

REVUE DE PRESSE

Trúc - Anh

Marie de la Fresnaye / 9 lives / Mai 2023



Avant que mes yeux se referment et avant que je vois l'image de Bouddha, 2022

Tissu de coton décoloré

240 x 120 cm Courtesy Trúc-Anh & galerie Sator © Grégory Copitet

Cette exposition dans le prolongement de celle de Trúc-Anh sur le site de Komunuma en janvier 2023 revient sur les 60 ans de l'immolation du bonze Thich Quảng Đức dans le centre de Saigon en protestation contre les actions de répression menées sur les moines bouddhistes suite à la division du pays. Cette scène est immortalisée par le photographe américain Malcom Browne, image qui publiée par Life que dix jours plus tard et lui vaudra le prix Pulitzer en 1964. Trúc-Anh interroge cette image à partir de ce que ses parents lui racontent de la scène. Par un effet de soustraction de la matière, il fait ressurgir le corps et le visage impassible du moine dans son état de sagesse et de « bouddhité ». L'artiste Danh Vo se penche sur la figure du missionnaire Théophile Vénard, entré clandestinement dans la région du Tonkin en 1854 puis condamné à mort par décapitation. L'artiste demande à son père de recopier à la main la dernière lettre du missionnaire envoyé à son propre père. A Komunuma, la galerie Sator présente « Ceux qui creusent » d'Eric Manigaud qui revient sur les exactions commises par le roi Léopold II au Congo pendant la période coloniale.

Marie de la Fresnaye / FOMO-VOX / Mai 2023

Les immanquables en galeries !

26 mai 2023

–Danh Vo & Trúc-Anh, *galerie Sator* (Marais)

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Drawing Now : Focus sur Truc-Anh / 2020

TRUC-ANH, GALERIE SATOR

«Lors de mes expositions, mon but est de challenger le spectateur en créant des énigmes visuelles» avoue Truc-Anh, féru de dessin depuis ses passages par l'École Boulle, La Cambre à Bruxelles et l'ECAL à Lausanne. Né en 1983 à Paris, installé aujourd'hui au Vietnam, le pays d'origine de ses parents, il croit en la capacité du dessin à révéler des secrets indicibles du monde. «Le réel n'est que l'ombre portée de l'imaginaire. Tout part de l'imaginaire. Nos objets, nos villes, nos dieux, nos traditions, nos valeurs, tout a été créé. [...] Il y a plus à voir dans ce qu'on ne veut pas voir. C'est ici, aux frontières de notre possible, qu'il faut écarquiller les yeux.» Un certain souffle chamanique travers son travail entièrement voué à réveiller les fantômes de son enfance et à rendre visible ce qui ne l'est pas. Son attraction irrésistible pour la représentation des fantômes et des monstres date de sa découverte même du dessin ; elle ne l'a jamais quitté. Il s'agit moins pour lui de chercher à représenter les individus qu'à les faire revivre et incarner leur énergie perdue. Si ses techniques de représentation et de figuration de s'y limitent pas (il pratique également la photographie et la sculpture), le dessin reste un médium central dans le système esthétique de Truc-Anh.



Truc-Anh, *After Him*, 2019, encre sur papier.
Courtesy Truc-Anh et galerie Sator.

Beaucoup de ses portraits sont réalisés à l'encre de Chine, qui empêche de revenir en arrière, quand d'autres le sont au graphite, au crayon blanc ou à l'Ecoline violette. Ses références, elles aussi multiples et éclectiques, liées tant à la peinture ancienne qu'à l'art conceptuel - Julien Schnabel, Jean Auguste Ingres, Francis Picabia, Bruce Nauman, Martin Kippenberger, On Kawara, Donald Judd -, traduisent le foisonnement de ses gestes créatifs et la nature intimiste de sa quête. Son désir de créer des «énigmes visuelles» est une manière de répondre à la saturation des images qui circulent dans nos vies, comme une brèche ouverte dans le champ miné du monde visible. Ses dessins toulés et tremblés sont la trace de son enquête sur le mystère des existences, rêvées, enfouies, réveillées.

Trong Gia Nguyen / CoBo Social / Février 2020

“Starving artists have nothing to lose”:
Truc-Anh on
censorship and the
rules of Vietnam’s art
game

Ho Chi Minh-based Vietnamese-American artist Trong Gia Nguyen sits down with fellow Vietnamese-French artist Truc-Anh to talk censorship and some of the challenges facing them.

TEXT: Trong Gia Nguyen

Trong Gia Nguyen: Your current exhibition at Galerie Sator in Paris is another development in the realm of portraiture. Here, you’re using special papers from Tibet that have a personal meaning for you. You’re also employing nonconventional instruments like bleach, not to remove, but reveal. And then there are lightboxes behind the papers, permeating the lines created from the bleach and giving the work a plainly visible aura. There’s a lot going on. Tell me more about this work, something maybe not readily evident.

Truc-Anh: The paper comes from Nepal. It had been a long time since I wanted to express energy itself in painting. I wanted literally to paint with light. I took me two years to develop this technique. I use bleaching as painting but actually there is no paint at all. The golden burnt color comes from the result of the process. The black dyed paper becomes thinner where I paint and lets the light from behind pass through it. The artwork is not lit by the space but rather lights up the space as viewers drown into darkness.



Installation view of Hứa Thái Trúc-Anh “Truc-Anh” at Galerie Sator, 18 January – 29 February, 2020. Photography by Gregory Copitet. Image courtesy of the artist.

You currently live and work in Marseilles. How did your work evolve as a result of your time in Vietnam, and what specific Vietnamese influences are visible in your work?

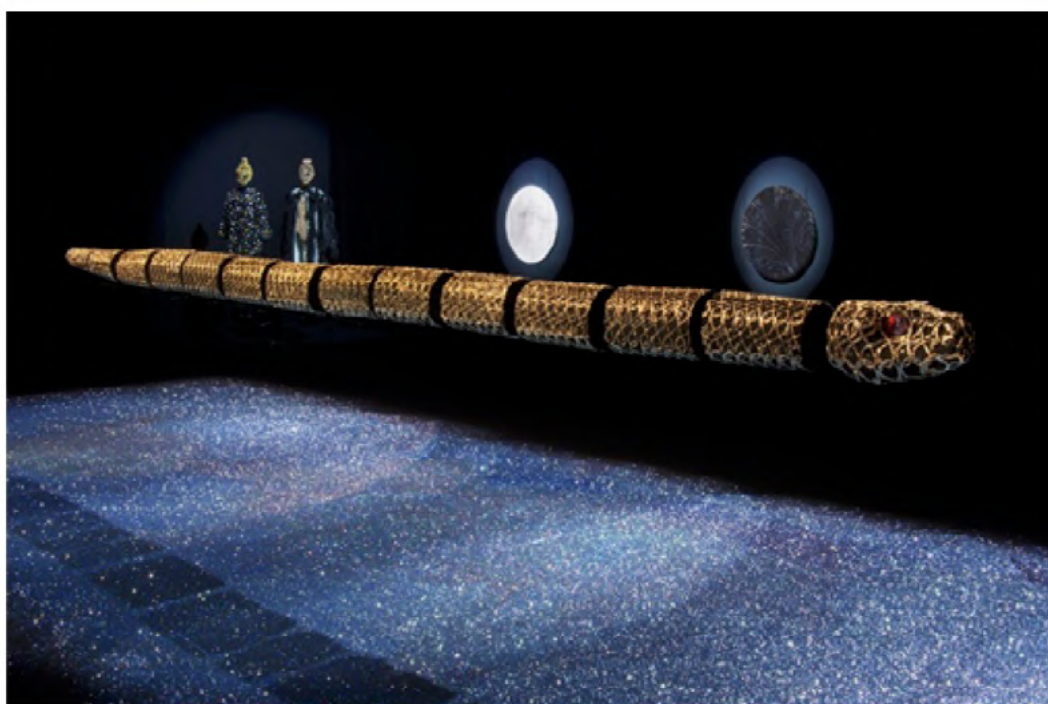
For a long time I was avoiding the use of Vietnamese roots in my work. I grew up with the idea that an artist has to exist beyond boundaries. I guess also that I didn’t want to use minority gimmicks and let this deep part in me reveal itself until it was fully ready and felt profoundly true. I realized very late that a lot of my interests were linked to my education, like my relationship to spirits and passed away souls, which come from my Mum. There is also the Buddhist concept of impermanence, which comes from my Dad’s teaching and is at the core of all my work. Both combined have subconsciously fed Ink Kingdom. I realized even later that this series of portraits was totally linked with the burning incense ritual at pagodas that I use to perform with my dad. We were “visiting” my grandpa who passed away before I was born. His portrait was in the middle of a little room filled with other ancestors. Years later I tried to reproduce this feeling with souls coming from any civilization and period of time.

What can you say about the differences so far of living and working in France, versus Vietnam?

Vietnamese genius consists of never questioning anything. Vietnamese drama consists of never questioning anything. French genius consists of questioning everything. French drama consists of questioning everything.

Do you have any experiences of censorship in Vietnam that you could share?

Like many I've been censored in Vietnam but I don't think it was specifically for my artwork, instead for the entire group show. For example censorship there is a rule but you can play with it by creating double entendre in your artwork. When I participated in the opening exhibition at the Vincom Center for Contemporary Art I was concerned about working with Vincom money, in a Vincom art center, within a Vincom shopping Center, inside a Vincom city! I created a video about illusion using footage of gambling games that were played in the mall arcades. Animations of gold coins floated across the screen. As someone once said, "art teaches life without giving a lesson". I mean that I just show to the visitor what he or she already knows in a different way, in a different set up, and then they make up their own story.

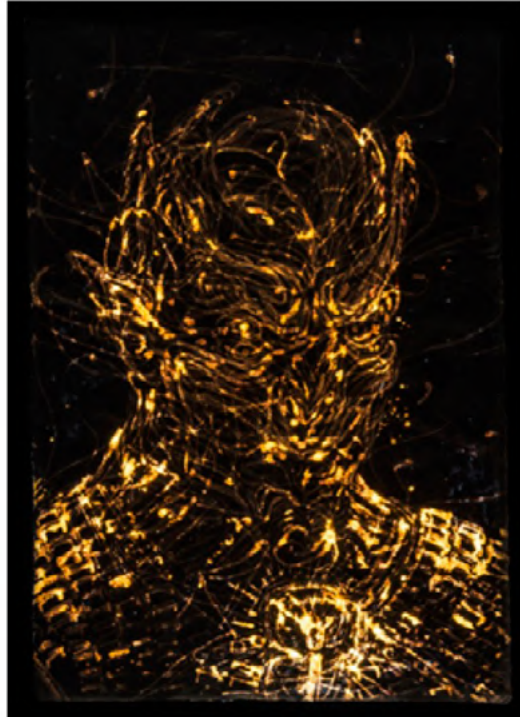


Not to talk trash, but I think it's important that readers see some of the inner workings of the artworld, and for artists, our place within it. Last year, we both participated in a group survey exhibition of contemporary Vietnamese art at The Mistake Room in Los Angeles. A number of us had negative experiences and we decided to start a discussion group on Facebook to share our thoughts. Not all was bad, but many agreed that communications between the space and artists were abysmal, sometimes resulting in misrepresentation of the work, which easily could have been avoided. One main concern of such neglect is the irony of how such exhibitions are initially meant to empower artists from underrepresented scenes. Yet in the end one can't help but notice the resemblance to a neo-colonial exercise in which one feels exploited by the curatorial powers.

