

Laotian Puppetry of Everyday Things



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Archaeology and Fine Arts

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**SEAMEO-SPAFA
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Archaeology and Fine Arts**

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- ▶ Promote awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of Southeast Asian countries through preservation of archaeological and historical artifacts, and traditional arts;
- ▶ Help enrich cultural activities in the region;
- ▶ Strengthen professional competence in the fields of archaeology and fine arts through sharing of resources and experiences on a regional basis;
- ▶ Increase understanding among the countries of Southeast Asia through collaboration in archaeological and fine arts programmes.



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'Everyday' Puppets Ka Bong Way - Laos

The middle-eyed "Anatole"

Imogen Butler-Cole wanders into a wildly imaginative world of puppet theatre in Vientiane that is quite unlike any other in Southeast Asia, and manages to un-attach herself from its mesmerizing hold, to tell the story.

Upon entering the company studio of Ka Bong Laos where practice is in session, I see what appear to be nothing more than dead coconut branches lying on a long trestle table in the centre of the room. When I question their presence, I am informed that they are to become the "new children" of the group. And right there, in front of my eyes, indeed they do. With the addition of only a few gnarled pieces of husk and shell for eyes, they spring into eerie, petrified life. Being in the space is in some ways like being in a morgue; everywhere are hanging inanimate, though intensely individual, beings; their faces frozen in quirky or malevolent expression; their bodies hanging limp, paralysed. Only when the act begins and the vital energy of the performer is transmitted into the otherwise flaccid conglomeration of cloth and wood, are these endearing children allowed their chance to play. Leuthmany is a slight and apparently unassuming man whose lifetime of experience popular theatre and clowning suddenly becomes vividly apparent when, eyes ablaze, he springs up to demonstrate a

Located within the tropics, Laos is - in the heart of Indochina - landlocked between China, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Rivers and mountains and thick tropical forests dominate the landscape of the country which covers 236,000 sq km. Close to half of its population, which is estimated at 5 million, are ethnic Lao or Lao Loum. Officially, there are more than 60 ethnic groups, with their distinct languages, cultural traditions, and performing arts that are primarily related to their festivals. On New Year or Buddhist Lent days, for example, the Ipok show consists of puppetry which is performed by artists who have inherited the art form from previous generations. The show has been held for hundreds of years, and originated in the Luang Prabang province. Most of the puppets used in performances today are inspired by the Ipok tradition. According to Phouvieng Sisouphanh, glove puppetry, with plots of legendary and historical backgrounds that are similar to the Javanese Wayang Kulit in Indonesia, had flourished in Luang Prabang. The tradition was revived during the late 1970s with Bulgarian assistance. Since founding the national puppet troupe, the government has sent young performers to train in Bulgaria.

gesture, or to manipulate one of the many puppets (considered within the troupe rather as members of an ever expanding family).

Ka Bong Laos is a unique art form of puppetry which uses everyday objects, such as coconut shells, bamboo poles, brooms, scraps of material and even plastic bags in the creation of mask forms and bizarre, vibrant puppets full of character. The origins of this performing company arose through a friendship and collaboration between the company director (and sole creator of the Ka Bong people), Leuthmany Insisiegmay; and Michael Lebon, a highly respected French practitioner of physical theatre, and director of Turak, the French Theatre d'Objets. They had met at Hong Kanyasin, the Laos National Circus, where they performed together as

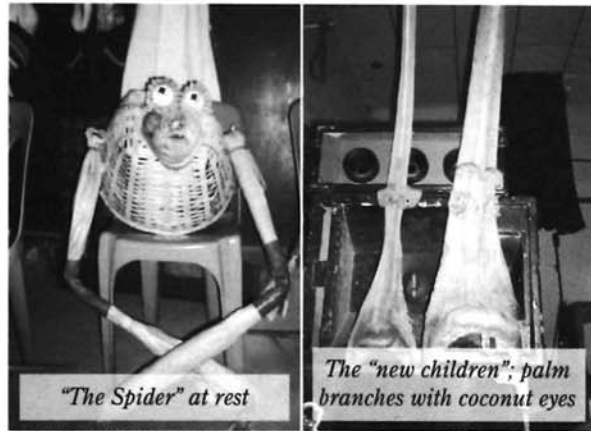
clowns for several years. There Lebon passed on his methods and expertise to Insisiegmay; who in turn used them to form the basis of his own company.

Recruiting through an extensive audition process, the three-year-old group now consists of performers with experience in circus, puppetry and popular theatre. Initially, Leuthmany and Lebon dedicated three months to developing their skills in applying the circus 'circle' method, through which the performers undergo rigorous training in mime, character, and physicality. Consequently, the ensemble was tightened; this is vital for a discipline in which up to three performers have joint control of one of the (often larger than life-size) puppets, rapidly switching from controlling one limb to

another, in a bid to maintain the most fluid and effective manipulation possible.

The company operate under the umbrella of the Laos National Puppet Theatre, and perform traditional work with hand-sewn, string-operated puppets. The troupe has been divided into two groups: Puppet theatre; and Theatre d'objets (a kind of theatre performed with recycled materials). Ka Bong is supported by organizations, such as UNICEF and Handicap International. UNICEF commissions educational work on topics such as AIDS, drug use and cluster bombs; while the performances in schools throughout the country, promoting road-safety awareness, are connected to Handicap International. Here, the performers act as a support band for the presenters of the project, providing comic relief from the more serious aspects of the programme, and thereby arresting attention and effectively highlighting the importance of safety. Throughout a two-hour lecture, they perform three knee-knocking rock songs as a variety of trouser-tugging characters - from the long-haired bass-playing rocker; to the slightly more incongruous, flowing moustachioed Grandfather figure; and to austere, head-scarf sporting housewife - much to the glee of the teenage audience.

Their work is not confined to schools, though it is educational, almost without exception. When questioned on the future of the company, Leuthmany becomes elusive, and when I probe I find out why. They are very much at the mercy of their commissioning organisations and can only afford to embark on the complex developmental process of



"The Spider" at rest

The "new children"; palm branches with coconut eyes



The infinitely variable "little Heads", made from a Hessian sack and coconut shells



Road-Safety awareness activity



Mr Souksakhone giving life to one of the simpler, one-man Ka Bong

Just one configuration of the "Little Heads" as they appear in performance, manipulated by Mr Lathanakone and Miss Lenthya

a new show when they have a guaranteed production. Such is the quality of life embodied by these creatures that they are rarely reused from one show to the next, and certainly never tampered with once they have taken on full form. So, although shows are



A young audience enchanted by the skills and inventiveness of this rare art form *The symbol of the project; brought to life by Leuthmany*



These two-man puppets are embodied by one performer, while the other takes care of the head



Extreme right is the character depicting the drug, opium, in drug awareness campaigns

always devised through improvisation and draw on the imagination and skill of all the performers involved, the story must be carefully conceived and the puppets

fashioned before this evolution can begin. Currently, Leuthmany is in the early stages of creating a new piece for February's National Holiday, which will be a representation of the Laos myth that explains the origins of the three major ethnic groups (Soung, Tung and Loum), who were released, one after the other, from a giant pear through a hole made in it with a red-hot poker.

Recently, in November, Leuthmany was invited to Thailand to participate in an international seminar and workshop on Southeast Asian performing arts, organised by SPAFA. He held workshops and also performed to fascinated audiences, jangling to life his trademark puppets of rags, coconut heads, and old shoes. Leuthmany's comic streak had no bounds; at one moment during the seminar, when he was fielding questions from participants, he slowly lowered himself and hid behind the rostrum as he did not know how to answer a particular question, setting off all-round laughter.

Another priority for the future of Ka Bong Laos is to expand their already strong international reputation. They have not only toured Thailand with the support of L'Alliance Francaise, but also spent three months travelling around France, developing a show which questioned "the different worlds existing between France and Laos." This was performed at the 2002 International Puppetry Festival in Portugal where they enjoyed resoundingly enthusiastic responses from a discerning multinational audience. As Leuthmany points out, this art form crosses boundaries of linguistic understanding.



Photo: Nipon Sud-Ngam

SPAFA Workshop

All of Ka Bong's work is in the genre of mime - often accompanied by atmospheric international music - which allows it to be enjoyed by anyone, regardless of nationality. Mimed work has the added advantage of encouraging the audience to create their own dialogue for the characters. It would be fascinating to discover how many differently voiced dialogues are being played out in

the heads of the observers. Certainly there are glimpses of them in the performers, occasionally betrayed by the characteristic mumblings and exclamations which escape their lips from time to time. Such lapses augment the remarkably three-dimensional world inhabited by, say, the intricately varied rolling-and-folding acrobatics of a hessian sack with a coconut shell face.

Quite aside from the unique resourcefulness and originality displayed in the creation of these marvellous beings (where else could an egg box, three bottle-tops and two old toothbrush heads be put to such spectacular good use?), there is an added charm given by the manner in which they are manipulated. There are no screens to hide the performers, nor are they shrouded within the robes of their marionettes, so while they are not in any way distracting, they are clearly visible - their own expressions adding further depth to the life of the characters they portray. And in turn, this visibility of the performers, teamed with the everyday accessibility of the creative materials, must surely add to the audience's inclination to ape the entertainers and create Ka Bong of their own.

When I put this to Leuthmany, and question whether being a predominantly educative group, they teach their audiences how to create and manipulate puppets themselves, he explains that, for the moment, they are busy practising and developing the art form itself; that they hope to be able in the future to pass on their methods to those who have so thoroughly appreciated their shows. I have a feeling, though, that even without trying, Ka Bong Laos leaves behind it a trail of individuals, both young and old, who see miraculous new uses for the bounty with which nature provides them, and finding enticing new reasons to plunder the store of utensils to be found around the home. I myself, upon leaving the theatre, catch myself taking second glances at coconut trees, certain that there are many little faces watching me...

According to the publication, 'Asian Puppets, Wall of the World', it is said that Asian puppetry, essentially rooted in Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic traditions, has been a pervasive folk theatre contributing to the "oral transmission of doctrine and myth to illiterate populations." As an art form that had not been documented or preserved in books or museums until recently, the puppeteers "are generally more concerned with vitalizing the stories than with gaining the adulation of their audiences." Puppetry must have existed long before the 10th century B.C. when puppets had been referred to in metaphors and similes; accepting that there was probably no single source of the origin of puppetry, it appears that it might have developed independently in many places, such as India and China, from where it spread to other parts of Asia. The oldest written source to mention puppetry in India is the Mahabharata, the great Indian classic epic which has been dated to the 9th century B.C..

Since training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (1996 - 1999), Imogen has performed and directed extensively in London, throughout the UK, and on tour in France and New Zealand. She frequently works with The Spontaneity Shop, one of London's foremost improvisation companies; and has played lead roles in several films. Having studied performance internationally, writing articles, scripts and sketches, Imogen has devised and directed workshops on Shakespeare for international students and teachers at Oxford University. Recently, she was involved in a specially commissioned drama project at the College of Dramatic Arts in Bangkok, and is currently directing theatre in Delhi, India before moving to Kolkata to work with theatre- and education-based NGOs.

