



GALERIE QUYNH CONTEMPORARY ART

# LACRIMAE

HOÀNG DƯƠNG CẨM

11.11.2022

30.12.2022

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

# INTRODUCTION

The exhibition title, *LACHRIMAE*, takes inspiration from the titular song by the English composer John Dowland (1563 – 1626), who was widely known for his masterful and complex musical explorations of melancholy. Also known as *The Seven Tears*, the piece comprises seven different pavanes – a type of Elizabethan processional dance, which was used to carry the couples to the front of the court<sup>1</sup>. In each pavane, John Dowland portrays different emotional stages of tears, which range from despair, grief, and fear to sanctity, compassion, and hope<sup>2</sup>. Of the famed composer’s archetypical plunge into melancholy and its manifold nature, *Lachrimae* reflects the condition of his time: an in-between period as Europe transitioned from the end of the Renaissance and ushered in the beginning of the Baroque period. The period was governed by melancholy – not as a category of subjective expression, but a cultural trope that is complicated by the disjunction and the interrelation between the self and the world, the contingent and the transcendent<sup>3</sup>. Details about the song, both musical and historical, together perfectly encapsulate the spirit of Hoang Duong Cam’s seventh solo show with Galerie Quynh as the artist continues his tireless personal interrogation and rumination on distance and liminal space, as well as the slippery boundary between absurdity and fact.

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1. Nath, Carrie. “About the Pavane | Arts in the Renaissance | PBS LearningMedia.” *PBS LearningMedia*. Accessed November 11, 2022

2. Buja, Maureen. “The Sad Music of ‘Seven Teares Figured in Seven Passionate Pavans.’” *Interlude*, June 20, 2022

3. DIMAKOPOULOU, Stamatina. “Remapping the Affinities between the Baroque and the Postmodern: The Folds of Melancholy & the Melancholy of the Fold.” *E-Read [En Ligne]*, 2016

Through extensive artistic research, which is grounded in his understanding and interpretation of fine arts traditions, music, history, and literature, Hoang Duong Cam has long been interested in identifying gaps as parameters for distance and intimacy in existing structures or compositions. In the seminal *Rest Energy* (1980), the acclaimed performance duo Marina Abramovic and ULAY held a bow with their body weight with the arrow directed towards Abramovic's heart; two small microphones were placed on their hearts. The tension between the two, who were partners in art and in life, was intensified by the sound of their amplified heartbeats. Later, Abramovic described the experience, though lasting only four minutes and ten seconds, feeling like forever<sup>4</sup> as she had no control over the situation, thus relying entirely on her trust in ULAY. Hoang Duong Cam has always been intrigued by how the duo examined spatial and mental distance in human relationships in their works, which to him managed to disrupt and redefine the distinction between near and far. Cam is also drawn to how musical geniuses see the gap, however small, in classical music — a genre notorious for its strict predetermined compositions. Midori Gotō is a Japanese-born American violinist — a child prodigy and celebrated musician to the world, but to Hoang Duong Cam she is someone who could deconstruct and reconfigure classical music through her body movements. When Midori performs *Chaconne* by Bach, her entire body moves in tandem with the twists and turns of the melody, thus letting her individuality infiltrate a seemingly unwavering structure.

Another area of interest to Cam is how historical landmarks have played the role of reluctant witnesses of major upheavals that caused mass migration. Decades after the Vietnam War, the once brutal, deathly battlefields such as Dong Thap Muoi, Hue, Quang Tri, Xuan Loc are now sites of peacetime and modernity. Receding to the background of these landscapes, what is left of that painful era now only exists in the form of archival war photographs, documentaries, and Hollywood productions, which for a while have been the main forms of evidence to understand the socio-political conflicts of that period. In his attempts to make sense of his own reality, Cam reimagines history by juxtaposing different timelines, sceneries, and figures against one another — a tedious experiment that helps

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4. Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present. "Marina Abramović and ULAY. Rest Energy. 1980." Accessed November 11, 2022

ease his own cynicism for the linearity of official history. Another prominent inspiration in this series of paintings is *Sunlight in the Garden* (1938), a short story written by Vietnamese author Thach Lam, which revolves around a young love that eventually ends in separation and regret. The way Thach Lam likens the couple's naivety and their inevitable parting to how pure and natural sunlight drapes the garden in its beautiful glory prompts Hoang Duong Cam to adopt a palette of well-measured colours. While not as dramatic and vivid as in his previous works, the colours he uses now have mellowed out, yet still retain a vibrancy.

*LACHRIMAE* embraces the identity of an intricate labyrinth that materialises as the artist weaves together his observations, compositional reappropriations, and his own hypotheses. It is a common practice to dissect an abstract painting by identifying the values of negative and positive spaces, which leads to the understanding of forms and composition. Positive space is thought to carry the creative actions and aesthetic manifestation of a painting, while its counterpart is considered as the less important background<sup>5</sup>. Cam's works prove otherwise as it is impossible to identify the positive from the negative. Each layer, whether having forms or free brushstrokes, represents a detail or a line of thought that is indispensable to the making of the whole painting. Packed with speculative references and anecdotes, these paintings invite viewers to keep shifting their perspectives in order to see the distance and proximity, which have haunted the artist for so long.

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5. Kočib, Zdeněk. "Quasi-Negative Space in Painting." *Leonardo* 19, no. 2 (1986): 141-44.

# BIOGRAPHY

In a career spanning over two decades, Hoang Duong Cam (b. 1974, Hanoi) dexterously alternates between painting, photography, video, installation, performance, and collaborative projects. Central to his artworks are the often humorous, sometimes absurdist explorations of the complex mechanisms that connect the self and its surroundings. The density of detail seen in much of Hoang's oeuvre stems from his extensive pool of disparate references: from the Socratic dialogues to Edo-era prints to quantum physics. Collated from history and contemporary reality, the artist's fragmented narratives revel in confusion and uncertainty, laying bare the contradictions inherent in human thought and behaviour.

