

rainy season | mùa mưa

Kim Duy studio

15/07/19 - 14/09/19

the exploration of individual subjectivity as the nexus for meaning resonates throughout Kim Duy's studio. his resulting works detail a journey away from the possibility of objectivity, establishing a distance informed by both western critical theory and eastern Buddhist teachings. they excavate a notion of being that is relational and interdependent, and reject a trend for participation from the audience in order to situate the mind, rather than body, as the key mediator of experience. together they provide a kaleidoscopic view of shifting perceptions that locate the individual - and its position in the current moment - as the lens of interpretation through which meaning is generated. using the works not as a tool but rather a stimulus, Duy invites his audience to contemplate the construct of the self through concepts of language, relativity, truth and understanding.

the information offered comes from our public domain: found photographs from the internet, the dictionary, ancient legend - yet its original content is unimportant. instead, Duy's process of arrangement and rearrangement demonstrates how the dissemination of information, over time and through a divergent chain of forms and authors, leaves it reliant on the interpretation of individuals, and presents the integral subjectivity involved in how we perceive truth. looking into the *Field of shredded paper* we see scattered fragments of a narrative. its rectangular shape gives pause for reflection: the field materialises like a photograph, mottled yellow-grey in colour, whose image is no longer discernible, and the paper appears blade-like, akin to grass. devoid of coherence, separated from the rest of their parts, the paper pieces are reconstrued with new significance contingent on the gaze and

inference of their viewers. the work appears characteristic of Duy's practice, as the residue of past performances, from both the artist and arguably those involved in the war and its reporting also. the distraction of action removed, it provides a still space to question the media's ability for objective truth, as well as the validity of emblematic images and singular narratives in the composition of history.

a use of late twentieth-century digital technology combined with other elementary and modest materials, such as pen and paper, allow Duy's works to step out of the flow of time. for the audience it is like looking back to a recent, pre-HD past, at the dominant technologies of the past century which are at once so familiar, but now out of sync with our rapidly evolving digital lives. we notice the present in the absence of its contemporary markers, such as the iPhone or flatscreen TV, as just one way Duy encourages his audience to assimilate into their own current of experience with his works. *On tracing myth* is an example of how Duy's works systematically deconstruct meaning and reach for the infinite. the original work is removed from the ongoing series of textual expansions and contractions, where each word is placed randomly in a cloud-like shape on one page, only to be recontextualised on the next, with new meanings emerging, as the words are remade in a traditional, linear form. grammatical pointers such as full stops and commas are eliminated, only the capitalisation of pronouns remains. by removing the starting point of the original text, Duy emphasises both the limitless and circular nature of time and our actions within it. in the unlimited repetition of the act we see the possibility for eternity to exist in a single moment, and a chance to transcend the present through our contemplation of it. the removal of the original further problematises the concept of authenticity: the content of the copies is dislocated and their message destabilised, signifieds with their signifiers removed and remade in a rejection of a single, authentic

meaning or self. Duy instead uses the formal reality of the text to indicate the self as a prism of understanding for the material world, where multiplicities coexist as interconnected and without hierarchy.

this return to the concrete reality of the signified is continued in the work *Vietnamese-Vietnamese Dictionary (TVs on chairs)*, where 33 versions of the same mouth simultaneously speak the words - minus their definitions - listed for each of the 33 letters of the Vietnamese alphabet. placed in front, behind and next to one another on the floor and on chairs, the installation can be read like a visual word cloud or paragraph. each speak act asserts the here and now of the current moment, emphasising the perpetual nature of the present through a constant reentering of time's ceaseless flow as each word begins anew. sometimes the words chime together, sometimes overlapping and at other times stretching apart, creating deviating temporal dimensions that rub against each other, keeping the audience alert to their placement within the cacophony. the audience, however, is rendered passive; the submissive experience of watching TV reflecting the same obedience with which we acquire language. despite being integral to the formation of our inner consciousness and the mechanism with which we explore our own minds and being, it remains a foreign element. Duy removes the definition of each word to stress how language comes to us already fully formed, as an instrument we need to learn to use, and one which we must master in order to play our own song. through a process of systematic deconstruction, Duy reduces the entirety of language to its immediate reality, showing the entirety of its possibilities for past and future combinations as contained within the present moment of the individual.

together, the works in Duy's studio convey a sense of dis-information symptomatic of the modern condition, yet they retain autonomy from their immediate context, leaving their meaning to be constructed by

the individual viewer's subjective experience. this presentation of information without comment allows them to act like neutral agitators of the current moment, protecting the chance for multiple readings. through his studio Duy points to a suggestion of individual responsibility. having taken the time to speak to his audience through his art, the onus is placed on the audience to construct their own meaning to take away.

text by Maria Sowter

list of works

1. *Field of shredded paper*
2017
copy paper
3250 x 6550 cm
edition of five, plus one artist proof (edition one collected)



over the course of three weeks, 2000+ photographs of the Vietnam War found from the internet, were printed and shredded immediately using a paper shredder. the original photographs existed only momentarily within a process of view–print–shred–repeat before being reformed on the floor as a newly imagined as a field of shredded paper. shown courtesy of the Post Vidai collection.

3. *Vietnamese-Vietnamese Dictionary (TVs on chairs)*
2019
video installation
33 channel video (17 channels installed for studio)
variable lengths



for each of the 33 video the camera is framed close-up on a single mouth. the same mouth proceeds to read from each of the 33 letters listed in the Vietnamese dictionary. starting simultaneously, the mouths' speech falls out-of and in-sync as they progress through the words listed, minus the context of the definition.

4. a.b.s.t.r.a.c.t.i.o.n
2016
copy paper, printer
dimensions variable



using programmed software a printer is used to print 9,979,200 variations of the word “abstraction”. each repositioning of the letters is random and meaningless, producing ambiguities. however, within the mathematical matches, combinations of words in comprehensible positions arise, opening the piece to interpretation, just like the title of the piece itself.

about the artist

through a multidisciplinary practice, Kim Duy questions the reading of history through visual art practice and the performative nature existing behind still images. his work often uses modest materials, such as paper, to explore interests in minimalism, experimentation and abstraction. Kim Duy was born in Hanoi, Vietnam in 1987. he studied painting at the University of Fine Arts, Hanoi from 2005 to 2008 before moving to Germany in 2009. he graduated in 2014 from the Academy of Fine Arts, Nuremberg. in 2018 Kim Duy was selected as an A. Farm resident artist for the July to December season in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and joined the MoT+++ artist collective. his work can be found in the Post Vidai and the Nguyen Art Foundation collections.

about MoT+++

MoT+++ is an artist-run contemporary art space in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. it hosts an ever-growing series of exhibitions, performances, presentations, workshops, sound events and residencies from international and locally-based artists. it takes a fluid and responsive approach to programming that prioritises artists, and acknowledges the creative process as often non-linear and divergent. it collaborates with artists to help them push the boundaries of their practice, together investigating the gallery site as a '+1 nice place for experimentation'.

established as a project space in 2015, MoT+++ has since expanded to include MoT (sound), a +1 museum by any other name, +1 collective, +1 library and +1 residency. resident artists are hosted by both MoT+++ and the international art residency, A. Farm, that it co-founded in 2018. additional +1s are continually added as the space grows and develops its artistic and collaborative practices.