

## Bui Huu Hung, Family Tradition.



Recent art movements have begun to incorporate traditional techniques into museum-bound works of fine art, leading to an expanding blend of folk and fine arts across the world. One of Vietnam's most prominent artists is Bui Huu Hung, whose series of portraits use traditional lacquer techniques to create paintings

that reference both the past and future of his country. Michaan's Auctions is proud to offer **Family Tradition, Portrait by Bui Huu Hung** (\$3/4,000) in our January Gallery Auction on Friday, January 19th.

A young boy stands in the middle of the frame, his face and shoulders squarely facing the viewer. His expression is stoic, with little emotion evident, although there is an aura of determination emanating from his eyes. He wears a thick cap and long double-breasted coat, with the white cuffs of a tightly buttoned shirt peeking out from the long sleeves and high collar. Behind him is a thick red stripe, likely a column or other architectural element. There are a number of papers, each bound without

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a cover, laying in stacks on the unrealized ground surface. In the left corner is his signature executed in red, bound in a red box, while a thin trail of characters beginning in the middle of the red box extends towards the bottom of the painting in thin black pigment.

In this work, Bui Huu Hung presents a young boy, presumably a student based on the artist's choice to include written material in the background of the work, in a regal style emphasizing his respect for the subject. Largely detached from his surroundings, with only the necessary elements for identification present, the subject is thus made into a symbol for his class of individuals, the young students who will become the future of Vietnam. Painted in the years following Vietnam's economy opening to the West, the student in this work can be interpreted to represent the country's potential for a

growing middle class through education, an experience which will become more widespread and comprehensive as standards of living rise.

This work marks a departure from the subject matter traditionally featured by Bu Huu Hung. While the painter usually highlights women in expensive garments, this work focuses on a boy of much more common wealth. Using lacquer, a traditional Southeast Asian technique, Bu Huu Hung renders this subject with the traditional stoic expression and formal posing of his other works, thereby imbuing the young student with the respect and status traditionally reserved for more aristocratic individuals. In this sense, the work is one of his most democratic and emphasizes the promise of education and the class-conscious perspective of contemporary Vietnam.

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Bui Huu Hung was born in Hanoi in 1957 and took an early interest in lacquer painting. Beginning at the age of 18 he traveled throughout the Vietnamese countryside, where he learned the traditional techniques still being used in small villages. After serving with the Vietnamese army in their war against the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, he studied at the Vietnamese University of Fine Arts and began exhibiting his work. Bui Huu Hung was one of the few artists able to exhibit internationally prior to the opening of Vietnam's economy in the late 1980s, with shows in Poland and Bulgaria. Since then, he has exhibited widely, with solo exhibitions in London, Hong Kong, Miami, Paris, Singapore, and Dubai.

**Bui Huu Hung, (Vietnamese, born 1957), Family Tradition,**

**Portrait**, (\$3/4,000) will be offered at Michaan's Auctions January Gallery Auction on Friday, January 19th, which features numerous cars in excellent condition in addition to fine examples from the Fine Art and Asian Art departments. The auction is led by a 2023 Tesla Model X in Plaid Trim with only 3,901 miles, a 1966 Ford Mustang Hardtop Coupe, as well as a 1955 Ford Thunderbird. Also included is a Large Gilt Bronze Figure of an Immortal, a notable oil painting by Joseph Henry Sharp, and a 14k yellow gold charm bracelet.

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