



Truong Tan

HOW TO BE AN ANGEL

Curated by Shireen Naziree

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Published 2010 by
Thavibu Gallery Co., Ltd
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Layout by Wanee Tipchindaichai, Copydesk, Thailand

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FOREWORD

Jørn Middelborg
Thavibu Gallery

Thavibu Gallery has the pleasure of presenting the current catalogue and exhibition **HOW TO BE AN ANGEL** by the Vietnamese artist Truong Tan (b. 1963). The exhibition takes place in Bangkok on 19 June – 11 July, 2010 and features a series of lacquer paintings on board. Contemporary lacquer paintings are unique to Vietnam and an important contribution from the country to the global art scene.

Truong Tan is an established and important artist, renowned both as a performance artist as well as a painter. Through the years, he has ventured into canvas paintings, lacquer paintings, drawings on paper, ceramics, installations and performances. He has participated in several biennales and triennales, and his works are found in the permanent collections of museums.

How to be an Angel is his first solo exhibition after five years and importantly represents a shift in his earlier explicative and clashing art-historical narrative. Truong Tan's series of lacquer paintings in this exhibition not only trumpet his reconciliation with his cultural history, it also pronounces a mature and sophisticated voice that continues to remain true to his convictions and moral principles. Truong Tan lives and works in Paris as well as in Hanoi.

The exhibition is curated by the independent curator and art historian Shireen Naziree.

I take the opportunity to thank Truong Tan for his collaboration and Shireen Naziree for her contribution.

HOW TO BE AN ANGEL

Shireen Naziree

Truong Tan came of age aesthetically amid the art-historical narratives of the late 1980s that resulted from Vietnam's market liberalisation policies or *Doi Moi*. In principle, the era tracked the conservative realism's so called endgame, generating a pronounced liberalisation in artistic expressions and trumpeted the resurgence of the romanticism of Vietnam's past. While many artists of his generation made a practice of reconciling with these tendencies, Truong Tan instead used his art to document Vietnam's social relations within its ascendant economy. His critical but concrete examination of Vietnamese national identity became a commentary not only on both within and beyond the nation state, but importantly also within the conception of the rigid conservatism of his social environment. This meant that Truong Tan was moving across formal conventions calling into question the meaning of freedom of expression.

With much of his art centered on his own personal identity and in particular his homosexuality which he put in dialogue with images of a quite different and discursive artistic terrain, such intimate and explicate symbolism articulated the tension between the physical and the emotional which was certainly not being embraced by Vietnam's art establishment.

It appeared that Vietnam's art institution was bent on the preservation of a romanticised Vietnamese society despite the rising tide of a new generation of artists who had the potential to stand apart from the forces of politics and provide an inspiring hint of the new Vietnamese identity.

Within this milieu, Truong Tan's work of the late 1980s and the following decade has been marked by his abandonment of typical Vietnamese academic art practices that were exempt from aesthetic or moral concerns. While he remained attentive to the experience of the physical making and seeing of art, particularly in his work as professor of drawing at Hanoi's University of Fine Art, he nevertheless remained conscious of its social use and moral valence. Truong Tan was less interested in evoking half-forgotten memories and the stillness of literal depictions of the past, but instead introduced the human psychological complexities as a venerable genre.

In this vein, Truong Tan may be regarded as a pioneer in Vietnam's modern art history. He presented the familiar in an unfamiliar context by openly expressing his being gay through his art. He emphasised the independent nature of his paintings by adopting a looser brush and as such rejecting the prevalent academic style of painting and politically acceptable art. Though Truong Tan's images were concerned with art's formal dynamics, the evocative lines of his expressions became a confrontation with the physical reality that was the metaphor for his individual struggle. Homosexuality sat

uneasily with Vietnam's conservative and communist social environment. Even his contemporaries were unsympathetic as they failed to register with his ideals. Such interpretation acknowledged the deep pessimism that framed both his internal artistic struggle as well as the outer reality throughout the decade.

The interpretive emphasis of Truong Tan's works of the period became particularly critical as he was grappling with a consciousness directed well beyond the literary notions of the prevalent creativity that presented Vietnam as an idyll and as a haven of tranquillity – far removed from the intensities of physical life. This is not to say that Truong Tan engaged directly in political activity; his art would be deemed political because of his circumstances for he lived in a society filled with paradoxes. Rather through his art, Truong Tan confronted this paradox that resulted from Vietnam's turbulent past, with a consciousness directed well beyond narrow literary notions of the "eternal" creative struggle.

