

27/07/2011 Tith Kanitha´s Hut´s Tep Soda Chan

On July 23rd Tith Kanitha presented her exhibition which was a successful and also meaningful event. Kanitha exhibited her project in her own house, she developed her project with her neighbors by recreating with them corners of their homes within Kanitha´s house, thus transforming these spaces into symbolic representations of the concept of home. The project and action were very significant within the context in which they took place: most of the people of this neighborhood are facing eviction and are losing their homes because luxury apartments will be built in this area.

“In the frame of the project SurVivArt , developed by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung and curated in Cambodia by Lydia Parusol, and as a preparation work for the final exhibition in Berlin next February, I am glad to invite you to my exhibition “Hut´s Tep Soda Chan” in my house in the area of Boeung Kak Lake, on this Saturday 23rd July, from 5pm.

The idea with the project SurVivArt is to work on the concept of a “good life” and, in the same time, find a way to improve community participation and involvement. I have decided to work with my house in Boeung Kak, which is now my studio, and the community around it, in order to, in a hot area in terms of politics, question the idea of what makes us find a good way of living.

The exhibition will be a mix between everything I’ve done in the past (previous artworks, festival of Cambodian films...), and a collaboration with my neighbors, who gave me some of their objects for the shows, here and in Berlin. For me, it’s also a way to bring the art in another place, where it’s not supposed to be usually, and see what will be the reactions.” – Tith Kanitha´s invitation to the exhibition.

“The exhibition at Kanitha´s house at the BKL on Saturday evening has really been an exciting, communicative and interesting event, against an extremely sad backdrop of homes being destroyed in the name of a fake and dishonest concept of development that serves a tiny minority of well-connected elite business people and their partners in government. In that regard, Kanitha´s project is a very important one, shedding a light at the concept of home in a world that appears to be crumbling around many of the families that have lived in this area, in some cases since the 1980s. Not to forget that the BKL families are not an isolated case, but that this is happening all around Cambodia. Most of our office staff attended the opening night and the feedback I got afterwards was very telling in many ways. One of the major points that came up during our discussions was that it would be important to preserve the “political element” inherent in Kanitha´s project during the summer festival and the subsequent

exhibition in February. How to best get the message across in Berlin that Kanitha's work continues to take place in a space, where under the false pretense of economic development, ordinary citizens are being robbed of their livelihoods and ultimately their identity by a small minority of well-connected individuals." – Manfred Hornung, Director of the Heinrich Boell Stiftung's Cambodian office.