

INTROSPECTIVES

A Cultural Perspective of Contemporary Vietnamese Art



ALONE

Pham Huy Thong

Oil on Canvas

2009



INTROSPECTIVES



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A Cultural Perspective of Contemporary Vietnamese Art

April 15th-21, 2010

Nguyen Bach Dan
Pham Huy Thong
Nguyen Thanh Binh
Le Quy Tong

Presented by

Jia Moderne, Boston, MA

Dream House Gallery, Suite 615
One Design Center Place
Boston, MA 02210

Special Guest speaker, 4 pm

Dr. Nora A. Taylor, Alsdorf Professor of South and Southeast Asian Art,
Department of Art History, Theory and Criticism, School of the Art Institute of
Chicago

Private Viewing
April 15th, from 3 pm

Opening Reception follows, until 8 pm

FOREWORD

Contemporary Artists in Vietnam: A Move Forward

If art speaks to where and when it is made, then what does contemporary art in Vietnam say about that country today? After decades of war and poverty devastated the country socially and psychologically during much of the twentieth century, the twenty-first century is proving to be kinder to the Vietnamese. Much has changed since television audiences viewed those tanks rolling into the presidential palace compound in April 1975. Today, some 80 percent of the population was born after that date, businesses are thriving and hundreds of thousands of tourists visit the country yearly.

When I first visited Vietnam to conduct research on Vietnamese art in the early 1990s, bicycles were the only mode of transportation, restaurants did not exist and it cost me \$6 a minute to make a phone call overseas. Today, there are many more Wi-fi cafes in my old Hanoi neighborhood than I can name in

Chicago and young people cruise around town on their motorcycles with one hand on the handle bars and the other on their cell phone. Shopping in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in the early 1990s meant going to the market looking for ceramic bowls and fabric to order a tailor to make into clothes. It now means browsing the latest fashions in chic boutiques and admiring works of art hanging in the hundreds of galleries strewn around the city.

The fact that artists are able to sell their work in galleries is already a monumental change, since for most of the latter part of the twentieth century, artists were patronized by the State. The State also limited the kind of subject matter that artists were able to depict, favoring patriotic themes, landscapes and portraits. When economic reforms were instituted in the late 1986, artistic reforms began to take place as well. Artists were allowed to exhibit abstract art for the first time in 1990

and performance art was born in the mid-1990s when a young artist presented a performance piece in Blue Space gallery, an independent art space in Ho Chi Minh City. Since then, artists have varied their subjects and media in increasingly diverse ways but the perennial question remains whether their work retains something “Vietnamese?”

The artists presented in this exhibition could not be more different. And yet, each of them is representative of the post-war generation. They embody the variety of experiences of individuals during these past decades. Their works are also expressions of current cultural, social and artistic ideas, although those may not be so apparent. Individual expression is relatively new in Vietnam which has long favored collective identity. These artists have dared to speak their own voices and their work embodies their unique sense of identity.

For Nguyen Bach Dan, a rare woman to succeed in a male

dominated art world, this meant developing her own individual technique. One could imagine that Vietnam has a long history of painting with ink on paper, but in fact it does not. The kind of ink drawing favored by the literati in China was not practiced by pre-modern Vietnamese artists. Instead, village folk artists made woodblock prints. Artists hired by the courts were embroiderers and ceramicists, rarely painters. Nguyen Bach Dan’s paintings regardless of their potentially “Chinese” look are unique, and refreshingly contemporary. Her brush is dynamic and vigorous. The forests of trees that she presents could be anywhere, in any country. The trees circling above a path have reminded viewers of snowy shrubs in a winter forest. She executes them with a bamboo brush and that is what makes them Vietnamese.

Pham Huy Thong’s paintings are more overtly political. He likes to parody contemporary political corruption by depicting greedy

officials as though they were 19th century mandarins, parading their wealth in a procession back to the village. Only the horse has been replaced by an expensive Ferrari. The Vietnamese middle class may have grown wealthy this past decade, but capitalism has also come with problems. The gap between rich and poor has widened and nouveaux-riches have often lost their sense of morals and become slave to the dollar. Contemporary artists have liked to comment of the new middle class loss of consideration for their roots and traditional values. Parody and satire has become the vehicle for expressing disillusionment with new found wealth.

With most of the population born after the end of the war, it has become important for the current generation to reflect on the past. This means caring for the fate of historical monuments and understanding the need to move beyond the pain of the past.

Le Quy Tong has created a series of images of the Long Bien Bridge in

Hanoi. The bridge was built during the colonial era by the engineering firm of Gustave Eiffel. It barely withstood the bombings of the 1960s and stands as an icon now for the city's many historical transformations. 2010 is the 1000th anniversary of the founding of the city and Le Quy Tong's paintings of the bridge stand with many other artists' works of his generation as a testament to the past but also one that forces us to contemplate its future amidst rapid technological development. In contrast, Nguyen Thanh Binh's works stand as if frozen in time, colorful portraits of women from any era, a tribute to poetry and music.

Vietnam's history may be rich, but what about its future? Will the cynical outlook of artists' predicting a loss of traditional values prevail, or will the semi-abstract expressionistic landscapes and experiments with technique show that art is eternal no matter its permutations? Are artists predictors of their country's future or merely commentators on its

present? Contemporary artists are still searching to strike a balance between what is new and what is old, between moving forward and not losing a sense of the past, between the global and the local. What is certain is that art has long given people a means to express their feelings for their country, to express their sense of community, of belonging to a nation but more

importantly to express who they are as individuals, Vietnamese and proud.

