

chavalit soemprungsuk

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1989

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CHAVALIT'S WIT

Chavalit Soemprungsuk is a Thai artist who has lived in Holland for more than two decades. He works in solitude in his studio in Amsterdam. The artist no longer makes art in Bangkok as he finds the chaotic life difficult to adjust. Chavalit says that his art would be totally different if he was to return and settle in the metropolis of Bangkok.

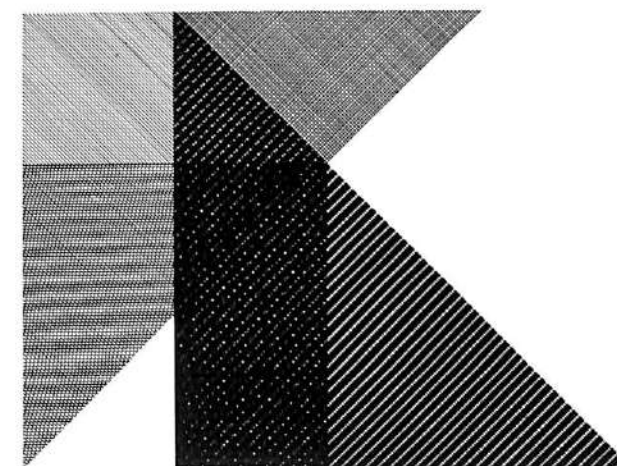
Chavalit's grids are emblems of modern art which have little to do with ethnicity and nationality. The artist shows us how his grids function to declare the modernity of modern art. His art turns its back to nature. It is free from the obligation to picture the world. It is anti-natural, anti-real, anti-mimetic. In so doing it demonstrates the independence of all deductive or logical systems from the process of observation. Chavalit's hand-drawn lines criss-cross in an orderly fashion and at the same time state the absolute autonomy of the realm of art. The grids stare back at us from the flat surface as if to challenge the mind to play a game.

This game is withdrawn from the real world entirely. Once the viewer's mind is conditioned the game becomes complex and sophisticated. Chavalit's systematic line drawing becomes almost obsessive and ritualistic with its precision, its neatness, its finicky exactitude. At first, we get the impression that the artist is in pursuit of intelligibility by mathematical means. Each line is carefully mapped out from one point to the next. The multitude of lines intersect in a mesh and we expect experience the sensation of purity or transcendence or something of that sort. But this is not the case. Chavalit surprises us by luring the mind to continue with the game. The artist creates a serial expansion for the mind to get tangled in a rich array of geometric forms that move beyond the economy of the mathematician's language. Chavalit's wit must be fully appreciated in a series of drawings. As a set of work the grids compliment one another emanating a feeling of infinity. As the result, the situation reaches a contradictory state as the notion of "less is more" becomes "the more the merrier." For Chavalit, the reduction of form and content is different from the concept of Kasimir Malevich or Ad Reinhardt (the square = sensation, the white area = nothing). Chavalit's art is not always reductive as his drawings are constantly reorganized and rearranged to create new compositions at different levels of complexity.

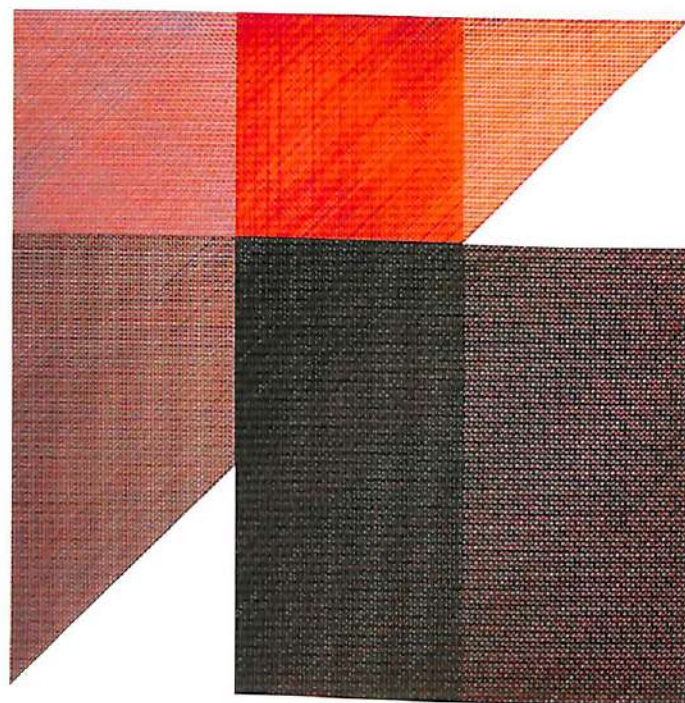
Those of us who have been following Chavalit's development will notice a change of tempo and rhythm in his work. His new series in this exhibition continues the grid-like geometric forms but colors take on a more significant role. The lines are made up of colors which create an equivalent of a screen or a filter through which light passes to the brain. The intensity of these colors vary according to how Chavalit makes them interact with their neighbors. In some areas intersecting colors create optical illusion as if they are vibrating, buzzing waves of electric currents. In other areas there are bright color blocks which create opacity. The use of pigments enrich images which are superimposed on the retina. Many viewers may find Chavalit's work baffling and meaningless. This is because his art rejects narrative or representational reading of any kind. But this is where Chavalit takes his stand and that is why every time he exhibits his work in Bangkok the experience is always refreshing. Once in a while, it is worth reminding ourselves that there are gifted artists who should be praised not because of their 'Thai-ness' but for the fact they are extremely talented modern artists.

