

Unless otherwise noted, all works are by Teo Nguyen,  
American, born Vietnam 1977.

Title translations provided by the artist.

**Tales of the Mountain**

**Đường đưa bước em đi**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Facing West**

**Hướng Về Miền Tây**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Something To Remember You By**  
**Còn một chút gì để nhớ, 2016**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Out of the Rolling Clouds**  
**Một Thoáng Mây Bay, 2016**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Where Must I Return These Footprints**  
**Dấu chân trên cát, 2016**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**I Love You, Before Long I Die**

**Tôi Yêu Người, từ thuở nào, 2016**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**I Have Traveled a Long Way**

**Ngìn Trùng Xa Cách, 2016**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**A Shadow Lost**

**Một chiều anh bước đi, 2016**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**A Tender Passage**

**Một Cõi Đi Về**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Departure**

**Ra Đi**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**The Terrible War Flower**

**Đóa Hoa Tội Lỗi**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

## **You Are Me and I Am You**

**Trong Tay Nhau**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

The subject of Nguyen's painting is one of healing and reconciliation. The location is Ngô Gia Tự Street in Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City. Devoid of traffic and pedestrians, the scene appears tranquil, even ordinary. In fact, it was the backdrop of a brutal wartime act. On February 1, 1968, during the Tet Offensive, when the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces launched a massive surprise attack on the South, Brigadier General Nguyễn Ngọc Loan, chief of the Republic of Vietnam National Police, executed a handcuffed Viet Cong prisoner, Nguyễn Văn Lém, by shooting him in the head in full view of the public and the media. The shocking event was witnessed and recorded by Võ Sửu, a cameraman for NBC, and Eddie Adams, an Associated Press photojournalist. Though American government officials condemned Gen. Loan's actions, images of the execution became a symbol of the senseless violence of the war in Vietnam and helped galvanize anti-war sentiment in the United States and elsewhere.

To see the original photograph, use your smartphone to scan this QR code:



**Keepsake**

**Kỷ Vật Cho Em**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**The Singing Stops in All the Trees**

**Hát Trên Những Xác Người**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**It Has Been Raining for Nights**

**Còn Lại Gì Sau CƠn Mưa**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Please Come Here and Witness**

**Đời Gọi Biết Bao Lần**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**You Have Come Here, My Beloved**

**Ngày Về**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Stay with Me, Brother**

**Trao Nhau Lời Cuối**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**The Foreign Lands**

**Vùng đất xa lạ**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**A Flock of Iron Birds Has Come**

**Trên Trời Rụng Ánh Sao đen**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**An Afternoon with You, Gone**

**Một Chiều Buồn Nhật Nắng**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum



**I Only Wished To Sit with You To Say a Word or Two**

**Vài Lời Tâm Sự**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**The Day I Got Rid of My Heart**

**Có Một Trái Tim Đã Qua Đời**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Here Are My Hands with Bowed Head I Give Them  
To You**

**Phó Thác**, 2016

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**We Never Met, Yet Our Souls Embrace**

**Yêu Nhau Trong Phận Người, 2016**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

Medium Paintings (5)

**I Cover You Over with Roses and Early Lilies**

**Cho một người nằm xuống, 2022**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Journey Awaits**

**Tuổi đời mênh mông, 2022**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**You Set Out This Morning**

**Đường xa Anh đi, 2022**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Crossing the Valley**

**Thung lũng hồng, 2022**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**A Shadow Lost**

**Một chiều anh bước đi, 2018**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

## **Scent of My Childhood**

**Những ngày thơ ấu**, 2022

Acrylic on vellum, mounted on aluminum

Recollections of childhood are among our most powerful memories. Nguyen's painting of smiling children standing among grazing oxen is based on a 1967 photograph by Welsh photojournalist Philip Jones Griffiths, who titled the original image *Limits of Friendship*. What Nguyen omitted from the scene was the uniformed U.S. Marine, rifle in hand, giving cigarettes to the girl in the foreground. According to the late photographer's daughter, this was her father's first glimpse of American soldiers attempting to win over the hearts and minds of the local citizenry. Known as "Civic Action," the coercive tactic was part of the U.S. military's strategy to burnish its hoped-for reputation as liberators. Jones Griffiths's photographs often revealed the brutal reality of war on civilians and were credited with helping to shift public opinion against America's involvement in Vietnam.

To see the original photograph, use your smartphone to scan this QR code:



**I Have Come To Be with You**

**Trao Nhau Lời Cuối**, 2018

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**In My Dream, I Met My Dear Friend**

**Trong Mơ, Tôi Đã Gặp Anh**, 2018

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

## **Phan Thị Kim Phúc**, 2018

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

Nguyen's landscape painting is based on the iconic photograph of Phan Thi Kim Phúc Oont, known as Kim Phúc, who as a 9-year-old girl in 1972 survived a napalm attack by South Vietnamese bombers. The shocking photograph, which captured a burned and naked Kim Phúc and other children running from danger, became a defining image of the brutality of the war in Vietnam and boosted the antiwar movement in the United States and elsewhere. She later sought political asylum in Canada, but has endured lifelong pain and other lingering health effects from her burns. In 1996, Kim Phúc gave a speech at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., where she publicly forgave those responsible for her injuries.

In 2008, Kim Phúc explained the meaning of forgiveness:

Forgiveness made me free from hatred. I still have many scars on my body and severe pain most days, but my heart is cleansed. Napalm is very powerful, but faith, forgiveness, and love are much more powerful. We would not have war at all if everyone could learn how to live with true love, hope, and forgiveness. If that little girl in the picture can do it, ask yourself: Can you?

To see the original photograph, use your smartphone to scan this QR code:



## **Please Come Here and Witness**

**Đời Gọi Biết Bao Lần**, 2018

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

Nguyen's tranquil rural scene, devoid of human activity, is a reclamation of a landscape once scarred by the horrors of war. The painting is based on an iconic image by Associated Press photojournalist Horst Faas, who captured the aftermath of an assault by Viet Cong guerrillas near the Michelin rubber plantation northeast of Saigon on November 27, 1965. In the photograph, a masked Vietnamese litter bearer stands in the foreground, overseeing the recovery of bodies of American and Vietnamese soldiers scattered along the road.

To see the original photograph, use your smartphone to scan this QR code:



## **We Never Met, Yet Our Souls Embrace**

**Yêu Nhau Trong Phận Người**, 2018

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Tales of the Mountain**

**Đường đưa bước em đi, 2018**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**I Have Traveled a Long Way**

**Ngìn Trùng Xa Cách, 2018**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum

**Never Let Me Go**

**Đừng xa nhau, 2022**

Acrylic on vellum, mounted to aluminum



## **My Being**

**Thân Tôi**, 2018

High-definition digital video

Running length: 15:04

*My Being* is a personal reflection on the life of Nguyen's mother, Duong Anh Loi, and her experiences of loss and separation during wartime. Nguyen's family was initially displaced by the civil war that began in 1953. During the American military presence in Vietnam (1955–73), more than 2 million Vietnamese lost their lives, and 1.5 million people were displaced to refugee camps.

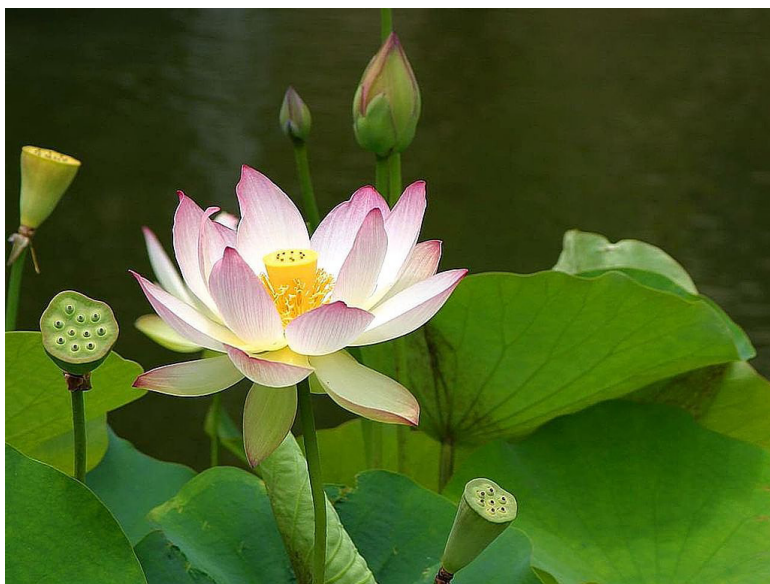
Duong fled home with her uncle during the war; she would be separated from her own mother for decades, having been repeatedly displaced during the war and after the fall of the South Vietnamese government in 1975. To this day, she does not discuss the painful journey out of North Vietnam, except in her poetry. Duong has published 11 books of poetry, and some of her poems are featured in Nguyen's film and in the adjacent display.

