

Interstice: A Space Between Two Worlds

DUO EXHIBITION BY

HUỖNH CÔNG NHỚ – Đà Nẵng (VNM)
& **PECUT SUMANTRI** – Yogyakarta (ID)

Exhibition Text by **Linh Lê** (VNM)

EXHIBITION PERIOD

7 Dec 2025 – 24 Jan 2026

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GALLERY FOREWORD

My very first encounter with Le Thien Bao, the founder of Galerie Bao (Paris), happened in Hong Kong. There was no formal intention, no meeting on the calendar – we simply ended up talking about the art scenes in our respective countries, while drinking a lot of wine. A lot of wine. Though Grace Samboh, an infamous Indonesian curator, was the one who connected us, my meeting with Bao was entirely unplanned. Purely a moment of genuine connection.

Since then, I followed her journey from afar, watching her move to Paris and begin building her gallery there. The pandemic passed, and we bumped into each other again by chance at the Art SG after-party during Singapore Art Week. The conversation flowed just as easily as before, and soon enough we were showing each other the artists we had represented or exhibited. Nothing felt forced; everything unfolded naturally.

I feel that this essence, this sense of ease, is the heart of this collaboration. We didn't feel the need to insist on some grand narrative about Indonesia and Vietnam, or to construct an artificial rationale for why this partnership matters. The choice of artists also came without pressure; the pairing of Đà Nẵng-based artist and filmmaker **Huỳnh Công Nhỏ** with Yogyakarta-based artist **Pecut Sumantri** simply made sense. The dual show between them finds its rhythm effortlessly.

As 2025 comes to a close – fast, chaotic, and turbulent – we wanted to end on a note that feels smooth and unforced. In life, the energy we spend pushing something against its nature often leaves us exhausted. Maybe this is the moment to stop forcing, and let things unfold the way they are meant to.

The curatorial text by Linh Le captures this beautifully:

"Yet in both, scenes of daily life and its people occupy centre stage. Coming from different histories, cultures and socio-political contexts, their paintings nonetheless open a shared platform in which ordinary lives—and their often neglected struggles—are given room to appear, to persist, and to be taken seriously."

Something found in the quiet of daily life, something unforced, can still lead to something profound.

So let us cherish what arrives naturally, and welcome whatever comes our way. As we approach the end of the year, perhaps it's a good time to give ourselves a little mental pause and embrace whatever unfolds next.

Love,
Rio Pasaribu

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At the Crossroads of Unrealities

...where scenes from lives in the distant past and the near future become entangled with those of the mind, as two worlds that seem far apart at first begin to slowly collide. In their first-ever duo exhibition, realised through a joint effort between Galerie BAO (Paris, France) and RUCI Arts Space (Jakarta, Indonesia), Đà Nẵng-based artist and filmmaker Huỳnh Công Nhỏ and Yogyakarta-based artist Pecut Sumantri turn to the quotidian—everyday people engaged in everyday activities—to open up a space of enquiry into faith, belief, and the human condition.

In the sober light that reigns across Huỳnh Công Nhỏ's paintings, people, who are often faceless, dressed in earthy-toned clothing, engage in the act of praying. Above their tilting heads hover bright discs, or halos. Sometimes these faceless figures cluster together inside modest chapels; elsewhere, they sit in open, mountainous landscapes of the coastal region he calls home, their gestures repeating as if part of a shared choreography. A familiar symbol in classical religious paintings, the halo is traditionally used to determine the holiness of a figure, a demarcation between the sacred and the profane. In Huỳnh's paintings, however, the halo seems to be quietly desacralised: it marks fleeting moments when a person realises that they truly exist—while praying, sleeping, thinking, or simply talking with others. Rather than separating the figures, the halos bind and strengthen their collective presence. At the same time, each halo creates what Gilles Deleuze calls a “round area” in painting: ⁽¹⁾ a circular zone that isolates the figure from everything around it, in this case, from the landscape or architecture, so that this brief, self-aware existence can be concentrated and held, suspended slightly outside ordinary time.

Such depictions perhaps owe something to Huỳnh's background as a filmmaker, who thinks through the frame and the act of framing. Coming to painting from cinema, he approaches each canvas as though it were a still cut from an unseen film: a close-up of a cluster of cacti lying on the ground; a zoom-in on a hat, perhaps mid-conversation between two oldiers; a god's-eye, wide-angled view of a street intersection where human presence becomes arbitrary, if not caricatured. Rendered in an apparently child-like manner with harsh, deliberately crude brushstrokes, these scenes—drawn from Huỳnh's memories, observations and ideas for future films—are at once direct and personal, yet strangely estranged. As time goes by, the light seems to grow brighter and brighter between each frame, an almost glaring clarity that forces scenes, people, and objects out of their tucked-away reality.

Meanwhile, a foggy dream drapes over the figures in Pecut Sumantri's works. The atmosphere is so dense that light can no longer pass through; instead, it stalls and breaks apart into blotches of colour. His figures, out of focus and fleshy, are observed and exposed in their most intimate states, thick with emotional rawness. As if they were test subjects in a psychological experiment, in their most vulnerable yet truest state, every movement and expression seems carefully captured and scrutinised. What was once a stylistic device—a clean, decisive drag of the brush from one side of the canvas to the other, used to experiment with the linearity of time—now dissolves into a directionless blurriness that clouds the entire surface. The effect recalls the tradition of Western old master painting, where techniques such as *sfumato*, the softening of edges, were used to evoke the ethereal, enigmatic presence of a figure in space. As in cinema, blur also signals a tension between closeness and concealment, intimacy and distance, a character's faulty vision or dissociation from reality. ⁽²⁾ As a result, Sumantri situates viewers in a feigned proximity to his figures—close enough to see them in their vulnerable existence, yet still held at arm's length.

Though they share a commitment to the everyday, Huỳnh Công Nhớ and Pecut Sumantri come to painting from markedly different backgrounds despite both being self-taught. As a result, they respond to the medium in almost opposite ways. Received formal training in philosophy, Sumantri's practice often treats painting as a way of slowing down inner turbulence. The tendency to push towards the abstraction of form for him is a revolt against the realism he grew up seeing, a tradition in which art is expected to mirror the visible world in painstaking detail. Pecut Sumantri likens his painting process, which consists of three stages of development: a sketch, a realistic rendering on canvas, and the introduction of blurring effects, to that of each stage in his life. A sketch with its innocence and openness symbolises his childhood, while as the image starts to fully materialise, it is when the artist arrives at his teenage years, full of idealism and yearning for recognition. As the details and accuracy give way to ambiguity, it is when he reaches maturity, and understands that inner peace is more valuable than external validation. For Huỳnh, by contrast, realism and its apparent straightforwardness become an intentional strategy—a way to hold on to his own naïveté and art-brut sensibility. Where Sumantri demonstrates a finely tuned command of light and colour, Huỳnh leans into rough edges, allowing awkward lines and uneven surfaces to remain. Yet in both, scenes of daily life and its people occupy centre stage. Coming from different histories, cultures and socio-political contexts, their paintings nonetheless open a shared platform in which ordinary lives, and their often-neglected struggles, are given room to appear, to persist, and to be taken seriously. Together, their works prompt viewers to reflect on what it means to go on living and believing in what increasingly feels like an age of unreason—an era where uncertainty and precarity are loud and clear, while trust and belief are continually muffled and eroded.

⁽¹⁾ Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 1.

⁽²⁾ Martine Beugnet, "Dream Screen: On Cinema and Painting, Blur and Absorption," in *Cinematic Intermediality: Theory and Practice*, ed. Kim Knowles and Marion Schmid (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 52–70.



Couple of Friend (Đôi bạn), Acrylic on Canvas, 60 x 80 cm, 2024
Still Life (Tĩnh Vật), Acrylic on Canvas, 60 x 80 cm



The Death of Charlie (Cái chết của Charlie), Acrylic on Canvas, 60 x 80 cm, 2023
The Prayer (Nguyện Cầu) #2, Acrylic on Canvas, 60 x 80 cm, 2023



Traffic (Giao thông)#1, Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 75 cm, (56 x 81 x 4,5cm with frame) 2023
The Prayer (Nguyện Cầu)#6, Acrylic on Canvas, 60 x 80 cm, 2023



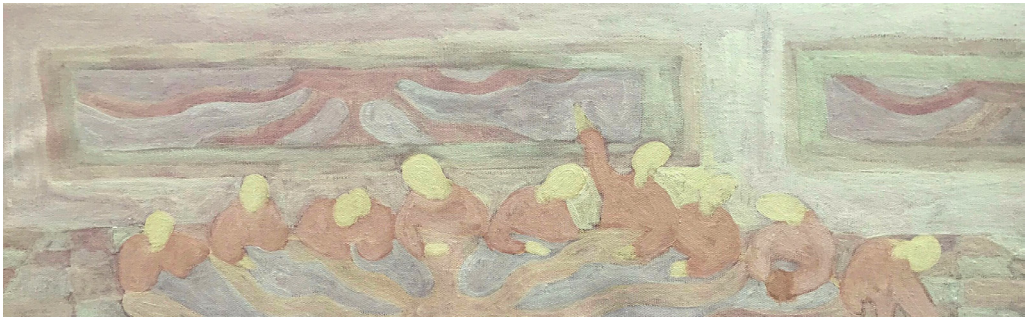
The Prayer (Nguyễn Cầu) #3, Acrylic on Canvas, 90 x 60 cm, 2023
The Prayer (Nguyễn Cầu) #4, Acrylic on Canvas, 75 x 75 cm, 2023



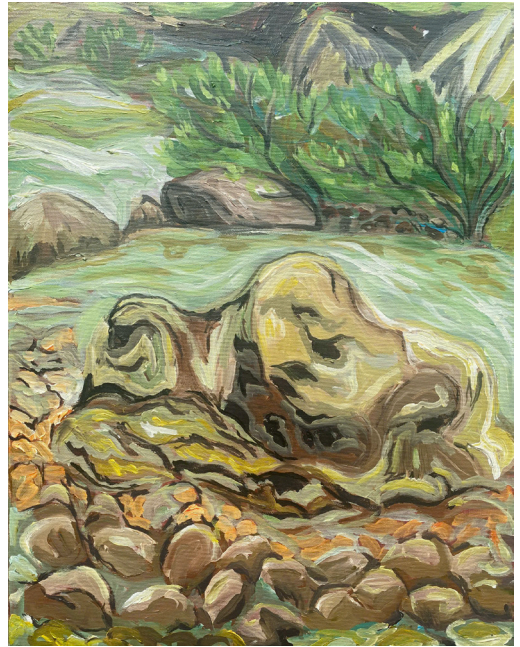
The Prayer (Nguyễn Cầu) #7, Acrylic on Canvas, 90 x 60 cm, 2023
The Prayer (Nguyễn Cầu) #8, Acrylic on Canvas, 90 x 60 cm, 2023



