

**Binh Danh** (Vietnamese, Born 1977)

*Ancestral Altar # 14, 2005*

Chlorophyll print and resin

Purchase with funds from the Cherry Hill Endowment

2006.039

Born in Vietnam in 1977, two years after the fall of Saigon, Danh and his family left their home in 1979 and immigrated to the United States in the early 1980s. The experience of displacement and his eventual trip back to his country of birth inspired the artist to create work exploring his homeland's history using found and natural materials. By inventing a process known as chlorophyll printing, Danh found the perfect metaphor to honor the thousands of people murdered by the Khmer Rouge regime. Printed on a variety of tropical plants, Danh's portraits of the victims are permanently imprinted into the matrix of the leaves' structure.

*"When I first saw this chlorophyll print of Khmer Rouge genocide victims I was moved, of course, by its dire subject matter, but I also was moved by the eloquence of Binh Danh's use of his medium. To have 'resurrected' these individuals in the flesh of a leaf so they seem to look out at us and ask, 'How could this have happened?' is the secret of this work's special power. And, as a writer, I thought at once of Walt Whitman's butterfly portrait and his central metaphor in Leaves of Grass: 'What is the grass? . . . and now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves . . .' My encounter with Binh Danh's work was challenging and inspiring. He and I became collaborators in the Taubman's exhibition War Memoranda as well as in Ancestral Altars, a book of poems and art. And he and I have become fast friends. Art connects. It can change your life."*

—Robert Schultz, Author and Professor of English at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia