

Htein Lin: Burma Inside Out
27 July to 13 October 2007
Co-curated by Katriana Hazell and Vicky Bowman



Asia House is proud to present the first UK exhibition of Burmese artist Htein Lin. This powerful body of work was produced between 1998 and 2004, at a time when Htein Lin had been imprisoned by the Burmese/Myanmar military government, accused of planning opposition protests. Already an established contemporary artist, as well as a comic actor and performance artist, he continued to paint secretly whilst in jail, using white cotton prison uniforms as a substitute for canvas and producing well over 230 works. While he was able to arrange for paints to be smuggled in by supportive prison guards, brushes proved difficult to obtain, and dangerous to keep. So he improvised with a variety of materials, such as soap blocks, syringes, cigarette lighters, pieces of netting, plates and mugs, and his own body, developing innovative printing techniques. The abstract and figurative images that resulted depict prison life, the memories, hopes, fears and dreams of prisoners, Buddhist faith, and memorable events spent behind bars, like the Millennium.

In November 2004, shortly before the end of his sentence, a purging of Myanmar Military Intelligence was followed by a review of many prisoners' cases. The military government informed Htein Lin that the case against him was unproven, and he would be freed. On his release he thanked his jailers for providing him with the opportunity and inspiration to develop his art, and to quit smoking and drinking. He immediately resumed his artistic career in Rangoon.

Stefan Kosciuszko, Chief Executive of Asia House said "Burma or Myanmar? By presenting these powerful works by artist Htein Lin along with a related programme of events, Asia House aims to encourage discussion and debate on a country little understood or noticed".

Katriana Hazell, Cultural Director of Asia House and curator of the exhibition said "Burmese contemporary art is rarely seen in the UK and this is such exciting work. We hope Htein Lin's exhibition and our related programme will help raise awareness of what is really going on inside the country, particularly amongst the artistic community'.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an education and events programme focussing on contemporary Burmese culture and society.

Monday to Saturday 10am to 6pm, closed Sundays
Admittance £2, free to Asia House members and concessions

Editors note:

Htein Lin is currently based in London. In 2007 he has performed at the Venice Biennale, and participated in the group exhibition Asian Attitude in Poznan (June 2007). He will have a solo exhibition at Karin Weber Gallery Hong Kong in March 2008. For further information, see www.hteinlin.com.

Asia House, was established in 1997, but only recently moved to its home in New Cavendish Street in 2005. It aims to lead the way in promoting a deeper understanding of diverse Asian cultures and economies, hosting around 125 lively artistic and corporate annual events. This includes Asian visual and performing arts, literature, current affairs and a glittering array of business events. Each year, its artistic programme unites emerging and established Asian artists and curators with four major exhibitions, a comprehensive education programme, and a variety of lectures and panel discussions.

Events Programme

Contemporary Art in Myanmar

Tuesday 31 July. Doors 6.30pm. Lecture 6.45-7.45pm

A joint lecture by Gill Pattison from River Gallery, Yangon, a showcase for Myanmar's leading contemporary artists and Chaw Ei Thein, Yangon-based artist, singer, performance artist and art teacher. Chaw Ei Thein, who has collaborated with Htein Lin, will discuss the Myanmar performance art scene and the challenges faced by Myanmar artists.

Asia House Members and concs £4, Non-members £7

Exhibition Private View

For Asia House members only

Thursday 2 August. Doors 6.30pm. Event 6.45-7.45pm

A special opportunity for members to meet artist Htein Lin and enjoy a private view of the exhibition with a drinks reception, talks by the exhibition curators and the artist, and guided tours.

Free – booking recommended

Family Day

Saturday 4 August. Sessions at 11.30am-1.00pm, 2.00pm–3.30pm

Join us for the day or drop in for a while. Design expressive t-shirts and experiment with unusual printing techniques with artist Htein Lin (please bring a light coloured t-shirt to work on). Artist Chaw Ei Thein will involve visitors in boldly expressive painting sessions, Burmese arts and crafts and even some performance art tasters!

Music of Myanmar

Wednesday 5 September. Doors 6.30pm. Event 6.45-7.45pm (with a reception afterwards)

A rare opportunity to hear traditional and contemporary music from five leading musicians visiting from Myanmar, including respected vocalist Soe Sander Tun and leading instrumentalist Tin Win Hlaing. The performance will be followed by a reception of drinks and Burmese food supplied by Yadana Restaurant, Fulham.

