

EuroSEAS panel proposal

Title: Stagecraft and Representation of Cambodian Intangible Heritage

Convener: Stéphanie Khoury (Tufts University, USA)

Description and explanation of format:

This panel gathers a selection of the contributors of a book that is currently in preparation and that the convener is co-editing. The 4 presenters each present original research that brings together complementary facets of Cambodian performing arts and cultural representations. In doing so, presenters and the convener introduce the original theoretical framework developed in this edited volume. Here, the panel format seems the most appropriate as we aim to present some of the specific case-studies that feed the reflexive approach to Cambodia's intangible heritage we are collectively developing.

Description of the single session panel:

Over the last few decades, Cambodian performing arts have been at the forefront of international initiatives sponsoring the restoration of arts as a symbol of cultural resilience in the aftermath of the 1970's war and genocide. In the meantime, artists, art associations, educational, and administrative institutions in Cambodia and in the diaspora concentrate their efforts on promoting the traditional performing arts as heritage while also building on them to set a scene for Cambodian contemporary arts and negotiate national and cultural identities. In this context, how are ideas of culture and intangible heritage shaped? By whom and for whom? Through which processes? Under what constraints? Multiple actors, forms of power, and agencies contribute to the staging of Cambodian performing arts. In this panel, contributors address the legacy of colonialism and the challenge of definition of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia as world heritage (Lucie Labbé, CASE, France); the redefinition of patronages and modes of representation of the rural classical all-male drama, *lakhon khol*, in relation to social and political contexts (Stéphanie Khoury, Tufts University, USA); the articulation of tradition and modernity in televisual and online performances of wedding music and popular *Bassac* theatre (Francesca Billeri, La Sapienza, Italy); and the political mediation of heritage-related narratives through the memorialization of dissident poet and lyricist Kong Bunchhoeun (Matthew Trew, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA). Through these concrete examples, this panel aims to illustrate and discuss some of the complex intersecting factors that shapes intangible heritage in Cambodia today.