

Smack Mellon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunny Leerasanthanah, *This is as far as I can take you*

[Gallery Two]

February 10-April 14, 2024

Opening Reception: Sat. February 10, 6-8PM



Clocks (still), 2024, HD color video, dimensions variable.

Smack Mellon presents artist Sunny Leerasanthanah's first solo exhibition in New York City. *This is as far as I can take you* is a multi-channel video installation that combines footage taken by the artist during trips to Thailand between 2020 and 2023 alongside home video footage captured by their late father between 1991 and 1998. This exhibition continues Leerasanthanah's search to embody and translate absence, following their 2021 project *Wuthichai (Exit Interview)*, which featured speculative conversations with their recently deceased father staged for video by Thai actors, as well as an archive of personal effects. *This is as far as I can take you* conveys the experience of separation and loss through intimate video and textual documentation.

For this installation Leerasanthanah has forged a posthumous collaboration with their father, Wuthichai Leerasanthanah. To create these works, they extracted moments from an archive of over 70 hours of his home videos and isolated the clips into motifs that track time including clocks, planes flying overhead, eclipses, car dashboards, and his brief appearances. In removing each clip from the greater context filled

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with family and events, Leerasanthanah locates each moment's singular perspective, belying the universal banality of the motifs themselves. Although he appears on-screen through reflections, and always mediated by a camera, their father's presence is most apparent through his idiosyncratic gestures, which function as his tether to the exterior world. The residual media becomes a surrogate for his body. Crucially, while the videos serve in part as evidence of a life lived, the artist also invokes their own hand by manipulating the footage and accounting for past memories.

By contrast, Sunny Leerasanthanah's sharper and more recent footage shows family members in moments of stillness while things happen ambiently around them. These extended clips, which contain nods to the home footage motifs, lack the quick cuts present in the archival footage, which allows each scene to linger in the palpable absence of loss. Accompanying the installation are works on paper that serve as another collaboration with their father. Referencing timestamps and larger concepts present, the works on paper provide another instantiation of the obsessive attempt to make order out of grief. *This is as far as I can take you* considers how proximity is experienced through what is lost and accreted through the limitations of the media that attempt to capture it.

BIO:
Sunny Leerasanthanah is a multidisciplinary artist living in Brooklyn, New York. Sunny observes and documents impressions and boundaries of place, time, loss, identification, and belonging. They have worked across film, video installation, photography, books, archives, roleplay, prompts, and conversation. In 2023, Sunny presented their first institutional solo exhibition, *Sunny Leerasanthanah: Naturalization* at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (WI). They are a recipient of the Artists Alliance Inc. LES Studio Program (2024), Center for Book Arts Residency (2023), Image Text Workshop Residency (2023), Fire Island Artist Residency (2022), Queens Council on the Arts New Work Grant (2021), Rehearsal Residency (2018), and Ithaca College's James B. Pendleton Grant (2015). They have exhibited at SculptureCenter (NY), Lubov (Projects) (NY), Local Project Art Space (NY), and Handwerker Gallery (NY), amongst other spaces. Their book *Mom's Magnets* (2020) is in the collection of Asia Art Archive in America (NY) and Fathom Library (RI). They have spoken in panel discussions including at Candice Madey Gallery (NY), Soho Photo Gallery (NY), Queer | Art (virtual), and Asian American Arts Alliance (virtual). Sunny received an MA from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a BFA in from Ithaca College.

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