Arts at the heart of a vital society

A catalyst in a vibrant arts sector, inspiring new generations
In 2019, Cambodian Living Arts celebrates a full 20 years working in Cambodia. Today, we envision the arts and cultural expression as essential to a thriving future for Cambodia.

Expression is a fundamental part of being human. It's part of interacting with the world around you, as more than an individual; playing an active role in the world in which you live.

It has always been at the core of CLA's beliefs that art is at the heart of a vital society – a society filled with dynamic, forward-looking people, who can look at the communities and systems that they are a part of, and explore the role they want to play. In today's world, we need this more than ever.”

PRIM Phloeun - Executive Director

Cambodian Living Arts operates under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni

In 2019, CLA celebrates twenty years working in the revival and development of Cambodian arts. Our first decade focused mainly on revival and transmission of endangered forms. In our second, we worked to ensure sustainability, and to help people build careers in arts. Now, our mission is to be a catalyst in a vibrant arts sector, inspiring new generations. Some highlights from the last twenty years are below.
KEUT Ran: Smot Teacher

“In 2000, Master IENG Sithul introduced me to Arn CHORN-POND when they visited me in my village in Kompong Speu. Later I got to know CLA and became a teacher of Smot (ritual chanting). In 2016 I retired, passing the class on to my student, SUON Srey Aun. Srey Aun now teaches 300 students in our local high school.

My biggest achievement is that 10 of my students are now professional artists, and still practice this rare form.

One student, PHEUN Sreypov, now runs a business offering services for Buddhist ceremonies, including Smot. Becoming a teacher of Smot has made me feel confident in transmitting the knowledge to the next generation. Through Smot I met people from all over the world when they visited my class. I am now paid under CLA’s teachers pension scheme, and I contribute some of that towards Buddhist work.”

NEANG Kavich: Filmmaker and former Arn Chorn-Pond Scholarship Student

“I first heard about CLA when I attended Master IENG Sithul’s dance class in the White Building in 2002. I felt very connected with people in the class, and the class itself was very exciting.

I met my neighbors from the White Building, and could make a little money to support my studies and my family. Even though I didn’t know anything about dance and music at the start, everyone felt the same way, and I felt so free and encouraged.

During the classes, everyone shared the same spirit and love for dance and music. Every time we danced together we were so passionate about it - I can’t forget that moment.

I joined CLA Studio as an intern in 2008, recording music and also making short documentary films about Cambodian arts, and this is how I discovered my passion for filmmaking. I just kept making films, from short film to feature length, from documentary to fiction film.

I feel lucky and grateful to do something I love, and also to share what I feel and think, especially in Cambodia where there is not much funding and resources to support filmmaking or arts in general.

CLA played an important role in representing and rebuilding the country from this devastation, not only understanding about the past, but envisioning the future.”

Kavich’s filmography includes: ‘Last Night I Saw You Smiling’ - Special Jury Prize, Jeonju International Film Festival (Director, 2019); ‘Diamond Island’ - 2016 Cannes SACD Award winner, (co-producer, 2016); Where I Go (Director & writer, 2013)
LEU Sivmeng: Dance teacher

“I first got to know CLA when I took a dance class with Master IENG Sithul’s Children of Bassac troupe in 2007. From 2014 I worked with CLA on a lot of projects including the dance show at the National Museum of Cambodia, demonstrations, and festivals.

Starting to learn dance and becoming a dancer on stage is an unforgettable memory, and being paid to do this meant I was able to help my family.

I got experience in performing arts, and knowledge of how to lead demonstrations and teach. Before I had never taught dance to anyone, but after working on the demonstrations, I became skillful. Now I am getting more and more requests to give dance classes, and I started my own troupe called Krom Robam - I can say that this is the impact of getting involved with CLA over the years.”

ONN Sokny: Living Arts Fellow 2017, co-Director of Epic Arts

“I applied to the Living Arts Fellows program because it is the only one of its kind in Cambodia. It is a unique experience - the program aims to fill the gaps for arts managers in Cambodia today.

