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now in bangkok

## RENAISSANCE BANGKOK

Bangkok has long been a popular shopping destination for affordable, original art. Now, partly thanks to a growing international yen for all things Asian, the local art scene is flourishing. New galleries are opening around town with each passing month; plus a growing roster of events lures both residents and visitors to investigate a maturing scene that is more varied and vibrant than ever.



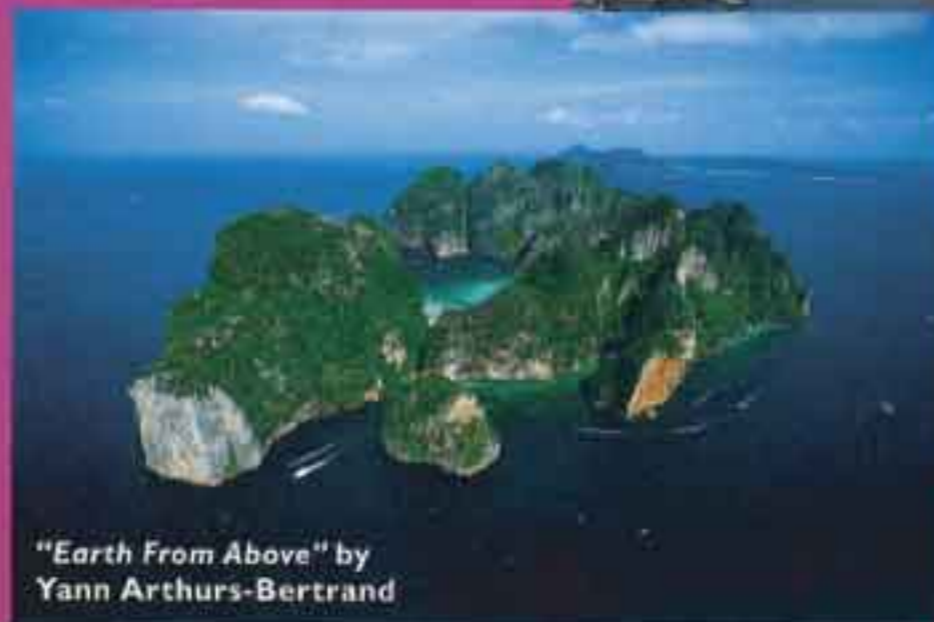
Those seeking an overview of Thai artistic endeavours can attend the inaugural **Bangkok Art Fest 2008** at Siam Paragon mall this month, promising short films, theatrical and musical offerings, as well as an exhibition of nudes. (Whether the latter elicits gasps, gawps or giggles from the assembled shoppers, voyeurs and school-kids remains to be seen).

Current Thai art is not just about pretty variations on themes of Buddhist imagery, either. Consider, for starters, self-styled multi-disciplinary conceptual artist Navin Rawanchaikul, known internationally for instigating colourful community art projects. His first major retrospective exhibition – **Navin's Sala**, hosted at Raimon Land property showcase The River Promenade – is well worth checking out this month. Visit [www.bangkokartmap.com](http://www.bangkokartmap.com) for more.

The art scene was also complemented in June by contributions from the Italian and French embassies, as part of their respective annual festivals. A particular highlight of this Euro-renaissance was Yann Arthurs-Bertrand's spectacular **Earth From Above**, an exhibition of aerial photography that has roamed the globe reaping plaudits. You can still head over to Zen department store any time this month and see the world from a fascinating, uniquely vertiginous perspective in this unprecedented outdoor exhibition.

Also enriching the local cultural landscape was the **International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA)**, held here for the first time last month. Passers-by were visibly shocked as hordes of screaming Bollywood fans did their best to recreate Beatlemania in Bangkok.

So – do these high-faluting scenes amount to just another day in the emerging artistic and cultural melting pot that is Bangkok? Sometimes it feels like that a badly timed-blink means you'll miss some of the vital goings on. Thankfully, a new **Bangkok Art & Culture Centre** is scheduled to open very soon, tasked with documenting developments. *Bangkok 101* just hopes they can keep up.



"Earth From Above" by Yann Arthurs-Bertrand

Bangkok 101 , July, 2008

Snapshots

events calendar



Throughout July

A "Nude Exhibition" opens the inaugural Bangkok Art Fest 2008 at Siam Paragon (Halls 1, 2 & 3) on 1 July and runs all month. From the 16th, the flagrant nakedness will be joined by a schedule of short films, theatrical and musical performances and an art fair.

[www.bangkokartfest2008.com](http://www.bangkokartfest2008.com)

Until 3 July RIVER CITY GRAND AUCTION

Antique lovers should get over to the auction at the River City complex before the best items go under the hammer. Items on display include Thai Benjarong, fine blue and white monochrome and polychrome ceramics. Admission is free.

4 July onwards NAVIN'S SALA

Navin's Sala, a unique new art book coupled with a retrospective exhibition spanning the 15-year career of internationally renowned Thai-Indian artist Navin Rawanchaikul, opens at Raimon Land's The River Promenade (see inside back cover for further details).  
Tel: 02-252-3900.

