

The Project of investigation and expert exchanging of Art Brut

FY2016 The Japan Foundation Asia Center Grant Program for the Promotion of Cultural Collaboration

Contents of the report of the Project of investigation and expert exchanging of Art Brut

Title of the project : The Project of investigation and expert exchanging of Art Brut

Term: 4/1/2016 - 3/31/2017

Host: Social Welfare Organization GLOW

Grant: FY2016 The Japan Foundation Asia Center Grant Program for the Promotion of Cultural Collaboration

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1. Project Outline

This project, ran throughout fiscal 2016, was supported by the Japan Foundation Asia Center. Through an exchange of experts and research regarding *art brut* works in Thailand, it aims at new interpretations and value creation relating to *art brut* and construction of an *art brut* network between the two countries.

1) Research

As part of the research into relevant artworks, interviews were conducted at local care facilities for disabled people and, via the offices of local art therapist Mr. Jumphol Chinaprapath, meetings with producers of *Art Brut* were arranged to study their creative practices. So far, it has been possible to meet with more than 10 individual artists.

2) Exchange of experts

The expert exchange program centered on local discussions, and an event attended by families of disabled children was held in November 2016 to address parenting concerns. It also involved an exhibition of photographs and a performance event for disabled people. Ms. Rosalina Alexander of The Rainbow Room Foundation, which offers support for those living in the community for disabled people in Thailand, gave a talk on the work of the Foundation. In February 2017, Mr. Chinaprapath spoke about art-mediated involvement with disabled people at the *Art Brut* International Forum in Japan. Furthermore, on March 8th, a symposium was held in the university music hall, and three specialists from two countries spoke on *art brut*.

3) Exhibitions of Art Brut

Exhibition was held to make Thailand Art Brut which are researched thorough this project widespread.

2. Investigation the Art Brut art works

Art Brut was a concept advocated by French artist Jean Dubuffet in 1945, and refers to art created by those with no formal art training to express emotions which well up from within, without regard to traditions or trends. Many works created by people with intellectual or mental disabilities are included in this genre of art. We, at Borderless Art Museum NO-MA, have been studying works of Art Brut in Japan and other Asian Countries. We also began studying works of Art Brut in Thailand in 2015.

2-1. Investigation of Art Brut work in the Kingdom of Thailand

In carrying out this project, interviews were first conducted with individuals working in the local welfare and arts sectors. Based on the information obtained, visits were conducted to welfare facilities for the disabled and the homes of disabled persons in order to locate individuals involved in the creation of Art Brut. In the end, 10 such individuals were found for the project. Of these, works by two people were put on exhibition.

Visiting the Rajanakul Institute, a facility for the disabled (November 2015)



Visiting an artist's home (February 2016)



Visiting an artist's home (February 2016)



Visiting the studio of a local art therapist (June 2016)

2-2. Outcomes

(1) Investigation results

- ⊖ Number of artists surveyed: 10
- ⊖ Details of locations and artists surveyed

Location	Details	No.
Artists' residences	Visits were conducted to artists' residences on the recommendation of Jumphol Chinaprapath.	6
Camilian Home	A not-for-profit facility which shelters orphans and children who are otherwise no longer under the care of their families, including those with disabilities. Conducts art-related initiatives. The official home page is: http://www.camillianhomelatkrabang.org/	1
Studio of Jumphol Chinaprapath	This studio is the center of Mr. Chinaprapath's practice.	2
Other		1

① List of artists

Name: Pasin Singhasaneh

※ Details are found on the list of exhibiting artists (2).

Name: Pichaya Lertsapcharoen

※ Details are found on the list of exhibiting artists (2).

Name: Vee (Nickname)

Interview date: February 24, 2016

Interview location: Artist's home

Works: Paintings

Summary: The artist creates alphabet-like letters on certain types of textiles. He also works in ceramics.

