

MỘT TRIỂN LÃM CỦA | A EXHIBITION BY

CURATED BY | GIÁM TUYỂN

# ☒ Lê D. Chung & Tâm Dã ☒ Linh Lê

"6 PM in the afternoon. The day was long. ☒  
The night too was long. I was always  
in the past: if only time could turn  
around, ahead. ██████████



If only after sunday, it was saturday.  
After friday, it was thursday. KHAI MẠC / OPENING RECEPTION:  
After tuesday, it was monday. 18:00, 26/7/2025

If only after afternoon, it was morning. ☒  
If only I, could live backward, return-  
ing to when I had not started a diary. What would I  
be doing? ☒☒

5 AM in the morning.



I will run away from the present. ☒☒☒☒

There will be no need, for days to be nights, because  
days will be nights and nights will be days. ☒

THỜI GIAN TRIỂN LÃM | EXHIBITION DURATION:

12:00-17:00, 27/7 & 30/7-3/8/25

I will get back to wandering, to one side of the  
purple gate next to the out-of-order lamp posts.

My day tomorrow will be just like that: ☒☒☒  
it will be the ☒ not exactly like  
reversed past, the bible, ☒☒☒  
but there will be much known happiness." ██████████

ĐỊA ĐIỂM | VENUE:

☒ (Trần Dân 2010, 197).



*H. Farm studios,*  
6/4 Nguyễn Đăng Giai, Thảo Điền ☒

# Exhibition map

1.

Lê Đ. Chung

**ex.1**

electronic scale, TV, video, plexiglass,  
wooden crutches

210 x 96 x 52 cm, video: 7 minutes

2.

Lê Đ. Chung

**ex. 2**

neon light, clay, fan motor, astray,  
cigarette, plastic bottle, mica frame  
dimensions varied

3.

Lê Đ. Chung

**ex. 3**

lithium batteries, wooden padlets, toy  
horse, pingpong ball, engine

60 x 25 x 32 cm

4.

Lê Đ. Chung

**ex. 4**

found wooden frame, one book page,  
band-aid

34 x 43 cm

5. 6. 7.

Tâm Đỗ

**Tam Sao**

acrylic, paper mâché, LED light, plastic  
mirror

set of three, each measuring

15 x 32 x 11 cm

8.

Tâm Đỗ

**Time Detective Show. Episode 1:  
Girls Against Death**

single channel video

12 minutes

9.

Tâm Đỗ

**Lost Stories**

ballpoint pen on calendar paper

119 x 42 cm

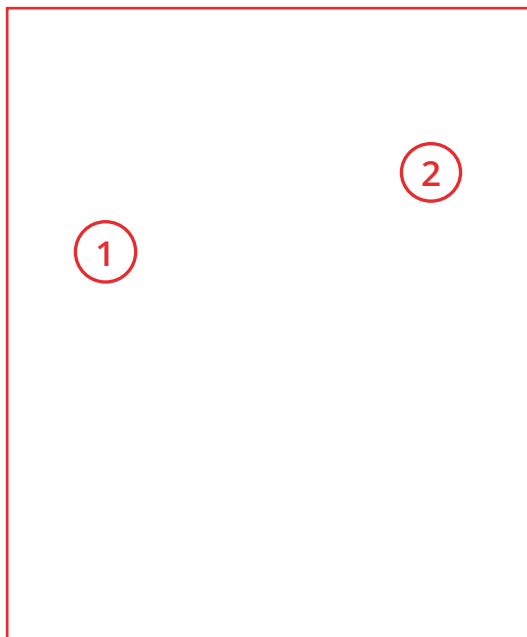
10.

