



Lien Truong, *The Peril of Angel's Breath*, 2018, oil, silk, acrylic, antique 24k gold-leaf obi thread, 19th century American cotton, antique obi mourning cloth on canvas, 244 x 183 cm

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

October 10, 2018

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam – Galerie Quynh is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Lien Truong titled *Mutiny in the Garden*, the artist's third solo show at the gallery. Born in Vietnam and based in the US, Truong employs a rich pastiche of styles uniquely her own as she explores the cultural dynamics of domination, assimilation, and resistance throughout history.

The show takes its title from a new body of work inspired by *The Course of Empire* by the Hudson River School painter Thomas Cole. Despite Cole's opposition to Manifest Destiny during a time of rampant genocide against the Native Americans, the romanticized landscapes produced by the



Hudson River School ultimately fed the public desire for westward expansion, evincing the disturbing ease with which art can be yoked to the ends of empire – a phenomenon also evidenced by Abstract Expressionism, which was collected and promoted by the CIA for propaganda purposes during the Cold War.

Critically borrowing from the aforementioned painting movements (and many others), Truong's *Mutiny* paintings feature sweeping Ab-Ex brushstrokes juxtaposed with landscapes in the style of Cole, as well as figurative elements inspired by Japanese war prints, which the artist paints on silk and then attaches to the canvas. The backgrounds are divided by a two-color gradient, generating a hybrid space between the horizon line in western painting and the void in Asian art. Asian style wave motifs allude to imperialism and immigration, while elsewhere Truong reproduces textile patterns from around the globe, carefully selected for their embedded histories of exclusion or assimilation, as well as for their contemporaneity to specific incidents referenced in the paintings.

Tattered fragments of the Confederate flag flutter in the titular work *Mutiny in the Garden*, alongside French, American, and African textile patterns and a view of The Great Dismal Swamp – a place of refuge for escaped slaves in the lead up to the American Civil War. In the painting *The Peril of Angel's Breath*, textiles from Japan and Vietnam intersect with an image of the Manzanar internment camp for Japanese Americans during World War II as a mushroom cloud billows overhead. Such references to narratives of resistance and protest are prevalent throughout the *Mutiny* paintings. One thinks of the iconic civil rights figure Fred Korematsu, who fought the legality of Japanese internment taking his case all the way to the Supreme Court. Truong inverts the gaze of power and turns History Painting on its head; an inversion reflected in the background color gradients, wherein the dark tones appear above the "horizon" and light tones appear below, as is rarely the case in western landscape paintings.

The exhibition also features a new series of miniature oil paintings titled *Translatio Imperii*, denoting the divine right of kings to rule in succession. Disrupting the white male-dominated lineage of painters who make up the canon of modern art, Truong appropriates the faux abstract expressionist brushstrokes of Roy Lichtenstein, turning them into windows looking onto what appear to be bucolic landscapes, which upon closer inspection reveal themselves to be war zones, painted in a manner reminiscent of the Hudson River School and pockmarked with craters from American bombing campaigns.

Mounted in ornate black frames, each piece is fitted with a brass plaque bearing the bombed country's name and the year of the bombings. The matte black from the frame spills onto the canvas, consuming it almost completely; only the "brushstroke" of the "heroic artist" pierces through the veil of darkness to reveal traces of violence on the other side. Exemplifying the



concept of heterotopia as defined by Foucault, Truong's work constitutes a space in which contradiction and otherness can exist. Acknowledging the conflicts and fault lines that run throughout our post-modern society, she nevertheless continues to trace vectors of escape and redemption.

Artist:	Lien Truong
Exhibition Title:	<i>Mutiny in the Garden</i>
Exhibition Dates:	October 19 – November 29, 2018
Opening Reception:	Thursday, 18 October from 6:30 – 8:30pm
Venue:	Galerie Quynh 118 Nguyen Van Thu, Dakao, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City
Contacts:	Ms. Celine Alexandre – celine@galeriequynh.com Ms. Nguyen Khanh Huyen – huyen@galeriequynh.com
Telephone:	+84 28 3822 7218
Hours:	10am – 7pm, Tuesday – Saturday, and by appointment

ABOUT LIEN TRUONG

Lien Truong's paintings examine social, cultural, and political history, exploring the influences that form contemporary identity and belief systems in a transcultural context.

Truong's work has been exhibited in numerous institutions such as the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, TX; Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC; Cameron Art Museum, Wilmington, NC; the Centres of Contemporary Art in Moscow and Yekaterinburg; Oakland Museum of California; and Pennsylvania Academy of Art, PA. Truong is the recipient of many awards and fellowships. She has participated in residencies at the Oakland Museum of California and the Marble House Project. Her work is in major collections such as the Linda Lee Alter Collection, Philadelphia, PA; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; Post-Vi Dai Collection, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Geneva, Switzerland; and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Vietnam among others. Born in Saigon, Vietnam, Truong immigrated to the US in 1975. She received her MFA from Mills College, Oakland, CA. Truong is currently Assistant Professor of Art at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



ABOUT GALERIE QUYNH

Recognized as Vietnam's leading contemporary art gallery, Galerie Quynh has been promoting contemporary art practice in the country for almost two decades. The gallery is known internationally for its consistently focused programming and educational initiatives. Working with a select group of emerging, mid-career and established Vietnamese artists, the gallery also exhibits the work of distinguished artists from around the world. In keeping with its mission to develop a sustainable ecosystem for the arts in Vietnam, the gallery collaborates with artists, curators, museums and art spaces locally and internationally to organize talks and lectures as well as to produce publications in English and Vietnamese. In May 2014 the gallery founded the non-profit educational initiative Sao La. Currently spearheaded by Ho Chi Minh City-based artists Nguyen Kim To Lan and Nguyen Duc Dat, Sao La comprises a young, diverse group of passionate creatives working loosely as a collective.

A new chapter began in December 2017 when the gallery moved to a 600 sqm space in Dakao, District 1. Spread over four floors, the gallery is able to produce more ambitious programming and play an even more vital role in the cultural community in Vietnam.

www.galeriequynh.com

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