

# EXHIBITIONS *US & Americas*

## From Cambodia to New York

*A season of art from the Southeast Asian nation will examine old wounds and build new bridges*

### NATIONAL SURVEY

**New York.** President Obama's lightning visit to Cambodia last year gave him just enough time to reprimand Prime Minister Hun Sen for his dismal human rights record, but the President was silent about what many see as America's own human-rights offence: the bombing of Cambodia during the 1970s.

In April, America will be reminded of this stain on its own record when the artist Leang Seckon brings *Parachute Flower Skirt*, 2013, to New York's Bronx Museum as part of "Season of Cambodia", a city-wide festival of all the Cambodian arts, produced by CLA (Cambodian Living Arts), a Phnom Penh-based non-governmental organisation founded in 1998.

Part of the installation is a parachute dropped into Leang's village. As a pacifist statement, the artist has adorned this ominous relic with flowers and a "train" of sarongs donated by village elders.

Taking place over seven weeks in leading New York institutions from the Asia Society to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, "Season of Cambodia" comes at a critical moment in the country's artistic revival and only a generation after the Khmer Rouge set out to eliminate all traces of culture.

The festival's visual arts component is curated by Leeza Ahmady of Ahmady



**Leang Seckon's work featuring an American parachute that fell to ground in Cambodia as it appeared at the Shanghai Biennale**

Arts and Asian Contemporary Art Week and Erin Gleeson, founder of Sa Sa Bassac gallery in Phnom Penh. The two have organised two-month residencies for ten of the country's most enterprising artists, complemented by a series of public events and conversations between those most involved in shaping Cambodia's contemporary art scene.

Interest in Cambodia's art has been growing for at least a decade. Following

a successful solo show at Documenta last year, sculptor Sopheap Pich's contribution to the festival will be "Cambodian Rattan" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vandy Rattana's "Bomb Ponds" at the Asia Society Museum presents photographic documentation of further Vietnam War era damage, while "Contemporary Cambodian Art: a Historical Inquiry" attracts leading scholars, curators and artists to Cornell

University's Art, Architecture, and Planning Center.

Curated by Lyno Vuth, "Open Studios" at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Building 110 on Governors Island will feature the work of artists Lim Sokchanlina, Amy Lee Sanford, Thar Sok, Svay Sareth and Vandy Rattana.

**Robert Turnbull**

• *Season of Cambodia*, various venues, New York, until 16 June