

## free size

Curated by Logan Bay

March 13 - April 17, 2010

at the:

Sinudom Silk Screen Factory

35/21 Moo 1, Sakaegnam Road

Samaedam, Bang Khun Thian, Thailand

works by:

Juan Angel Chavez

Alvaro Ilizarbe

P7

Jen Stark



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apexart franchise 2010

## free size

The city is a jungle, you better take care.

After nine months I am still unsure why I'm living in Bangkok. It is hot, crowded and frenetic. Channeling this abundant urban energy into creative projects might be the only thing that keeps me sane. While consulting on designs for a local clothing line, I was invited to visit the factory where the garments were to be made.

On my first visit to the Sinudom Silk Screen factory the workers were a few days into working nonstop shifts cranking out spools of tiger stripe patterned fabric in preparation for Chinese New Year. I watched in amazement as piles of blank fabric were printed, measured and loaded onto waiting trucks. The fabric was then delivered to other factories where it was used in the construction of consumer goods. Within weeks I began to see shirts, dresses, and handbags embellished with tiger print in retail stalls all over Bangkok. I have always had a fascination with how things are made, where they come from and who makes them. Witnessing the process left me inspired.

With it's power to transform why can't a factory be a considered a magical space?

## What is "free size"?

In a mass produced world of global goods, the act of creation is often lost or forgotten. Hidden machinery cranks and sweats out elements of our everyday life, yet we rarely get a glimpse of the environment where ideas are physically forged. To produce the exhibition **free size**, artists Alvaro Ilizarbe, Jen Stark, Juan Angel Chavez, and P7 will work for one week in the Sinudom Silk Screen factory creating works of art. By bringing these contemporary artists into a global manufacturing hub, the realms of production and creation will exist in a simultaneous space, transforming this modest factory into an active generator of creative capital.



P7, commissioned tiger head sculptures, Siam Square area in Bangkok, 2009

The Sinudom Silk Screen factory is located on the edge of Samut Sakhon a province that houses many factories. Over the past decades Thailand has worked to become a producer of exportable goods and inexpensive items for domestic use. While the machinery to manufacture is abundant, many of the products are designed elsewhere. **free size** encourages viewers to see industrial spaces as incubators for creative thought and social evolution.

## One size fits all.

Most domestically sold clothing in Thailand comes in free size. Baggy enough to fit larger people yet able to be belted or clipped when worn by slimmer individuals. Free size clothing is made to fit just about right. This sizing practice keeps production costs low and subtly encourages adherence to the norm.

## Utilizing the means of production.

As curator I enlisted a diverse group of individuals to produce this exhibition. Jen Stark, from Miami, brings a meticulous level of craft and execution, evident in her cut paper sculptures. Along with working as a fine artist, Alvaro Ilizarbe, from Miami, runs a commercial fashion

label, "FREEGUMS", giving him practical knowledge about the production of garments. Juan Angel Chavez, from Chicago, has managed large-scale public art projects. His work utilizes the environment as part of the final piece. With a recent series of playful installations, artist P7, from Bangkok, brings knowledge of creative resources in the area. Working collectively these four artists will improvise in a unique setting.

The Sinudom Silk Screen factory offers a rustic locale for the creation of site specific work providing several multi-use buildings, a garden, a residence and offices along with the equipment and resources to screen-print all manner of textiles. Artists will have access to the machinery and factory grounds during their week of installation, allowing for a multitude of possible creative outcomes. They also have the full support of the factory staff.

## Delivering the goods to market.

The work produced at the Sinudom factory will take many forms. Some artists will create installations and murals while others will produce consumer goods. Showing process as an equal to outcome, **free size** will exhibit the final products alongside documentation of their creation. Locating the exhibition in the factory places patrons in direct view of the machinery and inspiration behind the works produced.



## about the apexart Franchise 2010

For the second year in a row, **apexart** has held an open call for proposals for our Franchise project. Based on the idea of creating its own franchise, **apexart** solicited 250-word proposals, asking participants why the franchise should come to their town and provide all of the support necessary to produce an exhibition. Proposals were voted on by more than 150 jurors from around the world, with the winning project presented in the proposed city. The winner of the 2009 Franchise was *The League of Imaginary Scientists*, who curated the exhibition **X, Y, Z and U**, which was on view in Los Angeles, CA from June 4-July 3, 2009. Check our website for this and other opportunities for exhibition organizers. No past experience is required, only good ideas.

This year, to address the notion that good work and its effects happen everywhere and anywhere and not just in population centers, we limited the call to cities with fewer than 500,000 residents. As a result submissions for exhibitions to take place in large cities like New York, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo were not accepted, but rather focused on locations such as Moshupa, Baton Rouge, Lubeck, Cadiz, Az-Zawiyah or Samut Sakhon. In response we received 243 exhibition proposals from 63 countries, and jurors submitted over 5,000 votes to identify **free size**, curated by Logan Bay, as the winning entry.

## New techniques in global management.

Working as an extension of an established not-for-profit art space on the opposite side of the globe is rewarding and challenging. Parallels to the business world are easily made. Curators are unsung heroes of making the impossible happen; moving creative vision into the concrete world. Balancing budgets, sourcing materials and running PR are just a few of the many hidden tasks.

Producing a show on a global scale poses unique problems. Currency conversion and skilled translators are a few examples. Collecting resources locally is where the most energy is expended. Tracking down inexpensive paint can be an all day event.

## Open letter.

At the time of writing this, **free size** is still a month away from completion, making it hard to determine what will be accomplished. This means a finale assessment must come at a later date. Entertaining enough for non-traditional art audiences while maintaining standards to make this a credible global art event, **free size** will present a solid conceptual show with multiple points of entry. The goal of this exhibition is to engage the local audience in a dialog. The opening reception will be an unpretentious afternoon affair bringing together factory workers, artists and supporters for an interactive social event.

Since its inception **free size** has been about the manufacture of possibility.

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For more information on **free size**, and high resolution images of work in the exhibition, please visit: <http://apexart.org/exhibitions/bay.htm>

images in clockwise order from upper left:  
 Jen Stark, *Coriolis Effect*, 2009  
 Alvaro Ilizarbe, drawing, 2010  
 Juan Angel Chavez, *Listening Chamber*, 2008  
 Sinudom Silk Screen Factory exterior