





Drawn to Life

Despite her calm exterior, experienced freelance illustrator Patcharin 'Jeed' Jitviriyanon is excited. The holder of degrees in Applied Art from the Art Institute of Seattle in the U.S. and Rangsit University in Bangkok is looking forward to a debut exhibition of her quirky, vibrant illustrations later this month. A regular contributor to newspapers and magazines around the world (including the illustrations in these pages, which were produced exclusively for Bangkok 101), she talks to MATT WILDE about her art.

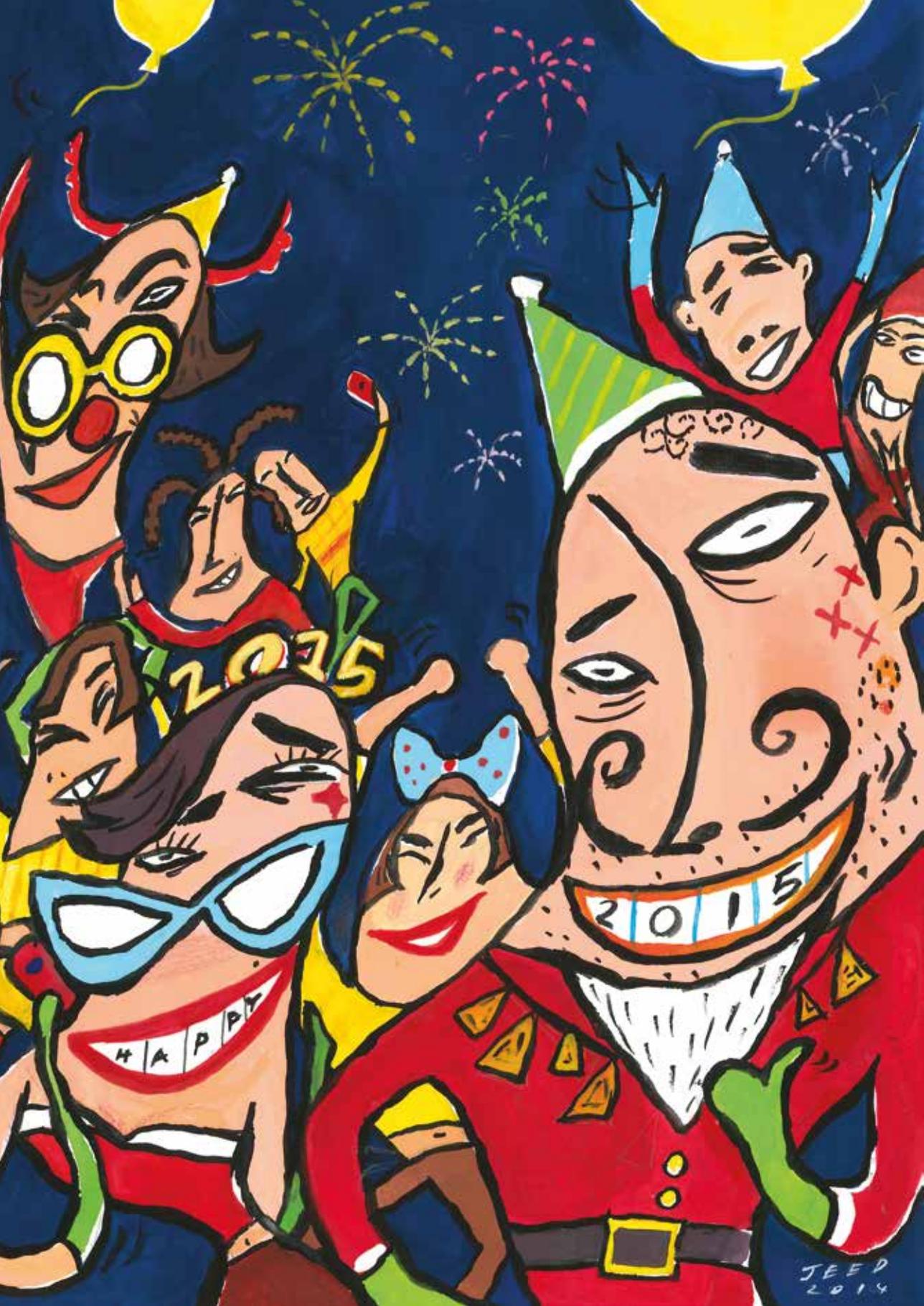
When did you know or realise you wanted to be an artist?

