

Photographers of the world unite

Sat, 31 January 2015 Harriet Fitch Little

PhotoPhnomPenh is bringing together 14 photographers from across three continents to share their artistic visions

Now in its seventh edition, this art-oriented photo festival is reaping the rewards of its investment in promoting photography among artists and audiences in the Kingdom.

Several of its exhibitions are by young Cambodians who first learned to wield a camera at the festival's Studio Images workshops, which PhotoPhnomPenh coordinators have been running weekly since 2009. In addition, local organisers have taken over from the French Institute in running the show.

For this year's festival, fourteen international photographers from Europe, Asia and North Africa bring their work to various venues across the city, alongside six solo shows from Cambodian photographers. The work of many promising young talents from Phnom Penh will also be on view in a group exhibition at the Royal University of Fine Arts.

Navigating the festival's 12 venues makes for a pleasant day of urban exploration – either use this map as your guide, or hop on board one of the organised tuk-tuk tours that are running at 3pm this Saturday and 3:30pm this Sunday from the French Institute.

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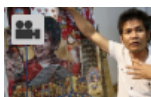
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9 Corinne Vionnet: Switzerland, France

At first glance, Corinne Vionnet's subject matter looks familiar: depictions of world famous monuments with little to set them apart from something you might find in a family photo album, or on the cover of a travel brochure. Rather than shooting her own work, Vionnet's trick is to create images by layering the

snapshots that tourists take of iconic sites over each other. The end result, which takes an average of 100 images to complete, prompts two contradictory emotions. It highlights the similarities in how we choose to capture the world – visitors all gravitate towards the same focal points and angles – but the layering effect simultaneously produces something entirely new: a light-as-a-feather mirage in pastel hues which brings to mind the early impressionist landscape painters. Predictably, Cambodia's contribution to Vionnet's collection depicts the elegant shape of Angkor Wat reflected in the water of the surrounding moat.



1 Charlie Jouvét France

Like Corinne Vionnet at the French Embassy, Charlie Jouvét is an international photographer who has applied his signature style to local subject matter. Jouvét's aim is to create portraits of cities devoid of human life, an effect he achieves by shooting early in the morning using a

long exposure and then digitally retouching images to blur any trace of human activity. This year is a particularly poignant time for the photographer to train his eye on Phnom Penh for the Words After Phnom Penh series: 2015 marks 40 years since the Khmer Rouge entered the city and evacuated its 2.5 million residents on foot. This history, combined with Jouvét's use of an exaggerated white light that suppresses detail, lends his shots of the city's thoroughfares and restaurants an eerie undertone of just-abandoned life, and prompts reflection on how the landscape of the capital has changed during its rapid expansion.



1 Mak Remissa Cambodia

Remissa won his first major photography award in 1997 through the Foreign Correspondents' Club's photojournalism competition, and has been notching up successes as a fine-art photographer and photojournalist ever since. For his latest work – Left 3 Days – he has had to seek out a new

technique to enable him to capture his memories of evacuating Phnom Penh as a seven-year-old in 1975. Using black paper cutouts silhouetted against smoky backgrounds, Remissa has recreated scenes of chaos and confusion: residents piling belongings onto bikes, or carrying baskets on their head. The images capture a sense of tumult, while the simple cutout style lends them the fairytale quality of picture book illustrations, conveying the sense of a child's eye view.



11 Neak Sopha Cambodia

A previous prize winner at the Angkor Photo Festival, Sopha's signature style is to obscure the faces of her subjects with objects associated with their daily life. She has worked with rural communities, with rice bails and fishing nets held up by her subjects as emblems of their identity. In keeping with a trend of this year's PhotoPhnomPenh towards urbanism, she has now shifted her focus to city dwellers: students, office employees and construction workers each masked by the tools of their trade. Her presence at the festival is a sign of the role it has played nurturing young talent over the years: Sopha began

training as a photographer as part of the festival's weekly workshop, Studio Images.

