

An aerial, black and white photograph of a coastline. A large, billowing plume of white smoke or steam rises from the water near a small island or peninsula. The land is covered in dense vegetation, and the water is dark. The sky is overcast. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# SLIPPAGE

PHUONG NGO | HWAFFERN QUACH

VESSELS THAT  
LEAK FROM  
THE TOP

THIS IS NO FANTASY

dianne tanzer + nicola stein

# SLIPPAGE

PHUONG NGO | HWAFFERN QUACH

## *VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP*

When American political journalist (and close friend of Henry Kissinger) James Reston observed, 'The ship of state is the only known vessel to leak from the top', he was speaking of the flow of informational leaks from executive levels of government. The idea of a vessel leaking from the top is absurd and surreal, and yet this is what Reston considers an aspect of 'functional' government. In borrowing this term for their current exhibition, Slippage seeks to understand the relationship between decision making, information sharing, and actions taken during conflicts, particularly the Vietnam/American War.

*VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP* is a conceptual and material exploration into the intersections of historic events and the role of governments in determining the fate of the 'masses'. In this exhibition, Quach and Ngo have slip cast a series of objects from the detritus of war: artillery, mortar shells, and trench art objects collected from Vietnam have been transformed into stoneware vessels, a loose reference to existing Vietnamese vessels held in national collections like the NGV.

Commenting on the role of chemical companies like Monsanto and Dow Chemicals, the producer of the lethal plant defoliant Agent Orange, each piece has been finished in an orange glaze that has had the weedkiller Roundup introduced into it, creating a series of unknown outcomes. Quach and Ngo expand on this by altering, chipping, and breaking the moulds from which each piece is cast, to illustrate the accumulation of damage physically and visually because of the policies that have been enacted by *VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP*.

### BIO

SLIPPAGE is the collaborative practice of contemporary artists, Hwafern Quach and Phuong Ngo. Rooted in the materiality of clay, SLIPPAGE examines the cycles of history in conjunction with current geopolitical and economic issues through the lens of vernacular cultures, artefacts, and language.

Photography: Simon Strong



SLIPPAGE  
THIS IS NO FANTASY, Installation View, 2023  
Photo: Simon Strong

SLIPPAGE

VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP



SLIPPAGE

VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #1, 2023

'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware, books  
installation 20 x 38 x 82 cm, approx. 14 x 33 cm each  
\$3,300 (set of three)



SLIPPAGE

VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #2, 2023

'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware, archival pigment prints, wooden ammunition crate

installation 17 x 51 x 78 cm

\$5,000 (set of five)



SLIPPAGE

VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #3, 2023

'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware, archival pigment prints, wooden ammunition crate

installation 17 x 51 x 78 cm

\$5,000 (set of five)



SLIPPAGE

VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #4, 2023

'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware, archival pigment print  
installation 27 x 33 x 55 cm, approx. 10 x 33 cm each, print 11 x 14 cm

\$3,000 (set of four)



SLIPPAGE  
VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #5, 2023  
'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware  
approx. 15 x 28 cm each  
\$3,000 (set of three)





SLIPPAGE  
VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #6, 2023  
'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware  
approx. 13 x 30 cm each  
\$3,000 (set of three)



SLIPPAGE  
VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #7, 2023  
'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware  
approx. 15 x 28 cm each  
\$2,000 (pair)



SLIPPAGE  
VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #8, 2023 (left)  
VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #9, 2023 (right, pair)  
'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware  
(left) 16 x 29 cm, (right) 8 x 15 cm each  
\$1,200 / \$800 (pair)



SLIPPAGE  
VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP #10, 2023  
'Roundup' altered glazed stoneware, 8 pieces, stacked  
variable dimensions, approx. 13 x 5 cm each  
\$2,000



SLIPPAGE  
THIS IS NO FANTASY, Installation View, 2023  
Photo: Simon Strong

# PHUONG NGO

## CV

Lives and works in Melbourne, VIC  
SLIPPAGE est. 2018 – Collaboration with Hwafern Quach

### EDUCATION

- 2022 Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Doctor of Philosophy (Fine Art)
- 2012 Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Bachelor of Art (Fine Art) Honours
- 2005 Flinders University, Bachelor of Arts (Asian Studies, International Relations) Honours

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 (upcoming) Inheritance, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, VIC
- 2023 VESSELS THAT LEAK FROM THE TOP, SLIPPAGE, THIS IS NO FANTASY, Melbourne, VIC
- 2022 Lost and Found: Prayer, Plantation, Pastiche, THIS IS NO FANTASY, Melbourne, VIC  
Nostalgia For A Time That Never Was, The Substation, Melbourne, VIC
- 2021 Adrift From The Fall, Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, Ivanhoe, VIC
- 2019 Drunken Swine (SLIPPAGE), First Draft, Sydney, NSW  
Expansionism V (SLIPPAGE), Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo, VIC  
Expansionism IV (SLIPPAGE), Bus Projects, Melbourne, VIC  
Article 14.1, Sydney Festival, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, NSW  
The coconut doesn't fall far from the tree, but is sometimes carried away by a current, SEVENTH Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2018 Expansionism III, FELTspace, Adelaide, SA
- 2017 Conflicted: Works from the Vietnam Archive Project, The Substation, Melbourne, VIC
- 2014 Article 14.1, Next Wave Festival, No Vacancy Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2013 My dad the people smuggler, Counihan Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2012 Domino Theory, Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP), Melbourne, VIC  
The Vietnam Archive Project: Slide #1, SEVENTH Gallery, Melbourne, VIC