My experience with The Mistake Room was tough and a bit deceptive. Not because we fought, but rather because I had almost no exchange with them – only two or three replies that lead to a non-decision. I did not recognize my work as it was installed but it made me learn some important lessons. To make a long story short, the project was built by incredibly talented people, with good intentions—I would like to believe. At the end there was so much power play involved that the art itself wasn't free in my case. They tried to give a voice to the artist but the structure of thinking was still a pyramid in which artists were not at the top. Conclusion: if you want to help artists, give them also the opportunity to exceed you. Even if it's your own program, to truly help them.

Artists always have the most to lose. But yeah, I guess the most powerless tend to be artists. In our discussion group, the artists who veered most politically in the exhibition did not weigh in at all, which I also found odd. It had me thinking a lot about what it means to make political, 'activist' work in one's art and yet completely dismiss such real work in real life, which could improve the artist's place within these constructed hierarchies. I found that disconnect disappointing, but maybe I'm being too idealistic.

Or the opposite, starving artists have nothing to lose. That's why they finally accept the offer and compromise to get a bit of exposure. It might look like a caricature but it's a real shift in an artist's mind. When you decide that you don't work for the art world but you have to decide how, where and with whom you want to work. It's very difficult but at the end that is the price to pay to make meaningful art. I don't want to be idealistic or dramatic, either. You have to know the rules of the game if you want to go beyond it. They're neither good nor bad.



Hứa Thái Trúc-Linh's latest work in 2020, bleach on lokta paper, lightbox. Photography by Gregory Copitet. Image courtesy of the artist.

In your work, there are strong elements of ritual and spiritualism. Is that a way for you to cope with the outside world?

I can't say that there is actually an outside world in opposition to an inner world. Most of our reality is built on beliefs. Laws, rules, nations, values, rituals. Our world is our perception of it. The "inner world" defines this perception. What is good or bad, ugly or beautiful. In my work I try to connect to that deeper truth, under the multiple layers of our conditioning and habits. I often try to escape my certainties because they're all mental. And mental is limited.

What might some of these certainties be?

Anything. It can be the size, the form, how to make a portrait, how long I spend on a painting, etc. One of the biggest challenges was how I consider what should look like a "coherent" body of work when I was freshly graduated. Get a strong concept, build around that, know what you want, etc. All of these bubbles have burst slowly. It had started with my series *Ink Kingdom*, which is not driven by a particular method of painting, only a common denominator of portraiture. Since then I've produce 400 works while trying, as absurd as it may sound, to always rediscover how to make a portrait. I'm like Almodovar, who says: "I have no certainties, only beliefs."

Within the constraints of Ink Kingdom, what are some of the “breakthroughs” that resulted within the process? Have you regularly surprised yourself?

The breakthrough was that I decided to do it my own way. Even if artists are supposed to know exactly what they are doing. At least this is what I've learned. To get a strong concept and so on. I decided that I want to show what I really am at that specific period of time. Someone who wanted everything at the same time. Without having any predefined style, medium or process. It's a tabula rasa each time I start a portrait. I surprise myself each time and I discover that I'm good when I'm discovering. Being present is so important, especially in an era of post-reality in which we can produce representation of representations. It looks true. It smells authentic. But everything is fake. This is what I see and hear all day long. Art is an act of resistance against the lost of meaning. Being present each time is looking for an eternal present. Painting is always in process of researching immortality.

Truc-Anh is a visual artist born in 1983 in Paris, degreed of La Cambre, National School of Visual Art, Belgium and of ECAL, Haute Ecole d'Art et Design in Switzerland. He works in a large range of technic and media including drawing, wood carving, 3D printing, installation, and video. His serie Ink Kingdom displays an accumulation of portraits in which he depicted the spiritual presence of known and unknown characters. His work have feature in numerous of solo exhibitions in Galerie Sator, Paris, Galerie Quynh, Vietnam or Galerie Varola, Los Angeles. It have been subject to articles in various national and internation reviews such as Hypperalergic, Le Monde, LA Times, Asia Art Pacific and the Wall Street International.

Trong Gia Nguyen is a Vietnamese-American artist living and working between Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Brussels, Belgium. His wide array of works examines structures of power in their myriad forms, scrutinizing the soft foundation upon which contemporary life plays out, often behind the façade of fairness, sincerity, security, tradition, and civility. He has exhibited internationally in numerous solo and group exhibitions including most recently *This House Is Falling*, La Patinoire Royale / Galerie Valerie Bach, Brussels, Belgium (2019); California Pacific Triennial, Orange County Museum of Art, Newport, CA (2017); and *The Foliage*, Vincom Center for Contemporary Art, Hanoi, Vietnam, (2017). Trong has received grants and residencies from the Museum of Arts & Design (New York, USA), Gate 27 (Istanbul, Turkey), Cannonball (Miami, USA), Bronx Museum (New York, USA), Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (New York, USA), and others. As a curator, Trong has organized over 25 exhibitions, including *TechNoPhobe* (2016), the inaugural exhibition at Vietnam's first contemporary art center, The Factory.

Philippe Dagen / Le Monde / 2020

Sélection galeries : David Salle chez Thaddaeus Ropac et Truc-Anh chez Sator

Deux expositions, deux styles : de grandes compositions impénétrables sous le pinceau de l'Américain David Salle et des œuvres spectrales réalisées à l'eau de Javel par le Français Truc-Anh.



Exposition Truc-Anh, à la galerie Sator (Paris 3e). GRÉGORY COPITET

Truc-Anh à la Galerie Sator

Ce ne sont pas des peintures, mais d'épais papiers népalais teints en noir sur lesquels Truc-Anh travaille avec de l'eau de Javel ou un autre liquide agressif. Il retire ou éclaircit le noir, qui devient alors d'un jaune de vieil ivoire. Par la tache et le trait, il fait apparaître des formes humaines. Les unes sont à peine distinctes, d'autres assez nettement visibles pour que l'âge et le sexe du sujet soient à peu près identifiables. Ce ne sont donc pas des portraits, quoique l'artiste prenne ses modèles dans sa famille. Les feuilles sont éclairées par-derrière, tels des écrans, et l'intensité de la lumière varie. Des visages se perdent dans l'ombre, d'autres en émergent. Ce procédé accroît le côté spectral des œuvres et fait glisser l'exposition vers une sorte de film au rythme lent et inexorable. Truc-Anh est né à Paris en 1983 d'une famille vietnamienne et, dans cette série comme dans les précédentes, réactive avec des moyens actuels des références venues des cultures asiatiques anciennes. Mais sans tomber dans l'exotisme et le pittoresque de la citation : ignorerait-on de quel passé remontent ces visages, on n'en serait pas moins sensible à leur fragilité et à l'alternance de l'effacement et du surgissement. De tels revenants peuplent toutes les mémoires.

Thi Nguyen / Saigoneer / Janvier 2020

Truc-Anh, a French Vietnamese painter, takes the flirtation with sacredness to a different level. Presenting his artworks alongside Cong Tri's ninth collection *Lua (Rice)* – which showcases fine silks from Lanh My A, a famous silk village in the Tan Chau silk region in An Giang Province in the Mekong Delta – Truc-Anh nested a world inside the exhibition space. Like the way Cong Tri weaves the entire landscape of the Mekong Delta into his work, Truc-Anh's design is epitomized by rice, Vietnamese most famous crop.

“Velvet and Lanh My A Silk are plaited into ripe rice, [*mắc nứa*] fruit and silk threads plaited into layers along the seams, motif of rice leaves pleating and sophisticated embellishment. Each detail receives thorough and sophisticated care, amounting to thousands of handicraft hours by artisans,” reads the exhibition brochure.

Meshing the sacred and the everyday, Truc-Anh references the space goddesses, serpents, rice, rivers and moons to create an impressive spectacle that straddles the line between reality and fiction in an unapologetic ode to the Mekong Delta's landscape and spirits.

Pauline Chevallereau / Le Quotidien de l'Art / Janvier 2020

Vu EN GALERIE



COURTESY GALERIE SATOR



PHOTO PAULINE CHEVALLEREAU

Vues de l'exposition « HUYA THÁI TRÚC-ANH » à la Galerie Sator.

Trúc-Anh

GALERIE SATOR

Photo de famille

Sept portraits se font face. Ils s'observent, s'examinent, se défient. Ils se retirent, aussi, délaissant à tour de rôle la lumière pour l'obscurité. Réalisés sur un papier produit artisanalement au Népal à partir de la plante de haute altitude Lokta, l'artiste (né en 1983) dessine à l'aide d'eau de Javel et d'autres solutions oxydantes et décolorantes les portraits des membres de sa famille. Les œuvres reposent sur des caissons lumineux et aléatoirement, s'embrasent. Dans cette nouvelle série, Trúc-Anh mène un travail d'introspection sur ses origines. Le portrait du demi-frère de l'artiste, Hu'a Trúc-Minh, se distingue par ses reflets bleus : les deux frères ne partagent pas le même sang. Prix : 5500 euros la pièce. PC.

« HUYA THÁI TRÚC-ANH »,
jusqu'au 29 février,
8, Passage des Gravilliers,
75003 Paris
galeriasator.com

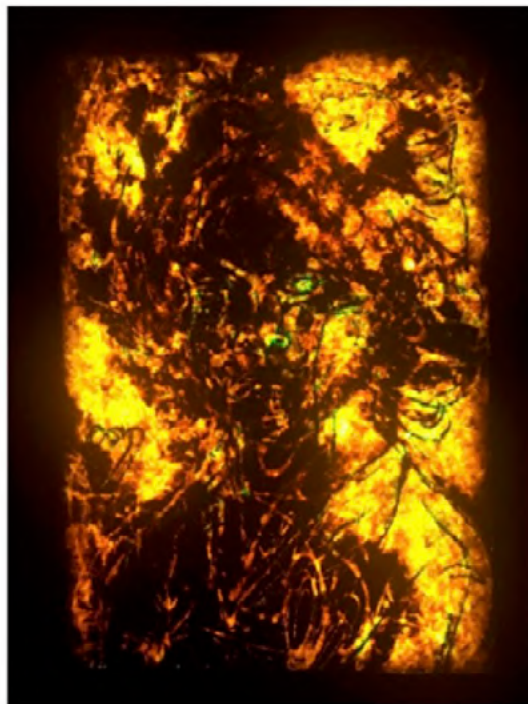


PHOTO PAULINE CHEVALLEREAU

Trúc-Anh,
Hu'a Tháí Trúc-Minh,

2019-2020, solution oxydante sur papier de lokta,
118 x 88 cm.

