

Nathan Beard

There are times I think I am not sure of what I absolutely know, 2022

Very often find confusion in conclusion I concluded long ago, 2022

In my head are many facts that as a student I have studied to procure, 2022

In my head are many facts of which I wish I was more certain I was sure, 2022

Etcetera, etcetera and so forth, 2022

3D printed PLA plastic, spray paint, steel, custom automotive paint modelled after the now-discontinued 2014 Gucci nail varnish 'Siam Red'

Courtesy the artist and sweet pea, Perth

In a series of five near-collapsing sculptures, Nathan Beard toys with objects and archives to displace the stillness of the museum into a lively scene. Spread throughout the gallery, their curving and tangled base forms reference the fray of the cartoon fight. On top, a range of objects balance precariously, as though thrown into the air by some kind of force. Replicas of Thai objects held in the archive of the British Museum appear alongside figures featured in Wat Buddhapadipa (the Thai Buddhist temple in Wimbledon), his mother's Buddhist shrine statues from Thailand, and Thai-costumed fast-food figurines from Beard's own family's collection of trinkets, including a Muay Thai Snoopy and Tweety Bird dressed as a Thai dancer.

All the objects are rendered at a similar scale and in the same gold chrome finish, collapsing long-held hierarchies and binaries of taste and value – between high and low, historical and sentimental, fine art and ornament – to allow for new and different meanings to emerge.

Nathan Beard

A Puzzlement, 2022

Single-channel video with sound, 8:20 minutes

Score composed by Mei Saraswati

3D animation by Brendan Harwood

Courtesy the artist and sweet pea, Perth

A Puzzlement takes us on a journey of moving images depicting Thailand. Loosely inspired by the opening credits of *Eyewitness*, a 90s BBC nature and science TV series that took place in an imagined CGI science museum, in Beard's version, objects and imagery from both fictional and documentary sources, and representing widely different historical periods, appear onscreen one after another in a hypnotic form of time travel. An original score by Mei Saraswati combines a range of sonic references from both internet and personal sources, acting as a musical guide to the variety of clips that blend together into a composite portrait of Thailand.

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From left to right

A.F.G. Kerr (1939), 2022

Lady Thiang (1952), 2022

King Mongkut (1956), 2022

Prince Chulalongkorn (1865), 2022

Dibond mounted Giclée print on Hahnemühle Fine Art Pearl,
Swarovski Elements each named using the antiquated term Siam,
Avery 3002 Blockout Vinyl Matt Laminate

Thai Sapphire Little Greene paint produced in partnership with the
National Trust as one of their official 'Colours of England'

Courtesy the artist and sweet pea, Perth

In this installation, Nathan Beard draws from ethnographic and botanical collections as well as promotional imagery from *The King and I*. The photo's subjects include A.F.G Kerr, the 'founding father' of Thai botany, whose journals and notes are held in the archives of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew; and Prince Chulalongkorn, whose portrait resides in the Wellcome Collection. Also featured is a film production still of King Mongkut and a Broadway playbill portrait of his chief wife Lady Thiang, played by Yul Brynner and Terry Saunders, respectively.

Surrounded by fragments of Buddhist statues held in the British Museum Collection and imagery from *Orchids of Thailand*, gifted to the Kew Gardens in 1932 by Prince Nakhon Sawan (Chulalongkorn's son), these portraits are hand-embellished with over 92,000 Swarovski crystals.

The hand-painted wallpaper is based on a wall painting featured in a shrine in Nakhon Nayok, the home province of the artist's mother, erected on the occasion of the cremation ceremony of King Rama IX in 2017.