You are free to express yourself, and it is intellectual and very creative. We share our experiences and challenges; learn from mentors from around Asia; discuss different social and cultural case studies; and improve critical thinking on the subject of arts, culture, and social issues.

I got practical tools and ideas that I could bring into my own work, like ways to debate and advocate for our goals. I got connected to policy makers and other influential people in the culture sector.

I feel now I have more insight into the value of arts and culture, and a deeper understanding of the roles that arts and culture play in society, in the contexts of Cambodia and Southeast Asia.

All forms - traditional, contemporary, pop - have their own roles, reasons, and voices; reflecting and telling stories about culture and the society in which we live.

Curiosity, open-mindedness, and reflectiveness are such important skills to unlock. I am still learning each day - and this is the responsibility of arts leaders, managers, and artists. Arts and culture reflects the lives lived from one generation to another, and they always keep moving and changing.”
20 YEARS OF CLA: EXPRESSION
LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS

TAN Vatey
Artist Fellow USA 2018

“Working and living together with so many artists at the Vermont Studio Center was an incredible experience. The program in NYC was fascinating, amazing and intense. The studio was calm with no time pressure, letting me feel more myself and make some wonderful artworks. Friendships began by visiting other studios to exchange work and life. In NYC, I met so many admirable people and visited a lot of interesting events and art spaces. I'm so grateful to experience this program.”

CHHORN Sina
Playwright and Director

“As a professor teaching spoken theater at Secondary School of Fine Arts, I'm very glad when Cambodian Living Arts organizes programs through which I can develop my skills. I have joined Storytelling and Script Development workshops, as well as a Stage Reading program. These programs have also given my students opportunities to work, get paid and develop their artistic skills. This also enables us to share our ideas about gender, relationships and society through our stories. I hope CLA continues this great work in the art and cultural sector!”

PHAN Chamroeun
Musician and Composer

“I first got to know CLA in 2003 when I studied music in Children of Bassac troupe. Later I continued to the Royal University of Fine Arts, where an Arn Chorn-Pond Scholarship helped me to study Tro. This scholarship helped me grow both my artistic skill and my leadership abilities. CLA now has many programs that give artists like me an opportunity to have new creativity in traditional music. For me, I've now been able to lead a musical troupe in festivals and performances, and I have led the troupe Yaksao, which composes and performs new traditional music.”

PICH Sopheavy
Dancer & Choreographer

“I was awarded a Dam Dos Mobility Grant in 2019, which helped me take part in the SEA Choreolab in Malaysia. Artists from around Asia were invited to share their experiences and collaborate on contemporary dance. The program gave me experience about combining different ideas to create something new. I learned that it is not only important to have the techniques to make beautiful movements, but also to understand exactly what we want to do, and what message we want the audience to take away. Overall, the Dam Dos Mobility Grant was very helpful in supporting me to build my capacity and achieve my goals.”
2018-19: INVESTING IN CHANGEMAKERS

We help dedicated, passionate artists and cultural workers to use their ideas and influence to make a difference in society, by offering opportunities for training, development and networking.

2018 Arnhorn-Pond Scholarship Students (2018 intake)
Helping talented people to pursue careers in the arts.

Samut Vatha
Sculpture Student from Phnom Penh

Bo Ratha
Circus Artist from Siem Reap

Chan Pisey
Graphic Designer from Battambang

Mak Chantha
Dancer from Ratanakiri

Ne Sovanneath
Architecture Student from Phnom Penh

Phe Phearam
Interior Designer from Phnom Penh

Praak Engleran
Musician from Siem Reap

2018 Living Arts Fellows
Our professional development program for mid-career artists and arts managers.

Soy Sina
Writer from Phnom Penh

Tang Eng Eang
Architect from Phnom Penh

Tip Savry
Singer from Phnom Penh

Nang Yanna
Artist and Puppet-maker, Artsolute-Cambodia

Kim Ann Arun
Writer and Script Supervisor, Khmer Mekong Films

2018 Artist Fellows
One month in residence at the Vermont Studio Center, and a networking program in and around New York City.