Truong Tan was born in Hanoi in 1963 – in the same year as the Vietnam Fine Arts Museum opened in Hanoi. Like most Vietnamese of his generation, he grew up in socialist Vietnam where cultural capital was limited as a result of Ho Chi Minh's cultural revolution, and the economic as well as physical destruction that resulted from Vietnam's war against the Americans that had started in 1964. Though art and culture was hardly within the economic reaches of the vast majority of Vietnamese, Hanoi proudly withstood the ravages of war and the inherent artistic and cultural heritage of Hanoi society survived while art remained a vital identity marker mainly through the reopening in 1955 of the Vietnam College of Fine Art at the original location of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. This was followed by the establishment of the Vietnam Fine Arts Association in 1957. Both these two institutions became pragmatic beacons under Ho Chi Minh's rule and would be equated with the communist regime.

When Truong Tan graduated from Hanoi's Fine Art University in 1989, Vietnamese art practice was very much in transition. Before the advent of *Doi Moi* in 1986 and as a result of the cultural revolution, the influences of social realism from China and the Soviet Union had been the only officially sanctioned form of art and any other form of expressionism was deemed subversive. Prior to the revolution, classicism and impressionism had been the primary western art styles, having been introduced to Vietnamese painting practice under French colonial rule.

Water Buffalo at Moc Chau, Vietnam, 1996

Truong Tan is equally renowned as a performance artist as a painter, both internationally and in Vietnam. His early performance art in the late 1990s focussed strongly on the imbalances of society. Because the buffalo is an important symbol of strength, humility and hard work, he references the buffalo as a teacher and those who plough as its students.



After his graduation in 1989, Truong Tan joined the academic staff of the Hanoi Fine Art University, Vietnam's prestigious art institution known for its rigid curriculum where it still remains paramount for students to study traditionally accepted techniques and content. By the mid 1990's, Truong Tan was already regarded as one of Vietnam's outspoken artists and became the first artist to have his exhibition and its suggestive content of explicit homosexual acts dismantled by the authorities. Ironically, it happened (in 1994) when an article on his work in an international publication brought him into the spotlight. In Vietnam, art is supposed to be completely divorced from social or official issues. Any critique testing the limits of tolerance and free speech can bring an artist into direct conflict with officialdom. This prompted the Vietnamese culture police to question Truong Tan about his motives and question his Vietnamese identity and patriotism. Despite his striking art and his ability to aesthetically remain visible without succumbing to the overload of cultural commercialism, Truong Tan became a sort of social interloper, not quite at home in his own cultural or social space.

However, it is worth noting that a few younger artists and students regarded him as a pioneer and were inspired by the openness of his expressions and the manner in which it supplied its audience with a way of debating issues that were in the forefront of popular imagination .

Against the neutral field of Europe, the earlier distillation of his experiences with sexual prejudice and his radical artistic vocabulary in Hanoi no longer registered. Truong Tan's candid representations of unconventional relationships were no longer out of place in a western liberal society. Leaving Hanoi for Paris would produce a constant sway between the privilege of having two "homes" and having no "real home".

Despite the move to Paris, Truong Tan remained one of Vietnam's most discussed artists both in Vietnam and abroad as he divided his time and exhibited both in Paris and Hanoi. If anything, being Vietnamese has been the one most important truth of Truong Tan's identity. In some ways, his art provided an inspiring hint of the new identity of Vietnamese art on the international arena. Until then broader interest in Vietnamese art had been primarily driven by the market and rarely garnered interest from prime art institutions. Though he had participated in international art exhibitions before his move to Paris, the change signalled his international debut not only with significant gallery shows but more importantly with examples of his work being included in group shows at such major non-profit venues such as the Liverpool Biennale 2002, the Singapore Biennale 2008 and more recently at the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale. These coupled with numerous solo shows has profiled him as one of Vietnam's most sought after artists.



Mother of Peace at the 2009 4th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale. Collection of the Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan

For his installation Truong Tan created a gown of 200 layers from 300 meters of fabric used to manufacture army fatigues. Each detailed layer and every meter of the fabric represents a question as to the validity of wars - past, present and in the future.

Over the years, Truong Tan's iconography had come to include relatively familiar appropriations as well as deliberate misappropriations, which he has used to make his point through his conceptual art. His installations, which feature elements of Vietnamese stereotypes often testing the limits of tolerance, free speech and corruption and reflect the harsher realities of life in Vietnam despite the country's liberal economic outlook; the entrenchment of a hard-line, conservative based regime bent on socialist preservation despite the rising tide of liberal-minded and youthful population who no longer want their country to stand apart from economic and political globalization.

For his installation *Hidden Beauty* at the IFA Gallery in Berlin in 2007, Truong Tan playfully appropriates disposable nappies and the pockets with insignias from 148 Vietnamese official uniforms to make a figure that is meant to mirror the 'sexual and political schizophrenia' of contemporary Vietnamese life.