Interview approach: The artist was introduced to the study by Mr. Chinaprapath. An interview was conducted with the artist and his family at their home.



Name: New (Nickname)

Interview date: February 24, 2016

Works: Paintings

Interview location: Artist's home

Summary: The artist creates illustrations that include characters from animated television series.

Interview approach: The artist was introduced to the study by Mr. Chinaprapath. An interview was conducted with the artist and family at their home.



Name: Dream (Nickname)

Interview date: June 1, 2016

Interview location: Camilian Home

Works: Paintings

Summary: The artist uses bold strokes to draw across the surface of the page. The artist is supported by art therapy staff and is provided with space to work freely.

Interview approach: Works were viewed at Camilian Home, a welfare facility engaged in art therapy in the Kingdom of Thailand.



Name: Worm (Nickname)

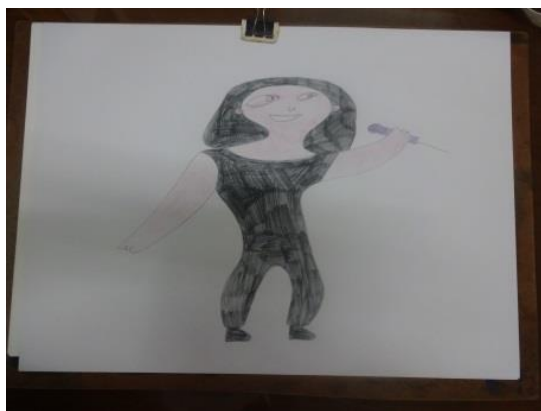
Interview date: June 2, 2016

Interview location: The artist's home.

Works: Paintings

Summary: The artist paints the world of television. The artist dreams of becoming a television presenter and frequently paints people and scenes related to news broadcasts. The artist employs a unique rounded brushstroke to draw figures and logos.

Interview approach: The artist was introduced by Mr. Chinaprapath and was interviewed alongside his father in his home.



Name: Suppakron (Nickname)

Interview date: June 2, 2016

Interview location: Artist's home

Works: Paintings, CG, objects

Summary: Along with CG imagery that the artist creates on computer, the artist also constructs objects using materials found around the home. The subjects of the artist's CG work include imaginary theme parks and robots, amongst others. The artist is a former student at a college for the arts.

Interview approach: The artist was introduced to the study by Mr. Chinaprapath. An interview was conducted with the artist and his family at their home.



Name: Jom (Nickname)

Interview date: June 2, 2016

Interview location: Studio of Jumphol Chinaprapath

Works: Paintings, CG, objects

Summary: This artist self-identifies as a "tom-boy" (the artist is female but dresses and behaves as a male) and has chosen to live a transgendered lifestyle. The artist has come to use art therapy to express his innermost feelings.

Interview approach: The works of this artist were viewed when visiting the studio of Mr. Chinaprapath. The artist lives outside of Bangkok and a meeting could not be arranged, however details were provided by Mr. Chinaprapath.



Name: Bjame (Nickname)

Interview date: June 2, 2016

Interview location: Studio of Jumphol Chinaprapath

Works: Paintings, CG, objects

Summary: The artist produces work during art therapy sessions. According to Mr. Chinaprapath, these works reveal the mental state. The works of this artist were viewed at the studio of Mr. Chinaprapath. The artist lives outside of Bangkok and a meeting could not be arranged; however, details were provided by Mr. Chinaprapath.



(2) Exhibited Artists

①Pasin Sinsaghaneh(1990-) Bangkok

The artist's family consists of his parents and two younger sisters. A 25-year-old, he enjoys travel, watching YouTube, and eating. He received psychological treatment in a psychiatric hospital as a child; his parents later decided that he should leave his special school in the ninth grade. They reasoned, "There must be a place in our wide world where he can live as himself." It was at this point that he came in contact with an art therapist, Mr. Jumphol Chinaprapath, who encouraged him to create pictures. These two have already known each other for 10 years. Initially, Pasin apparently had no interest in drawing. Originally, his only interest was to flush the toilet and watch the water swirl away. However, Jumphol saw his potential and thought it was important to support it; during their communication, Pasin began to draw as a means of directly expressing what he felt. He continues to mix acrylic paints to create various colors in his garden and quietly paints huge canvases.



