Objects, Museums, and Restitution: Cambodian Perspectives on Return

Friday, March 23, 2018, 5:30pm at RUFA (behind the National Museum)
Cambodia was raged by wars for many decades, which led to grave destruction of all sectors of the nation, and inevitably the national heritage. Many archaeological sites were seriously or partly destroyed; ancient artifacts were looted from historic sites or temples, and were illegally trafficked out of Cambodia for international antique collectors. As a signatory to a series of UNESCO and international conventions, Cambodia has been gradually successful in reclaiming ownership over a number of those lost artifacts through negotiation or litigation. Because the looting happened mostly in a context of insecurity and uncertainty, a proper documentation was difficult to constitute, therefore claim often appears as a big challenge for Cambodia.

Since the 1990s, Cambodia, with international assistance, has recovered a dozen of artifacts. Often the process went through amicable solution, based on a win-win policy.