

**Thursday 26 May**  
**4:30-6:00pm, Conference Room, AD Hope 128**



Still (detail) from Đặng Nhật Minh, *When the Tenth Month Comes* (1984).

## Scarlette Do

### When Tomorrow Comes: Melancholia for the Vietnamese Socialist Utopia in Đặng Nhật Minh's 1980s Films

Vietnamese *auteur* Đặng Nhật Minh is highly regarded both inside and outside of the country for his poetic films and skilful negotiations with the censors at the Ministry of Culture. This paper examines two of Đặng's films—*When the Tenth Month Comes* (1984) and *The Girl on the River* (1987)—against the backdrop of socio-political reforms and the Third Indochina War, during which time the socialist utopia once promised by the Communist Party of Vietnam became irretrievably lost. Situating the two films as revisions of the Revolutionary Cinema canon, I identify the ways in which Đặng navigates censorship to make known the Vietnamese community's deep disillusionment and mourning for war deaths. Despite their critiques of the nation-state, the films nevertheless exhibit fixation on the lost socialist utopia through the thematic focus on the tomorrow that never materialised. Imbued with melancholia, Đặng's films ultimately perpetuate within spectators yearning for this tomorrow, orienting their gaze away from the imperfect present and the encroaching neo-liberalisation of Vietnamese society.

**Scarlette Do** is a second-year PhD student at the Australian National University. Her research examines films about the Second Indochina War using interdisciplinary frameworks, including psychoanalysis, gender, and nationalism. When she is not researching and teaching, Scarlette serves as National Co-Director of the One Woman Project, a nonprofit focused on upskilling young people to challenge gender inequity in their local and national communities.

**ANU COVID safe event:** social distancing and masks mandatory

**Online:** Zoom Meeting ID: 861 8419 0389

Password: 2022



enquiries: [russell.smith@anu.edu.au](mailto:russell.smith@anu.edu.au)



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