



Ha Manh Thang, *Landscape of Hue Forbidden City No. 2*, 2013, acrylic, acrylic medium, charcoal on canvas

PRESS RELEASE

April 17, 2013

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam – Galerie Quynh is pleased to present Hanoi-based artist Ha Manh Thang's first solo exhibition in Ho Chi Minh City. Featuring a new body of work depicting monuments and edifices that symbolize Vietnam's urban centers, *HEAVEN IS A PLACE* reflects the artist's continued concern in reconciling Vietnam's cultural and social history with the dramatic changes the country has undergone since *Doi Moi*. Widely known for his bold and colorful satirical paintings that juxtapose Vietnam's past and its rich heritage with fashionable images of consumerist culture, Thang's new work is less about flash and more introspective and subdued. A waft of irony, however, still pervades the series as the exhibition title suggests.

HEAVEN IS A PLACE questions the connections between the buildings we construct and the ideals they embody. Thang looks at powerful and iconic monuments such as Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, the Hue Citadel, Ben Thanh Market and Bitexco Financial Tower and reduces them to their basic forms with no visible details. These reconstructions/erasures resemble rudimentary architectural drawings against anonymous backgrounds, or appear like silhouettes in an ominous almost apocalyptic scene. Vulnerable and exposed, their physical, imposing stature may seem diminished but their symbolic power still exists. That their identities cannot be stripped entirely reveals how deeply the images and ideals are ingrained in our collective consciousness. Is it possible to even reexamine the meanings and power of these structures/ideals? What do the transparent layers in these landscapes suggest? When these landscapes physically disappear, will they continue to be relevant or will their significance be lost?

MAIN GALLERY

65 De Tham Street, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
tel/fax: +84 8 3836 8019

DOWNTOWN

Level 2, 151/3 Dong Khoi Street, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
tel: +84 8 3824 8284



Thang imagines an increasingly urban country where the city occupies a liminal space between reality and fantasy. The landscapes he paints reflect a kind of historical discontinuity and feelings of displacement. In many of the works his use of cobalt blue, reminiscent of traditional Hue ceramics, suggests a quiet anxiety reinforced by the image of Ky Lan (or Qilin), an auspicious, mythical Chinese entity whose presence signals the imminent arrival or passing of a wise ruler or sage. Thang depicts the chimerical creature like a nostalgic ghost, haunting these anxious, metamorphosing landscapes.

A selection of works will be on view from the 11 – 25 May at the gallery's new downtown location at Level 2, 151/3 Dong Khoi Street, District 1.

ABOUT HA MANH THANG

Born in 1980 in Thai Nguyen Province, Ha Manh Thang is one of Vietnam's most important young painters. He was also the only artist from Vietnam profiled in the Phaidon publication 'Painting Today' (2009) alongside acclaimed artists such as Gerhard Richter, Neo Rauch and Peter Doig. Having graduated from the Hanoi Fine Arts University in 2004, Thang has since held a number of notable regional and international exhibitions including *Instruments of Meditation: Works of Art* from the Zoltán Bodnár Collection, Reök Palace, Budapest, Hungary (2011); *Connect: Kunstzene Vietnam*, ifa Galleries, Berlin and Stuttgart, Germany (2009); *The rain and the small stream* presented by Ernst & Young's Asean Art Outreach program, Singapore (2008); and *Post Doi Moi: Vietnamese Art After 1990*, Singapore Art Museum (2008). Ha Manh Thang currently lives and works in Hanoi.

ABOUT GALERIE QUYNH

Established in 2003, Galerie Quynh is the leading contemporary art gallery in Vietnam. Working with a select group of emerging, mid-career and established Vietnamese artists, the gallery also exhibits the work of distinguished artists from around the world allowing visitors access to a diverse range of contemporary art practice. In keeping with its mission to support education and develop an infrastructure for the arts in Vietnam, the gallery collaborates with artists, curators and art spaces locally and internationally to organize talks and lectures as well as to produce publications in English and Vietnamese.

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GALERIE QUYNH CONTEMPORARY ART

www.galeriequynh.com

A PDF of works in the exhibition is available upon request. Please contact the gallery for further information and images.

Exhibition Title: HEAVEN IS A PLACE

Exhibition Dates: 24 April – 25 May, 2013

Gallery Hours: 10 AM – 6 PM, Tuesday – Saturday and by appointment
Closed on Sundays and Mondays

Location: 65 De Tham Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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