

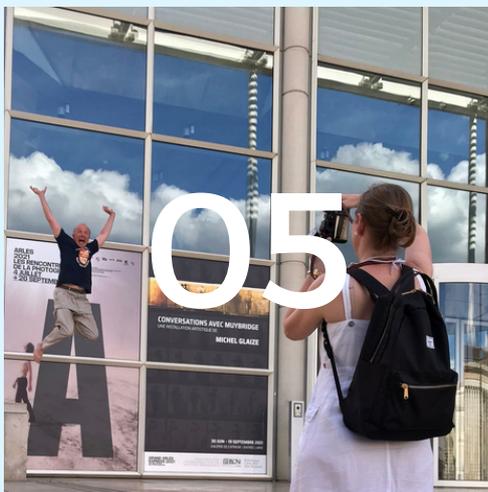
À bâtons  
rompus

## Ramblings

The shortest path  
between us  
passes through  
Cambodia

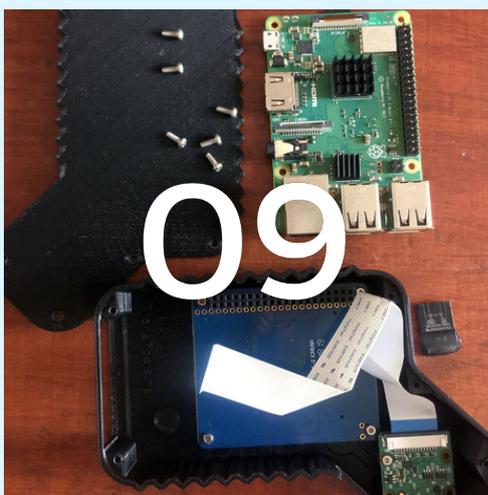
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### Arriving with meaning

Between West and East  
*Conversations with  
Muybridge:*  
art installation and mediation  
setting



### Exchanging meaning

A workshop set up  
for a Khmer audience,  
from collective creation  
to technical transmission



### Returning with meaning

A corpus of B&W portraits  
of the Battambang  
community  
using modern digital  
and traditional processes



### Resisting

Our social bond

# Ramblings

## Project note

This project is about a personal need linked to the complex paths that are a feature of our social relations. It may be easy or hard for us to talk each other, listen to each other, even when we share a culture. What am I doing as an individual? What am I supposed to do as an artist?

In September 2021, I took down my art installation *Conversations with Muybridge*, hosted during the summer of 2021 by the Carré d'Art (Nîmes), as part of the photographic event, *Rencontres de la Photographie* (Arles).

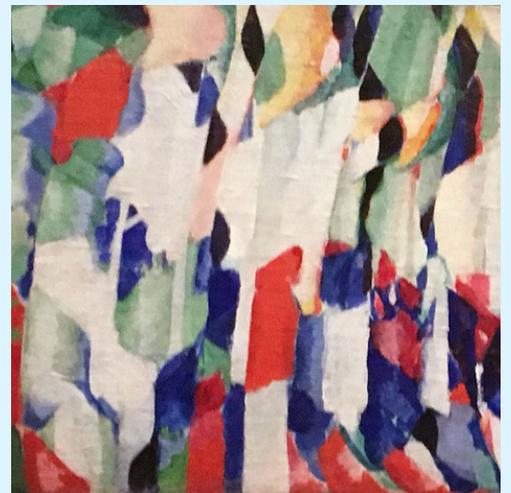
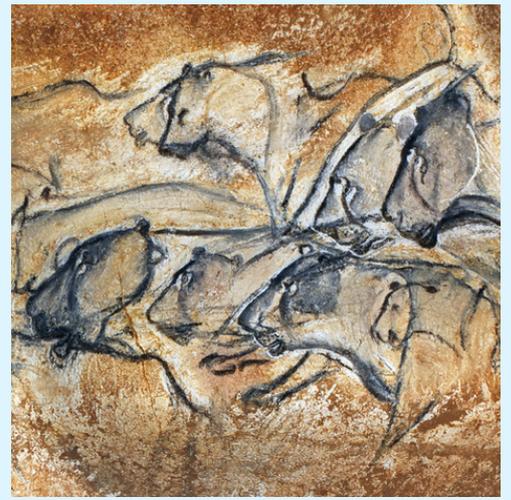
Through an interactive game to immerse the visitors, my aim was to share the astonishment conveyed just over a century ago by the photographer, Eadweard Muybridge, when he observed the pure intuition of the decomposition of movement. For 36,000 years (from the paleolithic caves), we have known that this intuition is universal.

