



GALERIE QUYNH CONTEMPORARY ART

[Dept. of Phòng  
Speculation Đoán]

07.07-20.08.2022



# [ Dept. of      Phòng Speculation      Đoán ]

To speculate is to form a theory without firm evidence. Bordering on the threshold between information – what is available to all the senses, and fact – what is proven or approved, speculation is perhaps one of the most innate activities of human life. It shares some affinities with gossiping in a sense that both actions contribute to the construction of knowledge and ideas, the proliferation of information and the establishment of social connections. Speculation takes place constantly, sometimes unconsciously as the mind thinks the thought, and the mouth utters the words. The act embodies the fun and open-ended nature of thinking that is not intended to arrive at one definite conclusion.

However, from the Age of Reason<sup>1</sup>, when theories are either right or wrong, factual or fictitious, speculation with its infinitude has begun to lose its favour.

“Speculators on the universe...are no better than madmen”  
– Socrates was said to have said to one of his disciples.

***Dept. of Speculation*** is a non-hierarchical agency that materialises and thrives only in the realm of thoughts and possibilities. Its existence was unknown to many including its members – the speculators, until recently. Just as the speculators attempt to make sense of what is happening in their lives, the department begins to take form. The department functions on a conjectural, pseudo-scientific premise: ideas about time and space as we know them are subject to the speculators’ very own empirical and personal reconfigurations. Built upon the infinitude of figment, ***Dept. of Speculation*** resists any attempt at classification and any single interpretation staying true to the madness of this world.

<sup>1</sup>Also known as the Enlightenment in 18th century Europe when reason and science ruled over superstition and blind faith.

exhibition views





[Dept. of  
Speculation  
Phòng  
Đoàn]  
Nguyễn Đình  
Nguyễn Đình  
Đỗ Huệ Linh  
Cao Xuân  
Nguyễn Đình Châu  
Trần Minh  
Hà Văn Châu  
07/07 - 20/08/2022

















works

# Nghĩa Đặng

*A sequel to his graphite on paper series **Father's Adagio** (2019-2020), this trio of intricate tapestries sews to life the topography of Nghĩa Đặng's psyche, which is mapped by the father-son relationship as well as his own inexhaustible pursuit for the other half of his self. A significant departure from the monochromatic portrayal of a heightened suspension of emotion, these new hand-embroidered works witness the arrival of technicolour landscapes and a change in tempo. From lethargic and stately to moderately-paced and at ease, it seems that Nghĩa's journey has reached a new phase where he has come to terms with the incompleteness of being. Just as every rebirth begins with death and decay, the tapestries capture the near-end of a muted transition as ashes morph into living things, and shadow recedes so light can emerge.*



**Nghĩa Đặng**

*Glittering the moon returns*

2022 | hand embroidery on cut-out canvas mounted on carved wooden frame | 65.5 x 60 x 4 cm



**Nghĩa Đặng**

*Father's Adagio #9*

2022 | hand embroidery on cut-out canvas mounted on carved wooden frame | 40 x 51 x 4 cm



**Nghĩa Đặng**

*Father's Adagio #10*

2022 | hand embroidery on cut-out canvas mounted on carved wooden frame | 49 x 40 x 4.5 cm



# Biography

Nghia Dang's multi-media practice conveys an inherent theatricality, though far from that of a boastful, spectacular kind. Understated in expression, Dang's works draw the viewer into strange, disorientating scenes that compel one to rethink the familiar. The artist uses psychoanalytical ideas, and in particular the Lacanian approach, as a tool to traverse what he calls 'the ruin within himself', making sense of his experiences, relationships and, perhaps most salient of all, how the self is constructed. The artworks alternate between visceral iterations of reality and the imaginary realm to recount stories, often of emotional tumult.

His earlier works, made from objects and materials found in our daily lives and surrounding infrastructure, such as cardboard and chocolate, or concrete and steel, navigate the contradictions of the family home, and within it the tethers between father-mother-son. On his endless journey to unravel these ropes, he steers towards the immediacy of graphite on paper as if to forge a link with the subconscious. Yet, as his works delve deeper into the recesses of the mind, the artist refrains from dramatising the uncertainties, and instead presents them as a shared opportunity for introspection.

