

Bill Nguyễn & Vân Đỗ

Lê Hiến Minh (b. 1979, Vietnam) studied traditional Lacquer at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Fine Art and acquired a degree in Fine Art from the Art Academy of Cincinnati, USA. She is known to persistently employ a Vietnamese traditional handmade paper called Dó, with which she constructs large scale installations. In her work, Dó paper is visibly vulnerable to the effects of weathering and human treatment. Materiality, whether on the point of dematerialization or materialization, is central. It is a manifestation of an idea that all things are impermanent. Additionally, Lê Hiến Minh’s work also acts as a bridge between contemporary and traditional Vietnamese art and also between modern and historical Vietnamese culture. Her works have been exhibited in major museums and galleries in Vietnam as well as in Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Finland and the USA since 2003.

/

Richard Streitmatter-Trần

Richard Streitmatter-Trần (b. 1972, Vietnam) is an artist based in Ho Chi Minh City. Orphaned shortly after birth in Bien Hoa, he was adopted by an American family and raised and educated in the United States before relocating to Vietnam in 2003 after art school. While his background and education focused on an immaterial arts practice in performance art and new media, over the years he has transitioned largely to a studio based material practice focusing largely on sculpture, installation and painting. As an artist based in Vietnam for the last 17 years, outside of his studio art work production, he has also contributed to Vietnam’s contemporary arts development through curatorial and arts criticism projects, running Dia Projects – an arts organization founded in 2010, and education. While his production has always been based in Vietnam, most of the exhibition of his work has been outside of the country. He is currently represented by de Sarthe Gallery in Hong Kong and Vin Gallery in Ho Chi Minh City.

/

Thảo Nguyên Phan

Thảo Nguyên Phan (b. 1987, Vietnam) is a multimedia artist whose practice encompasses video, painting and installation. Drawing from literature, philosophy and daily life, Phan observes ambiguous issues in social conventions and history. She started working in film when she began her MFA in Chicago. Phan exhibits internationally, with solo and group exhibitions including WIELS (Brussels, 2020), Rockbund Art Museum (Shanghai, 2019); Lyon Biennale (Lyon, 2019); Sharjah Biennial (Sharjah Art Foundation, 2019); Gemäldegalerie (Berlin, 2018); Dhaka Art Summit (2018); Para Site (Hong Kong, 2018); The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre (Ho Chi Minh City, 2017); Nhà Sàn Collective (Hanoi, 2017); and Bétonsalon (Paris, 2016), among others. She was shortlisted for the 2019 Hugo Boss Asia Art Award. In addition to her work as a multimedia artist, she is co-founder of the collective Art Labor, which explores cross disciplinary practices and develops art projects that benefit the local community. Thảo Nguyên Phan is expanding her ‘theatrical fields’, including what she calls performance gesture and moving images. Phan is a 2016-2017 Rolex Protégée, mentored by internationally acclaimed, New York-based, performance and video artist, Joan Jonas.

/

Điểm Phùng Thị

Điểm Phùng Thị (1920-2002) whose maiden name is Phùng Thị Cúc, is considered one of the masters of Vietnamese modern art. In 1946, she graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Dentistry from Hanoi Medical University, and then served for two years in the resistance war (First Indochina War), against the French. In 1948, history books share that due to a major illness, she was sent to France for medical treatment, where she continued to study and eventually graduated in 1954 with a PhD in Dental Surgery in France with a Doctoral thesis on Vietnam’s ‘betel chewing custom’. It was not until 1959 that she also began practicing and

studying sculpture, under the renowned sculptor Antoniucci Volti. In 1966, she had her first exhibition in France at Bernheim-Jeune Gallery in Paris. From then on, until she returned to Vietnam in 1992, she organized exhibitions across Europe of her work (and several internationally), with her artworks consequently acquired by many international collections. Her sculptural language is said to have reached its peak in artistic maturity and excellency for her invention of what came to be referred to as her ‘seven modules’, through which she created many artworks from a wide range of materials (paintings, reliefs, statues) and for which she was also best known. Her first exhibition held in Vietnam took place in 1978, at the Hanoi Fine Arts Association (now referred as the Exhibition House, Hanoi), and is arguably considered as one of the first abstract exhibitions in Vietnam. Before her death, Điểm Phùng Thị donated approximately 175 of her artworks to Huế City, which are honored and kept on display today, at a small museum named after her Điểm Phùng Thị Art Center (Hue Museum of Fine Art) in Huế.

