

Aragna Ker Ann Phong

Hung Viet Nguyen

Huynh Thuy Chau

Nguyen Khai

Nguyen Ly

Olga Lah Nuttaphon Mia

Sayon Syprassoeuth

Trinh Ponce

Viet Le Tuan Phan



Vietnamese American Arts & Letters Association (VAALA) proudly presents a visual art exhibit entitled transformART. The exhibit aims to show how the creative process can provide alternative ways of looking at concepts such as environmental stewardship / degradation, beauty / trash, consumerism, and the "disposable" culture. Twelve diverse Asian American artists will exhibit an intriguing array of works created from found, recycled, or repurposed materials. VAALA strongly believes that transformed art has the potential to transform entrenched viewpoints and habits. The goals of the exhibit and its related events are to engage an ethnically and socially diverse community and elicit community dialogue about topics that are pertinent to our times.

James Dinh  
Curator

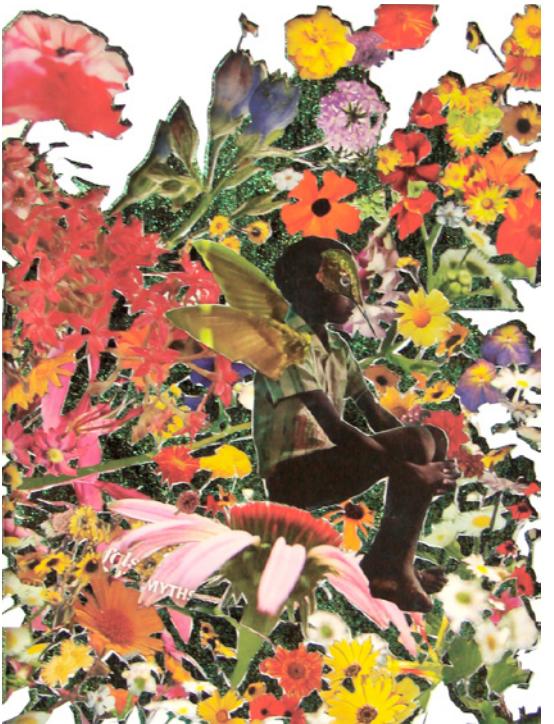


**Jump**  
Mixed media | 62" h x 42" w



**Food Talk**  
Mixed media | 24" h x 24" w X 8" d

Ann Phong received her MFA in painting from California State University, Fullerton in 1995, and has participated in VAALA off and on since 1994. Phong has actively exhibited in more than 60 solo and group shows in galleries and museums, and her work has been widely shown in Los Angeles, Orange County, San Jose, Oakland, San Francisco, Houston, Vancouver, Paris and even as far as Japan. Ann currently teaches art at California State University, Pomona. Since 2007, she has been invited by the College Board of Education as one of the readers to score AP Studio Art for high school students' art portfolios. She has also been invited to speak at many high schools, colleges, universities, galleries and museums on the subject of her own work and the work of other Vietnamese American artists.



**Mystical Garden**  
Paper collage | 20"*h* x 16"*w*

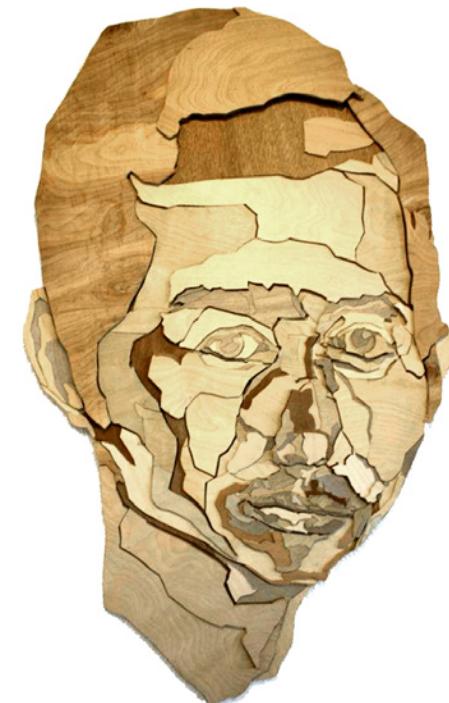


**Touch the Sky**  
Paper collage | 36"*h* x 24"*w*



**A Knight's Tale**  
Paper collage | 36"*h* x 24"*w*

A native of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Aragna Ker graduated with a BFA in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute and a MFA in sculpture from Claremont Graduate University. Essential experience serves as springboard for Aragna's methodology. His playful works fuse cultural symbols and myth to explore the vast range of hybrid identities. His drawings and sculptures utilize the potency of motive to curiously attack simplistic materials.



