

## the second Asiatopia

### Introduction:

During the time we organized this festival, tragedies struck us at heart. We watched referendum vote for independent of East Timor with our deep cheer and of course mixed with fears of some terrible things would happen. And it did happen, we cried with horror, though we knew some bad things would happen but, like many others, we did not expecting the worse to be such worse than our human imagination can vision. In the middle of all the East Timor horror, Chiangmai factory's chemical blasted and destroy 600 houses of 2 villages, then Earth quake stucked Taiwan took many lives and loses... Destruction continued, in October, repression against Burmese refugees in Thailand followed the seized of Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok, and military coup in Pakistan... towards the end of 1999, in Asia.

Despite all these human disasterous seems to find no end, democratic fighters in Asia carry on their fight. This is in fact proof that freedom and democracy is still an issue in our region.

As artists, we are struggling for recognition to freedom of our expression in our own society, as much as democracy can spell out... This may be part of our discover of the word ASIATOPIA.

...In this Asiatopia II/1999 most artists are relatively new to many of Bangkok viewers, they are all recommended by networks of performance artists in the region. A few I met in festival else where, like a tradition to introduce one friend to the others. They are from Japan, Korea, Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Singapore, 17 Thai artists also invited (all together 32 artists). Special friends from Australia, Germany and England, who are long term friends of us. I think, participation from other continent lend solidarity spirit and will help enrich our festival. I also hope that friends who come to observe the festival will also help develop Asiatopia to a future dimension.

The second Asiatopia is including works in multi-media and other forms of intervention, not just stage performances. As performance art has taken many forms and artists are always explore different medias and techniques. However, It is very difficult to say what is performance and what is not. Although, there are artists who can distinctively use body and live moment, but many times artists use electronic, sounds, light, objects, etc., to incorporate in their process. Many audience expect performers to work in front of them but some performances happen in hidden area and only allow audience to see recording of their activities. Many artists use words - text - language, as poets and/or story tellers, some are purely lecture about their ideas. The meaning of performance art, has never been specific, and this is the charm of performance art.

Electronic communication / internet / e-mail / whatever we can call it. Artist like Prapon Kumjim open an opportunity to expand Asiatopia from this Saranrom park to the space in "time" which can reach to other "time" in the other side of the globe. I would like to invite people who come to Saranrom park on the weekend of 20-21 November join Netopia, an e-mail activity. To experience ideas develop in time and get transfer into earth's time-space, or may be just a record of time in which activities take place. This exciting project opens our activities into another unlimited dimensions of art.

However, the classic form of performance, which is audience and performers confront each other in the same space and time, is still relevant

and preferable form of practice. This stage situation creates interaction between audiences and the performers to the point that allow us – performers and audience – each performs their own expression in time and space of togetherness

May I welcome you all, and thank you for being part of this public art event.

Chumpon Apisuk  
Concrete House, Nonthaburi  
November 1999

#### Acknowledgement:

On behalf of Jaxpa organizing committee of Asiatopia, I would like to thank Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), the Office of Social Welfare of BMA, EMPOWER Foundation, for their support and cooperations. I would like to acknowledge especially to Khun Kraissak Choonhawan, and his staff at the BMA, Khun Nikom Wairachapanich, Deputy Director of the Office of Social Welfare of BMA and his supportive staff. The ArtsWA, who supports an artist from Australia. Helmut Lemke, Murayama Yoshiko, Jay Koh, Blue Space Contemporary Art Center in Ho Chi Minh City, Yuan Mor'O Campose from Manila's Philippines International Performance Art Festival, who join our festival with their high spirit of friendship. Seiji Shimoda of NIPAF for his moral support and inspiration, Yani Arahmiani from Jakarta for her unseccefull but hard work in seeking artist from East Timor for us.

I also would like to thank, Noi, Surang and friends from EMPOWER, Josef Ng, Thanom Chapakdee, Paisan Plienbangchang, Noppawan Sirivechakul, who spent days and nights putting together this catalogue. Vasan Sittiket for his excellent painting we used for our festival image. Many others individuals who drop by and lend their hands and eyes to the preparation process.

However, we must recognized that the festival cannot be done without our strong and active volunteers, friends at the organizing committee, U-kabat Group, Project 304, AARA – About Café, Gallery 253, community groups like EMPOWER, Forum Asia, Baan Nok-Weed and all the BMA officers at the Saranrom Park.

My respect and faithful to all participating artists.

Chumpon Apisuk  
On behalf of Asiatopia II/1999