

**PRESS KIT**

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# hà ninh pham

## FUGITIVE ZONE

8 March - 4 May 2024

Curator: Lê Thiên-Bảo

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**Vernissage** at 18h, 28 March, in the presence of the artist  
at **Galerie BAQ**, 15 rue Beautreillis, 75004 Paris

Public hours: 11-19h, Tuesday - Saturday  
Free admission, no reservations required

## PRESS RELEASE

It has been seven years since Hà Ninh Pham began constructing his own world within the *My Land*[1] project, stemming from his time as a Master of Fine Arts student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. *Fugitive Zone* at Galerie BAQ marks the artist's first solo exhibition in the heart of Paris, declaratively claiming space for a burgeoning *My Land* beyond its former boundaries.

For Hà Ninh – a non-traveler skeptical of extreme politics and weary of supposedly liberatory discourses imposed by Western empires on post-colonial countries – flying to a center of Europe to set up a new territory poses a direct challenge to the artist's personal convictions. Yet this breach is essential to this phase of his practice.

[1] In the project *My Land*, from 2017 to today, Hà Ninh Pham invents a world that refuses affiliation to any existent place or culture. There, the artist creates complete infrastructures, operating systems, codified measurements, as well as a formal history.



Hà Ninh Pham, [mothermap] v1, graphite, watercolor and pastel on paper, 122 x 117 cm, 2019 (courtesy of Nguyen Art Foundation Collection)

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Adhering to the core principles of *[mothermap]*<sup>[2]</sup>, the "maps" exhibited in *Fugitive Zone* delineate units A2, B2, D4, and F4. These areas all belong to the Northern Hemisphere of the world that Hà Ninh constructs within My Land, originally planned in the early stages of the project to accommodate Western ideologies. As a means of resisting stereotypes imposed on Vietnamese art, the artist only uses "neutral" materials such as paper, charcoal, paint, ink, plastic (for 3D printing), etc., as a way to erase all traces of his identity and background.

Commenting on Hà Ninh Pham's first solo exhibition, *Cheat Codes* (2019) at FRONT Art Space, New York, the art critic John Yau<sup>[3]</sup> wrote:

*"Hà Ninh Pham draws maps that lead to more maps... we get the sense that his drawings have to do with feelings of displacement and disruption – and that drawing a map can give him a sense of control."*

Staying true to that spirit, however, Hà Ninh's control shifts from artworks, gradually extending into space; this progression can be clearly seen in subsequent solo exhibitions such as *Recursive, Fables* at A+ Works of Arts (2022, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), or *Entrusted Conjectures* at Manzi Art Space (2023, Hanoi, Vietnam).

With *Fugitive Zone*, the artist utilizes the existing structure of Galerie BAQ, comprising a ground floor and a basement, transforming the gallery into a place of total freedom inside of a meticulously manipulated zone. Half of the exhibition space is only observable through a screen, broadcasted directly from the security camera installed in the basement. For the artist, the transmitted images represent the boundary between the real and the imagined world. That flat screen is also the only pathway into a space where viewers can gauge actual depth, something that cannot be fathomed when looking at those maps of paradoxical terrains. Accompanying the exhibition, as a key to delve into and decipher this world, the artist has written a set of "guidelines" called *Fugitive Zone/substance*, published in the form of a notebook/personal diary.

Despite the title, *Fugitive Zone* is not an area to hide in the literal sense. Hà Ninh invites viewers into a liminal threshold, to fall into a state of skepticism between the surveyor and the surveilled; between hierarchical orders; between freedom and constraints. Conventional dimensions are overturned, and boundaries blurred. Viewers stand right inside the zone but are essentially always outsiders, observing these lands from afar, as through a bird's-eye view.

