

CONCLUSION

Throughout the 20th century, Việt-Nam was at the intersection for most of the international powers in politics and culture: France, China, the Soviet Union, and the United States. For more than a century, the changes in aesthetics in Việt-Nam roughly followed the course of the nation's relations with these foreign powers. Inevitably, they left their traces in Vietnamese culture, more or less, according to their approaches to Việt-Nam.

The conclusion locates these changes at four turning points in Vietnamese art history and reviews Socialist Realism in the post-doi moi context. Consideration is also given to the introduction of alternative art schools that might challenge current Vietnamese institutions and help nurture a new generation of creative visual artists. Such institutions might fill the gaps between current Vietnamese art theory and practice and their relationship to the global art world. These alternative art schools could also disseminate a more complete and objective account of Việt-Nam's art history, which as outlined in the introduction, is one of the governing principles of this thesis.

The four turning points:

The four turning points of change are: the introduction of western influences under colonialism, the adoption of Socialist Realism in North Việt-Nam, the pursuit of individuality and expressive art in South Việt-Nam and the transformation in visual arts under doi moi.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the first influential turning point was already in progress with the imposition, in the late 19-century, of French colonial values, which were, and still are, most apparent in the architectural landscape and the adoption of western styled clothing. Developments in modern art were gradually assimilated by Vietnamese and represented Vietnamese willingness to accept foreign influences into

their culture. The incorporation of outside values and styles was justified by the drive to modernity which, at the time, was considered to play a crucial role in Việt-Nam's struggle for independence from Chinese cultural domination. It was the most far-reaching change in Vietnamese modern culture as eastern models were merged, if not replaced by western values.

The modernity of the 'new world' was representative of western values and, as would be expected, presented Việt-Nam with a dilemma; the power of colonialism paved the way for Việt-Nam to become a cultural colony. The success of borrowing and adapting western principles at the Fine Arts College of Indochina led to the reverence of foreign methodologies and the desire to be a disciple.¹ This desire destroyed creativity, as the next phase in history witnessed.

The second change in Vietnamese aesthetics occurred in 1948 and is defined by the foundation of Socialist Realism which in North Việt-Nam was nationally endorsed from 1954 onwards. Accompanied by the two Indochina wars and the cold war atmosphere, Vietnamese Socialist Realism was a force fighting against western imperialism and employed artists and the arts as instruments of propaganda in the ideological struggle to unify the masses with 'art for humanities sake'. The imposition of strict controls was enforced throughout society to systematically strengthen Socialist doctrine. Artists' activities were monitored and visual culture was pared down, effectively depriving society of its colourfulness. It neither offered nor tolerated any style other than Realism and imposed narrative content over form.

¹ Nguyễn Ngọc Tuấn, *Tính Chất Thuộc Địa và Hậu Thuộc Địa của Văn Học Việt Nam* (the Colonial and Post-Colonial Characters of Vietnamese Literature) published in *Văn Học Việt Nam từ Điểm Nhìn Hậu Hiện Đại* (Vietnamese Literature seen from Post-Modernism) by Nguyễn Hưng Quốc, 2000, Văn Nghệ, California, cited from: <http://www.tienve.org/home/literature/viewLiterature.do?action=viewArtwork&artworkId=141>. Note: Nguyễn Hưng Quốc is the pen name of Dr. Nguyễn Ngọc Tuấn at Victoria University, Australia..

Two reasons explain this moribund status. First, administrative measures imposed this doctrine on artists, which for many, was contrary to their own practice. Frequently, deviation from this doctrine was punished by ‘re-education’ and artistic initiative was extremely limited in this period. Second, never before in Vietnamese history had the nation systematically followed foreign art policies as when imitating from the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, in the name of methodology. Artistic creativity and self-reflection were suppressed toward a collective identity which was the imperative in society, to the extent that individuality and artistic experimentation all but disappeared. Consequently, it was those artists who chose not to align themselves with mainstream Socialist Realism, but surreptitiously embraced the aesthetic tradition of the Fine Arts College of Indochina, who were the real artistic achievers during this period.

