

apexart

2013-14 Franchise Proposal by
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Franchise location: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

SUBMISSION:

On the Streets

This exhibition looks at the process of modernization in Southeast Asia through the phenomenon of street vendors.

In the age of global capitalism, cities and towns in Southeast Asia are undergoing rapid urbanization. Countries throughout the region have joined international financial and political entities such as World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations. For these countries' governments, that process entails modernization along a perceived Western standard of order and cleanliness.

Street vending is an integral part of the local economies and cultures of all Southeast Asian countries, and enables entrepreneurs with little capital to support themselves and their families. Across the region, however, national and local governments have passed policies that forbid street vendors to operate in popular tourist areas. According to these policies, street vendors and their wares are unsightly, add to street congestion, occupy valuable sidewalk real estate, and pose a harassing presence for tourists. While local and international policymakers and investors espouse the virtues of modernization as economic empowerment for local communities, it is the working class who must bear the disproportionate costs.

This project invites a total of six artists from the region and around the world to create projects inspired by the street vending culture in their specific locales. After that first leg of the project, they will meet in Phnom Penh to work in pairs to collaborate on a project with the local street vendors there. There will be exhibitions and talks indoors and outdoors for them to share their projects with the local community. The Phnom Penh-based parts of this project will be done in collaboration with Java Gallery and the artist-run collective Stiev Selapak, which will help to connect the international artists with local resources and help coordinate collaborations and offer exhibition spaces.

The project will involve artists known for making labor-intensive work and for using their bodies as a site for art.