Apinan Poshyananda
November 12, 1989
New York

Top : untitled 1989, mixed media, 75 x 90 cm.
Under : untitled 1989, mixed media, 75 x 90 cm.

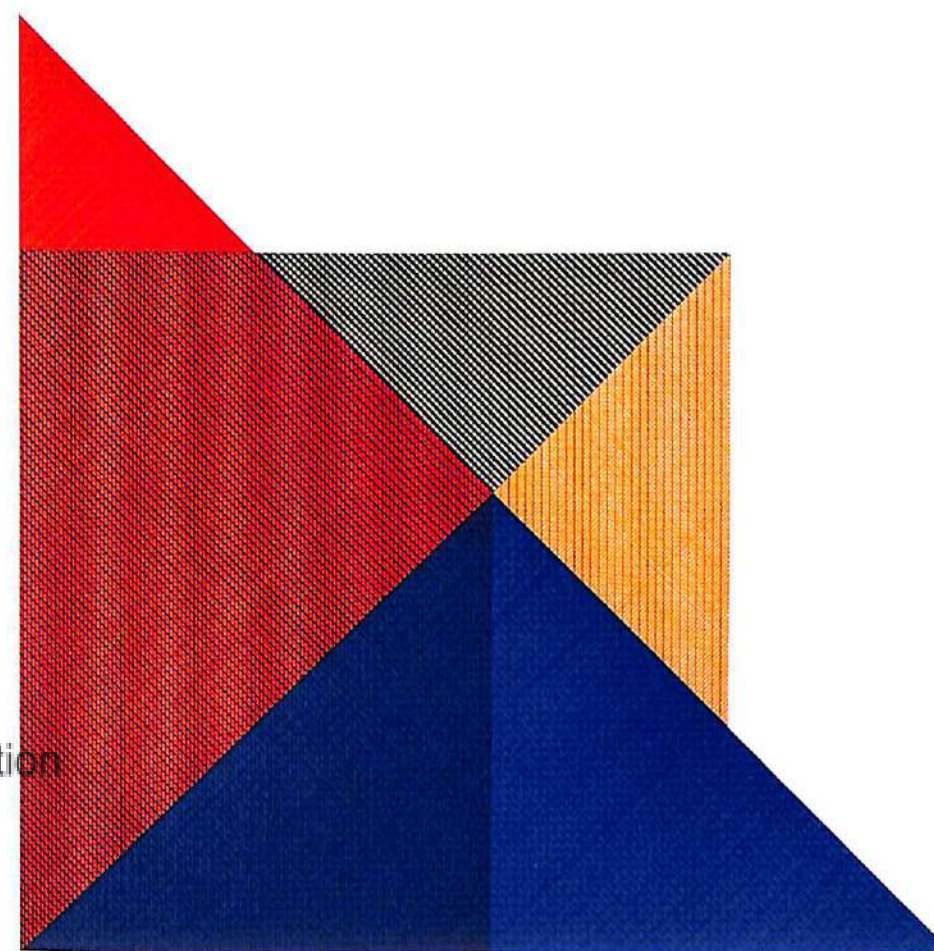


Museum Foundation

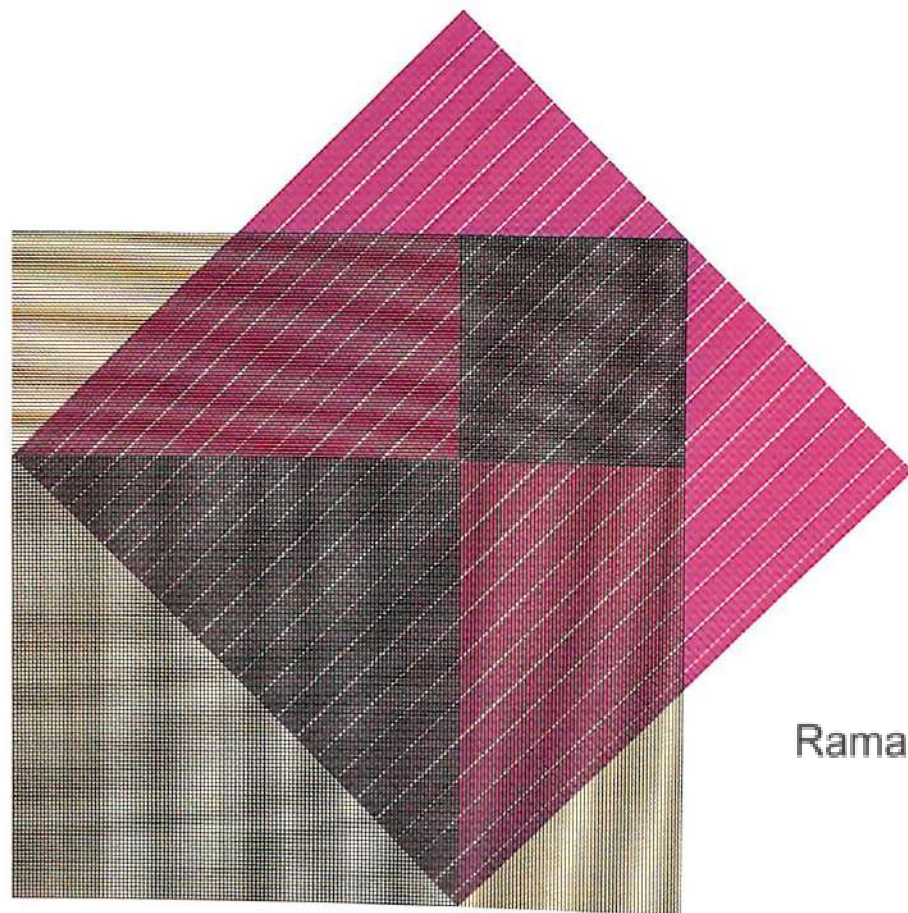


untitled 1989, mixed media, 72 x 75 cm

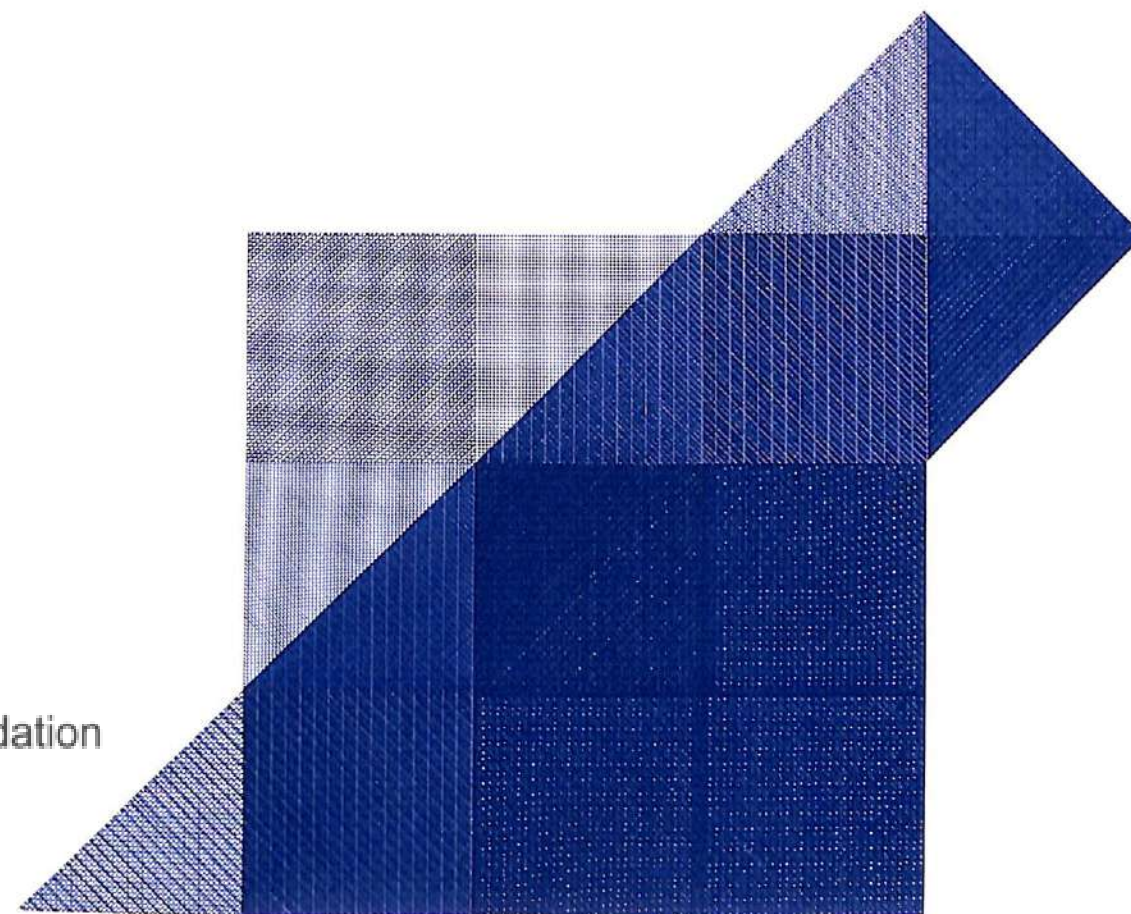
Rama IX Art Museum Foundation



untitled 1989, mixed media, 80 x 83 cm



Rama IX Art Museum Foundation



chavalit soemprungsuk

1939 born at khon kaen, thailand
1955/1962 fine arts university, bangkok
1963/1965 rijksacademie voor beeldende kunsten, amsterdam, the netherlands

independent exhibitions

1963 suan pakkad palace, bangkok, thailand
1966 leiðs akademisch kunstcentrum, leiden, the netherlands
1972 gallery nouvelles images the hague, the netherlands
1974 municipal exhibition centre aemstelle, amstelveen, the netherlands
1975/1986 gallery inart, amsterdam, the netherlands
1980 national gallery, bangkok, thailand
1985 dutch design centre, utrecht, the netherlands