I loved to draw as a little girl but my parents used to say that artists don't make any money! However, they were very supportive when I said I wanted to study visual communications at university. After I graduated I knew I wanted a continue in a career with an artistic bent but I don't consider myself to be an 'artist', rather an illustrator.

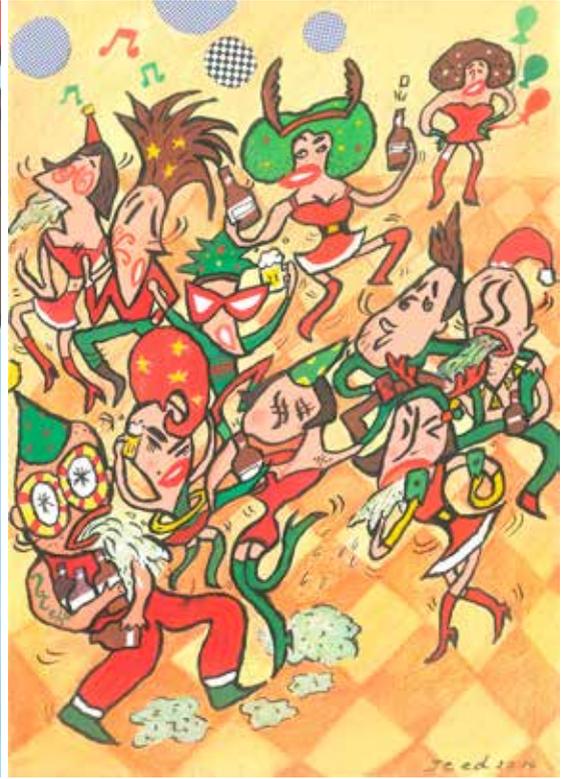
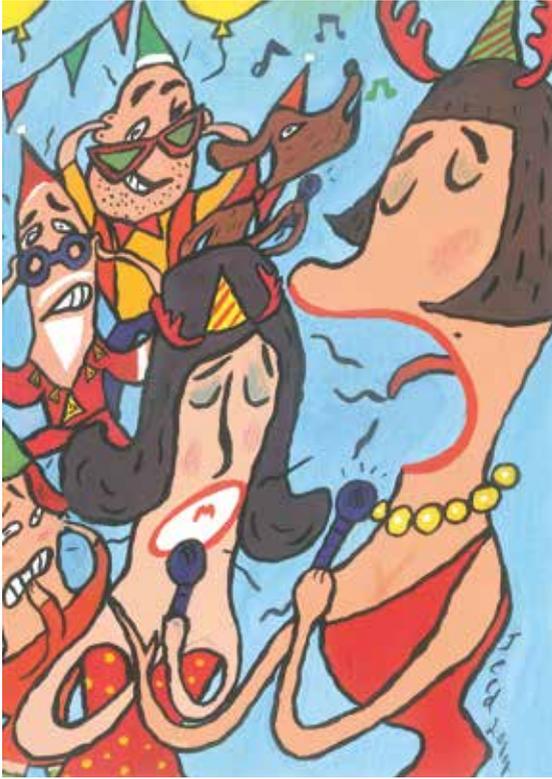
I'm in my own world when I create artwork and I'm fortunate in that I love what I do. I find it very satisfying, even more so when others appreciate the end result.

How did your time in the States influence your work?

Before I went to the U.S. I had not travelled outside Thailand much – a few short visits to other Asian countries and a three-week exchange in Canada – so the five years I spent in America were a real eye-opener. I had the opportunity to properly experience another culture and I loved the freedom of expression and the cultural diversity of the States. It was a source of enormous creative energy. Living and studying abroad really opened up the world of art for me. I had the chance to check out cool museums and galleries. It was inspiring.