Hidden Beauty at 2007 CONNECT, Artscene Vietnam, IFA Gallery, Berlin, Germany

A giant diaper was stitched from the pockets of traditional police uniforms and articulates Truong Tan's concerns with corruption in Vietnam. "When one commits a traffic offense, instead of getting a ticket, they bribe the policeman".

Truong Tan has proved that he was an artist in the broadest sense and as a Southeast Asian artist, quite ahead of his time. As an artist, he fully understands that the intellectual rigor of conceptualism and the sensuous practice of painting need not be separate practices. Early on in his career, he had recognised the large choice of methods and that the range was widening all the time and as such, challenging the primacy of painting. Equally regarded for his performance and installation art that he had initiated while in Vietnam, the move to Paris opened up new opportunities as international art circles and critics recognised the entire scope of his work. Yet there is something ironic in his success in this arena, since in a wider world one may get the sense that painting is no longer the main carrier of his visual information.

Truong Tan has always been conscious of the practice of painting and the struggle with a medium that can seem too invested in permanence and virtuosity, in carefully planned out compositions and layered meanings, in artistic authority and creative strength – all the qualities that make fine art 'fine'.

HOW TO BE AN ANGEL is Truong Tan's first solo exhibition after an absence of five years. Unlike many of his earlier monumental sized paintings, mostly on canvas, the nineteen paintings in this exhibition tend to be modest in size, appearing to have forfeited the 'heroic' ambitions and size of his earlier works. At that time his challenging of sexist attitudes led him to an almost overwhelming proliferation of formal modes, gripped in a forceful and explicit language. The self-referential qualities of his content along with strong and overt forms were open to endless deconstructions and judgements as his physical artwork took its place alongside his personal biography as well as a specific package of theory and was evaluated as such.

There has been international awareness and embrace of his art. On another level, his life experiences have also enabled Truong Tan to take control of his contexts and create new nuances of meaning by modulating the ways in which his output is now perceived. Rather than falling back on past political and cultural formalism, he has chosen to use his paintings as a space of mental and sensual transition that expresses the emotional structure of his personal reality. The act of grappling with the ineffable truths and irresolvable contradictions of human existence remain central to his art within which the representation of self, authenticity and identity are fundamental issues. The experience of viewing Truong Tan's paintings is akin to his choice of medium which is lacquer painting; a complex and time consuming process requiring exacting formal skills. In the complexity of lacquer painting there is a transparency that hints to his autonomous presence. In a sense, his choice of using a traditional form of art making seems less important than his new attitude toward imagery.

For critics of Truong Tan, recognition of this new and apparently conservative tendency together with his choice of representation would imply an abandonment of his long cherished avant-garde that existed in perpetual opposition to the mainstream. What has changed in his artistic landscape is that he now uses specifics of his background to create works that communicate universal ideas relating to the complexities of human relationships. From this vantage point he is able to examine the relationship between his art and social politics from a different direction while maintaining his commitment to continue examining the potentialities of art's response to those at the extreme margins of life or in the crosshairs of socio-political context.

From the beginning of his career, Truong Tan wanted his art to rise above the opposition between narrative and abstraction. In the body of work that forms HOW TO BE AN ANGEL, Truong Tan has applied colour, line and form – the key elements of painting. And yet he did not want to stick with just that. The world of his paintings was not meant to renounce any relationship with reality, even though he did not want to paint narrative pictures. And lacquer painting has allowed him to do so as through the process of executing lacquer, he is able to go beyond the surface. As such, he allows himself to be absorbed by the process as his subjects emerge – something which he does not find possible with oils on canvas for example as the process of making lacquer paintings are more tactile.

In his own reanimation of his personal history, Truong Tan portrays himself in the works, not once but always. To fully grasp the nuances, it is essential to know that Truong Tan's experiences since moving to Europe has been a realisation that social prejudices such as sexuality and gender differences occupies much the same position in every society. The notion of anything that challenges social and even moral norms remains deeply rooted even in the contemporary psyche.

Truong Tan's articulation of intent accords strongly with responses to his paintings. Strongly composed, he favours forms and hues that are close knit. For instance, *Red Dreaming* (p. 22) where crimsons and vermilions are used to subtly distinguish form and idea while pulsating into a whole.

These are amongst the formal ways in which he uses colour to represent different attitudes towards time and emotion. Red casts him back to the familial past, which he views as an experience of moving back and forth between a consciousness of past anger and the dynamic of facing it straight on. *The Grey Cloud* (p. 21) is another painting that hovers across time - the intersection of the past and the present. Strongly composed so as to be ineluctably suspended, it reveals itself little by little and brings to mind references of memory, articulated by the artist's fragile and vulnerable impulses.