Photographs by Imogen Butler-Cole except those on page 9

SPAFA will organise an international puppet festival in 2005. For more information, please contact spafa03@yahoo.com

"Bamboo Man"; Leuthmany, Lathanakone and Lemthy in action



This gentleman's legs are those of the performer, who directs the rest of the body from outside of the coat



Bamboo and coconut can make an endearing and undemanding pet!



The options are endless, given a few plastic bags and a spark of imagination



A housewife; appropriately crafted from a variety of household goods



The trouser-tugging grandfather in a more formal pose; Lathanakone and Suksakhone each giving a hand



Backstreet, Phnom Penh



Rice Planting, Mae Faek



Approaching Storm, Koh Samui



Home Studio of Artist

Chaos and Perfection

*An interview with watercolourist,
Louise Truslow*

Painting scenes of the vivid markets in Cambodia; along the banks of the Mekong River in Laos; the narrow lanes of Bangkok or the lush fields of up-country Thailand, this artist exudes a dignity and simplicity of life in Southeast Asia. **Suteera Boonlua** and **Ean Lee** talked to **Louise Truslow**.



"Sometimes when I look at the paintings I have done, I get that feeling I wish I'd done that ...," she said in a dreamy sort of way, as if someone else had painted them. Eight years ago, she took up the brush – which she had always wanted to – and now it probably seems unimaginable for her to live her life without it. It was not an accident, but the opportunity was what Louise Truslow would not regret at all. She started watercolour painting with Charlie Satprasat, a Thai artist who had invited her to take part in an exhibition, and ever since then she has been painting and exhibiting her works, almost relentlessly.

We visited Louise's home in a large compound one afternoon, and were enchanted by the house, especially the room out front that she has made her art studio. Surrounded by paintings, tools and art materials, and the bright afternoon light that came through the glassed patio studio, we could easily imagine her spending an inordinate amount of time savouring the pleasures of watercolour painting right here.



Garden in Front of Studio



*From Up High,
Siem Reap*



Javanese Royalty



Gazing Out



Serenity - Wat Jet Yau, Chiang Mai



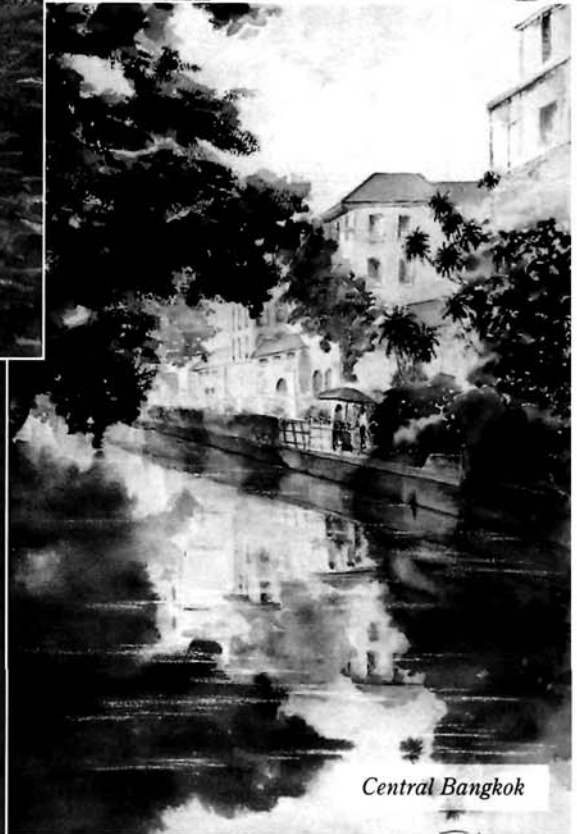
Shafts of Light



Beyond the Horizon



A Paler Shade



Central Bangkok



*The Mae Faek Year -
Scenic Transitions*

Louise herself was no less enchanting, engaging in conversation with us, and expressing an irrepressible enthusiasm about her work. She came to the East as an English teacher, and has been living in Bangkok for more than thirteen years, with her children and husband who works for the Bank of Asia. She also travelled throughout Southeast Asia, pursuing her interests in photography and watercolours, deriving inspiration from her experiences in the region. Exhibiting annually since 1997, her art has been drawing greater attention, and collected by both private and corporate collectors from several countries.

We asked her when her interest in watercolour painting began, and Louise explained that it was fairly recently, "About 8 years ago. I had never painted before. I've always loved and appreciated art, and studied it as an academic subject - history of art." What was the inspiration, the spark? "Oh that, it was something I've always wanted to do. Watercolour appealed to me. I saw an



Saffron and Gold



Wending Homewards, Siem Reap



Morning Bath, Chiang Dao



Chao Phraya Calm



Warorot Market, Chiang Mai



Alms Gathering



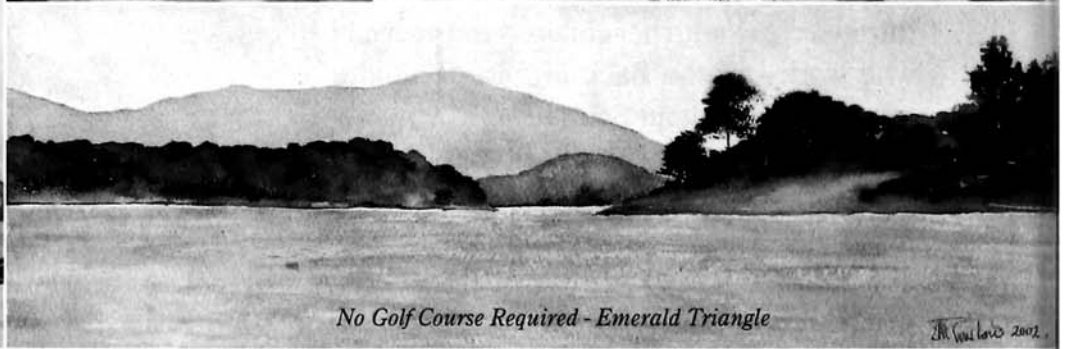
Opportunity



Kite Flying, Sanam Luang



Friends, Ton Le Sap



No Golf Course Required - Emerald Triangle

Ph. Wal Lewis 2802



The Family, Hue



Cornfields, Mae Faek



Soi Kengchuan, Bangkok



Wat Chong Nonsi

Reflections, Ayutthaya



Morning Light, Ubud



Bargain Hunting, Sampeng Lane



Lop Buri Sunflowers



*After the Rain,
Phnom Penh*



The Lake, Mae Hong Son



Who Are You?



Wat Jet Yod, Chiang Mai



Contrasts



Motherhood



The Chedi, Sukhothai



The Boys, Thaton



Ang Nam Ngum, Laos

advertisement for a watercolour course, and I thought, I want to sign up for that! Once I did that, I started and couldn't stop."

What do you love most about watercolour?

The unpredictability of it, the fact that something magical can happen – that's very exciting. I also love the way you can recreate light; and the subtlety. It can be incredibly strong, but at the same time very subtle. Sometimes I look at my paintings and – it sounds stupid – I think, *Ah I wish I could do that*. There's this magical element. Often with watercolour paintings, the artist may look at the completed work, and feel that it is not his/her painting. I think it happens with oil painting as well, but in a different way, the medium is more stable ... you get what you apply whereas with watercolour, it does change more. For me, it is more the inspiration side of it when I view my own work differently. I feel that my painting is a gift working through me; my ability to paint is not something that I created or worked for myself but it was a gift – it was given to me. It may be something from me, but I believe that it is from somewhere else as well.

Where do you draw inspiration for painting?

Images. I'm very strongly affected by images. I feel like I can't paint the images that I find most beautiful, because to represent them is in a way to reduce its beauty. Also, images influence me because before I started painting, photography was my main interest. I carry a camera, take lots of pictures. My paintings are done from the pictures.

Which painter do you admire most?

John Singer Sargent. He does portraits, with both oils and watercolour. I just love his work! The light depicted in his paintings is fantastic!

Are you influenced by a particular artist?

John Yardley, an impressionist whom I know and paint with for a week every summer. He's very well-known in Britain. Singer Sargent is also his favourite artist.

Raised in Leigh-on-Sea near London, with a father who was an architect and along with her mother, who also shares a great interest in art, they spent a lot of time visiting art galleries, and architectural sites when she was young. She studied art history as well as drama, music and dance, with a degree in performance. She said that the patience and practice have helped her to paint better, and she enjoys using watercolours because she likes the uncertainty of the colours, and the way that the colour itself looks different on the paper. Louise also paints beautiful buildings that attract her, exteriors of supermarkets she visits, and now abstract works too.

Louise has a painting style of defined compositional lines but fluid strokes. Her viewpoints - concentrated on rural and urban landscapes until recently - often offer moments into which an observer is invited to linger and contemplate stillness or transitions. She has also depicted monks in their bright orange robes, and produced an exhibition, 'Saffron and Gold'. This was a collection of paintings showing Buddhist

monks in different activities, such as tending to their chores in the temples, in pensive poses, or gathering alms.

Where are you now seeking your impressions and influences.

Beyond your landscape/scenery work, what new directions are you moving in?

What I'm doing now is exploring subjects that are very present to me – picking something out from obscurity – that I may not notice but is very present. Last year I painted these semi-abstract umbrellas, and I explored the ideas of colour, light and shape so it was more to do with abstract concepts. At the moment, my exploration has become more personal. I have this fascination with many things and images I encounter in my daily life which I love to paint, but knowing that I can't do everything, I've become practical, and concentrate only on a number of things. By personal, I also mean I've become more intimate with the subjects, focussing less on themes, and looking at details in microscopic perspectives.

I can see your talent in watercolours, but I'm sure you have other talents, what talent would you most like to have?

Opera singer. I've sung some opera, but it is not something I'll ever be famous for. When I hear an

opera singer sing wonderfully, I have that wow-I-wish-I-could-do-that feeling.

Our host appeared to be an extrovert, who loves company, and who is creative, with an interest in lots of different art, including the theatre – she has directed a large theatrical production in Bangkok – and opera. She admitted to being a very untidy person but when it comes to crisis, deadlines and details she is as meticulous as she is a perfectionist about getting the job done.

Between being untidy and chaotic, and perfectionist and meticulous with details - it seems contradictory, doesn't it? How do you reconcile this?

Yes, yea. I am like that. We are referring to projects, which I would work hard, long hours

on every aspect, good at project management. The other things, my daily life, it's not quite managed this way. I could be difficult to live with when I'm in the middle of a ground project. Meticulous and untidy, that's me. Anybody in my family will verify this fact! [she laughed].



The Sala, Khun Kukrit's House

When do you decide that your painting is done? At what point do you let go of your perfectionist tendencies, and feel comfortable about a painting, to declare: "it's done!"?

It is a really hard thing. When you are a new artist, that's a difficult problem to know when a painting is finished. Yes, you can keep going on and on and on, but with watercolours you don't want to say everything – you want to leave things unsaid. You want to have some mystery, and watercolour lends itself to that because if you over work it, then it's spoiled and you're on dodgy ground. It's difficult to answer; I just know. I get the feeling that it's right, and that means it's finished. I supposed it's partly intuition, and partly experience.

