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Locating the Domestic in Vann Molyvann's National Sports Complex

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Abstracts

Français English Español Deutsch Italiano
Cet article aborde la question de la construction et de l'interprétation de l'architecture post-indépendance au Cambodge en s'appuyant sur l'exemple du stade national à Phnom Penh, conçu par Vann Molyvann et achevé en 1964. Jusqu'ici, la plupart des études sur le stade, et sur l'œuvre de Molyvann et l'architecture moderne cambodgienne plus généralement, ont souligné la présence de références stylistiques angkoriennes. D'un point de vue historiographique, cette insistance sur les liens avec les temples d'Angkor a pour effet la construction d'un discours à la fois téléologique et limité par le concept de nation. La contre-lecture présentée ici rapproche le stade plutôt de l'architecture domestique, ce qui permet de mettre davantage l'accent sur des formes architecturales contemporaines et des intersections régionales plus larges. Cet article propose trois approches différentes mais croisées, correspondant à trois notions du domestique. La première, s'appuyant sur des archives conservées au Cambodge et aux États-Unis, considère le contexte historique de la construction du bâtiment, offrant le stade comme emblème de la politique cambodgienne de non-alignement pendant la guerre froide, sous le règne du prince Sihanouk. La deuxième est iconographique : elle examine les références aux maisons en bois sur pilotis présentes au sein du stade, ainsi que la reprise, dans des maisons privées et de conception anonyme, de traits architecturaux caractéristiques des grands bâtiments publics. La troisième approche, spatiale et expérientielle, aborde la division interne des espaces du stade en zones à échelle réduite.

This essay concerns the construction and interpretation of post-independence architecture in Cambodia, taking as an exemplary case study the National Stadium in Phnom Penh, completed in 1964 and designed by Vann Molyvann. To date, most accounts of the Stadium—and of Molyvann's work and modern Cambodian architecture more generally—have emphasized Angkorian stylistic references. Considered historiographically, this focus on the temples of Angkor constructs a narrative which is teleological, and nationally bound. My counter-reading centres instead on the trope of the domestic, which enables greater attention to coeval architectural forms and broader regional intersections. The essay is based in three related approaches to the Stadium, which correspond to three interlinked understandings of the domestic. The first considers the politico-historical context of the building's construction, proposing the Stadium as emblematic of Cambodia's policy of Cold War non-alignment, under Prince Sihanouk's rule. This draws on

archival work in Cambodia and the United States. The second is iconographic: it considers references to stilted wooden housing in the Stadium, as well as the repetition of architectural features from large-scale public buildings in smaller, anonymously-designed private houses. The third is a spatial and experiential reflection on the internal division of spaces within the Stadium, into smaller-scaled zones.

Este artículo aborda la construcción y la interpretación de la arquitectura posterior a la independencia en Camboya a partir del ejemplo del Estadio nacional de Nom Pen, concebido por Vann Molyvann y acabado en 1964. Hasta ahora, la mayor parte de los estudios sobre el estadio – y sobre la obra de Molyvann y de forma más genérica sobre la arquitectura moderna camboyana– han destacado la presencia de referencias estilísticas angkorianas. Desde un punto de vista historiográfico, esta insistencia en las relaciones con los templos de Angkor se ha traducido en la construcción de un discurso teleológico a la vez que limitado por el concepto de nación. La contra-lectura aquí presentada acerca el estadio a la arquitectura doméstica, lo que permite poner el acento en las formas arquitectónicas contemporáneas así como en confluencias regionaless más amplias. Este artículo propone tres aproximaciones diferentes, y entrecruzadas, que corresponden a otras tantas nociones de lo doméstico. La primera, a partir de archivos conservados en Camboya y en los Estados Unidos, considera el contexto histórico de la construcción del edificio como emblema de la política camboyana de no alineamiento durante la Guerra Fría, bajo el reino del príncipe Sihanouk. La segunda es iconográfico y examina las referencias a las casas de madera sobre pilotes presentes en el seno del estadio, así como la recuperación, en las casas privadas y de autoría anónima, de trazos arquitectónicos característicos de los grandes edificios públicos. La tercera aproximación, ligada a la experiencia, aborda la división interna de los espacios del estadio en zonas a escala reducida.

Dieser Essay behandelt Aufbau und Lesart von Architektur, die nach der Unabhängigkeit in Kambodscha entstanden ist. Als exemplarische Fallstudie dient das Nationalstadion in Phnom Penh, das 1964 fertiggestellt und von Vann Molyvann entworfen wurde. Bisher haben die meisten Würdigungen des Stadions – wie auch allgemeiner von Molyvanns Werk und moderner kambodschanischer Architektur – auf die stilistischen Verweise nach Angkor abgehoben. Historiografisch betrachtet konstruiert dieser Fokus auf die Tempelanlagen von Angkor ein teleologisches, national ausgerichtetes Narrativ. Meine Gegeninterpretation konzentriert sich stattdessen auf den Tropus des Landeseigenen, wodurch ein gesteigertes Augenmerk auf zeitgleich aufgekommene Architekturformen und weiter gefasste regionale Überschneidungen möglich wird. Der vorliegende Essay basiert auf drei aufeinander bezogenen Annäherungen an das Stadion, die drei zusammenhängenden Auffassungen des Heimischen entsprechen. Der erste Ansatz nimmt den politisch-historischen Kontext des Baus in den Blick und liest das Stadion als ein Symbol für Kambodschas blockfreie Politik im Kalten Krieg unter der Regierung von Prinz Sihanouk. Er stützt sich dabei auf Archivarbeit in Kambodscha und in den USA . Der zweite Ansatz ist ikonografisch und erläutert die Verweise im Stadion auf Pfahlwohnbauten aus Holz sowie die Übernahme von Architekturmerkmalen öffentlicher Großbauten in kleinere Privathäuser durch namenlose Architekten. Der dritte Ansatz reflektiert räumlich und aus eigener Anschauung die Aufteilung des Stadioninneren in Abschnitte kleineren Maßstabs.

Questo studio tratta della costruzione e dell'interpretazione dell'architettura cambogiana nel periodo successivo all'indipendenza, prendendo come esempio lo stadio nazionale di Phnom Penh, terminato nel 1964 e progettato da Vann Molyvann. Fino ad oggi, la maggior parte degli studi sullo stadio, nonché sul lavoro di Molyvann e l'architettura cambogiana moderna in generale, hanno posto l'accento sui riferimenti stilistici ai templi di Angkor. Da un punto di vista storiografico, da questo tipo di analisi scaturisce un discorso teleologico legato ad un'idea nazionale. La mia contro-lettura è incentrata invece sull'idea di "locale", il che permette di porre maggiore attenzione sulle forme coeve di architettura e sull'estensione delle intersezioni regionali. Il saggio è basato su tre approcci correlati, che corrisponono a tre modi di comprensione connessi dell'idea di locale. Il primo considera il contesto politico e storico della costruzione dell'edificio e vede lo stadio come un emblema della politica cambogiana di non allineamento durante la guerra fredda, sotto il regno di Sihanouk. La ricerca d'archivio si estende alla Cambogia e agli Stati Uniti. ll secondo è iconografico e osserva i riferimenti – nello stadio - alle palafitte d'abitazione in legno, così come la riproduzione di caratteristiche architettoniche di grandi edifici pubblici in più piccole case private di progettazione anonima. Il terzo approccio è una riflessione spaziale e esperienziale sulla suddivisione interna degli spazi nello stadio, che crea zone più ristrette.