Hoang's canvases, as layered with paint as they are with metaphors, are visual (re)constructions of liminal spaces, of distances irreconcilable. Though fascinated with historical and psychological boundaries, through his works the artist contends that boundaries are not a given but fluid and impermanent. When using media other than painting, Hoang often presents subtle, amusing projects that catch the viewer off-guard in their seeming straightforwardness. In juxtaposing and filtering through his eclectic interests, Hoang makes way for an unpremeditated sense of whimsy, or unease, or haunting melancholy to arise in his works.

In 2012, along with artists Quang Lam, Phan Quang, Nguyen Thanh Truc and UuDam Tran Nguyen, Hoang co-founded XEM, a publication showcasing photography-based works by its founding members and invited artists.

Hoang has been living and working in Ho Chi Minh City since 2001.

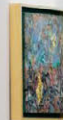
# INSTALLATION VIEWS







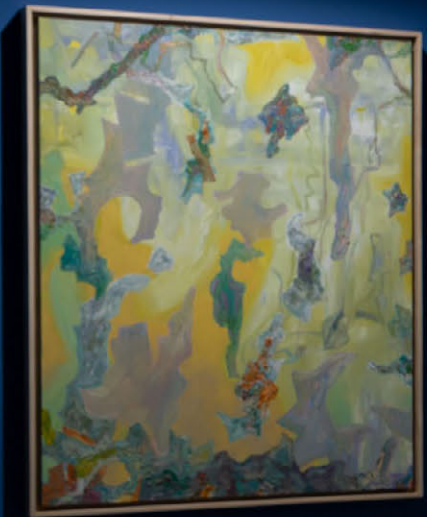
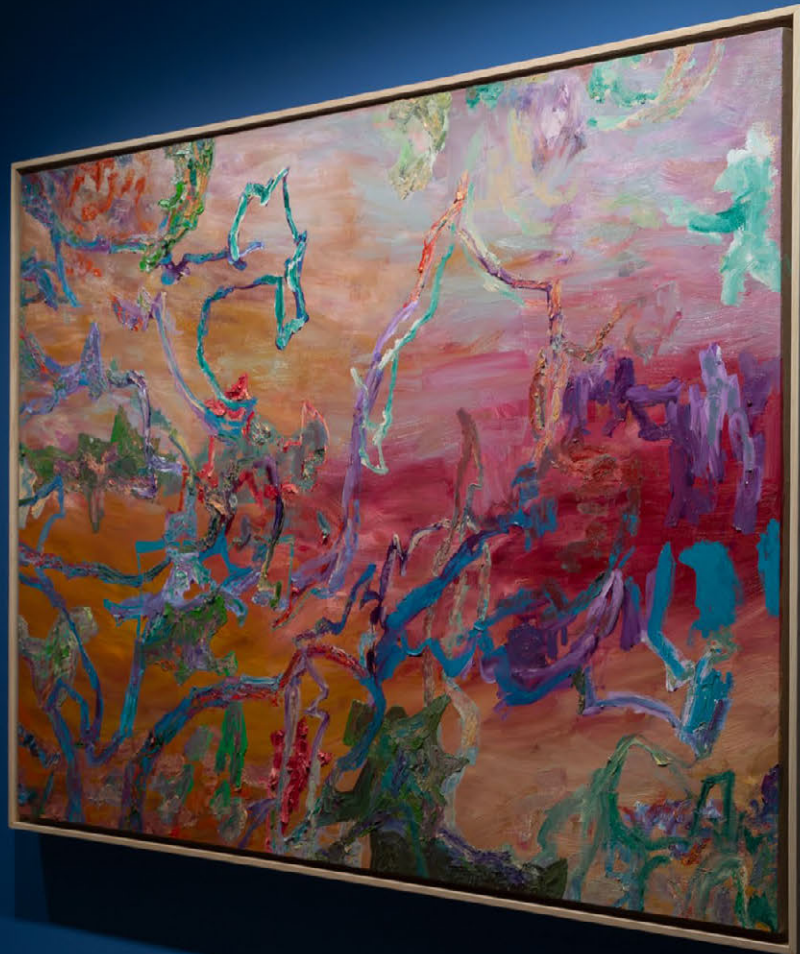












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# ARTWORKS

*with notes from the artist*





*After Hiroshige's fireworks and Linebacker 2*  
2011 - 2021 | oil and acrylic on canvas | 235 x 186 cm



detail views: *After Hiroshige's fireworks and Linebacker 2*





*Concerto for Oboe in D minor, Adagio* by A. Marcello  
2021 | oil on canvas | 180 x 150 cm



detail views:  
*Concerto for Oboe in  
D minor, Adagio* by A.  
Marcello





*Pre-helicopter Era, Michael Rabin  
in the middle of Dong Thap Muoi or  
Bach Violin Sonata 1005 Adagio  
2021 | oil on canvas | 195 x 260 cm*

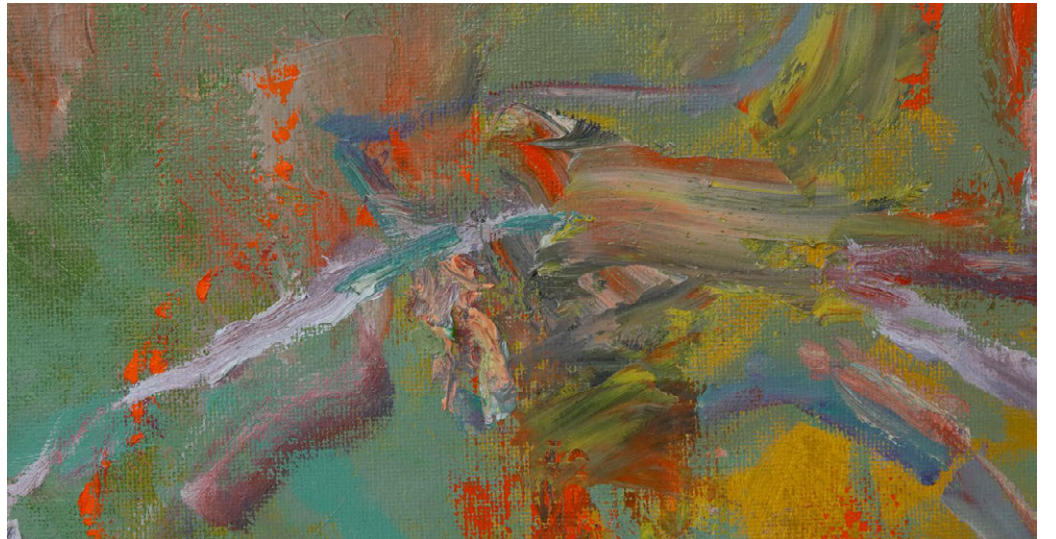


detail views: *Pre-helicopter Era, Michael Rabin in the middle of Dong Thap Muoi or Bach Violin Sonata 1005 Adagio*





