

THU VAN TRAN  
*We live in the flicker*

November 9 – December 8, 2012

For her first solo exhibition at the gallery, Thu Van TRAN (Ho Chi Minh City, 1979) takes over the first floor with a title taken from a book: *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. Published in 1899, this novel chronicles the slow journey up a river in Africa by a young British officer on behalf of a Belgian company. Based on observations made by Conrad himself, this book develops the inner experience and perception of the world by the young sailor linking them to the description of wild and oppressive nature. The reference to this story enables Tran to initiate and shape a process of reflection about the colonial past of nations such as Belgium and France, but also to allude to the devastating presence of the U.S. Army in Vietnam.

The artist has organized this exhibition by weaving many links between each work. In the **alcove**, one piece which embodies lightness and pressure combines squares of plaster in particular colours with struts made of hevea wood, from the famous rubber-producing tree which was planted intensively by French settlers in Indochina or Belgians in the Congo. The colours refer to defoliating agents (called "Rainbow Herbicides") used by the U.S. Army in Vietnam from 1961 to 1971, the best-known being Agent Orange. The all-out chemical warfare by the U.S. Army consisted of destroying crops and plants by bombing them with potent herbicides in areas where they expected to find the Viet Cong. Formal allusions can be found in two rooms with works on paper: drawings, inkjet prints, photos of jungle treated with rust. The pencil drawings (clouds or volcanic pyroclastic surges?) are deliberately distorted by the artist who colours them with spray paint, representing the various "Rainbow herbicide" agents, or who finely hatches the subject itself.

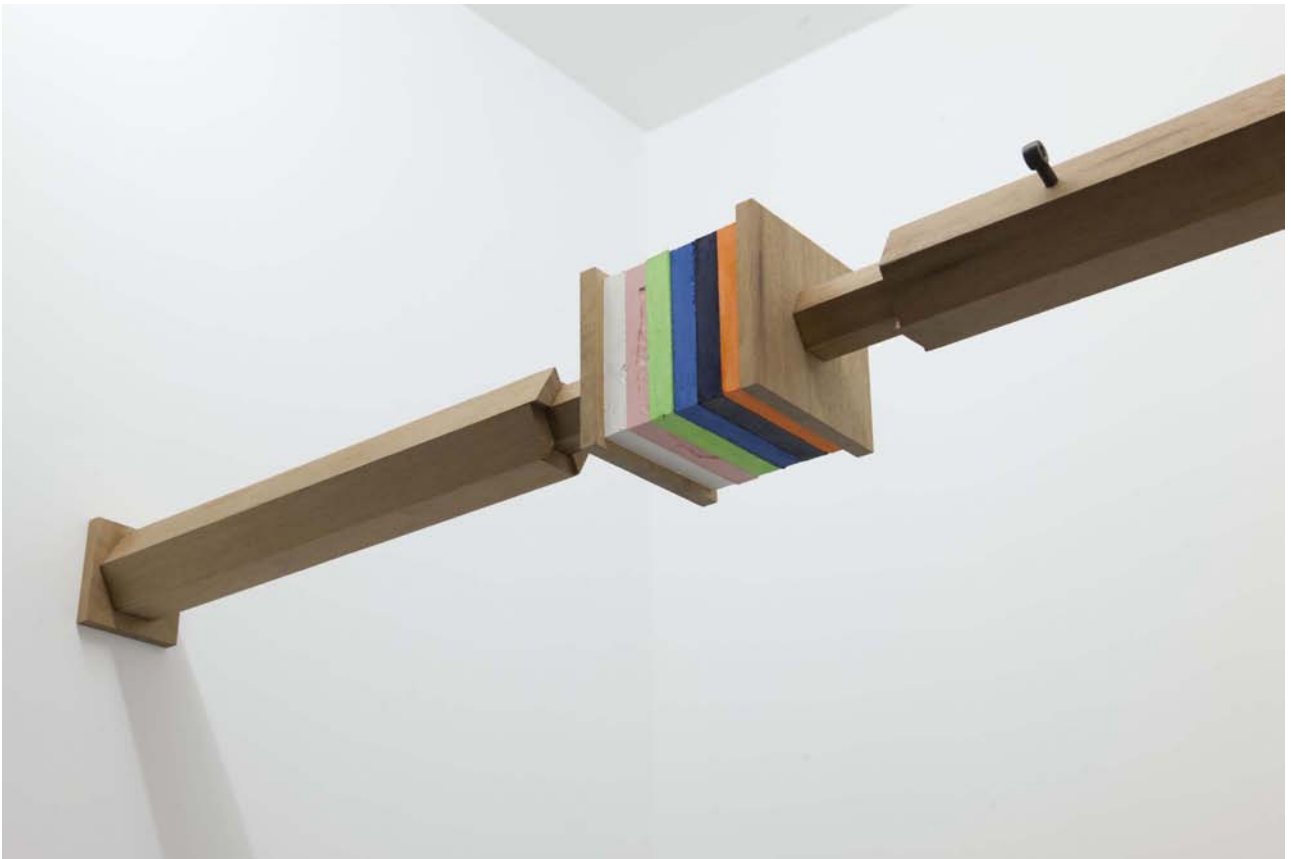
The relationship to colour is of a different order with *Chinatown* displayed in the passageway at the rear of the alcove. Brought back from New York (Chinatown), this label representing an Asian landscape is obviously an allusion to her country of origin and gives a fine scale ratio: small label for a large poster/small image for large memories. By exhibiting in broad daylight for weeks, the artist's desire was to allow the sun to perform its work slow of absorption and erasure of the colours. The memory of the place of childhood will fade sooner or later. Forgetfulness will make way for a void, but a void to be filled with new memories. The survival of buried images, a dream landscape is found throughout Tran's work. We find these flashes of lucidity in large photograms which, being "burned" by the light, only reveal extracts of *Heart of Darkness* relating to light or darkness. Light blinds but also makes things visible. That light that Camus talks about in *L'Etranger*, another key book shown in fine precarity, poised on a pedestal of cracked and mangled plaster.

As for the two copies of *Heart of Darkness* soaked in black ink, they seem to ooze or soak up all the darkness of that period of history which, is gradually resurfacing like a patch of oil. A fine approach to the concept of contamination. *Sabena, Vous y seriez déjà* is another ambiguous work with archive pictures rendered half-visible under shapes made of hevea. A powerful metaphor for Belgian history suggests the difference between history that is taught from books and the history actually lived in the Belgian Congo.

Here we are in the presence of an artist who, imbued with different cultures, is able to ask relevant questions without adopting a partisan stance.



*Into the yellow*, 2012  
20 x 20 x 195,5 cm  
Hevea wood, plaster



Detail of *Into the yellow*, 2012



Exhibition view of *We live in the flicker*, Meessen De Clercq, 2012



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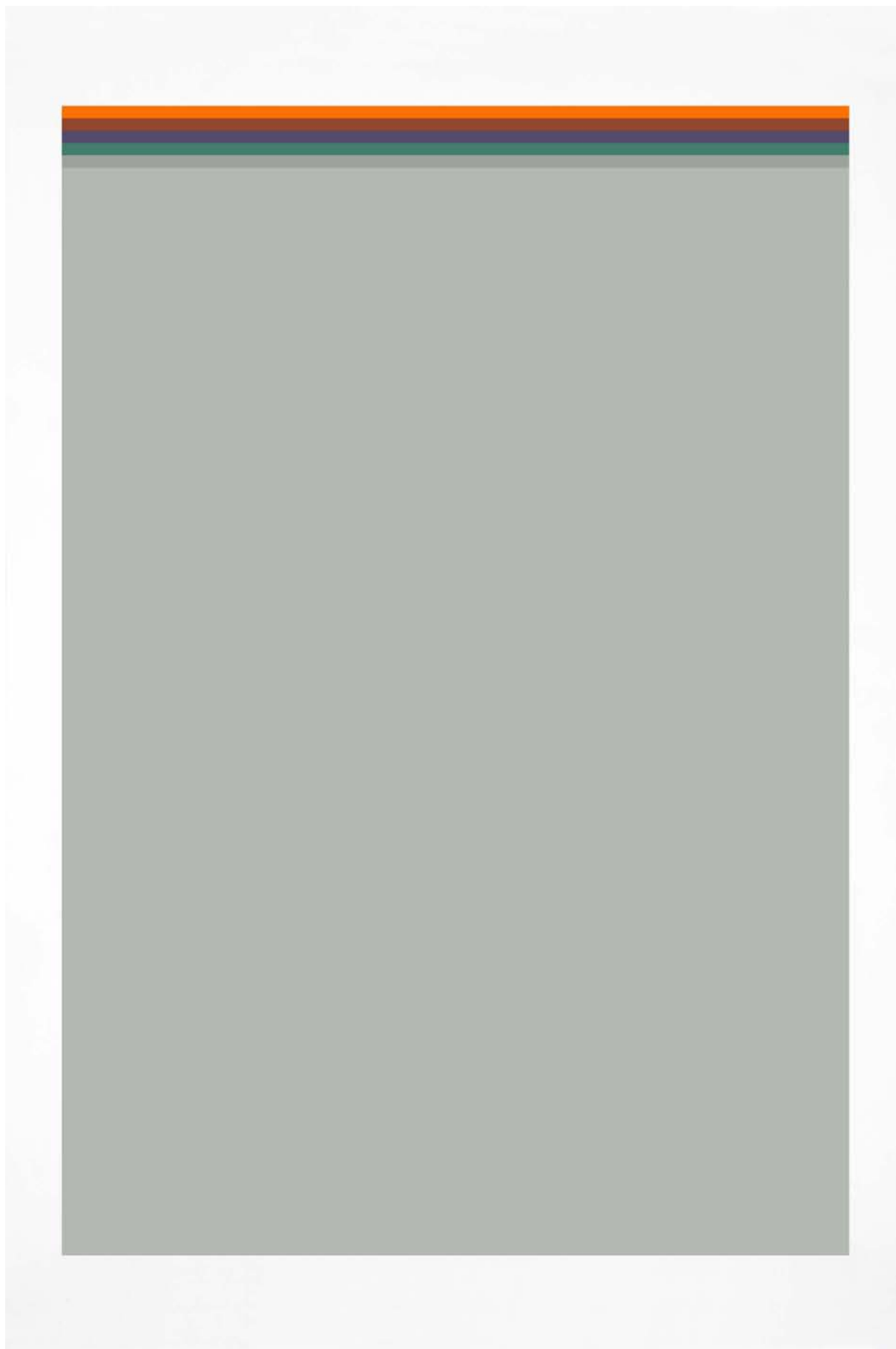


*Rainbow herbicides #1, 2012*  