—Dr. Nora Taylor
Alsdorf Professor of South and Southeast Asian Art History
School of the Art Institute of Chicago



Nguyen Thanh Binh



Le Quy Tong



Nguyen Bach Dan



Pham Huy Thong

Nguyen Bach Dan

The techniques utilized to create light and dark patterns are as important as the techniques used to achieve the gradual changes between the two. I have chosen a soft and gentle style which is similar to Western style impressionistic paintings. Some parts of the painting are a bit fuzzy or blurred; some are made up of layers of small dots of ink on the paper. I do this so that the art work will look like it is sparkling. I do it in order to create a spiritual feeling, to mimic the actual movements of life.

In ink brush painting the highest focus stays on the wrist. A flexible wrist will lead the brushes the way you want it. A fast and confident brush will create clear and definite strokes. A strong, steady wrist is needed for lively brush strokes. A flexible wrist helps to create free brush strokes. You can either hold the brush up straight, about 90 degrees to the paper, or you can lean the brush when making long lines of ink. As you move the brush very fast the brush itself energizes your painting

techniques. When moved slowly, it gives depth and contemplation. Miracles come when you move your brush freely as inspiration flows from your unconsciousness.

As an ink brush painter you seek life from the tip of your brush.

From the tip of the brush you can create the world anew by inserting light in the deepest patterns. Or you can deepen an already existent lightness by laying dark ink on top of light ink. The beautiful thing about painting with Chinese ink is that you are playful with the definition of light and dark itself. Light ink is used to create definition and to link patterns of varying intensity and darkness. Dark comes not from one simply dark color but from laying layer upon layer of ink on top of itself until both color and depth have been created.

Fine brushes are used to outline shape. The "colors" in ink paintings are not red, green, purple, or yellow, but the different levels of light and dark and the depth of the work. A master in ink painting illustrates

not only shapes and sizes, but also distances and the liveliness, the spirit of the scene.

The structure of the painting has to be something that is already laid out in the mind of the painter. The painting process needs to happen all at once to achieve best results. Between the mind of ink brush painter, the wrist, and the brush, the beautiful transition between light and dark is actualized.

—Nguyen Bach Dan, 2009

IN THE LIGHTS OF POETRY

In her works, artist Nguyen Bach Dan uses the rhythm of natural lives to depict her internal emotional world and her notions about living things.

The internal emotional world of Nguyen Bach Dan surges strongly at times, spreads thoughtfully at others; but it always shines with lovely poetry in which one can see the spreading of her notions about lives, and surprises sprung from experiments. Does this deeply

emotional grasp of lives come from inside her or from the outside world? Perhaps Nguyen Bach Dan herself has yet had an accurate answer. After all, the desire to live a peaceful and forever-lasting life is seen clearly and sharply in her paintings.

Nguyen Bach Dan's paintings depict the isolated, broken features of nature in a wider world of all living things. Not many artists possess this ability to feel and depict such emotions.

Whether through the strong and lively description to create bursting feeling or through the slow and gentle move towards the world of endlessness, Nguyen Bach Dan always expresses her desire to seek the core nature of all living things.

I strongly believe that together with time, Nguyen Bach Dan will fully grasp herself, as she has already built up her own artistic path. We will just need PATIENCE.

—Nguyen Xuan Tiep

Artist and Deputy Director – Vietnam Fine Art Museum

Nguyen Bach Dan

The daughter of a greatly respected professor of the theory and history of art at the Hanoi College of Fine Arts, Nguyen Bach Dan studied art from the time she was very young. After graduating from the College of Fine Arts, she became a graphic designer for a fashion magazine.

In 1999, when she received a full fellowship to attend the Vermont Studio Center, she was inspired and encouraged to return to painting. Though she continues to work as a graphic designer, she is also making time to paint.

Using very traditional media—ink on handmade paper—her romantic landscape paintings are very contemporary. Some of her subjects (snow covered hills or snowy forests) are inspired by her experience in Vermont. The nuances in black and gray of her ink paintings convey the serenity and confidence of this young artist.

Nguyen Bach Dan (b. 1970)

Scholarship: 1999 Artist in Residence, Vermont Studio Center

Education: Hanoi College of Fine Arts

EXHIBITIONS

Solo and Two Person Exhibitions

2003 *Work by Two Vietnamese Women Artists*, The Eastern Gallery, Chicago

Group Exhibitions

2000 *The Ascending Dragon: Vietnamese Painting Today*, The Landon Gallery, New York

2001 *Images Vietnam: Perspectives of Leading Contemporary Artists*, The Landon Gallery, New York

Nguyen Bach Dan

- 2001 *Tradition and Change: Contemporary Vietnamese Art*, The Landon Gallery, New York
- 2002 *Brush to Block: Vietnamese Works on Paper*, The Eastern Gallery, Chicago
- 2002 *Contemporary Vietnamese Art*, Seagrass Cove Gallery, Montauk, New York
- 2003 *Keeping Cool Exhibition*, Fine Contemporary Vietnamese Art, New York
- 2004 *Contemporary Vietnamese Art*, Calvin Charles Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona
- 2004 *Tet Celebration Exhibition*, Fine Contemporary Vietnamese Art, New York
- 2004 *1 + 1 + 1*, Vietnam Fine Art Museum

