

AGENDA | OPENING NIGHT
9TH MARCH 2018 | 19:00—22:00 | FCCT

19:15—20:00 Expected arrival of journalists and guests

Start of the event

UN Women's opening address

Australian Embassy's opening address

Pornvit and Piyavit talk about their experiences of photo taking

20:00 ONWARDS Q&A from FCCT members and guests

UN WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS PHOTO EXHIBITION



EXTENDED TO:
30TH MAY 2018 | 22:00 @ FCCT BANGKOK

THE PHOTO EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS THE STORIES OF WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The pictures were commissioned by UN Women as part of a project to raise public awareness of the challenges they face, as well as their personal strength. The exhibition runs from 09 March to 20 April 2018.

Women migrant workers are a vital part of the economy across Southeast Asia, yet face some of the harshest and most unjust conditions of any workers in the region. Many endure long hours, dangerous work, underpayment and even violence, without access to adequate support.

The two photographers travelled across Thailand to capture individual stories of resilience and humanity, featuring women from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar as they pick crops, sew garments or clean hotel rooms to secure a better future for themselves and their families.

The women's status, lack of integration and even their eagerness to work makes them vulnerable to exploitation. This can include illegally long hours or low wages, discrimination and poor access to basic services, as well as confinement, abuse and even "disappearance."

UN Women is working with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other organizations to improve the conditions of women migrant workers, both within the bloc and in other destination countries such as the Middle East. The exhibition features the work of photographers [Piyavit Thongsa-Ard](#) and [Pornvit Visitoran](#).



PORNVIT VISITORAN

A professional journalist with more than 10 years' experience, and a particular interest in social justice and human-interest stories.

"The pictures in this assignment portray women who sometimes lack faith in themselves, but who demonstrate more resilience and open-mindedness than many men.

As a photographer, it was difficult to capture the images, both logistically and on a more human level. Access to their workplaces was restricted, and sometimes denied by overseers or facility owners. It was also a strain to watch these women perform long days of hard labour without ever being able to speak freely with them or for us to get to know each other.

For their part, the women also seemed sometimes nervous about being photographed at work. We both knew that the resulting pictures would be far from glamorous, and even challenging for the viewer. But they speak an important truth and reflect the workers' daily reality. So, with this shared mission, a level of unspoken goodwill was able to develop between the photographer and the subjects, despite the barriers.

I hope these pictures can reach a wide audience, so that others can witness the same exemplary perseverance that I have seen. These are ordinary women who voluntarily put themselves through extraordinary ordeals to secure a better future for themselves and their families. I can only admire them."



PIYAVIT THONGSA-ARD

Thai photographer based in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand. His focus on social and political issues, human rights and climate change has led him to follow stories throughout South and South-East Asia in both reportage and documentary formats.

He has worked with Corbis Images, and had material published in several leading Thai and international media, in addition to his work with development organizations.

"We must not forget that the comfort of our own lives is only possible with the labour of migrant workers who are often not seen but whose lives are deeply connected with our own.

Of course, some choose to migrate to more favourable labour markets. But this assignment looked more closely at the others, those who are driven abroad by violence, dispossession or desperation. These migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation at every turn, too often ignored by society and institutions, and often end up working illegally long hours in the toughest sectors, for sub-standard wages.

I sought to capture their tired faces, failing health, and living conditions. These images form the message that I want to convey to the viewer.

They may come from different countries but punishing work and poor conditions have remained the common destiny for generations of migrants reaching Thailand. I hope that we can come closer together to help improve their situation in this lifetime."