Nguyễn Đỗ Cung, the founder of the Fine Arts Museum in Hà Nội and the first Director of the Research Institute of Fine Arts, expressed his view on the development of the national art in his article, *To Inherit and Develop the National Tradition in order to Create a new Vietnamese Socialist Art*:

The people’s struggles, production and life are the impetus for the development of the national art, and *not the influences of foreign countries*. The national art, apart from fighting against the art of reactionary ruling classes, *must oppose the spreading impact of external cultures* save for a selective reception of the essence of foreign arts.² (Italic added)

His article was published numerous times in various magazines.³ The rationale behind the repeated publications was that it clearly set out the principles that Vietnamese

² Nguyễn Đỗ Cung, ‘Kế Thừa và Phát Huy Truyền Thống Dân Tộc để Sáng Tạo một Nền Nghệ Thuật Tạo Hình Xã Hội Chủ Nghĩa của Việt Nam’, (To Inherit and Develop the National Tradition in order to Create a new Vietnamese Socialist Art), published in *Nghiên Cứu Mỹ Thuật* (Researches on Fine Arts), p. 15.

³ first in *Mỹ Thuật* (Fine Arts) n. 4 in 1969, then in *Nghiên Cứu Mỹ Thuật* magazine (Researches on Fine Arts) n. 1(18) in 1978, reprinted again in *Văn Nghệ* (Literature and Fine Arts) n. 36 in 1983 and finally in a book entitled *Researches on Fine Arts* edited and published by the Research Institute of Fine Arts.

artists were to follow, and from it can be gathered the prevailing xenophobia in the arts in North Việt-Nam.

The third turning point in aesthetics coincides with the establishment of the National Fine Arts College of Saigon in South Việt-Nam in 1954 and the development of southern arts in the 1960s and 70s. Although southern visual arts were modelled after the Fine Arts College of Indochina, their artists practiced in a different social environment and had greater autonomy which led to the expressive art of Modernism and a diversity of styles. On the one hand, artists carried on the tradition of pre-colonial art, as exemplified in temples and the colonial values as taught in the Academy of Fine Arts. On the other hand, they pursued various 'isms' and abstract art with the intention of speaking the universal language of art. Thus, the arts of the South retained positive aspects of art creation: the search for new forms of expression and innovation.

There were some similarities between the Fine Arts College of Indochina and the National Fine Arts College of Saigon. Both colleges survived almost the same length of time: 20 years and 21 years respectively. They were both hybrid cultural products of their times and travelled the same direction toward western modernism. Both were suspended due to political circumstances and their graduates were turned toward the Socialist course implemented by the State. Subsequent to North Việt-Nam's triumphant victory over the South in 1975, Socialist doctrine was propagated as the only means to Việt-Nam's independence from the West and held a totalitarian influence over Vietnamese arts for more than half a century. Art that espoused Western values, which was particularly the case in the South, was deemed 'decadent' and 'bourgeois' and, consequently, prejudicially evaluated or erased from Việt-Nam's art history.

The fourth turning point emerged after the launch of the 1986 reform policy. When Việt-Nam opened its market system to the outside world, it was exposed to late 20th century technological and economic achievements from the West and many of its regional neighbours. Việt-Nam awoke to see itself as one of the poorest nations in the world, far behind their non-Communist neighbours in South East Asia, like Singapore, Thailand or Malaysia. In the psyche of post-war reconstruction, modernity again became the impetus in Vietnamese society, this time expressed by an explosion of artistic pluralism and internationalism. In sharp contrast to the previous era, architecture and clothing took on vibrant international values and western consumerism held sway. As a result of doi moi, in the 1990s a Vietnamese art market developed with links to the international art world, Vietnamese paintings became profitable, and, to some extent, were overrun by commercialisation. At the same time, the State retained control of the arts through censorship and art education but its rigid grip began to loosen and Socialist Realism began to fade. The role of the French-run art school was reappraised and colonial artworks regained their reputation. Yet, it is still the case that the arts of the South are largely overlooked, even today.

Characteristics of changes

In the discourse of the 20th century Vietnamese art history, three characteristics can be noticed in the aesthetic changes.

First, aesthetic changes visibly occur when Việt-Nam has contact with outsiders; new elements are adopted and integrated into the visual culture. This is not a new phenomenon; the same happened to various countries in South East Asia through colonialism. But, in Việt-Nam this characteristic challenges the national xenophobia, which was the result of their intermittent conflicts with China and the two Indochina wars. Việt-Nam is obsessed by the fear of being absorbed and assimilated by

outsiders; by Chinese, by French and so on. To disguise this fear, Vietnamese return to tradition, as expressed in the following folk song:

Let's return to have a bath in our pond,
Whether it's transparent or not,
Ours is more preferable.

To go back to the old (maybe polluted) pond and be happy means to close oneself to the outside world. It is obviously not the way to evolve or progress in terms of economics and culture, but it does sustain traditional values and identity. This fear of assimilation was exploited during the second Indochina war and the first decade after reunification when the Socialist government applied strict prohibitions on foreign cultural production and so heightened Vietnamese xenophobia. During the Socialist era, State censorship rigorously suppressed aesthetic changes and erected a psychological embargo on creativity through the common fear and suspicion of something new. But, to acknowledge the impact of foreign influences on Vietnamese culture, while it is a political statement that goes against the Party's policies, is to acknowledge the strength of Vietnamese culture and sees Việt-Nam in a more real and fuller historical context.

The second characteristic is Việt-Nam's ongoing pursuit of modernity in the arts, which was a general experience in Asian art and obviously imported from the West.⁴ This issue in Việt-Nam was generated by the fact that the modernisation of the nation was not fulfilled due to successive hindrances imposed by colonialism, two prolonged wars and some erroneous practices of Socialism. The drive to modernity can also be accounted for by the time lag in the introduction into Việt-Nam of the art movements involved. Romanticism, for instance, was practiced in France in mid 19th century, but did not come to Việt-Nam until the 1930s, Abstract art appeared in Europe at the beginning of 20th century, but was only practiced in Việt-Nam as a movement in the

⁴ See John Clark, edited, 1993, *Modernity in Asian Art*, Wild Peony.

late 1980s, although Tạ Tỵ and Ngô Viết Thụ (mentioned in Chapter 4, page 242-246) presented serious abstract works in the early 1960s, and Bùi Xuân Phái from 1970 to 1972.⁵

While Vietnamese culture was more often than not exposed to these art movements through colonialism, nevertheless, colonialism controlled the practice of the arts. In addition, consideration must be given to the social contexts which incite and promote art movements. In Việt-Nam, these were largely underdeveloped; for instance, Expressionist art, can only emerge when there is room for subjectivity; there was no art market in the western sense of the term. But, although Modernism was totally banned in North Việt-Nam for nearly half a century, the search for modernity became more intense because it had to go underground.

The third feature of change was the influence of tradition in the Vietnamese approach to Modernism. Referring to changes in Việt-Nam's contemporary society, Andrew J. Pierre from Georgetown University in Washington DC notes:

Change is inevitable. The real question is, Will the change be evolutionary or revolutionary? ...The traditional Vietnamese way of transition is evolutionary.⁶

Vietnamese aesthetics rarely breaks abruptly from the past; new art movements are usually merged with traditional Vietnamese practices. For instance, the dramatic turning point in Vietnamese aesthetics took place when the nation was introduced to western architecture and the art academy in the early 20th century. Yet, through the utilisation of crafts, like lacquer work and traditional decorative features like bamboo, tradition still played a part in shaping the new aesthetics. Nguyễn Tư Nghiêm's

⁵ See Bùi ThanhPhượng & Trần Hậu Tuấn, 1998, Bui Xuân Phái, Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 180-183.

⁶ Andrew J. Pierre, November 2000, 'Vietnam's Contradiction', first published in Foreign Affairs, November/December 2000, cited from <http://www.vietforum.org/English/Vision/vision03.htm>.

paintings, considered typical of Vietnamese Modernism, are actually generated from traditional motifs.

Nguyễn Tư Nghiêm with *Tax Revolt, A Young Buffalo, New Year Eve* and the series of *Genie Gióng, Old Dance, Horoscope Animals*.... is a great modernist who opened the path for painting, returning to tradition and bearing international contemporary characteristics at the same time.⁷

While primitivism in French art exploits the design, colours and forms from other non-western cultures as in the case of Gauguin and Picasso, Vietnamese artists refer to tradition, namely folk art, more or less as a category of anthropology in that they excavate and preserve the traditional imagery. Art students are trained in this practice from their first year in a unit in drawing, ‘copying ancient motifs’. This leads to a tendency to borrow religious and ancient decorative motifs by artists of primitivism.⁸ Moreover, most artists take an interest not only in the forms and colours of folk art but also regard it as a cultural and political stand for their traditional representations through which they can avoid the propaganda machine as well as attract buyers.