② Pichaya Lertsapcharoen (1994-) Bangkok

Lertsapcharoen's works are often human figures with background contours, drawn in ballpoint pen and accentuated with colored pencils. At first glance, the action involved seems simple, but the production process includes rituals and rules. She first outlines what she wants to draw with a ballpoint pen. Then, she draws a clear distinction between work in progress and completed works, storing them in separate places (e.g., drafts in a white bag). There is a vast quantity of draft-stage pictures featuring queues of human figures with long necks. Lertsapcharoen carefully selects which one she wants to color next. Sometimes she joins pictures together to transform them into a giant patchwork.

Because her father is a doctor, hospitals and nurses often appear in her pictures. Other themes are everyday realms such as department stores and television. Lertsapcharoen uses bright colors and a pop-art style, distorting human figures in a unique way, working with evident pleasure, and sometimes humming as she works.



3. Exchanges of Art Brut experts

Along with the above investigation into the works of individual artists, this project also involved exchange activities amongst Art Brut experts from both Japan and Thailand to encourage the dissemination of views and opinions.

These saw Japanese experts visiting other persons and groups involved in the fields of Art Brut, art, social welfare, and art therapy and presenting their own answers to the question, “What kind of art form is Art Brut?” As a result, even though the term “Art Brut” was not used by all involved, they found similar ways of thinking among their Thai colleagues. A network of Japanese and Thai specialists in Art Brut was formed, while arrangements were also made for Thai practitioners to visit Japan. The Art Brut International Forum 2017 was conducted and a symposium was also held in Bangkok.

3-1. Bilateral exchange of views and ideas

During this project, experts from both countries proactively exchanged views and opinions and planned further meetings. These included, on the Japanese side, Ms. Mizue Kobayashi, who is involved in a wide range of Art Brut projects in the capacity of Executive Director and Artistic Director of the Japanese social welfare organization Aiseikai, and Artistic Director of the special not-for-profit organization Haretari Kumottari. She also serves on the planning and management staff of Borderless Art Museum NO-MA at the social welfare organization GLOW. The Thai side included Mr. Jumphol Chinaprapath, who works in art therapy in Thailand; counselor and therapist Ms. Piyachat Ruengvisesh Finney; Rosalina Alexander, representative of The Rainbow Room Foundation, which seeks to raise awareness regarding disabilities in Thailand, and Mr. Eiji Sumi. Participants in these discussions were able to deepen their mutual understanding of Art Brut.

	 <p>We are looking for....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We deal mainly with people with disabilities, but it can be artists without disabilities too• Works that are free of constraints and full of boundless imagination• Works created with everyday materials• Self-taught artists• Works born of a strong singular and obsessiveness• A hitherto unseen unique worldview• Drawings and paintings that may not be 'technically' the best, but possess a presence and quality• Giant, large-scale works
<p>Exchange of opinions at a facility caring for the disabled (May 2015)</p>	<p>Meeting slide</p>
	
<p>A visit to the Jittament Kindergarten (November 2016)</p>	<p>A visit to The Rainbow Room Foundation (February 2016)</p>



In the studio of Mr. Chinaprapath (September 2016)



Meeting with the artist Eiji Sumi (September 2016)

These exchanges amongst experts of differing origins dealt not only with issues regarding the spread of Art Brut, but also provided an opportunity to shed new light on conventional interpretations of Art Brut and to discover further diversity within the art form. The results of these discussions were presented via the program of visits by Thai experts, in a special report at the Art Brut International Forum, and at the Bangkok symposium.

