



**NHA SAN COLLECTIVE**

# NGUYEN MANH HUNG

Nguyen Manh Hung is a contemporary artist and experimental musician.

As an artist, Hung is known for bringing a fresh, original perspective to the visual arts in Vietnam, with an extensive body of work including paintings, sculptures, digital images, installations and performances. With a unique style as a Surrealist, his work often displays a fascination with vehicles and all things militaristic, juxtaposed with elements of daily life. His art draws on the national and cultural history of Vietnam, as well as personal and contemporary life experiences.

Hung studied at the Hanoi University of Fine Arts. He has participated in many solo and group events, including several important exhibitions and concerts in both Vietnam and abroad. He is also known as a curator at Nhasan Studio, a well known contemporary art space in Hanoi, Vietnam.



**PAINTINGS**



Our lives are filled with conflicts - sometimes sad and sometimes humorous. My creative practice is an exploration of aspects of the national and cultural history of Vietnam, as well as personal and contemporary life experiences. I don't aim to talk about anything specifically, preferring to focus on the visual relationships of disjointed elements and unusual scales. Influences include early and contemporary Surrealism.



**3D WORKS**



# BAD COLOR

Dimension variable

5 ready-made 16" action figures, 1 used artist color tube.joy.

## GO TO MARKET

2013

materials: wood, plastic fruits, nylon bags, metal, cotton.

dimensions: w:60cm - h:200cm - d:400cm

Nguyen Manh Hung's work is inspired by his experiences and observation of Vietnamese life. In "Go To Market", a jet plane hurtles through the ground floor gallery, transformed from hi-tech war machine to scaled-down and meticulously constructed sculpture, at once playful and harmless. Betraying the artist's long-held fascination with militaristic images - his father was a fighter jet pilot - the surreal scene of a fighter plane carrying nylon bags laden with shopping goods humorously morphs a symbol of destruction with conduits of hope, benevolence and joy.





# KEEP MY PLANET CLEAN

2013

materials: clay, fabric, metal, resin,  
plant-derived roots, plastic, acrylic  
paint.

dimensions: w:140cm - h:100cm - d:70cm

"Keep My Planet Clean" is a small diorama derived from a painting I made in 2012. Using an image of riot police torturing a pig, I present a perspective of violence, that comments on both brutality and stupidity.



# THE BARRICADE

2013

Materials: wood, paper, plastic, metal, nylon, LED lighting system, sawdust, canvas bags, sand.  
Dimensions: w: 430cm - h: 220cm - d: 120cm

In this difficult time of the subsidized economy, a standard apartment can be shared by two or three families. They have to negotiate how to divide the space to live together. If one family gets the bathroom then they have to give up the kitchen to the other family, and share the toilet. With cramped living conditions, lack of water, and a difficult economy, these families often have to expand the living space with a cage, install their own water pump and pipes, and bring livestock and poultry into their apartments to improve their life.

These factors alter the shape and structure of the building as much as they affect the lifestyle of the inhabitants. Life in these buildings isn't the usual life of people in urban areas, but rather a high-rise village superimposed on its urban cousin.

The people of Vietnam continue to suffer the consequences of a violent war history. In this work, I use images associated with Vietnamese life and war, such as apartment blocks and barricades, combined in one installation. This presents a perspective about war in the language of art.





# LIVING TOGETHER IN PARADISE

2011

I was born and raised for 20 years in an apartment block in the Vietnamese capital city of Hanoi. Contemporary thinking might see this urban structure as one that isolates people even while living at such close quarters. I experienced it more as a complex "village" stacked vertically rather than spread out horizontally.

"Living Together in Paradise" is an extension and improvement of this urban village and living space. One where farming, growing vegetables and upgraded living conditions prevail. A place where people share everything, but do not have much privacy. I asked myself: "Could angels live together in a paradise?".



# FLIGHT

2006

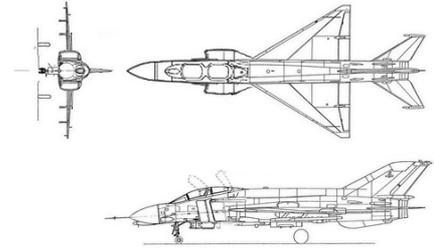
A common Vietnamese traditional funeral ritual is burning symbols of material goods so this wealth might ascend to the heavens with the deceased. These symbols are made out of paper and wood and are designed to burn easily. Depending on the status of the person who died, the models can be very elaborate and colorful or quite simple in form. Paper money is always used, as well as different sized models of houses, furniture, televisions, cars, motorbikes, etc.

My father was a jet fighter pilot (MiG 19) during the American Vietnam War. The father of a American friend and artist, Bradford Edwards, was also a helicopter and jet pilot (Phantom F-4) during 2 tours of duty at the same conflict. Our fathers flew in opposite directions – their jet streams crisscrossing – the shadows of both jets cast on these very fields. We decided to make our own version of a fighter jet and burn it in a symbolic effort to exorcise this "instrument of destruction" from our own lives.

"Flight" was originally conceived from a vision that Bradford had over a year ago in a street cafe. He invited me to collaborate on this project and we decided to make a huge life-sized jet out of bamboo and white rice paper. The jet was set on fire while a well-known performance Vietnamese artist, Dao Anh Khanh, danced around the flaming sculpture to original music composed by me.

This performance took place at dusk in a large field surrounded by brick walls in Gia Lam, a semi-rural area near Hanoi. This project "Flight" was free and open to the public and generously sponsored by Saigon Open City and the Ford Foundation.

There is a wider context for "Flight" than just our own personal histories. Jets serve only one purpose – they are devastating weapons ultimately used for killing people. We believe that by lovingly handcrafting our own jet with warm and organic materials we can render this high-tech war machine soft and harmless. Through this process, the jet is transformed into a beautifully shaped sculpture – a white bird of peace.

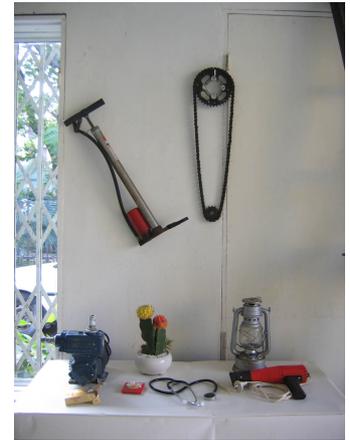




# CONDUCTOR

2005

These objects have inputs and outputs, and are electrical conductors. People are also conductors with inputs and outputs. If you know what my inputs and outputs are, you will know my abilities.



# COLOR PENCILS

2004

Three wooden pillars, each 5m long, have been cut in half and made into one set of six colored pencils. They've become the opposite of their original white color.



# VINAWIND

2003

Group exhibition "Green Red and Yellow" - curated by Tran Luong.

These fans are borrowed from families, friends and relatives. They've been given a source of electrical energy and function as energy sources. As human beings, we are unified by our blood, our humanity, in the experience of our connection with others, and the physicality of our environment. I want audiences to feel the atmosphere of this room through the movement of wind on their bodies.





## MILK BOTTLES

2001

Baby bottles reproduced to scale in wood, metal and stone.