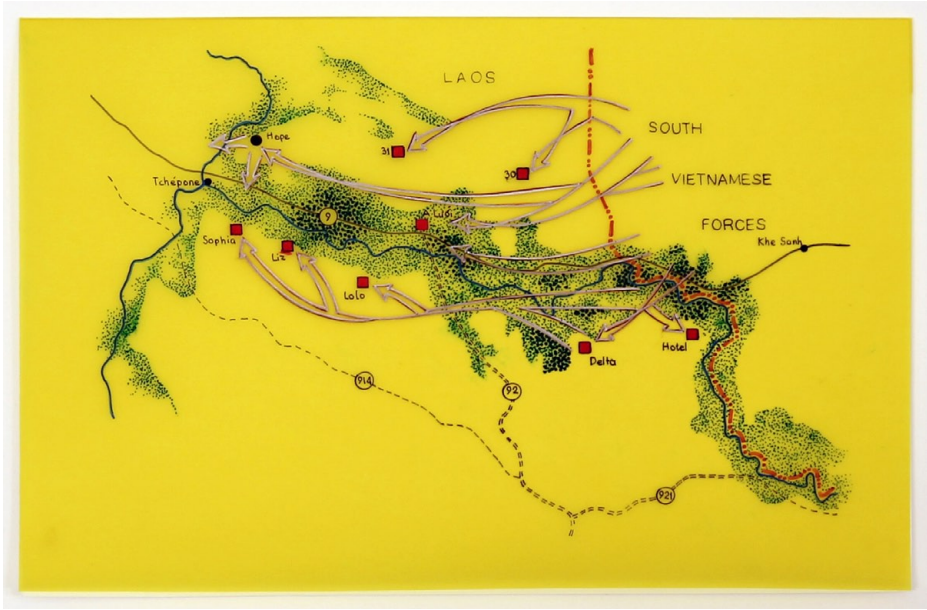
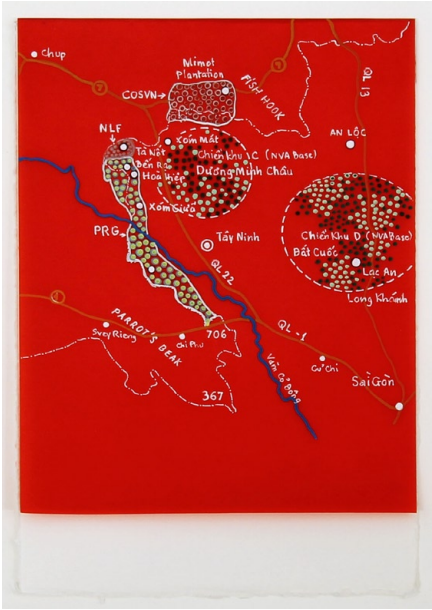


