

# The Work of Memory

Video Stills, 2012-2023  
By Boone Nguyen

I am an artist of the Southeast Asian diaspora. My experience as a refugee in the metropole informs my work through the themes of displacement and place-building, landscape and historical memory, leaving and returning, loss and transformation. I use documentary video, moving images, and soundscapes to create immersive installations storying a continuing search for a distant yet familiar homeplace where the intimacies of life and death and the dialectic of subjection and resistance serve as a living archive of memory that is both personal and collective.

*The Work of Memory* is a series of seven video stills that visualizes the concept of the living archive. This archive lives in the reproductive, cultural, and spiritual labor that sustains communities subjected to social, political, and economic dislocation, for instance an elderly man feeding bananas to fish raised in a bomb crater pond or spirit money flying from an outstretched hand during a funeral procession. The hands in each still represent the labor communities perform to sustain intergenerational knowledge and practices of remembering our histories and ancestors. This provides an education, and interaction with knowledge that militates against nostalgia, in favor of a critical memory that remembers not only the violence of (neo)colonial expropriation, but of the collective labor required to sustain places that have been subjected to its depredations.



