

Follow You Home

WOMEN ARTISTS FROM CAMBODIA AND
CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN DIASPORA



4-26 September 2026
Curated by Lauren Elise Barlow

FOLLOW YOU HOME

Cambodian-Australian artists Linda Sok, Allison Chhorn, Nataly Lee and Cambodian Mao Sovanchandy navigate identities shaped across countries, languages and cultural traditions. Their works explore cultural memory, intergenerational relationships and the complexities of belonging, maintaining connections to Khmer heritage while navigating contemporary Australian life. Grounded in personal experience, each artist's story diverges from a critical moment in Cambodian history, to take us on a journey in which families and individuals experience survival, change and an ongoing search to define home and belonging in an ever-changing cultural space. Bringing these four artists together draws connections between Cambodian histories and Australia's multicultural present, reminding us that the stories of diaspora are also Australian stories.

Australia has always been shaped by movement, exchange and cultural complexity. Long before colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples maintained rich and diverse cultural, linguistic and artistic traditions across the continent. Today, these histories exist alongside the experiences of migrant communities who continue to reshape what Australian identity looks like. In a country where nearly half the population has a parent born overseas, Australian culture cannot be understood through a singular narrative. Instead, it emerges through overlapping histories, inherited memories and the ongoing negotiations of belonging that take place across generations.

Yet diasporic voices often remain on the margins of Australian art history. As our understanding of Australian identity continues to expand, there is an increasing need for exhibitions that create space for artists whose experiences connect this continent to the wider histories of Asia and the Pacific. These perspectives reveal Australia not as an isolated nation, but as one deeply entangled with regional stories of migration, displacement, resilience and cultural exchange. *Follow You Home* sits within a growing movement of artists and curators bringing diasporic narratives to the forefront of contemporary Australian art.



Allison Chhorn, *Where is the House Now?* 2025
Digital video and Super 8 film, single-channel video, two-channel audio

Catalogue cover:
Nataly Lee *KID* 2025
Silkscreen print on rice sacks
variable size



Image credit courtesy Alex Nguyễn

Allison Chhorn is a Cambodian-Australian filmmaker and interdisciplinary artist exploring displacement, post-memory and diasporic identity through intimate engagements with family histories. Drawing on film, photography, archives and oral testimony, Chhorn reimagines the gaps and silences left in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge, tracing how memory, loss and belonging are carried across generations. *Follow You Home* presents four of Chhorn's films that include observations of family members, dynamics and beliefs. The works travel across Australia and Cambodia tracing stories and memories of collective and personal history.

Cambodian-Australian multidisciplinary artist **Nataly Lee** was born in Battambang in 1983 during Cambodia's civil war. This early experience of displacement continues to shape her work. Through field-based research and image-making, Lee explores memory, migration and cultural inheritance, focusing on how histories of movement and survival are carried through time, place, materials and everyday practices. *Follow You Home* presents sculptural works, prints and paintings by Lee expressively retelling her lived experience from Khao I Dang refugee camp as a child, to her diaspora in Australia and New Zealand before returning as an adult to Cambodia.



Image credit courtesy Nataly Lee

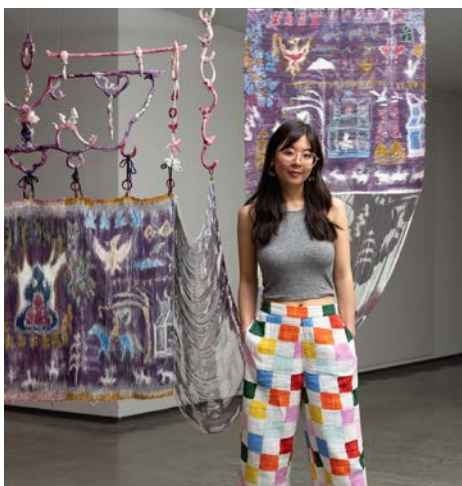


Image credit courtesy the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia. Photo by Jessica Maurer

Rooted in her Cambodian cultural heritage, Cambodian-Australian artist **Linda Sok's** practice considers her upbringing in Australia as a fracture through which personal and historical traumas are unravelled. Working through weaving, ritual and material translation, she treats memory, historical and personal narratives, speculation, and imagination as equally reliable archives, dissolving distinctions between fact and fiction. *Follow You Home* presents a compelling opportunity to bring the *Lineage 1631.1* and *Deities in Temple* series together in conversation, illuminating the conceptual and aesthetic threads that connect them.