Graphite on Canson paper, spray can paint  
60 x 40 cm  
61 x 43 x 3,6 cm (framed)





*Le gris de l'herbicide #1, 2012*  
Graphite on Canson paper  
60 x 40 cm  
61 x 43 x 3,6 cm (framed)



*Le gris de l'herbicide #2, 2012*  
Inkjet print on rag paper  
61 x 43 x 3,6 cm (framed)



*Le gris de l'herbicide #3, 2012*  
Inkjet print on rag paper  
61 x 43 x 3,6 cm (framed)





*Sabena ; Vous y serez déjà*, 2012  
81 x 128,5 x 42,5 cm  
Hevea wood, paper



Detail of Sabena ; Vous y serez déjà



*Without Stain #1*, 2012  
Hevea wood, plaster, paper, ink  
81 x 37,5 x 37,5 cm



Detail of *Without Stain #1*, 2012





*Without Stain #2*, 2012  
Hevea wood, plaster, paper, ink  
81 x 37,5 x 37,5 cm



Detail of *Without Stain #2*, 2012



*Chinatown, 2012*  
Paper  
40,8 x 46,5 x 4 cm (framed)



Exhibition view of *We live in the flicker*, Meessen De Clercq, 2012

then from the de  
at such a tremulous and prolonged wa  
ter despair as may be imagined to fo  
ope from the earth.