Khuat Can Vinh / Harper's bazaar / Décembre 2019

Artiste visuel TRUC-ANH

Les œuvres de Truc-Anh vont de la peinture à la sculpture, au plus profond de la création de Truc-Anh se trouvent des concepts pointus et sensibles nés quelque part entre la réalité et la fantaisie. L'artiste franco-vietnamienne née en 1983 s'est fait connaître grâce à des prix tels que le Prix de la Fondation Manganel en 2006 et des expositions personnelles "Truc-Anh : 8 Coeurs" (Galerie Quynh, 2018, Vietnam), "Truc-Anh : Le". Du Terrestre » (Galerie Sator, 2017, France) ou « Truc-English : Ink Kingdom » (Galerie Sator, 2015, France) ; exposition conjointe « Chant de la cigale parmi les coquelicots » (Galerie Quynh, 2018, Vietnam) et « olie. v2 » (Galerie Quynh, 2015, Vietnam).

L'artiste Truc-Anh se réjouit de l'approche de Cong Tri pour la collection n°9 car il n'oppose pas des choses souvent considérées comme contradictoires, comme la tradition et la contemporanéité, la précision de la géométrie et des silhouettes, les looks organiques, les rizières rurales et la science-fiction. Truc-Anh introduit cette opposition dans son travail dans cette exposition, avec un ensemble massif d'œuvres comprenant des peintures, des sculptures statiques, des sculptures dynamiques et des installations spécifiques au site. La salle d'exposition est un espace qui dégage une atmosphère sacrée, comme s'il s'agissait du sanctuaire de la déesse du fleuve, du riz, de la lune et du dieu serpent.

Catherine Womack / Los Angeles Magazine / 2019



Vietnamese Artists Born After the War Offer a Fresh Perspective on the Asian Nation

"Where the Sea Remembers" moves past the Vietnam War to cover technology, mythologies, displacement, futurism, and more

By Catherine Womack - July 15, 2019

In 2014, L.A.-based Vietnamese-American artist Thinh Nguyen left their home in Southern California and set out to travel across the United States for a year. Nguyen didn't take a car or use a map to plan a route. Instead, the artist simply packed an extra set of clothes and a camera in their backpack and hit the road with their thumb pointed east, hoping to catch a ride.

Relying on the kindness of strangers across the continental U.S., Nguyen's travels were part of a performance and public intervention artwork titled *Across the American Plains*. Hitchhiking and staying in people's homes for two to four nights at a time, Nguyen zigzagged across the country, taking pictures, keeping a journal, and gathering new friends along the way.

Some of the physical remnants from that journey are on display this summer at the Mistake Room just south of downtown L.A. as part of *Where the Sea Remembers*, a group exhibition featuring works created since 2007 by Vietnamese artists primarily born after the Vietnam War.

Inhabiting a corner of the gallery dedicated to performance works and works dealing with the body, Nguyen's installation includes pairs of beautifully subtle glossy photographs and a journal sitting open on a small pedestal. (Visitors are encouraged to page through the journal and read the artist's handwritten memories, stories and personal musings from the trip).

Nguyen's framed photographs feature blurry images taken from the windows of cars, many of which capture bodies of water and could easily be mistaken as images of Vietnam. Paired with each blurry landscape is a more still photo of bedding. In these photos, softly colored ruffled sheets and duvets mingle with pillows, photographed from above after a night of sleep.

"My hosts let me sleep here," the artist explains. "I photographed them as a way of remember and of capturing the imprint of my body on those surfaces. It's very intense and very intimate. A moment in time."

Just to the left of Nguyen's glossy photographs and displayed journal, another photo rounds out the installation. Grainy and unframed, it's a snapshot of the mud, hay, and bamboo farmhouse where Nguyen was born and lived in Vietnam until they moved with their parents to Orange County at age 11. Nguyen took the photo using their flip phone camera when they were 22 and returned to their home country for the first time. The process of getting reacquainted with their home country on that trip is in part what inspired the artist to travel across the U.S. a few years later.



COURTESY THE MISTAKE ROOM

Because Nguyen is based in the U.S., they are a bit of an anomaly in this group show, which features works by many artists living in working in Vietnam, primarily in Ho Chi Minh City.

César García-Alvarez, the Mistake Room's executive and artistic director and a curator of this exhibit, says as a group these artists represent Vietnam's contemporary art scene, a vibrant community of mostly under-40 conceptual artists, collectives, and independent art spaces mostly based in Ho Chi Minh.

In an introduction to the exhibit, García-Alvarez says the show is a "dispatch of multiple perspectives rather than as a defining survey." He notes that this generation of artists offers a new perspective on Vietnamese art. While the work of their elders was so often centered around the Vietnamese War, these artists are exploring more modern, global concepts.

The show is a rich and well-organized dispatch that covers themes of technology, mythologies, displacement, futurism, and more.

Trong Gia Nguyen's large hanging work *Cracked Mobile No. 5* plays with concepts of home and technology, calling to mind both the window grates from colonial homes that pepper Vietnam and the cracked screen of an iPhone. Tr'ông Công Tùng's *When the virtual become the actual and the actual become the virtual* also juxtaposes history and mythology with pervasive modern technology. Against the backdrop of a vibrant, textured wall covered in plastic bags embedded with dusty orange dirt from Vietnam's Central Highlands sit two horses, one of them toppled over on its side. Covering the horses' metal frames are hundreds of keys removed from dirty, old computer keyboards.



An evolving wall project from the Propeller Group, a collective founded in Ho Chi Minh City in 2006, will change shape over the run of the show. *Slaughterhouse #7*, a painting of a cow being butchered by Nguyễn Văn Du that recalls Renaissance-era European grandeur, was painted using actual cow's blood. Tuấn Andrew Nguyễn's *Blanket Works* features thermal survival blankets coated in epoxy resin, a symbol of displacement and suffering transformed into a bright abstract work.

García-Alvarez says that the exhibition is only the beginning of *Where the Sea Remembers*. The rest of the project includes a website (launching this week) that will feature critical texts about these artists and their works. This, the curator says, will help to fill a scholarly gap by generating writing about these artists and their works. An extensive program series rounds out the project.

Thinh Nguyen will be featured on one of those programs (date TBD). If you're curious about their journey across the United States, about how their own preconceived notions of the U.S. melted away into a more nuanced understanding, you can join them for a storytelling night.

"I had an idea of some of the states I visited. But then I went there and met the people and interacted with them and it just blew my mind," they say. "It changed my way of thinking about what is the United States. About how we dismantle our political ideology and how we can connect. Really it's about proximity. Because of the vastness of the United States, we don't have proximity towards each other, nor do we have the time and space to really get to know each other. Just come to the program! I will recount some of the stories."

Caroline Miranda / Los Angeles Times / 2019

ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS



"Re/cover no. 2," 2013, a digital C-print by Phan Quang, from the group exhibition "Where the Sea Remembers" at the Mistake Room. (Phan Quang / The Mistake Room)

Datebook: Paintings that serve as reflections of indigenous life in Australia

By CAROLINA A. MIRANDA

JULY 26, 2019

"Where the Sea Remembers," at the Mistake Room. This project, devoted to contemporary art made in and about Vietnam, takes several forms, including an exhibition, a program series and a related website. It also marks a new series of collaborations between the Mistake Room and art spaces in that country. The project's title is inspired by the name of a song that was known widely among people who fled Vietnam after the end of the war in 1975 and will feature works and events by artists with connections to Los Angeles — such as Thinh Nguyen, Truc-Anh and Tuan Andrew Nguyen — as well as many artists who are based exclusively in Vietnam. *At noon Saturday, Mistake Room Executive Director Cesar Garcia-Alvarez and exhibition organizer Anna Borisova will lead a walk-through of the show. On Wednesday at 7 p.m., artist Thinh Nguyen will host a performative storytelling hour devoted to a cross-country hitchhiking adventure in the United States. The show runs through Oct. 12. 1811 E. 20th St., downtown Los Angeles, tmr.la.*

Ruben Luong / Art Asia Pacific / 2019



Ruben Luong / Art Asia Pacific / 2019

Where the Sea Remembers



Installation view of selected works from TRUC-ANH's *Ink Kingdom* series, 2015-2019, ink on paper, dimensions variable, at "Where the Sea Remembers," The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, 2019. Courtesy the artist and The Mistake Room.

Unlike their predecessors, the 14 Vietnamese artists and one collective featured in "Where the Sea Remembers" do not dwell on the trauma of the Vietnam War. Rather, they belong to a younger generation—many from the war's resultant diaspora—who have returned to Vietnam from abroad in the past decade, bringing with them refreshing perspectives on the country's past and present. Staged at The Mistake Room in Los Angeles, the show served as a personalized cultural dispatch from a lesser-known Vietnam.

Trong Gia Nguyen touches on how technology and media operate within a rapidly developing Vietnam in his sculpture *Cracked Mobile No. 5* (2019). The artist welded iron within a raw frame of gypsum and enamel paint to mimic the glass cracks of a shattered cell phone. Referencing the traditional window grates of colonial homes in Southeast Asia, the black iron fissures radiating from the bottom right corner of the frame allude to the darker aspect of globalized communication and

media that have flooded into Vietnam's urban centers, in turn causing the erosion of local, traditional values.

Another section of the gallery was dedicated to explorations of Vietnamese history. For *Voyages de Rhodes* (2014–17), Phan Thao Nguyen purchased on eBay a first-edition travelogue on Vietnam by 17th-century French Jesuit missionary Alexandre de Rhodes, who is credited with establishing the Romanized Vietnamese script. On excised pages of the book, Phan painted watercolors that are by turns fanciful (children glide around a water tower), strange (children kneel with black chopsticks extending from their mouths into the ground), spiritual (villagers bow to a blindfolded deity enshrined within a lotus flower), and even anachronistic (businessmen ascend and descend escalators). Eighteen of these paintings were displayed within glass frames nailed perpendicular to a small white partition, forming a charming reel of imagery. By juxtaposing the missionary's text with her own fantastical paintings, Phan creates a reflective case study that reclaims the power of the colonizer's language, while gesturing at the inherent unreliability of narrative and artistic representation.

Elsewhere, artists grappled with how the diasporic body registers collective trauma and conflicted histories, and reconciles its placement in the world. Truc-Anh's *Ink Kingdom* (2015–), a series of 27 differently sized portraits, alluded to isolation and otherness. In one acrylic painting, a man's wrinkles are distorted into exaggerated forms and lines that render his expression moody and ambiguous, while a postcard-

sized piece of paper depicts the faint contour of a Buddhist monk. Lined up on a back wall, these portraits of seemingly random subjects nevertheless gain an odd sense of unity. Meanwhile, Thinh Nguyen's installation *Across the American Plains* (2014–15), comprising the artist's journal and photographs documenting their journey hitchhiking across the United States, probed notions of home and alienation. On one wall of an L-shaped partition was a small, low-resolution photo of the artist and their family at their old bamboo farmhouse in Vietnam, while six pairs of photographs taken in the US adorned the other. The faraway placement between the walls seems intentional, alluding to the geographical and psychological distance experienced when one moves to a new country. In one pair of photographs, a blurred snapshot of a forest captured from a moving car accompanies an image of a crumpled comforter graced by the halo of a lens flare. Another pair juxtaposes an image of a hazy lake and that of ruffled bedsheets. The obscured landscape photographs are gray and cold, producing a sense of alienation that is heightened in contrast to the sharpness of images capturing their imprint on the empty beds.

