

Title of the Thesis

Un:Reality in Reality

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Diploma Thesis

Un:Reality in Reality

Abstract

Un:Reality in Reality is a video work exhibition that was created through a combination of various techniques and personal experimentation in three-dimensional environments. The visualizations of the works are displayed through animations and lighting, which are outcomes of the experimental interactions between three-dimensional geometries and two-dimensional grayscale texture maps, mediated through adjustable input variables.

The series consists of three videos and one installation.

The core of this project is my interest in the translation between the three-dimensional and two-dimensional worlds. Beyond the technical foundations, the visualization serves as my expression of resistance against the constraints imposed on me by my family and by society in general during my childhood.

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Un:Reality in Reality

Originating not from an artistic background and a relatively late start in art practice and study at the age of 28, what I have achieved today would once have seemed and absolutely unrealistic future to imagine. As a child, drawing came most naturally to me. My chalk marks were all over the house.

“We have no time for that; it is a complete waste of time, you would end up nowhere with these drawings.” my sister said to me when I was six years old.

During the post-war reconstruction in Vietnam during the 1990s, material wealth and financial gain were more valued than arts, or even one's spiritual life. These social prejudices influenced me during these early years, eventually led me to abandon drawing and my interest in arts.

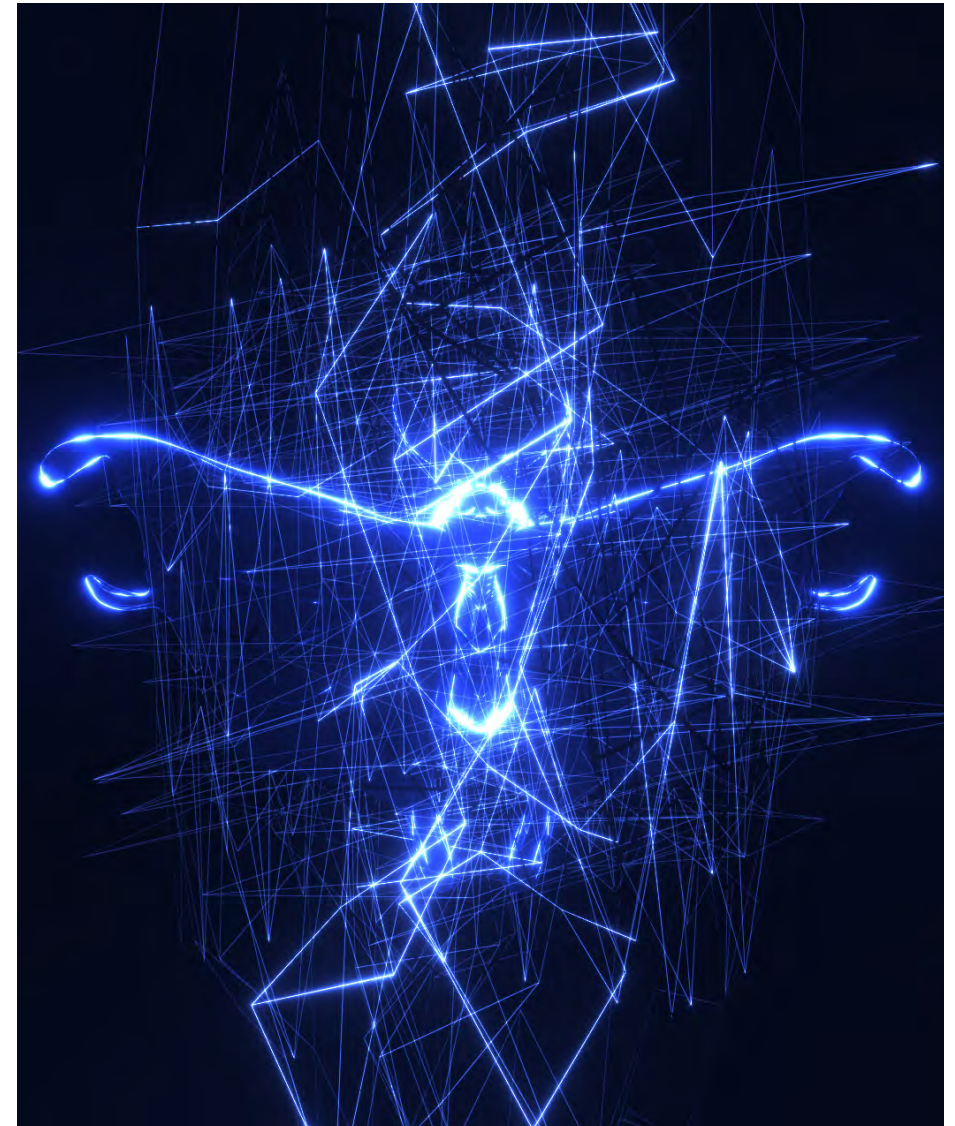
It was not until I saw a fashion illustration from a friend that my long-forgotten inner self finally awoken. Five years of nonstop work and earning followed, with weekends spent immersing myself in sketches and art practice. Through ups and downs, through continuing challenges and barriers of studying abroad, step by step, my artistic path has been taking shape.

