

An artistic statement

By: Truong Tran

I was born in Saigon, Vietnam in 1969 and immigrated with my family to the United States at the age of five. I grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1992. In 1995, I earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from San Francisco State University. Over the course of my career, my work has been featured at art galleries across the Bay area. In addition to crafting visual art, I'm a published poet and have received several awards for my work. I'm also a professor and teach creative writing at San Francisco State University and Mills College.

My art teases the lines between genre, materiality and movement, between subject and object. Instead of thinking outside the box, I've gone lengths to rid myself of it. I don't paint, draw or sculpt. My process for creating art is founded in the doing. I find handed down, discarded and long forgotten objects. Ping-Pong balls. Cutout dolls. Paint chips. Porn. Lab-beakers. Plastic frames. I look at them and wait for these objects to speak to me. I glue things together. Sometimes, dip things in wax. I cut. I build. I weave. And in doing so, I lose myself in the process.

A few principles inform my art. *Containment* embodies the threshold, providing me with a context to work within or around. And my art is derived from *compulsion*. I attribute my art not to any inherent artistic talent but to my obsessive-compulsive drive. I'm fixated on searching for, studying, collecting materials and creating work that fits into our time and consciousness. Through this process, I hope to reclaim the lost significance of these objects. I refer to my work as *correlative* art. It gives people an experience, drawing attention to questions of repetition, surprise, duration and desire. Onlookers become engaged participants, bringing their own understanding and life metaphors to answer these questions.