Index terms

Index de mots-clés : architecture domestique, architecture moderne, nouvelle architecture khmère
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Author's notes
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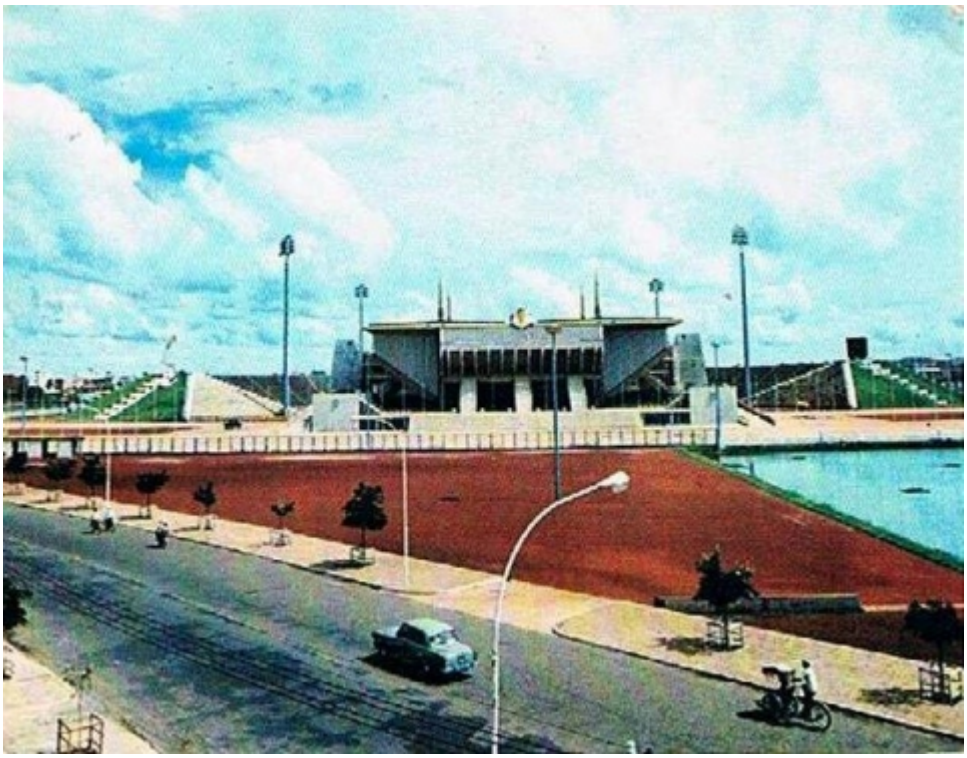
Full text

1 The National Sports Complex in Phnom Penh, designed by Vann Molyvann and completed in 1964, is one of the city's largest structures, and one of its busiest and most beloved public spaces **(fig. 1)**.[1] In 2016, the World Monuments Fund listed the Stadium —as it is colloquially known—as one of the world's irreplaceable treasures. In their official statement, the organization called the Stadium "an iconic symbol of the massive post-independence effort that transformed Cambodia from an agrarian colony into a modern state," and suggested that "the design is one of the most important examples of regionally inflected modernism."[2] But what exactly is the nature of the "iconic symbolism" embedded in this building, and what does it mean to claim that its design is "regionally inflected"? These questions will guide what follows.

Figure 1: Vann Molyvann (architect), National Sports Complex, Phnom Penh, completed 1964.



Source: Photograph 1966, from personal archive of Srin Sokmean, posted on the Facebook page "Amazing Cambodia."

2 To date, the critical response to both of these questions has been a singular focus on the Stadium's numerous references to the temples of Angkor—architectural and rhetorical references which have also been emphasized in numerous writings and statements by the eloquent Vann Molyvann himself. Yet while these allusions to Angkor

are undeniably important, the singular focus on them nevertheless obscures another equally crucial element to the ways in which the Stadium functions as an "iconic symbol" of post-independence Cambodian modernization, and also the ways in which its design can be understood as "regionally inflected."

3 In this essay, my focus will be on the centrality of the domestic as a locus of meaning in the construction and interpretation of post-independence architecture in Cambodia, taking the Stadium as an exemplary case study. References to the domestic function as a counterpoint to the monumental in the Stadium and other large-scale public works. An attention to the domestic also reveals the primacy of coevality in constituting the (architecturally and spatially) modern in the Cambodian context: a coexistence of old and new forms which challenges assumptions of a dichotomous opposition between the colonial and the postcolonial, and between the premodern and the modern. The simultaneous presence of built forms associated with several historical moments (premodern and modern) and numerous locations (from within the nation, the region, and beyond), and the sense of plural temporalities within Phnom Penh (as in other Southeast Asian cities), may appear to be paradoxical; it is perhaps better understood in terms of architectural and discursive syncretism. The coevality of the domestic in the modern is especially densely layered. References to Angkor, after all, point to a specific period in Cambodian history, from around the ninth to fifteenth centuries in the Common Era. The Angkorian period has been constructed in Khmer, Francophone, and Anglophone historiographical discourse as the pinnacle of Cambodian civilization, one followed by a long period of decline. Post-independence cultural nationalist narratives cast the Sihanouk era as a reversal of this process of civilizational decline, through a recuperation of the great achievements of Angkor. This sense of history is powerfully teleological and progressivist. By contrast, references to the domestic, and specifically to the various forms of stilted wooden housing in which many Khmers have lived from pre-Angkorian times into the modern era, do not point to a discrete, defined period in history. The stilted house type is not unique to a specific moment, any more than it is confined to the territories currently or formerly known as Cambodia, being familiar across much of the region we call Southeast Asia (and beyond). Perhaps an attention to the domestic may resist the teleology in standard historical narratives of post-independence Cambodian modern architecture, and point to the presence of numerous built forms that blur distinctions between the local, the national, the regional, and the global.

4 My argument here will be based in three related approaches to the Stadium, which correspond to three related understandings of the domestic. The first looks at the politico-historical context of the building's construction, and specifically at how the Stadium can be seen as an emblem of Cambodia's policy of Cold War nonalignment, called "neutralism" (in Khmer, *apyiakrit)*, under Prince Sihanouk's rule. This draws primarily on archival work in Cambodia and the United States.[3] The second is essentially iconographic: it considers visual and spatial references to stilted wooden houses in the Stadium's built form, as well as the repetition of architectural features from the Stadium and other large-scale public buildings designed by Vann Molyvann and his peers in smaller, anonymously designed private houses from the period. The third is spatial and experiential: a reflection on the internal division of spaces within the Stadium into numerous smaller-scaled zones. This mitigates a sense of the Stadium as monumental. These three methods of analysis also represent three conceptions of the domestic, which, while differing, should be understood as linked. The historical and the formal are always already related, of course, but an analysis which synthesizes multiple approaches is especially advantageous in a setting like Cambodia, given the loss and dispersal of many historical sources during the years of civil war and under the Khmer Rouge regime which followed the post-independence boom epitomized by the Stadium.

Neutralism and Modernism: on the Stadium in its Cold War context

5 It is a surprisingly little-known fact that Phnom Penh's National Stadium was built with funds raised by a special national tax imposed on ice, alcohol, and ice cream: items regularly consumed by many Cambodians from diverse class and other backgrounds.[4] I came across records of this special Stadium tax while conducting archival research in early 2015, in the United States National Archives in College Park, Maryland. Before then, it was not known by any of the many Cambodian architectural history enthusiasts I know and is not mentioned in Molyvann's own retrospective account of the Stadium's construction.[5] The sole monograph on modern Cambodian architecture, co-authored by architecture historians Helen Ross and Darryl Collins, states only that the Stadium's 30 million dollar construction cost "came out of the national budget" but provides no further details or citations;[6] Ross and Collins' extensive research in preparing their foundational survey did not include the US National Archives in Maryland.

6 Given the bountiful investments in construction and built space offered as "aid" by the US, Soviet and Chinese governments in the years preceding the Stadium's 1963 construction, it can be safely assumed that Prince Sihanouk could easily have sought international sponsorship for the ambitious Stadium project. Just three years earlier, it had been US "aid" which had funded construction of Vann Molyvann's first major public building, the Chaktomuk Conference Hall, completed in 1961, also in Phnom Penh.[7] This is a somewhat inconvenient fact which is today flatly denied by some senior officials at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, which owns and manages the building. In the same year as the Stadium's construction, the United States presented an enormous exhibition of agricultural and industrial machinery on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, which attracted over 200,000 visitors.[8] But the United States was far from the only international sponsor in terms of either financial "aid" or expert assistance. In 1960, the renowned author Han Suyin characterized the situation in neutralist Cambodia as follows:

> "Being neutral, Cambodia gets help from *everyone*. The airport was French aid, the road was American; an enormous, dazzling white hospital was Russian, something else was Czech; three factories were given by China, the Japanese were taking out rusty water pipes and replacing the lot with Made-in-Japan plumbing; and so it went on."[9]

7 Given this context, it is especially striking that the Stadium was funded by a domestic tax, rather than through international "aid." Should he have desired, Sihanouk could have relied on foreign funds for the Stadium's construction; instead, it was the single largest public construction project from the post-independence era to have been built without financial dependence on international governments.

