



Journal of Southeast Asian American
Education and Advancement

Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement

Volume 8 | Issue 1

Article 14

2013

Selected Creative Works

Trinh Thuy Mai
trinhmaistudios@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jsaaea>

Recommended Citation

Mai, Trinh Thuy (2013) "Selected Creative Works," *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement*. Vol. 8 : Iss. 1 , Article 14.

DOI: 10.7771/2153-8999.1069

Available at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jsaaea/vol8/iss1/14>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries.
Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).



Selected Creative Works

by
Trinh Thuy Mai

Hope Never Dies

No one knows how much I owe

Reaping what I've sown from lifetimes ago

As I note this ode, my soul implodes

Because I know we're much too old,

Too wise to fold and hide from what Life holds at our side.

Let's ride.

Funny money

Running hungry

Drums of honey

Funds that numb me

There's been enough for us

Then tough for us

Rough. Unjust. Unbearable.

Never preparable. Where are the parables?



Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and the **Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement**, it is distributed for non-commercial purposes only, and no alteration or transformation is made in the work. More details of this Creative Commons license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. All other uses must be approved by the author(s) or JSAAEA.

But these times do find their rhymes relining my spine

Inspire me to define what is mine.

My Life. My Love. My Strife and all the beauty that's ever came of.

It's all the same Love.

We girls and boys share the same joys

Bare and tame noise

Dare to claim voices which we call our very own

Tones barely grown

So much there to know.

We are human.

New men and women

Driven then dropped

Living then lost

But still striving to thrive and keep hope alive because hope never dies like in '75

When the stillness of night instilled in us fright

Veiled from us light,

Could have killed us. We fight.

For our lives, for their lives

Family.

Em and Chi.

Five and five was ten, but then again, one never made it in.

Elbow to elbow

Chin to chin

Set on the vision to be free once again.

Sea to sea

Gust of wind

And yet they never gave in.

And as I stride beside my dear Bà Ngoạì,

Thirty five years have gone by

And that time resides in her vibrant eyes,

Still alive with that fire for all she had desired and more.

To arrive with a new Life

A mother, a wife

With stars and stripes adorn, her babies' babies being born

On western shore to live like those before.

Movements in circles

Trueness in the purples and pinks with every setting sun

Summons one to become aware that the cycle of this life,

And the next, and the next is never done.

Because we're all spun from one thread woven,

From the beginning of time

Even ever before it's begun.

Works From the “Family Tree” series

(Top; from left to right)

1975, 2011, mixed media on panel, 5 3/8 x 4”

Bà Ngoại (Grandmother), 2011, mixed media on panel, 5 3/8 x 4”

Ba Có Phũ (Grandmother’s Grandmother), 2011, mixed media on panel, 5 3/8 x 4”

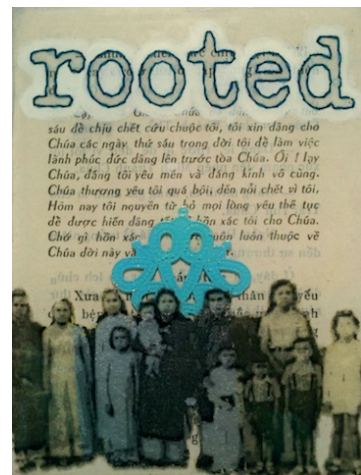
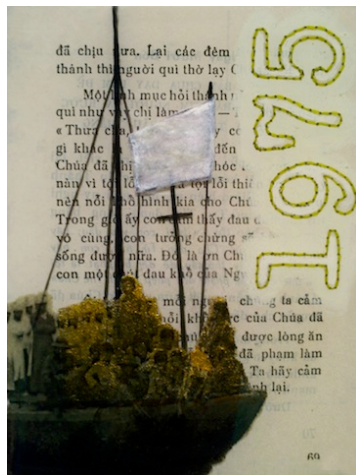
(Bottom; from left to right)

Mother’s Parents, and Their Ten Children, 2011, mixed media on panel, 5 3/8 x 4”

The Predecessors, 2011, mixed media on panel, 5 3/8 x 4”

Rooted, 2011, mixed media on panel, 5 3/8 x 4”

Inspired by my Vietnamese roots, this growing series aims to document my family history. Upon the pages of my late great aunt’s prayer book, I’ve incorporated family photos and imagery drawn from their personal memories.