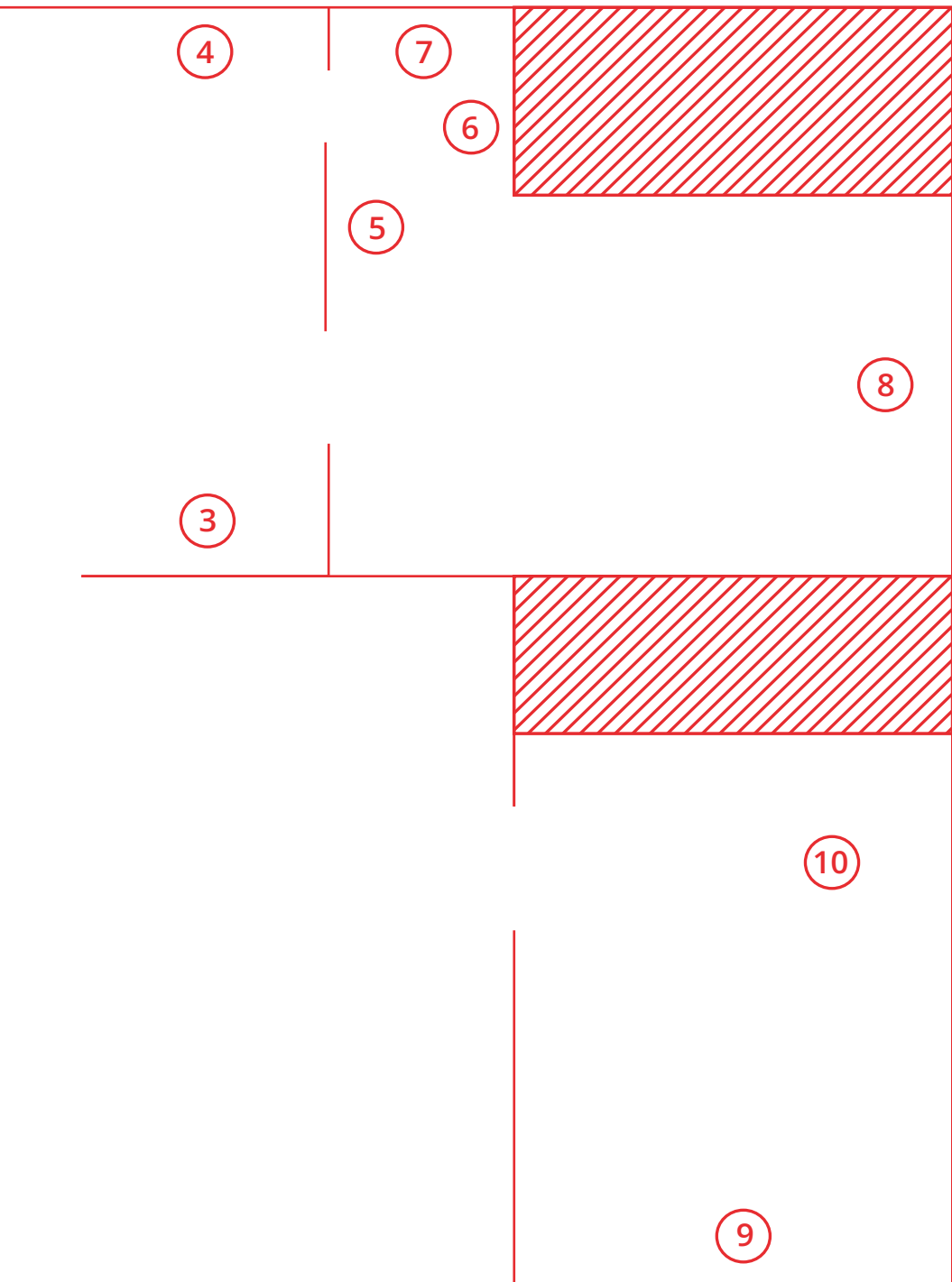
Tâm Đỗ

**Khăn thương nhớ ai**

embroidered on cotton

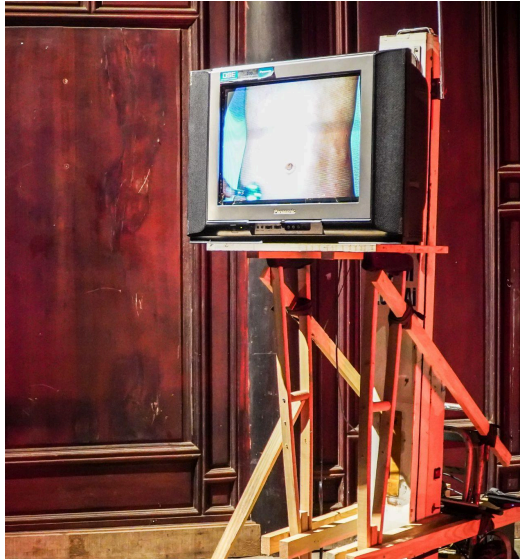
145 x 145 cm





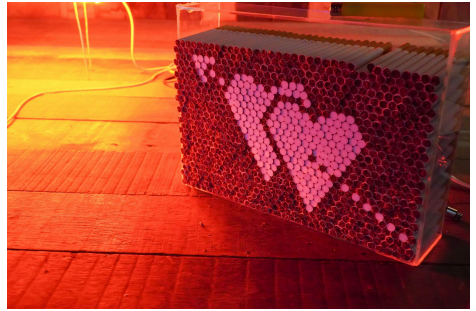
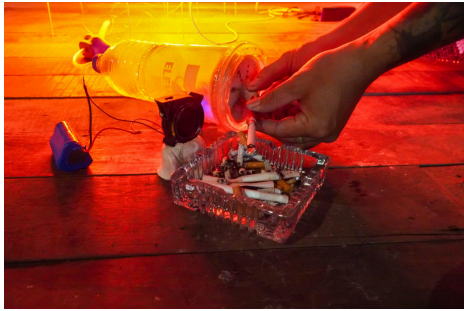
