

## Alumni Spotlight: Sophal Neak, Cambodia

by [Jessica Lim](#) on [JUNE 18, 2014](#) in [10TH EDITION ANGKOR PHOTO FESTIVAL](#), [ANGKOR PHOTO WORKSHOPS](#), [BEST STORY PHOTO PRIZE](#), [NEWS & HAPPENINGS](#), [PARTICIPANTS 2013](#), [WORKSHOPS 2013](#)



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The team was in Phnom Penh for i-Click Canon's [Cambodia Canon Photographers Club](#) gathering, and we had a chance to catch up with **Sophal Neak**, our 2013 Workshop Alumni and winner of last year's [Photo Prize](#).

Sophal joined us in speaking to the club members about her work and experience at the workshops, and will be featured today (18 June) on [CTN's Post 21](#) program. Friends in Cambodia, be sure to **tune in tonight to CTN at 9.45pm** to watch the show!

***Tell us what has been happening for you after winning the 2013 Photo Prize at the Angkor Photo Workshops, and if you have any future plans for your work.***

After winning the prize, I have more confidence to continue with what I am doing, and I now know clearly that this is my style of photography. I plan to continue this series in the future when I have the time to do so, and also to continue with photo stories which are a little 'strange', exploring further the concept of not showing faces in the picture.

***When you first started photography, you were doing more documentary-style work and later switched to a more conceptual approach. Tell us more about this change and why it happened.***

When I started photo classes in 2010, I was just learning how to take a good picture in terms of composition and forming a story with my photos. I continued with my classes and my own research in 2011. In 2012, I started another class which was only for one week. During that time, I photographed people who lived and worked by the side of the road, with a focus on the homeless.

I tried to ask people to let me take their portrait, but they were scared and worried about having their photos published in public. That gave me the idea to photograph them from the back, and most of them agreed. After doing this, I realized I really liked this process, and I felt this was what I wanted from my work. Most of my photos since then do not show the faces of people.

***What is the most important thing that you learnt from the Angkor Photo Workshops?***

I learnt many things from the Angkor Photo Workshop, but an important point is that it was my first time joining an international workshop. It was a serious workshop, for both me and my tutor. My team worked so hard I felt like I had to try my best as well. I was shooting every day, and I asked people to let me photograph them even though I knew they wouldn't agree. I walked alone on the street, thinking... For me, it made me more

confident and serious about my wish to be a photographer.

***If you could give some advice to young photographers in Cambodia, what would you say?***

I think, if they love photography, then they should try to know more about it by learning and research as much as they can. Then, do what you like deeply as a photographer, so that you can be happy with what you have done.