

Davidson College in Davidson, NC

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sky as a place of war and terror. The title refers to a concept dating from the Middle Ages that espouses a linear succession of dominant civilizations whose power and political legitimacy can be traced back to classical antiquity.

Mounted in ornate vintage frames, the paintings feature idyllic landscapes reminiscent of works by Hudson River School painters who found inspiration in the expansive, untamed American landscape of the mid-19th century. Artists like Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt portrayed nature as both awe-inspiring and superable. The title of the series inextricably links the Hudson River School painters to the concept of Manifest Destiny, but Truong's subject matter - the sites of US military bombings - pushes beyond the confines of American borders and speaks to wider US imperialist strategies. Brass title plates denote specific countries and years of the bombings.

Truong's landscapes are revealed within painted gestures taken directly from Roy Lichtenstein's *Brushstrokes* series, which acknowledges another influential art movement, American Abstract Expressionism. That movement, which came to prominence nearly one hundred years after the Hudson River School, was endorsed by the Central Intelligence Agency during the Cold War in direct opposition to Soviet-sponsored Socialist Realism, thereby promoting American modern art as evidence of US cultural superiority. The deliberate small scale of these paintings represents a questioning both the Western art historical canon to US military dominance.

Truong aims to create a type of Asian Futurism through narratives that simultaneously refer to, reject, and reframe oppressive epistemologies. In her earlier paintings, Truong focused more on landscape, gesture, and materiality, while more recent works incorporate representations of the body.

Both of Truong's parents spent their youth in Vietnam, under the rule of French Indochina. The landscape in this painting is Đà Lạt, Truong's mother's birthplace. Truong's process - fracturing, combining, and layering the landscape with a mix of canonical Western and Asian painting techniques, antique Japanese fabrics, painted silk, and, in this particular work, painting of French Monarchs - ties in with her concept, especially the complexity and confusion of identity and heritage, further complicated by war and colonization.[1] Juxtaposing Western and Asian painting techniques, materials, and philosophies also questions the hierarchy of the former over the latter within the art historical canon.

Truong's incorporation of silk and historical textile designs highlights the worldwide textile trade, a centuries-old, entangled narrative of colonization, migration, and power. But her interest in utilizing textiles, particularly Vietnamese silks such as the kind treasured, worn, and collected by her mother, aunts, and cousins, is also a powerful personal rejection of Orientalist ideologies associated with these materials, particularly those of a sexualized or fetishized nature. Truong notes, "We need to consider that skin, cloth, and ornament can only become interrelated metaphors for personhood when actual personhood is ignored and invisible."

This work, from Truong's newest series of the same name, features landscape imagery of the Philippines. Truong's focus on the island references the various strategies and acts - moral, ideological, military, and legal - employed by the United States to justify expansion and imperialism. The Philippines became a US territory after the Spanish-American War in 1898. Truong sourced imagery of the locale during World War II, during Japanese occupation and just a few years before independence, to speak to the widespread influence of American policies as related to colonialism, immigration, and citizenship.[2]



Liên Truong and Hồng-An Truong
"The Sky is Not Sacred", 2019, Oil on Arches paper, triptych, 72 x 153 inches, Courtesy of the Artists

While landscape is still a key element of her new works, Truong has shifted her focus to include more figurative elements and, in some cases, depictions of specific people. For example, in *From the Earth Rise Radiant Beings*, Truong includes the likeness of Teresa Magbanua y Ferraris, a resistance fighter who led troops into battle against the country's successive colonizers: Spain, the United States, and Japan. Other figures are sourced from Orientalist paintings in which women in particular were portrayed as submissive and sexualized. Painted as silhouettes in a pale yellow hue, Truong's figures, "born from the violent histories descended from Orientalist ideologies, repudiate their origins...transcending geopolitical and generational boundaries to create narratives of resistance and autonomy."

All of Truong's works - well-researched, complex narratives that connect a range of influences from historical and military references, textile designs, art history, Asian and Western painting practices, and personal narrative and experiences, speak to perceived representations of culture and the complications of identity, particularly in relationship to colonialism, imperialism, and war. For works that, at heart, are really about transnational and generational trauma and violence, they are remarkably optimistic. Truong helps us imagine new worlds where from our violent past, strength, resistance, autonomy, and love spring forth and help propel us forward.

Truong was born in Vietnam and emigrated to California when she was just eighteen months old. She earned a BFA from Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA, in 1999, and an MFA from Mills College, Oakland, CA, in 2001. Her work has been included in exhibitions at the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; the National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Moscow, Russia; Nha San Collective, Hanoi, Vietnam; and Art Hong Kong; among others. She is the recipient of several awards and honors, including the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, Whitton Fellowship from the Institute from the Arts and Humanities, and the NC Arts Council Fellowship.

Residencies include the Oakland Museum of California and the Marble House Project, Vermont. Truong's work is in several public collections, including the Linda Lee Alter Collection of Art by Women at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia; DC Collection, Disaphol Chansiri, Chiang Mai, Thailand; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh; Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC; Cameron Art Museum, Wilmington, NC; and the Post Vidai Collection and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Vietnam.

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Visitors must adhere to current college's COVID-19 protocols including wearing a mask if unvaccinated and maintaining physical distance from other guests.

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[1] Truong has incorporated fractured paintings of Napoleon III, who made the decision for France to invade Vietnam in 1857, which resulted in more than six decades of French rule over Vietnam.

[2] In developing the Nuremberg Laws, Nazi Germany looked to American tactics such as Jim Crow and the Immigration Act of 1924, which imposed national quotas and barred most Asian people from entering the U.S. Indigenous groups and

Filipinos, among others, were designated as non-citizens, even though they were from the U.S. or its territories. Passed in 1935 by the Nazi Party, the Nuremberg Laws stripped citizenship from Germans with three or more Jewish grandparents and reclassified them as "subjects" of the state, among other things.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (www.davidsoncollegeartgalleries.org).

Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture in Charlotte, NC, Features Works by E. Mackey

The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture at the Levine Center for the Arts in Uptown Charlotte, NC, is presenting *Choose Your Weapon: Views from the Front Lines of the War for Black Lives*, featuring works by E. Mackey, on view through Oct. 17, 2021.

After viewing the video of Ahmaud Arbery's murder, photojournalist E. Mackey felt broken. He understood that he didn't have the political or financial means to enable immediate change, but he knew that helplessness was not an option. He possessed powerful tools - his talent, his social platform, and an unrelenting resolve to bring his vision to fruition - and, with camera in hand, he set out on a near four-month journey across 11 cities to document the movement for Black lives during the summer of 2020.

Choose Your Weapon: Views from the Front Lines of the War for Black Lives is the visual representation of that journey.

In this exhibition, Mackey's poignant imagery illustrates a multi-faceted movement. His carefully curated photographic and video content captures protestors from the front lines and provides viewers a first-hand account of the movement from the perspectives of a spectrum of individuals who were present. Although the exhibition primarily chronicles the historic protests of summer 2020, images of key



"Declaration", 2020. © E. Mackey

individuals taken in 2021 were included for additional context.

It is Mackey's desire for *Choose Your Weapon: Views from the Front Lines of the War for Black Lives* to serve as a window into the depth and complexities of the movement for Black lives, all the while inspiring individuals to identify the tools they have at their disposal to use as weapons in the fight for equity, for all.

E. Mackey is a photographer and author from Miami, FL. He found acclaim as a musician, fashion designer and entrepreneur before earning his Bachelor's degree in Clothing Textiles and Merchandising from Florida State University in 2010. It was in 2011, when he first picked up a camera, that his career as a photographer began. He explored the streets of South Beach in Miami, taking photographs of

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