3-2. Program of visits by Thai experts

Practices in Thailand and Japan

In November of 2016, Rosalina Alexander, Director of The Rainbow Room Foundation in the Kingdom of Thailand, visited Japan and gave a presentation about her own initiatives, and also visited a social welfare facility involved in the manual arts.

(1) Public lecture

Date and time: November 23, 2016, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Speaker: Rosalina Alexander, Director, The Rainbow Room Foundation

Interviewed by: So Yamada, Independent Living Assistant

(GLOW Social Welfare Organization)

Locations: Okamura Residence

(8 Nagaharouchoukami, Omihachiman-shi, Shiga Prefecture)



The presentation provided an overview of the activities of The Rainbow Room Foundation in Thailand. The foundation, which seeks to improve the standing of those living with disabilities, has held photography exhibitions involving children with autism and organized performances in which people living with disabilities took to the stage.

(2) Visit to a Japanese social welfare organization involved in manual arts

Date: November 22, 2016

Location: Biwako Gakuen Medical and Welfare Center Kusatsu, Omigakuen Shiga, Open Space Legato



Omigakuen Shiga



Open Space Legato



Biwako Gakuen Medical and Welfare Center Kusatsu

Three welfare facilities were visited in order to gain an appreciation of how manual arts are used to assist people either living with a disability or in welfare settings in Japan.

3-3. Report on talks given at the Art Brut International Forum (Shiga Prefecture, Japan)

Title: Art Brut International Forum, Thailand Special Report “Initiatives in Thailand”

Speaker: Jumphol Chinaprapath

Date and time: February 10, 2017, 3:15 p.m. - 4:05 p.m.

Location: Lake Biwa Otsu Prince Hotel, Omi Convention Hall
(4-7-7 Nionohama, Otsu, Shiga Prefecture)

<Speaker profile>

The speaker is an art therapist who uses art to help clients with autism and Parkinson’s disease. In 2014, Mr. Chinaprapath opened the “Self+Art Exhibition Therapy,” which presented works created by people with severe intellectual disabilities. Mr. Chinaprapath aims to encourage people with such difficulties in their lives to participate in society, as well as for society to gain a better understanding of such individuals.

<Talk summary>

One girl’s work

Today I would like to talk about the work of a particular girl whom I met many years ago. I would like everyone to have a sense of how this girl’s work evolved into something quite astonishing with each passing day.

This work (Figure 1) is from around the time when I had just met her. At first, most of her work was colorless, drawn in pencil and pen. Yet when I saw this work, I was taken aback by her potential as an artist, by her wonderful sense of artistry. I later asked her parents if perhaps she would like to draw some more pictures. The suggestion was not made to her parents with the idea that their daughter would become an artist, but rather because I thought it might be useful for her self-expression and to assist her to communicate. I thought it might be a way to draw out her inner desires.

A repeated mark

When she started drawing, I noticed something. In all her pictures, every figure was given arms and yet there were no fingers at their ends. She also drew a round mark almost like a stamp on the arms of her figures, and for a long time I thought about what this mark might mean (Figure 2). I even tried asking her directly. However, each time I asked her what the mark was, she would not reply. Most of the time, these round marks were drawn in a reddish color, and other colors were not often

used. I began to wonder if the girl had been abused by her parents, and that perhaps this had left a deep mark on her emotionally. One day, I broached the subject with the girl's mother. She replied that there had been no abuse, and that the marks were likely a memory from when she would play with her father. It turns out that her father is a doctor, and when they would play together, the girl would often imagine she were a nurse or was a patient receiving an injection. I decided that the red marks referred to those that appear after an infection.

Around the same time, I asked my colleagues whether they knew of any others who, like this girl, would draw a similarly particular object. They replied that such objects could likely represent the individual's experiences or a range of memories.

