# PHUONG LINH NGUYEN

## biography

Studied with Tobias Rehberger at Stadelschule Frankfurt 2015-2017. Studied at Academia Albertina Belle di Arti Torino 2007-2008.

Lives and works in Saigon and Hanoi, Vietnam

Spanning moving images, kinetic sculptural installation and performance, Phuong Linh Nguyễn's work contemplates form and time. Allusions to bodily movements convey her long standing fascination with the body, its resilience and vulnerability, gentleness and violence, flesh and bone. She attempts to navigate geopolitical and cultural shifts in Vietnam by tracing ambiguous fragments of personal and collective histories, drawing inspiration from the Northern landscape and the Red River Delta architecture, crafts, and folk tales.

Phương Linh Nguyễn was born and raised in Nhà Sàn Studio - based in her father's home, it's considered one of the longest established non-profit artist-run spaces in Hanoi. In 2013, she co-founded and since then has been co-directing Nhà Sàn Collective with her close artist friends. Together, they participated in Documenta 15 curated by Ruangrupa in 2022. Phương Linh's works have been featured in various local and international exhibitions, including Busan Biennale and Asian Art Biennale 2024, Listening to the Overtones of Fissures at National Human Right Museum Taipei 2023, Asian Pacific Triennial 2021, the Singapore Biennale, Kuandu Biennale Taipei, Shanghai Biennale in 2016, HIWAR Darat AL Funnun Jordan 2014. She won the Han Nefkens Foundation-BACC Award for Contemporary Video Art and The Pollock Krasner prize in 2017.

# DUO WITH TRƯƠNG QUẾ CHI

Nguyễn Phương Linh (1985) and Trương Quế Chi (1987) are longtime friends and colleagues. Spanning video, installation and sculpture, Phương Linh's practice contemplates form and time. Her works attempt to navigate geographical and cultural shifts as she traces ambiguous fragments of personal and collective histories in Vietnam. Allusions to bodily movements in recent works convey her long standing fascination with the body, its durability, its resilience. Quế Chi traverses the borders of different terrains including moving image, sculptural installation, and performing arts, while remaining attentive to proportion, materials, rhythm and temporality. Her works delve into the spectacle of the everyday, its contrasting feeling and enigmas. Beside individual pursuits, from 2021 onwards, the Hanoi-based duo also realizes collaborative projects as echoes of the synchronous rhythms of their lives that mirror one another. Their works, in juxtaposition, converse and conjure up a visceral sense of weights, heights, and ephemerality hidden beneath architectural structures and social communities. Among their shared interests are shadows of intergenerational loss and the corporeality associated with the female body in various aspects and contexts.

They have been active as curatorial board members of Nhà Sàn Collective, an artist-run initiative in Hanoi, Vietnam since 2013.

#### **BREATH 2025**

Nguyen Phuong Linh and Truong Que Chi have undertaken collaborative projects since 2021. Truong's works delve into the spectacle of the everyday—its contrasting emotions and its enigmas. Nguyen's practice contemplates form and time. Allusions to bodily movements in her recent works convey her long-standing fascination with the body, its durability, and its resilience.

BREATHE is their new collaboration, unfolding through two distinct yet interconnected bodies of work that respond to each other in material dialogue and corporeal investigation. The installation emerges like a living organism: a fabric surface printed with spongy red blocks flying and undulating; a rattan tree trunk spinning in circles as if dancing; a bicycle seat bouncing alone on a slender structure; a moving air tube striking sharply against a metal rod; and a mirror sprouting like a leaf, spinning like a carousel, reflecting a childhood photograph. A wooden Goddess's head rests on a mirrored tray, along with two old coats once belonged to their fathers.

The space operates as a mechanical body with autonomous circulation—surfaces and lines, like skin, like flesh, like veins, like hair. Heartbeat and lung rhythm, blood and air, bones and muscles. Each sculptural element contributes to a collective choreography, a meditation on a space with its own breathing pattern. Carrying the echoes of memory, the installation creates an interplay of stillness and motion, tenderness and violence, transformation and repetition, compression and release.

Motorcycle mirror & photo オートバイのミラーと写真

Rattan trunk 籐の鞭

The father's blazer 父のブレザー

> The father's leather coat & Linh San's 6<sup>th</sup> tooth 父のレザーコートとリン サンの6本目の歯

