

PRESS RELEASE**'OTHER FUTURES'**

A solo exhibition by Thy Nguyễn

Opening: 6PM, 19 June, 2020

Location: The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre (15 Nguyen U Di, Thao Dien Ward, District 2, Saigon)

Lying at the heart of Thy Nguyễn's practice is a deep interest in printmaking – an artistic language that requires labour, time, a sensitive understanding of different materials, and trained hands that can work in a systematic way. Triggered not only by the rich history and various techniques of printmaking, but also by its ability to record, reflect, and re-shape our experience of the everyday, Thy strives to catch the impression of what once was in his works. A faint memory, a shadow, a fleeting moment – of the people, objects and events depicted.

Silent human beings in desolate environments – across the surface of Thy's works on paper we feel a sense of solitude; a life lacking human touch. His art, however, is certainly not sentimental; rather it honestly captures the anxiety of modern life and its inhabitants. For Thy, 'What you see is what you get', for he is an artist who is less interested in the abstraction of the everyday, than in what the everyday reveals itself to be. In one work, a series of almost-identical clouds glide heavily, as if dreading the shifting of time. In another, light and shadow play their tricks – is it an empty hallway, or a lonely balcony we see? More characters creep into our vision: a man sits still, staring straight at us, beside him dancing feet appear to move joyfully. A shadow stands alone, swamped by interiors devoid of people, is he speechless or deep in thought? A woman looks out a window, tirelessly waiting, as if worn out by time. A couple with their backs to each other, with no words between them.

Viewed from the side or behind (is someone casting their voyeuristic eyes over them?), these figures seem trapped, in a state of suspension, as if anticipating something to happen. But, nothing ever really happens for, like stills from a movie, Thy's characters are forever 'frozen', either in the aftermath, or in the lead up

to, a significant event. What that 'event' is, is not suggested. It is thus beyond our capacity to comprehend, for we belong to a different time and space. Nonetheless, we can still empathize with these fictional scenes a possible vision of what our future may look like: as silent human beings in desolate environments.

Hung from above, these works on paper sporadically float around the gallery space at different heights, thus deepening the feeling of suspension. Our conventional, linear (left to right) mode of 'reading' is challenged by a more immersive experience. At times, the same images seem to multiply, appearing both here and there, as if the ghosts of yesteryears are back to haunt us. Our vision becomes jarred; our eyes required to move from ceiling to floor, from foreground to background, as characters, objects and their environments switch places and planes. The unfolding of events in Thy's works thus occurs no longer just in time, but also through space, for we are invited to walk into, inside and in-between the works in order to really 'see' them. Here, time becomes interrupted - as past, present and future co-exist, and reality, nightmares and dreams weave into one.

'Other Futures' is a 'Materialize' 2020 exhibition. It is organized by The Factory, and remains on view until 4 October, 2020.

For further enquiries please contact: art@factoryartscentre.com | +84 (0)28 3744 2589

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Notes to the Editor:

Thy Nguyễn (b.1992, HCMC), born and raised in Saigon and a graduate from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Fine Arts with a major in Graphic Design in 2017, Thy Nguyễn uses printmaking as his dominant artistic medium. For Thy, printmaking is both a way to explore the different aspects of life, a creative means of visualizing particular perceptual phenomena. Select exhibitions include: the '5th Bangkok Triennale International Print and Drawing Exhibition', Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok (2019); the '2nd International Print Biennale Yerevan', KulturDialog Armenien, Yerevan (2019); the 'International Graphic Art Festival UNI Graphica', Kovalenko Art Museum, Krasnodar (2019); the '3rd International Biennale of Miniature Art', Mansarda Gallery, Timisoara (2018) etc.

'Materialize' is an ongoing exhibition program, initiated by The Factory in 2017, in response to the great lack of space and opportunity for Vietnamese artists to experiment and display their art in Vietnam. This program seeks artists willing to be challenged to extend their experimentation with concept and media beyond their official training and general assumptions about art, who understand that to exhibit their work demands consideration of their audience and how their art is received and understood by a visiting general public.

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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