

# NAM BANG!

CURATED BY BOITRAN HUYNH-BEATTIE



A 2009 CASULA POWERHOUSE PROJECT

## BOITRAN HUYNH-BEATTIE

PROJECT CURATOR

We all live in history, some of us write it and a few of us rewrite it. But how do we understand history and how do we *want* history to be written? Can perceptions of history be changed or should history be changed with time? Eric Foner, a prominent American historian states that:

History always has been and always will be regularly rewritten, in response to new questions, new information, new methodologies, and new political, social and cultural imperatives.<sup>1</sup>

In relation to Australia's history, Katya Johanson and Ruth Rentschler argue that the period 1940-1970 should be seen as a series of emerging collective campaigns to develop Australian art and culture, and that it is not the "ice age" deemed by contemporaries of the era.<sup>2</sup> The Vietnam War<sup>3</sup> is another instance in which one can witness collective memory changing over time. In 1970 Vietnam veteran Mark Gladwell, father of one of the artists in *Nam Bang!*, applied for a job but after disclosing his employment history of the previous two years as "soldier served in Viet Nam" he was sent on his way with the line "we don't want your type here".<sup>4</sup> Like most Vietnam veterans Mark never imagined the day they would hear their Prime Minister acknowledge:

We have not always been good at thanking our Vietnam veterans. In fact, at times we've been very bad at it. The time has well and truly come to turn the page and to turn the corner. To thank you all on behalf of a grateful nation for doing your duty to the nation.<sup>5</sup>

History of the Vietnam War is being re-written, to incorporate the troubled journey of many Vietnam veterans who inflicted years of turmoil and despair on their families and to disclose the personal accounts of suffering experienced by Vietnamese refugees who now call Australia home. The exhibition *Nam Bang!* and its accompanying conference titled *Echoes of a War* at Casula Powerhouse<sup>6</sup> provides an opportunity to present different perspectives from those directly involved in the war and those who carry significant post-war legacies. It also gives a chance for others to stand up for those who could not speak, or had no legitimate voice.

This essay records the sociocultural and political contexts in which the *Nam Bang!* project evolved. The preliminary title was *Nam Bang: Producing Generation 2*, a concept generated by Kon Gouriotis<sup>7</sup> through his association with those diversely affected by the Vietnam War, when he co-curated *Viet Nam Voices* (1997)

and *Viet Nam Voices - Australians & the Vietnam War* (touring 2000-2004) with Adam Lucas. The title *Nam Bang* was proposed by Cuong Le and the subtitle "Producing Generation 2" was removed when Paul Howard suggested that it diverted from the nuanced significance of *Nam Bang!*<sup>8</sup> A few individuals expressed reservations about the title *Nam Bang!* citing that the word "Nam" had no relevance to Australian culture because it was a colloquial expression among US soldiers referring to Viet Nam and as "Bang" refers to an explosion it could distress some Vietnam veterans, as well as being slang for sexual interaction.<sup>9</sup> From a Vietnamese perspective "Nam Bang" translates as "southern state", a scornful allusion to Viet Nam used by imperial Chinese historians, following nearly a thousand years of Chinese occupation in the first millennium. The exhibition's Curatorium considered these issues but ended up unanimously approving *Nam Bang!* as the proposed title.

Opposition also arose from a small group of anti-communist protesters in Sydney's Vietnamese community, prior to the launch of the Viet Nam Voices exhibition.<sup>10</sup> They claimed that a collage by Vietnamese Australian artist Hanh Ngo was "pro-communist" and requested that her *Untitled, Uncle Ho with Sun Flowers* be removed, along with a drawing by George Gittoes that portrays a sex scene. When Casula Powerhouse staff stood firm, the pressure group approached Thao Nhi La, another young Vietnamese Australian artist in Sydney, and succeeded in influencing her to pull out of the exhibition.<sup>11</sup> For Sydney's broader Vietnamese community, a preview of *Viet Nam Voices* was specifically organised so that they could form their own opinions, but threats from this small group to demonstrate loomed like a dark cloud for weeks. In retrospect, their threats may have been a 'copy cat' response to an earlier protest in the US.<sup>12</sup>

So how do these events relate to the *Nam Bang!* project? This question can be partially answered by exploring the intergenerational conflict among the Vietnamese community in Australia. On the other hand one cannot ignore the suffering and residual hatred resulting from the Vietnam War that like unfinished business can flare up under the slightest provocation.<sup>13</sup> The *Nam Bang!* exhibition examines a reality that when the Vietnam War ended, the psychological and cultural issues common to most post-war societies were born. Through *Nam Bang!* the pervasive effect of the aftermath is investigated and how its impact has extended over several continents.

The launch of *Nam Bang!* featured Mai Long's *The Burning of Godog* performance on an embankment at Casula Powerhouse and coincided with a public demonstration of an estimated 100 Vietnamese Australians in the car park of Casula railway station.

Mai Long was born to a Vietnamese father who arrived in Australia in 1962 as a Colombo Plan student and an Irish-Australian mother. Mai spent her childhood in numerous Asian countries, moving to wherever her father's job transferred him. A yearning to get in touch with her paternal heritage has been the stimulus for much of Mai's recent art. For instance, her 'mongrel' *Phở Dog* installation (comprising 12 colourful paper-mâché dogs) refers to her hybridity. First exhibited in the group show *I Love Phở* curated by Cuong Le,<sup>14</sup> *Phở Dog* marks Mai Long's transition from painting to installation, through which she seeks to interpret various visions of our contemporary society. Mai envisaged that her mongrel dogs were a representative call to create links between different cultures. However, when the installation was exhibited in Perth in 2008, mockery was construed by a faction in Perth's small Vietnamese community, who publicly condemned it. Apparently one *Phở Dog* was deemed particularly offensive because among the national flags painted on its buttocks, was a flag of the former Republic of Viet Nam. This generated requests for the dog to be removed from display, to which Mai responded by covering the whole installation with a black shroud.<sup>15</sup> Paradoxically, this act of self-censorship was also a refusal of censorship; Mai Long's contribution to *I Love Phở* evolved into *Phở Blackout* as:

"a gesture to acknowledge the suffering of the Vietnamese community concerned and at the same time the suffering of all people who cannot speak out in the world or are censored in their own societies."<sup>16</sup>

This fuss in Perth surfaced when Mai had almost completed her *Godog & the Ascension of Dag Girl* installation.<sup>17</sup> In response to the pressure and insular vision of some Vietnamese Australians about the *Phở Dog* work, she proposed a performance for the launch of *Nam Bang!* where a colourful 190 centimetres tall paper-mâché *Godog* would be ceremonially cremated and transformed through fire.<sup>18</sup> Through *The Burning of Godog* the differences and polarities in politics would hopefully be erased. It was a courageous act to level the disparity and a cathartic expression by a young artist who has tried to "expand her debate on the emptiness and complexity of contemporary transcultural spaces."<sup>19</sup> It left no ground for compromise with the past; one just has to bury it and start the future from zero. The residue of *Godog* is displayed in *Nam Bang!* with three video documentations of the performance that also features the

protest during the launch. Ironically, Mai has given her Vietnamese compatriots a space in her work, while they tried to impose on her their personal repudiation.<sup>20</sup>

Lucy Lippard commented "that the most effective social/political art being done today consists of words and images".<sup>21</sup> Lucy's observation corresponds to a remarkable work in the *Viet Nam Voices* exhibition by Dennis Trew, who constructed his *Names from the Book of the Dead* (1999) through such means. By using photographs and text lifted verbatim from a national daily newspaper,<sup>22</sup> Dennis compiled a portrait gallery of the 503<sup>23</sup> Australians killed fighting in Viet Nam, with an austere account of their life cut short. This large significant artwork anticipated a long awaited emotional tribute to Australia's fallen veterans of the Vietnam War.

Dennis Trew served in the Royal Australian Navy as a weapons mechanic and sailed on HMAS Sydney several times to Viet Nam.<sup>24</sup> For *Nam Bang!* Dennis created *Journey – Aftermath* that incorporates some intensely graphic images, where he depicts himself carrying his heart in a jar pondering over a loss of self. Dennis combines this with text stating "since the war, it seems something has been torn out of me, leaving me numb and disconnected from the world". Other images refer to skin rashes and suicide car accidents, Vietnamese and Australian children with cleft lip and palate. These documentary-like images reveal the horrific aftermath of the Vietnam War inflicted on victims regardless of race or age.

Psychologically and emotionally, many Vietnam veterans bear scars. William Short is an American Vietnam veteran, who in 1969 served as an infantry platoon sergeant. Born into a family that saw every generation serve in a war, William considered military service normal duty for a good citizen. However, after four months combat in Viet Nam he began to see "that there was something wrong in this war" and refused to fight, which led him to be court marshalled followed by several months in jail. Later, William completed a Masters Degree in Visual Arts at UCLA, working on a series of abstract paintings specifically to release feelings of bitterness and confusion; by using colours that suggested blood and mud, followed by a process of slashing and stitching them back together.

In 1991 William Short published *A Matter of Conscience – GI Resistance during the Vietnam War*, a book on his photographic exhibition accompanied by oral histories compiled by his partner Willa Seidenberg.<sup>25</sup> *A Matter of Conscience* shed light on another war fought in Viet Nam, one by black and white American soldiers of conscience refusing to take part in the war. The work is a historical excavation of this difficult past and as Lucy Lippard wrote; to proceed with it was a courageous act.<sup>26</sup> William returned to Viet Nam in 1989 to assist curating the ground breaking exhibition *As Seen by Both Sides – American and Vietnamese Artists Look at the War*, which travelled nationally in the US and to Viet Nam.<sup>27</sup> This visit to Viet Nam was a transformational experience for William, who with Willa returned several times. Together they have photographed and interviewed some 90 Vietnamese, including North Vietnamese ex-servicemen, ex-Viet Cong, and wartime student activists, to create a large archive under the title *Memories of the American War- Stories from the Other Side*. For *Nam Bang!* William selected six of the portraits, accompanied by text about each life story that embodies the loss and struggle most Vietnamese had to endure – "a pain they all share".<sup>28</sup> All the sitters appear reserved in their office or home, apprehensive perhaps confused about *Doi Moi* (reform), when Viet Nam's rigid Socialist ideology gave way to a market driven economy. William's

black and white portraits present a grim reminder of Viet Nam's history. They are accompanied by 12 colour photographs of war remnants – the fuse of a Chinese mortar round, the fragments of an American claymore mine, pieces of Australian barbed wire<sup>29</sup> and similar assorted items that display international collaboration in the Vietnam War. Most poignant is the image of a vendor of war vestiges who himself might be a veteran, selling fragments of his past to international tourists, which William must have found so affecting that he focused his camera's lens onto the vending tray, to maintain the anonymity of his subject. For William Short, talking to his former enemies, to come to some understanding with them and to record their stories, is a journey that offsets his own memories about the war – the war that he hated and the reflections that have haunted him.<sup>30</sup> These photographs form a gesture of reconciliation that William has spent years searching for, since the day in 1969 as a young American soldier he stepped off Viet Nam's soil.

