ALVEO ทวิรำรยา
Italian Thai Friendship Sculpture
A project conceived and promoted by the Embassy of Italy in Bangkok

Ambassador H.E. Francesco Saverio NISIO
First Counsellor Lamberto Maria MORUZZI

Special thanks to:

EMBASSY OF ITALY
Giovanni Nocera, Anna Cecilia Amari, Simone Cattaneo,
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BANGKOK METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY
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CENTRAL GROUP
Chairman of the Advisory Board, Sudhitam Chirativat
Executive Chairman and CEO, Tos Chirathivat
Executive Director and Member of Executive Committee, Prin Chirativat
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MONZART BRONZE BENNY LINE
Founder, Armando Benato

We kindly thank Tommaso Maggio for the graphic design and the logo for the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Italy and Thailand
INTRODUCTION

In this brief commemorative brochure I am pleased to present the origin and creative process behind the sculpture called “Alveo” dedicated to celebrating Italo Thai Friendship.

An ambitious and seemingly daunting project at first, it nevertheless successfully came together, piece by piece.

The fact that the citizens of Bangkok are able to admire a monument that today celebrates relations between Italy and Thailand is due to several factors: fortuitous insight on behalf of the Embassy and my desire to leave a tangible and lasting symbol in the year marking the 150th anniversary in diplomatic relations; the presence of Monzart, an historic Italian artistic foundry, spanning over thirty years in Thailand; the collaboration of Silpakorn University, founded by the Italian Corrado Feroci, regarded as the father of modern Thai art; the economic and logistical support of Central Group, very close to Italy and the Embassy due to their significant investment in our country with the purchase of La Rinascente; the excellent political relations enjoyed with local authorities, relaunched just this year by the exchange of visits between our two Foreign Ministers.

Such elements have been key ingredients of the project, the combination of which was skillfully blended together by First Counsellor Lamberto Maria Moruzzi, whom I wholeheartedly thank for his creativity, determination and organizational capacity, in close collaboration with all those who, both from inside (I would like to mention Simone Cattaneo and Gertraud Schwenberger) and outside of the Embassy, made the end result possible thanks to their commitment and passion. Special thanks also go to Khun Suddhitam Chirativat for having immediately received my proposal with enthusiasm and to Armando Benato, who brings extraordinary bronze artworks to life and without whose passion and professionalism we would never have never been able to build the sculpture in the first place.

The various steps that have characterized the project are shown in the pages of this brochure. From the initial concept to the early collaboration proposals, through to the selection of sketches and wax casting, up to the installation in Lumpini Park and the inaugural ceremony. These images and text illustrate the direction taken and explain how a monument that would last over time came to be, in memory of a peaceful and fruitful past but also as a milestone of good wishes for future relations.

Bangkok, 2 June 2018

Francesco Saverio Nisio

(Ambassador of Italy to the Kingdom of Thailand)
The letter from H.E. the Ambassador F.S. Nisio to Khun Sudhitham Chirathivat, Chairman of the Advisory Board, Central Group Co.

The letter from H.E. the Ambassador F.S. Nisio to Prof. Wanchai Sutananta, the President of Silpakorn University.

The letter from H.E. the Ambassador F.S. Nisio to Pol. Gen. Aswin Kwanmuang Governor of Bangkok
Pictured (above) are the creative ideas submitted by the competition finalists.

The "Alveo" sculpture project by Komsan Phetsit was chosen by an Italian-Thai commission from a competition held among the students of Silpakorn University.

A mock-up of the "Alveo" sculpture as envisioned by artist Komsan Phetsit: a typical Italian boat (gondola) and a typical Thai boat (e-pong) intersect above vertical segments that recall the architecture of both countries as reflected in the water. The element of water is used as an underlying metaphor of unity between the two cultures with the boats chosen as symbols of communication and good relations between the two countries.
These images illustrate the process by which a raw metal like bronze can be transformed into a work of art at Monzart, where the high quality of craftsmanship made the bringing to life of the student's project possible.

H.E. Ambassador Nisio and First Counsellor Moruzzi visit the Monzart foundry to watch their artisans at work.

Monzart Bronze Benny Line is a well-established historic bronze foundry which relocated its production to Rayong, Thailand, over thirty years ago. Using the “lost wax” method, the foundry produces works that are admired all over the world. Monzart has worked with very important artists in its long and distinguished history.

Completion of the first part of the statue (below).

Preparations get underway for the installation of the artwork within the designated area in Lumpini Park.

Construction of the cement plinth on which the actual sculpture will be placed commences.
The key moment the sculpture is unveiled at the inauguration ceremony (left). In the presence of municipal authorities, Embassy dignitaries and sponsors donate the monument to the city (right).

As is evident from these images, the symbolic moment helped to bind the two countries and communities even closer for the future.
In 1430, almost six hundred years ago, Nicolò de Conti became the first Italian to visit the Kingdom of Siam while the first Siamese Mission set forth for Italy in 1688. One could say that our two countries have known each other for quite some time. But it was with the signing of a friendship and trade treaty in October 3rd 1868 that the Kingdoms of Italy and Siam officially established diplomatic relations.