Cambodian artist **Mao Sovanchandy** is an independent multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores environmental and social issues, as well as societal norms, through self-reflection and personal experience. Her work is deeply informed by the rapid transformation of Phnom Penh; a city where historical, cultural and ecological values are in constant flux. Mao's practice includes social engagement, often centring on the tension between what is visible and what is forgotten. *Follow You Home* presents new and past works by Mao, tracing her personal transformations as she navigates and seeks to understand the shifting landscapes around her.



Image credit courtesy Mao Sovanchandy. Photo by Peysien

Follow You Home

By Allison Chhorn

I wonder what my life would have been like if I wasn't born in Australia. If my parents had never migrated to Australia. If they had moved to one of the other countries like America, Canada or France, where other Cambodian refugees migrated to. If they had stayed in Cambodia. If the Khmer Rouge never happened. Or if my parents were able to speak more about what had happened, everything before the war and migrating to Australia. Where do we house our memories if they were created in another place and time and if we ourselves are constantly moving?

I feel like there is an invisible connection amongst all Cambodian people and those with Khmer heritage. Even those who've migrated to different parts of the world. It's a shared history of loss. Our cultural identity cannot move forward if we can't process the past. What would it have looked like if the artists, musicians, cultural figures killed during the Khmer Rouge genocide, if they were still alive today? What kind of art would they have made?

We grasp and glean and hold on to remnants of them, their art, the fragments of history they left behind.

For so long, I have thought about what we've lost and what could have been. About my parents' siblings and what happened to them other than being described as 'missing'. Or about my mother and how her youth was taken away from her when she was 16-19 years old and how she is still in a perpetual state of survival mode.

Everyday I am learning to live with the things we have.