/

Bill Nguyễn

Bill Nguyễn (b. 1988, Vietnam) is an artist-curator interested in researching and developing an alternative, locally-driven method and platform for curation in Vietnam. Currently Assistant Curator at The Factory, Bill is also the co-founder and co-curator of Manzi (Hanoi) and previously guest curator of Nhà Sàn Collective (Hanoi). Select recent projects include: ‘We’re in this together’ - a ‘Pollination’ project (co-curated with Grace Samboh), The Factory, Ho Chi Minh City (2018), ‘Spirit of Friendship’ (co-curated with Zoe Butt & Lê Thiên Bảo), The Factory, Ho Chi Minh City (2017), ‘0395A.ĐC: A solo exhibition by Ly Hoàng Ly’, The Factory, Ho Chi Minh City (2017), ‘Skylines With Flying People 3’, Nhà Sàn Collective, Hanoi (2016); ‘Into Thin Air’, Manzi, Hanoi (2016). He is an alumnus of the 8th Berlin Biennial Young Curators Workshop, and the CuratorsLAB initiated by the Goethe Institut South East Asia.

/

Vân Đỗ

Vân Đỗ (b. 1995, Vietnam) is a curator and writer. After 23 years of living and growing up in Hanoi, she moved to Saigon in 2019 and has been curatorially assisting The Factory ever since. She has been intellectually nurtured by various alternative educational and artistic platforms and individuals. While in Hanoi, she labored with independent art spaces such as Hanoi Doclab and DomDom in their Hanoi Docfest 2017 and Hanoi New Music Festival 2018 respectively. Her recent projects include: co-curator with Hà Ninh, group exhibition ‘Virtual Private Realms’ (Manzi Art Space, 2021); curator, film screening ‘An Ode to the Microscopic’ (Dcine, 2020); co-editor with Linh Lê, Măng Ta Journal (2020); co-curator with Lê Thuận Uyên, ‘Leaf picking in the ancient forest’, solo exhibition by Võ Trần Châu (The Factory, 2020); curator, ‘Silent Intimacy’, solo exhibition by Đặng Thuỳ Anh (The Factory, 2019); producer, short films ‘Evenfall’ and ‘Film no. 3’ by Tạ Minh Đức (2018-19)

/

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.

A group exhibition by

Lê Hiến Minh

Thảo Nguyên Phan

Richard Streitmatter-Trần

/

/

lần trong / within

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

Curated by:

Bill Nguyễn & Vân Đỗ

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

/

13/3 - 6/6/2021

'Within / Between / Beneath / Upon' focuses on the art of sculpture by three internationally acclaimed Vietnamese artists Lê Hiền Minh, Richard Streitmatter-Trần and Thảo Nguyễn Phan. Coming from diverse media backgrounds (Hiền Minh originally in lacquer, Richard in new media and Thảo Nguyễn in painting), each of these artists has gone on to experiment with varying methods and materials, committed to reflecting the perspectives of their local contexts, evident in their subject matters and materials with which they work.