Changes in the work

The girl in question only drew the upper half of the body at first. Over time, however, she began to draw the lower half as well. One day, as I was looking over some of these wonderful works, I wondered if they couldn't be improved even further. I worried to what extent she might be able to accept my ideas and advice, but I also thought that the works might undergo a significant change if she could hear my opinions. This was not something that I taught her in a one-sided way. Rather, we would talk as she was drawing, and I would give her some small suggestions.

At one point, I cut some light blue cartridge paper into the shape of a finger and said to her, "A pretty woman would be even nicer with these fingers. What do you think?" She thought for a moment, and then placed the blue fingers on one of her drawings. Later, she created skin-colored fingers and added them to her drawings. Up until then she had only used light blue.

I also talked to her about the red marks left after receiving an injection. I explained that when one gets an injection the location swells slightly and becomes red, but this eventually goes away. After these two conversations, she began to draw her figures with hands. I think she also likely became gradually aware of her own creative abilities. In the sense she was able to develop this ability, I respected the efforts that she made here.

She would later create drawings such as these (Figure 3), thanks to her unique sense of color, attention to detail, and imagination. For her, this is one form of self-expression. Over time, she has begun to draw things that are in close proximity to her. She is a student, so at times she might draw a girl wearing her school uniform, and later, an actor or singer she has seen on TV. She uses what she sees around her as the subject of her work. In the beginning, she would draw outlines in pencil or ballpoint pen and color them in using colored pencils. She is now able to use paint and brushes.

Painting life

This particular girl loves to draw and paint, and she spends all day at home creating her works. Her many works are piled up in the room next to hers. On one occasion, I took one of the works from the pile, saying to her, "So this is what you've been painting," and I placed the piece on top of the pile. Later, she took that piece and returned it to its original position in the pile. It turns out that, even if it's a simple draft, each of her works has a story and an order, and this order cannot be muddled with. When I asked her mother about this, she explained that her daughter keeps all of her draft paintings in a large bag and carries them up to her room on the second floor, as Santa Claus might do. The next day, she takes them back downstairs to her studio and lays them out on the same table.

Art gives us a certain driving force, and it also gives us vitality. This is the same for all people, whether or not they have a disability, whether they are young or old. Being moved by all things is the driving force within our lives that pushes us to grow.

In the case of this girl, she also learned a great deal from painting, and matured as a result. She not only improved her quality of life, but began to operate in the wider society through her art works, and her emotions became more stable. Her works are highly artistic and have received attention from a large number of people. She would say that she has changed as a result of her previous efforts. We only gave her the smallest of helping hands.

Self+Art Borderless Art Museum

We renovated a house to build our own art museum, though it's so small it's almost embarrassing to call it a museum. Many people who draw or paint wonderfully go out into the world to work and forget all about their art. I am deeply concerned that these fantastic works may end up buried away somewhere, having never been seen by anyone. This is what led us to collect and exhibit as many works as possible, with the hope that many might be seen by others with similar understanding. Unfortunately, Thai society has not matured to the same extent as Japanese society, and thus, the general public there will not have much interest in such works. Nonetheless, societies are constantly changing, and I believe it is worthwhile to collect these works.

Though our museum is in a very small house, we display the works of many different people. Please come to Thailand. I believe our museum will continue to develop, and it is my hope that we will grow from the input of everyone here.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



In the hall



During the talk

3-4. Symposium report, “Thinking Art Brut” (Bangkok, Thailand)

Date: March 8, 2017

Time: 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Location: Chulalongkorn University Music Hall

Admission fee: Free

Speakers: Shiro Sadoshima, Ambassador of Japan (Embassy of Japan, Thailand)

Mizue Kobayashi (Social Welfare Organization Aiseikai)

Jumphol Chinaprapath (Self+Art Borderless Museum)

Piyachat Ruengvisesh Finney (counselor and therapist)

Chair: Rosalina Alexander

Symposium outline

The “Thinking Art Brut” symposium involved a program of talks by people with expert knowledge of Art Brut in Japan and Thailand.