Nguyen Bach Dan



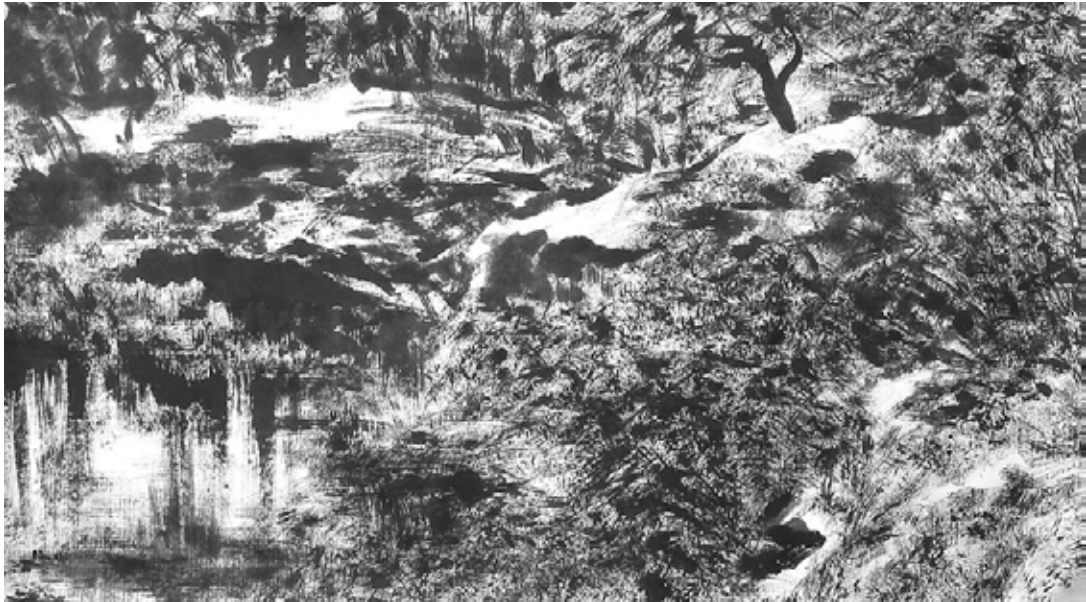
Halong Bay

2007

Ink on Xuyen Paper

35.4 x 70.9 inches (90 x 180 cm)

Nguyen Bach Dan



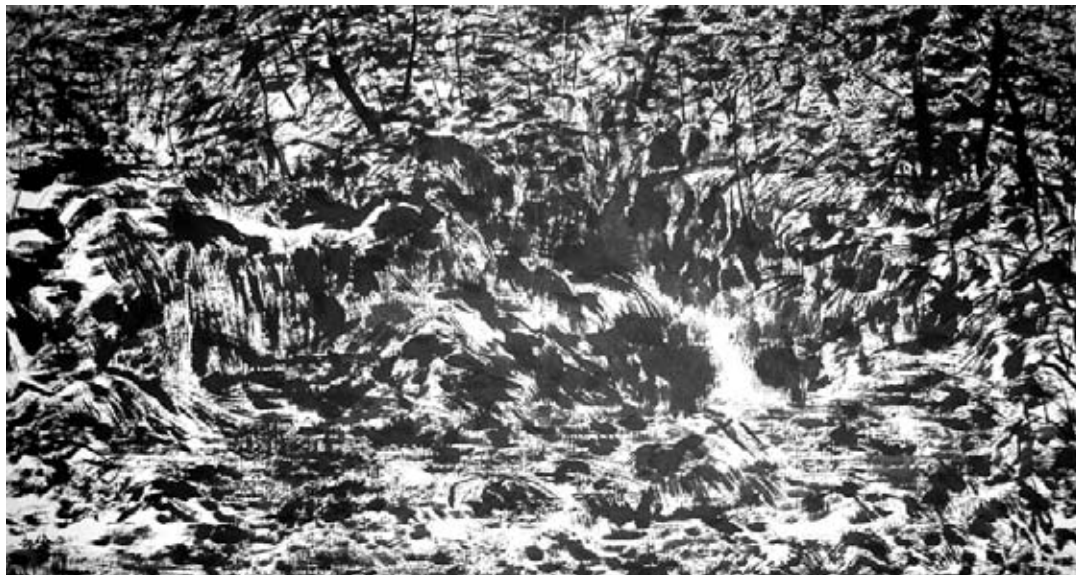
Streak of Sunny

2007

Ink on Xuyen Paper

37.4 x 61 inches (95 x 155 cm)

Nguyen Bach Dan



Stream in the Forest
2007
Ink on Xuyen Paper
35.4 x 70.9 inches (90 x 180 cm)

Nguyen Bach Dan

Pham Huy Thong

I call myself a social commentary artist, focusing on social issues, especially social economic problems. As a young man, I don't [sic] want to put on my face the serious mask of a biting old judge. People always found in my painting a message of criticism together with a mocking smile. I hope that through my surrealist art works, people may have better vision toward reality.

DONG BAO (Children from the Same Womb)

Every culture or religion has its own story about the origins of its people. Christians, for example, believe that they are the descendents of Adam and Eve, and Vietnamese believe that they are the children of Lac Long Quan and Au Co. This creation story started thousands of years ago and an abbreviated account tells how Lac Long Quan (a dragon from the ocean) and Au Co (a fairy from the mountains) loved each other. Au Co became pregnant and gave birth to 100 sons. These sons grew up and scattered

to the ocean, the lowlands and the mountains and became the ancestors of all Vietnamese people.

Since then Vietnamese have called each other "Đồng Bào," which means children from the same womb. This is how they remember their creation myth. The story also contains a message of unity which reminds Vietnamese that they are blood brothers and sisters and that they should always love, take good care of and respect each other.

Despite this meaningful creation tale, Vietnamese have a long history of killing, persecuting and factionalizing each other and even today discord and discontent between different groups of people is evident throughout our society...

This is a Vietnamese conundrum that I have been exploring since Tet, 2008 and my present painting series focuses entirely on the theoretical and realistic aspects of "Đồng Bào."
—Pham Huy Thong, 2009-2010

Pham Huy Thong

The Plastic Chairs Series

Plastic chairs or stools are the most recognizable objects that stand out when people walk along Vietnam's city streets. Used by street vendors, sidewalk cafes or residents watching life pass by, old or new, dirty or clean, plastic chairs can be considered an individual art object or a part of a huge artistic installation where the whole city becomes a dance floor full of color chairs. People in Hanoi love to sit on these plastic chairs while they smoke cigarettes or drink beer. Plastic chairs or stools became popular in Vietnam's city not only because they are useful or beautiful, but also because they hide the appearance of those on the street; they tell a story linked to economy [sic] status and social situation.

