This text revolves around a dialogue between artists and longtime friends, Nguyễn Quốc Thành and Gabby Miller, reflecting on Đặm Queer / Queer Lust, a film shorts program curated by Nguyễn Quốc Thành. This program was first screened in Hà Nội at DocLab, a documentary and experimental film “laboratory.” A few months later, in collaboration with Dirty Looks, the program was screened again in Los Angeles at the Echo Park Film Center (EPFC), a kindred arts space, that inspired the founding of DocLab in Vietnam in 2009.

Nguyễn Quốc Thành is a founding member of Nhà Sàn Collective (NSC) and has been organizing Queer Forever!—an arts festival and platform in Hà Nội—since 2013. Gabby Miller is an artist based in Los Angeles who has worked extensively in Vietnam, her mother’s birthplace, since 2005. She has been a frequent visitor and collaborator with NSC, as well as contributor to Queer Forever! since the project’s inception, working closely with Nguyễn Quốc Thành to produce projects ranging from building a queer Vietnamese dictionary to drag nights, exhibitions, and artist talks.

Nguyễn Quốc Thành and Miller are both part of a constellation of cultural producers who work at times very closely, and at times quite loosely, with NSC. NSC emerged from Nhà Sàn Studio, which is commonly understood to be the first and longest running experimental arts space in Vietnam.
Founded in 1998 by artist and curator Trân Lương and Nguyễn Mạnh Đức, in Đức “Nhà Sàn”—a Mường ethnic minority house on stilts. This wooden structure was disassembled in the mountains and reconstructed in the then-outskirts of Hà Nội to act as the studio for Nguyễn Mạnh Đức’s antique business, as well as the home for his wife, Lê Thị Lương, and their daughter, Nguyễn Phương Linh, who is now an artist in her own right.

By hosting installation works and performances in a private home, these artists often circumvented asking for permission to share their work with audiences. This underground and resolutely flexible space quickly gained fame and notoriety as a gathering place and nexus for domestic and international exchange between artists across disciplines.

After Nhà Sàn Studio was forced to close under pressure from local authorities in 2011, NSC was founded by Nguyễn Phương Linh, the daughter who grew up in the studio along with other younger Nhà Sàn’s artists in 2013. The collective started operation in a different, public mode, in a rented space outside the original Nhà Sàn Studio. There, Queer Forever! was established by Nguyễn Quốc Thành, also a NSC’s co-founding

**FIGURE 1:** Digital poster made by Dirty Looks / Bradford Nordeen (https://www.dirtylooks.org/), using still from director Nguyen Tan Hoang’s short Forever Bottom!.
member, which was supported by NSC. NSC continues to operate today as a flexible platform defined more by a collaborative spirit of friendship than a physical space.

Nguyễn Trịnh Thị, another founding member of NSC and a renowned artist and filmmaker, is also the founder of DocLab, a project that nurtures the development of documentary and experimental films in Hà Nội. These overlapping cultural projects and social networks span the Pacific Ocean. DocLab was partially inspired by the artist-run space EPFC. DocLab, Nhà Sàn Studio, NSC, EPFC, and Queer Forever! share a “DIY” (do it yourself) and familial ethos.

DocLab hosted Queer Forever! in Hà Nội, and EPFC, paired with Dirty Looks (a platform for queer film, video, and performance founded in 2011 by Bradford Nordeen), hosted Queer Forever! for Đắm Queer / Queer Lust, a film program curated by Nguyễn Quốc Thành. Our dialogue reflecting on this trans-Atlantic and trans-temporal screening is preceded by the program description, deftly edited and promoted by Nordeen.
Program / Film Descriptions

The program description for Đầm Queer / Queer Lust, curated by Nguyễn Quốc Thành (June 26, 2019, Los Angeles), reads:

Dirty Looks and Echo Park Film Center and Queer Forever! invite you to Đầm Queer / Queer Lust, curated by Nguyễn Quốc Thành, a raunchy shorts program by Vietnamese and Vietnamese American filmmakers that takes queer sex quite seriously.

Đầm means: full of, but has a thoroughly wet and “soft,” feeling, soaking up in liquid, like đầm tears or blood.

In the past few years, two LGBT documentaries took Vietnamese multiplexes by storm, a sign that audiences are open to watching films about LGBT life and its struggles. But what about the films that are defiantly queer: experimental, bizarre, silly, or kinky? Who will watch that sort of cinema? The gays and lesbians? The sex addicts or the cinephiles? Ironically, when Queer Lust was first screened in Hà Nội, the house was packed with young queers, but the LGBT activists were absent.