For some Vietnam War veterans commemoration offers a generous space for their artistic activities. Le Tri Dung was conscripted into the (North) Vietnamese People's Army in 1972, while still completing his final portfolio at Ha Noi's College of Fine Arts. This was a time when the escalating war was not going well for the communists, and its army desperately needed replacements. All students and overseas graduates were conscripted under the motto "everything is for the front". The army trained Dung to be a tank commander and his armoured brigade fought in Quang Tri, one of the most intense battle field provinces. When the military's bureaucracy discovered his artistic and literary skills he was re-appointed as a war correspondent, a post that saw him travel from one battlefield to another. The author Bao Ninh, writer of the internationally acclaimed *The Sorrow of War*, is a close friend of Dung's and fought in Quang Tri at the same time. Bao Ninh does not see war as glorious but a ruthless business of human beings.

From then on his whole generation threw itself into the war enthusiastically, fiercely, making its own blood flow, and causing the blood of others to flow in torrents.<sup>31</sup>

The war has ended but an all encompassing suffering remains, and Viet Nam's post-war society still mourns the human loss. So many young lives were cut short and hopes turned into despair. Dung painted *The Same Pain for Both Sides* to express his empathy for those who lost their loved ones. An earlier version of this painting was shown at the Fine Arts Museum in Ha Noi for one day, before being removed by the cultural police because it "undermines our glory by placing the losing side equally with us".<sup>32</sup> The deformed foetus at the tip of a large banana leaf points to the harmful effects of Agent Orange, accompanied by the hats of two soldiers from opposing armies. Le Tri Dung's message crosses the boundary between 'the losing side' and 'the winning side' and typifies the need for a holistic expression of compassion.

One of the commonalities shared by Vietnam veteran artists in *Nam Bang!* is that they express compassion toward others. Terry Eichler is one. In 1992 he exhibited with a group of veteran artists in the *Dog Tags* exhibition that led him to further pursue his art after years of teaching. Terry was conscripted into the Australian army and in 1968-1969 served in Viet Nam as an interpreter, mainly with the Ninth Infantry Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment. Terry's job was to work with South Vietnamese

soldiers and the locals more than with his peers, subsequently the casualties he witnessed were mostly elderly Vietnamese or children.

One day while patrolling near the hamlet of Suoi Nghe, Terry took a photograph of a group of children in front of some old charcoal kilns. Their collective faces expressed innocence, hope, confusion, fear and vulnerability; faces that have haunted him ever since. Did they survive the war? Who have they become? Are they still in Viet Nam or are they scattered around the world? These are questions that have bothered him time and again. For *Nam Bang!* Terry Eichler has created from this subtle photograph, *Mediation of 2,063,500 Deaths*, as a memorial to the more than two million Vietnamese and approximately 63,500 people from other nations, killed during the Viet Nam War. Overlaid on the photograph are transparent pages of old Vietnamese note paper, unto which Terry has drawn an intricate symbol system.<sup>33</sup> Each symbol stands for 50 deaths and in total, represents all the estimated casualties from nations that participated in the Vietnam War: America, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines and of course Viet Nam.

Heonik Kwon, a social anthropologist from the Edinburgh University has researched Vietnamese casualties and post-war commemorative practice.<sup>34</sup> He observed that the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has constructed countless war memorials throughout the nation, venerating their fallen soldiers as "martyrs". However, there is an absence of memorials to uphold the collective memory of those who fought on the wrong side or for civilian deaths, unless through massacres. A significant omission in Socialist Viet Nam's 'official history' is the absence of the Hue Massacre, a term given to the mass killings conducted by Viet Cong guerrillas and North Vietnamese soldiers during their brief occupation in Hue during the 1968 Tet Offensive. These un-recognised deaths have become ghosts of the war, pushed into social and spiritual displacement. Much the same can be said of Maya Ying Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., a place where American veterans can lament for fallen colleagues but there is no memorial for the deaths brought about by Americans. Terry's Eichler's *Mediation of 2,063,500 Deaths* embraces these gaps, by advocating for equality in the collective memory of death and commemoration for all who perished in the war - a quiet place for mourning and reconciliation.<sup>35</sup>

Francis Edwards was about to commence a musical career but it was put on hold when he was called up for national service. Francis served with the Royal Australian Artillery for 12 months and subsequently suffered hearing loss from field gun blasts,<sup>36</sup> a condition with marked consequences for a musician. Francis is known within the Australian veterans community for the songs he writes and performs, as a voice of healing and inspiration for those suffering from issues arising in the aftermath of combat. Francis Edwards' album *Vietnam - Dreamscape* released in 2008 has been described by Bob Rogers as an outstanding achievement.<sup>37</sup> Each song explores the real life situation and circumstances of 11 Vietnam veterans, who live on today with their own different demons. Of the 14 original songs on the album, four relate to Francis Edwards himself and the rest are the stories of the others. *Vietnam - Dreamscape* is a unique audio window into the minds and emotions of returned combat soldiers trying to regain their lives.

Peter Stephenson joined the Australian Navy as a 17 year old after following in his uncle's footsteps, hoping to travel the world. An interest in drawing led him to study art after completing his service. Peter served on the destroyer HMAS Hobart for seven months in 1968, patrolling the international waters off North Viet Nam and the de-militarised zone. On 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1968, HMAS Hobart came under attack from North Vietnamese coastal defence. Three days later the destroyer was again attacked, this time by a missile launched from a US aircraft in a case of mistaken identity, which badly damaged the ship, as well as killing two crew members and injuring several others. Peter Stephenson's painting *Casualties* is a tribute to the two fallen crew members, who due the peculiar incident that caused their deaths are placed upside down, to typify the absurdity of war.

Within the community of Vietnam veteran artists, Peter F. Daly's most significant achievement is the 1992 *Dog Tags* exhibition.<sup>38</sup> For his *Nam Bang!* commission Peter created a series of acrylic works on paper titled *The Highway North No.1-10*, which is exemplary of a consistent style he has developed over the years. Peter's pictorial forms are typified by bold colours, described as "seemingly naïve but highly charged symbolic works, densely filled with political and social references".<sup>39</sup> *The Highway North No.1-10* maintains Peter Daly's modern primitive style to portray striking images of haunted males, painted with an urgency that eloquently underpins their protesting nature. They are underscored with text emphasising grievances from some Vietnam veterans in the 1980s, when their plight was ignored by the government of the day.

*Nam Bang!* offers the post-war generation a forum to prescribe alternative views about residues of the war. Liza Nguyen was introduced to *Nam Bang!* through her *Souvenirs of Vietnam* exhibition that showcased close-ups of soil samples from battlefields in both of the Indochina Wars and nearly one hundred photographs of Vietnamese war memorials, all in the form of postcards.<sup>40</sup> Born to a Vietnamese father and a French mother, Liza did not see Viet Nam until her early twenties when accompanied by her father. In 2004 she returned to document *Souvenirs of Vietnam*, with the intention of connecting to the land and its people.<sup>41</sup>

Liza Nguyen was so fired up by her commission for *Nam Bang!* that the flow of ideas tossed her into creative unrest. Finally she was drawn to French colonial postcards, once sent to friends and relatives back home by Indochinese colonists. Liza presents *Mos Maiorum - A Family Album 2009*, a series of ten digitally manipulated French colonial postcards. Included is another work *Ancestors' Altar*, a video-installation offering reconciliation to both coloniser and colonised, through the ceremonial structure of Vietnamese ancestral worship. Fifty five old French and Vietnamese colonial portraits are looped into a video album, installed above an altar to symbolise equality of commemoration.<sup>42</sup>

*Mos Maiorum - A Family Album* is Liza's review on the past, "a reflection on the ethics of memory."<sup>43</sup> Ten digital postcards printed on canvas convey images ranging from modern warfare to contemporary culture; each with an idiosyncratic title to help unravel their story. These images convey Liza's speculations about the French colonial past in Viet Nam and imply that inevitably, all wars lead to diabolical brutality, loss of identity, prostitution, drug abuse and exploitation. *Les Putes de la Republique* (The Whores of the Republic) presents five Tonkinese<sup>44</sup> women in exotic costumes. Their faces are painted with the national colours of the French tricolour and the Moulin Rouge is

in the background, alluding to the plight of prostitution that ensnared many Vietnamese women in two successive Indochina wars. *Laquelle Choisit-tu?* (Which One Do You Choose?) is a collage of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Vietnamese woman and Tila Tequila, a Vietnamese young star in America, well-known for her erotic photos and her shows on MTV called "A Shot at Love". Another postcard *La Vie en Rose* (Life through rose-coloured glasses or Life is pink), portrays a Vietnamese servant pouring wine for a French soldier. The vanquished and the invader pose on either side of a small table displaying the decapitated head of a Vietnamese rebel. A butterfly is collaged on the severed head and another on the French soldier. Today, most cultures would be cautious about the indecency of sending such postcards signed with "my best wishes" on the back, particularly in the light of the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.