Nghia Dang (b. 1994, Hanoi) was awarded the Distinguished Scholarship (2015-2018) from the Art Institute of Chicago USA where he earned his BFA in Studio Art. He has participated in group exhibitions in Vietnam and the US, including *Lunar Breccia* and *Encounter*, Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City; *Spring Galeria*, The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Ho Chi Minh City; *Duc Rong/Lap Day*, Nha San Collective, Hanoi; *-Ology*, Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, IL, USA; and *Race Car, Race Car*, Z1 Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA. In 2018, he held a solo exhibition titled *Scenes of the Imago* at The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, and in 2020 was selected as a Season 3 resident at A. Farm, an international art residency founded by San Art, MoT+++ and the Nguyen Art Foundation. He is currently teaching Art and Art History at Hoa Sen University.

Dang lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City.

# Nadège David

*Nadège David, assuming an all-encompassing god view perspective, envisions an almost utopia as non-human beings reclaim their place and dismantle the dominating anthropocentric order. In this new setting, the artist erects a world where all are equal and interconnected. From afar, Nadège's paintings are imbued with joy and exuberance of life – animals dreaming, playing the game hide-and-seek undisturbed. Only upon closer inspection does one realise that her translucent, ethereal scenery is not entirely perfect: her fairyland is recalibrated on the ground of a pre-existing one whose naivety has been compromised by human greed and violence. Underneath what seems like a missed opportunity is actually remorseful anticipation of the future as informed by past prophecies like the Greek mythology of Erysichthon<sup>2</sup> and Hieronymus Bosch's<sup>3</sup> eerie pictorial depictions of the world.*

<sup>2</sup> The Thessalian king Erysichthon was punished with insatiable hunger by the goddess of grain and agriculture Demeter for chopping down her grove to build his own feast hall. In the end, left with no choice he had to devour his own flesh.

<sup>3</sup> Hieronymus Bosch (ca. 1450 - 1516) was an early Netherlandish and Renaissance painter. He is known for his complex oil on panel paintings, which are rich in religious symbolism, fantastical elements and allegory.



**Nadège David**

*Anatomy of a polytical forest*

2022 | acrylic, pastel, ceramic painting on canvas | 140.5 x 175.5 cm



**Nadège David**  
*Jubilation in the World of Origins*  
2021 | acrylic, pastel, ceramic painting on canvas | 150 x 150 cm



**Nadège David**

*Unique fantasy of the penitent lagomorph I*

2021 | acrylic, pastel, ceramic painting on canvas | 75.5 x 75.5 cm



**Nadège David**

*Unique fantasy of the penitent lagomorph II*

2021 | acrylic, pastel, ceramic painting on canvas | 75.5 x 75.5 cm

# Biography

"My research on the relationship between the individual, the body and the world, continues with a powerful emergence of forms of nature. The body, the flesh and nature merge in a formal complexity where 'the flesh of the world' is revealed. My creative process is a constant negotiation between intuition and reason. The dynamic relationship between colour and drawing underpins the ethos of my work. Through the vibrant dialogue composed of colour and gestural forms, a multiplicity of narrative potential unfolds gradually. These narratives are anchored in a theoretical breeding ground. The "new" philosophy of nature, the ancient myth of Erysichthon, Pierre de Ronsard's Forest of Gastine and the paintings by Hieronymus Bosch all played a role in this series. Throughout this dialogue, the borders between plants, animals and humans instituted by language and the senses begin to fade. Interconnections are revealed, hierarchies are erased. A narration of the particularity of complex beings then emerges."

Born in 1975 in France, Nadège David received an MA in Political Philosophy at University La Sorbonne, Paris, France and an MA in Contemporary Political Philosophy, University Paris VIII, Paris, France. She was a lecturer in Sociology at University Marne La Vallée, France between 2001 and 2005. David's exhibitions include *Experience sweet and relaxing dreams*, Mai's Gallery, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and *of reveries and obsessions, Soil-Less®*, and *Carne Vale* at Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Nadège David lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City.

