

# MAYA FRODEMAN GALLERY

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MAYA FRODEMAN GALLERY ANNOUNCES *MOTHER / LAND*  
AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY KENNY NGUYEN

Exhibition Dates: 20 DECEMBER 2024 – 09 FEBRUARY 2025

JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING – MAYA FRODEMAN GALLERY is pleased to present *Mother / Land*, a solo exhibition of paintings by artist Kenny Nguyen, on view at the gallery's downtown location from December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 through February 9th, 2025. An artist reception will be held on Friday, December 20th, from 5 to 7pm. Nguyen will be in attendance. All are welcome.

Kenny Nguyen creates expansive, dimensional, mixed-media paintings that center on ideas of cultural identity, displacement and integration. Nguyen uses color and silk as a way of mapping memories to visually de- and re-construct his own identity. He begins by tearing swaths of natural silk fabric into hundreds of strips that he dips in acrylic paint and adheres to raw canvas. Methodically, almost meditatively, he repeats the process—tearing, painting, sanding, sewing, weaving, attaching, layering—until he has a structured but malleable medium, which he shapes into undulating, sculpted forms. A repeated process of destruction and reconstruction, Nguyen's practice has become the bond that has fashioned both of his cultures together, and a mode of both exploration and reflection.

This monumental solo exhibition, Nguyen's first with Maya Frodeman Gallery, focuses most prominently on the abstract works from three of his most recent series, *Encounter*, *Passage* and *Eruption*. *Encounter*, *Passage* and *Eruption* were born out of Nguyen's recent trip back to his homeland of Vietnam. It was the first time he had been back in thirteen years, and he was profoundly influenced by unexpected and poignant feelings of alienation as he reflected on and grappled with the ways in which his own identity and his home country have shifted. "Things felt out of order again," Nguyen said. "It was quite shocking to me, and brought me back to the moment I first moved to the United States."

Nguyen grew up on a coconut farm in a rural area near the Mekong Delta in southern Vietnam amongst many silk farms. Despite having established a career in fashion design, he decided to join his family when they moved to the United States in 2010. Acclimating to an American way of life proved uneasy at first, especially with a language barrier that intensified feelings of alienation and isolation. Nguyen turned to art-making as a coping mechanism and as a means to express himself in a more universal language. He began to cultivate an artistic practice centered around silk, to explore his personal and cultural identity. In addition to its significance to Nguyen's background in fashion, silk has long been a symbol of wealth and beauty in Vietnam, and that status has shaped Vietnam's economics, policy and culture for thousands of years. Nguyen has pushed the medium and developed a distinctive technique to produce sensual, three-dimensional works that he describes as "deconstructed paintings." Informed by his training in fashion, he often installs each piece sculpturally with pushpins, allowing him the flexibility to rehang or adjust the composition as desired. The works can be stretched flat like a traditional canvas or gently draped, folded and creased into animated structures. Nguyen views the resulting malleable forms as embodying to the transformations of each of our identities over time.

In the *Passage* series, Nguyen presents stoic, meditative works, which, though still fashioned from silk, acrylic and canvas, are more akin to Western color field painting. Nguyen used sand and dirt in these works to create more texture. The result is structured, almost topographic, compositions like *Passage No.1* (2024)

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and *Passage No.3* (2024), where forms steadily float amongst sandy neutrals. Colors that recall the signature vibrancy of Nguyen oeuvre peek through in some areas of the elemental works, but are moderated by the distinctly quieted compositions. These works represent the time immediately after his journey in which Nguyen reflected and processed his feelings during his time in Vietnam. “It’s a reflection of how I see myself. It’s a renewal, a rebirth. In these works, I tried to explore how I define myself in this time and space,” Nguyen reflected.

The stillness of the *Passage* works finds its foil in the *Eruption* series, which immediately followed. Bursting and flowing with movement and color, these works are Nguyen’s effort to find order in chaos, in his ways in which his identity once again felt fraught. When getting lost in the lucidity of the chromatic undulations, it is evident that Nguyen has found full control over his created medium. His mastery of his once-experimental media has positioned Nguyen as a conductor, and, in this series, he has orchestrated a dialectical harmony. In Vietnamese, words that denote colors are incredibly specific, infused with descriptive meanings and references, giving Nguyen an extraordinary perspective on the dynamism of color as a visual language in addition to an aesthetic expression. Colors become a language for memory and place, and Nguyen decisively engages this language through the specific meanings and precise combinations of colors to tell the story of his experience.

