



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ceci N'est Pas Une Guerre - This Is Not A War

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014

May 23, 2025 - August 23, 2025

Opening Reception with the artists: Friday, May 23, 2025 | 6-8 PM

Curated by Do Tuong Linh

Artists:

Bui Cong Khanh

Doan Van Toi

Oanh Phi Phi

Xuân-Lam Nguyen

Arlette Quynh-Anh Tran

Van Khanh

Bui Thanh Tam

My-Lan Hoang-Thuy

Nguyen Phuong Linh

Ha Ninh Pham

Tran Luong

Minh Dung Vu

Ca Le Thang

Le Hoang Bich Phuong

Anh Thuy Nguyen

Pham Tuan Tu

Truong Tan

New York, NY, May 23, 2025 - Eli Klein Gallery is thrilled to present "Ceci N'est Pas Une Guerre - This Is Not A War," a group exhibition of 17 Vietnamese artists showcasing 24 works. Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, the exhibition seeks to challenge the long-standing tendency to confine Vietnamese contemporary art within narrow narratives of war, trauma, and survival. Audiences are invited to move beyond inherited narratives and experience the breadth, complexity, and vitality of Vietnamese contemporary art today: unbound, unpredictable, and charged with energy.



Bui Cong Khanh, *Porcelain Medals*, 2018.
140 hand painted porcelain medals.

The exhibition prompts a reconsideration of how Vietnamese visual culture is presented within a global context. While artists have engaged deeply with the past fifty years of history after the War, their works have often been interpreted through the lens of the aftermath. Within the context of Vietnam's massive economic reforms, the artists critically explore themes of identity, censorship, and queerness. The exhibition focuses on a younger generation of artists who reflect on materiality, memory, and mythology, reimagining self and culture beyond the burden of historical trauma. The exhibition also highlights Vietnamese artists living abroad, particularly in America, France and Germany, whose works address themes of displacement, cultural hybridity, and artistic innovation. Curated by Do Tuong Linh, the show brings together the voices that challenge the notion of "Vietnamese art" as a singular concept, creating a layered dialogue that is poetic and political, introspective and globally engaged.

ELI KLEIN

奕 来 画 廊

Emerging in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the implementation of the widespread generation of influential artists responded to history, memory, and the shifting boundaries of identity and expression in deeply personal and resonant ways. Ca Le Thang's compositionally poetic painting serves as a quiet footnote to the natural and spiritual landscapes of southern Vietnam, expressing a deep emotional connection to his homeland's nature and history. Through humor and symbolism, Tran Luong retells a traditional Vietnamese legend in a gently narrated yet subtly subversive manner, reflecting the sociopolitical tensions and transformations of early 21st-century Vietnam.

Truong Tan, who was considered the first openly gay artist from Vietnam, creates work that is both emblematic and groundbreaking in its exploration of social norms and marginalized identities. Blending historical research with conceptual art not taught in Vietnam's educational system, Bui Cong Khanh playfully, yet critically, challenges official reward systems by combining porcelain military insignias from multiple nations to question the authority behind medals. Vietnamese lacquer serves as the core medium in Oanh Phi Phi's practice, through which she explores the transmission of memory, reflections on image theory, and experimental possibilities in scale and technique. Bui Thanh Tam blends the delicate spirit of Vietnamese folk traditions with the bold allure of pop and consumer culture, creating works that are at once challenging, seductive, and provocative.



Ca Le Thang, *Beneath Deep Rivers, Field Submerged No. 3*, 2024.
Oil, acrylic, and mixed media on canvas. 39 3/8 x 67 inches (100 x 170 cm).
Courtesy of the artist, Salon Wiking, and Eli Klein Gallery © Ca Le Thang



Nguyen Phuong Linh, *Allergy*, 2004.
6kg of nails on underwears.

