

Bristol Community College Art Gallery to open *Rooted in Memory*, featuring works by Yary Livan, Pete Pin, Amy Lee Sanford, LinDa Saphan and Savonnara Sok on September 5, 2019

The Bristol Community College Art Gallery reopens on Thursday, September 5, 2019 with the exhibition *Rooted in Memory*, featuring the work of Yary Livan, Pete Pin, Amy Lee Sanford, LinDa Saphan and Savonnara Sok. The opening reception takes place on Thursday, September 5, from 6-8 p.m. The exhibition will run through Friday, October 11, 2019. Admission is free and open to the public

The title, *Rooted in Memory*, encompasses ideas about exile, displacement and loss. It also an acknowledgement of the persistence of cultural identity and the touchstones that exist beyond geographical boundaries.

The work in this exhibition connects to a number of ideas:

How do we honor our history when we no longer have access to the geography in which our familial roots were planted?

What rituals do we use to heal from trauma?

What does it mean to be stateless?

What does it mean to be a survivor?

What does it mean to be a refugee in a new country?

How do we define home?

In addition to reception refreshments, there will be a variety of traditional Cambodian delicacies to sample. The *Mass Apsara Dance Group* will also perform a *Blessing Dance* and a *Chicken Dance* beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The exhibition is the first curatorial effort by staff assistant Rathary Kranh. Rathary is a graduate of Bristol's Graphic Design transfer program and has been working with the gallery for more than a decade. She designed and maintains the gallery's website and oversees the design of promotional and interpretive materials for each exhibition. Rathary also assists with work-study interns each year to introduce them to the professional practice of design.

Yary Livan is a ceramist and artist who currently lives and works in Lowell, Massachusetts. He is one of only three Cambodian master ceramists known to have survived the Khmer Rouge genocide of 1975. Primary targets of the Pol Pot regime were artists, writers, and intellectuals. Mr. Livan managed to survive by applying the clay and kiln-building skills he had learned as a student to manufacture roof tiles. He was granted political asylum in 2002.

His work and teaching focus on traditional Khmer ceramic forms and ornament. He has been honored as a NEA National Heritage Fellow, the highest honor the US Government bestows for folk and traditional arts. He teaches at the Western Avenue Studios in Lowell.

Pete Pin was born in the Khao-I-Dang refugee camp on the border of Cambodia and Thailand in 1982 and was raised as a refugee in California. His photo-based work explores themes of memory, migration, and inter-generational trauma among the Cambodian American community across the United States and among his own family in the U.S. and Cambodia. Previously a high school drop-out, Pin is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, where he did Honors and was awarded the Louis and Charles Outstanding Honors Thesis Award, and the International Center of Photography. He received fellowships and grants from the Magnum Foundation and Open Society Foundations Photography Project, among others, and has been featured in the New York Times, TIME Magazine, NPR, and VICE, among others.

Amy Lee Sanford is a sculptor whose work investigates the intersection of trauma and healing, the healing processes of repetition, recollection and repair, and the defragmentation of history. Born in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and raised in the United States, the artist holds a degree from Brown University in the Visual Arts. Sanford has been in numerous exhibitions internationally, most recently *Break, Bind and Rebuild* (Kuala Lumpur, 2018), *Unauthorized Medium* (Amsterdam, 2018), *Memory | Commitment | Aspiration* (Arkansas, 2018), *Cinerama: Art and the Moving Image* (Singapore, 2017-18).

LinDa Saphan was born in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Fleeing the Khmer Rouge regime, she lived for more than two decades in Canada and France. In 2005, Saphan co-founded Visual Arts Open in Phnom Penh and she established the “Selapak Neri” program in 2006, providing workshops, networking opportunities, and an exhibition space for emerging artists. As a visual artist, Dr. Saphan's work has been included in several collective exhibitions throughout Cambodia, Myanmar, Kenya, Hungary, Singapore, France, and the US. Saphan earned a PhD in Sociology from the Sorbonne in 2007. Saphan is also an associate producer and head researcher for the documentary film directed by John Pirozzi *Don't Think I've Forgotten: Cambodia Lost Rock and Roll* released in 2014. The film tracks the twist and turns of the political turmoil of Cambodia's modern history through the lens of rock and roll. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

Born in Long Beach, California, where his Cambodian parents came to escape the Khmer Rouge genocide, artist **Savonnara Alexander Sok** says one of his early and enduring influences was his grandfather, a monk at the local temple. When he was 12, Sok's family moved to Omaha, Nebraska, and it was there that he began to develop and explore art-making. Although he studied Graphic Design at the University of Nebraska, his work explores the role of spirituality in his life and influences such as street or urban art. He incorporates found materials and his work exudes exuberance. The themes most important to him are life, death and love.

He currently lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island.

For more information please call 774.357.2439 or visit <http://www.bristolcc.edu/gallery/>.

About Bristol Community College

Bristol Community College is a leading resource for education and workforce development in Southeastern Massachusetts. Bristol has locations in Fall River, Attleboro, New Bedford, and Taunton, along with flexible online offerings that lead to an associate degree, a career ready certificate, or the ability to seamlessly transfer to baccalaureate colleges throughout the state and country. The college's Center for Workforce and Community Education provides customized training for businesses and the community including healthcare, workforce and sustainable initiatives, and corporate services. The Bristol Community College Foundation, a nonprofit organization utilizing community donations and partnerships, supports the college's mission to meet the lifelong educational needs of the community. For more information, [visit bristolcc.edu](http://bristolcc.edu).