In order to properly celebrate the 150th anniversary of such a historical event, the Embassy of Italy has this year decided to create a special edition of the Italian Festival in Thailand with 69 events spanning 299 days of the year. It was not enough!

We also wanted to create with our Thai friends something which would testify to our long-lasting friendship forever. We thought about bequeathing a bronze sculpture to the city of Bangkok. There were indeed all the conditions for a shared contribution to such a wonderful project.

We then approached Silpakorn University, which was established in 1943 by the founding father of modern Thai Art, Italian-born professor and sculptor Corrado Feroci/Silpa Bhirasri. The University went on to organize a contest in order to choose from the entries submitted the one that would eventually provide the actual model for the work of art. The winner – selected by a Commission chaired by the Italian Embassy – was a 3m-high contemporary bronze sculpture titled “Alveo” (named by the artist Mr. Komsan Phetsit himself) representing a Gondola (traditional Italian boat) and an E-Pong (traditional Thai boat) above vertical segments recalling the architectures of both countries reflected in the water. “Alveo” symbolizes the common ties binding Italy and Thailand through water as a unifying element. Indeed, Bangkok has been often called the “Venice of the East” due to the canals that characterize the layout of both cities. Historically, such canals have been crucial in linking people and places. In the artist’s interpretation, they also connect our two cultures.

The sculpture was cast in bronze by the Italian-Thai Foundry MonzArt Bronze Benny Line belonging to Mr. Armando Benato, an Italian entrepreneur working in Thailand for more than three decades. Throughout these years, his artistic foundry based in Rayong has become globally renowned with exports worldwide.

Last but not least, I would like to mention the extraordinary participation of the Bangkok Municipal Administration in offering this public space in Lumpini Park and in helping us sort out all the red tape!

As a final touch of Italian Thai cooperation, we have chosen for today’s inauguration ceremony the symbolic date of 21st April, which coincidentally marks the day in which both Rome and Bangkok were founded.

This really is an Italian Thai achievement!

Today, as Ambassador of Italy, I have the honour and the pleasure of officially donating the Italian-Thai Friendship Sculpture “Alveo” to the city of Bangkok.

Thank you all.

Bangkok, Lumpini Park
REMARKS BY H.E. Mr. CHAISIRI ANAMARN ADVISOR TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Your Excellency Mr. Francesco Saverio Nisio (ฟรานเชสโก ซาเวรีโอ นีซีโอ), Ambassador of Italy to Thailand, Mr. Thaweesak Lertprapan (ทวีศักดิ์ เลิศประพันธ์), Deputy Governor of Bangkok Assistant Professor Sayumporn Kasomsuwan (สยุมพร กาษรสุวรรณ), Vice President for Art and Culture – Silpakorn University Mr. Suthipand Chirathivat (สุทธิพันธ์ จิราธิวัฒน์), Executive Director of Executive Committee of the Central Group Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is my great pleasure and honour to be here today, as representative of His Excellency Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Thailand and Italy, and be part of the unveiling of the Thai-Italian Friendship Sculpture on this meaningful day of 21 April, which is the date that commemorates the ‘Birthday’ of both Bangkok and Rome, (although with over two thousand years apart).

I am very much impressed that the Alveo (อัล-เว-โอ) or ทวิธารา, this remarkable piece of art, has well captured the first link of our two nations through navigation. Our diplomatic relations began with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation in 1868. This friendship was further deepened in the 19th century when His Majesty King Chulalongkorn paid two visits to Europe in 1897 and 1907. Italy was, in fact, the first European country that His Majesty visited, as His Majesty disembarked at Venice, where Gondola was the chief mean of transport at the time.

The bond was strengthened ever since, as pioneers of Italian artists, architects and engineers came to Siam to serve the Siamese Government during the important time of our modernization. As we all know, the name of Mr. Corrado Feroci (คอร์ราโด เฟโรชี่) or ศิลป์ พีระศรี became well-known as the Father of modern Thai architecture and the founder of Silpakorn University.

Over the centuries, our bilateral relations have developed beyond art and architecture. Today, our relations have covered wide range of aspects, especially in politics, trade, and investment.

This year of the 150th anniversary is indeed an important milestone in our relations. It would not be an exaggeration to say that our bilateral relations have never been this close in years. There has been a significant exchange of visits by the two Foreign Ministers, His Excellency Mr. Angelino Alfano (อันเจลีโน อัลฟาโน) in February and, in reciprocal, His Excellency Mr. Don Pramudwinai visited Italy in early March. The successful visits were of prime importance as they were the first high-level political contacts between Thailand and the EU country after the EU’s resolutions on Thailand. And I believe there will be more high-level visits between our two countries in the near future.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to express my deep appreciation, on behalf of our Foreign Minister, to His Excellency Mr. Francesco Saverio Nisio (ฟรานเชสโก ซาเวรีโอ นีซีโอ), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Silpakorn University and the Central Group, for their efforts in realizing this meaningful Thai-Italian Friendship Sculpture which will be presented today. I am certain that the Thai-Italian Friendship Sculpture will stand strong as the testimony of our longstanding relationship, which will continue to flourish for many years to come.