

## PRESS RELEASE

Toronto, February 15, 2012

The **East Gallery** presents:



## HALF THE SKY

### Five female contemporary artists from Southeast Asia

**Exhibition Period:** February 28 – March 26, 2012, open daily from 9 am to 11 pm

**Opening Reception:** February 29, 6.30 – 10 pm. Burmese artist Nann Nann in attendance

**Exhibition Venue:** Art Square, 334 Dundas Street West, Toronto



Lim Khim Katy (Vietnam), New Law

The East Gallery, Toronto's only gallery that focuses exclusively on contemporary Asian art, celebrates International Women's Day with ['Half the Sky'](#), a month-long exhibition of leading female artists from **Burma, Vietnam and Cambodia**. The title of the show was inspired by the ancient Chinese proverb 'Women hold up half of the sky', later used by Mao Zedong during the Chinese revolution to promote the status of women.

To be a female and an Asian artist represents a double challenge for these unconventional visionaries, coming from traditional societies and breaking into the male and western-dominated art world. And yet, despite these challenges, each of these artists have not only had a successful career in their home country but have already made a name for themselves in the international art world.

The subject matter of the five women is often rooted in their social and cultural heritage, their relationships and families. Vietnamese painter **Vu Thu Hien's** dreamlike and sometimes haunting watercolors refer to the soul, to spirits, and ancestor worship while her Burmese colleague **Nann**

**Nann** expresses her feelings about Buddhism and spirituality in elegant, conceptual pieces that make ample use of gold leaf, a material used to decorate pagodas and Buddha statues.

**Dinh Thi Thampoong**, a member of one of Vietnam's 54 ethnic minorities, creates intricate, vivid and often surreal paintings that depict the close relationship between humans and nature. Another Vietnamese painter, **Lim Khim Katy**, draws her inspiration from interactions with ordinary people, many of who have endured hardship and suffering.

The only explicitly 'feminist' artist among the five women is young Cambodian painter **Oeur Sokuntevy**, who openly challenges her country's traditional notions of the role of women in society, as well as traditional gender relationships.

To preview the works of the exhibition, please visit: [www.theeastgallery.com](http://www.theeastgallery.com) or view an [animated slideshow](#) .

Burmese painter Nann Nann will be in Toronto from February 28 to March 6 and will be **available for interviews** about the vibrant contemporary art scene in her troubled home country that has undergone enormous changes in the past few months.

**For more information, to request photos or arrange an interview please contact:**

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About the East Gallery:

The East Gallery's mission is to be Toronto's gateway to the vibrant contemporary art scenes of East and Southeast Asia. The gallery wants to introduce Canadians to a wide range of modern Asian artists, both emerging and established. Through a range of special events such as book readings, lectures and film nights the East Gallery provides visitors with a cultural, historic and social context to the art and artists we present.

The East Gallery was founded in 2011 by husband-and-wife team Andrew FitzGerald and Claudia Blume, who fell in love with Asian contemporary art while living in various countries in the region for more than 14 years. The gallery currently organizes exhibitions in various locations around Toronto but will move into a permanent space in July 2012.

**[www.theeastgallery.com](http://www.theeastgallery.com)**