The first speaker was Mr. Shiro Sadoshima, Ambassador of Japan (Embassy of Japan, Thailand), who made some comments about the historical transformations that Art Brut has undergone both domestically and overseas. Mr. Sadoshima also described the Japanese “Art Brut” exhibition as the first to be held amongst the ASEAN countries, and described a vision aimed at spreading Asia’s art throughout the world, and of making art more inclusive for those living with disabilities. The Ambassador’s final comments touched on the Japanese government’s support for Art Brut, and Mr. Sadoshima’s own wish to support work in this field.

The next speaker, Ms. Mizue Kobayashi, is both the Executive Director and Artistic Director of the social welfare organization Aiseikai and has worked with many Art Brut projects over the years. Ms. Kobayashi’s talk, based on her own experiences and entitled “Art Brut in Japan – From the Origin to the Present,” surveyed the history of Art Brut in Japan and provided an account of the conditions that surround Art Brut from an international perspective, also taking into account international exchanges such as the present project.

Ms. Kobayashi was followed by Mr. Jumhol Chinaprapath, who also spoke at the Art Brut International Forum in February, and his talk was entitled “The Beginning of Art Brut” in Thailand. Mr. Chinaprapath has been intimately involved in the process by which Art Brut has come to be recognized in Thailand and its artists discovered, thanks to his work in numerous studies and exhibitions. He is one of the leading authorities on Art Brut in the Kingdom of Thailand. In this talk, Mr. Chinaprapath described how Art Brut is received in Thailand and analyzed the works of individual artists

The final speaker was Ms. Piyachat Ruengvisesh Finney who gave a talk entitled “Spider Web –

The Intricate Mind.” In her talk, Ms. Finney spoke from her own experience as an art therapist, describing the emotional frameworks, or motivations, of those who make Art Brut works, as can be seen through an analysis of Art Brut. Ms. Finney compared these emotional frameworks to a spider’s web, both being extremely complex and possessing intricate structures. She also spoke about several of the artworks on display in the “Art Brut in Japan and Thailand” exhibition held in the adjacent hall.



Mr. Shiro Sadoshima, Ambassador of Japan



Ms. Mizue Kobayashi



Mr. Jumhol Chinaprapath



Ms. Piyachat Ruengvisesh Finney



Chair: Rosalina Alexander



Scenes from the symposium



3-5. Outcomes

(1) Outcomes of events

- ① Program of visits by Thai experts, Japan-Thailand Art Brut Exchange Commemorative Event

Attendees: 19

- ② Art Brut International Forum, Special Report 2: Thailand, Mr. Jumphol Chinaprapath, “Initiatives in Thailand”

Attendees: 89

Comments (excerpted from a survey of attendees)

“While economically and culturally, circumstances [in Thailand] may differ from those of Japan, the environment which surrounds people with disabilities and their care-givers has much in common.” (Female, 20s)

“The talks were good and easy to understand. In the work of welfare facilities, group support is the main form, and so it’s difficult to see changes at the individual level. I felt a renewed sense of the importance of initiatives that are respectful and seek small changes.” (Female, 30s)

- ③ Symposium “Thinking Art Brut”

Attendees: 117

Comments (excerpted from a survey of attendees)

“I believe Art Brut should be spread more widely.” (Female, 50s)

“The talks given by the speakers were fantastic.” (Female, 30s)

(2) Other outcomes

Mr. Jumphol Chinaprapath, who was involved in the investigation and talks during the project, and who has carried out exchange activities throughout the year, has decided to open the “Self+Art Borderless Museum” that will display works of Art Brut. As of March 2017, plans for the opening of the museum are underway.

In February 2017, the Pridi Banomyong Institute in Bangkok is hosting the “Self+Art Borderless Museum” exhibition, leading up to the museum’s opening.