Kenny Nguyen was born in Ben Tre Province of Vietnam in 1990. Nguyen graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Art in Fashion Design from National University of Art and Architecture, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in 2010. He later graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Art in Painting from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, in Charlotte, NC, in 2015. Nguyen’s recent solo exhibitions include those at Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Singapore; Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina; Sugarlift Gallery, New York, New York; Sozo Gallery, Charlotte North Carolina; Deiglan Gilfelagio Gallery, Akureyri, Iceland; and M Gallery, Czung Institute for Contemporary Art Museum, South Korea. Nguyen has participated in group exhibitions across the globe, including at Sotheby’s, London, UK; Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA (forthcoming); the Sejong Museum of Art, Seoul; CICA Museum (Czung Institute for Contemporary Art), Gimpo, Gyeonggi Province, Korea; Kunstwerk Carlshütte, Büdelsdorf, Germany; LaGrange Art Museum, Georgia; Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, Florida; Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, Santa Ana, California; and The Rayburn House Office Building, United States Capitol Complex, Washington, DC. In 2016, Nguyen received the Excellence Asia Contemporary Young Artist Award from Sejong Museum of Art and in 2023, he received a nomination for the Joan Mitchell Fellowship. In 2024, Nguyen also received the Asian Art in London’s Modern & Contemporary Asian Art Award, presented by Sotheby’s. He has been awarded numerous grants, fellowships, and residencies, including but not limited to the Artist Residency Fellowships from the Ragdale Foundation, Chicago, IL; The Hambidge Center, GA; Vermont Studio Center, VT; Gil Artist Residency, Akureyri, Iceland; Château d’Orquevaux, Orquevaux, France; and AIR Guidiguada Gran Canaria, Spain. Kenny Nguyen lives and works in Charlotte, North Carolina.

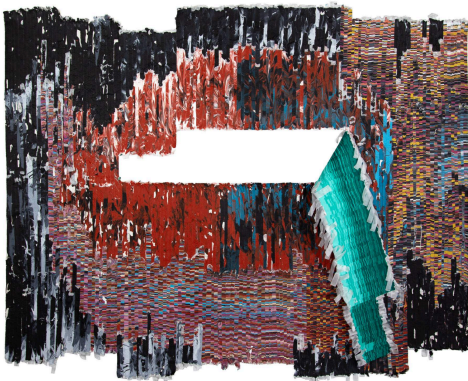
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Kenny Nguyen, *Passage No.3*, 2024, hand-cut silk fabric, acrylic paint, canvas, mounted on wall, 116 x 96 inches



Kenny Nguyen, *Eruption Series No.52*, 2024, hand-cut silk fabric, acrylic paint, canvas, 74 x 67 x 7 inches



Kenny Nguyen, *Deconstruction No. 2*, 2024, Hand-cut silk fabric, acrylic paint, canvas, mounted on wall, 71 x 92 inches

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Specializing in modern and contemporary art, Maya Frodeman Gallery, formerly Tayloe Piggott Gallery, unites artists from all over the world in a tightly curated vision. Maya Frodeman Gallery began in 2024, continuing the 23-year legacy of Tayloe Piggott's eponymous gallery, the first of its kind in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. In an expansive exhibition space in downtown Jackson Hole, the gallery pursues a rigorous schedule of exhibitions representing both emerging and established artists, encompassing unique practices of painting, sculpture, paper, photography, and printmaking.

Exhibiting contemporary giants such as Caio Fonseca, Jane Rosen, Richard Fleischner, Rakuko Naito, Nicola Hicks, and Stephen Talasnik alongside emerging stars like Jane Yang D'Haene and Kathryn Lynch, Maya Frodeman Gallery supports its extensive contemporary roster with close relationships with the estates of Wolf Kahn, Emily Mason, Hans Hofmann, and Esteban Vicente.

From first-time buyers to seasoned collectors, the woman-owned and women-led gallery assists a wide range of clients with the intricacies of collecting contemporary art. Our staff has the knowledge and expertise to facilitate art acquisitions, advise collection management, and curate the interiors of private spaces.

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