I Am My Grandmother's Granddaughter

2011, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30"

Collection of Paul Saunders, San Francisco, CA

As we stood before a portrait of my grandmother, I shared an intimate moment with a kind-hearted gentleman who cupped my face in his hands and said to me:

“Sweetheart, *you are* your grandmother's granddaughter.”

These words found their rhythm into this portrait.



On Our Way

2007, Oil, latex, and joss paper on canvas, 48 x 60"

Collection of Christopher and Susan Ausschnitt, Naples, FL

On their journey to America, my husband and his family traveled through the jungles of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand.

They experienced the wages of war. They have survived. They move forward. With each trial, we recognize our resilience and our strength to move on.



Remember

2004, Oil on canvas, 48 x 36”

Collection of Paul Nakada and Christine Hoang, San Francisco, CA

When the Viet Cong invaded North Vietnam, my family began moving their family south, where they and their children could be free from communist rule.

This painting is dedicated to those who have sacrificed in order to allow their loved ones a greater opportunity.



Sũa Xua (Milk of Old)

2012, Mixed media on canvas, 48 x 36”

Milk is first form of nourishment that is offered to a newborn child, representing fertility and God’s blessings.

My great-grandmother, stoic and strong, prepares for the migration to the “land of milk and honey”. She holds my dear mother whose eyes fill with wonder toward a bright future.



Thirty Days

2006, Oil on canvas, 48 x 48” (diptych)

In 1975, my family found refuge on a Vietnamese naval ship while the Viet Cong invaded South Vietnam. They spent weeks at sea before they were rescued. To board the ship, they crawled across a ten-foot rope ladder, suspended above the surface of the Pacific Ocean.

**Má Cured in Vietnam**

2010, Mixed media on cardboard, 20 x 28”

Through this portrait of my mother at age seventeen, I honor my mother and her various personalities—the nurturer, the friend, the provider, the free Spirit and the survivor.



Sáng, Sống, Sang Sông, Sang (To Lighten, To Live, To Cross a River, To Arrive)

2012, Charcoal, joss paper and hand stitching on paper, 24 x 30”

This piece observes the faith by which my mother lives her life, and the persistence by which she presses forward in this life.

The Vietnamese hand-stitched text reads, “sáng, sống, sang sông, sang”, translating to “to Lighten, to Live, to Cross a River, to Arrive”.



About the Author



Trinh Mai was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1978, three years after her family fled Vietnam during the fall of Saigon. In 1979, her family relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area, where she was raised. Springing from an artistically talented family, her young creative mind was consistently exposed to the visual, literary and auditory arts, which nourished her early passion for art. In 2004, Trinh graduated from San Jose State University with a BFA in Pictorial Art and since then has continued to exhibit nationally with representation reaching from San Francisco, CA to Naples, FL and all over Orange County. She also attended the School of Art and Architecture at the University of California Los Angeles, where she further explored her passion in painting. It has also been her privilege

to support the underrepresented peoples of Southeast Asia, donating works to the Friends of Hue Foundation, Viet Hope, and the CoVN (Creating Opportunities in Vietnam) Foundation. In early 2011, Trinh began partnering with Friends Without a Border by donating her artwork to support the Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Riep, Cambodia. In 2013, she was chosen to create a public work of art to benefit the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation. Her long-lasting involvement with charitable organizations has been a stepping stone to the direct involvement she hopes to realize in the years to come. Trinh has exhibited in San Francisco, Palo Alto, Santa Clara, San Jose, Seattle, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Naples (FL), New York, Washington D.C. and all over Orange County, showing in public and private collections internationally. She is currently a fine arts instructor for the Bowers Museum of Orange County.



