



**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

December 8, 2021

*Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam* – Galerie Quynh is pleased to present *The Reflection*, an exhibition of new work by Hanoi-based artist Ha Manh Thang. This is the artist's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery and showcases his most experimental and introspective works to date.

As Ha Manh Thang witnesses the erosion of time across the surfaces and in the details of ancient paintings and objects, he admits the tendency towards abstraction comes naturally through his own research and discovery of the works' images, colors and multilayered meanings. His continuous exploration of Vietnamese heritage and culture, and love of antiques from lacquer panels and folding screens, to carvings and reliefs seems to parallel with his continuous contemplation upon the landscapes present in both the antiquities and in the natural world.

The belief in *am* and *duong* (*yin* and *yang*) plays a significant role in Vietnamese society where the spiritual is connected to everyday life. In Ha's paintings, the tension that exists in this duality – between the spiritual and the physical world – is essential in creating a harmonious balance in his work. This is most evident in his current works, some of which include copper sheets left outside to the elements for years. Time is an important theme in Ha's practice and even serves as a medium. Ha's canvases are treated as organic and living; they will transform over time as the copper continues to oxidize. The work's association to human life is not lost on viewers – copper being a trace mineral essential for human survival.

In a seamless reality enabled by the omnipresent flow of time, any interruption (or intervention) can neatly act as a spatiotemporal, and mental, medium of reflection. With Ha Manh Thang, his scenes are the depiction – thus reflection – of a landscape, whether actual and taken from particular images of the outside world, or imagined and originating from one's inner psyche. Within the same painted space or context, these seemingly opposing forces indeed form up pairs of parallels that complement each other in harmony, through layers unto layers, of images and meanings, and through visual and textual motifs. As time permanently punctures through each and every layer of imagery, new spaces are created.

The exhibition title "The Reflection," though deceptively simple, is deeply nuanced. Are we looking at a landscape or its shadow? Where does its exterior end and its interior begin? Is it situated in the past or extended to the present? In a recent interview with the artist, Los Angeles-based artist and curator Brian Doan states, "*The Reflection* is perceived to carry a sense of absence, where the particularities of time and space are erased and even blended into one another." To Ha, there are two modes of seeing in these works - one stemming from the emotional and mental state of the observer; the other arising as the scenery being observed enters into a mutual dialogue with the onlooker. With each painting in the series there are two different surfaces: the upper half painted on silk and the lower on canvas, therefore two different techniques, and thus, two different effects – the balanced with the transitory, the vigorous with the poetic, and the eternal with the ephemeral. Such limitless viability of reflection is enabled only when one views life as a seamless, ongoing existence, trailing indefinitely across the passage of time. Ha Manh Thang states, "My artistic journey is a way for me to understand, appreciate and grasp what life is about. A life that's not just meant to be experienced and embraced, but also left behind and forgotten; a life projected back onto ourselves."

## Educational programming at Galerie Quynh

### **Exhibition Walkthrough with Ha Manh Thang**

Tuesday, the 14 December, 4:30 – 6 PM

The walkthrough will be in Vietnamese with English translation. Participants will need to register their attendance at [info@galeriequynh.com](mailto:info@galeriequynh.com).

### Notes on the exhibition

Artist:	Ha Manh Thang
Exhibition Title:	<i>The Reflection</i>
Exhibition Dates:	December 14, 2021 – January 8, 2022
Opening Reception:	Sunday, December 12, from 4 – 6 PM
Venue:	Galerie Quynh 118 Nguyen Van Thu, Dakao, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City
Contact:	<a href="mailto:info@galeriequynh.com">info@galeriequynh.com</a> / +84 28 3822 7218
Hours:	10am – 7pm, Tuesday – Saturday, and by appointment

### **ABOUT HA MANH THANG**

Ha Manh Thang's work is a poetic meditation on the passage of time, memory and place. His paintings speak to viewers about mindfulness and the vicissitudes of life. Seeped through with a quiet lyricism informed by Ha's interests in Western jazz and classical East Asian poetry, and inspired just as much by chance encounters as elaborate conceptual starting points, his paintings are, in the artist's words, 'attempts to better understand oneself in relation to nature, and to express what one cannot grasp'. Born in 1980 in Thai Nguyen Province, Ha is one of Vietnam's most important painters. Ha has been featured alongside acclaimed artists such as Gerhard Richter, Marlene Dumas and Peter Doig in several international publications including 'Painting Now' (Thames and Hudson, 2015) and 'Painting Today' (Phaidon, 2009). Ha has held a number of notable regional and international exhibitions including *Shared Inspiration*, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China; *Pueblos en Resistencia*, 1 Bienal del Sur, Caracas, Venezuela; *Instruments of Meditation: Works of Art from the Zoltán Bodnár Collection*, Reök Palace, Budapest, Hungary; *Connect: Kunstzene Vietnam*, ifa Galleries, Berlin and Stuttgart, Germany; *The rain and the small stream* presented by Ernst & Young's Asean Art Outreach program, Singapore; and *Post-Doi Moi: Vietnamese Art After 1990*, Singapore Art Museum. Ha Manh Thang's work is in public and private collections around the world including National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China; Singapore Art Museum, Singapore; Post-Vi Dai Collection, Geneva, Switzerland and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Vietnam Fine Arts Museum, Hanoi, Vietnam; and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, Vietnam. Ha currently lives and works in Hanoi.

### **ABOUT GALERIE QUYNH**

Recognized as Vietnam's leading contemporary art gallery, Galerie Quynh has been promoting contemporary art practice in the country for over two decades. The gallery is known internationally for its consistently focused programming and educational initiatives. Working with a select group of emerging, mid-career and established Vietnamese artists, the gallery



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also exhibits the work of distinguished artists from around the world. In keeping with its mission to develop a sustainable ecosystem for the arts in Vietnam, the gallery collaborates with artists, curators, museums and art spaces locally and internationally to organize talks and lectures as well as to produce publications in English and Vietnamese. In May 2014 the gallery founded the not-for-profit educational initiative Sao La directed by artists Tung Mai and Nguyen Kim To Lan. Sao La has since developed into an independent artist collective spearheaded by To Lan and Dalat-based artist Nguyen Duc Dat. In summer 2020 with support from the Goethe-Institut, the gallery launched the not-for-profit CÁRÔ, an educational initiative that provides art education for students aged 13 – 18 who show demonstrative interest in the arts.

In December 2017 the gallery moved to Dakao, District 1. Spread over four floors totalling 600 m<sup>2</sup>, the gallery is able to produce more ambitious programming and play an even more vital role in the cultural community in Vietnam.

[www.galeriequynh.com](http://www.galeriequynh.com)