The unimaginable – the unreal has become reality. Furthermore, from my perspective, the artworks represent my dreams, my honesty, my inner

voice. They originate from imagination materials and later are portrayed visually in the real world. This also emphasizes one of my artistic interests: the shifting between worlds. And this is why this project is titled “Un:reality in Reality”, marking the completion of my studies, while opening the next chapter of my artistic path.

The project contains four artworks in the form of video works, installations and space interventions:

- Flying
- Eclipse
- Beyond
- Bo toi



Flying

Year of creation: 2025

Medium: video, animation, loop

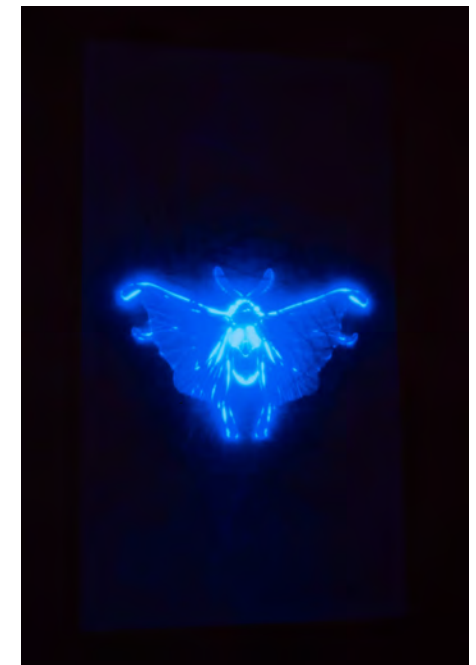
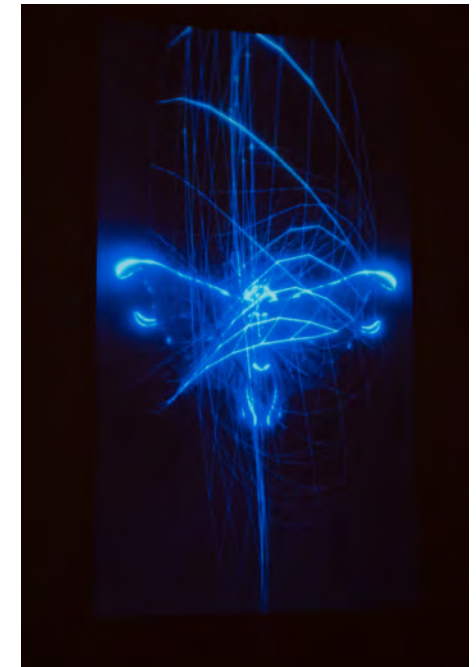
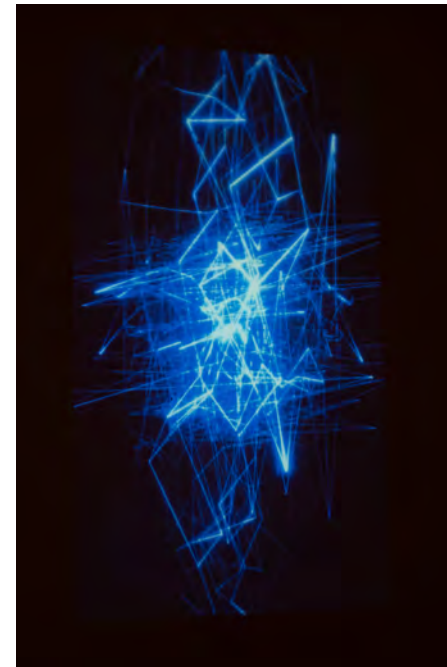
Link to video: www.youtube.com/shorts/yinrBX01KSs