How do you cope with your interests, your children, the family, the household, etc...?

Well, I think I'm very lucky, to have domestic assistants in the household. Their help is crucial. I don't have to be involved in chores that would surely mean no painting time for me. I'm very fortunate in that sense. The children, I usually paint/work when they're at school, when they're not home. My family is the most valued thing in my life.

Do you believe in reincarnation?

No, I'm a Roman Catholic but if I could be reborn, I would like to come back as a cat. I have a deep passion for my five cats and a dog.

Any influence from Buddhism?

I am very much attached to this world, and Buddhism is interesting to me in its persuasion on becoming detached to worldly material. I have experienced that sense of

detachment, and how it can help to instil peace in our lives, monuments from those hectic and chaotic times.

Favourite way to 'waste' time?

I love walking in the countryside. Whenever



Peace, Siem Reap

I'm in the north – I have a house up in Chiang Mai – to take breaks, I spend a lot of time walking in the natural setting.

Any vice or indulgence?

Being late, I can be half an hour away from somewhere, it's two minutes before I'm meant to be there, and I can still have this idea in my head that I'm not late yet. But my projects, I've never been late on deadlines! Another vice, I talk too much. I love to talk.

That's a good thing ...

Well, sometimes.

Crossroads of Thai and Dutch History

*International Symposium on the occasion of 400 years of
Relations between Thailand and the Netherlands*

National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden
9-11 September 2004

Relations between the Netherlands and Thailand began more than 400 years ago, although the historic event that set off the formal and diplomatic contacts of the two countries date from the year 1604. The initial Dutch enterprises in the Kingdom of Siam were indeed a part of the United East India Company expansion overseas, but such efforts did result in a colonisation bid as they did in other regions. The amazing and unique East-West relationship between the Dutch and Thais has endured the stormy events through the centuries, and today stands out as an example of the trade policy of Dutch enterprises overseas. After the fall of Ayutthaya, the previous Thai capital and a great trading emporium in Southeast Asia, followed by the decline of the United East India Company itself, the contacts took a new turn and continue in the same way until the present day.

Only scant tangible remains of the Dutch presence are known in Thailand today, although new archaeological surveys and excavations may reveal additional and even startling discoveries. Somewhat in contrast, the United East India Company journals are a rich source of information on Thailand, and on the dynamics of trading and political activities in Southeast Asia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Dutch Archives still contain a massive amount of unpublished records on Thailand.

Activities in the Netherlands and Thailand to commemorate and celebrate their unique East-West relationship have already commenced in 2002, and are being carried through into 2004. The National Museum of Ethnology, with its major focus on the mutual understanding between the East and the West, and with the generous support of the Royal Thai Embassy and the VOC-fonds Foundation, is pleased to organise an international symposium for this occasion. Scholars of the two countries, and others of international repute, are invited to meet, to present and to discuss new evidence, explore new research, and even provide new perspectives on established information. The main aim is to explore and highlight the process and the historic development of such a unique phenomenon, along with a re-examination of the underlying circumstances.

**For information and registration
please contact:**

**The organisers
Symposium 'Crossroads of Thai
and Dutch History'
National Museum of Ethnology
P.O. Box 212, 2300 AE Leiden
The Netherlands
<crossroads@RMV.nl>**

Speakers

- 1) Prof. Leonard Blusse (University of Leiden), (commentator and chairperson).
- 2) Dr. Dhiravat Na Pombejra (Faculty of History, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand), A Dutch account of the 1656 court conflicts in Ayutthaya.
- 3) Dr. John Guy (Victoria & Albert Museum, London), Commissioning Indian Textiles for the Court of Siam and the role of the VOC.
- 4) Prof. John Kleinen (University of Amsterdam), Recent discoveries from the coast of Vietnam - new evidence of international trade.
- 5) Dr. Kees Zandvliet (National Museum, Amsterdam), Ayutthaya seen through Dutch Eyes.
- 6) Dr. Remco Raben (Netherlands Institute of War Documentations, Amsterdam), The Kings of Siam and the Dutch East India Company (tentative title).
- 7) Prof. Jurrien van Goor (University of Utrecht), The Phaulkon years in Thai history.
- 8) Drs. Henk Zoomers (independent scholar), Dutch-Thai Relations in the Early Bangkok period.
- 9) Drs. Supaporn Ariyasajsiskul (Leiden University), Two centuries of the Dutch in Ligor.
- 10) Mr. Sod Daeng lead (Deputy Director, Fine Arts Department, Thailand), Dutch Monuments in Thailand (tentative title).
- 11) Mr. Sirirat Wangsapa (private scholar, Thailand), Tracking down Dutch Cannons.
- 12) Ms. Somsri Iamtham (National Library, Thailand), Thai Interests in Dutch Records.
- 13) Drs. Bhawan Ruangsilp (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand/University of Leiden), Schouten's Siam : A Dutch Construction of Siam in the first half of the Seventeenth Century.
- 14) Prof. B.J. Terwiel (University of Hamburg), Manuscript Drawings concerning Thailand by Engelbert Kaempfer, 1690 A.D.
- 15) Dr. Lodewijk Wagenaar (University of Amsterdam), Mid-eighteenth century contacts between Sri Lanka and Thailand, as recorded by the Dutch East India Company.
- 16) Dr. Nandana Chutiwongs (National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden), Merchants, Ships and Religious Missions.
- 17) Dr. Han ten Brummelhuis, (University of Amsterdam), Thai Community in twentieth century Netherlands.
- 18) Prof. Rasmi Shookongdej (Silpakorn University, Thailand), H.R. van Heekeren and Research on Prehistory in Thailand.
- 19) Drs. Jody Leewes (University of Leiden), Thai-Dutch Relations after 1860 AD.

Product Development for Heritage Tourism

There is a need for a working partnership between those in the fields of cultural heritage and tourism to enhance visitors' experiences and to generate economic opportunities for local communities and other stakeholders. Sompong Amnuay-ngerntra shares his thoughts on the matter.

Due to the rapid changes with shrinking conservation budgets, and increasing consumer demand for a quality experience, a heritage manager needs to be adaptive, proactive, and market-



Interpretation techniques of both personal tourist guides and displays, both play an important role in enriching a visitors travel experience and their understanding of heritage values.

oriented. Understanding the concept of marketing contributes to an increase in the number of visitors and visitor management. Meanwhile, to develop a cultural heritage product, it is essential to understand the three levels of heritage tourism: core, tangible, and augmented. Interpretation plays an important role in the development of heritage tourism products at two levels: that of managing single sites (e.g. a temple, or historical building, etc.); and the other of managing a destination (e.g. an area consisting of various heritage sites, or historical monuments, etc.). Ideal interpretation requires that the right message and communication techniques are

used to enhance a visitors' understanding of heritage values and to receive a great travel experience. In addition, festivals and special events are proposed to create a value-added experience.

Introduction

There is a lack of understanding of the working partnership between cultural heritage and tourism which fails to create a great visitor experience and to generate economic opportunities for the local community and other associated stakeholders. Ironically enough, tourism success is perceived as a cultural tragedy for many heritage places (Hanna 1972 as cited by Picard 1995: 65). Traditionally, the prime mission of heritage sites has been to gather, preserve and study artifacts. The heritage manager was perceived as the keeper of the objects, as one who performed the custodial role for the cultural capital of that institution. Today managing heritage sites requires an understanding of the custodial role and the need to attract visitors, as a result of the rapid change in external environments, in particular the change of visitor behaviour and shrinking conservation budgets. Therefore, there is a need for a site manager to comprehend a marketing concept which contributes to achieving his organisation's objectives (Gilmore and Rentschler, 2002). This article aims to discuss why a heritage manager needs a comprehensive understanding of marketing concepts and how to develop heritage tourism products at both individual organisations and wide-destination levels. The significance of cultural heritage management marketing will be discussed first, followed by a discussion

of the conceptual heritage tourism product, and will conclude with a discussion of developing the products at both levels: an individual organisation and a wide-destination.

A Need to Change

Traditionally, there has been great resistance to thinking of cultural and heritage assets as products. Many heritage managers focus their attention on the tangible assets they manage, without appreciating the core product and the visitor experience, that they offer to visitors. A few managers have studied business and realise the significance of their heritage assets. Apparently, most managers are responsible for protecting and conserving tangible assets rather than providing a tourist experience.

Heritage managers have increasingly encountered a rapid change from uncontrollable external environments, impacting on the heritage asset management. These external environments are:

1. Shrinking conservation budgets, grants, and donations.
 2. An increase of heritage conservation costs.
 3. The change of heritage tourist behaviour.
 4. Increasingly, heritage visitors are more educated, sophisticated, experienced, and have more expectations for a quality service.
 5. An intense competition from other heritage attractions.
 6. The change of technological advancement.
- The above environments force the heritage managers to become proactive, adaptive, and innovative. The faster the heritage managers can adapt themselves, the more effective they manage a heritage site. Some heritage managers realise that they need to know more about marketing.

Impacts of Marketing

The use of a marketing approach to heritage asset management provides a number of benefits for heritage managers, whereas the failure to do so presents a number of threats to the sustainability of their assets. By understanding why people visit, the experience can be shaped to better satisfy their needs in a manner that is compatible with the wider cultural heritage management goals of the asset.

If the experience is not shaped to satisfy the visitors' needs, or if those needs are not known, then the tourists will shape the experience themselves to satisfy their own needs. In other words, they will define the asset according to their own core needs and consume it accordingly, even if it is quite different than the desires of the site managers (McKercher and Du Cros 2002).

Similarly, if the asset is positioned vaguely in the marketplace, or if the tourists are unaware of the position strategy used, a greater likelihood exists that the wrong type of tourists will visit. The wrong type of visitors can adversely threaten cultural heritage resources of the host communities. Alternatively, the failure to appreciate the tourism significance of an asset and the accompanying need to transform it for tourism consumption may result in the unappealing presentation of the site, resulting in lower visitation levels, lower satisfaction levels, less repeat visitation, and fewer financial returns (McKercher and Du Cros 2002).

The success of a product depends on the ability of the producers to understand the

needs of the consumers and then to shape the product accordingly. However, this does not mean that visitors have the right to do anything they want. Marketing does not only aim to increase visitor numbers, but also help heritage managers to control overcrowding, which causes negative impacts on cultural heritage and visitor experiences. The mar-



*Phra Ram Ratchananivej
(the Gunner Palace of King Chulalongkorn).*

keting approach enables the heritage managers to define the core product on their own terms and in doing so, identify and target the desired type of visitors. In this way, the asset is presented in a manner that makes it most appealing to the desired type of user and less appealing to undesired visitors. The heritage-oriented visitors should be targeted as they are willing to contribute to conservation through high entry fees. This group makes a relatively high per capita financial contribution.

Pricing and Cultural Heritage Management

A high quality and high price policy will bring

economic benefits to local communities while minimise cultural heritage. The strategy not only seeks to maximise visitor numbers, but to provide special interest tourists with a quality experience. Attracting small numbers of high spenders will maximise economic benefits while limiting the need for investment of site infrastructure. Heritage tourism is expected to provide the economic base for local communities and may also provide the principal motor for development of the region as a whole.

