

## Tam Van Tran

### *Purple System*

21 November thru 22 December 2006

Opening reception: Friday, 17 November, 6-8pm

Anthony Meier Fine Arts is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles artist Tam Van Tran. In his second solo show at the gallery Tran continues to investigate the juxtaposition of organic and industrial materials while also infusing his work with symbols and gestures that are personally and socially significant.

*Purple System* defines Tran's engagement of color as language. Purple connects to religion, royalty and heated emotions such as anger and lust. This multi-faceted definition is indicative of Tran's multi-media practice. The exhibition includes large and small scale flat and three-dimensional works on paper, ceramics, paintings and collaged paper on paper pieces.

Many of the small-scale drawings and collaged works on paper include explicit references to non-western sources. Sanskrit lettering is quietly embedded into the works; it is a common Indian belief that the Sanskrit alphabet originates from the sounds of the inner channels of the human body. Round sections of paper are represented as targets, a Buddhist allusion to mental concentration. Rectangular sections of paper are shredded and painted to resemble feathers, reminiscent of Incan art.

Tran exhibits these collaged works against a backdrop of handmade wallpaper featuring pattern derived from late modernism. The tension between the common imagery on the wallpaper and the object quality of the collaged works addresses the banality of mark making as a means of decoration.

The two ceramic sculptures on view are Tran's first. One features a functional bowl and ikebana vase propped up by scaffolding structures with decapitated monsters. In the bottom of the bowl is the Sanskrit 'ah' symbol painted in glaze, a reference to the need for energy while on Buddhist retreat.

A myriad of elements and allusions, Tran's work is essentially about painting. His connection between the mind and the hand is evident, creating work with a depth and beauty that can only come from the soul.