*We live in the flicker* (detail), 2012  
Photogram  
216,5 x 144,5 cm



*We live in the flicker* (detail), 2012  
Photogram  
216,5 x 144,5 cm



*The Pedestal of the Stranger*, 2012  
Paper, plaster  
19 x 153 x 90 cm



*From green to orange, 2012*





*From Green to Orange #3, 2012*  
31,6 x 35,5 x 2,2 cm (framed)



*From Green to Orange #2, 2012*  
31,6 x 35,5 x 2,2 cm (framed)



*From Green to Orange #1, 2012*  
31,6 x 35,5 x 2,2 cm (framed)

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Born in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) in 1979

Lives and works in Paris (France)

## **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

### **2013**

Centre d'Art Villa du Parc, Anemasse (France) forthcoming

### **2012**

*We live in the flicker*, Meessen De Clercq, Brussels (Belgium)

### **2011**

*La Tache*, Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris (France)

### **2010**

*Le Nombre Pur selon Duras*, La Maison Rouge -Le Patio, Paris (France)

### **2009**

*Fahrenheit 451* -Homme Livre Homme Livre, Bétonsalon -Centre d'Art et de Recherche, Paris (France)

### **2007**

*Thu Van Tran*, L'Espace -Centre Culturel Français de Hanoi, Hanoi (Vietnam)

### **2006**

*Lumière Arrière*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Mulhouse, Alsace (France)

## **GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

### **2012**

*L'Homme de Vitruve*, Le Credac, Ivry-sur-Seine (France)

*Twentieth to twentieth*, End of Century Gallery, New York (USA)

*Particles*, Meessen De Clercq, Brussels (Belgium)

### **2011**

*Soudain déjà*, Beaux-Arts de Paris (France)

*Au grenier quatre pièces de mémoire*, Musée Départemental d'Art Contemporain de Rochechouart, Rochechouart (France)

### **2010**

*All Over*, Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris (France)

*Le Carillon de Big Ben*, Le Credac -Centre d'Art d'Ivry-sur-Seine, Ivry-sur-Seine (France)

### **2009**

*Meeting you half way*, Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris (France)

*Phase Zéro*, Galerie Serge Aboukrat, Paris (France)

*Là où je suis n'existe pas*, Le Printemps de Septembre à Toulouse -Lieu Commun, France *Memory of void*, Kimusa, Séoul (South Korea)

### **2007**

*Expérience Insulaires*, Le Credac -Centre d'Art d'Ivry-sur-Seine, Ivry-sur-Seine (France)

### **2006**

*Voir en peinture 2*, La Générale, Paris (France)

*Hradacany*, la Générale, Paris (France)

*Tolerate me*, Galerie DAP, Warszawa (Poland)

**2005**

Galerie Hengevoss-Durkop, Hamburg (Germany)

**2004**

*Félicité*, Beaux-Arts de Paris (France)

*Première Vue*, Galerie du Passage de Retz, Paris (France)

*Singles*, Galerie Pitch, Paris (France)

#### EXPOSITIONS FOIRES

**2010**

*FIAC*, Stand Acquisitions du FMAC et Galerie Martine Aboucaya Cours Carré du Louvre, Paris (France)

*Liste*, The Young Art Fair, Bâle (Switzerland)

**2009**

*FIAC*, Stand Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Cours Carré du Louvre, Paris (France)

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

**2011**

*Soudain déjà*, catalogue d'exposition, édition Beaux-Arts de Paris (Texte Hélène Meisel)

*Menteur*, revue «J'aime beaucoup ce que vous faites» (Invitation Christian Alandete)