A Guanyin wooden statue head 木像の観音菩薩頭部

Qi/Air: IV Line & Needle 気:ラインとニードル

Watermelon スイカ Bicycle saddle *自転車のサドル* 

BREATHE

**Nguyen Phuong Linh** & Truong Que Chi Various objects with motors 2025

BREATHE (ブリーズ) **グエン・フォン・リン**& チュオン・クエ・チーモーター付きの様々なオブジェクト
2025年



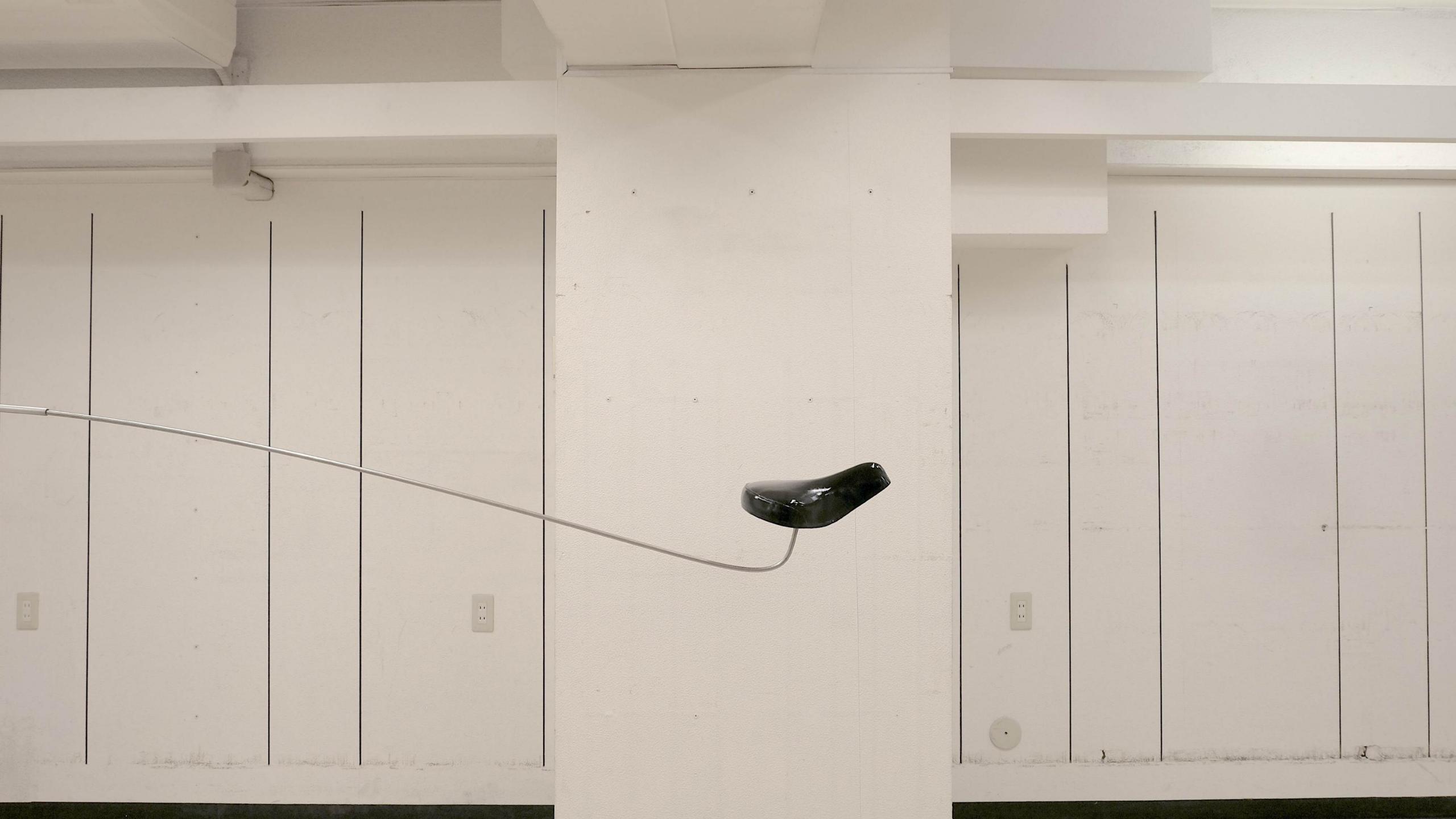
















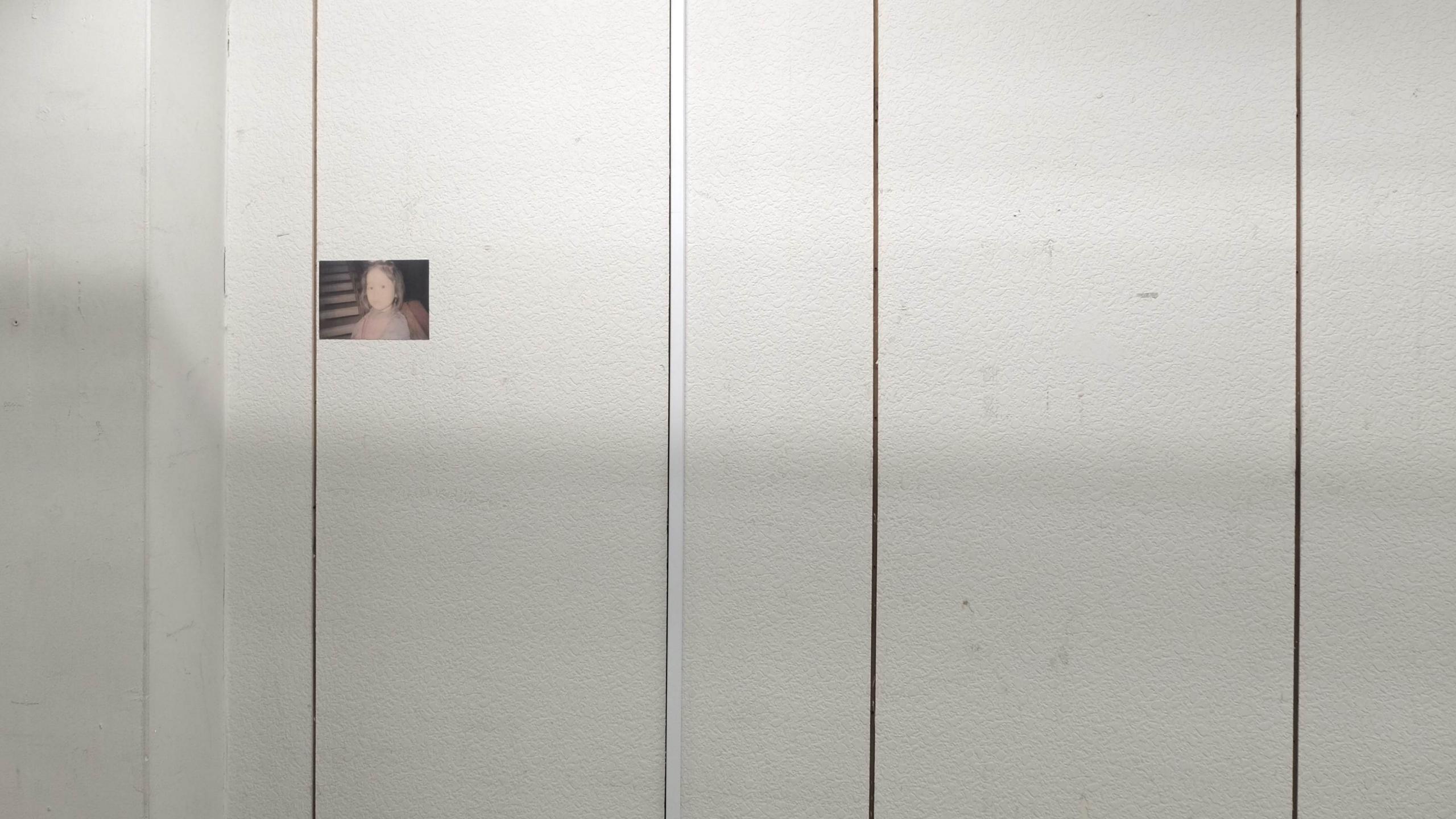














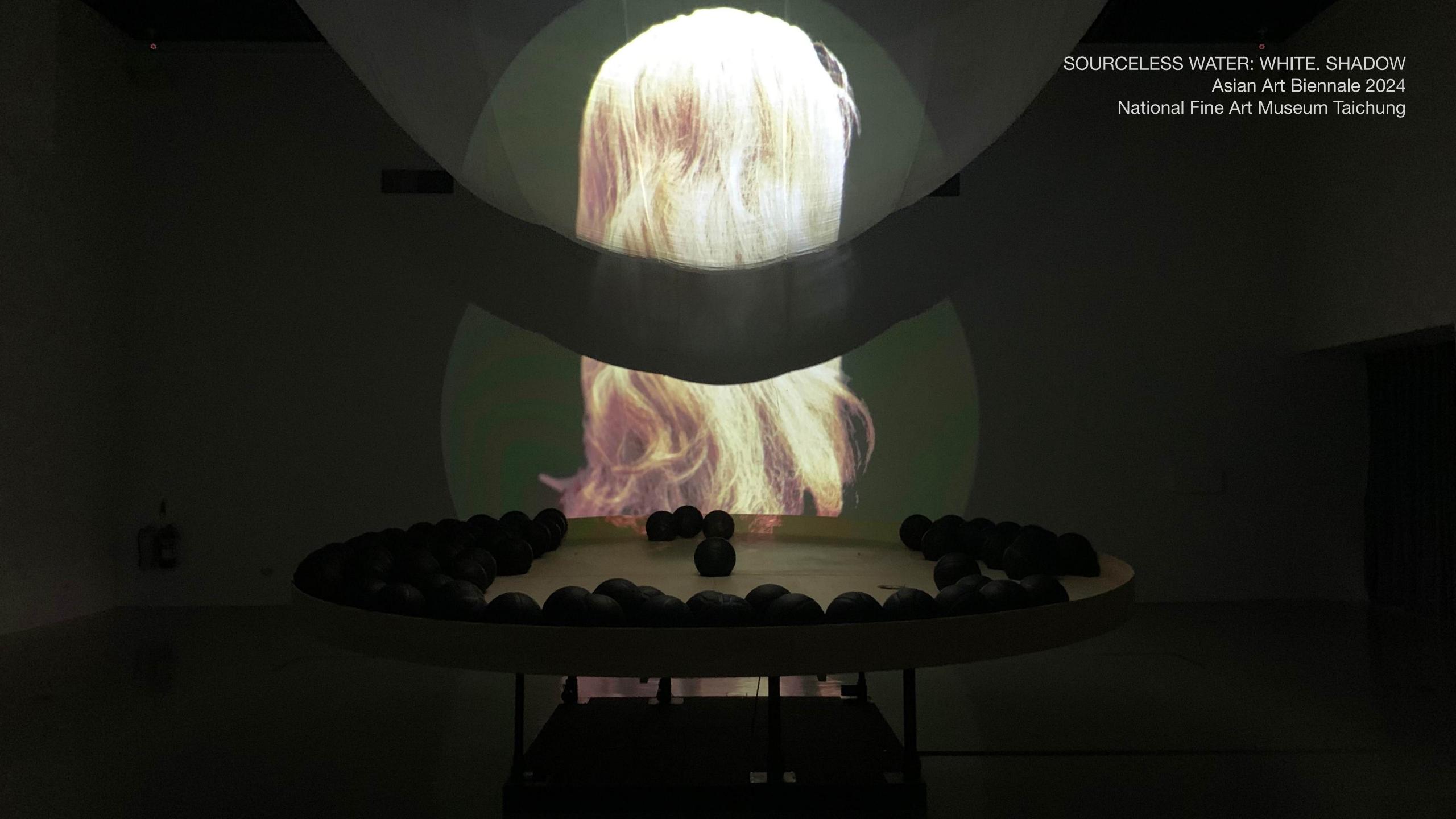


### **SOURCELESS WATER: WHITE. SHADOW.2024**

fabric, rubber balls, electric fan, motors and light system
White by Trương Quế Chi & Shadows by Nguyễn Phương Linh
Comissioned work for Asian Art Biennial 2024
Curators: Fang Yeng Hsiang, Anne Davidian, Merv Espina, Kim Haeju, Asli Seven

