

as if in a factory production. In *Fuck Me* (2010), idolatry becomes narcissism when a large resin *buhul* with a protruding penis stares at its reflection in the mirror and sees the word “Fuck” on its forehead and the word “Me” written on the back of its head, a whimsical nod to the many projections placed on the deity.

Some works in the show incorporate other Ifugao objects that have been turned into souvenirs: knives used as everyday tools and also in indigenous shamanic rites, which Damag had transformed into metal sculptures in *Chair 1* (2012), *Puso 1* (2013), and *Puso 2* (2013).

The museum context for this exhibition is the appropriate environment for Damag’s manipulations and subversions of the *buhul* and other significant Ifugao objects because it allows the artist to critique prevailing Western views of so-called primitive art, in an institutional setting. It gives Damag the opportunity to reanimate seemingly static objects—a common perception of objects on display at museums—for it is through his own rituals and ruminations that the artist gives new life and meaning to the objects that he holds most sacred.

Patricia Tumang

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THAILAND

Bangkok

Monologue Dialogue 3 at the Bangkok Art & Culture Center

Supported by the British Council, *Monologue Dialogue 3* was an impressive exhibition that explored monumentality and fragility through an ongoing conversation initiated eight years ago by 12 British and Thai artists in both London and Bangkok.

The exhibition series has been orchestrated by British artist Andrew Stahl, a regular

visitor to Thailand—a place that has generated inspiration for him since first exhibiting there in the mid-1980s. Stahl has curated the third, and possibly the tautest, most inventive show in the series, with the thoughtful presentation occupying the Center’s voluminous space.

As in the two previous exhibitions, several artists reappear alongside new contributors. Stahl’s selection has been organic, with any conceptual factors left largely open-ended to encourage dialogue and interaction, perhaps a reflection of his role as an educator at the Slade School of Art in London.

The evolutionary focus was further cemented by several of the artists producing and installing new works quickly in a short time prior to the opening. With the Center’s restricted budget, the intense process allowed overseas artists to make and exhibit ambitiously scaled works with significant input from a large community of local volunteers. Regardless of the show’s success physically, the spirit of fostering cooperation and interchange is Project’s core achievement.

While the focus has been towards collaboration, the sub-texts of monumental-

ity and fragility are clearly evident in several of the works. Certainly it is to be found in Atsuko Nakamura’s eight-meter, pyre-like tower of recycled wood, *Inside Out of the Spirit*, dominates one of the Center’s main galleries, and there is also a sense of the epic in Stahl’s six-meter long oil-on-canvas *Death of Trotsky*.

Despite such grand proportions, these works instill a sense of the tangible and human frailty: Nakamura’s decaying branches and loosely draped monastic cloth suggests impermanence. The solitary figure at the end of Stahl’s composition shows vulnerability as the predatory serpent nearby prepares to strike. Yet humanity’s awkwardness is conveyed most effectively in the experience of climbing and descending Jesada Tangtrakuwong’s precarious, uneven staircase, *Hill*, which is an expression of Buddhist philosophy.

There is also a great sense of the tactile and immersion in the exhibition presentation. Tuksina Pipitkul’s *100,000 Lines* is labor-intensive, methodically crafted from plastic cable straps to resemble the coarse hair of a Thai street dog. Similarly rich in texture, though more disturbing than Pipitkul’s sen-

timental creature, is Miranda Housden’s giant surreal *Monkey’s Cooking Pot* with tubular fur and grotesque orifices.

Steven Pettifor

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THE UNITED STATES

Atlanta, Georgia

Adrienne Outlaw at Whitespace Gallery

In the tastefully restored Victorian carriage house of Whitespace Gallery, one sees first beautifully abstracted images in a refreshing white, accentuated with agreeably grainy textures. The alabaster hue is maintained in the second room, with touches of scarlet scoring sculptures in the center of the space. In the last and smallest of the three rooms, however, subtly sinister imagery emerges, undercutting the snowy brilliance of the earlier works. Gradually the freighted current underpinning the installation comes into focus: sugar, from which the works are made, is the cause not only of physical and emotional addictions, but also of historical atrocities, especially the slave



Jesada Tang-trakuwong, Hill, 2014, steel, rubber, and wood, 664 x 110 x 290 cm.



