



333 east river road
minneapolis, mn 55455
www.weisman.umn.edu

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for immediate release

contact: christopher james
612-625-9685
james052@umn.edu

digital images available upon request
(see last page of release)



**Weisman exhibition *Changing Identity:
Recent Works by Women Artists from Vietnam*
brings marginalized voices to the forefront**

Exhibition dates: February 1–May 24, 2009
Preview party: Saturday, January 31, 7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (December 1, 2008)—Vietnamese women’s voices—often marginalized—are front and center in the exhibition *Changing Identity: Recent Works by Women Artists from Vietnam*, which opens February 1, 2009 and runs through May 24, 2009 at the Weisman Art Museum.

Changing Identity is the first-ever major U.S. exhibition of Vietnamese women artists. The ten artists in the show work in a range of media from dynamic watercolors on rice paper to ink paintings reminiscent of calligraphy to riveting installations to breath-taking photography. The exhibited works offer rarely-seen perspectives on gender roles, stereotypes, cultural identity, and what it means to be a woman artist in Vietnam.

Vietnamese artists have prospered since the country opened itself to the West twenty years ago. Contemporary Vietnamese art has seen newfound attention on the international art scene—but this attention has been bestowed almost exclusively on men artists. Through their work, the women artists in *Changing Identity* question and challenge that status quo.

According to Dr. Nora Taylor, who curated *Changing Identity*, “Vietnamese men artists emerged on the contemporary art scene because the women were often more concerned about the livelihood of the family, making sure that they still had an income. That’s still residual from a patriarchal system. The women in this show stuck to their artwork, pursued it, were persistent in trying to create and trying to find their own vision.” Taylor is a professor of art history at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Changing Identity fits with the Weisman’s history of mounting exhibitions that give voice to underrepresented groups—particularly cultural groups that are part of the Twin Cities community. In the past year, the Weisman has mounted exhibitions including *Documenting China: Contemporary Photography and Social Change*, and *Changing Hands*, which presented contemporary Native American art.



“The demographics of the Twin Cities are changing from a more homogenous, Northern European population to a varied, diverse, and much more globally far-reaching population,” said Weisman curator Diane Mullin. “You see it in the census but also in neighborhoods, in community centers, in restaurants. We want to address that broadly. Over the last year, our exhibitions have brought artists from those communities to the table. Artists are thinking about identity issues, about being connected to two cultures. They’re talking about identity and what it means to be away from your culture.”

The Weisman is the last stop on *Changing Identity*’s national tour. It has been presented at the Kennesaw State University Art Gallery in Kennesaw, GA; the Crow Collection of Asian Art in Dallas; the Stedman Art Gallery at Rutgers University in Camden, NJ; and the Utah Museum of Fine Arts at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

A full-color catalogue of the same name accompanies *Changing Identity: Recent Works by Women Artists from Vietnam*.

The exhibition’s tour is sponsored by International Arts & Artists in Washington, D.C., a non-profit arts service organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally, through exhibitions, programs and services to artists, arts institutions, and the public. It is supported in part by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and the Henry Luce Foundation. The educational program is supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation, Hanoi Office, and fiscally administered by the Institute of International Education.

For information on additional exhibitions currently at the Weisman, see page 5 of this release.

ABOUT THE WEISMAN

Since its origin in 1934, the Weisman Art Museum has been a teaching museum for the University of Minnesota. Today, education remains central to the museum’s mission to make the arts accessible – intellectually, emotionally, and physically – to the University and public communities.

The Weisman Art Museum is located at 333 East River Road, Minneapolis, on the University of Minnesota campus. Admission to exhibition galleries is always free. For more information on museum hours, driving directions, and parking options, visit weisman.umn.edu.





RELATED PROGRAMS

Programs are free and take place at the Weisman Art Museum unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, January 31, 7:00–10:00 p.m.

EXHIBITION PREVIEW PARTY

Tickets: \$12/\$8 WAM members, seniors and students

Celebrate the opening of Changing Identity. Mingle with artists and curators in an intimate, conversational setting. Enjoy complimentary beverages and a custom menu of delectable Vietnamese hors d'oeuvres, plus mellow lounge grooves courtesy of DJ Etones. Space is limited and advance ticket purchase is recommended. To purchase tickets, call the University of Minnesota Arts Ticket office at 612-624-2345 or visit weisman.umn.edu for online ticket sales.

Sunday, February 1, 2:00 p.m.

VIETNAM RE-IMAGINED

When she arrived in Vietnam after living for nearly three decades as a refugee in the U.S., photographer Phuong M. Do embarked on a project that confronted her feelings of displacement and separation. In this dialogue, Nora A. Taylor, curator of Changing Identity, talks with Do about this project and women's art in Vietnam today. Do received a master's degree in photography at NYU in 2002. She has participated in several group exhibitions and a solo exhibit, Places of Home, at the Asian American Arts Alliance in New York in 1998. Taylor is currently professor and Alsdorf Endowed Chair of Southeast Asian Art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is author of Painters in Hanoi: An Ethnography of Vietnamese Art (2004) and has lectured and published widely on Vietnamese art. In 2004–2005, both women were Fulbright Scholars in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Thursday, February 19, 7:00 p.m. program followed by reception

WHY DOES THE WORK OF ASIAN WOMEN ARTISTS MATTER?