8 That Sihanouk chose not to seek sponsorship from any foreign governments for the Stadium's construction suggests that the Stadium served as not only an outcome but also a symbol of Cambodia's policy of neutrality during the Prince's rule as Head of State over a regime called the Sangkum Reastr Niyum, or "People's Socialist Community" (1955-1970).[10] This is consistent with Sihanouk's general approach to the arts and culture, which he affirmed had a duty to help "build the nation." The arts, the Prince repeatedly proposed, should demonstrate a strength "appropriate to the independent status of the country":[11] with "independence" repeatedly articulated by Sihanouk and others as a byword for Cold War nonalignment or neutralism.[12] To perform this neutralist rhetorical function—and thus also to avoid being subject to a politicized naming battle, as was the Khmer American Friendship Boulevard, later renamed the Russian Boulevard, and many other foreign-sponsored construction projects at the time[13]—the Stadium needed to be independently funded, and thus a special tax was necessary. The government's choice of goods to tax is particularly poetic.

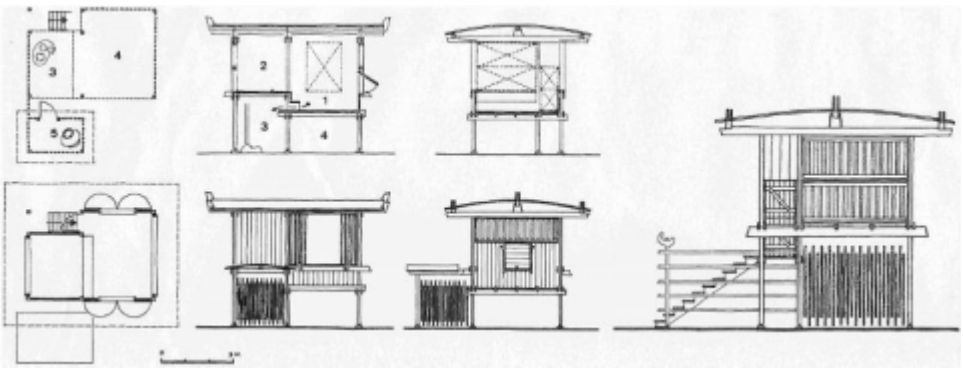
9 Ice, ice cream, and alcohol—the only items chosen for the special tax that funded the National Stadium's construction—are consumables that may appear to be luxuries, and yet that are also widely considered by Cambodians to be necessities in the tropical climate. And so, too, construction of the Stadium may be seen to have been at once an ambitious extravagance—especially in a moment of national budget deficit, as other archival records reveal[14]—and an essential component in Sihanouk's project of (literal and rhetorical) nation building. More than any other single structure built during the

Sangkum Reastr Niyum period, the Stadium performed rhetorically to articulate Cambodian modern nationhood. And here, more clearly than in any other single project, we can discern the centrality of a neutralist posture to the Sangkum's cultural and political identity.

10 The Stadium tax was "domestic" not only in the sense of being raised within the country, rather than from foreign contributions, but also in the sense that it delegated the responsibility for funding into the domestic environment, the private home. Most Cambodian households would have contributed to the Stadium's construction through payment of the tax on ice, ice cream, and alcohol: items which most Cambodian households consume. The significant effect of this is not only that most households would have therefore contributed to the cost of the Stadium's construction, but also that most households thereby also participated in and contributed to the policy of neutralism. Cambodia's Cold War nonalignment was not only a political position held by Sihanouk and the nation's rulers; it was a stance that was thrust upon and embraced by many sections of the population. The special tax for the Stadium is best understood as having operated in tandem with contemporaneous nationalist narratives that conflated Cambodia's independence with its neutralist stance.[15] These intensified as the war in Vietnam escalated.

11 One especially clear way in which Phnom Penh's National Stadium, and several other large-scale state-sponsored projects such as the Bassac Riverfront Complex (which we will return to later), embodied Cambodian neutralism was in their omnivorous adoption of expert assistance from both the "Free World" and the Soviet bloc. The funding was domestic, but the technical team was decidedly transnational, a fact which reinforces an understanding of this grand architectural project as both an outcome and a symbol of Sihanouk's policy of non-alignment, as a result of which, as Han Suyin quipped, "Cambodia gets help from *everyone*." Ross and Collins note that French as well as Russian engineers worked with Cambodians on the National Stadium.[16] Historian Kosuke Matsubara's archival research reveals that French-trained Japanese architects Gyoji Banshoya and Nobuo Goto also worked on the Stadium, and that this experience inspired Nobuo to embark on an extensive research project on Cambodian stilted wooden housing. Nobuo's research resulted in a proposal for a new model of low-cost housing, based on the stilted form and constructed in wood **(fig. 2)**. The proposal was titled "Habitat Experimental," and which was published in French journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*.[17] Further archival and interview-based research by Masaaki Iwamoto reveals that at least 23 of Vann Molyvann's projects involved collaboration with foreign experts, of at least seven nationalities.[18]

Figure 2: *Habitat experimental*.



Source: Drawings originally published in the French journal *L'Architecture d'Aujour'hui*. Reproduced in Kosuke Matsubara, "Japanese Collaborators in the Golden Age of Modern Khmer City and Architecture in Cambodia," unpublished paper presented at *The 15th Science Council of Asia Board Meeting and International Symposium,* Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 2015. With thanks to Pen Sereypagna for sharing this document.

12 Yet the contributions made by transnational architects and engineers—from across the Cold War political spectrum—has not been the focus of previous studies of the Stadium and its construction; instead, most accounts have cast the Stadium's construction in national terms, as "Angkorian." While this approach has emphasized national rather than transnational factors in the building of the Stadium, it has done so through a consistent emphasis on the structure's references to grand temples, rather

than to domestic stilted housing. This has the effect of enfolding the story of the Stadium into a narrowly cultural nationalist narrative, rather than seeing its intersections with a broader regional vocabulary of vernacular built forms. For example, in both a sole-authored journal article and in the aforementioned monograph co-authored with Ross, Collins stresses the "astonishing" speed of the Stadium's construction, which was completed in eighteen months.[19] Ross and Collins repeatedly note the "spectacular" and "remarkable" speed of the project, which they claim is especially "astounding" in "a small country like Cambodia," and suggest that while the "logistics behind such a complex design are demanding in any circumstances [...] in Cambodia, it was a feat to achieve the construction of this mammoth work, which is on a scale of the Angkor monuments themselves."[20] The combination of the size of the project, the smallness and "limited technology" of Cambodia, and the rapidity of the Stadium's construction are hailed as "an Angkorian challenge."[21]

13 While a fair characterization in many ways, viewed historiographically such hyperbolic emphasis on "speed" and "scale" are also a testament to the seductive power of nationalist and progressivist views of modernization, amplified in the Cambodian context by a pervasive nostalgia for the post-independence period before civil war and violent revolution. The Stadium is today loved and celebrated by Cambodian architects and enthusiasts born in the generation after 1979, not only for the spaces it provides, but also for its status as a symbol of the imagined "golden age" of Sihanouk's regime. Since its construction, the Stadium has been closely linked to Sihanouk, its patron **(fig. 3)**. According to the nationalist teleology, the Prince's rule as Head of State in the Sangkum era was a time in which Cambodia momentarily recuperated the grand ambition and achievements of the Angkorian period,[22] only to have this post-independence promise quashed by civil war following Sihanouk's overthrow in 1970, then the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975, the subsequent Vietnamese invasion/liberation from 1979, and finally decades of autocratic rule by the increasingly unpopular prime minister Hun Sen.

Figure 3: An image of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, at the opening ceremony of the National Stadium, 12 November 1964.

Source: Charles Meyer/National Archives of Cambodia.

14 Progressivist views of history, as well as being rooted in nostalgia for Sihanouk's regime as a symbol of post-independence and pre-war possibility, also function to elevate and heroize the architect as the sole agent in the shaping of modern spaces, to the exclusion of other historical actors. This elevation of individual authorial genius is a familiar trope of the modern in many locations, of course; it is further bolstered in the Cambodian setting by Molyvann's close affiliation with the "heroic" Sihanouk, in whose government the architect served.