*Post-helicopter Era, Michael Rabin  
in the middle of Dong Thap Muoi or  
Bach Violin Sonata 1005 Largo  
2021 | oil on canvas | 195 x 260 cm*

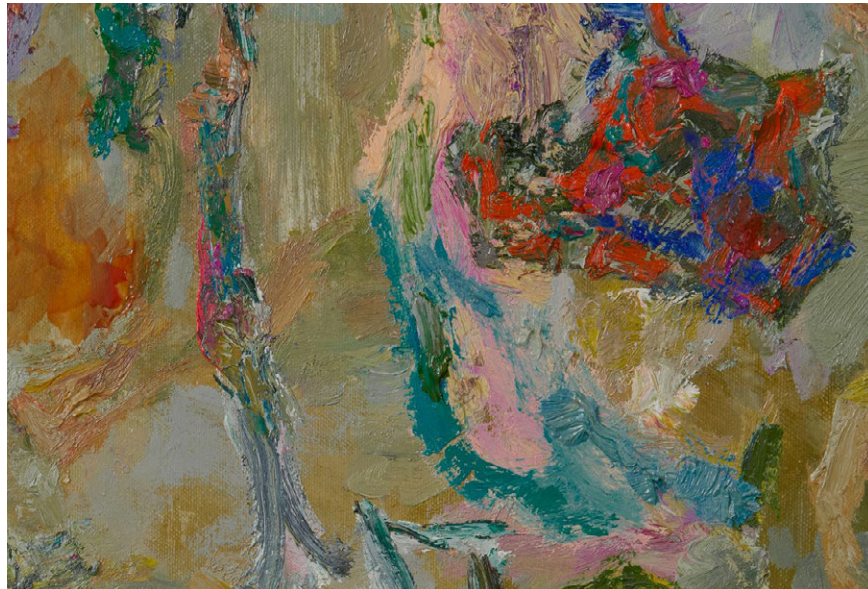
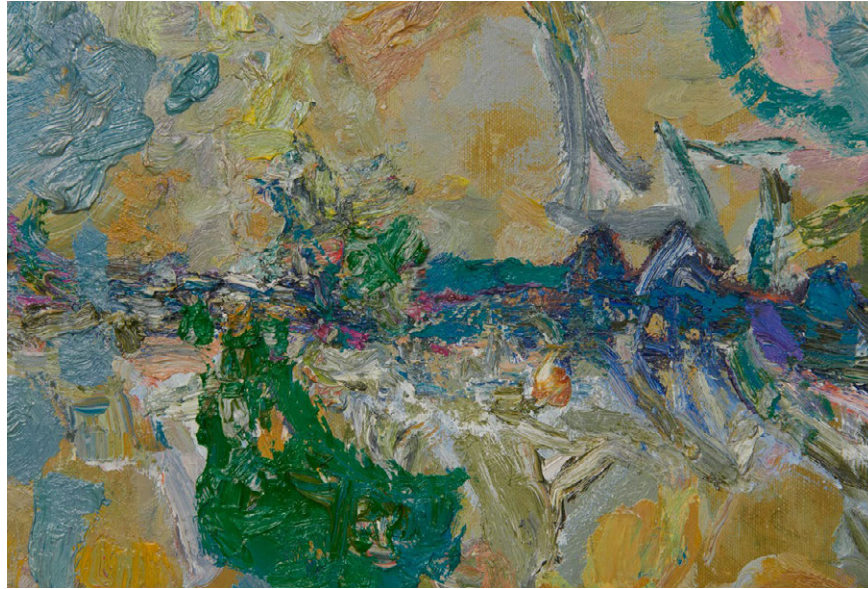
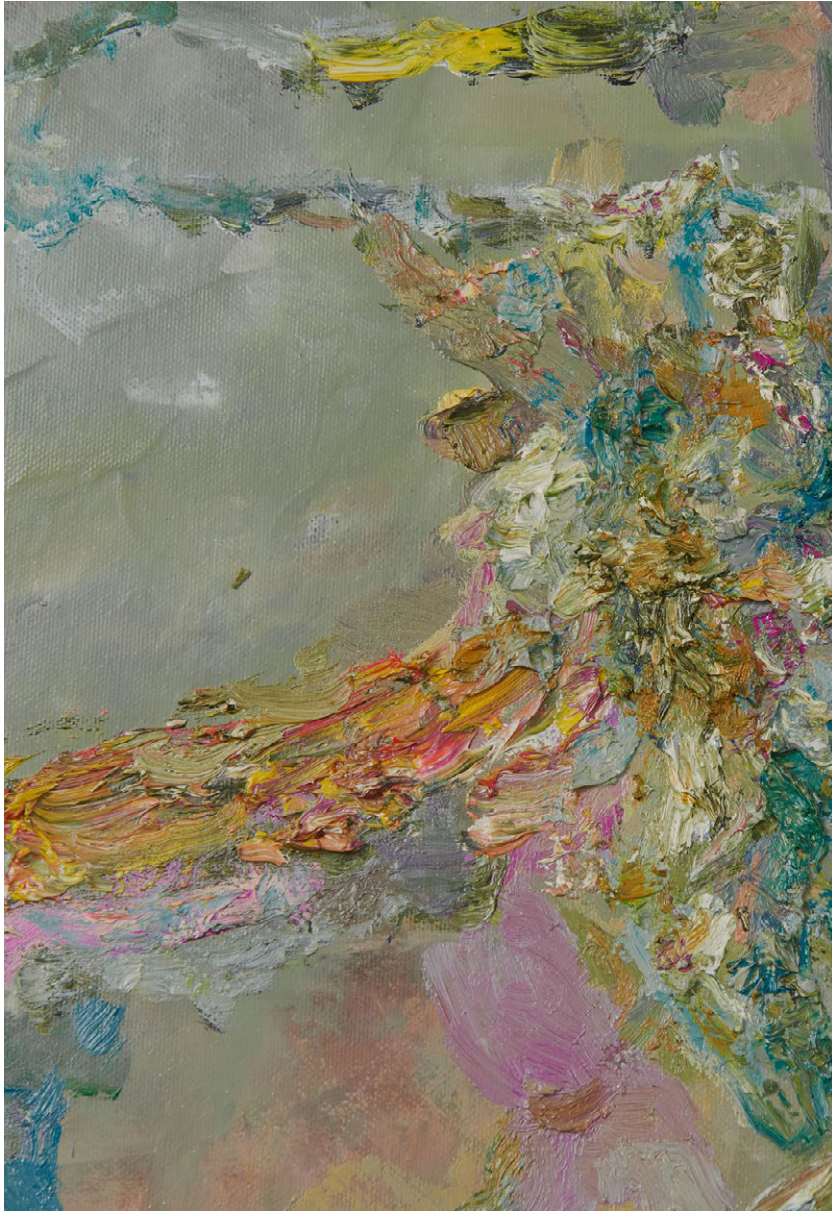