Volume 8 (2013)

Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement

www.JSAAEA.org

A peer-reviewed
scholarly journal
published by the
National Association
& Advancement of
Cambodian, Laotian,
and Vietnamese
Americans (NAFEA)

Editor

Dr. Wayne E. Wright

University of Texas, San Antonio

Associate Editors

Dr. Chhany Sak-Humphry

University of Hawaii at Manoa

Dr. Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy

University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Book Review Editor

Dr. Vichet Chhuon

University of Minnesota

Creative Works Editor

Bryan Thao Worra

Lao Assistance Center

Special Advisor

Gregory Green

Curator, Echols Collection on Southeast Asia, Cornell University Library

Journal Manager

Sovicheth Boun

University of Texas, San Antonio

Comments and questions for the editorial staff may be directed to jsaaea@lists.sis.utsa.edu

Editorial Review Board

Dr. Steve Arounsack

California State University, Stanislaus

Dr. Phala Chea

Lowell Public Schools

Dr. Loan Dao

University of Massachusetts, Boston

Dr. Changming Duan

University of Missouri, Kansas City

Dr. Jeremy Hein

University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

Dr. Samlong Inthaly

Minneapolis Public Schools

Dr. Kevin K. Kumashiro

University of Illinois, Chicago

Dr. Carl L. Bankston III

Tulane University

Dr. George Chigas

University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Dr. Hien Duc Do

San Jose State University

Dr. Sophal Ear

U.S. Naval Postgraduate School

Dr. Nancy H. Hornberger

University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Peter Nien-Chu Kiang

University of Massachusetts, Boston

Dr. Ha Lam

Arizona State University

- Dr. Jonathan H. X. Lee**
San Francisco State University
- Dr. Sue Needham**
California State University, Dominguez Hills
- Dr. Max Niedzwiecki**
Daylight Consulting Group
- Dr. Clara Park**
California State University, Northridge
- Dr. Mark Pfeifer**
SUNY Institute of Technology
- Dr. Loan T. Phan**
University of New Hampshire
- Dr. Karen Quintiliani**
California State University, Long Beach
- Dr. Angela Reyes**
Hunter College, The City University of New York
- Dr. Fay Shin**
California State University, Long Beach
- Dr. Cathy J. Schlund-Vials**
University of Connecticut, Storrs
- Dr. Yer J. Thao**
Portland State University
- Dr. Myluong Tran**
San Diego State University
- Dr. Khatharya Um**
University of California, Berkeley
- Dr. Terrence G. Wiley**
Center for Applied Linguistics
- Dr. Stacey Lee**
University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Dr. Bic Ngo**
University of Minnesota
- Dr. Leakhena Nou**
California State University, Long Beach
- Dr. Isabelle Thuy Pelaud**
San Francisco State University
- Dr. Giang Pham**
University of Minnesota
- Dr. Bounlieng Phommasouvanh**
Minnesota Department of Education
- Dr. Kalyani Rai**
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
- Dr. Sovecha Ros**
Royal University of Phnom Penh
- Dr. Nancy J. Smith-Hefner**
Boston University
- Dr. Christine Su**
Ohio University
- Dr. Loan Tran**
University of California, Riverside
- Dr. Tinou Tran**
Alief Independent School District
- Dr. Linda Trinh Vo**
University of California, Irvine
- Dr. Zha Blong Xiong**
University of Minnesota
- Dr. Kou Yang**
California State University, Stanislaus

Doctoral Student Editorial Review Board

- Virak Chan**
University of Texas, San Antonio
- Annie BichLoan Duong**
San Joaquin County Office of Education
- Peter Tan Keo**
Columbia University
- Monirith Ly**
Texas State University-San Marcos
- Hoa Nha Nguyen**
Boston College
- Vanna Som**
Harvard University
- Krissyvan Truong**
Claremont Graduate University
- Yang Sao Xiong**
University of California, Los Angeles
- Keo Chea-Young**
University of Pennsylvania
- Ketmani Kouanchao**
California State University, Fullerton
- Ravy Lao**
University of California, Santa Barbara
- Thien-Huong Ninh**
University of Southern California
- Malaphone Phommasa**
University of California, Santa Barbara
- Alisia Tran**
University of Minnesota
- Silvy Un**
University of Minnesota
- Yeng Yang**
University of Texas, San Antonio