

# *Tree of Life*

*by Maitree Siriboon*



Project Space • Luang Prabang

## ***Tree of Life***

The geographic and environmental links between Lao (Laos) and Northeastern Thailand (Isaan), separated by the Mekong River, are strong, but the contrasts in the natural environment are striking, almost shocking. On the Lao side, development has been limited and the lush tropical forests and complex natural environment have been largely maintained over the eons. On the Thailand side of the river, deforestation and development have drastically changed the ecology and social environment in only the last 100 years or so. Almost 100% of the Isaan population now works on farms that cover the deforested landscape that is now filled with rice fields, eucalyptus trees, sugar cane fields, casava farms, and, increasingly, dairy farms. Flooding is a constant threat and groundwater supplies are diminishing and more and more saline. There remain only a few mature and stately trees in this almost barren landscape and they seem so out of place as prehistoric symbols of more primitive times. They are threatened by those who view them as only wood or an interruption to the agricultural sameness and do not appreciate their fragile status of these living and lonely organisms.

The young people of the Isaan, who have grown up entirely in the "modern" agricultural environment are leaving their homes for work in urban areas and in factories. There are few remaining elders who remember the more diverse and complex environment and the wisdom and beauty of those tropical forests. The new generation is, quite bluntly, abandoning the rural life and, in the process, are losing an important connection to nature and the ecological and social history of the Mekong.

As an artist from the Isaan, someone who grew up on a farm and in a village, I feel great pain when I see the sudden and probably irreversible changes in our region and want very much to increase the awareness of the current generation of the very edge of the world that is disappearing. I have chosen the "Tree of Life" as my theme for the upcoming exhibition in Luan Prabang to utilize my drawing talents and photographic vision to create a series of images highlighting the remaining trees in the Isaan and the existing trees in Laos, linking them artistically but also showing the contrasting environments. It will be my contribution to the effort to preserve nature in as many ways as possible and to ensure that the beauty and grandeur of these stately trees are forever in the minds of people who watched them grow over the decades, people who are leaving in the region, and tourists who must be exposed to their beauty and to their plight as endangered species.

"The Tree of Life" is the theme of my exhibition and I respectfully request the opportunity to display my art work out of respect for the natural world.

As an Isaan artist whose background is that of a rural live

As Isan artist who has background root of life combination, the link between Thailand and Laos.

Almost 100 % of Isan population working as farmer, Life base on agriculture is influence for people so connect to the nature.

and landscape. the recently past 10 years the environment in Isan has so much change. A lot of eucalyptus have been plant in Isan area.

Less local tree has been grow so much. Young people also move into the capital city to work in the factory.

while the farm and Isan landscape have abandon for the older generation.

A lot of spices of plants become extinct while a young people abandon their home lands.

In this Isan environment change issue has give me the worry and concern of the tree and environment in LPB.

As contemporary Thai artist who been work in the different media of art work, Traddition Thai art, Photography, Installation, conceptual.

At this time I would like to create my first time drawing sketch series " Tree of Life" That inspire by the old trees that surrounding in LPB city.

Hopefully this exhibition would help to encourage the local & tourist who made the visit to see exhibition to appreciate the beauty of nature though my artistic vision.



*Borassus flabellifer*

E: Sugar palm; Asian Palmyra palm.

L: Ton tan.

Location: Luang Prabang Nation Museum

This tree inspire to the painting  
title "Ton tan"

Tree of life exhibition • Project space Luang Prabang  
Maitree Saiboon. 2012

Isat Ouy



*Samanea saman* (Jacq.) Merr

E: saman, East Indian walnut, Raintree

L: (Ton) Somsa.

Location: along the Mekong River

Tree of for life evolution

Project Space Luang Prabang

Maitree Siriboon, 2012

Prof Siriboon



*Samanea Saman (Jacq.) Merr.*

E: Saman, East Indian Walnut, Rain tree

L: (Ton) Somsa

Location: along the Mekong River side

This ~~painting~~ tree inspire my painting title "Somsa"

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Maitree Siriboon. 2012

*Maitree Siriboon*



*Ficus religiosa* L.  
E: Bodhi tree, Bo tree  
L: (Kok, Ton) Pho

This tree inspire to my painting title "Ton Pho"

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Maitree Niriboon. 2012

ໂຮງ ອາຣຽດ



*Corypha umbraculifera* L.

E: Sugar palm

L: Ton Bai Lan

Location: Ban Mano temple

This tree inspire to the painting title "Ton Bai Lan"

Tra of life exhibition • Project space Luang Prabang.

Main tree Siriboon. 2012

Janis O'Sy





*Couroupitan guianensis* Aubl.

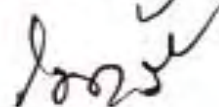
E: Cannonball tree

L: (ton) manikat

Location: Ban Mano temple

Inspire to my painting title "Ton manikat"

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Maitree Siriboon, 2012 

*Samanca Saman (Jacq) Mess*  
*Along the Mekong River side, LPB Laos*  
*Acrylic on Paper, 56 x 76 cm, 2012*



*Samanca Saman (Jacq) Mess*  
*Along the Mekong River side, LPB Laos*  
*Acrylic on Paper, 56 x 76 cm, 2012*



*Ficus Religiosa*  
*Ban Aphai Temple, LPB Laos*  
*Acrylic on Paper, 6 x 76 cm, 2012*



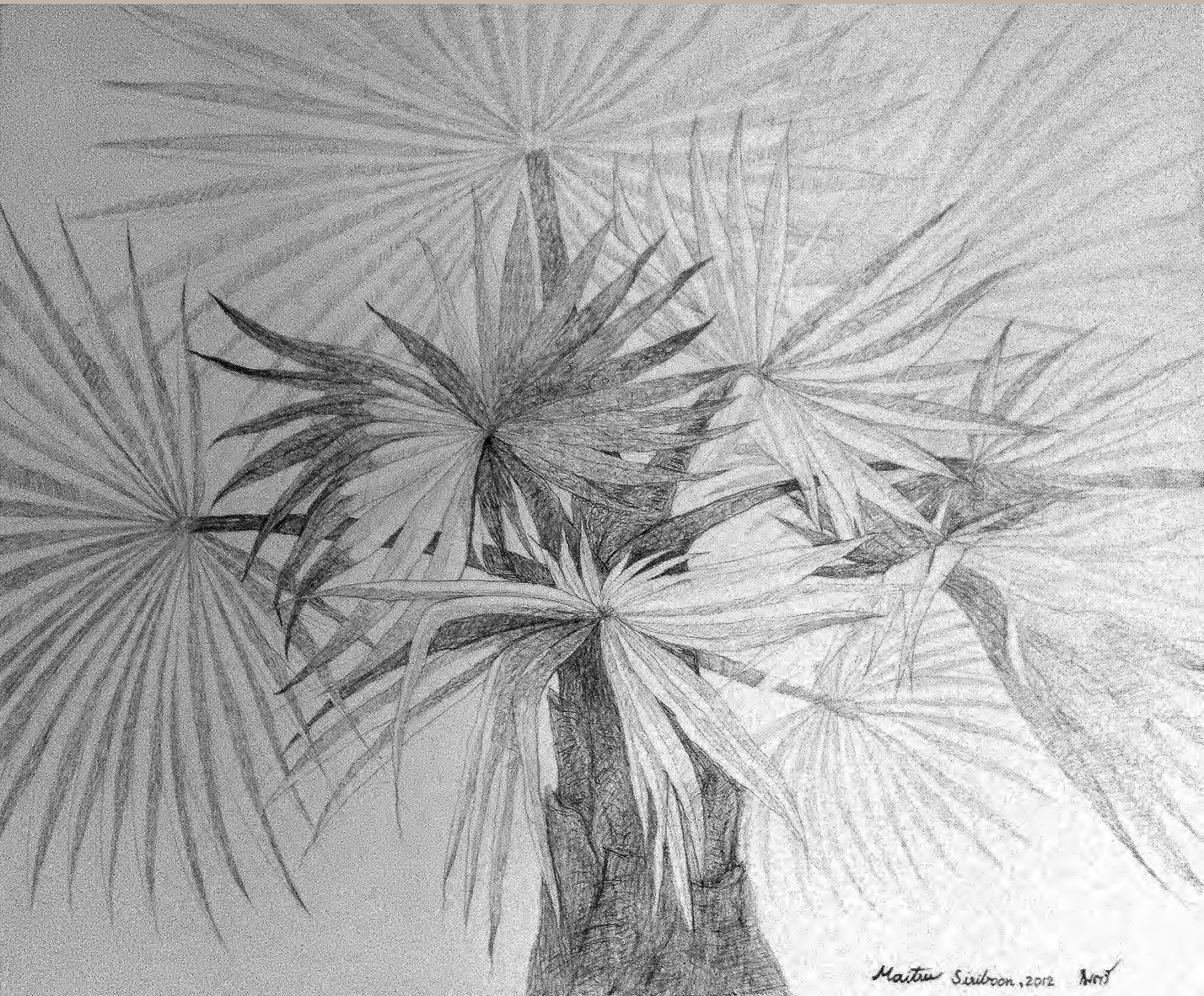
*Borassus Flabrellifer (Leave)*  
*National Museum, LPB Laos*  
*Acrylic on paper, 56 x 76 cm, 2012*



*Borassus Flabrellifer*

*National Museum, LPB Laos*

*Pen Study Sketch on Canvas, 100 x 120 cm, 2012*



*Corypha Umbraculifera*  
*Ban Mano Temple, LPB Laos*  
*Acrylic on Saa Paper, 99 x 332 cm, 2012*



*Corypha Umbraculifera*  
Ban Mano Temple, LPB Laos  
Acrylic on Saa Paper, 116 x 303 cm, 2012





*Tamarind Tree*

*Ban Vat Saen Primary School, LPB Laos*

*Pen Study Sketch on paper, 27 x 37 cm, 2012*



*Tree of Life (Sketch)*  
*Acrylic and Mosaicon paper, 56 x 76 cm, 2012*



*My Buffalos and My Dog*  
*Acrylic and Mosaic on Saa Paper, . 66 x 80 cm, 2012*



*Tree of Life*

*Acrylic and Moza on Saa Paper, 315 x 354 cm, 2012*



## **Biography**

Maitree Siriboon was born in 1983 Ubon Ratchatane province in the Northeastern part of Thailand (“Isaan”). He moved to Bangkok at the age of fifteen to study, first at the College of Fine Art and later at Silpakorn University where he received his Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Art. Maitree is a recipient of numerous national awards, among them "The Bangkok Bank Art Award" in 2006, and the painting award, "Sixty Years of Happiness Under His Most Benevolent and Majestic Rule" in 2005. His art has been featured in Art Asia Pacific News 2008, Asia Art News 2009, and Contemporary magazine 2007

Maitree's early collage work draws from his boyhood in Isaan (Northeastern Thailand), transforming half-forgotten memory snapshots into colorful abstractions of rural life. His childhood landscape permeates his art, a sparkling two-dimensional texture filled with trees, rice paddies, traditional farming scenes, and water buffaloes. More recently, Maitree has turned to contemporary photography. His first series, “Isaan Boy Dream,” invites foreigners to his childhood home Nong-Bo, placing them against characteristic village backdrops. “Isaan Boy Soi 4” examines, in an idealized fashion, the experience of rural youth transplanted to a big cosmopolitan city, with an underlying motif of sex labor. Most recently, in “Albino & Green” and in “Dream of Beyond,” Maitree develops a sensuous (and even mystical) treatment of human models in idyllic pastoral settings. In his recent work, Maitree combines his inner childhood memories and contemporary dreams, creating a new imaginary world with stunning beauty using the traditional “mirror collage technique,” so well developed in his earlier works. In the new series entitled “The Rebirth of The Blue Dinosaur,” he highlights the dinosaur, a symbol of the new capitalistic culture, chasing the water buffalo, a symbol of the Isaan people, or working class citizens in Thailand. Both animals are struggling through the flood waters (representing global warming). The series includes a cat and a dog, man’s best friends, along with himself. Maitree presents his new collage as the dreamlike story, using his unique Thai visual sense of colorful elements, creating a complex collage filled with beauty and light.

In 2006 Maitree founded Whitespace Gallery in Bangkok to encourage young Thai artists by providing a venue for solo exhibitions. Many artists have started their professional careers in this gallery. He has been invited frequently to give guest lectures to university students, inspiring them to develop their talents. Today, Maitree continues to work in the Maitree Art Studio with his team and to organize exhibitions to promote young Thai artists from Thailand and around the world.

General: The artist currently lives and works in Bangkok, Thailand

2007 Complete studies degree at Thai Art department, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

2006 Founder the Whitespace Gallery Bangkok, The gallery to promote the emerging Thai artist.

2002 Complete studies art academy degree at the Collage of Fine Art Bangkok, Thailand

1983 Born in Ubonratchatani, Thailand

#### Awards:

- 2006 Silver Medal Prize, The 28th Bualuang Painting Contest
- 2005 1st Prize The Exhibition of Painting Sixty Years of Happiness Under His Most Benevolent and Majestic rule
- 2004 Silpakorn Pradit (Special Prize) 22rd Young Thai Artists Awards

#### Solo Exhibitions:

- 2012 The Tree of life, Project Space Luangprabang, Lao  
Inside Out, Art Stage Singapore 2012 (Project Stage), Marina Bay Sand, Singapore
- 2009 Isarn Boy Soi 4, Whitespace Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2006 Dream of Liberation, Whitespace Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand

#### Group Exhibitions:

- 2012 Origin - Originality: A New Wave of Thai Art, Forty7 Gallery, London  
The Cambodia Gay Pride week 2012 (visual art), Meta House, Cambodia  
On the Threshold of Senses: New Art From South East Asia, Tally Beck Contemporary, NYC
- 2011 Young Artist Project (YAP 2011), Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea  
Across the Mekong, Project Space Luangprabang, Lao  
Thai Sensational, Contemporary art paraty, Brasil  
Idols and Icons: new photography from SE Asia and the Middle East, Yavuz Fine Art, Singapore
- 2010 Different, Tang Contemporary Art, Bangkok, Thailand  
I Giovanni Isan, Cappella Dei Caduti, Via Sant's Andrea, Pelago, Italy  
GFEST -Gaywise FESTival 2010, The Atrium, London, UK  
Month of Photography Tokyo, Richo Building Hall, Tokyo, Japan
- 2009 The God of Small Things, Casa Masaccio arte contemporanea, Italy  
Rites de Passage, Shunck Contemporary Museum, Netherlands  
CUT-09; Figure New South East Asia Photography, Valentine Willie Fine Art , KL, Malaysia
- 2008 Sensational Salves, Chula Art Centre, Bangkok, Thailand  
Face to Faces (Month of Photography 4th French festival in Bangkok), Silom Galleria, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2007 Collage & Color, Lalanta Fine Art Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2006 Selected Participation 28th Jitgam Bualuang, The Queen's Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand  
Selected Participation 23rd Young Thai Artists, the National Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2005 Eaksilp Thai, Silpakorn University Art Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand  
Selected Participation 17th Toshiba Brings Good Things to Life, National Gallery, Bangkok  
Selected Participation 2nd Amata Art Award, The National Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2004 Selected Participation 20th PTT Art Award, The National Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand  
Selected Participation 7th Panasonic Art Award, The National Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2003 Selected Participation College of Fine Arts, Bangkok, Thailand

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