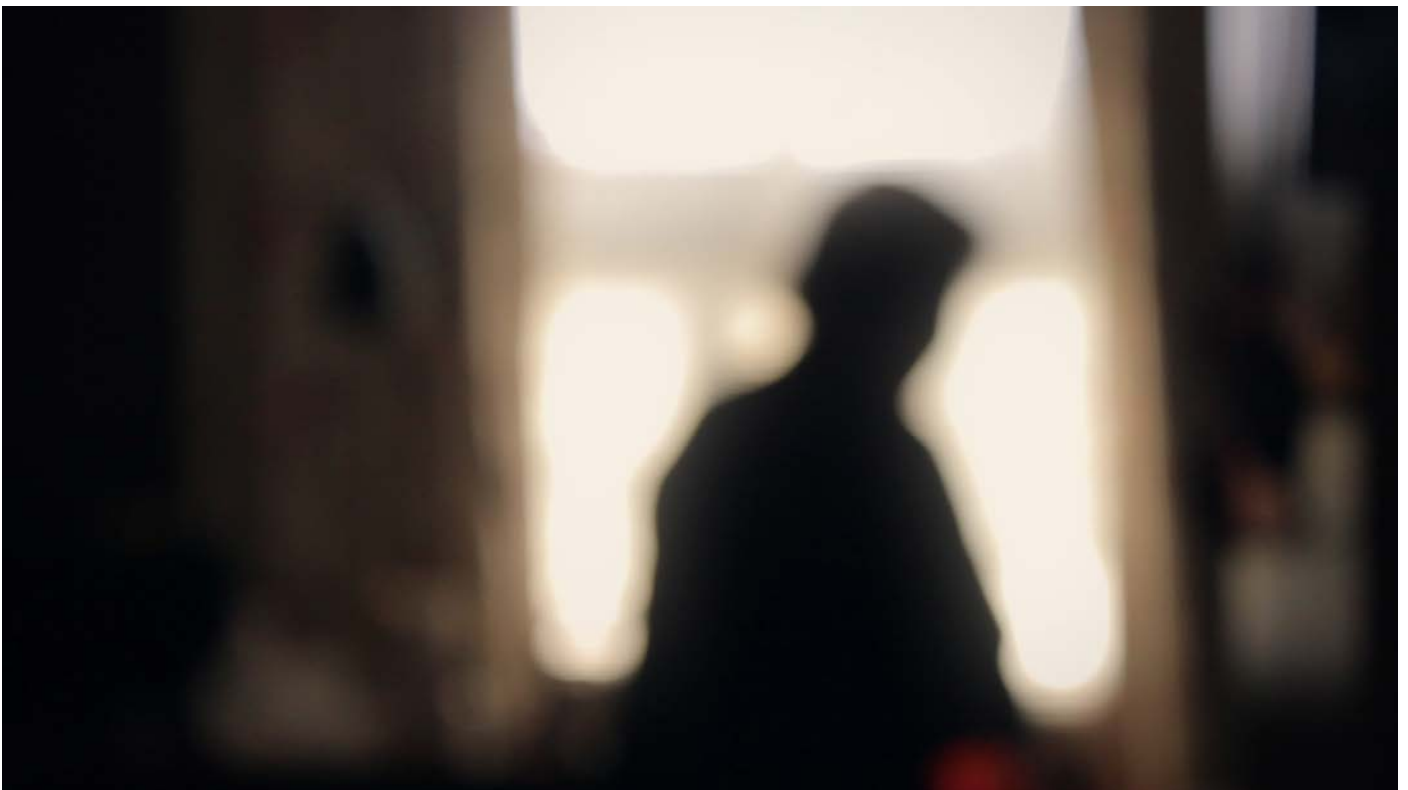
I look to Linda Sok, Nataly Lee, Mao Sovanchandy – my fellow artists in this exhibition. Although we are moving in different ways, living in different locations, creating different kinds of art, we are all making work from the same historical context. In my work I document, uncover, record, remember and reimagine what has been passed on to me and the things unspoken. I want to celebrate our differences and acknowledge our shared cultural history.

Home is the work within this exhibition. It is also the families we have, past and present. It is the memories of them and the stories they've told. It is what we carry in each of us.