Decades ago, when the Vietnamese government still operated under a subsidized economy, people were poor. Every day they went to their office with a lunch box and returned home for dinner at home with the entire family. They did

not have any extra money to eat outside (besides, restaurants did not exist). Then, from the late 1980s, after economic reforms or *Doi Moi*, the market opened. People had the opportunity to find additional jobs and earn more income. They spent more time away from home, chasing money. They had to eat outside, drink beer with their business partners and sign contracts in street-side-restaurants. From that moment on, Vietnamese sidewalks were crowded with plastic chairs or stools, people, young and old, sitting, eating and drinking.

In the past few years, the economy has grown, people work more and have become richer and richer. Luxury air-conditioned restaurants have appeared to serve the demands of people. Vietnamese believe that one day, in the near future, all street-side open-air cafes will be replaced by air conditioned ones. So the images of plastic chairs or stools are glimpses of the recent economic situation.

—Pham Huy Thong, 2007-2009

Pham Huy Thong (b. 1981)

Foundation Forum, Sapporo
Miyanomori Museum, Tokyo

EXHIBITIONS

Solo Exhibitions

2006 *Rain*, Installation Exhibition,
Bookworm Art Space, Hanoi

2009 *Updated*, L'Espace, 24 Trang
Tien, Hanoi

Selected Group Exhibitions

Prize Encourage Prize in *Asia
Vision Art Competition*

2001 *Asia Vision Art Competition*,
Hanoi

2003 *XYZ*, Vietnam Industrial Fine
Art University, Hanoi

2004 *Ke Moi*, Illustrations
Exhibition, Festival Hue, Hue
Ancient Citadel, Hue

2005 *World of Lacquer Painting*,
Kyoto City International
Exchange Hall, Japan

2006 *An Appointment*, Lacquer
Tree Gallery, Hanoi

2007 *Len San*, Hanoi Young Artist
Club, Hanoi

2007 *History of BD*, L'Espace, 24
Trang Tien, Hanoi

2007 Collection of Institute of
Vietnam Contemporary
Art, Hanoi (8/2007), China
(10/2007)

2007 *SPACE + SPACE*, Maison des
Arts, Hanoi

2008 *Continuation*, Hanoi Young
Artist Club, Hanoi

2008 *Norwegian Folktale
Collection*, Illustrations
Exhibition, Villa Fridheim
Museum, Krødsherad,
Norway

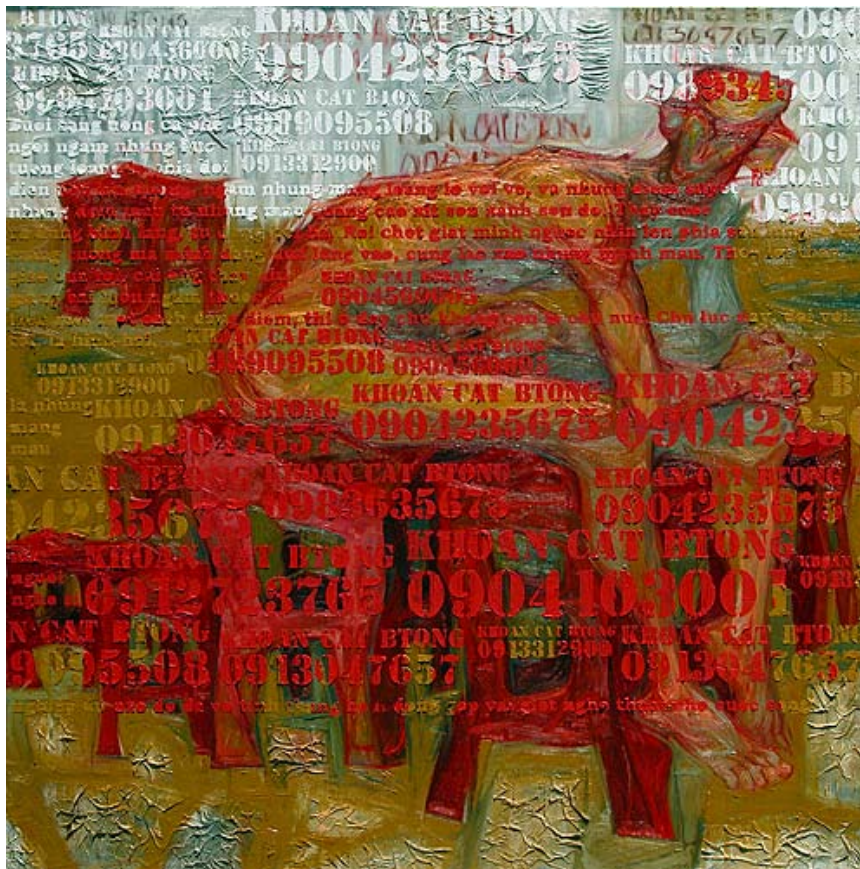
Pham Huy Thong

- 2008 *Post Doi Moi, Vietnamese Art After 1990*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
- 2008 *Talent Prize Performance Art*, Van Ho Cultural Exhibition Center, Hanoi
- 2008 *Asia in Harmony*, 23rd Asian International Art Exhibition, The University City Art Museum of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Guandong, Guangzhou, China
- 2009 *Print*, Hanoi Graphic Faculty, Vietnam Artist Association, 16 Ngo Quyen, Hanoi
- 2009 *Portraits*, Hanoi Young Artist Club, 16 Ngo Quyen, Hanoi
- 2009 *ISO 25*, 25 Studio, Tay Ho, Hanoi
- 2009 *Asia @ Asia*, 24th Asia International Art Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Chair
2008
Oil on Canvas
19.5 x 40 inches (50 x 100 cm)