The story could stop there and I could move on, but my reference to the photographer was not just about laying a stone.

I would like to develop these ramblings, these *Conversations with Muybridge*. To go further. To wander. To interpret our old Europe in a different way.

I have chosen Cambodia to present this project, with a ready-made installation. The idea is to leave with another creation, ready to install somewhere else.

An artistic proposal should be inseparable from a societal proposal (ethic, economic, ecological, etc.), in the same way that the appeal of an artistic performance should be inseparable from a similar appeal for technical performance.



# Ramblings

This project is sponsored by the Cambodian filmmaker and writer Rithy Panh, who also created the *Bophana Cultural Center*



- Farmer and market gardener in Battambang, [Panha Yem](#) welcomes the whole project. With tools drawn from organic farming and cultural exchanges, she is coordinating a micro rural development pilot project, the center of a network of young proactive farmers, keen to take responsibility and change their living conditions.
- The associated solidarity development micro-project is conducted in partnership with *Ingénieurs sans Frontières (Engineers Without Borders)* and young students of *AgroParisTech (Paris)*, benefiting on this occasion an exceptional scholarship of their university.
- This project is supported by the *French Institute of Cambodia (IFC)* and coached by the *Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs (DRAC)* in Occitanie - representative of the *French Ministry of Culture* - to whom has been submitted a request for an individual grant.
- Whether in Cambodia or in Europe other partnerships are in the course of realization. I am fully committed to realising this project.



# Ramblings

**Cambodia is not a place that  
I would have chosen randomly**



**Cambodia is a part of me.**

**My grandparents arrived there in 1928 and my grandfather, Maurice Glaize, was the curator of the Angkor archeological site from 1936 to 1946.**

**My father grew up in Cambodia and my parents returned there every year after the Paris Agreements in 1991 and the end of Khmer Rouge dictatorship.**

**Is this linear transmission?**

**Yes, I certainly stayed there on five occasions, with my parents, my children or alone. But the country was assaulted, dispossessed of its history, today and yesterday.**

**It was obvious for me and my parents: rather than Paris, the shortest path between us passes through Cambodia. It was clear, with nothing really linear ...**

**In Khmer, Battambang means: "the lost bat". People say that a local giant once challenged the then Khmer king and threw his club at him, but missed his target. The place where the bat landed was called the province of "the lost bat", Battambang.**



# Arriving with meaning

## *Conversations with Muybridge* and its mediation set

The first step of the project is to show my art installation *Conversations with Muybridge* to the Battambang audiences. The quality of the presentation will be the same as that of the installation at the Carré d'Art in Nîmes and the Rencontres de la Photographie in Arles, with the same original mediation set.

*Conversation with Muybridge* is a contemporary interpretation of the intimate experience of the model / author / spectator triangulation, offered by the photographer Eadweard Muybridge from 1872 to 1885 in his series *Animal Locomotion*.

It is an interactive installation: it is the viewer that creates the pace and part of the content, without headphones or glasses.