It's a fragile thing. "Like a mother's hand on the back of her child, feeling the rhythms of their breathing, the motions of their lungs, the beats of their heart, the occasional swallowing of saliva. Like a grandmother's silver hair. A woman rows a boat as thin as a bamboo leaf - it's uncertain if she is getting closer or disappearing. A son writes down this verse "Under the scarf that covers my mother's head/Is the history of a people in pain/Eyes of inherited sorrows, hidden in the night". A woman's heart beats like a drum. From outside, the sound of the train like it's about to crash into the bedroom. The humidity of a mother's womb. A clot of blood and a lump of ash. We head into the forest at three a.m, where we glow like fireflies. The timelessness of the color white, the muslin net of a wartime infirmary. A sick father resting, his child slowly rubs his back. A father carries his child to the lake so the child can breathe with ease, his hand patting the child's back."Sourceless Waters: White. Shadows. marks a new collaboration of Phương Linh and Quế Chi with two distinctive works processing a shared self-transforming landscape of their intertwined memories. In Phương Linh's Shadows, the rubber balls normally used in sports training now lie on the platform: some vibrate, some roll around and collide with others - motions governed by motors mounted under the platform. They create ripple-like relay movements among small modules. White by Quê Chi features a rectangular sheet of white handwoven muslin cotton. This fabric is a popular material for infant wear and care, medical gauze, mosquito nets, and in the old days for menstrual pads. There also exist other varieties of white muslins for specific usages including funeral rites, or tofu making. At a predetermined interval, the motors hanging the fabric descend. Attached strings loosen and let the sheet fall down. Soft white enshrouds black rubber, an unified shape that is at times in motion, at times still. A rhythmic play of light and darkness, the routine repeats itself.

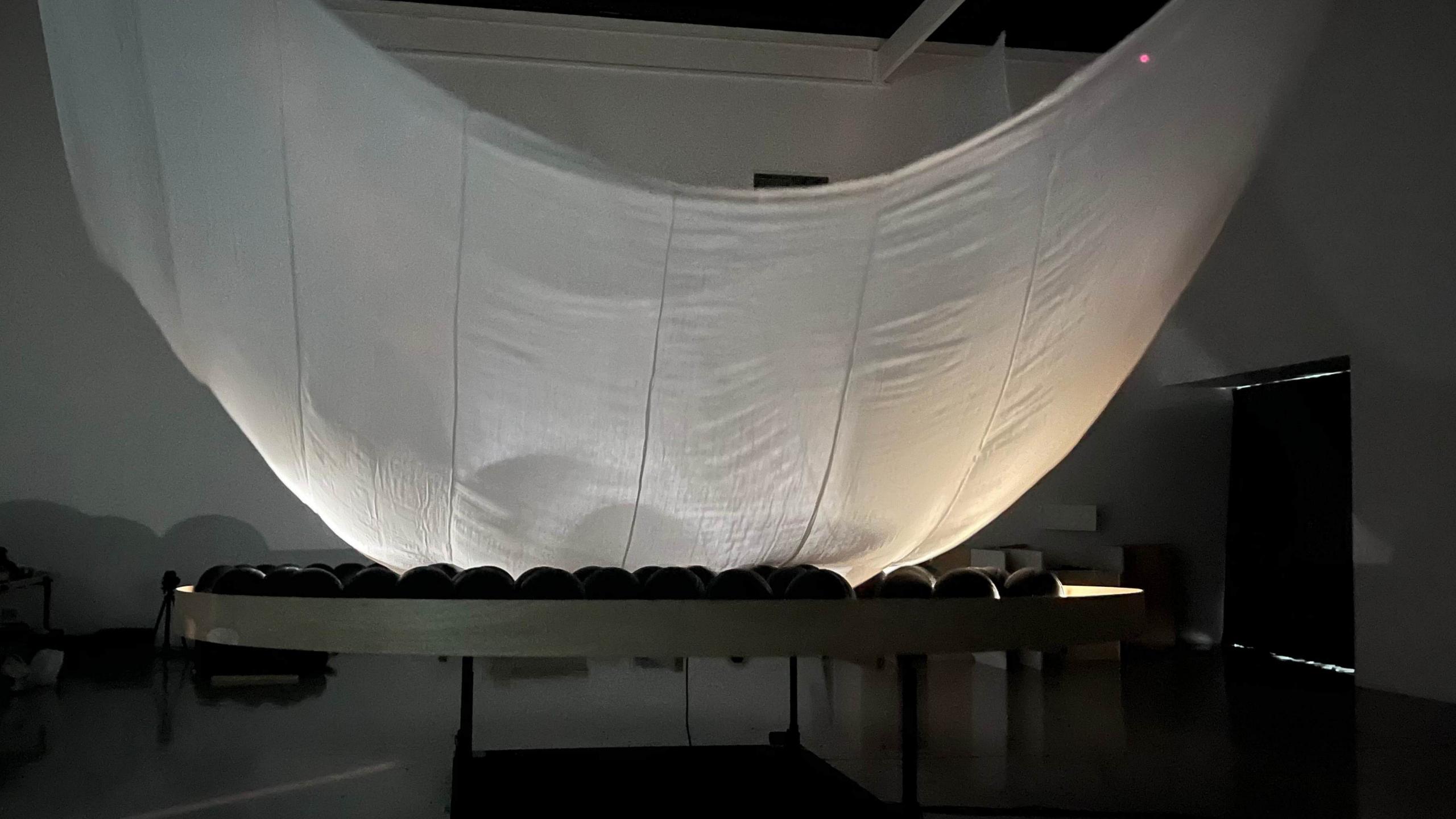
Video (full performance): https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c6otlHzFT8nWUKiqTrvMK3kdLpjN4rg0/view?usp=sharing













## **SOURCELESS WATER: WHIP. KNIFE. 2024**

whip, knife, fabric, wooden platform, motors, lighting & curtain system, dimension variable. The Whip by Nguyễn Phương Linh & The Knife by Trương Quế Chi Comissioned work for Busan Biennale 2024 Curators: Vera Mey & Philippe Pirotte

Sourceless Waters: The Whip & The Knife (2024) is an installation made in collaboration. In Nguyễn Phương Linh's The Whip the mechanical arm lashes with the slow inevitable continuity of inhalation and exhalation. The shadow created by the whip falling onto the fabric heightens the tension and drama of this kinetic installation. At the whip's height the light in the space is at its brightest, gradually returning to darkness as it descends. Situated under a constant, intense white light a clinical atmosphere is suggested. In Truong Quê Chi's The Knife, a hand-forged knife free-falls onto a wooden counter made from the beams of an old architectural style house in Northern Vietnam, before being retracted to the ceiling. These two works may be entered separately, but share space divided by a light-blocking curtain, which periodically closes during this sequence of motion. The Whip and The Knife move in mirroring tandem through a shared rhythm. The leather whip is soft and soaring; while the knife tip is hard, pointed and plummets. Both operate on automated mechanisms exerting gravitational and centrifugal forces on surfaces using materials contrasting in forms and pliancy. Constant repetition of The Whip's and The Knife's movements in an almost unchanging environment, together with the minuscule, barely noticeable impacts of such movements, invite contemplations on violence as well as resilience, collision and circulation, weight and weightlessness, birth and decay. Each work has its own space which is then conjoined in a flood of red light. This recurring interconnectedness brings to mind the circulatory constriction and dilation of the organs in the body.