# Đỗ Thanh Lãng

*Lãng's paintings, all the while consistent in terms of technique and subject matter, depict deadpan 'scenarios' of a kind of hyperreality – sceneries and figures that are both familiar but bizarre. They are generously filled with colour and movement, but at the same time exuding a vacant feeling: they are realities and simulations of reality altogether.*





**Đỗ Thanh Lãng**

*Untitled*

2022 | black and white laser printing on tracing paper, oil, acrylic, and epoxy resin on canvas | 120 x 140 cm



**Đỗ Thanh Lãng**

*Untitled*

2022 | oil, acrylic, and epoxy resin on canvas | 70 x 130 cm

# Biography

In Do Thanh Lang's paintings there is a hidden force within their bright swathes of colours that intrigues and confuses. The performativity of his characters and heightened drama of the scenes act as a visual confidence trick, masking the dangers lying in wait beneath the superficial resin. The spectator takes the role of the dreamer, for like in dreams one is unsure how one arrived at this, or any particular instance. Navigating through the artist's perplexing, surrealist tableaux, the spectator-dreamer is but a character equipped with scripts and storylines, though acting as witness rather than participant. As his frantic brushmarks flit between the crude layers of plastic and resin, Do Thanh Lang seems to mimic that hypnagogic state of mind where darkness turns to dreams.

Approaching art practice with a rare instinct – visible through the craggy edges of his canvas, or the occasional insect fossilised by his resin pour – Do Thanh Lang is aptly positioned to extract humour from a dire situation. In all their hazy strangeness, his artworks are akin to pieces of a memory – a visual journal of altered consciousness.

Born in 1986 in Ho Chi Minh City, Do Thanh Lang studied painting at the Ho Chi Minh City Fine Arts University. His work has been shown in a number of group exhibitions in Vietnam and regionally such as *Salt of the Jungle*, Korea Foundation Gallery, Seoul, Korea; *Modern Wind*, HCMC Fine Arts Association; *My Eldest Sister*, San Art; *Fall*, Café Tram; *Out of Nowhere*, and *Out of Museum*, Sao La; *Art Walk*, numerous venues in HCMC; Chung, PongDang Gallery, and *Lunar Breccia*, *Alluvium*, *song of the cicada among the summer poppies*, *Hopscotch* and *NGUCHONOBAY* (curated by Sao La) at Galerie Quynh.

Do has also participated in *Spot Art Singapore 2014* at ARTrium@MCI, Singapore, and undertaken the The Brownian Movement residency programme at Heritage Space in Hanoi.

Do lives and works between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

# Cian Duggan

*Cian's printed plexiglass paintings form part of the series **Mediums** (2020-2022) in which the artist explores the culture of image authorship, memory perception, and the online/offline presence of space and architecture. A seamless and playful combination between his now-disappeared street tagging symbols and always available stock images, the series situates viewers in front of a portal where past, present and future collide.*



**Cian Duggan**

*Soaked in silver dust*

2021 | enamel on UV printed plexiglass | 142 x 100 cm



**Cian Duggan**  
*Desperately one*  
2021 | enamel on printed plexiglass | 112 x100 cm



**Cian Duggan**  
*House of stain*  
2021 | enamel on UV printed plexiglass | diptych, each panel 159 x 100 cm

# Artwork notes

## ***House of stain***

I found this image on a stock photography database. I'm almost positive I've seen it somewhere before, but cannot place where. Familiar, yet distant. Like memory residue. The nature of stock photography is fluid. To be used, reused, and remixed without boundary or authorship, over and over again. Ever-changing yet indifferent.

Similar to our memories and time itself, they are a non-linear fragmented force, in-flux, being reconstructed by the past, present, and future, endlessly. How is our experience of reality and memory formed? What happens if you reorder layers of time? What might leak out?

## ***Desperately one***

There's a deep uncertainty embedded in the painting, *La Derelitta* or *The Desperate One*. Throughout history, the work has been attributed to multiple artists (such as Botticelli and Lippi). It's unclear who the lone figure is or what exactly has taken place?

We see walls, we see a door but do we know which side we're on? Are we trapped or are we free? It's as if there is key information missing, like there has been an error in a "system". What has been displaced, or is in hiding?



# Biography

Cian Duggan was born in Ireland in 1990 and lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Duggan was brought up on skate culture during his teenage years. He draws inspiration from its bootleg and DIY culture, mixing it all up with an interest in industrial materials and design. He plays with the known and the unexpected, combining organic, yet alien shapes with human and figurative elements. Most of his work is on the walls and streets of places he visits.

Duggan's abstract forms appear otherworldly; they hover with a static tension that animates them, as extra-terrestrial life forms, or portals to another dimension. They coexist with their surroundings, rather than overtake it. They exist somewhere between memory and imagination, primitive and futuristic, organic and digital. The evocation of the familiar rendered unfamiliar lending the forms their oddness.