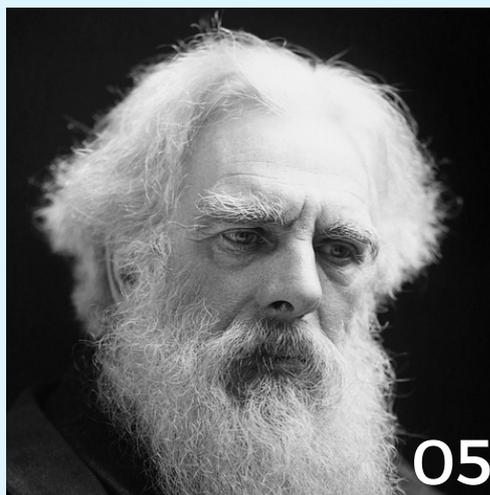
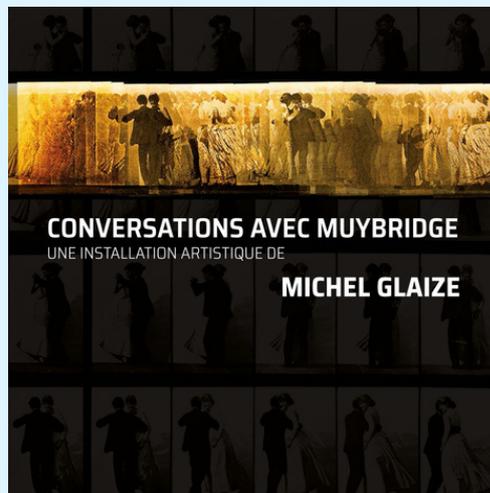
It is an immersive installation: the viewer is within a non-frontal system. The viewer's senses, their sight, hearing, touch and their movement are called upon, like when they dance.

*Conversation with Muybridge*, thus, combines a playful and educational approach.

Like a funfair attraction, it should generate joy, complicity, astonishment. With *Animal Locomotion*, Muybridge chose austere scientific research. Later, with zoopraxiscope, he announces cinema, by inventing a toy adapted from old magic lanterns.

The installation is also a serious documented tribute to the photographer's work, which is clearly explained in the introduction.

The installation and its mediation set are autonomous. All the necessary elements are provided. Once in place, it can simply be plugged in and unplugged.



# Arriving with meaning

*"Only photography has been able to divide human life into a series of moments; each of them has the value of a complete existence"*

Eadweard Muybridge

Eadweard Muybridge is the man who could have invented the cinema, but he did not. Muybridge is talking about photography.

This installation does not seek to interpret his gesture as a forerunner of cinema, which is simply a convenient screen. On the contrary, it focuses on the paradox of the deconstruction of movement.

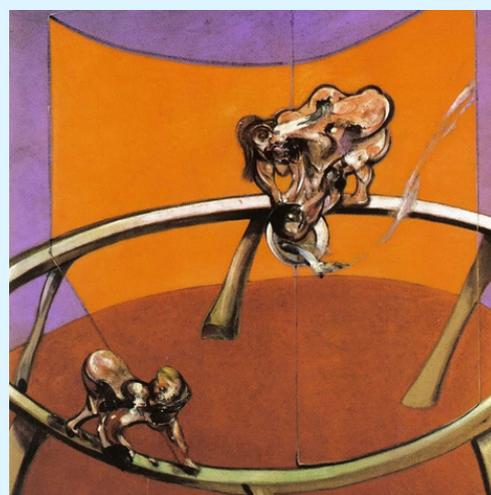
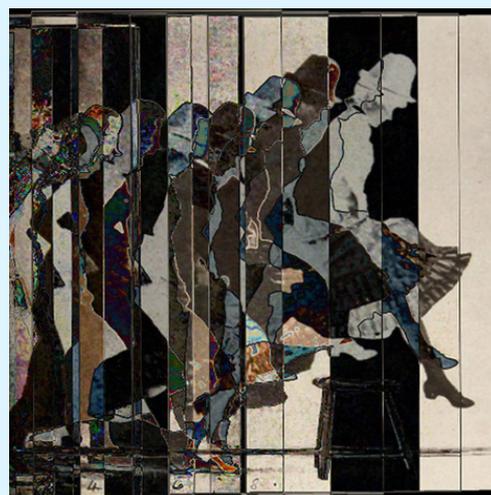
I think that the decomposition of movement interested him far more than its recomposition. It is as if he was fascinated by a particular segment of the experience of animated images. Almost as if Muybridge wanted his research to remain useless.

