



TRAN LUONG

Tran Luong is a painter who now also works in video, new media, performance installation and conceptual art. He was born in Vietnam in 1960 and graduated from the Hanoi Fine Arts Institute in 1983. In his early paintings, which became increasingly abstract, he drew on themes of nature. He was one of the so-called 'gang of five' young artists in Vietnam, all graduates of the Fine Arts Institute, who came to international attention in the mid 1990s and participated in shows with that group in Vietnam, The Netherlands and the UK. He was the Founder and Artistic Director of the Contemporary Art Center, Hanoi, Vietnam from 2002 to 2003 and is also now a curator, advising on several international contemporary curatorial projects. As an artist, he has participated in solo and group exhibitions throughout Vietnam, and in The Netherlands, France, Germany, Argentina, Japan, Thailand, China, Singapore, the UK, South Korea and the United States. His video work 'Flowing' in this exhibition was exhibited at 'The Second Fukuoka Asian Triennale' 2002 and subsequently purchased by the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. The video encompassed his childhood memories of growing up in Vietnam during the American war and is informed by his Buddhist beliefs. Tran Luong has written:

"'Chay – Flowing' is my self explanation for growing- up, observing, absorbing and accepting, based on the positive philosophy I

learnt from Buddhism. I grew up in the eventful period of Vietnamese history. Like many other children living in Hanoi, from the 1960s to the beginning of 1973, we left the city many times for rural areas to avoid American bombings. It was also possible to be bombed in rural areas, however it was thinly populated and the danger of being wounded and killed was less. In my memory, around me were kind-hearted farmers and nice peaceful ancient villages. We lacked any food or electricity, and since we strangers had to move regularly, we had no place to study especially. I was able to go to school only after coming back to Hanoi in the beginning of 1973.

The war came to an end in 1975, after which the fight against the Khmer Rouge broke out as I was just graduating from High School (1977), and in 1979 China attacked Vietnam in the north. This was a period of hunger and economic difficulties that were extended to the years of Open Door in 1986, 1987... My life – as an artist – has become easy to breathe since around 1992, but Vietnam in the early days of Open Door period had to face many evils such as pollution, corruption and illiteracy as it grew acquainted with the free market economy...'

(reproduced from the Catalogue of the 'Imagined Workshop' The Second Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale', Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, 2002, p. 131