

PRESS RELEASE

YAVUZ FINE ART @ ARTHK12
BOOTH 3X9

A TALE OF TWO CITIES
BY NAVIN RAWANCHAIKUL



After the overwhelming success of Navin Rawanchaikul's representation with Yavuz Fine Art at Art Stage Singapore 2012, the Singapore-based gallery is proud to reunite with artist Navin for the unique exhibition booth presentation, *A Tale of Two Cities*, at Art HK 12, curated by Steven Pettifor.

Exploring aspects of community from a geo-cultural perspective, *A Tale of Two Cities* incorporates deliberately nostalgic photographic studio-style paintings, alongside documentary video, textual work, and sculptural installation. Developed from Navin's penetrations into Hong Kong's historic market areas that centred upon candid interviews with resident vendors, this new chronographic series traces the dramatic changes within urban Asian mercantile traditions. Within such a context, the artist draws Dickensian parallels to his own familial experience being raised within the once bustling central market in his hometown of Chiang Mai, northern Thailand.

The son of Hindu-Punjabi immigrants to Thailand, Navin spreads his time between Chiang Mai and his adoptive home of Fukuoka in Japan. Since the early 1990s, the 41-year-old artist has become renowned for creating an animated and accessible brand of situational art, which incorporates an entertaining theatre of media, methods, and collaborative characters. Creating elaborate egocentric narratives that blur fact and fantasy, his artistic approach involves direct interventions, social commentary, and an innovative style of integrating community or individual experiences.

Imbuing the spirit of 17th century Dutch Golden Age civic portraits, *A Tale of Two Cities* centres upon two grand panoramic group portraits of Chiang Mai's and Hong Kong's commercial fraternity. In Thailand, the cast gathers in the focal point of the town's historic Kad Luang market, the site where Navin's family established the O.K. fabric store upon their arrival in Thailand. Adapting the fading genre of photographic studio portraiture, Navin extends the series through sepia paintings of the Rawanchaikul ancestry in a sentimental fanciful projection of epochal and cross-cultural possibility.

A sense of periodic commemoration straddles time and place in a blurred cross-generational framing that references past and present, with implications to the future. The intimate autobiographical associations allude to the consequences of migration upon familial obligation. Sincere video interviews from Hong Kong merchants also invoke the rapid pace of progress being witnessed across Asia, state interventions towards such end, the surge of global commerce, and the uncertain future for existing communities.

YAVUZ FINE ART

51 Waterloo Street, #03-01, Singapore 187969 | Tel: +65 6338 7900 | www.yavuzfineart.com
Opening Hours: Wed – Sat: 10am – 7pm, Sun: 1pm – 5pm | Mon, Tue & public holidays: by appointment only

Empowering individuals and entire communities by reigniting a sense of mutual pride that is fast diminishing, *A Tale of Two Cities* is optimistic towards tolerance and respect in contrast to modern society's effacement to the bonds of generational legacy. A recurrent theme in Navin's oeuvre, this is evident in the recognition of abandoned seniors in a fresh reinterpretation of the artist's seminal 1994 tiered bottle installation *There is No Voice*. In the pertinent 2012 re-visitation, the message-in-a-bottle photographic archive reaffirms the educational, historic, and cultural significance our seniors can imbue, if we take time to preserve.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in 1971 in Chiang Mai, Navin Rawanchaikul has developed a unique and vast body of works that question modern systems of artistic production and presentation, seeking ways to put art in touch with the lives of everyday people. His work is often produced under the banner of Navin Production, his production team and studio. In 1995, he initiated his landmark project Navin Gallery Bangkok, in which an ordinary Bangkok taxicab was transformed into a mobile art gallery. Its great success prompted several versions of the Taxi Gallery around the world including Sydney, London, Bonn and New York. In 2006 the Navin Party was founded to unite Navins of the world under the common bond of a first name.

In addition to a series of community-based art projects that he has continually presented in his home country, Rawanchaikul has held solo shows at prestigious institutions including New York's P.S.1 Contemporary Art Centre (2001), the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2002), Jim Thompson Art Centre in Bangkok (2006) and Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art in Beijing (2009) among being included in several international art exhibitions and festivals. His works are housed in the collection of international art centres and museums including Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan, National Art Gallery in Singapore, FRAC in France, Pinchuk Art Centre in Ukraine, Moderna Museet in Sweden and Inhotim in Brazil.

In 2010, Rawanchaikul was awarded the national Silapathorn citation from the Thai Ministry of Culture in the respected field of Visual Arts. He represented Thailand for the 54th International Art Exhibition at Venice Biennale in 2011. The artist divides his time between his family in Fukuoka, Japan, and his hometown of Chiang Mai where Navin Production is based. More information about the artist and Navin Production: www.navinproduction.com

YAVUZ FINE ART

51 Waterloo Street, #03-01, Singapore 187969 | Tel: +65 6338 7900 | www.yavuzfineart.com
Opening Hours: Wed – Sat: 10am – 7pm, Sun: 1pm – 5pm | Mon, Tue & public holidays: by appointment only

ABOUT YAVUZ FINE ART

Yavuz Fine Art is situated in the heart of Singapore's Museums District, in the refurbished former Catholic High School - a heritage building with a unique character that reflects the singularity of our standpoint. Within less than two years, the gallery established itself as one of South East Asia's leading contemporary art spaces, known for its cutting edge exhibitions, its element of the unexpected and its carefully curated exhibitions. Since its inauguration, each exhibition that Yavuz Fine Art held has been positively reviewed in magazines, newspapers and online blogs around the world.



A Tale of Two Cities (Chiang Mai), 2012, acrylic on canvas, 145 x 280cm

Courtesy of Yavuz Fine Art

The **Art HK 12 vernissage** will be held on Wednesday, 17 May 2012 from 5 – 9pm at the Hong Kong Convention And Exhibition Centre. The fair will open to the public from 18-20 May 2012.

For more information about Art HK 12, please visit the Art HK 12 website at www.hongkongartfair.com

For inquiries please contact Stella Chang at stella@yavuzfineart.com or at (65) 6338 7900.

Yavuz Fine Art @ Art HK 12 is proudly supported by **HAWORTH®**

YAVUZ FINE ART

51 Waterloo Street, #03-01, Singapore 187969 | Tel: +65 6338 7900 | www.yavuzfineart.com
Opening Hours: Wed – Sat: 10am – 7pm, Sun: 1pm – 5pm | Mon, Tue & public holidays: by appointment only



A Tale of Two Cities (Hong Kong), 2012, acrylic on canvas, 145 x 280cm
Courtesy of Yavuz Fine Art



A Tale of Two Beauties, 2012, oil on canvas, 70 x 100cm (each)
Courtesy of Yavuz Fine Art

YAVUZ FINE ART

51 Waterloo Street, #03-01, Singapore 187969 | Tel: +65 6338 7900 | www.yavuzfineart.com
Opening Hours: Wed – Sat: 10am – 7pm, Sun: 1pm – 5pm | Mon, Tue & public holidays: by appointment only



There Is No Voice (3), 1994/2012, wood, glass bottles and photographs 200 x 65 x 150cm
Courtesy of Yavuz Fine Art



There Is No Voice (3) (detail)
Courtesy of Yavuz Fine Art

YAVUZ FINE ART

51 Waterloo Street, #03-01, Singapore 187969 | Tel: +65 6338 7900 | www.yavuzfineart.com
Opening Hours: Wed – Sat: 10am – 7pm, Sun: 1pm – 5pm | Mon, Tue & public holidays: by appointment only