

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

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PHUNG HUYNH: *BITE THE HAND THAT FEEDS YOU*

September 12 – October 24, 2026

Opening Reception:

Saturday, September 12, 2026, 4:00–7:00 P.M.

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Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is pleased to announce **Phung Huynh: *Bite The Hand That Feeds You***, the multidisciplinary artist's third solo exhibition with the gallery, featuring documentary-style drawings, paintings, and sculptural installations that honor immigrant experiences. The exhibition runs from **September 12 through October 24, 2026**. An opening reception will be held Saturday, September 12, from 4-7 pm.

Bite The Hand That Feeds You presents new drawings, paintings, and sculptural installations centered on pink donut boxes—an iconic yet often overlooked artifact of Cambodian refugee labor in California and across the United States. Donut shops, frequently framed as success stories of refugee entrepreneurship, obscure the physical toll, racialized labor conditions, and intergenerational sacrifices that make such survival possible. Huynh reclaims the donut box as a charged container—one that holds sweetness alongside exhaustion, nostalgia alongside exploitation, and cultural memory alongside erasure. Rendered fragile, monumental, or emptied, these forms question who is feeding whom, who is consumed, and who is rendered disposable within capitalist and nationalist frameworks.

Food operates in Huynh's work as a complex register of memory, intimacy, and obligation. Within refugee households, food is often the primary language of care, carrying histories of loss, adaptation, and survival across generations. Yet food is also labor—frequently feminized, racialized, and undervalued—performed under conditions shaped by displacement and economic precarity. In the context of anti-immigrant violence, this labor becomes even more precarious, as the threat of detention or deportation shadows everyday acts of survival. By invoking Cambodian-owned donut shops, Huynh situates food as both sustenance and site of struggle—where care persists despite systemic harm.

Huynh reconstitutes the well-known idiom “bite the hand that feeds you” as a powerful stance of both provocation and refusal. Reflecting on the context of the phrase's original disciplinary tone, used to silence dissent, and maintain an expectation that refugees and immigrants accept rescue without complaint and perform gratitude in exchange for survival. This new body of work critiques U.S. foreign policy and refugee resettlement programs, exposing how state aid is often conditional and extractive. The metaphor collapses under the reality of anti-immigrant policies and the violence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which targets the very communities whose labor sustains the economy. The true “hand” is not the state, but immigrants, refugees, and undocumented workers whose labor undergirds entire industries. To bite, then, is not an act of ingratitude, but a refusal to accept exploitation disguised as opportunity.

Thus, *Bite The Hand That Feeds You* ultimately rejects the moral economy of gratitude imposed on refugees and immigrants. It insists instead on critique as a form of survival and care. To bite is to remember, to resist, and to expose systems that exploit while claiming benevolence. Huynh reframes feeding not as an act bestowed from above, but as labor performed from below—by those whose work sustains the nation even as they are targeted by it. In this reversal, the work asks us to confront an urgent truth: the hand that feeds has always been immigrant labor, and the violence against it is both systemic and self-destructive.

Phung Huynh (b. 1977, Rạch Giá, Vietnam) is a Los Angeles-based artist and educator whose practice includes drawing, painting, public art, and community engagement. Grounded in her lived experience as a Cambodian-Vietnamese refugee, Huynh's work interrogates the ongoing conditions of displacement, assimilation, and cultural negotiation that shape the refugee life in the United States. Her projects examine how histories of war, U.S. imperialism, and forced migration persist long after resettlement—embedded in systems of labor, expectations of gratitude, and the quiet erasures that accompany survival.

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Huynh's works are held in the public collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, CA; Vincent Price Art Museum, Monterey Park, CA; USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, CA; Escalette Permanent Collection of Art at Chapman University, Orange, CA; and the Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine Art Collection, Pasadena, CA, as well as private collections. She is the recipient of numerous honors including the Marciano Art Foundation Artadia Award, Los Angeles, CA; Fellows for the Lucas Artists Program, Montalvo Arts Center for the Arts, Saratoga, CA; Women of Impact Award, 49th Assembly District, California; California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Artist Fellows; California Arts Council Individual Established Artist Fellowship; and the 2021 COLA Individual Artist Fellowship from the City of Los Angeles.

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For further questions contact the gallery at 213-395-0762, or email galler@luisdejesus.com. Follow the gallery on IG: [@luisdejesuslosangeles](https://www.instagram.com/luisdejesuslosangeles)