



MoT Doi Gai | A Beach Life

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I, a selfie, a secondary version of the myself_a_portrait
Toi, cai phien ban phu cua cai chan dung cua cai toi

me, another secondary version of the myself_a_portrait
to, cai phien ban phu nua cua cai chan dung cua cai toi

999 - 9 clouds, cloud 9 and the fundamental f(s).. can't
translate in mother language but it's gonna rain cats
and dogs, climate, clime, climax

999 - 9 tang may, may tang 9 va nhung chu éphò co
ban.. khong dich ra tieng me de duoc nhung mua se
nhu trut nuoc, khi hau, vung khi hau, cuc diem

on top the cloud beneath the flowers
tren hoa duoi goi

flower market - Dao Mai Hong Hue Lan Lai Tra Sen
Cuc - 9 names, 9 essences and the old bill.. can't
translate in mother language either
cho hoa, 9 cai ten gai, 9 mui hoa va mot cai ten la hay
to bac cu.. cung khong dich duoc tieng me de

notice: masturbation prohibited

often known as the world's oldest profession, Cam Xanh's exhibition MoT Doi Gai | A Beach Life explores the theme of prostitution at a conceptual level. starting with a quote from Gore Vidal that "we are all prostitutes in one sense or another, ethically if not sexually", the exhibition goes on to investigate the contemporary relationships between feminism, love and sexuality, art, beauty, power, economics, and the potential for exploitation that emerges at their intersections.

in removing the defining accents from the Vietnamese title, Cam Xanh plays with possible interpretations in the meaning of 'a girl's life', further emphasised by the pun resulting from its mis-translation to English. having often compared herself to a silkworm, the saliva it uses to spin its cocoon like the words spoken to create artworks and articulate the self, Cam Xanh's exhibition can subsequently be read like a tapestry of interwoven threads. recurring themes and motifs such as the manipulation of words and use of millennial pink, form long and continuous threads in her oeuvre, whilst others such as the flowers and clouds that fill the current exhibition appear more like embroidery, adding texture to the fabric. her choices of medium and modes of production further inform an artistic politic, with video artwork shot using only an iPhone and conceptual work constructed by others demonstrating a democratic approach to art making, and the self-described 'anti - all art anti(s)' stance of the artist.

*We are all prostitutes in one sense or another
ethically if not sexually*

Gore Vidal

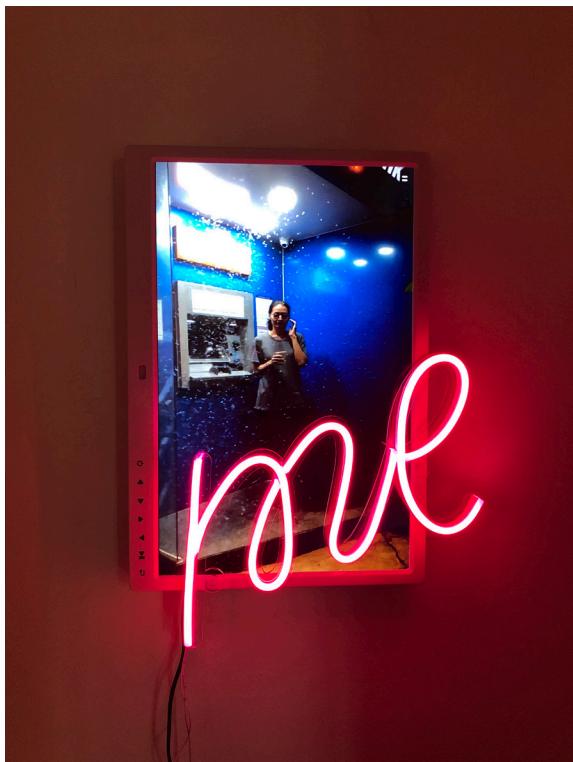
Mug for you



#flowermarket #nineflowers #theninthcloud #fundamental_f
#greenorangewhitelightandthecolorlessdreams #chapter_1

me, another secondary version of the myself_a_portrait
to, cai phien ban phu nua cua cai chan dung cua cai toi

the placement of neon lights at the opening of the exhibition, the bowel level Instagram heart and the self portrait 'me', create a playful insistence from the artist that the audience 'love'+'me', and reflects a growing online digital culture of self-worth defined by likes and followers. a sentiment that can be applied to the life of an artist and porn star alike - both sharing a desire for visibility and promoting an aesthetic ideal on social media, where sex will often win in a popularity contest with art. in the video she stands admist a natural phnomemon of moths swarming the overhead light of an ATM machine. next to the machine she waits for something that might never come, standing in solidarity with working girls that wait elsewhere exposed to the elements, hopeful for cash from other sources. yet Cam Xanh stands not only as a woman but an artist also, and so the visualisation of the 'like moths to a flame' idiom becomes equally suggestive of the market's influence on creative practices.



