

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### SA SA BASSAC opens *Humanbuild* by Kong Vollak

PHNOM PENH – 12 October 2011 – SA SA BASSAC is pleased to present *Humanbuild*, the result of a month-long artist-in-residence program with Kong Vollak.



*“The desire to see the city preceded the means of satisfying it.” - Michel De Certeau*

Kong Vollak’s immersive environment of charcoal, ink, and wire forms is intended to create a feeling of wonder, pleasure, and uncertainty in the viewer. This is no longer meant to be experienced as a traditional gallery space, but as an urban landscape both vibrant and ominous, a kind of utopian vision with a dark side.

The possibilities of what could be, as the artist imagines, a complementary relationship between the architecture and urban planning of modernity and a reciprocal relationship with the populace, who reap the expected benefits of development. In such a reciprocal relationship, the city serves the people just as the people serve the city. In Kong’s vision, the people in the city are at one with its architecture – their bodies transformed into buildings. Perhaps this is reflective of the nature of urban subjects, who bear the imprint of their environment on their bodies, in the way they carry themselves, in the way they speak, in the care of the self. We are mentally and physically structured by the architectures which we inhabit. Yet these figures in the landscape look to the skies, in search of the horizon...

The chaotic configuration of shapes and forms in Kong’s wall drawings and sculptures is deliberate, a result of an increasingly organic and instinctual process and engagement with the space of the gallery and the textures of its walls. Each component reflects a conscious decision about meaning and aesthetics; this is not a parallel to what the artist is witnessing in the urban reality around him. The

choice of black on white is a means to deter didactic messages and literal meanings associated with colors. The charcoal used on the walls is derived from wood, alluding to deforestation, while the installation is composed of charcoal rendered from coconut shell, a proposal for ecological alternatives. The importance of using these crude materials also lies in the crafted sensibility of Kong's cityscape, in its lines, shadows, smudges – these are the gestures of the hand that makes the marks.

Text by Pamela Nguyen Corey,  
Center for Khmer Studies Research Fellow / Doctoral Candidate, History of Art and Visual Studies, Cornell University

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Focused on mark making, with particular interest in the line and line interactions, Kong Volla (b. 1983, Phnom Penh) is known for his black on white architectural and reticular drawings of both the real/present and imagined/future of Phnom Penh. Kong is a member of the artist collective Stiev Selepak and a Teacher of the national high school art curriculum. His solo exhibitions include *Many Floors*, French Institute, Phnom Penh (2009) and *Black*, Hotel de la Paix Arts Lounge, Siem Reap (2009).

## **About SA SA BASSAC**

SA SA BASSAC is a gallery and resource center dedicated to creating, facilitating, producing, and sharing contemporary visual culture in and from Cambodia.

## **Exhibition Details**

Exhibition: *Humanbuild* by Kong Volla  
Opening: Friday 14 October, 6:00-8:00PM  
Dates: 14 October – 6 November, 2011  
Opening Hours: Thu-Fri-Sat 2-6pm / Sun 10am-6pm + by appointment  
Location: #18 2nd Floor, Sothea Blvd, Phnom Penh  
Website: [www.sasabassac.com](http://www.sasabassac.com)

## **Contact:**

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