

The image is a promotional poster for a theatrical production. It features a man in a white vest and cap, holding a long, thin, glowing red object that forms a large, stylized letter 'C'. The background is dark, and the entire poster is framed by a colorful, diagonal striped border. The text 'theATNewORKs Presents' is in the top left, and the title 'FLYING CIRCUS PROJECT 2013: BURMESE DAYS' is in large white letters at the bottom. A small circular logo with the letters 'FCP' is also present.

theATNewORKs  
Presents

# FLYING CIRCUS PROJECT 2013: BURMESE DAYS



# MESSAGE FROM THE CURATOR, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## ART, JOURNALISM, ACTIVISM... AN ENCHANTED WORLD OF MICRO-POLITICS

Myanmar? Burma? What name shall we call the country that the Flying Circus Project (FCP) is about to visit? This alone highlights the complexity of the landscape. Preparations for FCP 2013: Burmese Days began in earnest in February 2010. In the three long years, many changes have occurred, not least that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, the National League for Democracy have garnered 43 seats in the Myanmar Parliament. It is true that this is only a fraction of the total 664 seats but it is still a significant dent into the armoured tank that runs the land some have nicknamed 'the forgotten country'. Well it's no longer forgotten, for never a week passes without

some headline grabbing news now: from President Obama's historic visit, to the Rohingya issue and ethnic conflicts in the western state of Rakhine, to the violent security raids on monks and mine-workers during a recent protest in Monywa.

What is the FCP doing there? What is the FCP in the first place? The FCP is a gathering of invited artists, individuals, from different disciplines and different cities of the world. These artists do not form a collective, they may have never met and often do not know each other's work. They are not unlike a flash mob that comes together and travels through a city of Asia for two weeks. During their stay, there are multiple communications that are deepened by the FCP artists, based on personal interests. The artists experience the site and meet with curated individuals who are enabling change in the city - inspirations, key thinkers, political activists, emerging artists. These meetings take different formats but they are not intensive workshops on artistic techniques. All FCP artists who have been invited to the city invest in a session to share their work, their lives or their perspectives with local individuals. This investment is developed by each FCP artist personally.



In 2010, I visited the Theatre of the Disturbed in Myanmar (also known as Burma). I realized that it could be a possible collaborator for the FCP in Yangon (also known as Rangoon). From that visit, things started to develop albeit slowly even as Myanmar's politics took an abrupt turn. I met up with Gitameit, a music academy independently started by American pianist Kit Young and other music colleagues of Myanmar. Happily Gitameit will work together with FCP alumni Kaffe Matthews. Kaffe has willingly volunteered to spend some time at the school sharing her music process. Since 1998, I had been visiting Burma/Myanmar every few years, drawn to the tenacity of the diverse arts scene. I harnessed old friends from 2003, visual artists Tun Win Aung and Wah Nu. They proposed to explore "What is a museum?" with their peer community of artists. They were especially interested in a museum's relationship with the people who own, who play with, who visit, who chance upon, it. Along the way, I met the Wathann Film Festival, young film-makers who are trained in FAMU (Film and TV School Prague). I was introduced by Keiko Sei who had made a month-long Public Action Design Workshop in Myanmar for the Arts Network Asia. Four

years ago, I asked which country in South East Asia was ready for a tactical media workshop to develop citizen journalism, without hesitation she replied Burma. The last puzzle piece came in July this year when, as Prince Claus Awards Committee member, I met prize-winner Zarganar in Yangon. A comedian who is a household name, he has been actively involved in resisting the old military regime through humour. The regime retaliated by sending him to jail for 59 years. Today he helms the national Art of Freedom Film Festival which screens uncensored films and has Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as patron.