ALLISON CHHORN

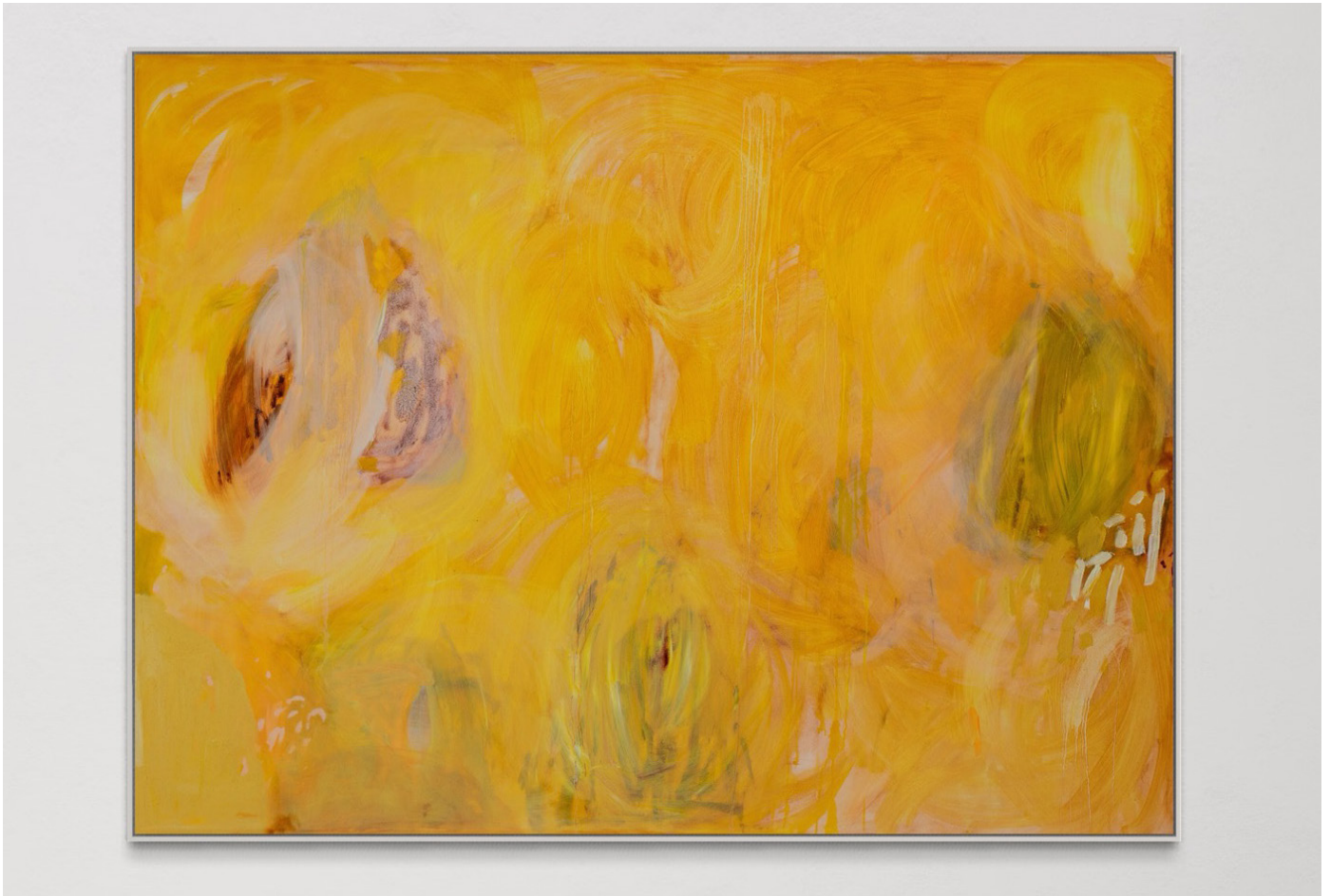


Allison Chhorn, still from *The Plastic House* 2019
digital single-channel video
Docu-fiction, Experimental, 46 mins



Allison Chhorn, still from *Blind Body* 2021
digital single-channel video
Documentary/Experimental short, 15 mins

NATALY LEE



Nataly Lee, *Rice straw stacks* 2024
earth pigment and oil on canvas 150 x 200cm



Nataly Lee, *Roots* 2025
hand-coiled water hyacinth, clay vessel. Various dimensions



Nataly Lee, *Preah Torani* 2025
hand-coiled water hyacinth, clay vessel. Various dimensions

Follow You Home

By Nataly Lee

For me *Follow You Home* is not so much about home in a physical sense, but about the things we carry with us, the things we inherit, and how we come to navigate and hold them over time. I think about rituals, traditions, values and memories, but also our ancestors, as well as the people and experiences that have shaped us. Some of these things are consciously passed down, while others become so deeply embedded that we may not fully recognise where they come from.

My own understanding of what we carry and inherit is deeply connected to my experience of displacement. I was born in Battambang, Cambodia in 1983, during the civil war. At eleven months old, my family fled the country, walking through rural Cambodia to reach the Thai border. We lived in refugee camps for four years before resettling in New Zealand and later Australia.

Being displaced at a young age has shaped my relationship to culture and identity, as well as my sense of home and belonging. Because I grew up away from Cambodia, much of my cultural knowledge was inherited in fragments, through family stories, rituals, gestures, objects and values, while other parts were lost, left unspoken or transformed over time. These fragments have become an important part of how I understand who I am and how I approach my work.

My practice begins with these fragments. I engage with them not necessarily as markers of loss, but as starting points for reconnection, reworking them into visual forms that link memory, place and ancestry in the present. In this way, art becomes a method of remembering, reconnecting and reimagining cultural knowledge and identity.

