

CULTURAL SNAPSHOTS

Artist: **Mr. Boonpard Kangkamano** (1966 —)

Bachelor of Arts (Sculpture), Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Master of Arts (Sculpture), Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

Diploma (Sculpture), Shinshu University, Nagano, Japan

He is now a lecturer in the College of Fine Arts at Lad Krabang in Bangkok

These works are a commentary on the growing consumerism in Thai society. The artist sees this consumerism and materialism becoming so powerful, that it is also feeding upon and destroying indigenous Thai culture.



Taberu - Consuming (2001, 2002) was originally developed and sculpted in Japan, when the artist was studying for his diploma, and later revised in Thailand. It suggests that we human beings, live in this world in a manner where we both *use* the world, but in the process, also *destroy* it. Chopsticks suggest a traditional manner for eating and consuming for the benefit of self and body. Their elegance also expresses the paradox more clearly between traditional culture and destructive consumption.



Taking Advantage (2002) was developed after the *Taberu - Consuming*. The idea is that in this materialistic, consumerist society, people allow others to take advantage of them to satisfy their materialist desires. But here the artist chose the portrait of a woman, implying the condition of poor women, like prostitutes, who are exploited. And this would also include those women who wish to marry foreigners for a better life. Even those who reject materialism are taken advantage of because they are in a position which is too weak to fight or escape. Thus the face of the portrait has a look of sadness.



The Manipulation (2002) discusses how Thais sometimes use other people's hands (like foreigner's hands) and trade-in our own ancient, valuable things because they desire wealth. The *Khon* head indicates something very precious being traded easily and openly. The big ladle also indicates consumption. The hand could be anybody's hand, but the artist chose a man's hand because it is unusual for a man to hold a cooking ladle, at least in traditional Asian culture, so it creates a feeling of conflict. And a man's hand also indicates a manipulation which is stronger and more destructive than a soft and weaker hand of a woman.

*Text and photographs are by **Preeyanuch Nhukate**, Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University of Thailand.*