Ann Proctor

**NGUYEN Phan Chanh (Nguyễn Phan Chánh, 1892-1984)**

Nguyễn Phan Chánh (also known as Hồng Nam) was a member of the first class of students at the École des Beaux-Arts d’Indochine, Hanoi, in 1925. Born in Hà Tĩnh Province, Chánh received a Sino-Vietnamese education prior to studying in Hanoi (1925-1930). He is known for scenes of village life painted on silk, previously considered a medium for ancestor portraits. Many of his early paintings included poems written in Sino-Vietnamese calligraphy. He developed a distinctly modern Vietnamese style of silk painting, using areas of flat colour echoing the manner of local prints, to create tender paintings of subtle colours. His women are generally depicted in clothes typical of those dating prior to the introduction of the modern *ao dai*. During his lifetime his paintings were included in a number of overseas and local exhibitions. *The Game of Squares*, (1931) was well received when it was exhibited in Paris in 1931. As one of the originators of Vietnamese modern art, Chánh lived through difficult war-years, at times painting patriotic, but never bellicose works. He taught art intermittently and was a member of the Vietnamese Fine Arts Association (1957-1983). In 1972, for his 80th birthday, a retrospective exhibition of his work took place at the Museum of Fine Arts, Hanoi.

**References and further reading**

Masahiro Ushiroshoji and Toshiko Rawanchaikul. (1997) *The Birth of Modern Art in Southeast Asia*: *Artists and Movements,* Fukuoka, Japan: Fukuoka Art Museum.

Taylor, Nora, Annesley. (2004) *Painters in Hanoi: An Ethnography of Vietnamese Art*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press. (Taylor gives an alternative interpretation of Nguyễn Phan Chánh’s anti-colonialism than that found in Vietnamese histories).

Thomas, C. David. (June 2002) ‘The Painter who discovered himself in silk,’ *Vietnam Cultural Window*, No. 51, 2-5. (This issue of features a number of articles about Nguyễn Phan Chánh, including one written by his daughter, Nguyệt Tú, the artists Trần Văn Cẩn and Nguyễn Văn Tỵ who discusses his nude paintings).