These are amongst the formal ways in which he has brought suspension into play. Various aesthetic impulses are also suspended within the solution that is Truong Tan's art – impulses that define its dynamic. His paintings are at once restrained and expressive, reductive and associational, rational and romantic. While the feelings that he evoke are essentially his own, it is his determination and integrity of these qualities that makes for a rich experience, and it is clear that the

variably matte or glossy surfaces of lacquer paintings are significant to his orchestration.

In this body of work, Truong Tan approaches the subject of his gayness neither as a mode of absolute secrecy nor as scandalous, but rather as a form of private knowledge that may be rendered in visual terms to be shared with others as he freely unfolds his personal insecurities. Much in this body of work is about love and desire, the kind of love you have with another person with whom you are in a relationship. In *When Love Starts* (p. 18) he articulates the tension between the existential nature of love and desire. It proposes that when one is in the grip of love and desire it symbolises new beginnings. In keeping with his association of balance, here in *When Love Starts* his thematic association prompted by colour veers away from pigments associated with traditional lacquer painting. His preference for greens in this picture demonstrably brushed with circular movement is in keeping with his inclinations towards the language of love.



Though such romantic associations are evident throughout, the paintings have a quiet intensity often associated with devotional works such as in the Islamic *Sufi* tradition. This might have to do with Truong Tan's ability to acknowledge the simultaneity of multiple perspectives on a subject. However what is clear is that the aesthetic function has given him a greater insight or perspective on his life. It has also been healing and this deeper understanding of his own identity and seeing himself in a more universal context has become a more fulfilling experience. The idea of *The Divine* (p. 29) is about extending his identity beyond the ego to other levels of transpersonal identity. Here the tree is the metaphor and he regards the branches as the many emotions that make the portrait of the human soul.



In working on this body of work, Truong Tan has articulated how the process of painting has allowed him to examine his own inner world and understanding of his life and his place. This integra-



tive approach allows him to span the complexities of the spirit, body and mind and also the power of desire and love, the kind of love you have with another person with whom you are in a desiring relationship. In *HOW TO BE AN ANGEL* he often questions the capacity of love which he expresses through imageries of this seemingly unending desire. *The Last Leaf* (p. 31) spatialises the idea that when one is in the grip of love, it can fade and often does but its possibility for re-emergence is continual.

On another level, *A Quiet Moment* (p. 30) offers us an encounter with the artist in a manner that makes it plain that we cannot know him completely. While most of the works have an open, transparent quality to them, *A Quiet Moment* relates more to the psychic distances between memory and its subsequent representation. Time plays an important role as Truong Tan revisits his past. While *A Quiet Moment* represents an intimate moment as the characteristics of the imagery have very specific cultural references, which are evident in Truong Tan's articulation of classical Oriental painting.

At times one does get a sense of Truong Tan's past tensions between political concerns and his own self regard. In *Crazy Dogs, Crazy Men, Everything Crazy* (p. 20) he demonstrates that it



is essential to know that his preoccupation with Vietnam's socio-political climate remains compelling. The painting articulates that the central debate of explicitly engaging issues that once animated his practice as he recreates a narrative that is urgent and revealing. The amalgam of forms and notations retell his history.

To date much of the discussion of Truong Tan's work has focussed on his distinctive narrative of highlighting his being openly gay in a very conservative society. To be sure this narrative remains critical, he has chosen the traditional Vietnamese lacquer painting largely for its intensity, traditional intellectual engagements and philosophy. In context after Vietnam's incipient nationalism following the revolution, a contemporary interpretation of lacquer painting took inspiration from its cultural past. His choice to produce his art solely in Hanoi and not in Paris is an important affirmation of his Vietnamese identity as well as his sense of patriotism. Though lacquer painting is one of the most popular forms of expression, especially within Hanoi's art community, Truong Tan's formal interest sets his work apart from the productions of this circle. The labour intensive process conceptually aligns the process with his personal melancholy. The tight convergence of process, image and narrative is performed by his incredible play with scale and form. The result is an unusual union of discipline and turbulent emotions.



Each individual painting is a beautiful example of Truong Tan's aesthetic craftsmanship as he deftly constructs a painterly vocabulary that recalls a spiritual landscape that is often woven through his productions. But the strength of his paintings does not rest solely in his draftsmanship, but rather in the enigmas of reproduction and the originality that they produce. While each painting is made different by subtle differences, they each possess a self-conscious response to his mental and social environment. *In the Deep Sea* (p. 19) for example, he subliminally emphasises his desire and difficulty to reach the depths of emotions when in a relationship. The corals in the picture reference the depth of the sea as well as examples of nature's pristine beauty that should not be destroyed. The layering of floating figures is seductive in disrupting one's vision which is an appropriate metaphor for the fallibility of emotion. *Hybrid Emotions* (p. 25) is another example where he demonstrates the hybrid between emotion and the force of nature. Here he illustrates the notion of harbouring feelings. The two smaller figures floating alongside the central figure express a struggle of bringing feelings to surface.

Truong Tan's intimate works also deal with and critique contemporary society. In HOW TO BE AN ANGEL he explores what is specific about himself in relationship to the world around him. By considering the moral and spiritual dimensions that are integral to the sacred understanding of life, the figures in HOW TO BE AN ANGEL reflect people's understanding of their place in the world. Because the desire to attain beauty and goodness is a fundamental aspect of human nature, Truong Tan uses his art as a spiritual tool to remind us of our deeper nature. The central figure in the painting *How To Be An Angel* (p. 26) which is represented in pink is symbolic of an angel and the surrounding figures positioned in meditative poses point to the individual's desire for such attainment.



Truong Tan's transformative impact on lacquer painting is revealed not only by his adaptation of his stylistic hallmark but also through his choice and serial approach to his subject matter – his sexuality. In a manner, HOW TO BE AN ANGEL represents a circle of his life. Truong Tan's transformation over the past twenty years from an outcast eccentric master into an admired icon could not have been foretold. Truong Tan's physical artwork takes its place beside other factors such as his biography, events in his life and a specific package of practice which are taken together as an aesthetic totality.

PLATES



When Love Starts, 2006 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 60 x 70 cm



In the Deep Sea, 2006 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 60 x 70 cm



Crazy Dogs, Crazy Men, Everything Crazy, 2008 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 90 x 120 cm



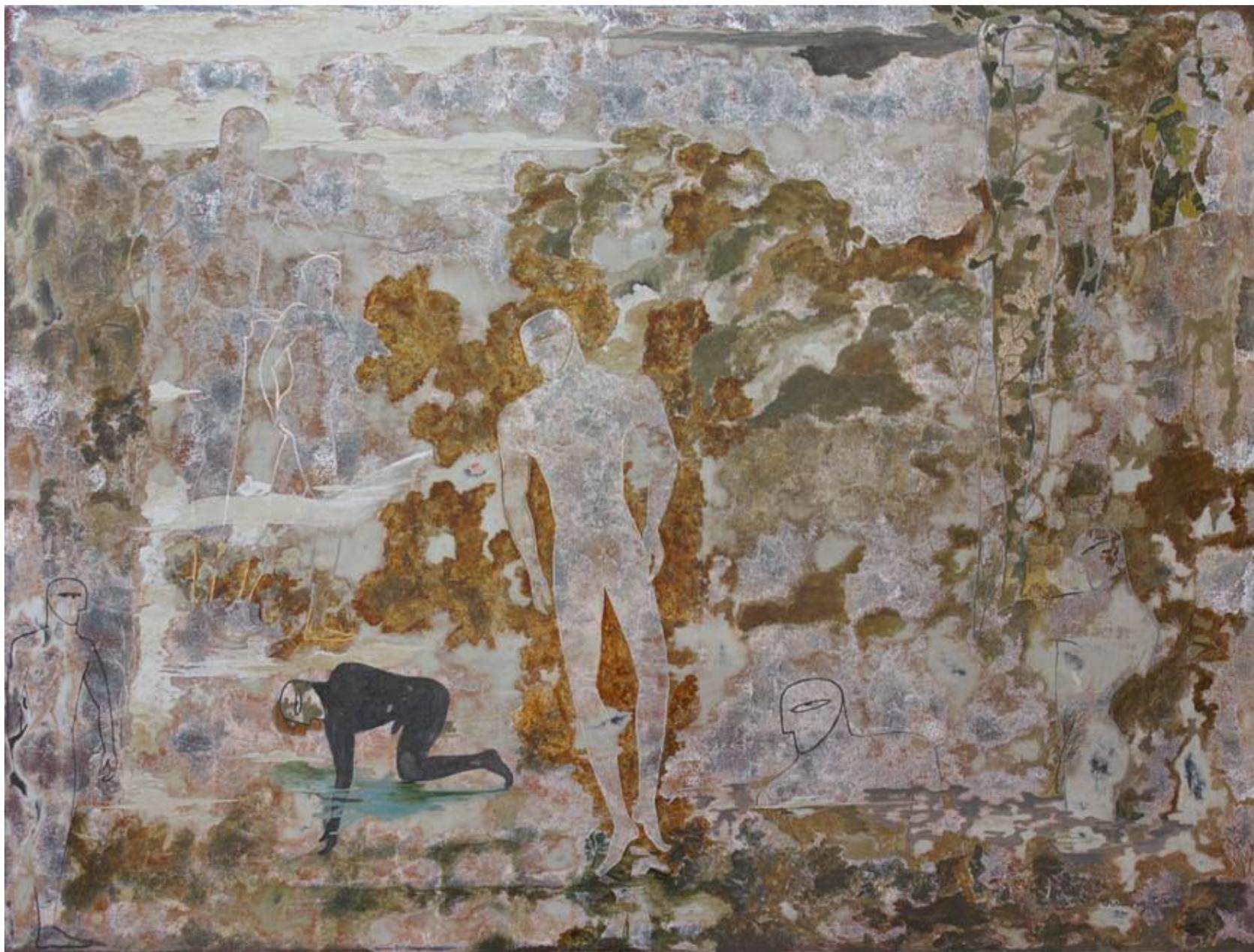
The Grey Cloud, 2008 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