Under Socialism the application of “national tradition” was strongly recommended and artists were often forcibly reminded to keep their nationality - the Vietnamese-ness in their arts.⁹ On the other hand, from the 1950s to the 1980s, making preservation of tradition a priority for the arts was a strategic counterpoint to the Soviet and Chinese protocols imposed on Vietnamese arts. To preserve tradition is, without doubt, a good strategy in cultural policy, but to insist upon it is a problem. This insistence on looking

⁷ Nguyễn Quân, ‘Mỹ Thuật Việt Nam Giai Đoạn 1945-1975: Yêu nước – Tập thể – Lạc quan’ (Vietnamese Art of the Period 1945-1975: Patriotic – Collective – Optimism), published on *Talawas* website (11-10-2002): <http://www.talawas.org/talaDB/showFile.php?res=842&rb=0202&von=100>

⁸ See Bùi Như Hương & Trần Hậu Tuấn, 2001, *New Vietnamese Art in the 1990s*, Fine Art Publishing House, p. 19-32.

⁹ Nguyễn Đỗ Cung, ‘Vấn Đề Áp Dụng Vốn Cũ Dân Tộc trong Mỹ Thuật’ (On the Issue of Applying National Tradition in the Arts) published in *Tính Dân Tộc của Nghệ Thuật Tạo Hình* (Nationality in Fine Arts), Văn Hoá Publishing House, p.17-20.

back to the past has dominated the arts for nearly 50 years and effectively delayed exploration of contemporary issues. For instance, the covers on the first six issues for 2004 of *Mỹ Thuật* magazine, the official voice of the Việt-Nam Fine Arts Association, all have reproductions of artworks from the 1940s to the 1960s.¹⁰ Furthermore, the February issue, which dedicates five articles on the fourth National Sculpture Exhibition in December 2003, inappropriately, has, on its front cover Phạm Gia Giang's *Happiness* dated 1940.

It seems contradictory that Vietnamese art practices accommodate both a search for modernity and the weight of tradition, both a fear of and desire for something new. Nevertheless, it is Việt-Nam's reality that these opposing drives are still currently fundamental to national culture and, specifically, visual art practice. In the post-đổi mới era, Việt-Nam's contradictions continue in the debate between artistic pluralism versus Socialist Realism.

What is Vietnamese contemporary aesthetics?

In the last ten years, Vietnamese art has become extremely mobile; paintings are sold overseas, exhibitions and workshops are held in Việt-Nam as well as overseas, such as the Royal Academy of Amsterdam, the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, the Singapore Art Museum, the Queensland Art Gallery, the Civitella Ranieri Center, the Venice Biennale, the Sydney Biennale, the Museum of Modern Art New York, the Mori Art Museum Tokyo. Overseas Vietnamese artists and foreign artists have settled and worked in Việt-Nam for a considerable number of years, like Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Richard Streimatter-Tran, Dinh Q. Le, Sue Hajdu and others. Consequently, Vietnamese art has been exposed to a more diverse spectrum of media, styles and ways of expressions, than ever before in its history.

¹⁰ See Appendix D for the list of reproduction of the artworks.

On the other hand, art curricula remain unchanged despite all the dramatic transformations in contemporary art practices. The art curricula for all art schools are obsolete with strong emphasis on drawing¹¹ and ideology.¹² Apart from Aesthetics, mainly relating to Socialist Realism, five compulsory subjects indoctrinate students into socialist ideology: Marxist-Leninist Political Economics, Scientific Socialism, Marxist Leninist Philosophy, History of Vietnamese Communist Party, Policies of Culture and Arts and Literary Theories and from the academic year 2003-2004, Hồ Chí Minh's Thoughts became another obligatory discipline in the curricula. Art students were and, continue to be, provided with theories totally alien to what is really happening in Vietnamese contemporary art and the world. Art lecturers, like other tertiary educators, work at two or three jobs in order to compensate for the meagre salary from their official employment.¹³ Teacher training is given very little attention, if any, but new school buildings have sprung up at the Fine Arts University of Hà Nội, the Fine Arts University of Hồ Chí Minh City and Đồng Nai College of Decorative, leading to a false impression of development.¹⁴ In reality, budgets for constructing buildings are often said to be related to corruption, whereas, it is difficult to disguise graft in the allocation of training budgets. Fortunately, Hà Nội accesses international trends through exchange programs, sponsorships offered by embassies and affluent art galleries in its ancient quarter; Huế has hosted the International Sculpture Symposiums and annual Huế Festival since 1998; but Hồ Chí Minh City is left struggling through negligence, art exchange programs are not often extended to the South. Moreover,

¹¹ The new curricula were sanctioned through the meeting of five national art schools chaired by the Ministry of Culture and Information on 27-28/03/2002; it definitely did not want to change the proportion of drawing.

