

# Chào Fulbright

*The Fulbright Program in Vietnam  
Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy  
Rose Garden Tower, 6 Ngoc Khanh  
Ha Noi, Viet Nam*

**The Fulbright Program was proposed to the U.S. Congress in 1945 by Senator J. William Fulbright. The program was signed into law by President Truman in 1946 and is now active in over 150 countries worldwide. The Fulbright Program in Vietnam began in 1992, with the establishment of the Vietnamese Student program. The program now has the following components:**

- Vietnamese Scholar Program
- Vietnamese Student Program
- U.S. Scholar Program
- U.S. Student Program
- U.S. Senior Specialist Program
- Fulbright Economics Teaching Program in Ho Chi Minh City

Each year, 25-30 Vietnamese citizens are granted scholarships to pursue a Master's degree or post-doctoral research in the U.S. Likewise, 20-25 Americans receive grants to lecture or pursue research in Vietnam.

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## From the Director

Greetings from the Fulbright office! For many of you, summer is a time for rest and relaxation, but the Fulbright program is as busy as ever.

At the beginning of this summer, we held pre-departure orientations for 28 Vietnamese scholars and students who will begin their programs in the U.S. this year. We are also preparing to welcome 8 American scholars and students to Vietnam in September.

Additionally, the Fulbright Program recently provided two Senior Specialists to institutions in

Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Their stories are inside.

Last but not least, we are pleased to announce the arrival of the U.S. Embassy's new Public Affairs Officer, James A. Warren, who will be responsible for overseeing the Fulbright program on behalf of the State Department. We hope Fulbright alumni and friends will have a chance to greet Jim personally at upcoming Fulbright events.

As we are adding more staff soon, we look forward to both streamlining and enhancing our



work and service to the Fulbright Program and community. Please enjoy the summer issue of the Fulbright newsletter, and remember that we always welcome contributions from readers.

Best wishes,  
Dr. Tran Xuan Thao

## Welcoming New Public Affairs Officer James Warren



After studying Vietnamese in Washington, D.C. for seven months, Public Affairs Officer James A. Warren arrived in Hanoi in May to begin a three-year posting in Vietnam. He is accompanied by his family: wife Naiyana, 14-year-old daughter Joanna, and 13-year-old son Nathan. Like their father, both children are musicians—Joanna plays the piano and Nathan plays the trumpet. The entire family is looking forward to a long and enjoyable stay in Vietnam. "There are so many beautiful places to visit," Mr. Warren says. "I have already visited Ha Long Bay, one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen in any country. My family and I will be going to the beach at Nha

Trang in August. We also want to visit the mountains near Da Lat. And, I am looking forward to seeing the old capital of Hue when I attend the events there to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Fulbright Program in Vietnam."

Originally from Sacramento, the state capital of California, Mr. Warren studied music at San Francisco State University and played the clarinet in a symphony orchestra for 6 years. He then entered the MBA program at San Jose State University, and in 1990, decided to enter the Foreign Service because, he says, "I enjoy seeing how other people live and how other societies are organized." He has served in the Public Affairs sections of a variety of U.S. Embassies, including Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Bangkok, Thailand; Lagos, Nigeria; Calcutta, India; and Dhaka, Bangladesh. His most recent posting was in Vientiane, Laos, from 2002-2006. He says, "I really en-

joyed managing the Fulbright program [in Laos] because it is a real pleasure to work with bright, enthusiastic young adults eager for the chance to study in the U.S. so they can build good lives for themselves and help their country develop. I am also proud of the two American Centers I opened, one in Vientiane and one in Luang Prabang. They both have many books and computers with information about the United States, as well as materials for studying English."

In addition to his many other duties as Public Affairs Officer in Hanoi, Mr. Warren will be responsible for overseeing the Fulbright Program in Vietnam. He believes that the Fulbright Program is the most important activity he is involved in, because, as he says, "No other program will have as significant an effect on the mutual understanding between the American and Vietnamese peoples as this program."

The Fulbright Program in Vietnam is pleased to welcome Mr. Warren to the U.S. Embassy.

## Vietnamese Scholar Pre-Departure Orientation 2007



**Applications for the 2008 Vietnamese Scholar Program are now available on the Fulbright website. The deadline is October 15, 2007.**

From June 15-16, eight new Vietnamese Fulbright Scholars met for a pre-departure orientation. During her opening remarks to the group, Assistant Public Affairs Officer Angela Aggeler said, *“You’ve been given an extraordinary opportunity. The word “opportunity” comes from the Latin “ob portus”, meaning ‘toward the port.’ It refers to the fact that ancient sailing ships would wait for the right wind to carry them into or out of the harbor. It strikes me that this is a particularly appropriate word for a group launching themselves on the Fulbright Scholars Program. Each one of us found an auspicious wind that takes us from a home harbor and out into the world. The experiences that we gain from venturing beyond our homes are invaluable. The diversity and distinctions that we observe in other people and cultures can change our lives. But perhaps even more powerful is the realization of how much we share, the values we each embrace and the familiar ideals we find far from home. I am so pleased to meet those of you who are preparing to travel far, see new lands, learn many new things, and will then bring that understanding back to Vietnam.”*

The orientation provided the scholars with useful and practical information to help them maximize their time in the U.S. In addition to the briefings by Embassy officers on economic, political, visa, and health issues, a number of other Fulbright alumni shared their experiences with health insurance, U.S. academic culture, and issues related to dependents.