Red Dreaming, 2008 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 60 x 80 cm



In the Past, 2008 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 60 x 80 cm



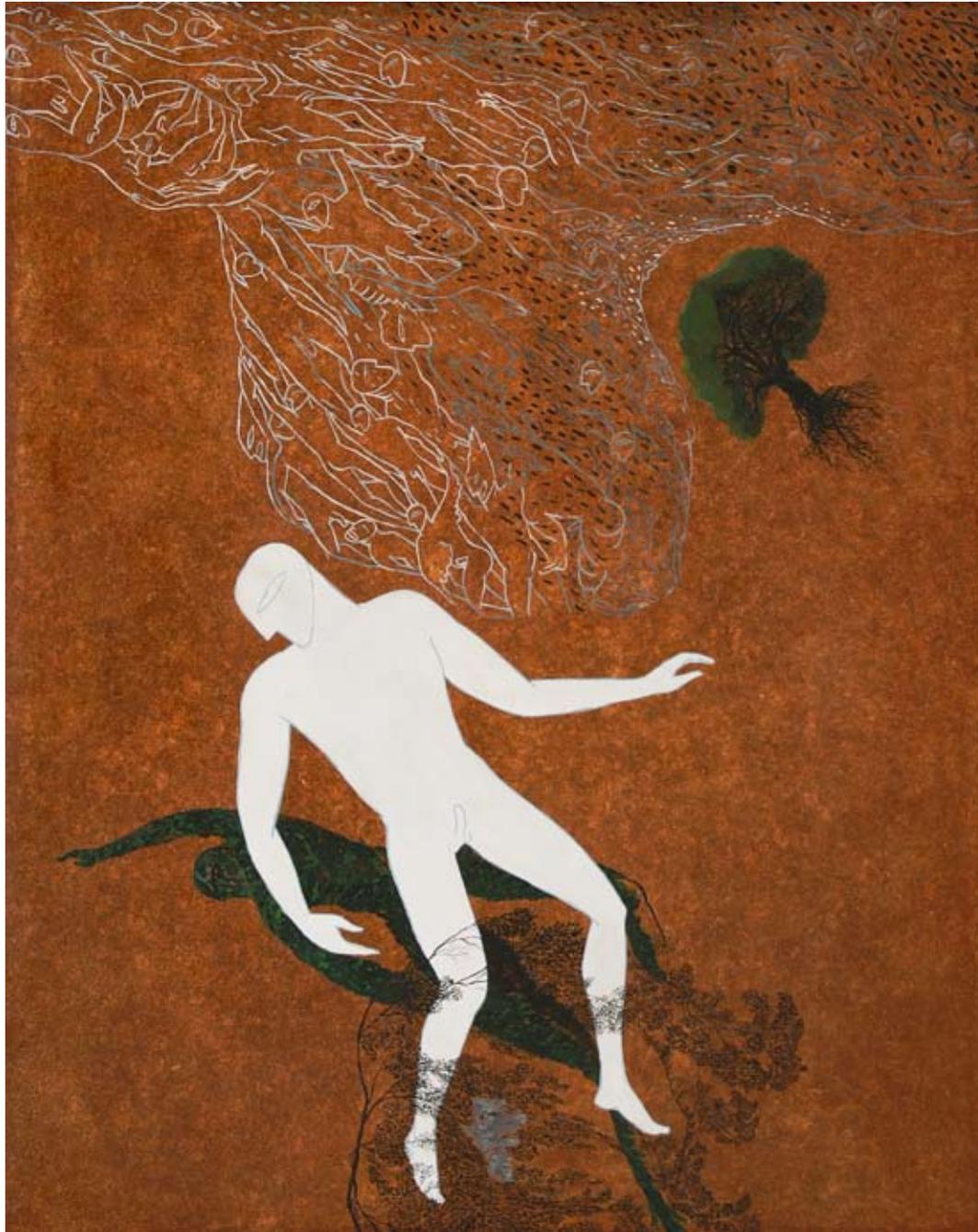
In the Shadow, 2008 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 60 x 80 cm



Hybrid Emotions, 2008 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 60 x 80 cm



