

Give More Than You Take

Pratchaya Phinthong

The Gift Exchange residency

Gift Exchange residency is developed by Maja Ćirić and Biljana Ćirić who were inspired by the Kula Exchange, ceremonial exchange system conducted in Papua New Guinea. Gift Exchange residency explores the notion of gift through cultural exchange that would stimulate centrality of peripheral exhibitions, hoping to draw unpredictable connections between different locations and productions proposing future ongoing relationships.

Institutions that will host practitioners from different regions include: Times Museum (Guang Zhou, China), Grey Projects (Singapore), Dom Omladine in cooperation with Šumatovača AIR (Belgrade, Serbia) and Casa Tres Patios (C3P), Medellín, Colombia

Selection of artists is conceived through the nominations submitted by curators from the country of artist's origin, while the final decision is made by the curator related to the host institution.

Gift Exchange doesn't only symbolizes gift for the ones granted residency but it is a gift for the locals that will host them, as well as to the locations where they come from. In both ways the residency will contribute to the understanding of one selves and the other.

Gift Exchange residency was started in order to complete Pratchaya Phinthong's *Give More Than You Take*

For the exhibition *One Step Forward Two Steps Back - Us and Institution*, 2013 presented at Times Museum, Guang Zhou curator Biljana Ćirić decided to start Gift Exchange residency to complete the piece *Give More Than You Take*. According to instructions the curator is supposed to propose a replacement for 500 kg of berries that the artist Pratchaya Phinthong has picked. Biljana Ćirić has proposed a Residency that will start in 2014 and will continue till symbolic weight of artists fulfills 500 kg.

Residency attempts to connect the regions and places that lack connection in global art system but possible share similar positions as proposal of self-reflection and activation of possible new connections and researches to come. At the same time this initiative through *Give More then You Take* work by Phinthong attempts to explore the possibility of existence beyond determined exhibition period through establishing research residency program for artists.

About Give More Then You Take

After learning from local and international media that a large number of Thai peasants travel to Sweden in the summer to pick wild berries, facing exploitative work conditions and pay so low that many do not even earn enough to pay off their original airline ticket to Sweden, the artist Pratchaya Phinthong decided to spend a month and a half living and working alongside the workers in the Swedish part of Lapland. But what might sound like the fundamentals of an ordinary journalistic exposé instead serves as the starting point of a project that presents the exchange of money and workforce, and the market of individual stories and collective hopes, as part of a process of transformation, sublimation, and formalization. At the end of each work day, Phinthong calculated the weight of wild berries he had managed to pick. In turn, he asked the director of the CAC Brétigny, Pierre Bal-Blanc, to collect an equivalent weight in useless objects, destined to be forgotten or thrown away, and pile them in the exhibition rooms.

Phinthong asks every curator who exhibits *Give More Then You Take* piece to decide for themselves how to display the objects collected over many days, arranging them in the space as they wish, without consulting the artist. While this might appear to be an act of negation and deprecation, in actuality Phinthong is confronting us with yet another transposition: not just of materials and symbolic functions, as we have just seen, but of responsibility—from the artist to the curator— which subtracts from these objects their value as mementos, testimonies, or fetishes in order to set them free in the space of the viewer's experience.