# TIFFANY CHUNG



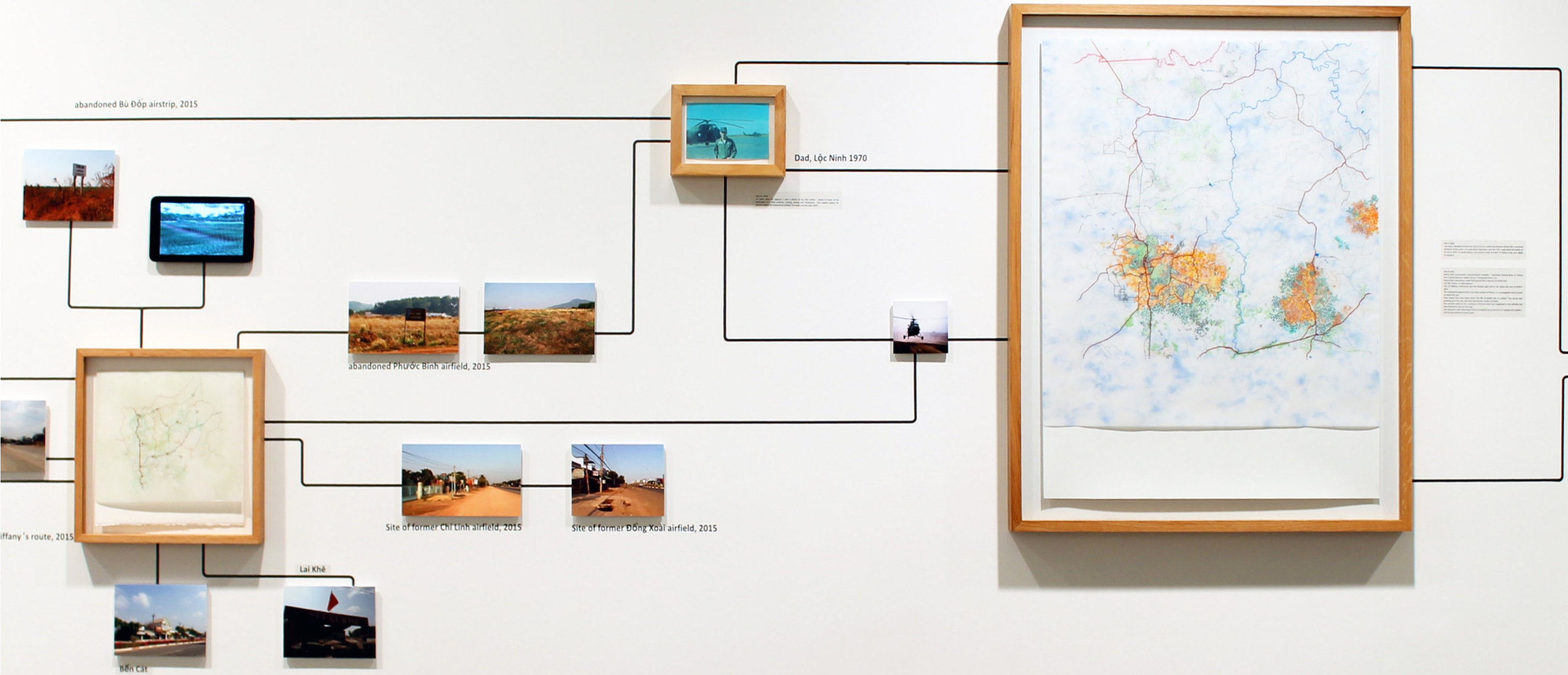
Top left: *Operation Lam So'n 719 in 1971*, 2015, oil and ink on vellum and paper, 6 ¼ x 9 ½ in. [16 x 24 cm].  
Top right: *COSVN, NLF, PRG and VC bases*, 2015, oil and ink on vellum and paper, 8 ½ x 5 ½ in. [21.5 x 14 cm].



Tyler Rollins Fine Art is pleased to present *finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble*, a solo exhibition of new works by Tiffany Chung. One of Vietnam's most prominent and internationally active contemporary artists, Chung will present a new project in the upcoming Venice Biennale as part of the exhibition *All the World's Futures*, curated by Okwui Enwezor (May 9 – Nov. 22, 2015). *finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble* marks her fourth solo exhibition with the gallery, and features multi-media works relating to the lingering effects of three natural and manmade disasters: the 1995 earthquake that devastated Kobe, Japan; the current conflict in Syria; and the battlefields of the Vietnam War. These separate yet intertwined components reflect the artist's long-term research into geographical shifts in countries that were traumatized by war, human destruction, or natural disaster, with a particular focus on the growth, decline, or disappearance of towns and cities, and related issues of urban development, environmental catastrophe, and humanitarian crisis.

The exhibition features work perhaps the most explicitly linked to the artist's biography, or rather, that of her father, a former pilot for the South Vietnamese Air Force. Archival fragments relating to his wartime experiences are juxtaposed with Chung's current investigations of disused and ruined airstrips scattered about southern Vietnam. Chung's project relating to the massive destruction in Kobe, Japan, a country in which she has worked extensively for many years, is also informed by the notion of contemporary ruins, as related through archival video and photography as well as her characteristic map drawings. These meticulously detailed works involve a complex layering of topographies from different historical periods, interweaving historical and geologic events, as well as spatial and sociopolitical changes, with future predictions and utopian visions. The exhibition also incorporates elements from Chung's ongoing research into the current civil war in Syria, with its enormous urban destruction and spiraling refugee crisis. She presents a new installation of light boxes, arranged like a chaotic cityscape, showing haunting images of the contemporary ruins of the Syrian city Homs, a poignant meditation on loss and shattered polity.

Based in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), Chung holds an MFA from the University of California, Santa Barbara (2000) and a BFA from California State University, Long Beach (1998). She was awarded the Sharjah Biennial Artist Prize in 2013. Selected museum exhibitions and biennials include: *My Voice Would Reach You*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2014); *Residual: Disrupted Choreographies*, Carré d'Art, Nîmes, France (2014); *THREADS*, Museum Arnhem, Netherlands (2014); California Pacific Triennial, Newport Beach (2013); Asia Pacific Triennial, Brisbane, Australia (2012); *Six Lines of Flight*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2012); *The Map as Art*, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City (2012); *PANORAMA*, Singapore Art Museum (2012); Kuandu Biennale, Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, Taiwan (2012); Singapore Biennale (2011); *Roving Eye*, Sorlandets Kunstmuseum, Norway (2011); *Atopia: Art and City in the 21st Century*, Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Spain (2010); *The River Project*, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Australia (2010); Incheon International Women Artists' Biennale, Korea (2009); *transPOP: Korea Vietnam Remix*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2008) and Arko Museum, Seoul, Korea (2007); Fukuoka Triennale, Japan (2005). Chung's solo exhibitions include: *Tiffany Chung*, Lieu-Commun, Toulouse, France (2014); *Fukagawa Shokudo*, Fukagawa Tokyo Modan Kan, Tokyo, Japan (2011); and at Tyler Rollins Fine Art, *TOMORROW ISN'T HERE* (2012), *scratching the walls of memory* (2010) and *Play* (2008).