*\*Special thanks to A+ Works of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for their support and collaboration on this project.*

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[2] *[mothermap]* is an intermediary document recording the structure of the imaginary world in the My Land project, serving as the primary entry point that the artist has introduced to the public thus far. Similar to a chessboard, *[mothermap]* employs an 8x8 grid system, with the vertical axis ranging from 1 to 8 and the horizontal axis ranging from A to H. Each unit of space within these 64 units leads to different "lands," each characterized by distinct functions and infrastructure structures.

[3] John Yau, *Out of Vietnam, Drawings of Displacement and Repression*, Hyperallergic, June 30, 2019  
<https://hyperallergic.com/507131/out-of-vietnam-drawings-of-displacement-and-repression/>

**ARTWORKS**  
HÀ NINH PHAM



Hà Ninh Pham, B2 [Square Hamlet], 2024, graphite, acrylic, ink, and colored pencils on paper  
140 x 280 cm

**ARTWORKS**  
HÀ NINH PHAM



Hà Ninh Pham, B2 [Square Hamlet - detail], 2024, graphite, acrylic, ink, and colored pencils on paper  
140 x 280 cm

**ARTWORKS**  
HÀ NINH PHAM



Hà Ninh Pham, D4.1 [Vertical Pump Station],, 2024, graphite, acrylic, ink, and colored pencils on paper  
104 x 66 cm

**ARTWORKS**  
HÀ NINH PHAM



Hà Ninh Pham, A2.1,3 [Hermetic property no.1,3], 2024, colored pencils on paper mounted on PVC board  
16.3 x 11 x 2.5 cm

**ARTWORKS**  
HÀ NINH PHAM



Hà Ninh Pham, A2.4,5 [Hermetic property no.4,5], 2024, colored pencils on paper mounted on PVC board  
16.3 x 11 x 2.5 cm