Living between Cambodia, New Zealand and Australia has also shaped this process. Each place holds different relationships to family, memory, culture and belonging, and I have come to understand these not as separate parts of myself that need to be reconciled, but as relationships that coexist and continually shape one another. There can be connection and estrangement, familiarity and distance, belonging and unbelonging at the same time. This condition of being both inside and outside has become a generative space within my practice.

The works in *Follow You Home* emerge from these relationships, moving between family history, cultural knowledge, landscape, ecology and ritual. My work often begins with materials that already carry cultural, historical and spiritual significance. Rather than treating materials as neutral, I am drawn to those that already embody histories, relationships and cultural knowledge. The process of making then becomes a way of revealing, extending and reimagining those existing meanings.

Across my works, I am interested in how inherited cultural knowledge, memory and lived experience can be remembered, reconnected with and reimagined in the present. For me, this is also connected to how I have come to understand home as something layered, complex and always changing. I think of home as a feeling, a sense of connection, grounding, familiarity and care. Sometimes that feeling is strongly connected to a physical place; at other times it exists through people, memories, values, rituals or ways of being.

I don't think my practice is about trying to arrive at a final answer to where I belong. It is about remaining attentive to the relationships that have shaped me and discovering what can emerge from them. In that sense, home is perhaps not something I am trying to find. It is something I continue to make, something held, sensed and negotiated over time.

Follow You Home

By Linda Sok

Would you mind if I followed you home?

Follow / to understand / to haunt / to come after / proceed / shadow / obey / to continue

How do you connect to a culture so physically far away from you?

My practice engages and actively builds and contributes to a living archive. I am keeping things alive that were intentionally targeted and systematically erased. How do you find a way home when there are only traces of those connections to your homeland? When the culture you try to attach yourself to was the one that was intentionally eliminated. How do you continue to hold on? Grasping at smoke, reaching for something to hold on to, and finding only fragments. You follow the crumbs that fall into your lap in the form of broken stories, splintered histories, trickles of culture, a vague outline of something you yourself never experienced firsthand. Traditions are improvised despite the separation from the homeland, and as a result emerge makeshift rituals that maintain and sustain heritage. Ghosts and shadows linger – they float, they haunt, they echo. And you mourn the loss of what might have been. Until you consciously confront that loss, the abstractness of the loss remains overbearing.

You / personal / me / you / family / changes over time

Confronting the archive.

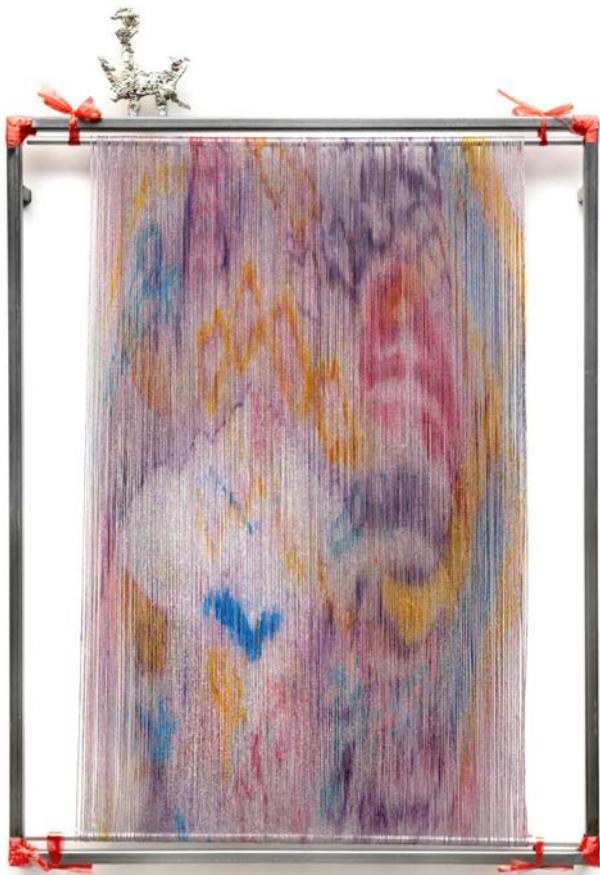
The archive introduced you to a particular way of accessing your history. Often conceived of through the lens of the West and its gaze it places on anything declared as 'exotic' or 'strange'. This lens is one I adorned myself – a warped and distorted view of what it means to be Cambodian. There were two different narratives emerging, pulling me in different directions. How do I negotiate the oscillating nature of my upbringing, how do I relate to a culture I wasn't raised in, and in what ways do my Australian and Cambodian upbringings intersect and complicate who I am as a person. I found it difficult to make sense of how to bridge these two distorted narratives – an experience ubiquitous throughout diaspora. Perhaps engaging with the personal is the methodology I could use to recover those lost narratives that might have been suppressed by these archives. What does it mean to speak back to those ghosts, commune with them, to find out what they want?

