

PRESS RELEASE

'Leaf Picking in the Ancient Forest'

A solo exhibition by Võ Trần Châu

Opening 14 February, 2020



The Factory is pleased to present '**Leaf Picking in the Ancient Forest**' a solo exhibition by Võ Trần Châu, one of the very few artists in Vietnam merging methods of photography and textile. This exhibition is Võ Trần Châu's largest solo exhibition to date, displaying recent and new bodies of work exploring particular Vietnamese 'heritage' sites, retrieving and rethinking what defines, and records, the legacies of the past.

Borrowing the title from a Buddhist text, which centres on the core Buddhist teaching of impermanence and acceptance, '**Leaf Picking in the Ancient Forest**'¹ metaphorically reflects the artist's method of collecting fragments of the past through a weaving of textile.

For the last two years, Võ Trần Châu has been collecting garments that were dumped in unidentified containers scattered around docks in Saigon, particularly Cát Lái dock. Võ Trần Châu continues to feel puzzled by the excessive production of the fashion industry and its impact on the environment, particularly on developing countries who are the major production houses of the industry. The artist questions the consequences of 'developing' at all costs with little regard for the environment and the impact this predominant urbanization has on resources of cultural identity. For the works featured

¹ The book is written by a Buddhist monk titled Minh Đức Triều Tâm Ảnh. Self published in Huế, Vietnam, in 2015.

in this exhibition, Võ Trân Châu recycles these unwanted clothes by transforming them into a number of suspended installations as mosaic 'paintings', many of them depicting architectural sites that no longer exist, such as textile factories in Nam Định, Saigon Tax Trade Center, Trà Cổ cathedral, to name but a few. Working with the digital photographs of these sites, Châu turns these photographs into pixel graphs, which she uses as a foundation to recreate mosaics by sewing color-coded fabric squares together. By re-imagining architectural structures and symbols (such as the old Saigon tram that was terminated in 1956) that have completely or partially disappeared from public memory - many of these recalling Vietnam's French colonial era - the artist here particularly contemplates how local culture absorbs, adapts and discards foreign influence, ultimately pondering society's ethical concern for the value of collective memory and its materiality today.

'Leaf picking in the ancient forest' is curated by Lê Thuận Uyên and Van Do, and will be on view until 10 April, 2020.

Please see below for indicative imagery



Image caption: Võ Trân Châu, 'Leaf Picking in the Ancient Forest - Yellow, Blue, Red, Black & White', 2018-2019. Used clothing. Photo by Lusher Photography. Courtesy of the artist (Installation view, Centre for Heritage Arts & Culture / Mill 6 Foundation, Hong Kong)