# Curator's notes

Lê Đ. Chung's work consists of a series of four examples:



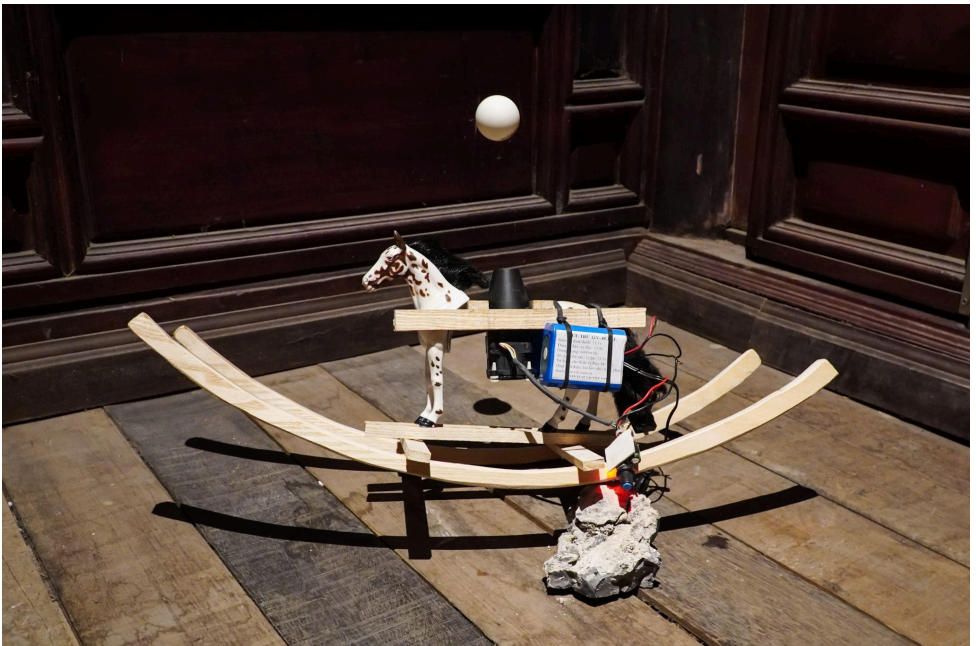
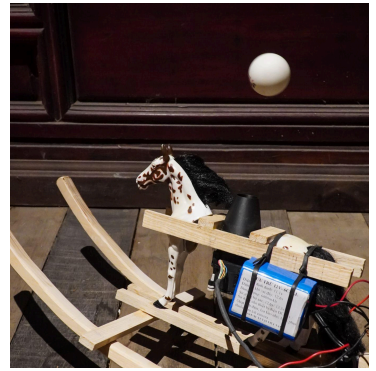
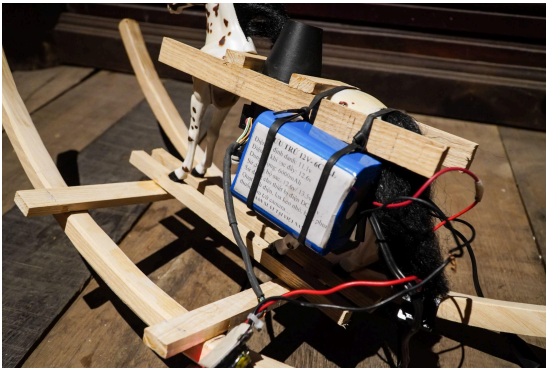
ex.1.

