



PRESS RELEASE

Sweet Waste - Retrospective and book launch

By French artist **Claude Estèbe**

Toot Yung Art Center

16 Nov 2019 - 26 Jan 2020

Opening reception Saturday 16 Nov, from 5pm, in presence of the artist

Since his debut show “*Tukata, Post industrial Venus*” in 2011 in Bangkok, the Toot Yung art center has been the proud representative of the unique works of French photographer Claude Estèbe.

Estèbe’s acute vision of our contemporary societies has continuously shaken the Bangkok and international art scene. His signature photographs are a subtle mix of *kawaii* and fierce social critique, mixing mass-produced cheap artefacts, scholarly references, extreme close ups and sophisticated lighting.

His 2012 exhibition “*Choking Hazard*” showed ironic depictions of modern canons of femininity mirrored until absurdity in fashion dolls. In 2013, “*Radium Girls*”, was a personal rendition of the ambivalent fascination for atomic energy in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. “*Pachimon*” (2015) explored the border between original and copies in derivative toys from the Japanese *Kaijū eiga* universe of monsters and giant robots. Estèbe also explored the edges of *otaku culture* in “*H Dolls*” (2017) using *Akihabara* figures with *moe* aesthetic, exhibited in Tokyo (DecabarZ) and Bangkok (Black Pagoda), or in “*Sweet Waste*” (Bangkok, 2018) using Japanese and Chinese life-size love-dolls. He is currently working on social issues like junk food and ecology with his new series “*Ultranature*”.

Estèbe, expert in Japanese visual culture, uses subculture artefacts and visual codes to reverse corporate propaganda with a warped sense of humour. By enhancing the defects and imperfections of mass produced plastic objects, he transmutes them into striking figures, archetypal objects, modern tribal gods or mythological heroes lost in time.



For this retrospective show the Toot Yung Art Centre will present highlights of his past exhibitions including works from “*Radium Girls*”, “*Agent Orange*”, “*Pachimon*” or “*H dolls*” as well as new works engaging with global warming themes.

On this occasion a complete catalogue of Claude Estèbe’s career will be launched, with more than one hundred works reproduced on high quality paper. The book, edited by Myrtille Tibayrenc, includes essays by eminent scholars like Michel Poivert, historian of photography at the Sorbonne, critic and curator or Agnès Giard, anthropologist, writer and French journalist, specialized in issues of sexuality and Japanese subculture.

About Claude Estèbe

Claude Estèbe (b. 1959) is a French contemporary art photographer, scholar in Japanese visual culture (CEJ-Inalco), and expert in ancient photography. He was a fellow artist at French Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto (2001) and a Louis Roederer Fellow for Photography at the French National Library (2007). He published *The Last Samurais* and *Yokohama shashin*. From 2013 to 2018, he was one of the curators of the *Kyotographie International photography festival*. He also works regularly as an expert for Guimet museum of Asian Arts (MNAAG). His work is presented by the Toot Yung Art Center since 2011. He currently lives between South of France, Bangkok and Tokyo.

TOOT YUNG ART CENTER

74/3 MOO 4, KILEK, MAE RIM DISTRICT, CHIANG MAI 50180

TOOTYUNGARTCENTER.COM / TOOTYUNGARTCENTER@GMAIL.COM

+66 8 49 14 54 99 (ENG) +66 9 59 59 19 62 (TH)

OPENING HOURS

FRI - SAT - SUN / 9:00 - 17:00

TUE - WED - THU / BY APPOINTMENT

MON / CLOSED