These six films explore queer sexual pleasure and celebrate sex magic: Vietnamese Americans Vu T. Thu Ha and Nguyen Tan Hoang clearly have fun turning the camera on themselves or their milieu, while simultaneously taking aim at race and sex wars. In the case of the Vietnamese filmmakers, dealing with the taboo of queer sex seems to spark experimentation: Trương Minh Quý’s The Sublime of Rectum is composed of one, long hard take, while Chu Trần Minh Đức’s The Lover is based on still images. Việt Vũ’s The Ant-man explores longing and what lies behind physiological needs.

1. The Sublime of Rectum (2017, 14.29 min)
dir. Trương Minh Quý
A visual exploration on an intimate body contact.

2. The Ant-man (2018, 26 min)
dir. Việt Vũ
The daily life of a homosexual guy whose body is inhabited by ants. A portrait of freedom.

3. The Lover (2012, 12 min)
dir. Chu Trần Minh Đức
Composed with black and white images, this film seems to bring us into an intimate relationship with someone at the other end of the phone line.

4. look_am_azn (2012, 5.36 min)
   dir. Nguyen Tan Hoang
   The video explores gay Asian men’s (GAMs) cruising strategies on American gay sex hookup websites. In environments deemed open and accessible, affording new sexual freedoms, GAMs often encounter such pronouncements as “No fats, no femmes, no Asians,” that is, caveats that severely constrain their cyber-cruising opportunities. I draw on two sets of GAMs’ cruising strategies in the face of such rejection: the headless torso pics as a way of “tactical masking” their GAM-ness and the use of screen names that proudly assert their Asianness (“GAM” and “AZN”) and those that exploit shameful racial slurs (“chink” and “gook”). The video combs online sex cruising grounds for articulations of gay Asian men’s desires and demands.

5. Forever Bottom! (1999, 3.52 min)
   dir. Nguyen Tan Hoang
   In Western gay male subculture, being the bottom is associated with femininity, faggotry, weakness, and sexual insatiability. To call someone a bottom is almost a put-down, a devaluation of his masculinity, his aspiration-to-butchness. To call oneself a bottom in polite conversation invariably elicits nervous (and knowing) giggles and opens oneself to ridicule. In this pseudo-instructional videotape, I embrace the pleasures and desires of full, unrepentant bottomhood. This bottom poses a challenge and an invitation: aggressive, unapologetic, and ubiquitous.

   dir. Vu T. Thu Ha
   A yellow-fevered white boy’s exotification of a restaurant’s staff of Asian dykes turns into an MSG nightmare.
Dialogue: Hội An, December 2019

“I hear there is a new gay bar in Hội An, shall we check it out!?”

Four of us are tearing apart a perfectly folded bright yellow bánh xèo at a street-side eatery in Hội An. All four of us are coincidentally visiting the tourist-driven beach city at the same time.

Nguyễn Quốc Thành, the founder of Queer Forever!, and a young film maker named Quang Nông Nhật were in nearby Đà Nẵng for a workshop put on by the British Council. Nguyễn Quốc Thành’s gentle and bespectacled boyfriend has joined in at the tail end of the workshop so that the two of them can spend a few days on the beach together, and Gabby Miller happens to be visiting family who live in Hội An, and is still bleary-eyed from the long flight from Los Angeles.

Nguyễn Quốc Thành is wearing silk Thai boxing shorts, the curved script across his crotch, zebra striped leggings underneath, and a billowing long sleeved shirt made of thin strips of cotton sewn together.

We check out the gay bar—sparsely populated with men on apps, glancing up momentarily from the screen. Unengaged with the crowd, we mostly talk about finding a way to bring Queer Forever! (i.e., Nguyễn Quốc Thành) to California. Nguyễn Quốc Thành has just gotten a health equity fellowship that will bring him to the United States in the summer, taking care of his visa.
and plane tickets. We jump on the opportunity for free travel and begin planning a “Queer Forever! residency” in Gabby Miller’s house.

Six months later, Nguyễn Quốc Thành is in Los Angeles, wearing the same Thai boxing shorts and zebra striped leggings. We’ve paired up with Dirty Looks, a platform for queer film, video, and performance based in Los Angeles and New York, to bring a film program to the EPFC. The following is a partial record of the ongoing dialogue that is at the center of Gabby Miller’s and Nguyễn Quốc Thành’s collaborative relationship.