15 One photograph from Molyvann's personal collection, showing the construction of the Stadium, is especially representative of this widespread tendency **(fig. 4)**. In this

image, the Stadium's concrete structure rises as if of the architect's singular volition, or as if of its own divine will—no construction workers are visible. This is a striking contrast to the kinds of photographs kept and published by Le Corbusier, the architect who Molyvann has often professed to most admire. Corbusier's construction images typically featured numerous anonymous, sometimes even faceless construction workers. These men and women are, as architectural historian Vikramāditya Prakāsh has written, "classic subaltern subject[s], silenced and unrepresented."[23] Literal traces of their role in the process of constructing large-scale buildings are imprinted in the rough and manifestly hand-rendered surfaces of the raw concrete, or *béton brut*, from which the brutalist style derives its name.[24] The photograph of the Stadium's construction was chosen by Cambodian urban scholar Pen Sereypagna as the promotional image for a research project organized by the Vann Molyvann Project team, under Sereypagna's leadership, in Phnom Penh in 2015.[25] This selection, as well as the popularity which the image enjoyed among the Cambodian participants in the project, and among the thousands of Cambodians who actively followed its progress through online social media (and joined events organized by the project), together demonstrate the image's continuing appeal more than half a century after the Stadium's construction.[26]

Figure 4: The National Sports Complex during construction, 1963.

Source: Photograph from Vann Molyvann's personal archive. Courtesy of Pen Sereypagna and *The Vann Molyvann Project*.

16 Molyvann himself has participated actively in the rhetorical coupling of the Stadium with Angkor. In the year of its completion, he asserted that "modernity should not be inspired superficially by Western ideas that destroy all traces of the past. New building should bring *tradition and heritage* back to life."[27] In a retrospective account of the Stadium, he writes that its "series of water surfaces recalled the characteristic moats of Khmer settlement."[28] While true, this statement overlooks the equally obvious fact that the water surfaces recall not only moats—in Angkorian times reserved for temples—but also the ponds which can be found next to many ordinary rural Cambodian homes, and in most farms. That the Stadium's use of water recalls domestic spaces such as these is significant as it functions in tandem with the numerous references to stilted wooden houses, which we will turn to soon.

17 Molyvann's rejection of "Western ideas that destroy all traces of the past" may be understood, in part, as a rejection of the beaux-arts style of architecture popularized during French colonial rule (in Cambodia as elsewhere, within and beyond Southeast Asia); that is, Molyvann's design preferences may be understood to have been at least

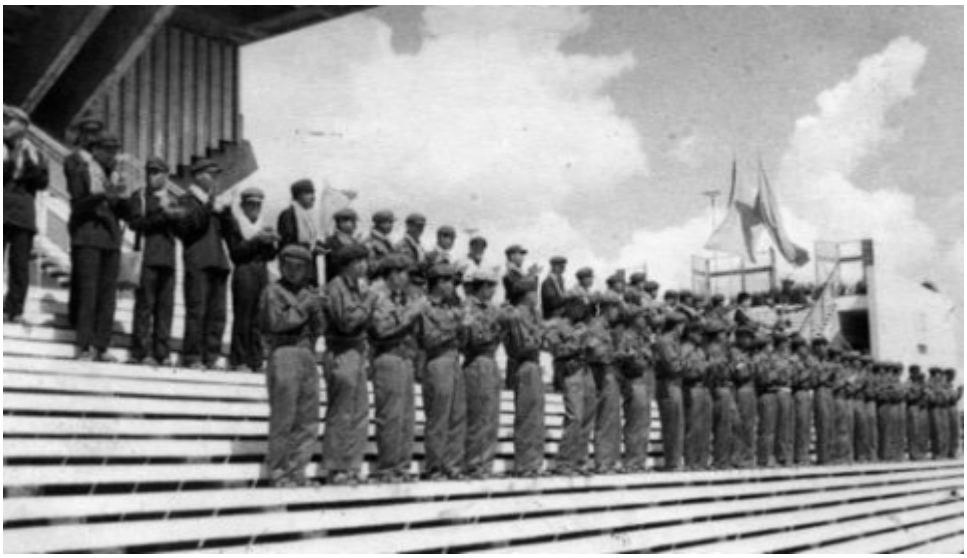
partly political in nature. This may seem paradoxical, given that the architect was vocally proud of his French education, and often affirmed his respect for Le Corbusier's designs and ideas, as well as those of other French (and French-trained) architects and engineers. Yet Molyvann's embrace of the brutalist idiom, despite his rejection of beaux-arts French architecture, may be explained by his sense that many of the ideas promulgated by Le Corbusier were resonant with vernacular Asian building forms. The elevation of buildings on columns, of course, echoes stilted housing found throughout Southeast Asia. But the modular proportioning of many so-called "International Style" buildings was also likened by Molyvann to Japanese architecture and its basis in the dimensions of the tatami.[29] Moreover, the adoption of elements of French brutalism may be understood as a conscious choice, an act of volition on the part of Molyvann and other postcolonial Cambodian architects. By contrast, the spread of beaux-arts structures in bricks and concrete during the colonial period had been not a choice but rather an imposition insisted on by French authorities, who initially met with considerable resistance from their Cambodian counterparts. According to historian Penny Edwards, "it had taken three years of persuasion, wrote one French entrepreneur, before the king 'finally decided to build the town in brick,'" which would in turn bring numerous lucrative construction contracts for the French.[30] The Stadium's rejection of architectural forms associated with French colonial rule may be understood as an assertion of national independence, one decade into the postcolonial era, just as it was also an articulation of Cold War nonalignment.

18 Another key way in which the Sangkum's neutralist policy has been reflected in the National Stadium is in the diverse ways in which the space has been used, political as well as sporting. Although the 1963 Southeast Asian Games which initially prompted its construction were canceled and the 1963 World Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) were relocated to Jakarta,[31] the Stadium hosted speeches and rallies featuring leaders from across the spectrum of politics, from Charles de Gaulle in 1966 **(fig. 5)** to Pol Pot a decade later **(fig. 6)**. In 1993, during nationwide elections held under the supervision of the occupying United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, the Stadium was one of the capital's main polling stations; in the 2010s, it is used annually as the site for official commemorations of the Vietnamese invasion/liberation in 1979, a key moment in Prime Minister Hun Sen's narrative of political legitimacy and control. Just as regular performances by Sihanouk's Royal Ballet for politicians and diplomats throughout the Sangkum period proved remarkably flexible in their ability to shift political allegiances,[32] so, too, the dramatic spaces of the Stadium have proven equally amenable to political figures and uses from across the spectrum.

Figure 5: French President Charles de Gaulle, delivering a speech at the National Stadium, 1 September 1966.

Source: http://archives.gaullisme.fr/43cdg_PhnomPenh.htm. Accessed November 2016.

Figure 6: Khmer Rouge soldiers at the National Stadium, circa 1976.



Source: http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/sites/default/files/styles/homepage_blog/public/blog-photos/. Accessed November 2016.

19 Sihanouk and his fellow Sangkum leaders repeatedly asserted the important role of women in the nation's achievements. In Sihanouk's short films celebrating the Sangkum's achievements, modernist buildings are consistently used as backdrops. In one film titled *Women During Sangkum Reastr Niyum*, an all-female team plays basketball alongside the National Stadium **(fig. 7)**, dozens of women cycle past modern concrete apartments and public buildings, and a fleet of women sail along the Tonle Sap River, close to the Chaktomuk Conference Hall.[33] In functioning as symbols of the Sangkum's technologically advanced modernization program and political neutralism, these modern buildings are also positioned as symbolic articulations of the central place of women in this national project. All designed by men, modern Cambodian buildings are presented in films such as this—and also in numerous publications produced under Sihanouk's supervision—as equally accessible to and utilized by the modern Cambodian women of the Sangkum period.

Figure 7: An all-female team plays basketball in the grounds surrounding the National Stadium.

Source: Digital film still from Norodom Sihanouk (director), *Le femme cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum [Women during Sangkum Reastr Niyum],* Khemara Pictures, 1960s. Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Bophana Center, Archive Reference NSI_VI_001568. Copies also circulate online through YouTube.

