

Session Re-imagining Histories of Conflict: Art and craft practices as catalysts

The Art of Ikat: A Cambodian Renaissance invites OUM Sophea, SOK Linda, and FONKI to an artistic dialogue with the National Museum of Cambodia's pre-1975 textile heritage. Faced with missing objects, these creators have found inspiration in the museum's remaining archives (photographs, descriptions of textiles and motifs found in object index cards, and old cataloguing records). Each with their specific sets of skills, they imagine 3 original pieces – woven, painted, printed and assembled – which are not reproductions of lost textiles, but contemporary interpretations of the unique Cambodian ikat art form. For this session, the artists are joined by dr Magali An Berthon for a conversation on their textile practices in relations to their Cambodian heritage.

Pushing the limits of ikat weaving, OUM Sophea presents a silk shawl showcasing a luscious natural scenery of foliage, flowers, and dragonflies in energetic blues and yellows. Made in locally-produced golden silk threads and natural dyes, this piece was designed, tied, dyed and handwoven with her team over a period of ten months.

US-based, Cambodian-Australian, fibre artist SOK Linda revisits the art of *pidan* with a spectacular pictorial silk hanging. She interlaces diasporic family memories with Buddhist visual imagery as described in one of the National Museum's index cards. Instead of using the ikat resist-dye technique, she uses silkscreen printing on silk threads to create patterned woven surfaces onto the loom.

A leading figure of the Cambodian contemporary art scene, especially as FT Gallery's managing director, FONKI is a Cambodian-Canadian artist based in Phnom Penh who combines a street art style and classical painting influences with the ornamental aesthetic of *kbach*, seen in Khmer decoration and crafts.

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