

Earth in Flower

The Divine Mystery of the Cambodian Dance Drama

បុព្វលោកយ

អាថ៌កំបាំងអធិទេពនៃរាំកម្ពុជា



Paul Cravath

ប៉ូល ក្រាវ៉ាត

Introduction by Kent Davis

គ្រឿងគ្រឿងដោយ ខិន ដេវីស



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ABOUT THE COVER

“Saem in Her Festival Attire” By Jean Despujols

In the 1930’s, Saem was a dancer with Princess Wongat Say Sangvann’s royal troupe in Phnom Penh. The princess married the youngest son of King Sisowath, Prince Yong Kath, when she herself was a royal dancer. Saem’s skill impressed the princess, who adopted her as a foster child. In 1937, Despujols painted Saem on the Rainbow Bridge at Angkor Wat where special dance performances were held; she holds her right hand in the classic gesture symbolizing a flower.

Saem’s “Cinderella story” embodies the history of the Cambodian dance tradition and the hope of Cambodia’s future. In ancient times, girls from all levels of society pledged their service to temples and to learning the dance. Saem’s devotion to the art led to her royal adoption. Her story speaks to the modern Spirit of Cambodia, empowering women and men from every level in society to participate in the Khmer Renaissance.

THE ARTIST - JEAN DESPUJOLS

In 1936, the Société des Artistes Coloniaux in Paris selected Despujols to travel throughout French Indochina to record his impressions on canvas and paper. His evocative works were only exhibited a few times until 1969 when they became part of the permanent collection of the Meadows Museum of Art at Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana. Special thanks to the Meadows Museum of Art for their kind permission to feature this artwork: www.centenary.edu/meadows



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