¹² See Appendix for the art curricula.

¹³ Interview with Huỳnh Văn Mười (Uyên Huy), Nguyễn Long, Trương Phi Đức who are staff at the Fine Arts University of HCMC, also see Philip Taylor, *Fragments of the Present*, especially p. 141 for quality of tertiary education.

¹⁴ The Fine Arts University of Hà Nội completed two new buildings of 4 storeys between 2000-2003; the Fine Arts University of HCMC is building a new study complex of 10 storeys to be used in 2006, Đồng Nai College is constructing a 5 storey building in 2004..

established southern artists, who deem themselves ‘losers’ in the war, rarely raise their voice on contemporary issues and seem not to engage young emerging artists.¹⁵ Art graduates from the Fine Art University of Hồ Chí Minh City become confused and lost. For the first time, in August 2004, they publicly announced their despair on the diaspora website, Talawas. They describe the art institute and its teaching in the bitter metaphor, “finding out that there are lice in the mattress when you get into the bed.”¹⁶ But these complaints had spread by word of mouth for at least a decade.¹⁷

It is a problem when art education is so indifferent to the real world. This is going to remain an issue for a long time because rarely would one take risk raising a question relating to ideology in Việt-Nam. Asking questions, as mentioned in the introduction, is not a Vietnamese habit; furthermore, in the Vietnamese political environment, raising questions, even as innocuous as the ‘Oliver Twist’ request, “Can I have some more, please?” can be interpreted as rebellious, as happened in the Nhân Văn – Giai Phẩm scandal of 1956-1957. It is unlikely, then, that Vietnamese would raise questions such as: What has Socialist Realism really offered visual culture in the last 50 years? What if Socialist Realism had not been made the mandatory art practice and where does it fit into the post-doi moi era?

Writing art history in Việt-Nam, therefore, is a political act. Art historians are likely to reflect the regime’s vision, little differently from that of court painters – making the subject matter more attractive and authoritative. Art historians, instead of detaching themselves from the power to remain independent and preserve integrity in their

¹⁵ See Dinh Q. Le, interviewed by Roger McDonald at http://www.a-i-t.net/news/001/institution01_e.html.

¹⁶ Graduates from Vietnamese art schools criticize the curricula on the website of Talawas, see Nguyễn Thuý Hằng and Lê Hiền Minh in <http://www.talawas.org/talaDB/showFile.php?res=2498&rb=0202>.

¹⁷ Nguyễn Trọng Chức, *Họa Sĩ Trẻ Thành Phố Nghĩ Gì Làm Gì ?* (What Do Young Artists of the City Think and Do?) Mỹ Thuật HCMC, n.4 (5-92), p. 4-5 &40.

research, became tools of propagating the superiority of the ideology.¹⁸ The most typical evidence was proved in Nhân Văn – Giai Phẩm scandal; while all Hanoians knew clearly what happened to the artists involved in this scandal, these ‘sensitive’ stories during and after the event were only publicly released in 2004 by an American scholar, Nora A. Taylor, in her book, *Painters in Hanoi, An Ethnography of Vietnamese Art*. So where have Vietnamese art historians been?

Writing art history is a dilemma when it has to be done in tune with the power. Southerner, Huỳnh Hữu Ủy’s research into Saigonese arts from the beginning of the century to 1975, was published in 1990 - *The Cultural Geography of Hồ Chí Minh City*, clearly took the Communist’s side and attempted to weave stories into the ‘revolutionary history’. The essay concludes with Bửu Chỉ being described as a, “militant artist, using his art to mobilise the masses for the liberation of the community,”¹⁹ which actually was an act of blowing with the wind.²⁰ Gallery director, Natalia Kraeskaia stated, “Vietnamese art has yet to be written”²¹ and Nora Taylor asked “...what kind of ‘art history’ has been, and needs to be, written.”²² Vietnamese art historians have been silent.

