

From the Rwandan Tour of
See You Yesterday



A Visual Report



See You Yesterday is
A **GLOBAL ARTS CORPS** Production

produced in partnership with
Phare Performing Social Enterprise
Phare Ponleu Selpak Association &
Amrita Performing Arts

The Rwandan tour of
See You Yesterday
was made possible through the
generous support of the

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

See You Yesterday is a story created by a troupe of **19 young Cambodian circus performers** between the ages of 13 and 30.







...they used their world class circus skills to travel back in time,

exploring their elders' experiences under the Khmer Rouge regime.





As their inherited memories were unlocked and began to take shape on the rehearsal stage,
a silence between generations was broken...

...opening up a new relationship
between young and old.





In July 2016, after 2 preview performances in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian cast traveled with Global Arts Corps to Rwanda, where they had their **world premiere** at the Ubumuntu Arts Festival in an amphitheater on the grounds of the **Kigali Genocide Memorial**.





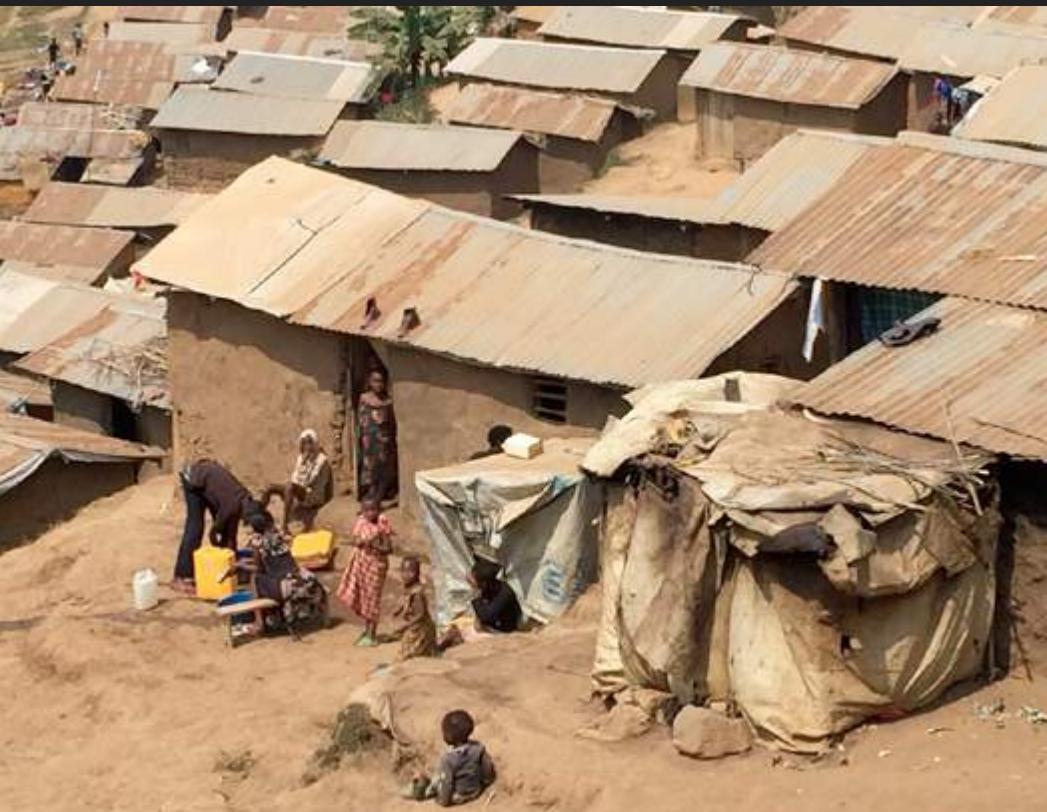
The festival brought together companies from 18 different countries emerging from violent conflict...

And the cast was reunited with Global Arts Corps' South African trainers from their first workshop.



Following the festival premiere, the cast and crew traveled to the **Kigeme refugee camp**.

The Kigeme refugee camp in southern Rwanda is currently home to approximately **20,000 displaced people from the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo**, who have fled two decades of civil war and famine in their home country.







An outdoor stage was constructed on a dusty football field, so men, women, and children could gather on the surrounding hills to watch the performances.



The Cambodian cast performed on three consecutive mornings, for **audiences that swelled from 4,000 to 5,000 to 6,000** with each new performance of *See You Yesterday*.



A young Rwandan actor from Kigali narrated the Cambodian story for the Congolese, providing historical context for the piece in their local language...





