

ベトナム・モダンの 写し鏡

タ・ティの
作品世界

Mirror of Modern Vietnam
The World of Ta Ty

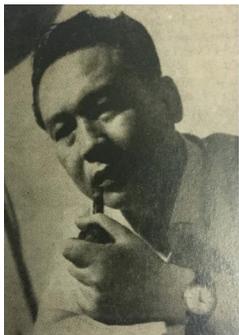
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福岡アジア美術館 アジアギャラリー (7F)
Fukuoka Asian Art museum, Asia Gallery (7F)

Ta Ty (b.1921-2004) is a painter who quickly adopted the latest artistic styles at that time, such as Cubism or abstract expressions, and became a pioneer of modern art in Vietnam. What did it mean to be “modern” in Vietnam, and also for Ta Ty? Let’s look inside the world of the artist’s works by referencing the three paintings created between 1950 and 1969.

1. At the Hometown in Hanoi - Devotion to the Cubism



Ta Ty (1921-2004)

Source: Nguyễn Quốc Định, Tạ Ty: Dấu Ấn Sáng Tạo (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Hội Nhà văn, 2019).

Ta Ty (whose real name is Ta Van Ty) was born in Hanoi, Vietnam, in 1921. The artist enrolled at the Indochina School of Fine Arts, the most authentic educational institution of art in Vietnam at that time, where he graduated in 1943. Ta Ty actively worked on new styles such as Cubism and was awarded prizes in various competitions at a young age.

When The First Indochina War broke out in 1945, Ta Ty joined Viet Minh (Vietnamese Independence League) led by Ho Chi Minh and worked as a member of a resistance group in the mountainous area. However, being unfamiliar with the socialist concept of art, Ta Ty decided to return to Hanoi in 1950, when the city remained under the influence of France. There the artist devoted himself to making art, which led him to organize the solo exhibition in 1951, where he sold 90 percent of the exhibited works and received high recognition.

2. To Saigon and to the U.S. — An encounter with Abstract Art

In 1953, Ta Ty moved to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) by an invitation from a friend. Saigon was the city located in the State of Vietnam, which was then the puppet state of France. The artist worked in a cosmopolitan environment where it was accessible to grasp the latest art scenes in Western countries, such as France or the U.S. Ta Ty then gained a new style of expression and devoted himself to abstract expression.

However, after The Vietnam War came to an end in 1975 and the unification of the South and North Vietnam was finally realized after 20 years, Ta Ty was regarded as a collaborator of the South by the new government and sent to the Re-education camp, where he stayed for 6 years. After being released from the camp in 1981, Ta Ty moved to the U.S. Later, the artist returned to Vietnam to spend the last days of his life, just before he passed away.



Ta Ty, Woman, 1950, oil on board

Woman 1950 - Cubism and the “Modern” in Hanoi

In this painting, a woman represented in the Cubist style inclines her head in a quiet mood. Within a sophisticated structure combined with the bright yet decently done colors, it gives an urban feel. Ta Ty tries to depict the feeling of isolation of a woman living in the city, which is a subject uniquely modern. While adopting a new Cubist style of expression, the artist succeeded in representing the “modern” at that time in Hanoi when it was in the midst of rapid urbanization and social change.

Curves 1960—Abstract Painting and the Cosmopolitan City of Saigon

After having moved to South Vietnam, Ta Ty devoted himself to creating abstract paintings which was banned in the North. For the artist, abstract painting was the style that “makes the painter and the viewer be free.” At that time in South Vietnam, the U.S had been actively promoting abstract paintings against the Socialist Realism in the Soviet Union. The abstract paintings were, in a sense, the symbols of the American ideology of “freedom.” However, for Ta Ty it was the expression that could internalize the cosmopolitan environment where he could freely come in touch with the art all over the world.

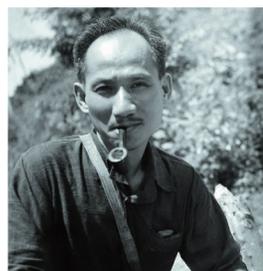


Ta Ty, Curves, 1960, postercolor on paper

Portrait of a Man 1969—The Reminiscence towards the “Modern” in the Past

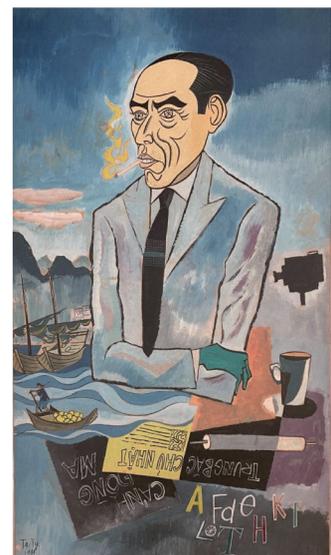
Nguyễn Tuân (b.1910-1987), the model of this work, was the writer who got along well with Ta Ty. However, Tuân decided to remain in Hanoi, resulting in the two taking a different path.

In 1969, the year this painting was done, a false report which told that Tuân had died spread in the South. Ta Ty seemed to have believed in the misinformation. The painting portrays the charismatic figure of Tuân together with motifs representing the artist’s life. It seems to indicate not only Ta Ty’s tributes to Tuân, but also the reminiscence towards the “Vietnamese Modern” which meant the days of youth for the two young artists.



Nguyễn Tuân (1910-1987)

Source: Nguyễn Huy Thắng, Văn nghệ & kháng chiến qua ống kính Trần Văn Lưu (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Kim đồng, 2018)



Ta Ty, Portrait of a Man, 1969, postercolor on paper