Pham Huy Thong



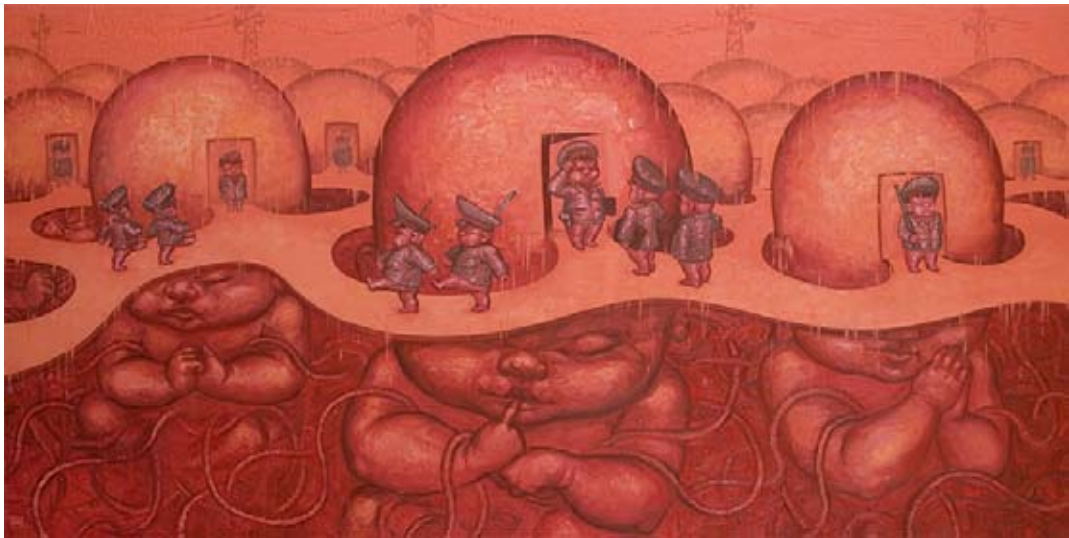
Alone
2009
Oil on Canvas
39.4 x 39.4 inches (100 x 100 cm)

Pham Huy Thong



Red Chairs Under Rain
2009
Oil on Canvas
19.5 x 59 inches (50 x 150 cm)

Pham Huy Thong



Dream XI
2009
Oil on Canvas
39.4 x 78.7 inches (100 x 200 cm)

Pham Huy Thong

Le Quy Tong

Le Quy Tong graduated from the prestigious Hanoi Fine Arts University founded by the French in 1925. With exhibitions in Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, and France, he is considered one of the leading emerging artists today in Vietnam.

Tong first entered Vietnam's art scene with his collection of oil on canvas paintings on the Long Bien Bridge. Long a symbol of Hanoi's heritage, the bridge is more than a physical structure, it is Hanoi's soul. Inspired by the steel beams and the concrete structures, Tong's strokes are deliberate and the tones austere. Spanning the river through times of war and peace, the bridge—now in its 1,000th year—still carries the legends and stories of the ancient city it serves. In a city marked by the colorful palettes of the seasons, Tong shows us the power in a lack thereof.

He sees the movement of the people and things across the bridge as part of the life and rhythm of Hanoi. While his earlier work focused on the development of Hanoi

following the Doi Moi policy in 1986, Le Quy Tong now chooses to paint the deep emotions that lie underneath the face of the Vietnamese. He is witness to the poverty of Hanoi's many citizens, the mental and emotional effects following so many years of hardship.

Through his Faces series, we see this emotion. As Le Quy Tong said, "I do not intend to picture the faces of people living around me. I just want to filter, through the glances on these faces, the modern essence of the generation, with all his [sic] emotions and sincerity."

Le Quy Tong

Le Quy Tong (b. 1977 in Hanoi)

