integrated in the re-construction of a new spatial imaginary inside Meyer Library.

(Site) Specificity II

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY:

Prima is a polyvalent, polyglot artist, currently based in San Francisco. Her artistic practice ranges from sculpture, installation, collaboration, video and performance. She was born in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1989, and was raised in Oxford, England and Paris, France. She earned her Visual Arts Degree (Diplome National des Arts Plastiques) from the Ecole des Beaux Arts de Nantes Metropole, in 2010 before pursuing a License in Film Studies (License en Cinema et Audiovisuelle) at the Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3, in 2011. In 2013, she completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the School of the Arts Institute of Chicago. After two years working in various museums and nonprofit organizations in Tucson, Arizona, she is now attending the California College of the Arts for a Master of Fine Arts, in San Francisco. Due to her nomadic upbringing, she became interested in how human societies structure themselves in power relations, respective of histories and cultures. Her interest in architecture, film, power, labour and modes of production bring about forms and narratives that examine the uneasiness of being in our global transnational world and the primacy of technology over manual labour. The works are platforms to reflect ethically on our role as citizens and individuals. Her works have been shown in Chicago, Oklahoma City, Tucson, Philadelphia and San Francisco. She had her first solo show at the Cobalt Studio, in Chicago, Illinois, in 2011. She had a temporary installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tucson and was included in the Arizona Biennial 2015, at the Tucson Museum of Art. She was a recipient of the 2016 SOMA Summer awardee, to attend the SOMA Summer program in Mexico City.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

My artistic practice stems from studies of space and its socioeconomic implications. Through a plurality of disciplines, from sculpture and installation to film and performance, I investigate how human societies structure themselves in power relations. I use architecture as a vehicle for investigating ideology, particularly monuments whose design reflects hierarchical and dictatorial powers. Temples, palaces and triumphal arches use monumentality and facade to demonstrate such powers. These manifestations of power are still pervasive in our contemporary globalized spaces of governance. In my recent works, I conduct multi layered performances and installations that use archival images, light projecting apparatuses and a lecture format. The written text is the starting point for each project. It draws on histories of architectures of power in relation to the ideologies they promulgate. Imagery, whether of architecture or contemporary infrastructures provide support to the text. Both are subordinate to the immersive experience, created by light projecting technologies to facilitate and obstruct the viewer's reception of information. In this aesthetic and cerebral experience, facts become interpretations rather than truths.