

PHAM An Hai

Born in Hanoi in 1967, Mr. Pham An Hai belongs to a family that has been involved in arts. His great-grandfather was a noted poet – a street in Hanoi is named after him - his grand father was a recognized architect in Hanoi. His wife as well as is younger brother are active artists.

After studying painting in Hanoi, en embarked on a career as a painting artist. From a figurative approach, he has moved progressively to an expressionistic period (1998-1999) before moving to abstract painting (from 2000 onwards).

Mr Pham An Hai signs his work as Fahai.

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Instead of observing nature, Pham An Hai expresses himself through nature. Systematically, he has abandoned the natural appearance of things and increasingly constructed his art through a net consciousness and understanding of the surrounding world. In searching for meaning, he unconsciously taps into the very essence of his own life through the principles and laws of his own experience. His canvas has become a vehicle to express his emotion while he developed his pictorial vocabulary with forms and expressions that reflected his innermost feelings.

Despite being non-representational, many of Mr. Pham An Hai's paintings may be viewed as cityscapes or landscapes from his home city of Hanoi and its surroundings, or paintings from nature. We can discern houses, buildings and narrow lanes, and also imagine the city in various seasons or time of the day. At another level, his paintings may also reflect inner landscapes of the soul and heart. More recently, Mr. Pham An Hai has developed an interest in the mundane objects of our daily life while enlarging his palette of colors. The paintings exhibited at Asia Contemporary Art Show of May 2014 belong to this new period, demonstrating the willingness of the artist to keep searching for new subjects, for new experiment while keeping his distinct style of color, form and composition.

Mr. Pham An Hai is a master in the use of colors, and their choice and combination are important features in his works. Mr. Pham An Hai describes colors as the purest form of expression. He refers to colors as musical notes. Learning to understand the intense experience of colors through their value and knowing how to put them together in an understandable manner became an integral part of his artistic journey.

The abstractionist language has proved to suit Mr. Pham An Hai who, by nature, is rather more prone to emotional expression than to description. He tends to perpetuate evanescent things, sometimes beyond perception that one cannot grasp, but only vaguely guess. His works belong to this inspirational vein in which you would hear more of the rustles of the passing seasons than of the noisy jostling and elbowing of prosaic life.

Mr. Pham An Hai is one of the rare contemporary Vietnamese artists whose works have been sold in auctions. He has been present at Sotheby's South Asian Art auctions over the last three seasons.