20 While post-independence modernizations saw women playing an increasingly prominent (albeit still far from equal) role in the public sphere—in the kind of political, sporting, and other activities that may have taken place at the Stadium, for example—in conventional Cambodian understandings, women are said to dominate the domestic realm. It is widely held that women control the finances in most households, for example. There are also various ritual roles that only women can play in the ceremonies that accompany the construction of a new stilted wooden house in a rural Cambodian village,[34] as well as sections of the stilted house which are typically reserved for use by female occupants.[35]

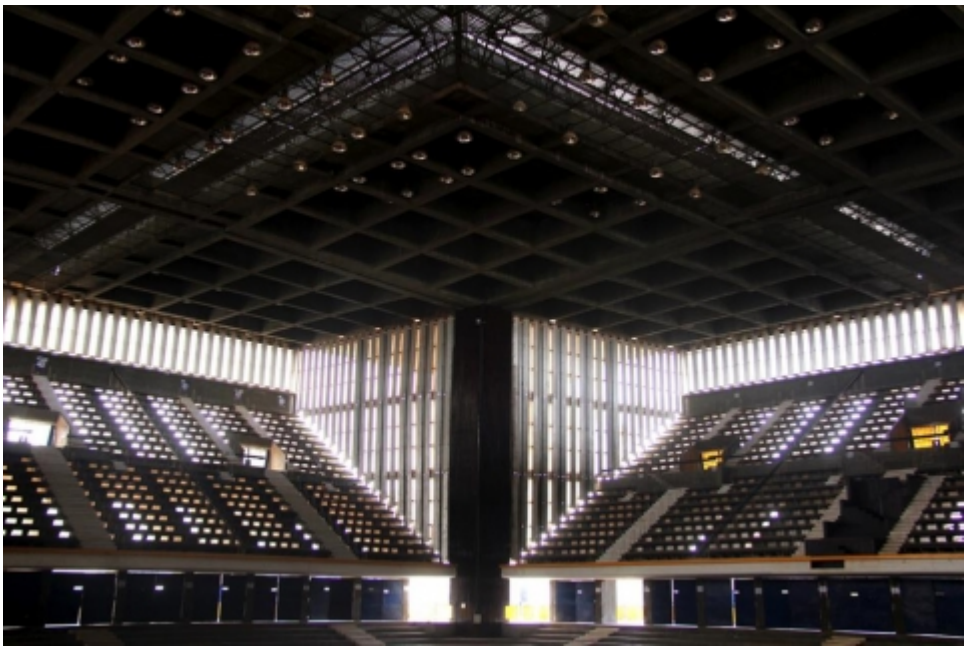
21 With this, we turn to the second method of approaching the National Stadium: a consideration of the visual and spatial references to stilted wooden houses in the Stadium's built form, as well as of the repetition of architectural features from the Stadium and other large-scale public buildings designed by Vann Molyvann and his peers in smaller, anonymously designed private houses from the period.

Stilts and Modernism: References to Vernacular Housing in the Stadium

22 In the image from Sihanouk's documentary about women in the Sangkum period that shows an all-female basketball game in the Stadium's grounds **(fig. 7)**, already we can discern some of the references to stilted housing in the part of the structure visible in the background, which houses the indoor arena. The repeated vertical lines formed by the ventilation panels in the building's upper section visually resemble both stilts and the wooden boards used for cladding the external walls of houses. Also of note are the oversized, angled concrete beams that support the building's middle section. From some positions, they too appear as repeated vertical lines, and the resemblance to stilts is emphasized by their function as supporting columns. From other vantage points, like the one in this image, their dramatic angle is revealed, emphasizing the extravagant cantilever—one of many throughout the Stadium. Such angles and cantilevers suggest ways in which the age-old but continuously used housing technology of the vertical stilt or column was extended in previously unimaginable directions by modern engineering technologies and by the use of steel-reinforced concrete in place of timber.

23 Elsewhere in the Stadium, these features recur again and again. The repeated vertical lines from the upper section of the building that houses the indoor arena are visible also from its interior, their verticality further emphasized by a simple rhyming with the massive square concrete columns at each corner of the space and by additional vertical ventilation panels that flank each of these columns, also comprised of equally spaced narrow vertical panels **(fig. 8)**. Outside, in the much larger open-air arena, stairs leading down into the main seating area also appear from some viewing positions as vertical lines and from others as elegantly shifting angles **(fig. 9)**. From this main seating area, audiences have a view of the glass-walled communications box, which hovers on an especially flamboyantly cantilevered tapered concrete column over the covered area of the outdoor Stadium **(fig. 10)**. The elevation of this communications box rivals that of the platform originally reserved for Sihanouk himself, and for other royalty and dignitaries. The large lighting towers, and the smaller spires on top of the flat-roofed indoor Stadium structure, are other prominent repeated vertical lines visible in the outdoor arena which work in tandem with the various angled forms to recall the stilts seen in Cambodian wooden housing.

Figure 8: The National Stadium's indoor arena.



Source: Pen Sereypagna, 2013.

Figure 9: The National Stadium's main outdoor seating.

Source: Pen Sereypagna, 2013.

Figure 10: Media broadcasting box at the National Stadium.

24 To speak of these numerous echoes of stilted housing as "references" is perhaps misleading, since the term implies intention on the part of the architect; terms like "echo" and "resonance" may be more appropriate. To be clear, my interest here is not primarily in what Vann Molyvann intended when designing the Stadium: a great deal of critical attention has already been paid to the architect—much more than to any of the others working in Cambodia in this period—firmly situating him in an individualist and masculinist historiographical tradition of great master geniuses.

25 My interest is rather in how the Stadium's structure might be and might have been perceived and experienced by Cambodians, especially at the time of its construction. In the absence of records documenting people's responses to the Stadium at the time of its construction, such a line of inquiry is necessarily somewhat speculative, but it is informed by a multidisciplinary understanding of the visual and cultural context of that time. Firstly, then as now, the vast majority of the population are rural farmers, and very many of these live in stilted wooden houses. Secondly, the prevalence of images of stilted wooden houses in the representational paintings of rural landscapes by Cambodian artists of the 1960s—and their ubiquity as décor in modern concrete buildings, including those designed by Molyvann—demonstrates that stilted wooden houses were prominent as images, even in architecturally modern urban settings in Phnom Penh.[36] Thirdly, one of the city's prominent galleries displaying such paintings was located directly opposite the Stadium. One review of this gallery, published in 1968, specifically noted that its glass display windows, which were filled with paintings depicting bucolic scenes, also reflected the Stadium's "audacious" architecture.[37] And fourthly, many Khmer language novels of the period include detailed descriptions of stilted houses.[38]

26 Given these various contextual circumstances, it is possible to speculate that any repeated vertical structural form can be understood as an echo of the wooden columns which support stilted houses, by far the most familiar built form for most Cambodians. This very familiarity of the stilt form—its ubiquity in both the countryside and in towns and cities—has perhaps rendered it as if invisible to most commentators.

27 Yet repeated vertical lines, an echo or resonance of vernacular stilted housing if not a deliberate or conscious reference to the form, are found not only in the National Stadium but also in most modern buildings from the post-independence era. Other well-known examples include the small, circular library designed by Vann Molyvann as part of his Teacher's Training College in Phnom Penh (completed 1971, **fig. 11**), and also the Technical Training Institute (completed 1969, **fig. 12**), designed by another architect from the period, Mam Sophana (born 1936), who studied architecture at Miami University from 1958.[39] The use of water catchments—decorative as well as functional for draining and cooling—is also found not only at the Stadium but in many other public works from this period, including both of these aforementioned structures. While Molyvann referred to such reservoirs as being designed in reference to Angkorian

moats, as mentioned earlier, they also recall ponds used for domestic use, found alongside stilted houses in most rural villages.

Figure 11: Vann Molyvann (architect), classroom blocks at Teacher Training College, Phnom Penh, completed 1971.

Figure 12: Mam Sophana (architect), Technical Training Institute, Phnom Penh, completed 1969.

Source: Photograph ca.1969, from personal archive of Srin Sokmean, posted on the Facebook page "Amazing Cambodia."

28 Moreover, the emphasis on repeated vertical lines, and on exaggerated angles and cantilevers in supporting columns, are among many design features found not only in large-scale public buildings, but also in anonymously designed private houses from this period. A formal vocabulary is shared across the differing scales and purposes of civic projects and domestic environments. This suggests that these syncretic elements of modern architecture—the resonances not only with Angkor but also with continuously used vernacular housing forms—were enthusiastically embraced not only by State-sponsored architects, but also by private citizens during the two decades after national independence.

