

# THE DISTILLERY GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

05/31/22



សំសុភ័ក្រ រង់ចាំចូលនិព្វាន

SOPHEAK SAM:

*Waiting For Enlightenment*

June 1, 2022 – July 9, 2022

Reception:

Saturday, June 11, 7 – 10 PM

IMAGE CREDIT

Sopheak Sam, ខ្ញុំជាពស់ (*Languishing*), 2022.  
Image transfer, spray paint, and acrylic on wood panel, 9" × 12". Photo by James Hull. Courtesy of the artist. © Sopheak Sam

---

A sumptuous journey through queer temporality, **SOPHEAK SAM: រង់ចាំចូលនិព្វាន** *Waiting for Enlightenment* opens June 1st in celebration of Pride Month and is the first in a series of new exhibitions and programming at the Distillery Gallery beginning summer 2022.

The Distillery Gallery joins artist **Sopheak Sam** (b. 1989, Thai-Cambodian border) in welcoming their first solo presentation of multidisciplinary works ranging from mixed media drawings, paintings, prints, books, and video. Time is played by a serpent in រង់ចាំចូលនិព្វាន *Waiting for Enlightenment*. Traversing picture planes and video screens, the serpent is a pervasive multidimensional being, but like other symbolic beings of western evil and sin, it is demonized for ruination or pillaged for pleasure—never permitted a peaceful journey to self transformation or enlightenment. Sam’s multidisciplinary practice traces cultural hybridity, queer futurity, religious iconography, and the fabulation of a marred political history between the U.S. and Cambodia. A child refugee born in the aftermath of the Cambodian genocide, the artist’s personal entanglement with the historicization of the Khmer experience posits the exhibition as an embodied site for individual and collective searching. Crawled from an existential fever dream, the serpent is an avatar that cruises through liminal spaces of representation, duality, belonging, spirituality, and utopia. It is birthed infinitely from a recurring cycle of displacement, loss, and love.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an intimate publication created in collaboration between Sopheak Sam and Melissa Teng, City of Boston Artist-in-Residence. A reception with refreshments will take place Saturday, June 11, 7-10 pm.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

សំសុក់ ស៊ីវី **Sopheak Sam** (they/he) is a Fulbright Scholar and artist-researcher exploring ornamentalism, religious iconography, postwar mythologies, and film/media archives as source materials across Cambodia and Cambodian diasporas to arrive at sites of memory, affect, pain, pleasure, and spirituality. Sam received the 2022-2023 Fulbright Research Fellowship to Thailand, the U.S. Department of State's Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study at the Glasgow School of Art, the Morton R. Godine Travel Fellowship (New York, NY), the Barbara Grad Award, and the Rob Moore Grant in Painting. Sam has exhibited work nationally and internationally including the Minnesota Museum of American Art (St. Paul, MN), Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Godine Family Gallery, Midway Gallery, Sandra and David Bakalar Gallery (Boston, MA), Gallery 263 (Cambridge, MA), Dreitzer Gallery (Waltham, MA), and the Grace and Clark Fyfe Gallery (Glasgow, Scotland). Sam is a naturalized American citizen of ethnic Khmer descent who was born on the Thai-Cambodian border. They grew up in Lowell, Massachusetts (ancestral Pennacook and Pawtucket land) where Sam currently resides and works. Sam graduated with their BFA in Studio for Interrelated Media (S.I.M.) at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2018, and recently completed the post-baccalaureate program in Studio Art at Brandeis University in spring 2022. Sam is an upcoming MFA candidate at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University through a Full Tuition Scholarship.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

**The Distillery Gallery** is an art gallery and project space located in South Boston, with a focus on promoting interesting and engaging art, working with artists from the Distillery, Boston, and beyond. The Gallery is on the first floor of The Distillery, a community of artists, artisans, and small businesses located in a converted rum warehouse building in South Boston. For more than twenty years The Distillery has been a hub of creativity and the arts in the city.

### LOCATION

[516 East 2nd Street, South Boston, MA 02127](#)

### HOURS

Monday - Friday, 9 am - 6 pm and by appointment.

*Face coverings required in the gallery for safety and comfort of all visitors.*

### TRANSPORTATION + PARKING

Accessible by Public Transportation via the MBTA. 15-20 minute walk from Broadway and Andrew stations on the Red Line, near bus stops for #9 from Copley Square (Orange and Green Lines) and #7 from South Station (Red and Silver Lines). There are several visitor spaces in the building parking lot and street parking nearby.

### MEDIA CONTACT

**Email:** [distillerygallery@gmail.com](mailto:distillerygallery@gmail.com) / [sopheak@sopheaksam.com](mailto:sopheak@sopheaksam.com)

**Instagram:** [@distillerygallery](#) / [@alwazebmybb](#)

## WORKS INCLUDED



Sopheak Sam, ជាទីវន្តរី (*Ouroboros*), 2021. Acrylic and oil on repurposed vinyl, triptych: 135" × 60" (45" x 60" each). Photo by Mel Taing. Courtesy of the artist. © Sopheak Sam



Sopheak Sam, ចិត្តពីរ (*Two Hearts*), 2022. One-channel video (color, sound; 2:00 minutes), CRT monitor, and plastic gold Buddhist home shrine. Courtesy of the artist. © Sopheak Sam

[Click here to video.](#)



Sopheak Sam, ព្រំ (Eden), 2021. Mixed media on paper: acrylic and soft pastels, approx. 14 × 8 feet. Courtesy of the artist. © Sopheak Sam



Sopheak Sam, *Mobilities and Silences*, 2022. Excerpt: centerfold from booklet, paper collage, 11" × 17". Courtesy of the artist. © Sopheak Sam



Sopheak Sam, អរព្រឹត្តិ (*Pray for Me*), 2021. Mixed media on paper: oil, acrylic, soft pastels, 40" × 26". Photo by James Hull. Courtesy of the artist. © Sopheak Sam