**Portrait of My Father as a Young Man**  
Salvaged wood | 48"*h* x 36"*w*

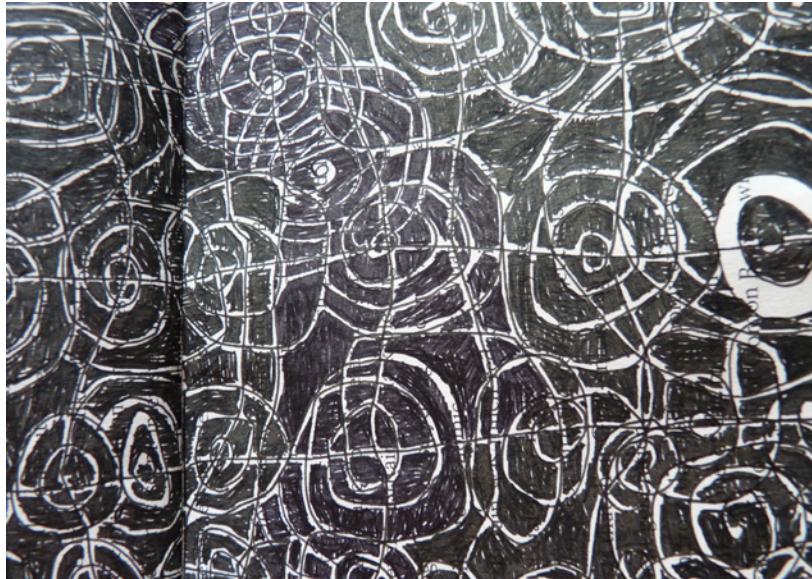
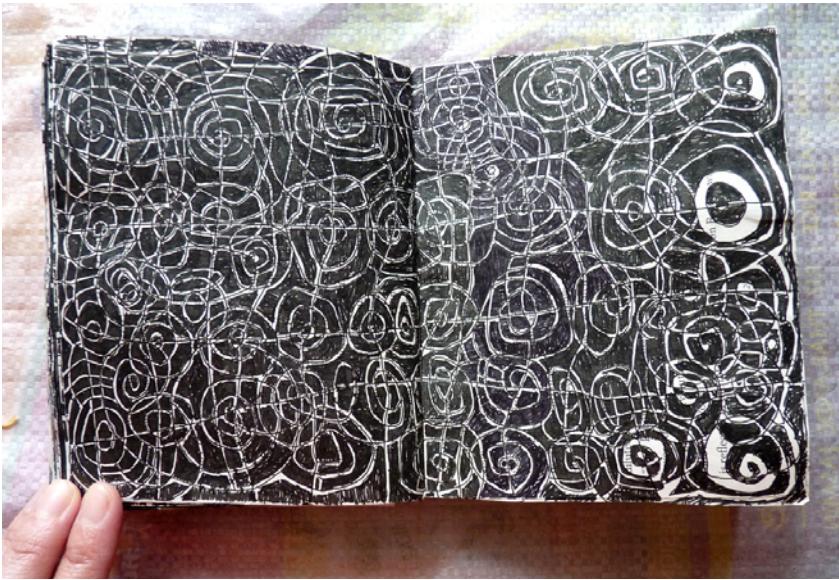


**Jellyfish**  
Acrylic paint on used car hubcaps



**Chorus**  
Oil paint on found rocks

Artist Hung Viet Nguyen was born in Saigon, Vietnam in 1957. He studied Biology at Science University in Saigon, Vietnam, then works as illustrator, graphics artist and designer since settled in US in 1982. He developed his artist's skills independently, studying many traditional Eastern and Western forms, media and techniques. Nguyen's complex, labor-intensive investigations of oil paint reveal a methodical mastery of texture. While portions of Nguyen's work suggest the influence of many traditional art forms including woodblock prints, oriental scroll paintings, ceramic art, mosaic, and stained glass, the ultimate expression asserts a contemporary pedigree.