WITH DEEPALI DEWAN, JOAN KEE, AND JIGNA DESAI

For this roundtable discussion, participants will begin by presenting brief responses to the following questions, Pecha Kucha style:

Does the work of Asian women artists matter?

Is presenting artwork yoked by a presumed shared identity valuable? Viable?

For a Pecha Kucha (Japanese for "chit chat") event, each speaker presents a concise statement with 20 images shown for 20 seconds apiece. These succinct presentations are meant to provoke thought and stimulate discussion about these questions amongst all the evening's attendees.

Deepali Dewan is curator of South Asian Arts and Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum and assistant professor of Fine Arts at the University of Toronto. Joan Kee is a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts in Washington, D.C. and assistant professor at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor focusing on modern and contemporary East Asian art. Jigna Desai is associate professor in the department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Minnesota, specializing in Asian American literature and cultural studies, feminist theory, queer/sexuality studies, and South Asian diasporas.

This program is cosponsored by the Consortium for the Study of the Asias at the University of Minnesota.



RELATED PROGRAMS (continued)

Thursday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.

FILM SCREENING: OH, SAIGON (2007), 57 MIN.

WITH DIRECTOR DOAN HOANG

Filmmaker Doan Hoang and her family were on the last civilian helicopter out of Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. In 2000, she began filming family interviews in America and kept the camera rolling as they journeyed back to Vietnam. In seeking to uncover the circumstances of her family's multiple schisms, Doan has compiled a documentary account that reveals the humanity of those who were soldiers, wives, children, prisoners, revolutionaries, and refugees.

Doan Hoang is an award-winning producer, director, and writer of films, heading her own Brooklyn, N.Y.-based production company, Nuoc Pictures. Oh, Saigon has won numerous prizes from such prestigious organizations as the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, the Brooklyn Arts Council International Film Festival, the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund, Independent Television Service, and the Asian American Media Fund.

Friday, April 10, 8:00 p.m. (galleries open at 7:00 p.m.)

EQUILIBRIUM SPOKEN WORD AND HIP HOP SHOWCASE

Galleries open at 7:00 p.m.

\$5/\$3 students, WAM and Loft members; tickets at the door

The Weisman hosts nationally renowned performing artists in this special rendition of the Loft Literary Center's "Equilibrium" series at the museum. The program begins with performances by two of the nation's most talented spoken word artists, Jennii Le and Sahra Nguyen. Brooklyn hip-hop duo Magnetic North, featuring Teresa Vu and Derek Kan, headlines the show.

Cosponsored by the Weisman and the Loft Literary Center. Equilibrium is the Loft's groundbreaking series engaging communities of color with spoken word performances by the brightest local and national talents.

Saturday, April 11, 10:00 a.m.

SPOKEN WORD WORKSHOP FOR TEENS

Instructors: Jennii Le and Sahra Nguyen

The Loft Literary Center

Open Book, 1011 Washington Ave. S, Minneapolis

Space is limited. To register, contact Claire Wilson at 612-215-2571 or cwilson@loft.org.

The Loft's inkTANK Teen Council welcomes fellow teens in grades 7-12 to this workshop to build their skills in writing, spoken word performance, and community organizing. Participants will attend the April 10 EQ performance (see description above) for free and work the next day with visiting spoken word artists Jennii Le and Sahra Nguyen, building on the theme of "Changing Identity." Light lunch and beverages will be provided.



OTHER EXHIBITIONS AT WAM

These Artists Look Like This: Arnold Newman Portraits

Through February 1, 2009

This exhibition, on view in the WAM corridor gallery, features portrait photographs by Arnold Newman, one of the 20th century's premier photographers. The show includes portraits of visual artists whose work is part of the Weisman collection alongside examples of their work. Artists represented in the exhibition include Georgia O'Keeffe, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Roy Lichtenstein, and many others. The exhibition reveals the breadth of the Weisman's holdings in mid-20th century art and the strength of Newman's portraiture. Each artist's personality—and Newman's hand in teasing it out—is evident in the photographs. By placing the portraits together with the artists' works, the viewer might consider the works and the portraits in dialogue, helping to reveal and enrich the possible meanings embedded in each.

Looking into Likeness: Portraits in the Weisman Collection

November 22–March 7, 2008

In the simplest sense, a portrait is a representation of an individual person. Often it is a visual image. A portrait can also be verbal, as in a literary portrait where words “paint a picture” of a person. With work ranging from Chuck Close's famous “fingerprint portraits” to R. Justin Stewart's conceptual self-portrait mapping his use of the bus system over thirty-one days, this exhibition features the Weisman's varied collection of portraiture. Some of these are traditional portraits of individual visages, like Manet's portrait of Edgar Allen Poe, and others stretch the genre to comment not only on the tradition of portraiture but on identity itself.



press
release

WAM

weisman art museum

CHANGING IDENTITY: RECENT WORKS BY WOMEN ARTISTS FROM VIETNAM

February 1-May 24, 2009

Digital images available upon request. Email Christopher James at james052@umn.edu or call 612-625-9685.

REPRESENTATIVE IMAGES:



IMAGE CREDITS

Phuong M. Do, *Self in Street*, 1998, silver gelatin print (top left)

Vu Thu Hien, *Food for Thought*, 2005, watercolor on *do* paper (top right)

Dang Thi Khue, *Dialogue*, 1998, paper and string (bottom left)

Dinh Y. Nhi, *Daughters of Mr. Nguyen II*, 2005, gouache on paper (bottom right)