Los Angeles, June 2019, Nguyễn Quốc Thành and Gabby Miller

Gabby Miller: First, Thành, how would you describe what Queer Forever! is?

Nguyễn Quốc Thành: Queer Forever! started as a queer art festival in 2013 and has become a “forever” project based on collaboration. We make exhibitions, queer markets, workshops, film screenings, and discussions whenever possible, like when we have funding, people are visiting, or when we want to do something fun together. I think these screenings in Hà Nội and Los Angeles were made exactly because we wanted to do something together.

GM: We know that is true! We were sitting on the beach in Hội An, and you told me that you received a visa and plane ticket through participation in this health equity program, and we jumped on the opportunity to get you to come stay at my house and to see what happens when we bring Queer Forever! to Los Angeles.

NQT: It started in Hà Nội even a few months earlier, do you remember? You suggested to come to Los Angeles, stay longer, and do something. The trip has been about working on my next Queer Forever! project here too, visiting people, queer spaces, and archives. It’s been so good to visit the ONE Archives and artist-run spaces.

GM: Yes, that’s right. It feels like working in Hà Nội in a certain way, in that we are organizing through friendship, in an ongoing collaboration and conversation, with an expanding network of people and places.

NQT: I believe it is how artists work everywhere. I’m so happy that Dirty Looks and Echo Park Film Center were so enthusiastic and engaging with our Hà Nội program. And here we are at your home, cooking and doing the laundry together.
GM: The audience in Los Angeles was quite hungry! The space is small, but I didn’t expect to have to turn people away at the door. Why did you group these films together?

NQT: I wanted to screen films that have sex in it. It seems that sex is so much of a taboo in the LGBTQ scene in Vietnam. It is not only that we don’t show it, but also we don’t talk about it in our public conversations about queer stuff in Vietnam. If you look at the LGBTQ movement here, sex seems to be nonexistent. If we talk about it at all, it is about HIV, AIDS, STIs—through a lens of public health, but not the experiences of sex. At the same time, there was a bit of an outcry when Tumblr removed sexual content, including queer sex. So, I found it interesting that Trương Minh Quý made The Sublime of the Rectum, and he found an interesting way to show this extreme sexual activity. I used this film as the starting point for the series. Of course, I wanted to include Tan Hoang’s films. I have wanted to screen his Forever Bottom! for a long time. I put look_im_azn into our exhibition with you, Việt Lê, and Lu Yang, which was the first iteration of Queer Forever! in 2013.

GM: Forever Bottom! is the inspiration for the name you gave to the Queer Forever! Project, so it’s fitting to celebrate this little gem of a film.

NQT: That the few young queers walked out while Forever Bottom played in Los Angeles seemed to surprise everybody. People said they might be too shy, that this “powerbottomness” was too much for them.
GM: Tell me a little bit more about the other films.

NQT: Thu Ha’s film *Shut Up White Boy* is so great! I don’t know any other [anyone else] doing that kind of work: race issues, BDSM, and Vietnamese food too.

*The Ant-man* is the newest one, and it has some surreal qualities. The film centers around a young gay man with ants living inside his body. There is an incredible scene in his wood workshop, where the camera follows mist moving across the floor of the workshop in a long slow shot. A lot of people seemed to read this film in a straightforward, political way—a rotten body from the inside, repressed sexuality. But I remember that after seeing it, I just asked the director why the sex scene was so short! The film is so new that the director, Việt Vũ, decided to reshoot the ending of the film for our *Đâm Queer* screening. This film is fresh from the oven!

It seems that sex in these films is different for the Vietnamese filmmakers working in Vietnam and for those in the United States. I might be too generalizing here, in the case of Tan Hoang’s and Thu Ha’s films, queer sex is presented as Asians’ power in managing racial relations. For the other Vietnamese filmmakers, queer sex is social taboo but shown more as a personal choice or moral dilemma.

GM: Tan Hoang and Thu Ha’s films were made almost twenty years ago, while the movies made in Vietnam were all made in the last couple of years. *Shut Up White Boy* is a classic punk film shot in San Francisco in the year 1999.

NQT: For audiences in Vietnam, even though their work is almost two decades old, these films are new. We never had a chance to watch them when they came out here. Also, we have yet to explore things such as punk, dyke aesthetics, and racism in queer films. Actually, I like the idea of screening “old” films in order to see something new. And these films are so fresh and exciting, especially when the more “correct” LGBT films are flooding our film theaters and pride events.