Photographic memories can be seen as collective memories, often through trauma or historical events. Photographs also carry the 'power of epic concentration' that condenses the tragedy of history into a single arresting image.<sup>45</sup> Representations such as this can affect a whole society, as in the case of Nick Ut's photograph of the child Kim Phuc running naked from a napalm attack during the Vietnam War. Liza Nguyen's series *Mos Maiorum – A Family Album* does not aim to catch a decisive moment, as captured in much photo-journalism but it does insert a mental snapshot into the collective memory, with a weight of criticism that reveals our prevalent distrust of ideologies and the ambiguities in our society, as a reaction to post-modernity. *Mos Maiorum – A Family Album* is not a tool of memory but a search for justice and a means of righting some wrongs, through reminding us of the forgotten past.

Works inspired by an artist's passing encounter with another society often evolve into a critique of its reality and there are several examples in *Nam Bang!* that assumes such a direction. A few works in the exhibition are created by artists with no direct involvement in the Vietnam War.

English born Nigel Helyer spent his childhood in the aftermath of World War II, when almost everyone in his town experienced a weekly test of air raid sirens. As a five or six year old child he was terrified by the sound of the sirens. The ruins of bombed houses, schools and streets were everywhere and Nigel with his mates would play in the muddy bomb craters. Nigel's childhood memories recurred during a trip to Ha Noi in 1994 when he encountered the Ha Noi Opera House, built between 1901 and 1911 by French colonialists for their entertainment. It was "the most extravagant architecture"<sup>46</sup> and bears some resemblance to Charles Garnier's Opera House in Paris. What struck Nigel was not so much the theatre's baroque style but air-raid sirens on the rooftop, installed by the Japanese to warn against possible American bombing in 1944-1945. This bizarre combination of an opera house with sirens conjured up an ironic arrangement of flamboyant classical music with blaring sirens.

*Silent Forest* installation evolved from these early impressions, and after pondering the continuing effects of some short-sighted US foreign policies in Viet Nam, Nigel developed the idea into a metaphoric silence. War devastates nations and ruins the lives of innocent people, particularly through collateral damage.<sup>47</sup> In the Vietnam War, serial bombing and the deployment of chemicals throughout the countryside ravaged the natural environment.<sup>48</sup> *Silent Forest* specifically cries for "all Vietnamese forests unwittingly at war and reduced to silence by chemical defoliants".<sup>49</sup> This work was created in 1996, when the impact of the defoliant Agent Orange had

been acknowledged by US studies, and without admitting liability seven manufacturers of the chemical settled a 180 million USD pay-out to American and allied Vietnam veterans. However, the US refused to accept any responsibility for the countless Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange, who suffer serious medical conditions or grotesque birth deformities.<sup>50</sup> To Nigel this silence is disgusting and terrifying; expressed in the title of one article "The ghost that US left behind when their troops left Viet Nam".<sup>51</sup>

Nigel Helyer's *Silent Forest* displays four large aluminium horn-speakers suspended high in the ceiling of the former powerhouse. Rising elegantly from the floor below are the frames of 20 aluminium towers, each solemnly supporting a miniture bonsai ecosystem, confined inside a glass laboratory pitcher. Bonsai's in Vietnamese temples and homes suggest tranquillity but in *Silent Forest* they refer to deformed foetuses, resulting from wide-spread deployment of defoliants by the US military. The speakers and towers complement each other like yin and yang, and are accompanied by multiple overlapping audiotexts compiled from disparate sources: fragments of western art music and Vietnamese instruments tuning up; to mention a few. This swirling sonic environment facilitates an understanding of the many contradictions of the Vietnam War and its complicated aftermath.

Producing socially engaged art and defending those who cannot speak or not authorised to speak, is a responsibility several artists in Nam Bang! take seriously. Dinh Q. Le's four-channel video installation *The Penal Colony: A Mapping of the Mind* questions warfare and deliberate cruelty brought to prominence in 2007 through the exposure of embedded torture as policy at Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp. The inhumane treatment of prisoners and civilians during war has a long history, and has been described as "a crime of obedience".<sup>52</sup> After the 1968 My Lai massacre, Sergeant William Calley's defence for his behaviour argued that he merely obeyed orders from a superior and was not personally culpable. Immediately after 9/11, America's self-image as 'the' international power was ruthlessly damaged through a sense of helplessness and vulnerability "violence is the effort of last resort to restore an unlimited sense of control, to dispel the humiliation".<sup>53</sup>

Dinh Q. Le was 11 years old when he and his family arrived in Los Angeles as refugees. Several childhood experiences in his hometown on the Vietnamese-Cambodian border and the complexities of being a migrant, led him to become an artist to help answer some of his questions. In 1988 while an art student at the University of California, he put his posters up around campus about Vietnamese war casualties, to offer "another voice" against the one-sided American view.<sup>54</sup> This action led Dinh to investigate the aftermath of the Vietnam War from a more personal perspective, through family photographs that could not be carried to the US while fleeing Viet Nam. This resulted in *A Tapestry of Memories* (2007), using a process between craft and photo montage to present a lost past of immersed memories. Dinh Q. Le first returned to Viet Nam in 1992 and since 1998, divides his time as a transnational city-dweller between Ho Chi Minh City and Los Angeles. He has exhibited extensively throughout the US and his installations *Damaged Genes* (1998), *Lotus Land* (1999) and the film *The Farmers and the Helicopters* (2006) were featured in the 2006 Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane. These works dealt directly with the social burdens of a post-war

society, principally birth deformities and the transitions that Viet Nam is currently going through.

*The Penal Colony: A Mapping of the Mind* installation is about the prison cells in the infamous Con Dao prison on an island off South Viet Nam's coast. It was established in 1862 by the French colonial government and became a notorious prison for the opponents of French colonialism. In 1954 it was turned over to the South Vietnamese government who used it for the same purpose, by imprisoning not only communists but nationalists whose politics did not conform to Saigon's regime. The prisoners were simultaneously tortured by the South Vietnamese government and US advisers, to renounce their ties and at night nationalist prisoners were pressured by communist detainees to change their political views. This extraordinary situation is portrayed in Dinh's *The Penal Colony: A Mapping of the Mind* as a rotating push-and-pull space where prisoners were humiliated by power. Upon entering the video installation, viewers soon sense the perpetual void and a feeling of physical detachment from reality. The Con Dao penal colony is now a tourist destination and "one of the most schizophrenic spots in Asia".<sup>55</sup>

Dinh Q. Le's installation has an indirect connection to another work in *Nam Bang!*: Nerine Martini's *Life Boat* (the maquette). *Life Boat (Thuyen Cuu Roi)*<sup>56</sup> was created from the structural remnants of a wooden Vietnamese fishing boat abandoned in the ancient trading port of Hoi An.<sup>57</sup> Narine restored the old frame and added eight lacquered oars in the spirit of Kwan Yin's thousand arms that she saw in Ha Noi's ancient But Thap temple.<sup>58</sup> *Life Boat* was warmly received when exhibited at Ha Noi's Museum of Ethnology in 2006 and she was declared "an Australian artist arriving in Viet Nam by the *Life Boat*".<sup>59</sup> The maquette for *Life Boat* was purchased by a Vietnamese Australian art collector who is a boat person.<sup>60</sup> He was jailed for nearly six years because of repeated attempts to escape after the 1975 fall of Saigon. One of those years was spent in Con Dao prison, the location of Dinh Q. Le's *The Penal Colony* installation. However, Dinh was not aware that previous to Con Dao prison's revamp as a historic tourist site in the new millennium, it was used by the communist regime after 1975 to detain failed escapees.<sup>61</sup> *Life Boat* stirred up flashbacks about the art collector's own horrendous boat journey to Pulau Bidong refugee camp in Malaysia.<sup>62</sup> "To me the boat appears sacred and miraculous for those carried to their destination by that sort of flimsy vessel; it can only be a miracle that they successfully crossed the oceans."<sup>63</sup> For most boat people, particularly those who made numerous attempts to escape, the image of a boat represents an ongoing obsession and strong resolve to flee Viet Nam. As a symbolic blessing for those who travelled through danger, eight oars on the *Life Boat* morph at each oar blade into the different hands of Kwan Yin. A recollection written in Vietnamese of the art collector's own boat journey accompanies the maquette. It reveals seldom acknowledged symptoms of Post Traumatic Distress Disorder experienced by some Vietnamese refugees,<sup>64</sup> and is a tribute to the Vietnamese community in Australia.

Nerine Martini continues to explore the significance of boats in the social and spiritual life of Vietnamese people, through her installation *Heaven Net* (Luoi Troi in Vietnamese).<sup>65</sup> It is a Vietnamese custom to burn worldly objects fabricated in paper, to satisfy the afterlife needs of ancestors. Through the ritual burning of paper boats, ancestors whose lives were associated with the

ocean could have their afterlife appeased. *Heaven Net* presents 150 small delicate paper and bamboo boats, drifting on a large fishing net suspended from the ceiling, to suggest the vulnerability of navigating the South China Sea. It is roughly estimated that between 1975 and 1990 about one million Vietnamese refugees set out on such a journey but only around half of them successfully arrived on foreign shores. Most survivors paid a cost in one form or another through levels of adversity: hunger, thirst, sickness, storms, robbery, atrocities by pirates and the list goes on. In Nerine Martini's *Heaven Net* installation, the faint flickering light on each of the 150 boats symbolise hope, lights that could help steer desperate lives to safety.

Dr. Pam Scott is an Australian academic with extensive and ongoing involvement in Viet Nam.<sup>66</sup> For her first visit in 1993 Pam introduced a senior management training program to Vietnam Posts and Telecom; and from 1994 until 2001 lived there, working variously as a freelance consultant in the telecommunications industry, as a visiting professor at the Ha Noi Economics University and as a project manager with CARE Australia. Pam also opened a bookshop in Ha Noi and has had some of her own writing published.<sup>67</sup>

In 2006 Pam Scott carried out a series of interviews with Vietnamese refugee women in Sydney, published as *More Than Boat People* in 2007. The documentary was inspired by Pam's admiration for Vietnamese women she had met over the years in Viet Nam, who she found so capable, intelligent and resourceful. Through these interviews she hoped that the regular lives of many Vietnamese Australian women behind the label 'boat people' would be more generally recognised and in particular, how they have contributed to contemporary Australian society. Pam felt that allowing the women to speak in their own voice was more authoritative than any words she could write about them. Four Vietnamese women gave a detailed account of the events in their lives to feel Australian, including the psychological impact, cultural shock and racism they endured while adjusting to a new society. Pam Scott's *More Than Boat People* strips the 'boat people' label in order to reveal the contributions Vietnamese women have made to Australian society.