Building on this historical trajectory, a younger cohort turned toward material experimentation, ironic language, and cross-disciplinary methods to address contemporary social issues, incisively engaging with gender, politics, and cultural memory amid Vietnam's rapid transformation. Pham Tuan Tu combines elements of primitivism and humor in his work, using refined craftsmanship and a diverse range of materials to delve into the complexities of contemporary society. Nguyen Phuong Linh weaves personal memories into broader cultural contexts, skillfully transforming found objects and materials to reveal the vulnerability of being a woman in Vietnamese society.

Merging political themes with sci-fi aesthetics, Arlette Quynh-Anh Tran constructs nonlinear and absurd narratives of modern history, challenging dominant post-Cold War frameworks surrounding the Global South. Doan Van Toi and Le Hoang Bich Phuong both explore the contemporary rhythms of traditional media. Toi weaves digital pixels into silk and textiles to reflect on the intricate relationship between humans and nature, while Phuong employs delicate silk to blend surrealism with quiet subversion, questioning gender, eccentricity, and societal norms.



Artistic practice continues to expand into the intersections of new media, speculative narratives, and digital processes, reimagining and reconstructing tradition and identity. Vietnamese art now charts a future-oriented sensibility, forging new dialogues and connections between personal experience and global context. My-Lan Hoang-Thuy redefines the relationship between artist and medium, using acrylic drips as a “canvas” to merge painting with personal photography, creating a visual language where intimacy, spontaneity, and imagination intersect. Ha Ninh Pham explores the construction of territories and perception through drawing and sculpture, creating imagined worlds shaped by his unique logic and underlying sense of skepticism. By sewing dyed silk onto canvas, Minh Dung Vu initiates a dialogue between material surface and visual texture, investigating materiality, light, shadow, and perception.

Xuân-Lam Nguyen brings forgotten Vietnamese folk art into contemporary relevance, focusing on Indochinese Orientalist photography and displaced cultural artifacts, blending autobiographical elements with queer identity to construct glitchy, alternative narratives that offer a dynamic commentary on the intersections of identity and history. Anh Thuy Nguyen’s sculptural works explore the relationship between emotional states and the human body. Through digitizing and transforming everyday Vietnamese domestic objects, Van Khanh creates faux-fiber replicas that exist between physical reality and digital dreamscape, reimagining traditions and mythologies within trans narratives.

About the Curator

Do Tuong Linh is a curator based in Hanoi (Vietnam) and New York City (United States). Linh holds a BA in Art History and theoretical criticism from Vietnam University of Fine Arts, and a MA in Contemporary Art and Art Theory of Asia and Africa, at SOAS (University of London) UK with the prestigious Alphawood scholarship. She is a part of Bard Curatorial Studies program class of 2025 and was part of the curatorial team of 12th Berlin Biennial.

Linh has engaged in various art exhibitions and projects in Southeast Asia, Europe and beyond since 2005. She participated in international arts programs such as Le 18 Curator In Residency 2024, Asia Cultural Council Research Fellowship 2023, Ljubljana Graphic Art Biennial 2019, Slovenia; Association of Art Museum Curators conference, New York, USA; Mekong Cultural Hub 2018 – 2019, Taiwan; CIMAM International Museum Workshop 2018, Oslo, Norway; Asia Culture Center (Gwangju, Korea) 2018; Tate Intensive 2018, Tate Modern Museum, UK; French Encounter at Art Basel in Hong Kong 2018. Some of her notable curated exhibitions include Who is Weaving the Sky Net (Singapore), Means of Production 2024 (New York City, USA), Revived Photo Hanoi 2023 (Hanoi, Vietnam), Berlin Biennial 2022 (Berlin, Germany), Citizen Earth 2020 (Hanoi, Vietnam), The Foliage 3 (VCCA, Vincom Center for Contemporary Arts, Hanoi, Vietnam) 2019, Geo-Resilience of the All-world at La Colonie (Paris, France) 2018, the No War, No Vietnam exhibition at Galerie Nord (Berlin, Germany) 2018, and SEAcurrences (London, UK) 2017.

Inquiries:

Eli Klein Gallery

Phil Cai, phil@galleryek.com | +1 212-255-4388