

Endless, Sightless

Nhà Sàn Collective

Do Van Hoang
Le Xuan Tien
Nguyen Duc Huy
Nguyen Phuong Linh
Nguyen Trinh Thi
Ta Minh Duc
Truong Que Chi



Endless, Sightless

28 September - 19 October 2019

Middle Gallery and Black_Box

Nhà Sàn Collective

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Black_Box

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ENDLESS, SIGHTLESS

*Endless, Sightless** speaks of a state of difficulty in attempting to see things clearly, given the conditions – either from the external reality or the internal mind – like layers upon layers of fog, or of ocean waves. This Seeing, in its nature, is akin to an awareness of the space-time to which one belongs, from which a personal vantage point might shed light upon itself as much as others.

In the two selections of films from members of Nha San Collective – to be screened concurrently in two adjacent spaces – viewers experience both the visual worlds and the stories the artists have conjured. An interesting dynamic between practices of moving image employed by Nha San Collective artists of different generations is thus revealed.

In similar attempts to review history with clarity, for questioning and meditating upon the present, Nguyen Trinh Thi uses found footage that explores collective memories while Nguyen Phuong Linh captures landscapes – natural or artificial – that are haunted by turbulences of the past. Ta Minh Duc points his camera to the city ever expand-

ing in all directions, from a vast waste-treatment site to the height of skyscrapers. His main character – a young man – might as well be a wanderer in the video game built by Nguyen Duc Huy, a chaotic universe where everyone tries to find their place. This young man also constantly traverses the in-between space of Le Xuan Tien, made up of thousands of fingers.

Additionally, the 2 film series, made 5 years apart, about Nha San Collective offer us another approach to portraiture of the observers-artists, the connection between them within the art context of Vietnam. We see a liberating energy of the beginning, despite many challenges when Nha San Collective was founded in 15+. The most recent film, *Sleep and then Behold*, was produced during the spaceless period of the collective after three relocations.

It is a tribute to the initial space, the birthplace of Nha San's spirits, home of Mrs. Luong and Mr. Manh Duc. Among the gatherings, with tea and food and chit-chat, are the quiet moments, the rhetorical questions by artists of different generations. Isn't practicing art also an attempt to see, to recognize oneself? Truong Que Chi

**Endless, Sightless* (Trùng Mù), title of Nguyen Phuong Linh's video work, 2014-2016

Artworks



MIDDLE GALLERY

Memory of the Blind elephant, 2014-2016

HD, color, sound, 14 mins

Nguyen Phuong Linh

Phuong Linh's film *Memory of the Blind Elephant* (2014-2016) navigates the environment of a domesticated elephant who is part of an entanglement of life in the post-colonial ecologies in Central and Southern Vietnam. Rubber trees in large plantations, insects, humans, lizard, streams and machines are the other intersections of histories, technologies and becoming which her film connects with the white choreographies of rubber processing and the mechanics of 'land reorganization' since French colonization. (from text by Suza Husse)

Song to the front, 2011

B&W, sound, 5 mins 14s

Nguyen Trinh Thi

Song to the Front abstracts a feature-length 1970s Vietnamese war propaganda film and its aesthetic and political elements into a 5-minute vignette. Set to Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, which represented a sacred pagan ritual in pre-Christian Russia where a young girl dances herself to death to propitiate the god of Spring, *Song* deconstructs the melodramatic and romanticized elements of the original social-realist drama. Playing with the original plot line in an ambiguous manner, the filmmaker desires an imaginative space for the viewer's reinterpretation of the historical event and perspective.

Film no. 3, 2019

HD, color, sound, 24 mins 38s

Ta Minh Duc

Film no. 3 is the third film I have made in the series of 5 short films about family. As an adult, the son takes up the responsibility of

preparing for the funeral of his family's just deceased dog. In search of funeral options for the dog, he takes some time to reminisce before its permanent departure from life. (Ta Minh Duc)

Come in Come, 2018

HD, color, sound, 6 mins 24s

Nguyen Duc Huy

Inspired by and follows the rules of a Vietnamese children's group game called "The Crocodile comes ashore", the work/game unfolds continuously, without beginning, without end. When no one participates in the interaction, it operates like a video. When someone participates in the interaction (by way of altering the running route of a character), it operates like a video game.

