FINAL VERSION DATED 22 OCT

*desiderare* presents artists’ moving image works that share an understanding of the power of desire - its propulsion to the place beyond the limit of acceptable thoughts, words and deeds, and its violent forcefulness. The catalyst is the Argentinian-Indian videocontemplation, *De Sidere 7*, by Nicolas Grandi and Lata Mani, whose subtle, sensuous exploration of the many faces and forms of desire creates an opening for connection with recent works by three artists in Southeast Asia: *Shooting Stars* (Som Sutthirat Supaparinya), *Eleven Men* (Nguyen Trinh Thi) and *Endless, Nameless* (Mont Tesprateep). In their different and distinctive ways the works in this programme address us from the place of vulnerable flesh, of illegitimate memory, and of experiences and beings in excess of the bounded conformity of legitimised subjecthood. In speaking to us from the intimacy of a personal place, and yet speaking of shared experiences of complexity in excess of the hyper-visible, these four works speak in the register of the essay film. Yet while *De Sidere 7* and *Eleven Men* use the voice-over, *Shooting Stars* and *Endless, Nameless* do so without dialogues.

SHOOTING STARS, Som Sutthirat Supaparinya, 2010, 9:06 mins

Video, colour, sound

Trails of flickering light slice through the darkness whose formless expanse heightens the piercing echoing sound of metallic cartridges dropped on hard surface. This minimal yet affecting video is made from footage shot by Som as she was travelling on the night train from the north down to Bangkok just a few weeks after the military’s massacre of protesters in the capital of Thailand. The artist’s solitary cross-country journey echoes the ones made shortly before by hundreds of thousands of anonymous women and men propelled by the desire for change. The wordlessness of the video replaces the hysterical pitch of the dominant media’s demonisation of bodies murdered and flesh torn. Its capturing of light’s ephemeral yet inextinguishable nascence is a fitting tribute to the solidarity of spirit and the desiring bodies of those who had gone before.

DE SIDERE 7, Nicolas Grandi & Lata Mani, 2014, 38 mins

HD, colour, sound

“De Sidere 7 is an experimental work that interweaves performance, dance, poetry, storytelling and text to reflect upon aspects of desire. Shot in Bangalore and Delhi, the film scripts the work of five performing artists into a sensorially rich meditation on desire’s vexed status as at once, animating force, object of suspicion and ground of contention. De Sidere 7 is conceived as a videocontemplation: a formally plural, multilayered composition intended to be experienced as an integrated whole.” http://www.latamani.com/desidere7/

ENDLESS, NAMELESS, Mont Tesprateep, 2014, 22: 39 mins

Super 8 to video, B&W, sound

It starts as if in Eden. The lush tropical woodland, the young men frolicking in the clearing tending to the trees and flowers and almost flirting with each other. The scratchy super 8 effect and the black and white evoke the nostalgia of early home movie footage, while the playfulness of the young conscripts in casual army gear brings to mind the kinetic energy of silent actuality. But don’t be fooled. Slowly and insidiously the film turns violent. A cobra rises and spreads its hood. Young male bodies torture each other with theatrical perversity. Mont’s film is a retroactive reckoning with the violent undertow inside the homes of Thailand’s degenerate class. An experimental take on a Faulknerian theme that brushes once again terribly close to the enslaved labour tending the roses in the plantation where the privileged offspring of the slave owning general grew.

ELEVEN MEN, Nguyen Trinh Thi, 2016, 28 mins

Video, colour, B&W, sound

““Eleven Men” is composed of scenes from a range of Vietnamese classic narrative films featuring the same central actress, Nhu Quynh. Spanning three decades of her legendary acting career, most of the appropriated movies — from 1966 to 2000 — were produced by the state-owned Vietnam Feature Film Studio. The film’s text was adapted from “Eleven Sons”, a short story by Franz Kafka first published in 1919, which begins with a father’s declaration: “I have eleven sons.” Transposing the father’s voice of Kafka’s story, the film begins with a woman stating: “I have eleven men.”” https://nguyentrinhthi.wordpress.com/2016/05/17/eleven-men-2016/

Curated by May Adadol Ingawanij