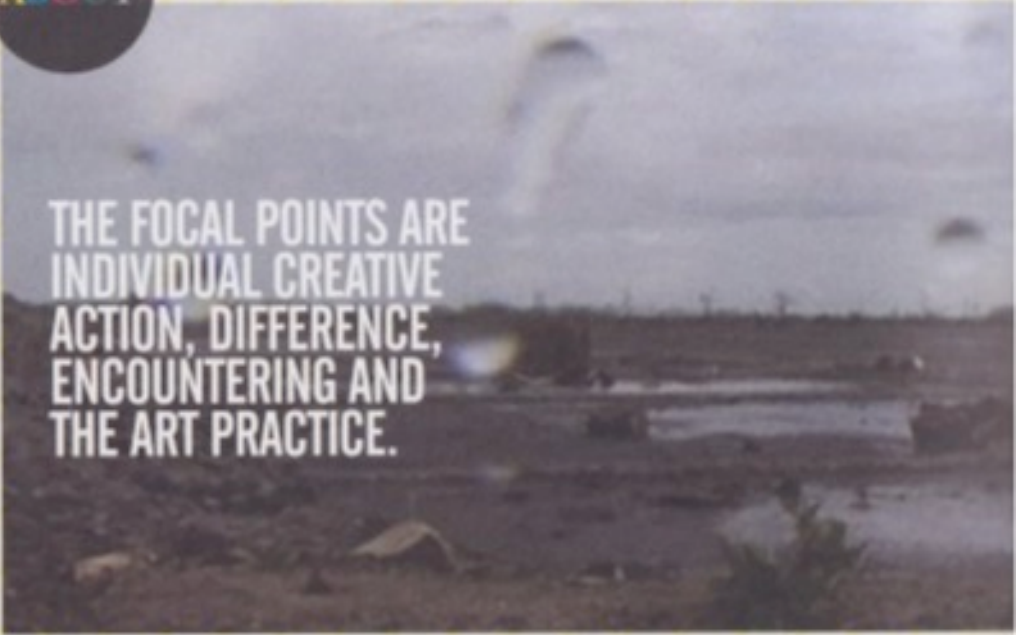
And so what is the FCP doing in Myanmar? Planetary consciousness perhaps. As Paul Gilroy has said, different peoples in the world are beginning to feel connected despite being separated by vast distances. A sign of the frailty of our times. I remember a call to the BBC during the Arab Spring. The caller was Burmese, she asked to be connected to the protesters in Tahrir Square for perhaps 'we' can learn something from them.

Ong Keng Sen  
24 December 2012



# FLYING CIRCUS PROJ

ABOUT



THE FOCAL POINTS ARE  
INDIVIDUAL CREATIVE  
ACTION, DIFFERENCE,  
ENCOUNTERING AND  
THE ART PRACTICE.

2013 marks the 8th edition of the Flying Circus Project or FCP. Established in 1996, the FCP is a long-term programme exploring creative expression in Asia. This inter-disciplinary, research & development programme consists of performances, screenings, conversations, laboratories, workshops, talks and engagement by visiting artists in localized sites. The focal points are individual creative action, difference, encountering and the art practice. In 2004, the FCP began to intensely include artists from beyond Asia, including the Arab world, Europe, the USA and Africa.

# ECT 2013



Thakshi Norga - When I've Stopped Breathing 2010

Since 2007, Flying Circus artists have been travelling together to two different sites, interacting with the cities. The emphasis is to introduce the tenacity of local sites with their artists, activists and public intellectuals. Hence the Flying Circus artists are linked with the notion of world creating. How do we form micro-worlds which are responsible, articulated and ethically engaged? At the same time, the FCP rejects the instrumentalization of art. Instead it activates other methodologies allowing for participation and reflection in highly individualized ways. This includes the Alter U programme, a shared micro-space/time made by artists for world-citizens to contemplate action. In 2007, the FCP visited Ho Chi Minh City/Singapore and in 2010, the FCP explored Phnom Penh/Singapore.

# THOUGHTS FROM THEATRE OF THE DISTURBED

FCP 2013 MYANMAR ARTISTIC COLLABORATOR



*Theatre of the Disturbed, IAF25 International Festival of Contemporary Theatre & Performances 2012*

The core idea of the works of Theatre of the Disturbed is to create "thinking spaces and interactive situations" to reflect upon the socio-political reality around us. Socio-political issues are interwoven within different forms and structures of performance narrative, and can be discovered as subtext. Therefore these issues are not addressed bluntly in a direct or didactic manner but the audience is always invoked to participate actively and raise questions. Most importantly, in many of our performance works, the complex socio-political issues of Myanmar are approached not merely as subjects of representation but as investigative procedures.

Currently, Theatre of the Disturbed is working on a performance trilogy titled *Hotel Reverie - Room No.64*. The aim is to explore collective memory, trauma, conflict, violence and transition from the post-colonial period in Burma through artistic and intellectual means. The title of the project is a reference to the past 64 years [from 1948, which marks the beginning of the post-colonial era in Myanmar]. How is this immediate past conditioning our present?

Lin Htet and Larène Tamain, Theatre of the Disturbed



Ngô Lay, *The Relevancy of Restriction*, 2010



May Phan Thut, *Performance of the Day*, 2010





## PROGRAMME IN MYANMAR

THE FLYING CIRCUS PROJECT  
INVITES AUDIENCES TO JOIN US  
IN YANGON AND MANDALAY FOR  
THE MYANMAR LEG OF FCP 2013.