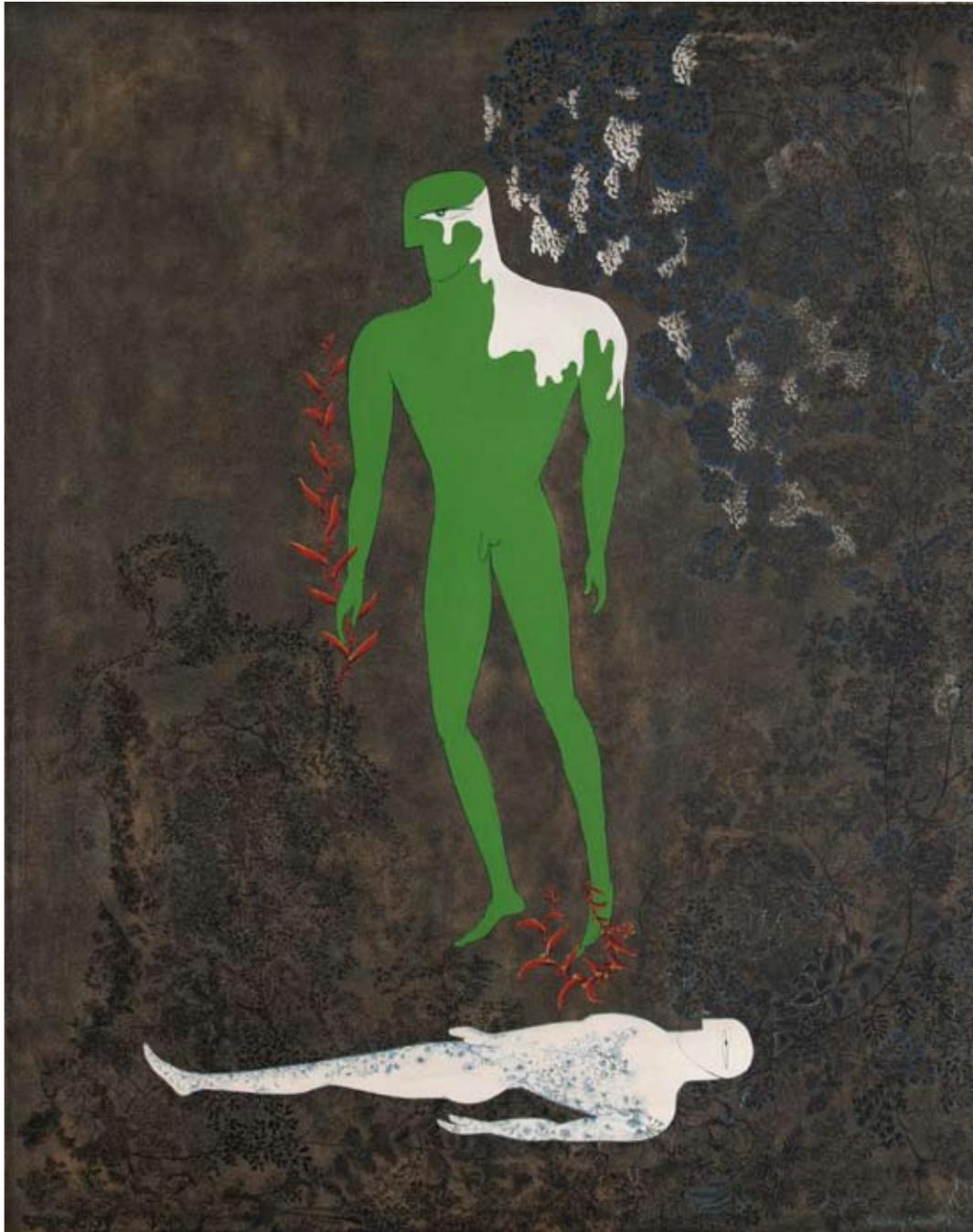
How to be an Angel, 2008 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



Caught in a Typhoon, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



Touched by an Angel, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



The Divine, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



Quiet Moment, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 90 x 120 cm



The Last Leaf, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



Another Life, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



The Meeting, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



My Destiny, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



With Wings, 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 80 x 100 cm



Thoi Gian Lanh (Cold Time), 2010 | Lacquer, dyes and mixed media on board | 60 x 160 cm



Truong Tan

Born in 1963, Hanoi

Graduated from Hanoi Fine Arts University in 1989

Truong Tan joined the academic staff of the Hanoi Fine Arts University as a lecturer the same year. After almost ten years at the university, he left in 1998 to pursue a full-time career as an artist. He has participated in numerous exhibitions in Vietnam and internationally. Besides being recognized as an astute painter, Truong Tan has been a pioneer in new media representations through which he has candidly voiced his concerns about the conflictive and restrictive social environment of Vietnam.