A video sculpture features a scale as its base, supporting an old television mounted on a pair of crutches that function as a makeshift scaffold. Once a familiar street spectacle in Vietnam's major cities during the early 2000s, the "talking scale" was known for its cordial, automated female voice, announcing a person's height and weight, followed by a judgment—thin, normal, or fat—and a suggestion to eat more or less accordingly. Years have passed, and she has largely faded from public memory, but her reappearance in this space recalls a time when Vietnam, emerging from the poverty of the pre-Đổi Mới subsidy years in the late 1980s and early 1990s, began to shift its focus toward health, the body, and self-image. Against the mechanical, almost industrial system of support is a torso undergoing the act of *cạo gió*, or coining—a traditional, household remedy believed to release bad energy and physical discomfort. From the scale, a familiar voice enunciates: "The weight is 23 kilograms, the height is 170-point-5 centimetres, the body is thin, please eat more."



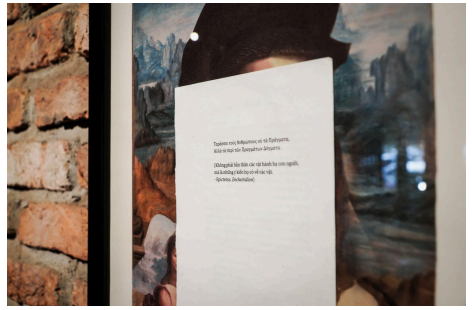
ex.2.

On the floor lies the clay torso of a woman, her arm outstretched toward a line of text that reads “how long is forever.” Nearby, a plastic water bottle—repurposed into an improvised ventilation system—draws smoke from a burning cigarette at one end and channels it through the body, along the length of her extended arm, where it exhales gently onto the glowing words. Visitors are invited to continue this process, drawing a cigarette from the nearby pile, though each gesture carries its own risk. A recurring symbol in Chung’s work—most notably in his ongoing painting series *Following the Stone Wall and We Found an Electric Generator* (2017–ongoing)—the breasted torso references the Roman goddess Libertas as depicted in Eugène Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* (1830). No longer astride a horse, nor bearing a torch or flag, she no longer leads a charge toward freedom, democracy or triumph. Now fallen, her outstretched arm becomes a conduit for a thought process, guiding viewers not toward resolution, but into an unsolvable conundrum.



