

GBE  
439 W 127<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
NY NY 10027

RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA  
**SKIP THE BRUISING OF THE ESKIMOS TO THE EXQUISITE WORDS  
VS.  
IF I GIVE YOU A PENNY YOU CAN GIVE ME A PAIR OF SCISSORS**

**SEPTEMBER 24 – OCTOBER 28, 2017**  
**OPENING RECEPTION: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2017**

There are three works on view in Rirkrit Tiravanija's new exhibition at Gavin Brown's enterprise, at 439 West 127th Street. The show takes the visitor on a journey from his beginnings, to utopian possibilities of the future, and then finally back to a darker past that seems to have come back around to our present.

On the first floor a room-sized cabinet contains an archive of 47 of Tiravanija's Super 8 films from 1981 through to early 2000s; from Canada where he was a student to New York, Berlin, Thailand. The lens (his eye, our eye) gazes curiously out at the world passing by. New York subway trains, Chicago construction cranes, friends, lovers, artists, Bangkok streets. All roll silently by.

At the center of the exhibition are two films, each a 'day in the life...' of their respective protagonists; a retired rice farmer living near Chiang Mai, Thailand, and a poet/artist living in Berlin. Both these films are self-portraits, from afar, via others. The people portrayed in them are pieces of evidence submitted by Tiravanija in the forever ongoing and never-ending court trial: our struggle over the proper use of life. Are we here to leave a monument behind or to watch the sun rise then set? Are we here to toil? Or to play? Tiravanija's contention is that the artist and the ideal (idle) human are one and the same. They act on the periphery and he sees them as models for old but radical ways of thinking and living.

As he has so many times before, Tiravanija makes something by making nothing new. In this case, he finds his own self in the resemblance of another. This process of repetition by 'mono-print' produces nothing new, only new versions, new generations of an original Origin story. This story is passed along from one hand to another, like a secret message, a shared stigmata. From Lung Neaw's palm to Rirkrit's to ours. From Karl Holmqvist to Rirkrit to us. From Douglas Sirk to Rainer Werner Fassbinder to Rirkrit to you and me.

Over the past month in the gallery, Rirkrit has made a shot-by-shot remake (or repetition) of Fassbinder's *Ali: Angst Essen Seele Auf*. The top floor of the gallery contains a set from the film, the bar where Emmi and Ali, the two main protagonists meet. This is a recreation of a set; in turn a recreation in itself. Just as so many of Rirkrit's previous structures have been recreations, or physical descriptions, of previous or existing spaces: 303 Gallery, his rehearsal studio, John Giorno's living room, the Schindler house. Ghosts of spaces Rirkrit has once occupied; spaces he never occupied but dreamed of; bottles emptied by friends, then cast. This work also functions as a description, as a print from a something previous: Germany in the early 70s, folded forward to today, in America. Inevitably, given the extremity of our current political discourse, parallels and conclusions will be drawn, none of which Rirkrit would disavow. But ultimately he is compelled to repeat another work by a fellow artist (Fassbinder), to pass the message on, from hand to hand.



The story then is the oldest one: our observation of the passage of time and our place within this sundial. It runs through every work in the exhibition. In this sense Tiravanija is a fellow traveler, observing alongside us.

Tiravanija is the winner of the 2010 Absolut Art Award and the 2005 Hugo Boss Prize awarded by the Guggenheim Museum. Tiravanija was also awarded the Benesse by the Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum in Japan and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucelia Artist Award. Recent solo exhibitions include the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2016); the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2015); the Kunsthalle Bielefeld (2010); the Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel (2009); the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Serpentine Gallery in London (all 2005); as well as at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam (2004). Tiravanija is on the faculty of the School of Visual Arts at Columbia University, and is a founding member and curator of Utopia Station, a collective project of artists, art historians, and curators. Tiravanija is also President of an educational-ecological project known as The Land Foundation, located in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and is part of a collective alternative space called VER located in Bangkok.