Audience members expressed their hope that, if these young Cambodians--only one generation removed from their elders who grew up in refugee camps--could use **theatre and circus to navigate and move beyond the darkest moments of their past...**

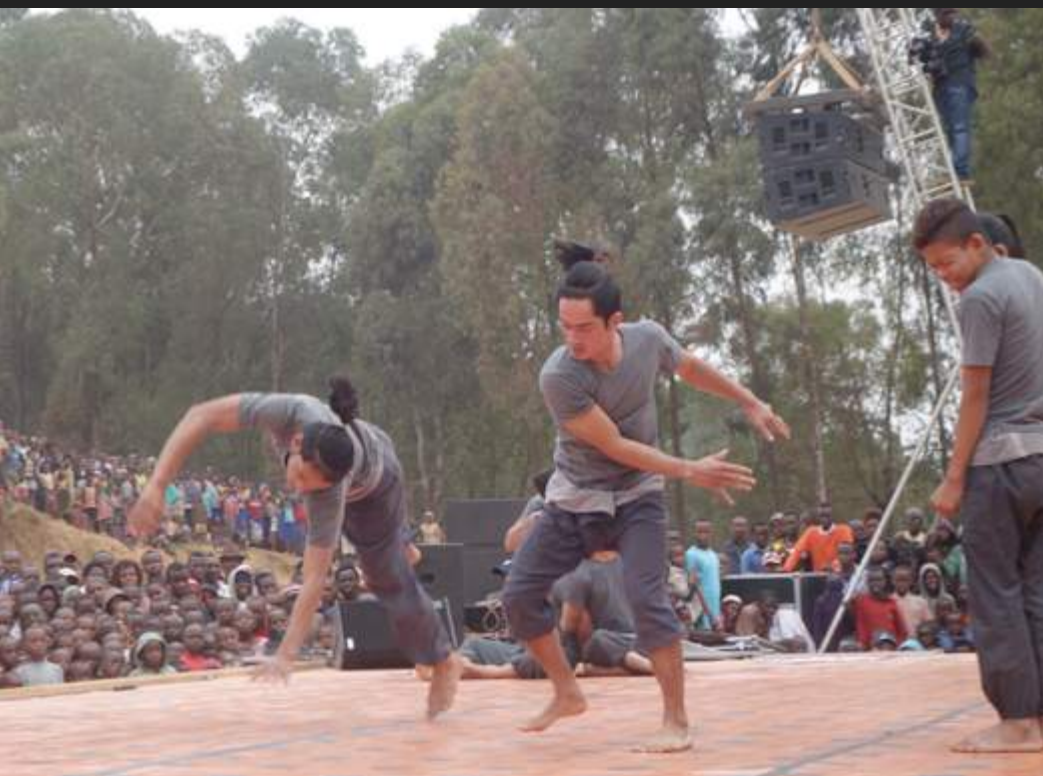
The same might be possible for them and their children.







One young refugee from the camp, an aspiring acrobat trained in the Congo, saw in the production an experience he had lived...



...having been forced to beat a prisoner when he was a young boy.



After seeing the performance, he reflected,

*“I thought I was the only one this happened to, but I am not the only one ...
I realized that whoever wants to destroy a nation starts from its youth.”*



For the Cambodian performers, it was an extraordinary exchange.

They became **ambassadors for hope**, helping to ease a sense of loneliness and shame among others who had only known their own trauma and suffering.









Before the final performance, **a young boy from the refugee camp asked to take the stage** and performed his original rap songs as the cast warmed up.





The interaction between the Cambodians and the Congolese was made doubly poignant through the presence of Khuon Det. The Artistic Director and Co-Founder of the Phare Ponleu Selpak and a member of Global Arts Corps' directing team, **Det grew up in a refugee camp on the Thai border after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime**. Speaking with a group of elders from the camp, Det shared his own experience, saying,

“When we arrived in the camp in our bus and I saw the children running around the vehicle... I did the same when I was in a camp. Because we were so happy to see outsiders... Since I’ve been here, I’m so touched by the similarities in our stories... I’m inspired to continue to do more for people in these kinds of situations... It makes my heart full.”



After each performance, the cast conducted workshops with youth from the camp who were eager to learn skills in circus and theatre that they could continue to practice after performers had gone... We worked with them for three days.

One young boy said to us, after the workshops had concluded,
“I am happy now, and I await your return.”

We are presently working to build a partnership with educators from the camp that will allow Global Arts Corps’ trainers to go back and continue working with these young people and their teachers so that they can create a story of their own, using the exercises and techniques we developed in building our own productions.

In the meantime, we are collaborating with community leaders to help publish their first journal in the camp.





“When I was teaching at the refugee camp, I was so happy because it was quite an experience and because I also want to be a teacher... being given the opportunity to teach those kids, it was great; I love everything about teaching.” – Sreypov, 18, a member of the See You Yesterday cast



LOOKING AHEAD

Global Arts Corps is now seeking partners to tour *See You Yesterday* to other refugee camps and post-conflict areas around the world, where the Cambodian cast can share their story with others struggling to understand where they've come from and find an identity in communities torn apart by violence.

Simultaneously, we are pursuing a new, four-year endeavor largely inspired by this Cambodian project that will result in a Festival of Radical Reconciliation, bringing together young artists from around the world, all dedicated to exploring the human potential for reconciliation through the theatrical arts.





Special Thanks
to the

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

who have generously supported *See You Yesterday* throughout the production's development
and whose long-standing commitment to this project
made the Rwandan tour possible.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SEE:

See You Yesterday, a 6-minute film of rehearsal footage from Global Arts Corps' production development workshops:
<https://vimeo.com/149697989>

& Global Arts Corps' website:
www.globalartscorps.org