



Being the son of an artist Chu Cil started painting at a very young age. Chu Cil and his family live along the Thai-Burma border and Chu Cil supports them with his work painting Buddhist monasteries and creating and selling his work to travellers to the border area.

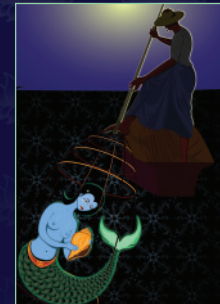
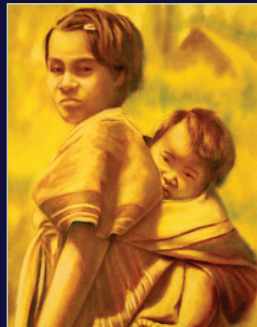
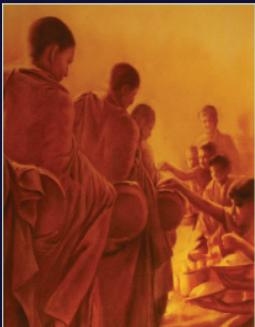
Chu Cil has been arrested and put in jail several times in Burma for talking with NLD members, refusing to pay bribes, and being caught with so called 'counterfeit Thai money.'

"The third time I was arrested I asked for pencils and paper and started doing sketches of the guards. They brought me pictures of their family members and so I sketched them too. After awhile we all became friends and they let me go. Most of the guards are working in prison just to feed themselves, there aren't really a lot of choices in Burma, if you can get a job that feeds your family you take it."

Chu Cil has been commissioned for numerous works both in Thailand and overseas. He sends back half of the money he earns to his family inside Burma and the rest goes to support his family along the border.

"It's easy to get depressed here and think that things will never change, that no one knows of our plight. Getting commissions not only helps me and my family but helps everyone who struggles here by giving us hope."

CHU CIL
www.borderlinecollective.org/artists/saw-chucil



LOVE BURMA

love freedom

ANDREA DRAPER - TIMOTHY SYROTA - CHU CIL

Special thanks to: Vicki Fairfax, Claire Wilson, Thet Soe Kwin, Huong Giang Le, Myo Nanda Myo, Jill Morgan, Anita Larkin, Jayne Lovelock, Candy Mitchell & Garry Woodard



Artist Andrea Draper was born in the East End of London and grew up in the south eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The atmosphere of Andrea's early life was very distant from the Burmese culture that her parents experienced. Apart from tales of life in Burma and Burmese traditions, and some colourful visitors from Burma, this extrinsic land seemed "old fashioned" and a long way away from contemporary life in London and Melbourne to a young Andrea.

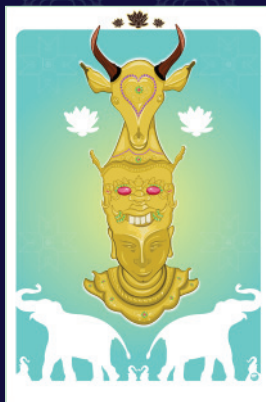
When people asked me "where do you come from?" I automatically answered "Burma," but this seemed like an untouchable far away land to me, one that I had little experience of, I subconsciously found it hard to truly grasp an understanding of my ethnic origin. I could relate more to cockneys & rhyming slang than to the exotic people in longyis (Burmese sarongs) with thanaka* on their faces. As I grew up I became more aware of the way Burma was portrayed in the media, whenever I saw articles of Burma in the newspaper or on the TV, they were understandably very negative stories about the military regime performing extreme corruption and horrible acts of murder & genocide. It was hard to relate this evil dictatorship to my loving parents, my convivial Aunties, Uncles and all the Burmese family friends who where mostly generous fun loving people.

The digital prints in *Love Burma Love Freedom* represents a positive Burma; the captivating aspects of the culture and traditions of the everyday people. The art is my personal experience imbued with contemporary expression; it is my rediscovery of the history that is in my blood.

I have been lucky enough to grow up and live in countries that practice and value democracy. I enjoy the freedom that the Burmese can only hope for; the people of Burma must be liberated.

ANDREA DRAPER
andrea@studiosamsara.com
www.studiosamsara.com

Thanaka ~ yellowish-white sunscreen "rouge" used as a beauty product on the cheeks, noses and foreheads of Burmese women and young boys. Thanaka paste is made by grinding bark of the sandalwood tree mixed with water.



Timothy Syrota first visited Burma as a backpacker in 1997 and since that time much of his work has focused on the country. Timothy is the author of 'Welcome to Burma and Enjoy the Totalitarian Experience' (Orchid Press, 2001) and his photographic work concerning Burma has been widely exhibited in Australia, Thailand, and the UK. Exhibitions have been opened by dignitaries including Nobel Peace Laureate, Jose Ramos Horta, former Australian Governor General, Sir Ninian Stephen, and former Australian Ambassador to Burma, Garry Woodard.

In 2008 Timothy won an international photojournalism award for his photography concerning the situation for Burmese migrant children on the Thai-Burma border. Timothy has filmed, edited and directed three documentaries concerning Burma including the soon to be released feature documentary, *Burmese Dreaming*. Timothy has worked as a photographer and film maker with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Save the Children (UK), ZOA Refugee Care, Handicap International, and the World Wild Life Fund. Timothy was the vice president of the International Society for Human Rights (Australia), 2001-2004, and founded and continues to jointly co-ordinate the Burma Border Children's Art Project, a project which also involves Timothy's close friend Saw Chu Cil. Timothy lived on the Thai-Burma border from 2004-2008 and continues to spend significant time there in order to facilitate his ongoing work in South East Asia.

TIMOTHY SYROTA
timothysyrota@gmail.com
www.timothysyrota.com

Concerning the Thai-Burma border children's art project: www.bbc-art.org