Photo: Busan Biennale Organizing Committee

Video (short version): https://youtu.be/7MhZeRhmRpU?si=sIzGkSj64BHIqtQ6

Video (full performance): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlMmDPaiQSc&t=100s





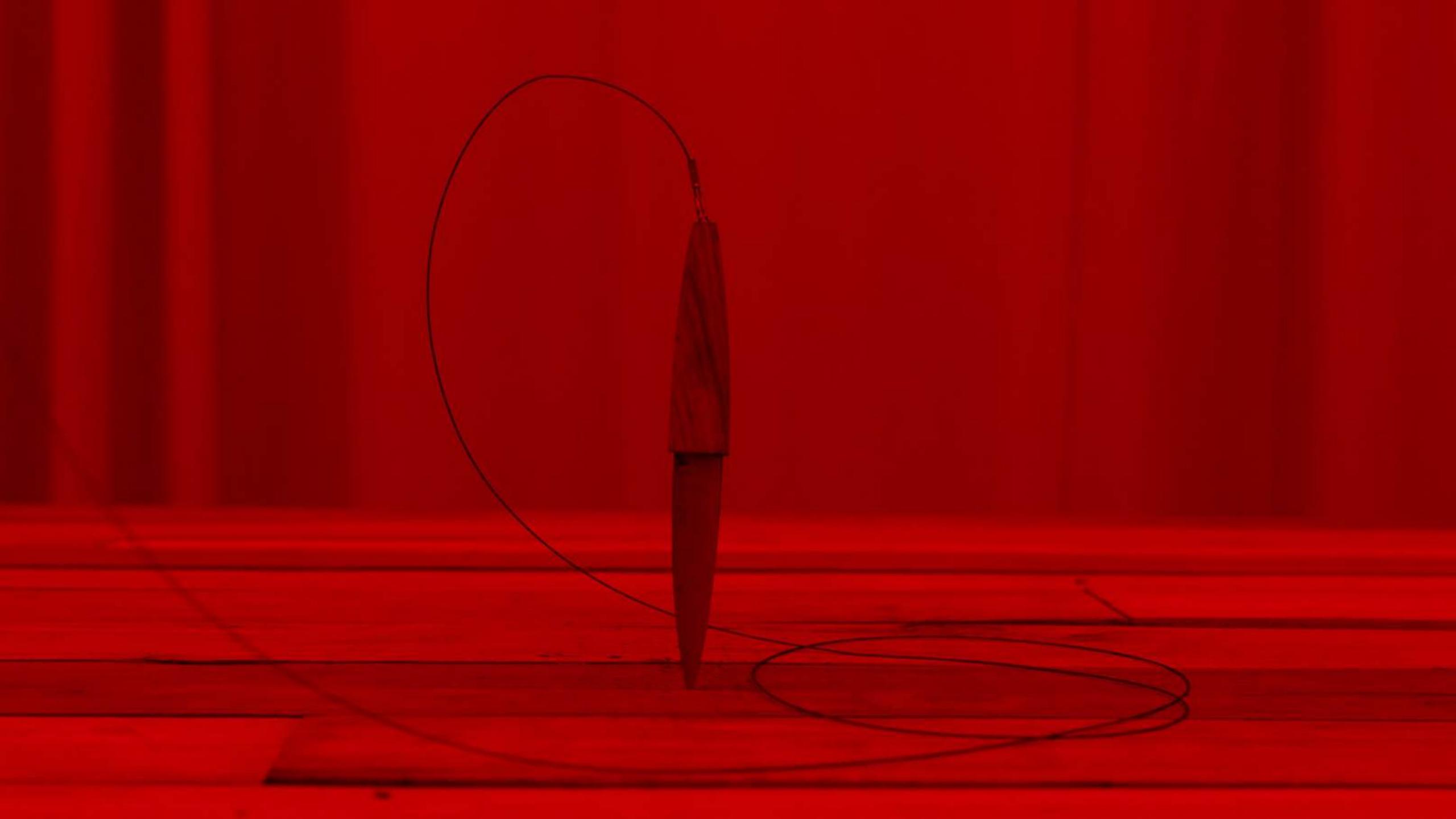












#### A MANGROVE APPLE TREE 2022

Acrylic mirrors; curvy pole; wooden stairs; printed wallpaper; motor & bamboo stick; various children's toys: the wooden horse, the balance board, the balance seesaw; the ceramic pots with plants from the Immigrating garden of Tuấn Mami.

curated by Ruangrupa

Under a mangrove apple tree at Truòng Phuóc, Quảng Trị in 1972, Mr. Nguyễn Mạnh Đức\* buried his father's letters. This marked the most enduring memory he shared with his father, a soldier-writer who had participated in the Anti-French Resistance War nearly thirty years earlier, in Northern Vietnam. His story became the inspiration behind the title of a collaborative installation comprising of objects, sculptures, and prints by two artists - two friends and colleagues from Nhà Sàn Collective (founded in 2013) - Nguyễn Phuơng Linh and Trương Quế Chi. Mr. Đức, Phương Linh's father, founded the art space Nhà Sàn Studio in 1998. A slice of Vietnamese art history not detached from the artist's personal lives. Objects within this installation are imagined as drifting fragments of a stilt house structure and items from Mr. Đức's private collection; they are the silent witnesses of people, stories, and corners of the larger art landscape of Vietnam.

Sculptures and installation pieces conjure up visceral sense of the weights, heights, and breadths of legacies in an exploration of the complexities and depths of intergenerational and floor, bamboo being the traditional measuring stick in northern Vietnamese villages' house construction. Complemented by its own mirror reflection, a metallic curve gestures a

northern Vietnamese villages' house construction. Complemented by its own mirror reflection, a metallic curve gestures a bow, a simultaneous instance of passing on and being upheld, in parallel worlds. Friendship as another way to reflect. Intergenerational relationships, especially that between the father and the child is one of the recurring themes among works by artists in the community of Nhà Sàn. Continuation, inheritance, loss, circulation, new possibilities.







#### EYES WITHOUT A FACE 2021

at Manzi Art Space and Japan Foundation Hà Nội curated by Dat Nguyen

'A struggle to start writing about something, without adding to or subtracting from its weight being tricked by a longing for lightness to endure heaviness has its silver lining: one can still sense weight passing the point that makes black humor come distances, varied: geographical, physical, in between those involved 'things that ought to come' does not mean being ready for such the foresight prompts much odd rhythms ungraspable without the pulse of some apparatus light is rhythmic a nonverbal correspondence one instinctive, one austere an exquisite corpse proving difficult to dissect everything revolves around that bed - which I slept on life, death, mirth, and nightmare a pole, a lightning rod first entrance through a veil-skirt hung mid air the collapse of one's own abode all is a stage absurd, sore, romantic fragments a play is but the wait for its happenings inevitable baggage: the objects in front of the partition await those waiting for their allotted number Uhm, Exit one whom Heaven calls forth.'

