

On our pathway vol.4

An open studio by Lê Xuân Tiến

Opening party: 06.30 PM 08 September 2023
Manzi Art Space, 14 Phan Huy Ích, Ba Đình

Open studio featuring '*Snowy night*' - a series of videos on view from **09 September** until **30 September 2023**
Manzi Exhibition Space, số 2 ngõ Hàng Bún (from 11.00 AM to 07.00 PM, Tue-Sun)

Finale: screening short '*Sunny day*' và artist talk
03.30 PM 01 October 2023
Manzi Exhibition Space, số 2 ngõ Hàng Bún



'**On our pathway**' is an on-going series that Lê Xuân Tiến has been working on since the end of 2019, up until now, 3 volumes have been completed. In the upcoming open studio at manzi, Tiến will introduce the latest developments of this project - Volume no.4 which he described as "born from a concept of a man lying inside a frozen lamb bone, in the snow". The volume is composed of two bodies of works - a twin named 'Snowy Night' & 'Sunny Day'. 'Snowy Night' consists of 14 videos arranged as a multi-channel installation while 'Sunny Day' is a 30-minute short film.

Canned a single moment inside the closed space of the exhibition room, 'Snow Night' stages a nonlinear story. More precisely, its core setting is that time got stuck and unable to move forward as a matter of logic, leaving one isolated fragment of time bound. That moment was told over and over again by the co-presentations of various layers of scenes repeatedly projected on one wall, reflecting a solely locus from different perspectives:

A man lying still on the ground;

A beast inside a cave;

A gunman confronted a swordsman in front of that cave...

As their twisted fates entangled with each other, all characters, unable to do anything at their will, are forced to wait.

The opening act is clearly manifested, the ending destiny is already disclosed, causes & consequences are all unfolded and how to go from one point to another also has been instructed explicitly step by step; nevertheless, all is in vain. Except loosely joining each other into a half-closed loop of a frozen moment, the scenes and the characters are stuck, no possible happenings can be played, yet the curtain cannot be dropped, either.

In contrast to such a discontinued fracture, on the opposite wall is a series of independent objects and accidental events - a scattered collection recorded over a long period of time: *a winter melon, a needle, a gun, spear of Longinus, sleep paralysis,...* Though simultaneously projected on similar tablet screens, all reject to be imposed under any hierarchical system or connective structure. As much discursive as they seem to be, the collected images strangely echo each other, just like the natural resonance of a haiku poem. Neither logical rules nor conceptual chains can explicate these 'elements/lines'; they also, above all, do not seem to be dependent on their author's will, but rather, have been provoked by some intuitive

feelings, unexpected emotional waves or some random triggers (such as visual pieces recalled from a dream and an ear-catching melody,...). It's luck & fate that starts everything, then **all just runs its course**.

Adopting a paradoxical situation (yet, interestingly, not disguised as a type of allegory or tragedy) as a starting point to frame the entire Volume 4, the artist does not attempt to propose any existential question or poignant reminder of the 'fate and beings' / 'self & surrounding' relation. Rather, he intentionally resisted the idea of a '**SEARCH**', aimed to do nothing but simply to '**FIND & PICK UP**' then '**OFFER**' what remained to everyone.

*"Trees bear fruit, fruit ripens, and then falls. I pick up some fruits and temporarily call them:
'On our pathway'"*

- Artist's statement about his project

Probably that's the reason why 'Snowy Night' (and Vol.4 generally), despite its distinctive taste (interspersed with flavors of fantasy fiction and twisting mythical narrative) can not be served as a full course that we can enjoy easily and quickly. The arrangement of multi-channel straining time & space is not a meticulous preparation for a specific climax or denouement that would instantly overwhelm us by generating shock waves and nervous vibrations in our brains. Contrastly, other type signals to be detected, discordant notes are quietly waiting in the monotone. Such lyricism of chance and uncertainty.

Lê Xuân Tiến has a collage approach in his practice, using various materials as input resources: his original videotapes (both deliberately recorded or accidentally encountered), hand-drawn animation, mixed with found footage and public images on the internet. The visual data, therefore, is rich and raw, yet managed to be blended smoothly, though not soft at all. Once in a while, we can catch a taste of bitter, an offkey note, irritating like a small cut on finger. Throughout the 'Snowy night', these '*cuts*' are so shallow, just enough to scratch onto a tense & smooth surface stretching by black-gray-white palette and monotonous sound.

How weak the cuts are...

But in the endless loop of screenings, when our eyes get used to the space and darkness has faded, when our ears become familiar with the sound and that initially menacing stormy night has claimed to be no more threat,

in such diluted status of space and time,...

feelings of these cuts are gradually more obvious and intense, to a point that's so alarming.

No longer able to ignore it, our consciousness is trapped and pulled off its track.

The **Silent** - The **Seen** - The **Read** elements (the anchors our consciousness holds onto to navigate the visual language) in the images of 'Snowy night' and the whole Vol.4 as well, are fragmentary and chaotic. The cues for reasoning are, therefore, vague and useless. Perhaps by this way, our mind can be released from the tyranny of consciousness, thus, fresh and truthful observation will be followed, with honest contemplation naturally coming afterwards, no more requiring a definite conclusion.

*"For we are like the green earth that waits for snow
And like snow that waits for the thaw."*

- Paul Ernst (Brunhild)

Open studio will display 'Snowy night' until the end of 30 September, end with a FINALE event including a screening 'Sunny day', followed by an artist talk on the afternoon of 01 October

- PROJECT'S WEBSITE >>> <https://onourpathway.wordpress.com/>
- ARTIST'S WEBSITE >>> <https://lxtien.wordpress.com/>