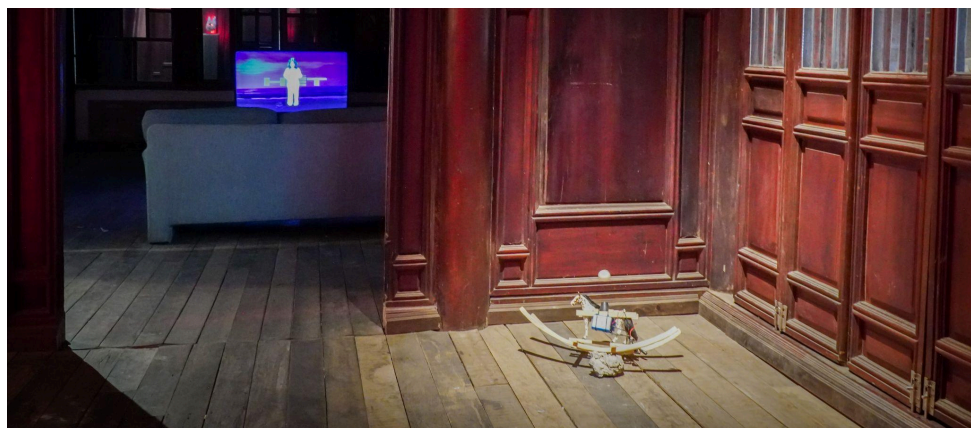
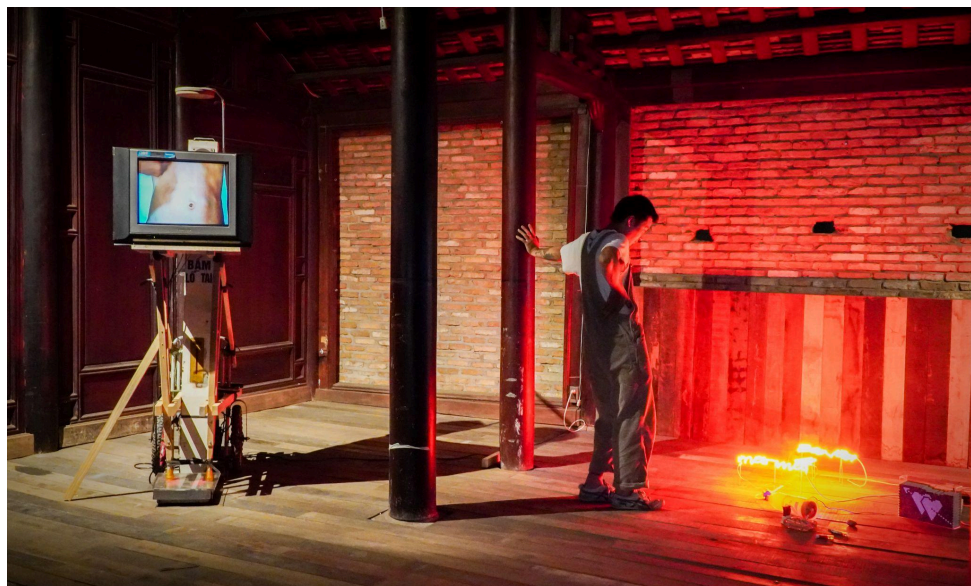
ex.3.

No longer bearing liberty on its back, the horse now hauls two oversized batteries—each nearly the size of its own body. Despite their bulk and weight, the batteries, ironically, power only a small fan, just enough to keep a ping-pong ball afloat, generating more whirring noise than actual motion. Mounted on rockers, the horse is rendered immobile—trapped in a perpetual motion of moving, yet going nowhere.

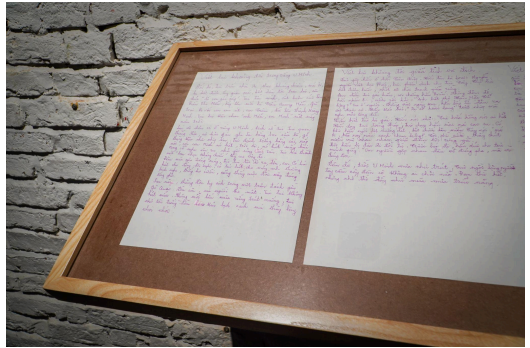


ex.4.

A page torn from a landmark novel that defines Western modern literature is displayed with a borrowed quote: "It is not events themselves that trouble people, but their judgements about those circumstances" (Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, ch. 5). Neatly framed against a found painting used as backdrop, the page is accompanied by a bandage bearing the word "you." Just as the quote shapes the novel's unfolding thoughts and events, here too it disrupts and reframes the viewer's perception—prompting a reconsideration of what they have just seen, and how it is seen.



By presenting bodies in severed forms—limbless, immobilised, suspended in states of precarity and contradiction—Lê Đ. Chung's works evoke the lingering afterimage of revolution(s), seen only after its climactic rupture has passed. Whether the revolution has fulfilled what it initially set out to achieve remains uncertain. Perhaps it never truly ends; instead, like a chronic pain, it continues and transforms into another form, another upheaval. In this suspended state, time stretches indefinitely, leaving severed bodies trapped in a perpetual present, detached from both past and future.



