

PARADOX in art

THE NATION

SCOTTISH ARTIST Richard Skene explores capitalism and religion in his debut Bangkok exhibition opening on Tuesday at Eat Me Restaurant and Gallery.

In addition to having a Thai flavour, a common theme of Skene's collection is the "pursuit of happiness", which is one of the three "unalienable rights" in the United States of America's Declaration of Independence and a key principle of Buddhism.

That such superficially conflicting forces of capitalism and religion share the same destination suggests the path to happiness may not be straightforward, and short cuts may be counterproductive.

For example: while Thailand is a welcoming, tolerant and spiritual place, Bangkok provides abundant opportunities for hedonism although contrary but complementary forces co-exist in the vast city. Those who deviate from the true path may, after a period of trial and error, reach the same conclusion as William Blake, who coined the phrase from which the exhibition takes its name.

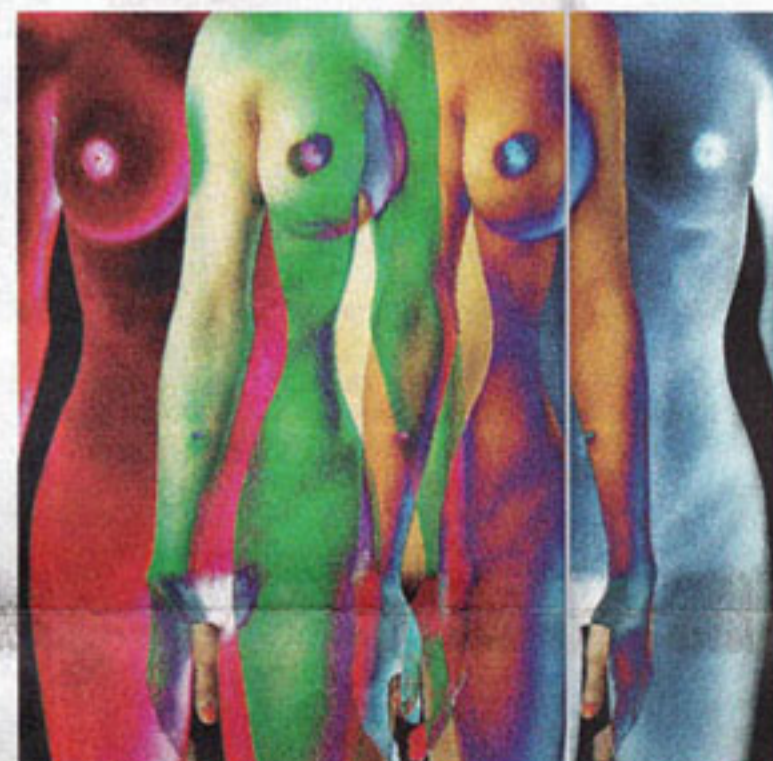
Skene's art deals with a variety of diverse and conflicting subjects, including peace and violence, love and sex and hope and fear and takes the viewer on a visual journey from hedonism to Buddhism in Bangkok.

The result is a stimulating and provocative collection, comprising graphic design, photography, video and light installations. The artworks are simplified and stylised, incorporate wit and wisdom, and reveal influences from Andy Warhol, Damien Hirst and Roy

SCOTTISH ARTIST RICHARD SKENE BORROWS FROM WILLIAM BLAKE FOR HIS SOLO SHOW "THE ROAD OF EXCESS LEADS TO THE PALACE OF WISDOM"



Richard Skene



I ♠ BK

Lichtenstein.

Skene, who was born in Aberdeen, has lived in Bangkok for eight years.

"I first came to Thailand as a backpacker in 1990 and returned to work in Bangkok in 1995. Since then, I've had the privilege of working in Bangkok, Phuket and Koh Samui, so have a close affinity with Thailand and a great respect for Thai culture. As many of the artworks were inspired by my observations and experiences of living in the Kingdom, it's appropriate that my first exhibition takes place in Bangkok.

"I am delighted that Eat Me agreed to sponsor my exhibition as I believe the restaurant's contemporary style and funky character complements my collection," says the artist.

Situated between the infamous Patpong red light district and religious centre Christ Church, Eat Me Restaurant and Gallery offers a unique location, which coincidentally and respectively represents both the "Road of Excess" and "Palace of Wisdom".

FAITH AND FINANCE

- "The Road of Excess leads to the Palace of Wisdom" is on view from Tuesday till August 30.
- Eat Me Restaurant & Gallery is off Soi Convent on Silom Road. It is open daily from 3pm till 1am. Call (02) 238 0931.
- More about the artist at www.RichardSkene.com

OUT AND ABOUT



Strokes to remember

Natee Utarit juxtaposes toys, plastic figurines and human organs with traditional canvases in his new solo show "Illustration of a Crisis" showing at Bangkok University Gallery through August 31.

The gallery, which is at the university's Kluay Nam Thai campus, is open Tuesday to Saturday from 9.30am to 7pm. Find out more by going to the Bangkok University Gallery page on Facebook.

Mooncake magic

Swissotel Nai Lert Park Hotel, Bangkok celebrates the upcoming mid-autumn festival with a delicious selection of mooncakes that will be on sale from August 9 to September 30 at Noble House Chinese Restaurant and Gourmandises Cafe and Bakery.

Fillings include lotus seed paste, red date, durian and cream custard, with the treats packed in a tailored box. A box of 8 pieces is priced at Bt599 net while 2 pieces go for Bt125 net per box. Place an order at (02) 867 7127 or e-mail: SNL.Gourmandises@Swissotel.com.

Resizing anonymity

Thosapol Boriboon, who made a name for himself by taking a sarcastic dig at the western art movement by resizing prominent artists, returns with a solo art exhibition "Anonymous Friends", in which he applies the same techniques to depict the paradoxes found in contemporary art.



The exhibition at DOB Hualamphong Gallery, on Rama IV Road opens on August 6 and runs through September 8.