



Technical Features of Traditional Engrave Panting in Lacquer Works at Binh Duong

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Abstract

Lacquer comes in a variety of forms and styles of expression, like clear warm cockroach paint and jet black lacquer, which merge in harmony with many other materials (eggs, pearls, gold, silver, lipstick, colors, and so on) to create a work of profound artistic language. Artists have conveyed these forms and techniques through lacquer paintings. With a comprehensive expression of typical materials combined with abrasive painting techniques (interlacing, snail-egg carving techniques, embossed relief painting techniques, gold cupping techniques, sunken engraving techniques, engraved paint or so on), each type of lacquer painting in Binh Duong has become more effective than expected. Among the current lacquer techniques, the engraving technique involves the artisan's meticulousness and expertise when utilizing sharp, blunt tools to carve into the paint surface while also creating evenly spaced engraving lines. These engraved lines have become a defining feature of Binh Duong's painting and engraving techniques. Because of the above distinguishing features, the author employed an artistic research approach to analyze and evaluate several traditional lacquer painting styles in Binh Duong. To clearly see the artistic value of the engraving technique in Binh Duong, it must be recognized as a true core value that deserves to be cherished and promoted in creativity, education, and vocational transmission, especially given the risk that traditional occupations are gradually disappearing, as they are today.

Keywords: Lacquer in Binh Duong, lacquer technique, engraving technique.

1. Introduction

Binh Duong excels in economic and service growth but also stands out in culture and arts, comparable to surrounding areas like Dong Nai, Tay Ninh, Vung Tau, and Binh Thuan. Lacquer paintings in Binh Duong province are a timeless issue that many critics and art theorists have examined in depth, revolving around a variety of contents and research topics such as artist, lacquer painting, lacquer painter style, lacquer techniques and materials, lacquer artwork worth or so. Lacquer materials in Binh Duong province have a wide range of expressive capabilities and techniques. Other accomplishments include the grinding-interlaced

drawing technique, the snail-egg carving technique, the embossing-relief technique, the gold cupping technique, the sunken engraving technique, and the engraved painting technique.

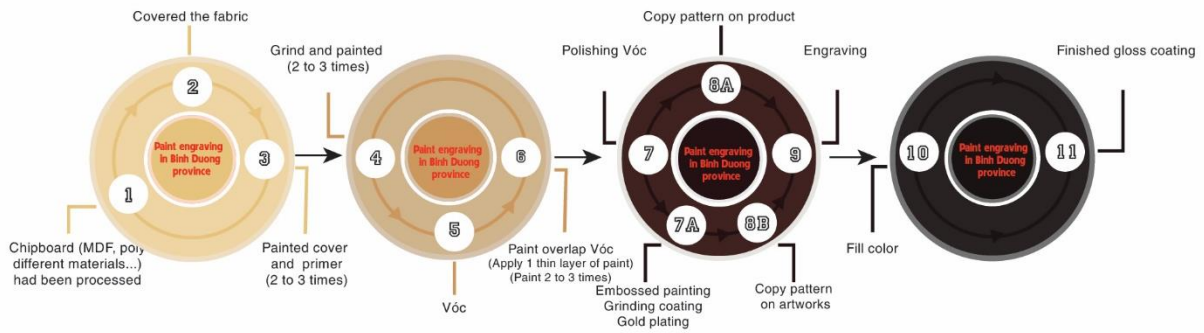
Therefore, each lacquer work with a magical substance and expressive technique has the potential to express endless levels of emotion via the styles of generations of artisans, artists, and artists of the time. The external environment, as well as several objective and subjective elements unique to ordinary people, have a considerable impact on compatibility. Human tastes have evolved significantly over time and have been impacted by a wide range of art forms. Thus, the emotional and spiritual diffusion of works of art causes viewers to sublimate their feelings accordingly. The materials and processes are both still and warm. This is a scene of emotional sympathy between the audience and the maker, as well as sympathy for the materials and techniques embedded deep within the work's soul. As a result, a minor modification in the composition method can generate a sense of comfort and spread, as well as a rhythm to the work, which is the quickest approach to reaching art enthusiasts.

As a result, in lacquer techniques in Binh Duong province, the rhythm of the engraving technique is a specific voice created by the continual repetition and alternation of engraved lines, similar to a flowing circuit that sometimes forms shapes on the work. Deep or shallow engraving processes, as well as dark or light coloring procedures, produce dark, occasionally light results. These techniques have elevated the painted and etched works in Binh Duong to an unfathomable degree, much like a harmonious symphony. This is a valuable artistic asset that artisans, painters, and art critics must evaluate, share, and utilize Binh Duong engraving skills to create modern lacquer paintings. Nowadays, efforts are being made to elevate the lacquer painting style in Binh Duong to regional standards.

