

Nguyễn Trần Quỳnh // Richard Tran

Struggle | Trauma | Pain

Bến Tre Province is known as the coconut paradise of Viet Nam. This is where my family calls home, despite living diasporically in Chicago for the past three decades. For a long time, my home was in constant disarray from warfare, martial law, and subjected to extreme defoliation from the mass spraying of Agent Orange by the U.S.

I've always been lost in the process of negotiating this duality and proximity to culture and identity. I find myself intrigued by how my personal identities are constantly transforming and re-shaping themselves relative to where I'm physically situated in the world. Because of the deeply rooted connections to Viet Nam and the U.S., my artwork is articulated through the themes of belonging and the fluidity of cultural difference and dispute. I begin my work with a confession to myself and draw inspiration from crucial moments in history. My intent is to honor the forgotten, expose corruption, create a voice for the unheard, and set a pathway for narratives that are, more often than not, silenced. I do this not only for the othered, but in order to validate and authenticate my own being.

I aim to introduce/reintroduce, claim/reclaim, define/redefine history as a way to heal and grow, not only for myself, but for my communities. Through research and analysis, oral history, living, struggle, and the use of culturally self-specific histories, my artwork seeks to convey these ideas in the most visceral way possible. Currently I find mixed-media, performative installation, and sculpture to be the forms that most powerfully articulate the concepts I'm working with.

My goal is to provide an understanding, a narrative, a truth, and a tangibility, to those who need it most. I do this because I can. I do this because others can't.

Resilience | Rebellion | Liberation

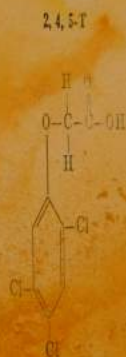
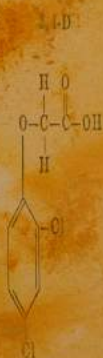
the announced effects of the herbicide program on the health of  
these people appear to have been smaller than one might have

The President has approved the recommendation of the Secretary of State  
and the Deputy Secretary of Defense to participate in a selective and carefully  
controlled joint program of defoliant operations in Viet Nam starting with the  
clearance of key routes and proceeding thereafter to food denial only if the most  
careful basis of resettlement and alternative food supply has been created.  
Operations in Zone D and the border areas shall not be undertaken until there  
are realistic possibilities of immediate military exploitation.

The President further agreed that there should be careful prior considera-  
tion and authorization by Washington of any plans developed by CINCPAC and  
the country team under this authority before such plans are executed.<sup>27</sup>



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 food crops grown in the areas that they control. If these crops  
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 The additional burden of importing food would decrease their e  
 securing the war.<sup>28</sup>



1. Continue spray operations at the present rate until exhausting the supply of herbicides and then withdraw the 12h SOS from South Vietnam.
2. Operate at the present rate through June 1970 and then reduce the 12h SOS to the minimum level needed to meet emergency spray requirements.
3. Reduce the 12h SOS to eight aircraft and ration herbicide missions so as to consume all the herbicide stocks by the end of June 1971.<sup>11</sup>

Carry out defoliant spray operations, using hired commercial planes and (CIA). These operations would initially be experimental, designed to test and further develop the capability to use defoliant sprays to clear access routes.<sup>12</sup>

The way to win a guerrilla war, basically, is to win the people. Crop destructions counter to this basic rule. The problem of identifying fields on which Viet Cong depend is hardly susceptible to solution so long as the Viet Cong and the people are co-mingled. The Government will gain the enmity of people if crops are destroyed and whose wives and children will either have to stay and suffer hunger or become homeless refugees living on the uncertainty of a not-too-efficient government.<sup>19</sup>



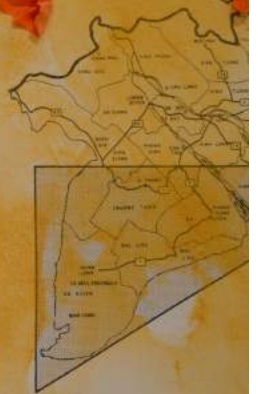






1. Continue spray operations at the present rate until exhausting the supply of herbicides and then withdraw the 12th SOS from South Vietnam.
2. Operate at the present rate through June 1970 and then reduce the 12th SOS to the minimum level needed to meet emergency spray requirements.
3. Reduce the 12th SOS to eight aerial and seven herbicide missions so as to consume all the herbicide stocks by the end of June 1971.<sup>1</sup>

Carry out defoliant spray operations, using hired commercial planes and pilots (CIA). These operations would initially be experimental, designed to prove out and further develop the capability to use defoliant sprays to clear off jungle access routes.<sup>1</sup>









Gallery  
Maximum Room  
Capacity:  
225

Take, for example, Operation Ranch Hand, a system of spraying the land with poison to kill plants that provide the Communist-led guerrillas with food and shelter.

Officials hope it can be effective in helping starve out and flush out the enemy Viet-cong. Details are secret, but it is known that converted U.S. Air Force planes sweep across the countryside spraying poison from nozzles along their wings to destroy rice fields around insurgent strongholds and to strip the brush from roadsides where the enemy sometimes hides in ambush.<sup>21</sup>

On balance, the untoward effects of the herbicide on the South Vietnamese people appear to have been feared.<sup>22</sup>



Destruction of Viet Cong food stores in the field could be one of the most effective means of defeating the enemy. The Viet Cong [sic] currently are living on old crops grown in the areas that they control. If these crops are destroyed, the Viet Cong [sic] would be required to obtain food from other sources or starve. The additional burden of importing food would decrease their effectiveness in pursuing the war.<sup>14</sup>



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The chemicals recommended for use 5-T, are sufficiently active to kill a map if:  
(1) They are applied properly to the  
(2) They are applied during a period



The chemicals recommended for use, namely, the esters of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, are sufficiently active to kill a majority of species encountered in Vietnam if:

- (1) They are applied properly to the vegetation
- (2) They are applied during a period of active growth of the vegetation.\*

The way to win a guerrilla war, basically, is to win the support of the people. This basic rule runs counter to this basic rule. The problem of the Viet Cong depends is hardly susceptible to solution and the people are co-mingled. The Government of South Vietnam whose crops are destroyed and whose wives and children are in place and suffer hunger or become homeless refugees. The bounty of a not-too-efficient government.\*

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