Art Brut experts have been building relationships since 2015 through the current project, including during the planning stages, and are working to deepen their understanding of the importance of Art Brut towards the opening of the “Self+Art Borderless Museum.” This has been one of the most significant outcomes of the exchanges amongst these experts.



Exhibition poster



At the Pasin Singhasaneh exhibition



At the exhibition



At the exhibition

4. Art Brut Exhibitions

Two exhibitions were held as part of this project. The first was the “Art Brut in Thailand” exhibition held in Otsu, Shiga Prefecture at the Biwako Otsu Prince Hotel in the same hall as the Amenity Forum, a welfare related forum, held February 10 - 12, 2017. Along with this exhibition, other exhibitions were held simultaneously at the hotel. These included the “Shiga Color 3” exhibition, which included Art Brut works from Shiga Prefecture, and “Lifework-ism,” an exhibition showcasing Art Brut throughout Japan. Visitors were able to view works from the “Art Brut in Thailand” exhibition alongside many other works from Japan.

The second exhibition held was “Art Brut in Thailand and Japan,” which took place in Bangkok, Thailand. The exhibition opened on March 3, 2017, at the Chulalongkorn University Museum, located on the university’s Bangkok campus. The exhibition showcased over 90 works from eight artists in Thailand and Japan, and ended on March 26.

4-1. “Art Brut in Thailand” (Shiga Prefecture, Japan)

Exhibition title: Art Brut in Thailand

Summary: The exhibition included paintings and objects created by Pichaya Lertsapcharoen, who was discovered as part of this year’s investigation of Art Brut in Thailand, and also introduced Art Brut created in Thailand to a domestic Japanese audience.

Dates: February 10 - 12, 2017

Hours: 9:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m. (until 2:00 p.m. on the final day)

Location: Omi Convention Hall, Biwako Otsu Prince Hotel

Admission: Free

Artist showcased: Pichaya Lertsapcharoen

Scenes from the exhibition



Inside the exhibition



Inside the exhibition



Pichaya Lertsapcharoen and works



The artist and her family with Mr. Chinapraph

4-2. “Art Brut in Thailand and Japan” (Bangkok, Thailand)

Exhibition title: Art Brut in Thailand and Japan

Summary: Works from six Japanese and two Thai artists were placed on display for nearly one month.

Dates: March 3 - 26, 2017

Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Closed days: Saturdays and Sundays except for 18th, 19th, 26th.

Location: First Floor Gallery, Chulalongkorn University Museum

Admission: Free

Artists showcased:

【Japan】

Masao Obata

Shinichi Sawada

Marie Suzuki

Kiyoshi Toya

Hidenori Motooka

Kenichi Yamazaki

【Thailand】

Pasin Sinsaghaneh

Pichaya Lertsapcharoen

Main Organizing Bodies: Borderless Museum NO-MA, GLOW Social Welfare Organization

Sponsored by: Aiseikai Social Welfare Organization

Haru Social Welfare Organization

Minna de Ikiru Social Welfare Organization

Yatsugatake Meisui-kai Social Welfare Organization

Yu-Yu Social Welfare Organization

Rakusho NPO

Supported by: The Embassy of Japan in Thailand, Asia Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD)

With assistance from: Art Connection, Haretari Kumottari NPO, The Rainbow Room Foundation, Self+Art Borderless Art Museum

Concept of the exhibition

By showcasing works of Art Brut produced in Japan and Thailand, this exhibition aimed to connect the art form to a wider audience and to provide an opportunity to people living with a disability, who have not been previously recognized in an artistic context, to demonstrate their individual talents. It also aimed to strengthen the cultural and education exchanges between Japan and Thailand.

The exhibition attracted widespread attention with 1,030 visitors and coverage by local television agencies, newspapers, and online news websites.

The road to an Art Brut exhibition in a foreign country

The first step towards realizing this exhibition was the search for an exhibit space. While a number of spaces amongst Bangkok's galleries and art centers were considered, in the end the decision was made to hold the exhibition at the First Floor Gallery of the renowned Chulalongkorn University Museum, in order that Thai students would be able to view these works.

