

Equality Forum hosts Cambodian artist's U.S. debut

By Larry Nichols
larry@epgn.com

Equality Forum's 14th Annual LGBT Art Exhibit features the work of artist Vuth Lyno this week at William Way LGBT Community Center.

An openly gay Cambodian photographer and curator, Lyno is a rising star in Cambodia's contemporary art scene, a founding member of the art collective Stiev Selapak ("art rebels") and the director of the community art center Sa Sa Art Projects.

His exhibition for Equality Forum will be his first in the United States.

Entitled "Thoamada," after a Khmer expression meaning "the usual," Lyno's exhibition includes work from two photographic series exploring LGBT identity

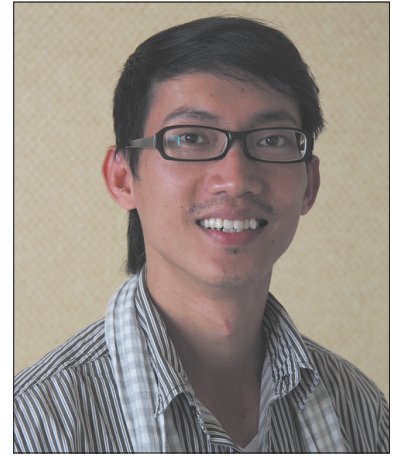
and community in Cambodia.

"I just wanted to share human stories from several gay, lesbian and transgender families from Cambodia," Lyno said. "I hope people learn something from that. I'm interested in human stories. So the selection of subjects for the exhibition is to show the diversity of life among gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual individuals in families. Along with the photos, there is a short text for the family images with quotes from families in the pictures with stories about how the family is shaped. I hope that people can see through those images and the stories how Cambodian families come to terms with issues of acceptance and identity and how people define their own world as a family, which is not different from straight families."

When asked how LGBT rights differ between Cambodia and the United States, Lyno described the LGBT-rights movement in his native country as less defined.

"Basically in terms of rights for Cambodian LGBT individuals, it's quite different," he said. "There isn't a legal framework that defines LGBT rights. It's very vague. But also there are no major articles that discriminate against LGBT individuals either, compared to here. It's an unclear interpretation. I know that there are some LGBT organizations working to clear and make things safer for LGBT individuals."

Equality Forum presents the work of Vuth Lyno through May 5 at William Way LGBT Community Center, 1315 Spruce St. For more information, visit www.equalityforum.com. ■



ARTIST VUTH LYNO