detail views: *Post-helicopter Era*, Michael Rabin in the middle of *Dong Thap Muoi* or *Bach Violin Sonata 1005 Largo*





*Chopin Sonata No. 1 -  
Mr. Horst Faas' drifted lens tank*  
2021 | oil on canvas | 120 x 150 cm

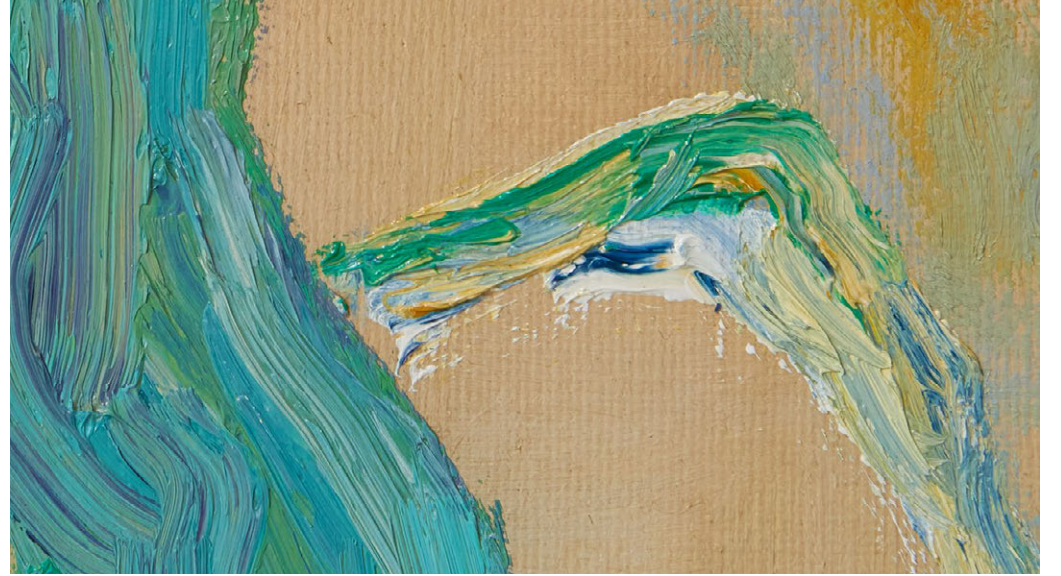


detail views:  
*Chopin Sonata No. 1 -  
Mr. Horst Faas' drifted  
lens tank*





*Kubrick's Hue Scene or Midori Goto  
playing Bach's Chaconne 1004  
2021 | oil on canvas | 200 x 195 cm*



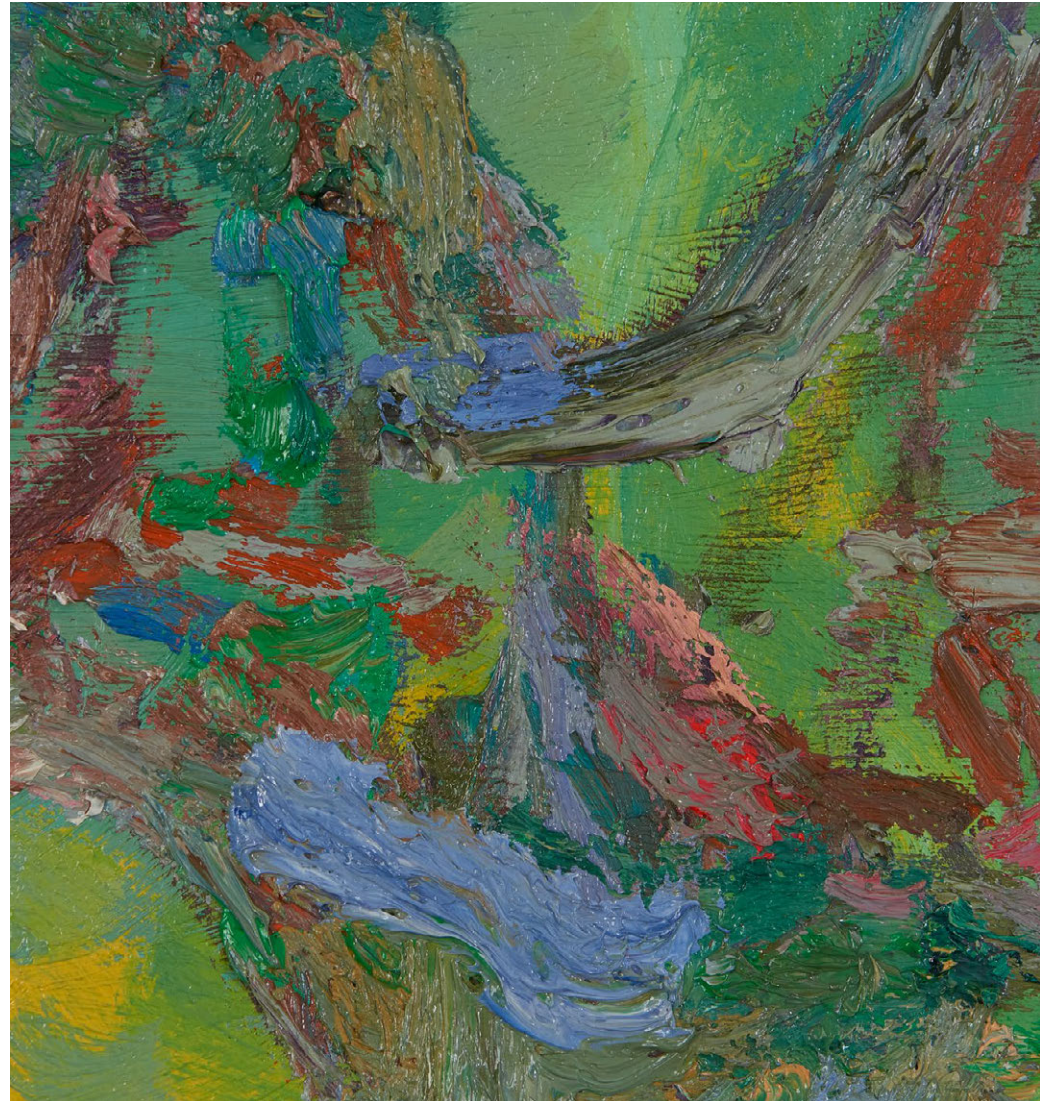
detail views: *Kubrick's Hue Scene* or *Midori Goto playing Bach's Chaconne 1004*





