

ATTENTION ART EDITORS

For Immediate Release

G/F, 10 Chancery Lane
SoHo, Central, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2810-0065

Email: info@10chancerylanegallery.com

FORTRESSTEMPLE: RECENT ART BY BUI CONG KHANH



Bui Cong Khanh, *Prayer on the Wind*, 2015, Participative installation: Monk's robes & camouflage textile, handwritten notes, (H)260 x 218 x 223 cm

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 17, 6:30-8:30pm

Curator's Talk and Artist Performance: Saturday, September 19, 2.30 pm

Exhibition: September 17 - October 10, 2015

(30 JULY, 2015) HONG KONG-

10 Chancery Lane Gallery is pleased to present *FortressTemple*, an exhibition of recent work by Vietnamese artist Bui Cong Khanh, curated by Iola Lenzi, from September 17 - October 10.

Saigon-based multi-media artist Bui Cong Khanh (b.1972) examines Vietnamese society and culture from both insider and outsider perspectives. His eye trained on his country's social, political and cultural tensions, he scrutinizes these especially alert to the impact of history and power in shaping Vietnamese contemporary life. Images from street and traditional culture, emblems and texts of the state, and symbols of religion,

are the building blocks of Khanh's visual repertoire. Medium is selected according to its ability to impart additional meaning and elicit sensual response: blue and white porcelain vessels, textile, performance, video, participative installation, sound, drawing, and painting are combined to articulate his ideas.

While past works have among other things explored consumer habits, Communist party propaganda, rural society's abrupt transformation, corruption, and abuse of power, starting in 2014, Khanh has turned his interest toward evolving nationalist sentiment as Vietnam rethinks its place in the world in the twenty-first century. In new and recent work assembled for 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hong Kong, Bui Cong Khanh takes Vietnam's ancient and modern colonial histories as starting points for series where the artist's personal heritage as a mixed Chinese-Vietnamese is interwoven with current Vietnamese geo-political anxiety focused on China's recent manifestation of imperialistic ambition. Choosing classical blue and white underglaze Chinese porcelain as medium for its clear reference to China and Vietnam's shared cultural history, Khanh presents a three-part ceramics and video installation *Fortress Temple 2015*. A second work, the singing and writing performance *Hymne National*, builds compelling tension through its contrasting of sensual and poetic form, and its evocation of Vietnam's still ambiguous relationship with its French colonial history sixty years after France's defeat by the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu. A third installation, activated by the audience's participation, is *Prayer on the Wind*. A cloth temple-like structure made from sewn cut-out squares of Burmese monks' saffron robes inter-dispersed with military camouflage, the piece boasts a number of pockets on its outer walls into which members of the public are asked to insert notes inscribed with their prayers, ideas and wishes. Once these scraps of paper materializing prayers have been stuffed into the piece's outer pockets, viewers are invited to lie inside the cloth temple to experience radiant shafts of coloured light produced as sunshine filters through the installation's textile fibers. Co-opting the public sensorially through experiential play and direct text-based interaction, *Prayer on the Wind* triggers thought about the relationship between different types of state institutions and the role of religion, faith and the military in power structures. Originally conceptualised in Myanmar, *Prayer on the Wind's* conceptual basis translates meaningfully to all contexts where citizens question authority's legitimacy and its modes of operation.

Visually and materially seductive, technically accomplished, and through participative strategies, the three works assembled in *Fortress Temple* stimulate viewers to join the artist in a critical reading of contemporary life and politics. Bui Cong Khanh, one of the most sophisticated and socially cogent artists working in Vietnam today, in *Fortress Temple* shows how through virtuously combined materials, conceptual strategies, and compelling visual cues, art nurtured in one locale and context translates to other places and time-frames.

Fortress Temple is curated by Southeast Asian art specialist Iola Lenzi.

About the artist

Born in 1972 in Danang, Vietnam, Bui Cong Khanh lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Bui Cong Khanh's work explores historical and contemporary issues in Vietnam. As one of the first local artists to gain international recognition during the 1990s with his performances questioning restrictions of individual expression in communist Vietnam, Khanh has since embraced painting and sculpture to express his fascination with the

complex history of Vietnam. More recently, his works are reflective of the dichotomy of his fast changing nation. Deeply philosophical and reactive to the world around him, Khanh is one of Vietnam's most intriguing artists.

Bui Cong Khanh's work is in institutional collections including the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, and the Koc Foundation, Istanbul.

About the curator

Iola Lenzi is a Singapore-based researcher, critic and curator of Southeast Asian art.

About 10 Chancery Lane Gallery

Since 2001, 10 Chancery Lane Gallery has been a driving force in contemporary art in Hong Kong and is one of Asia's leading contemporary art galleries. Representing the Asia-Pacific, the gallery is particularly interested in emerging art movements and historically important artists from the region.

Representing important artists such as Huang Rui and Wang Keping (China), Atul Dodiya (India), Bui Cong Khanh and Dinh Q. Lê (Vietnam), and Manit Sriwanichpoom (Thailand), 10 Chancery Lane Gallery is committed to playing a role in documenting the development of Asian art. The gallery has worked with curators Feng Boyi, Beyond the Red Curtain - China, Erin Gleeson, Forever Until Now - Contemporary Art Cambodia, Iola Lenzi, Subjective Truth - Thai Contemporary Art, Zoe Butt and Dinh Q. Lê, Time Ligaments - Vietnam. Katie de Tilly is co-President and one of the founders of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association.

For press enquiries and to arrange interviews, please contact Bo Kim on bo@10chancerylanegallery.com or +852 2810 0065.

Bui Cong Khanh

Fortress Temple

10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Central, Hong Kong

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 17, 6:30-8:30pm

Curator's Talk and Artist Performance: Saturday, September 19, 2:30pm

Exhibition period: September 17 - October 10, 2015