Fees and pricing can be effective in reducing visitor numbers during the busiest times of the day, week or year. For many vulnerable heritage places, raising fees during busy periods and lowering them

during the low season can achieve a more balanced flow of visitors (Fyall and Garrod 1998). Meanwhile, visitors who make only a limited contribution to the local economy should have lower priority if the capacity is limited. A ticket giving access to all assets, valid for one week and priced accordingly, has been suggested. The Taj Mahal in India and the Angkor Wat in Cambodia are examples of successful World Heritage Sites where pricing is considered a useful management tool (Wager 1995; Timothy and Boyd 2003). However, this may not apply to all sites, as heritage visitors are price inelastic: when prices rise, demand remains reasonably unaffected (Fyall and Garrod 1998).



Phra Nakorn Kiri, the hill-top palace of King Mongkut.

Alternatively, diversification and development of additional leisure attractions should be introduced to direct visitors' attention away from overcrowding heritage sites. The principle of dispersion is useful in this regard as it helps to generate economic development to local communities, promote other heritage tourism products, and enhance travel experiences (Page 1992). Some suggested activities include re-establishing traditional classical dance, shadow-puppet theatre, and light and sound presentations.

Conceptual Heritage Tourism Product

Understanding a conceptual product will contribute to the development of heritage tourism products. Conceptually, a product can be perceived as: core, tangible, and augmented.

The core product, the most important feature, describes the core benefits or solutions provided by its consumption. The core product of heritage tourism is a visitors' experience. Developing this experience should be based on the unique characteristics of local communities that are meaningful to potential customers. Notably, it is a challenging job for heritage managers to conserve a sense of authenticity so that visitors can enjoy a quality experience. Once a place loses its authenticity and sense of place, it will be difficult to satisfy visitors. A loss of indigenous handicraft at Kro Kret, in Nonthaburi, and the pseudo-floating marketing in Pattaya (the original one is in Damnoen Saduak, Ratchaburi) are examples of poor heritage attractions that tourists feel that they are no longer experiencing the authenticity in the place.

A tangible component represents the second conceptual level of a product. It represents the physical manifestation of the core product that enhances visitors' satisfaction. Heritage tourism products must be shaped to satisfy the tourist needs and wants. Designing a tangible product to deliver a certain type of experience enables heritage places both to meet visitor expectations and to control the experience.

The augmented products provide additional features above and beyond the tangible product that add value and facilitate easier satisfaction of the core need. Notably, Kotler et al (1996) say that augmented products include aspects such as accessibility, atmosphere, the process of customer interaction with the service organisation, and customer interaction with each other.

Essential Elements of Heritage Tourism Product

Unlike a luxurious hospitality complex requiring a high capital investment, heritage assets can be developed as a cultural product with a minimum cost. It is suggested that cultural products encompass the unique features of a place while reflect its cultural traditions, history, ethnic backgrounds, and cultural landscapes. The primary part of a heritage tourism product includes a mix of tangible and intangible elements:

1. Historic buildings and monuments such as ancient palaces and temples.
2. Sites of important past events like a battle such as the bridge on the River Kwai, Kanchanaburi.
3. Natural features such as traditional landscape and indigenous wildlife.

4. Language, literature, music, and art.
5. Traditional lifestyle including culinary art, drink and sport (Swarbrooke 1994: 222)

In addition, Kimmel (n.d.) states that the primary elements of a heritage product are historical events, ethnicity, architecture, natural and cultural characteristics of a common or rural area, daily life of the community. Hospitality properties especially hotels and restaurants help to create an impressive experience for visitors. This may be expressed by a collection of historic local photographs exhibited in the property, architectural building, decoration, music, and dancing that should be consistent with the town identity. For Thailand, festivals and special events play an important role in tourism promotion campaigns which as a result increase visitations all year round. Likewise, a very successful handicraft campaign known as OTOP (One Tambon One Product) is regarded as an important element of heritage tourism derived from local wisdom.

Developing Heritage Products at an Individual Organisation Level

To create cultural tourism products, it is important to analyse heritage assets so as to come up with heritage significance which can be further developed as the cultural tourism product. This product should be experiential, unique, exciting, and appealing to the

target market (EPGC 1995). According to McKercher and Du Cros (2002), several successful heritage attractions tend to share the same common features:

- Telling a story
- Making the asset come alive
- Making the experience participatory
- Making the experience relevant to the tourists

Focusing on quality and authenticity.

These features are interrelated and presented to help visitors appreciate the heritage significance. Also, good interpretation enhances a visitor's understanding of the heritage values. In doing so, it adds depth to visitors' experience making a visit more meaningful. Good interpretation increases customer satisfaction, and satisfied customers are good for heritage tourism business. Overall, the importance of interpretation of heritage places has become an accepted norm among practitioners in both cultural heritage and the tourism industry in general. These practitioners can

gain an effective process of communication, as interpretation can differentiate their heritage tourism from more main-

stream products. Likewise, interpretation can enrich travel experiences, increase customer satisfaction, attract higher-yield clientele, increase the rate and the length of visitation, and increase guide satisfaction (Hall and McArthur 1996).

The three palaces in Phetchaburi (Phra Nakorn Kiri, Phra Ram Ratchanavej, and Marukhathayawan) can be bundled as a prime cultural heritage destination. It would reveal the personalities and visions of three monarchs (King Mongkut, King Chulalongkorn, and King Vajiravudh) toward Siam modernisation, embedded in the architectural building

According to Amnuay-ngerntra (2003a), for most heritage attractions, interpretation can be used as a value-added component, especially for the niche market with cultural heritage interest. In the Asian context, in order to sustain competitive advantage, both heritage attractions and tour operators need to be able to differentiate themselves from other competitors by employing professional tourist guides who are experts in their field. Such tourist guides must be licensed and obtain a tertiary degree in history, architecture, archeology, or associated fields.



*Marukhathayawan
(the beach front palace of King Vajiravudh).*

Tilden (1977), the pioneering experts in interpretation, states that interpretation should capitalise on curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit. This should relate to the personality and life experiences of the visitor. In addition, interpretation should be provocative and reveal a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact. For Thailand, there is a need for several heritage places to develop the quality of interpretation. Quite often, the interpretation fails to enrich travel experiences as it cannot stimulate visitors' curiosity nor speak to their needs and interests. As the significance of heritage places varies depending on heritage assets, it is critical for managers to research and identify the right message, which is interesting to target markets, and the right communication techniques increase a visitors

learning and understanding (Amnuay-ngerntra 2003b). According to Figure I., a range of communication techniques can be used on-site such as a personal tourist guide talking to groups, printed materials, signs, displays, demonstrations of cultural performances such as music, drama, art, electronic media such as the internet, video and audio, and combinations of any of these methods.

The majority of heritage tourists are not seeking a deep learning experience. Making the travel experience fun, light, and entertaining is more important for many tourists. There-

fore, visitor participation should be encouraged to increase a visitors understanding and experience. In addition, there is a need to develop an interpretative theme, a statement which connects different strands of information, and uses an idea or concept as a way of understanding a place. The interpretative theme will help visitors understand the connected facts of a heritage site. This makes the visit more interesting and more memorable.

Developing Heritage Products at A Wide Destination Level

Three strategies have been proposed to develop heritage assets into heritage tourism destination.

Bundling Attractions

Bundling helps to create a theme for a place,

creating a stronger sense of place for tourists by involving many places with similar meanings. Figure II. shows the three vacation palaces of King Mongkut, King Chulalongkorn, and King Vajiravudh in Phetchaburi, 126 kilometers south west of Bangkok. The three heritage places have great potential for being developed as a prime cultural heritage destination. Notably, these heritage buildings have a great value in setting out what is known about the respective personalities of the three kings, their views of modernity and of “the West”, how their palaces might be seen to reflect those differences, and how the differences are at present interpreted and marketed by the three respective government agencies-the Fine Arts Department, the Royal Thai Army, and the Border Patron Police- currently responsible for the palaces. Notably, the architectural style of three palaces greatly reveal the socio-cultural change influenced by “the West” during the modernisation period in Thailand (1850’s to 1925 A.D.). This can be further developed as an interpretative theme to appeal to a niche-market with a special interest in historical arts.

Festivals and Special Events

A festival is a spectacular way for tourists to learn about a community because it appeals to all senses and often celebrates important cultural events. To make the festival meaningful, there should be a wide range of cultural heritage such as food, religion, dancing, music, plays, contests, and handicrafts. Clearly, a festival will contribute to the economic development of local communities; simultaneously, it will encourage visitors to learn about the myths, religious meaning,

and heritage values behind a ceremony (Amnuay-ngerntra 2003a).

Programming, Packaging, and Partnership

Packaging can involve putting together a mix of products by linking a number of attractions together. Clearly, opportunities exist for destinations with similar or complementary heritage assets to come together for their mutual benefits (Morrison 1998). Thus, developing products for customers should be linked to wider ideas of collaboration and network development with other heritage attractions and the tourism industry in general.

Conclusion

Marketing is an important part of heritage tourism. Not only can it assist in promoting awareness aimed to increase visitor numbers, but it is a productive strategy used in managing both natural and cultural resources. When done properly, marketing can also be a useful tool for managing visitors and their impacts (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). Due to the rapid changes of external environments affecting cultural resource management, it is suggested that a heritage manager be adaptive, innovative, and marketing-oriented. Understanding visitor needs and interests is important for a manager to be able to provide services to meet visitors’ expectations. Also, a working partnership with the tourism industry greatly contributes to the sustainable heritage tourism development which aims to generate economic benefits to local communities and to visitor quality experiences without degrading the quality of heritage values.

