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## Thu Tran: 'Giăng tơ' To Tell Her Story

29/04/2019 by Viet Ha

It is inspired by the story of Vietnamese women in legend and literature, artist Thu Tran (Tran Thi Thu) has launched "Giăng Tơ", an impressive installation exhibition displaying at Hoi An, Da Nang.

'Tằm Tang queen' \* (the queen of silkworm) had created a legend, a famous "silk road on the sea" from the Faifo harbor of Hoi An going around the world. And it is the "Silk Road" that led the artist Thu Tran to learn the beauty of Vietnamese women from the ancient times. The exhibition "Giăng Tơ" tells viewers the old beauty through language of painting with 3 parts: the installations; the paintings and the fashion, more especially the fashion part is combined with designer Pham Hong - a contemporary artist with many valuable works about the status of Vietnamese women.

On the background of traditional natural fabrics such as raw silk, tussah, silk, the artist uses watercolors and acrylic to move the brush gently and strongly to create a sense of many virtual variables in space, when so close when so far, it is like connection of the sound of spinning silk or silk threads that bring people together. From the 17th century, when Faifo port was one of the busiest places in Asia, silk of 'Đàng Trong' (Central of Vietnam) followed the famous "silk road on the sea" traveling around the world.

That is also the reason for painter Thu Tran to display her unique exhibition in Hoi An, where planting mulberry, raising silkworm, reeling silk, weaving silk have become familiar for generations. We had a conversation with Thu Tran about her exhibition.

*- Can you share your inspiration from the Silk Road, from the silk threads to make this exhibition?*

Inspiration from the thread of heaven that nature has bestowed on people, has entered the art story of so many generations. Those values retain many generations in Vietnamese folk songs, image of spiders spin webs or silkworm spinning seems to be an invisible string, it creates interconnected cultural stories, creates a lot of motivation to promote science and technology, trade, exploration to help people have a new perspective on nature, geography, politics ...

Above all of that beautiful things, it shows the thought of every artist when they find for themselves a direction, an inspiration to turn their insights into art stories. "Giăng tơ" was formed very invisibly, from the years of research on silk, on color on fabrics. Story of the queen 'Tằm Tang' of 'Đàng Trong' region (Central region of Vietnam) urged me to learn about the history of "Silk Road on the Sea" - a rich history of our father's culture that made me carry out a project for myself, to praise those wonders in my own painting language!



*A work in the exhibition "Giăng Tô" by artist Thu Tran*

*Silk thread, silkworm, spider has entered in art, became a familiar image. How does Thu Tran exploit such folk material to make a difference?*

Material is a story for every artist to learn and incarnate into the material to say what they want, especially for a very fragile material, be connected by each fiber, each fiber through many working stages of human, of nature so it can have translucent silk threads.

In front of such folk materials, I thought a lot, the process of experimenting came in very quick, very virtual moments but it takes a lot of time to put those thoughts into reality. Until I am working on the exhibition, I still always ask myself what is folk, what is the tradition to make a difference of contemporary look?

It is a real question for every individual artist, I am no exception, it seems very easy but whether the journey go to it can be done or not is still out of the question.

Making a difference is not really my intent, I desire to use my own painting languages to carry out the process of telling story, I am quite disturbed that how can I connect the bridge between tradition and modernity? Is my painting language appropriate to it? I often discuss the process of working with painter Ly Truc Son about my painting language, combining painting trends to perform on every part of the work. I borrow painting language of the Western to tell Vietnamese stories, which is the reason to make a difference.

'You go, for the spider spin uhhh....it spins...huuu...huuu a web, spinning..huuuu a web' (the lyrics of a song)

One time, I sang that song while I was drawing, It was like the night of Vietnamese women in some places, they were spinning ' huuu...huuu a web'...the lyrics of the song shows that those women didn't just sing leisurely, they were spinning on the loom, grinding the rice, pounding the rice all night and they sang a song to open their hearts.

Artists rely on nature and people to make art stories. I am a lucky Vietnamese woman to well understand the hardship of women, I also spin on my story, be inspired by those eternal love.

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*After the story of the silk threads, what do you want to share with the audience?*

I want to say this story is a system, be formed like a road, not turning sideways, not dividing, and not interrupting. So after this silk story, I still tell my story and still learn non-stop, still cultivate my field of colors to find a new predestined relationship for endless love with "Painting".

*Thu Tran's exhibition reminds me a lot of beauty of memories, including the beauty that has faded. What do traditions and memories mean in your works?*

Tradition for me is a very important thing, I think that whatever appears on this earth has a reason, a history of formation to perfect and develop. Memory is contained in our brain, will show up when we have opportunity, it will remind us of so many memories and those memories will nourish us. To me, memories of sadness or happiness is miracles.

My memories always cover the life of art, from the thatched house, where the childhood in the great forest...observations, implicit things are bold in the forest, the memory gives us an overview through the working process, each working process, and the memory unfolds and explores different elements.

I remember, seniors in art always tell me that making art has to tell your own story, how to tell your story in the most honest way, not cliché, not deceiving anyone, that is the unique memory of each individual.

Memory is luggage for us to connect between the past and the present, memory gives us profound experiences, step by step, that is the value of memory!

*Thank you for the conversation.*

### ***Painter Ly Truc Son about Thu Tran***

*Thu Tran experienced her youth in the highlands - where people lived like thousands of years ago. Women weave silk on the colorful decorative images with certain rules but those are never the same. Myths, poetry and life intertwine together, the past is closely linked with the present.*

*Thu Tran receives this lasting legacy, nurturing and preserving it naturally. Drawing and dyeing on silk was a natural need as a highland girl continued to work that her mother and grandmother did. The point is that Thu Tran was trained well in art and became one of the outstanding painters. Painting helped her to create freely and there were many solutions for drawing and dyeing cloth. Drawing and dyeing fabric opened a wider path for her in painting.*

*Fabric and painting are two different fields, but they rely on each other to create the silk with variety of colors and shapes that harmonize in the rhythm of shaping. When it is used by fashion designers, painting comes to the life. Fashions associate with shaping is a new trend in Vietnam. That trend is promising a blossoming future, the spirit of painting on silk fabric create inspiration for Thu Tran's painting.*

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*Experience in drawing and dyeing silk fabric gives unique and personal ideas for her painting. Double-sided silk painting is a strange idea, but how to create it, which is even more worth of discussing. Richness and improvisation of colors and vignettes suddenly stopped, leaving only the horizontal structure of color streaks that made the painting look like silk sheets are weaving silently by itself with light on the background of time.*

*For an abstract painter, finding his own structure means reaching to success, and finding the deepest reason for that structure will be himself. Thu Tran with her painting go through conventional aesthetics, be coming to the individual.*

Explain the word

\*Tằm Tang queen:

The queen of silkworm - based on the historical story about Hieu Chieu queen who had built and developed mulberry cultivation, rearing silkworms and weaving silk in Central region of Vietnam

Source:

<http://vnca.cand.com.vn/doi-song-van-hoa/Hoa-si-Thu-Tran-Giang-to-de-ke-cau-chuyen-cua-minh-543040/?fbclid=IwAR1HNVJ8h9zL8-NSDB5ckmonv-YnKLTqs00W6Z1zuQPJvz3XMS1QthUYe0g>

Translated by Vietnam Art House.