



Smithsonian American Art Museum and Renwick Gallery

Tiffany Chung: Vietnam, Past Is Prologue

MARCH 15, 2019 — AUGUST 25, 2019



Tiffany Chung, *reconstructing an exodus history: flight routes from camps and of ODP cases*, 2017, embroidery on fabric, 55 x 137 3/4 inches, 140 x 350 cm, edition of 2, courtesy of the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York

Smithsonian American Art Museum (8th and F Streets, NW)

Internationally acclaimed artist Tiffany Chung (b. 1969, Da Nang, Vietnam) is known for her multimedia work that explores migration, conflict, and shifting geographies in the wake of political and natural upheavals. The Smithsonian American Art Museum has invited her to present work that responds to the Vietnam War, and its legacy on the culture and population of the United States. The project stems from the facts of her own life: Chung's father was a pilot in the South Vietnamese army who fought alongside American forces, and the family immigrated to the U.S. as part of the post-1975 exodus from that country. Chung examines the narratives that have been used to understand the war and its aftermath, and probes how the America we know today was shaped by Vietnam. The exhibition is presented in conjunction with SAAM's major exhibition **Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War, 1965-1975**

Based in painstaking primary research, *Vietnam, Past Is Prologue* is broad and richly textured, illuminating both the war's scale and the personal stakes of people affected by it. The exhibition features a new series of video interviews with former Vietnamese refugees in Houston, Texas; Southern California; and Northern Virginia that has been commissioned by the Smithsonian American Art Museum for this exhibition. It also includes photographs, watercolors, texts, and hand-drawn maps that trace military strategies and refugee resettlement patterns. Through this work, Chung documents accounts that have largely been left out of official histories of the period and begins to tell an alternative story of the war's ideology and effects. In the process, she reframes our understanding of how the contemporary world has been formed.

Sarah Newman, The James Dicke Curator of Contemporary Art, is organizing the exhibition.