Over 12 days, FCP 2013 will move from Yangon to Mandalay, engaging with local communities of artists, activists, cultural workers, starting with the Art of Freedom Film Festival. Into its second year, the festival aims to broaden the essence and concept of freedom among the peoples of Myanmar through film as a medium. The FCP artists will also engage in two days of keynote addresses by Myanmar public intellectuals on issues of environment, education, feminism, digital media and the new Myanmar. During their stay in Yangon and Mandalay, the FCP artists will encounter many independent artists including Theatre of the Disturbed, the Wathann Film Festival, the Art & Museum Project: Mingon Museum Of Contemporary Art, and Gitameit.

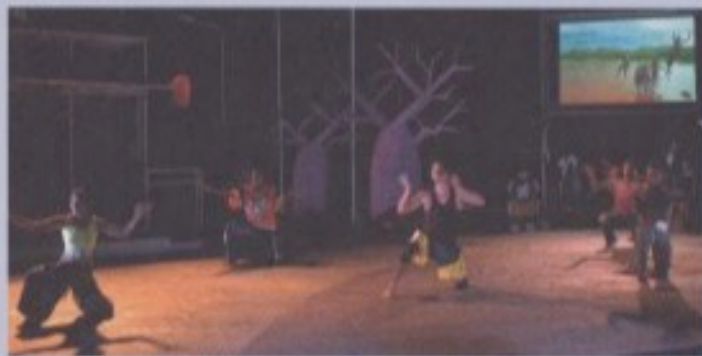


Wu Wengang China Village Self-Governance Film Project 2007





Wen Ha Listening To Third Grandmother's Stories 2011



Rachael Swain Burning Daylight 2006



## PROGRAMME IN SINGAPORE

THE FLYING CIRCUS PROJECT  
INVITES SINGAPORE AUDIENCES  
TO JOIN US FOR SUPERINTENSE  
OVER 5 DAYS AT 72-13.

SUPERINTENSE is a marathon of personal strategies of creativity in the urban context, and is a hallmark of the FCP. All the FCP artists will have one hour each to present their work to a public audience. A projector, a microphone, an audience – the same conditions are given to each artist. They are invited to share their practice, past work, present work, future work. It can take the form of a conversation, a demonstration, a lecture-performance, a film, a DJ session, a workshop. The artists articulate their practice, communicating an insight to the myriad ways of inhabiting, dissolving, thinking, making, living, destroying, rejuvenating. An actor, an audience, a shared space. Take a cigarette pause on the run!



Sanathanan Thamatharampillai: *The Incomplete Thambu* 2011

.....  
Opening – Keynote and presentations  
16 January 2013  
Wednesday, 7.30pm  
72-13

The Flying Circus Project 2013 opens in Singapore with the context of a new Myanmar from Zarganar, comedian turned politician. This is followed with presentations by Sanathanan Thamatharampillai and Anomaa Rajakaruna about memory, trauma, conflict, violence and transition in the context of Sri Lanka.

.....  
17 & 18 January 2013  
Thursday & Friday, 7.30pm  
72-13

.....  
19 January & 20 January 2013  
Saturday & Sunday, From noon till late  
(Admission at any time, preferably on the hour.  
Stay as long as you wish)  
72-13  
.....



Arenas Rajakaruna: *July: Life After 28 Years 2008*

Look out for the Myanmar (Burma) films on Jan 20 in 72-13. These have yet to be screened outside of Myanmar: shorts from the 2013 Art of Freedom Film Festival, a selection of new films from the Wathann Film Festival as well as the classic *Katipar Phanutsi Shwe Hti Saung* (*Wearing Velvet Slippers, Holding a Golden Umbrella*). The last is by master filmmaker Maung Wanda, it won the Academy Award in 1971 for best directing in Myanmar (Burma). He is survived by his son Okkar, another film maker whose film *Next Drop of Rain* will also be screened on Jan 20, and his daughter Wah Nu. Wah Nu, a visual artist, will speak on Jan 19 about the Art & Museum Project: Mignon Museum of Contemporary Art.

Check out <http://flyingcircusproject2013.wordpress.com> for details of the events.

All events are by invitation only.

For invitations, please contact TheatreWorks at +65 6737 7213 or [tworks@singnet.com.sg](mailto:tworks@singnet.com.sg)

Free admission.

Donations are required for refreshments.





## PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

THE FLYING CIRCUS PROJECT 2013 ARTISTS:

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Anomaa Rajakaruna, Colombo  
Aw Pi Kyeh (APK), Yangon  
Brett Bailey, Cape Town  
Fiona Koh, Vertical Submarine, Singapore  
Joshua Yang, Vertical Submarine, Singapore  
Ju, Yangon  
Julie Tolentino, Los Angeles  
Kaffe Matthews, London  
Keiko Sei, Bangkok  
Ka Tar, Yangon  
Lin Htet, Yangon  
Lorène Tamain, Paris  
Maija Hirvanen, Helsinki  
May Phue Thet, Yangon  
Min Thein Sung, Yangon  
Moe Naing, Yangon  
Mriganka Madhukailya,  
Desire Machine Collective, Guwahati, Assam  
Nge Lay, Yangon

Okker, Yangon  
Ong Keng Sen, Singapore  
Rachael Swain, Broome  
Sithu Zeya, Yangon  
Sonai Jain,  
Desire Machine Collective, Guwahati, Assam  
Sanathanan Thamotharampillai, Jaffna  
Tadasu Takamine, Tokyo  
Tellervo Kalleinen, Helsinki  
Theiddhi, Yangon  
Thu Thu Shein, Yangon  
Tun Win Aung, Yangon  
Venuri Perera, Colombo  
Vuth Lya, Phnom Penh  
Wah Nu, Yangon  
Wai Mar Nyunt, Yangon  
Wen Hui, Beijing  
Wu Wenguang, Beijing  
Zarganar, Yangon

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Visit <http://flyingcircusproject2013.wordpress.com> for biographies of the artists.



Kate Matthews *Sexist Bench* 2007



Jean Touloukian *City of Love – A Labyrinth* 2009



Vertical Subversion *UnderWater's Table* 2011





## ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY IN “INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS MOBILITY”

THE FCP 2013: BURMESE DAYS IS COMMISSIONING AND SUPPORTING A NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT LOCAL PROJECTS IN MYANMAR:

Our belief in artist mobility is that we can work towards enriching the local, the small, the intimate, and not just the international, the big, the spectacular. International curation can be responsible for the development of conversations in local arts communities and their audiences. The international arts market should not just ‘cream’ off the interesting artists to be exhibited abroad. Hopefully, we can *all* slowly move towards a more sustainable process in the art-ecosystems of production and circulation.

**1 Commission: The Art & Museum Project**  
“We initiated the Art & Museum Project because as we travel around the countryside

we are always faced with questions as to what artists like us do. People want to know what artworks we make. Where are our exhibitions held? They think the ‘art-museum’ is still a far away land. Hopefully this project will respond to ‘what is art?’ and ‘what is museum?’


In 2010, we started to realise small scale exhibition spaces in different villages and towns where there are no art galleries or museums built for the people. We thought exhibition designs should be connected and reflect on local people’s daily life, situations or landscapes. Space designs should be friendly and accessible for local people. So, we chose local small huts, tents, and barns. After that, we asked what pieces should be exhibited? We decided to collect local artifacts & handicrafts even though they were not seen as ‘artworks’. We walked around the villages, met children and asked for their toys in exchange for our new ones. We walked by the river to find flotsam which the water brought.

Related to ‘the urban’ in Yangon or Mandalay or Taungyi, we will work with a variety of different spatial designs from the pagoda festival bazaar to an open-air museum of new media art. We invite artists and support them to create artworks for these spaces. These spaces can turn into studios, workshops





Tekla Kallonen The Making Of Utopia 2008



and private classrooms. Through conversations with the artists, new works may be imagined and developed.

We propose these four artists May Phue Thet (b. 1992), Min Thein Sung (b. 1978), Phyo Kyi (b.1977) and Zar Min Htike (b. 1975) for collaboration with us."

Tun Win Aung & Wah Nu

## 2 Bridging the Wathann Film Festival Yangon with Mandalay

For the first time, the emerging Wathann Film Festival will screen prize winning works of young Myanmar film-makers in Mandalay. This allows a circulation of Myanmar films within Myanmar, rather than being 'for export' only.

## 3 Hotel Reverie Part 2 – Titus Andronicus (work-in-progress) by Theatre of the Disturbed

### 4 Subtitling of Myanmar (Burma) films

The subtitling in English of Maung Wana's first film which has become a classic. Also the subtitling of Okkar's newest film. This allows for the circulation of Myanmar (Burma) films internationally to introduce that there was once a film culture which was dynamic, integrated with society, and hopefully there will be another era of vibrant film culture again.



Teddy Tokarawa Inside Of The Mud 2012 Image by Ayoko Ake



Maung Wana Wearing Velvet Slippers, Holding a Golden Umbrella 1971



Verani Peters: Thuleto 2012 Image by Lakina Edirisinghe



Deixe Machava Collective: Slow Flow 2012







Bret Bailey Big Da Da 2001 Image by Peter Hugo and Bret Bailey

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[www.artsnetworkasia.org](http://www.artsnetworkasia.org)

**MYANMAR** 4 - 14 JANUARY 2013  
**SINGAPORE** 16 - 20 JANUARY 2013

Maja Heinen für Social Democratic Business 2011 | Image by Audo Mula