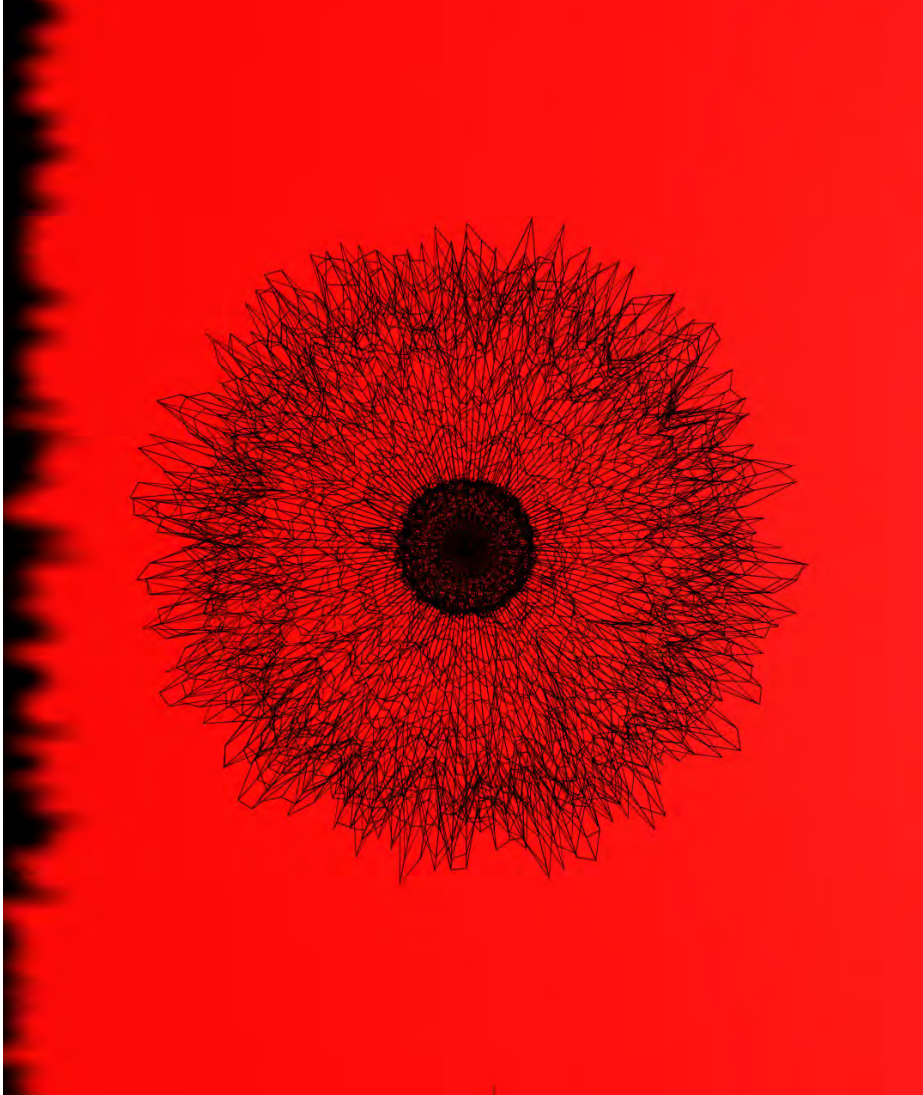
The animation video work is entirely created in a three-dimensional environment and visually presented in two dimensions. The main visuals consist of movement and deformation of geometric forms with the flying moth positioned in the centre, accompanied by changing emission strengths of the subjects.