**The Three Hundred (Books #2, #3, #4, #5)**  
Set of bound books made from old library books

The *Three Hundred* series was inspired by the single-minded tenacity that was required to construct the 300-km-long Cu Chi tunnels in southern Vietnam during the war, using only rudimentary tools fashioned from remnant American supplies. The act of drawing everyday on different pages of found books parallels the inch-by-inch digging that was spurred on by one ultimate goal.

Huynh Thuy Chau graduated from U.C. Berkeley, majoring in fine arts and social welfare, and received her M.F.A. from UC Davis. Her artwork is in a constant process of change as each project represents her intentions to understand and use past experiences. She often employs found and repurposed materials in her artwork. She currently resides in Seattle.



**Salvation**

Electronic parts & mixed-media | 40" h x 40" w



**Eve of the 21st Century**

Electronic parts & mixed-media | 37" h x 43" w



**Moonlight**

Electronic parts & mixed-media | 30" h x 24" w

This series of assemblage paintings, called *Mankind and Computers*, was done from 1993-96, many years before people started to consider the tremendous impact that electronic waste would contribute to our environment.

Nguyen Khai was born in Hue, Vietnam in 1940. He graduated from the National School of Fine Art in 1963 and is a founder of the prestigious Association of Young Vietnamese Artists. Even before his graduation from the school of fine art, Nguyen Khai won the Bronze Medal at a spring Art Exhibition in Saigon. After six years under the Communist regime, in February 1982, Nguyen Khai escaped by boat to Indonesia. Nguyen Khai has exhibited internationally in Vietnam, Paris, Tokyo, Tunis, Sao Paolo, New Delhi, Houston, Virginia and Florida. His local exhibition credits include shows in Tustin, Garden Grove, Westminster, Irvine, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Torrance, Los Angeles, Burbank and San Diego.



**Untitled**

Print on tea bags | 72" h x 36" w



**Untitled**

Paper, metal wire, bamboo,  
tea, methylcellulose | 60" h x 18" w x 8" d

Nguyen Ly is a multimedia artist and art educator with a focus on printmaking. He has exhibited throughout California and in locales as diverse as Springfield, Missouri, and Guadalajara, Mexico. Born in Vietnam, Nguyen is a member of the Latino printmakers' network Consejo Gráfico and the printmaking collective Los de Abajo.



House Study No. 001 . Made in The China Outpost  
Mixed-media | 13.5" h x 14" w x 7" d

Using the architectural landscape of the artist's ancestral village as a point of departure, *House Study No. 001* is made from castoff materials such as discarded wood scraps, plastic grocery bags and fabric taken from the artist's retail day job.

Nuttaphol Ma is a multi-media artist originally from Bangkok, Thailand. He received a B.A. in economics from the Uni. of Calif., San Diego; an M.B.A. from Thunderbird School of Global Management; a M.Sc. in architectural conservation from the Uni. of Hong Kong; and an M.F.A. in installation from Claremont Graduate Uni. He has received awards from the Calif. Community Foundation Irvine Fellowship, Feitelson Arts Fellowship, Armory Center for the Arts Honorarium, Richter Watson Fellowship Fund, and the Walker / Parker Memorial Fellowship.



**Untitled**

Discarded zippers | 7'h x 13'w approx.

Olga received a double B.A. in Studio Art and Art History from the University of California at Riverside and a M.A. in Theology from Fuller Theological Seminary. She has exhibited most recently at the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Torrance Art Museum and Gallery 825 in Los Angeles, and was a twice recipient of a Getty Multicultural Intern Alumni Fellowship and a recipient of a supported residency at the Can Serrat International Art Center in Spain.

"I am interested in the accumulation, repetition and presentation of humble materials to question perception and the nature of reality. I am after a kind of precarious monumentality, built from repetitious labor and craft. I want to point to transcendence in my work and remind the viewer of her or his physicality. I feel sculpture and installation work engages in this kind of sensory experience in a unique way."



**The Art of Being Royal**  
Found materials | 7'h x 3'w x 3'd



**Birth of the Dragon Lady**  
Found materials | 5'h x 5'w x 4'd

Sayon Syprasoeuth is a mixed-media installation artist living and working in Garden Grove, California. A survivor of the Khmer Rouge, he and his family escaped Cambodia under the protection of the night sky to Thailand, where they lived in multiple Thai refugee camps. His artwork is influenced by stories and folklores told by village and by stage theater. Sayon graduated from California State University Long Beach in 2003 and Claremont Graduate University in 2007 with an M.F.A. His works have been shown in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; China; Berlin; Los Angeles; and throughout the United States.