- Notes from a hiccup-ish conversation between curator Đạt Nguyễn and a newfound friend, Ngân on EYES WITHOUT A FACE







INSTALLATION VIEW AT MANZI ARTSPACE

3

The Curtain 2021 (1) 4x2m, black fabric

Two Persons 2021 (2) various size concrete

Light, Lightness 2021 (3) resin blocks 60x80x11cm, lights, moving motors





WORKS FROM 2009-2018

### TRÙNG MÙ - ENDLESS SIGHTLESS Hans Nefkens - BACC award 2018 curated by Vera May

The exhibition Trùng mù endless, sightless by Nguyen Phuong Linh invites audiences to journey through the medium and metaphor of light as a process of opening your eyes to memory. Trùng mù loosely translates as endless and sightless. This idea used by the artist is informed by the complex geopolitical terrain of Vietnam, paying attention to the undercurrents of history that have historically divided the nation and continues to affect the various cultures contained within bordered lines. These histories require uncovering and have resulted in blind spots in local knowledge. The artist engages with these legacies through a series of installation and videos which draw attention to your eye line focus through both the brightening of reality and the dimming of various narratives revealing how memory is also a ghostly and shadowy presence.

Influenced by the movement of objects, memory is ingrained into these artworks through repurposing materials. The wooden panels of a Catholic Church from North Vietnam becoming light fixtures. An elephant howdah is deconstructed as abstract shapes. A black forms the the residue of rubber, a material abundantly collected in the dead of the night when the rubber readily weeps.

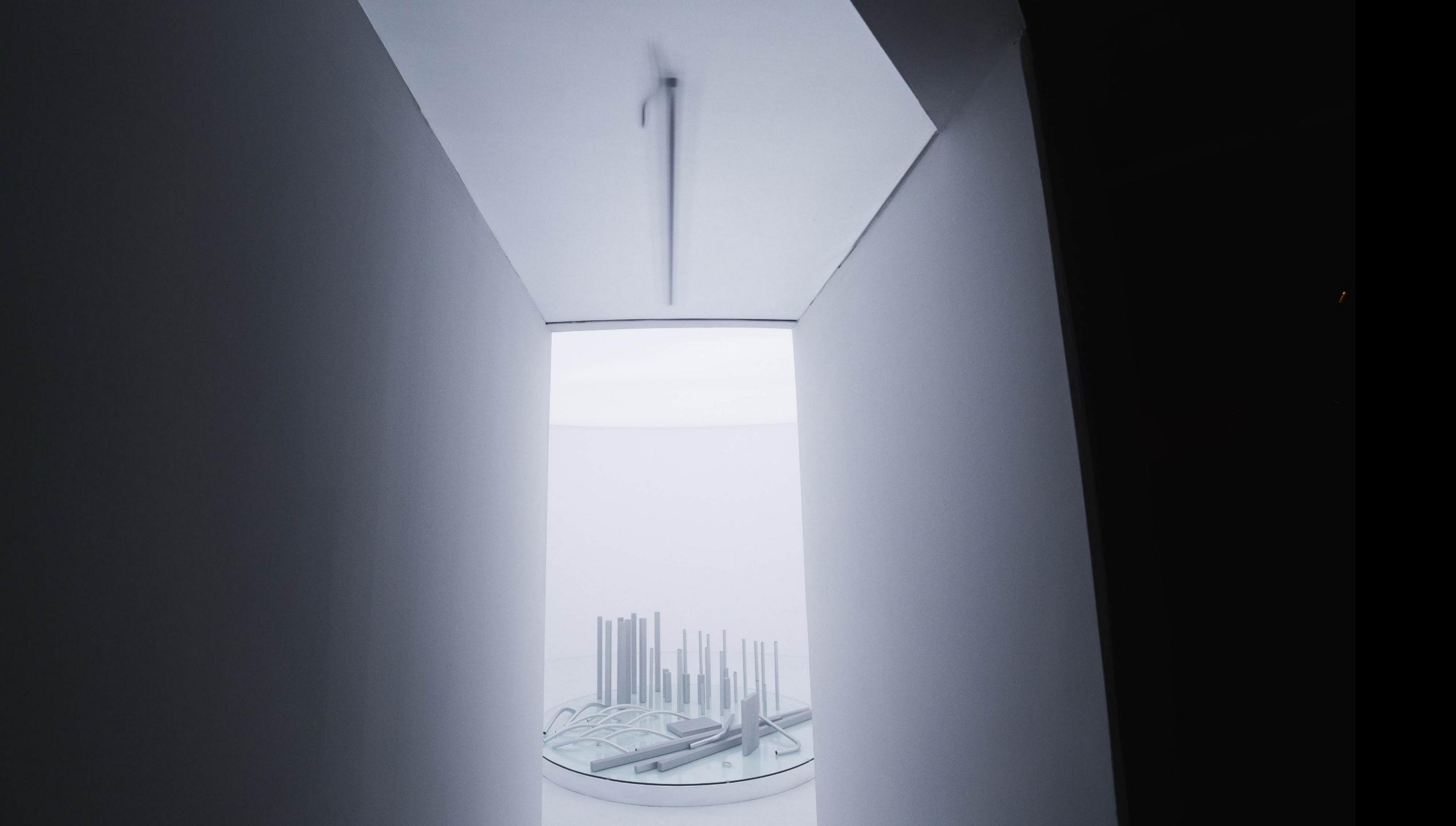
The unspoken legacy of geographic lines linger through the image of a young boy from the central highlands of Vietnam an area rich in minerals and central to the lives of ethnic minorities. The synthetic urban light of the city from nail parlour salons which uses artificial bulbs to dry pigment points to the urban areas which are altering the geography of the country. These are all references which demonstrate the artists concern with the diverse terrain of Vietnam as a land contested, colonised, exploited and capitalised. Interested in Vietnamese mythology, the artist also used the folklore premised on the idea that after death, the ghost never really leaves and remains an integral part of the house.

Intertwined with the often invisible weight and history of these changes, these artworks travel between these different atmospheres and terrains. The constellation of artworks begins abstractly and progressively becomes more concrete in imagery, analogous to a waking up to the world as the light pours in giving sense to the often used statement, "I see."