29 Indeed, private homes from the period still found throughout Phnom Penh suggest a trend of adapting quite specific design elements from large public projects for the domestic environment.[40] One rather baroque modern house in the Tonle Bassac neighborhood boasts hexagonal windows which are precise miniatures of those featured in the classrooms of Molyvann's Teacher's Training College **(fig. 13)**. Moreover, the

oblique vertical plane of the house's cutaway roof—visible to the left of and above the hexagonal windows—is clad in terracotta-colored bricks divided into evenly sized sections, also in a rhytme with the similarly obliquely angled external walls of Molyvann's classroom buildings.

Figure 13: Private house, Phnom Penh. Architect unknown, date of construction unknown, circa early 1970s.

Source: Author's picture, 2015.

30 There are two important points to note in this example of a private house's replication of design elements from Molyvann's Teacher's Training College. The first is that no information on this private house, or indeed on most like it in the city, is available. Official records in Cambodia's National Archives do not typically include details about individual properties such as this. Moreover, neither this house nor any other in the capital is inhabited by the same family that lived there at the time of construction. This is because of the forcible evacuation of the entirety of Phnom Penh during the Khmer Rouge takeover in 1975 and the haphazard nature of the repopulation after 1979. The second point to note in this example is that the design of Molyvann's classroom buildings, because of their domestic scale, readily lend themselves to such quotation and adaptation in private homes. While part of a much larger campus complex conceived with explicit references to Angkor Wat—including a raised walkway over a moat and streamlined versions of the Angkorian sculptures of six-headed *naga* serpents—the Teacher's Training College classrooms and other individual components are scaled at very approachable and intimate dimensions. Raised on stilts—albeit stilts fashioned at a showy cantilever—and clad on two sides with shades that form repeated vertical lines recalling wooden boards, these classroom blocks resemble vernacular housing both in form and in scale.

31 Attending to resonances with stilted houses in grand public projects like the Stadium and the Teacher's Training College, as well as to the sharing of a formal vocabulary between large structures and small, anonymously designed private homes, brings the domestic and homely into view in ways that align with the changing roles for women during the Sangkum era. Sihanouk's use of the Stadium and other modern buildings as background images for scenes of women excelling at sports has already been discussed. This continued after the 1970 coup which overthrew Sihanouk, in popular magazines from the Khmer Republic period (1970-1975; **fig. 14**). Despite the Stadium's immense scale, in its emphasis on the column form for both structural and decorative uses, it is legible as continuous with vernacular housing, in which Cambodian women are imagined to play a central role as heads of the domestic household. In recalling stilted houses, modern Cambodian buildings like the Stadium can be understood as announcing their accessibility not only to the men who commissioned, designed, and

built them, but also to the women who were increasingly called on to assume leading roles in public life.

Figure 14: Runner Meas Kheng, on the front cover of *Réalités cambodgiennes*, no. 778, 7 January 1972.

The unattributed photograph is shot in Phnom Penh's National Sports Complex, and a caption informs us that it was taken before she departed for Kuala Lumpur to compete in the SEAP (Southeast Asian Peninsular) Games.

Source: *Réalités cambodgiennes*, no. 778, 7 January 1972.

Unmonumental Modernism: Internal Division of Spaces Within the Stadium

32 I've discussed the small, even domestic or homely scale of the classroom buildings in the Teacher's Training College, despite the large size and Angkorian plan of the campus as a whole. In this final section of the paper, I will consider how the National Stadium, despite its immense overall size, is also spatially organized into a series of smaller-scaled zones. It is not experienced from within as a singular monolith, and irrespective of its height and spread, it is difficult to view from outside as a single mass or form.

33 I call this quality "unmonumental." This is not to deny the Stadium's numerous explicit references to the monuments and temples of Angkor. Yet it is also worth recognizing that while most Angkorian temples are legible from a certain distance as a unified whole, the experience of being within their walls is also not a feeling of being subsumed into an architectural immensity, but rather of moving through a series of smaller areas, such as causeways, galleries, shrines, gardens, and so on.[41] This is analogous to what I argue is the experience of moving through the National Stadium, despite its very large overall plan.

34 Let me offer some examples of the spatial experience of being inside the Stadium's various zones, in order to illustrate this sense of it being "a big place, but with many smaller places."[42] The clearest instance of this is in the indoor arena. Square in form and covered by a dramatic cruciform suspended concrete roof, this is one of the finest of many examples of Molyvann's use of cross-ventilation to provide natural cooling. Under each of the approximately 8,000 seats is a small opening, through which air from outside (as well as some light) can pass **(fig. 8)**. Of course, this opening functions to cool down the entire space. But whenever there is an even slight breeze (as there very often is at this elevation), each individual spectator can feel it against her or his own legs. Watching a sports match or performance, as spectators we may often tend to forget ourselves, to come to feel as if dissolved into a mass. Yet the individuated vents in the indoor stadium disrupt this viewing experience; we become bodily aware of our specific position. In short, our experience of the vast space of the indoor stadium is transformed into the experience of a much smaller space: that of our own seat.

35 The main seating in the outdoor stadium has no such individuation; indeed, in its uninterrupted and repeated horizontal lines, running in an almost complete circle, this area functions rather to emphasize the mass nature of the viewing crowd. Yet from any position in this main outdoor seating area, one has a clear view of the covered grandstand with its elevated seating areas and communications box, as mentioned above, and also of the large concourse area that runs the entire circumference of the stadium. So while the individual spectator is not architecturally reminded of her or his individual position in the crowd, it is nevertheless spatially emphasized that this seating area—as expansive as it is—does not comprise the entire Stadium, but is just one part of its numerous and distinct components.

36 There are many more examples of spaces in the Stadium that spatially divide the vastness of the whole complex into smaller components, thus making the experience one of being in a comparatively small space, rather than in an overbearing monument. The swimming pool seating, while physically adjoining the main outdoor stadium, faces away from it and is instead oriented to the city's center, thus forming a surprisingly intimate area that can seat up to 8000 people. And perhaps most prominent of all in the twenty-first century context is the open concourse that runs the length of the outdoor stadium, interrupted only by dramatic cantilevered concrete shades. Every evening as the sun sets, thousands of people of all ages gather here, some to exercise in groups led by aerobics instructors and accompanied by recorded music, and others to eat *nom kruok* and other snacks. As architect Bill Greaves has argued, the astonishingly varied uses of this space—all self-organized by citizens, without official sponsorship or direction—are testament to the flexibility of Molyvann's architecture, its openness to multiple uses, and its non-prescriptive character.[43] This character works together with the internal division of spaces that I have outlined.

37 Internal division of very large structures into smaller subsections is common in many of the major public projects of the Sangkum. The two largest housing developments of the period were co-located in the Bassac Riverfront Complex, a cultural precinct built on reclaimed land, which also included a theater, exhibition halls, a water sports complex, a performing arts conservatory, and landscaped gardens. These two housing developments—among the first multistory apartment buildings in Phnom Penh—are now known as the Grey Building (originally Olympic Village Apartments, designed by Vann Molyvann and completed c. 1963, now renovated beyond recognition; **fig. 15**) and the White Building (originally Bassac Municipal Apartments, completed 1963, still extant; **fig. 16**). Both were designed with features that break up their immense length—several hundred meters each—into smaller sections. In the White Building, the 468 initially planned apartments were spread over six separate buildings, each linked by an identical open air staircase which provides light, ventilation, and an informal gathering place for residents. Pen Sereypagna's detailed study of the White Building's architectural plans notes that each of the six individual substructures is of a more intimate scale than the Building as a whole, proposing that in scale each block is more approximate to a small rural village, where residents would typically know all of their neighbors.[44] In the Grey Building, 164 apartments were stacked in an undulating "stepped" formation, which Molyvann claims was inspired by New York's skyline, and

which appears from some angles or at a distance like numerous buildings close together, rather than one structure.

Figure 15: Vann Molyvann (architect), Olympic Village Apartments, now known as the Grey Building, completed 1963.

Source: Photograph 1960s, from personal collection of Vann Molyvann. Courtesy of Pen Sereypagna. http://nka.lumhor.org/?portfolio=olympic-village-apartments-gray-building. Accessed May 2016.

Figure 16: Lu Ban Hap (architect), Bassac Municipal Apartments, now known as the White Building, completed 1963, photographs circa 1960s.

Source: http://whitebuilding.org/en/photoseries/archival-images. Accessed September 2016.