# Ngô Đình Bảo Châu

*At a certain altitude and location when day and night appear side by side, Ngô Đình Bảo Châu's two-part installation **Even a dead clock is right twice a day** contemplates the stillness of time ticking away – a passing so flitting that it verges on obsolescence. Evoking the proverb “bán mặt cho đất, bán lưng cho trời” (literally translated as “selling one's face to the ground, one's back to the sky”) the work lays bare the reality of traditional agricultural practice, one that is punctuated by a never-ending cycle of physical labour, of hope and precarity.*

*With the ceramic blade rendering the hoe completely useless, now lying tip down on a bed of cracked soil, Bảo Châu speculates – or simply unearths an avoided truth – a doomed outlook for farm work impacted by industrialisation and environment degradation.*



**Ngô Đình Bảo Châu**

*Even a dead clock is right twice a day*

2022 | ceramic blade mounted on bamboo rod, fastened with wicker string on a bed of air-dried white and red clay | site-specific installation | 20 x 15 x 101 cm each hoe





# Biography

From early on in her career, Ngo Dinh Bao Chau has worked with a wide range of materials, from sedge mats, steel, and concrete, to *trúc chỉ* – paper made from the purées of bamboo, corn and duckweed. Her practice examines contemporary life in Vietnam; she repurposes objects and images in order to challenge the dualisms and tensions that exist in society. In her most recent work, Ngo Dinh Bao Chau appropriates the symbols which are part of a collective, cultural memory, and places them in an imagined homespace. Through her multimedia installations, the artist comments on the power of repetition, and explores the indistinction between public and private space.

Ngo Dinh Bao Chau (b. 1986, Dong Thap), since graduating from the Ho Chi Minh University of Fine Arts, has held various exhibitions within the region and abroad, including *Silk of light*, San Art Productions x Phuong My, Ho Chi Minh City; *Block of Silence*, SECC, Ho Chi Minh City; *Where The Sea Remembers*, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, CA, USA; *Bodies Survey(ed)*, San Art, Ho Chi Minh City; *She, Sweet 'Art*, London, UK, travelled to Little Pink Monster Gallery, TX, USA; *Body Bouquet*, Welch School Galleries, Atlanta, GA, USA; *Out of Nowhere*, Sao La, Ho Chi Minh City; and *My Eldest Sister*, San Art, Ho Chi Minh City. In 2018 she was selected for the *apexart* Fellowship in New York, USA, and in 2010 undertook the 943 Studio arts residency in Kunming, China. In 2016 she received a grant from the Denmark–Vietnam Cultural Development and Exchange Fund for Open Room – an open studio event with artists Cam Xanh, Lap-Xuan N. Do, Kim Duy, and Dao Tung.

Ngo Dinh Bao Chau lives and works between Hue and Ho Chi Minh City.

# Trúc-Anh

*Hinging on the state of transmutation but in a rather overt and imposing manner, Trúc-Anh theorises the precise moment of spiritual apparition and withdrawal. Of great emotive presence, the paintings depict life-sized human figures with every last bit of their strength traveling at high velocity and piercing through the fabrics of existence as they enter a trance.*



**Trúc-Anh**  
*The flat flesher*  
2018 | oil and oil pastel on canvas | 219.5 x 149 cm





Trúc-Anh  
*The depth riser*  
2018 | oil, acrylic, oil pastel and glitter on canvas | 221 x 146.5 cm

# Biography

Born in 1983 in Paris, Truc-Anh studied at École Boulle, École Supérieure des Arts Appliqués, Paris; ECAL, Haute École d'Art et de Design, Lausanne, Switzerland; and La Cambre, École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels, Brussels, Belgium. His awards include the Prix Manganel (Lausanne, Switzerland), and Laureate of the Prix Photo Europa (France).

For Truc-Anh, painting and drawing provide a means for questioning the relation of representation to the existence of things, whether they are fantasy or products of a tangible reality. His paintings – or rather his mental images – are filled with waves of intense emotions and robust energy made possible by the artist's quintessential spontaneous and unrestrained brushwork.