Through my interviews with artists, a great demand has been expressed to me for alternatives to State run art institutions, for instance, if possible, an international private art school; this is particularly so among southern artists, who consider it a

¹⁸ Nguyễn Tiến Cảnh, ‘Viện Mỹ Thuật – Hành Trình vào Nghiên Cứu’, (Art Research Institute – The Path into Research), *Nghiên Cứu Mỹ Thuật*, (Researches on Visual Arts), Fine Arts Institute, p.8.

¹⁹ Huỳnh Hữu Ủy, 1990, ‘Mỹ Thuật Saigon từ Đầu Thế Kỷ đến 1975’ (Saigonese Arts from the Beginning of the Century to 1975), in *Địa Chí Văn Hoá Thành Phố Hồ Chí Minh* (Cultural Geography of Hồ Chí Minh City), p.308.

²⁰ Huỳnh Hữu Ủy later published the same material in ‘Nghệ Thuật Tạo Hình Saigon trước 1975’, (Visual Arts in Saigon before 1975), in *Hợp Lưu* n.10, (April & May), California p.83-147. Yet, Bửu Chỉ was not mentioned. Also, the ‘revolutionary interpretation’ was also absent.

²¹ Natalia Kraevskai, ‘A Look at Vietnamese Art Writing’ at the *Talawas* website <http://www.talawas.org/talaDB/showFile.php?res=862&rb=0202&von=80>.

²² Nora A. Taylor, 2000, ‘Whose Art Are We Studying’, in *Studies in Southeast Asian Art, Essay in Honor of Stanley J. O’Connor*, edit. Taylor, Nora A., Cornell University, p. 157.

remedy for the inadequacies of the current institutionalised art curricula. The desire to create a new art tradition is embedded in this vision. Alternative art schools would provide a broader art education; promote critical and independent thinking, which is not encouraged by public education; help eradicate cultural xenophobia and so assist art students to position themselves in global society.

This desire is already, to a certain extent, in process. Off-shore universities in Việt-Nam²³ were first established in 1988 to respond to the demands of society that public tertiary education could not meet. The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) established its link with Việt-Nam in 1992, obtained its provisional license in 1998 and in 2000, full license to operate for the following 50 years. RMIT is the first international university in Việt-Nam to be fully owned by foreigners.

Schools such as these would nurture a new generation of creative artists as opposed to the cultural cadres that currently graduate from Vietnamese institutions. Furthermore, they would not only challenge Vietnamese national art schools to reconsider their direction, but also Vietnamese art to test its strength and flexibility as to whether it can take in new elements in the global context and enrich its cultural identity. I do not mean ‘to retain its cultural identity,’ which is the expectation of Vietnamese officials.²⁴ I mean, ‘to enrich its cultural identity,’ as I believe culture is always in progress and that tomorrow will be different from today.

²³ See Pham Lan Huong & Gerald W. Fry, *The Emergence of Private Higher Education in Vietnam: Challenges and Opportunities*, Educational Research for Policy & Practice, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, p.127-141.

²⁴ Decree 34-CT/TW of the Politburo on the Central Conferences of Literature and Arts, dated 10 January 2004.

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Appendix A: Chronology in Vietnamese dynasties:

Ngô Quyền dynasty: 939-944 AD

Đinh Tiên Hoàng: 968-980

980: Chinese invasion from Song Dynasty. The troops were defeated by Lê Hoàn, who later started the Lê Dynasty.

Tiền Lê Dynasty: 980-1009

Lý Dynasty: 1010-1225: Lý Công Uẩn was raised in a Buddhist temple before ascending the throne and starting the Lý Dynasty. He moved the capital from Hoa Lư to La Thành and renamed it Thăng Long, where Hà Nội is located now.

Trần Dynasty: 1225-1440: The Mongolian troops invaded Việt-Nam three times and were all defeated: 1258, 1285 and 1288. In 1285, the king Trần Nhân Tông held a referendum of elders to decide whether the nation should fight or surrender. The whole referendum unanimously agreed to fight under the commander of General Trần Quốc Tuấn (1228-1300), stylised as Trần Hưng Đạo, who became a saint in Vietnamese belief after his death.