Hypnotized by the strange, inexplicable image he had produced, he repeated it endlessly, in a kind of obsessive ritual. Yet, there is always a photo missing between two photos. There is no doubt that, like filmmaker Rithy Panh, Muybridge was pursuing the "missing picture". There is a blind spot for Muybridge. He circles it, fascinated.

It is an anti-portrait, a hollow portrait of Muybridge, a self-portrait free from the slightest psychology. It is an abstraction, like the portraits painted by Francis Bacon, for whom Muybridge was his "main information source".

The purpose of the installation is to invite each visitor, individually, to relive the special emotion of Muybridge's gesture, as closely as possible, by giving them the chance to be in both the photographer's and the model's place. I wish to project each one into the strangeness of a singular experience which, at the end of the 19th century, was already something like an installation between game, astonishment, physical involvement, joy and discovery.

The work left by Muybridge is open, inviting us to grasp it. We have the feeling that he left these plates for us, for everyone, like a message in a bottle. Recognizing and transmitting this disorder is a unique experience.



# Arriving with meaning

## The viewer's experience

In the first room, the visitor is welcomed by an evocation of Eadweard Muybridge's project.

Very visual panels: a brief explanation and ten plates from the *Animal Locomotion* series.

The visitor is then invited to select the ten *Animal Locomotion* plates that best suit them, using a touch pad.

This choice determines one of ten possible scenarios that will be proposed in the next room, in an individual experience.

In front of the visitor, a ten meter long rectilinear course opens up. Their progression on this course will unveil the successive images of the chosen *Animal Locomotion* plate, projected on the left hand wall.

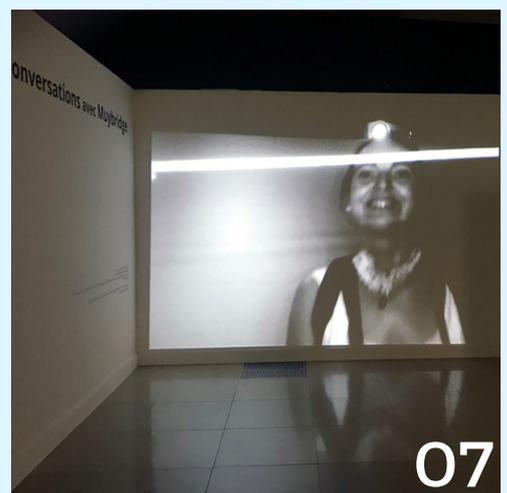
The original images also leave a permanent projected trace, as a contemporary interpretation of the same gesture. Both types of images are combined.

The viewer can stop, go back, speed up, leave the course. All these actions are translated into projected images, a unique translation, specific to each viewer's experience.

The visitor's attention is also attracted to a small colorful trolley running along the course on eye-level rails. This train moves forward, backward and stops with the visitor, putting them in a good mood and encouraging playful participation.

The toy is ostensibly carrying a webcam, which otherwise replicates Muybridge's gesture, involving the visitor. It films their face and projects the images captured in real time on the wall in the reception area.

The next visitors do not know what the viewer is seeing. They do not know what their successors are seeing. This screening leaves no trace, it is a simple stream. Each viewer erases the traces of the previous viewer.



# Arriving with meaning

The mediation set



Like with my installation *Conversations with Muybridge*, each visitor is invited to take part in three photographic experiments of the decomposition of movement. An original playful and interactive experience that Muybridge might have enjoyed.

When the viewer leaves the installation, he is invited to choose to produce his own animated GIF, panoramic photo or selfie-souvenir, with the help of different photo devices.

