



Montien Boonma

*The Pleasure of Being, Crying, Dying and Eating*

1993, reconstructed 2015

Ceramic bowls, wooden tables, cloth and brass

255 x 180 x 180 cm

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

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### **Look, Think and Connect!**

1. Walk around this artwork. What objects can you identify in this artwork?
2. How would you describe the placement of these objects?
3. Why do you think the artist has chosen to use bowls as a medium in his artwork?
4. What do you usually use bowls for? Are there any other uses for bowls?
5. What do you feel when you encounter this artwork? How do you think the artwork has provoked these emotions?

### **Artwork Story**

*The Pleasure of Being, Crying, Dying and Eating* was created by Thai artist Montien Boonma in 1993 and reconstructed at the National Gallery Singapore in 2015. The artist's interest in bowls as art objects began in 1991 with his exploration of Buddhist alms bowls and terracotta vessels. Buddhists believe they gain merit by placing food and other gifts in bowls carried by Buddhist monks. For the artist, the hollow of a bowl is a meditative space in which he can allow his mind to dwell, separate himself from the troubles of the outside world and find inner peace.

Visit **UOB Southeast Asia Gallery 14** to view this artwork.

### **Artist's Biography**

From 1987 to 1992, while teaching at Chiang Mai University, Montien Boonma (1953–2000) was inspired by rural ways of life in Thailand's northern region. He explored local materials that would help refine his conceptual processes and provide new directions in his work, and preferred working with raw materials to demonstrate their aesthetic qualities and relations to local culture and environments. Boonma shunned classical art techniques and persistently developed new forms of sculptural expression. His practice is concerned with the tensions between spirituality and rationality, the rural and urban, and the primitive and modern.

### **Find Out More:**

Boonma, Montien & Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook. *Those Dying Wishing To Stay, Those Living Preparing To Leave: Montien Boonma and Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook – Thai Pavilion*. Bangkok: Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, 2005.

Ee, Elaine, Edwin Thumboo & Daryl Yam. "Painting and Poetry into Installation | In conversation with Professor Edwin Thumboo." National Gallery Singapore.

<https://www.nationalgallery.sg/magazine/painting-and-poetry-into-installation>

(accessed 27 December 2021).

“Montien and Sam.” Roots. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/Collection-Landing/listing/1470669>

(accessed 27 December 2021).

Poshyananda, Apinan. *Montien Boonma: Temple of the Mind*. New York: Asia Society, 2003.

Poshyananda, Apinan & Sutee Kunavichayanont, eds. *Death Before Dying: The Return of Montien Boonma*. Bangkok: Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, 2005.

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