As for the Los Angeles audience, I guess they are so young they might not know them as well. I just wonder, perhaps *Forever Bottom!* presented the “passive-aggressive” tactic that is not so correct now. Maybe that’s why [a] few people went out [of the theater]?

GM: How did you decide on the title of *Đâm Queer*, what you’ve translated as “queer lust”? Can you talk about the title? How you would translate “đâm” into English?
NQT: Đắm Queer—the title... everybody in Hà Nội said the title was too much. Too dramatic—too muuuuch... “đắm” is like... fully soaked... thoroughly soaked. Over-soaked in some liquid. Like “đắm tear / đấm lệ, đắm máu / đắm blood, đắm nước / đắm water.” Imagine you jumping into the pool and you are all wet, that is đắm... the weight pulls you down.

GM: Does it always have a sexual connotation?

NQT: Not always sexual but very, very exaggerated. Yes, wet and heavy. Dripping wet. If you watch The Sublime of the Rectum, you can see what the word means.

GM: It’s different from the word lust...

NQT: You feel the lust... because we can’t use the word “lust” in Vietnamese. In a way, for the title of the project... it would be too explicit, too straightforward.

GM: This is perhaps one of the clearest distinctions between the movies made by Việt Kiều artists and those made in Vietnam, is explicitness and straightforwardness.

NQT: You mean the Vietnamese are not straightforward?

GM: Yes, everything’s hidden. Even The Sublime of the Rectum has so many layers of obfuscation. The narrator, whom we never see, speaks in English, and the scene is designated with a title at the beginning of the film saying, “Bali, seven years ago.”

NQT: Actually, we always have to find way to hide in order to tell and do things...

GM: What about the difficulties you were talking about in translating Shut Up White Boy specifically?

NQT: Yes, after the screening in Hà Nội a girl in the audience told me that she didn’t agree with the translation of the scene between the two women [Liz and Cherisma] talking intimately in the bathroom of the restaurant. In English it is just “you” and “I,” no gender, but in Vietnamese, how we call another person is based on their gender and age. It’s different when they are older or younger. I didn’t know how to translate the flirtation between these two women. [One] suggested using some gender-neutral pronouns, like “cậu,” or “tớ.” To some extent, those pronouns sound flirtatious, but not erotic. I have yet to find out how queer women are using pronouns in
Vietnam. But I’ve realized we have a variety of friendly, gender-neutral ways to address each other, like “minh,” “câu,” “tô,” “áy,” “dăng áy,” and “mày người.” We translate “they/them” quite literally as “họ” which doesn’t sound local, but more and more queer folks use this word. It was a pity the US films were not shown with Vietnamese subtitles. I will put Vietnamese subtitles on all the films next time we do a screening in the United States or elsewhere—this will allow for more conversations on translation and meaning with people living in the diaspora.

GM: What other challenges came up in translating?

Translating The Sublime of the Rectum was also difficult because the entire narration of the film is in English. Even the title was in English, so we had to even come up with a title in Vietnamese. Rectum is “ruột thăng” or “trực tràng.” We first translated the title to The Great Pleasure of the Rectum [Trực tràng trắc tuyệt]. But then I asked the filmmaker if he had a title in Vietnamese, and if he liked our translation. He wanted it to be a more simple translation: Sự thăng hoa của trực tràng.

GM: The Sublime of the Rectum was the film you centered the screening on, right?
NQT: I first started with The Sublime of the Rectum, and then I wanted to frame it as something radical, a monster or something…but I realized that the monster is too related to Foucault, deviations and norms, so I decided to move away from that. So, I thought, maybe just sex as the through line. Looking at the program, most films don’t present queerness or queer people as spectacular or uncommon, there is weirdness and non-normativity, but queerness seems to be interwoven into society. Like in Tan Hoang’s video, queer sex is everywhere. Even Thu Ha’s film Shut Up White Boy has a similar feeling from this perspective. This bar looks just like any other Asian bar. It can happen everywhere.

GM: Can you give me more context for The Sublime of the Rectum?

NQT: It was made just recently, by the filmmaker Trương Minh Quý. He once said he didn’t mind if his [previous] film was framed as a queer film, but he doesn’t frame it as a queer film. It was titled Ai đoang đi vào rừng [Someone Is Going to the Forest] and it was shown in the Queer Forever Film Fest in 2016. This was a very strange film, although it has some queer desire in it. I asked him why the forest. One of the answers (and given much later when we were passing a park in Berlin) was that “you go to the forest to cruise.”

