

Exhibition Guide

Trương Công Tùng

June 10–September 10, 2023



Trương Công Tùng

Drawing upon mystical ritual and indigenous mythologies, the work of **Trương Công Tùng** (b. 1986, Đắk Lắk province, Vietnam) is characterized by a poetic sensitivity to history, landscape, and materiality. His dynamic installations often incorporate natural materials that bear the traces of time and the echoes of generations and are composed in such a way as to reimagine the land from a site of colonial empire to one of communion. Disrupting the boundary between the physical and spiritual worlds, Trương's practice reconfigures elements of each to reframe the relationship between the living and the inanimate.

The exhibition—Trương's first museum solo presentation—brings together a constellation of sculptural and video works produced over the last three years. At the gallery entrance is a curtain of wooden beads made from a combination of coffee, cashew, and forest trees, materials that have been exploited throughout the artist's homeland in the Central Highlands of Vietnam because of the relentless forces of war and industrialization. Created in homage to the dislocated, extracted, and disappeared, the network of suspended beads invites visitors to reflect on their own connections to these complex histories of people and place.

Also on view is an installation made from gourds, water, soil, and seeds. The gourds are joined by a web of clear plastic tubes through which flowing water and earth create an undercurrent of migration from one gourd to the next. Each is sealed with a glossy finish made using lacquer, a once-prized and heavily traded material that is derived from tree sap. In the lacquerware painting tradition, lacquer is added to an object's surface and then polished to reveal the hidden layers beneath. For the artist, this unearthing is a sacred act.

Reminiscent of the forest's depths with its darkness, shadows, and gentle hums of insects and other life, Trương Công Tùng's living exhibition requires ongoing cultivation and care, allowing it to become a metaphor for, and a journey of, co-existence and transformation.

Trương Công Tùng is organized by Amanda Sroka, Senior Curator, with Caroline Ellen Liou, Curatorial Assistant.

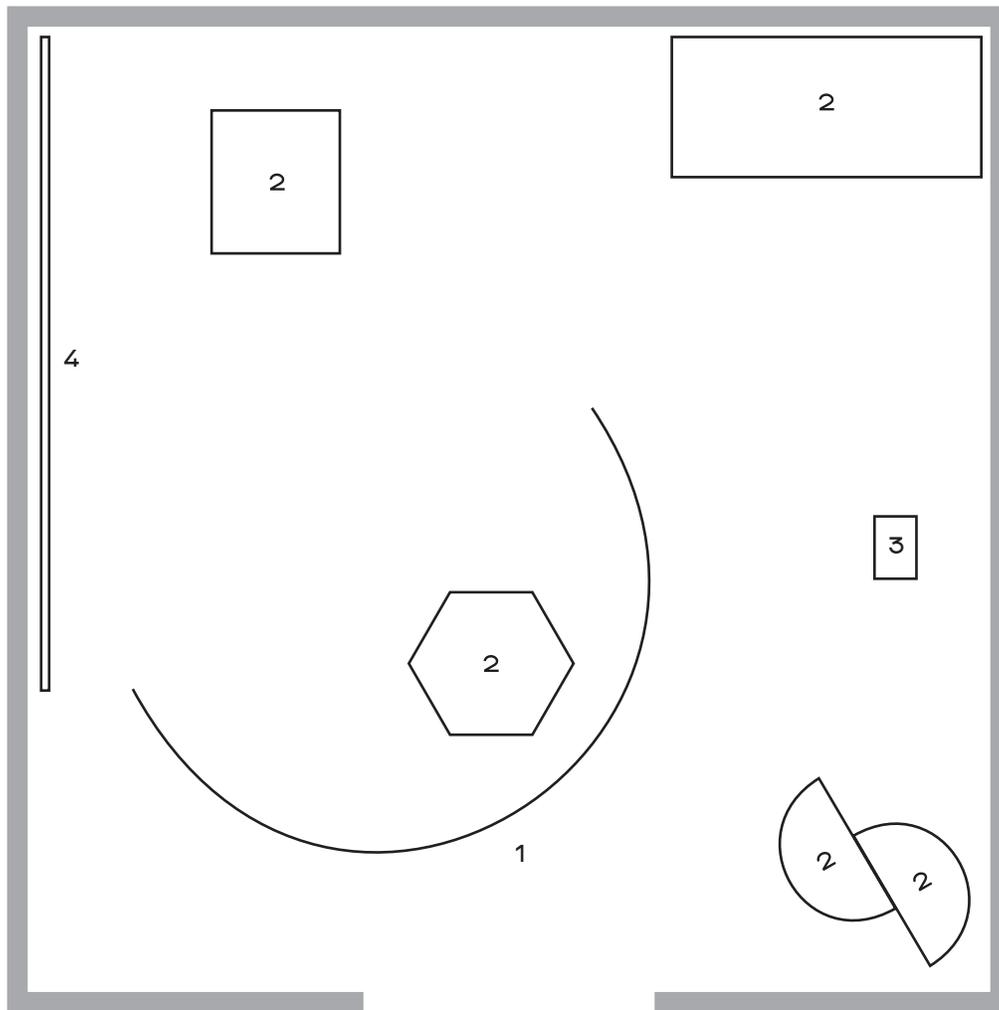
ICA LA is supported by the Curator's Council and Fieldwork Council.