2001 Graduated from Hanoi Fine Art University

EXHIBITIONS

1995-7 Annual University Exhibition

1999 *Asian Exhibition by Young Artists*, Japan

2000 *South East Asian Exhibition by Young Artists*, National Exhibition, Hanoi

2002 *The Soul of Vietnam*, Vietnam Fine Art Gallery

2002 *Vietnam Artists Today*, Hanoi Melia Hotel

2002 *Digital Visual Arts Exhibition*, Goethe Institute, Hanoi

2002 *Jeunes Regards*, Award, Henry Martin Museum, Cahors, France

2003 *Jeunes Regards*, French Embassy, Hanoi

2003 *Visage du Vietnam*, Henry Martin Museum, Cahors, France

2003 *Vietnam Artists Today*, Space No. 4, Artists Contemporary Center, Hanoi

2004 Workshop—*Moving City*, Goethe Institute, Hanoi

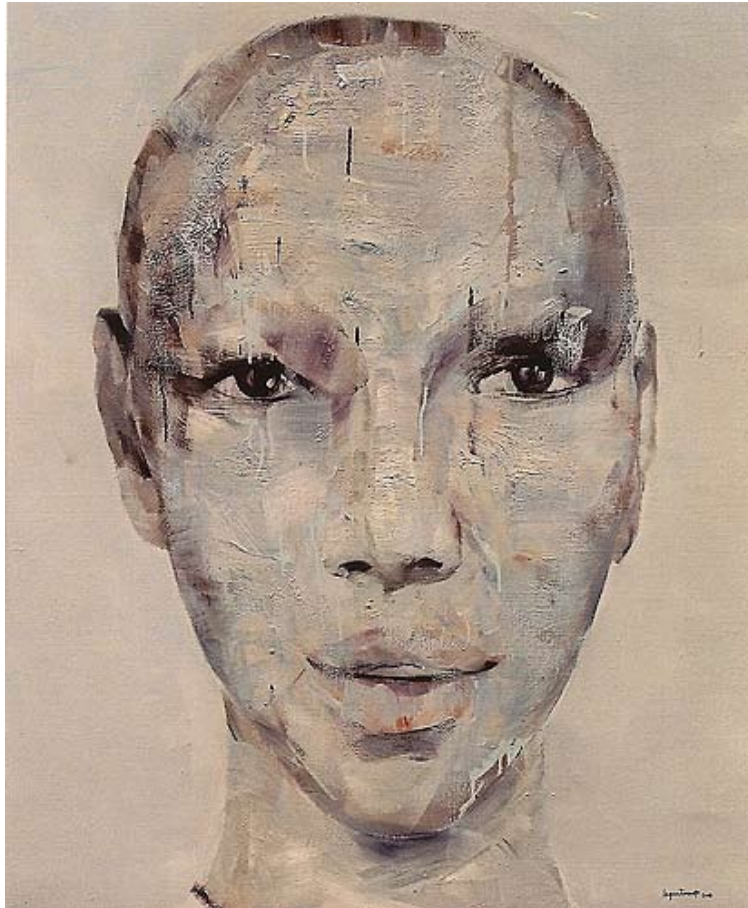
2004 Workshop—*Vietnam, Thailand, America*, Thailand

2004 Workshop—*Giving Water and image*, Hanoi University of Fine Art

2005 *Sudden Appearance*, Solo Exhibition, Suffusive Art Gallery, Hanoi

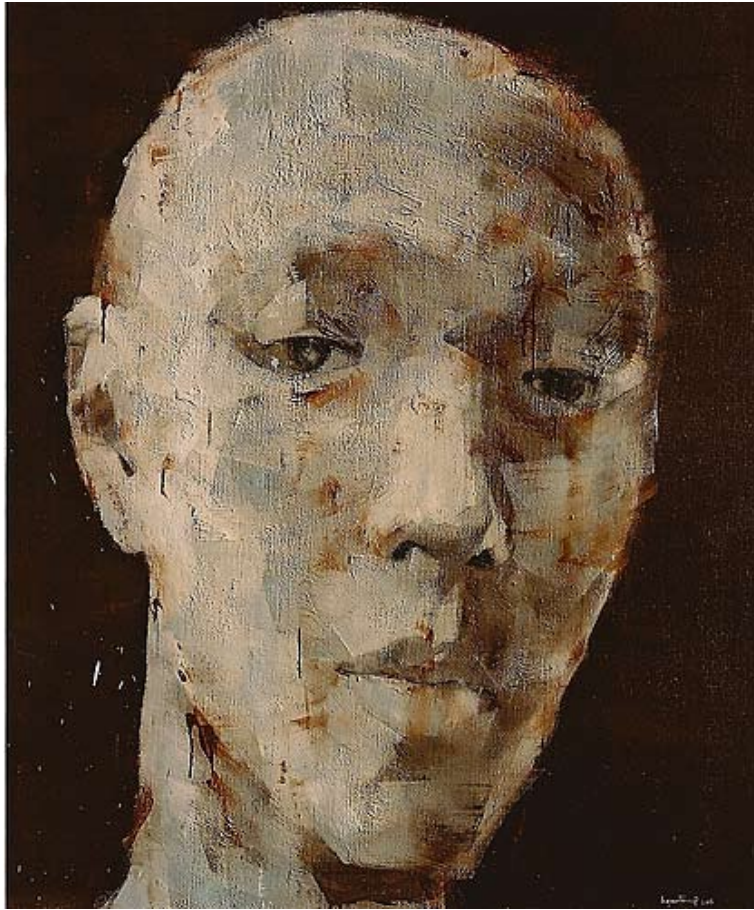
2006 *Memories Kept in the Bottom of a Box*, Solo Exhibition, Suffusive Art Gallery, Hanoi

- 2006 Group Show, Estel Gallery,
Nashville, Tennessee
- 2007 *Hanoi on the Move*, Hanoi
- 2007 Group Show, *Ha Noi 5000*
Hoan Kiem Lake, Viet Nam
Museum of Fine Arts, Hanoi
- 2008 *The Pink Days*, Solo
Exhibition, Viet Art Centre,
Hanoi



Faces Series #1
2008
Oil on Canvas
47.2 x 39.4 inches (120 x 100 cm)

Le Quy Tong



Faces Series #17
2008
Oil on Canvas
47.2 x 39.4 inches (120 x 100 cm)

Le Quy Tong



Faces Series #17
2008
Oil on Canvas
47.2 x 39.4 inches (120 x 100 cm)

Le Quy Tong

Nguyen Thanh Binh

Nguyen Thanh Binh was born in Hanoi in 1954 and now lives in Ho Chi Minh City.

He graduated from Hanoi Fine Arts College and Ho Chi Minh City Fine Arts University. Binh has become an artist with a global following, having exhibited his works across Europe, England, Japan, China, Hong Kong, New York and Los Angeles. He was drafted and fought in the war for the reunification of Vietnam and later spent six years in Prague with his diplomatic service family. While in Europe, Binh studied and developed many of the techniques he uses in his works today.

Binh believes that his art is not about philosophy or literature, but about music and poetry. His ideas stem from an appreciation of the simplicity and profundity of Japanese Haiku, and also the active use of empty space or “silence” to define more clearly his subject matter. By omitting many of the unnecessary details, he is able to capture the shimmer of colours

giving a scene movement.

In recent years, Binh has focused on the portrayal of women as his primary subject, as the concept of a woman is universally equated with beauty. He works with a minimalist combination of whites, browns, taupes and russet to form the backgrounds against which his Schoolgirls, Dancers, Teachers and Choirs can come to life. Hands and faces are usually left unfinished as Binh considers these details unimportant relative to the entire composition.