My Le Thi is one of four interviewees in *More Than Boat People* and a member of the Ede, one of 54 ethnic groups in Viet Nam. Some of her childhood recollections during the war were portrayed in *Dilapidated Memory and Evacuees*, both exhibited in the *Viet Nam Voices* exhibitions. After arriving in Australia in 1985, My Le found herself once again a minority in society but it did not hinder her pursuit of an art career. For her *Nam Bang!* commission My Le Thi has created a three channel video installation titled *Encounters & Journey*, edited from footage recorded in 2007 upon return to her central highland town of Ban Me Thuot.<sup>68</sup> She has combined this with symbolic images and traditional music from the region, to celebrate her peoples' life and hope despite their loss and suffering. *Encounters & Journey* offers an insight into the contemporary life of My Le's ethnic group, and reveals some unwelcome changes in Ede traditional culture, resulting from the Socialist government's assimilation policy and its expansion of tourism.<sup>69</sup> My Le was saddened to witness that Ede people still suffered poverty and widespread malnutrition and that their day-to-day reality remains as harsh as ever.<sup>70</sup> During the Vietnam War, most ethnic groups were squeezed between the opposing sides that resulted in them being taken advantage of by all factions.<sup>71</sup> It is unclear if an enduring prejudice and mistrust from the current government exists against some ethnic groups, as fallout for their tacit support of South Viet Nam's regime during the war.<sup>72</sup>

The global Vietnamese Diaspora is clearly a product of the Vietnam War. It not only includes boat refugees but people who chose to no longer live in Viet Nam, particularly if the past became too great a burden. Tran Trong Vu falls into this category. Vu was born in 1964 in Ha Noi but has lived in Paris since 1992. His father, Tran Dan (1926-1997) was a prominent dissident figure in Vietnamese literature in the 1950s, through his participation in the legendary Nhan Van-Giai Pham Affair. In 1956 with a group of intellectuals, writers and artists living under Ha Noi's newly established communist regime, he formally requested autonomy in the arts. Tran Dan's sustained dissident conduct led him to prison where he carried out a failed suicide, followed by years of hardship, unemployment and discrimination from the authorities.<sup>73</sup> Tran Trong Vu grew up through these events in his father's life, to become a lecturer (1987-1989) at the Ha Noi Art School.<sup>74</sup> From 1989-1992 he studied at the National College of Fine Arts in Paris, with the aid of a French government scholarship and after completing his studies decided to adopt French citizenship. Vu's migration from Viet Nam freed him from the scholarly silence once imposed onto his father and enabled him to examine Asian identity in the context of war, globalisation and communism, in ways that most artists in Viet Nam are forced to shy away from.<sup>75</sup> Despite an international demand for his art<sup>76</sup> Vu resists "capitulating to western notions of Vietnamese culture commodified for consumption by tourists".<sup>77</sup>

For his *Nam Bang!* commission, Tran Trong Vu created *Illusion of War*, a large installation of 57 painted transparent sheets of plastic hung as a labyrinth that allows viewers to 'wander through' the work. This layered arrangement sets aside an important position in the work for the viewer and has helped Vu to redefine his thoughts on painting.<sup>78</sup> He has been painting on plastic as an alternative support since 1997 and by breaking 'through' the painting he crossed a boundary in order to move on.

*Illusion of War* expresses Vu's interpretation about the Vietnam War, independent from the official view. Instead of praising it as a glorious victory, *Illusion of War* portrays it as a complex system, somewhat similar to the legendary Greek architect Daedalus who could not escape one of his own designs.<sup>79</sup> The architects of the Vietnam War (whoever they were), surely became disorientated when the war took on its own momentum. Along with many Vietnamese, Vu sees it as a civil war where North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese soldiers were fighting each other. Rain symbolically appears in many of Vu's paintings and in *Illusion of War* the 'rain' of flowers implies a state of self deception; rain was also visualised in one of his father's concrete poems:<sup>80</sup>

I walk on  
     seeing no street  
         seeing no house  
 Only the rain falling  
     upon the red flag.<sup>81</sup>

The word pattern of Tran Dan's poem takes on the shape of falling rain to symbolise his ideological confusion. Similarly, Vu's rain of flowers are "beautiful but fake, to acknowledge the conflicting representations of the Vietnam War".<sup>82</sup> Soldiers are the main characters in the installation; each is a northern soldier and southern soldier at the same time, sharing the same flesh and fate in a civil war. For many second generation Vietnamese, reading and re-interpreting the past is a compelling quest, particularly with the distance of more than three decades and the introduction of *Doi Moi*.

Another work produced for *Nam Bang!* by Tran Trong Vu is titled *The Other Side of the Mirror*, painted on a large sheet of polished stainless steel. It was created during Vu's short residency at Casula Powerhouse, and is installed in a narrow passageway, portraying a demonstrably vulnerable life-size naked male, floating in space with outstretched arms and head turned away. On the opposite wall is a painting on plastic of an observer (possibly a voyeur) taking photographs; whose reflection when accompanied by that of viewers entering the work, becomes meshed in multiple mirrored images with the naked male. These multiple reflections create an ambiguous understanding of what might be going on. Tran Trong Vu's *The Other Side of the Mirror* embodies the social disorientation from being sandwiched between ideological beliefs, which reinforce the structures of power and instil doubts about what fate such unpredictable social circumstances might bring.

The post-war generation in *Nam Bang!* is also represented through works by four artists whose fathers are Vietnam veterans: Matthew Cheyne, Shaun Gladwell, Kelly Manning, and Van Thanh Rudd.

Throughout his childhood Matthew Cheyne has been an enthusiast of Greek mythology. He has reinterpreted their legends in numerous paintings and his work in *Nam Bang!* titled *Penelope*<sup>83</sup> was chosen because of its allusion to the aftermath of war. The story goes that the legendary Greek character Penelope was the wife of Odysseus who fought for ten years in the Trojan War, then spent a further ten years making his way back home. With indefinable loyalty, Penelope waited 20 years for Odysseus to return despite the innumerable suitors, some of them princes and war lords seeking her affection, in an attempt to acquire her husband's kingdom. Eventually Penelope was re-united with her husband after a legendary long wait that embodies supreme faithfulness and devoted love.

Matthew Cheyne's *Penelope* expresses the steadfastness of many wives of Vietnam veterans who waited for their husband's return, hoping that he would "just walk through the door". Matthew's *Penelope* bears a crown constructed from eating utensils symbolising a domestic cage. The legendary Greek Penelope had to engage in a guardian role to protect her husband's kingdom, while being emotionally imprisoned by exploitive suitors. Furthermore, like the wives of many Vietnam veterans, she waited for her husband's return from a war while bearing the weight of its unpopularity. Penelope's demeanour emits strength, determination and vigilance, while facing the prospect that her husband might not return as the same person, a reunion that could transpire as a domestic cage under the banner of matrimony.

Shaun Gladwell was born soon after his father completed a second tour in Viet Nam. A large biscuit tin in the family home stacked with photographs taken by his father aroused young Shaun's curiosity. The marvel of seeing moments and memories on a piece of paper was an impetus for him to engage in art. Mark Gladwell was always candid with the children about his Viet Nam experiences, but Shaun felt that he could never really penetrate what his father went through. As a child and teenager he witnessed some of his father's struggles after Viet Nam, which is not uncommon in the veteran community.<sup>84</sup> The impossibility for Shaun of living his father's war experience in order to fully



comprehend the aftermath pushed him to explore as many cues as possible about his father.

Two large photographic light boxes titled *Contact Scans* display tattoos from the forearms of Shaun's father. In some cultures tattooing is a function of self expression that facilitates a social milieu, and not least among military personnel. Shaun always viewed his father's tattoos as symbolic of his Viet Nam experiences, a memory that can never be erased, a healed wound that never totally restored itself, a metaphor for "the battle after the war"<sup>85</sup> that affected the lives of so many Vietnam veterans. The word 'contact' in the title of Shaun's work refers to his father's contact with a desktop scanner for this work but it is also military jargon for a clash with the enemy, usually resulting in an exchange of rifle fire. On one of Mark Gladwell's arms, a tattoo portrays a dagger through a heart and on the other arm a hawk-like bird stands above an Australian flag, accompanied by the letters ARA (Australian Regular Army).

*The Nam* is another work by Shaun Gladwell. It is also the title of a 1997 work by British artist Fiona Banner, a text-based publication consisting of 1,000 un-paginated leaves, describing several Vietnam War movies frame-by-frame.<sup>86</sup> Fiona narrated 11 unbroken hours of harrowing film "to convey the reductive, if not outright slanderous clichés of a Vietnam veteran"<sup>87</sup> Fiona endorsed a request from Shaun to replace her original book cover with an army photograph of his father in Viet Nam; to [re] present these fictional stereotypes of the soldier and later the veteran. In deference to his father, Shaun Gladwell offers a poetic and metaphorical truth, hoping to come closer to the full extent of the war's residue on the 'real' emotional and intellectual life of a Vietnam veteran.

A third work by Shaun Gladwell for *Nam Bang!* titled *They Wake from the Dreams as My Father Once Told Me*, consists of fragments from two more Hollywood movies,<sup>88</sup> displayed on PlayStation Portables (PSP game screens). Each screen portrays a Vietnam veteran waking up from his dream on a train, and experiencing a series of flashbacks that discloses their Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Whilst Matthew's and Shaun's works express emotion to the imagery of the mother and father, Kelly Manning evokes an emotional impact of the Vietnam War on the children. Kelly Manning's father completed his combat duty in Viet Nam in 1967, which was possibly the climax of his 20 years military service that saw the family move from one posting to another. Michael Manning owns a shelf of Vietnam War literature, and Kelly recalls that "Dad would be totally immersed in a new book until he finished it." In 1992 she travelled to Canberra for the inauguration of the National Vietnam War Memorial and was stimulated by the flyover of a squadron of Iroquois helicopters, a memory that motivated her almost two decades later to paint *Plaques of the Day* for her *Nam Bang!* commission. A sky blue permeates this six-panel work, through which a portrait of four year old Kelly emerges, among silhouettes of helicopters and repeated outlines of Viet Nam that unmistakably highlights echoes of the 'war machine'. When Kelly was ten years old she had to undergo surgery to remove a tumour. It is unclear if it was related to her father's Viet Nam service but the family held their breath each time another child was born.

