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# ...These Things That Divide The World In Two...

Saun Santipreecha

May 25<sup>th</sup> – June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024

Reisig and Taylor Contemporary Gallery, Los Angeles

Review by Thomas Symeonidis

What is important for understanding Santipreecha's practice and its relation to Beckett's work is the topological dimension of his endeavours. By topological, I mean two things. First, Santipreecha's reflection on space and on the artistic decisions that can be made regarding trajectories and positioning in space. Second, his cross-disciplinary movement across different epistemic fields. Thus, the artist channels his applied thought by questioning the notion of position itself and weaving a web from various disciplines and inquiries that, in his own words, result in the sculpting, forming and embodiment of gestures of thought. In this context, the idea of body becomes an encompassing frame, an organic whole that organizes and at the same time subverts dominant mechanisms of history, fiction and mythmaking. But the body, following this idea, is not restricted to human or non-human aspects; it is also a semantic and artificial construction, an organic disposition that is designed so as to start from the ground and evolve into complex and more intimate, psychic levels of activity. This is why the notion of fractal is so appropriate in this context. Santipreecha traverses different scales in a way that forms a heterogenous nexus of allusions and similarities. And this is where we could locate his more intense relation to Beckett.

It is in this sense that we must approach the architectural idea that guided the design of the exhibition, which transforms the gallery into an experimental space, sensitive to visitors' movements. It is about a novel form of sculpture that interweaves the lines of the visitors' bodies and the overall disposition of the installed objects framed by the structural elements of the gallery as a built entity. The contours of the moving bodies can be thought of as appearing on a theatrical stage, as being a spontaneous and dispersed chorus trapped by two choreographing elements – the Ear, a microphone mounted on the outside wall of the gallery, and the Eye, a webcam. The gathered signals are processed by a system, ingeniously engineered by Luc Trahand, leading to a series of permutational acts. A permutation is a type of change that takes into account several elements. A good way of understanding this concept is by looking at Santipreecha's piece, *16 Permutations for Copper* (oil, vinegar, salt, coffee, tracing paper on copper sheets, approximately 8ft x 12 ft total, 2 ft x 3 ft each), exhibited on the central wall of the gallery. According to the artist's exhibition text, the sixteen copper panels are permutational, that is, the function of each can change in the musical sense "where a note's function (and legibility) is determined by its positioning in relation to another".





*16 Permutations for Copper* (Pic: F. Ó Faoláin)



The last piece, *The sun shone [...] on the nothing new*, stemming from the opening lines of Beckett's *Murphy*, provides an ironic but powerful conclusion. This piece, hovering in the central section of the gallery, itself an abstraction of a tree, can be seen, according to the Artist's Exhibition Text, as "a visual (and conceptual) anchor point to the work as totality". Ontology is fictional, is subject to writing and disposition in time and space; ontology is modular. And at this point we could highlight the resistance of Beckett's work to appropriation from any school of thought, which could also be said of Santipreecha's work. If art is still in a privileged position to comment on the everchanging novelty of human bodily existence, it is precisely because it possesses the ability to play with and suggest designed spaces for material and symbolic being implicated in provisional ontologies of the human.

It is Sunday and all the participants of the Beckett and Justice conference are outside the gallery, some of us flying in a few hours, others not. Last words and goodbyes. Emotional? Sincerely permutational? What a closing.

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*Perhaps that's what I am...* (Image courtesy of Reisig and Taylor Contemporary)