



SALON SAIGON  
HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY ARTS

**Salon Saigon**, a new space dedicated to contemporary creativity, is opening its doors on the 2nd of December, 2016 with its first exhibition: **“Bittersweet Whispers”**

**Salon Saigon** will showcase the cultural heritage and contemporary art of Vietnam through exhibitions, performances, conferences, screenings, educational programs, and exclusive encounters with artists. In addition to our new exhibition space, our library documenting Vietnamese art and culture will be a resource available to the public.

**The curatorial program** will reflect a particular emphasis on contemporary drawing. As an art in its own right, drawing is today receiving a degree of attention that it has never known in the past. Many artists now choose drawing as their primary mode of creation, and in so doing they are expanding the very definition of drawing itself: it is no longer limited to pencil on paper but includes all artistic composition based on the line. The acceptance of drawing as a fine art, given the same respect as any other medium, is now taken for granted in many countries. However, contemporary drawing in Vietnam is still struggling to earn the recognition it deserves. As Trần Minh Đức, curator of the exhibition “Shaping a Line” (San Art, 2011) bemoaned: “the skill of drawing is [sadly] still considered inferior to the plastic arts.”

As the first art gallery in Vietnam to focus on contemporary drawing, Salon Saigon aims to foster appreciation for this unique art form through the public exhibition of artists who place the line at the center of their creative process. Accordingly, Salon Saigon is pleased to present **“Bittersweet Whispers”** featuring the artists Ngo Thi Thuy Duyen, Le Hoang Bich Phuong, and Mai-Loan Tu, each of whom use drawing in their own way to evoke ideas, reflections, memories and dreams.

Through the repetition of a simple flower motif, **Ngo Thi Thuy Duyen** creates entire fields of flowers that balance on the edge of abstraction, suspended in the sky like dandelion seeds on the wind. Reminiscent of Yayoi Kusama’s infinity nets and flower paintings, Duyen’s flower drawings hint at both the vast interconnectedness of all being, and the solitary, aching beauty of our individually lived experiences.

Best known for her delicate silk paintings of anthropomorphized botanical studies, **Le Hoang Bich Phuong** produces images that challenge the viewer with their tenderness and vulnerability. In addition to the botanical studies, Phuong also presents a series of portraits of a girl she once saw on the train in Malaysia, fleeting impressions snipped from the flow of time.

Working with both ink and paper cut-outs, **Mai-Loan Tu** draws the viewer in with a deceptively realistic line, only to shock us a moment later with the surreal juxtaposition of disparate elements. Combining familiar objects in uncanny ways, her images seem to draw from the collective unconscious that lives somewhere deep within all of us.