**2010**

*Le Dessain Collectif*, revue «ROVEN» - n°2 automne, (Dossier rédigé par Daphné Lesergent)

**2009**

*Là où je suis n'existe pas*, Le Printemps de Septembre, catalogue d'exposition

**2007**

*Expériences Insulaires*, revue "Semaines" - n°61, Éditions Analogues

**2006**

*ICI-ICAR*, catalogue d'exposition, édition du Musée des Beaux-Arts de Mulhouse

#### PRESSE

**2012**

Revue *L'art même* - n°55 2ème trimestre 2012, "Art et littérature" Dossier rédigé par Magali Nachtergaele

**2011**

Journal *Le journal des Arts* - 4 au 17 novembre, "Multiplicité d'une époque" par Frédéric Bonnet

Revue *Connaissance des Arts* - octobre, "Jeunes pousses" portrait rédigé par Damien Sausset

Revue *Artforum* - summer, «Thu Van Tran» par Liliane Davies

Site *Lunettesrouges.lemonde* - 28 mars, «Entre gui parasite et l'amour victorieux, une courbure dans la trajectoire de la lumière» par Marc Lenot

**2010**

Site *Lunettesrouges.lemonde* - 18 février, «Marguerite Duras, Billancourt, et le nombre pur» par Marc Lenot

Site *Artparis* - décembre, «Meeting you half way», par Sarah Ihler-Meyer

**2009**

Journal *Le monde* - 29 septembre, «Printemps de Septembre» par Emmanuelle Lequeux

Site *Lacritique.org* - 14 octobre, «Printemps de Septembre. Dialogue de dessins, vidéos, sculpture et dialectique critique» par Christian Gattinoni

Site *Lunettesrouges.lemonde* - 01 octobre, «Les quatuors de Christian Bernard» par Marc Lenot

Site *Lacritique.org* - 22 avril, «Fahrenheit 45, Homme livre Homme libre» par Daphné Lesergent

Site *Lunettesrouges.lemonde* - 21 février, «Fahrenheit 451 à Bétonsalon» par Marc Lenot

## **2007**

Revue *Mouvement* - "La culture de l'alternative" par David Samson

## **2006**

Site *Lacritique.org* - 05 avril, «Les faux-semblants de l'héritage formaliste» par Daphné Lesergent

## RÉSIDENCES

### **2012**

Programme de résidence *Hors les Murs*, Institut Français, New-York (USA)

### **2010**

*La Fabrik*, bourse de la ville de Burgdorf, Berne (Switzerland)

### **2009**

*Seoul Art Space*, Geumcheon, Séoul (South Korea)

### **2007/2008**

Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (France)

## BOURSES / PRIX

### **2010**

Allocation d'Installation, Drac Ile-de-France

### **2009**

Finaliste prix Audi Talents Awards, Paris

Aide Individuelle à la Création, Drac Ile-de-France

Soutien des Amis de la Maison Rouge -Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris

### **2008**

Aide à l'Exposition, Département des Affaires Culturelles de la Ville de Paris

### **2006**

Aide Individuelle à la Création, Drac Ile-de-France

### **2005**

Allocation d'Installation, Drac Ile-de-France

Lauréate prix Mulhouse 05, participation proposée par Henry-Claude Cousseau

### **2004**

Aide au projet, Département des Affaires Culturelles de la Ville de Paris

## ACQUISITIONS / COMMANDES PUBLIQUES

### **2011**

Collection du Musée Départemental d'Art Contemporain de Rochechouart (France)

Commande du Centre Georges Pompidou pour la conception d'oeuvres relatives au Musée des Enfants du Musée du

Louvre Abu-Dhabi, (United Arab Emirates)

**2010**

Collection du Fonds Municipal d'Art Contemporain de la Ville de Paris (France)

**2008**

Commande publique réalisée dans le cadre du 1% artistique de la médiathèque de la ville de Poissy (France)