The group also enjoyed a reception with Ambassador Michael Marine, who congratulated them on their accomplishments and wished them luck during their time in the United States.

| Name                     | Field of Study         | Institution in Viet Nam                                | Host Institution in U.S.  |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| Dr. Dao Trong Hung       | Environmental Sciences | Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources          | East-West Center, University of Hawaii  |
| Dr. Nguyen An Ha         | Economics              | Institute for European Studies                         | University of Oklahoma  |
| Dr. Nguyen Minh Tri      | Mathematics            | Institute of Mathematics                               | University of Chicago   |
| Dr. Nguyen Thi Hoang Yen | Physics                | National Center for Technical Progress                 | University of California, Irvine  |
| Dr. Nguyen Kim Dung      | Education              | Institute for Educational Research in Ho Chi Minh City | Higher Learning Commission of the North-Central Association of Colleges and Schools |
| Dr. Nguyen Thi Vinh      | Agriculture            | Institute of Agricultural Genetics                     | University of Missouri  |
| Dr. Quach Manh Hao       | Economics              | National Economics University                          | Harvard University  |
| Dr. Tran Thi Hoa         | Biological Sciences    | Institute of Agricultural Genetics                     | University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  |

## Vietnamese Student Pre-Departure Orientation 2007



**Preliminary applications for the 2009 Vietnamese Student Program will be available by December 2007. Check our website for updates.**

Twenty new Fulbright students gathered in Ha Noi from May 18-19 to participate in a pre-departure orientation. The highlight of the event was a dinner hosted by Ambassador Michael Marine at his residence in Hanoi. The orientation featured sessions on pre-departure planning, culture shock, tips for academic success, and visa instructions. Over

15 Fulbright alumni, both U.S. and Vietnamese, were present to provide first-hand knowledge about life in the U.S. After the orientation, grantees commented:

*"In general, what was discussed at the PDO was what I read in various Int'l student handbooks. But the PDO has lively presented that info. It was great!"*

*"I thought the U.S. was different from VN just like other countries. Now I learned some subtleties which were really interesting."*

*"I'm glad to hear that most Fulbrighters said most Americans they met were nice."*

*"The U.S. is a country with so many differences to Vietnam, but it is not too difficult to adapt to."*

*"Before the orientation, the U.S. was just a place for me to study (in). However, I have now learnt that it is also a place for me to explore my potential parts through culture, exchange and social experience."*

| Name                       | City/Province   | Field of Study          | University in the U.S.          |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mr. Bui Huu Minh Tri       | An Giang        | Public Health           | San Diego State                 |
| Ms. Cao Le Thanh Hai       | Hue             | American Studies        | University of Kansas            |
| Ms. Cao Ngoc Lam Vien      | Tp. Ho Chi Minh | TESOL                   | Southern Illinois University    |
| Mr. Doan Hong Son          | Ha Noi          | Law                     | George Washington University    |
| Mr. Duong Trong Hue        | Quang Tri       | Communications          | University of Northern Iowa     |
| Ms. Ha Thi Thanh Huyen     | Ha Noi          | International Relations | George Washington University    |
| Mr. Ha Thai Trong Danh     | Kien Giang      | TESOL                   | Central Michigan University     |
| Mr. Le Quang Minh          | Tp. Ho Chi Minh | Finance                 | Tulane University               |
| Ms. Nghiem Thi Kim Hoa     | Ha Noi          | Rural Development       | Brandeis University             |
| Mr. Nguyen Phan Truong     | Tp. Ho Chi Minh | Urban Planning          | Texas A&M University            |
| Mr. Nguyen Hoang Giang     | Ha Noi          | International Relations | Syracuse University             |
| Ms. Nguyen Thi Minh Nguyet | Ha Noi          | Journalism              | University of Oregon            |
| Ms. Nguyen Minh Chau       | Ha Noi          | Journalism              | University of Missouri          |
| Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Ha      | Ha Noi          | Business                | Willamette University           |
| Ms. Nguyen Than Thuong     | Ha Noi          | Public Administration   | University of Missouri          |
| Mr. Nguyen Ba Truong Giang | Ha Noi          | Public Policy           | Cornell University              |
| Mr. Nguyen Xuan Hung       | Thanh Hoa       | TESOL                   | St. Michael's College           |
| Mr. Pham Thuc Truong Luong | Ha Noi          | Business                | Worcester Polytechnic Institute |
| Mr. Tran Ba Tien           | Nghe An         | TESOL                   | San Francisco State University  |
| Mr. Vu Cuong               | Ha Noi          | Business                | Brandeis University             |