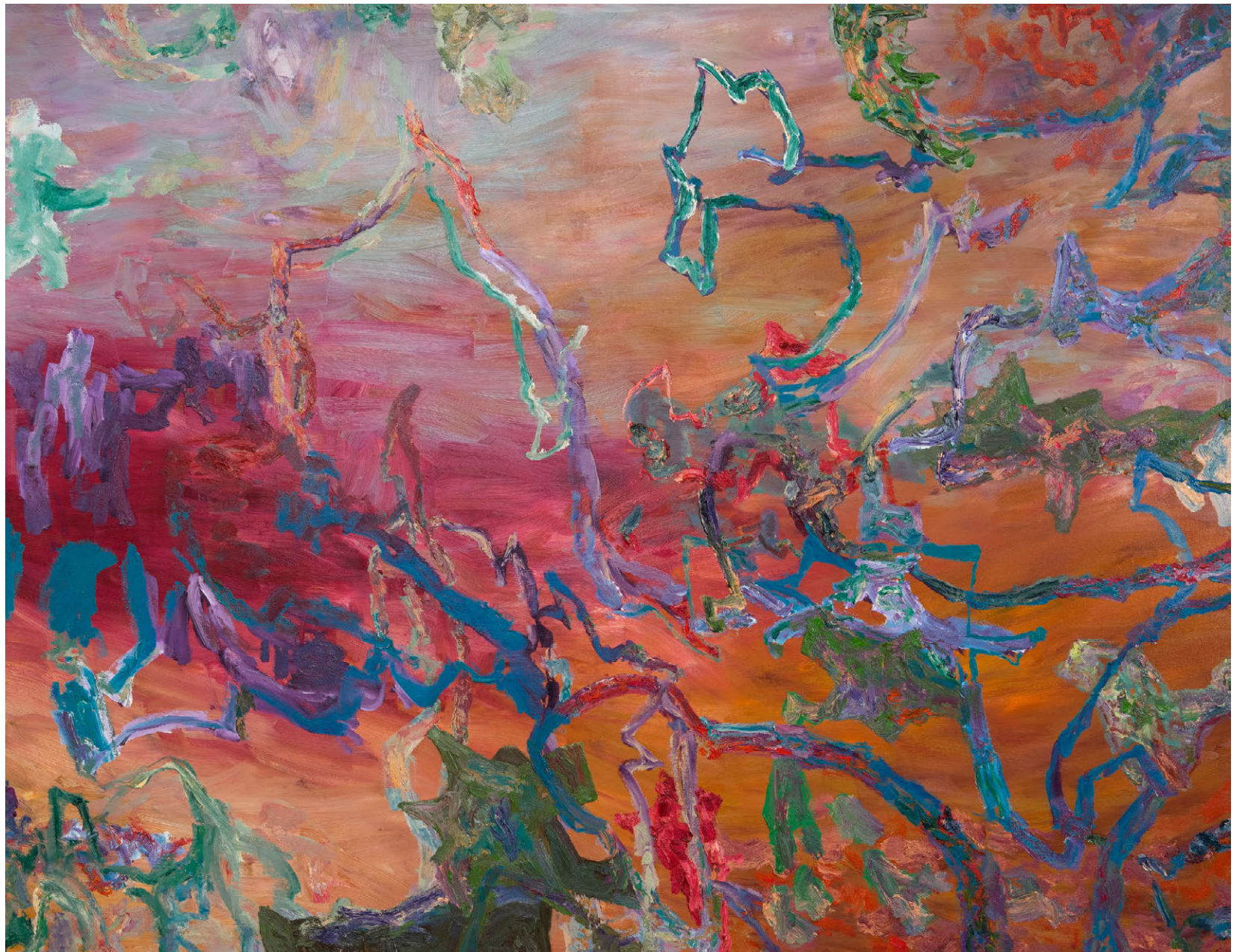


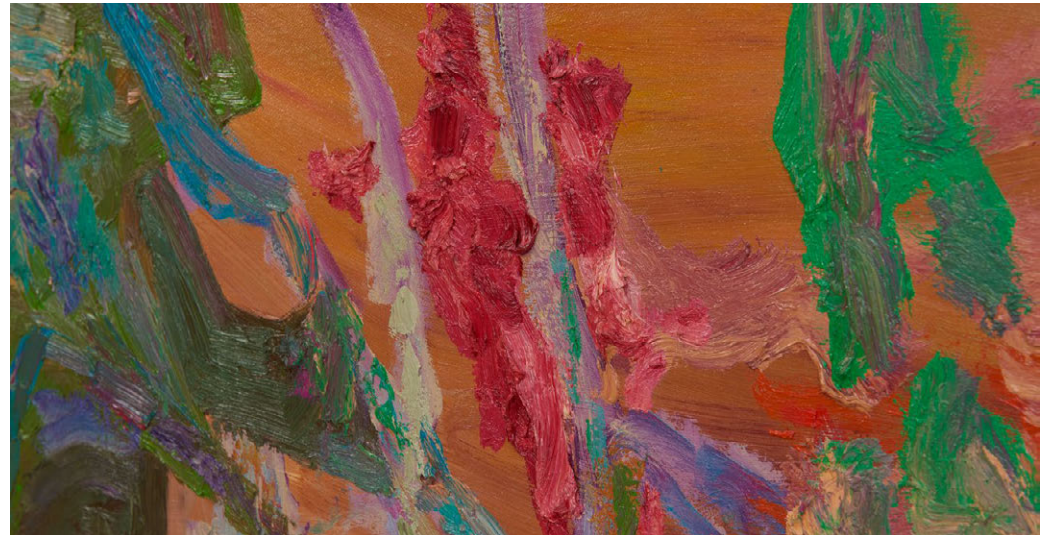
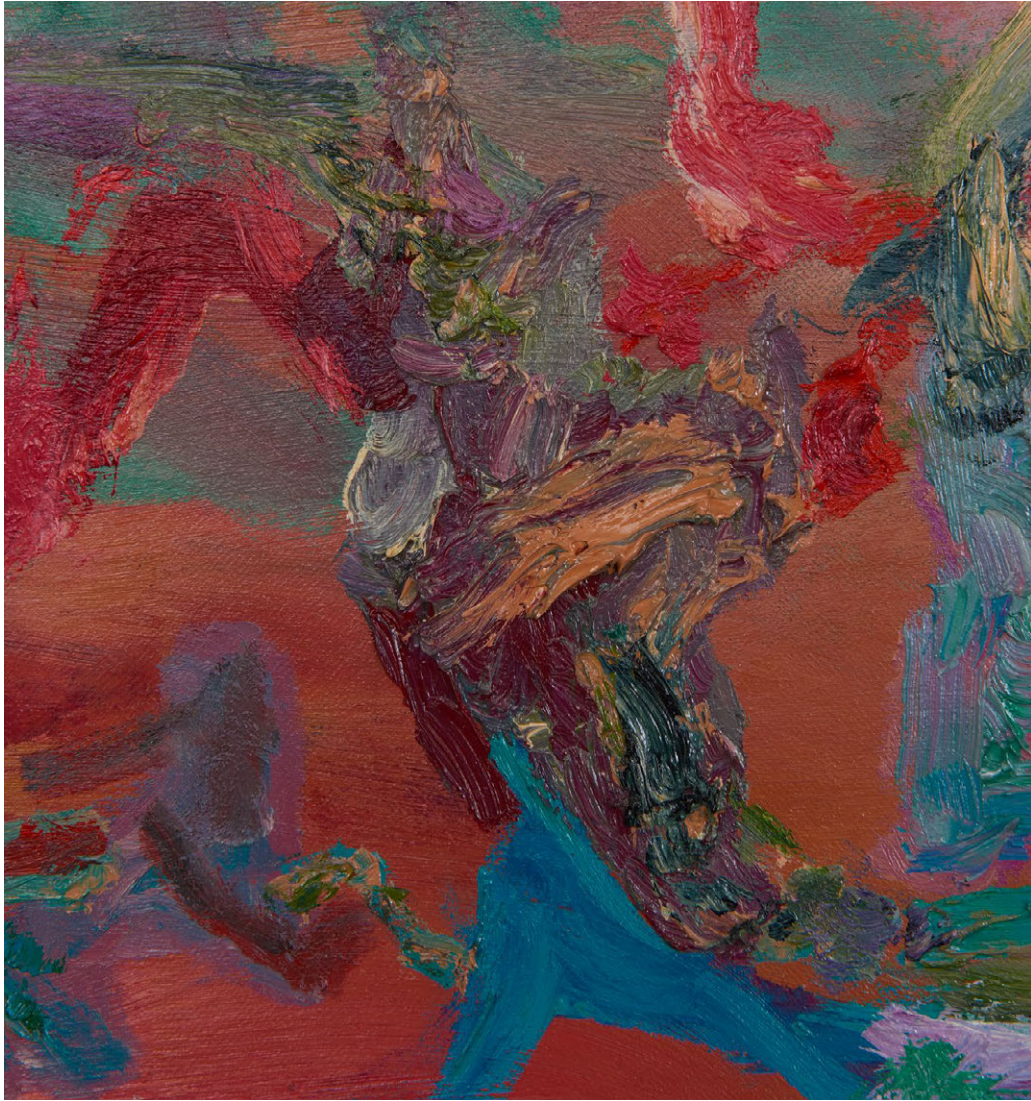
*Prokofiev Violin  
Concerto No. 1 -  
Ha Tuyen  
2021 | oil on canvas  
140 x 195.5 cm*



detail views: *Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 