

Artist Sakul Intakul attains his long-cherished dream

FLORAL MUSEUM BLOSSOMS

STORY: PANTHITA PHENSAWANG

Famed artist Sakul Intakul has at last fulfilled his long-cherished dream of opening a floral museum, the first of its kind in Thailand.

The Museum of Floral Culture opens this Sunday, Her Majesty the Queen's 80th birthday.

Located in the Sriyan area of Bangkok's Dusit district, it occupies a two-storey colonial style mansion in the embrace of an expansive botanical garden.



Sakul Intakul

On display on its ground floor are objets d'art such as one labelled "The Secret Art of Shoka Floral Arrangement of Ikenobo" — it is an ancient Japanese scroll dating back to 1756.

There are also rare photographs of floral culture sourced from the National Archives of Thailand; items used in floral arrangement, and related photographs from various countries including India, China, Egypt, Greece, England and France.

The highlight is a portrait of Their Majesties painted by ML Jirathorn Jiraprawat and presented as a gift to the museum.

One exhibition hall, "The Temple of Flowers", explores the inter-relationship between forests, sources of water, communities, people and floral culture, in Loei's Phu Suan Sai National Park, and communities around Wat Si Pho Chai in Saeng Pha village in the province's Na Haeuw district.

Visitors can appreciate the "how-to" process of traditional floral works ranging from garlands, floral pendants or *kruang kuaen*, and traditional flower decorations such as *pan dok mai*, *baisri*, *krathong* and *ngan baitong* — all closely related to the traditional way of life and Thai culture.

In the museum's "Pen and Pencil Hall", Sakul has put on display a collection of his sketches, including the floral



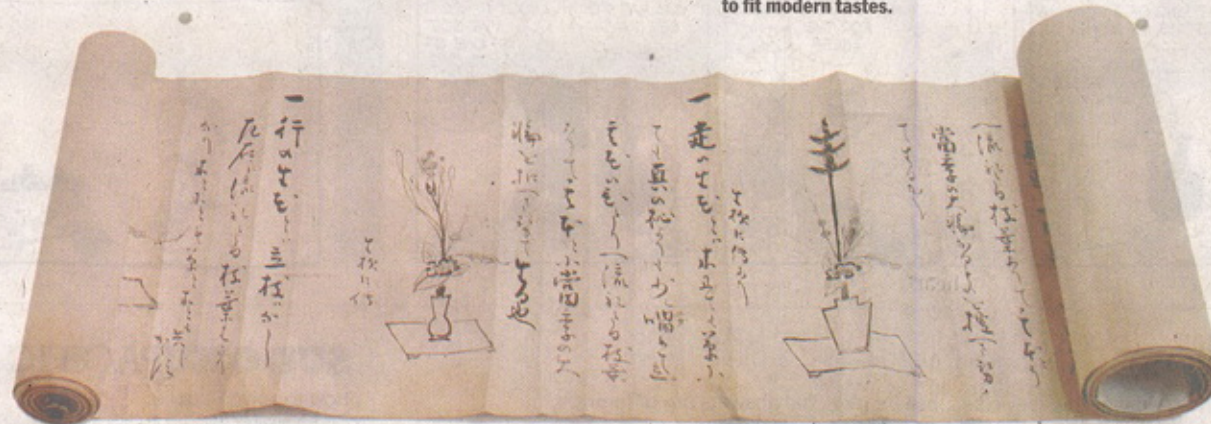
The Museum of Floral Culture is in Sriyan, Dusit district of Bangkok. Its vast botanical garden boasts plants that emit sweet fragrance.



Various styles of traditional flower arrangement.



A set of traditionally designed floral arrangements adapted to fit modern tastes.



Ancient Japanese scroll.



Hair accessories made from artificial flower.



A decoration at the museum made from petals arranged in exotic patterns.

arrangement for the royal banquet held in the Grand Palace to celebrate the 60th anniversary of His Majesty's accession to the throne in 2006.

Visitors will be impressed by the spacious botanical garden which is home to a wide variety of flowers and plants including white champaka, orange champaka, jasmine, orange jasmine, crown flower, gardenia crape jasmine and tanea banana tree. The garden is a good place for Thai youths to learn about these rare plants and see them up close.

"I would like to share my experience and joy with the world," Sakul said.

"The museum represents a lifetime of my commitment to flower culture — from floral works and photographs of beautiful blossoms, to plants sourced from across the globe."

Speaking of his plans for the future, Sakul said he would like to transform the museum into an institute to facilitate learning and exchange of knowledge about plants and flowers, host workshops on flower arrangement, and hopefully provide scholarships to student keen to study and explore this side of our heritage.

The Museum of Floral Culture is located in Soi Ong-karak, Dusit district. It is open daily 10am-6pm, except Monday. Admission fee is 150 baht. For more information call 02-669-3633 or fax 02-669-3632.