Hang Sokharo
Independent filmmaker

Tan Vatey
Visual artist - drawings, paintings, mixed media installations.

Tor Vutha
Artist and art teacher, Phare Ponleu Selpak

Srey Bandaol
Artist, Co-Founder of Phare Ponleu Selpak

Thorn Seyma
Artistic Production Manager, The Khmer Magic Music Bus

Yim Sotheary
Arts Therapist, Clinical Psychologist
2018 Dam Dos Grantees
Grants that support artistic and research projects; and participation in workshops, conferences, and residencies in Asia.

- CHAN Pisey
  Digital Artist attended International Children’s Content Right Fair in Chiang Mai, Thailand

- KHIENV Kanel
  Photographer, attended Singapore Biennial 2019

- PICH Sopheavy
  Attended SEA Choreolab 2019 in Rimbun Dahan, Malaysia

- HANG Sokharo
  Researching for the new film script: “Memories of the river”

- NANG Yanna
  Documentation and research: “The history of puppets in Cambodia”

- PHAL Youphea
  Creating a short animated film: “Dream”

- SOUS Sinath
  Staging the second Arts and Environment Festival in Kampong Thom province

- SRUN Rida
  Exploring the printmaking arts of Cambodia

Mobility First! Grants in partnership with Asia-Europe Foundation
Rayjinvar Anne Marie SALCEDO (Sangam House Writers’ Residency, India)
Kayleigh Chian Ching GOH (Yogya Art Lab Residency, Indonesia)
Mark SALVATUS (900mdpl site-specific art project, Indonesia)
Deepthi ASTHANA (Angkor Photo Festival and Workshops, Cambodia)
Jiradej MEEMALAI (Asian Cultural Forum, India)
Cong Tung TRUONG (Practice-led research trip, France)
Drik Picture Library (Chobi Mela International Festival of Photography, Bangladesh)

Case Study: Arts & Environment Festival

Each year, the Living Arts Fellows undertake a group project. The 2017 Fellows developed the first Arts & Environment Festival, at Sambor Prei Kuk, Pagoda and School in Kampong Thom Province. They independently continued the festival the following year, and now plan to make it an annual event.

“We see the issue nowadays about the environment, and we want to engage in sustainable development through arts and culture in Cambodia.

We strongly believe that arts and creativity can have a big impact in terms of social change. Through the festival, a lot of people from the Kampong Thom community will benefit including local artists and the younger generation.

People will both learn more about Cambodian art and culture and understand more about the importance of protecting the environment.

We want to make Sambor Prei Kuk Pagoda a model for managing a cultural tourism site with good environmental responsibility.

It is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, and more and more tourists are coming. So, we want to help the community there to be ready and to know how to understand and protect their place.”

- SOUS Sinath, Living Arts Fellow 2017 and Director of Arts & Environment Festival
2018-19: CREATIVE YOUNG MINDS

Culture & Arts Education

In January 2017, we launched a five-year pilot program to develop a model for culture and arts education in Cambodia’s public education system. We are working in partnership with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoEYS), the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MoCFA), and UNESCO. Project highlights to date include:

- Creation of **syllabi for grades 7, 8 and 9** for the subjects of Drawing & Handicraft and Music & Dance.
- 72 classes operating, totalling more than **3000 students** around the country that benefit from the project so far.
- **4 Creative education workshops** delivered to more than 40 participants.
- 26 hours of arts education at New Generation School per week, reaching more than **500 students**.
- **Successful advocacy** to expand national arts education curriculum to cover grade 9.
- Working with **8 instructors of arts education** at the Teacher Education College in Phnom Penh and 3 in Battambang.
- **Consulting the government** on the curriculum for future arts education teachers at the Teacher Education Colleges.
- Development of a **creative resource library** for teachers to use in lesson planning.
- Supporting students in **self-organized art clubs**.