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the soft, mountainous sculpture exudes a tactile and alluring sensuousness: an exercise in restraint for its viewer who can look, but can't touch. it is a picture of both fantasy and fallacy, for to start its climb would collapse the structure, destroying the image. the temptation of climax leaves the viewer looking up, the glow of pink neon illuminating their face as though they were the heart-eyed emoji staring with blind adoration. cloud 9 represents this peak of pleasure, orgasm and desire that is made unattainable by Cam Xanh, who teases instead with the unfulfilled promise of bliss. the work asks how far we might go to achieve what we desire, and what might cloud our judgement in the decisions we make to get there. its heavenly aesthetic dissipates and reforms as a bulging cumulonimbus cloud, threatening a beastly and nonsensical storm of cats, dogs and ideology. the poem of the fundamental f(s) falls and scatters across cloud 9, starting the rain.

the
fundamental
f(s)
for
future
of..

fabulous
fashionable
funky
feminist
freedom
fairness
foolish
fantastical
fairytale



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the poem is left to continue in the mind of the audience, ending differently for everyone. it asks us to choose our own core beliefs, and encourages us to question what the f we believe in. as an artist Cam Xanh seeks to defy easy categorisation, and her pseudonym translated as Green Orange highlights this sense of the uncanny that she often seeks to employ in her works. through her art she makes the familiar appear strange and vice versa, invites misunderstanding, and reminds us that sometimes nothing is ever quite what it seems. as a woman her work is frequently approached through a feminist lens, yet she calls her work 'anti-feminist feminist art', and rejects classification as a feminist artist in the same way she would like us to reject the domination of any single ideology. Cam Xanh doesn't attempt just one expression in her artwork, but embraces multiplicity, creating works layered with meaning that solicit a plurality of understandings.



on top the cloud beneath the flowers
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taking the body as her subject, Cam Xanh pulls us intimately close to examine its form as landscape. reminiscent of the moon mission, peaks and troughs of flesh and fabric appear like sand dunes, cavernous mountains, and murky lakes. zooming in and out in slow motion, the camera struggles to react to the reflective material, creating deep shadows and foggy light; the effect highlights the drone-like motion of the camera as it pans across the surface. filmed using an iPhone with its flashlight on, it tests the limitations of the simple phone camera, and alludes to its ubiquity in our daily lives. the video work appears in the exhibition as part of an installation that places the viewer's body directly at its otherworldly centre. set up like a bad karaoke room, artwork and flesh meet as the viewer sinks down into the sky to look up at the Earth. protruding above from the industrial ceiling, withering bouquets are used to question our relationship to beauty as the artwork draws on flowers' symbolic qualities of femininity, love and sexuality, and their allure when combined with youth. the dying flowers act as a memento mori and create a distinct, rotting smell, that adds a fouled undertone to the visceral experience of Cam Xanh's flower market. the innocence of naming girls after flowers, entangled by the artist with the reality of life. to be called a flower girl in Vietnam is also a euphemism for prostitute.

Cam Xanh's real team of working girls living the beach life sit passively in the video, like flowers in a still life, paused in another temporality. they could be anybody, and the viewer is encouraged to see the body as their own, but rather they are Cam Xanh's MoT+++ team, each taking the camera from her hands to film one another, leaving only the sound of her voice singing acapella through their headphones. Cam Xanh negates her power as creator and removes herself from the process to allow for spontaneity and idiosyncrasies to enter. a droplet from the iCloud of the digital sphere, the video is a study of relationships between people, between artist and team, the organic and the technological, an individual and a landscape, and an observer and the observed. it presents a mirror to the viewer with which they can question their own standards of beauty and morality.



