SOPHEAP PICH, *Buddha 2*, 2009, rattan, wire, dye, 254 x 73.7 x 22.9 cm. Courtesy Tyler Rollins Fine Art.

The Pulse Within

TYLER ROLLINS FINE ART, NEW YORK — The first solo exhibition in New York for Cambodia's most internationally prominent artist showcased Sopheap Pich's distinctive sculptures made from bamboo, rattan and, most recently, burlap, farm tools, wood, plastics and paint. Pich and his family left Cambodia for the United States in 1979, at the peak of the conflict between Vietnam and Cambodia during the genocidal Khmer Rouge period (1975–79), and only returned in 2002. Cambodia's fraught history and the rapid growth of its urban centers during the past decade are of concern to Pich, whose work—both organic and architectural in form—conveys a sense of the fragility, which he relates to the social body of the nation. *Raft* (2009), the largest piece in the exhibition, was a skyscraper-like structure mounted atop two long floats that could pass as bombs. Pich made the work in response to real-estate developments in the lakeside neighborhood around his studio in Phnom Penh; residents are being paid to vacate the area so the lake can be filled in and built on. *Raft* is at once beautifully and painfully evocative of a nation buoyed and troubled by newfound global modernization.