

White Building

a film by Kavich Neang

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Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or

even first feature film, and the merits of their feature film project. During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.

Technical Information

Working Title: White Building

Director: Kavich Neang

Screenplay: Kavich Neang & Daniel Mattes

Nationality: Cambodia

Genre: Coming-of-age Drama

Format: Digital

Length: 100 min

Shooting location: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Production in Cambodia: Anti-Archive

Producer: Davy Chou


Associate Producers: Steve Chen & Park Sungho

Co-Production in France: Apsara Films

Producer: Marine Arrighi de Casanova

Director's Biography

Kavich Neang, from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, studied music and dance at a young age before graduating in graphic design in 2013. He began making documentaries in 2010, under the mentorship of Rithy Panh. In 2014, he co-founded Anti-Archive, an independent Cambodian production company. In 2015, Kavich directed his first short fiction film, Three Wheels, which premiered at Busan. Kavich has also joined Busan's Asian Film Academy, Locarno Summer Academy, Talents Tokyo, and Docs by the Sea. Kavich is currently working on his debut narrative feature, White Building, now in script development. He is also in post-production on a feature-length documentary, Last Night I Saw You Smiling. Both films are produced by Cambodian-French filmmaker Davy Chou.



Synopsis

Phnom Penh's landmark White Building faces demolition, and an 18-year-old resident, Samnang, grapples with the hard reality that his lifelong friend will leave Cambodia. As his own nightmares concerning his father's ill health converge with the deep traumas shared within this diminishing urban community, Samnang begins to understand that his once stable home environment is on shaky ground. Samnang, his friends, and his family must soon flee alongside other residents as the building is destroyed. All that remains is their memory of a building which no longer stands, and the relationships which they retain for the future.

Statement of Intent

The "White Building", one of Phnom Penh's last standing modernist structures from before the Khmer Rouge, was demolished, but my memory remains. This is where I grew up. *White Building* fictionalizes my own experiences to present a story of youth growing up in a country developing faster than their bodies. My protagonist, Samnang, learns that loss is not always sudden but can occur through slow acceptance of the unacceptable. He tries to reject the fear of the adults surrounding him, discovering instead the positive opportunity of his youth: although he and his friends lack clear purpose, the strength of their spirit and their personal relationships ideally push them to imagine their own futures beyond the uncontrollable present.

Synopsis

Le « White Building » emblématique de Phnom Penh va être démolé, et Samnang, 18 ans, est aux prises avec la dure réalité du départ de son ami d'enfance qui va quitter le Cambodge. Alors que ses cauchemars sur la mauvaise santé de son père convergent avec les traumatismes profonds partagés au sein de cette communauté urbaine en déclin, Samnang commence à comprendre que son environnement familial autrefois stable repose sur des bases chancelantes. Samnang, ses amis et sa famille doivent bientôt fuir aux côtés d'autres résidents puisque le bâtiment est détruit. Tout ce qu'il leur reste, c'est le souvenir d'un édifice qui n'est plus et les liens qu'ils conservent pour l'avenir.

Note d'intention

Le « White Building », l'une des dernières structures modernistes de Phnom Penh avant les Khmers rouges, a été démolé, mais son souvenir demeure. C'est là que j'ai grandi. *White Building* est le récit de mes propres expériences afin de présenter une histoire de jeunes qui grandissent dans un pays qui se développe plus vite que leur corps. Mon protagoniste, Samnang, apprend que la perte n'est pas toujours soudaine mais peut se produire par une acceptation lente de l'inacceptable. Il tente de rejeter la peur des adultes qui l'entourent, découvrant plutôt l'opportunité positive de sa jeunesse: bien que lui et ses amis manquent de but précis, la force de leur vitalité et leurs relations personnelles les poussent idéalement à imaginer leur avenir au-delà de l'incontrôlable présent.