## Vinh Enrichment Seminar and Open Forum

In May, eight U.S. Fulbright Scholars and Students traveled to the north-central city of Vinh, in Nghe An province, for an enrichment seminar and open forum at Vinh University. The grantees shared their research experiences with each other, and discussed life and culture in the U.S. with the students and faculty at the university. "The Fulbright enrichment seminar in Vinh was enlightening," one scholar commented. "I found the reports on each student or scholar's work the most interesting since the projects and outcomes were so varied." After the open forum, a U.S. student wrote, "The questions from the Vinh City students reflected differences in schooling, social upbringing, and societal values and forced me to re-examine the differences between the modern value systems of Vietnamese and Americans."

In addition to these exchanges, the U.S. Fulbrighters had time for several excursions. Nghe An is the home province of Vietnam's most famous son, Ho Chi Minh, and the group visited several historic sites related to his childhood in the province.



*France Nguyen presents her public health research at the Enrichment Seminar for scholars and students*



*Vinh University students chat with Linh Vuong, U.S. Student program, at the Open Forum*



*The Fulbright group visits Ho Chi Minh's house in Nam Dan commune, Nghe An province*

## Fulbright Senior Specialist Vladimir Briller lectures on "Educational Administration and Leadership Development"



*Dr. Briller receives a plaque of appreciation from the HCMC University of Education*

From July 14 to July 28, the Fulbright Program in Vietnam organized two conferences on "Educational Administration and Leadership Development" designed specifically to support Minister of Education Nguyen Thien Nhan's efforts to modernize Vietnam's educational system and bring it more in line with international standards and practices. The first program, held in collaboration with the HCMC College of Education, was attended by 40 senior administrators from several colleges and universities in the HCMC area. The second program, a 3-day conference for 62 senior administrators from 11 Community Colleges located throughout Vietnam and the three planned Colleges, was held July 24-26 at Vinh Long Community College. The program was co-sponsored by the Vietnamese Association of Community Colleges, and attended by rectors, vice-rectors, department heads, and officials from MOET. The workshops were led by Dr. Vladimir Briller, from the PRATT Institute in New York City, who focused on educational management, decision-making and the characteristics and qualities of effective college and university leaders. PAO Jim Warren gave closing remarks and presented certificates to participants at the closing ceremonies for both programs.

Dr. Briller's participation was funded by the Fulbright Senior Specialists Program. In his final report, Dr. Briller wrote: "Vietnam institutions of higher education are willing to change and to become more adjusted to international standards. People are hard-working and receptive to new ideas. I plan to invite CIECER representatives to my Institute to learn the U.S. experience in running private institutions of higher education. I have already started extensive e-mail exchanges with many participants and the VACC Board to advise them on strategic planning. I plan both personal and professional contacts; I am a part of extensive professional network of university administrators from 9 countries. I hope Vietnam will become the 10th. My experience so far has been outstanding."

## “American Art, Vietnamese Vision”, by Sherry Goodman

*Fulbright Senior Specialist Sherry Goodman, Director of Education and Academic Relations at the University of California’s Berkeley Art Museum, conducted a seminar entitled “Topics in American Art: From Colonial Art to Multiculturalism” at Hanoi University from April 18-May 13.*

"What's the difference between New York City and Manhattan?!" asked one understandably confused student. My class in American art had just watched the famous 1921 experimental short film "Manhatta" that pictures one dynamic day in the life of the city. I'd shown the film to introduce the Machine Age in the course I taught this past spring at Hanoi University. As I started to explain New York City's five boroughs verbally, my colleague, historian Doug Jardine, bounded up to the blackboard to draw a map—thereby illustrating the adage "a picture is worth a thousand words" that I'd recited in my introductory lecture! It was also an illustration of the need to think through more than one level of context for American art when presenting it to students abroad.



To make American art as relevant as possible to students in the Faculty of International Studies (FIS), I planned a series of art history topics that would intersect with important issues in America's cultural development—national identity, technology, consumerism, multiculturalism, et al. And historical episodes like the American Revolution, the Civil War, the Depression, and the social protest movements of the 60s took on new dimensions when "illustrated" by artists of those times. My main goal was to help students see how American visual art embodies American culture. Several students told me, however, that what they most gained from the course was how it opened their eyes, as well as their minds, to art itself.