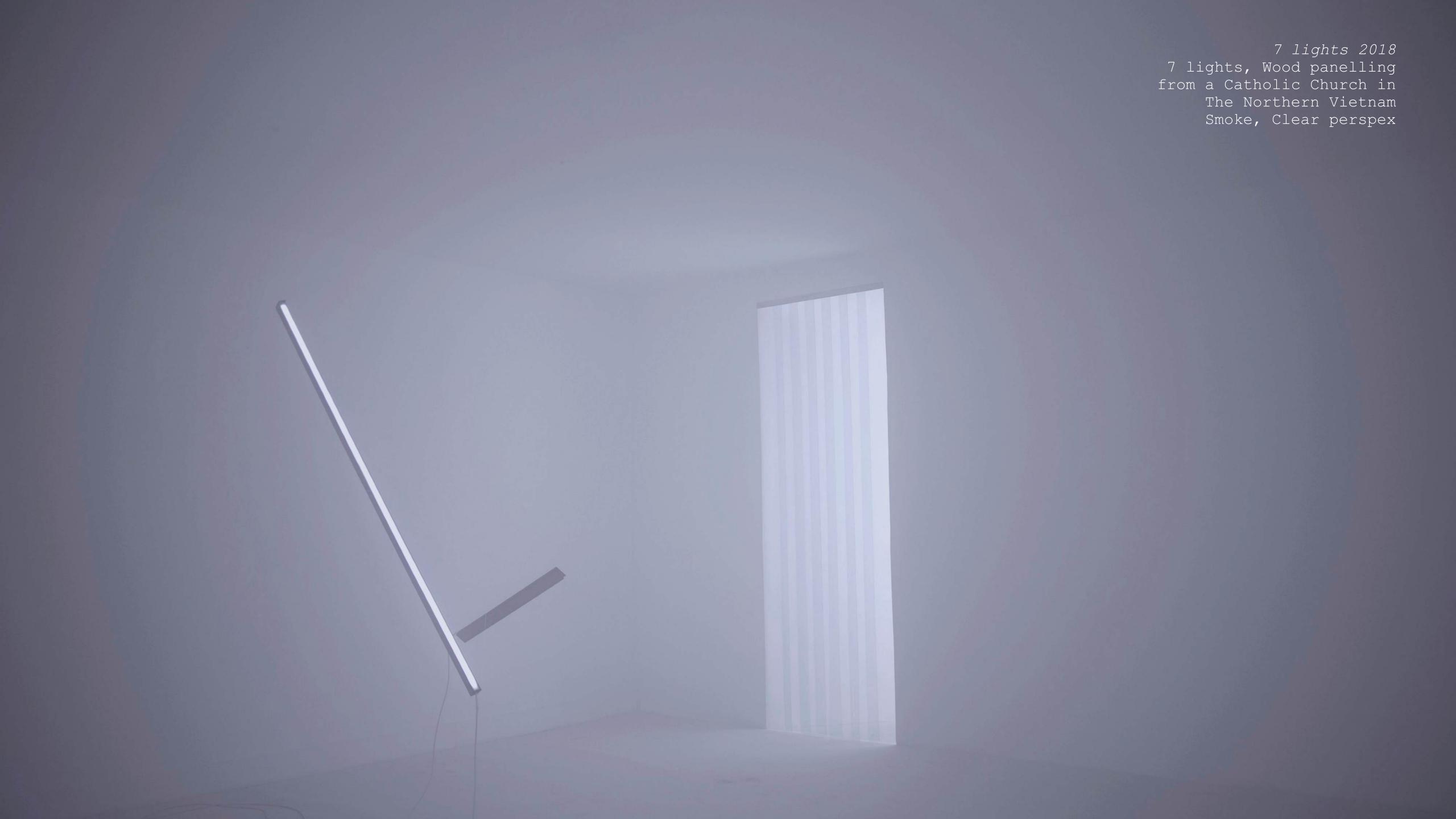
Vera May - curator

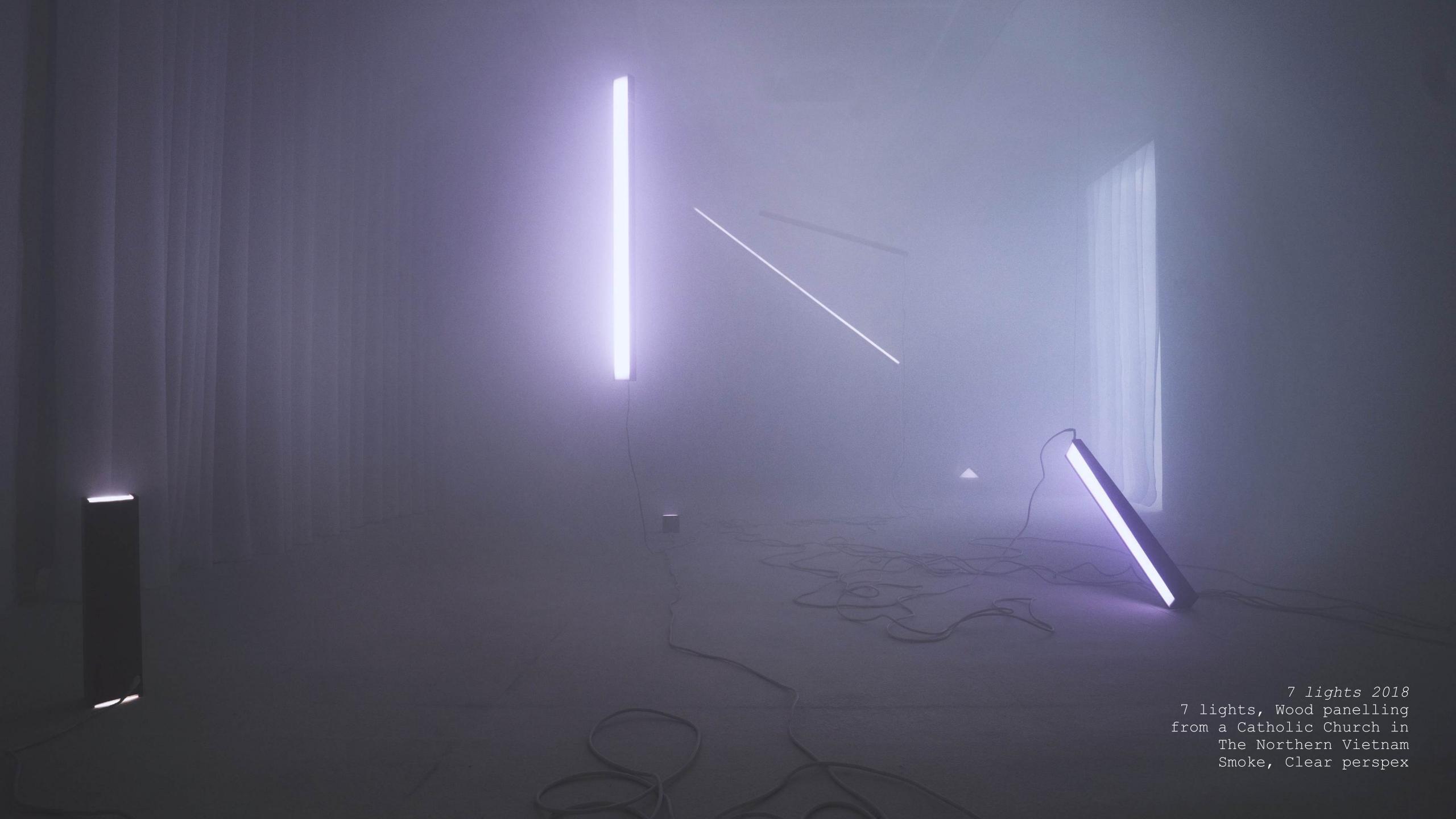




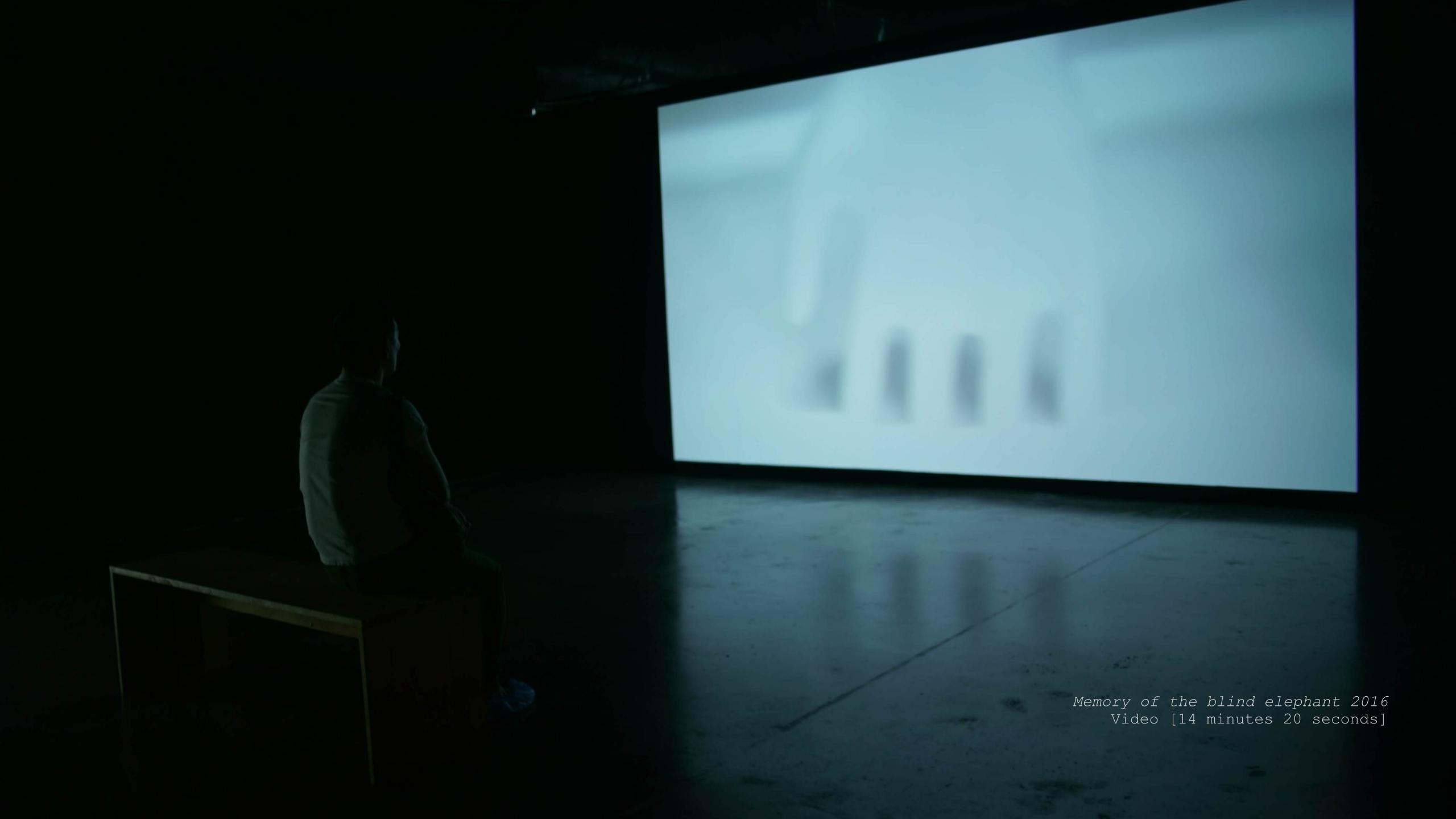


The last ride 2017 (the lance on the roof)
Details of an elephant's metal palanquin Aluminum pieces, various dimensions Plastic perspex, lights, circle glass pedestal









#### SANCTIFIED CLOUDS 2015

Almost 200 small masses of Sanctified Clouds fly over the wall, foam beautifully and shine in blue hue - the blue of peace, Oriental ceramics, and sacred mosaic paintings in Arabic temples. However, looking closely, we realize that these soft white are not clouds, but actually the masses of dust and smoke bursting all around. Phuong Linh collected images of bomb explosions, initially in the Vietnam War, and then gradually expanded to other conflicting areas in the Middle East. This expansion seems to be a reasonable progression along the history timeline, yet it is strikingly cruel when it demonstrates the repetition as never-ending acts of armed force in human history. To emphasize further the insensitive violence of bombing, Phuong Linh cut off the entire context of the photos, leaving only smoke and dust swirling in midair. When viewers are immersed in seemingly harmless and splendid clouds printed on pottery sheets, one suddenly awakens from the aesthetic illusion and realizes that he or she has fallen into a cloud of burning dust from hundreds thousands of bombs. When the exploded cloud dissolved, another explosion occurred to generate another cloud. They become immortal like saints.

Arlette Quynh Anh Tran - curator of Post Vi Dai Collection



printed porcelain
(18x32cm)



## RUBBER, SOAP, TOBACCO 2 0 1 2

Phuong Linh Nguyen examines the intersection between personal memory and collective history by using these common products as the raw materials for her work. The work consists of three compressed cubes of each of these widely consumed goods by both the Vietnamese working- and middle-classes. Inspired by the familiar, intoxicating aromas from Yellow Star Rubber Factory, Hanoi Soap Factory and Thang Long Tobacco Factory three prominent companies established in the 50s and 60s in Hanoi that proudly marked Vietnam's ability to produce light industrial products for the first time - each dense cube sits on its own iron pedestal and stands strong and stoic like totems of economic power. Despite their minimalistic shape and reference to industrial production, the cubes have a distinctly domestic quality, representing materials commonly found in homes in Vietnam



## WHITE MIST IN FOREIGNC OUNTRY

On going project since 2015

White Mist in Foreign Country is a series of research, conversations, visual studies and art works under the title which Phuong Linh is developing since she moved from Hanoi to Frankfurt for art studies in 2015. The series took its departure from friendships and shared experiences with women from Vietnamese diaspora working in nail salons there.

(Excerpted text courtesy of Suzanne Husse, curator of District Berlin. For more info, please read <a href="http://www.district-berlin.com/en/6122-2/">http://www.district-berlin.com/en/6122-2/</a>)









## CANDIES FOR THU HA 2012

These lemon candies are simply made by mixing sugar and lemon juice. The candies are dedicated to Thu Ha who fled the country to America at the age of 10.