GM: Okay, but why does The Sublime of the Rectum anchor the screening program? It felt like you started the evening by putting us in a trance with...
the long slow shot, the dripping hand moving across the screen toward the ass.

NQT: At first, I had some issues with the *The Sublime of the Rectum*—it talked about fisting but in quite an elegant way. I didn’t really like that elegance. This simple black and white aesthetic, the one slow, long shot—it seems [to] be a contradiction. I realized later that it could be another way to show such an act. And this refined simplicity goes together with the confessions of the narrator of the film that is quite heavy with judgements and stereotypes. I also liked the flow in the film, half of it was waiting for the hand to reach its “target.”

GM: What was the screening like in Hà Nội?

NQT: It was crowded! Sold out! One of the most crowded screenings we’ve [Queer Forever!] had at DocLab.

GM: How are these movies getting made and who are they for? Who gets to see them? Who has access to them? How do they circulate in Vietnam and in the world at large?

NQT: I can only really talk about how these movies were being made. I can say that screening a film like that is difficult, so we can deduce that it was made for a foreign audience. But they can also screen films in places like DocLab or NSC, for the local audience.

GM: But it’s mostly to move out to film festivals.

NQT: This is true for most of the art stuff in Vietnam. They have super small audiences—like Nguyễn Trịnh Thi, Nguyễn Phương Linh, Tuân Mami, or Art Labor—they show abroad.

GM: Representing Vietnam but not shown in Vietnam.

NQT: Maybe representing in a way that is framed as representing Vietnam. It has to be framed as representing Vietnam to be attractive to international audiences.

GM: There is a demand within the art scene in Vietnam to see these movies, yes?

NQT: Yes—actually, we didn’t really share too much in advance about this movie in particular, because it’s too risky. Gay sex, or any sex, is still not something that you can talk a lot about.
GM: Thành, tell us about what you are working on now. Anything about your time in Los Angeles that you have brought back to Vietnam?

NQT: I’m working on a project on Vietnamese queer film heritage. It’s a pop-up queer cinema, where we will screen Vietnamese queer films five days a week for four weeks, with workshops and a discussion program. The project’s name, Vườn Lài, Wonderland [Jasmine Garden, Wonderland], is taken from a movie theater in Sài Gòn called Rạp Vườn Lài [Vườn Lài Cinema] that was hacked by queer guys and changed into a cruising place. The place as a gay cruising space does not exist anymore though. I was originally thinking about a pop-up bar, similarly to the project your friend, Sadie Barnette, made in homage to her father’s gay bar, Eagle Creek in San Francisco. But I realized though pop-up cinema sounds better for getting funding, it can get us into trouble with authorities. The main point is for it to last a little bit longer so that people can get more chances to come and do something together. Working site specifically is not a new idea in Vietnam though, and it is also not so different from the Dirty Looks project On Location—where films are screened in a culturally specific context, like when we went to the Dirty Looks screening of Hippie Dick in the beautiful garden at the Tom of Finland House in Los Angeles.

The Vườn Lài Project does not last very long, but we will try to make different things in relation to moving images and queerness, such as zines,
theater, and maybe also dance workshops. I hope people will come not just to watch films, but also to discuss, write, and make drawings, graphic designs, and objects. I will later edit it into a little art book about queer films. I’m so excited! There is a growing demand for and awareness of more queer people making films and art, especially in the activist environment. I also see that art spaces are more interested in doing queer projects. So, I guess the next challenge is not just how to do queer projects separately as we have been doing for quite some time, but also how to do art/film projects with queer participation, to engage queerness into dialogues between all participants.

NQT: Gabby ơi, what are you working on now? When will you be back to Vietnam?

GM: Vietnam has come to me so much this fall! Nguyễn Phương Linh (the co-founder of NSC) and her husband Đỗ Thanh Lãng were here as part of the Sea Remembers exhibition at The Mistake Room, and Arlette Quỳnh-Anh Trầ, a member of Art Labor, moved to Los Angeles to do a Master of Arts program at the California Institute of the Arts, so I’ve been hosting our friends here for meals, and long talks, and walks around the lake, like when you were here this summer. With Nguyễn Phương Linh, we are talking about future iterations of the Skylines project in Hà Nội, maybe in the winter of 2020? I think everything I’m doing right now is grounded in a practice of open-ended dialogue, the way we are talking with each other now, and over the course of many years. There isn’t a firm, determined endpoint, but a practice of possibility and collaboration, which will be punctuated with gatherings or coming together, an overlapping experience in a theater or gallery context.