Figure 1: Painting and engraving technique in Binh Duong province. Source: Author, year 2023



Figure 2: Process of making the work as well as engraved paint products. Source: Author, year 2023



PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING ARTWORKS/PRODUCTS LACQUER ENGRAVING IN BINH DUONG PROVINCE

Figure 3: Tung Hac-themed flower vase with the engraving technique of Thanh Festival lacquer in Binh Duong Province. Source: Author, year 2023



Figure 4: Painting engraved with the theme of birds and animals by Thanh Le Lacquer in Binh Duong province. Source: Author, year 2023



Figure 5: Painted vase engraved with the theme of orchids by Thanh Le Lacquer in Binh Duong province. Source: Author, year 2023



Figure 6: Painting engraved with the Lotus theme. Author: Tu Phen. Size: 60 x 40 cm. Source: Author, year 2023



Figure 6: Painting engraved with the theme of orchids Author: Tu Phen. Size: 30 x 40 cm. Source: Author, year 2023



Figure 7: Painting engraved with the theme of Countryside. Author: Nguyen Quang Son. Size: 80 x 120 cm. Source: Author, year 2023



1.1 Word concept

Lacquer is both a traditional painting substance and a recognized Binh Duong painting product. Because Binh Duong lacquer painting combines traditional Vietnamese lacquer painting techniques that have existed for thousands of years with Vietnamese lacquer materials such as Phu Tho and Nam Vang paints, as well as other materials such as pearls and eggshells, to create diverse shapes, the techniques expressed in the work are enriched.

The lacquer painting technique is part of the traditional Vietnamese painting profession. Stirring paint is a traditional technique for mixing paint that uses traditional abrasive materials from the painting profession, such as black paint, cockroach paint as a binder, and Nam Vang paint, to stir the paint and create a special material for lacquer painting in Vietnam and Binh Duong province.

Painting and engraving are two techniques that require the artist's meticulousness, skill, and proficiency when carving into the paint surface with a pointed stick and then moving continuously in the direction of shaping each detail, which can be large or small, curved or straight. The goal of this technique is to generate recurring, overlapping, and alternating engravings from the crisp, decisive engravings that are so distinctive, setting it apart from engraved paintings from other regions of Vietnam.

1.2 Research methods

The author of the essay gathered data from professional experience, fieldwork, surveys, and research and used the main technique of analysis to serve as a theoretical foundation and determine the worth of engraved painting artworks in Binh Duong province. During the study process, the author employed the method of comparing, contrasting, and analyzing painting and engraving techniques in Binh Duong province and adjacent areas to present comments and explain topics linked to painting and engraving in an objective and scientific manner.

2. Body of paper

2.1 Some information on traditional lacquer in Binh Duong province

Vietnamese lacquer painting, a traditional beauty of the Vietnamese people, has evolved throughout time, thanks to sticky paint and deep gloss, into a beauty of traditional identity that any Vietnamese person can recognize. We have the right to be proud of the splendor of the golden light, the iridescence of oyster shells, and the depth of the bright red and deep blue

colors beneath the clear golden cockroach paint, which contains what resonates with the sounds of thousands of ancient voices, indicating that the past is echoed in today's life (Nguyen, 2015).

According to local historical records, in the mid-18th century, a group of Northern immigrants crossed the Saigon River and settled in Binh An district (Thu Dau Mot). Many of them arrived in the harsh land of Tuong Binh Hiep, formed alliances to explore the wasteland, founded new villages, and became the first residents of Tuong Binh Hiep. Tuong Binh Hiep lacquer craft village originated in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Due to historical circumstances and the flow of immigration, the traditional painting profession has followed the class of folk painters from Quang Binh and Thuan Hoa to Dong Nai and Gia Dinh communes. According to the book *Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi*, the people of Thu Dau Mot Hamlet had a pretty prosperous old-fashioned career of manufacturing lacquer (black paint). However, there were only a few homes in the village that specialized in creating lacquer, gilding, and blending vermilion paint with black paint to meet the area's basic necessities (People's Committee of Binh Duong Province, 2010).

