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**“APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL: THE SERENITY OF MADNESS” MAKES NORTH AMERICAN DEBUT
AT THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO**

The renowned filmmaker and SAIC alum takes on economic disparity, government-sponsored censorship and marginalization through rarely seen short films, photography, archival materials and video installations

CHICAGO—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a global leader in art and design education, announces the North American debut of Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s exhibition “The Serenity of Madness.” Exploring threads of sociopolitical commentary, this new solo exhibition uniquely presents rarely seen short films and video installations by the Thai artist, alongside his photography, sketches and archival materials.

A leading figure in contemporary film and art, Weerasethakul’s (SAIC MFA 1998, HON 2011) work reveals stories often excluded in history in and out of Thailand: voices of the poor and the ill, marginalized beings and those silenced and censored for personal and political reasons. Weerasethakul has developed a singular realist-surrealist style in which he portrays the everyday alongside supernatural elements suggesting a distortion between fact and folklore, the subconscious and the exposed and various disparities of power.

“Art fosters more platforms for different voices, and it is important to be aware of the world’s narratives,” said Apichatpong Weerasethakul. “Sometimes just simply being aware can be a powerful tool, and that’s why I’m humbled to present my work at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a place which exposed me to aspects of film and world views that had an enduring impact on my career.”

“Apichatpong Weerasethakul: The Serenity of Madness” is a traveling exhibition curated by SAIC alum Gridthiya Gaweewong (MA 1996) and produced by Independent Curators International (ICI), New York. It has previously been shown in Thailand, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

“While many of us have focused on the internationally acclaimed feature films that Apichatpong Weerasethakul has directed over the past decade and a half, there has been far less attention paid to the significant body of short films and tapes, museum installations and commissioned productions,” said Bruce Jenkins, Chair of SAIC’s Department of Film, Video, New Media and Animation. “The ‘Serenity of Madness’ exhibition is an invaluable corrective that assembles for the first time the remarkable works from his ‘other cinema’ and offers all of us the rare chance to experience his arresting imagery and haunting stories on a truly intimate scale.”

“Apichatpong Weerasethakul: The Serenity of Madness” will have press and VIP preview hours on Wednesday, September 13 and Thursday, September 14 from 11 a.m.–2 p.m. The exhibition opens to the public on Friday, September 15, 6:00–9:00 p.m., at SAIC’s Sullivan Galleries, 33 S. State St., 7th floor. The exhibit will run through December 8, Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Gaweewong will give a curator’s tour of the exhibition on Monday, September 18 from 12–1 p.m. The tour and exhibition is free and open to the public. For more information about the exhibit, visit saic.edu/serenityofmadness. Related to the exhibition, Weerasethakul will give a talk as part of SAIC’s Visiting Artists Program on Tuesday, September 19 at 6 p.m. For more details, visit saic.edu/vap. Additionally, SAIC’s Gene Siskel Film

Center will screen four of Weerasethakul's films in October: "Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives," "Cemetery of Splendour," "Syndromes and a Century" and "Tropical Malady." More details for film screenings can be found at siskelfilmcenter.org.

About Apichatpong Weerasethakul

Apichatpong Weerasethakul was born in 1970 in Bangkok and raised in the northeastern Thai city of Khon Kaen. Working independently of the Thai commercial film industry, he is active in promoting experimental and independent filmmaking through his company Kick the Machine, which he founded in 1999. With Gridthiya Gaweewong he founded the Bangkok Experimental Film Festival in 1997, and presented it three more times through 2008. His work has been presented widely in art and film contexts internationally, including the Sharjah Biennial in the United Arab Emirates (2013), dOCUMENTA 13 in Kassel, Germany (2012), Liverpool Biennial in England (2006), Busan Biennial in South Korea (2004), the Istanbul Biennial (2001) and in solo and group exhibitions at art spaces including Haus der Kunst in Munich, Germany; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; New Museum, New York; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin and Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Weerasethakul's 2009 feature film, "Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives," won a Palme d'Or prize at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival. Additional feature films include: "Cemetery of Splendour" (2015), "Syndromes and a Century" (2006), "Tropical Malady" (2004), "The Adventures of Iron Pussy" (2003), "Blissfully Yours" (2002) and "Mysterious Object at Noon" (2000).

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For 150 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been a leader in educating the world's most influential artists, designers, and scholars. Located in downtown Chicago with a fine arts graduate program consistently ranking among the top three graduate fine arts programs in the nation by U.S. News and World Report, SAIC provides an interdisciplinary approach to art and design as well as world-class resources, including the Art Institute of Chicago museum, on-campus galleries, and state-of-the-art facilities. SAIC's undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate students have the freedom to take risks and create the bold ideas that transform Chicago and the world—as seen through notable alumni and faculty such as Michelle Grabner, David Sedaris, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Hunt, Georgia O'Keeffe, Cynthia Rowley, Nick Cave, Jeff Koons, and LeRoy Neiman. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

About Independent Curators International

Independent Curators International (ICI) produces exhibitions, events, publications, research and training opportunities for curators and diverse audiences around the world. Established in 1975 and headquartered in New York, ICI is a hub that connects emerging and established curators, artists, and art spaces, forging international networks and generating new forms of collaborations. ICI provides access to the people and practices that are key to current developments in the field, inspiring fresh ways of seeing and contextualizing contemporary art.

For more details, visit ICI's website:

<http://curatorsintl.org/exhibitions/apichatpong-weerasethakul-the-serenity-of-madness>

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