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“Vietnamese artist unveils dreamlike exhibition”
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Vietnamese artist unveils dreamlike exhibition

ARTS & CULTURE

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More Topic



Vietnamese artist Truong Cong Tung’s solo exhibition The Disoriented Garden... A Breath of Dream, opened its doors on January 26. Photo supplied

SA SA Art Projects is currently hosting an extraordinary art exhibition entitled, *The Disoriented Garden... A Breath of Dream*, featuring Vietnamese artist Truong Cong Tung.

The solo show, which opened its doors on January 26 and will run until April 4, marks Tung’s first presentation in Cambodia.

“Tung introduces a newly produced video work, together with four existing works, including a sculptural installation, a set of two lacquer paintings and two other videos,” says the gallery.

The exhibition has been brought to life with the support of the Han Nefkens Foundation. Launched in 2023, the foundation’s Southeast Asian Video Art Production Grant is designed to boost contemporary artistic output in the realm

of video, specifically targeting artists residing in the region.

Tung, born and raised amidst the ethnic diversity and rich biodiversity of Dak Lak in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, transforms the gallery space into an ever-evolving garden that blurs the boundaries of time and space.

The exhibition evokes a heightened consciousness of coexistence among humans, non-humans and the seen and unseen forces of nature. Drawing from his deep connections to his homeland, Tung's work is a testament to his ongoing engagement with the land, its stories and its spirits.

Upon entering Tung's 'garden', visitors are greeted by earthy smells, the sound of flowing water and flute music, and a striking straw-roofed structure illuminated by a circle of light, surrounded by a blend of natural and industrial materials.

Inside, a lacquered wood disc from the series *In the Wind – Up the Sky – In the Garden... Shadows Out There* (2023 – ongoing) seems to float, its surface rich with the imagery of the natural world, suggesting a deep, yet flat, cosmic landscape.

Further exploration reveals the artist's new video installation, encased in wooden panels and draped with various materials, from semi-transparent plastics to beaded curtains made from local agricultural products.

Artistic symbolism

These elements, reminiscent of the Central Highlands' agricultural practices, symbolise the interaction between human civilisation and the natural world, highlighting the tension between traditional ways of life and modern industrial expansion.

"A circular shape reincarnates and resurfaces throughout The Disoriented Garden video, as well as the whole exhibition," says the gallery.

"Is it a moon, a sun, a firefly, a spirit, a ghost, a divinity, a drop of life, a torch? It is all, and it is none of them at the same time," it adds.

In Tung's film, a figure in a camouflage shirt, face hidden by tangled hair, guides visitors through diverse landscapes, embodying both human and spirit.

This journey through fields, forests and waterfalls underlines the film's layered aesthetic, echoing Tung's lacquer technique.

The sounds of nature and indigenous music fill the air, enhancing the dreamlike exploration. A highlight is Kpuih Bor, a 103-year-old village woman, symbolising the land's history and myths.

Adjacent to the video, an installation of gourds, both natural and crafted from ceramic and lacquer, represents life and sacredness, connected by tubes simulating veins.

The setup, embodying gourds as life-giving and sacred vessels, showcases Tung's conceptual depth, merging the traditional with the symbolic to create a living, breathing art piece.

Tung's masterful use of materials, his layering techniques and his ability to evoke a sense of wonder and contemplation make this exhibition a must-visit for art lovers and those seeking to explore the depths of human and environmental interconnectedness.

An ideal setting

Sa Sa Art Projects, through its dedication to experimental and critical contemporary art practices, provides an ideal setting for Tung's exhibition.

Supported by Larry Strange and the Han Nefkens Foundation, a private, non-profit organisation established in Barcelona, Spain, in 2009 by Dutch writer and patron Han Nefkens, Sa Sa Art continues to play a crucial role in nurturing contemporary art in Cambodia, making significant contributions to the country's vibrant cultural landscape.

Tung's work will also be presented at the group's other partner institutions, including San Art in Vietnam; the Jim Thompson Art Centre in Thailand; the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Museion) in Italy; the Busan Museum of Art in South Korea; and the Prameya Art Foundation (PRAF) in India.

Don't miss this opportunity to experience the enchanting world of Tung, where each piece serves as a portal to a realm of dreams, memories and reflections on the complex tapestry of life, in an immersive experience where the natural and supernatural, the tangible and intangible, intermingle.