38 To gain a glimpse of how the Grey Building was experienced by its occupants, we may look to an archival photograph from 1968 **(fig. 17)**. In it, the French-born Louise-Marie Men Makoth née Jarrier (who was married to the prominent Cambodian artist Men Makoth), a resident at the time, poses in front of the Grey Building with her two young daughters. The photograph is shot from mid-distance, perhaps in order to show the figures at full length, in the context of the landscaped garden and the multistory building behind them. Significantly, however, a hand-drawn line of blue ink across the building indicates where the Men Makoth family's apartment was located. This family memento suggests that these residents' experience of the Grey Building was not of the immensity of the overall structure, but rather of the more intimately proportioned, domestically scaled section that housed their own apartment.[45]

Figure 17: Louise-Marie Men Makoth née Jarrier (wife of artist Men Makoth), a resident in the Grey Building (Olympic Village Apartments), Bassac, Phnom Penh, poses in front of

the building with her two young daughters.

Source: Sanda Men Makoth's private archive, Paris, June 2015.

Conclusion

39 Why have I chosen to conclude this paper about the National Stadium with mention of the Bassac Riverfront Complex and with this poignant personal memento from the Grey Building apartments there? I hope that this image of a domestic space within a public landmark points to some of the broader generative potentials of an attention to the domestic in the spaces of the Stadium.

40 Like the Stadium, the Bassac Riverfront Complex was an essential stop in any official tour of Phnom Penh during the Sangkum period. Newsreel footage of French president Charles de Gaulle's visit in 1966, for example, shows an impressive cavalcade traveling past the White and Grey Buildings on the way to the Stadium, where a spectacular parade was organized and speeches were delivered. These and other large-scale modern

buildings were also featured in many of the films Sihanouk directed during his time as prince and head of state, including both documentaries and fictions.

41 During an official visit to Phnom Penh in 1967, Singapore's prime minister Lee Kuan Yew, in an official address at the state dinner given in his honor, enthused that "the new Phnom Penh [has] the architectural style, in steel and concrete, of what Angkor had in sandstone and laterite" and made special mention of an "exhibition building [...] founded on newly reclaimed land."[46] This exhibition building was one of several within the Bassac Riverfront Complex, which residents of the adjacent Grey and White Buildings at that time recall being frequented by those from within the neighborhood, as well as by the wider community, and international visitors such as Prime Minister Lee. The reclaiming of land, as well as mass construction in steel and concrete, would come to be defining features of Singapore but were at the time of this visit only in their infancy.[47] Yet Sihanouk's earlier visit to Singapore in 1962 also coincided with the city-state's initial stages of development of the high-rise apartment housing for which it would later be renowned.[48] Photographic records of the visit show Sihanouk being shown plans for large-scale urban housing.[49] This follows closely from the prince's 1961 announcement that "our capital must deal with the problem urban population [...] We must begin the construction of low-cost apartment buildings."[50]

42 Architectural and urban modernization, in Phnom Penh as elsewhere, was largely driven by practical needs for increased and improved housing. Residential constructions —both large-scale projects like the multi-level apartments in the Bassac Riverfront Complex and smaller scale private homes—operated in tandem with civic buildings like the National Stadium in the transformation of cities in the wake of national independence.

43 Locating the domestic in large-scale civic buildings like the National Stadium offers us a way of considering how these buildings were experienced—and continue to be experienced—by their users, by ordinary citizens. It offers a view of these structures and spaces from within, rather than the kind of falsely omniscient view that political leaders and architects adopt when looking at scale models rather than real environments. Just as crucially, it offers a way to understand modern architecture as in a dynamic, multi-layered, constantly shifting and infinitely complex relationship to time and history. Any notion of a neat split between the colonial and the postcolonial, or the premodern and the modern, is exploded by this understanding of density and multiplicity; so too, distinctions between the local, the regional, and the global blur and dissolve. Attention to the domestic in the National Stadium reveals that the coeval old and new forms that comprise the architecturally modern in Cambodia extend regionally and temporally, beyond the cultural nationalist references to Angkor, to encompass echoes of vernacular housing—a form which resists confinement to any discrete historical moment or to any nationally bounded territory. This is a syncretic enactment of the modern in architecture, in which plural temporalities and multiple scales are interwoven. Despite the claims of Vann Molyvann and his patron Norodom Sihanouk, there is no simple teleology from the time of Angkor to the time of the post-independence Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime. The domestic—and especially the form of stilted houses—troubles this linear conception of temporality and progress, in ways that may be generative of broader disruptions to cultural nationalist narratives and to teleological myths elsewhere in the region.

Notes

1 Born in Kampot in 1926, Vann Molyvann's reputation as an exemplary modern architect has, in recent years, increasingly spread beyond Cambodia. Here, he has long been acclaimed as the nation's first Western-trained architect, and he embodied a polymathy that was typical of the Cambodian nation-building project. He served not only as the chief state architect for Prince and Head of State Norodom Sihanouk, but also as his Minister of Culture, and in this capacity he oversaw ambitious cultural initiatives, including the transformation of colonial arts institutions and their integration into regional networks. Vann Molyvann passed away just days before the publication of this essay. He will be sadly missed. For an introduction to the breadth of Molyvann's "long, multifaceted career," see Ashley Thompson, "Preface," *in* Vann Molyvann, *Modern Khmer Cities*, Phnom Penh: Reyum, 2003, p. iii–viii.

2 "National Sports Complex of Cambodia," *World Monuments Fund*, 2016, URL: https://www.wmf.org/project/national-sports-complex-cambodia. Accessed 17 July 2017.

3 My research in the United States of America's National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, was made possible by support from the Getty Foundation's Connecting Art Histories program, in funding a 2015-2016 research initiative titled "Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art." Original research in Cambodia and the region was undertaken with support from an Australian Government Postgraduate Award and the University of Melbourne's Asia Institute Scholarship.

4 The tax on ice and "a local type of ice cream" was five percent; the tax on alcohol was one riel per liter for "domestic alcohol" and 10 riels per liter for "imported alcohol." Confidential Foreign Service Despatch from US Embassy, Phnom Penh to Department of State, Washington, headed "1963 SEAP Games May Be Financial Problem." College Park, MD (United States), United States of America National Archives and Records Administration, USA. RG 59/250/4/18/3 Box 2558. Declassification Authority NND949601.

It is not known for how long this tax was imposed. Regrettably, budget records on this matter are not held in the National Archives of Cambodia, and no other archival records to corroborate the findings in the United States of America National Archives and Records Administration have been located to date. Given the tight control that Sihanouk exerted (including over the media) during the 1960s, and given also the destruction and dispersal of pre-1975 records as a result of civil war and the Khmer Rouge regime, historical research in Cambodia must by necessity often rely on fragments of evidence.

5 Vann Molyvann, *Modern Khmer Cities*, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 157–160.

6 Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, *Building Cambodia: "New Khmer Architecture" 1953-1970*, Bangkok: Key Publisher, 2006, p. 208.

7 Ingrid Muan, "Playing with Powers: the Politics of Art in Newly Independent Cambodia," *Udaya, Journal of Khmer Studies*, no. 6, 2005, p. 51–54.

8 College Park, MD (United States), United States of America National Archives and Records Administration, RG 306/131/39/11/1 Box 3. Declassification Authority NND74610.

9 Han Suyin, "The Laughing Cambodians," *Eastern Horizon*, no. 1, July 1960, p. 24. Emphasis in original.

10 This is the translation most often used in scholarly and other sources. See David Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History: Politics, War, and Revolution Since 1945*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991, p. 79.

11 Klairung Amratisha, "The Cambodian Novel: A Study of its Emergence and Development," PhD Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1998, p. 174. Klairung is quoting from a speech Sihanouk delivered in 1961 (and published in 1962, the year before the Stadium's construction), addressing the Association of Khmer Writers.

12 Norodom Sihanouk and Wilfred Burchett, *My War with the C.I.A.: Cambodia's Fight for Survival*, Harmondsworth: Penguin and Allen Lane, 1973 (Pelican books).

13 For a detailed discussion of this Boulevard in relation to performances made by Sihanouk's Royal Ballet to celebrate its opening in 1959, see in Roger Nelson, "Pathways in Performance (in and around Cambodia)?," *Stedelijk Studies*, no. 3, 2015, URL: http://www.stedelijkstudies.com/journal/pathways-in-performance/. Accessed 18 July 2017.

