

ina's Belt and Road Initiative at ASEAN Summit | Cambodian, Vietnamese, Laotian PMs Meet over



S'ART Urban Art Festival Promotes Progress with the Knowledge of the Past

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including graffiti, street art, murals, puppet workshops, hip hop dancing and more. Artists from Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Indonesia and Malaysia can network and engage in interactive art installations, painting demonstrations, workshops and panel discussions.

S'Art is a play on the Khmer word for 'beautiful' and the festival was initiated in 2018 to provide a platform for artists to engage, exchange and interact with each other and the public. A main theme of the festival promotes a deeper understanding of the Mekong Region's shared cultural heritage, which is done through artist talks and panel discussions. One such discussion this week asked the interesting question, "What does it mean to be a contemporary artist in a country that is still fighting to preserve its art and culture that were all-but-lost just 30 years ago?"

Questions like this are kept in mind while the festival itself is packed with contemporary art like breakdancing, graffiti and giant puppet making where attendees can learn and participate in community efforts to create something new and beautiful. Children and adults collaborated to make a giant rabbit puppet using natural materials for the frame. In another area artists worked on murals and graffiti to beautify the outdoors. At one of the more spirited events, a crowd cheered on breakdancers who also gave a workshop on how to perform their moves.

Artist talks are another way people can learn and get involved with the artists themselves who are displaying beautiful paintings that mix the traditional with the contemporary; depicting figures like King Norodom Sihamoni and using Hindu religious art motifs in new and beautiful ways.

The festival is part of Battambang's effort to be recognized as a UNESCO Creative City. The city held a workshop last month with the collaboration of the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Culture to prepare its application as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which they hope will boost Battambang's reputation as a tourist destination for art and food lovers. The official decision will be made this November when hopefully the city will be inscribed in the network of cities that promotes creativity and cultural pride.











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<u>Meets Kesorrr, One of ABC "Exceptional"</u> <u>Individuals</u>



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