This visit of the musicians to England is being sponsored by the Myanmar and Britain Association and Orient-Express Hotels.

Htein Lin – Constrained Art

Thursday 20 September. Doors 6.30pm. Lecture 6.45-7.45pm

Htein Lin will discuss his experiences as an artist in prison and outside, and explain the background to his prison paintings. As a political prisoner from 1998-2004 in Burma, he struggled to continue painting, constrained by both space and the absence of proper materials and forced to improvise with such things as cotton prison uniforms, soap bars, cigarette lighters, syringes and tin plates.

Burma and Tourism

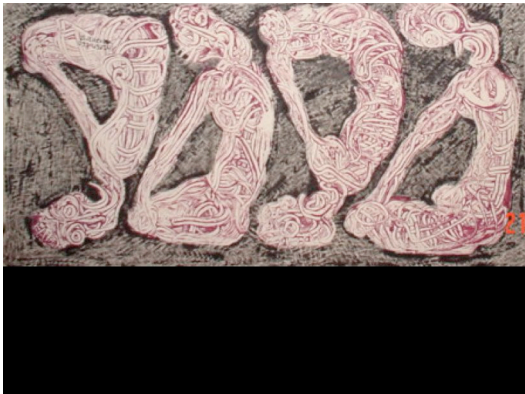
A Panel Discussion

Wednesday 3 October. Doors 6.30pm. 6.45-7.45pm

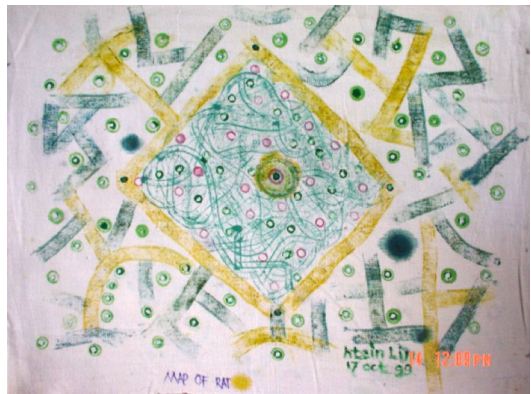
Can the benefits of sustainable tourism help to open up and develop Burma or is an isolationist approach more effective in dealing with a repressive military regime? After initial presentations by a panel including advocates of a tourist boycott, and of responsible tourism, as well as those involved directly in the tourism industry, the moderator will open the debate to the audience for questions exploring the complexities and conflicting opinions this subject raises

PRESS ENQUIRIES & IMAGES

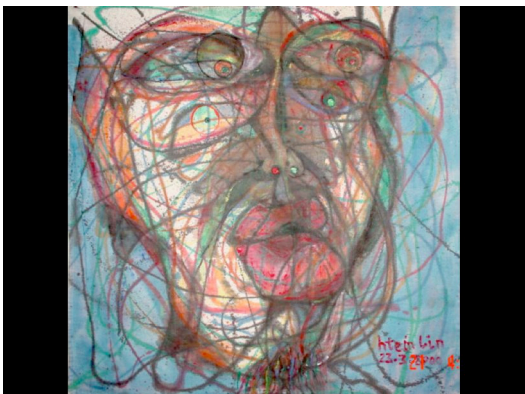
Sophie Persson, Asia House – 00 44 (0)20 7307 5447 / sophie.persson@asiahouse.co.uk



Pon-San-Tain (I)



Map of Rat



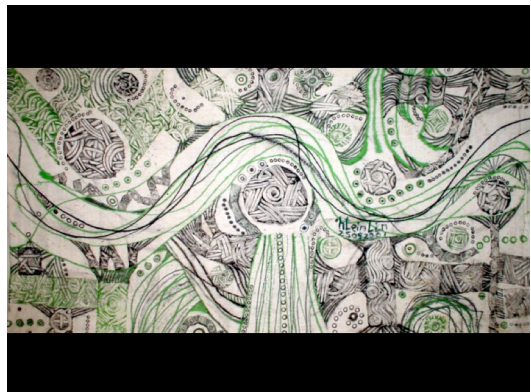
Self-portrait



Waiting for Food



Biology of Art



Mosaic (I)