"Where the Sea Remembers" displayed the intellectual, emotional and creative breadth of Vietnam's returnee and diaspora artists, providing a rich and unforgettable visual context for understanding the country and its people's complex histories.

RUBEN LUONG

British Concil / 2019



CHALLENGES TO VIET NAM'S HUB DEVELOPMENT

Previous studies have given us a clear picture of the current nature and distribution of creative hubs in Viet Nam. Truong Uyen Ly's [2, 14] report for the British Council lists 24 Hubs in Viet Nam: 10 each in Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi, and others in Hue, Hai Phong and Hoa Binh; the report by Luong Hong Quang et al. [1] lists 13 hubs; other estimates suggest as many as 40 hubs. Ly [14] offers an estimate of the potential scale of the 'start-up community' by estimates drawn from Facebook 'likes'. She estimates that the core community may number 8-10,000; and when one includes that who are connected to these networks as supporters or visitors the number could be increase ten fold. This issue of the precise number of people involved, let alone their economic output, and cultural output is unknown, but it is an issue that need more information. The precise number of hubs depends on the definition adopted. Without doubt the largest and best known

internationally is Ha Noi Creative City. The important point to make is that the extant creative hubs do not fall into an easy classification or taxonomy: diversity is key, in terms of size, formation, objectives and focus. Few of the hubs are 'established', and even the largest ones are undergoing rapid change and transformation. New entrants such as The Factory in Ho Chi Minh City, and the fine art based hubs in Hue illustrate the breadth and nature of change. There is a clear sense of growth and development, and hubs are becoming more popular.

By comparison hubs in Europe tend to be rather more normative; usually state, or partially statesupported old industrial buildings accommodating a group of creative business or artist studios and workshops. The Viet Nam picture is an interesting contrast with little if any role for the state; instead external NGOs, expatriots, and property developers taking

the lead role. In Europe, there is a great concern about the provision of work spaces, and studio spaces for artists and creative businesses; this seems less a priority in Viet Nam. Either spaces were more easily, or cheaply, available; or, the main priority for creative workers was networking and meeting, this is what many hubs provided as a priority. Here, it is important to make some distinctions between co-working spaces that are primarily of business model for property management, and networking hubs where the curation of activities or training is a priority. The distinction between these two categories can be unclear, and change over time.

It is important to note that creative hubs in Viet Nam, as in Europe, encompass a variety of different business models. Specifically, whilst the 'bottom line' is always to make money, or not make a loss the subsidiary aim is often more important.

Blouin Art Info / Juin 2018



"Sharingan Dosatsugan (eye of inside)," 2018, by Truc-Anh (1983, Paris), Aodized stainless steel, 90 x 150 x 150 cm, Edition 7 + 1 AP, Galerie Quynh
(Courtesy: Artist & Galerie Quynh)

The latest works created by Vietnamese-French artist Truc-Anh are now on display in Ho Chi Minh City. Galerie Quynh is hosting the exhibition of new and recent creations in an exhibition titled "8 Hearts". The exhibition will be on view until May 12, 2018.

For this exhibition, Truc-Anh tells a complex and nuanced story of transformation and awakening. The artist's practice has always been defined by his navigation of parallel terrains – the tension between personal histories and age-old wisdoms, between an egocentric need to succeed and the Buddhist philosophy of being selfless. The title of the show exemplifies these dynamics, being a reference to the video games of Truc-Anh's childhood while also alluding to metaphysical dimensions.

Inspired by a series of ritual events he experienced recently in Nepal, the artist ruminates on the theme of mortality in "8 Hearts" – the exhibition an imagining of a journey through the afterlife. Seen this way, the entrance of the exhibition can be considered as a sort of threshold to cross over – between the past and the present, between one world and another.

Truc-Anh's paintings, drawings and sculptures – whether appearing sparse and quiet, or posing as dense visual riddles – attempt to portray the continual shifts from the corporeal to the astral and back. The idea of perpetual motion shines through elements taken from the lore of both ancient mythology and modern popular culture as well as from the artist's own experiences. In particular, the symmetrical number eight – representing a perfect loop and infinity – appears in many of the works while references to rebirth, healing and impermanence interspersed with images of the ego, vanity and conceit are also prevalent.

Born in 1983 in Paris, Truc-Anh studied at Ecole Boule, Ecole Supérieure des Arts Appliqués, Paris; ECAL, Haute Ecole d'Art et de Design, Lausanne, Switzerland; and La Cambre, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels, Brussels, Belgium. He has received awards for his work including the Prix Manganel (Lausanne, Switzerland) and Laureate of the Prix Photo Europa (France).

Recognized as Vietnam's leading contemporary art gallery, Galerie Quynh has been promoting contemporary art practice in the country for almost two decades. The gallery is known internationally for its consistently focused programming and educational initiatives. Working with a select group of emerging, mid-career and established Vietnamese artists, the gallery also exhibits the work of distinguished artists from around the world.

galerie Sator

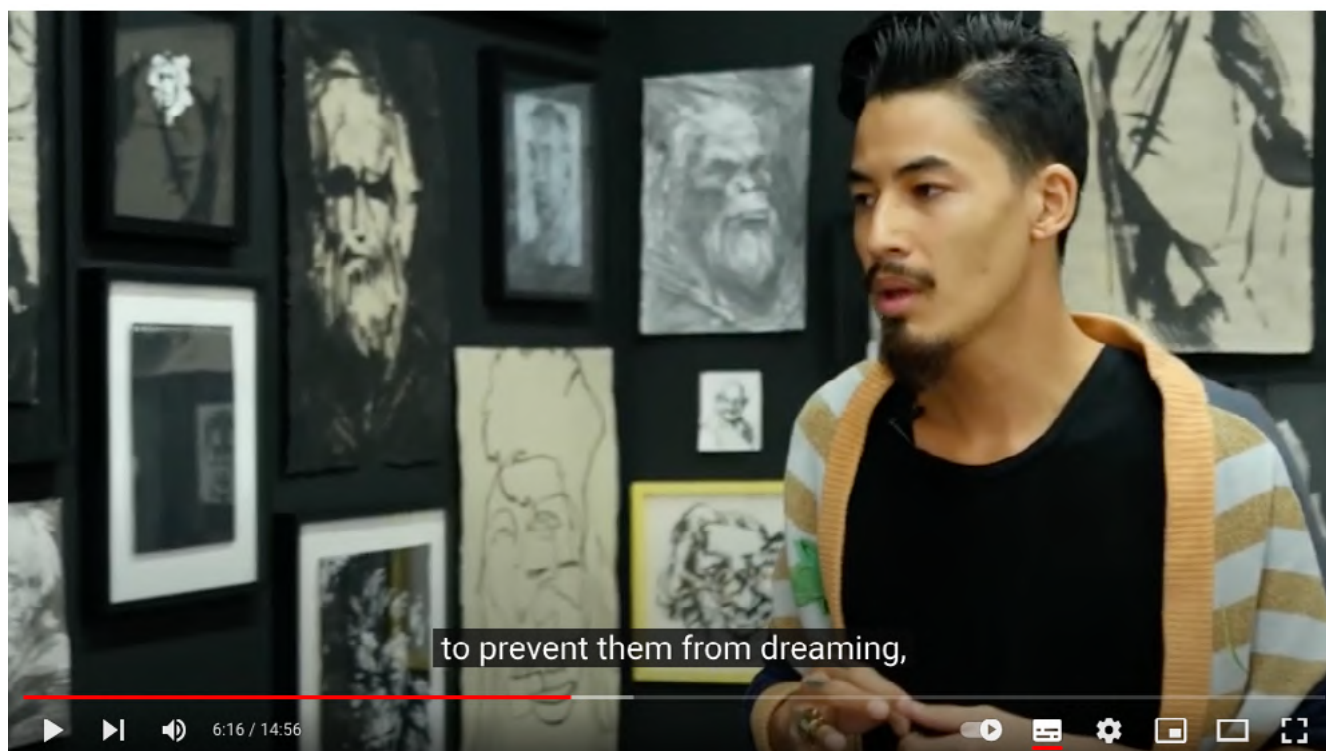


Interview / Manal Show / 2017

Interview / Baert Gallery / TV 5 Monde / 2017



Interview aert Gallery / MAI / 2017



Interview aert Gallery / MAI / 2017



galerie Sator
Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times / Janvier 2017

“Truc Anh: Vacuphilia,” at Varola. The first exhibition by the Vietnamese-French artist features paintings and installations that feature bodies and body parts inhabiting an abstracted world of black and white. *Through Friday. Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., Suite B256, West Hollywood, helenvarola.com.*



"Vacuphilia" by Truc-Anh at Varola in West Hollywood. (Varola)

Alice Bauer / Wall Street International / Juillet 2017



Conversely, Truc-Anh's pieces from *Ink Kingdom* strike with the brutal simplicity of black and white, ink and paper. Vivid images like the spectral portrait *Noemie* or the slightly twisted rib cage of *Soul Archive #2* are recognisable objects placed on display and almost challenging the viewer with an inescapable virulent energy. But even they are not concrete and realistic. Each object is slightly off, blurred, or altered. A horror story of existence, malice seems to observe us from the canvases. The uneasiness seeps into our bones and spreads into the psyche; angst and morbidity make a home in our heads.



Alice Bauer

Alice Bauer is a multi-lingual (German and Spanish) American working in editorial and cultural journalism. She focuses on the arts and media and their impact on the individual and society. [Full profile »](#)

Ben Valentine / Hyperallergic / Mai 2016

Art **Reviews**

Holograms, Robots, and 3D-Printed Masks at a New Art Center in Vietnam



Ben Valentine May 3, 2016



The Factory's offices and installations, with the coming library below (all photographs by the author for Hyperallergic)

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam — The newest and allegedly largest contemporary art space in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), [The Factory](#), launched with a bevy of robots and holograms in its inaugural exhibition, [TechNoPhobe](#). Highlighting six HCMC-based contemporary artists and featuring several large installations, sculptures, and interactive works all incorporating new media, this exhibition would feel at home in any global arts city, from NYC to Beijing. It offers a rare peek at the new and future forms and media gaining traction in HCMC's arts scene.

Coming into the large, sleek space, visitors are confronted by "[License 2 Draw](#)" (2014) by U'u Đàm Trần Nguyễn. The work, like many others throughout the exhibition, is an interactive new-media installation, only this one is app-based, relinquishing some of its aesthetic control to the networked audience. Vietnam is the third most connected Southeast Asian country, with [43.9% internet penetration](#), and among the city's more well-to-do youth, smart phones have been the norm for some time. I watched several viewers quickly download the app and, with big smiles, begin controlling the drawing robot.



Uu Đàm Trần Nguyễn, "License 2 Draw" (2016)

While the installation of the piece was well crafted, and controlling the robot car to paint was undeniably fun, the idea itself felt a bit overdone. Ever since Nicholas Negroponte's "[Seek](#)" (1970), robots and their crowdsourced human counterparts have been creating collective forms. "Blurring the boundary between audience and artist" in such a manner is a well-worn trope.