Cactus Flower (Hoa xương rồng), Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 70 cm, 2024
Country Mother (Bà mẹ quê), Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 75 cm, 2024



The Winter Prayers #03, Acrylic on Canvas, 35 x 75 cm, 2024



Grandma (Bà Nội) #02, Acrylic on Canvas, 60 x 40 cm, 2024
On The Bank of The Rocky Stream (Bên Bờ Suối Đá), Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 40 cm, 2025



Beachside Awards (Giải thưởng bên bờ biển), Acrylic on Canvas, 60 x 100 cm, 2023



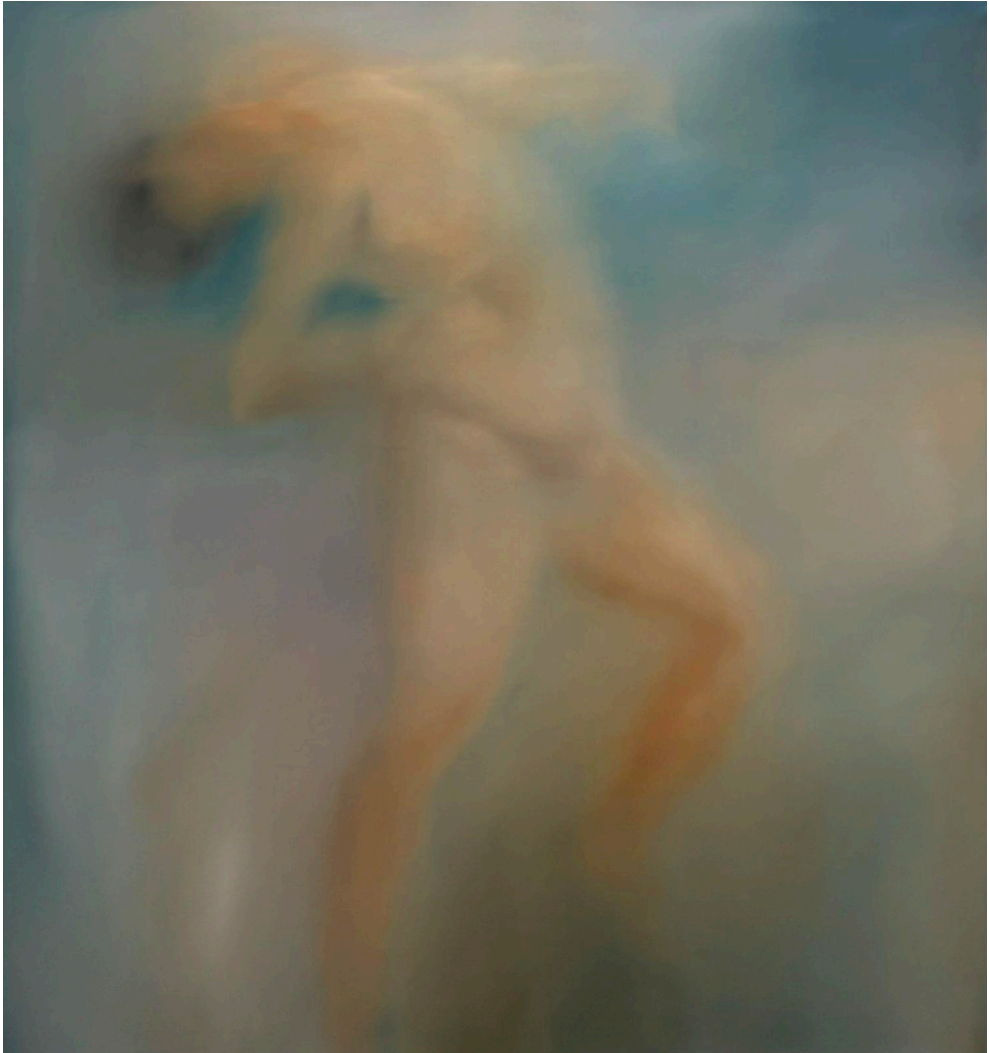
Hat (Mũ), Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 600 cm, 2024



