

The mission of
Cambodian
Living Arts
is to facilitate the
transformation
of Cambodia
through
the arts



Press Release

From Cambodian Living Arts



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARTS AT THE HEART OF CAMBODIA'S FUTURE: CAMBODIAN LIVING ARTS TO WORK WITH FOUR LEADING ARTISTS

Phnom Penh, 8 March 2017 – Cambodian Living Arts is happy to announce the launch of a new five-year strategy that will create new opportunities in the arts and culture scene in Cambodia. This is the third stage of the organization's evolution; founded in 1998 by musician and Khmer Rouge survivor Arn Chord-Pond, it was originally a grassroots organization working to preserve traditional performing arts in danger of disappearing. As the Cambodian arts scene developed, CLA began to focus on the needs of an emerging generation of artists, offering scholarships, fellowships, and training; creating performance and other employment opportunities; and helping to develop national and regional networks for the sector.

Looking forward, as the arts sector becomes more established, CLA's role has changed again; becoming more of a catalyst for the sector. Or in other words, working to create the conditions in which artists and cultural leaders are more able to create work that expresses something of themselves and their society, and contribute to sustainable development through the arts. To make sure that artists' voices are always at the heart of all our programs, CLA has created a new committee of four Associate Artists to oversee implementation of the strategy.

H.E. VENG Sereyvuth, Chair of the Board at Pannasastra University and CLA Board Member, said:

"I truly believe in the strength of the young generation, and the potential they have to become leaders - the future of Cambodia is in their hands. I'm very happy to see how much CLA is investing in them by creating such access to culture and the arts through these new strategic goals"

Highlights from the strategic plan include:

- The launch of a five-year pilot program seeking to integrate culture and arts education into Cambodia's public schools
- More scholarships, trainings and grants for artists, researchers and other practitioners in the arts
- More festivals and performances in Phnom Penh, including a multidisciplinary festival around women and the arts, planned for November this year
- Increasing connections and networks with Asia.

Arn Chorn-Pond, founder of CLA, said:

"Part of my dream was always to help the young people to realize their dreams. Now we are on our way, young people are doing new things by themselves, and are encouraging others to dream bigger through arts and culture."

CLA has created a new advisory committee to fully engage artists' voices into their development. The committee's four "Associate Artists" are all innovators and creators in their field, practicing independently of CLA. They are: dancer and choreographer CHUMVAN Sodhachivy (Belle); filmmaker and founder of KlapYaHandz label SOK Visal; *Yike* Opera teacher UY Latavan; and Siem Reap-based visual artist YIM Maline. These artists, chosen to represent a range of different art forms and experiences in the sector, will make sure that projects, strategies and activities always serve the needs of artists and the arts community. The launch of this committee is a strong signal of CLA's commitment to working with and for the community and putting artists' needs at the heart of its activities.

Associate Artist YIM Maline said,

"I am collaborating with CLA because they are working for the sustainability of the arts, and they have a strong connection with artists – this kind of organization is what Cambodia needs. For me personally, it is an opportunity to share my skills and knowledge as a contemporary visual artist to others. This collaboration I think will benefit artists, the arts sector, and help people to know more about our culture".

Cambodian Living Arts will hold an open meeting about the new strategy at 10.30am on Thursday 16th March at the CLA Office. If journalists or others would like to attend, please contact sokim@cambodianlivingarts.org.

There will be an evening celebration for and with the local arts community, at the Cambodian Living Arts Theater in the National Museum of Cambodia. This will feature a gratitude ceremony for Master Artists with whom CLA has worked, and a performance of a new dance piece entitled "K'dey-sromai" by CHAMROEUN Sophea. This event is not open to the public, but journalists who would like to attend should contact sokim@cambodianlivingarts.org.

Notes for Editors

- Cambodian Living Arts was founded by Arn Chorn-Pond in 1998.
- Cambodian Living Arts is an independent not-for profit organization, based in Phnom Penh.
- Cambodian Living Arts' mission is to be a catalyst in a vibrant arts sector, inspiring new generations. Cambodian Living Arts believes that are at the heart of a vital society, and envisions the arts and cultural expression as essential to a thriving future for Cambodia.