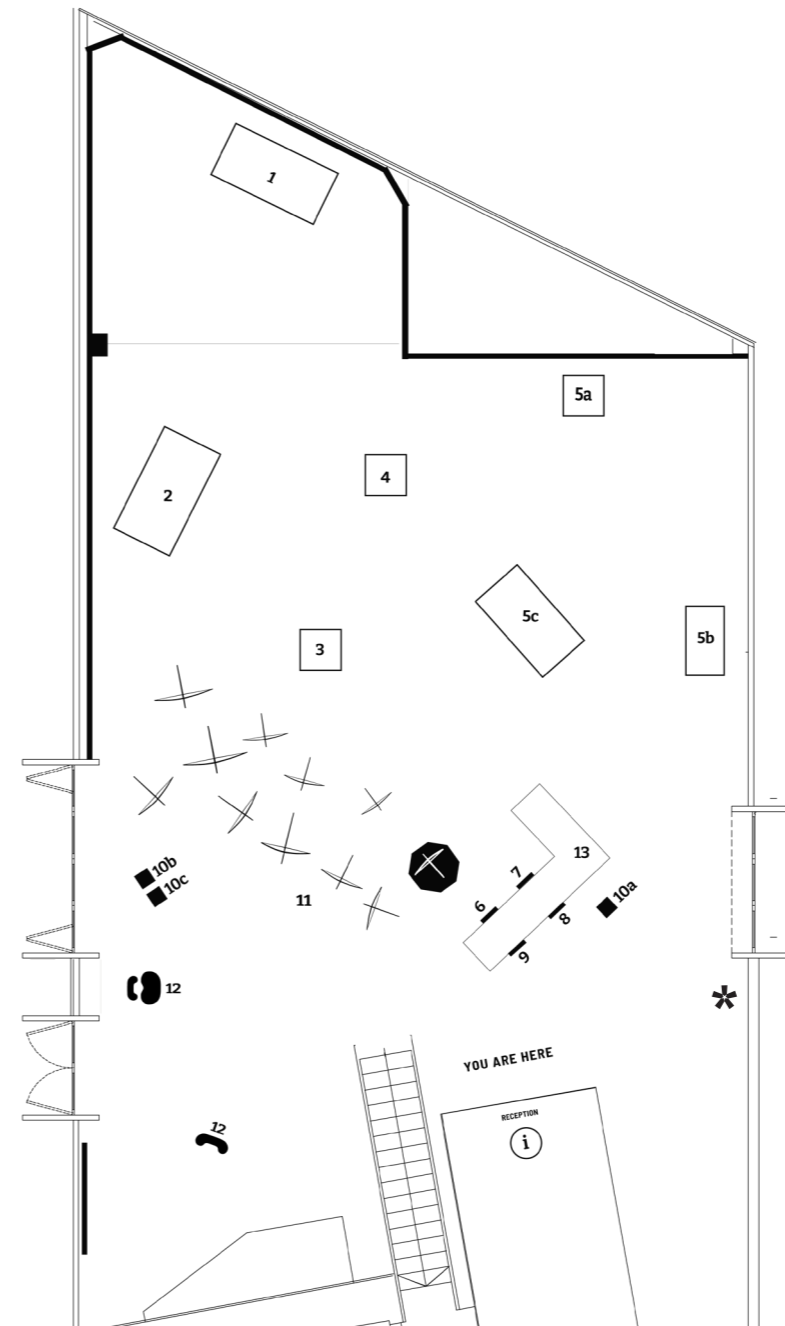
'Within', 'between', 'beneath', 'upon' are concepts of place and time that not only tell us where something or someone is located, but also influences the direction of our gaze. Thus, the gallery space of this exhibition, and the accompanying display strategies of the selected artwork, have been designed to enhance our local audience experience, to further expand their understanding of sculpture today.

In Vietnam, contemporary art is not taught within its university curricula. Sculpture is thus generally still associated with religious statues in temples and pagodas (a form of folk art that is deeply integrated into the spiritual life of local Vietnamese people); as grand political monuments that are socialist realist in style, that continue to be erected throughout the country as reminders of power and control; or as outdoor decoration whereby 'form' precedes any purpose or content, and is often a replication of an 'international' style (with rarely an acknowledgment or intention). These examples recall sculptural forms where composition, style, shape, material and colour are of primary concern, when art was approached classically and formally, and not considered a cross-disciplinary, conceptually-driven, comparative practice.

This exhibition thus investigates influence – be it personal histories (of family and travel), collective legacies (found in architectural design and religious monuments), or interdisciplinary reciprocity (of methodology and knowledge from different disciplines) – aspiring to show how Lê Hiền Minh, Richard Streitmatter-Trần and Thảo Nguyễn Phan understand and enrich the practice, meaning and value of sculpture today.