Home / where is home? / sanctuary / homeland / how do you find home in a new place?

A continuous journey.

Where do you see home? What do you call home? Who do you call home? Who do you follow? How do you find home? What are your avenues in? What do you do when those stories have been intentionally fragmented, not only by perpetrators that look to suppress culture and revert times to an agrarian society, not by the colonies that possess their own agenda to dominate/control a society, but by the victims that survived their trauma and that then fragment their connections to culture to protect themselves from retraumatizing themselves? From hurting too much? Despite these hurdles, there still remains the desire to reconnect these severed ties. The rituals, materials and other tangible acts, rooted in those fragments, anchor us to something bigger than ourselves, and the stories start to fill out. The fragments become less veiled, more legible, more palpable, accessible. An avenue to understanding family, and an appreciation of those past attempts to maintain those connections to home, it opens up the opportunity to consider – what comes after?

LINDA SOK



Linda Sok, *flowering moon* 164.8 2025
dye, silk, pewter, steel and polyster nylon 84 x 7 x 3 cm



Linda Sok, *parasol carrier* 186.9, 2025
dye, silk, pewter, steel and polyster nylon 84 x 7 x 3 cm



Linda Sok installation view *Reincarnations of an altar cloth* 2025
Image credit: Silversalt Photography, courtesy of the artist

MAO SOVANCHANDY



Mao Sovanchandy, 13th from *Way of the Water* series 2023
single channel digital video



Mao Sovanchandy, *The Chapel of the Sisters Providence Hospice* 2020
digital C-prints, Alford Semi Gloss 40 x 60 cm or 50 x 75 cm

Follow You Home

By Mao Sovanchandy

What if home is not a place that you return to, but something that follows you?

I have been thinking about this through the places I leave, and the places that change while I am still there.

I have lived through many changes in Phnom Penh. Buildings disappear, familiar spaces are replaced with the new development, and places I remember can become difficult to recognise. Construction and destruction in the city are our daily experiences. I explored this feeling in my earlier and on-going photographic work, *Asymmetry*, looking at the changing city and what happens to our memories when the places connected to them are no longer the same.

Sometimes we leave a place. Sometimes the place leaves us.

This feeling has stayed with me while moving between different places. I began noticing how certain things can bring back a place without warning. A landscape, a sound, a building or even a plant can suddenly make somewhere feel close again.

The water hyacinth became one of these things. I have known it since I was young, but it was only when I started seeing it in unfamiliar places that I began to look at it differently. During my residency in Beppu, Japan, I encountered it in foreign canal and sea far from home. It was an ordinary thing but seeing it there made me think about where I came from.

This became the starting point for *Way of Water*, a moving-image work made during the residency. Rather than focusing on the plant itself, I was interested in its movement and in the feeling of encountering something familiar somewhere else.

Follow You Home connects me from these experiences.

The work is about the small moments when a place returns to us. Not through a direct memory but through something we encounter in the present. These moments can be very brief but they can change how we see where we are.