1* - Ha Tuyen

*Prokofiev Violin  
Concerto No. 2 - Quang Tri*  
2021 | oil on canvas  
150 x 195 cm



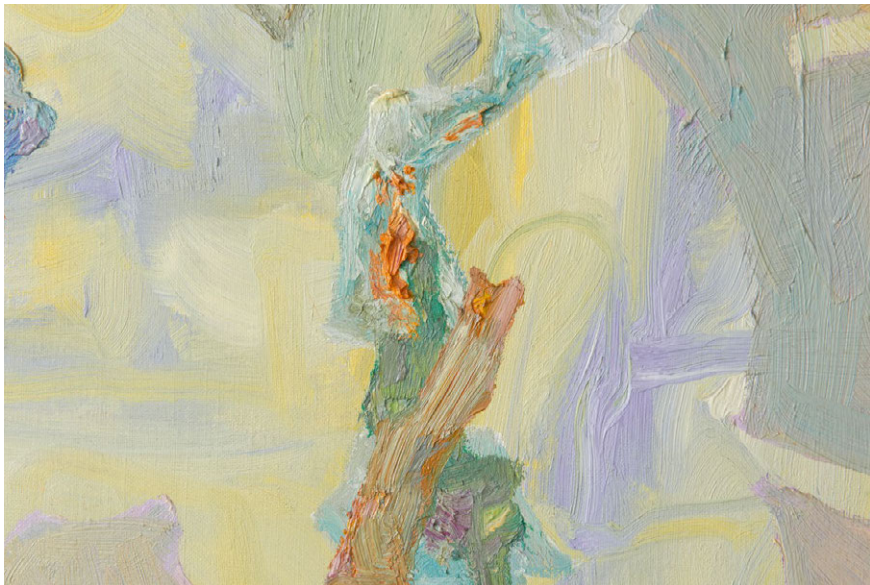


detail views: *Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 2* - Quang Tri