In this exhibition, sculptural installations are elevated to emphasize the distance of social inequality; some lie closely to the floor to accentuate the weight of history; while others invite us to look intimately into the layers of materials and forms. Lê Hiền Minh playfully challenges our collective understanding of monumentality and femininity, mounting larger-than-life structures in Dó paper, where magnificent figures of goddesses from multiple indigenous beliefs are amalgamated with home appliances – provoking, while also acknowledging, the strength of women in their seeming invisibility. Inspired by different periods of art history, techniques and cultures, Richard Streitmatter-Trần assembles industrial and ephemeral materials (such as steel, concrete, rice paper and moss) into hybridized forms that float, lie still or hang in the balance between the elements – defying the assumption of permanence in materiality and its determination of an artwork's final form and meaning. Thảo Nguyễn Phan's preoccupation with historical artefacts and various folk tales invites the inclusion of work by the late renowned Vietnamese modernist artist Điềm Phùng Thị, whose unique geometric stone sculptures and fabric collages inspire Thảo Nguyễn to create her own response (of wood, lacquer and paint), continuing to re-narrate and employ the complex and often contested oral and recorded history of Vietnam.

* The Factory would like to extend special thanks to Mr Phan Đình Hối for his generous lending of artwork by Điềm Phùng Thị for this exhibition.



① Richard Streitmatter-Trần
Heaven's Roof
2021
Rice paper, wooden base, wire
120 x 130 x 130 cm (h x w x d)

② Richard Streitmatter-Trần
Light Heavies
2021
Insulating foam, modeling clay, styrofoam
195 x 140 x 80 cm

③ Richard Streitmatter-Trần
Ascension
2021
Modeling clay, steel beams, cement
3 components: dimensions variable
Element 1: 177 x 28 x 19 cm
Element 2: 193 x 28 x 19 cm
Element 3: 226 x 28 x 19 cm

④ Richard Streitmatter-Trần
Petrifoot
2020 - 2021
Limestone, naturally occurring moss and lichens, iron base
Sculpture: 43 x 66 x 33 cm
Base: 90 x 55 x 55 cm

⑤ a b c
Lê Hiền Minh
The Gods of Expectation (Divine Cycle, Divine Constant, Divine Source), no. 1
2021
from 'Five Questions' series (2019 - ongoing)
Vietnamese handmade Dó paper, wooden table, washing machine, inox kitchen sink, bed
3 components: dimensions variable
Element 1: 223 x 60 x 60 cm
Element 2: 162 x 138 x 76 cm
Element 3: 81 x 164 x 79 cm

⑥ Điềm Phùng Thị
Husband and wife
1998
Metal
36 x 17 x 10,5 cm

⑧ Điềm Phùng Thị
Untitled
1997
Fabric
28,5 x 29 cm

⑩ a b c
Điềm Phùng Thị
A baby
1965
Jade, metal bar
15 x 12 x 5,5 cm

A nun
Circa 1974
Jade, metal, wood
32 x 11 x 5 cm

A temple
Circa 1973
Metal, marble
27 x 25 x 18 cm

Each of these works above (10a, 10b, 10c) by Điềm Phùng Thị is placed upon an artwork by Thảo Nguyễn Phan (a marble base which forms part of her 'Magical Bows (Lacquered Time)')

⑪ Thảo Nguyễn Phan
Magical Bows (Lacquered Time)
2017 - ongoing
Watercolor on silk, mother of pearl inlay and lacquer on wood, marble, steel
Lacquer produced in collaboration with artist Đinh Văn Sơn
Installation dimensions variable

⑫ Furniture designed by Điềm Phùng Thị (1995), reproduced by Thảo Nguyễn Phan (2021)
Produced in consultation with Mr Phan Đình Hối, Điềm Phùng Thị's personal assistant

⑬ Wall designed by Thảo Nguyễn Phan in response to Điềm Phùng Thị's seven 'letter' system

* Curatorial meandering - Letter exchange between Bill Nguyễn and Văn Đỗ

Excerpts in English available to download at:

