

WANG DU  
SURASI KUSOLWONG

February 4 through March 25, 2001

Opening hours : Tues.-Fri. 2-6 p.m., Sat.-Sun.2-5 p.m., Thursday evenings 8-10 p.m.

**Surasi Kusolwong**

*Everything 2SF (Money-Minimal), 2001*

Surasi Kusolwong lives and works in Bangkok. Daily life is also at the center of Surasi Kusolwong's artistic approach. He imports utensils and objects of everyday use in his country to inform us about a life style intimately linked to a specific culture. There is no better way to understand a culture than to observe its day-to-day habits. These objects provide us with a wealth of information on modes of behavior and customs, a glimpse of what is found in the local market or neighborhood shop. We marvel at the colors and shapes, at the playful and exotic aspect of these things. But why does the artist work with such commonplace materials? He sets a single price on all these things so as to give them equal material value, equal opportunity, and equal attention, so as to concentrate on the information they convey and endow them with a different status, an artistic practice.

This practice includes a view of the art market in general. When buying an object you are not acquiring a work, but a portion of the material the work is composed of. And you contribute to an economy that requires assistance. However, this economy is also a means of transmitting information and of creating cross-references towards other cultures, all the while putting into perspective our own consumer habits and system of consumption.

1<sup>er</sup> étage

**Wang Du**

*Mon kiosque, 15 juillet, 2000; Paysage International, 1997 \**

Wang Du lives and works in Paris. The work of Wang Du focuses on the media, presenting a critical reading of how they - and the mass media in particular - inform us about everyday reality, a reality that consists of both news items and the events that define our society.

The media manipulate reality to "boost" topical events. They do so consciously or unconsciously, and to a variable degree, taking advantage of the communication explosion that generates a constant and abundant flow of images. From this raw material, the artist has chosen "powerful" visuals that he transforms into colored three-dimensional *photo-objects* that retain the original frame and the distortions created by the camera lens. The result is kitsch, extravagant, outrageous. These photo objects, treated as an enormous undifferentiated "mix", are in fact so extravagant that at first they make us smile. Soon however, they give rise to a number of questions. Why are these stories of unspeakable banality exploited by the media in the first place? Who or what is behind these mundane, though sometimes unbearably cruel news items, that reduce the participants to mere merchandise on the information market? We are soon overtaken by a feeling of uncertainty, of indignation even, at the sight of the subjects represented, and the events that are part of our reality as well. What Wang Du proposes is manifestly a critique of the media through the media. But why does he choose to endow these items with emblematic status? Wang Du explains: "*Of course the most important thing for me is to abolish value judgments (good/bad, interesting/banal), to do away with these binary concepts. A judgment may never be trusted, it is always deceptive. By using the idiom of monumental sculpture and of mummies, I conceive of these 'artifacts' as of relics, or textbooks for the use of future generations.*" Critic and curator Hou Hanru comments his statement thus: "*In order to stress his break with all value judgments, Wang Du shows an extreme 'indifference' towards the 'esthetic impact' of the images he uses to create his 'artifacts', taking them to the utmost and attempting to reproduce them as faithfully as possible.*" Purple Prose 7, Automne 1994.

Courtesy Gallery Art et Public, Geneva

During the show, **La Cuisine** will be open every Thursday evening. Information and reservations : 026 323 23 51

**Thursday 8 March at 8 p.m.** : Guided visit of the exhibition with Michel Ritter, director of FRI-ART

**Coming exhibition** : Patty Chang - Jonathan Meese, Opening Saturday 7 April at 5 p.m.