

Nge Lay

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

In Myanmar, Grade 1 is a monumental point in one's life as it represents an individual's first foray into formal education. From this entry point, a fundamental right to life-long learning, the option of social mobility and an expansion of one's worldview begins. However, our education system has been in a difficult situation since the coup of General Nay Win in 1962, which followed with the rule of the military government and then the new government of today.

In our everyday life, we are used to hearing the sheer differences and discrimination between urban and rural education. In the cities, the 5 year old kids of rich families receive formal education systematically at the international school by using computers as teaching aids, and they get to learn other languages as well. Meanwhile, in rural areas, it's really hard for a family to send their 5 year old kids to school. They can't even afford to buy a pair of new slippers for their kids. Worst of all, in some remote regions and war-torn areas, the kids find it harder to stay alive than to go to school.

It is central to the processes of this work that it was collaborated and performed with Thuye 'dan village school and another 7 village schools in Myanmar. School children are an integral part of dialogues and conversations concerning their ideas, hopes and aspirations for the future. The school children were also encouraged to contribute personal belongings to the project. Each item is highly personal and individualistic, reflecting a child's personal taste, character and preference.

This also highlights a state of apathy, disjunction and a certain distance which pervades the social realities of the country despite recent political and economic reform. I created photographs and video clips and made 26 life-sized wooden sculptures, which were made from wood that was already cut for use as firewood. The five year old school children collaborated with a village craft man for this.

Artist Biography

Nge Lay **Myanmar**

b. 1979, Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay division, Myanmar
Currently lives and works in Yangon, Myanmar

Nge Lay studied Fine Art painting at University of Culture, Yangon, 1999 - 2003 and has BA (Fine Art Painting) in 2003 and graduated from the Yangon East University with a Bachelor degree in economics in 2004. Went on to do Jewelry Design in 2004 - 2011. Interest in performance art, installation, sculpture and also interest in photography emerged in 2007 and started to create art work in 2007. Most of her works are reflection of her inner perception of the prevailing societies in Myanmar and also historical background and self-referential.

Participated in numerous group show and first solo show "The Relationship between the Great Nothing", at Youkobo Art Space, Tokyo, Japan, 2011. 30 finalist of the 2011 Sovereign Asia Art Prize, "Singapore Biennale 2013 If The World Changed". Women In - Between 1985- 2012, Asian Women Art Exhibition, Okinawa Prefecture Art Museum 27th Nov 2012 - 6th Jan 2013, Tochigi Prefecture Art Museum of Fine Arts 26th Jan- 24th March 2013. Mie Prefecture Art Museum 13th April - 9th June 2013; the 5th edition of the festival PhotoPhnompenh (PPP) 2012. Institut français du Cambodge. 8th - 13th December 2012. Phnom Penh. Cambodia; The 3rd Singapore International Photography Festival 5th Oct - 17th Nov 2012. ARTSCIENCE MUSEUM at Marina Bay Sands 10th Oct - 25th Nov 2012; Idols and Icons: New Photography from Southeast Asia and the Middle East, Yavuz Fine Art Gallery, Singapore, 2011; Angasana: Contemporary Southeast Asian Photography Takes Flight, 2902 Gallery, Singapore, 2011; The International ORANGE Photo Festival, Changsha, China, 2010; On/Off Myanmar Contemporary Art Event, The Almaz Collective Art Studio, Hanoi, Vietnam, 2010; Making History: How Southeast Asian Art Reconquers the Past to Conjure the Future, Jendela Gallery, Singapore, 2010; HISTORY, Alliance Francaise, Yangon, 2009; Magnetic Power: ASEAN-Korea Contemporary Photography, Seoul, Korea, 2009.

Co-organizer of "Thuye'dan Village Art Project". Thuye'dan Village, Pyay, Myanmar.