**The happiness of being (laughing king)**  
Found materials | 9'h x 7'5"w x 4'd



Trinh Ponce . All American  
Junk mail | 72" h x 36" w

"We as Americans have become addicted to shopping for different types of goods over the years and the type of paper ads that repetitiously come through our mail are ads for eateries, grocery stores, Target and phone/internet services. In a way these ads cause people to over spend on things that are not necessarily healthy or beneficial to their well-being. My intention is to create a piece symbolic of the American flag and weaving the strips of cut out ads together to create an awareness that even though the U.S. was built on traditions and Christian values and beliefs, somehow we are still being swayed into the material world with the bombardment of ads to buy things that we don't need. The weaving of papers creates a quilt which again is symbolic of the American heritage."

Born in Vietnam, Trinh and her family relocated to the United States in 1987. While studying graphic design at California State University, Long Beach, she developed an interest in fiber arts. In 2003 she graduated with a BFA degree in fiber arts and 3D design.

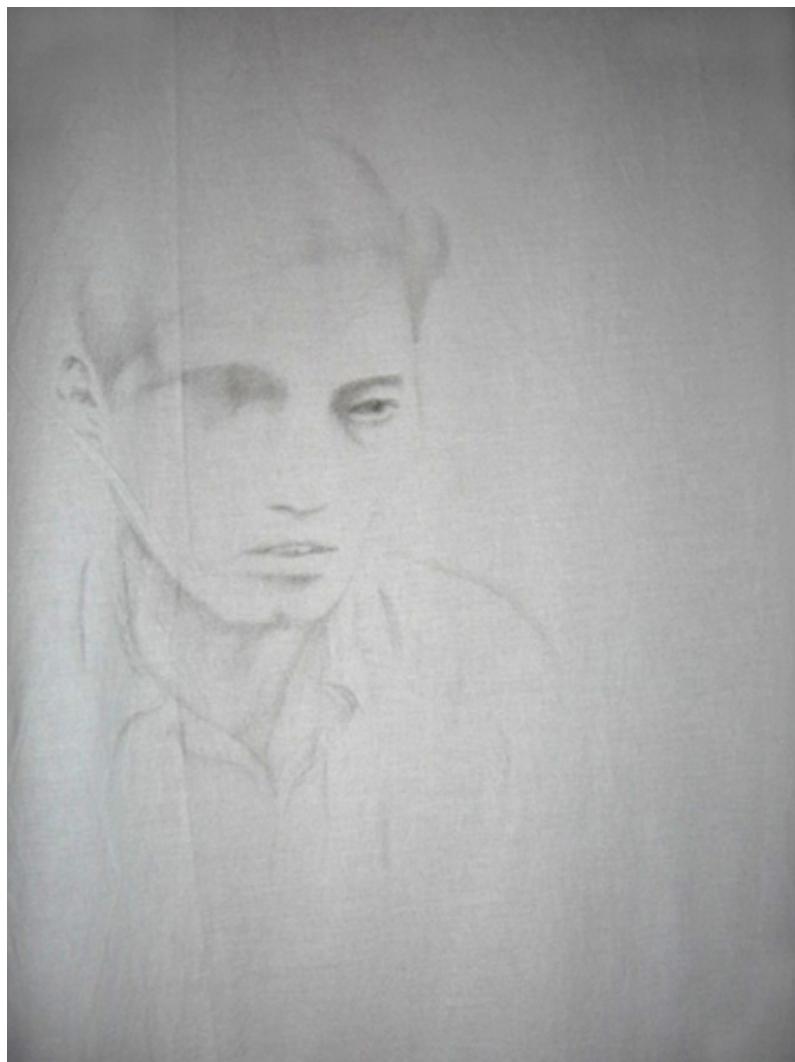


**Node #1**  
Ceramic and mixed-media | 12" h x 13" w x 5" d



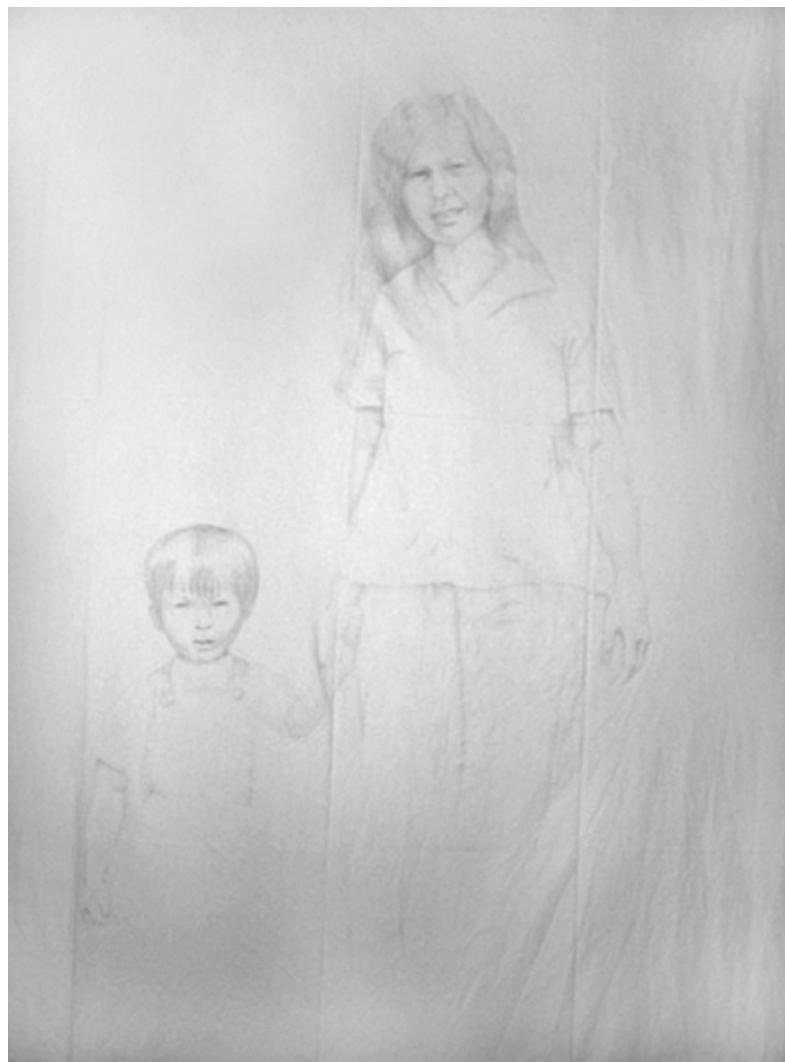
**Node #6**  
Ceramic and mixed-media | 25" h x 8" w x 7" d

Tuan Phan is a Vietnamese-American artist who considers the human body to be a metaphorical map that physically charts the course of personal journeys. Phan associates his artwork with Buddhist teachings about life and death, reminding viewers that their physical existence on earth is impermanent. Tuan received a B.A. in art with an emphasis in drawing and sculpture from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and an M.F.A in Studio Arts with emphasis on painting from California State University, Los Angeles.