JEED
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I was also very lucky to be taught by Bill Cumming, one of the best artists in the north western United States. He said I had a great sense of colour and his enthusiasm encouraged me and made me believe I could have a career in the arts.

Who or what inspires you?

Books, travel, the people around me, nature, movies, music, the city in which I live. I also get a kick out of works by other artists, such as Botoro and great illustrators like Nate Williams and Steven Appleby. You need to be open minded and realise that you can find inspiration in any number of situations and places. I'd like to travel more as I think there's huge inspiration to be found in visiting other countries and experiencing other lifestyles.

You have added elements of collage to your illustrations. What is the concept behind that?

I like working with paper. It's easily available and I like the fact that I can re-use or recycle materials. It lets me explore a different technique. Before I started working with paper I only used paint and I found this too restricting sometimes. I like to have physical contact with the material I am using because that way I feel more emotionally connected to the piece of art I am working on.

I like the process of doing collage – choosing paper, cutting shapes, applying them to the artwork. It's almost a form of meditation!

Your works offer quite a tongue-in-cheek view of people. Do you consider yourself anti-establishment?

If anti-establishment means working outside pre-defined rules within my discipline, then yes, I consider myself

anti-establishment. So, for example, I like to work without symmetry. I like to distort and change proportions so that they appear unusual or odd. I like to create organic collages and pieces. I don't like things to be too sharp or too defined and I think that this is one of the reasons I have not embraced digital media; I find it too restrictive and I don't want to be constrained by working within the routines and menus of a software programme.

Contemporary Thai art is starting to come of age but what more could be done to promote the art scene in Thailand.

Thanks to facilities like the Bangkok Cultural Centre and the Museum of Contemporary Art, it is definitely developing. We have many good galleries too. When Khun Shane of Serindia gallery approached me to do the illustrations for the novel *Crazy Rich Asians*, I felt honoured to be asked. Also, Ratchaburi [a small town two hours south of Bangkok], has a flourishing art scene, which is great because the more art spreads beyond the city, the more ordinary people can enjoy it and understand that it isn't something just for the elite or the intelligentsia. I'd love to see more examples like this in Thailand.

But I do think art in Thailand has a way to go. The more galleries like Serindia give coverage to contemporary artists and illustrators, the more possibility we have of gaining exposure. This in itself can become self-perpetuating, bringing more people in, encouraging new artists to 'give it a go' and follow their ambitions.

