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Centre to open in Cambodia

Thirty years after the Khmer Rouge genocide, remembering and reflecting is essential so that Cambodian society can envision the future with serenity. The testimony of image and sounds is a precious tool that can help new generations reconnect with their culture and their history. Conserving the traces, preserving the milestones of the past and fighting against forgetfulness are today's priorities. But memory is also a living thing, and is built from day to day, from the inside.

Introduction of the Audiovisual Resource Centre project

Two non-profit associations – the Association for the Assistance of Audiovisual Development in Cambodia (AADAC, based in Paris) and the Association for the Research, Production and Archiving of Audiovisual documents (ARPAA, based in Phnom Penh) – are the main **forces** that endeavour to create the Audiovisual Resource Centre in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The project was developed on the initiative of the renowned filmmaker, Rithy Panh who directed the documentary *S21, the Khmer Rouge Killing Machine*. It will focus on two activities: the creation of a "space dedicated to memory" and a training program for upbringing audiovisual professionals, especially documentary-makers.

The public will have access to the area dedicated to memory, which will provide it with a wide collection of films, sounds documents and stills. All these documents will be digitalized, stored on hard disks, classified by topics (historical periods, art, archaeology, ethnology, popular culture, etc.), and searchable through a database with notices in three languages: Khmer, French and English. AADAC is collecting and searching potential materials with the support of National Audiovisual Institute (INA, France) and Gaumont Pathé Archives, among others. Different partnerships are planned, for example, with the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the INALCO (Oriental language school in Paris) in order to subtitle in Khmer some audiovisual documents, the duration of which will be 750 hours. The aims of the Centre are, firstly, to provide the country with the archives of its past that have been disseminated throughout the world, but often are unavailable, and secondly, to rediscover the traces of the culture, heritage and identity of the Khmer people. The Centre also wants to encourage meetings and debates.

The other mission of the Centre is the creation of an audiovisual study program that will focus on documentary-making. Open to a dozen of students, selected according to their motivation and presentation of a proposal for a documentary project, the class will have theoretical courses and practical workshops. Through the workshops, students will be able to train themselves with digital camera and virtual editing stations, and eventually, complete the

creation of a film at the end of the course. These films will be added to the Centre's archives. The educational staff will consist of a Cambodian team and foreign contributors, and the Centre will establish partnerships with other audiovisual professional training institutes. Meetings with filmmakers from other Asian countries are also planned.

The Centre will be inaugurated in April 2006 in a building provided by the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, and the training program will welcome its first students in October in the same year.

The project is receiving support from the Cambodian and French Governments and UNESCO, as well as private partners.


Once famous for its filmmaker King, Cambodia's film industry is now almost inexistent. Although the Kingdom has hosted an impressive number of foreign filmmakers in the last five years, it has not brought about much benefit to the local situation. Indeed, the creation of the Audiovisual Resource Centre is an efficient first step, and creative documentaries can be expected in the years to come.

by *Jérémy Segay*

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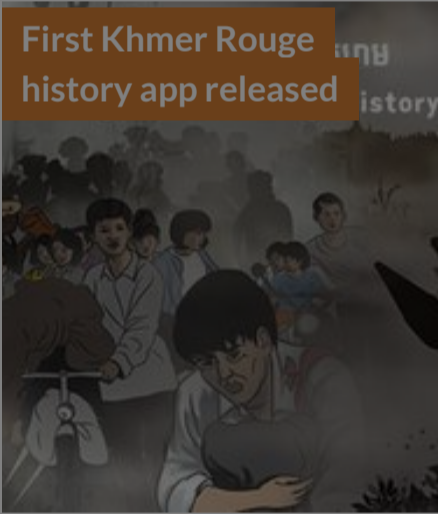
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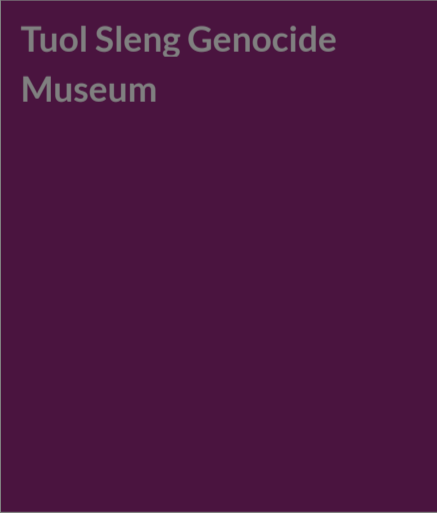
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