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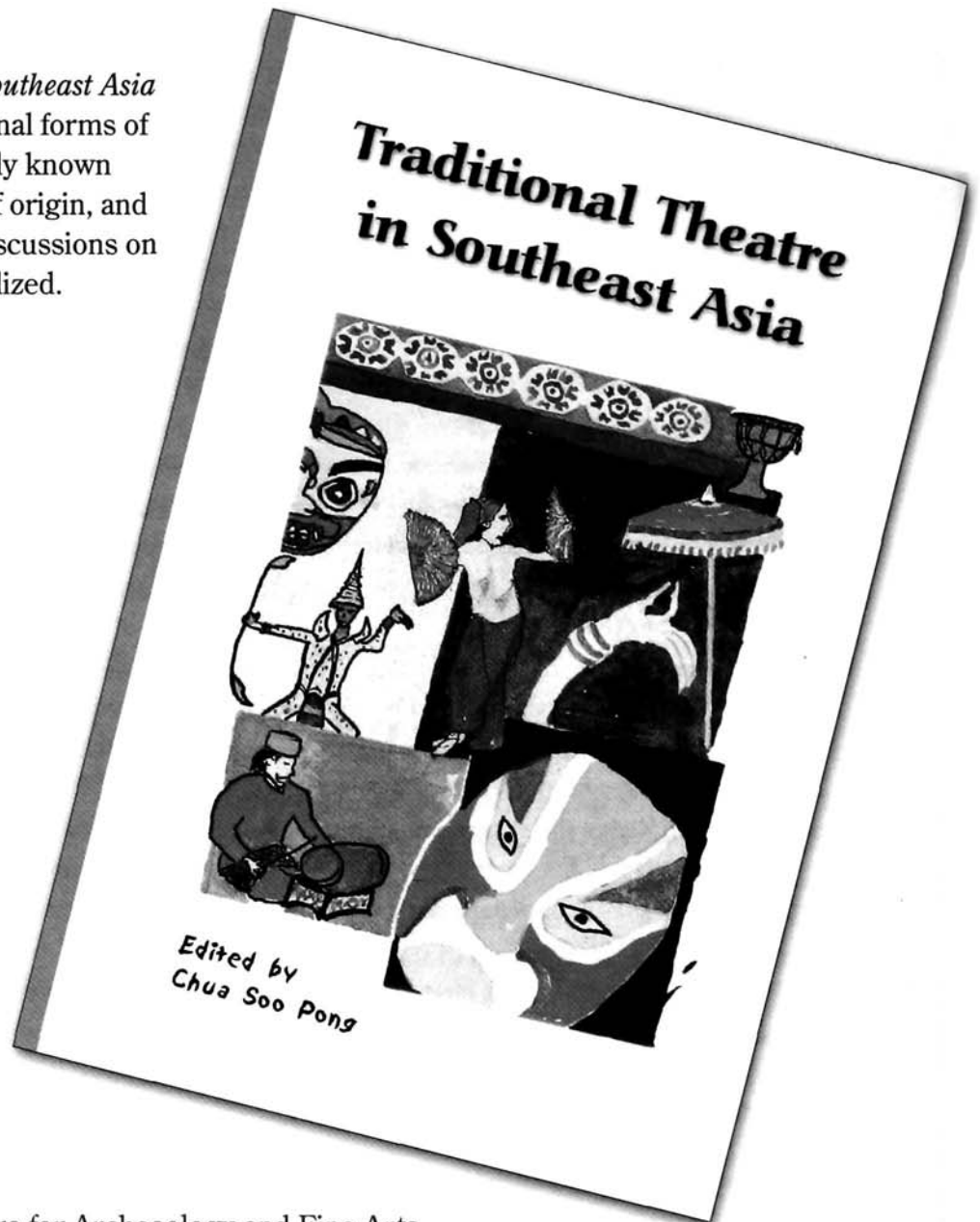
Photographs by Korrachai LeKpetch

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Traditional Theatre in Southeast Asia

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A World Between the Worlds

Vietnam-based Finnish artist **Maritta Nurmi** recently exhibited her unique paintings in an exhibition titled "World between the Worlds" at Numthong Gallery, Bangkok. **Varsha Nair** reports.

Traditional forms of painting are rarely popular amongst contemporary art practitioners. Many think of these paintings as old-fashioned or even irrelevant, and they no longer paint or rarely paint. This is especially apparent in the west where other media have been vigorously embraced by many artists of the day. In the East, however, painting as a medium is as strong as ever; long-established art forms continue to be engaged, and painting in particular is the chosen medium of many artists. One only needs to remind oneself of works by well-known Thai painters, such as Chatchai Puipia or Richard Tsao, who's relatively unknown at home but a prolific New York-based artist whose works I have been fortunate to experience.



Discussing the place of painting in contemporary art and the burgeoning new art forms, the world-renowned 72-year-old British artist Bridget Riley, one of the leading abstract painters of her generation, states: *"Painting on the other hand is an ancient-an archaic-form of art. It takes and needs time and this is to its great advantage. An artist needs enough time to reflect, to revise, to explore various directions, to make changes, to lay foundations. The most astonishing thing about painting is its unbelievable simplicity. In principle anyone can take a few colours and a flat surface and have a go. This ease of access is of course very deceptive and double-edged. It makes painting very vulnerable - more so than any other art form - to all kinds of abuse, distortion and mishandling. Nevertheless this lack of a threshold barrier also has a great advantage; it opens painting to a unique range of invention and development."*⁽¹⁾

¹ From the essay "Painting Now". Publication "The Eye's Mind: Bridget Riley", collected writings 1965 - 1999. De Montfort University, Serpentine Gallery. ISBN 0-500-21865-3

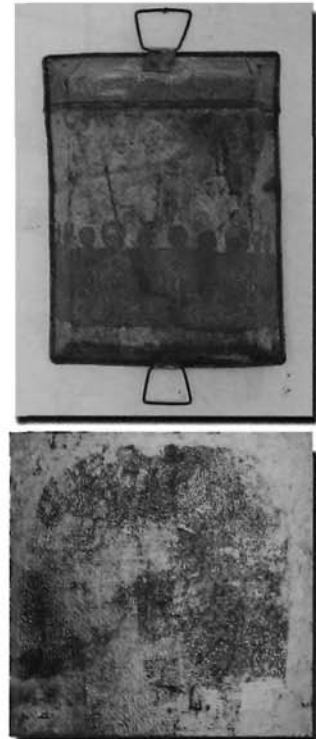
This “time to reflect, to explore various directions, to make changes, to lay foundations” and the “unique range of invention and development” in painting is especially reflected in artist Maritta Nurmi’s works. In my opinion, her art definitely evokes all that is significant about good paintings. Over and above all, they also speak of an honesty that one rarely finds in most art one comes across these days. I first met Maritta three years ago when she showed me photographs of her works, and after encountering her exuberant personality and her rather loud but infectious laughter, I was suddenly plunged into silence and lost in a world that was unfolding in the photos before me. At her recent exhibition “World between Worlds” at Numthong Gallery in Bangkok (from November 1 - 29, 2003), I came face to face with some of her works on canvas. Being drawn further into the realm of what could be described as the artist’s mindscape, alchemy starts to take place where many of the paintings that bear layers of metal foil/ leaves, paint and lacquer have literally been left to age by themselves, distilling time, space and emotions into what now appears in front of our eyes.

In this instance, one can refer to the artist as an alchemist in a literal sense. Having achieved a degree in biochemistry from Finland where she was born, Maritta says she was not happy and found herself “searching for a right place”. Drawn to painting from a young age, she applied for a place at art school whilst teaching and researching as a biochemist. She was accepted and subsequently completed 4 years of study in painting. Family connections brought her to Vietnam in time, where she has been living for the past 10 years and this is when her true journey seems to have begun.

Fascinated with traditional Vietnamese lacquer painting technique, she started delving further and claims this as the point of origin - the foundation that has been a major influence in her own process of art-making. Initially using silver leaves, eggshells and lacquer to build layers, Maritta later found the process too rigid and started to experiment and adapt it to her own way by keeping two major aspects of the technique: the use of metal which initially included only silver but later aluminum and copper leaves, and the layering.

The collaged, painted and finally lacquered surface of her canvases are built up gradually, creating a fine play between textures and colours. The colours are mainly achieved as part of the natural oxidizing process rather than entirely imposed. Acrylic paint is used and this is to build textures and interplay with the metal foils. It is a lengthy process; each

*From the “Tray” series,
painted found objects, 2003.
50 x 40 cm.*



*“Tangles of Buddha” 2, 2003.
Acrylic, silver leaf on canvas,
100 x 100 cm.*

*"Towers of Tears" 1, 2003.
Acrylic, silver leaf on canvas*



*"River beneath the River",
2003. Acrylic,
aluminum leaf on
canvas, 45 x 100 cm.*

painting can take 6 to 8 months to complete after which it is sealed to stop oxidization and to give protection. The resulting depth further provides a play between delicate hues and repetitive forms or motifs that are mostly organic. As Maritta explains, "the circles that I use widely stand for an opening, the possibility for something else, for hope and change. The teardrops for me have always had a mission to cleanse, allowing one to change one's state of mind from one to another. The knots speak of an old symbol - the dot, the beginning point drawing you back to your roots. This is the starting point that is common to us all, no matter who we are."

Repeated circle and dot forms are used in almost a pointillist fashion in the paintings "Tangles of Buddha" 1 and 2, and refer to both Lord Buddha's top knot (or "Usnisa" of enlightenment) and "knots" or "tangles" of mind and body that were encountered, dealt with and overcome to achieve this state. "River beneath the river" also hints at a deeper state of mind and seems to particularly speak of the artist's idea of making art - that of mainly wanting to lead people into the deeper self rather than simply skimming the surface. Says Maritta, "This is important to me, to get into this idea that is global, common to all of us. Not in the modern sense where globalization is the buzzword but to me, it is the idea of introspection that connects us all and I consider this to be the original form of globalization. I believe in this ancient form where we all can read through intuition. It has always connected people and provided comfort and is also evident in all languages of art, literature, poetry, etc.."

As a non-Asian artist living and working in Asia, it has not been easy in terms of getting exposure but in terms of interaction with local art forms and finding the right isolation to set herself on the road for a deeper search, it has provided Maritta the right environment to flourish. Furthermore, Vietnam is for this self-supporting artist an affordable place to live. As most artists know, not having major financial worries is one of the factors sustaining their practice.

In recent times, however, Maritta has been exhibiting widely in the US, Finland and Vietnam and will take part in a group exhibition involving 70 artists from 10 Southeast Asian countries. The exhibition is titled "Globalization versus Identity", and will open in Chiang Mai in February 2004 and then travel to the National Gallery in Bangkok.

In 2001, she was invited to the Womanifesto Workshop that took place on a farm in Si Saket, and this in a way provided yet another turning point. Maritta explains: "It was important after a long period of isolation to be together with other artists." The outdoor nature of the workshop provided a challenge to this primarily studio-based artist. She took a bold step away from the confines of a canvas, and found a way to successfully juxtapose her images in direct response to the environment and landscape. Placing small sheets of silver leaf on the trunks of trees on a winding path, she painted almost invisible images on the bark that were subtly left to be encountered unexpectedly by people passing by (see *SPAFA Journal*, volume 12 Number 1, Jan - April 2002). Maritta's charged and meaningful shift at this workshop has become one of the major factors in expanding the horizon of her art practice. She now finds herself drawn to found objects such as rusted metal trays and traditional tofu boxes made from aluminum, which she collects and transforms. One of her work-in-progress consists of small format paintings that she aims to install in a suitable room and in conversation with the surrounding space where, the walls are no longer just a surface to hang paintings, but the wall itself and the space it contains will all be brought into play. A recent grant from Finland has also made it possible for Maritta to think in such wider terms for the first time as this support enables her to experiment more; she is not forced to sell all the works she creates in order to survive.

Breathing, living, reacting to nature, and appearing different in different light, Maritta says her paintings "begin with a mark and soon the painting paints itself..." This recognition of one's instinct is fundamental. But along with it, invested also are knowledge, experience, technique and a great amount of effort and commitment. It is the process that must be gone through over and over again to make things "visible". And in order to "see", one creates art and through this activity in turn finds what can be seen and gained.

Maritta Nurmi's works can be viewed at the following websites:

www.womanifesto.com

www.vietnamesefineart.com

www.salonnatasha.com

www.asianartoptions.com

Procreation/Postcreation - A Womenifesto Art Project



Womanifesto 2003, an artist-initiated project, launched 'Procreation/Postcreation', an art box of personal stories, poems, beliefs and tales, advice and lullabies that contain thoughts and ideas from around the world concerning issues relating to procreating.

