Therme Group Supports Realisation of the Serpentine Pavilion 2022 Designed by Artist Theaster Gates

Marking Fourth Consecutive Year of Therme's Partnership with Serpentine, Black Chapel Opens to Public June 2022

London, United Kingdom Feb 5, 2022 (Issuewire.com) - **Therme Group** announced today that it is supporting *Black Chapel*, the Serpentine Pavilion of 2022, designed by Theaster Gates with **Adjaye Associates** throughout its full life cycle, marking the fourth consecutive year of partnership between Serpentine and Therme. The partners' ongoing collaboration explores the bonds that link art, architecture, and forms of creative expression with outlets that encourage wellbeing in unconventional ways, such as their co-curated Wellbeing Culture Forum talks programme.

"The Serpentine's annual architectural programme is a lighthouse that concurrently illuminates what is visionary and urgent in architecture and for the future wellbeing of cities and urban environments," commented **Robert C. Hanea**, Therme Group's Founder and CEO. "For Therme Group, this initiative serves as a catalyst for continuous learning and ongoing inspiration that is directly influencing our urban development projects worldwide."

"Therme Art was founded to support the realisation of visionary projects that align architecture and urban planning to the body, mind, and soul. Our recently launched mental health initiative is focusing on the responsibility of artists, architects, and creatives to generate healthy and nurturing environments," stated **Mikolaj Sekutowicz**, CEO and Co-Founder of Therme Art. "We would like to thank Serpentine Gallery, Bettina Korek, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, for welcoming Theme Art to participate in bringing Theaster Gates' *Black Chapel* to life and inspiring all of us towards building a city of peace,

contemplation, and healing."

Black Chapel draws its inspiration from the historic great kilns of Stoke-on-Trent, paying homage to British craft and manufacturing traditions. Primarily crafted of wood, the Pavilion's design alludes to the performative and meditative qualities of a small chapel. A bell from the demolished St. Laurence Church on Chicago's South Side will be placed next to the entrance of the Pavilion and used to call, signal, and announce performances and activations. A single source of light from an oculus will create a sanctuary-like environment for reflection and communion. Conceived as a platform for participation, and performances, with an emphasis on music and public engagement, *Black Chapel* extends the artist's practice of space-making through vernacular urban and architectural interventions.

Theaster Gates said**,** "The name *Black Chapel* is important because it reflects the invisible parts of my artistic practice. It acknowledges the role that sacred music and the sacred arts have had on my practice and the collective quality of these emotional and communal initiatives. *Black Chapel* also suggests that in these times there could be a space where one could rest from the pressures of the day and spend time in quietude. I have always wanted to build spaces that consider the power of sound and music as a healing mechanism and emotive force that allows people to enter a space of deep reflection and/or deep participation."

Bettina Korek, Chief Executive, and **Hans Ulrich Obrist**, Artistic Director, said, "We are honoured to undertake this remarkable project with leading visual artist Theaster Gates. One of the most significant voices working today, Gates's praxis combines formalism, conceptualism, and powerful impact felt throughout the communities in which he works and beyond. We look forward to welcoming visitors to *Black Chapel* as a platform for engagement, spirituality, and togetherness."

Throughout the Summer, the 2022 Pavilion will become a platform for Serpentine's programme which will feature the return of *Park Nights*, the interdisciplinary platform for live encounters in music, poetry, dance, and the Serpentine's Education and Civic activations, including *Family Workshops* and *Community Day*.

The Pavilion is being designed to minimise its carbon footprint and environmental impact, in line with Serpentine's and Therme Group's sustainability policies. The predominantly timber structure will be lightweight and fully demountable, with a focus on sustainably sourced materials and the reusability of the structure as a whole after its time installed at Serpentine. *Black Chapel,* together with previous pavilions Therme Art has partnered on, will be re-sited to a permanent location in the future.

Four Years of Partnership

Therme Group previously supported Serpentine Pavilions designed by **Sumayya Vally** and her studio **Counterspace** (2021), **Junya Ishigami** (2019), and **Frida Escobedo** (2018). Therme Art partnered in the activation of each of these architectural spaces through the conceptualisation and organisation of innovative events and commissioned projects that provided platforms for cross-disciplinary exchange and innovative thinking and that sought to foster wellbeing through the arts.

In 2021, Therme Art presented performances by Tinie Tempah and ENNY in partnership with Serpentine and MYTH at the Counterspace-designed Pavilion timed to Frieze. In conjunction with that event, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Mikolaj Sekutowicz co-curated a series of Wellbeing Culture Forum talks featuring Sumayya Vally, Torkwase Dyson, Yomi Adegoke, and Priya Ahluwalia, that built upon the

Pavilion's themes of gathering and belonging and that furthered conversations on how art and community can support mental wellbeing.

About Theaster Gates

Theaster Gates (b. 1973) creates works that engage with space theory, land development, sculpture, and performance. Drawing on his interest and training in urban planning and preservation, the artist redeems spaces that have been left behind. His work contends with the notion of Black space as a formal exercise, one defined by collective desire, artistic agency, and the tactics of a pragmatist.

In 2010, Gates created the Rebuild Foundation, a non-profit platform for art, cultural development, and neighbourhood transformation that supports artists and strengthens communities through free arts programming and innovative cultural amenities on Chicago's South Side.

Gates has exhibited and performed at The Victoria and Albert Museum (2021), London, UK; Whitechapel Gallery (2013 and 2021), London, UK; Tate Liverpool, UK (2020); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2020); Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (2019); Palais de Tokyo Paris, France (2019); Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany (2018); Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2018); National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA (2017); Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada (2016); Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2016); Punta Della Dogana, Venice, Italy (2013) and dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, Germany (2012).

Gates is the twelfth recipient of the Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts (2021). In 2020, he received the Crystal Award for his leadership in creating sustainable communities. He was the winner of the Artes Mundi 6 Prize and a recipient of the Légion d'Honneur in 2017. He was awarded the Nasher Prize for Sculpture 2018, as well as the Urban Land Institute's J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development. Gates is a professor at the University of Chicago in the Department of Visual Arts and serves as the Senior Advisor for Cultural Innovation and Advisor to the Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy.

About Serpentine

Championing new ideas in contemporary art since 1970, the Serpentine has presented pioneering exhibitions for half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists of our time. Across two sites only 5 minutes apart, in London's Kensington Gardens, the Serpentine presents a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, education, live events, and technological innovation, in the park and beyond. Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, thanks to its unique location the Serpentine reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a deep connection with its local community.

Further information: www.serpentinegalleries.org/.

About Therme Group and Therme Art

Therme Group is a leading global wellbeing provider designing, constructing, and operating the world's largest wellbeing facilities. Its contemporary urban development proposition incorporates environmental concepts to re-integrate nature into everyday life. Therme Group's facilities combine its innovative sustainable technologies with human-oriented design. Drawing upon the tradition of ancient thermal baths, which were designed to be healing, social, and egalitarian settings, Therme Group builds environments that nurture the mind and body for visitors of all ages and demographics, creating healthy and resilient communities.
Further information: www.thermegroup.com

Therme Art is the cultural incubator of Therme Group. Responsible for the outreach to the creative communities, it curates forums between culture, science, and society and works with internationally renowned artists and architects, as well as emerging talents, to commission and develop site-specific artistic projects that challenge the limitations of conventional exhibition spaces and redefine contemporary art viewing. Therme Art provides the resources and means required to fulfill artists' visions that cannot be realised in galleries or museums, regardless of their complexity, production, installation, and long-term maintenance.
Further information: www.therme.art

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