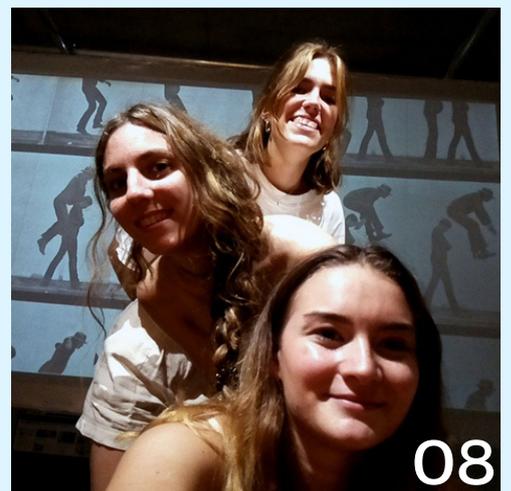
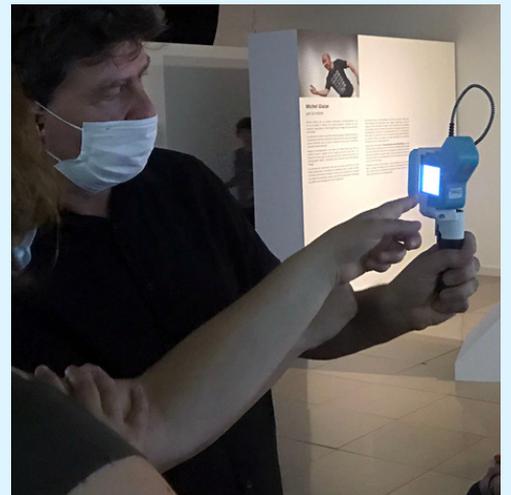
Once validated by the visitor, their work is instantly broadcast to the community on a dedicated website ... and wherever they wish (social networks, etc.).

Specifically designed to accompany the art installation, these *Pilaroïd* devices are jointly proposed by Rémi and Olivier Sarrailh + *Interaction Research Studio (University of London)* + Michel Glaize + *Carré d'Art Labo2*

We can reproduce them by ourselves, in as many copies as necessary.

They use the same technical tools as the actual art installation: programmed electronics (*Raspberry*) and 3D design and printing.

This mediation device is kept after the presentation of the installation and used during the creative and technical workshops, which use the same extremely cheap *Raspberry* tools (from \$50).



Want to see a (mute) video?  
[michelglaize.com/les-outils-de-la-mediation](http://michelglaize.com/les-outils-de-la-mediation)

# Exchanging meaning

## A micro-economic development project

This new part is intended to stay as close as possible to the specific features of the Khmer culture. It may last several months and requires the close involvement of local partners so that it is adapted to their specific projects (adaptation to rural areas, school projects, etc.).

All of us know how closely art and culture are linked to economic and ethical priorities.

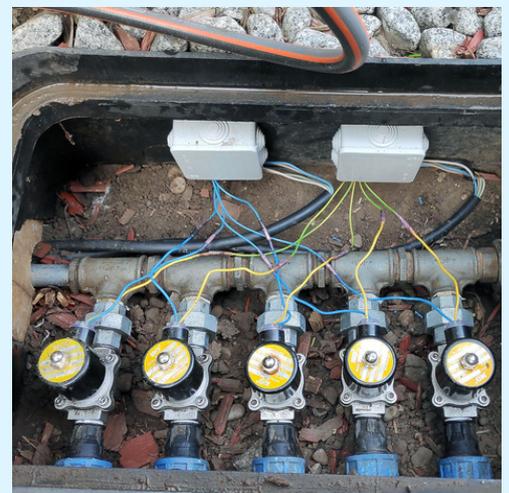
On the edge of the art installation, the triple proposal of the *Pilaroid* devices is a contact phase that will help us get to know each other better.

It will also help us unravel these *Pilaroid* devices and master the digital tools. The tools are just small computers that everyone can programme at no cost, so that they can be applied to very different uses (apart from taking pictures).