See more of Patcharin's work at jeedillustration.com

'10: A DECADE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

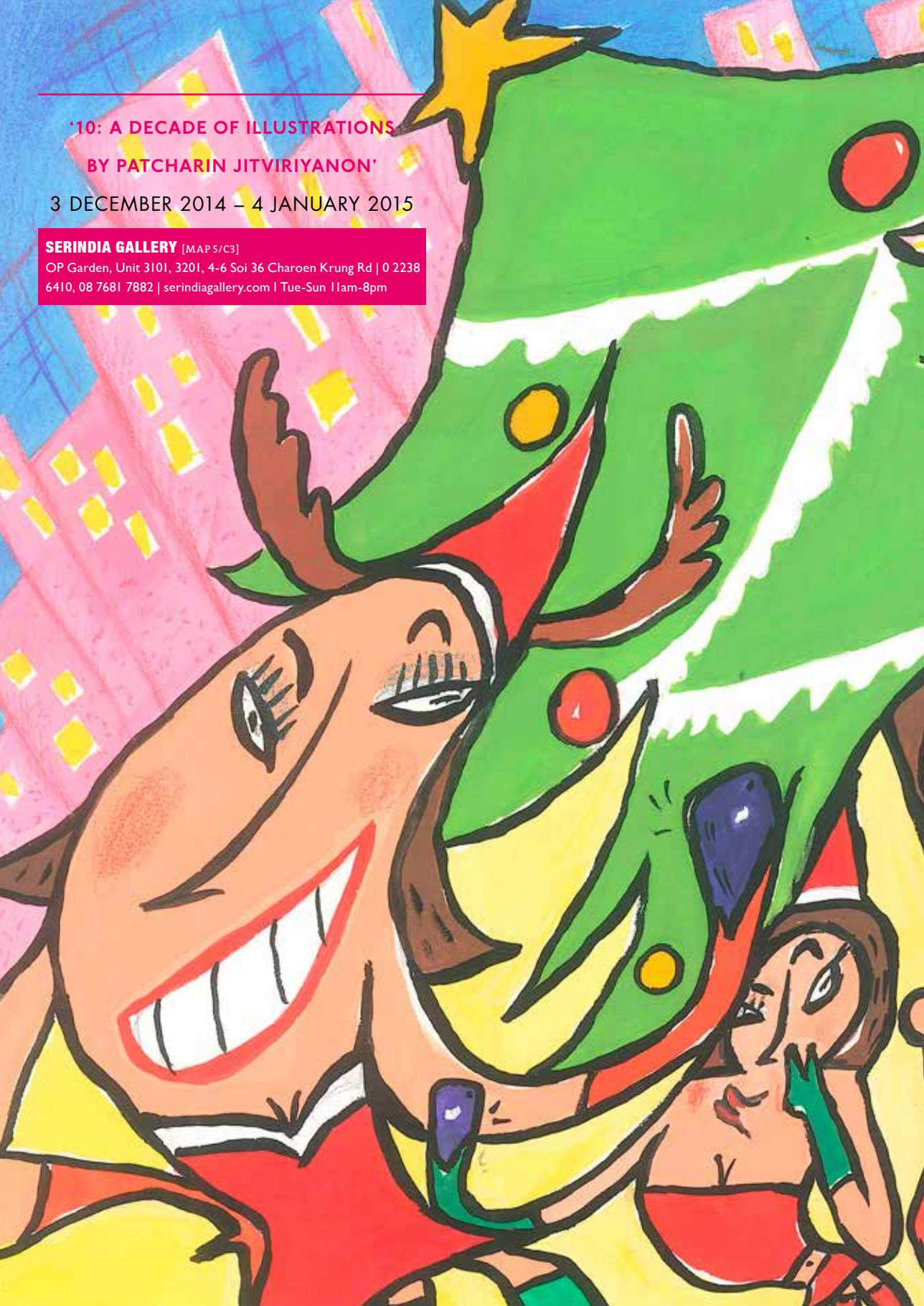
BY PATCHARIN JITVIRIYANON'

3 DECEMBER 2014 – 4 JANUARY 2015

SERINDIA GALLERY [MAP 5/C3]

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Jeed
2014



STARS AND STRIPES AT THE COURT OF SIAM

Launched in Bangkok last month, the 304-page hardback book *Americans in Thailand* recounts the fascinating history of the Kingdom's American community.

Focusing on famous and notorious personalities through the eras, the colourful tale begins with the first American to set foot on Siamese soil in 1818. It then describes how the early missionaries, diplomats and traders navigated – sometimes with hilarious or disastrous results – the unfamiliar terrain and customs of Siam.

In the 20th century, Americans became more influential, with several assuming powerful roles within the Siamese court and assisting the country's reforms. By the 1970s, American influence was becoming ubiquitous and increasingly contentious, as the Vietnam War era inspired clandestine operations, decadence and development. Today, Americans living in Thailand continue to contribute in compelling ways. Collected in this lavishly illustrated volume are many of their stories and historical nuggets never unearthed before.

Several long-time American residents of Thailand contributed their writing, including Denis Gray, Bangkok bureau chief for the Associated Press for more than 30 years; Nicholas Grossman, who created *Chronicle of Thailand* and other historical volumes on the Kingdom; Jeff Hodson, who is former editor and reporter for *The Seattle Times* and was a project director for Internews in Chiang Mai; Robert Horn, who has worked as a reporter in Thailand for Time magazine and the Associated Press; and Wesley Hsu, an award-winning copy writer. An allowance was also made for Canadian writer Jim Algie, whose latest book is *The Phantom Lover and Other Thrilling Tales of Thailand*. Archives expert Grissarin Chungsiriwat led the picture and text research.

Published by Editions Didier Millet and priced at B1250, *Americans in Thailand* is available at all good local bookstores.