Open the Door between the Bedroom and the Balcony, 2018

HD, color, silence, 14s
with A4 papers of the screenplay, Le Xuan Tien

Everytime getting a headache after wake up from a sleep, I usually have a cigarette at the balcony like a habit. In one Saturday night, the moment when I stepped out of the bedroom, and did not get to the balcony yet, I was in the middle of those two spaces, my presence at that moment was belonged to the space of the door. The curiosity and my desire to describe the door started from that moment. (Le Xuan Tien)

Landscape Series #1, 2013

Color, sound, 5 mins

Nguyen Trinh Thi

As the journey starts, wide empty landscapes make one wonder what one is looking for. A mysterious object? A crime scene? Something horrifying? The scenes are getting more and more specific, but they do not lead to any

concrete solution – only an injury in place of a metaphor.

Drowning Dew, 2017

HD, color, sound, 39 mins

Collaboration of Art Labor Collective with
Truong Que Chi & Do Van Hoang

Drowning Dew is a critical yet poetically fictional depiction of rapid changes of environment, landscape, human habits and society in Central Highlands of Vietnam. The film series contain 6 mini pieces that are loosely based on Jrai myth of posthumous metamorphosis. The myth acts as an open narrative framework, and as allegory of inevitable transformation of the area during the modernization and industrialization, which occur also in different regions in South-east Asia.

Endless, Sightless, 2018

HD, color, sound, 9 mins

Nguyen Phuong Linh

Endless, Sightless begins with two figures behind a curtain patterned with foliage: a feminized cyborg is bent over another body to engage in some facial operation. Their interaction is accompanied by the repetitive sound of a laser machine for the removal of dark pigmentation in the human skin, which sound binds the visual and temporal movements of the whole film. Oscillating between different intensities of blurring, blinding, and obfuscating the images it creates, the video drama by Phuong Linh Nguyen slowly unfolds a generic and timeless space of cosmetic technology. From the choreography of textiles and textures, of material and gaseous states, of human and non-human bodies, the beauty salon emerges as a manifestation of capitalist corpofiction, migrant labor, and global toxic bonds. (from text by Suza Husse)

Monitor: Sleep and then Behold, 2018

HD, color, sound, 80 mins

Do Van Hoang

A woman asleep. Around her: paintings, antiques, dark shadows. The house and the stage entwine.

BLACK_BOX

Nha San 15+, 2014

HD, color, sound, 46 mins 15s

Ta Minh Duc

The story about the beginning of Nha San Collective in 2013 with their first location at Zone 9, an abandoned medicine factory which would become a complex of creative spaces in Hanoi. After six months, however, Zone 9 was forced to close.

Artist Information



Nguyen Phuong Linh (b. 1984) is a Hanoi-based artist whose multidisciplinary practice spans installation, sculpture and video. Her materials, such as salt, dust and rubber, and research interests deal with the transformation of geopolitical landscapes, human manipulation of nature, and alternative historical perspectives of modern Vietnam. Phuong Linh has participated in the Singapore Biennale, Kuandu Biennale Taipei and Shanghai Biennale in 2016. In 2017 she received Pollock Krasner award. Most recently in 2018, she realized her solo show *Trùng Mù – Endless Sightless* at BACC Bangkok as the winner of Hans Nefkens BACC award. Nguyen Phuong Linh is the co-founder and member of Nha San Collective's curator board.

Nguyen Trinh Thi (b. 1973) is a Hanoi-based independent filmmaker and video/media artist. Her diverse practice has consistently investigated the role of memory in the necessary unveiling of hidden, displaced or misinterpreted histories; and examined the position of artists in the Vietnamese society. Nguyen studied journalism, photography, international relations and ethnographic film in the United States. Her films and video art works have been shown at festivals and art exhibitions including *Jeu de Paume*, Paris; *CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux*; the *Lyon Biennale 2015*; *Asian Art Biennial 2015*, Taiwan; *Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial 2014*; *Singapore Biennale 2013*; *Jakarta Biennale 2013*; *Oberhausen International Film Festival*; *Bangkok Experimental Film Festival*; *Artist Films International*; *DEN FRIE Centre of Contemporary Art*, Copenhagen; and *Kuandu Biennale, Taipei*. Nguyen Trinh Thi is founder and director of Hanoi DOCLAB, an independent center for documentary

film and the moving image art in Hanoi since 2009.