Some reactions surprised me. Many students found an early Colonial portrait of mother and baby—to my eyes, a charming pair—cold and unappealing. Perhaps less surprising was their skepticism about abstract art, which the radiant, nature-based abstract visions of Georgia O'Keeffe helped warm them to. A highlight was the field trip to the Hanoi Museum of Fine Arts. Though there was no American art to study first-hand, the treasures of Vietnamese painting on view gave students the chance to use their new approaches to looking in order to explore their own artistic culture as well. Each chose an artwork to visually analyze as well as to research. From their interpretations, I learned a lot about the students' vision of things—for example, how attached these urban young people were to the idea of the countryside.

Dr. Bui Phuong Lan, the inspired and irrepressible dean of FIS, made me feel wonderfully at home in her department, and convened faculty meetings that centered on how art could enrich the larger curriculum, including courses on the environment and on world civilization. Conversations about art, about the US, and also about the students' professional aspirations continued after class over delicious restorative meals in the student canteen (I especially loved the daily array of cooked greens: morning glory stems, water spinach, sweet potato buds!).

I'm indebted to Dr. Lan, as well as to university president Dr. Nguyen Xuan Vang and Vietnam Fulbright director Dr. Tran Xuan Thao, for recognizing the potential of visual art to enrich the International Studies curriculum, and for matching me with the program and its delightful as well as impressive students. I'm looking forward to returning to teach again...perhaps to participate in a new service learning project in a nearby hill-tribe region. In whichever ways, I hope that my unforgettable Fulbright experience now has an ongoing life of its own, in my future, at Hanoi University, and beyond.



*Discussing Georgia O'Keeffe's painting, "Evening Star"*



*The class takes a field trip to the Museum of Fine Arts in Ha Noi*

## **“Warm-hearted Lubbock: the bridge for friendship and peace between Vietnam and the U.S.A.” by Dr. Tran Thi Bich Lieu**

*Vietnamese Scholar Dr. Tran Thi Bich Lieu studied higher education at Texas Tech University during her 2005-06 Fulbright fellowship.*



Lubbock is a city in Texas, one of the biggest states in the United States. The city is located on flat land approximately 1,000 meters above sea level. Lubbock has many churches, beautiful parks and large farms. The population here is small, 210,000 people on 297.85 square kilometers of land. All streets are numbered, but avenues have names. Streets and avenues are connected to each other and form a chess table. It is very easy to find your way here. Flint Avenue is one of the most beautiful streets in Lubbock with a lot of green trees and parks. It is rare to see tall buildings here. People live in one-story houses peacefully and very silently among the trees.

This city is especially hospitable and friendly. People who do not know each other say “hello” on the streets. Most American people I have met love peace. They have a special positive emotion for Vietnam. In our talking, I realize that, people want to have peace, friendship, beauty and love. Dr. Diane Oliver lives here with me and Phuong, a doctoral student at Texas Tech University who is from Ho Chi Minh National University. An American lady lives with two Vietnamese persons and we feel like a special and happy family.

Diane worked in the Vietnam Center of Texas Tech University for five years and then she moved to teach Higher Education in College of Education. Diane knows a lot of things about Vietnam. She is a “Buddhism-hearted” lady, as one of her college friends said. She is willing to help all Vietnamese students, and sympathizes with everyone who lives in difficulties. She has been in Vietnam many times, and there, she met with warm-hearted Vietnamese people. The way they have treated her has had a favorable impact on her relations and her thinking about Vietnam. Not only she, but other Americans say the same thing to me, that they love Vietnam and once they have visited the country, they want to return and do something for Vietnam. They wish for Vietnam to become a prosperous nation and for the Vietnamese people to live there peacefully, with good lives in a beautiful country.

The Vietnam Center and Texas Tech University have been implementing some projects in the Mekong Delta to help develop Community Colleges in this region. Lubbock preserves artifacts and archival materials about the war between the United States of America and Vietnam before 1975 in its Vietnam Archive in Texas Tech University. In this Archive, war has not only a fierce face, but also something that reflects the nature of human beings, of love, of humanity, especially evident in the diaries of Vietnam soldier Dr. Tram. Why did American soldiers keep her diaries for more than 30 years? Why do people here, who work in this Archive respect her diaries so much? War is death, loss, devastating and heartless. Nobody wants war and let it never happen again.

The autumn in Lubbock returns late, when the green trees in other areas in US turned to yellow a month ago. A cold morning with yellow sunlight covers the city, but there is warmth in minds and souls of the people. The warm and kind hearts of people bring them close to each other. Lubbock is one of the bridges for peace and friendship between Vietnam and United States of America.

## **Le Hoang Nam, Vietnamese student 2006-08, discovers Miami**

Hi everyone, I am Nam Hoang Le, MPH student of Graduate School of Public Health at University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. I would like to share some information which I got when I took part in Fulbright Enrichment Seminar in Miami from February 22 to February 25<sup>th</sup> 2007.