"The Quantic Family" (2016) by Truc-Anh is a visually enticing installation comprising two parts; three 3D-printed masks and a wallpapered backdrop, all in high-contrast black and white. The two walls are covered with images of faces and masks from all over the globe, cut up and mixed together to make strange new near-faces. The 3D-printed masks render several of the faces from the wall in physical form.



Truc-Anh, "The Quantic Family," detail

The piece suggests the intermingling of cultures through globalization (especially via digital technologies) — such as throwing in the Terminator with the Egyptian cat goddess Bastet. But

globalization and digital technologies are never as uniformly and horizontally distributed as this installation might suggest. The idea that with the internet all cultures can now connect and share together equally is an old and debunked techno-utopian dream.

The piece I enjoyed most viscerally was Cao Hoàng Long's "The Infinite in the Finite" (2016), which is comprised of a faux well with thin bands of white-blue light projected onto the water inside that change radiuses and frequency as the work interacts with the viewer. The piece is simple but has a strong impact. Another visitor and I silently stared at the shimmering water for a long time, as countless people have done out in the world since time immemorial. This piece was strong enough to transcend the technologies used and speak to the deeper human condition — something new-media works aspire to but rarely achieve.

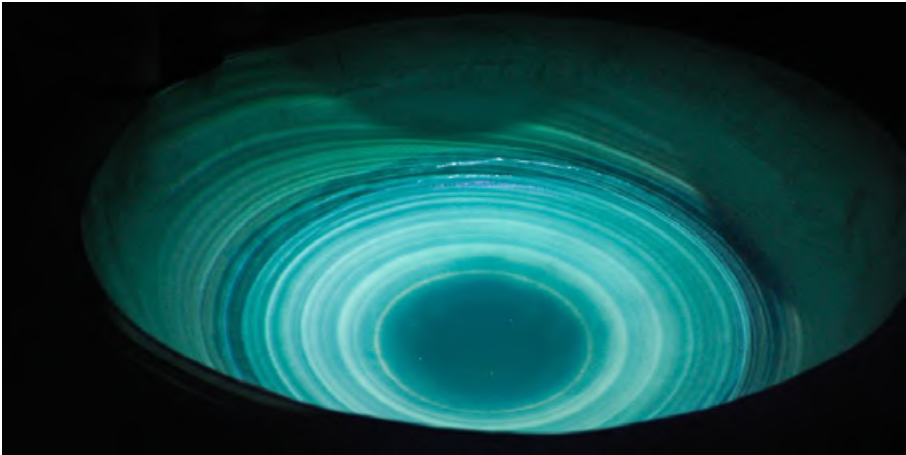


"Hầu Đồng Song," (2016) by Ngọc Nâu and Crazy Monkey.

However, the piece that left the strongest impression on me was "Hầu Đồng Song" (2016) by Ngọc Nâu and Crazy Monkey (Lê Thanh Tùng). This work is a projected hologram of Ngọc dancing while wearing the traditional Vietnamese clothes of the Goddess of Mountains and Forest. The artist's dancing is fun and modern, abstracted slightly through the Kinect 3D-scanned image, and the accompanying song is traditional, part of a Vietnamese custom for communicating with the deceased or asking the spirits for assistance. This playfully jarring juxtaposition felt smartly representative of contemporary Vietnam. Throughout HCMC, an undeniably modern city fighting its way to global status, there are still many unique intersections of traditional beliefs, communism, and a socialist-oriented market economy post-Đổi Mới. Ngọc's installation plays cleverly within these surreal and generative intersections.

Due to ongoing negotiations with the local Cultural Police, a sound installation by Thierry Bernard-Gotteland, a French-born, HCMC-based artist, is currently absent from the exhibition. The Factory is negotiating the work's return.

The Factory encompasses a bar, a coworking space, workshops, and a library, and will soon feature an organic restaurant as well. In this regard, the space, like its inaugural show, represents a rapidly changing and increasingly global Ho Chi Minh City. The question for the future of both the Factory and the artists based there is: Can they compete at an international level while retaining the uniquely Vietnamese quality of HCMC?



Cao Hoàng Long, "The Infinite in the Finite" (2016)



Truc-Anh, "The Quantic Family" (2016)

Sandra Cazanave / French Morning / Octobre 2016

"Vacuphalia", l'anti-Los Angeles de Truc Anh à la galerie Varola

par Sandra Cazenave (<https://frenchmorning.com/author/edjscazenave/>) -

4 octobre 2016

Une réaction face à l'effervescence de Los Angeles : c'est ainsi que l'on pourrait qualifier les créations épurées de l'artiste franco-vietnamien Truc Anh, exposées à la galerie Varola (<http://www.helenvarola.com/>), du jeudi 6 octobre 2016 au vendredi 20 janvier 2017.

"Vacuphalia" est le résultat de plusieurs semaines passées dans la résidence d'artiste de Downtown, Werkartz (<http://www.werkartz.com/#home>) , au printemps 2016. *"Je voulais travailler sur la continuité et proposer quelque chose qui est aux antipodes de ce que l'on trouve à Los Angeles. J'avais envie de parler de vérité, de solitude, de doutes et d'introversion, des notions absentes ici"* , affirme Truc Anh.

Intitulé "Mermaids of time" (ci-dessous), le ballet des cinq paires de jambes ornées de chaussons de ballerines suspendues a un côté hypnotique, oscillant tel un pendule. *"Cette oeuvre parle de sexualité à travers l'érotisme. Il y a les deux cotés des jambes mais il est fait abstraction du sexe"* , précise l'artiste de 33 ans.



Dans ses créations, il joue avec les frontières, travaillant sur les paradoxes: noir/blanc, plein/vide, saturation/manque, Orient/Occident. Ainsi, la sculpture ethnographique "Catherine", imprimée en 3D au Vietnam, mixe un masque japonais du théâtre Nô et les traits de Terminator.

"Truc-Anh convoque un bestiaire peuplé de chimères plongées dans un état de contemplation. "The Dilettante" se donne l'allure d'un collage. Quant à la silhouette fragile et élégante de "The Shameful", elle flotte indécise comme en lévitation", décrit Pierre Lefort, le commissaire de l'exposition.



Truc Anh a déjà exposé en Europe et en Asie.

Chez ce boulimique d'apprentissage (Boulle, Ecole nationale des arts appliqués de Paris, Ecole nationale supérieure des arts visuels de Belgique), les techniques varient d'une oeuvre à l'autre, passant de la sculpture à la peinture à l'huile.

Au regard des oeuvres, on trouve une envie de simplicité, de revenir aux matériaux naturels. *"On vit dans une époque de saturation et d'effets spéciaux. Faire de la peinture, c'est une forme de résistance. D'une manière générale, je vais à l'inverse de ce que l'on m'a conseillé à l'école, en m'attachant à travailler sur du premier degré, sans cynisme, ni recul critique."*

Ses oeuvres avaient déjà été présentées au public de Los Angeles au terme de la résidence d'artiste. C'est à ce moment là que Truc Anh a retrouvé Pierre Lefort. *"J'avais déjà vu son travail à Paris, mais je l'avais loupé à Hong Kong. J'ai donc profité de cette opportunité pour organiser une exposition"*, raconte Pierre Lefort.



Myriam Dao / VisuelImage.com / Juin 2015

Ink Kingdom / Truc-Anh, « Un cabinet des âmes errantes »,

Comment visiter Ink Kingdom, sombre galerie de portraits installée par Truc-Anh à la Galerie Sator à Paris, sans penser aux âmes errantes des millions de victimes du Vietnam, pays où l'artiste a choisi de s'installer il y a 5 ans. Comment, en voyant ces visages torturés, déformés, grimaçants, ne pas se souvenir que ce pays fût le théâtre de guerres et celui, il n'y a pas si longtemps, de l'établissement du Goulag vietnamien, véritables camps de torture et de mort lente ?

Pourtant, le discours de Truc-Anh, jeune artiste trentenaire, ne dit rien de tout cela. De formation essentiellement européenne (La Cambe en Belgique, ECAL à Lausanne), il explique son installation à Ho Chi Minh Ville par un retour aux origines, loin du monde de l'art. Son propos reste centré sur une peur de fantômes profondément ancrée depuis l'enfance, mais le mystère reste entier, il n'en dévoilera pas la cause. Néanmoins, en filigrane, un questionnement sur l'humain se fait jour dans son travail. A la Galerie Sator, où il expose jusqu'au 4 juillet, je suis saisie d'emblée par la souffrance présente dans chaque visage, et presque mal à l'aise. C'est le titre de l'ouvrage de Didi Huberman, qui me vient à l'esprit devant les portraits de Truc-Anh « Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde ». Non content de nous rendre captif par la force de ses encres, Truc-Anh nous a offert une performance, « La Rivière », le jeudi 4 juin, installant son auditoire, parfaitement immobile, dans une écoute attentive pour quarante longues minutes. Sa performance est un récit échevelé, haletant, décousu, à mi-chemin entre le stand-up et le théâtre. Là, l'artiste, manifestement habité, incarne tour à tour plusieurs personnages, comme s'il donnait chair à sa galerie de portraits graphiques, se délivrant peu à peu de ses fantômes.

Entretien avec l'artiste

Si vous étiez invité à la Biennale de Venise, quel pays pourriez-vous représenter ?

L'identité est une entité mouvante, résultant d'un croisement de flux : éducation du pays où j'ai grandi (la France), de parents (les miens sont nés au Vietnam) - éducation artistique (Belgique et Suisse)... Et je vis et travaille aujourd'hui au Vietnam, donc pourquoi pas...La Yougoslavie ?

Mais vous n'êtes pas arrivé à Ho Chi Minh Ville, au Vietnam, par hasard ?

Non, il y avait un questionnement sur mes racines. Quand j'ai commencé la peinture, j'avais envie de commencer par le début : la peinture, le dessin - LE médium élémentaire des arts visuels - même si je suis passé par la vidéo, la photographie, la sculpture et la performance auparavant.

Vos études d'art à Lausanne étaient plutôt tournées vers l'abstraction. Dans votre travail vous revenez souvent au portrait, au figuratif, au corps. Les corps de « Ink Kingdom » emprisonnent des vides, et, bien souvent, il n'y a pas de limites entre la figure et le fond, pour mettre en relation la matière et l'immatériel, le corps et l'esprit.

Parlons de la performance que vous avez faite à la Galerie Sator, non seulement destinée à nous questionner, mais à nous donner à voir, à travers une technique narrative les obsessions qui semblent vous traverser.

Je suis issu des arts vivants - je voulais être danseur - jongleur, j'appartenais à une petite compagnie. Finalement j'ai opté pour les arts plastiques, plus à même de m'amener vers l'espace infini. Déjà dans la vidéo Sadako l'insulaire, j'incarne un personnage, façon pour moi de concilier arts vivants et arts plastiques. A Ho Chi Minh Ville, j'ai découvert l'improvisation théâtrale et je fais partie d'une troupe amateur. La performance à la Galerie Sator était complètement improvisée, avec plusieurs niveaux de narration juxtaposés, et non linéaires, tout comme l'accrochage. Il donne à voir une simultanéité des événements : on regarde un portrait, et en même temps, on est regardé par d'autres portraits.

