

Cambodian artists compete for \$36,000 prize

Some of the paintings and installation pieces by five Cambodian artists in a competition to win the \$36,000 Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize . Photo supplied

More than 130 artworks by artists from 24 different countries will go head to head in Singapore next month in a competition to win a \$36,000 art prize.

Cambodian artists Leang Seckon, Pich Sopheap, Vandy Ratana, Svay Sareth, and Yim Maline, have all been selected to compete in the 3rd annual Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize, only the second time candidates have been chosen from Cambodia, says competition judge Erin Gleeson.

“Last year we selected only three of the nominated artists, but this year we chose five. I think it’s very important for Cambodian artists to become a part of the conversation in Asian countries. It’s not only a benefit for the artists but also for the visitors to know about Cambodian contemporary art.”

Among the Cambodian artworks selected for inclusion in the competition, are kites constructed from bamboo by Battambang based artist Yim Maline, who is also up against her husband, fellow artist, Svay Sareth.

Sareth’s entry is in the form of a 200 kilogram boat he constructed in 2009 while studying at the d’Études des Arts Plastiques in France. Svay’s wooden vessel named Tuesday was featured in an art exhibition at Hotel de la Paix in Siem Reap earlier this year. Svay said he was inspired to construct the boat after reading the novel Robinson Crusoe, while contemplating his return “from exile” in France to Cambodia.

“I sculpted the boat for many months, and then I pushed it 27 kilometres for 11 hours to the sea. I got inside to find out if there was a chance it would float, and if psychologically, I could return to my home,” Svay explained.

Artworks selected for the competition will be displayed at the Singapore Art Museum, until fifteen shortlisted finalists are announced on October 15.

The final winner of the competition will be announced at an awards dinner on November 18.

***By Ou Mom
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