All animations result from interactions and translations by means of variables between the created objects in three-dimensional space and the input grayscale two-dimensional textures. The grayscale levels in these textures determine the positions of vertices that form the geometries. Changing values amplify or reduce these grayscale levels, which in the process generate the animations. All settings of the processes mentioned above were carried out in node system of the program Blender.

The animation was rendered frame by frame as individual still images and later assembled and transformed into an animated video using video editing software.

The work carries the main concept of my project: the shifting of materials in different environments, the invisible and tangible.





Eclipse

Year of creation: 2024

Video duration: 2:34

Medium: video, animation

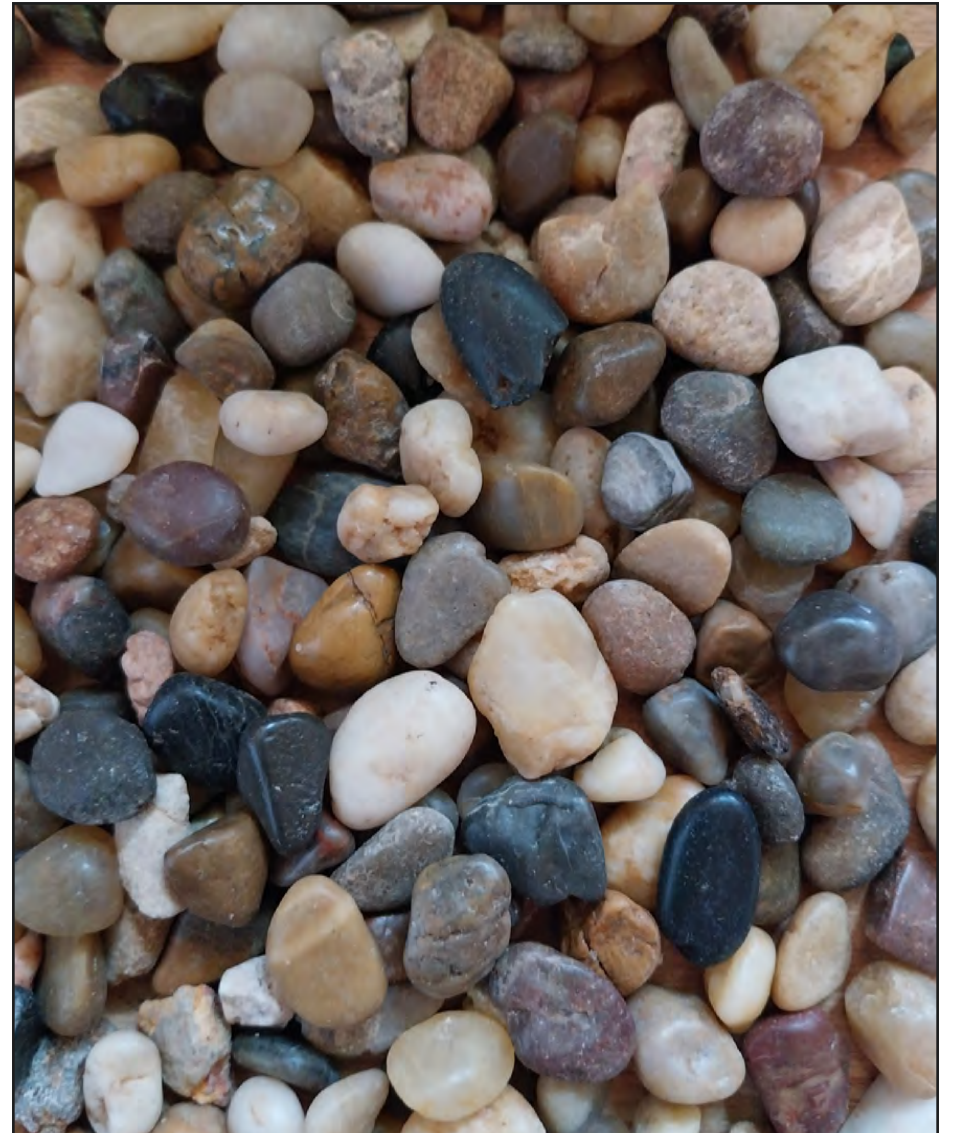
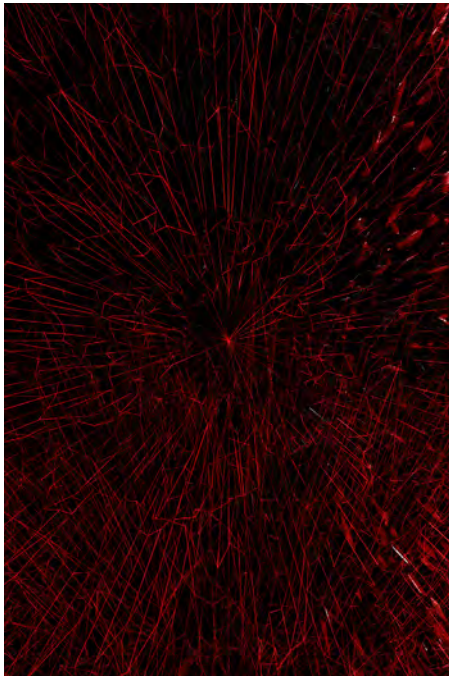
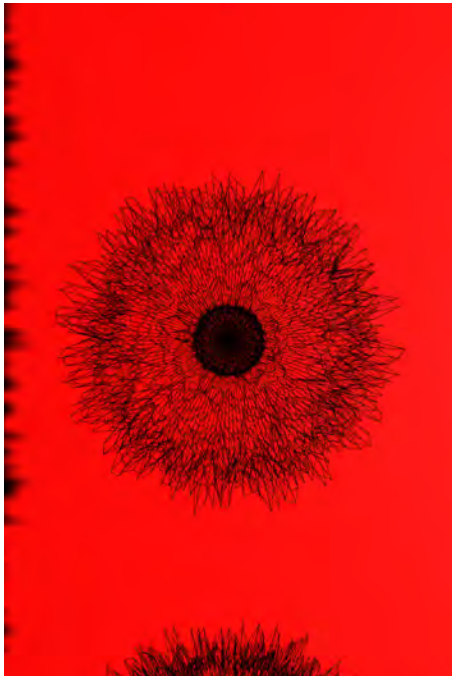
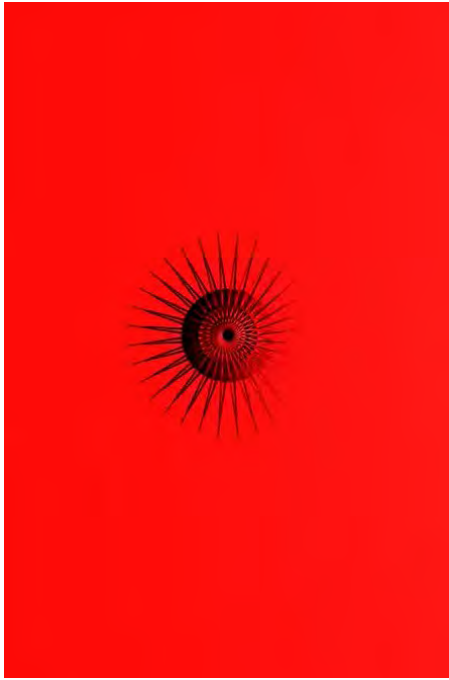
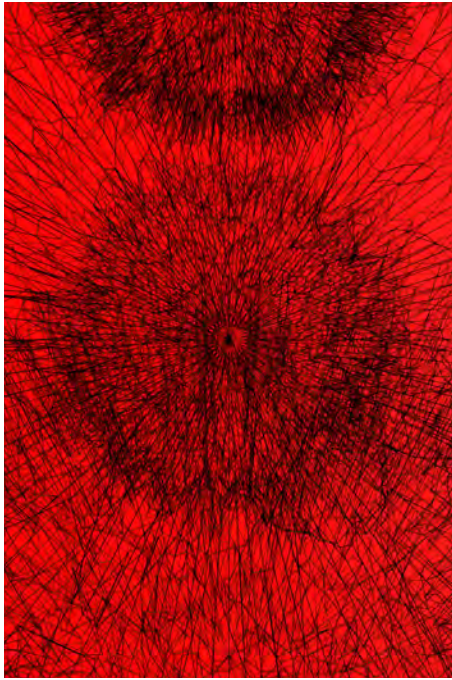
Link to video: youtu.be/a7R9RtKzpZU