To tell the truth, before coming to Miami, I knew very little about it. I only had some concepts which I heard from my American friends and what I watched on TV, such as the beauty of Miami city and beautiful weather all around year, etc. Therefore, I was excited to see Miami with my own eyes and discover the daily life as well as the culture of Miami people in reality. On the way from the airport to Miami Beach Hotel where the seminar would be held, I was pretty impressed by the beauty of the city. The roads and buildings are located along the sea-side. All Fulbrighters on the bus had the same common thought: “That is awesome! How beautiful Miami is!”

The theme of the 2007 Miami Fulbright Enrichment Seminar, “Leadership and Public Service”, helped participants to examine the ways in which individuals and organizations work together to build positive social changes in communities. Along with it, this forum made good opportunities for fellow Fulbright students to present their own work in community development and leadership. In addition, a group simulation activity allowed me to work with other Fulbrighters to develop a program that focused on addressing a need in the Miami community.



Extracurricular activities of the seminar were also very interesting, such as a high school visit and having dinner with local residents. Visiting high school classes in Miami was my unforgettable memory. I had talks with the kids in two classes and we had a lot of fun. Kids asked me a lot of interesting questions in relation to my background and Vietnam country as well. Through talking with them, I also understood much more about American students’ perception of other countries around the world, especially Vietnam.

To wrap it up, I personally think that this seminar promoted mutual understanding of the diversity of culture and peoples between the United States and other countries all over the world.

## Graduation Day and Beyond: Vietnamese Students after Fulbright

Truong Thu Huyen ('06-'07, 2nd from right), graduated from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University with a Master's in Public Administration. She writes, "From August to December this year, I will be enrolled into the Asia Pacific Leadership Program, a signature program of the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii. The program involves coursework and working within a diverse community, which focuses on two areas: a) personal and leadership development and b) interpreting emerging issues facing the Asia Pacific."



Do Tien Doan, (right, '05-'07) studied Environmental Management at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is currently working for a PCB project funded by the World Bank under the supervision of the Vietnam Environmental Protection Agency.



Nguyen Thi Bich Thuy ('05-'07, center), obtained her Master's in International Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, in Washington, D.C.

"My two years at SAIS as a Fulbrighter is a great experience for me. I not only had an opportunity to broaden my knowledge on international relations but also understand more about American people and culture and make very good friends. Now I am doing my Academic Training at the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council in Washington, D.C. I hope I will be able to make a contribution to trade promotion between Vietnam and the United States."



Truong Nu Minh Ngoc, (left, '05-'07), studied Business at Southern Illinois University, in Carbondale, Illinois. She tells us, "As you can see, I had my Mom and my brother with me at my graduation to share those happy moments with me. I came back to Vietnam in June. I have been quite busy since then in order to adapt to my 'normal' life here. I got a job as an investment officer at BankInvest, which has just set up a private equity fund of US \$80 million to invest in Vietnam. I have a lot of chances to apply what I learnt from my MBA program to the real business world. On top of that, I am happy that I can support and provide assistance to local companies to help them become stronger and better in the market."

Nguyen Thi Thu Thao (right, '05-'07) writes, "This photo was taken when I attended a town hall meeting in Maryland between Governor Martin O'Malley and Asian/Pacific Islander communities in Maryland. I studied US politics in my MA at American University in DC, so it was quite special for me to witness democracy at work where politicians listen to concerns and wishes of various ethnic groups in their state.

Since I returned to Hanoi, I continue to work with the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVA), starting a new program called DRIVE Dioxin Resolution Initiative in Vietnam. This is a humanitarian program, implemented in 11 provinces, that provides direct assistance to people and families supposedly affected by exposure to dioxin/toxic chemicals used during the war. The experience and knowledge that I learned from my two years studying and interning in Washington have helped me tremendously in my work – an area which is considered among the most politically sensitive issues between the two countries. I am so pleased to see how this issue has progressed in the last one year much faster than it did in the last 32 years since the end of the war. Being part of this process is a rewarding experience."



Le Phuc Nguyen Tuan (left, '05-'06) is an IT Management major from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is currently working for BSquare, a software engineering firm in Bellevue, Washington. He writes, "Washington is a nice state, the weather is cool. It is very convenient for all kinds of outdoor activities (water sports, camping, hiking, fishing, etc.). I have a lot of chances for all of them, so I play hard, and also work hard."

## “Black Box,” an exhibit by Fulbright alumna PhiPhi Oanh Nguyen, opens at the National Museum of Fine Arts



Ambassador Michael Marine and museum Director Truong Quoc Binh, along with the artist, cut the ribbon at the exhibit

On July 19, Ambassador Michael Marine opened the exhibit “Black Box” at Vietnam’s National Museum of Fine Arts. The exhibit features a series of lacquer painted boxes by former Fulbright Student (Katherina) PhiPhi Oanh Nguyen. Originally from Houston, Texas, Ms. Nguyen now lives and works in Ha Noi. After exhibiting in Ha Noi, the show will travel to Spain and on to the United States.



