

In the Eclipse of Angkor: Tuol Sleng, Choeng EK, and Khmer Temples



Angkor Wat
9 x 12 inch (plate size)
Daguerreotype
Binh Danh © 2008

San Francisco—In Binh Danh's third solo exhibition at Haines Gallery, the California artist documents a recent journey to Cambodia with a series of photographs titled *In the Eclipse of Angkor: Tuol Sleng, Choeng EK, and Khmer Temples*. The show marks Danh's first public exhibition of daguerreotypes, of which he states, "The daguerreotype is a negative image, but the mirrored surface of the metal plate reflects the image and makes it appear positive in the proper light. The daguerreotype is an early direct photographic process without the capacity for duplication. But with contemporary equipment, I have perfected a process of exposing a daguerreotype in the darkroom, allowing me more creative control." Danh, the innovator of the chlorophyll print, continues his exploration of photographic processes in the new exhibition.

As in his previous series, *Ancestral Altars* (Haines Gallery, 2006), Binh Danh explores the Khmer Rouge period (1975–79) during which an estimated two million Cambodians died through execution, torture, starvation, and forced labor at Tuol Sleng and Choeng EK. The Khmer temples that were built at Angkor during the Khmer Empire (9th to 15th century CE) contain wall carvings and mythology dedicated to the Buddhist and Hindu gods, such as Rahu, the snake god that swallows the sun or moon causing an eclipse. Interestingly, the deadly Khmer Rouge originated in this same area of northern Cambodia, marking its own period of darkness.

Binh Danh was born in Viet Nam and immigrated to the United States in 1980. After acquiring a BFA in photography at San Jose State University, Binh Danh received an MFA in studio art at Stanford University in 2004. In 2009, he will have solo

exhibitions at Eleanor D. Wilson Museum, Hollins University, Virginia, and Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon. Binh Danh's work is in the permanent collections of Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; M.H. de Young Museum, San Francisco; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College, Chicago; Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, New York; and Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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January 8 - February 28, 2009
Opening Reception with the Artist:
Thursday, January 8, 2009,
5:30pm to 7:30pm