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finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble





Top: view of the exhibition *finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble*, Tyler Rollins Fine Art.  
 Bottom: view of the exhibition *finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble*, Tyler Rollins Fine Art.  
 Middle page: *finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble*, 2014, 31 hand crafted mahogany wooden boxes, found photographs printed on plexiglass, LED lights, electrical wire, dimensions variable.  
 Far right page: *Kobe urban planning map after 1995*, 2015, oil and ink on vellum and paper, 31 x 39 ¼ in. (79 x 100 cm).



## THE STONES

Pamela Corey

From the ink-drawn clusters of dots, circles, and lines spreading along the smooth surface of vellum, to spectral photographs of buildings reduced to rubble, back-lit and framed within unassuming mahogany boxes, *finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble* draws in the viewer's sensory perceptions but denies easy gratification. Characteristic of Tiffany Chung's broader conceptual and material practice, the lure of the aesthetic serves a critical objective grounded in her commitment to produce unsettling reflections on human landscapes that have been traumatized by warfare, the processes of modernization and industrialization, or the forces of nature. Chung's interest in the human responses to such changes is manifested through efforts to map these psychic states using various forms and media, including: hand-drawn cartographic abstractions; lyrical yet visceral video works focusing on the human body in motion; and large-scale installations that play with scale in order to emphasize the fragility of human experience. For the artist, the social imaginaries that shape the shifting identities of a place are most effectively represented through assembled fragments that challenge the viewer to discern a didactic narrative. The artworks are outcomes yet also starting points within a larger project of psychogeographical inquiry. They are made legible only to a certain extent without extinguishing the poetic ambiguity of the objects and the environments they create.

*finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble* is grounded in documentation, comprising materials constructed through – and at times against – the archival. Their presentation provides the visitor with a peripatetic experience, mirroring the artist's own itinerant research throughout Asia, the United States, and the Middle East. Yet this group of three seemingly discrete components, effectively representing disastrous historical and current episodes in Vietnam, Japan, and Syria, finds connection through the artist's larger preoccupation with the persistence of everyday life in the face of such upheaval. Without rendering these catastrophic events commensurable, Chung draws our attention to them as part of a global constellation of crises – crises too often relegated to the margins of public memory and social consciousness. Careful arrangements of found video footage, audio recordings, popular print media, data reports, photographic snapshots, dream-like map drawings, and a large-scale installation of light boxes draw the viewer into a space situated between archive, laboratory, and diorama.

The anchor for this experience is a twelve-meter-long diagram running across one wall, a type of documentary route map charted through a series of critical events and now abandoned sites related to the Easter Offensive of the U.S.-Vietnam War. Near its center is a photograph of Chung's father taken in 1970. A former helicopter pilot and member of the Kingbee 219th Squadron, an elite group of pilots for the Vietnam Air Force of the southern Republic of Vietnam, the photograph was taken a year before his helicopter was shot down in Laos during Operation Lam Son 719. Because he was captured and imprisoned in the north, his absence in Chung's early childhood has served as a trenchant subtext for her long-term investigations into the traumatic rifts, cartographic divisions, and familial separations produced in circumstances of warfare as well as natural and industrial disasters. The photograph of her father as a young pilot, in a seemingly carefree, jubilant moment, in front of a helicopter in the background, joins other photographs of the young pilots of the 219th squadron in uniforms, sitting around the fire, playing guitar in the airfields, yet waiting for the ground alerts that would send them to the gravest extraction missions that might cost them their own lives. The right side of the diagram shows found photographs of the landscape and everyday life of An Lộc before and after the pivotal 1972 battle that marked an important victory for South Vietnam. These before-and-after images translate into the diagrammatic pictorial language of Chung's drawings, two of which chart military strategies and routes, and one of which collapses temporal topographies of An Lộc's major road system. Through her painstaking rendering, the lines configure a precious armature protectively enveloping the landscape, yet against the green and brown camouflage tones of the ground, still evoke martial form.