### From the artist’s statement (abridged):

#### Concept

Black Box is a stroll through memories of scenes so commonplace and recurring that they are overlooked in our daily lives. Yet over time, the sum of these instants forms the structure for the collective impression of an experience: a place, a culture, a period in one’s life.

#### Materials

Mysterious and sensual, the lacquer resin has unique characteristics that make it incomparable to any other image-creating medium in the West. Temperamental to its environment, lacquer remains at the mercy of humidity, heat, time and space. This can be demonstrated by the fact that depending on the percentage of the natural humidity on a given day or place, the resin may or may not set. Even when it does, the colors may vary greatly. The artist is powerless to control completely the outcome of each image and must allow chance to play its part. Thus, this body of work serves not only as a metaphor of memory formation, but also as a direct and active witness to one’s immediate environment.

The resin itself, the color of dark amber or molasses, comes from the earth. A painting encompasses in its production all the main elements: water, air, earth, and wood. As a result, the finished painting is an accumulation of time, environmental factors, state of mind, and reflections of a memory that symbiotically form a single meditative image. To the touch, the surface may seem smooth and flat like a mirror, but

the rich textures and deep colors beneath the surface evoke the mind’s eye gazing upon a memory.

#### Artist

This body of work examines the themes of exploration and passage that have affected me directly on a personal level. Born in Houston to Vietnamese parents, I have always been struck by stark contrast between Vietnamese culture and Western values. In late 2004, I was awarded the Fulbright Student Grant which allowed me to travel to Vietnam for the first time and to begin my exploration of traditional Vietnamese lacquer painting. This installation was created in Ha Noi.



The piece entitled “Motor Corpse”



## Kelly Lan Phuong Le, U.S. Student 2006-07, featured in Lao Dong newspaper

The work done by U.S. Fulbrighters in Vietnam often attracts media attention. Below is a translation of an article from Lao Dong (Labor) newspaper that appeared on June 19, 2007.

**LAO ĐÔNG**

Di tìm sự thông hiểu...  
Lao Động số 139 Ngày 19/06/2007 Cập nhật: Thứ Hai, 18/06/2007 - 10:27 PM

In bài này

(LD) - 13 năm sau khi rời Sài Gòn định cư tại bang Florida (Hoa Kỳ), cuối năm 2006, họa sĩ trẻ Kelly Lan Phuong Lê mới lần đầu trở về quê nhà.

Thực hiện các tác phẩm nghệ thuật, tham gia tổ chức đấu giá tranh từ thiện... - những gì Kelly thực hiện tại quê nhà là để tìm sự thông hiểu...

Kelly Lan Phuong (ảnh) là một trong khoảng 10 nghệ sĩ, họa sĩ trẻ người Mỹ gốc Việt đang sống, làm việc tại TPHCM. Lấy xong bằng cử nhân sư phạm mỹ thuật, văn chương phê bình và lịch sử mỹ thuật của ĐHTH Florida, tháng 11.2006, Kelly một mình về quê mẹ sau khi đoạt giải thưởng Chương trình Fulbright. "Chương trình tài trợ cho em về VN trong 9 tháng để thực hiện đề tài. Nhưng em nghĩ, em vẫn chưa hiểu hết người Việt nên sẽ ở lại thêm một



"Seeking mutual understanding...."

13 years after emigrating to Florida from Saigon, young artist Kelly Lan Phuong Le returned for the first time to her homeland at the end of 2006. Kelly is promoting mutual understanding by organizing several exhibitions, as well as participating in a charity art auction.

Kelly Lan Phuong is one of approximately 10 Vietnamese-American artists living and working in Ho Chi Minh City. With a bachelor's degree in art education, and cultural criticism from the University of Florida in 2006, Kelly returned to her motherland on her own after winning a Fulbright Research Fellowship. "The program sponsors me to come to Vietnam for 9 months in order to carry out research. But I believe I have yet to truly understand the Vietnamese people, thus I plan to stay for one more year," Kelly says.

In the 7 months she has been in her homeland, Kelly has staged 3 independent exhibitions: In December 2006 at Himiko Café, she presented a video and light installation, which commented on the Western view of Vietnamese traditional feminism, on March 12, 2007, at the Ho Chi Minh University of Fine Arts she presented "Elementary Remenances," an mixed media installation that spoke of her childhood experiences in America suburbia. From July 13-31, at the Ryllega Gallery (Ha Noi), Kelly will have another show, integrating light and video, called "Sins of a Viet Kieu." "I invite everyone to participate in these exhibitions," Kelly says. "The visitors can write on their ideas about the Viet Kieu (overseas



Vietnamese) community on the walls and afterwards, I will reply to them on the opposite wall. Often, Vietnamese only see the positive aspects of life of the Viet Kieu such as their 'wealth'; they don't fully understand the challenges of the Viet Kieu experience, both in Vietnam and in their host country." Additionally, she participated in the group collaboration on a project called "Exquisite Crisis and Encounters" in the U.S. from February 15 to March 31, along with 7 artists from Ho Chi Minh City.