Ta Minh Duc (b.1991) graduated from the Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema in 2014. His works span film, photography and installation. He narrates modern stories based on myths, fragmented histories or folk literature. Ta Minh Duc shares his contemplations on the alienation of beings and his skepticism about the human's relationships, the latent violence and domination in modern society. Duc's works have been featured in notable exhibitions including *The Foliage 2*, VCCA, Hanoi (2018), *Look for the Divines Being*, *Crafting Home* project, Nha San Collective, Hanoi. (2017); *Skylines With Flying People 3*, Japan Foundation, Hanoi (2016), *Film no.1*, Doclab, Goethe Institute, Hanoi (2016), *DocFest*, Goethe Institute, Hanoi (2016); *Hanoi DocFest*, HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity, Hong Kong (2016); *Behind the Terrain*, Studio Kalanhan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2016); *Choose to Move*, Sàn Art, HCMC (2015); *Mini DocFest*, Hanoi DocLab, Hanoi (2014); *Petite and Smooth*, Nhà Sàn Studio, Hanoi (2014); *Autopsy of the Day*, Goethe-Institut Hanoi (2013); *Escape Mobile Gallery*, *Skylines with Flying People 2*, Japan Foundation, Hanoi (2012).

Nguyen Duc Huy (b. 1995), is an emerging artist who studied at the Vietnam University of Fine Art. He has participated in a photography workshop under the tutelage of Jamie Maxtone Graham at Hanoi Doclab and an art practice workshop at Nha San Collective, instructed by Nguyen Huy An. Group exhibitions in Hanoi include *Hobbling Pe-*

destrian (Nha San Collective, 2016), Emerging artists 5, (Nha San Collective, 2017), Second Opinion, Manzi Art Space.

Le Xuan Tien (b. 1995) is a moving image practitioner currently based in Hanoi, Vietnam. Tien graduated from Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema in 2017 with a degree in Cinematography. Since 2015, he has started to practice independently and work with moving image as his main medium. Tien is relentless focused on examining and exploring the way Individual relationships manifest in various contexts of the Whole.

Do Van Hoang (b. 1987) graduated from the University of Theatre and Cinema at Hanoi. Some of his works include: "Underneath it All" (documentary, 17m), "At Water's Edge" (documentary, 17m), "A Film on Sofa" (short film, 17m), "A Silent Shout" (short film, 20m), "False Brillante" (short film, 22m), "Drowning Dew" (a collaboration with Art Labor Collective) His works have been shown at Hanoi Docfest, Yamagata Film Festival, Centre Pompidou, Times Museum.

Truong Que Chi (b. 1987) is an artist, a curator and a filmmaker. Her practice examines the spectacle of everyday violence in Vietnam and delves into the complex relationship between archive, memory and imagination. Her works have been featured at various local and international film festivals, exhibitions, and symposium, including Site/Shine/Sight, duo show with architectural studio vn-a, The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Vietnam (2018), When I stop by the Cape, solo show, Nhà Sàn Collective, Vietnam (2017); Cosmopolis #1, Centre Pompidou, France (2017); Asian

Film Focus: Time Machine, Objectifs-Centre for Photography and Film, Singapore (2017); Skylines with Flying People 3, Nhà Sàn Collective, Vietnam (2015-2017); South by Southeast. A Further Surface, Times Museum, China (2016). Truong Que Chi is currently a member of Nha San Collective's curator board since 2015. She is also a film lecturer at the Hanoi University of Theatre and Cinema.

Nhà Sàn Collective

Nha San Collective (NSC) was established in 2013 by artists of the younger generation of Nha San Studio - one of the longest-running spaces for creative experimentation founded in 1998 in Hanoi. Operating as an independent and non-profit initiative, the group initiates art projects of various scales and forms, focusing on examining local socio-political contexts and histories. With or without a physical space, NSC serves as a supporting platform for its members as well as seeks and nurtures other young artists in the community by pushing the boundaries of artistic expressions and dialogues in Vietnam. Their main projects, which have been held on numerous occasions, are Skylines with Flying People, Queer Forever! Festival, Emerging Artists program and In: Act Performance Art Festival.



Images

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