Many individuals mention Mr. Ngo Tu Sam (from Ha Dong), as well as Mr. Tung, Mr. Hai Xam, and his wife. They were the first lacquer artists in Tuong Binh Hiep village. Tuong Binh Hiep lacquer craft village has established a new enterprise called Thanh Le, which employs many talented artisans. Thanh Le has been well-known in the North and South since the early twentieth century for its one-of-a-kind handicrafts (Tinh, 2022). Through several stages of lacquer growth in Binh Duong province, compositions with topics portrayed in lacquer paintings have become increasingly diversified and rich, as well as incorporating new painting trends. If artisans were still limited in their creativity with prescribed themes in the twentieth century and earlier, the lacquer style has been experimented with and shaped through a series of works from the 1930s onwards, and many artisans and lacquer artists paint with themes of nature, country, and people today.

Furthermore, employing traditional lacquer materials, artists have created works with vibrant visual language, revealing rich emotions through a number of enlarged themes and conveying realism, surrealism, ... Lacquer paintings in Binh Duong province are true works of artistic and applied worth, as well as having long-term cultural significance, as seen by their widespread popularity.

Traditional paint, also known as Nam Vang paint and Phu Tho paint, is used for diving painting, embossed gold painting, lacquer coating, gold sapling, sunken snail and floating snail, sunken egg, and engraved painting techniques, which have established a reputation and brought many achievements to lacquer in the ancient Binh Duong province. From 1945 to 1975, high-class lacquer paintings at Thanh Le workshop and in Binh Duong province participated in many lacquer exhibitions in France (1952), Thailand (1954), and the United States (1959), and are favored by friends from all over the world, including Cambodia, Thailand, Japan, and China (Tinh, 2022). Thanh Le's works at the time were frequently painted thinly, similar to oil paintings, with two or three layers of paint followed by a layer of adhesive paint. Despite numerous ups and downs, lacquer paintings in Binh Duong province continue to use traditional technical processes, even though product content and themes have altered to suit customer preferences. In addition to the traditional lacquer items and paintings, artists also offer new products such as sofas, wine cabinets, dining tables, beds, and other Western or European visual style paints. As a result, the lacquer profession in Binh Duong province, and specifically in Tuong Binh Hiep village, is not outdated.

2.2 The process and characteristics of engraving in lacquer works in Binh Duong province

The golden age of lacquer in Binh Duong province was highlighted by places that trained numerous artists, including the local Fine Arts School, the Thanh Le lacquer workshop, and the historic Tuong Binh Hiep craft hamlet, which was well-known throughout the country and among worldwide acquaintances. As we can see, Binh Duong province produces many highly artistic decorative works. A golden age of lacquer in Binh Duong province left many marks in the hearts of the art-loving public with lacquer paintings with rich themes such as Hai Ba Trung, Kim Van Kieu, and Luc Van Tien, especially paintings of daily life, countryside scenes, goldfish, pheasants, and nature of the four seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter (apricot blossom, orchid, chrysanthemum, bamboo), stuff like that.

Traditional lacquer paintings are created by combining traditional paint materials with techniques such as abrasive painting, alternating painting, snail-egg painting, embossed painting, sculpture, golden cupping, sunken engraving, and engraved painting. Among those skills, engraving painting appears to be the final secondary technique, with a lower economic worth than other lacquer items and products in Binh Duong province at the time. However, when compared to other techniques demonstrated in lacquer items in Binh Duong province (Figure 1), engraving demands a high level of meticulousness, care, and sophistication.

The procedure for manufacturing works and engraved lacquer products is similar to the various processes of making lacquer works in Binh Duong province, and it includes three steps: The first stage is to compute the product's size and shape (MDF, various materials, etc.) according to the requirements. The second phase is to process boards, starting with fabric manufacturing and moving on to lining cutting. The third stage is to line and grind the lining twice or three times to perfect the rough core, also called Voc. Following that, Voc is painted with two to three coats and polished to provide a smooth, generally complete surface layer that will serve as the base for the next stage of sculpting the motifs (Figure 2).

After the Voc phase has finished polishing, the artisans and painters proceed to construct shapes on Voc utilizing embossing, gold and silver inlay, and engraving painting techniques. To begin engraving the goods, the artisan or artist first sketches a model of Voc's face that includes the appropriate shapes and layouts for the topic. The artisan or artist then uses a stick to etch evenly curved lines and bubble each precise detail on the optical paint layer. The rolling process incorporates many processes for slicing large or small flatouts from face materials, depending on the sample's features.

