

Blue Kingdom

Whimsical and insightful, Vipoo Srivilasa's blue and white porcelain are intricately painted with vignettes of his life.

Blue and white. Those illustrious wares that have precipitated global trade between the east and west during the early centuries are the inspiration behind Vipoo Srivilasa's work. His ceramic art, which incorporates emblems of Thai culture, is hailed by many as whimsical, theatrical, insightful and contemporary.

The Thai artist uses the age-old techniques of hand-pinching and hand-painting to transform modern materials such as Australian cool ice porcelain into stunning works of art. He peppers each piece with vignettes of his life as well as thoughts about "materialism, cross culture mingling, Buddhist philosophy and disposable culture," he tells *Silkwinds*. He finds

inspiration from "travel, good conversation over a nice meal, books and everyday events."

Vipoo is an environmentalist and his exhibitions dramatically illustrate the need to protect the world's reefs. He is so enamoured by the beauty of the seas that mermaids and other sea creatures figure largely in his works. One of his most recent exhibitions, "Indigo Kingdom," is splashed with heaps of artistic promise and the right dash of theatricality to get his environmental message across.

His collections are hailed for their symbolisms as well as fine craftsmanship – something that Vipoo is well proud of. But, according to him, to fully appreciate his art, one must involve not just the sense of sight but all the other senses (taste, smell, hearing, touch and mindfulness). For him, sensory experience is an essential part of art appreciation.

INDIGO KING

"Indigo Kingdom" tells a theatrical story of the human effects on coral reefs. Vipoo uses a traditional Thai narrative of an imagined ancient kingdom with the Indigo King as the focal character.

FOR THE FUTURE

Inspired by the ceramic figurines of court ladies he saw in Beijing's Ming Tombs, Vipoo wields his artistic wand to bring to life this futuristic underwater character.



In 2008, he launched the Roop-Rote-Ruang (Taste-Touch-Tell) Project, a series of dinner parties at various residences in Sydney, Australia where he presented more than 100 pieces centred on the coral reef theme. He presented his works together with the meals he prepared for guests.

"The works unfold as the meals are consumed. The dinner project emphasises the role of ceramics in sensory experience and embraces the Buddhist philosophy of *ayatana*."

With functional, decorative and experiential collections, Vipoo aims to engage his audiences in a way no ceramic artist has ever done before.

PRINCE P

This is a piece from "The Night I Had Fun" series, which is a cultural exchange project for Thai and Australian ceramic artists that Vipoo organised in 2006. The series is a memory of the first night the invited artists met each other.



PROTECTOR OF THE EAST

This piece from the "Indigo Kingdom" exhibition references a giant serpent sculpture often found in most Buddhist temples.



PEE BEAR WITH THAI HAT

The Pee Bear comes with five different hats (Thai, Chinese, Indian, Japanese and ??????????) that function as lids. The idea is to match the hat with the tea in the pot, in this case tea hat for Thai tea.



STILL LIFE OF DEATH

Vipoo's take on the transience of life. Phrases such as "There is no avoiding death" and "Good health is the highest gain" are painted on the ceramics.



NOT FOR SUSHI

Mermaids are often found in Vipoo's ceramic art. This piece from the Roop-Rote-Ruang Project was presented along with 100-plus ceramic wares that centre on the coral reef theme.