With thanks to:
CHHOR Sao Leng, CHHUM Kakada, CHIM Sundalin, MAO Samnang, MON Nev, MOUL Suy Heeng, MUTH Koh Somaly, SAM Komsan, SAMBATH Soksan, SAO Sovann, SORN Chanthea, SUM Sithoeun, TOP Samy, TOUCH Borin

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### Arts for Transformation Course

The first Arts for Transformation: The Case of Cambodia course in 2016 was developed for undergraduates at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), and taught by our Executive Director Phloeun PRIM.

The course looks at the role arts and culture can play in transforming a post-conflict society like Cambodia. As well as classroom time in Abu Dhabi, it includes a field trip to Cambodia.

The class has now been taught three times. During the field visits to Cambodia, we connected with students and faculty from Pannasastra University Cambodia (PUC). This exchange has been so successful that from 2019, thanks to the support of PUC leadership, we have made the full Arts for Transformation course available as an elective module for PUC students.

We are launching the course at the Royal University of Fine Arts, taught by artistic director and choreographer CHEY Chankethya. In August 2020, for the first time we will deliver the Arts for Transformation course as a two-week intensive, immersive study program in Cambodia. The course will be taught in English and open to students and practitioners from around the world.

Read more at artsfortransformation.cambodianlivingarts.org

"I think it is important that students are asked questions that provoke in-depth thinking and give them opportunity to debate, and to discuss the role that arts and culture play in the Cambodian context."

- **NOUN Sonny, 2017 Arts for Transformation student**
Dance Troupe Incubator

Our cultural enterprise Experience Cambodian Living Arts supports 38 artists in a Dance Troupe Incubator in Phnom Penh.

This is a two-year vocational training program providing emerging artists with stable and meaningful employment, while also giving them the opportunity to work with top directors, and to benefit from regular personal and professional development training.

The artists perform in the daily show at the National Museum of Cambodia, as well as providing arts workshops and performances at events around Cambodia and abroad.

In 2019, Experience Cambodian Living Arts expanded this model to Siem Reap, working with all-female multi-instrumentalist troupe Medha, who combine original music, dance, song and storytelling.

"Since I joined the incubator program, I have improved dance skills, as well as my communication, my English language ability, and I have learned more about teamwork. The training workshops have given me better artistic skills, as well as more general professional skills I can use in daily life.

Being part of the troupe has given me the opportunity to do a job I love while learning more about it. I've joined international workshops and learned about other cultures while sharing Cambodian culture. I've developed new ideas to develop my career in the future."

- CHHOET Sokha, Dancer in Experience Cambodian Living Arts' Incubator Program

Career Skills Training

Our Professional Development short-courses, first launched in 2014, provide essential non-artistic skills for building careers in arts - from budgeting and marketing, to teamwork and goal setting.

In 2018, the Secondary School of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh incorporated our program into their curriculum, making it a requirement for all fourth year students.

“I learned characteristics of professional artists such as being open-minded and always ready to learn, having specific skills, a good attitude, and practising regularly.”

“I learned about creating personal vision, that reflects my dream. And having a mission to help me to achieve this dream, as well as values that motivate me to do things with love.”

“(The Art of Teamwork module taught me to) cooperate, give ideas, tolerate, to not be selfish, and to encourage and listen to each other.”

"I think it is important that students are asked questions regularly.”

"I am so excited to have a proper class and students to continue transforming a post-conflict society like Cambodia. As well as develop my career in the future.”

- CHHOET Sokha, Dancer in Experience Cambodian Living Arts' Incubator Program
2018-19: STORIES OF CONTEMPORARY CAMBODIA

Since 2017, CLA’s strategic focus has been creativity and expression. We make small grants, run creative workshops and commission new productions. We present a selection of these works to the public each year through festivals and a performance season.

Tradition & Life:
Stories from the Kreung Community

Tong Nong Leh Village Arts Troupe come from the Kreung community in Ratanakiri province, Northeast Cambodia.

