



PRESS RELEASE

'Paradise Lost' a solo exhibition by Hoàng Thanh Vĩnh Phong

Opening: 6PM Friday 29 September

Exhibition: 29 September – 26 November 2017

Venue: The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, 15 Nguyen U Di, Thao Dien, District 2, Ho Chi Minh City

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'Paradise Lost' by Hoàng Thanh Vĩnh Phong (b. 1971) invites us into a world where the familiar is made strange, the mundane mythologised and the symbolic re-arranged. Through the shifting of shape and twisting of material, images and objects from the everyday are taken out of context, heightened with a sense of ambiguity, asking us to look beyond what our first glance has to offer.

Throughout the exhibition, the human presence is dimmed down, or faints away to the background, while inanimate objects are elevated as subjects of study, and become the focus. In one instance ('The perfect illusion'), we see a sculpture of a male figure with his hands raised, either in a state of despair or revelation; his female counterpart ('It's about time') looks down, contemplatively, at her pregnant belly, or perhaps caught in confusion. Both of their heads are replaced by household items, suggesting the psychological disturbances these characters have found themselves in are caused by the failed promise of the 'Happily ever after'. In the series 'The three portraits', the human body is completely taken over by domestic drudgery. Where once portraits of members of a family would stand, we now find life-size paintings of single mattresses; not a single trait in their appearance indicates a relationship. Hovering over this lost paradise, lurking from one corner to another, are images of stars and an eagle – both historically reinvented and used as religious and ideological symbols of power and authority – reinforcing their symbolic significance as icons of social meaning.

Together, these images, objects and characters form a playful but sinister spillage into a world where humans seem to have been paralysed by the mundanity of the everyday. Their psychological and physical selves are simultaneously infected by the false hopes and aspirations they once desired, inevitably trapping them into the religious and ideological conditions to which they were born, perhaps too afraid to seek alternative. Here, the fictions become a critique of their lived environment, inviting us to examine the ways we see and understand our own version of reality.

This exhibition is the second in the series of **'Materialize'**, a program that aims to provide exhibition opportunities for Vietnamese artists who have had little chance to create exhibitions of their art in Vietnam. Artists are challenged to extend their experimentation with concept and media beyond their training and general assumptions about art. This program is open for application to artists born and currently living in Vietnam and over the age of 25. Artists must submit specific information for consideration, which is assessed by an appointed jury. The next open call for applications takes place in November 2017.

For further enquiries, please contact: art@factoryartscentre.com | +84 (0)28 3744 2589 |
The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, 15 Nguyen U Du, Thao Dien Ward, District 2, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

This exhibition is initiated, and organized by The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, with thanks to Indochina Arts Partnership, for their support and co-sponsorship.

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Notes for editors

Hoàng Thanh Vĩnh Phong (b. 1971 in Quang Tri, currently living and working in Hoi An) graduated from the Hue University of Fine Arts in 1996. Over the last two decades Phong has consistently experimented with a myriad of forms and media – from oil and lacquer painting, to printing on ceramic and sculpting with found objects – simultaneously researching and expanding their techniques and capabilities.

The Indochina Arts Partnership (IAP) is a non-profit art organization that conducts programs of cultural development and artistic exchange in countries of Southeast Asia, with a primary focus on Vietnam. IAP offers various activities through three core programs: 1) organize exhibitions and promote art education, 2) providing artists' support through residencies and career development program, and 3) fostering mutual development through partnerships and collaborations. For more information at: <http://indochinaartspartnership.org>

The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre is the first purpose-built space for contemporary art in Vietnam. As an independent organization, we are a 'factory' of critical ideas; a site of constant physical transformation; a network of people who strive to speak about tangible and intangible cultural memories that matter and are indelibly unique. We understand the social system that we operate, but we want to challenge its limits, acknowledging artists today as interdisciplinary thinkers who reveal unique ways of conceiving our journey into the 21st Century – their ideas we thus nurture and celebrate as constructive observations of our social world <http://factoryartscentre.com>