gallery 'r', novi sad, yugoslavia
the bhirasri institute of modern art, bangkok, thailand
1986 gallery green orange, dubrovnik, yugoslavia
1987 gallery inart, amsterdam the netherlands
nv luchthaven schiphol, the netherlands
1988 the bhirasri institute of modern art, bangkok.
1990 the artist's gallery, bangkok

collective exhibitions

1958/1972 national exhibitions, bangkok, thailand
1962 pratt institute, new york, u.s.a.
1966 gallery tasca, new york, u.s.a.
1972 municipal purchase, museum fodor, amsterdam, the netherlands
1973 municipal purchase, stedelijk museum, amsterdam, the netherlands
1974/1976 the dutch national collection exhibition 'single-plural' and 'movement', organized by netherlands art organization, a.o. amsterdam, frans hals museum, haarlem, the netherlands
1974/1980 universal moving artists, stedelijk museum, amsterdam
1976 frans hals museum, vishal, haarlem, the netherlands
1977/1978 municipal purchase, museum fodor, amsterdam the netherlands
1978 graphic manifestation, stedelijk museum, schiedam, the netherlands
1979/1980 the dutch national collection exhibition 'graphic technique', organized by netherlands art organization, a.o. amsterdam, the netherlands
1980 europe prize for painting, oostende, belgium
1983 société internationale des beaux arts, grand palais, paris, france
1983/1985 salon d'automne, grand palais, paris, france
1983/1985 the international independent exhibition of prints in kanagawa, japan
1984 the 10th international print biennale in cracow, poland
the international print exhibition intergrafia 84, gallery of modern art, katowice, poland
1985 the 1st international of poster in toyama, japan
1986 art centre abc no rio, new york, usa
1987 41 e réalités nouvelles, grand palais, paris, france
1988 Universal Moving artists, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
42 e réalités nouvelles, grand palais, Paris, France

commissions

1987 wall object, 'windbreker', amsterdam