# SALT solo exhibition at Galerie Quynh 2009

Salt comprises a suite of site-specific sculptures, an installation of stylized flowers created with over 700 articles of used clothing as well as photographs and a documentary video. The exhibition is the result of months of research conducted by the artist in the salt villages in Vietnam, from Hai Hau in the north to Sa Huynh in the central and Ba Ria-Vung Tau and Can Gio in the south. Vietnam has the long sea coast that makes the job of mining salt a long history. Through my travel I observed and studied how the geographic and cultural changed the life and beliefs of salt people. A great population of people living near the sea lives by salt mining although the job does not give them good incomes. Mostly the woman and children stay home and make salt while the men go sailing or work in the factory. Making salt in Vietnam are depended on the weather and all handmade. There are no industrial machines involved. Vietnamese salt is not clean and fine but coarse, big, dirty crystal. The exhibition, however, is not simply a documentary or a tribute to the salt communities. Salt reflects Nguyen Phuong Linh's continued interest in transformation and the ephemeral. Her work is often both sensual and sexual, humble and exalted.

For Salt, Nguyen Phuong Linh has created sculptures made completely of this destructive, corrosive, yet life-sustaining mineral. As viewers enter the exhibition, they are confronted with an elegant, pod-shaped sculpture that appears like a beached boat. The compressed salt that makes up the sculpture alludes to the origin and travels of the boat itself - its passage through the saline seas, its surface weathered by exposure to the elements (salt is, after all, the natural enemy of boats). Referencing the stark, spare colors of the salt fields, as well as the Catholic religious sites along the salt villages near by the sea, Linh has created a minimal landscape of over one hundred perfect salt mounds of varying sizes. The sculptures will become less recognizable as mounds as they gradually dissolve during the exhibition leaving traces of salty fluid on the gallery floor. The lone salt pyramid in this landscape, resting on a tray filled with earth, will transform into a softer, more feminine form as water drips onto it from above, runs down its sides and is absorbed into the soil. Over the duration of the show, viewers will be able to witness actual salt crystals forming on the surface of the soil. (Galerie Quynh www.galeriequynh.com)









MELTING
PVC globe, salt, soil, tray
various size





## RAIN UNDER THE TABLE 2023

Phuong Linh created a dialogue with time through a series of simple, mysterious, humorous and melancholy moving images that evoke thoughts about the relationship between nature, animals, oneself and other spirits. The video was captured in various places in Green Island Taiwan, and in Cù Rú bar in Da Lat, Vietnam. The memorial where Phuong Linh set her scenes, once a bunker during the Japanese occupation, now memorial of the politician victims under Chiang Kai-shek era by architect Han Pao Teh evoked Giorgio de Chirico paintings that prompted to search for a landscape, a mise-en-scène in relation to surreal space-time. In the absolute stillness of the landscape and the fury of the big waves, the stoic, slow and repeated movements of the characters led to contemplations of weight and weightlessness, birth and decay, loneliness, the ephemeral and the metaphysical world.

In other places, the bodies are transformed, dislocated and magnified. Body as mental landscape. Body as memory. Body as transgenerational inheritance.

