

## Buffalo battle wins international ceramics prize

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Contemporary resonance and 'personal readings' take out top prize at international ceramic award.



*Image: Vipoo Srivilasa, Battle of Old and New Power 2012, porcelain. Courtesy of the artist and Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane*

Melbourne-based artist [Vipoo Srivilasa](http://visual.artshub.com.au/news-article/news/visual-arts/jamming-it-in-the-regions-244245) (<http://visual.artshub.com.au/news-article/news/visual-arts/jamming-it-in-the-regions-244245>) was announced the winner of the 29<sup>th</sup> biennial Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award, taking home \$10,000 for his artwork *Battle of Old and New Power*.

The winning entry was a narrative work showing a pair of water buffalo covered with hundreds of hand-painted porcelain petals. One marked 'red' and the other 'yellow' they are shown circling each other.

'Buffaloes have always played an integral part in Thai culture and Thai society,' Srivilasa said on his website (<http://vipoo.com/new/>). 'The worst insult in Thai language is to be called "Buffalo" as this animal is seen as slow, stupid and stubborn.'

'*Battle of Old and New Power* is my response to Bangkok Red Shirt and Yellow Shirt protest and fight in the recent years,' he said.

Judge Dr Patsy Hely from the Australian National University School of Art selected the winner from 48 entries, which included submissions from Japan, Switzerland, Argentina and Israel.

Srivilasa created the artwork in response to political upheaval in Thailand over the last few years. Rendered in pristine white porcelain, the work was praised by Hely as a 'fine example ... where idea, material and technique coalesce.'

Hely said the work could be subject to different interpretations, and that it 'might have more personal readings'.

'It could for instance be referring humorously or sardonically to sexuality or to personal relations in general,' Hely said.

'[The work] has resonance not just with one country's internal battles but with the pulls and pushes of global relations and power struggles more broadly,' she said. 'In this way, it is a work in which the contemporary world is writ large.'

Srivilasa's work was described as 'at once beautiful and unsettling' and reflects the contemporary world by 'speak[ing] loudly of this moment in time.'

In 2002, the artist was selected by Craft Australia (<http://vipoo.com/about/>) to represent the country at an exhibition called ATTITUDE Ceramics: New Australian Ceramics, in Chicago. He has since achieved widespread recognition for his ceramics work in the Asia-Pacific, and more recently, in Europe and the Americas.

Within Australia, his work has been included in exhibitions such as the Bravura: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australian Craft Exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Fierce and Friendly at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.

In 2012, he was elected a member of the International Academy of Ceramics (the foremost organisation representing ceramicists worldwide) due to active involvement in cultural exchange projects.

'We are very pleased to acquire Vipoo Srivilasa's winning artwork as it will be a valuable addition to our collection of high-end ceramic art practice,' Gallery Manager John Walsh said.

The exhibition is at the Gold Coast City Gallery from 6 September – 26 October 2014 at the Gold Coast Arts Centre.

For more information on the exhibition visit

<http://www.theartscentregc.com.au/whats-on/whats-on-items/29th-ceramic-art-award> (<http://www.theartscentregc.com.au/whats-on/whats-on-items/29th-ceramic-art-award>)

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Caroline Tung is a second-year student at Monash University.