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An Approach to the Artist Scene in Vietnam

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In Vietnam, contradictions including the search for modernity, the heritage of tradition, a desire for something new, continue in the debates on modern art, between artistic pluralism and state interference in art production.

After the war, also after the period of reflecting on the own history – colonial era, war, socialist realism, national spirit –, as with the emerge of the art market plus artist scene, good opportunities were phased out by a standardized art discourse, and replaced by an inert formalism and a trend that could be viewed as a counter-effect of trying to get rid of the alleged reverse “Orientalism”. The local narratives subsequently have to coordinate the horizons of their artistic constructs with the globalization, they increasingly return to the art of pre-colonial Vietnam, and embrace Western stylisations, in favour of the acceptance of cultural interference, but without much explicit reflections of the artists themselves. The emergence of an artistic personality seems to be relevant only on this track. And with the attempt to overcome the state-mandated discourse by postmodern arbitrariness, it has sometimes become self-referential.



Nguyen Tu Nghiem, *Saint Giong*, 1982