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## Art of Vietnam in NY Goes Beyond War Trauma To Brain in a Frame and Underwear with Nails

by Matthew Russell Lee, [Patreon Book Substack](#)

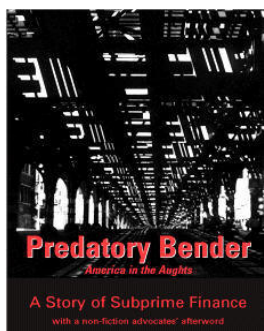
SDNY COURTHOUSE, May 23 – It's not everyday you can go to a show of 17 Vietnamese artists, outside of Vietnam. But May 23 on the far west side of Manhattan in the Eli Klein gallery, the show "Ceci N'est Pas Une Guerre" (This is Not a War, playing off Magritte's pipe) opened.

Despite intermittently pouring rain out on West Street, the two room space was standing room only. Some marveled at the piece that looked different from each angle you looked at it. A metal frame hung in mid-air, focusing attendees on a shape hanging behind it that looked, at least to this viewer, like a brain.

Also hanging was what at first glance looked like the two pieces of a bikini, strangely heavy. The work, by Nguyen Phuong Linh, is called Allergy: "six kilograms of nails on underwears." Not a pipe, indeed.

Eli Klein, who greeted people at the door, pitched the show as breaking Vietnamese art out

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of the "confines of the narrow narratives of war, trauma and survival."

As luck or timing has it, Netflix is now promoting a multi-part series about the Vietnam War, which to its credit interviews more Vietnamese people, from both North and South, than is usually the case. Still the documentary has no art.

This show is not only a good counterbalance: it is great art. Prices are discretely only available via a QR code, and range from \$2300 to \$25,000. Get it while it gets hot!

(The show runs from May 23 to August 23 at 398 West Street, corner of W. 10th Street)

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