When asked why he uses so little colour in his paintings, he replied:

“It is like the Haiku poetry of Japan. A haiku is a very small poem containing only three lines, but its meaning is enormous. Art can have enormous meaning from very few colours and details.”

Nguyen Thanh Binh

Nguyen Thanh Binh (b. 1954 in Hanoi)

EXHIBITIONS

- | | | | |
|---------|--|------|---|
| 1985 | National Fine Arts Exhibition | 1992 | Group Exhibition by 3 Young Artists of Ho Chi Minh City |
| 1985 | Lacquer Painting Exhibition of Ho Chi Minh City Artists | 1993 | Abstract Vietnamese Exhibition, Ho Chi Minh City |
| 1986 | <i>The Young Artists in Ho Chi Minh City</i> Exhibition, Ho Chi Minh City | 1993 | <i>New Space</i> , Group Exhibition by Vietnamese and Singaporean Artists, Ho Chi Minh City |
| 1987 | Group Exhibition by 4 Young Artists, Ho Chi Minh City | 1993 | Exhibition by Vietnamese and French Artists at Espace NK Gallery, Ho Chi Minh City |
| 1989 | National Young Artists Exhibition, Hanoi | 1993 | Group Exhibition by 3 Artists, Ho Chi Minh City |
| 1989 | The Arts Exhibition by 13 Artists at Vietnam House, Paris | 1994 | Vietnam Festival—May 1994, Hong Kong |
| 1989-96 | <i>Annual Recent Works</i> Exhibition by a Group of 10 Artists from Ho Chi Minh City | 1995 | <i>Keeping Cool II</i> , Exhibition at Galerie La Vong, Hong Kong |
| 1991 | <i>Reminiscent from the Land of Vietnam</i> , Paris | 1995 | <i>Light and Shadow</i> , Exhibition at Galerie La Vong, Hong Kong |

Nguyen Thanh Binh

- 1995 *The Best of La Vong*, Exhibition at Galerie La Vong, Hong Kong
- 1995 *Dalat Dialogue*—Workshop of Vietnamese and Dutch artists in Dalat, Vietnam
- 1995 International Fine Arts and Antique Fair—*Art Asia '95*, Convention & Exhibition Center, Hong Kong
- 1996 *The Aesthetics of Nguyen Thanh Binh*, Solo Exhibition at Galerie La Vong, Hong Kong
- 1996 *Aqua Asia*, Exhibition in the Rinku Tower, Osaka, Japan
- 1996 Exhibition by a Group 10 Artists from Ho Chi Minh City, Gallery Trang An, Hanoi
- 1997 *Vietnamese Approaches to Human Form*, Galerie La Vong, Hong Kong
- 1997 Exhibition by a Group of 3 Artists, Blue Space Gallery, Ho Chi Minh City
- 1997 *Responsive Chords*, Galerie La Vong, Hong Kong
- 1997 *New Face of Vietnam*, Gallery Simyo, Seoul, Korea
- 1997 Two-Man Show (with artist Do Quang Em)—*The Elegance of Southern*, Galerie La Vong, Hong Kong
- 1997 H&S Even Award, Woman and Man, Bruxelles, Belgium
- 1998 Group Exhibition by 3 Vietnamese Artists for Vietnamese Children's Charities (with Hong Viet Dung and Le Thiet Cuong), The Gallery in Cork Street, London

Nguyen Thanh Binh

- 1998 Group Exhibition by 3
Vietnamese Artists, Pacific
Bridge Gallery, Oakland,
California
- 1999 Solo Exhibition, Galerie La
Vong, Hong Kong
- 1999 Group Exhibition by 3
Vietnamese Artists, Gallery
Artasia, Sydney
- 1999 Group Exhibition by 2
Vietnamese Artists, Eastern
Gallery, Chicago, and
Landon Gallery, New York

Nguyen Thanh Binh



A Dancer
2008
Oil on Canvas
39.4 x 39.4 inches (100 x 100 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



The Teacher
2008
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



The Ballerinas
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Dancers
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Friends
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Friends
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Friends
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



A Lotus Bunch
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



The Mother
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



The Red Lantern
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Schoolgirl
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Schoolgirls
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Untitled
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Untitled
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh



Untitled
2009
Oil on Canvas
37.4 x 31.5 inches (95 x 80 cm)

Nguyen Thanh Binh

Le Quan

I really think that a street painting school is taking shape whose founding father is Bui Xuan Phai. In the wake of the regretted master, artists of the younger generations like Le Thanh Son, Pham Luan, and Hoang Dang Nhuan have got fame and success. In the wider perspective, one can also include Pham An Hai with his abstract variations on the theme of modern Hanoi streets. What is interesting is that these street painters are free of complexities and unafraid of being overshadowed by that giant named Phai—since they know better than to ape him in an uncreative way, and each of them penetrates and absorbs themselves in the soulful beauty of the streets differently to express his feelings through his work according to his own temperament and frame of mind.

In Le Quan, I see another descendant from Phai. Quan is also a passionate lover of Hanoi streets in his own unsophisticated way. Quan's streetscapes are not marked by that nostalgia of the past so typical of

Phai's—they do not have the flickering sunshine of Thah Son or the mystical quality of Hue, the ancient capital in Hoang Dang Nhuan's works. Le Quan's are peaceful with rows of trees whispering stories of the four seasons. Yes, Quan's streetscapes always luxuriate with copious foliage—those foliages vibrating tender green, turbulent red and sobbing yellow. His style is sincerity—this I read—but he consistently keeps to an unsophisticated brush style which is really his own. Nearing his fifties now, that age when one grows conscious of God-destined fate with his very first solo exhibition in September of 2000, he displays an eternal love for the millenary capital city.

And in his paintings, over those foliages of Hanoi streets, I sense the rotating flow of the seasons.

— Duong Tuong, Fine Arts Critic
Hanoi, 2000

Bui Xuan Phai was not the only artist who painted Ha Noi street scenery and people.

