

# SAKARIN KRUE-ON

## A Sakarin Krue-On's solo exhibition

Opening: 2018.12.22, 16:00

Duration::2018.12.22 - 2019.02.20

Tang Contemporary Art Beijing 1st Space

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Tang Contemporary Art is proud to announce the opening of a self-titled solo exhibition for Thai artist Sakarin Krue-On in the gallery's first Beijing space on December 22, 2018. Krue-On is an internationally-respected Thai contemporary artist who has never shied away from different creative media in his artistic practice. Traditional Thai wall paintings, folk customs, dramas, and historical, geographical, social, and cultural environments have been both inspiration and source material for the work. Krue-On brings traditional culture into the contemporary context, reflecting on the immense changes that have taken place in Thailand in the course of globalization and the crises and challenges faced by all of human society.

The main work in this exhibition, entitled Monument of an Awakening Era, stems from a chance encounter with the Schomburgk's deer. On a trip many years ago, the artist first saw a Schomburgk's deer specimen at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris. He learned that the Schomburgk's deer was one of the world's extinct species that had been unique to Thailand. Coincidentally, more than one hundred years before, the area in Thailand in which the Schomburgk's deer lived was often subject to serious flooding.

Many years ago, flooding took place in the central plains of Thailand every year, and as the floodwaters spread, the deer gathered on high ground. Hunters discovered that it was far easier for them to hunt the deer during this time, and approached the herd wearing antlers. The deer were busy looking for fresh leaves and did not sense the imminent danger, so their numbers dwindled year by year. In this installation, Krue-On placed antlers from the Schomburgk's deer formed in ceramic on a pool of water, representing the past and warning of the present and future. Our endless greed has killed beautiful animals and will eventually destroy the home in which we live.

An upside-down tapestry hangs above the antlers and the water, depicting the story of a tiger-hunter from southern Thai dramas. The reverse of the tapestry is embroidered with the word "ethics." Krue-On wrote, "In a sense, progress is the fragile spiritual armor that we wear. We need it to live safe and sound in a rapidly-developing modern society. However, if we lack moral restraints and respect for the natural laws that provide what we need to survive, what good is it to us? An advanced modern world could be an obstacle on our path to truth, beauty, and peace, or all of these ideals become a monument to an era of awakening."

The image of Guan Yin in the small exhibition space is made of boiled white sugar, a technique that the artist learned in the Tio Chew Temple in Thailand. The sweetness of the sugar is associated with happiness and luck, so it is used to make small Buddha figures and good luck charms for offerings, but it also attracts swarms of ants and other insects. For the artist, humans and ants are alike, both engaged in a search for excessive wealth, power, and success. As a result, he has cleverly placed water around the statue to block the ants' path, but it also represents a barrier that stems our own greed.

Through his art, Krue-On has always encouraged people to reconsider traditional culture and values, even as he cherishes previous beliefs in truth, beauty, and wisdom. In his work, he raises issues that Thailand is currently confronting, but also that every member of society in civilizations around the world must collectively ponder.

### *About Artist*

Sakarin Krue-On was born in 1965 in Mae Huong Sorn, Thailand. He currently lives and works in Bangkok and he is the head of the Art Department at Silpakorn University, Thailand's top art university.

As one of Thailand's earliest artists to work in conceptual art, Sakarin Krue-On has become world-renowned for his innovative creations spanning decades. He has represented Thailand in international exhibitions such as the 50th Venice Biennale (2003), the Thai Pavilion at the 53th Venice Biennale (2009), the Busan Biennale (2012), and the Singapore Biennale (2016). The first Thai artist to participate in Documenta, Krue-On presented two of his important earth art installations, entitled Terraced Rice Field Art Project and Nang Fa, which presented the clash between primitive power and modern civilization. In 2015, Sakarin Krue-On and Huang Yongping held a dual solo exhibition entitled "Imply-Reply" at the Bangkok Art and Culture Center (BACC), often called the Guggenheim of Thailand. With ingenious works and installation methods, the two artists inspired discussions about the relationships between East and West, the individual and the nation, and the traditional and the modern, attracting attention from important figures in the international art world. In 2016, Krue-On received the Third Prudential Eye Lifetime Achievement Award, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Asian art.