This gives participants the opportunity to imagine how they could benefit from using the same tools in other projects. The purpose of these technical workshops is to master a few simple techniques to give participants greater autonomy for the day-to-day management of their individual or collective activities.

When applied to an agricultural project, we can imagine the automation of an irrigation system to meet the individual needs of each plant. In the case of a collective project, we could pilot a self-contained solar power generator. The tools can be applied to any other micro-economic development project.

A good way to proceed is to start with our *Raspberry* cards, once they have been equipped with *Gladys* ([gladysassistant.com](http://gladysassistant.com), a complete open-source home automation environment), by turning it away from its original domestic functions. This would make it possible to build a totally functional installation, using a minimum amount of specific coding or other skills.



# Exchanging meaning

## Collective raving

Simultaneously, we will open another series, dedicated to an original collective cultural project.

It is related to Eadweard Muybridge's photographic experience, although it is far removed from its origins.

While experimenting with our *Pilaroid* devices, we will start imagining a fiction, a tale that we would like to tell together.

In the same way as Muybridge explored the deconstruction of movement through photography, we will then destructure our story into several media and techniques. We will break it down into different visual media.

These supports and techniques can be based on Khmer tradition or drawn from innovative inspiration. It is up to individual participants to choose which pattern they feel is the most inspiring and to manage their specialized workshop.

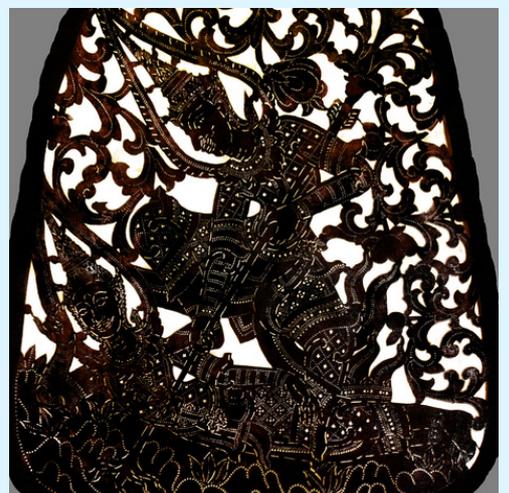
Photography, painting, textiles, shadow theater, as well as video or websites may be used ... any form of expression is possible as long as the result is exclusively visual and easily reproducible - eg: dance through video capture-.

*Pilaroid* devices can be used.

Finally, we will create a single proposal, by drawing on all the fragments of our "deconstructed" story in exactly the same way as Muybridge when he "deconstructed" a unique movement into a board, innumerable boards into books and a whole series of books in *Animal Locomotion*, a single masterpiece.

Once completed, this collective narration - deconstructed but consistent -, will be presented as feedback from our workshops. It will be shown to the widest possible audience, first in Battambang and then anywhere else in the world, wherever it is possible.

It will be proposed in a free, non-linear and visual form, so that everyone can understand it, both in Cambodia and the West.



# Going back with meaning

## A new artwork

In this third component of the project, I would like to document our whole adventure with a photographic portrait of the Battambang community.

A portrait realized under reporting conditions, but with a studio spirit, with no obligations regarding the documentary form or a collection of static poses. The idea is not to seek the model's complicity with the lens, but to keep a permanent reference to the movement.

Captured in digital medium format, these very neat B&W photos will then be processed freely on the computer and may move away from realism.