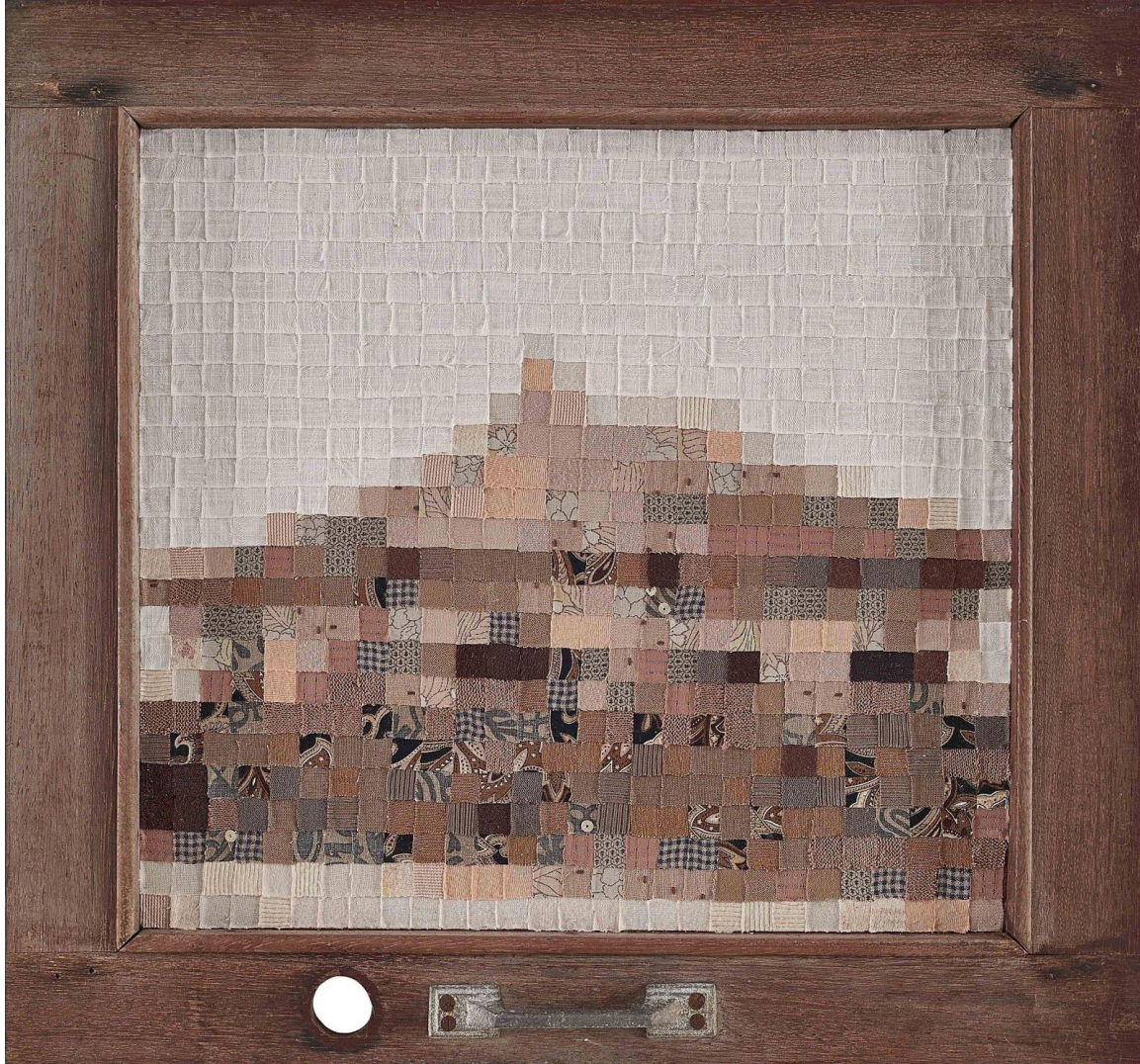


Image caption: Võ Trân Châu, 'It was someone's home 1', 2019. Used clothing, found wooden cabinet door. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Quynh.

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Note to the editors:

Võ Trân Châu (b. 1986, Binh Thuan) was born into a family of traditional embroiderers. She understands the power and materiality of threads and fabrics, and chooses textiles, particularly found fabrics and second-hand clothing, as materials for her artistic practice. By deploying these materials, imbued with their own personal stories, Vo portrays how strongly history reflects on the grand narrative of nation states and society. She delves into the social and cultural history of Vietnam to highlight issues surrounding labor, consumption and waste. Selected exhibitions include: 'Where The Sea Remembers' (The

Mistake Room, Los Angeles, CA, USA, 2019); 'Unfolding: Fabric of Our Life' (Centre for Heritage, Art & Textile (CHAT)/MILL6, Hong Kong, 2019); 'Bodies Survey(ed)' (Sàn Art, HCMC, Vietnam, 2018); 'Lingering at the Peculiar Pavillon' (Manzi Art Space, Hanoi & Salon Saigon, HCMC, 2017); 'The Foliage' (VCCA, Hanoi, Vietnam, 2017); 'Still (the) Barbarians' (EVA International: Ireland's Biennial of Contemporary Art, Limerick, Ireland, 2016); 'Suzhou Documents' (Suzhou Art Museum, Suzhou, China, 2016).

The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre ('The Factory') is the first purpose-built space for showcasing contemporary art in Vietnam, established in 2016. As an independent private initiative, it creates and hosts interdisciplinary activities in order to introduce and expand knowledge of contemporary art and cultural trends, both past and present, in Vietnam. As a social enterprise, The Factory also offers a publicly accessible reading room of art-educational resource; workshop and community space for hire; replete with café and restaurant. All profit from the sale of art and business on-site supports the running costs of its Arts Centre. www.factoryartscentre.com

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