**THE RIVER**  
The River Promenade  
July 4 - August 10, 2008  
Daily 10am - 6pm  
(Free Admission)

**NAVIN'S SALA**  
A Retrospective Exhibition  
by Navin Rawanchaikul

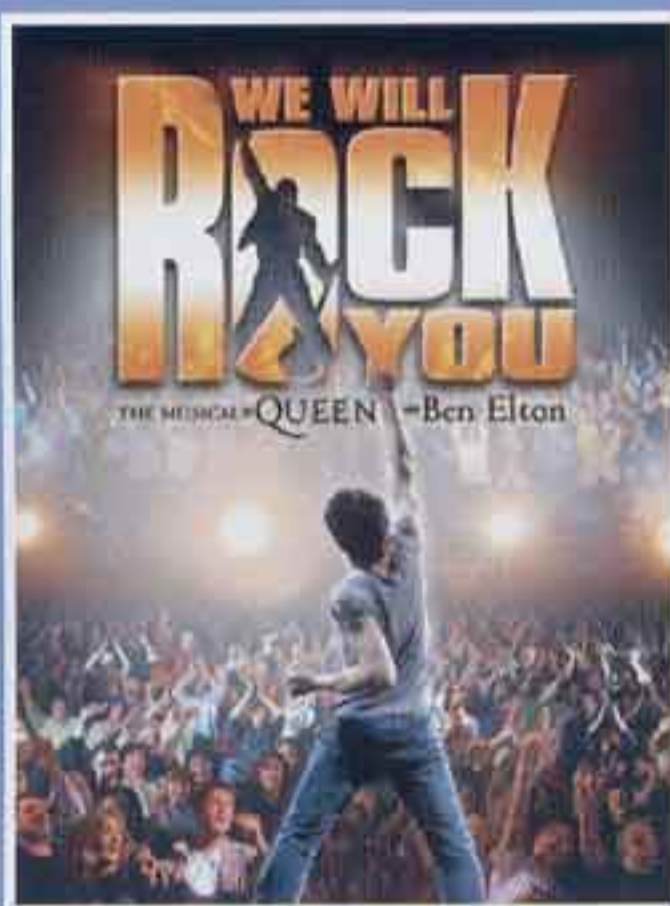
**NAVIN RETURNS!!!**  
He is back in the latest incarnation of the famous Navin's Taxi Gallery

**MASTERPIECE!!!**  
Being first in the new nine-metre long Navin's Sala, Navin's painting featuring a cast of characters from his 15-year career and pick up a complimentary copy of the artist's new monograph, packed with collaborative insights

**EXCLUSIVE!!**  
Get your hands on the latest fashion accessories from the brand new line of Jim Thompson's Pua Khee Mer Collection by Navin Production.

**DON'T MISS!!!**  
Collect the limited edition "Nude Exhibition" calendar and receive a complimentary copy of the monograph by Navin Production.

**BIM!** **JIM THOMPSON** **ECS**

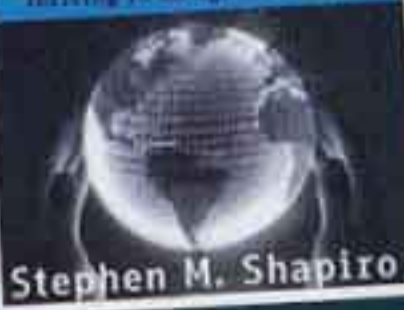


12 - 27 July WE WILL ROCK YOU

"You got mud on your face, You big disgrace, Kicking your can all over the place!" Originating from London's West End, having busted box offices everywhere, this rock theatre spectacular comes to Bangkok with a moustachioed, regal air. Tickets: B1,000 - 4,000. [www.thaiticketmajor.com](http://www.thaiticketmajor.com)

24/7 Innovation

A blueprint for surviving and thriving in an age of change



10 July 24/7 INNOVATION  
Turn your organisation into a crew of cutting-edge pioneers with the help of this full-day seminar hosted by moneybags American business guru Stephen Shapiro, co-founder of elite real estate agency WEA of Beverly Hills (who featured on VH1's 'Fabulous Life Presents: Really Rich Real Estate.') At the Radisson Hotel, Rama 9 Rd. [www.thaiticketmajor.com](http://www.thaiticketmajor.com)



25 July AKON

Three international pop players pass through Bangkok in the space of a week. The fun starts with Billboard Chart-slaying US rapper/producer Akon (he's sung with Michael Jackson, you know.) [www.thaiticketmajor.com](http://www.thaiticketmajor.com)

**In Print**

Bangkok is home to an eye-popping array of excellent book shops, small, large and sprawling. Just head for any major mall – Siam Paragon, Emporium, All Seasons Place, Central World or Central Chitlom, to name a few (see mall listings on p. 102) – and look for chain favourites like Asia Books, Kinokuniya, B2S, Nai-In or Bookazine. Plenty of other stand-alone local book stores across town offer the latest in print, new and used.