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## EXHIBITION VIEWS

FUGITIVE ZONE

8 March - 4 May 2024

Image courtesy of Galerie BAQ

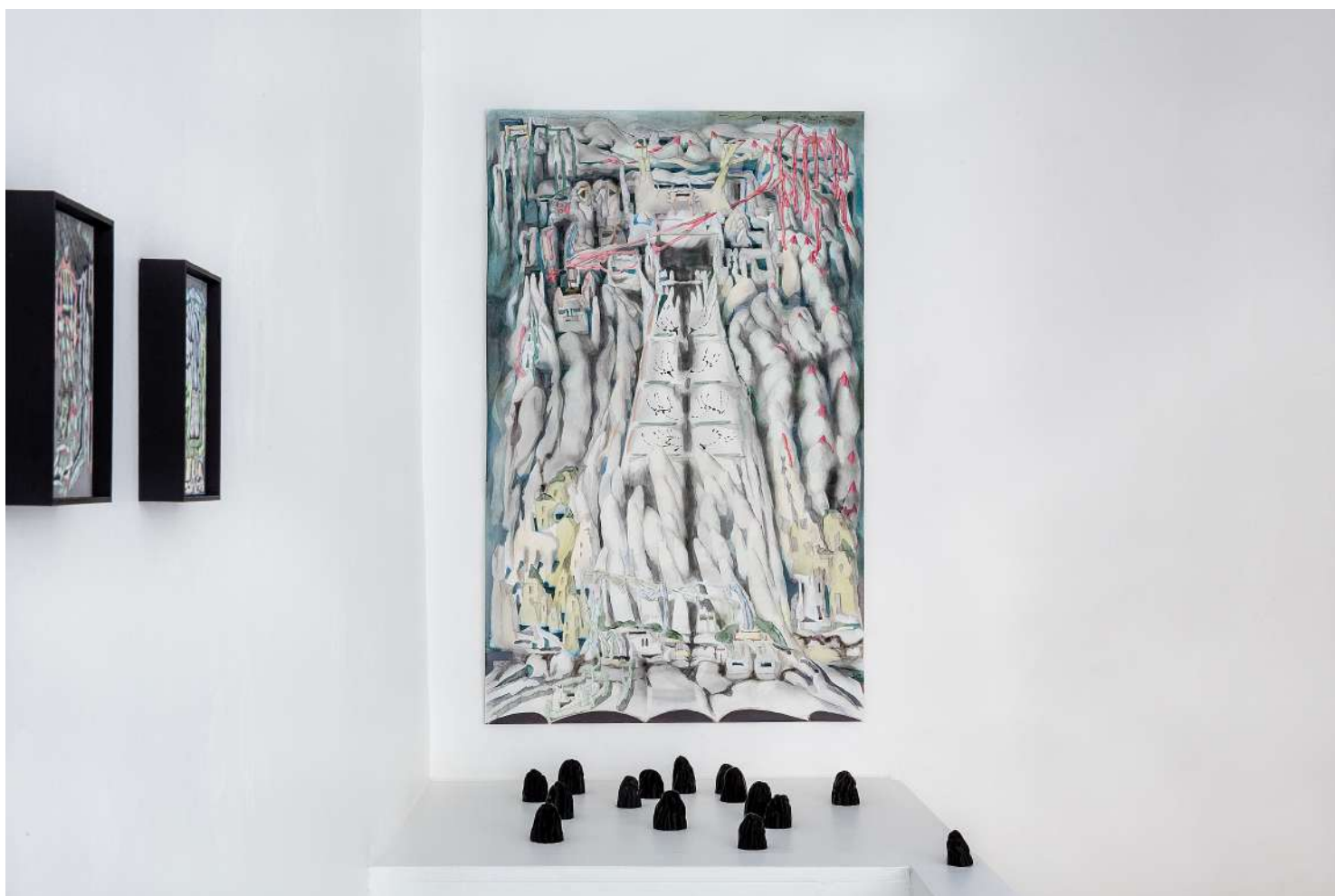


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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Hà Ninh Pham (b. 1991, Hanoi, Vietnam) is a fine artist and arts educator. His work exploits how we construct our understanding of territories from a remote, “bird’s eye” perspective. Working predominantly with drawings on paper and with 3D-printed objects, Hà-Ninh invites viewers to explore the nuanced relationship between manual skill and technological precisions. Driven by a desire to completely suppress his identity from the interpretation of his work, Hà-Ninh is best known for My Land, where the artist imagines terrains that claim no pre-existing ties to Earth and to humanity, and indecipherable maps and unknowable artifacts are the only available clues to understanding this dimension.



Hà Ninh Pham in his studio, 2020. Photo © Hoàng Thắng

He earned his MFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, USA in 2018 and his BA from the Vietnam University of Fine Arts, Hanoi, Vietnam in 2014. He received the Silver Medal for Young Talents of Vietnamese Fine Arts Universities in 2015 and the Murray Dessiner Travel Award in 2018.

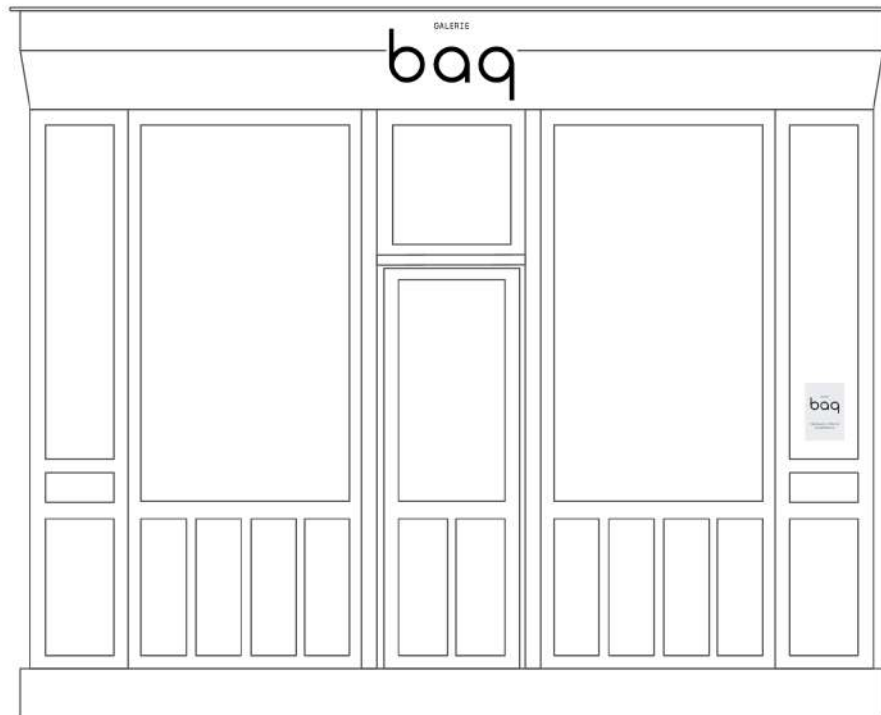
His notable exhibitions include Recursive Fables, A+ WORKS of ART, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2022; Institute of Distance, S.E.A Focus 2021 (S.E.A Focus Digital and S.E.A Focus Curated hyper-horizon), Tanjong Pagar Distripark, Singapore, 2021; Necessary Fictions, The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, HCMC, Vietnam, 2019 and Cheat Codes, FRONT Art Space, New York, NY, USA, 2019.