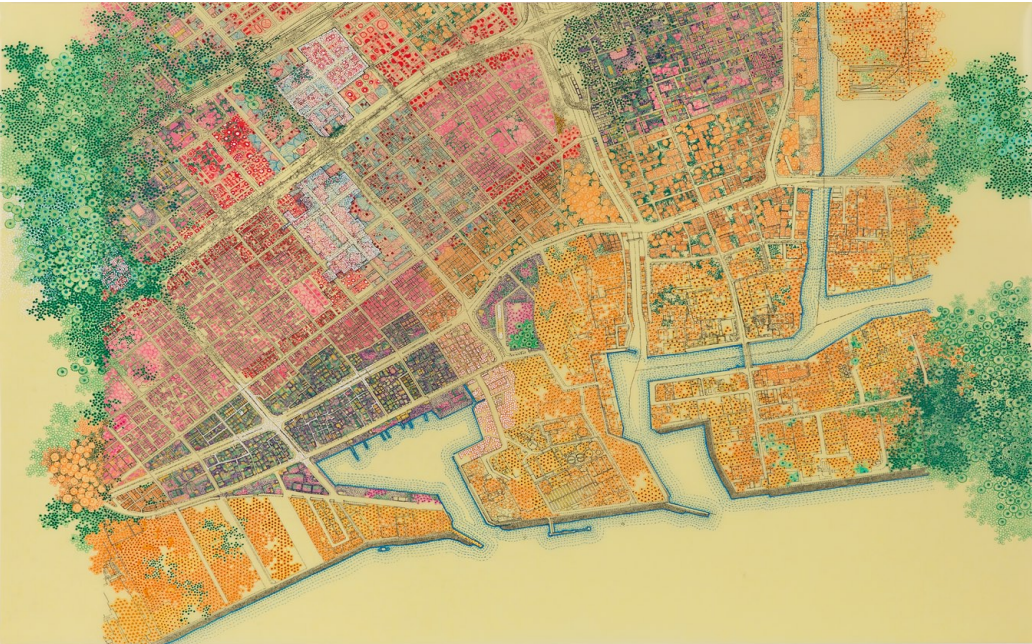
With her own memories of the refugee experience, Chung's preoccupation with the current civil war in Syria inspired research into the conflict and its spiraling refugee crisis. Her ongoing Syria Project includes cartographic drawings referencing dates and areas of conflict, or the escalating numbers of refugee camps, refugees, and IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). *finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble* features a different facet of this project: an installation of wooden lightboxes in which photographs of Homs – of its gutted buildings and debris – are carefully inset and gently backlit. Each one in isolation presents a view into an urban wasteland cloaked in an apocalyptic glow, as though bathed in the light of an unrelenting sun. Yet, in their cumulative formation within the darkened environment, the boxes provide the sense of a miniature cityscape lit

up at night. The charm evoked by these simple wooden boxes, laid out so carefully, and in their mass resembling a cluster of lanterns at night, is beset by the spectral iterations of desolation portrayed within. It is an elegiac endeavor to lend order to the excess of disorder, to the countless stones within the rubble.

Reflecting her long-term inquiries into historical episodes in Japan, including food riots, major earthquakes, industrial ruin, and demographic change, Chung here focuses on the earthquake that devastated Kobe in 1995, also known as The Great Hanshin Earthquake. Within an archival corner created through documents, magazines, folders, and articles arranged on a wooden table, a particularly poignant scenario is played out in the video footage framed in a small monitor. Among the dilapidated buildings and riven landscape near the Shin Nagata railway station, a mailman perseveres in his daily routine of delivering the mail. Moving as though by rote, his movements are touching yet disquieting; his obdurate persistence to maintain such aspects of everyday life provides a counterpoint to Chung's own efforts to resurrect historical memory through her archival collecting and display, combined with testimonies from her ethnographic research. Magazines from before and after January 1995, and folders containing data reports and statistical articles about the earthquake provide empirical accompaniments to her album presentations of found photographs and snapshots taken by the artist of buildings and the residents who chose to stay in Shin Nagata. Like the lightboxes, these albums are poignant recreations evoking intimate heirlooms.

Through her juxtapositions of narrative fragments, from the archival to the hand-crafted, Chung provides glimpses into the resilience of the human condition as well as its frailties. As custodian and curator, Chung gathers such vulnerable documents and, together with her own delicately drawn recreations, attempts to resurrect the former lifeworlds of these abandoned and ruined landscapes, as though reconstructing a building from the stones of its rubble. For Chung, these ephemera are the stones of history.

*Pamela N. Corey earned her PhD from Cornell University with a focus on modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia. She is currently working on a book project that looks at the relationship between contemporary art and urban form in Vietnam and Cambodia.*



### The artist would like to thank:

Kobe Project:  
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*finding one's shadow in ruins and rubble*

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