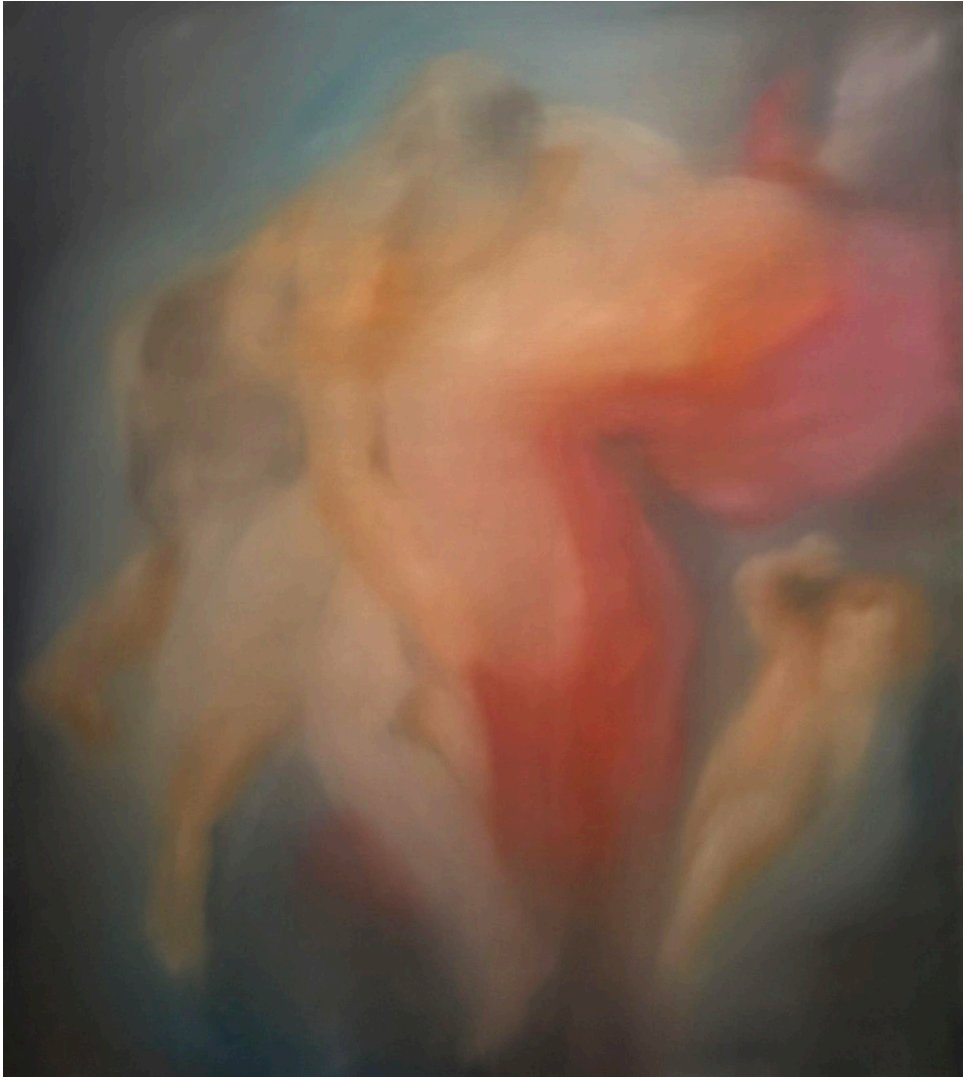
Two Soldiers (Hai người lính), Acrylic on Canvas, 90 x 90 cm, 2024



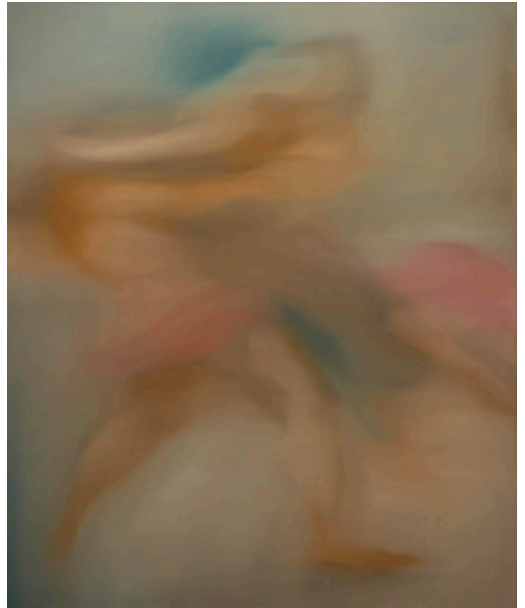
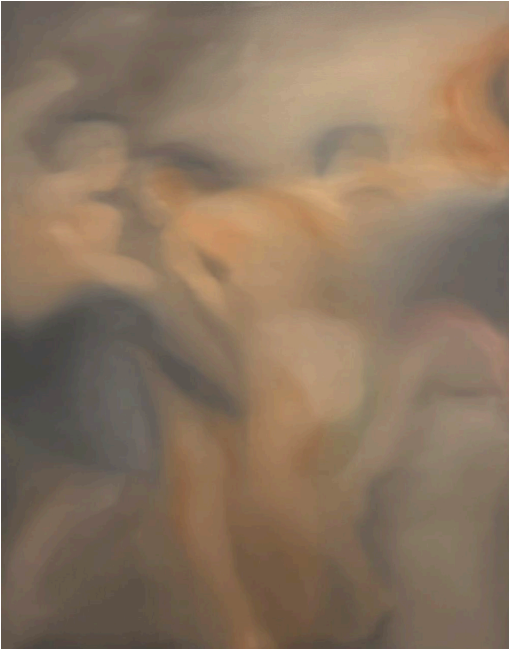
The Flowers of Yesterday (Những bông hoa của ngày hôm qua),
Acrylic on Canvas, 200 x 280 cm, 2025