14 "1963 SEAP Games May Be Financial Problem." College Park, MD (United States), United States of America National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59/250/4/18/3 Box 2558. Declassification Authority NND949601.

15 According to Sihanouk, "We would be condemned by history if we permitted Cambodia to become not only a military dictatorship but once more a colony. All my life I have dreamed and fought for my country's independence. I did not win it from France in order to abandon it now." Norodom Sihanouk and Wilfred Burchett, *My War with the C.I.A.*, *op. cit.* (note 12), p. 28.

16 Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, *Building Cambodia*, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 212.

17 Kosuke Matsubara, "Japanese Collaborators in the Golden Age of Modern Khmer City and Architecture in Cambodia," unpublished paper presented at *The 15th Science Council of Asia Board Meeting and International Symposium*, Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 2015. With thanks to Pen Sereypagna for sharing this document.

18 Masaaki Iwamoto, "The Roles of Foreign Experts in the Cambodian Modern Movement of 1950-60s: Focusing on the works of Vann Molyvann," *Proceedings of the 11th ISAIA, Sept. 20-23, 2016, Miyakgi, Japan,* 1185–1189. With thanks to the author for sharing this document.

19 Darryl Collins, "Vann Molyvann: Situating the Work of Cambodia's Most Influential Architect," *Perspecta*, no. 45, 2012, themed issue Kurt Evans, Iben Falconer and Ian Mills (eds.), *Agency*, p. 82.

20 Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, *Building Cambodia*, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 207.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 208.

22 This is an observation drawing on numerous conversations with Cambodian friends and colleagues from 2011 to 2017. It is also regularly articulated in journalistic and documentary sources. See for example the interview with architect Yam Sokly in the short documentary film *Concrete Visions. New Khmer Architecture* (selected scenes, work in progress), directed by Nico Mesterharm, concept by Helen Grant Ross and Nico Mesterharm, Krossover Media Germany and Meta Art Cambodia, 2007. Sokly speaks enthusiastically of a *samay meas*, or "golden age."

23 Vikramāditya Prakāsh, "*Béton Brut* and the Rough Poetry of Le Corbusier's Capitol in Chandigarh," *in* Charlotte Huddleston and Kristen Wineera (eds.), *Gavin Hipkins: Leisure Valley*, exhibition catalogue, Auckland: St Paul St Publishing and Ilam Press, 2014, p. 14.

24 Writing of deliberately rough-surfaced concrete such as this in the "brutalist" buildings of Le Corbusier in Chandigarh, Prakāsh notes that "Traditionally in India, the roughness of the construction was covered over with fine stonework [...] By deciding to leave the concrete as it came out of the shuttering, he was thus taking a risk—a risk that, some today might argue, has not panned out. The sense that the buildings were left unfinished, rough and incomplete has been interpellated by their later [sic] day inhabitants as the freedom to not bother maintaining the buildings 'as they were' [...] find[ing] ever novel and ever uglier ways of water-proofing them, to paint them or otherwise despoil them as per their own needs and expectation." Vikramāditya Prakāsh, "*Béton Brut*," *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 12. There are parallels in the post-war treatment of Sangkum era buildings in Cambodia, including the painting of some of the Stadium's exterior concrete, which began in 2013.

25 The Vann Molyvann Project was founded by Canadian architect Bill Greaves, but Pen Sereypagna has taken on an increasingly leading role in the years since.

26 "The Vann Molyvann Project Summer School 2015," *The Vann Molyvann Project*, n.d. URL: http://www.vannmolyvannproject.org/past-program#/events-1. Accessed 18 July 2017.

27 Quoted in Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, *Building Cambodia*, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 205. Emphasis added.

28 Vann Molyvann, *Modern Khmer Cities*, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 160.

29 Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, *Building Cambodia*, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 204–205.

30 Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation 1860–1945*, Hawai'i and Chiang Mai, HI: University of Hawai'i Press and Silkworm Books, 2008 (Southeast Asia: politics, meaning, memory), p. 44.

31 Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, *Building Cambodia*, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 212.

32 Roger Nelson, "Pathways in Performance," *op. cit.* (note 13).

33 Norodom Sihanouk, *Le femme cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum [Women during Sangkum Reastr Niyum],* 24 minutes, color with sound, Khemara Pictures, 1960s. Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Bophana Center, Archive Reference NSI_VI_001568. Unofficially duplicated versions also circulate online.

34 Fabienne Luco, "House-Building Rituals and Ceremonies in a Village of the Angkor Complex," *in* François Tainturier (ed.), *Wooden Architecture of Cambodia. A Disappearing Heritage*, Phnom Penh: Center for Khmer Studies, 2006, p. 104.

35 Jacques Népote, "Understanding the Cambodian Dwelling: Space and Gender in Traditional Homes," *in* François Tainturier (ed.), *Wooden Architecture of Cambodia. A Disappearing Heritage*, *op. cit.* (note 33), p. 108–123.

36 See Roger Nelson, "'The Work the Nation Depends On': Landscapes and Women in the Paintings of Nhek Dim," *in* Sarena Abdullah, Yvonne Low, Phoebe Scott and Stephen H. Whiteman (eds.), *Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art, 1950-1990*, Singapore; Sydney: National Gallery Singapore and Power Institute Publications, 2018 (forthcoming).

37 Author unnamed, "Une visite à la galerie Sam Yoeun," [A visit to the Sam Yoeun Gallery], *Réalités cambodgiennes*, 5 July 1965, p. 28–29.

38 I deal with this in a chapter in my doctoral thesis, which I am developing for a future publication.

39 Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, *Building Cambodia*, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 97. See also Rann Samnang, "Air, Light and Water: Veteran Architect Mam Sophana Talks About His Work," in *Sthapatyakam: The Architecture of Cambodia*, Phnom Penh: Department of Media and Communication, Royal University of Phnom Penh, 2012, p. 12.

40 This phenomenon is also explored in: Sakona Loeung, "Exploring Modern Private Houses and Ways of Living in Relation to Urban Development in 1960s Phnom Penh," unpublished Master of Architecture thesis, Chiang Mai University, 2017.

41 See Eleanor Mannikka, *Angkor Wat: Time, Space, and Kingship*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996.

42 This phrase is from a Cambodian student in her late teens, who (like tens of thousands of her peers, as well as others of all ages) enjoys relaxing at the National Stadium around sunset. I spoke with her in February 2014. Anecdotal evidence gathered between 2012 and 2017, including conversations (mostly in Khmer) with both friends and with strangers, informs my understanding of how Cambodians use and experience the Stadium and other spaces.

43 Bill Greaves, unpublished presentation at *Time, Space, Voice: Phnom Penh's White Building*, a bilingual symposium convened by Erin Gleeson, Roger Nelson, Pen Sereypagna and Vuth Lyno, presented by SA SA BASSAC and hosted by the Bophana Center, Phnom Penh, 9–10 January, 2015.

44 Pen Sereypagna presentation at *Time, Space, Voice: Phnom Penh's White Building* symposium, 2015.

45 The photograph is from the personal archive of Sanda Men Makoth, and contextual information is from an interview I conducted with her in Paris, in June 2015. I thank her for her warmth, generosity, and openness, and I also thank Adeena Mey for kindly hosting and facilitating the interview.

46 Lee Kuan Yew, "Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, at the State Dinner in his Honour Given by the Head of State of Cambodia, Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, in Phnom Penh on December 7th, 1967." Singapore, National Archives of Singapore, URL: http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/lky19671207b.pdf.

47 Reclaiming of land in Singapore began in 1965. See Joshua Comaroff, "Built on Sand: Singapore and the New State of Risk," *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 39, "Wet Matter," 2014, URL: http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/39/built-on-sand-singapore-and-the-new-state-of-risk. Accessed 18 July 2017.

48 The Housing Development Board (HDB), now synonymous with Singapore's high-density, high-rise apartments, was established in 1959. Yue-man Yeung, *National Development Policy and Urban Transformation in Singapore*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1973, p. 34–35.

49 Singapore, National Archives of Singapore, Image 20120000379 – 0025, Negative A4083/14/32, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 19/12/1962. URL: http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/photographs/record-details/29cf20be-43a6-11e4-859c-0050568939ad. Accessed 18 July 2017.

50 Quoted in Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, *Building Cambodia*, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 16.

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