

Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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Phoenix Art Museum showcases The Propeller Group's broadened boundaries of fine art with their blend of popular media and conceptual art

International artist collective presents films and multi-media projects at Phoenix Art Museum for the first time

PHOENIX (January 24, 2017) – On February 18, 2017, Phoenix Art Museum presents *The Propeller Group*, an exhibition dedicated to the work of an international art collective based in Vietnam, whose work blurs the boundaries between fine art and media production. With dual headquarters in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Los Angeles, California, The Propeller Group artist collective is a cross-disciplinary collaboration whose work merges conceptual art practices—partially steeped in the politically inflected artwork of the 1990s—with the forms and methods of popular media today. The upcoming exhibition was organized by Phoenix Art Museum in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston, and represents the first time a number of these works have been presented together.

“We strive to bring the best art from around the world to our community,” said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO of Phoenix Art Museum. “*The Propeller Group* exhibition presents some of the most interesting contemporary art being created today. We are fortunate to feature their work at Phoenix Art Museum and to be able to share it with the greater Phoenix area.”

The Propeller Group collective was formed by Matt Lucero, Tuan Andrew Nguyen and Phunam. The duality of their collaboration, functioning as both art collective and production company, is reflected in their cross-disciplinary art production and the global subjects with which they work. The group members utilize their backgrounds in visual art, film and video, as well as an interest in street culture. Their ambitious projects are frequently anchored in both Vietnam's history and its current dynamics as a growing capitalist market; yet the artists also address global phenomena, whether international commerce, the tools of war, or shared traditions across cultures.

Gilbert Vicario, the Museum's Selig Family Chief Curator, who collaborated on the organization of *The Propeller Group*, expressed his enthusiasm for this exhibition's premiere in Phoenix. “We are excited to bring The Propeller Group to Phoenix Art Museum,” said Vicario. “Their innovative approach to combining popular media and global issues challenges conventions yet makes them accessible to a wide audience. We're fortunate to be one of the few museums in the United States to showcase the group's projects together for the first time.”

This exhibition presents a number of multi-part projects developed in the past five years, including videos, sculptures, installations and more. The *Fade In* installation composed of parts of an antique house from Hue, Vietnam, tracks the counterfeit antiques trade in Vietnam. *The Living Need Light, The Dead Need Music* is a film that weaves together funerary traditions from Ho Chi Minh City and New Orleans. Other recent works scrutinize the histories of specific weapons: namely the AK-47 and M16, two rifles that in mainstream movies are often associated with Vietnam and countries in the West, respectively. This is the first time that these projects have been exhibited together since the group was first formed in 2006.

The Propeller Group will be on view in the Museum's Anderman, Marshall and Hendler galleries, beginning February 18 through May 14. Admission is free for Museum Members and included with general admission.

About the Exhibition

The Propeller Group is organized by Phoenix Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston. The exhibition is free for Museum Members, included with general admission, and free of charge to the public during voluntary-donation free-access times every Wednesday evening from 3pm-9pm, the first Fridays of every month from 6-10pm,

and the second weekends of each month, when general admission is free Saturdays from 10am – 5pm and Sundays from noon – 5pm. To request interviews and high-resolution photography, contact Margaree Bigler at Phoenix Art Museum's Marketing and Communications Office, at margaree.bigler@phxart.org or 602.257.2105.

The Propeller Group exhibition webpage may be found here: <http://www.phxart.org/ThePropellerGroup>

Media images and image captions may be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/PropellerGrplimages>

About Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for more than 50 years and is the largest art museum in the Southwestern United States. Critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the Museum's permanent collection of more than 18,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents festivals, a comprehensive film program, live performances and educational programs designed to enlighten, entertain and stimulate visitors of all ages. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum's landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit PhxArt.org, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.

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