Untitled #2

Graphite & acrylic on bedsheets | 106" h x 56" w



Untitled #8

| 12" h x 13" w | 100" h x 58" w

The series of life-sized drawings and paintings on used bed sheets is based on old family and archival images. It is a musing on the afterlife of trauma, the politics of representation, and the traces of wars past and present.

Viet Le is an artist, academic, creative writer, and curator. Viet received his M.F.A. from the University of California, Irvine, where he has also taught Studio Art and Visual Culture courses. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Southern California and is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Academia Sinica, Taipei. He has received fellowships from the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, Fulbright-Hays, William Joiner Center, Fine Arts Work Center, Center for Khmer Studies, and PEN Center USA.



# VIETNAMESE AMERICAN ARTS & LETTERS ASSOCIATION

Nov 2      Fri      7-10pm  
Nov 17      Sat      11-4pm

**VAALA Cultural Center**  
**1600 N. Broadway, Suite 210**  
**Santa Ana, CA 92706**  
**[www.vaala.org/transformart](http://www.vaala.org/transformart)**

Opening reception  
Closing reception

Gallery hours: Sat & Sun 11-4pm  
and by appointment

The Vietnamese Arts & Letters Association would like to extend a deep appreciation to all the artists who made this exhibition possible. Thank you for showing us how to

**REDUCE**

**REUSE**

**RECYCLE**

**and**

**most importantly**

**REIMAGINE**