Truc-Anh has held numerous solo exhibitions including *The Cabinet of the Psychopomp*, NL=US Art, Rotterdam, the Netherlands; *Hua Thai Truc-Anh*, Galerie Sator, Paris, France; *8 Skins*, CODE Southway Studio, Marseille, France; *Horizon of Unreason*, curated by Isabelle Le Normand and Pierre Lefort, Baert Gallery, Los Angeles, USA; *The Quantic Family*, Tongerlohuys Museum, Roosendaal, Netherlands; and *Vacuphilia*, Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles, CA. Group exhibitions include *Where the sea remembers*, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, CA, USA; *The Foliage*, Vincom Center for Contemporary Art (VCCA), Hanoi, Vietnam; *Technophobia*, The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; *Tentoonstelling: Sounds of Silence (De stem van de stilte)*, Museum CODA, Apeldoorn, the Netherlands; *Solo Project Art Fair*, Basel; *Drawing Now Art Fair*, Paris; and Delhi Photo Festival, New Delhi, India.

Truc-Anh lives and works in Marseille.

# Võ Trân Châu

*Adapting found photographs from two distinct periods – French colonialism in Vietnam and the present day, and using hand-quilting techniques and embroidery on textile, Võ Trân Châu briefly chronicles the evolution of fashion and portraiture photography. If clothing was once made for utilitarian purposes, now it is the exterior aesthetic value that is more important. If photography was once an invention that only people with power and authority could possess – and so determined how the photographed subjects would appear; now it is so democratized to the point of overabundance. Besides such a history-laden narrative, it is worth noticing that Trân Châu's meticulous and time-honoured handiwork helps conjure up the identity of these faces: when brought together in a room, they pose a stark polarity in appearance, yet in the virtual realm, they are just binary-codified specimens.*



Võ Trần Châu  
*An interpreter*

2021 | hand-quilted found fabric and embroidery on linen | 111 x 78 cm



Võ Trần Châu

*A coppersmith*

2021 | hand-quilted found fabric and embroidery on linen | 111 x 78 cm



Võ Trân Châu

*A tirailleur*

2021 | hand-quilted found fabric and embroidery on linen | 111 x 78 cm



Võ Trân Châu

*A teacher*

2022 | hand-quilted found fabric and embroidery on linen | 111 x 78 cm



Võ Trân Châu

*A little girl*

2022 | hand-quilted found fabric and embroidery on linen | 111 x 78 cm





Võ Trân Châu

*A boy*

2022 | hand-quilted found fabric and embroidery on linen | 111 x 78 cm

# Biography

Woven into Vo Tran Chau's practice is the intrinsic emotionality of found fabrics and used clothes, retaining within them ambiguous, yet still pertinent histories. The act of threading together her squares of textile is akin to a reconstruction of the stories lost in grand narratives. In her earlier works, Vo Tran Chau navigates various sites with cultural or personal significance, subjecting them to a pixelation that draws attention to the murky waters of history. The images, blurred from view, evade our attempts to see and point to the very nature of memory: hazy, and at times wilfully amnesic. In other works, the artist continues to explore the act of remembering, but with those whose histories overlap her own. Her encounters with Jeju Island – its textile techniques, the personal stories, and the religious practice of Muism – inform her spiritually-charged works, asking further questions of life and death and reincarnation. Through her method of image making, Vo Tran Chau recognises the depth of historical wounds passed down the generations, and stitches them back as a way to heal.

Vo Tran Chau (b. 1986, Binh Thuan) graduated from the Ho Chi Minh University of Fine Arts in 2011, and has since held prestigious exhibitions within the region and abroad. Selected shows include *Leaf picking in the ancient forest*, The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, HCMC; *Where The Sea Remembers*, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles; *Unfolding: Fabric of Our Life*, Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile, Hong Kong; *Lingering at the Peculiar Pavilion*, Manzi Art Space, Hanoi, travelled to Salon Saigon, HCMC; *Suzhou Documents*, curated by Zhang Qing and Roger M. Buerger, Suzhou Art Museum, Suzhou; *Still (the) Barbarians*, curated by Koyo Kouoh, *EVA International: Ireland's Biennale of Contemporary Art*, Limerick; *Tracing, Born from the Land*, and *My Sister*, San Art, HCMC; *Black Fog*, Nha San Collective, Hanoi; *Petit and Smooth*, Nha San Studio, Hanoi; and *Bolero*, Zero Station, HCMC. In 2015, Vo Tran Chau undertook San Art Laboratory, an arts residency initiated by San Art. She received a grant from the Danish Vietnamese Cultural Development and Exchange Fund in 2011 for the exhibition *Born from the Land*.

Vo Tran Chau lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City.



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