I, a selfie, a secondary version of the myself_a_portrait
Toi, cai phien ban phu cua cai chan dung cua cai toi

I, a selFie, a secondary version of the myself_a_portrait
Toi, cai phien ban phu cua cai chan dung cua cai toi

like an internal monologue, song lyrics to the Bee Gees' 1968 anti-war song run up the length of Cam Xanh's 'I' self portrait: "i started a joke, which started the whole world crying, but i didn't see, that the joke was on me." echoing the bright lights of advertising on the street, the work's positioning in the corner draws us closer to read what's for sale, entering us into intimate conversation with the artist as though she was whispering the lyrics into our ear. the individual is once again placed at the centre by the artist, the title of the work, 'a selFie', an explicit connection to how we represent ourselves in our digital lives, and our own relationships with the people we encounter there. as the 'I' of the song laments the "things that they said", the artist's introduction of a self-conscious tone reflects her caution of her position as a creator in the world.



flower market - Dao Mai Hong Hue Lan Lai Tra Sen Cuc - 9 names, 9 essences and the old bill.. can't translate in mother language either cho hoa, 9 cai ten gai, 9 mui hoa va mot cai ten la hay to bac cu.. cung khong dich duoc tieng me de

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Cam Xanh further invokes the subjective experience of the viewer with her final work in the exhibition. engaging the global tendency to name females as flowers, she matches the Vietnamese name of the locally produced scent with its internationally recognised English designation: 'lan/magnolia', 'lotus/sen'. the nine scents are positioned exposed to their viewer, on show for consumption like the market flowers and the prostituting women they personify. the aroma they form is synthetically created, a molecular falsity that begs the question of what love is, and whether it is possible to fake or buy. Cam Xanh positions their shelf like a hyphen connecting the works of her exhibition to her original inspiration, and leaves an empty space at its end to close her show with an open question. the last word is given without translation and comes from 'old bill', whose scent the viewer is urged to imagine. the ambiguity of the phrase 'old bill', with its double meaning of money, calls upon personal memories of used currency and its smell to conjure affect in its viewer. without making a sound, 'old bill' speaks of patriarchy, pimps, power and the growth of our current capitalist system - the history of the world and its transactions encompassed within its absence.



anna banana.. lana banana..
and hannah banana..
hanna, hanna, bo-banna
banana-fana fo-fanna
fee-fi-mo-manna hanna!
it's a fake
f is for fake but ff is double f

gold square.. old shit!
two seats, talking shit!
two seats, full of shit!
fuck around, don't shit about!
gold square.. old shit!
two seats, talking shit!
two seats, full of shit!
gold squares.. old shit!
old square, gold shit
london square
new york square
saigon square
time square
gold squares.. old shit!
old square, gold shit
old square, gold shit
old shit, gold bitch
old bitch, gold shit
holy bitch, full of shit
holy shit, full of bitches

f is for fake but ff is double f
it's a fake
now we're talking!
thanh da vs america
anna banana.. lana banana..
and hannah banana..
hanna, hanna, bo-banna
banana-fana fo-fanna
fee-fi-mo-manna hanna!
thanh da banana
viva banana

Cam Xanh's polyphonic works often offer a sense of comfort to pull us out of our comfort zones. assembled as market qua exhibition, they question our perception of beauty and value. they ask us what we ourselves are selling to the world: are we serving a particular ideology or purpose, or simply bitching for the 'old bill'?

once again, words light an artificial pink shade on Cam Xanh's colourless dreams.

about the artist

Cam Xanh is the pseudonym of conceptual artist Tran Thanh Ha (b.1977, Vietnam). translated as Green Orange from Vietnamese, it is the first of many playful departures from the expected that characterise her work. her physical works are often based on texts and poetry, or developed from previous performances by the artist. they take on many forms such as installation, sculpture, painting and video, and often include elements only activated by audience participation. in 2016 she was a speaker for the ASIA YOUNG 36 exhibition at the Jeonbuk Museum of Art in Seoul, Korea and founded independent art space MoT+++ in 2015 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. in 2018 she co-founded A. Farm, an international art residency, to further support the growth of the Vietnamese art scene. her work can be found in the collections of the Nguyen Art Foundation and the Singapore Art Museum (SAM).

about MoT+++

established in 2015, MoT+++ is an artist-run space in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. it hosts an ever-growing series of exhibitions, performances, presentations, workshops, sound events and residencies from international and locally-based artists. it takes a fluid and responsive approach to programming that prioritises artists, and acknowledges the creative process as often non-linear and divergent. it collaborates with artists to help them push the boundaries of their practice, together investigating the gallery site as a ‘+1 nice place for experimentation’. additional +1s are added as the space continues to grow and develop its artistic and collaborative practices.

MoT (sound)

- +1 contemporary project
- +1 nice place for experimentation
- +1 museum by any other name
- +1 library
- +1 collective
- +1 residency
- +1..