2 Photography: A Family Story Cambodia

Surviving collections of old photographs are a precious treasure in Cambodia. For this exhibition, a group of curators have managed to reconstruct one family's photographic "family tree". The collection, which was originally discovered by photographer Philong Sovan, traces a family's development from the 1960s onwards through ID cards, portraits taken on visits to Angkor and lavish wedding souvenirs. The images have been sourced by scouring the collections of multiple family members, and this diversity of sources helps illustrate the technical history of photography's changing appearance. Some treasured photos have been reproduced with various mutations for distribution to far flung relatives, while others exist in both black and white and hand-coloured format. Following an acrimonious divorce, several of the wedding photos have been cropped to expunge the estranged spouse from the family's collective memory.



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Venue Guide

1. French Institute, #218, Street 184
2. Bophana Centre, #64, Street 200
3. Java Cafe and Gallery, #56E1, Sihanouk Blvd
4. The Plantation, #28, Street 184
5. X-Em Design – La Galerie, #13D, Street 178
6. Romeet Gallery, #34, Street 178
7. Tepui Chinese House, #45, Sisowath Quay
8. Sisowath Quay/Riverside
9. French Embassy, #1, Monivong Blvd
10. Central Market
11. Royal University of Fine Art, #72, Street 178
12. Royal University of Phnom Penh, Russian Federation Blvd



EXHIBITION Guide

8 Ruud Van Empel The Netherlands
A photographer turned digital painter, Van Empel's retouched portraits conjure up a vibrant jungle paradise inhabited solely by children.

8 Hicham Benohoud France, Morocco
Obedient donkeys are photographed

inhabiting opulent Moroccan homes in Ane Situ – a quirky exploration of the absurd.

8 Lek Kiatsirikajorn Thailand

The pressures of accelerated urbanism in Bangkok – and the few nature spots that manage to escape its clutches – are brought into focus in Lost in Paradise.

10 Caleb Ming Singapore

Plots documents the social function of Singapore's open spaces – an increasingly rare commodity in a city with a population density of 7,315 people per square kilometre.

1 Kim Hak Cambodia

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11 Studio Images Cambodia

This group exhibition is a showcase of local talent nurtured by PhotoPhnomPenh through their free weekly photography classes.

11 Nayantara Gurung Kakshapati Nepal

The portraits of members of various Nepalese ethnic groups that make up Being Nepalese are on show here for the first time internationally.

3 Nguyen Thi-Nhan France, Vietnam

A series of close-up, soft-focus images taken in Toulouse and Vietnam that confront the challenges of photographing when partially blind.

3 Emeric Lhuisset France

Last year, Lhuisset travelled to Ukraine as protesters were gathering in Kiev. Cent Portraits à Maydan catalogues the lives of the people he met during the conflict.

5 Ti Tit Cambodia

A young, playful photographer and prolific blogger – Ti Tit's photographs blur

the line between amateur experimentation and something more thoughtful.

4 Chung Uong Chhor Cambodia

The first exhibition by the young local photographer, this series considers whether it is possible to invent bold new landscapes within conventional spaces.

6 Vannak Khun Cambodia

By superimposing his licence plate, phone number or date of birth on his body, Vannak creates a series of self portraits that question the nature of modern identity.

7 Zhang Kechun China

A travel photographer with a difference – Kechun's large-format images evoke the scale of the natural environment when contrasted with the seemingly tiny scope of human endeavours.

12 Harit Srikao Thailand

The youngest participant in PhotoPhnomPenh trains his lens on the menacing shadows that appear in his hometown of Bangkok at nighttime.

12 Alban LéCuyer

For Here Soon, the French photographer uses Photoshop to create images that contrast developers' promises of urban regeneration with the reality on the ground.

12 Katharina Lepik Germany

Lepik's self portraits feature the artist in a variety of unfamiliar settings, but always positioned next to strangers who bear some resemblance to her.

12 Shen Chao-Liang Taiwan

A series of portraits of the "scenery trucks" that drive around Taiwan providing

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