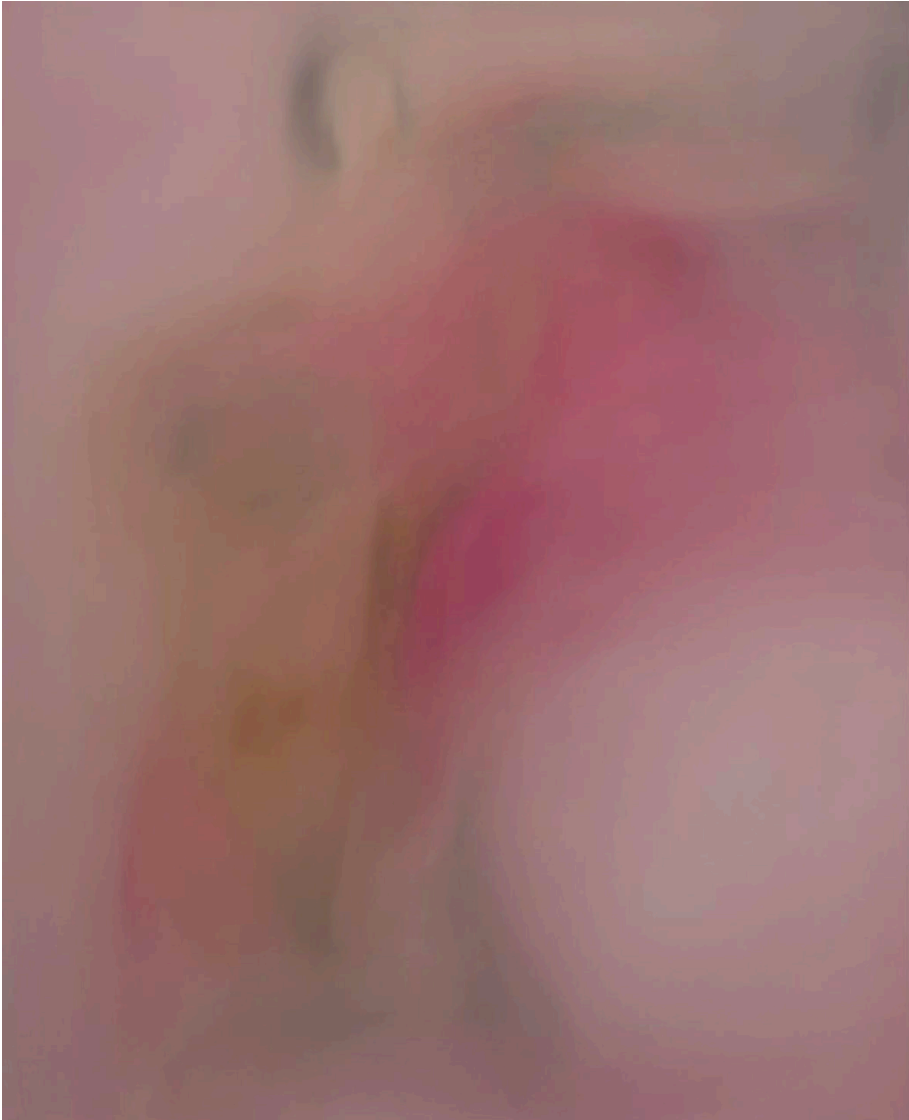
A Fragment of My Soul, Oil on Canvas, 150 x 140 cm, 2025



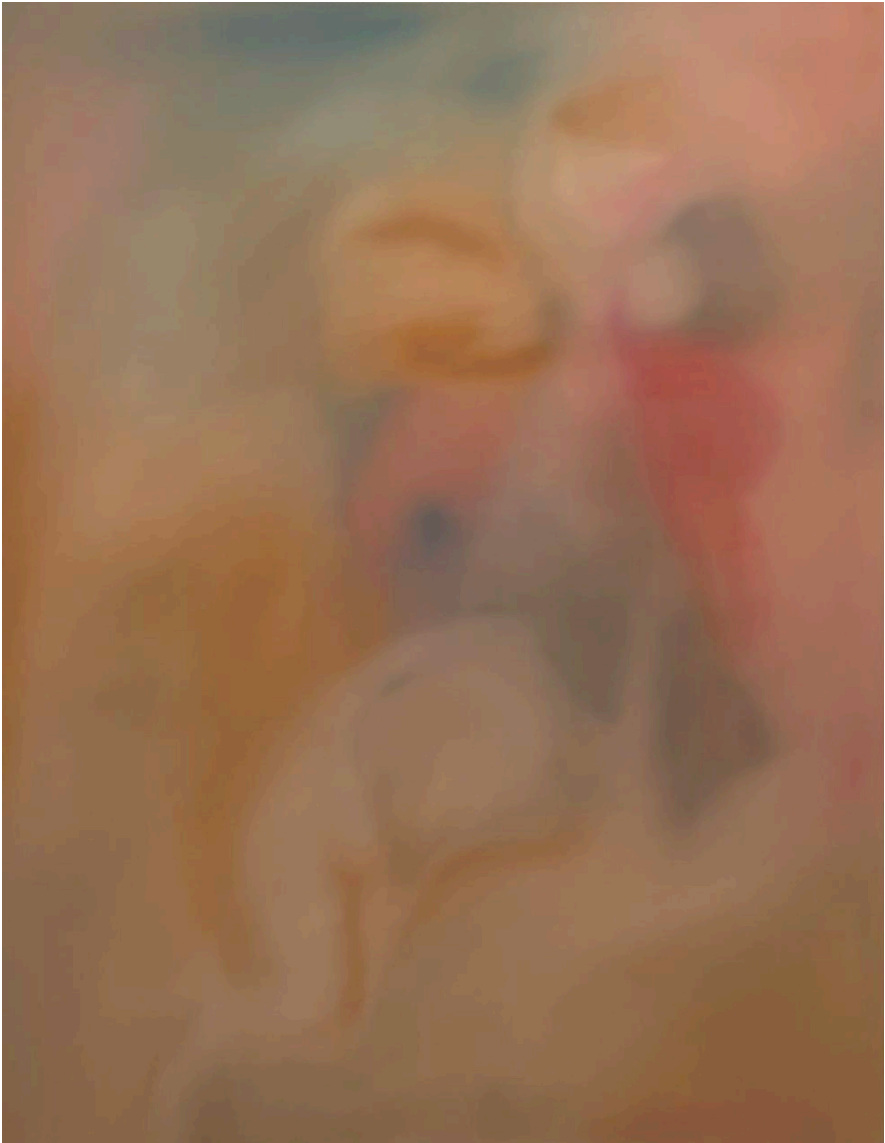
The Increasingly Crazy Lover, Oil on Canvas, 160 x 145 cm, 2025



