

# Viet Nam The World Tour

2010 - Ongoing

Various videos online.

Logos, t-shirts, stickers, banners and other paraphernalia.

[www.VietNamTheWorldTour.com](http://www.VietNamTheWorldTour.com)

**THE  
PROPELLER  
GROUP**

[www.the-propeller-group.com](http://www.the-propeller-group.com)

[hello@the-propeller-group.com](mailto:hello@the-propeller-group.com)

3 Me Linh, District Binh Thanh

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam



Production still from online video of El Mac painting in Singapore.

This rogue nation-rebranding campaign appropriates marketing language, graffiti strategies, and viral video platforms to re-associate a historically colonized and mediated national identity with an entirely new mediated history.

This online media platform began in 2010 as an attempt to re-work and problematize ideas of nationhood and nation-branding by becoming its own nation-branding campaign that set out on a challenge to re-associate a historically saturated icon with renewed meaning. If history is an immense archive determined by the printed/written word, impenetrable, how does one overcome its hold on the current state of relations? How can one interject into that archive to re-adjust or counter-balance its favoritism? If George Orwell

was correct in saying, “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past...” how then can we interject into this dialogue?

Viet Nam The World Tour collaborates with leading fashion labels, graphic designers, street dancers, graffiti artists, public muralists, and a wide-range of artists to bring them on tour around the world giving away t-shirts, stickers, and doing live performances, creating public murals and dance workshops. These collaborative actions and interactions attempt to intervene into history-in-the-making. These actions and events are documented and archived into stylized videos and distributed online, where the archive of history grows exponentially on a daily basis.



Production still from online video of Tony Transformer performing at the Marina in Singapore.

To date, the videos distributed under the brand Viet Nam The World Tour, have gained a substantial following, with subscribers in the hundreds of thousands. Videos have totaled over 3 million hits. The website is expanding it's functionality to include "branding campaigns" from fans and followers.

The tour has been to Amsterdam, Paris, Singapore, Viet Nam, and is heading to Kabul, Afghanistan and Brisbane, Australia.

Check out:  
[www.Viet NamTheWorldTour.com](http://www.VietNamTheWorldTour.com)

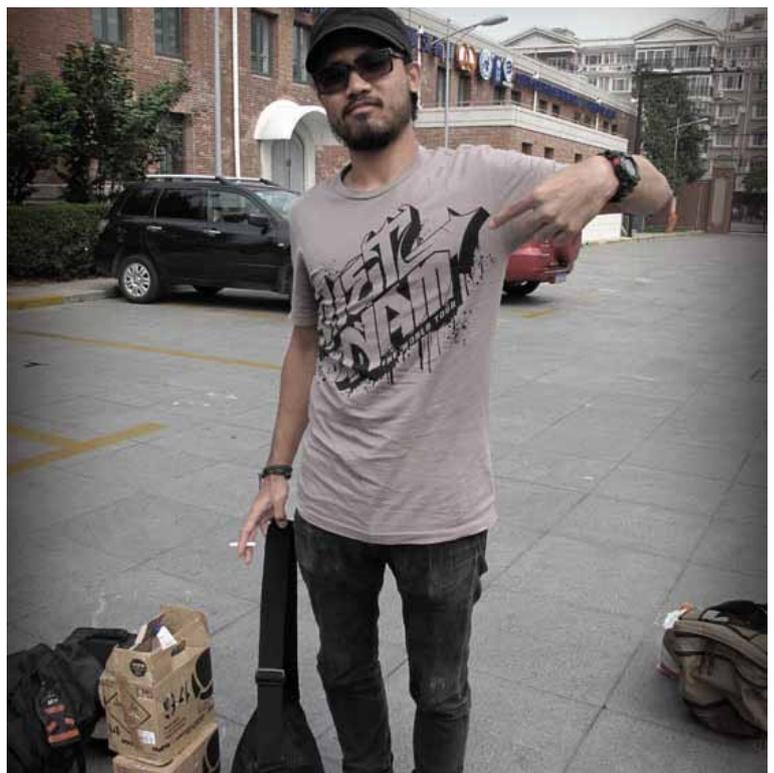


Image found on revok.com of a VNTWT t-shirt in Shanghai, China.



VNTWT t-shirts and stickers` ready to be passed out.



VNTWT sticker spotted in Europe.



Piece by TykeWitnes AWR/MSK in Amsterdam, 2010.



Detail shot from above mural.



Kaba Modern Legacy after a spontaneou dance performance at the Louvre, Paris, France.



Kaba Modern Legacy on stage during a performance in Singapore.



Piece by TykeWitnes AWR/MSK in Amsterdam, 2010.



El Mac mural in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam.