Artists to be showcased at the exhibition were chosen amongst Art Brut practitioners from Japan and Thailand. The Japanese artists selected include Masao Obata, Shinichi Sawada, Marie Suzuki, Kiyoshi Toya, Hidenori Motooka, and Kenichi Yamazaki. These artists have been featured in numerous other exhibitions. Based on the already significant recognition of their work in Japan, these artists were selected precisely to emphasize the appeal of Art Brut to audiences in Thailand, where the art form is less recognized.

Two Thai artists selected for the exhibition, Pasin Singhasaneh and Pichaya Lertsapcharoen, were discovered during the investigation of Art Brut in Thailand that commenced in 2015. Including the wonderful pieces produced by these two artists provided an opportunity to promote "Art Brut in the Kingdom of Thailand." With fantastic works selected from each of these eight artists, preparations for the opening of the exhibition continued.

Many Japanese organizations provided support to make this exhibition possible, including the Aiseikai Social Welfare Organization, Haru Social Welfare Organization, Minna de Ikiru Social Welfare Organization, Yatsugatake Meisui-kai Social Welfare Organization, Yu-Yu Social Welfare Organization, and the Rakusho NPO. A great many local Thai organizations also provided significant assistance to the exhibition, having understood the intentions and importance of this project.

In particular, cooperation from Thai organizations ensured this event's success, by providing volunteers to supervise and manage the exhibition and by publicizing the event with local media outlets, all of which would have been difficult to carry out from Japan.

Understanding through seeing

No matter how one tries to describe it, aspects of a work of Art Brut will always remain indescribable. While the investigators had ample opportunities to describe what Art Brut in welfare settings and at related institutions, actually seeing these works is the most immediate way to understand the power of this form of art.

The idea of creating an exhibition so people can see these works represents a significant step towards achieving the goal of this project: for people living with disabilities in Thailand to be recognized in the artistic world by the broader Thai public.



Japanese staff preparing the works



Thai staff preparing the exhibition



Chulalongkorn University Museum



Cutting the tape at the opening ceremony



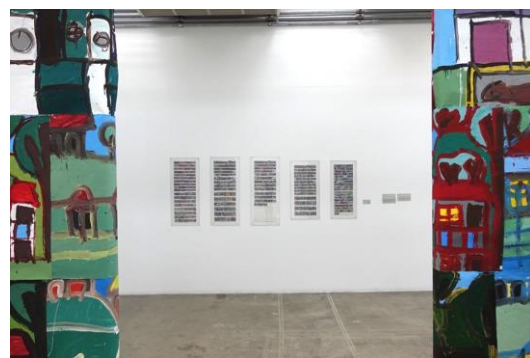
Exhibition poster



Inside the exhibition



Inside the exhibition



Inside the exhibition



Inside the exhibition



Inside the exhibition



Inside the exhibition



Inside the exhibition



Mr. Chinapraphat speaking at the exhibition



Ms. Mizue Kobayashi speaking at the exhibition



Exhibition workshop



Exhibition workshop

4-3. Outcomes

1. “Art Brut in Thailand”

Exhibition period: 3 days

Total visitors: 1,468

Average daily visitors: 489.3

Comments (excerpted from survey of visitors)

“I was amazed that they used the color pencils right until the very end.” (Female, 13-19)

“These works will stay in my heart.” (Female, under 12)

2. “Art Brut in Thailand and Japan”

Exhibition duration: 19 days

Total visitors: 1,030

Average daily visitors: 54.2

Comments (excerpted from survey of visitors)

“I would like to see even more works of Art Brut than those on display.” (Female, 40s)

“I was very happy to see Japanese works of art in Thailand. The works of both countries were outstanding.” (Female, 20s)

“I wish there were more Art Brut exhibitions.”(Female, 30s)