

WORDS TO KNOW

- Angkor Wat** Built in the city of Angkor in the Mekong Basin in honor of a Hindu deity, Angkor Wat was a state temple of the cosmopolitan Khmer Empire (802-1431).
- Diaspora** The dispersion or spread of a people from their original homeland.
- Genocide** The crime of killing many people who are all part of one ethnic or religious group, or some sort of similar group, and trying to destroy that group. Genocide is done usually by a group, such as a government, or military group, not by one person or a small number of people.
- Khmer Rouge** The radical communist movement that ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 after winning power through a guerrilla war.
- Mekong Basin** The Mekong River is one of the world's great rivers. Covering a distance of nearly 5,000 km (3,107 miles) from its source on the Tibetan Plateau in China to the Mekong Delta, the river flows through six countries: China, Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam.
- Repatriation** The act or process of returning a thing to the country of origin.

SUPPORT

Lead support for this exhibition is provided by the U-M Office of the Provost, U-M Office of the President, National Endowment for the Arts, Michigan Arts and Culture Council, Eleanor Noyes Crumpacker Endowment Fund, U-M Ross School of Business, U-M Department of History of Art, and U-M Center for Southeast Asian Studies. Additional generous support is provided by the U-M Department of Asian Languages and Cultures.



ANGKOR COMPLEX

Cultural Heritage and Post-Genocide Memory in Cambodia

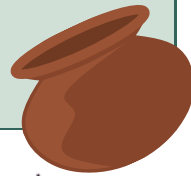


Empire, Colony, and Nation



Anticipating the imminent collapse of social, political, and economic order in Cambodia in the early 1970s, Amy Sanford's Khmer parents arranged for a foster family in the United States to adopt her. Her parents were killed soon after. Sanford returned to Cambodia for the first time several decades later, traveling across the country trying to piece together her biological family's history.

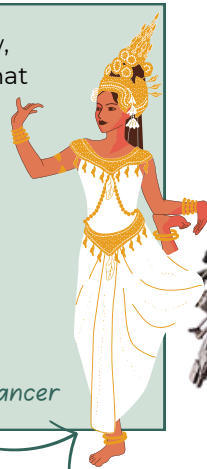
To create this artwork, Sanford broke forty pots and then tried to piece them together with glue and string. Despite her best efforts, she was unable to find some sherds or glue others back into their proper position. How might this artwork represent loss and trying to piece personal history?



Inheritance of Loss

This sculpture portrays a woman in an iconic posture from Cambodia's apsara (celestial dancer) dance tradition. The *Apsara Warrior's* body and the mound upon which she stands are made up of parts of AK-47 and M-16 rifles seized from former Khmer Rouge (1975–79) fighters.

Apsara dancers are known for glittering headwear, slow, graceful movements and expressive hand gestures. What story is this sculpture telling with her hands?



Apsara dancer

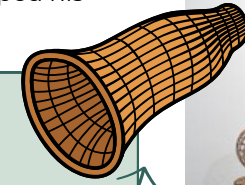


Buddhism in Cambodia

Sopheap Pich's decision to make the sculpture primarily from bamboo and rattan also pays homage to the Khmer fish-trap tradition, which he experienced as a child when he helped his father make traps to catch fish.

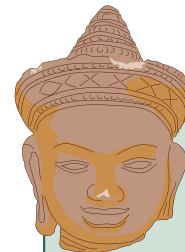
If you made an object about your own history, what material(s) would you use?

Khmer fish-trap



On Repatriation

Journey Crossing the Border is a meditation on the loss of Cambodia's cultural objects to the international art market and the perils sculptures face crossing borders.



Recall a time when you lost something precious or essential. Name the emotions that you felt when that happened.