



ARTIST STATEMENT

Beneath 'Colors of Gray,' a Toxic Undercurrent

Even on first glance, Thu-Van Tran's 'Colors of Grey' is rife with a sense of loss. Its palette of summery, evocative background colors bleeds into an ominous grayscale mélange informed by acts of ecocide against Vietnam, where the Paris-based painter was born.

BY JENNA ADRIAN-DIAZ

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Here, we ask an artist about the essential details behind one of their latest works.

Bio: Thu-Van Tran, 44, Paris.

Title of work: Colors of Grey

Where to see it: “In Spring, Ghosts Return” at Almine Rech, Tribeca.

Three words to describe this work: A surrender between beauty and obscurity.

What was on your mind at the time: My mind was haunted by the first act of ecocide on earth and our collective imagination remembers the American aviation flying over the millenary forests of Vietnam to drop dioxins. The colors that make up the gray in the paintings each reduce a chemical agent, a toxicity. These combined colors, although intense, inevitably form a gray chromatic field, a field of melancholy.



An interesting feature that's not immediately noticeable: I work with lime, a mineral that has a high absorption capacity: the traditional fresco's technique. The more I move, by gesture and with matter, the more the limestone gets inflamed which allows a dust that rises to the surface of the painting and delivers a haze, which is rather an earthy and mineral veil.

How the work reflects your practice as a whole: It does not derogate from a founding principle of my work which is to appear in a moment of contemplation and at the same time a space of idea, thought and memory.

One song that captures the work's essence: Mozart's "Requiem."