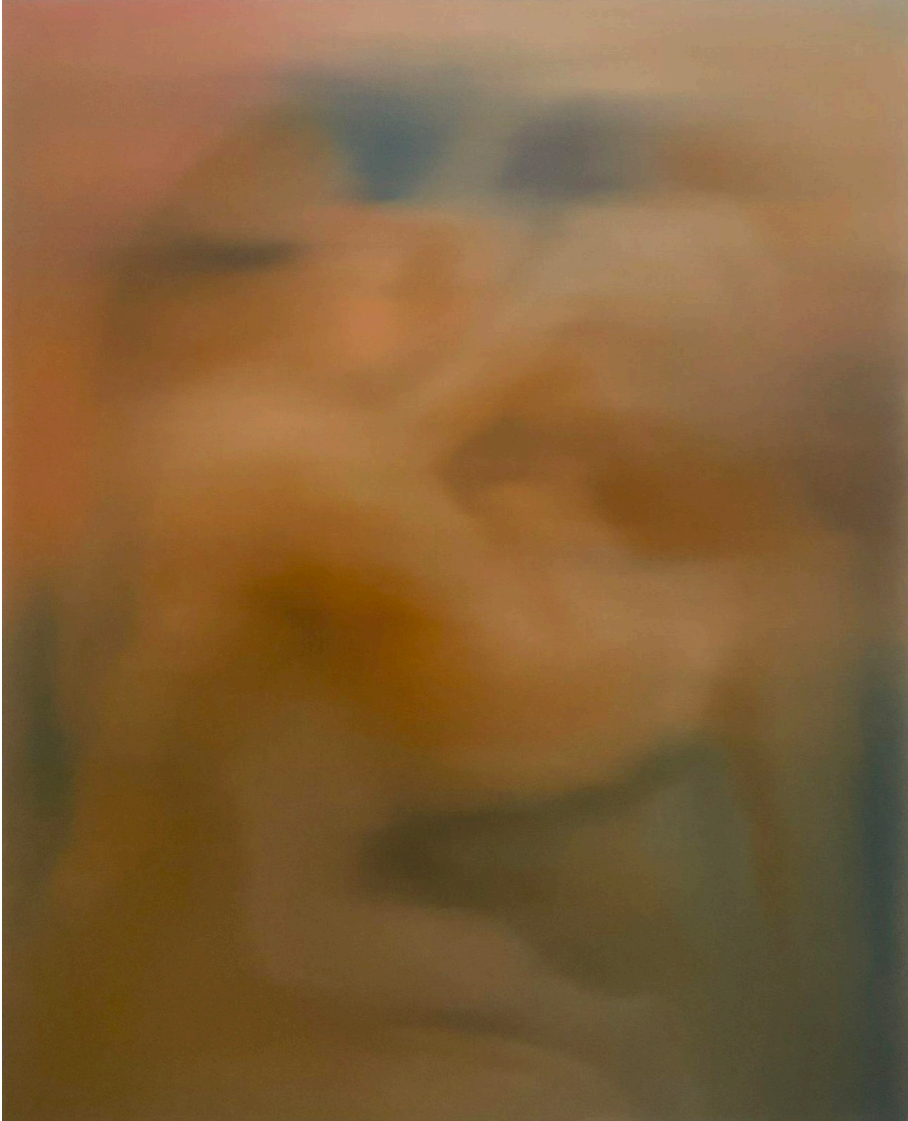
After Party, Oil on Canvas, 150 x 120 cm, 2025
The Dance of Eternity, Oil on Canvas, 145 x 125 cm, 2025



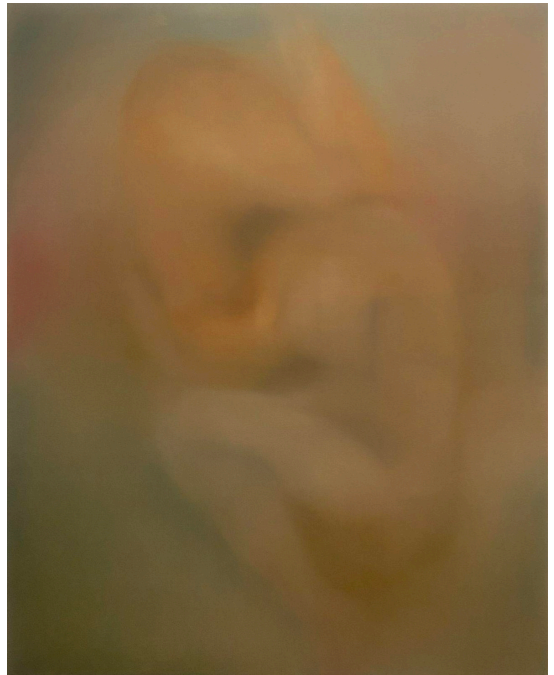
Distant Memory, Oil on Canvas, 145 x 120 cm, 2025



