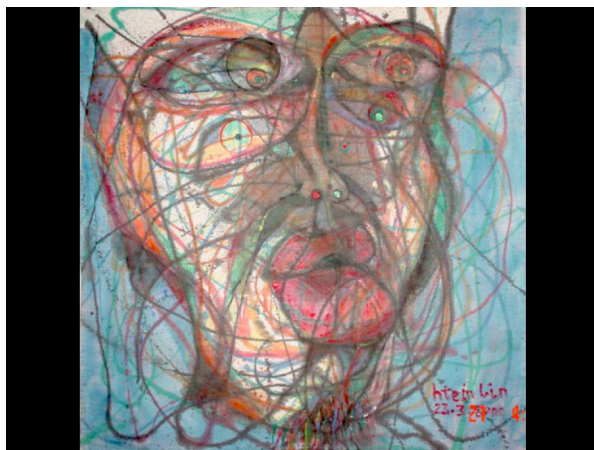


Htein Lin: Burma Inside Out
27 July to 13 October 2007

Press launch attended by Htein Lin: Thursday 26 July 10am to 12pm

Private view: Thursday 26 July 6.30 to 8.30pm



Self-portrait, mixed media

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. He will perform at the Venice Biennale, and participate in the group exhibition Asian Attitude in Poznan in June 2007, and 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 to date

Tuesday 31 July, 6.45 – 7.45pm Contemporary Art in Burma

An evening of presentations and conversation with Gill Patterson and Chaw Ei Lin

Gill Pattison is a New Zealander who runs River Gallery, Yangon, Myanmar's premier art space. The gallery showcases the best works of Myanmar's leading contemporary artists, both emerging and established (with some 30 artists currently represented including Htein Lin and Chaw Ei Thein).

Chaw Ei Thein is a Rangoon-based artist, singer, performance artist and art teacher who has collaborated with Htein Lin on performance art in Burma. Chaw Ei will give a presentation on the state of Burma's performance art scene and the challenges faced by artists in Burma today.

Thursday 2 August, 6.45 – 8.00pm Members Event

A members only private view of Htein Lin: Burma, Inside out.

An opportunity for members to meet the artist and enjoy a private view of the exhibition. The evening includes a drinks reception, talks by the exhibition organisers and artist Htein Lin, and a full guided tour of the works.

Saturday 4 August, 11.30am – 4.00pm Family Day

A day of activities inspired by the current exhibition Burma, Inside out.

Burmese artist Htein Lin will work with families designing expressive t-shirts using a range of materials, paints and printing techniques. Please bring a plain light coloured t-shirt along or buy one at Asia House. Artist Chaw Ei Thein will involve visitors in performance art tasters and boldly expressive painting sessions and Burmese arts and crafts.

There will be a strong Burmese theme to the day and visitors will take inspiration from the artworks of both Htein Lin and Chaw Ei Thein.

Wednesday 29 August, 6.45 – 7.45pm Acclaimed author and Orange Price Winner 2007 Karen Connelly presents 'The Lizard Cage'

Set during Burma's military dictatorship of the mid—1990s, Karen Connelly's exquisitely written and harshly realistic debut novel is a hymn to human resilience and love.

In the sprawling and isolated Burmese prison known as the cage, Teza languishes in solitary confinement seven years into a twenty-year sentence. Arrested for his involvement in mass protests, he is the nation's most celebrated songwriter whose resonant words and powerful voice pose an ongoing threat to the state. Forced to catch lizards to supplement his meagre rations, Teza finds emotional and spiritual sustenance through memories and Buddhist meditation. The tiniest creatures and things—a burrowing ant, a copper-coloured spider, a fragment of newspaper within a cheroot filter—help to connect him to life beyond the prison walls...

Wednesday 5 September, 6.45 – 7.45pm

Musical Myanmar

A rare opportunity to hear live music by Burmese musicians. Burmese music consists of a series of seven tone scales called *athan*. This distinct Burmese sound shares similarities with the Javanese *patet* and even Indian *Raga*. The evening will be led by the leading vocalist in Myanmar, Soe Sandar Tun. She will be accompanied by four Burmese instrumentalists, led by Tin Win Hlang. The musicians will play the piano, oboe, Burmese xylophone, drums and cymbals.

A reception with drinks and Burmese food will follow.

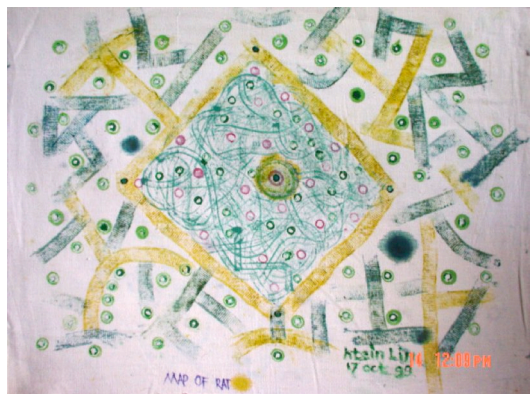
Visit sponsored by the Myanmar and Britain Association and Orient-Express Hotels.

Press enquiries & images:

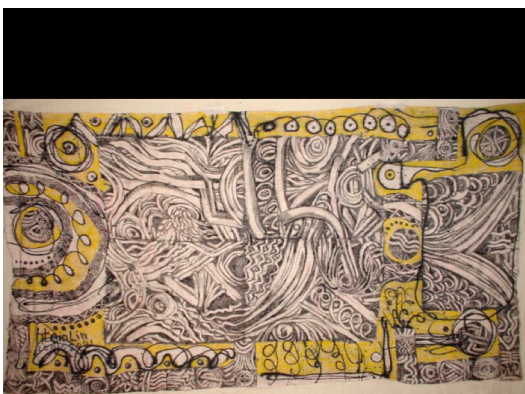
Sophie Persson, Asia House – 00 44 (0)20 7307 5447 / sophie.persson@asiahouse.co.uk
Ayira Ahmed, Asia House – 0044 (0)20 7307 5434 / ayira.ahmed@asiahouse.co.uk



Pon-San-Tain (I)



Map of Rat



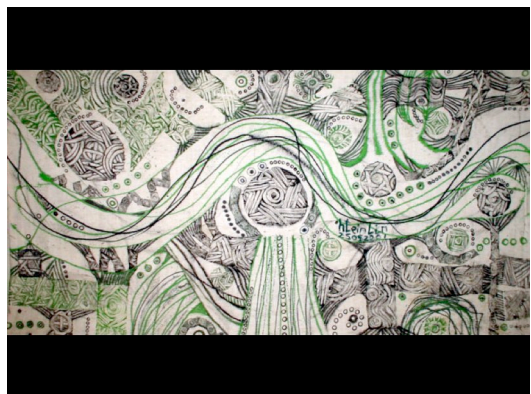
Gloomy Room (I)



Waiting for Food



Biology of Art



Mosaic (I)