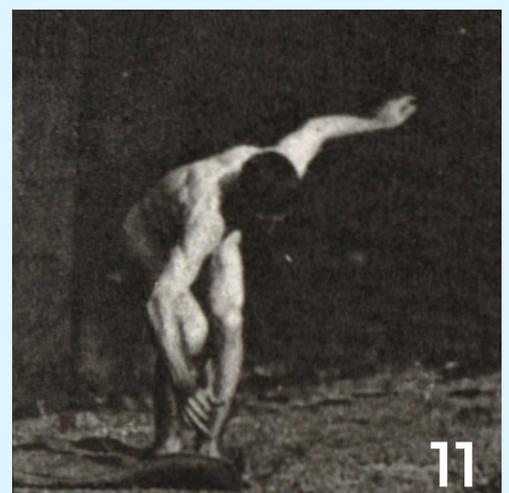
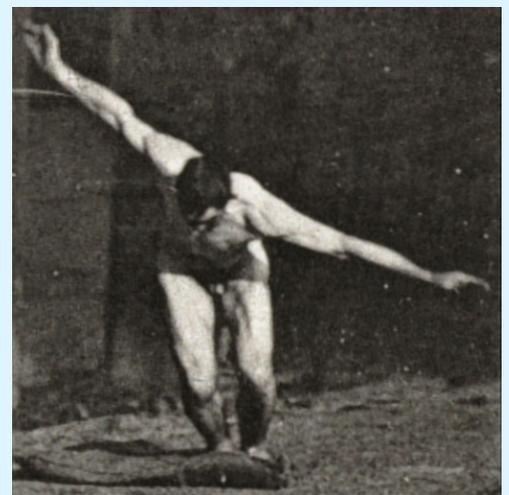
They will then be printed using ancient processing techniques, such as the moist collodion that Muybridge used. Large prints will be made (3 meters high). They should be observed from a distance to value the model and focus on presence rather than familiarity.

The idea of inviting the Khmer community to run these artisanal prints on site is very exciting. It is an experience that I would like to try.

By minimizing the distance between shooting and printing, processing the photos on the computer and being in charge of our own chemical processes means that we keep control throughout the process of making the image. We stay connected to both spirits of the historic *Polaroid* photos and the contemporary DIY (*Raspberry*). Everything is visible, open sourced and transparent for the model, the photographer and the viewer.

This will close the loop, as it were, since Muybridge's models were simultaneously spectators, subjects and triggers of the photo. In the same way, today's visitor to conversations with Muybridge leaves a real time video portrait of him or herself experimenting with the installation.

This new personal art project could subsequently be exhibited in Cambodia and France, opposite the collective realization of Battambang.





# Resisting

## Our social bond

I am a socially engaged artist. The responsibility of the artist is not to produce pretty things to be hung in a living room, but to invent and experiment with social bonds.

Schiller-Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* affects all of us - it was made the European anthem - because it recalls collective experience of joy, beyond aesthetics.

I used to live and work in Nîmes, a French city with a strong character that lies between the Cevennes mountains - whose motto from the *Camisards* is "Resisting" - and the Mediterranean Sea, the cradle of Europe.

Therefore, I cannot stand by, paralyzed, and watch the Mediterranean become a cemetery, where the lives and legitimate hopes of migrants are lost because of the simple hidden costs of a certain global economic "order" - much like our victims of deindustrialization.

Nîmes, Calais or Battambang are so far, so close ...

By pursuing the *Conversations with Muybridge* experiment, I wish to open the windows on other horizons, beyond the so called European pessimism, to help me, to help us breathe, give and receive, be stronger. Digital technologies are a gift for all of us. By paradoxically twinning our culture with the Khmer culture, with partners also committed to defend borderless responsibilities, these technologies help to create movement, which is my job as an artist.

No need to talk about resistance. Talking about solidarity and the future is to resist. Was the emigrant Muybridge in the resistance? He was the opposite. With his dyed-in-the-wool liberalism - which he imagined to be "natural" -, he would have considered these reconciliations highly unlikely.

Resistance is not an answer, it is a process, a democratic process. It is not a conversational topic or an objective in itself. It is constantly questioning, which is characteristic of the visceral compulsion of the human animal to start moving, to migrate. Resistance is roaming. Stupidity is self-evident.

This fascination for the living, when pulling out of inertia, is one of the challenges of Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion*.