

Nguyễn Thế Sơn

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

For a long time the Vietnamese have considered “Nhà Tây” one of the three measurements of happiness. Until now, Vietnamese people often say: “Ăn cơm Tàu, Lấy vợ Nhật, ở Nhà Tây”, which means “Eating Chinese food, marrying Japanese woman, living in French-styled villa”. Without a doubt there are always conflicting opinions about the validity of these measurements. However if we could turn back time and try to imagine Vietnam in the old days when people had to live frugally, we might just be able to understand the reasons behind such living standards.

The words “Tây” (West) and “Tây Dương” (Western) - probably originated from the Chinese language – are still commonly used by the locals to refer to all things beautiful, novelty and imported from abroad. The notion of “Nhà Tây” begins with the introduction of French-styled architecture to Vietnam, which later became a housing design and quality standard popular among the local middle-class. The harmonic blending of Eastern and Western cultural elements in “Nhà Tây” gave birth to the irresistible charm and undeniable values apparent in the architectural heritage of Hanoi. Its story, however, is one of ups and downs – just like the history of Vietnam in the last century.

With Nhà Tây transforms I want to further expand my research on the transformations of urban landscapes, which I have been carrying out in the last 10 years through separate artistic projects. By utilizing a method called “photo-relievo”, I try to dissect the different social and historical layers which have been built, extended and altered on top of these “Nhà Tây” since their beginning. Through this imaginative act of time-traveling, I hope we will be able to see and appreciate not just the journey these architectures have been on, but also the fate and story of their owners throughout the last 100 years.

Artist Biography

Nguyễn Thế Sơn Vietnam

Born in Hanoi – Viet Nam

Education

- 2000 Graduated from Hanoi Foreign Language University – Chinese Dept.
- 2002 Graduated from Hanoi Fine Arts University – Fine Arts Dept.
- 2002 to 2008 Worked at Vietnam Fine Arts University
- 2008 to 2012 Studied Masters course at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing, China
- 2012 Graduated from CAFA, Design Institute, Fine Arts Photography major
- 2012 to current Lecturer at Vietnam Fine Arts University

Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 “From Pho Phai to Nha Mat Pho” exhibition at Eight Gallery, Ho Chi Minh City
- 2013 “Nhà Tây” TRANSFORMS exhibition at Manzi Art Space, Hanoi
- 2012 “HOUSES FACING THE STREET” (Saigon Series) Photo-relievo exhibition at Cactus Contemporary Art Gallery, Ho Chi Minh City
- 2012 “THE ROAD HOME IS FAR AWAY” Photo exhibition at CHULA Art Space, Hanoi
- 2012 “House Facing the Street” Photo-relievo exhibition at Goethe Institut, Hanoi
- 2009 “New Higher Level” painting exhibition at Art Vietnam Gallery, Hanoi
- 2007 “High Above” Photo-installation exhibition at Goethe Institut, Hanoi
- 2005 “Headwash” Photo-installation at Ryllega Gallery, Hanoi

Group Exhibitions

- 2013 “Karaoke” series at Museum of Vietnam University of Fine Arts, Hanoi.
- 2013 “VINATREE” photo-installation at Muong studio in I-CAMP project.
- 2013 “House facing the street” (Karaoke series) in “Asian- Korea Contemporary Media Art Exhibition”, Seoul, Korea.
- 2013 “Nhà Tây” TRANSFORMS photo exhibition at Museum of Vietnam University of Fine Arts, Hanoi
- 2013 “I am looking for the Communal House ” photo exhibition in “Dialog with Đình” Project at Museum of Vietnam University of Fine Arts, Hanoi
- 2013 Photo-Installation “HOUSES FACING THE STREET” (Saigon Series) at Viet Art Center, Hanoi
- 2013 Photo-Installation “MOUNTAIN LINKS WITH MOUNTAIN. RIVER LINKS WITH RIVER” in “RIVER SCAPES IN FLUX” Project at Yangon (Myanmar), Jakarta (Indonesia), Manila (Philippine).
- 2013 “House Facing the Street” Photo-relievo exhibition at Audi showroom, Hanoi
- 2012 “VIETNAM NOW” Exhibition at The Rotunda, Exchange Square, Hongkong Land, Hong Kong
- 2012 “HOUSES FACING THE STREET” Photo- relievo exhibition at “THE START OF A LONG JOURNEY” Excellent Graduation works exhibition at CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China
- 2012 Photo-Installation “MOUNTAIN LINKS WITH MOUNTAIN. RIVER LINKS WITH RIVER” in “RIVER SCAPES IN FLUX” Project at Bangkok, Thailand
- 2012 Photo-Installation “MOUNTAIN LINKS WITH MOUNTAIN. RIVER LINKS WITH RIVER” in “RIVER SCAPES IN FLUX” Project at Goethe Institute in Hanoi, Sai Gon, Vietnam
- 2011 “FOUR SEASONS SUITE” photography series at Viet Art Center, Hanoi
- 2010 “PREMONITION” Photography series in “From the Myth to the Reality” exhibition at Viet Art Center, Hanoi, Vietnam
- 2010 “VINATREE” photo-installation in NẶNG BỒNG NHẹ TẾCH outdoor exhibition, Hue Festival 2010, Hue, Vietnam

- 2010 “NEW HIGHER LEVEL” silk painting series in “CITY IN ART” exhibition at Goethe Institute, Hanoi, Vietnam
- 2010 “FOUR SEASONS” photography series in “ART ON PEACE” exhibition at Beijing, China
- 2009 “Dissolve” photographic series in Teachers’ Art Works exhibition, Viet Art Center, Hanoi
- 2008 “The Group” photo-installation in SH300T exhibiton at L’espace, Hanoi
- 2008 “My Oasis of Silence” photographic exhibition, Art Vietnam Gallery
- 2007 Video-installation “Nuoc xa lua gan” exhibition, Hanoi Fine Arts University
- 2007 Photo-installation “VINATREE”, Hanoi Fine Arts University
- 2006 “Super Conductor” mixed show exhibition, Art Vietnam Gallery
- 2005 Mauvais Goût exhibition, L’espace, Hanoi
- 2005 Photo-installation “Leaf Shadow” in Within the Room exhibition at Goethe-Institut, Hanoi
- 2005 Video “Tree & Life” in Tree exhibition at Hanoi Fine Arts University
- 2004 Photo-installation “Story of Water” in Giving Water an Image exhibition, Hanoi Fine Arts University
- 2003: Teacher of the College exhibition
- 2002: Hanoi Fine Arts Exhibition, Hanoi, Vietnam
- 2001: Eye on the World exhibition, Nokia Award – Asia Pacific, awarded Bronze medal
Vietnam – My Country exhibition, Vietnamese Fine Arts Association
- 2000: National Fine Arts Exhibition, Hanoi, Vietnam