



Spaces of the In-Between

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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## Stories from the White Building: Storytelling and the Production of Space

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The White Building is an apartment complex in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It was built in 1963 as a keystone of the Sihanouk governments' urban social housing scheme. After the fall of Khmer Rouge in 1979, the few surviving artists were called to live in The White Building due to its proximity to the National Theatre in order to re-build Khmer culture (the National Theatre has since been demolished). After decades of no maintenance and ongoing restructuring of the exterior, the White Building is in poor condition. However, behind the fading facade and dilapidated infrastructure there lives a complex community of over three thousand people including artists, musicians, community activists and everyday city dwellers. This paper explores the role of recent projects to document the everyday lives of the Building's inhabitants as both a means of resistance and to enable critical reflexivity among participants. Through the development of a number of initiatives across a variety of mediums and media platforms – including the very successful Humans of Phnom Penh series, whitebuilding.org and the Sa Sa Art Projects artists' collective based in the building – there is a desire to not only celebrate and document the living memory of this unique community, but to push back against government and property developers' interest in the site. By utilising a Lefebvrian analysis we argue, first, that the dominant discursive acts of the more powerful can be challenged through the expression of the 'lived' and the elevation of everyday life. And, second, we argue that the very perception of the space and the sense of place is (re)produced through these interactions across these new and diverse mediascapes.