

Artist Statement - Trang Huynh

Thuong is a powerful word in Vietnamese. *Thuong* means unconditional love, a love that exceeds one's personal selfishness. Paradoxically, when you add the adverb "bị" in, bị thương means to be hurt. My work as an artist explores the contradictory meanings of this word, illustrating the intertwined relationship between love, pain and forgiveness, particularly through the lens of a Vietnamese Post-War generation. Drawing from historical narratives and personal experiences, where my family members found themselves on opposing sides during the war, my art offers a reflection on the inherited scars left by colonial oppression, and a desire to heal and love.

I specialize in mixed-media painting, defined by intricately layered compositions incorporating laser-cut components, collage, oil paint, and linoleum prints. The layering symbolizes complexities of memory and emotion, inviting viewers to explore intersections of past and present. Collages of personal photos add layers of personal history, while hand-carved linoleum prints feature traditional Vietnamese tile patterns, reflecting my deep connection to the culture I grew up in. Laser-cut components replicate window grille designs I photographed around my home city, rooting the work in its origins. These patterns, while grounded in my cultural heritage, also reflect the enduring influence of colonialism, adding complexity to the narratives within the work. Among these densely layered settings, I place figures of my family and friends, capturing them in moments of connection and intimacy. This depiction of people within intricate compositions is my way of addressing generational trauma and exploring how it manifests in everyday life.