He has participated in a wide range of residencies and projects, namely Programme de Réciprocité, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France, 2022; 3rd ASEAN Artists Residency Programme, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2022; Digital Design & Media Residency, RMIT University Vietnam, HCMC, Vietnam, 2020; Residency, PLOP, London, UK, 2019; Visual Art Residency, The Corporation of Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, NY, USA, 2019; and Month of Arts Practice, Heritage Space, Hanoi, Vietnam, 2015.

His works are collected by prominent public collections in Southeast Asia, including the Nguyen Art Foundation, The Yeap Lam Yang Collection, and The Outpost.

Hà Ninh Pham is represented by A+ Works of Art in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He currently serves as a lecturer in the Faculty of Creative Industry Design at RMIT University Vietnam.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY



**Galerie BAQ** opened in 2023, under the direction of Lê Thiên-Bảo and Quinnie SG Tan. Situated in the heart of Paris, Galerie BAQ champions and amplifies contemporary art from the world's emerging centers of creativity, working directly and in collaboration with artists who have ties to Southeast Asia and their diasporic communities everywhere. In addition to artists whose work creates dialogue with Southeast Asia, Galerie BAQ is curious about forms of cultural production and creative expression that engage with complex histories and identities, reimagine traditions, and challenge dominant ideologies.

<https://galeriebaq.com/>

## LES DIRECTRICES



### **LÊ Thiên-Bảo**

*Co-founder / Director*

Bảo divides her time between Ho Chi Minh City and Paris. Since 2010, her curatorial practice has been exploring the best ways to promote contemporary art in Southeast Asia by raising awareness and connecting artists and their communities. After curating the first contemporary art center in Vietnam (The Factory) from 2016 to 2019, she structured Nỗ Cái Bùm, an artist-run art festival in 2020 and 2022. In France, she commissioned several exhibitions, notably with Château La Coste (2019), A2Z Art Gallery (2022, 2023), and POUISH (2023).

In April 2023, she co-founded Galereo BAQ in Paris with the aim of creating a dialogue between Southeast Asian and European art practices.



### **Quinnie SG TAN**

*Co-founder / Director of Operations*

Quinnie holds a bachelor's degree in architecture and cultural studies from Yale University. After moving to Paris in 2019, she completed a master's degree in public affairs at Sciences Po, focusing on cultural policy. During her 16-year career in public service, she served as a trusted policy advisor and senior administrator on complex civic projects involving affordable housing, streetcar expansion and waterfront redevelopment.

As co-founder of Galerie BAQ, Quinnie will lead day-to-day operations, overseeing administrative, financial and legal functions, as well as developing community programs with external partners.

Image © Mathilde Cazès



## **CONTACT**

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