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June 2017 Newsletter



## CLA News: June 2017

### Introducing our 2017 Living Arts Fellows

We have chosen five talented and dynamic individuals working in arts and culture to take part in our 2017 Living Arts Fellows program. They are **AN Raksmeay**, from Kampong Thom Department of Culture and Fine Arts; **HEAK Pheary**, art teacher and independent artist; **MENH Chanvanda** (aka Romdoul Lich Tek) fashion designer and stylist; **OU Buntheng** from Epic Arts; and **SOUS Sinath** from Phare Performing Social Enterprise. They are currently in Battambang, taking part in a 'lab' about Value in the Arts, the second of a series of four this year. This weekend, they are joined by mentor **CHUNG Shefong**, founder of folk and world record label [Trees Music and Art](#), and the Migration Music Festival in Taiwan; and by **Katelijan VERSTRAETE**, Director of Arts and Creative Industries at the [British Council](#) East Asia.



[Read more about the Fellows](#)

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## The Story of Kakei

### Exploring gender stereotypes through traditional art

We just staged a *Yike* opera rendition of 'Kakei' an old Khmer story. Traditionally, the tale warns women to be faithful to their husbands whatever the situation or suffer the consequences, but director and troupe leader UY Latavan presented the story in a new light. She invited the audience to think critically about the larger issues at play and the range of choices available to the protagonist, and to question the notion that 'Kakei' is a "bad girl". Our theater in Phnom Penh sold out in days, and the audience took part in a series of discussion activities about the issues on stage. More performances are scheduled soon!



[Read coverage by The Cambodia Daily, including interviews with the principal actress and the director.](#)

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## Creativity and Tradition

### Composition Workshop with Chinary UNG

This July, renowned Cambodia-American composer Chinary UNG will return to Siem Reap, and mentor 6 traditional musicians taking part in a composition workshop led by virtuoso PHAN Chamroeun from the Royal University of Fine Arts. This follows on from the success of last year's related workshop, with the Nirmita Composers' Institute. Over two weeks, the participants will on



work technical and creative techniques, building the skills to create new pieces and to add to the repertoire for traditional Cambodian instruments. We are seeking donations to support this project!

[Read more, or to donate to our crowdfunding appeal to support the workshop.](#)

## Explore our Heritage Hub: The Focus of our Siem Reap Arts Space

We've designated our center in Siem Reap a 'Heritage Hub'. Its mission is to strengthen living arts and culture, and bring cultural, creative, and economic value to Cambodia, especially Siem Reap. The Heritage Hub will continue to carry out activities such as hosting music residencies and workshops, creating performing opportunities for traditional artists, and generating knowledge about Cambodian artistic heritage. On July 23 we will be welcoming the Siem Reap arts community to our space, where they will enjoy performances from the musicians taking part in the Composition Workshop as well as from Sounds of Angkor.



[Read more about the aims and activities of the Heritage Hub](#)

## A message from Phloeun, Executive Director



"The last three months have seen some big changes in the arts scene in Cambodia, but not all have been happy ones: The White Building, which for decades housed a vibrant community of artists (and CLA's very first space!) has just been cleared out, ready for demolition. And two of our former Master Artists, SUON San and SOK Duch have recently passed away. However, we have been preparing for change since we began, and I am reassured and happy to see that despite inevitable setbacks young people continue to learn about arts, artists continue to create new work. Last month I saw so many people come to our performance of *Kakei*, and take part enthusiastically in complex discussions about traditional art and gender -and my belief in the power of arts for transformation was renewed yet again."

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