This video work is the first work created within this project. The same techniques used in *Flying* were applied, however, in a greater variety of geometric shapes and in a red-and-black colour combination. The work was composed in a sequence of animated scenes, the visual intensity is synchronized with the melodic intensity of the French song *Vois sur ton chemin*.

Vois sur ton chemin is a popular song composed by Bruno Coulais for the film *Les Choristes* (2004). The version used in my video work is the techno edition by Bennett, which became a hit after its release in 2023 and has been widely played in clubs since then. *Vois sur ton chemin* can be translated into English as *See on your path*. The lyrics of the song are mainly about guiding lost boys through their dark times, to a different tomorrow and giving them hope. In this sense, the song resonates with my past and the journey to who I am today.

During the 1990s and even into the early 2000s in Vietnam, techno music and club culture were viewed in association with criminals, evils and moral decay. Artistic practices carrying liberated meanings were often suppressed, even within the family unit.

For all these reasons, *Eclipse* was created to resemble visuals commonly displayed in music clubs and *Vois sur ton chemin* was chosen to guide the animations. Through this work, I would like to express my rebellious voice against the societal prejudices I experienced during my childhood.



Beyond

Year of creation: 2025

Medium: video, animation and space intervention

Link to video: youtu.be/pXCoMzhx6bE

Beyond is the only artwork in this series that combines multiple art forms: animation, video and space intervention. The visual language was inspired by the Japanese Zen aesthetic, which emphasizes quietness and meditation. This contrasts with the first two works, which feature complexity and dynamism, while here simplicity and quietness are main elements.

The main scene is a floor of stones in a three-dimensional environment, created by scanning real stones. Actual stones are placed around a monitor displaying the animation, symbolizing the transition of materials between different worlds, in this case, the virtuality and the reality.

Conceptually it symbolizes the maturity of thoughts. As we grow older, we tend to seek simplicity and inner peace. Meanwhile, it represents renewal and forgiveness toward my inner self.



Bố tôi

Year of creation: 2025

Medium: text

"What do I still remember?

A crying boy, only a few year old, at an age when it's hard to understand things. I knew instinctively that it was wrong, because my older brother was hurt. He was nine years older than me, at an age everyone wanted to be with friends and stay out late. He was beaten with a belt, chained up at the house door. He cried, humiliated, and was told that it would be better to have a pet dog than to have him.

As a very young child, because my siblings called him dad, I called him dad. But I've never felt the connection, I wondered if he had ever hugged me. Yes, I remembered that time: he tried to hug me, with violence, because I tried to push him away and escaped.