Tout comme l'est votre installation, votre performance était parfois étouffante. Je me suis sentie comme prise en otage et j'ai pensé que cette pesanteur faisait partie du dispositif. Les distorsions de votre voix, gutturale par moments, m'ont fait me demander – nous avons les yeux fermés à moment donné - s'il n'y avait pas quelqu'un d'autre dans l'espace de la galerie. Vous êtes habité par des présences incroyables, les fantômes de l'enfance ?

J'avais peur de ces fantômes sans jamais les avoir vus. Peur de ce qu'ils pourraient révéler de la vie, de la mort. Dès l'âge de 10 ans je dessinais des monstres partout, tout le temps. Questionner des représentations pour moi c'est questionner la croyance. Figurer pour donner à croire. C'est une recherche vers la source, un questionnement sur moi-même, sans chercher pour autant à reprendre des codes.

Sans être dans la répétition, je note pourtant une filiation entre les encres de Victor Hugo et les vôtres. Par la technique que vous utilisez - l'encre - et le genre - le portrait, on va forcément vous comparer à des artistes qui sont des références en la matière.

Aujourd'hui je vais faire des portraits de manière différente, j'ai envie de le faire, j'ai la naïveté ou l'inconscience de croire que je peux apporter un regard différent. Quand j'étais dans les écoles d'art, c'était le truc à éviter : la peinture à l'huile, le portrait, le pathos, les émotions, il fallait être abstrait, géométrique. J'ai grandi dans cette opposition, c'était diamétralement opposé à ce que je tentais de faire.



Lorsque vous êtes à Ho Chi Minh Ville, vous vous fondez dans le décor ou bien vous vous démarquez ?

J'essaie d'être indépendant, je me nourris de tout ce qui peut m'inspirer en pensant que le monde des idées ne possède pas de hiérarchie. La bonne idée peut venir tout aussi bien d'un enfant que d'un curateur célèbre. Je ne suis pas plus intéressé par la scène artistique vietnamienne que par la scène artistique française, ce que j'aime dans la création, ce sont les exceptions. En venant à Ho Chi Minh Ville, j'avais deux souhaits : m'intéresser à la culture vietnamienne, et m'éloigner du monde de l'art, je voulais vivre le plus loin possible. Les arts plastiques me permettent la simultanéité, j'ai l'illusion d'avoir le don d'ubiquité. Eloigné, mais présent tout à la fois à travers des expositions dans différents endroits en même temps, Belgique, Pays-Bas, France, et Vietnam avec la Galerie Quynh.

Hormis au Vietnam, où avez-vous exposé en Asie ?

Seulement en Inde, au New Delhi Photo Festival. La scène artistique asiatique est assez centralisée, mais assez vite internationale, car la plupart des gens qui s'intéressent à l'art vietnamien sont plutôt des occidentaux. La pratique contemporaine n'est pas encore rentrée dans les mœurs des vietnamiens, (ils préfèrent acheter de l'art occidental, valeur plus sûre). L'art contemporain vient de la Modernité, qui est occidentale, et, même si l'art chinois contemporain est exposé, cela reste relatif par rapport au succès qu'il connaît en Europe et aux Etats-Unis. La création est liée au Capital, par essence. Dans la manière de penser la création il n'y a rien qui soit démocratique, ou « méritocratique », l'artiste devient célèbre pour sa meilleure œuvre, pas pour toutes les autres.

Qu'avez-vous trouvé d'inspirant au Vietnam ?

Le chaos. A Ho Chi Minh Ville, essentiellement. La circulation des énergies, les déplacements faciles et mélangés, les nouveautés, l'adolescence de la ville, qui correspond à ce que je suis à un moment donné. Je sais pourquoi je suis allé au Vietnam : trouver une sorte de fondamental dans mon art. Avec mes deux dernières expositions à la Galerie Quynh à Ho Chi Minh Ville, et à la Galerie Sator à Paris, j'ai trouvé ce que je cherchais. Ma peur m'a quitté, suite aux travaux que j'ai fait sur ça. Maintenant, j'ai besoin d'être dans une autre dynamique. Prochaine destination les Etats-Unis. Et un de mes rêves, monter une école, car mon travail passe aussi par la parole.

Julie Dao Duy / Peclers Paris / Août 2015



COURTESY THE MISTAKE ROOM

Because Nguyen is based in the U.S., they are a bit of an anomaly in this group show, which features works by many artists living in working in Vietnam, primarily in Ho Chi Minh City.

César García-Alvarez, the Mistake Room's executive and artistic director and a curator of this exhibit, says as a group these artists represent Vietnam's contemporary art scene, a vibrant community of mostly under-40 conceptual artists, collectives, and independent art spaces mostly based in Ho Chi Minh.

In an introduction to the exhibit, García-Alvarez says the show is a "dispatch of multiple perspectives rather than as a defining survey." He notes that this generation of artists offers a new perspective on Vietnamese art. While the work of their elders was so often centered around the Vietnamese War, these artists are exploring more modern, global concepts.

The show is a rich and well-organized dispatch that covers themes of technology, mythologies, displacement, futurism, and more.

Trong Gia Nguyen's large hanging work *Cracked Mobile No. 5* plays with concepts of home and technology, calling to mind both the window grates from colonial homes that pepper Vietnam and the cracked screen of an iPhone. Tr'o'ng Công Tùng's *When the virtual become the actual and the actual become the virtual* also juxtaposes history and mythology with

Avez-vous un processus de création ? De l'inspiration à la création ?

Oui, ça fonctionne en différents cycles. Un « cycle global » qui contient plusieurs étapes de « cycles locaux ».

Le cycle global consiste à observer. Rechercher. Sélectionner. Digérer. Interpréter. Créer. Produire et résoudre les problèmes techniques lorsqu'ils se présentent. Exposer. Rencontrer. Expliquer parfois. Publier. Ecouter. Apprendre. Et recommencer.

Chaque étape requiert un processus local qui se précise d'années en années. Par exemple, j'observe énormément. Tous les domaines de la création. J'ai constitué une banque d'images personnelles depuis que j'ai 15 ans.

L'étape de création en peinture est un chemin qui part de l'analyse dès le matin, qui passe par de multiples états de doute et de croyance en journée jusqu'à finir par l'intuition tard dans la nuit. Un état alchimique d'inconscience et de pleine conscience. C'est seulement à ce moment précis que je peins.

J'approfondis aussi loin possible chaque étape car elle peut s'avérer être un goulot d'étranglement pour les étapes suivantes ou au contraire un décuplement de leur potentiel.

Vous changez souvent de support, du dessin à la peinture, à la photo ou la sculpture. votre art peut prendre des formes et des styles très différents, qu'est ce qui provoque ces changements?

La nature réelle du mental. C'est l'une des clefs que je cherche. De quoi rêvez vous lorsque la bienséance sociale ne vous conditionne pas à sélectionner vos idées les plus appropriées ? Cette harmonie chaotique est en chacun de nous mais nous en sommes déconnectés. Nous sommes tous victimes d'une auto censure inculquée dès le début de nos scolarités. Lorsque je travaille, j'essaie de ne pas hiérarchiser, de ne pas cataloguer les styles car tout ça existe en moi. Peu importe la direction du chemin pourvu que les pas soient réels.

La deuxième raison est, elle , plus méthodique. C'est une recherche sur la figuration au sens large et les multiples méthodes de représentation qu'elle a généré dans l'Histoire. Nous avons plusieurs natures d'existences. Charnelles, énergétiques, spirituelles, sociales. Mes oeuvres s'approprient ces différents niveaux de figuration, parfois

Où allez-vous puiser votre inspiration? Plutôt dans l'art? Où dans des

PARTAGER SUR



Pendant longtemps ce fut dans l'histoire de la représentation. Ce peut être la mythologie égyptienne, un costume shamanique, un moine tibétain, une vielle star de cinéma, un robot de blockbuster américain, un portrait de la renaissance, un manga sur un fantôme japonais. J'aime les personnages qui deviennent des entités. Ils incarnent ce que les humains pensent d'eux même. L'humain est un être imaginaire, « il est le fruit de la culture et non de la nature. » comme le disait France Borel, ancienne directrice de La Cambre. (L'École nationale supérieure d'Art Visuel de Belgique, où j'ai étudié et enseigné)

Mais les idées ne se trouvent pas forcément là où on les cherche, donc je garde une oreille grande ouverte. J'adore demander aux inconnus que je rencontre de m'expliquer leurs travaux dans les moindres détails. Ça me fait voyager

Comment voyez-vous l'homme, la femme d'aujourd'hui?

Le féminisme a transformé le rôle des femmes et par effet mécanique celui des hommes. La grande différence entre ces deux changements c'est que les hommes ne se sont pas regroupés pour changer volontairement. Ils se sont adaptés, chacun dans leur histoire individuelle. Il n'y a pas ou peu de figure de proue de la nouvelle cause masculine.

Mon avis c'est que les hommes doivent se reconnecter à leur sensibilité sans avoir peur de fragiliser leur masculinité. Je suis d'une culture asiatique où l'impassibilité du visage est un signe de sagesse et donc de force. Avec beaucoup d'affection et de respect, je dirai que c'est une grosse connerie ! Beaucoup d'hommes sont des handicapés émotionnels, et ils en souffrent, je pense. 99% des héros de cinéma sont des célibataires sans émotion : comprendre invulnérables.

Je pense qu'être présent, en accord avec le présent, c'est être immortel. J'ai mon petit panthéon personnel et dedans y'a Neil Young. Lorsque je l'ai vu chanter « Heart of Gold » avec sa voix puissamment fragile, je me suis dit : « Ça c'est un mec ! Je veux être pareil. »

Pensez-vous que la mode est un bon reflet de cette masculinité/féminité ?

J'adore les fringues, mais la mode actuelle ne m'intéresse pas outre mesure. Il m'arrive d'acheter de belles pièces chez KTZ, Walter Van Beirendonck ou encore Westwood. Mais je regrette que les marques plus accessibles soient si « chiantes ».

Selon moi la mode masculine est simplement dictée par des conventions et non les envies des consommateurs. Lesquels d'ailleurs ne savent pas vraiment ce qu'ils veulent si ce n'est d'éviter les fautes de goûts.

Sur les salons on se rend compte que toutes les silhouettes ne sont que les multiples déclinaisons d'une unique vision de l'homme moderne, attaché à démontrer son élégance par la sophistication. Il y a encore peu d'autodérision. Sur ce point je rejoins l'avis de Lidewij Edelkoort : « Le rôle sociétal de la mode, alors restreint aux élites, se perd. »

Vous vivez entre plusieurs villes/pays (France/Vietnam/Belgique). Puisez-vous des influences propres à chaque lieu? Si non pourquoi?

Bizarrement peu. Car je suis beaucoup plus lié à un monde mental. Ma patrie c'est l'imaginaire.

Je me rappelle à 14 ans, avoir découpé et collectionné tous les portraits d'artistes que je pouvais trouver. Je me reconnaissais dans ce peuple épars.

Quels sont les modèles qui aujourd'hui vous inspirent, vous motivent?