During a visit to the Southern Vietnamese Women's Museum, Tâm Đổ encountered a glass case displaying personal belongings of Vietnamese Heroic Mother and People's Armed Forces Heroine, Major Trần Quang Mẫn, also affectionately known as Mười Mẫn. Among these possessions was a handwritten autobiographical account detailing how she disguised herself as a man, without her family's knowledge, to join the revolution as a soldier. Presented simply as a modest stack of A4 pages written in ballpoint pen, the documents offered museum visitors only a limited glimpse into the depth and complexity of her life, beyond her celebrated wartime role. Seeking to liberate Major Trần Quang Mẫn, and essentially, other wartime heroines, from narratives that reduce them solely to the revolutionary duties, in **Lost Stories**, Tâm compiled a series of seven speculative accounts of the Major's life in Southern Vietnam from 1947 to 1952. These stories foregrounded details often overlooked as unnecessary or irrelevant within official history: the vulnerability and quiet struggles of a woman navigating a man's world, her occasional reminiscences of life as a woman, and serendipitous encounters with Chiêu, a soldier with "an incomplete body" akin to her own, and Thắm, a girl working in a café in Saigon, as well as her complicated romantic feelings. These seven accounts were then transcribed onto the backs of calendar pages by Tâm's mother, who would normally leave notes for her daughter and husband at home in the same way.



Music plays an important role in Tâm's reimagining of Major Trần Quang Mẫn's life. It becomes a way for her to connect with others and to imagine the possibility of a peaceful future shared together. In the fictional accounts of *Lost Stories*, music is not politicised—or more precisely, it is not judged or condemned for allowing people to feel the full range of emotions that come with loss and separation. In that world, a girl band is formed, taking the name ***Tam Sao***.

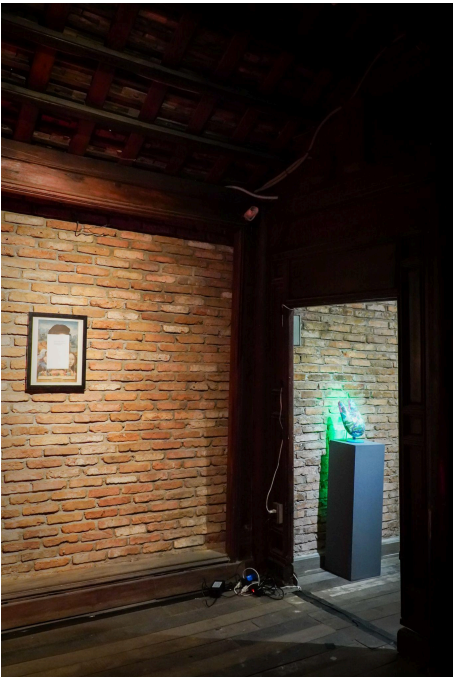


In her new video work, titled ***Time Detective Show. Episode 1: Girls Against Death*** Tâm Đỗ embodies the role of a time detective—a girl who travels back and forth through time to correct historical injustices, or at least those that appear somewhat wrong. In the first episode, the time detective is on a mission to prevent the untimely and tragic deaths of young Vietnamese women during the wartorn period in different parts of Vietnam; among these women is Tâm's own grandmother, who lost her life due to a stray bullet. Using found footage from landmark wartime films such as *The Passerine Bird* (1962), *The Purple Horizon* (1971), and *Land of Sorrows* (1973), Tâm playfully retells the stories of their female protagonists. Despite originating from different times and geographies, these women share a common adversary: Lâm—a man whose unhealthy infatuation leads to tragedy—and a misfired bullet, representing the arbitrary cruelty of war itself. Both in these films and in reality, women often seem predestined for sacrifice; their deaths are framed as necessary for the nation's freedom, result from the rage of jealous suitors, or occur simply because death has already been written into their stories.



