**Countdown to the Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023 and reveal the final 20 artists who will showcase their creative works aiming to gain global recognition. The exhibition will be held on December 9, 2023 until April 30, 2024.**

On November 19, 2023, H.E. Mr. Sermsak Pongpanit, Minister of Culture, presided over the press conference on the final 20 artists of the Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023. This event was attended by Mrs. Yupha Taweewattanakitborvon, Permanent Secretary for Culture, Mr. Puttipong Sirimart, the Governor of Chiang Rai Province, Mrs. Khunying Patama Leeswadtraku, the Chairperson of the Contemporary Art Promotion Fund, Mr. Prasop Riang-ngoen, the Director-General of the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, as well as executives from the Ministry of Culture, artistic directors, curators, artists and representatives from relevant agencies at Sann Hotel, Chiang Rai.

The Minister of Culture said that the 60 artists from 21 countries were selected from around the world in order to create their own artworks. Following the on-site visits last week, the festival is making good progress and the venue is well-prepared. The artists have been actively working on their creations according to the schedule. They are ready to showcase their works to the public from December 9, 2023, to April 30, 2024.

The Minister of Culture stated that the core concept of Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023, originated from on-site studies and exploration of Chiang Rai's context, which reveals an information specifically about the Open World Posture Buddha image, located at Wat Pa Sak, which symbolizes the multicultural influence from various Asian cultures and serves as the inspiration for "The Open World" theme. In this edition, it is a crucial point to integrate the cultural narrative of Thailand with the artistic creations of the participating artists, promoting Chiang Rai Province to become a 'world-class art city' and a destination that global travelers would want to visit, fostering integration between art and local culture with innovative creativity. This initiative aims to develop products and tourism, generating income for the community through the organization of international art festivals, aligning with Thailand 4.0 policy to promote the creative industry of the Ministry and drive Thailand forward with soft

power, making it a global focal point. Therefore, during the 5-month event period, Chiang Rai Province will be filled with artworks from the primary creations of 60 artists, along with collateral events and activities such as traditional music performances, performing arts, film screenings, educational activities, as well as 13 Pavilions, and more than 80 local artists' open houses. Today marks the countdown to the international contemporary art festival, Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023. We would like to invite Thai citizens to be part of this event, opening the world to artistic perception, showcasing the country, and connecting Chiang Rai, while linking art to lifestyle. Together, let's make this a historical event and be good hosts alongside the people of Chiang Rai.

Mr. Puttipong Sirimart, the Governor of Chiang Rai Province states that as the host province, Chiang Rai has prepared thoroughly for the event with the collaboration of various sectors. This includes local artists, cultural organizations, sub-district administrative organizations, chambers of commerce, foundations, and various associations. The community made all-round preparations and is currently ready to welcome artists and tourists in every aspect. The governor is confident that visitors will fall in love with Chiang Rai, which, aside from its nature's beauty, historical sites and the local way of life, is a city with cultural richness and potential. Chiang Rai has a long history with a diverse Lanna cultural heritage unique architecture, various ethnic groups, and a reputation as a hub for wisdom and a diverse range of artists. Chiang Rai has actively contributed to the continuous creation of valuable artworks, gaining recognition worldwide. Chiang Rai has been recognized as the "City of Art," a genuine city of contemporary artists, and a true artistic hub.

Miss Gridthiya Gaweewong, Artistic Director, Mr. Angkrit Ajchariyasophon, Curators and Miss Manuporn Luengaram emphasize the origin of the concept of "The Open World", stating that it emerged from on-site exploration and the study of information about in Chiang Rai. It was discovered that the idea was inspired by the iconic Buddha statue at Wat Pa Sak, known as the Open World Posture Buddha image, which was established in the year 1838 during the reign of Phya Saen Phu, the founder of Chiang Saen city and the grandson of Phaya Mengrai. The Buddha Image stands on a lotus flower, with both hands hanging gracefully on both sides of the body, forming the gesture of opening the world. This symbolic gesture represents the three worlds: the divine world, the celestial world, and the human world. It serves as a visual

representation of Buddhist wisdom and awareness, suggesting the opening of the world in all three aspects. The term "The Open World" is considered quite literal, but it can also be interpreted metaphorically to convey the idea of opening up perceptions through art that connects reality in society and leads to questioning through contemporary art. It raises the question of whether, through contemporary art, we can imagine a better future.

In addition, "The Open World" also signifies the importance of learning from the past, particularly in the intricate historical aspects of Chiang Rai which serves as the birthplace of traditions and cultural heritage in the Lanna region. This encompasses various aspects, including architecture, cultural practices, and diverse art forms, as well as a multitude of cultural beliefs and perspectives. This rich cultural tapestry extends to the present-day urban systems, notably within the artistic communities of Chiang Rai. The artistic community in Chiang Rai, with a solid foundational structure led by renowned artists such as Ajarn Thawan Duchanee and Ajarn Chalermchai Kositpipat, who are globally acclaimed national artists, serves as a crucial model and inspiration. They play a significant role in revitalizing their hometown, making it robust and ready to participate in the multifaceted dimensions of hosting the international contemporary art festival, Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023.

The pavilions, considered pivotal developments from the past two editions. This edition Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023 plays a crucial role in the upcoming event. There will be exhibitions from 13 pavilions, featuring diverse and influential artistic groups: 1. **Laos Artists Group** 2. **International Watercolor Artists Group (Art Bridge) ** 3. **Sala Mueang Phan Group** 4. **The Khon Phej Project** 5. **Production S.O.M.A.** 6. **New Energetic Contemporary Art Museum** 7. **New Walsh Gallery Contemporary Art Museum** 8. **Buddhist Arts, Mae Fah Luang University** 9. **Mae Ying Artist Collective** 10. **Rubana** 11. **Sala Salla Kin** 12. **Korean Pavilion** 13. **PLUVIOPHILE**. Each pavilion represents a unique perspective and artistic contribution, making Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023 a diverse and enriching cultural experience.

For the final 20 artists in Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai 2023, namely: 1. Almagul Menlibayeva (Almaty/Berlin) 2. Arin Rungjang (Bangkok) 3. Atta Kwami (Accra/ Loughborough) 4. Chakaia Booker (New York) 5. Cheng Xinhao (Kunming) 6. Korakrit Arunanondchai (Bangkok/ New York) 7. Vuth Lyno (Phnom Penh) 8. Maria Theresa Alves (Berlin/ Naples) 9. Pablo

Bartholomew (New Delhi) 10. Pierre Huyghe (New York / San Diego) 11. Sarah Sze (New York) 12. Shimabuku (Naha) 13. Somluk Pantiboon (Chiang Rai) 14. Songdej Thipthong (Chiang Rai) 15. Tawatchai Puntusawasdi (Chiang Mai) 16. Tomás Saraceno (Berlin) 17. Tsherin Sherpa (California/Kathmandu) 18. Ubatsat (Chiang Mai) 19. Wang Wen-Chih (Chiayi) 20. Xin Liu (London)

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