In 2003 Kelly attained a three-month residency in Ha Noi that gave her a direct experience of Viet Nam and added meaning to some childhood myths. She has tried to persuade her father to visit Viet Nam, hoping that it might help him to assimilate his past there but has not yet succeeded; like many veterans he harbours concerns about being unable to cope. Kelly Manning's *Plaques of the Day* exposes the memories of a veteran's daughter engulfed in her father's Vietnam War, while at the same time emerging from it.

Van Thanh Rudd's father served in Viet Nam where he met and later married Van's Vietnamese mother. Van regards his hybridity as a privileged option of claiming something from both cultures but not without enduring a childhood of some racism. He is the founder of the Carriers Project, which aims "to expose politically engaged art to new audiences beyond the four walls of a gallery"<sup>89</sup> Van's painting *Portrait of an Exploding Terrorist* was created in response to Israel's 2006 invasion of Lebanon, casting doubts about who is the terrorist in our post 9/11 society.<sup>90</sup> Van Thanh Rudd's leftist vision was initially informed by accounts of political struggles in Latin America that demonstrated to him a long history of authoritarian regimes similar to Viet Nam's. This has led Van to engage in advocacy through art activism; for justice, social change, inequality, racism and of course war.

It is thought-provoking to see in the *Nam Bang!* exhibition, voices from the children of Australian Vietnam veterans' adjacent to perspectives from the post-war generation living in Viet Nam, particularly from those directly affected by the trauma of war.

Le Thua Tien was the youngest of nine children born to a family in Hue, the romantic imperial capital of central Viet Nam that encountered the fiercest battles during the 1968 Tet Offensive. With a population of less than 100,000 at the time, it is alleged that at least 3,000 civilians died from atrocities committed by North Vietnamese soldiers and Viet Cong guerrillas during the offensive.<sup>91</sup> How did such brutal transgressions take place in the most Buddhist region of Viet Nam? How do Hue's citizens cope with their trauma when the rest of the nation celebrates its annual Lunar New Year (Tet)?

Tien and his family permanently mourn events of the Tet Offensive and since 1968 have not celebrated the Lunar New Year, after his mother was killed with her newborn daughter, while fleeing the maternity hospital that got bombed. Tien was four years old at the time his father discovered their charred remains, and the full story of the tragic event was not revealed to him until he was in his late 30s.

Le Thua Tien's three large terra cotta *Hands*<sup>92</sup> in the *Nam Bang!* exhibition were modelled from the hands of Ly Thanh Trinh, an elderly Vietnamese boat person in Sydney who fought in both Indochina wars and as a former South Vietnamese Army Marine Corps soldier successfully captained a boat load of refugees to Australia in 1977. Ly Thanh Trinh is a devoted Buddhist, who for many years has been a fundraiser for a Sydney temple that provides wheelchairs for the disabled in Viet Nam. Tien expressed an interest in finding a "good pair of hands" to model his sculpture and was introduced to Trinh's life story. His commitment to Buddhism and sturdy but graceful hands, culminated in the perfect metaphor for Tien's research into spirituality and reconciliation. Three pairs of praying hands rise solemnly on plinths sprinkled with ashes and pieces of charcoal, a metaphor for Tien's bereavement for his mother and sister. Each pair of hands lament in deferential dignity, over the loss of thousands of innocent victims of the 1968 Tet Offensive in Hue.

Bui Hoai Mai's documentary *The Rain on the River* is an emotional journey to his father's hometown of Quang Tri south of the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel, to record his metaphor of reconciliation and connection to a 'found' homeland. The province of Quang Tri is where many battles of the Vietnam War were waged and purportedly the most intensively bombed location in military history. Mai encountered several Vietnamese mothers whose sons or husbands died fighting the war but ironically for opposing sides. Yet local custom endorses rituals for 'all' the dead, regardless of their political cause or their race. "Everybody believes that their sincere prayers and the soothing river will ease the pain of souls who died unjustly, forgotten and homeless."<sup>93</sup> The beautiful Quang Tri River is there to bury all pain and the rain is there to wash away hatred and division. Mai's documentary is given an added dimension through the weaving of emotionally moving traditional lullabies sung by elderly mothers.

Another documentary in *Nam Bang!* is by Korean born Soon-Mi Yoo, titled *Ssitkim: Talking to the Dead*. On her first visit to Viet Nam in 2000 Soon-Mi took hundreds of photographs and on return later that year was led to the small coastal settlement of Ha My,<sup>94</sup> where a solemn commemoration was organised by the South Korean Vietnam Veterans' Association, with the cooperation of village authorities. The occasion was to acknowledge those who paid the ultimate price in a village massacre in 1968,<sup>95</sup> carried out by the South Korean Army.

Soon-Mi Yoo's documentary resulted from an impulse that she 'had to' do something and not because she 'wanted to'.<sup>96</sup> It narrates tragic personal accounts from survivors of the Ha My massacre, including a seventy years old woman who lost both legs and how these catastrophic events are remembered in the community. Interviews are intermixed with archival footage to provide a historical analysis of South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War, and the post-war residue faced by Korean Vietnam War veterans. Soon-Mi's enquiry refers extensively to Heonik Kwon's comprehensive study of the local history on this hardly known massacre of unarmed civilians,<sup>97</sup> and the 1999 revelation of the massacre in Hankyoreh 21 magazine<sup>98</sup> that generated a scandal in South Korea.<sup>99</sup> Her documentary focuses on the rituals of commemorative mourning by inhabitants of Ha My that helps them to interact with their ancestors and ghosts of the dead, and how they assimilate the catastrophe into their everyday life. Soon Mi Yoo's documentary *Ssitkim: Talking to the Dead* like Bui Hoai Mai's documentary *The Rain on the River*, advocates for compassion, healing and a sincere appeal for closure.

Bruce Barber is a New Zealand artist who has achieved international recognition from his base in Canada. In 2008 he held a major survey exhibition at Artspace in Sydney titled *Reading and Writing Rooms* spanning a 40 year career.<sup>100</sup> His 1984 work *Remembering Vietnam* was included in the ground breaking exhibition *A Different War* curated in 1990 by eminent art critic Lucy Lippard. Due to the work's significant and enduring implications it has been justified for inclusion 25 years later in *Nam Bang!*

Within a precise critical framework *Remembering Vietnam* consists of three large photo-text panels documenting 'propaganda' advertising by corporate supporters of the Viet Nam War. The work is complemented by the DVD *We Are United Technologies*, displaying four years of "advocacy advertisements" promoting the corporate image of United Technologies.<sup>101</sup> Their rhetoric reveals the unprecedented power imbedded in the integrative propaganda of such advertisements. Bruce Barber has been described by Lucy Lippard as "the quintessential dissident theorist/artist" through an art practice

that questions social and cultural transformations.

Trevor Woodward was conscripted into National Service and served 12 months in Viet Nam in 1969-1970 as a forward scout for the Anti-Tank/Tracker Platoon, Sixth Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. Scouting is a demanding task that requires ever present alertness and sharp eyesight "searching for clues that might foresee anything that doesn't belong there".<sup>102</sup> Like many Vietnam veterans, Trevor took a stand in the anti-war movement and to avoid community prejudice was always wary about disclosing his military service.

Trevor Woodward relived the trauma of his Viet Nam experience when Australia sent troops to the Iraq War. It prompted him in the first week of the US invasion to commence producing - in the end over 700 cartoons, focusing on former Prime Minister John Howard as a blind follower of the foreign policies of former US President George W. Bush. One cartoon with the heading "John Howard turned his back on Australia on September 11" is accompanied by a speech bubble announcing "It was my big chance" and denigrates Howard as a manipulator of the 9/11 terrorist event for political advantage through the media. Opinions and beliefs seem to flow effortlessly from Trevor's pen, expressing with almost daunting authority his exasperation with John Howard and some of his parliamentary colleagues. Several cartoons lampoon the blunt talking Amanda Vanstone, former Minister for Family and Community Services, then the Minister for Immigration and a public face of the Howard Cabinet's so-called 'welfare reform' program. Vanstone began attacking the welfare sector with an unhealthy zeal, by initiating a review of disability support pensions that included Vietnam veterans cared for by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.<sup>103</sup>

For *Nam Bang!* Trevor Woodward also painted *What for No More, Where is the Door*, a quirky setting where a toad's head, the body of a plucked duck and a snare drum become entwined. This brightly coloured rather implausible event evokes bewilderment but emphasises distinct traits in Trevor's thinking. The process of painting helps him to liberate some unnatural and unconscious moments from his past in Viet Nam that continue to create emotional tension.<sup>104</sup> The rhythmic energy of brushstrokes in *What for No More, Where is the Door*, amplifies a spontaneous state of mind different from ordinary consciousness, and for Trevor plausibly functions as an agent for healing and understanding.

Like Trevor Woodward, Ray Beattie also spent 12 months of his National Service in Viet Nam in 1970-1971, with an infantry unit of the Second Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. He regards it as normal for soldiers to feel uneasy patrolling and ambushing in the jungle; to feel cut off, irritable and sometimes short-tempered. Ray finds a verse from the Leonard Cohen's song *A Bunch of Lonesome Heroes* evokes these experiences.