In 1305 (?) Princess Huyền Trân married to Chế Mân, Champ King, who offered the two provinces Ô and Rí (now Quảng Trị, Thừa Thiên – Huế and northern part of Quảng Nam)

Hồ Dynasty (1400-1407) was established by Hồ Quý Ly (1336-1407) who climbed to the highest position in the court and dethroned the last Trần King. Hồ Quý Ly was a reformer; he initiated bank notes, land reform and social development. He also re-arranged education and the army, both of which impaired the aristocracy. He moved the capital from Hà Nội to Thanh Hoá, however, in 1407, China invaded Việt-Nam, Hồ's army was immature for the resistance.

Lê Dynasty (1428-1527) was founded by Lê Lợi (1385-1433), a aristocratic land lord, who led the insurrection against Chinese troops for ten years to the final victory. Nguyễn Trãi (1380-1442) became advisor and strategist in the war. Lê Thánh Tôn reigned 1460-1497 is seen as golden time of this dynasty.

By 15th century, Lê Dynasty was interrupted by a war against its rival Mac Dynasty (1527-1595) for 70 years. In the early 17th century, this conflict gradually shifted the power from the Lê kings to two hostile families: Trịnh

and Nguyễn. Trịnh family reigned in North Việt-Nam, called Đàng Ngoài (Outer Region). Nguyễn family controlled South Việt-Nam, called Đàng Trong (Inner Region).

Nguyễn Lords managed to annex Champa in 1697 and turned this part into Bình Thuận province. In 1698, Nguyễn Lords appointed their general Nguyễn Hữu Cảnh to Đồng Nai as a governor for the South. Also at this time, three thousand Chinese asked for asylum from Nguyễn Lords, who granted them Hà Tiên to colonize the new land. Successive incursions led to the annexation of Chenla in 1757 and Việt-Nam reached its modern size of the land. Nguyễn Lords were defeated by Tây Sơn Brothers in late 18th century.

Tây Sơn Dynasty (1778-1802) formed by three brothers Nguyễn Tây Sơn: Nguyễn Nhạc, Nguyễn Lữ and Nguyễn Huệ from Qui Nhơn, a central coast town. Nguyễn Nhạc declared himself Emperor in 1777 and based in central Việt-Nam. However, Nguyễn Huệ, with more military talent, chased the lineage of Nguyễn Lords, Nguyễn Phúc Ánh, out of the country in 1773. In 1776, Nguyễn Huệ defeated Trịnh's troops in the North, but still entrusted King Lê Duy Khiêm, who married his daughter Ngọc Hân to the hero Nguyễn Huệ. The king died soon afterward, his heir Le Duy Ky ascended the throne and stylized himself Lê Chiêu Thống. When Nguyễn Huệ departed Thăng Long for the South, a void of power was created in Thăng Long that led to instability; Lê Chiêu Thống had to flee his palace and finally asked for help from Chinese king, who sent a troop to invade Viet-Nam. In 1788, Nguyễn Huệ proclaimed himself Quang Trung Emperor and marched into Thăng Long with his troop, defeated the Chinese. Unfortunately, Quang Trung died 4 years later, left his throne to his 8 years old son, Quang Toản.

Nguyễn Dynasty (1802-1945) was initiated by Nguyễn Phúc Ánh, or Nguyễn Ánh, who struggled for 20 years to gain back the country that his ancestors had secured. In the fight against the Nguyễn Tây Sơn, Nguyễn Ánh was to ask for military assistance from Siam and then France. Through his contact with the priest Pigneau de Behaine (1741-1744), who himself raised funds and paid for two ships with weapons that reached Việt-Nam in 1789 with military officials. They were skillful naval warriors and they contributed considerably to Nguyễn Ánh's final victory. He ascended the throne in 1802, stylized himself Gia Long, named the country Việt-Nam for the first time and chose Huế the capital.

1858: French attacked Đà Nẵng

Appendix B: Journals relating to visual arts of the Republic of Việt-Nam:

Articles on American art on *Free World* magazine (Thế Giới Tự Do, published in Vietnamese), all the issues found in the Phòng đọc hạn chế (Restricted Reading Room) at the Polytechnic Library of Hồ Chí Minh City:

Volume VII, n. 12: American Art in the 20th Century, p. 20

Volume X, n. 4: Aspects of American Art, p. 9-11.

Volume XV, n. 5: Exhibition by David Smith, p.38-41.

Volume XII, n.1: American Modern Art, p. 20-29

Volume XII, n. 6: American Graphic Art, p 24

From the collection held in the Restricted Room at the Politechnical Library of Hồ Chí Minh City: *Ánh Đèn Dầu* (The Oil-Lamp Light) had their issues from 1959 to 1965, *Sáng Dội Miền Nam* (Enlightenment in the South) had their issues from 1959 to 1963. *Thế Giới Tự Do* (the Free World) does not record dates, but only volumes and numbers. The library holds up to volumes 18.

Appendix C: Soviet art books imported into Việt-Nam in the 1980s:

The Tretyakov Gallery, Aurora Art Publishers, Leningrad, 1979.

Western European Drawing, Aurora Art Publishers, Leningrad, 1981.

The Museum, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1981.

Valentin Serov, Aurora Art Publishers, Leningrad, 1982.

The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae, Aurora Publishers, Leningrad, 1982.

The Itinerants, Aurora Art Pub, Leningrad, 1982.

Henri Matisse, Aurora Art Pub, Leningrad, 1984.

Auguste Renoir, Aurora Art Pub, Leningrad, 1984.

Jacob van Ruisdael, Aurora Art Pub, Leningrad, 1984.

Ilya Repin, Editions d'art Aurora, Leningrad, 1985.

Valentin Serov, Editions d'art Aurora, Leningrad, 1985.

Paul Cezanne, Editions d'art Aurora, Leningrad, 1985.

Italian Cassoni, Aurora Art Pub, Leningrad, 1983.

Appendix D: Images on the front cover of the first six issues of Mỹ Thuật magazine in 2004:

January, 2004: Lê Phổ (b.1907), *Composition*, oil, 1970

February, 2004: Phạm Gia Giang (b.1912), *Happiness*, bas-relief, 1940

March, 2004: Văn Bình (b.1917), *Bamboos and Bananas*, lacquer, no date

April, 2004: Mai Văn Hiến (b.1923) *Meeting*, gouache, 1954

May, 2004: Nguyễn Đỗ Cung (b.1912) *Uncle's Portrait*, oil, 1954

June, 2004: Bùi Trang Chước, *Mining Industry in Thái Nguyên*, oil, 1962.

Appendix E: Curriculum for the Bachelor in Visual Arts, five year course, applied for Universities of Fine Arts of Hà Nội, Huế and Hồ Chí Minh City.

280 units, no selectives.

Number.	Subjects	Units	Contact Hours
A.	GENERAL STUDIES (hardware)		
A/I	Social Sciences		
1.	Marxist Leninist Philosophy	5	75
2.	Marxist-Leninist Political Economics	5	75
3.	Scientific Socialism	5	75
4.	History of Vietnamese Communist Party	5	75
5.	Logistics	3	45

6.	General Vietnamese law	3	45
7.	History of Western Philosophy	2	30
8.	History of Eastern Philosophy	2	30
9.	Pedagogies	3	45
10.	History of the World's Civilizations	3	45
11.	Foundation of Vietnamese Culture	3	45
12.	Aesthetics	5	75
13.	History of Arts in general	4	60
14.	Vietnamese Literature and Practicing Vietnam	4	60
15.	Psychology	3	45
A/II	Natural Sciences		
16.	Computing	6	90
17.	Environment and Human	3	45
A/III	Foreign Language	20	300
18.	Physical Training	4	60
19.	Military Training	4	60
B	SPECIALISATION (Software)		
B/I	Core Subjects		
20.	Policies of Culture and Arts and Literary The	4	60
21.	Perspectives	5	75
22.	Technical Drawing	4	60
23.	Anatomy	5	75

24.	History of Vietnamese Art	5	75
25.	History of the World's Art	5	75
26.	Theories of composition	4	60
27.	Photography	4	60
28.	Psychology in Arts	3	45
29.	Artistic Media	4	60
30.	Methods of Teaching Art	4	60
31.	Computing for Arts	3	45
B/II	SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE	140	
	DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING	120	
32.	Drawing Study	50	750
33.	Basic composition Decoration	15	225
34.	Sculpture	3	45
35.	Specialized Composition	29	435
36.	Field trip	23	345
	DEPARTMENT OF SCULPTURE	120	
37.	Drawing Study	11	165
38.	Statues	50	750
39.	Relief	18	270
40.	Creative Composition in Materials	18	270
41.	Field trip	23	
	EXAM & PORTFOLIO	20	
42.	Thesis	5	75
43.	Major	15	225