*Bach 826 Courante*  
2021 | oil on canvas | 140 x 110 cm





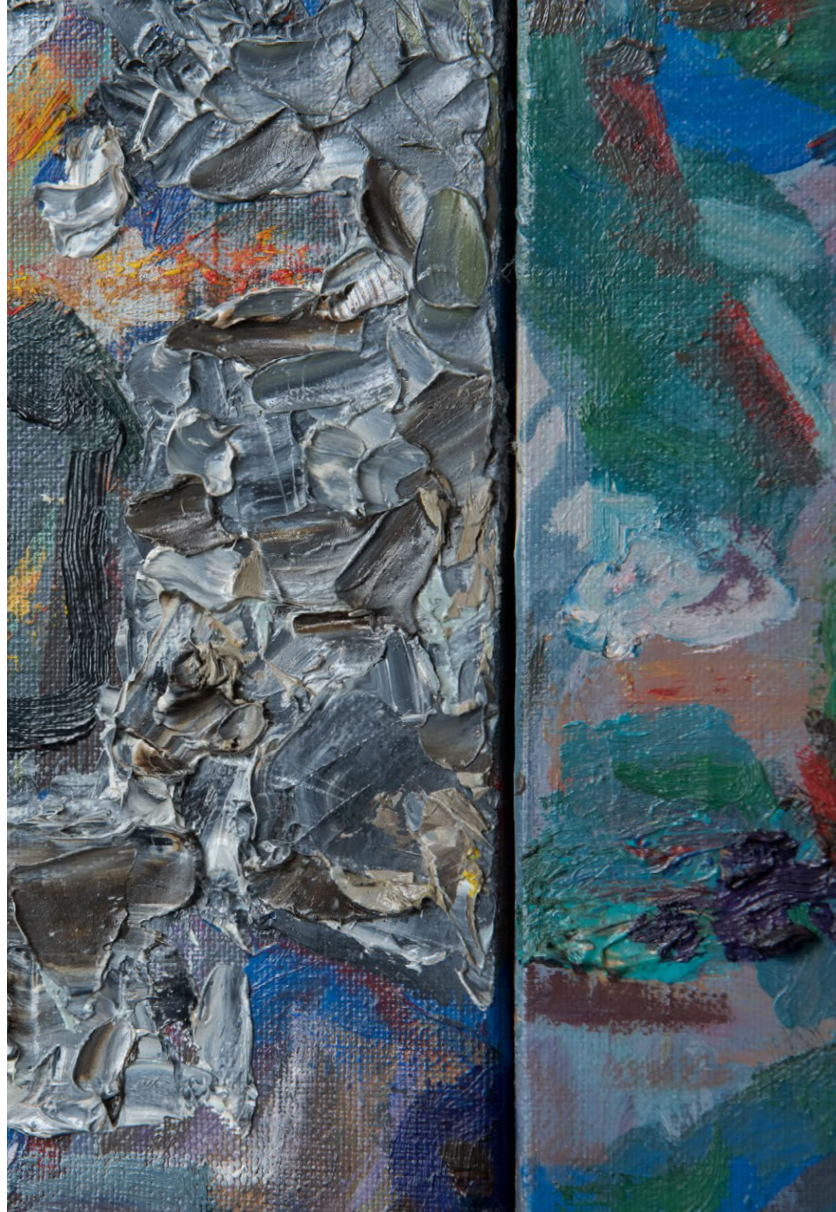
detail views:  
*Bach 826 Courante*







*On Soil On Water* | 2018 | oil, acrylic and found objects on canvas | 154.5 x 233 cm



detail views:  
*On Soil On Water*





*Lachrimae*

2021 | oil on canvas | 120 x 150 cm



detail views:  
*Lachrimae*





*Sunlight in the Garden - Xuan Loc*

2020 | oil and acrylic on canvas on board | 30.5 x 40.5 cm

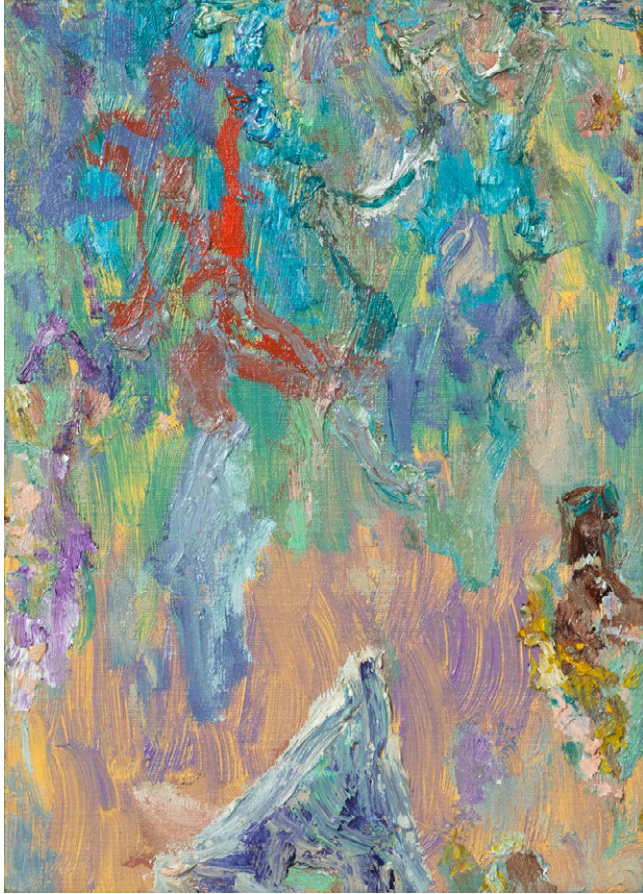




*Sunlight in the Garden - Hue*  
2021 | oil and acrylic on canvas on board | 36.5 x 33.5 cm