The Kreung are one of Cambodia’s many ethnic minorities, with their own language and traditions. CLA commissioned the troupe to create a new piece to be performed in the 2018 Cultural Season ‘Exploring Identities’.

Historically, the arts and customs of minority groups have been appropriated and performed around Cambodia without context - so by commissioning this work, we aimed to give Tong Non Leh Village Arts Troupe a platform to share their own stories to audiences in Phnom Penh.

Directed by former Arn Chorn-Pond Scholarship Student CHREUS Sarun, the troupe performed an offering ceremony, followed by the traditional Dong Tek Dance, which shows a long-standing Kreung tradition of getting water from the river and well. The performance concluded with a new piece combining dance and modern spoken theater developed in collaboration with CHUMVAN “Belle” Sodhachivy. Called ‘Tradition and Life’, this piece highlights beliefs in spiritual healing as well as in modern science.

SAO Sreymao: Independent Visual Artist

“In 2017, I received a small Dam Dos project grant from CLA. I focused on people living around the Mekong River, their situation before and after a hydroelectricity project was built, and the movement of community and loss of identity.

This grant supported my travel, to the province for research, and for the exhibition, and the CLA team also gave me advice.

I think this is good for artists who want to express their concepts through artistic projects, and I really encourage other artists to apply for this small grant to implement their own projects.”
2018-19: CONTINUITY OF HERITAGE

REPfest New Traditional Music Festival

REPfest is an international festival of New Traditional Music, bringing together artists from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Japan.

With performances, exchanges, and interactive workshops, REPfest aims to inspire those taking part to develop their music creatively, and to share it with new audiences, through performances, exchanges, and interactive workshops.

REPfest takes its name from Siem Reap’s airport code, an international hub in Cambodia’s ancient former capital. CLA’s ‘Heritage Hub’ based in Siem Reap is a center for the practice, research, and development of Cambodia’s intangible cultural heritage.

“We are thrilled to host the second edition of REPfest in September 2019. It is a great chance for artists from the Mekong and Japan to meet and explore each other’s cultures, and learn about our similarities and differences.

Beyond that, it is a platform through which all the participating artists can share what the arts mean to them, and the roles and values arts play in societies around Asia.”

SONG Seng, Heritage Hub Manager

“I wish we had a festival like REPfest in Vietnam to really exchange and collaborate with our neighbouring countries like Cambodia, Laos or Thailand.”

Mai Khoi, singer from Vietnam
The Khmer Magic Music Bus

The KMMB has been working with remote communities in Oddar Meanchey province and in Chhay Areng Valley, Koh Kong province, to preserve and develop some of Cambodia’s most endangered musical forms.

‘I am so excited to have a proper class and students to continue Ken (a bamboo mouth organ). I have felt concerned for many years, because I’m getting older and older, that if there are no new students coming to learn, this art form will disappear one day. I really want to see and transfer my knowledge and skills to young people and my big dream is to see my students performing for people. I am grateful to The Khmer Magic Music Bus and CLA for their great support to the new Ken class, and for helping to make this art from bloom again. I will be strongly committed to teaching my students.’