*A bunch of lonesome and very quarrelsome heroes  
Were smoking out along the open road;  
The night was very dark and thick between them,  
Each man beneath his ordinary load.*

The ordinary load for an Australian infantry soldier in the Vietnam War averaged 45 kilograms.<sup>105</sup> A favourite joke shared between Ray and a platoon mate Peter 'Jack' Trease is that "if anyone asks what you did in Viet Nam, tell them you were a backpacker

travelling for a year on a government grant".<sup>106</sup> Most Australian infantry spent their entire time operating in jungles, rubber plantations, paddy fields and fire support bases, occasionally encountering Vietnamese from villages and hamlets but very rarely meeting urbanised folk.<sup>107</sup> In 2004 Ray returned to Viet Nam for the first time after his army days to witness that "Sadly the Vietnamese countryside had changed rather little over the past 30 years; the buffalo still pulls the plough and children run around in bare feet".<sup>108</sup> One unexpected experience was seeing mass produced 'reprints' of communist propaganda posters for sale to tourists; a far cry from their original purpose in political and psychological warfare. The standard charge for an A4-copy was 10 USD and an A3 copy for 30 USD. One shop openly marketed for 250 USD, a large faked layout in gouache, of a famous propaganda poster revering the North Vietnamese army soldier Hero Le Ma Luong (now Director of the Viet Nam Museum of Military History in Ha Noi). Ray came across a colourful coffee-table book of 1960s communist Vietnamese propaganda posters in a Ha Noi bookshop titled *Dogma: Morale from the Ministry*, celebrating the North Vietnamese spirit in winning a war against great odds. To him this was just another manifestation of red capitalism at work, in this instance 'commodity' Socialism marketing its war heroes. Ray Beattie's painting *Morale from the Ministry* reflects upon the shifting fundamentals of Socialism in Viet Nam today, through this expedient exploitation of an item once credited for its significant propaganda.

#### Conclusion: WHO OWNS HISTORY?

The demography of participant artists in *Nam Bang!* stretches over two generations and several continents. Artists worked independently on their projects but after the exhibition was mounted some marked connections came to light. The owner of Nerine Martini's *Life Boat* (maquette) had his memories of imprisonment in Con Dao jail ignited by Dinh Q Le's *Penal Colony* installation filmed in the jail. Pam Scott's documentary of female Vietnamese refugees in *More than Boat People* helps to interpret what Nerine's *Life Boat* and *Heaven Net* works stands for. Matthew Cheyne's *Penelope*, and Kelly Manning's *Plaques of the Day* uncover the day-to-day difficulties endured by many wives and children of Vietnam veterans. Le Tri Dung and in particular Nigel Heyler, have critically dissected the permanent impact of Agent Orange on both humankind and the natural environment. Liza Nguyen, Dinh Q. Le and Tran Trong Vu open up Viet Nam's historically turbulent past, seeking to underpin the origins of its 20th century wars. Similarly, Soon-Mi Yoo's historical account excavates an incident during South Korea's involvement in the Vietnam War, by documenting the traumatised past of elderly Vietnamese villagers who survived a little-known massacre. Dennis Trew, Peter F. Daly and Peter Stephenson commemorate their mates and the loss they have endured. William Short and Ray Beattie arrived at some degree of closure about their war ordeals by looking into Vietnamese contemporary society. Terry Eichler's work delivers an equality of death and commemoration that Liza Nguyen conveys through her *Ancestors' Altar*. Bui Hoai Mai and Mai Long share with Terry and Liza the intention of erasing differences and polarities, particularly suffering and loss. Bruce Barber, Nigel Heyler, Trevor Woodward, Ray Beattie and Shaun Gladwell investigate the role of propaganda and media in relation to war; and the list of connections could go on. The *Nam Bang!* exhibition and conference present a mirror through which audiences can see residues of the post-Vietnam War era, as

experienced by relatives, friends, neighbours and perhaps themselves.

Throughout the development of *Nam Bang!* one commissioned artist claimed that there were too many Vietnamese names in the list of participants, and that Australian Vietnam veterans artists have been overlooked by Australian institutions. On the other hand, a faction in the Vietnamese community stated in a protest that they were not consulted for their advice and input. These 'enthusiastic protestors' had not seen the exhibition and did not know that three boat people were on the *Nam Bang!* Curatorium, who contributed to every stage of its development.

It appears that those who have been shaken by the Vietnam War in one way or another aspire to 'own' *Nam Bang!* This rivalry is a compliment to Casula Powerhouse for sticking to a sensitive issue, seemingly still relevant and challenging to contemporary Australia. Diverse voices have been equally embraced for inclusion, with each artist's interpretation woven into this contemporary social fabric titled *Nam Bang!* - and as Lyotard reasoned, grand narratives have to give way to small stories.<sup>109</sup>

In his book *Who Owns History?* historian Eric Foner states that history is owned by everyone and no one. The history of the Vietnam War is continually being reworked. All participants in the *Nam Bang!* project have made significant contributions to this critical analysis; filling the gaps in official histories, exorcising the trauma endured by so many and revealing the absurdity of war.

Socially, what legacy *Nam Bang!* has contributed will undoubtedly unfold in the future. However, it is evident that the project engaged and challenged some insular visions in the community, and that art still has the power to inspire.

<sup>1</sup> Eric Foner, *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2002, xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Katya Johanson and Ruth Rentschler, "Nationalism and Art in Australia: Change in a Time of Conservatism, 1948-1968", *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, Spring 2005, V. 35, N. 1, p. 8-20.

<sup>3</sup> The *Vietnam War* is the most commonly used name in English. It has also been called the *Second Indochina War* and the *Vietnam Conflict*. In Vietnamese the war is known as *Chiến tranh Việt Nam* (The Vietnam War) or as *Kháng chiến chống Mỹ* (Resistance War against America) or loosely translated as "The American War". The *First Indochina War* happened in 1946-54 between French troops and Ho Chi Minh's followers.

<sup>4</sup> Telephone interview 25 February 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Speech at the National Ceremony to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battles of fire support bases Coral and Balmoral, Canberra, 13 May 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Casula Powerhouse was a former 1950s power station reopening in 1994 as an arts centre that housed many culturally diverse exhibitions. The centre closed in July 2006 to undergo significant renovations. The new centre opened in 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Executive Director of Casula Powerhouse for ten years until October 2008, currently Director of Visual Arts at the Australian Arts Council.

<sup>8</sup> Cuong Le curated a number of exhibitions and projects at Casula Powerhouse: *Generation 1.5* (2002), *Buddha in Suburbia* (2001), *I Love Pho* (2008). He gave up his position to pursue a new career. Paul Howard worked as Senior Curator at Casula Powerhouse briefly in 2008.

<sup>9</sup> One of the nine commissioned artists strongly objected to the title *Nam Bang!* by always referring to it as "*Wham Bang!*" in correspondence to Casula Powerhouse.

<sup>10</sup> In the 2009 exhibition calendar, Casula Powerhouse shows Viet Nam Voices (31 January - 15 March) then *Nam Bang!* (04 April - 21 June).

<sup>11</sup> Thao Nhi La, *The Vietnam War*, 2000, acrylic, ink, black and white photo stencil and vanish on satin reflects the suffering of the Vietnamese people. It is assumed the artist was pressured to pull out to weaken the exhibition by undermining it.

<sup>12</sup> *F.O.B. II: Art Speaks* held by the Vietnamese American Arts and Letters Association (VAALA) in Santa Ana, USA, was protested against, leading to closure of the exhibition on allegations that the artists and VAALA presented a pro-communist show. Deepa Bharath, "Vietnamese artists exhibit shut down by threat of protests", *The Orange County Register*, January, 16, 2009, accessed on line [www.ocregister.com/articles/exhibit-community-flag-2283385-vietnamese-photo.html#comments](http://www.ocregister.com/articles/exhibit-community-flag-2283385-vietnamese-photo.html#comments) on March 15, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> I was told by an old Vietnamese army veteran that for some in the Vietnamese Diaspora the month of April is bad timing for the presentation of *Nam Bang!* because the Vietnamese anti-communist psyche considers it as "Black April" to refer to the fall of Saigon in April 1975.

<sup>14</sup> *I love Pho* was initially exhibited at Casula Powerhouse for the period 8-17 June 2006 with six artists. Catalogue was published by Casula Powerhouse with the contributions from writers, journalist and poets. *I love Pho* became a touring exhibition to Footscray Arts Centre in Melbourne (22 Feb-10 April 2008) and then to Breadbox Gallery in Perth (10 - 24 May 2008).

<sup>15</sup> Cloth- wrapped sculpture played an important role in 20<sup>th</sup> century art. Dadaist Man Ray wrapped his *Enigma of Isidore Ducasse* 1920, to arouse physical and poetic associations in the viewer.

<sup>16</sup> www.mai-long.com/pdbo\_270508.pdf

<sup>17</sup> Exhibited at NG Gallery, Sydney, June 2008.

<sup>18</sup> I would like to credit former Artistic Director Nicholas Tsoutas, whose input into this performance developed it into a spectacular 'classical Greek' drama.

<sup>19</sup> Kon Gouriotis, "Emptiness, Meaning and the Spaces in-Between", Brochure for Aqua Mutt: An installation with dag girl, published by the Atrium Gallery Incinerator Arts Complex, 2007

<sup>20</sup> See Hoa Pham, "Pho Dog Fuss", on www.peril.com.au/featured/pho-dog-fuss, published on 11 January 2009. Also see Gina Fairley, "Beyond Stereotypes", *World Sculpture News*, Autumn 2008, p.48-51.

<sup>21</sup> Lucy Lippard, "Some Propaganda for Propaganda", *Get the Message: A Decade of Art for Social Change*, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984, p.114.

<sup>22</sup> *The Australian*, August 18. 1988. Special Edition, '500 The Australians Who Died In Vietnam'.

<sup>23</sup> Exact figures vary according to what other incident reports are included.

Eg. Entertainers and foreign aid workers etc.

<sup>24</sup> From 1965-1972 the converted aircraft carrier transported about 16,000 Australian troops as the famed 'Vung Tau Ferry'.

<sup>25</sup> *A Matter of Conscience – GI Resistance during the Vietnam War*, photographs by William Short, oral stories by Willa Seidenberg, published by Addison Gallery of American Art, 1991

<sup>26</sup> See Lucy Lippard, "Snipper's Nest", *Zeta Magazine*, January 1989, p.65-67.