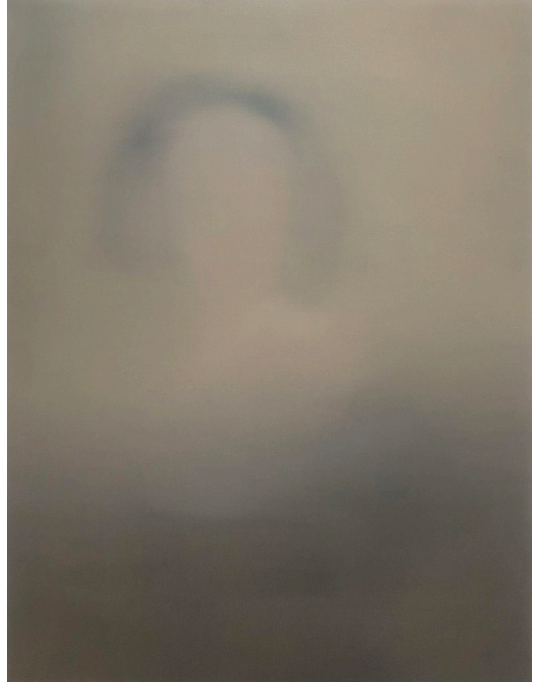
Dejavu, Oil on Canvas, 140 x 110 cm, 2025



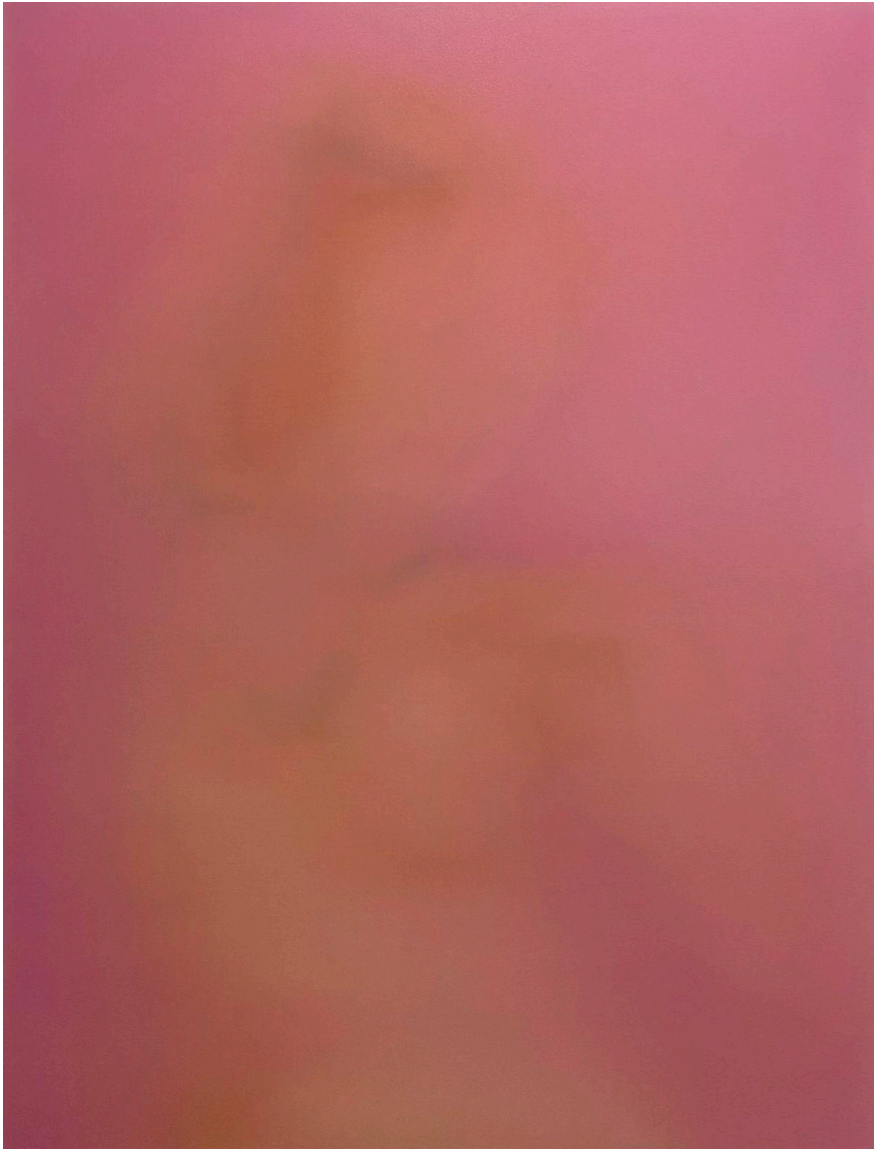
Merasa Nyaman, Oil on Canvas, 115 x 95 cm, 2025



Dekap, Oil on Canvas, 120 x 100 cm, 2025
Deep Talk, Oil on Canvas, 120 x 100 cm, 2025



Sunflower After Van Gogh, Oil on Canvas, 110 x 90 cm, 2025
Berhenti Sejenak, Oil on Canvas, 110 x 90 cm, 2025



Di Balik Tirai, Oil on Canvas, 104,5 x 85 cm, 2025



Huỳnh Công Nhớ

Đà Nẵng (VNM)

(b. 1991 in Đà Nẵng, Vietnam) stands out as an art brut (outsider art) artist, endowed with natural talent and a naïve approach that lends a unique sincerity to his creations. Entirely self-taught, he entered the art world through cinema, training in the prestigious Autumn Meeting program under the mentorship of filmmaker Trần Anh Hùng, a renowned workshop for promising young international filmmakers.