In the work titled ***Khăn thương nhớ ai***, Tâm Đỗ uses the form of an embroidered cotton handkerchief—a traditional token of love, affection, and fidelity. Such handkerchiefs frequently appear in museums across Vietnam, typically crafted by women: female prisoners sending messages of hope and encouragement to the frontline, wives pledging their faithfulness as they await their husbands' safe return. Although there are occasions when male soldiers partake in this practice, embroidery has predominantly been considered women's work. However, rather than existing in its modest, intimate form—something easily folded and tucked discreetly into a pocket—Tâm's handkerchief asserts itself with pride and presence. On it, the women from Tâm's reimagined stories emerge confidently, playfully inhabiting their newly adopted identities, detached from grand historical narratives, and appearing to enjoy themselves, including their femininity, thoroughly.





## About the artists

With a multidisciplinary practice spanning painting, sculpture, installation, video, and performance, *Lê D. Chung* (born 1990, Đắk Nông) observes everyday occurrences while engaging with both historical and counter-historical narratives. Through this, he investigates the contradictions and complexities of contemporary reality, as well as the enigmatic return of unresolved motifs and meanings from the past.

*Tâm Đỗ* is a multidisciplinary artist working across visual art, graphic design, soft sculpture, video art, sound design, poetry, and performance art. Their practice challenges conventional narratives while provoking reflection on the fluidity of identity. Some of Tâm's notable projects include *The Queer W(e)aves*, *Queer Forever & Ba Bau AIR*, 2024; *Nổ Cái Bùm 2024: Collectivity-in-(act)ion*, 2024; *Act 1*, *Project Đầy Sàn & The Run Theater*, 2024; *Đường Biên Đông Người*, *Á Space & Cement Park & Santo Streets Studio & SOWERART*, 2024.

## About the curator

*Linh Lê* is an independent curator, writer and researcher from Saigon, Vietnam. Her work investigates the changing landscapes and ecologies of Saigon and other parts of Vietnam under the pressure of modernisation and urbanisation, while at the same time exploring and filling in the gaps in contemporary art historical discourses in Vietnam, particularly in experimental art forms such as performance art and video art. Since July 2024, she has been working on *Đo Đặc*, a site-responsive curatorial project that aims to survey the impact of forced resettlement on the Thủ Thiêm peninsula, Sài Gòn. She is currently a Curatorial Board member of *Á Space* (Hà Nội), and a research fellow of *ArtsEquator's* Southeast Asian Arts Censorship Database project.

# Program Schedule

<p>15:00 – 16:00</p> <p>Chủ Nhật Sunday 27 /7</p>	<p>A. Farm Studio 6/4 Nguyễn Đăng Giai, Thảo Điền</p>	<p>Exhibition Walk-through with Linh Lê, Lê Đ. Chung &amp; Tâm Đỗ VN</p> 
<p>19:00 – 21:00</p> <p>Thứ Tư Wednesday 30 /7</p>	<p>A. Farm Space 10 Nguyễn Đăng Giai, Thảo Điền</p>	<p>Film screening   Chiếu phim giữa những chớp bóng, tôi mơ tiếp những giấc mơ - chương 1 in between frames, i dream the dreams i have been dreaming - chapter 1</p> <p>curated by   giám tuyển bởi Lại Minh Ngọc</p> 
<p>10:30 – 12:30</p> <p>17:00 – 18:15</p> <p>Thứ Bảy Saturday 2 /8</p>	<p>A. Farm Space 10 Nguyễn Đăng Giai, Thảo Điền</p>	<p>Nhập vai kỳ ức — Một buổi viết chung cùng Tâm Đỗ VN</p>  <p>Film screening   Chiếu phim giữa những chớp bóng, tôi mơ tiếp những giấc mơ - chương 2 in between frames, i dream the dreams i have been dreaming - chapter 2</p> <p>curated by   giám tuyển bởi Lại Minh Ngọc</p> 
<p>15:00 – 16:00</p> <p>Chủ Nhật Sunday 3 /8</p>	<p>A. Farm Studio 6/4 Nguyễn Đăng Giai, Thảo Điền</p>	<p>Tham quan triển lãm cùng Linh Lê, Lê Đ. Chung &amp; Tâm Đỗ VN</p> 