I’m working toward my thesis in graduate school by developing a project in a black box theater this winter. I’m thinking about the possibilities of edgeless-ness and working in a dialogical practice. Conceptualizing work in the black box theater with “black box theory”—where input goes in, an unknown operation happens within the black box, and an output comes out.

You can think of this in terms of the black boxes in an airplane, but almost anything might be referred to as a black box: a transistor, an algorithm, or even feelings. I’m particularly interested in the potential of framing this project around oracle machines⁴—both referring to the oracle machine as a kind of black box used in developing computer engineering and automated reasoning, but also in the classical sense of an oracle as in a soothsayer. In collaborating with people from very different disciplines, and also from
different places in developing an “input” into the black box theater, asking, if we can turn the black box into an oracle machine, what will the “output” be? I’m sourcing materials from our friends in Vietnam to be piped into an installation in the theater, which I think is a way of us reframing or expanding questions around how to imagine the future together in a practice that is an open field rather than a dialectic. This will inevitably loop back to our work in Vietnam and is of course inspired by the flexible organization of Vietnamese art scenes that I’ve gotten to be witness to, and a part of, over the years.

Nguyễn Quốc Thanh is a founding member of Nhà Sàn Collective (NSC) and has been organizing Queer Forever!—an arts festival and platform in Hà Nội—since 2013.

Gabby Miller is an artist based in Los Angeles who has worked extensively in Vietnam. She is currently pursuing an MFA at the University of California, Irvine.

Resources
Dam Queer on Dirty Looks Website: https://dirtylooksla.org/events/queer-lust
Gabby Miller: http://www.gabby-miller.com/
Nhà Sàn Collective (NSC): http://nhasan.org/
DocLab: http://www.hanoidoclab.org/
Echo Park Film Center (EPFC): http://www.echoparkfilmcenter.org/
ONE Archives: https://www.onearchives.org/

Notes
1. For further contextualization of the social and political constraints that artists in Vietnam have been working with, see Nguyễn Trinh Thị’s sound and video installation Unsubtitled. Installed, first at Nhà Sàn Studio, and subsequently at the 2013 Singapore Biennale, Unsubtitled offers a haunting and defiant testament to the power and fragility of Hà Nội’s experimental art scene. In the original installation at Nhà Sàn Studio, luminous figures were projected onto life-size wooden cutouts in the dark. These are the digital body doubles of the individual artists who made up Nhà Sàn Studio’s social constellation in the fall of 2010. The installation bends the dialogue surrounding an intense slew of negative media
coverage and a directive by the cultural police to “put on pause” all exhibitions at Nhà Sàn Studio. This particular clampdown was in reaction to photos of artist Lai Thị Diệu Hà performing in the nude. The images circulated like wildfire through the internet, making public evidence of the first instance of a female artist performing naked within the country. *Unsubtitled* opened the studio back up when the period of laying low ran its course.

As Gabby Miller has written elsewhere, “Nguyễn Trinh Thi directed each artist to face the camera, eat an item of food, and then state their name followed by the name of the food they had just consumed. Suggesting a kind of review stand, the pseudo interrogation sessions do not result in self-criticisms. Instead we see and hear a chorus of overlapping statements-of-the-obvious: the basic human act of eating was just committed. Examining the gap between artists and the general public and questioning long-running methods of surveillance and intimidation pervasive in Vietnam, Nguyễn Trinh Thi creates an ethereal portrait of this time in Hà Nội, and of the flying people who inhabit it” (text excerpt from exhibition essay for Skylines without Flying People, written by Gabby Miller, Rory Gill Fine Art, London, 2011.)

2. ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the University of Southern California Libraries is the oldest existing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organization in the United States and the largest repository of LGBT materials in the world.

3. Việt Lê is an artist, writer, curator, and Assistant Professor in Visual Studies, Visual and Critical Studies at California College of the Arts. Lu Yang is a Shanghai-based artist who creates work exploring themes and formats that combine traditional Chinese medicine and spirituality together with contemporary digital cultures. Both Lu Yang and Việt Lê have spent time collaborating with and working at Nhà Sàn Studio and NSC.

4. An oracle machine is an abstract machine used to study decision problems. It can be visualized as a Turing machine with a black box, called an oracle, which is able to solve certain decision problems in a single operation.