No matter which form of expression she uses, each of Kelly's exhibitions lead towards one goal: to find common understanding between Vietnamese people who live in Vietnam and Viet Kieu, especially with the young population of both sides. "Before returning to Vietnam, I knew I was a Vietnamese-American, standing between two cultures. After 7 months, I still don't think of myself as a true Vietnamese person. Art helps me to learn more about the Vietnamese people in order to understand for myself what it means to be Vietnamese," Kelly says.

This past May and June, Kelly organized two art auctions for East Meets West Foundation's Operation Healthy Heart Program and Thao Dan Street Children Foundation. Having had opportunities to work with young artists in Ho Chi Minh City, Kelly remarks, "They are talented. But they don't know how to express their ideas verbally and literally, although they know what their ideas are. They still depend on critics and gallery owners to state their objectives. Their artistic activities are too limited." Kelly intends to establish of a group called "Con Art— which promotes CONceptualized and CONtemporary art." She hopes to create a website that would provide Vietnamese artists with means to locate overseas funding for their projects and introduce their ideas to the world. "That's how I want to repay the kindness and generosity I have received during my time in Vietnam. Isn't that the American way?" Kelly Lan Phuong asks, smiling.

By Thuy An

At left, a video still from Kelly's exhibition. At right, a piece entitled "Ignited Contemplation"



## Where are they now? Alumni stories

**Ms. Do Minh Thuy studied Journalism at Indiana University from 2004-2006. She currently works for Time Magazine in Ha Noi.**

*What do you remember most about your Fulbright experience in the United States?*

My one year and a half program in the United States under Fulbright Program ended, leaving me with joy and tears. Academically speaking, the Fulbright program placed me at the wonderful campus of Indiana University at Bloomington. There at the School of Journalism, I received attentive instruction and encouraging attitudes from my professors as I was trying my best to study while adjusting to a new life and environment. The instructions, seminars and lectures were clear and in great detail. I remember the good relationship, the comportment and interaction among students and professors. There didn't seem to be a distance since professors were always there trying to understand our difficulties and were ready to help. My program would not be such a success without the help from J-school's professors including David Nord, Nancy Comiskey, David Weaver, John Dilts and many others whose names will be with me forever.

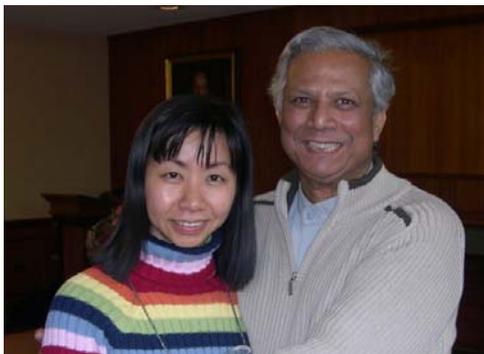
*How has your Fulbright experience contributed to your professional and personal development in Vietnam?*

I am indebted to Fulbright program for giving me a training opportunity in Journalism in the U.S. Professionally speaking, throughout the seminars and lectures with professors, I was instructed with Western-style writing techniques, ethical issues, press law as well as updated with U.S press society. We have had critical discussions on various cases in the world of press in order to withdraw lessons for us to apply to our profession. I am now a moderator for Vietnam Journalism website, an online forum where I can exchange views and handover the knowledge I've learned. I hope it can help other journalists in my country. Throughout the course, I've been inspired by the freedom of press and freedom of speech and got to know what the American press league are doing to enhance their role in the society and monitor the Government's transparency. I've learned to keep our morale high. The training course is really a treasure to my life and my profession. And I am thankful to Fulbright Program for giving me such a great opportunity to fulfill my dream of being a good journalist. I hope I can contribute my knowledge to the press industry of Vietnam.

Personally speaking, I have had an opportunity to open my mind to a whole new world, the one in which mistrust is replaced by trust, misunderstanding is cleared. Getting to know people of different cultures and races was the best part of my time thanks to Fulbright's enrichment seminar, as it provided me a chance to understand various cultures, different currents of thoughts. We all feel the world is not a far-away or immense one, instead, it's like a global village in which every one of us is an element. A change in each element can affect others, thus we all bear responsibility to make our lives better.



*Do Minh Thuy interviews Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung with colleague Kay Johnson of Time Magazine*



*A Fulbright hug between Bich Ha and Dr. Muhammad Yunus, fellow Fulbrighter and Vanderbilt graduate. Dr. Yunus went on to win the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work in microfinance.*

**Ms. Nguyen Thi Bich Ha studied Business at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee from 2003-2005. She is the Deputy General Director at Eastern Asia Commercial Bank in Ho Chi Minh City, as well as Chairwoman of the Eastern Asia Money Transfer Company.**

*What do you remember most about your Fulbright experience in the United States?*

Participating in the Net Impact conferences in 2004 and 2005, I met with great people and saw that by different ways, MBAs can use the power of business to build a better world.