Keiko Sei reports.

"Bosnian Girl" by Selja Kamic, shows an image of herself with graffiti found in the army barracks in Srebrenica, Bosnia (courtesy of the artist)

Female feticide is increasing at an alarming rate in India, according to the November 10 edition of *"India Today"*. This is, it says, in spite of improving educational standards and wealth of the nation. Contrary to the expectation that modern education will bring awareness of gender equality to a large number of the population, and contrary to the idea that poverty is the major factor in a family preferring a male child, it reveals that the biggest culprits of female feticide are found in the most prosperous areas of the country and among the most educated people.¹ In these cases, modern technology is helping people determine the sex in the uterus, to terminate female fetuses and in some circumstances, to produce a male child with chromosome manipulation.

¹ Well-off states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana recorded more than a 50 point decline in the child sex ratio (CSR—the number of girls in the 0-6 age group per 1,000 boys) since 1991, reports *India Today*, November 10, 2003. In urban capitals such as Delhi and Mumbai, the CSR figure is far below the national average of 927 (Delhi 850 and Mumbai 898 in 2001).

Coincidentally, on November 11, another publication 'Procreation/Postcreation' - produced by "Womanifesto 2003" as its 4th major project - was launched in Bangkok in celebration of womanhood, life, art and intelligence. At the well-attended launch of this publication, men consisted of half the audience.

The project itself is an archive. It collects and archives contributions, by both women and men, on this theme in the form of art pieces, poetry, graffiti, comments, ideas, stories, theories, et cetera. The statement of the project organisers also says that it is "about exploring old and new myths surrounding both *pro-* and *post-creation* and how these myths have influenced our thinking in the past, and continue to do so today and into the future." Eighty-eight contributions from different parts of the world are printed on separate papers, and are contained in a re-cycled cardboard box.

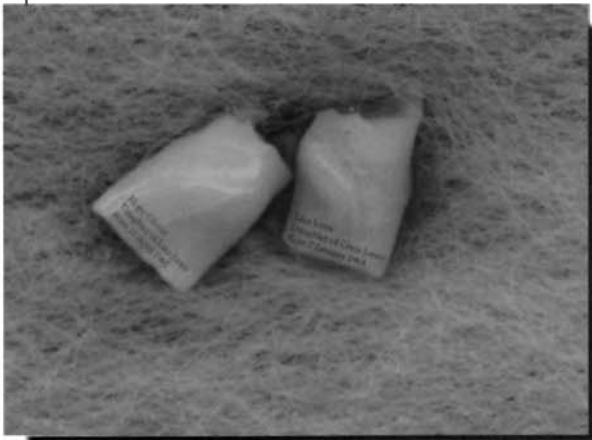
In today's world of Internet, we hit a button, and *voila*, out come so many different ideas, texts and pictures in so many different forms. Questions are often raised on the efficiency of search engines, such as "Am I missing something? Don't I need some filters to help me choose what is worthwhile?" A simple box, as created by Womanifesto, thus emerges as an interesting antithesis to the raging use or misuse of technology on the topic of procreation (and postcreation). The organisers didn't select by gender, race or quality; they only called for contributions and archive everything.



Nilofar Akmut's sculpture
(courtesy of the artist)

We read a scholarly paper about the problematic perception of sexuality of Arab women (Mona Bur), about different textiles used for babies in China, India and Japan (Padmini Balaram), a Luganda (language of the Baganda people in Uganda) lullaby about a traditional way to give birth and a Mongolian proverb about bringing up a child (Hasi), to mention a few. There is a photo collage based on graffiti written by a Dutch soldier found in the army barracks in Srebrenica (Selja Kameric, Tarik Samarah and Grazia Neri); a drawing of a woman-like figure with one eye and sewn head and a string coming out of her navel that makes the word “uncondizhahnal love” (Bops); a photo of a young couple just after they had sex (Martine Stig); and a digital print of two teeth that fell out, one of which belonged to the mother and the other to her daughter (Lisa Jones). There are even recipes of foods related to birth customs, such as sweetened noodles with Tahini from Rhodes, that are traditionally prepared for nursing mothers (Dana Squires). Many contributions are about giving birth and having a child and some are tales and nuances of losing a baby and mistreatment of women.

*“Mother and Daughter”, a digital image by Lisa Jones
(courtesy of the artist)*



There are as many personal stories, and emotions are more explicit than in a curated art show: excitement, happiness, sadness, bitterness, remorse and anger. Some make valuable documents of birth conditions in different places, such as one about a hospital in Alice Springs (Pamela Lofts). There are also metaphors, such as ‘occupied territory’ for example, woman, womb, and land-wise. A photo of a young Jewish woman who is

about to take a video of Arafat in Ramalla, entitled "Arafat and Me" (Tamara Moyzes) challenges probably one of the biggest myths in history and it reminds us that a myth equals an occupied territory itself in mind. For so many women and men, their bodies seem not to belong to them. A digital image by Varsha Nair, entitled Occupied Territory (a woman's body), shows the arm of a young woman, with a number of slashes resulting from her suicide attempt after a disastrous marriage. And there is also an anonymous contribution from Burma, a photo of a shopping bag made by political prisoners as prison labour. A poem by Nilofar Akmut, which is accompanied by a photo of an iron bed (or a chair-like object) with a cushion from which sharp nails stick out, says ".....Catch them [the silent voices]/Twist them around/The truth has a tendency of revelation."² One of the opening day performances, by Esther Ferrer, was about silence, or as she calls it, emptiness. She actively creates it: she looks around the audience, counting the numbers of women and men and placing a board that said "1st minute of performance" on a chair on the stage, and repeated the same action by placing a boards saying "2nd minute of performance", "3rd minute of performance"... This went on till the 7th minute of her performance. In this case emptiness is used as a space for everyone to fill in and to contemplate. An interesting effect of this performance was that the audience was talking and chatting

² "Wait, do not drop the veil/These silences are real voices/
Hidden by threats/Innuendo and abuse/Grotesque/
Bloody/Macabre/Catch them/Twist them around/The
truth has a tendency of revelation" -Nilofar Akmut

*Exhibition installation view of the launch of the box
(photo by Preenun Nana)*



*"Table is Ready", digital print
by Ingrid AR, France
(courtesy of the artist)*

*"Arafat and Me" by Tamara Moyzes, photography
(courtesy of the artist)*



*"After" by Martine Stig of
the Netherlands, taken by a
couple after they had sex
(courtesy of the artist)*

to each other while she was silently performing ("What is she doing? "What is this supposed to mean?") and so here, the positions of the performer and the audience are reversed. Don't let silence go without telling you anything. Catch it and twist it around. Don't let emptiness go without you saying something.

A performance by Mink Nopparat, entitled "Flowers", starts with her action to place voice bubbles onto characters from art or from general photos, which otherwise remain as mere objects for the gaze of the audience. So, Venus de Milo says "I don't care about my arms," and a photo of Muslim women clad in chadors pronounce "I could be a doctor if...." After this action, she folds the papers with the pictures and texts and makes a flower out of them: a silence thus becomes a flower. In another performance, "Control Your Brain" by Liliane Zunkemi, remote-controlled replica toys crawled as brains amongst the audience, knocking at their feet, as if stating that they've been forced to separate from bodies (in the performance the audience use remote controls to operate the brains).

A group from Chiang Mai called The Beauty Suit Team³ took the subject of the myth of beauty for their performance. The group came together at an exhibition entitled "The Beauty Suit" which was curated by Katherine Olston, a member of the team. The exhibi-

³ The members: Boondarik Sukhaboon, Katherine Olston and Estelle Cohenny-Vallier.

tion, at Chiang Mai University Art Museum, was about different perceptions of beauty, and about cultures and myths, and beliefs relating to it. In a partitioned room, three women look into mirrors, separately, and the audience can watch each of them through the transparent mirrors as the women face them but do not see them. The women are busy taking care of themselves - one is whitening herself, one is wearing black make-up to become darker and the other in a wedding dress grumbles to herself "Am I beautiful?" "Am I too fat?" The performance projects anxiety of every woman, about her image, and about a common myth in Asia that a woman must be white to be desired by men and society in general. The women talk only to themselves and to the mirrors about their problems, but the audience can catch their voices clearly.

The publication, 'Procreation/Postcreation' archives what we can call "eloquent silences" and, those who catch them. Yes, we live in the time when technology, such as Internet, helps to bring more voices out into public space, so much so that we cannot decide which to pick, read and to hear. But we also

live in the time when, again with the help of technology, more and more female voices are killed even before they are silenced. Given the current scenario, this plain box of diverse offerings make us slow down, think, and, possibly, care about the issues.

Womanifesto 2003 was funded by the Bangkok regional office of The Rockefeller Foundation, and organised by Preenun Nana and Varsha Nair. 'Procreation/Postcreation' is a limited edition. To order a copy, contact the organisers at: info@womanifesto.com Website: www.womanifesto.com

Womanifesto is a bi-annual project focusing on the work of woman artists from around the world. It has developed steadily since its first event in 1995, and has gained international recognition. Through various activities, including art exhibitions, workshops and seminars, Womanifesto links participating artists, and encourages interaction within urban and rural communities. Womanifesto 2003 was an art publication project in which eighty-eight individuals from different parts of the world participated. It also involved art performances and video screenings.

Lessons from Looting: The Place of Museums in Iraq

Yasser Tabbaa

Early trepidation at the potential destruction of Iraqi archaeological sites has long given way to anger and profound sadness about the looting and sacking of Iraqi museums and libraries. The unexpected scale and intensity of the looting has produced various reactions, initially dominated by blame and recrimination of the United States' mishandling of the post-war situation but is now focused on ameliorating the damage by tracking down stolen antiquities and controlling their traffic across international borders.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has just finalized a Red List of Iraqi Antiquities at Risk to be distributed to all relevant border crossings. While almost everyone agrees that the US – the authority legally responsible for maintaining law and order in Iraq – was woefully negligent in protecting Iraqi national treasures, very few have attempted to understand why some Iraqis looted their own cultural institutions. This is a difficult and still quite unpopular line of questioning. Over three days of meetings in Lyon, France with INTERPOL and ICOM officers, the question was hardly discussed, only muttered in passing with total incomprehension and a measure of disdain.

As an Arab-American, a frequent visitor to Iraq and an art historian, I am especially troubled by this question: why did some Iraqis take advantage of the breakdown of order to loot and even sack their own museums, libraries, and universities? Rather than fixing blame, in this essay I would like to use my knowledge of Iraqi history, museums, and institutions of culture to address a question that may haunt us for a long time, in Iraq and in other countries that may face similar upheavals in the future. Silence on this matter, I think, is dangerous.

While some might attribute Iraq's current state of lawlessness and disregard for historical patrimony to underdevelopment, my long-term association with the country tells me otherwise. Until quite recently, when wars and sanctions took their inevitable toll, Iraq was ahead of most of the Arab world in cultural matters, including archaeology, museology, art, architecture, and music.

