Kick off of Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023: Ministry of Culture in collaboration with Chiang Rai Province announces its concept "The Open World" and reveals 20 featured artists across the world in the First Phase. The event will be held from 9 December 2023 to 30 April 2024 in Chiang Rai Province.

On 25 March 2023, the Minister of Culture, H.E. Mr. Itthiphol Kunploem, and the Chiang Rai Provincial Governor, Mr. Puttipong Sirimat, jointly attended a press conference at Wat Rong Khun, Chiang Rai, with executives from the Ministry of Culture, Artistic Directors, co-curators, artists, and representatives from relevant agencies to reveal the concept and 20 featured artists to appear in the First Phase of Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023.

The Minister of Culture H.E. Mr. Itthiphol Kunploem announced that the Government has assigned the Ministry of Culture via the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture to host the International Contemporary Art Festival, Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023. The province will promote its metamorphosis into the "world-famous city of art", aiming to become a destination for global travelers. Local art and culture will be combined with novel and creative ideas to improve tourism and product development, using the art dimension to boost community income and propel the province towards the creative economy. International art festival activities will increase the potential of tourist attractions, products, and services and income from art and cultural tourism. The said event is a response to the Thailand 4.0 policy, enhancing the development of the creative industry through the Ministry of Culture and moving Thailand forward through Soft Power. Artistic Directors and co-curators will implement Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023 under the concept of "The Open World" as devised from site visits and research on the Chiang Rai context. The concept originated from the history of a Buddha statue found at Wat Pa Sak, standing in the "open world" posture, which signifies the symbolic fusion of multi-cultures and represents the influence of various cultures in Asia.

The Chiang Rai Provincial Governor Mr. Puttipong Sirimat said that "As the host, the province has prepared for the event by collaborating with every sector. This includes Chiang Rai artists, the Association of Artbridge Chiang Rai, Subdistrict Administrative Organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, companies, shops, foundations, and associations. The venues, people and community of Chiang Rai are now ready to welcome artists and tourist groups visiting the event in every aspect. We assure that if you visit Chiang Rai, you will find it filled with an abundance of natural beauty, waterfalls and forests, temples, historical sites, and culture. Our way of life, the Lanna culture, is an asset with long-standing history, magnificent art, and unique antique architecture fused from various ethnicities. We take great pride in being the chosen locality for the Kingdom's world-famous philosophers and artists, all of whom have mutually created valuable artworks so constantly that the province has been

deemed “the city of art”. Chiang Rai has without a doubt become the city of artists and the golden land of contemporary art.

The International Contemporary Art Festival, Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023 is a collaboration between all sectors to drive the dynamic of Chiang Rai to become a more colorful and animated province with artworks in various fields. The art and cultural tourism of the province will be publicized, helping cultivate the love of art among the youth and local people. The event also provides an international stage for artists to showcase their talents and support the art and cultural dimension, developing prosperity and strength among the city and its people.

The Artistic Directors, Mr. Rirkrit Tiravanija and Ms. Gridthiya Gaweewong, and co-curators, Mr. Angkrit Ajchariyasophon and Ms. Manuporn Luengaram, introduced the “Open World” concept during the site visit. While conducting their research on Chiang Rai Province, they had investigated Wat Pa Sak’s “open world” Buddha statue, which was found to be built in 1295 (B.E.1838) during the Era of Phaya Saen Phu, the nephew of Phaya Mangrai and the founder of Chiang Saen City. Buddha stands on a lotus flower with his arms at his sides, hands slightly raised with his palms extended outwards, “opening the world” for all three worlds - the heavenly world, the underworld, and the human world - with his magnificent power representing wisdom and awakening. The meaning of “Open World” could be considered quite literal but also conveys how art perception opens the world and connects reality, leading us to question whether we can ever imagine the possibility of a better future.

“The Open World” also signifies the importance of learning from the past through the complex history of Chiang Rai. The present-day Lanna traditions and cultural heritage of the city as seen in architecture, culture, craftmanship, storytelling, beliefs, multi-cultural dimensions, and the ecology originated from ancient kingdoms such as Yonok Nakorn, Ngoen Yang Chiang Saen, Wiang Kalong, and Phu Kam Yao. This is especially important for the Chiang Rai artist community, whose infrastructure is heavily supported by renowned national artists Master Thawan Duchanee and Master Chalermchai Kositpipat. They have acted as role models and powerful inspiration for artists returning to their hometown, helping build up Chiang Rai’s strength and capacity to serve as the venue of Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023.

The first phase of Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023 will feature the following 20 Thai and international artists:

1. All(zone), Bangkok
2. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Chiang Mai
3. Baan Noorg Collaborative Arts and Culture, Ratchaburi
4. Busui Ajaw, Chiang Rai
5. Citra Sasmita, Bali
6. Ernesto Neto, Rio de Janeiro
7. Haegue Yang, Seoul / Berlin

8. Ho Tzu Nyen, Singapore
9. Kamonlak Sukchai, Bangkok
10. Michael Lin, Taipei / Shanghai / Brussels
11. Navin Rawanchaikul, Chiang Mai / Fukuoka
12. Nguyen Trinh Thi, Hanoi
13. Nipan Oranniwesna, Bangkok
14. Roongroj Paimyossak, 101 Historic Lanna House Collective, Chiang Mai
15. Ryusuke Kido, Tokyo
16. Sanitas Pradittasnee, Bangkok
17. Sawangwongse Yawnghwe, Amsterdam
18. Soe Yu Nwe, Yangon
19. Sriwan Janehuttakarnkit, Chiang Rai
20. Tobias Rehberger, Frankfurt

Minister of Culture H.E. Mr. Itthiphol Kunploem concluded the event with a countdown to the upcoming International Contemporary Art Festival, Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023. Everyone is invited to join "The Open World" of art perception and play a part in the nation's "Open Country" and "Open Chiang Rai", connecting art to our way of life. Together, let's create new history through art and a cultural-driven creative economy backed by the generous hospitality of the Chiang Rai people. We look forward to seeing you at "The Open World" in Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023 from 9 December 2023 to 30 April 2024.

For more information, please visit:
Website: www.thailandbiennale.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/thailandbiennale
Ministry of Culture Hotline: 1765