

Editorial Note

To You, and to the
Things We All Care
About

ARTIFACT Journal
Inaugural Issue

Editorial Note

Xin chào, friends,

Finally, we have a publication to call our own - a space where we can truly speak about Vietnam. But the Vietnam we hope to explore here is not the steaming bowl of phở at dinnertime, nor the golden afternoon by Hoàn Kiếm Lake, nor the lilting melody of "Biển Nhớ" on a tipsy evening. Instead, we turn to things that beat closer to the heart: acts of creation, pull of memory, moments of struggle, quiet curiosity, ideals yet unshaped - and the many ways we each try to speak back to the world.

We call it ARTIFACT Journal. You might find the name evocative of history - and rightly so. The word "artifact" traditionally refers to relics and archives preserved through time. But what we wish to offer is a different kind of archive: one made of stories still in motion, of overlooked but truthful artistic encounters, and of a generation finding new languages to stitch the word "Vietnam" into the fabric of the present.

In these pages, you'll find art and architecture, cultural heritage and digital worlds. You will find voices that question how long a space can stay "alive," and others that wonder whether an exhibition deserves to be forgotten. You'll read about diaspora, gender, cartography, imagined futures, the alleyways of Hanoi, and the quiet, shared ache of longing and hope.

The contributors - artists, cultural practitioners and members of the VAC team - are not conventional media professionals. We are, in essence, memory workers: using words, images, sounds, and even silence to piece together the stories of Vietnam. These aren't grand national epics. They are stories that live close to the skin - tender, fractured, and real. Much like life itself.

We know the word "archive" can sound clinical, distant. But lean in, and you'll find its warmth. It speaks of the spaces, bodies, histories, and identities you hold dear. It is someone sharing a story. And it is you, listening, wanting to understand.

ARTIFACT Journal doesn't set out to declare what matters. Rather, it asks - with you - what matters to us. Each contribution is born of a love for making and observing: some from within the studio, others from daily life. These are voices not always heard. That's why we want to make space for them. And why we hope you'll take the time to listen.

Let me take this moment to say, from the heart: thank you.

To our friends and artists across Vietnam - thank you for your welcome and your trust. You've helped us take root here, grounding our work and lives in something honest and true. To our peers across Asia, the Americas, and Europe - your recognition and support have given us the courage to keep going. And to the VAC team in Hanoi and beyond, led with care by Sophie Huang - thank you. Your focus and passion are the reasons these words and projects could come to life.

And finally - to you, dear reader. Thank you for opening this journal. It is still growing, still learning. But it is sincere. It is quietly stubborn. A little idealistic. And brave enough to meet your gaze. We hope it becomes a companion in your days - something you return to, again and again.

Because in the end, what we hope to leave behind isn't just an archive. It's the trace of something that carries warmth.

May ARTIFACT Journal be one such trace.

Muchun Niu

**VAC Founder /
Publisher of ARTIFACT Journal**