

# Special Seminar

# Forming Cambodia's First Gay Dance Company

Photo by Nobuyuki Arai

## Speaker: Prumsodun Ok

### Monday July 1 2019

### 11:30-13:00

Tonantei (Room No. 201),  
2F Inamori Foundation Building,  
CSEAS, Kyoto University

In this intimate conversation, Prumsodun Ok will share the history of Prumsodun Ok & NATYARASA, Cambodia's first gay dance company. Founded in 2015, the troupe has become one of the country's premiere dance companies. The talk highlight the journey and challenges the group faces, while also exploring the role of tradition in shaping social values, artistic innovation as an act of cultural preservation, and the place of LGBTQ people within our societies.



No  
Reservation  
required



Photo by Morn Sopharoth



Photo by Nobuyuki Arai

## Prumsodun Ok



Born to Khmer refugees in the United States, Prumsodun Ok rose from the poverty and violence-stricken inner city of Long Beach to become the new face of Khmer dance. He uses art to heal, illuminate, and empower, reviving the spirit of his people from the enduring forces of conflict. Seen by many as a champion of Khmer culture, he works as an artist, teacher, and writer to shape a world where everyone can blossom into their fullest selves. Ok's interdisciplinary performances contemplate the "avant-garde in antiquity," and have been presented at the Department of Performing Arts (Cambodia), Bangkok Theater Festival – Asia Focus (Thailand), Za-Koenji (Japan), Godrej Leadership Forum (India), Teatro Benito Juarez (Mexico), bhive (Greece), and REDCAT (United States). They have been celebrated as "a vision of elegance and grace" (*The Phnom Penh Post*) and "Radical Beauty" (*The Bangkok Post*). Ok is the recipient of grants and fellowships from TED, MAP Fund, Surdna Foundation, and Dance/USA, and has been a guest speaker and choreographer at California Institute of the Arts, UCLA, Santa Monica College, and Rajabhat University among others. He was also associate artistic director of Khmer Arts, a member of the Alliance for California Traditional Arts' Board of Directors, and an artist in residence at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York. He is the founding artistic director of Prumsodun Ok & NATYARASA, Cambodia's first gay dance company, which Channel NewsAsia (Singapore) describes as "one of the most revolutionary dance troupes in Cambodia . . . a dance troupe like no other." Ok was named an LGBT+ Creative Leader of Tomorrow for The Dots's and WeTransfer's Championing Diversity. He is the keynote speaker of the Dance/USA Annual Conference in 2019. His celebrated TED Talk has been translated into more than fifteen languages and viewed more than 2.5 million times across various platforms.

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