On Kawara, Martin Kippenberger, Jurgen Teller, Donald Judd, Julian Schnabel, Ingres, Daido Moriyama, Picabia, Bruce Nauman et d'autres ambassadeurs de la justesse ou du désordre.

En parlant de désordre, votre dernière exposition avait lieu dans un où les murs étaient couverts de peinture noire. Beaucoup d'œuvres y étaient apparemment sans suivre un ordre particulier ?

PARTAGER SUR



Les images et leur mise en scène m'apparaissent, simultanément, lorsque je ferme les yeux. Dans mon exposition, j'ai voulu créer un paradoxe spatial : être entouré par un monde intérieur.

J'ai appris quelque chose avec cette expo. Je pensais aussi avoir un univers « sombre » mais en réalité beaucoup de visiteurs avaient des expériences sensorielles ou intellectuelles plutôt « positives ». Ils prenaient du plaisir à voyager dedans. Les sujets sont sombres pour la plupart mais l'expérience est excitante car mon offre généreuse.

Quels sont vos futurs projets/expositions?

En septembre, une exposition solo à la Galerie Albus Contemporary Lux en Hollande qui me représente depuis 5 ans. En octobre je lance Soul Archive, une édition photographique en collaboration avec l'agence Rice Créative : de petits tirages photos vendus sur un bike-shop ambulant dans les rues de Saïgon. On y présentera la nouvelle génération de photographes au Vietnam. C'est un projet dont je suis très fier car on y bosse depuis 2-3 ans. La création en équipe est pour moi une toute nouvelle expérience

Philippe Dagen / Le Monde / Juin 2015

TRUC-ANH
Galerie Sator



« Hell », de Truc-Anh.

TRUC-ANH ET GALERIE SATO

32 ans, est aussi à l'aise avec Goya qu'avec Dix, avec Hokusai qu'avec Warhol. Il les connaît si bien qu'il n'y a rien de laborieux dans ces variations, tracées avec une rapidité et une liberté de geste remarquables. Aussi est-ce moins une exposition de dessins à regarder un par un qu'une installation qui joue de l'hétérogénéité, des contradictions et des tensions qui se créent d'une œuvre à l'autre. Elle en dit long sur l'état actuel de l'art, sa mémoire saturée de références et la nécessité d'en sortir. Pour y parvenir, Truc-Anh a choisi de foncer à travers pour la disperser : ce n'est pas une mauvaise méthode. ● **PHILIPPE DAGEN**

Ink Kingdom. Galerie Sator, 8, passage des Gravilliers, Paris 3^e.

Tél. : 01-42-78-04-84. Du mardi au samedi de 14 heures à 19 heures.

Jusqu'au 4 juillet.

C'est une exposition de dessins, pas loin de deux cents, à l'encre ou au crayon. Ils couvrent les trois murs de la galerie, peints en noir pour l'occasion. La plupart sont des portraits, dont ceux, aisément reconnaissables, de Marlene Dietrich, du Mahatma Gandhi, d'Arnold Schwarzenegger, de Jules César et de Batman. Il y a aussi des inconnus, des poulpes, un cyclope de mauvaise humeur et plusieurs monstres. Mais ce n'est pas ce que l'on voit d'abord car le plus surprenant est la diversité extrême des styles graphiques juxtaposés par un accrochage délibérément chaotique. Truc-Anh,

David Kaye / Any Arena / Juin 2015



Arts - 18 Jun, 2015

TRUC-ANH'S INK KINGDOM IN PARIS

The Artist On His Show At Galerie Sator

"I want the viewer to be an adventurer in this land," French/Vietnamese artist [Truc-Anh](#) says of his 'Ink Kingdom' show that opened 28th May at Galerie Sator in Paris.

"And the entry requirements to my Kingdom? Curiosity! And a \$300 single entry visa," he laughs.

For the show, readied in Saigon then sent to Paris he says, "I prepared like a boxer entering the ring, but my fight's within the confines of a piece of paper, and there's no opponent, just me fighting against my fears, habits and limitations. I fight with Art History."

Galerie Quynh, where he shows here in Saigon (see last year's tongue-twistingly titled 'oNiReaKHoWaRiGNoRaLiSMe') describes Truc-Anh as, "Distinctly urban, dynamic and contemplative."



"I think my Vietnamese audience is more likely to say, 'Sorry, I don't understand what you're doing,' whereas my French audience might say, 'Great! I don't understand what you're doing!'" he explains to AnyArena. "But everyone's response is satisfying to me."

Creating his Ink Kingdom, first he painted the walls black, under the watchful eye of gallerist Vincent Sator. Then he painstakingly placed an avalanche of images on the walls. "I made around 250-300, and brought around 200, and we've selected 130 or 140 — I don't remember exactly," he explains in a [video](#) profile about his art, "This exhibition is extremely dense, but it breathes!"

"This is what it looks like when I close my eyes, a kind of harmony in chaos," he tells us.

There are contorted faces howling from the dark, disembodied rib cages, a screaming cyclops, and pop imagery pulled out of shape. "I think that a masterpiece is like a friend. You don't like it because it flatters you. You love it for its realness, and because it's raw," he says in the video, surveying his Kingdom.



Claire Moloux / Slash Paris / Juin 2015

Les Jeudis Arty Quatrième édition

Passé : Jeudi 4 juin 2015 18:00 → 22:00

Quarante galeries du Marais ouvrent leurs portes de 18h à 22h et proposent vernissages, visites guidées, rencontres avec des artistes et performances. Les galeries Zürcher, Christian Berst, Anne Barrault, ou encore Alain Gutharc prendront de nouveau part à cette soirée exceptionnelle. Semiose, Xpo Gallery ou encore la galerie de Pierre-Alain Challier rejoignent la liste des galeries participantes.

Certaines galeries proposent une programmation spécifique lors de la soirée : vernissage, rencontre avec un artiste, visite de la galerie ou encore performances.

Zoom sur deux galeries participantes

La Galerie Sator

Dans le cadre de son exposition « Ink Kingdom », l'artiste Truc-Anh réalisera une performance :

« Au milieu des murs couverts de dessins, Je présenterai pour la première fois une version orale du principe d'improvisation qui est au cœur de ma pratique depuis ces quatre dernières années. L'improvisation développe l'intuition des formes au profit de décisions rationnelles telles que mon éducation vietnamienne le préconise. L'exposition « Ink Kingdom » en est l'affirmation la plus poussée à ce jour. »

À 20h, durée : 40 min



Vue de l'exposition Ink Kingdom

Blouin Art Info / Juin 2015



Vietnamese Artists Born After the War Offer a Fresh Perspective on the Asian Nation

"Where the Sea Remembers" moves past the Vietnam War to cover technology, mythologies, displacement, futurism, and more

By Catherine Womack - July 15, 2019

In 2014, L.A.-based Vietnamese-American artist Thinh Nguyen left their home in Southern California and set out to travel across the United States for a year. Nguyen didn't take a car or use a map to plan a route. Instead, the artist simply packed an extra set of clothes and a camera in their backpack and hit the road with their thumb pointed east, hoping to catch a ride.

Relying on the kindness of strangers across the continental U.S., Nguyen's travels were part of a performance and public intervention artwork titled *Across the American Plains*. Hitchhiking and staying in people's homes for two to four nights at a time, Nguyen zigzagged across the country, taking pictures, keeping a journal, and gathering new friends along the way.

Some of the physical remnants from that journey are on display this summer at the Mistake Room just south of downtown L.A. as part of *Where the Sea Remembers*, a group exhibition featuring works created since 2007 by Vietnamese artists primarily born after the Vietnam War.

Inhabiting a corner of the gallery dedicated to performance works and works dealing with the body, Nguyen's installation includes pairs of beautifully subtle glossy photographs and a journal sitting open on a small pedestal. (Visitors are encouraged to page through the journal and read the artist's handwritten memories, stories and personal musings from the trip).

Nguyen's framed photographs feature blurry images taken from the windows of cars, many of which capture bodies of water and could easily be mistaken as images of Vietnam. Paired with each blurry landscape is a more still photo of bedding. In these photos, softly colored rumpled sheets and duvets mingle with pillows, photographed from above after a night of sleep.

Olivier de Rincqueson / Emission Chercheurs d'Art / BFM TV / Juin 2015



Laurent Boudier / Télérama / Juin 2015

Truc-Anh – Ink Kingdom

Jusqu'au 18 juil., 14h-19h
(sf lur., dim.), galerie Sator,
8, passage des Gravilliers, 3^e,
01 42 78 04 84. Entrée libre.

TT Entre le cabinet de curiosités et la chambre d'ado à ranger dare-dare, Truc-Anh, né en 1983, a transformé de fond en comble la petite galerie Sator. Sur des murs repeints à la peinture noire, l'artiste, qui

vit entre Paris et Hô Chi Minh, a troussé une installation où sont tapissées des œuvres sur papier, des dessins de petits formats de styles et de factures très différents, des pages de croquis, des lavis à l'encre, des portraits ou des scènes venues de la presse ou de livres ou encore des images issues d'Internet. Un piquant maelström d'images dont la saturation évoque, et plagie à sa façon, notre (pas) très évidente et moderne époque...

Harper's Bazaar / Juin 2015

Tóc Tiên hẹn gặp Bazaar ở một quán cà phê đẹp ở đối diện Nhà thờ Đức Bà. Mái tóc tém cá tính của cô thu hút mọi ánh nhìn, dù Tiên diện trang phục rất giản dị. Cô ca sỹ 29 tuổi nói vui rằng mình chỉ muốn sống một cuộc đời rục rờ trên sân khấu. Nhưng gián dị không có nghĩa là mất chất. Nhìn Tóc Tiên luôn toát lên nguồn năng lượng vui vẻ ẩn trong sức hút khó chối cãi của một ngôi sao.

Cuộc trò chuyện bắt đầu với chủ đề thời trang, niềm đam mê đặc biệt của Tiên. Cũng chính thời trang đã góp phần không nhỏ đưa cô đến vị thế hôm nay. "Phong cách là thông điệp mạnh mẽ nhất nói lên bạn là ai. Từ ngày cắt tóc tém, tôi khám phá ra một con người mới thú vị bên trong mình, một người phụ nữ cá tính, gọi cảm. Cũng từ đó, tôi biết yêu bản thân hơn, biết tìm hiểu về thời trang và bắt đầu được khán giả ở quê nhà nhắc đến liên tục".

Những sản phẩm âm nhạc của Tóc Tiên đều mang dấu ấn mạnh mẽ của thời trang, gu thẩm mỹ, sự tinh tế của một phụ nữ học thức, luôn nắm bắt nhanh xu hướng. Tóc Tiên nói chia sẻ không muốn MV của mình gắn với những con số trăm triệu hay thứ gì đó quá hoành tráng, hoa mỹ. Cô muốn khán giả nhận ra sự chăm chút, đầu tư của cô và e-kíp qua âm nhạc, hình ảnh, góc máy cho đến từng bộ trang phục. Từ những thương hiệu quốc tế như Dior cho đến những nhà thiết kế nổi tiếng của Việt Nam như Công Trí, Đỗ Mạnh Cường...

Tiên đều thử nghiệm. Giám đốc sáng tạo của cô không ai khác ngoài chính bản thân cô.