In 2022, Huỳnh Công Nhớ transitioned to painting, a medium where his raw imagination and intuition have fully blossomed. His works, characterized by evocative simplicity, transform cinematic imagery into static compositions while exploring the natural balance between inner rhythm and the external world.

His work focuses on interpreting personal human experiences within Vietnam's socio-political contexts. Combining both a naïve and incisive perspective, he opens up endless possibilities for storytelling while reminding us of the importance of human connection and the power of stories told through various materials.

SHORT LISTED EXHIBITION

2024 Afternoon Rêverie, 2024 Galerie BAO, Paris

2023 FR; Hanoi Grapevine Selection, Hanoi
Vietnam; Thăng bé bán kem, Top 14
Excellent Projects – CJ Short films Project

2022 Top 14 Xine House Grant, HCMC, Vietnam
Nổ Cái Bùm Biennial Art Week, Da Lat,
Vietnam

2021 Grandma's Broken Leg, Youth Jury Award –
Competition SEA Short Film – 32nd
Singapore International Festival Film

Projet de court métrage Ghost Dog, Top 14
Short film project CJ Entertainment
Top 12 Short film project Honor Lotte
Cinema, HCMC, Vietnam



Pecut Sumantri

Yogyakarta (ID)

B. 1982 in Kendal, Central Java, Indonesia. Lives and works in Yogyakarta. Pecut Sumantri is an artist who develops his practice through the medium of painting. His works serve as a reflection of his artistic journey as well as a visual record of his interactions with the self, the social environment, and nature. For Pecut, the creative process is not only an aesthetic pursuit but also a way of understanding the relationship between humans and their surroundings, and how nature shapes his creative consciousness. Pecut's artistic process unfolds through three highly interconnected visual stages: sketch, realist, and blur. These stages function not only as visual techniques but also as representations of his inner journey and his perspective on life. In the sketch stage, the works emerge through spontaneous lines that suggest honesty and openness.

Here, Pecut presents the initial energy of exploration—capturing spontaneity, curiosity, and an awareness of the formation of both visual and personal identity. The process then moves into the realist stage, where forms and details become more clearly defined. This phase reflects technical refinement as well as contemplation of the social realities around him. Pecut observes people, the environment, and their relationship with nature, shaping these observations into imagery that represents the dynamics of everyday life. In the final stage, blur, the boundaries between form and space begin to dissolve.

SHORT LISTED EXHIBITION

		2023	KARANGKITRI, Ex Loop Station Telkom, Yogyakarta, Indonesia Beyond Youth II : Perseverance, Rachel Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
2025	Next Motion: Yogya Annual Art #10 Crescendo: Group Exhibition of Indonesian Artists, Taiwan Art Show, Indigo Estate Atelier, Warsaw, Polandia Art Jakarta, Art Serpong Gallery, JIExpo, Jakarta, Indonesia	2022	Visions of Nusantara, Ciputra Artpreneur, Jakarta, Indonesia Jogja Affordable Art, Jogja Gallery, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
2024	Hari ini dan Esok, SUN CONTEMPORARY, Badung, Bali, Indonesia Tenang & Damai Indonesiaku, Yulindra Gallery, The Westin Hotel , Jakarta, Indonesia	2021	Artistfair, Fahrenheit, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
		2020	Global Conversation, UN General Assembly Virtual Web Gallery, United Nations, New York, USA



Galerie Bao is a curator-led gallery founded by Lê Thiên-Bảo, a Vietnamese curator recognized for her long-standing commitment to contemporary art from Southeast Asia since 2016. After launching her first gallery program in Paris in 2023, she redefined and established Galerie Bao as a new chapter under her sole direction in 2024.

Acting as a close ally to artists, Bao is dedicated to building sustainable relationships with artists and supporting the long-term development of their practices. Rooted in collaboration and care, the gallery goes beyond exhibition-making to foster communal dialogue and experimental thinking.

Bao has engaged with a wide network of institutions and public collections, including MUSEION (Bolzano), Han Nefkens Foundation (Madrid), MASS MoCA (Massachusetts), Kadist Foundation (San Francisco / Paris), POUSH (Aubervilliers), The Outpost (Hanoi) and Nguyen Art Foundation (Ho Chi Minh City) among others.

RUCI Art Space

RUCI Art Space embarked on its journey in 2014 with its inaugural exhibition held in a abandoned restaurant. Since then, we've grown to unveil our new gallery space in South Jakarta, spanning approximately 200 square meters of exhibition area.

The name "RUCI" embodies versatility, evoking notions of source of light, taste, and pleasure. Our mission is to serve as a hub for the entire creative industry, offering a platform for exploration and deeper understanding of Indonesian contemporary art.

With almost a decade of experience, we have forged partnerships with emerging contemporary artists from both domestic and international realms, nurturing the artistic passions of younger generations. Our endeavors have ranged from hosting notable events such as Ron English's Propaganda Asia Tour in Indonesia, contributing artworks to private museum collections, participating in international art fair, facilitating fine art collaborations between local artists and various entities including brands, public spaces, malls, and restaurants.

At RUCI Art Space, we strive to foster an environment where artists and the public alike can flourish, experiment, and translate ideas into tangible expressions within the rich tapestry of Indonesian contemporary art.

RUCI Art Space

Jl Senayan 63-65. 2nd Floor
Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta Selatan