So what may have led to this tragic situation? First, we now know that the recent looting of Iraqi museums was in some respects the sad culmination of a process that had already gained considerable momentum in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. There are confirmed reports, in the most recent issue of *Smithsonian*, for example, of extensive illegal excavations in such Sumerian and Babylonian sites as Uruk, Ur, Isin, and Larsa, digs often conducted by underworld groups under the protection of armed men. The current efforts of ICOM, the British Museum, and the College Art Association to control the trade in Iraqi antiquities are equally directed at the looting of Iraqi museums and the more intractable problems of illicit excavations and the illegal art trade.

Second, whereas cultural heritage has often been co-opted for nationalist purposes, Baathist Iraq turned it into an instrument for the aggrandizement of the party and especially of Saddam himself. By appropriating the antiquity of the land.

Saddam linked himself with Assyrian, Babylonian, and Abbasid rulers, substituting his humble origins with false genealogies. Bricks used in his megalomaniacal restoration of Babylon are stamped with his name, and a large inscription states that the city was begun by Nebuchanezzar and completed by Saddam. Close identification with a single ruler can easily backfire once the ruler is removed.

The third factor that seems to have contributed to the looting of museums has to do with their origins under colonial rule and their persisting state of alienation in Iraq and other Arab countries. Most Arab museums still operate within an outmoded orientalist framework, displaying artefacts with little regard for local general audience or even specialists. My Danish colleague, Ingolf Thuesen,

who conducted a survey of visitors to a regional museum in Hama, Syria, noted that the museum was primarily visited by foreign tourist and government officials and rarely by the adult Syrian population. Interestingly, precisely this museum suffered severe damage from looting in the aftermath of the 1982 bombardment of the city. By and large seen as symbols of the government, signs of privilege, and as 'foreign' institutions, one can understand why some Iraqis were willing to loot their museums and cultural institutions.

The Laws of Antiquities governing the excavation, possession, and transaction of antiquities in Iraq and other Arab countries seem to foster this rupture between society and artistic culture, in two main ways. First, the overly stringent policies in these laws virtually ignore the existence of an art market or the age-old desire of some people, Iraqis included, to collect ancient objects. Whereas such policies prescribe an ideal situation, in reality they have contributed to the proliferation of an illegal art market. Second, by defining a protected cultural artefact as 200 years or older, these laws valorise the ancient over the more recent and cheapen the still palpable memory of the population.

Finally, I agree that a few well-placed tanks in front of Iraqi museums and libraries would have prevented or at least minimized their looting. But in the end such security measures, whether by US or Iraqi forces, only serve to deepen the rupture and further disengage culture from the population. Rather, I would like us to look a little more proactively towards a future when cultural institutions are not only better protected but also better integrated within their own societies. It is time, I think, to turn alienation into outreach, to develop the public and educational components of these museums, following the example of European and especially American museums. Once Iraqis feel included in their own cultural patrimony, I suspect they will have second thoughts before looting it.

IIAS #31

Outcry over Pagan Viewing Tower

The construction of a 60-metre-tall viewing tower on the plains of Pagan amidst its many temples is causing great controversy in **Burma**.

Pagan – the ancient capital of Burma – has 2,237 temples and pagodas dating from between the 11th and 13th centuries, and is one of the country's most prominent sites of cultural heritage. The ruling military junta has already angered archaeologists with an insensitive and inaccurate renovation and reconstruction programme, **applying modern building materials to precious thousand-year-old monuments**.

Now, a viewing tower – complete with a restaurant, garden, a golf course and an access road that leads across the site – will tarnish this cultural landscape when completed next year, observers believed. The junta defends the scheme, pointing out that these ancient monuments are being slowly eroded by the thousands of feet of careless visitors. This has not impressed Unesco, who have already heavily criticised the venture, and may yet grant the site World Heritage status, thus delaying, or even cancelling the funding of the project. “It is a very big mistake,” said Richard Engelhardt, Unesco's Bangkok-based regional adviser for culture. He branded the viewing tower as **“a big eyesore.”**

Buddhism flourished in the reign of King Anurudh (or Anawrata) (1044-1077 CE) who encouraged a major building programme, culminating two hundred years later with the construction of more than 4,400 pagodas and 3,000 other religious monuments. Buddhist architectural features, including large domes, “corn-cob” spires and terraced pyramids, can still be found at Pagan today. However, the **16-storey viewing tower**, in the southeastern corner of Pagan – described as cylindrical, exuding a “traditional architectural style” - will stand taller than most of

the temples, and obstruct the “ancient beauty” despite claims to the contrary. Already, a tall crane now dominates the skyline.

Many commented that this is a further blight on the country by its ruling junta, long criticised for its suppression of democracy and human rights. It is a desperate measure, considering that sanctions and boycotts have dwindled the tourism sector to only 75,000 foreign visitors per year.

The Golden Age of Pagan was abruptly ended in 1287 by the invading hordes of Kublai Khan. Nine hundred years later, it seems that Burma's rich heritage is on the verge of a threat even greater than the Mongols.

7th Century Citadel discovered in Hanoi, Vietnam

An ancient citadel in central Hanoi dated to the 7th century CE, including foundations for an 11th century royal palace and over 3 million artefacts, has become **Vietnam's most important archaeological find**.

These foundations appear to be the largest in Vietnamese history. They measure 62 metres in length by 27 metres in width. Initial indications suggest that this was the west sector of the **“Thang Long”** citadel, built in the early 11th century by King Ly Cong Uan, otherwise known by his posthumous name of Ly Thai To (1009-1028), in his move away from the old Dai Viet capital of Hoa Lu.

In addition to lotus-shaped stone wall foundations, a sophisticated drainage system was revealed, along with a 2.5 metre deep well that is still able to hold water. The extensive work carried out this past year has also uncovered **evidence of lavish pavilions and bases for mighty pillars**.

In November 2003, it was announced that a **considerable and diverse number of artefacts**

had been unearthed. Over 3 million bronze, gold, porcelain and ceramic items from the Ly, Tran, Le and Nguyen dynasties and also from the Tang dynasty of China have been recorded, with the earliest dating to the seventh century CE.

This sheer quantity of artefacts is in very good condition. The head of a phoenix, dragons on leaf-shaped terracotta roof tiles, phoenix statues and ceramic bowls glazed with flowers and other astonishing designs were among the items already on display to the world media. Dragon and unicorn motifs were common throughout the many artefacts. Legend tells how Ly Cong Uan witnessed "a dragon ascending to the clouds," inspiring him to name the new citadel: "Thang Long." This may account for the prevalence of artefacts with dragon designs amongst the finds.

While attention has centred on the maximum age of the ruins, nine inhumations dating to later periods were found. Among these, the remains of two children aged 8-9 years dating to the Ly dynasty (1009-1225 CE) were unearthed near the palace's main foundation pillar. These particular burials may be human sacrifices – an act not uncommon to this region. The skeleton of a woman from the 19th century with three bowls placed around her head was another notable find. **Traces of a darker episode in Vietnamese history came to light.** Of four bodies found in one grave, at least one had had his hands tied behind his back. Fragments of bullets were also found amongst these remains estimated to date from the 18th or 19th centuries CE.

While it is intriguing to learn that the Vietnamese archaeologists have pinned an early date (the 7th century) to the citadel, there are engraved tiles belonging to the palace complex dating it precisely to the 11th century Ly dynasty. This may suggest that the site was already of considerable size or social complexity, up to four

hundred years at least, before Ly Cong Uan moved his capital here. Alternatively, the artefacts predating the palace may be the plunder of the raiding Ly kings.

There has **never been a richer find in Vietnamese archaeology** than this intriguing hoard. Excavation work is scheduled to finish in mid-2004, when it is expected that many more stunning artefacts will have been uncovered.

During 2003, excavations gradually revealed the 11th century citadel to have been a massive complex. It was discovered only because it had been chosen as the proposed site for a new parliament building. Consequently, all construction plans halted in December 2002 to let the archaeologists in.

The excavators have turned to Unesco for financial and technical assistance. The Vietnamese government stated that it needed extra money to **turn the site into an open-air museum.** A Unesco team has visited the site and the World Bank has stepped in to lend its help.

The Vietnamese Ministry of Culture hopes that the site - **already recognised as a potential major cultural tourism site** - would greatly enhance knowledge of the country's ancient past.

Museum in Airport

Athen's international airport inaugurated a museum, showing ancient artefacts that were found during construction of the airport site, twenty-seven kilometres south of the capital. Greece's Culture Minister Evangelos Venizelos and Transport Minister Christos Verelis officially opened the museum in July. On display were a hundred and seventy-two items, including amphoras, tools, engravings and bas-relief sculptures. It was reported that the artefacts were part of the history of the Spata region, a traditionally agricultural area, and dated between the Neolithic to the Byzantine era. The government of Greece, which is hosting the 2004 Olympic Games, has

been criticized because construction at the site has destroyed several significant archaeological sites. With the opening of the small museum within the new international airport, the government aspired to demonstrate its efforts in **reconciling economic development with the country's heritage preservation.**

The Art of Copying in Vietnam

A recent *Reuters* report indicated that although “years of poverty and isolation from the West led many in communist Vietnamese to view art as a bourgeois extravagance”, the situation has changed now. **Buying and owning art works have become popular**, especially for an expanding middle-class that is more interested now in decorative furnishings. While Vietnamese art is being exhibited in galleries and private collections of major cities, particularly in the West, it is ironically **reproductions of works by Western artists that are the rage** in contemporary Vietnam. An increasing number of studios and shops are present in large Vietnamese cities today, tapping into the trend in art collections by the well-to-do. Business in the sale of reproductions of masterpieces, such as Renoir's, Rembrandt's, Picasso's and others, is thriving. Demand can be so intense that in one studio, “six workers churn out four hundred pieces a year with about half of them sold locally and the rest exported.” Great masters are admired in Vietnam, and its local painters are gaining a **reputation in doing a better job at copying Western arts than their counterparts in Asia.** “Modern Vietnamese painting started in the 1920s, when the French colonial government established Ecole des Beaux-Arts de l'Indochine (Indochina School of Fine Arts). It trained a generation of painters from across French Indochina. The French influence explains why **Vietnamese art appeals to Western eyes** and the special skills of the painters,” the report added.

Palaeontology for a career, anyone?

A news report in *Bangkok Post* on 25 November 2003 said that there was a serious need to more than double the number of palaeontologists in Thailand. At present, there is **only one specialist** in the field, it said. When you consider the amount of prehistoric fossils discovered in Thailand, this would seem to be a dire situation. Mahasarakham University intends to remedy it by endeavouring to produce fossil experts. Courses would be offered at its faculty of science, it was reported, making it the first Thai university to turn out palaeontologists at the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate levels.

Undergraduate courses for two years, focusing only on fundamental knowledge of fossils and their physical appearance, are currently conducted with an annual enrolment of about twenty students. A **postgraduate palaeontology school** opened this year, and five students are undergoing it, which entails excavation and field research. Doctorate degrees are scheduled for 2005.

