

Thao Nguyen Phan: *Becoming Alluvium*
The final part of her *Monsoon Melody* trilogy

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona
Thao Nguyen Phan: *Becoming Alluvium*
November 16, 2019 – January 6, 2020
Press view: November 15, 11.00

WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels
Thao Nguyen Phan: *Monsoon Melody*
February 1 – April 26, 2020
Press view: January 30, 11.00

Chisenhale Gallery, London
Thao Nguyen Phan: *Becoming Alluvium*
June 26 – August 30, 2020
Opening: June 25, 18.30 - 20.30

“Becoming Alluvium is my contemplation on the glory and the tragedy of the Mekong River... my attempt to collect testimonies for the captured sediments and the variety of species that are sacrificed for human’s constant seeking of perpetual brightness.”
—Thao Nguyen Phan

As 2018 recipient of the **Han Nefkens Foundation – LOOP Video Art Award**, artist **Thao Nguyen Phan** will present *Becoming Alluvium*, an installation of video and painting at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona, Spain, this autumn, the first venue to host the installation of this award-winning young artist and once again renewing their commitment to the ideals of Joan Miró and his firm support for the new generations of creators.

The Han Nefkens Foundation has supported the production and presentation of this new work at the Fundació Joan Miró, as well as further presentations at WIELS in Brussels and at the Chisenhale Gallery in London.

Becoming Alluvium is composed of two elements: a video with the same title and *Perpetual Brightness*, a series of Vietnamese lacquer-and-silk paintings, structured in the form of detachable folded screens.

The exhibition builds on Phan’s ongoing research into the Mekong River, which runs through China, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. The waterway supports the largest freshwater fishery in the world, as well as rice agriculture and ecosystems in its Vietnam delta. In addition to its environmental and economic importance, the Mekong River has taken on a cultural significance, inspiring an array of ritualistic, musical and artistic expressions that shape the cultures of Southeast Asian countries.

Becoming Alluvium observes the environmental changes to the river due to the expansion of agriculture, overfishing and the economic migration of farmers to urban areas, with a focus on the perceptions of the impact of environmental change on nature and human lives. Through different levels of narrative and speaking simultaneously of real and imaginary worlds, Phan proposes alternate versions of reality. Her work builds a multi-layered, visual, thrilling and poetical body of work which goes beyond a purely historical or political point of view and explores current questions on food security and our ecological responsibility towards agricultural environments. The Fundació Joan Miró welcomes this project that connects directly with the Miróian values of communion with nature, mystical and a poetic experience of the earth and rooting locally to access the universal.

Becoming Alluvium forms the final part of *Monsoon Melody*, a trilogy of works consisting of a two-channel video installation *Tropical Siesta*, 2017, which speaks of the dark eras of Vietnamese history where the country economically and ideologically struggled and *Mute Grain*, 2019, which combines video, sound, painting, installation and archival material into a personal interpretation of the little-discussed 1945 famine in Vietnam. The famine took place during the Japanese occupation of French Indochina (1940–45) and is believed to have caused the death of more than two million people in the Red River Delta of North Vietnam.

Thao Nguyen Phan's exhibitions will be accompanied by an illustrated publication titled *Monsoon Melody*. The monograph features Thao's recent work and **contains texts and special contributions by Zoë Gray, Sam I-Shan, Lila Matsumoto, Han Nefkens, Pamela Nguyen Corey, Thao Nguyen Phan, Hilde Teerlinck and Thomas D. Trummer**. The publication is designed by Ok Kyung Yoon, edited by the Han Nefkens Foundation and co-edited by Fundació Joan Miró, WIELS and Chisenhale Gallery with the support of Galerie Zink Waldkirchen. It is published and distributed by Mousse Publishing.

Editors' Notes

Thao Nguyen Phan

Trained as a painter, Thao Nguyen Phan is a multimedia artist whose practice encompasses painting, installation and 'theatrical fields', which include what she calls performance gesture and moving image. Through literature, philosophy and daily life, Phan observes ambiguous issues in social convention, history and tradition. She started working on film when she began her MFA in Chicago, by exploring the feeling that painting lacks a direct involvement with life and functions too much from a distance. Phan has exhibited in Vietnam and further afield, with solo and group exhibitions at Gemäldegalerie (Berlin, 2018); Dhaka Art Summit (2018); Para Site (Hong Kong, 2018); Factory Contemporary Art Centre (Ho Chi Minh City, 2017); Nha San Collective (Hanoi, 2017); and Bétonsalon (Paris, 2016), among others. In addition to her work as a multimedia artist, she is co-founder of the collective, Art Labor, which explores cross disciplinary practices and develops art projects that benefit the local community.

Han Nefkens Foundation – LOOP Video Art Award

Thao Nguyen Phan was selected by a judging panel chaired by **Han Nefkens**, Founder of the Han Nefkens Foundation, and joined by **Emilio Alvarez**, Founding Co-Director of LOOP Barcelona, **Marko Daniel**, Director of the Fundació Joan Miró, **Hans Ulrich Obrist**, Co-Director of the Serpentine Galleries, and **Barbara London**, author, curator and professor.

Han Nefkens Foundation

The Han Nefkens Foundation is a private non-profit organization that was founded in Barcelona in 2009 by Dutch writer and patron, Han Nefkens. It aims to promote art and the artistic process, and in so doing, connects people through art, collaborating with renowned international art institutions. The Foundation's founding values have defined it from the beginning as an innovative and forward-thinking model: a production hub that oversees and promotes contemporary creation from the very first moments until the final presentation. Positioned as a platform for artists to advance their careers, its main activity – always at the international level – is to commission works through its awards and grants.

About the Fundació Joan Miró

The Fundació Joan Miró was created by the artist himself and opened its doors to the public in 1975. It has a unique collection of Miró's works, his personal library and an archive with almost all his preparatory drawings, which makes the Foundation a centre of reference in the research, dissemination and promotion of the artist's production and legacy.

Since its inauguration as the first museum in Barcelona dedicated to modern and contemporary art, the Fundació Joan Miró has hosted numerous temporary exhibitions. It also promotes Espai 13, one of the first venues dedicated to emerging artists and curators, and an active educational space dedicated to the promotion of creativity and a better understanding of modern and contemporary artistic practices. The concept of this experimental room devoted to exhibitions by young artists as well as the special attention that the Foundation's programming refers to emerging artistic practices had its origins in Joan Miró's desire to support new generations of creators.

Becoming Alluvium is produced and commissioned by Han Nefkens Foundation in collaboration with the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; WIELS, Brussels; and Chisenhale Gallery, London.

Fundació Joan Miró

 Barcelona

WIELS

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