

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

New Southeast Asia Artist-in-Residency at WAM to forge greater understanding

Two emerging artists from Vietnam to work and study in Worcester for one month this summer

Worcester, MA—August 9, 2018—Two emerging artists from Vietnam will enjoy a month of artistic and professional development at the Worcester Art Museum as part of a new Southeast Asia Artist-in-Residency. From August 20 to September 21, 2018, artists Nguyễn Thế Sơn of Hanoi and Nguyễn Kim Tố Lan of Ho Chi Minh City will work in studio space provided by the Museum. In addition, they will do research, give talks, participate in workshops, and attend other local art events. The public will be invited to meet the artists in weekly, drop-in open studios. The residency will include participating in Worcester's StART on the Street event on September 16, 2018.

The artist residency program is organized in collaboration with the Indochina Arts Partnership and the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts. The program's objectives are threefold: to support emerging artists from Southeast Asia, where the infrastructure and institutional support for contemporary artists are scarce, or in some extreme cases nonexistent; to create meaningful connections between the community of artists, Southeast Asians, and the general public in Worcester with the art and culture of Southeast Asia; and to focus on the internationally diverse connections within Worcester and the vital global role an encyclopedic museum, such as the Worcester Art Museum, plays in its community.

"With this residency, we hope to create an exchange of knowledge between emerging artists who will be the next generation of leaders in the arts community in Southeast Asia and art organizations, institutions, and communities in the U.S.," said Vivian Li, WAM's associate curator of Asian art and global contemporary art, who is coordinating the residency program.

The Southeast Asia Artist-in-Residency is supported by the Worcester Arts Council, a local agency supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Additional in-kind support is provided by the three collaborating organizations, including the Worcester Art Museum, Indochina Arts Partnership, and the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts

About the artists:

Nguyễn Thế Sơn, who studied photography in Beijing, is a professor of fine arts in Hanoi. Fascinated by life on the streets, especially the ubiquitous, ever-toiling, low-wage earners who are so easily overlooked, Thế Sơn uses his photography to create large-scale, layered and sculptural dioramas that reflect his street experiences. He intends to do similar work once he arrives in Worcester. This trip is his first to the United States.

Nguyễn Kim Tố Lan is a multidisciplinary artist in Ho Chi Minh City. She helped found Sao La Collective, an independent art collective in the southern region of Vietnam. Community oriented, she and fellow artists have been working towards a multi-form "art" approach and creating more public engagement.

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

“While it is important for Southeast Asians here in Worcester to assimilate into American mainstream society, it is vital to also stay connected with our cultural roots,” said Anh Vu Sawyer, executive director of the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts. “Engaging with the visiting artists—sharing ideas, experiences, and perspectives—will bridge the new and old worlds and bring healing to many in our community.”

“Indochina Arts Partnership is honored to have the opportunity to collaborate with WAM on our residency program,” said Nhung Walsh, executive director and chief curator of the Indochina Arts Partnership. “We hope that WAM and the supporting communities will benefit from learning about the artists' artmaking process, their research, and their country's culture and history.”

Related events:

The following events will be held during the Southeast Asia Artist-in-Residency. The events are free and open to the public.

Open Studio

Sunday, September 2; Tuesday, September 11; Saturday, September 15; Wednesday, September 19, 12-2pm; Thursday, September 20, 5-7pm.

The public is invited to visit the artists in their studios, to observe their work, and engage in conversation.

Writers of the Cambodian Diaspora: Panel Discussion

Thursday, September 20, 6pm

Three Cambodian-born writers—Tararith Kho, Bunkong Tuon, and Chath pierSath—will read from their work and participate in a discussion moderated by Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, Professor of English and Asian/Asian American Studies and Associate Dean for Humanities and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the University of Connecticut. The writers will talk about their unique experiences as political émigrés or refugees and how these experiences inform their work. This program is co-organized with *Consequence Magazine* and the Center for Gender, Race, and Area Studies at Clark University.

Farewell Party

Friday, September 21, 5-10pm

The Sprinkler Factory, located at 38 Harlow St, Worcester in Worcester, hosts a social gathering in honor of the visiting artists.

About the Indochina Arts Partnership

Established in 1987 by David Thomas, a Vietnam veteran, the Indochina Arts Partnership (IAP) is an organization for art, cultural, and educational exchanges between the United States and Vietnam. Since its founding, the IAP has supported more than 70 artists and cultural representatives through our residency program. The organization's early success includes important exhibitions namely “As Seen from Both Sides” (1991), “Seven Pillars” (1994), and “An Ocean Apart” (1995), which introduced Vietnamese artists to the American audience for the first time after the war. Since 2016, IAP furthers the discussions of arts among artists in countries of Southeast Asia, creating cross-sectorial partnerships, and supports projects that promote cultural diversity.

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

About the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts

The Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts, Inc. (SEAC) was founded in 1999 to address the lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate support services for Southeast Asian immigrants and refugees in Central Massachusetts, which include Laotians, Cambodians, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Burmese, and Vietnamese. SEAC's mission is to help Southeast Asians in Central Massachusetts successfully integrate into mainstream society, thrive, and become contributing citizens while maintaining their unique cultural identity. SEAC provides assistance with more than 10,000 client visits annually, reaches 6,000 people at public events, and offers a robust cultural program to help strengthen the local Asian community and bring healing to displaced refugees and immigrants. In 2015, SEAC earned the Massachusetts Non-Profit Network Excellence Award for the small non-profit category.

About the Worcester Art Museum

Founded in 1896, the Worcester Art Museum's encyclopedic 38,000 piece collection covers 51 centuries of art. Highlights include the Medieval Chapter House, Renaissance Court, and Worcester Hunt Mosaic, as well as the recently integrated John Woodman Higgins Armory Collection of arms and armor. The Museum is internationally known for its collection of European and American art. It was the first in America to acquire paintings by Monet and Gauguin and one of the first to exhibit photography as fine art. As the first U.S. museum to focus on collaborating with local schools, it has been at the forefront of engaging audiences and giving them a meaningful and personal experience for over a century.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and every third Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$16 for adults, \$6 for children 4-17, \$14 for seniors 65+, and \$14 for college students with ID. Members and children under four are free. Museum parking is free on a first-come, first-served basis; street parking is also available. For more information, visit worcesterart.org.

For more information, please contact:

Julieane Frost, Senior Manager of Marketing, Communications
and Design

508-793-4373

JulieaneFrost@worcesterart.org