<sup>27</sup> *As Seen by Both Sides – American and Vietnamese Artists Look at the War*: an exhibition in which American works were selected by Lucy Lippard and David Kunzle; Vietnamese works were selected by David Kunzle, William Short, Lois Tarlow and C. David Thomas. Catalogue published by the Indochina Arts Project & the William Joiner Foundation in 1991.

<sup>28</sup> The title was given to William Short and Willa Seidenberg's project by Los Angeles Times, see *War Stories*, *Los Angeles Times*, Sunday April 30, 1995, p. E1-E3.

<sup>29</sup> The Australian Government allocated £250,000 of its SEATO defense aid to the cost of barbed wire, corrugated iron and other materials.

<sup>30</sup> Interview by the author, 16 April 2009

<sup>31</sup> Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War*, English version by Frank Palmos from the original translation by Phan Thanh Hao, London: Vintage, 1998, p. 110.

<sup>32</sup> The story of this censorship was told by Le Tri Dung. In Viet Nam it is not uncommon that such decisions can be made without an official document.

<sup>33</sup> It consists of 40,000 pencil drawn symbols of traditional Vietnamese hats and 1,270 symbols representing other nations involved.

<sup>34</sup> Heonik Kwon, *After the Massacre*, California: University of California Press, 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Terry's Eichler's *Mediation of 2,063,500 Deaths* was collected by the Australian War Memorial at the end of the exhibition.

<sup>36</sup> Many combat veterans suffer from this condition and from tinnitus, due to extremely loud noises, usually exacerbated from no hearing protection.

<sup>37</sup> Bob Rogers is a legendary Australian radio broadcaster and disc jockey, who wrote *"Rock And Roll Australia"* in 1976 about the birth of the Australian rock music industry.

<sup>38</sup> Co-curated with fellow veteran artist Archie Zammit-Ross and toured Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra.

<sup>39</sup> Jeff Doyle, "Irony and Metaphor", *Craft Arts International*, N. 32, 1994-95, p. 43-47.

<sup>40</sup> I would like to thank Kon Gouriotis and the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto who recommended Liza Nguyen to this project.

<sup>41</sup> *Souvenirs of Vietnam* was exhibited in 2006 at L'espace Gallery, French Cultural Centre (Ha Noi) and Gallery of Photography in Dublin. 2007 at Kamchatka Gallery (Paris) Gallery Vu, Quebec, Canada. Gallery 44, Toronto, Canada. For this work she received the Prix Fnac de la Photographie and the grand prize of the International Biennale of Art of Lulea in Sweden.

<sup>42</sup> 55 photographs represent 55 days of the Dien Bien Phu battle.

<sup>43</sup> Octave Debary, "the Vietnam War and the Ethics of Memory: a Photographer's View", translated into English by Andrew Gallix, essay catalogue of *Souvenirs of Vietnam*, p.6

<sup>44</sup> Viet Nam was divided into three parts by French colonial administration: the North to be called Tonkin, Central as Annam and the South as Cochinchina. Tonkinese is term for Vietnamese northerners during colonial times.

<sup>45</sup> Rob Kroes, *Photographic Memories, Private Pictures, Public Images and American History*, Hannover & London: University Press of New England & Dartmouth College Press, 2007, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> William S. Logan, *Ha Noi Biography of a City*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000, p. 93.

<sup>47</sup> Collateral damage originated as a euphemism during the Vietnam War. It can refer to friendly fire or the killing of non-combatants and the destruction of their property.

<sup>48</sup> Particularly Agent Orange the code name for a herbicide and defoliant used by the US military in its Herbicidal Warfare program in Viet Nam.

<sup>49</sup> Nigel Helyer, email exchange with the author, February 2009.

<sup>50</sup> On behalf of millions of Vietnamese victims, the Vietnam Association of Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) filed a suit in 2004, but was dismissed in 2005 and 2008. Their appeal was rejected by the Supreme Court of the United States in March 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Anonymous, HDNet World Report Investigates the Devastating Effects of Agent Orange 30 Years after the Vietnam War, *Paediatrics Week*, 14 March 2009, p. 111.

<sup>52</sup> V.Lee Hamilton & Herbert Kelman, *Crimes of Obedience: Toward a Social Psychology of Authority & Responsibility*, Yale University, c.1989.

<sup>53</sup> Neil Altman, "The Psychodynamics of Torture", *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, Sept/Oct 2008, Vo. 18. N. 5, p. 658-670.

<sup>54</sup> "An Interview with Dinh Q. Le" by Stefano Catalani, *A Tapestry of Memories: The Art of Dinh Q. Le*, Bellevue Arts Museum, 2007 (catalogue for the exhibition at Bellevue Arts Museum from September to December 2007), p.51-72.

<sup>55</sup> Stan Sesser, "A Paradise with Prisons" *Far Eastern Review*, Hong Kong: March 14, 2002, Vol. 165, Iss. 10, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> The Vietnamese translation of the title *'Thuyen Cuu Roi'* bears a spiritual Buddhist meaning that gets lost in the English translation of 'life boat'.

<sup>57</sup> Declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1999 as a well preserved example of a 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century Southeast Asian trading port.

<sup>58</sup> Kwan Yin is the Goddess of Mercy in Buddhism, similarly to Madonna in Christianity. The statue Kwan Yin of Thousand Eyes & Thousand Arms at But Thap Temple is the most beautiful of 17<sup>th</sup> century classical sculptures in Viet Nam.

<sup>59</sup> www.vnexpress.net/GL/Van-hoa/My-thuat/2006/03/3B9E839F/, accessed on 01 March 2009. Life Boat was freighted to Australia and exhibited at Sydney's 2007 Sculpture by the Sea. In 2008 it won the peoples award at the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award at Victoria's Werribee Park.

<sup>60</sup> The collector would have purchased *Life Boat* had it not been acquired by Arts ACT, the Capital Territory Government's art agency.

<sup>61</sup> See Greg Ringer, "Convicts and conservation: Con Dao National Park, Vietnam", *Sustainable Tourism, A Global Perspective*, edit. By Rob Harris, Tony Griffin and Peter Williams, Oxford; Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2002, p. 221-237.

<sup>62</sup> A tiny island off Terengganu. Most of the nearly 255,000 Vietnamese boat people who ended up on the shores of Malaysia between 1975 to late 1980s were placed there. At its height it had some 40,000 refugees at any given time.

<sup>63</sup> Interview by the author.

<sup>64</sup> Derrick Silove, Zachary Steel, Adrian Bauman, Tien Chey & Alexander McFarlane, "Trauma, PTSD and the long-term Mental Health Burden amongst Vietnamese Refugees", *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, July 2007, Vol 42, Iss.6, p. 467-476.

<sup>65</sup> Meaning divine justice, which reflects on everyone's actions similar to the concept of 'the last judgement' in Christianity.

<sup>66</sup> In 2009 Dr. Scott was awarded an Asialink Literature Residency in Vietnam funded by the Australia Council to continue her work collecting the stories of Vietnamese women at home and abroad.

<sup>67</sup> *Ha Noi Stories*: eight wonderful years in Viet Nam's capital. Sydney. NSW: New Holland publishers 2004.

*Life in Ha Noi*: local and expat stories in Viet Nam's capital. Sydney. NSW: New Holland publishers 2005.

<sup>68</sup> My Le Thi returned to Viet Nam through the support of a 2006 Asialink Residency Grant.

<sup>69</sup> www.vietnam-beauty.com/vietnam-world-heritages/oral-and-intangible-cultural-heritage-of-humanity/10-oral-and-intangible-cultural-heritage-of-humanity/13-cultural-space-of-gong-in-the-central-highlands.html

<sup>70</sup> See Lieu Thi Thuy Trinh and Michael Dibley, "Anaemia in pregnant, postpartum and non pregnant women in Lak district, Daklad province of Vietnam", *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Southbank: June 2007, Vol. 16, Iss. 2, p. 310-315

<sup>71</sup> Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Shattered World, Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993. See particularly chapter 1, Rhadé, p.1-45.

<sup>72</sup> The American CIA poured propaganda and funds into highland ethnic groups with the aim of winning their loyalty to the southern regime.

<sup>73</sup> Tran Dan's life is mentioned as an intellectual dissident by Kim N. B. Ninh in *A World Transformed, The Politics of Culture in Revolutionary Vietnam, 1945-1965*, published by Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2002. See chapter *Intellectual Dissent: The Nhan Van Giai Pham Period*, p.121-163.

<sup>74</sup> For more information, read Nora Taylor, "Raindrops on Red Flags: Tran Trong Vu and the Roots of Vietnamese Painting Abroad", *Of Vietnam Identities in Dialogue*, edited by Jan Bradley Winston and Leahina Chau-Pech Ollier, New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 112-125

<sup>75</sup> Censorship of the arts remains rife in Vietnam. Major art projects and exhibitions need official permits from the cultural police, and shows can be shut down with no warning.

<sup>76</sup> Solo exhibitions in Amsterdam, Strasbourg, Ha Noi, Paris, Hong Kong, New York, and Berlin.

<sup>77</sup> Rudy Navarro, "Water and Memory, Vietnamese Artist Crosses Cultural Boundaries for ASU Exhibit", *Shade*, February/March, 2004, p.16-17.

<sup>78</sup> Tran Trong Vu's speech at the Interfaces symposium at Casula Powerhouse 05 April 2009.

<sup>79</sup> He was credited with building the Labyrinth in which the Minotaur was imprisoned.

<sup>80</sup> Concrete poetry, pattern poetry or shape poetry in which typographical arrangement is as important in conveying effect as conventional elements such as meaning, rhythm and rhyme, etc. Sometimes it is called shape poetry or visual poetry because typographical arrangement of words form a picture important in conveying intended meaning

<sup>81</sup> Tran Dan, "Chung Ta Nhat Dinh Thang" (We Must Win), a poem published in Giai Pham (Masterpiece of Spring) in 1956, English translation by Kim N. B. Ninh, in *A World Transformed*.

<sup>82</sup> Tran Trong Vu, email exchange with the author.

