

HUNG VIET NGUYEN

“I keep on painting because I know I will never get to the top and the challenge is always there.”

Hung Viet Nguyen was born in Vietnam in 1957. When he was a kid, Nguyen dreamed of becoming an artist. Instead, he studied biology at the Science University in Saigon. After relocating to the U.S. in 1982, the dream of becoming an artist came back. Nguyen found work as an illustrator and graphics artist during the day, and as a fine artist at night.

Hung Viet Nguyen developed his artistic skills carefully studying a variety of traditional Eastern and Western forms, media and techniques. His complex, labor-intensive use of oil paint reveals a mastery of texture. While portions of Nguyen’s work suggest the influence of traditional forms such as woodblock prints, oriental scroll paintings, ceramic art, mosaic, and stained glass, his ultimate expression as an artist asserts a more

contemporary sensibility.

Hung Viet Nguyen's paintings had been awarded "Juror's Choice Awards" at the San Diego Art and at the Institute Biennial International Award Exhibition in 2013 and 2015. Nguyen's paintings have been represented and exhibited at art fairs in Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Palm Springs, New York, San Diego, San Francisco. There are articles about Nguyen's Art at KCET-ARTBOUND (December 23, 2013), Easy Reader (November 23, 2016), Riot Material (June 12, 2018), and many more.

Nguyen's works of art gives us a sort of fresh start. Simply staring at his paintings, one can perceive a type of delicacy that yearns to expand way beyond. And this can definitely be seen in the intricacies, details and colors that we are exposed to. One can savor the moment, the story, the tale, the escape – all encompassed in one.

Q. What role does the artist have in society?

A. An artist is as a monk, focusing on the spiritual journey, lives a simple life, consumes less and leaves something beautiful for others.

Q. What's your best childhood memory?

A. Hanging around with bad kids, skipping classes, wandering areas, and smoking cigarettes. I was 11 years old.

Q. As a child, what did you wish to become when you grew up?

A. When I was a kid, I dreamed of becoming an artist, or a sailor. I guess I didn't do good in school. During 6th grade, there was a writing essay test; the topic was "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And my reply was to be an artist. However, coming from a large family, I didn't want to bother my parents, I didn't tell them what I wanted to be.

Q. Do you remember the first art you made? What was it and how old were you?

A. I drew often, since a very young age from elementary through high school. Then I attended the Science University in Saigon and studied Biology. During my second year (sophomore), I created two collage paintings to give to a classmate who I fell in love with. The first one was a violist, the second one was a zoo/botanic garden field trip scene. I was 20 years old.

Q. How and when did you first become seriously interested in art?

A. I have created art since I was a kid, but I got seriously interested after I got laid-off in 1984 and I took a trip to France. I visited many museums and spent time walking around Paris.

Q. Tell us about your particular style and how you came to it?

A. I'm a self-taught artist, I have been traveling to many different countries and regions. I pick up the arts here and there and blend them all together. More or less I compose my artwork as Oriental scroll painting which I paint the places (landscapes) I have been traveling through instead of one fixed location.

Q. How do you visualize the textures of your work?

A. Perhaps about 20% describing the realism, and 80% expressing the feelings.

Q. What does your art aim to express?

A. Human connection!

Q. What personality trait has gotten you in the most trouble?

A. Honesty.



Q. What have you had to sacrifice for this career?

A. Spending much time.

Q. Who are your biggest influences? Are you inspired by the work of your peers or anyone else in particular?

A. I love painters Vincent Van Gogh and Lucian Freud.

Q. Is the artistic life lonely? What do you do to counteract it?

A. Lonely is not a handicap but a strength. Artists need to be alone to focus, meditate, and create original artworks.

Q. Apart from art, what do you love doing?

A. I take breaks from painting to travel here and there, and after a few weeks, I need to be back painting again. That routine never bores me.

Q. What is your philosophy in matters of art?

A. Human is a dangerous species, so keeping us busy creating art is a good idea.

Q. What does 'success' mean to you?

A. Seeing my art progressing day after day and hope it can be shared with the public.

Q. What are the biggest things you've learned in life thus far?

A. No short cut.

Q. What's the best piece of advice you've been given, and by who?

A. Life is short (unknown).

Q. What advice would you give to the next generation?

A. Art is like religion; I'm practicing it like a monk.

AR| T |MOIRE

AR| T |MOIRE

