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# Vietnamese American artist Tiffany Chung leads discussion on immigration, art

Jenna Thompson Sept. 25, 2019



Vietnamese Artist, Tiffany Chung speaks at a Sheldon art museum podcast event on Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2019, in Lincoln, Nebraska.



The Sheldon Art Museum has been home to many culturally informative events like First Friday and the arrival of new exhibitions, but its latest event is one podcast fans can especially appreciate. Tuesday night, an ample crowd of art enthusiasts and podcast listeners shuffled into the Sheldon to hear from a multimedia artist and experience a conversational performance in the making.

At the event on Sept. 25, Vietnamese American artist Tiffany Chung talked in detail about her work consisting of sculpture, embroidery and hundreds of miniature glass bison as part of her display in the museum.

The event was a live taping of a conversation between Chung and host Tyler Green, which will later be broadcast on Green's award-winning show, "The Modern Art Notes Podcast." Green's podcast has been recognized by the BBC as one of the [top 25 cultural podcasts](#).

The artist told the audience about her family history and her traumatizing experiences with immigration, being a former Vietnamese refugee. Chung recognized that a great deal of her art is inspired by conflicts regarding immigration and war, but wanted Green to know how hesitant she was to incorporate immigration into work at first. "It takes time to process memory and trauma, and you can only do it when you're ready," Chung said.

Chung explained how she made her installation "Tomorrow Isn't Here," displayed inside the Sheldon Art Museum as part of the exhibition "Unquiet Harmony." The pieces were largely created after talking with former refugees and collecting information about their experiences. These pieces are made from an array of different mediums; Chung utilizes embroidery, videography and even makes maps.

"History is so real to these people," Chung told Green while speaking about the former refugees, "There's still this sense of urgency."

Chung turned the information given to her through interviews and conversations into several different art pieces reflecting a variety of styles.

Chung has created everything from maps to videos, all of which aim to educate people about the difficulties of immigration in different regions through aesthetics. With the aid of aesthetics, her work can provide a sense of comfort to a difficult situation while giving onlookers an opportunity to confront what they see, according to Chung.

First Friday attendees might recognize the sign that warns patrons to stay a respectful distance from her artwork, which reads, "Please don't touch the bison." The phrase is repeated on the T-shirts handed out at the Sheldon during First Friday to pay homage to Chung's Midwestern bison piece and others like it.

Chung addressed how events of the Great Plains inspired her pieces, saying that migrants of the Dust Bowl begged the question, "Maybe we need to redefine what a refugee is." The artist brings up the example of international immigration through the Dust Bowl to alter how we view immigrants.

The night ended with a question-and-answer session from the audience. Tiffany Chung and Tyler Green thanked the attentive audience for an educational night.

[culture@dailynebraskan.com](mailto:culture@dailynebraskan.com)