## Lotus Pond

**Cánh Hoa Lạc Quan**, 2018–22

Acrylic on vellum

The lotus is the national flower of Vietnam. Known as the “flower of the dawn,” the aquatic plant (*Nelumbo nucifera*) grows in the muddy water of ponds and shallow lakes. At dusk, the lotus flower closes and sinks beneath the water’s surface, only to rise and reopen at dawn. Between May and August, lotus fields bloom into dazzling displays of white, pink, blue, red, and purple flowers. In Vietnam, the lotus is considered the embodiment of perfection, symbolizing purity, serenity, commitment, and optimism for the future. For Nguyen, the lotus pond is integral to Vietnam’s indigenous landscape, as a place of contemplation, healing, and spiritual renewal. Here, presented as a larger-than-life mural of white lotus flowers, the lotus pond also signifies the country’s multigenerational transition from war to peace and ongoing commitment to self-determination.



Lotus flower, buds,  
and seed pods

Photograph by  
Jon Sullivan,  
Wikimedia Commons

**Untitled**, 2022

Stacked white paper, acrylic; site-specific installation

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., pays tribute to the 58,220 service members of the U.S. armed forces killed or missing in action during the American military presence in Vietnam (1955–73). The memorial, sometimes called The Wall, is a popular destination for American tourists who wish to honor those who died for their country. Few Americans, however, are aware of the enormous human cost of the war on the Vietnamese people. Officials of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have estimated that 1.1 million North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters, and some 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers, died in combat. In addition to military casualties, more than 2 million civilians perished during the war.

Nguyen's austere stacked-paper installation is a visual metaphor venerating those Vietnamese who died, while affirming the intrinsic value of all human life. The installation invites reflection and appeals to reconciliation by highlighting the countries' relative scale of loss. The 60 stacks of paper approximate the total number of Vietnamese lost during the war; one stack symbolizes the number of Americans who died.

**Agent Orange, 2022**

Archival aqueous pigment prints on transparent film; acrylic

*Agent Orange* is my conceptual frame for discourse on the environmental impacts, human mortality, and related adverse consequences of chemical militarism and war-making. Agent Orange, the deadly dioxin-herbicide weaponized during the U.S.-Vietnam war, resulted in the death of over 400,000 Vietnamese. Empirical data attribute birth defects, as well as severe psychological and neurological problems, to dioxin-herbicide exposure. Millions are still suffering today, though examination of long-term human and environmental devastation has only begun in the last two decades. The lack of both agency and urgency is part of the imperialist ethos that position a people and a land as unworthy of redress—what I call “the politics of worthiness.”

—Teo Nguyen

**Please do not touch.**

## **Duong Anh Loi**

Vietnamese, born 1935

### **Selection of poems, 1954–2017**

Hand-written manuscripts

Nguyen's mother, Duong Anh Loi, is an accomplished poet and writer whose published work often explores her experiences of loss and displacement during wartime. Indeed, it is only through her poetry that Duong addresses her painful journey out of North Vietnam. After living in the United States for more than a decade, Duong returned to her Vietnamese homeland, where she lives today. Nguyen chose this selection of his mother's handwritten poems for this exhibition.

### **Portrait of Duong Anh Loi, 1973**

Photograph

**Please do not touch.**

**Please do not touch.**

**Please do not touch.**

**Please do not touch.**