

White Building Archive - Stiev Selapak & Big Stories



Project author or developer:
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Where:
KH / Cambodia / Daun Penh

Website:
www.visibleproject.org/blog/project/white-building-archive-phnom-penh-cambodia/

White Building Archive gathers ongoing visual and audio materials produced in Phnom Penh's White Building.

These works of art, fiction and documentary assert the possibility, indeed the necessity, of an artistic future that transcends tired clichés of recent war and ongoing poverty.

The White Building is the colloquial name for Phnom Penh's most artistically significant yet endangered community: a high-density apartment complex, designed in 1963 as part of an architecturally and culturally visionary precinct for arts in a culturally booming, newly independent Cambodia. Now, the White Building is crumbling. Forcibly evacuated during the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge, the building was specifically reserved as housing for the few artists who survived the genocide. It has been a haven for creativity ever since, yet has suffered worsening government neglect and threats of evictions by profit-driven developers.

White Building Archive gathers materials created by neighbourhood residents and by artists-in-residence that Sa Sa Art Projects has hosted. Materials are digitised for posterity and posted at whitebuilding.org, built by our partner Big Stories. Our physical archive is an apartment remodelled to resemble the original design. With one eye on history, we also look to the uncertain future. Our dream is for the White Building Archive to gather community contributions within the next 24 months, before threatened evictions make this too late.

Creating White Building Archive is a collaborative, participatory process that strengthens a sense of community based in shared creativity and the chance for new possibility. Our dream is that this spirit can transcend physical space and the archive helps ensure this creative community survives, knowledge having been recorded and shared, whatever happens to the White Building. About the artist

White Building Archive is initiated by Stiev Selapak, Cambodia's only active art collective. In 2010 we founded Sa Sa Art Projects, Phnom Penh's only artist-run space, located in the White Building. Our activities there are based in education for the White Building community and Cambodia's arts community as a whole include free art classes for youth and the country's only dedicated artists' residency program. We facilitate dynamic collaborations between local and international artists and the community.