<sup>83</sup> For more information, see www.matthewcheyne.com. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Libby Edwards Galleries who assisted me in contacting Matthew Cheyne and collector Ivan Lazarou for the loan of *Penelope in Nam Bang!*

<sup>84</sup> Many Vietnam veterans have recently opened their personal wounds after Viet Nam through memoirs. See Barry Heard, *Well Done Those Men*, published by Scribe Publications, 2007, Don Tate, *The War Within*, published by Murdoch Books, 2008, Barrie Crowley, *View from a Low Bough*, published by Allen & Unwin, 1997.

<sup>85</sup> Adopted from the title of a book by Ambrose Crowe, *The Battle after the War*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1999.

<sup>86</sup> They are all American films: *Apocalypse Now*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *The Deer Hunter*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Hamburger Hill* and *Platoon*.

<sup>87</sup> *The Vietnam Reader: The Definitive Collection of American fiction and nonfiction on the War*: Edited by Stewart O'Nan, New York: Anchor Books, 1998.

<sup>88</sup> The first film is *Casualties of War*, 1989, starring Michael J. Fox and Sean Penn, directed by Brian De Palma. The second is *Jacob's Ladder*, 1990, starring by Tim Robbins, Elizabeth Pena, Danny Aiello and Jason Alexander, directed by Adrian Lyne.

<sup>89</sup> www.van-thanh-rudd.net/content/about-artist

<sup>90</sup> Van Thanh Rudd, "The Carriers Project", New Australia Media, www.newaustraliamedia.org/node/27

<sup>91</sup> See Paul Ham, Vietnam, *The Australian War*, Sydney: Harper Collins Publisher, 2007, p. 355-359.

<sup>92</sup> Created in coordination with his portfolio at the College of Fine Arts of the University of New South Wales, accompanied by his thesis *Journey to Inner Peace: Installation and Sculpture from a Buddhist Perspective*.

<sup>93</sup> Extract from summary on DVD back cover.

<sup>94</sup> Ha My in Quang Nam Province is hidden on a sandy coastal strip 25 kms south of Da Nang and 05 kms North of Hoi An, the ancient port of international commerce.

<sup>95</sup> A month after this incident a similar tragedy happened in the neighboring province of Quang Ngai, later known to the international community as the My Lai Massacre.

<sup>96</sup> Telephone interview with the filmmaker in March 2009

<sup>97</sup> Heonik Kwon, *After the Massacre, Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

<sup>98</sup> Written by journalist Koo Soo Jung for Hankyoreh 21, an independent weekly in South Korea.

<sup>99</sup> George Wehrfritz and Ron Moreau, "South Korea's Vietnam, an American Ally Confronts its own Troubled Legacy from the War in Southeast Asia", *Newsweek*, 10 April 2000: [www.newsweek.com/id/83656/page/1](http://www.newsweek.com/id/83656/page/1)

<sup>100</sup> From 14 November to 14 December 2008 curated by Blair French and Brad Buckley in conjunction with Manukau Institute of Technology and Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts in Auckland.

<sup>101</sup> American multinational conglomerate that designs and manufactures high-technology products including: aircraft engines, military helicopters, missile systems and rockets.

<sup>102</sup> Author's phone conversation with the artist in February 2009

<sup>103</sup> "Could Amanda Vanstone be the meanest person in Canberra?", *Sun Herald*, 17 August, 2003, [www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/08/16/1060936101890.html](http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/08/16/1060936101890.html), accessed on 07 March 2009.

<sup>104</sup> In a letter to the author 2009.

<sup>105</sup> The 54 Kilograms is an all up weight load including weapons, ammunition, water pack etc.

<sup>107</sup> Except when in Vung Tau for two days rest and convalescence (R&C) leave, three times in a 12 months tour of duty.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with the artist by the author.

<sup>109</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, "The Postmodern Condition", *Art in Theory 1900-1990, An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, edit. by Charles Harrison & Paul Wood, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992, p.998-1000.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altman, Neil, "The Psychodynamics of Torture", *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, Sept/Oct 2008, Vo. 18. N. 5, p. 658-670.

Anonymous, HDNet World Report Investigates the Devastating Effects of Agent Orange 30 Years after the Vietnam War, *Pediatrics Week*, 14 March 2009, p. 111.

*As Seen by Both Sides – American and Vietnamese Artists Look at the War*: an exhibition in which American works were selected by Lucy Lippard and David Kunzle; Vietnamese works were selected by David Kunzle, William Short, Lois Tarlow and C. David Thomas. Catalogue published by the Indochina Arts Project & the William Joiner Foundation in 1991.

Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War*, English version by Frank Palmos from the original translation

by Phan Thanh Hao, London: Vintage, 1998.

Catalani, Stefano, "An Interview with Dinh Q. Le", *A Tapestry of Memories: The Art of Dinh Q. Le*, Bellevue Arts Museum, 2007 [catalogue for the exhibition at Bellevue Arts Museum from September to December 2007], p.51-72.

Debary, Octave "the Vietnam War and the Ethics of Memory: a Photographer's View", translated into English by Andrew Gallix, essay catalogue of *Souvenirs of Vietnam*, p.3-11.

Doyle, Jeff "Irony and Metaphor", *Craft Arts International*, N. 32, 1994-1995, p. 43-47.

Foner, Eric *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2002.

Gouriotis, Kon "Emptiness, Meaning and the Spaces in-Between", Brochure for Aqua Mutt: An installation with dag girl, Melbourne: The Atrium Gallery Incinerator Arts Complex, 2007.

Ham, Paul, *Vietnam, The Australian War*, Sydney: Harper Collins Publisher, 2007.

Hamilton, V.Lee & Kelman, Herbert, *Crimes of Obedience: Toward a Social Psychology of Authority & Responsibility*, New Haven: Yale University, c.1989.

Heard, Barry, *Well Done Those Men*, Sydney: Scribe Publications, 2007.

Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Shattered World, Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

Johanson, Katya and Rentschler, Ruth "Nationalism and Art in Australia: Change in a Time of Conservatism, 1948-1968", *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, Spring 2005, V. 35, N. 1, p. 8-20.

Kroes, Rob *Photographic Memories, Private Pictures, Public Images and American History*, Hannover & London: University Press of New England & Dartmouth College Press, 2007, p. 13.

Kwon, Heonik, *After the Massacre*, California: University of California Press, 2006.

Lieu, Thi Thuy Trinh and Dibley, Michael, "Anaemia in pregnant, postpartum and non pregnant women in Lak district, Daklاد province of Vietnam", *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Southbank: June 2007, Vol. 16, Iss. 2, p. 310-315.

Lippard, Lucy R. "Never Happen – In Retrospect", *A Different War: Vietnam in Art*, Bellingham, Washington: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1990.

Lippard, Lucy R., "Snipper's Nest", *Zeta Magazine*, January 1989, p.65-67.

Lippard, Lucy R., *Get the Message: A Decade of Art for Social Change*, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984.

Logan, William S., *Ha Noi Biography of a City*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000.

Navarro, Rudy, "Water and Memory, Vietnamese Artist Crosses Cultural Boundaries for ASU Exhibit", *Shade*, February/March, 2004, p.16-17.

Ninh, Kim N. B. in *A World Transformed, The Politics of Culture in Revolutionary Vietnam, 1945-1965*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Pham, Hoa, "Pho Dog Fuss", on <http://www.peril.com.au/featured/pho-dog-fuss>, published on 11 January 2009. Also see Gina Fairley, "Beyond Stereotypes", *World Sculpture News*, Autumn 2008, p.48-51.

Ringer, Greg, "Convicts and conservation: Con Dao National Park, Vietnam", *Sustainable Tourism, A Global Perspective*, edit. By Rob Harris, Tony Griffin and Peter Williams, Oxford, Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2002, p. 221-237.

Sesser, Stan, "A Paradise with Prisons" *Far Eastern Review*, Hong Kong: March 14, 2002, Vol. 165, Iss. 10, p. 54.

Short, William & Seidenberg, Willa, *A Matter of Conscience – GI Resistance during the Vietnam War*, photographs by William Short, oral stories by Willa Seidenberg, Massachusetts: Addison Gallery of American Art, 1992.

Silove, Derrick; Steel, Zachary; Bauman, Adrian; Tien Chey & McFarlane, Alexander "Trauma, PTSD and the long-term Mental Health Burden amongst Vietnamese Refugees", *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, July 2007, Vol. 42, Iss.6, p. 467-476.

Sivric, Helena, "Vietnamese protest art exhibition for showing half the picture", *Liverpool Leader*, Wednesday April 8, 2009, p. 1

Tate, Don, *The War Within*, Sydney: Murdoch Books, 2008,

Taylor, Nora, "Raindrops on Red Flags: Tran Trong Vu and the Roots of Vietnamese Painting Abroad", *Of Vietnam Identities in Dialogue*, edited by Jan Bradley Winston and Leahina Chau-Pech Ollier, New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 112-125.

*The Australian*, August 18. 1988. Special Edition, '500 The Australians Who Died In Vietnam'.

The Third Australian Vietnam Veterans Mortality Study, Canberra: Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2005.

Vietnam Leaves Its Mark, interview by Hilary Harper on ABC Radio,

[www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/04/28/2229531.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/04/28/2229531.htm), access on 20 February 2009.

Walsh, Kerry-Ann, "Could Amanda Vanstone be the meanest person in Canberra?", *the Sun Herald*, 17 August, 2003, [www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/08/16/1060936101890.html](http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/08/16/1060936101890.html), accessed on 07 March 2009.

Wehrfritz, George, and Moreau, Ron "South Korea's Vietnam, an American Ally Confronts its own Troubled Legacy from the War in Southeast Asia", *Newsweek*, 10 April 2000: [www.newsweek.com/id/83656/page/1](http://www.newsweek.com/id/83656/page/1), accessed on 07 March 2009.

Y.P, "Nerine Martini", *VNExpress*:

[www.vnexpress.net/GL/Van-hoa/My-thuat/2006/03/3B9E839F/](http://www.vnexpress.net/GL/Van-hoa/My-thuat/2006/03/3B9E839F/), accessed on 01 March 2009.