- Master MUN Hai
Ken Master, Oddar Meanchey Province

Finance Report: FY18

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BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- $ 350,168 Direct payment to artists including performance fees & related expenses
- $ 316,808 Workshop & trainings for artists & others working in the sector
- $ 39,228 Scholarships & grants
- $ 15,296 Costs associated with newly-commissioned pieces
With performances, exchanges, and interactive workshops, REPfest CLA’s ‘Heritage Hub’ based in Siem Reap is a center for the people. I am grateful to The Khmer Magic Music Bus and CLA for their great support to the new class, and for helping to make workshops, grants, and networking around New York 2018 Artist Rayjinar Anne Marie SALCEDO PICH Sopheavy Creating a short network Vermont Studio Chorn-Pond 2018-19: CONTINUITY OF HERITAGE 2018-19: CONTINUITY OF HERITAGE 2018-19: INVESTING IN CHANGEMAKERS Independent Thom province Arts and Environment Staging the second CHAN Pisey Artist and art teacher, Phare Ponleu Selpak Singer PRAK Engleran Musician Musician KIM Ann Arun Supervisor, Khmer Magic Music Bus Visual artist - Phare Ponleu Selpak Artist and art teacher, Phare Ponleu Selpak Singer NANG Yanna Photographer, Phare Ponleu Selpak Singer TAN Vatey Visual artist - Phare Ponleu Selpak Artist and art teacher, Phare Ponleu Selpak Singer "We are thrilled to host the second edition of REPfest in September, countries like Cambodia, Laos or Thailand." Each year, the Living Arts Fellows undertake a group project. and to know how to understand and protect their place." We are working in partnership with the Ministry of Education In January 2017, we launched a five-year pilot program to develop a curriculum to cover grade 9. • Development of a curriculum for future arts education teachers at the Teacher Education Colleges. 8 instructors of arts education Drawing & Handicraft and Music & Dance. reaching more than 38 artists in a Dance Troupe Incubator in Phnom Penh. professional skills I can use in daily life. • Contribution to the development training. STEPS 2018: Arts for Transformation Course The first Arts for Transformation: The Case of Cambodia course in system. We are working in partnership with the Ministry of Education and to debate, and to discuss the role that arts and culture play to transform living conditions in rural areas. I think it is important that students are asked questions • Development of a development training. STEPS 2018: Arts for Transformation Course The first Arts for Transformation: The Case of Cambodia course in "(The Art of Teamwork module taught me to) cooperate, things with love." To date, MCH has worked with a network of over 50 dynamic artists and managers around the region. In 2017, Living Arts International set up a sister organisation to CLA, Mekong Cultural Hub (MCH). MCH’s programs and projects are designed to facilitate connection and collaboration between creative practitioners working at the intersection of arts and society in the Mekong Region and Taiwan. For more information, please see www.mekongculturalhub.org.
Thank You

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Power
In 2019, CLA celebrates twenty years working in the revival and development of Cambodian arts. Many Cambodians say that this is the impact of getting involved with CLA over the years. Some highlight from the last twenty years are below.

Some of these highlights include:

- **Demonstrations and Festivals**: CLA’s training and demonstration programs have been highly successful in fostering the arts. CLA also supports the establishment of new festivals and events to showcase and promote Cambodian arts.

- **Humanitarian Work**: CLA provides humanitarian support to vulnerable groups, including those affected by conflict, poverty, and displacement. CLA’s work in this area has been recognized by various organizations.

- **Knowledge Exchange**: CLA facilitates knowledge exchange between Cambodian artists and international experts. This exchange has contributed to the development of new ideas and techniques.

- **International Recognition**: Many Cambodian artists have gained international recognition through CLA’s support, including participation in international competitions and festivals.

- **Cultural Policy Development**: CLA has played an important role in representing and advocating for Cambodian arts and cultural expression as essential to a thriving society through our stories.

- **Educational Opportunities**: CLA offers educational opportunities to Cambodian artists, helping them to develop their skills and knowledge. Many students have received practical tools and ideas that they can bring into their own work.

- **Exchange Work and Life**: Cambodian artists have exchanged work and life with others from all over the world while visiting CLA’s classes. This exchange has contributed to the growth and development of the Cambodian arts community.

- **Supporting Artists**: CLA supports artists with financial and creative opportunities to work, get paid, and exchange work and life. In NYC, CLA has helped Cambodian artists to exchange work and life.

- **Organizationwide Support**: CLA helps Cambodian artists to give artists like me an opportunity and help me grow both my artistic skills and knowledge to the next generation. Through Smot I met people from short film to feature length, from documentary to fiction film.

- **Arts at the Vital Society**: CLA also given my students opportunities to work, get paid, and exchange work and life. In NYC, CLA has helped Cambodian artists to exchange work and life.

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