Nghệ sỹ thường bị cuốn vào cuộc đua hàng hiệu, Tiên thì không. Cô có khả năng để chạy theo xu hướng, nhưng không muốn mình chỉ được nhớ đến qua những set đồ đắt đỏ. Xác định sẽ tự thân vận động, dùng cắt-xé để tái đầu tư cho âm nhạc và hình ảnh. Tóc Tiên luôn cân nhắc về tính ứng dụng của mỗi chiếc túi xách hay mắt kính mình đang yêu thích. Cô nhìn nhận: "Không phải cứ phủ hàng hiệu lên người là đẹp, tôi nghĩ mình đẹp nhất khi biết cách tôn vinh bản thân, ăn mặc phù hợp với hoàn cảnh".

Bản thân là tài sản giá trị nhất

Tiên nói vui cô không phải người tham tiền, vì cô hiểu rõ giá trị bản thân là tài sản lớn nhất. Không vắt kiệt sức cho những show diễn, những event, tiệc tùng xa hoa, cô chọn lọc sự xuất hiện của mình để hình ảnh luôn đẹp và có giá trị trong mắt khán giả. Nhiều nhân hàng chào mời với mức thu nhập rất hấp dẫn, nhưng Tiên kiên quyết từ chối, vì nó không phù hợp với hình ảnh mà cô đang xây dựng.

Điều quan trọng nhất với Tóc Tiên, không phải là thần thái – khái niệm mạng xã hội đang nhắc đến nhiều nhất hiện nay – mà là việc giữ gìn hình ảnh. Từ khi trở về Việt Nam, truyền thông hầu như không khai thác được gì ngoài âm nhạc của cô. Đẹp, kín tiếng và thông minh, đó là những từ người ta thường mô tả về Tiên. Những người thông minh thường nhận mình "nhạt nhèo". Cô có vẻ cũng nằm trong số đó. Tiên bảo đừng hỏi gì mình về đời tư vì cô sẽ không biết nói gì.

Nhưng chính nhờ sự "nhạt nhèo" này mà cô đã nhận đến hai hợp đồng đại sứ thương hiệu lớn khi vẫn còn làm việc tại Mỹ. "Lúc deal giá hợp đồng thứ nhất, tôi nghĩ chắc người ta... hỏi cho vui thôi vì mình đâu có ý định về nước, làm sao quảng bá sản phẩm được. Thế mà họ vẫn đồng ý với mọi điều kiện tôi đưa ra. Hợp đồng còn lại là nhãn rượu của David Beckham, sự kiện diễn ra ở Anh, mang tầm quốc tế nên đòi hỏi về người tham dự rất nghiêm ngặt. Sau này, tôi mới biết cả hai brand chọn mình không chỉ vì sự nổi tiếng, style mà còn là vì đời tư sạch sẽ, không scandal".

Quyết định gắn bó hẳn với showbiz Việt, cô càng bảo vệ hình ảnh bản thân hơn. Nhiều năm tồn tại trong nghề, Tóc Tiên cho rằng "Scandal sẽ đưa bạn lên rất nhanh nhưng cũng rất ngắn. Bạn chụp một bức ảnh xấu, bạn có thể nhấn nút delete để xóa ngay. Nhưng với scandal, bạn không thể delete được những bài viết mà người ta chỉ mất vài giây search Google để tìm ra. Tên bạn vẫn nằm đó, mãi mãi ở đó". Tiên nói chỉ khi làm đại sứ thương hiệu, cô mới biết on bản thân đã không để đánh mất những cơ hội tốt đẹp chỉ vì tham những hư danh thoáng qua.

Bình yên trong đời sống, nói loạn trong nghệ thuật

Ngoài đời, Tiên có thể là một cô gái trẻ trung, nhẹ nhàng với mái hồng, môi nude, mặc váy jeans năng động dạo chơi trên phố. Nhưng khi bước lên sân khấu lớn, vào những set quay, cô vụt sáng thành một nghệ sỹ. Cô sẵn sàng thử thách mình với những kiểu tóc, make-up, trang phục mang hơi thở sáng tạo. Tiên bảo chỉ có ảnh đen sân khấu mới cho mình cảm giác thăng hoa và không ngại thử nghiệm để sống đúng nghĩa là một nghệ sỹ. Ở nơi ấy, cô không cần toan tính, không cần biết gì ngoài âm nhạc và khán giả. Bình yên trong đời sống và nói loạn trong nghệ thuật, những sự đối lập này giúp Tiên giữ được cân bằng, tinh táo và vững vàng trong chốn showbiz nhiều cám dỗ.

Ở tuổi 29, Tóc Tiên cảm thấy hài lòng vì những giá trị mà mình đã tạo ra cho bản thân, cho những người xung quanh. Nhiều người ngạc nhiên khi nhận ra Tiên mới chỉ về nước được ba năm, sau chúng ấy thành quả được đong đếm bằng những giải thưởng âm nhạc hay hợp đồng quảng bá. Vẫn miệt mài lao động, cống hiến nhưng cô đã nghĩ đến khoảng thời gian sẽ tạm ngưng công việc để hưởng thụ cuộc sống một cách đơn giản, vô lo nhất.

Nghe thì có vẻ điên rồ vì ai cũng sẽ nói thôi của nghệ sỹ ngắn lắm, khi còn hào quang thì phải tranh thủ kiếm tiền. Nhưng Tiên muốn có một, hai năm chỉ sống cho bản thân. "Tiên muốn đi đây đó, cho phép cơ thể, tâm trí mình nghỉ ngơi để tái tạo năng lượng. Còn sau đó sẽ làm gì à? Tiên nghĩ đó là tùy duyên". Hỏi Tóc Tiên có lo khi trở lại khán giả sẽ quên mình không, cô cười bảo nếu chỉ nghĩ đến con đường an toàn, hẳn cô đã không về Việt Nam mà cứ ở Mỹ học hành rồi chạy show vào mỗi cuối tuần. Rồi bỏ xù số cô hoa, cô đã chấp nhận làm lại từ đầu với hai bàn tay trắng. "Nếu đã dám bước khỏi vùng an toàn một lần, bạn sẽ không muốn dừng lại. Nơi nào có thử thách, nơi đó có cơ hội", Tiên khẳng định.

Mái tóc tém cá tính giúp Tiên khám phá con người mới bên trong mình. Với diện mạo mới, Tiên yêu bản thân và quan tâm đến thời trang hơn

Denise Tsui / Art Asia Pacific / 2015



Vietnamese-French artist TRUC-ANH's various new ink on paper works in a presentation titled "Ink Kingdom" at the booth of Galerie Quynh (Ho Chi Minh City).

Artist Pension Trust / Novembre 2013

Artist Spotlight: An Interview with APT Beijing artist Truc-Anh

11/26/2013

Truc-Anh is a French artist born in Paris in 1983. His parents left Vietnam 40 years ago. Today, he lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam.



Q: Tell us a little bit about your background: who are you? What is your art?

My name is Truc-Anh, a vietnamese (girl) name with a dash, because in France, where I grew up, nobody understood that "Anh" was not my family name. I kept it that way and as my artist name.

I started to study art in Paris, France, at the "Ecole Boule", the National School of Applied Arts. I stopped to become a dancer, I wanted to understand the concept of "total art". In 2001, however, I finally decided to study at La Cambre, National School of Visual Arts in Brussels, Belgium.

In 2006, I was studying at two schools in two different countries... Legally it was forbidden. But I did not want to lose my time. The other school was "L'Ecal" in Lausanne, Switzerland, where I did my postgraduate studies. It was funny and exhausting at the same time, I always had to travel by train between the two cities for the exams with all my work...

I did my Bachelor, Master and passed the aggregation for teaching. Today, I teach a little bit of painting La Cambre and keep on teaching in various contexts. Pedagogy is very important to me. I know that talking is an important part of how people receive my work. I create my paintings like enigmas, and not answers. Paintings can not only be the illustration of a concept, but have to erase it. It should not be held by the viewer. Not even by me.

I am better at my work when I am "discovering". If I know where I'm going, I become mediocre. I always try to challenge my brain to let go something about common habits, do painting the opposite way, reverse colors, and push myself to make some mistakes. It's like.. a little death and a little birth at the same time.

Q: What do you mean by "enigma"?

I believe that a painting has to challenge you over the course of time. Today, 90% of images are "ready to think", "prêt-à-penser". The concept itself has turned into crutches and statements like some slogan. I believe it's a huge mistake, because the eye of the viewer becomes passive. A piece of art should resist the consumption mechanism.

Q: Where are you right now?

I am in Paris because I had an opening last week, at Galerie Sator. It's a big set up of works of mostly black-and-white paintings called "Friends", with images of ghosts and creatures I used to imagine when I was a child. I grew up in a big dark house, and I started painting these "appearances" that came to me, even on the wall. I was imagining these creatures would fill the obscure emptiness I was surrounded with. This was my first relationship to art.

...and you called them "friends"?

Yes, because they surrounded me, they were present, they became my friends. I am working on another series called *Ghost*, which is a photo serie of my "real" friends.. I haven't published it yet. I finished the set when I wasn't scared of ghosts anymore. My relationship to them is the foundation of my own mythology. I use my own little history to question a larger history. The history of painting, the history of figuration: how can I make a portrait today? Is it still possible to create something? Of course the answer is yes.

Q: Why did you move to Ho-Chi-Minh City?

The main reason was because I wanted to live far away from the Western art scene, I am a very competitive person, but I know it's not good for my work. It's very hard to think differently when you are inside the system.

Q: What do you consider as the system? Why the need to get away?

In France, there's a tradition to divide and to set up a hierarchy. Rationality is superior to sensoriality for example. They are very afraid to fall in an excess of emotion, but for me it is the only way to access to sublime. Even if you're a *minimalist*, you have to be strongly emotionally committed to your work. The French are afraid to be criticized. And it's not that I particularly like it, but I am looking for it.

In Belgium, the surrealist's heritage nourishes a lot of the artist into an anti-heroic posture. But I used to be, and I still am, quite the opposite - I always wanted to be a hero.

I had the same feelings toward the Neo Geo movement in Switzerland. In my own way, I was always eager to learn and challenge my practice, but at the same, I felt a strong confrontation.

Q: Did your work change since you live in Vietnam?

My painting changed not because I am in Vietnam, but because I am a happier person. And it's not a question about being well or being unwell. I created many works in "pain", and I consider them good. Art is not always connected to pleasure; it can even be the opposite.

It was also important to me that my first exhibition wouldn't be about Vietnam. I don't want to feed the demand of "exotic" work. I don't create contemporary installations about the Vietnam War for example, but paintings about personal matters. It's a political gesture from my side.

Q: Tell us why you joined APT?

My gallerist told me that Moti Shniberg, co-founder and Chairman of APT, would like to meet me, and I think it was a big part of why I am part of APT. I have a very "human" relationship with APT. The system is very criticized in France, but I like the risk. I like the challenge of creating new economic models and new channels. And I am also impressed by the fact that someone had the courage to create a company like APT. And through APT, I have the opportunity to be part of projects I wouldn't necessarily be otherwise.