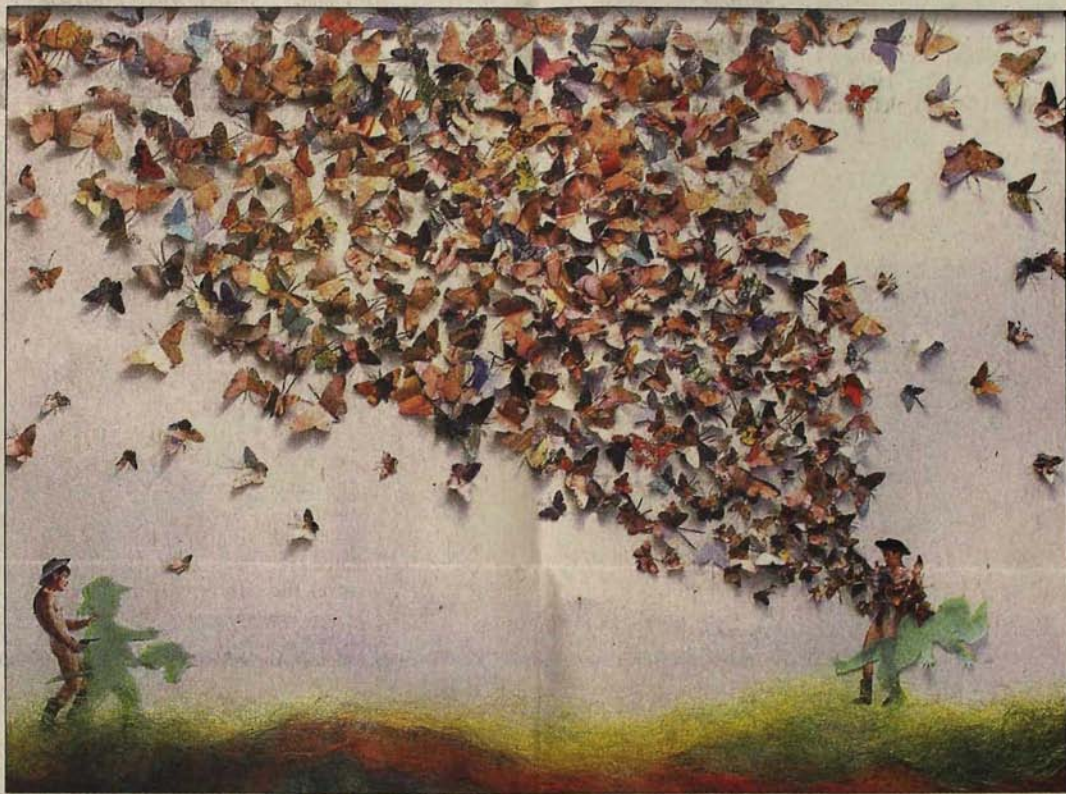


A graphic response to Hirst's canvas-pinned butterflies

JESS DENHAM

A San Franciscan artist has created paper butterflies out of porn magazines in protest against Damien Hirst's use of live insects. Truong Tran used 9,000 hand-crafted butterflies in protest against the same number of live insects used for Hirst's famous 1991 installation, *In and Out of Love. Or I Meant To Say Please Pass The Sugar* sees Tran attempt to "counter what [he] considers obscene — the killing of these butterflies — with [his] own artistic gesture that to many is also deemed obscene". *In and Out of Love* saw Hirst glue butterfly pupae to big white canvasses, where they grew and hatched. He provided food and sugar water and allowed them to mate before eventually dying, their bodies disposed of by gallery staff.

In Tran's graphic take, he explores the themes of loss, reconciliation, cultural appropriation and desire. His art asks viewers to consider how their bodies are viewed in society. The exhibition's full title is *Or I Know You Are But What Am I Or The Fleecing of Americana Or 9000 Butterflies For Damien Hirst Or I'd Rather Do This And Call It Art Or What You've Heard Is True Or And Away We Go Or The Miseducation of Gnouart Nart Or It's Complicated Or I Meant to Say Please Pass The Sugar*.



Truong Tran's *Or I Meant To Say Please Pass The Sugar*

Tran, who was born in Saigon, Vietnam in 1969, told local magazine *The Bold Italic* that his representation of white male bodies only was intentional as he believes the identity of "people of colour" is fragmented enough in his society. "I refuse to further contribute to that sense of fragmentation," he said.

Tran does not paint, draw, sculpt, or use any traditional mediums. "I find

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handed down, discarded and long-forgotten objects — ping-pong balls, cut-out dolls, paint chips, porn, lab beakers, plastic frames,"

he wrote in an artist's statement. "I look at them and wait for these objects to speak to me." Tran, who is also a published poet, relies

on his "obsessive-compulsive drive" as he tries to reclaim the significance of everyday objects. "My work is charged with unresolved issues that clearly define one's consciousness," he said. "I don't have any solutions, but in exhibiting these images I hope to show what they are doing to our psyche and consciousness. To me, that's where the real art lies."

THE INDEPENDENT