Adrienne Outlaw, *Mind I*, 2014, glass, sugar, archival coating, 13 x 17".

trade. Like Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*, sweets ensnare with their delectability, entrapping users and ultimately destroying them. However desirable, sugar, Adrienne Outlaw maintains, offers only a *Sweet Demise*.

In the first space, Outlaw adapts imagery from actual brain scans in *Mind I, II, III, IV, and V* (all 2014). Formed with calligraphic flourish from sugar on thick green squares of plate glass, these are propped against the wall on aluminum shelves, casting shadows behind—an ominous detail hinting at the deleterious consequences of indulging a “sweet tooth.” On the other wall, *Double Take* (2014) juxtaposes twined kidney shapes, also “sketched” with sugar on clear glass. These suggest the deterioration of organs from overconsumption, an idea reinforced by *Eclipse* (2014), which implies a veiled ken, refusing to pay attention to the dangers of sugar. On the far wall, the razor-sharp edges of *Plunge I and II* (2014) underscore the hazards of succumbing to the desire for sweets.

Aligned in an arc, six rectangular white boxes titled *Swell* (2014) dominate the second room. Cut through with irregular indentations lined in crimson velvet—a gashing red vein—the work suggests inner organs, such as the liver, all impaired by the effects of too much sugar. The case against sweets intensifies. *Lair* (2014) is a cage slathered with sugar clumped thickly like snow—its vivid invitation

to enslavement by confections underscored by the open door. Similarly appealing in its frosted hue but foreboding in meaning, *Leech* (2014) is a sugarcoated tangle of warped bedsprings, suspended from the ceiling.

Lining the far wall, *Grasp* (2014), a series of “paintings” in sugar on convex mirrors, suggests first the pleasure in looking at oneself, but closer scrutiny reveals more. Their convexity offers a wider per-



Adrienne Outlaw, *Swell*, 2014, velvet, plaster, wood, paint, each block 15 x 15 x 30". All images: Courtesy of the Artist.



Adrienne Outlaw, *Lair*, 2014, metal, sugar, archival coating, 17 x 15 x 34".

spective, and the free, thick strokes hint, as before, at the inner organs—heart, kidney, brain, liver—all compromised by excessive sugar. Splotted with ragged globs of sugar, a few of the pieces approximate vomit, a reference to bulimia, the affliction suffered by so many young women. Leaning against the wall, *Vault* (2014), a sugar-encrusted mirror shaped like a splayed Gothic arch—a frequent image in Outlaw's work—suggests, at

the same, time an altar, a tombstone, and, because of the title, a tomb itself. The sinister implications are unmistakable: “worship” of sweets leads to death. *Cascade* (2014) imitates a food tray filled with wafers formed from sugar, calling to mind vanilla wafers. But these are also like coins: sugar means money to those who process food.

In the third, smallest space, Outlaw's message takes on an even more militant edge with references to the pivotal role sugar played in the industrial revolution and in the slave trade. Three “paintings” of sugar loaves recall the way sugar was formed by slaves before granulation, and *Contract* (2014), a photograph showing a coil of sugar wrapped around a colonial-style wooden furniture leg, implies the destructive codependence of master and slave, a fateful relationship engendered by the ubiquitous craving for sugar.

Implicated in the fatal craving for sweets, Outlaw implies, are those who produce deleterious, sugary foods, further inciting the desire for them through advertising. Nor is history exempt from condemnation. Greed, together with the taste for sugar, conspired to foster the evils of the slave trade. Thus like Baudelaire's *Flowers of Evil*, sugar, desirable but deadly, is a metaphor for all those glamorous lures that ultimately harm us.

Dorothy Joiner