*Sunlight in the Garden - Quang Tri*  
2021 | oil and acrylic on canvas on board | 36.5 x 37 cm



*Sunlight in the Garden - Quang Ba*  
2020 | oil on canvas | 35 x 25 cm



*Sunlight in the Garden - Troi giat*  
2021 | oil and acrylic on canvas on board | 40.5 x 30.5 cm





## EDUCATION

1996            Graduated from the Hanoi Fine Arts University, Hanoi, Vietnam

## SELECTED SOLO AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2022            *Lachrimae*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

2018            *with a necessary dose of surrealism to go through the spaces between men*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

2017            *Spaces between men*, Affinity Art Gallery, Hong Kong

2016            *Between Two Mysteries*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

2015            *1972-2015: Works by Hoang Duong Cam and Trong Gia Nguyen*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

*Asia Now*, with Galerie Quynh, Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris, France

2013            *The day before the Renaissance*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

2012            *Tales of Chewing Gum, Noodle Soup, and Other Stories*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

2011            *Ideal Fall*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

*Lightning in U Minh Forest*, Art Hong Kong 11, with Galerie Quynh, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong

2010            *Representation in the meaning of a metaphor for a forest as endoscopy / links between locations*, Project Space and Spare Room Gallery, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

2007            *Projecting into the night what has gone with the dawn*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

- 2006 *Fat-free Museum*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- 2005 *Filename.disan*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- 2001 *Square Eggs* and *Under the Covers*, Goethe-Institut, Hanoi, Vietnam
- 1999 *The Wedding*, Nha San Collective, Hanoi, Vietnam

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *NO RAIN WITHOUT CLOUDS: Preserving Vietnamese Arts for the future*, Vietnam Women's Museum, Hanoi, Vietnam
- 2019 *in between days*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- 2018 *The Cloud Atlas*, François Schneider Foundation, Wattwiller, France
- Alluvium*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- LINES*, Affinity Art Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2017 *Sunshower: Contemporary Arts from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now*, Mori Art Museum and The National Art Center, Tokyo, Japan
- 2016 *Mirror-writing*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- 2015 *olio. v2*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- Eagles Fly, Sheep Flock: Biographical Imprints - Artistic Practices in Southeast Asia*, curated by Khim Ong for Art Stage Singapore: Southeast Asia Platforms, Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Singapore
- 2014 *Being Present*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- in the shadow of appearances*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

- Freedom is the motorbike*, Long Beach City College Art Gallery, Long Beach, CA, USA
- Vietnam Now: Changing Society*, Canvas International Art, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2013 *Electronic Pacific*, SOMArts, San Francisco, CA, USA
- 2012 *REVEALED CONCEALED: ALTERED ICONS*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- To Bring the World into the World*, curated by Biljana Ciric, Art Metropole, Toronto, Canada
- Subject Shall Remain Anonymous*, curated by Jason Wee, Give Art Space, Singapore
- Art Hong Kong 12*, with Galerie Quynh, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong
- 2011 *vis-à-vis*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- 36 Reasons Why We Still Need Superman*, Casa Tres Patios, Medellín, Colombia and Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, Cuba.
- 2010 *VideoZone 5*, the 5<sup>th</sup> International Video Art Biennial, various galleries, Israel, Daegu Photo Biennial, Daegu, South Korea
- Connect: Art Scene Vietnam*, ifa gallery, Stuttgart, Germany
- On Each Milestone*, Japan Foundation Center for Cultural Exchange, Hanoi, Vietnam
- Arts and Cities*, Aichi Triennale 2010, Nagoya, Japan
- 2009 *Connect: Art Scene Vietnam*, ifa gallery, Berlin, Germany
- MAX ART FEST 2009, Manifest of Oblivion*, Zagreb, Croatia
- Intersection Vietnam: New Works from North and South*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore
- Magnetic Power*, ASEAN - Korea Contemporary Photography & Media Art Exhibition, Coreana Museum of Art and Gallery Jijihyang, Seoul, Korea

- 2008 *Post-Doi Moi: Vietnamese Art After 1990*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
- Intrude: Art & Life 366*, Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China
- Strategies from Within - an Exhibition of Vietnamese and Cambodian Contemporary Art Practices*, Ke Center for the Contemporary Arts, Shanghai, China
- The Third Guangzhou Triennial*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China
- 2007 *Migration Addicts* (a collateral event of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale), *Rokovoko* by Mogas Station, Caffè Aurora, Piazza San Marco, Venice, Italy
- Thermocline of Art. New Asian Waves*, ZKM I Museum of Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe, Germany
- Rokovoko* (Mogas Station), *City of Expiration and Regeneration*, 2007 Shenzhen - Hong Kong Biennale, Shenzhen, China
- 2006 *Liberation - 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Saigon Open City*, Ho Chi Minh City Fine Art Museum, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- Belief*, Singapore Biennale 2006, AART publication and installation by Mogas Station, Singapore
- 2005 *Out of Context*, Huntington Beach Art Center, Huntington Beach, CA, USA
- 600 Images/60 Artists/6 Curators/6 Cities*, simultaneous exhibitions in venues in Bangkok, Berlin, Los Angeles, London, Manila and Ho Chi Minh City
- 2004 *Best Regards and Be Resolved to Win* (2002), Asia Now, Gyeonggi Arts Center, Suwon City, Korea
- 2002 *The Wedding* (1999), *ConversAsian*, National Gallery, Grand Cayman Island
- 2000 *God Creates Elephants, God Creates Grass*, Nha San Collective, Hanoi, Vietnam
- 1999 *Dialogue*, Centro Cultural General San Martin, Buenos Aires, Argentina

## **MISCELLANY**

2012 - present Founding member of Xem publication

2006 - 2008 Member of Mogas Station, a Vietnam-based artists' collective

Editor of A.ART magazine on contemporary art and culture

2002 - 2005 Co-founder of Vietnam Visual Arts, a non-profit information website on contemporary art worldwide

## **COLLECTIONS**

Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

Post Vidai, Geneva, Switzerland and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

RMIT University Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, Vietnam





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