Prehistoric fossils have been discovered in Thailand, including the oldest dinosaur herbivores, sauropods, which existed 210 million years ago, and the smallest dinosaur egg - the size of a house lizard egg. Fossils of some sixteen species have also been uncovered, five of which have not been found anywhere else before.

Dr Voravudh Sutheethorn of the Mineral Resources Department, holds the distinction of being the only palaeontologist in the country. Shocking fact?

There are more geologists; they, however, work in only **analysing layers of soil and not fossils.** It is believed that the lack of local fossil experts has been a major obstacle to research and the systematic conservation of discovered fossils. **At most sites of discovery, there were no qualified expert present to take charge.** Villagers sold remains of dinosaurs, while some of these artefacts were made into amulets.

Cream of the Crop



Premsini Ratanasopha, known by most as Cream, assumes several roles in her young life, as an only child-daughter, a student, an actress, a model, and an attractive star in the public eye. She is also a university student in performing arts, and has performed in several theatre plays.



She is known most for her character, Fon, in the 2001 movie, 'Bangkok Dangerous' which is about a confused deaf-mute Thai hit man who loses his life while avenging for the murder of his mentor.

While the film may be perceived as a narrow glimpse into Big Bad Bangkok and life in its subterranean, Cream (as Fon) stands out as a sweet, angelic pharmacy assistant who provides the few moments of kindness, love and sympathy for another human being, in a largely violent and sinister story.

Still completing her 4th year performing arts at the Srinakarin University, Bangkok, Cream's current activities also include performing in a TV series entitled 'Boon' (doing good, doing right), doing magazine shoots and fashion shows. She had just finished the film 'Siwui' (about a murder committed by a Chinese in Thailand) in which she played the character of a journalist searching for the killer of her sister.

How does she juggle school and a heavy professional schedule of acting and modeling? Having the support of her parents, and people around her is vital.

“For TV shooting, I may be required to work for 3-4 days a week. I get permission to be absent from classes; my teachers are supportive of what I do, and that helps to add a sense of relief from the stress. I ask my classmates to assist me by filling me in on what I have missed.”

Presently, Cream, with the delicate lips and fair-complexioned skin fit for a soap commercial, is not engaged in any



commitment. She has been looking forward to this.

“I want to relax, and do something that I’ve always wanted to do, such as learning to ride horses, play tennis. When I was young, I saw a local actress on TV, and I thought ‘oh, she’s young and beautiful!’ – she was riding a horse. I wanted to be like her.”

Aware that she may be required for roles that call for very different abilities and versatility, she is serious about her studying, which includes acting and directing at the university. She also understands that a variety of experiences are important in developing a rounded personality.

“I think an actress or a performing artist should have knowledge and skills in many areas,” she says.

Embarked on a career in acting, Cream has been interested in performing ever since she won a modeling contract when she was in high school. “I had never thought about acting until a friend persuaded me to do modeling, and accompanied me to the auditions. I got lucky and was chosen.” After that experience, she decided to enroll in the university for performing arts studies. “Before, I had wanted to do Business Studies. I used to be in ABAC (a business school). Importantly, I think I’m not suitable for business; the first thing is I don’t like mathematics – I hate it very much!” Cream sweeps back her long straight charcoal-black hair, and continues “As a child, I had never thought that I would one day be an actress.

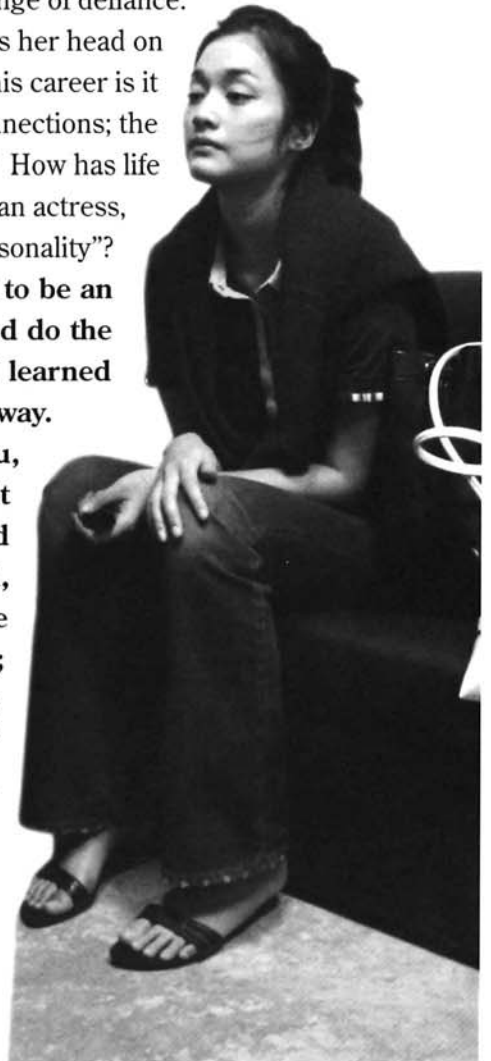
My parents didn't like the profession too, but now they accept what I do – they never force me. I wanted to be an air hostess but not a star or actress. Never.” She says it is important that her parents - her father is a social worker, and mother works in a bank – understands her, and not be swayed by the negative publicity that quite often happens in the entertainment industry. It becomes obvious that Cream is a performing artist who is devoted to excelling in her ability to perform; she also feels a responsibility to those who like her acting, and she vows to continue performing, as long as they wish to see her do so. In the glitzy world of entertainment, it is easy to be blinded by the lights and lose perspective. Cream has come to realize this. “The entertainment media can be bad news. I was badly misunderstood because of reports that I had been going to parties, and behaved badly in public. I was so sad because the reports were not true at all; I could not do any thing because I was only an actress, and reports are made by reporters, not actresses,” she said with a tinge of defiance.

She, however, keeps her head on her shoulders. “The good thing about this career is it allows me to gain experiences and connections; the bad thing is I lose my own personality.” How has life changed for her since becoming an actress, resulting in the “loss of personality”?

Cream elaborates on it: **“I wanted to be an actress but also the girl as I am and do the things I want to do, but I learned that it cannot be this way.**

The public eye is very much on you, and in many instances you have to fit into certain ideas and its expectations, i.e. how a girl, actress and student should behave and hold herself. I like acting; it makes me happy, so I'm willing to compromise.”

The slim and tall Bangkok-born 22-year-old lass, looking more like a





catwalking covergirl than a university student, describes how she sees her own personality. She notes that she is a self-confident person, and this confidence can seem difficult to accept in a society that expects girls to be demure, graceful and submissive. Once you have established a certain image in the entertainment industry, it takes a lot to change that perception.

Giving an example, she says, "Ever since making the movie 'Bangkok Dangerous', [in which I was] a sweet, girl-next-door character who got mixed up with a deaf-and mute hired assassin, I have been offered the same kind of gentle, proper woman roles ... again and again. I don't like that; I want to change and act in different roles."

In the public perception, Cream is expected to be angelic and feminine. "It is frustrating to suppress yourself to suit public perceptions, to have to feel as if you're not free to be yourself."

After a long silent pause of pensive contemplation, Cream blurted her description of the other aspects of herself: "I think self-centred ..." This is followed by a spontaneous laughter which suggests that she knows she's admitting it as an aspect of herself which is probably not the best, but that she's honest and is aware that this is how she is. She laughs as if she has succumbed to a sensual pleasure that contains an element of guilt. Does she mean selfish? "No, no ... self-centred, not selfish." Cream is still laughing as if she had performed a prank, and adds "I always think about myself and my interests but I am generous with others." Then, hastening to confide in a little secret, she excitedly says "When I was eight years old, I used to tell my parents that I did not want a brother or sister, because ... I was afraid my parents would love me less. She starts laughing again.

Was she lonely as a single child? "No, I was not lonely; I liked it as an only child. Mm ... yes!"

“Also, positive thinking!” she shrieks, “I’m a person who thinks positively about the world, about life.” And she certainly appears so, as she attends to the questions put to her with a feisty zest, rarely sounding negative no matter what the matter is. And when it comes to the subject of traveling, she was even more enthusiastic. “I lovvvvee traveling!!!” she declared, “I like to experience different cultures”. Cream had just recently been to Nepal where she did a shoot for a magazine. Where does her optimism comes from, and who are the biggest influences in her life? “Both my parents,” the irresistibly spirited actress/model answers without hesitation. What are Cream’s most attractive and unattractive features in her own view? “Simplicity. I like to be simple. That is perhaps my attractive feature. For the unattractive feature, **“er ... I am too blunt. When I don’t like something, I speak out. Unfairness, for example, rarely escapes my comments when it occurs.”** And what would she like to change about herself?

“I work a lot, and think about work too much, too seriously. I want everybody to like my work, to like me. It is not about wanting to be popular. I entered this line of work because I like it. Popularity is only a fringe benefit.”

What does Cream do for leisure? “I stay home, sleep and relax. I like reading. Kahlil Gibran’s ‘The prophet’ is my favourite. It has been helpful whenever I feel I need advice with some difficulties. I read and play tennis.

Fitness gyms are boring to me. I have three dogs, my pets at home - I’m afraid of cats ... when I was young, cats at a temple jumped and scratch me – and I love travelling, so much! I would like to experience different cultures.”

Cream reveals that she actually doesn’t think that she has talent. For example, she likes singing, but feels that she will be a disaster in a musical theatre. Karaoke would be fine, she jokes. For the young celebrity and student, however, abundant promises lie ahead of her, and there should be no shortage of offers for her to become one of her generation’s top performing artistes.



THERE
BEFORE
YOU

ANGKOR OBSERVED



DAWN ROONEY



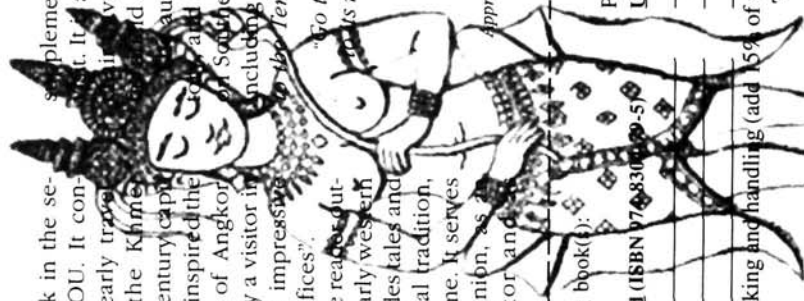
ORCHID GUIDES

ANGKOR OBSERVED

by DAWN ROONEY

This is the second book in the series **THERE BEFORE YOU**. It consists of a selection of early travellers' impressions of the Khmer empire's ancient, 12th century capital and the legends that inspired the majestic stone temples of Angkor which were described by a visitor in the 1920s as "the most impressive sight in the world of edifices".

The work brings to the reader an out-of-print impression of early western travellers, and also includes tales and legends based on an oral tradition, published for the first time. It serves as a guide-book companion, as an introduction to Angkor and



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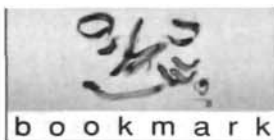
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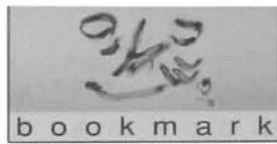
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