One of my older sisters liked to dress like a boy, she hated dresses. She refused to wear the school uniform, which was a dress. She was hit, humiliated and bullied by her parents, her teachers and friends. At home or at school, it was the same. As a result, she dropped out of school in the tenth grade.

Several times, he asked how old I was and in what grade I was in. We all knew these questions seemed to be normal in this family.

One night, many years later, some days before my thirty-year-old sister left Vietnam for her study, it rained heavily that water leaked through our ceiling and soaked the floor. My sister was hit with his belt, leaving those eye-shaped wounds that lasted until she boarded. She remained silent until she left that house, she left for her own good.

Some years later, our family went bankrupt, we all knew why. My mom temporarily escaped him to the US. When she came back home, she was locked for days in my former sister's bedroom, for the guilt of having betrayed him, as he said. She finally got her way abroad again with our help. She left for her own good.

For years I worked and saved: I need to escape from this family, from him. Everything was prepared in secret. He still found out, but he was so sure that I would not be able to go abroad by myself. He was wrong. I left, without a word. He was so shocked after hearing about it from my brother.

Our house was sold, in order to pay the debts. He refused to leave and claimed that he had been cheated by his own family. One night, months later, while my brother slept, he was splashed over his body with boiling water. My father was later ordered by the court to keep his distance from my brother, which meant he had to leave, this time for our own good.

One day, my brother told us all that he was in his last days in the hospital, when he barely remembered anything except the best days, when the factory was still there. He left, before saying any words to his wife, his sons and his daughters.

The day it happened, when I was on a visit to Vienna with my best friend. I was left feeling empty, filled at the same time with hate and sadness. I looked at him, in a wooden coffin, through my phone screen, with a question hanging in the air: Would he ever apologize?"

Bo toi is a text work and installation created in its simplest form, in order to contrast with the other works in the series. The piece consists of a text which was written in an old diary book. The title is presented in Vietnamese, and translated in English: My father.

This work aims to bring back fragments of memory from my past, specifically, my life before I came to Austria. I rarely remember the days before I boarded the airplane to Europe. These memories usually come in dreams, which are mostly forgotten upon waking. In this sense, I perceived this part of my life as a form of previous life.



Art from my perspective

“Art can truly be judged by you, the individual, as far as you yourself are concerned, by only one measure. It is not a static but an energy measure. Do not ask what the art is or ought to be, for this is debatable and will inevitably lead to endless argument. Ask only what it does – not what it does to somebody else, for this again is only hearsay, but what it does to you. No matter how good a painting may be by any and all theoretical esthetic standards, if it does not do something special to you, Mr. John Doe, then it means about as much to you as a rumor of a love affair on Mars heard in a convention of Psychologists.”¹

Coming from a country where culture and tradition are heavily influenced by Confucian ideology, where individuality and free thought are suppressed, and everything is expected to be aligned with orders and rules, I've gradually learned and defined the meaning of freedom. Even my artistic practice was initially shaped by aesthetic standards of the community. Like many art learners in Vietnam, my artistic path was constructed like mathematical calculations from the very beginning.

Being chained by standards, I've learned step by step to leave my comfort

¹ Norwood MacGilvary in the article 'Art and John Doe', originally published in Pittsburgh Architectural Club's 'The Charette' with excerpt's reprinted in The Architectural Forum, May 1939

zone, to experiment, to understand that art can take a variety of forms and types: Art is freedom. Through my study, I came to realize the beauty of unstandardized expression.

In my perspective:

- Art is valuable because it holds the greatest meaning for its creator, a way to satisfy inner desires and a method of portraying the artist's self.
- Art is the artist's confidence and his individuality, and does not need to conform to general aesthetic standards. On the contrary, it is a means of distancing the artist from the society, from obligations and daily life. Art should be free, and you and I should be free as well.