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 TarraWarra Biennial 2023 2023: ua ususi fa'ava'asavili, TarraWarra Museum of Art, VIC  
SPRING1883 Art Fair, THIS IS NO FANTASY, The Hotel Windsor, Melbourne, VIC  
MINH, Fairfield City Museum and Gallery, Fairfield, NSW  
Okkoota – alliance, gathering, assembly, Arts House, Melbourne, VIC  
ORBIT, THIS IS NO FANTASY, Melbourne, VIC
- 2022 Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, THIS IS NO FANTASY + Art Money, Sydney, NSW  
This language that is every stone, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, QLD  
1988, The Australian Art Orchestra, The Substation, Melbourne, VIC
- 2021 Asia Pacific Triennial (APT10), QAGOMA, Brisbane, QLD  
We will all eventually return to the earth, (SLIPPAGE) Ballarat Foto Biennale, Ballarat, VIC  
Stages, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne, VIC  
Ritual, Cairns Art Gallery, Cairns, QLD
- 2020 Older than Language, (SLIPPAGE), Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart, TAS
- 2019 The Essayist, Cross Arts Projects, Sydney, NSW  
Those Monuments Don't Know Us, Bundoora Homestead, Bundoora, VIC

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## CV

- 2018 Primavera, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, NSW  
In a World of Wounds, Artbank, Sydney, NSW  
Family Grimoires, SEVENTH Gallery, Melbourne, VIC  
Hyphenated, (SLIPPAGE), The Substation, Melbourne, VIC
- 2017 Photography 130 – Behind the Lens: 130 years of RMIT Photography, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2016 Belonging, Cheah Kongsu Obscura Festival, Penang, Malaysia
- 2015 Migratory Complex, Punctum, La Maison Folle
- 2014 Substation Contemporary Art Prize, The Substation, Melbourne, VIC  
What Follows Came Before, SEVENTH Gallery, Melbourne, VIC  
The Sievers Project, Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP), Melbourne, VIC  
Vietnam/Australia: Voicing the unspoken, Yarra Gallery, Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, Melbourne, VIC
- VIC
- 2013 Melbourne Now, National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Melbourne, VIC
- 2012 Come Sail your ships around me: stories of reaching Australia by sea, Atrium Gallery, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne, VIC  
Fresh Produce (How to make spring rolls and other Vietnamese cultural traits), Next Wave Festival, Melbourne, VIC
- 2011 Not Pictured, Pigment Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2010 My Life, Your Death, First Site Gallery, RMIT, Melbourne, VIC
- 2009 19/52, The Library Art Space, Melbourne, VIC

### AWARDS AND PRIZES

- 2023 Incinerator Art Award for Social Change (Finalist)
- 2022 Banyule Award for Works on Paper (Winner)  
Bowness Photography Prize (Finalist)  
Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award (Finalist)
- 2021 Darebin Art Prize (Finalist)
- 2020 Bowness Photography Prize (Finalist)  
National Photography Art Prize (MAMA) (Finalist)
- 2019 Incinerator Art Award for Social Change (Finalist)  
Ramsay Art Prize (Finalist)
- 2017 Incinerator Art Award for Social Change (Finalist)  
Banyule Award for Works on Paper (Finalist)
- 2016 Substation Contemporary Art Prize (Finalist)
- 2015 Banyule Award for Works on Paper (Finalist)  
Foam Paul Huf Award (Nominee)  
MACK First Book Award (Nominee)
- 2014 The Westie – Substation Contemporary Art Prize (Winner)
- 2013 The Westie – Substation Contemporary Art Prize (Winner)  
Macquarie Digital Portraiture Award (Finalist)  
The Churchie National Emerging Art Prize (Finalist)
- 2012 William and Winifred Bowness Photography Prize (Finalist)
- 2011 National Photographic Portrait Prize (Finalist)
- 2010 Siemens RMIT Fine Art Scholarship Award (Nominee)

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## CV

### COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Victoria  
Geelong Art Gallery  
Murray Art Museum Albury  
Moreland City Council  
Banyule City Council  
Private Collections

### CURATORIAL PROJECTS

2021-22 Hyphenated Biennial  
2020 Hyphenated Biennial (online)  
2019 The End/Future of History, The Substation, Melbourne, VIC  
Jason Phu in Footscray, Makers Window, Melbourne, VIC  
Hoda Afshar: Remain, The Substation, Melbourne, VIC  
2018-19 Due West Festival, Artistic Associate, Melbourne, VIC  
2018 Hyphenated, The Substation, Melbourne, VIC

### SELECTED GRANTS & RESIDENCIES

2022 Creative Victoria's Creators Fund  
Australian Council for the Arts - Arts Projects  
2021 George Mora Fellowship/State Library of Victoria Fellowship  
Regional Arts Victoria - Sustaining Creative Workers Program  
Artist in Residence – Parramatta Artist Studios  
2020 Creative Victoria Grant  
Australian Council for the Arts - Arts Projects  
2018 Australian Council for the Arts - Arts Projects  
2016 Australian Council for the Arts - Arts Projects  
2015 Australian Council for the Arts – Project Development Grant  
Creative Victoria Grant  
Creative Individuals Career Fund - Copy Right Agency  
2013 Australian Council for the Arts - New Work Grant  
City of Melbourne Arts Grant  
Arts Victoria Development Grant  
RMIT Honours Endowment Travelling Scholarship  
Kick Start Program, Next Wave Festival





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