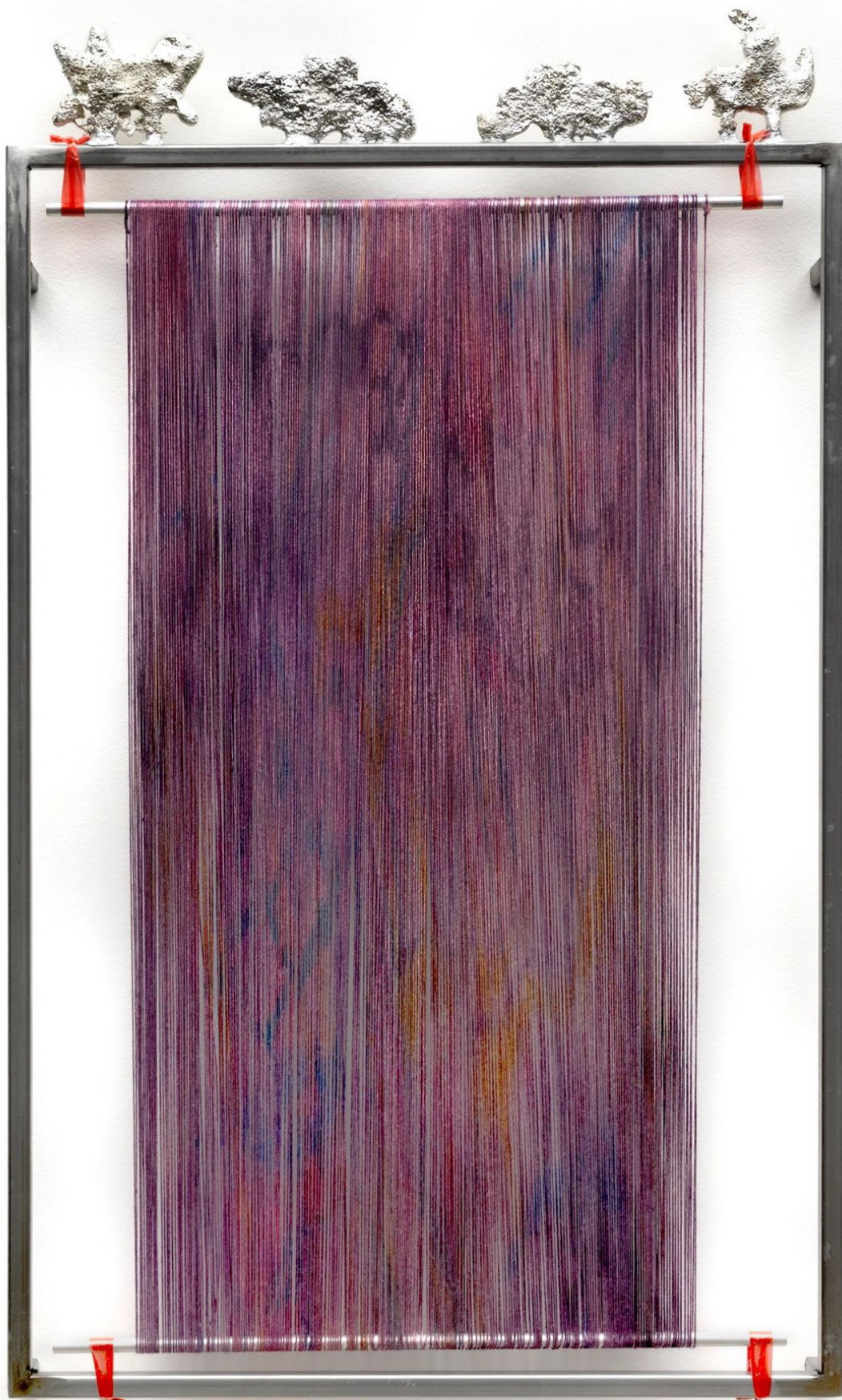
I think about this in relation to Phnom Penh as well. When a familiar building disappears or a neighbourhood changes, the memory of that place does not disappear with it. It stays somewhere within us, sometimes returning through unexpected things.

We carry places with us in ways we do not always notice.

For me, home is less about returning to a particular place and more about these moments of recognition – when something far away suddenly feels familiar.

Maybe we do not always follow home.

Sometimes, home follows us.



Linda Sok, *diamond eyes* 135.2 2025
dye, silk, pewter, steel and polyster nylon 80 x 46 x 3 cm

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