*How has your Fulbright experience contributed to your professional and personal development in VN?*

My Fulbright experience is wonderful. I have applied effectively a lot of what I learned in finance, human and organization performance, entrepreneurship. But most importantly, I learned to communicate well, to solve problems, and to lead others. Two years in the States brought me great friends, both American and international, that I will never forget.

## Can Tho University: A Fertile Ground for Fulbright

*Can Tho University, located in the Mekong Delta, has one of the largest concentrations of Vietnamese Fulbright alumni in the country. Since the start of the program, 8 staff members have participated as the Fulbright Student and Scholar, studying such diverse topics as Economics, Educational Administration, Rural Development, Literature, TESOL, and American Studies. Two of the eight alumni are featured below.*

**My name is Do Van Xe. I was awarded Fulbright scholarship in 1997 till 2000. I studied at Oklahoma State University (Ph.D) in Agricultural Economics. I am currently in the position of Vice-Rector of Can Tho University in charge of Education.**

*What do you remember most about your Fulbright experience in the United States?*

The wonderful thing I remember is the way Fulbright takes care of scholars. Every scholar is well taken of when he/she is awarded scholarship, placement to the university until he/she graduates. I may say that scholars always get help from Fulbright when they need.

*How has your Fulbright experience contributed to your professional and personal development in Vietnam?*

Education in the United States is very helpful for my job. Beside the knowledge of my major field, I learned the way of creatively thinking and organizing activities to make my work run smoothly. Learning from the Fulbright experience, I remember that in order to get succeed we need to pay attention carefully, even to the small things.



**Ms. Truong Thi Kim Lien is Deputy Dean of the English Department, School of Education, Can Tho University. She studied for her MA in American Literature at Boston College from 2001-2003.**

*What do you remember most about your Fulbright experience in the US?*

There are so many things I still remember, but perhaps the unforgettable experience should be the time I stayed with an American family in Brighton, MA from September 1 to October 6, 2001. My landlady was working for American Airlines at that time. One morning at about 8am I was about to leave the house for catching a shuttle bus to Boston College when my landlady stopped at the door with a shocking face. She told me that there was a big fire in NY city and if I would stay with her to watch the news on TV. Actually, I was not in an hurry so I accepted her suggestion. Then we sat in front of the TV in the big living room to search for CNN live program. Obviously it was far more than what we could imagine about the thing that was happening in NY. J. Boyer, my landlady, pointed at one of the two towers which was on fire and uttered some screaming sounds. I was also panicking but I tried to hold her hands so as to give her some strength. Some minutes later Barbara, a retired neighbor, called her and came to her house immediately. When both towers of the WTC were on fire the two ladies could not help

crying. No words could describe my feelings at that time. I was shocked, nervous, and confused. However, out of these feelings emerging in me the empathy towards these ladies and the desire to do something for them. With my two arms embracing the crying women, I told them it wouldn't be true that "America was under attack;" that everything would be over soon. Suddenly, Barbara turned to me and said: "Now I know what you experienced in your childhood in Vietnam, Kim and I have just learned how terrible war is, too." We then sat together holding hands and tears came in my eyes. I found true friendship under my American landlady's roof on the day of September 11.

*How has your Fulbright experience contributed to your professional and personal development in VN?*

My Fulbright experience has brought me valuable advancement in both professional and personal progress. First of all, I had a chance to take a Master program in English language study at Boston College which is one of the leading institutions in the US. When I came back to my own school, Can Tho University in south of Vietnam in June 2003, I was immediately appointed as head of the literature division. I have been using what I had studied I the US effectively. I have revised the syllabi using books I brought back from the US. Furthermore, by applying new pedagogies to teaching I make literature classes more tempting to my students. In terms of personal development, I think my Fulbright experience has changed me a lot. Now I am more confident and more mature in thinking and making decision. Most importantly, I have learned from an American teacher the idea of sharing. Once you received help from someone, you should do the same to other people who need your help.



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**“In the long course of history, having people who understand your thought is much greater security than another submarine.”**  
—Senator J. William Fulbright

## In this issue...



Lacquer art exhibit from a former U.S. Fulbrighter opens in Hanoi: the piece above is entitled “Aftertaste” (page 8)



Pre-Departure Orientations for the Vietnamese Scholar and Student Programs (photo above: outgoing Vietnamese Student grantees) (pages 2-3)

Senior Specialist  
Vladimir Briller  
lectures at the  
HCMC University  
of Education  
(page 4)



On page 7, meet some of the Vietnamese students who have graduated and returned to Vietnam—pictured here is Bui Ai Trang, who obtained her Master’s in Economic Development from Williams College in Massachusetts. She is currently working for International Development Enterprises in Hue.