**BANGKOK-SMART GUIDE**

By Insight Guides | APA Publishing | 144pp

It seems a long time since *Lonely Planet* reigned supreme when it came to weather-beaten wanderlust bibles. Really, though, in just a few short, blog-tastic years the market has become saturated with efforts from reputed brands. This particular release shrinks an earlier, more comprehensive entry down to slim pocketbook – or second generation iPhone – size, thereby minimising the impact of *Insight Guides*' usually arresting photography. That said, however, the tidy page layouts are easy-on-the-eye, with the essentials boiled down to easily digestible nuggets and presented in an intuitive A-Z format, neatly indexed on the inside-front cover for easy reference. This book doesn't exactly innovate, but still makes for a decent road companion for travellers with short attention spans, which is apparently all the thing these days.



**NAVIN'S SALA**

Navin Production with Galerie Enrico Navarra | 416pp

Navin Rawanchaikul is one of few Thai contemporary artists to have impacted internationally; in fact, this fat publication premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. And, just as the multi-disciplinary artist defies easy categorisation, it's equally hard to know what to make of this, his colourful debut monograph (or biographical study – although Navin is an arch collaborator). The book (if, indeed, that is what it is) is styled like some kitsch Seventies pop-culture magazine produced by an Asian Warhol Factory on steroids. It presents a random grab-bag of photo-laden topical essays, cocktail recipes, ironic, mocked-up vintage movie posters and tongue-in-cheek advertisements. Two things for sure: this is a coffee table tome with a difference (i.e. - it's actually interesting); and Navin is walking proof that the Thai art scene has legs. (See p.14 for more Navin.)



**THE TROUSER PEOPLE**

Andrew Marshall | Penguin Viking | 296pp

Bangkok-based *Time* correspondent Andrew Marshall was deported from Burma in the wake of recent hurricane Nargis. *The Trouser People* is his entertaining and un sentimental, pre-expulsion ode to the tortured country, written undercover while posing as a tourist to fool the odious junta. In it, Marshall traces the intriguing footsteps of roguish English colonialist and scholar George Scott, who supposedly introduced football – a game that Burmese now love because it "is so much like fighting" – to the country more than a century ago. This is a tried, tested and well-trodden travel writing device. However, Marshall frequently strays off course while venturing into seldom-visited northern regions, thereby sourcing rich material without ever mentioning Scott or soccer – and his entertaining, often amusing travelogue is arguably at its most effective when he does.

reading & screening

**On DVD**

Thai theatres are notorious for their rapid turnover rates, making DVDs one of the best ways for visitors to explore Thai film. Thai DVDs are readily available in Mang Pong or CD Warehouse outlets in major malls, but before purchasing check the back for English subtitles and DVD region compatibility, if you don't have an all-region DVD player. English-subtitled versions are also often available as exports from Hong Kong at websites such as [www.hkfilm.com](http://www.hkfilm.com) or [www.yesasia.com](http://www.yesasia.com).



**KHAN KLUAY**

Kompin Khemkamnerd | 2006 | \$8.95 for import with subtitles

A crash course in the darker aspects of Thai nationalism. Ostensibly a cute children's tale, this film starts off charmingly enough – a forest idyll, a loving mother elephant, and her adorable baby, the sweet-tempered Khan Kluay himself. Cue grueling rite of passage – after being separated from his herd, tender Khan Kluay finds himself training as a war elephant for the conflict against the Burmese. Set in the time between the Burmese sacking of Ayutthaya in 1569 and King Naresuan's victory over Phra Maha Uparacha that re-established Thai independence, the film soon places Khan Kluay within the royal palace itself, where he is chosen to serve as King Naresuan's battle elephant. The last twenty minutes devolve into a jingoistic snuff film that will surely scare any tots, or any adults who'd like to think that such naked nationalism has little place in a children's film... or anywhere else.

Bangkok 101 , July, 2008



# NAVIN'S SALA

A Retrospective Exhibition by Navin Rawanchaikul

THE RESIDENCE. THE LIFESTYLE. THE ADDRESS.

## THE RIVER

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 July 4 - August 10, 2008  
 Daily 10am - 6pm  
 (Free Admission)

### TAXIMAN RETURNS!!!

Hail a ride in the latest incarnation of the famous Navin's Taxi Gallery

### MASTERPIECE!!!

Be the first to see the new nine-metre long Navin's Sala billboard painting featuring a cast of characters from his 15-year career and pick up a bumper copy of the artist's new monograph, packed with collaborative insights

### EXCLUSIVE!!

Get your hands on the latest fashion accessories from the brand new line of Jim Thompson's Pha Khao Mar Collection by Navin Production

**DON'T MISS!!!**  
 Collect the limited edition "Quotations From Comrade Navin" ceramic bust and book set specially produced to celebrate the formation of the Navin Party.

#### How to access The River Promenade

**By Car:**  
 The River is located on Charoen Nakhorn Rd, beside Soi 13 close to the Peninsula Hotel. Limited parking is available at The River Promenade.

**By BTS/Boat:**  
 The River's complimentary shuttle boat is available throughout the exhibition. The boat leaves regularly from the Hotel Shuttle Boats Pier at Taksin Bridge, or can be arranged by calling The River Promenade: 02-861-1971. To reach the pier, take the BTS Sky Train to the last stop, Saphan Taksin, and follow signs.



JIM THOMPSON

