

SUNG TIEU

Frieze London

→ Focus H9

13 / 17 October 2021

Emalin is pleased to present a solo project by German Vietnamese artist Sung Tieu. Alongside a set of framed works on paper that reproduce historic documents from the German Federal Archives, Tieu presents objects produced by Vietnamese contract workers in the German Democratic Republic (GDR, formerly East Germany). Two large-scale steel panels are silk-screened and abstracted into altered form. The presentation weaves together ready-mades, text and installation to consider the relationship between work and life, as well as the individual in relation to greater social systems.

This project builds on a body of research that stands at the centre of the artist's recent exhibitions at the Museum for Contemporary Art Leipzig (GfZK), Kunstmuseum Bonn and Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin (all 2021). Tieu's central enquiry considers the 1980 recruitment agreement between the GDR and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. This agreement brought up to 100,000 Vietnamese contract workers to almost 1000 publicly owned enterprises (Volkseigener Betrieb or VEB).

The reality of the East German working environment – its rules, sanctions and systems of control – dominated the everyday lives of Vietnamese workers, who were housed in segregated residential homes and largely excluded from East German society. The agreement expired with the dissolution of the GDR and only a small number of the migrant workers were allowed to remain legally in the reunified Federal Republic of Germany, with their residency status remaining unresolved until 1997.

The presentation includes works exhibited as part of *Multiboy*, Tieu's solo exhibition at the Museum for Contemporary Art Leipzig, Germany. The stainless-steel panels mirror and develop Tieu's immersive installation currently on view at Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, as part of the exhibition *Preis der Nationalgalerie 2021*, for which she was shortlisted this year.

*

Sung Tieu (b. 1987, Hai Duong, VN) lives and works in Berlin. In 2013, she completed her BFA at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg, Germany, followed by the Postgraduate Programme at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in 2018. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at GfZK Museum for Contemporary Art, Leipzig (2021); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2020); Nottingham Contemporary (2020) and Piper Keys, London (2019). Selected group exhibitions have been held at Kunsthalle Basel (2021); Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2021); 34th Bienal de São Paulo (2021) and Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2020). Current solo exhibitions include *2021 Preis der Nationalgalerie: Song for VEB Stern-Radio Berlin*, Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin and *Fall*, Kunstmuseum Bonn.

Tieu is the recipient of the 2020 Ars Viva Prize for Visual Art as well as this year's Frieze Artist Award. She was also shortlisted for the 2021 Preis der Nationalgalerie.