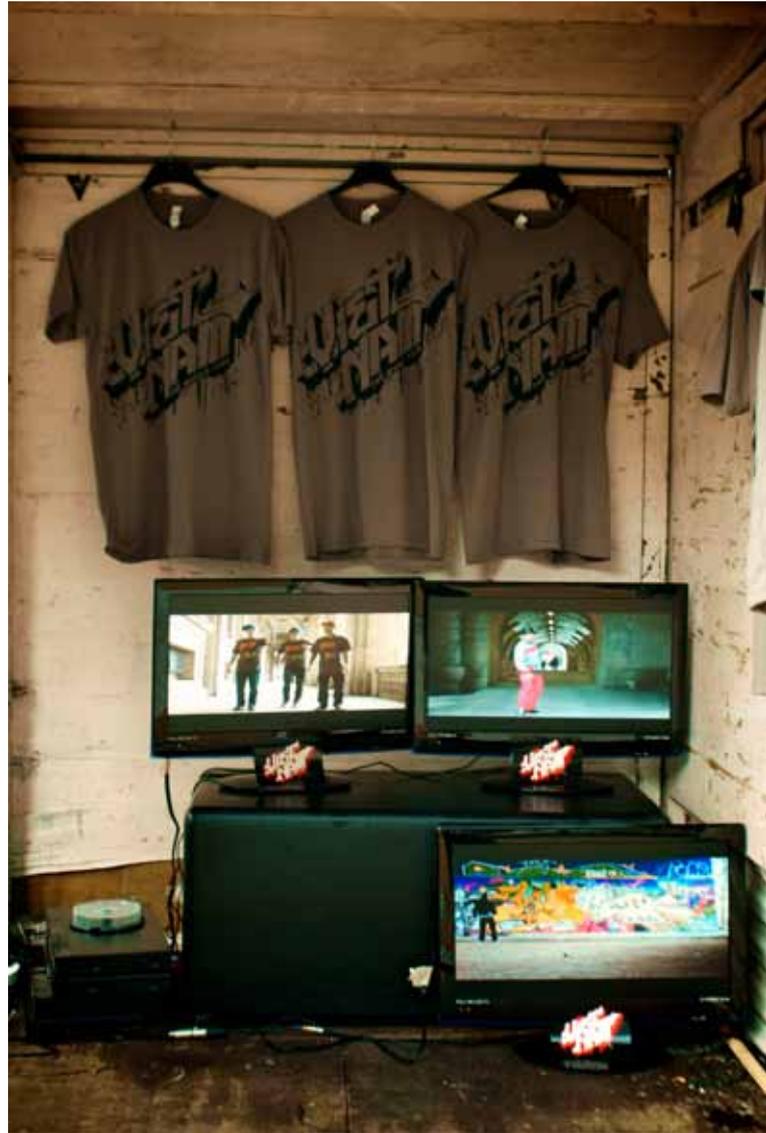
Passersby in front of a mural by El Mac in Little India, Singapore.



Kaba Modern Legacy with local dancers in Singapore.



VNTWT fan with tattoo of VNTWT logo.



Detail shot from above mural.



VNTWT fans in Singapore showign off t-shirts.

# THE PROPELLER GROUP

## An interview

Can you tell us how this project came about and what its aims are?

This project began in early 2010. Basically, *Viet Nam The World Tour* (VNTWT) was envisioned as an anti-nationalism-advertising-campaign disguised as a rogue nation-branding campaign or, better yet, a nation 'un-branding' campaign. We became interested in utilising one of the most branded national identities in history — Vietnam.

Intervention: it's something that a lot of our work attempts to do. History is a hefty, almost overwhelming and constricting set of conditions handed down to any given generation. It's a series of archives that are definitive. For us it's not about rewriting history, but more about shifting, or interrupting the archive a little bit, so that it's not so definitive or anchored. Basically, the campaign aims to destabilise our notions of what it means to subscribe to the idea of nationality and nationalism within the linear and continual context of history.

How to take a brand — in this case, specifically, a national identity — and move it completely outside of its definitions and constructions as a national identity, without saying or mentioning the conditions which it has fallen victim to. To not mention something, to not regard it, means to strip it of its significance. That's what we're posing. For example, many people talk about issues of centre versus periphery. We don't engage in that dialogue, because to engage means to reify these notions of a 'centre'. We believe that there are no peripheries.

We're getting to a point where this 'brand' has to almost become consumable, a commodity that could be acquired and owned. We've talked about it becoming a clothing brand, or a spray-paint brand, where people could actually disassociate the national brand and, in its place, begin to associate it with a consumer brand.

What is your process of collaborating with different cultural producers?

On a very superficial level, we work with artists in the same way that advertising companies would work with celebrities. On a deeper level, there are artists and producers out there that are doing some amazing things that we are genuinely interested in being a part of.

You have worked with El Mac a number of times. What interests you about his work?

We love that El Mac has brought photorealist portraiture into the street art mix. His technical and artistic skill level is unmatched. His portraits look like they're moving.

El Mac is also very involved in speaking about issues of immigration. He expresses his concerns in very poetic and thoughtful ways. It comes out in his choice of subject matter and his process of painting portraits of real people.

Tell us about the collaboration between El Mac and Shamsia Hassani.

It's almost as if 'collaboration' has become our artistic medium. We use it as a conceptual platform to talk about many things. We love its ability to transpire, metamorphose and amalgamate. We love interacting and sharing ideas with people and getting people involved in discussing those ideas with us. And we love being the catalyst for collaborations, because it leads to a new trajectory in practices that often develops into even larger, more layered approaches and art works.

This collaboration began with our interest in migration, particularly current migration and immigration issues related to war. Both El Mac and Shamsia have very unique knowledge and personal experiences with these issues, and through the process of creating a mural with The Propeller Group we have been able to share and begin an important dialogue that we hope will continue and expand.

Another interesting point of this project is that although El Mac has painted numerous large portraits in public and has collaborated with several artists all over the world, this is the first time he's painted a portrait of the person who is collaborating with him. For us this became a beautiful and transformative process that spoke about presence, gesture and image, and the power that these elements in combination can have in public space.

You have spoken about wanting to cross borders with your work. Is this how you see this collaboration linking to the VNTWT project?

The VNTWT project is about *transcending* borders. To mention borders is to reiterate and reify the very notion. We don't feel the need to cross borders, we crush 'em.

Interviewed by Maud Page, September 2012.



THE PROPELLER GROUP  
Est. 2006  
Vietnam/United States  
*Birds of No Nation* (from *Viet Nam The World Tour* 2010–ongoing) 2012  
A collaborative project created with Shamsia Hassani (Kabul, Afghanistan) and El Mac (Los Angeles, United States) / Work in progress / Images courtesy: The artists