Museum Collections

Singapore Art Museum

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia

Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan

Selected Art Exhibitions

Solo Exhibitions

- 1994** At the Ecole Nationale des Arts Decoratifs, Limoges, **France**
Peinture de Truong Tan at Galerie Ecole de Hanoi, Hanoi
- 1995** *Collision Culturelle* (partly censored) at Red River Gallery, Hanoi
- 1996** *Interieur and My Time* (performance) at Kunsthalle Bielefeld, **Germany**
- 1997** *Document* at Chai Gallery – Saint-Brieuc, **France**
Transition Installation at Place de la Republique, Paris, **France**
Solo exhibition at Galerie Les Singuliers Paris, **France**

- 1998** *Renaissance* at Galerie Les Singuliers Paris, **France**
L'art est mort at Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, **France**
AIDS-HeART at Galerie 4A, Sydney, **Australia**
- 1999** *Napkins* at Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, **France**
Water, Fire, Wood at Asian Fine Art Factory, Berlin, **Germany**
- 2000** Solo exhibition at Espace Chateaufort Tours, **France**
- 2002** *Vay Cuoi* at Duc's House, Hanoi
- 2004** *Spiders* installation at RYLLEGA Gallery, Hanoi
- 2005** *Dancers* installation at RYLLEGA Gallery, Hanoi
- 2010** *How to be an Angel* at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok, **Thailand**

Group Exhibitions

- 1985-90** National Exhibitions, Hanoi
- 1992** *Foundation Franco-Vietnamienne* at Hanoi Fine Arts University, Hanoi
- 1993** *Lacques Vivantes* at Alliance Française, Hanoi
- 1994** Asia Art Fair by Red River Gallery, **Hong Kong**
Zeitgenossische Malerei in Vietnam at Goethe Institute, Frankfurt, **Germany**
Avant-Garde at National Exhibition Space, Hanoi
- 1995** *Six Contemporary Artists from Vietnam* at Yokohama Portside Gallery, **Japan**
Sicherheitsabstand at Kunsthalle Bielefeld, **Germany**
Khoang cach an toan at the Substation Gallery, **Singapore**
- 1996** *Lack Erde Steine* at the Museum fur Lackkunst, Munster, **Germany**
Conteneur 96 - L'art franchit les oceans in Copenhagen, **Denmark**
Vietnamese Art after Doi Moi at the Fujita Art Museum, Tokyo, **Japan**
Black and White at Salon Natasha, Hanoi
- 1997** *New Vietnamese Painting* at The Siam Society, Bangkok, **Thailand**
Der rest Der Welt at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, **Germany**
Peintres du Vietnam at the Musee de l'Histoire et de l'Art, Saint-Brieuc, **France**
- 1998** *Vietnam Express* a travelling exhibition, **Norway**
Paris-Hanoi-Saigon at the Pavillon des Arts Paris, **France**
Art in Freedom at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, **The Netherlands**
Above and Beyond at Oakland, California, **USA**

- 1999** *GAP Vietnam* at the Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin, **Germany**
2nd Open 999 International Exhibition of Sculpture and Installation, Venice, **Italy**
- 2000** *Messagers de la Terre* at Espace Rur Art Rouille, **France**
L'humanité with Paella Chimicos at Galerie les Singuliers, Paris, **France**
- 2002** *All things fall and are built again* at the Liverpool Biennale, **United Kingdom**
- 2003** *Go! Stop!... and in Between - 16 Hanoi Artists* at the Goethe Institute, Hanoi
- 2004** *Vietnam Today* at Galerie Amber and Galerie Caro, **The Netherlands**
- 2007** *Diaper* installation, *Come In* exhibition at the Viet Art Center, Hanoi
- 2008** Singapore Biennale 08, **Singapore**
10th Anniversary at Duc's House, Hanoi
- 2009** 4th Triennale at the Fukuoka Museum, **Japan**
Connect: Kunstszone Vietnam at IFA Gallery Berlin, **Germany**
LimDim at the Stenersen Museum – Oslo, **Norway**

Selected Performances and Video Art

- 1995** *Me and Come In* (videos) at Hang Chuoi, Hanoi
- 1996** *About Freedom* (video) at German School, **Singapore**
Artist-Life-Art (performance) at Stadelschule, Frankfurt, **Germany**
Past and Future (video) at 29 Hang Bai, Hanoi
- 1997** *Flowers* (performance) at the Siam Society, Bangkok, **Thailand**
Van Nghe (video) at the College du Film et du Theatre, Hanoi
I Start everything with nothing (performance) at Kunsthalle Bielefeld, **Germany**
- 2001** *Pollution* (performance) in Hanoi
- 2009** *Meeting at Ryllega Gallery* (performance), Berlin, **Germany**



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