About the Artist

Trương Công Tùng (b. 1986, Đắk Lắk province; lives in Ho Chi Minh City) grew up in Đắk Lắk province among various ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands, Vietnam. He graduated from Ho Chi Minh Fine Arts University in 2010, majoring in lacquer painting. With research interests in science, cosmology, philosophy, and the environment, he works with a range of media, including video, installation, painting, and found objects, which reflect personal contemplations on the cultural and geopolitical shifts of modernization, as embodied in the morphing mythology of land. He is also a member of Art Labor, a collective founded in 2012 working between visual art and social sciences to produce alternative nonformal knowledge via artistic and cultural activities in various public contexts and locales.

Trương has exhibited extensively in Vietnam and abroad, both as a solo artist and as part of Art Labor. Recent exhibitions include the 58th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (2022) and others at Manzi Art Space, Hanoi (2021); San Art, Ho Chi Minh City (2018); Galerie Quynh, Ho Chi Minh City (2018); Para Site, Hong Kong (2018); Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka (2018); Kadist, San Francisco (2016); Nhà Sàn Collective, Hanoi (2016); as well as the Taipei Biennial, Taiwan (2016). He is also the recipient of the inaugural Han Nefkens Foundation—Southeast Asian Video Art Production Grant 2023, in collaboration with Sàn Art, Vietnam; Sa Sa Art Projects, Cambodia; Jim Thompson Art Center, Thailand; Museion, Italy; Busan Museum of Art, South Korea, and Prameya Art Foundation, India.

Exhibition Floorplan



1 *Long Long Legacies*, 2021–ongoing
Beads from rubber, coffee wood, and other variations of trees, steel wire, time, and temperature
Commissioned by Carnegie Museum of Art for the 58th Carnegie International, courtesy the artist

2 *the state of absence – voices from outside*, 2020–ongoing
Gourds, water, soil, seeds, machinery, time, and temperature
Commissioned by Carnegie Museum of Art for the 58th Carnegie International, courtesy the artist

3 *Dance of the insects*, 2020
Single-channel video (color, sound)
15:19 min.
Courtesy the artist

4 *The lost landscape #1*, 2021
Single-channel video (color, sound)
5:00 min.
Courtesy the artist



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Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

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Organized by Amanda Sroka, Senior Curator, with Caroline Ellen Liou, Curatorial Assistant



Long Long Legacies, 2021–ongoing

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The state of absence – voices from outside, 2020–ongoing

gourds, water, soil, seeds, machinery, time, and temperature

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Dance of the insects, 2020

Single-channel video, color, sound

15:19 min.

Courtesy the artist



The lost landscape #1, 2021

Single-channel video, color, sound

5 min.

Courtesy the artist

Artist Reading List

I Ching / Book of Changes (1000–750 BC)

Dead Sea Scrolls (300 BCE–100 CE)

Vienna Dioscorides (500–600)

Pedanius Dioscorides

Diamond Sutra (868)

The Book of Miracles (1500–1600)

Micrographia (1665)

Robert Hooke

Songs of Innocence and of Experience (1789)

William Blake

Ficciones / Fictions (1944)

Jorge Luis Borges

Things Fall Apart (1958)

Chinua Achebe

Scientia Sacra / Sacred Science (1960–64)

Hamvas Béla

One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967)

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Please Call Me by My True Names (1976)

Thích Nhất Hạnh

The Sorrow of War (1991)

Bảo Ninh

Forêt, femme, folie: une traversée de l'imaginaire joraï (1993)

Jacques Dournes

The One-Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming (2009)

Masanobu Fukuoka

Lo-TEK: Design by Radical Indigenism (2019)

Julia Watson