



Lim Sokchanlina. *Rising Tonle Sap*, 2012. Digital C-print. 80 x 120 cm

SA SA BASSAC is pleased to open *Riverscapes IN FLUX: Phnom Penh*.

Riverscapes IN FLUX is an eco-cultural art project initiated by the Goethe Institut Hanoi in 2012 involving newly commissioned artworks by seventeen artists from six Southeast Asian nations that address the subject of ecological and cultural change related to major regional river landscapes. Curated by a regional team, the traveling exhibition stops in Bangkok, Hanoi, Saigon, Jakarta, Manila, and Phnom Penh.

Riverscapes IN FLUX: Phnom Penh brings together six of these works by Cambodian, Thai, and Vietnamese artists working in new media, including photography, sound and video installation.

Riverscapes IN FLUX artists adopt different approaches and genres to prod a central topic of environmental change and degradation. Many bring community into their strategy, either initiating community involvement at the time of creation, or else requesting it of gallery-goers at the exhibition-site. Some pieces are performative, evolving over space and time, production processes documented for viewers. Several, mapping life on the river, transcend the literal aspect of representation. Elucidating the confrontation between traditional and development economics responsible for damage and change, they allude to moral and cultural consequences. But these are probed questioningly, the work exposing discomfort rather than adopting a one-sided critical tack.

Saigon performance and multi-media artist **Phan Thao Nguyen's** video *Mekong Mechanical*, filmed at a catfish factory in an industrial zone at Cuu Long delta in South Vietnam, documents change without judging, conveying a shifting grey-zone complexity that underpins both environmental and social change in contemporary Southeast Asia. Tinged with irony as well as loss, is Cambodian **Than Sok's** *Middleground*, a video installation with scarecrows, superimposes regionally-familiar concepts of temporality and nothingness with rural visual cues meaningful to the region. Cambodian **Vuth Lyno's** sound installation *Rise and Fall* is inspired by the spiritual practices of the fishing community in the floating village of Kompong Pluk and presents a dream-like composition emerging from a miniature stilted house. Hanoi composer/musician **Luong Hue Trinh's** *Black Circle* meshes clinically-listed natural disaster data with a lyrical tapestry of sound and voice comprising, amongst other elements, folk music derived from the court of Hue. Luong's audiovisual collage constitutes a subtle metaphor for opposing interests and forces in contemporary Vietnam. Thai artist **Sutthirat Supaparinya**, with her meditative two-channel video *My Grandpa's Route Has Been Forever Blocked*, uses nostalgia and family history to allusively confront the damming of the Ping River. Cambodian **Lim Sokchanlina's** photographic series *Rising Tonle Sap* documents a poetic, ritualistic performance of melting ice blocs floated down the Tonle Sap river. Aesthetic but also subtly disturbing, the elegant action suggests the change and loss associated with ecological disturbance and climate change.

Through art and the river-as-symbol, *Riverscapes IN FLUX* tackles one of the most future-defining stresses of this generation: the quest for balance between economic needs and environmental conservation. Whichever is responsible - a disregard born of social change, or an inability to control the river's fate - there is no doubting that the river, once an ally and source of livelihood, is now a site of strife. The *Riverscapes IN FLUX* works, questioning rather than stating, enlarge the project's ecological framework to offer intersecting perspectives on the complexities of Southeast Asia today.

- Selected text: Iola Lenzi, *Riverscapes IN FLUX: Southeast Asian Rivers as Sites of Life and Strife*, *Riverscapes IN FLUX* catalog, 2012.

Exhibition Details

Exhibition: *Riverscapes IN FLUX: Phnom Penh*
Opening: 18 October 6.00 - 8.00pm
Dates: 18 October - 11 November 2012
Opening Hours: Wed - Fri 2-6pm + Sat-Sun 10-6pm
Location: #18 2nd Floor, Sothearos Boulevard, Phnom Penh
Web: www.sasabassac.com
Contact: Artistic Director, Erin Gleeson +855 12 507 917

Related Events

Panel | Wednesday 31 October 7pm @ Meta House | *Creatives on Cambodia's Rivers* with Vannary San, Shelby Doyle, Chum Sophea
Film | Saturday 3 November 7pm @ Meta House | Line-up of documentaries focusing on the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers
Artists' Talks | Friday 9 November 6pm @ SA SA BASSAC | facilitated by *Riverscapes IN FLUX* co-curator Erin Gleeson

About SA SA BASSAC

SA SA BASSAC is a gallery and resource center dedicated to creating, facilitating, producing and sharing visual arts culture in and from Cambodia.