

PRESS RELEASE

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Limited interviews with the artist on September 7 and September 8 !

**Bellevue Arts Museum Presents
A Tapestry of Memories: The Art of Dinh Q. Lê
September 1 – December 30, 2007**



Untitled, 2004 (Series "From Vietnam to Hollywood")

Bellevue , WA- Bellevue Arts Museum presents the first major survey on the photographic and conceptual work of Vietnamese and American artist Dinh Q. Lê, who creates unique woven photographic works exploring personal and cultural identities in conflict. This hallmark exhibition of 19 woven photographic works, 2 white-on-white embroideries and 2 multi-channel video installations, drawn from both museum and private collections nationwide, spans twenty years of the artist's creativity.

Dinh Q Lê's tapestries mark the outcome of a two-decade-long introspective journey in which the artist, physically dislocated and culturally displaced from his homeland Vietnam, has sought to negotiate his cultural background within the prevailing values—philosophical, aesthetic, and cultural—of the West. His work reflects the complicated layers of differing cultures: his photographic art weaves multiple strands of identity and experience, history and memory, mythology and reality, conflict and resolution.

Lê uses the vocabulary of craft by weaving together strips cut from both black-and-white or color photographs and carefully burns the edges of the weavings, fusing the strips to create a border. The large tapestries are created using a traditional grass mat weaving technique learned in childhood from his aunt. Clearly handmade aspect of Lê's work is also the conceptual element of it, as the pieces combine disparate images culled from popular culture, particularly iconic American films and photo-journals representations of the Vietnam War, with anonymous photographs left behind by the fleeing Vietnamese and re-collected by the artist upon his return.

Born in Vietnam in 1968, in 1977 Dinh Q. Lê escaped his hometown, Ha Tien, following its invasion by the Cambodian Khmer Rouge regime located just across the border. In 1979, at age eleven, he and his family finally emigrated from Thailand to Los Angeles. While a student at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1989, he began to create the woven photographic work for which he is now known. After completing his university studies in Santa Barbara and New York, he chose to return to Vietnam, where he currently works and lives in Ho Chi Minh City.

Several works in exhibit, for example, weave black and white photojournalists' images shot during the Vietnam War – including the specter of South Vietnamese General Nguyen Ngoc Loan and Viet Cong suspect Bay Lop, whose infamous execution was captured in Eddie Adam's shocking photograph - with digitally enhanced stills from such films as *Apocalypse Now*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, and *The Deer Hunter*, with their fetish repertoire of a cowgirl-costumed Playboy Bunny and Captain Willard (Martin Sheen). The resulting artwork is haunting, puzzling, dually collective and personal, and blurs the lines between fact and fiction. By literally and metaphorically weaving together threads of the artist's conflicted cultural memory, Lê's work poetically addresses the constant negotiation between identities, and the struggle of finding one's own place faced by the refugee/ immigrant within the framework of a superimposing and collective identity.

“This is not simply a matter of borrowing of images, because through appropriation and re-contextualization Lê establishes new meanings out of these widely circulated images whose values are understood and accepted by everyone” States museum curator Stefano Catalani “Even at first glance, one sees the hybrid nature of the media: photography and fiber art, with the weaving bestowing materiality upon the photographic medium, as well as the hybrid nature of information, drawing on an imagery originating from both documentary and cinematographic shots revolving around the theme of the Vietnam War”.

Today, awarded with an Individual Photographer's Fellowship from the Aaron Siskind Foundation, and with his work included in the Venice Biennale, Dinh Q. Lê's work is featured in many museums and galleries including the Museum of Modern Art in New York City; the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY; Kyoto Museum of Art, Kyoto, Japan; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY; The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and more. His work is widely collected around the world by public institutions and private individuals.

The exhibition and a spectacular full color hardbound catalog have been made possible by the generosity of the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and Jill and Jay Bernstein, Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation, Dana R. Eggerts, Elizabeth Leach Gallery, P·P·O·W Gallery, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Rebecca and Alexander Stewart, and Sarah and Andrew Meigs.

Related Programs:

Saturday, September 8, 2007, 6:00-9:00 PM
Collectors Level Members Only Reception

Saturday, September 15
Vietnamese Culture Family Day

Visit the exhibition *A Tapestry of Memories: The Art of Dinh. Q. Lê.*

Join us for free cultural craft activities, music and dance performances and ethnic food samples in the Museum's Forum.

12-3 pm

Free to the public

Bellevue Arts Museum

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of the fine art of craft and design. An emphasis is placed on regional craft artists as part of the national and international conversation on fine craft and design. Bellevue Arts Museum is located at 510 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA 98004. The Museum's main information line is 425.519.0770 and website is www.bellevuearts.org

For More Information: Renate Raymond, Bellevue Arts Museum, 425.519.0754 or renater@bellevuearts.org

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