Rain Under The Table 33'04"





91

Through a series of slow and repeated daily rituals, Phuong Linh contemplates the generational circulation and the rebellion of transformed bodies. The video was captured in various places in Worcester such as a skatepark, a gym, a swimming pool, a hotel room, the fine art museum. The characters perform their daily routines, such as sleeping, walking, smoking, swimming.

## They are:

David Thomas: an old friend of Phuong Linh's father's, who is walking 5 to 7 km everyday to fight with parkinson.

Gabby Quynh Anh Miller: her long time artist friend based in San Francisco. Gabby fled to Worcester to see Phuong Linh.

Dinh Nguyễn: a young gen z actress from Worcester that Phương Linh newly met.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/
1f\_BGil-6IWAnYpIJT45pG3xsOTJJtsKk/
view?usp=drive link

## THE ENCOUNTER 2021

The three video installations entitled "The Head," "The Landscape," and "The Encounter" by artist Phuong Linh offer a contemplative journey into the enigmatic and melancholic landscape and culture of the Red River Delta. Through her work, the artist showcases her distinctive aesthetic that captures the natural and cultural artifacts in their geopolitical context.

Most of the footage for the videos was captured in Nam Định province, a land known for its ocean, mangrove forest, salt flats, missionary history, ruined churches, and traditional crafts. It was a place where Phuong Linh accompanied her father on his trips to scout and repair traditional wooden house frames, and where she completed her first research-based project, Salt, at a young age. Nam Định also holds a special place in the artist's heart as it was where many migrated friends she has made and collaborated with in nail salons in Germany departed.

The videos take the form of a continuous stream of memories that flow in reverse from the future to the past, filled with contemplations of inquietude. Phuong Linh's body of work explores fundamental experiences of memory, oblivion, death, continuity, iteration, and parallelity.

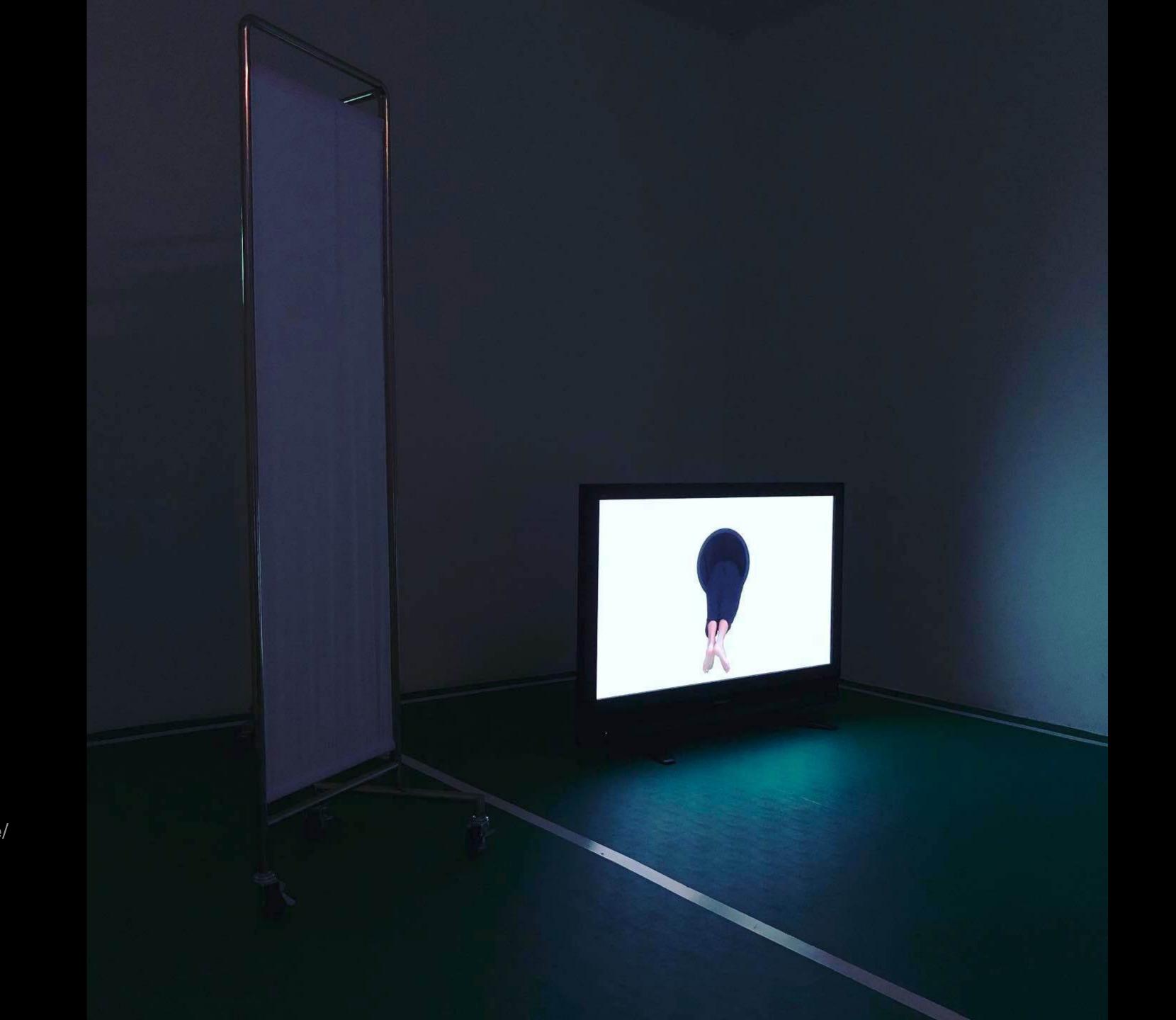




## THE ENCOUNTER 17'

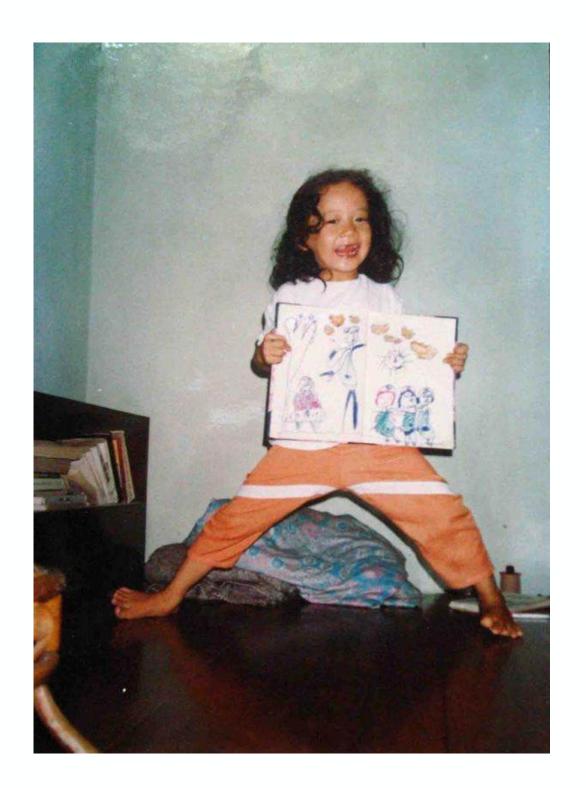
Male characters are entangled in a variety of situations and gestures, facing each other in an unreal labyrinth, amid a desolate landscape of sea, land, and salt. One runs as though being chased, with no destination in sight, one turns old in his own house, one fumbles about trying to ease himself into a heaving black hole made of fabrics, one smokes, one recites lovelorn poems, one slouches in sorrow, and one exercises. All of them are enshrouded under the body of a faceless woman. Phuong Linh's father, at a young age, meets his older self in this performance. The installation incorporates interactive performances from her father, his dear friend, and other artists from Nhà Sàn Collective, Sao La Collective, and Appendix Collective.

Link to video https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\_HOeVOCKHjZz-YjBQ5HjSsNgWZYY8HOy/view? usp=share\_link









Thank you!!!