# Film Screening

CHƯƠNG TRÌNH CHIẾU PHIM | A FILM SCREENING

giữa những



chớp bóng,

in between frames,



tôi mơ tiếp

i dream the dreams



những giấc mơ



i have been dreaming

CHƯƠNG 1 | CHAPTER 1:

19:00-20:30, 30/7/2025

(Nguyễn Trinh Thị,  
2011)



*Bà và Ra trận | Song to the Front*



*Tuổi Dại | Green Age*



(Thái Thúc Hoàng Diệp,  
1974)

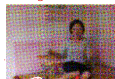
CHƯƠNG 2 | CHAPTER 2:

17:00-18:45, 2/8/2025

*The Place to Be Native*



(Trần Phương Thảo,  
2006)



*Giấc mơ là công nhân | Workers' Dreams*

GIÁM TUYỂN BỐI | CURATED BY:

(Hương Ngô, 2016) *Lưu Minh Ngọc*

*Ninh Bình - Saigon*



(2017)  
(Ngọc Như,

The screening takes a personal turn with moving image works and films that portray from seemingly traditional concepts to unconventional ideas of Vietnamese womanhood—The Virgin Mary opening her mythical arms to welcome migrants from Ninh Bình to Saigon in promise of a new land; a nurse veiling her face while treating a patient in the jungle, her mesmerizing gaze leaving viewers uncertain whether she's the protagonist or antagonist of fragmented montages of a propaganda film; young girls finding themselves in 1970s Saigon through music, love, and stimulants.... As the frames flip, the girls lean on their dreams, where they liberate themselves from the framings. In so doing, the programme questions the representation of female figures in Vietnamese cinema, which often places them in the moral confinement of “tam tông, tứ đức” (or, “three obediences and four virtues”). A legacy of Confucious teaching, a woman is expected to obey their father, husband and son, and to have diligence, modest appearance, proper speech, and morality, implying their existence as an embodiment of the nation, the traditional value through the male gaze. As seen across many filmic productions, a woman is there, yet she never truly exists.

*chapter 1:* 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM, Wednesday, 30/7/2025

chapter 1 follows the dreams of female characters who try to navigate their lives under the requirement of sacrificing for others, or “tam tông” (“three obediences”), and here in most of the films, “tòng quân” (military enlistment). *Green Age* (Thái Thúc Hoàng Diệp, 1974) brings back the dynamics of the 1970s in Saigon, where girls fulfill their own desire in the life besides wartime. The chapter ends with *Song to the Front* (Nguyễn Trinh Thi, 2011), in which the artist reconstructs a propaganda film footage into a thriller featuring the woman as the antagonist/protagonist.

*chapter 2:* 05:00 PM – 06:15 PM, Saturday, 2/8/2025

In the second chapter, the screening follows films and video works in which women and female bodies blend in, exist, and witness the movement of rapid changes in landscape and throughout generations. In *The Voice is An Archive* (Hương Ngô, 2016), four generations of Vietnamese diaspora connect through language and identity by humming a lullaby repeatedly. This is then followed by *Worker's Dream* (Trần Phương Thảo, 2006), a documentary that captures the reality of female workers as they search for a new life in the city. This chapter ends with *Ninh Bình - Saigon* (Ngọc Nâu, 2017), when the female figure only appears as mythical figures found in legends of migration

## About the curator

*Lai Minh Ngọc* was born in Hanoi and is currently based in Saigon, Vietnam. Freshly graduated in Social Studies and Art & Media Studies at Fulbright University Vietnam, she is taking small steps in practicing photography, documentary film, ethnographic film, and curation. Ngọc views artistic practices as a multidimensional approach to social research, especially issues and representation of sex and gender woven within the changing of urban space.

## *About the team*

A. Farm's director: Luke Schneider

Curator: Linh Lê

Exhibition technician: Hoàng Vũ

Curatorial assistant: Lại Minh Ngọc

Designer: Minh Hiền

Artist Tâm Đỗ would like to thank Hà Trang Trần, Cao Việt Nga  
for their technical support during the realisation of  
their project at A. Farm.