Many talented painters followed him. Le Quan belongs to the younger generation, but he has found another view, feeling, and expression of his own on the theme of Ha Noi.

In Ha Noi paintings by Le Quan, we sense an elegant meditative Hanoi with its peaceful life and honest and sincere people. Hanoi streets and landscape in his paintings are inspired with an ancient soul and animated with the breadth of contemporary life. They are stationary but free from sadness. Colors are soft yet not cold, as amidst the quietness, the gentle and refreshing shade of roofs, stand clusters of lively and dynamic people—pedicabs, loads of flowers, a few old bookshelves, and diligent, clever housewives with their soft and tranquil look. The coziness of a peaceful life, the warmth of Hanoi's ordinary existence, all enjoyed at every moment.

In Le Quan's painting of Hanoi,

there seem to pervade musical notes or the poetic soul of a certain author on the theme of Hanoi. This is precisely the common, mutual feeling shared by several artists, who by their proper artist's language personally contribute to express or portray the true spirit of Hanoi of today in which the look of ancient times is well preserved.

Hanoi paintings by Le Quan seem to have accepted the influence of the descriptive method adopted in theatrical fine arts and the cinema. It is a harmonious blending of the realistic and spiritual styles, of the natural and the stylized in composition, and the harmony of coloring the shape of trees, streets and roofs. The images of humans are especially lively, always depicted in action, thus filling Quan's paintings with the warm breath of life.

Amidst the master painters, Le Quan still reserves a place in the view and feelings of those who adore Hanoi and Hanoi paintings.

— Tran Dinh Ngon, PhD
Head of Vietnam Stage Institute

Le Quan

Le Quan (b. 1953, Hanoi)

1968 – 1973 Hanoi Fine Arts College

1977 – 1982 Hanoi Fine Arts University

EXHIBITIONS

1968-73 Group Exhibition in Vietnam
Fine Art University

1977-82 Group Exhibition in Vietnam
Fine Art University

1980 Group Exhibition, China

1990 Group Exhibition, Hanoi
Center for Art Exchange

1996-98 Hanoi Fine Arts Exhibition,
Hanoi

1998 Group Exhibition, Hanoi
Center for Art Exchange

1999 *Vietnamese Fine Arts
Exhibition, South Korea*

2000 *Hanoi Seasons, Solo
Exhibition, HCMC, Vietnam*

2001 *The Scent of Green Papaya,
Hong Kong*

2001 *A Vision of VN, London*

2002 Group Exhibition, London

2002 *Summer in the City, Hong
Kong*

2003 Group Exhibition,
Switzerland

2004 *Recent Paintings, Hong Kong*

2005 Group Exhibitions: France
and London

2006 *Contemporary Vietnamese
Paintings, Vittoriano
Museum, Rome*

2007 Group Exhibiton, Kuwait

Events

- Since 1980 Chief Designer for Vietnam Song, Music, Dance, and Theater
- 1980 Design for *Conical Hat with Poem*, Gold Medal in National Theatre Festival
- 1985 Design for *Tran Thanh Ngo*, Silver Medal in National Theatre Festival
- 1990 Design for *Noi Dau Tinh Me*, Gold Medal in National Theatre Festival
- 1999 Design for *La Dieu Bong*, a Play



After School
2009
Oil on Canvas
39.4 x 47.2 inches (100 x 120 cm)

Le Quan



August Autumn

2009

Oil on Canvas

39.4 x 47.2 inches (100 x 120 cm)

Le Quan

Hoang Duc Dung

Born in Hanoi in 1971, Hoang Duc Dung graduated from the Hanoi Fine Art University in 1998. During his time at university, he won several awards and established himself as a rising star on the Vietnamese art scene and has since had several international exhibitions.

Hoang Duc Dung's style is highly distinct, with his use of intense monochromatic colors contrasted against soft, calming subject matter. Known for flame red, deep magenta and emerald green palettes, his brushwork is so refined that the underlying images are almost imperceptible yet extremely intimate. In his landscape paintings, this effect lends a mystery and serenity to a hot summer day or an intense sunset.

His style contrasts with many of the current crop of artist who have taken on French impressionist methods in depicting village scenes or Hanoi's ancient streets. He is not preoccupied with his own surroundings or culture.

Instead, his use of intense saturated color has created works with a universal appeal.

Hoang Duc Dung

Hoang Duc Dung (b. 1971, Hanoi)

1997 Scholarship of Korean Sponsor
and Development Fund

1998 Graduated from Hanoi Fine Art
Institute

Worked in college for music and
painting teachers at the Fine Art
Institute

EXHIBITIONS

1997 First Prize: Student Exhibition

1998 Capital Fine Art Exhibition

1998 Spring Exhibition, 43 Trang
Tien, Hanoi

1999 Fine Art Exhibition, National
College for Music and
Painting Teachers

1999 Group Exhibition of Seven
Young Artists, 29 Hang Bai,
Hanoi

2000 Group Exhibition, Hanoi

2000 Painting and Sculpture
Exhibition, Hanoi Young
Artists Club

2000 Artistic Painting and
Photograph, Press Club

2000 Asian Exhibition

2001 Exhibition House, Singapore

2001 Solo Exhibition, Red Girl,
Hong Kong

2002 Two Men, London

2002 Group Exhibition, San
Francisco

2005 Group Exhibition, England

2006 Contemporary Vietnamese
Paintings, Vittoriano
Museum, Rome

2007 Group Exhibition, Kuwait

Hoang Duc Dung



Flames of Sunset
2009
Oil on Canvas
47.2 x 61 inches (120 x 155 cm)

Hoang Duc Dung



Homeland River
2009
Oil on Canvas
53.1 x 61 inches (135 x 155 cm)

Hoang Duc Dung



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