After you've finished engraving, color the pattern with oil paint and a cloth wrapped around your fingertips or a piece of wood, then slowly color and rub on the engraved design. When rubbing, pay attention: rub once to allow the color to dry comparatively, then wipe the patterns with a clean cloth to eliminate any excess color that overflows beyond the engraved lines. Finishing the work with a thorough polishing phase to hold the color and generate iridescence on the surface is one of the most important steps in creating a luxurious, lustrous look that adds value to the piece.

When sculpting and constructing works or decorative products utilizing painting and engraving techniques, artisans and painters in Binh Duong province pay great attention to carving large and small flat patches based on the topic. If lacquer goods such as vases, jars, cabinets, boxes, and trays are made by artists using classic engraving lacquer processes, they simply need to draw the exact shape, model, and engrave each piece precisely. It gradually becomes familiar, much like duplicating a picture or engraving based on a model. Furthermore, artisans and artists

can use sunken hooking techniques to create extremely realistic flower petals, bird snouts, and bird feet. As a result, all of the carved shapes will be identical.

Figure 3 shows a typical flower vase product with the Tung Hac theme. The artist engraves it in a circular pattern to mimic the shape of a pine leaf, which lacks lobes. The bundle of leaves is fastened to the pine tree trunk using straight lines carved in the shape of a circle, rotating concentrically or radiating rays. The bundle of pine leaves is painted in two hues, green on the inside and yellow on the exterior, which are extremely similar. The pine tree trunk is deeply engraved and engraved in a circular pattern, resulting in dynamic twists and turns through the dark and light colors that permeate the deep-engraved areas. The engraving of two cranes is extremely detailed; it shows the shape of a male or female bird through a pair of lengthy, fat bodies with curving lines that flow seamlessly depending on their stance. However, the engraved strokes depict the crane's wings as being made up of several layers due to the converging direction, the continuously recurring oblique direction, the thickness and sparseness of the engraved strokes, and the darkening of the strokes. The strokes make the crane's wings appear more realistic. Similarly, the artist shapes the crane's thighs and abdomen to be spherical, using the tiny curvature of the rounded shape and the white hue to portray the crane's plumpness. Furthermore, when we consider the work, the viewer's first impression is one of appreciation for the precision of each etched line. But the root of professional art does not yet exist since it is a stereotype; there is little creativity, no deep expression of color, and the tones appear uneven.

Furthermore, the etching technique is not only a highlight but also a distinguishing feature between the engraved paintings in Binh Duong province and those in Hanoi. For example, the works (Figure 04) and (Figure 05) show the painting and engraving style of Binh Duong lacquer, with the distinguishing feature being narrow lines that are precisely flared and bubbled, as little as a stick in the center to the point of being invisible. You can count the number of layered patterns on the painting surface, as well as the number of engraved lines that add depth and curvature to flower petals, tree trunks, canopies, birds, and butterflies... In general, Binh Duong artisans only need to use a stick to meticulously circle and bubble each detail of the material out of the surface of the optical paint layer, spread it evenly according to the pattern lines on the texture, and use color combinations appropriate to the topic to be described. We can observe that the artist or painter produced the task much faster and in less time than other lacquer processes.

2.3 Currently promoting the significance of engraved paint technology in lacquer painting operations in Binh Duong province

Nowadays, the art market is gradually warming up, and painting is beginning a new chapter. In the early decades of the twenty-first century, on the verge of innovative painting, many generations of artists were inspired to constantly mobilize and innovate in order to find directions and answers to clear the flow of Vietnamese fine arts throughout the integration period. Promoting the artistic worth of Binh Duong engraving aims to retain historic characteristics while incorporating current compositions. Although the sheer artistic value of the painting and engraving process has not reached the heights of other classical paintings, it is one of the most successful conservation solutions and a new creative movement to be celebrated.

Vietnam launched its international openness, trade, and integration in 1986. Culture and the arts were once seen to be at the forefront, but as a result of the impact of the market economy, they appeared to have reached a dead end and were lost, discolored, and disintegrated in the pursuit of personal economic interests. The ornate lacquer art style in Binh Duong province

has fallen after a lengthy slide, so when art fans think about Binh Duong lacquer, they cannot help but flinch, contemplate, and sigh. Faced with the gradual loss of traditional techniques and the loss of intangible cultural quintessence over time, this serves as a warning bell for artists, critical theorists, and artisans to develop many solutions to promote the quintessence of the craft as an effective solution for vocational transmission, a creative solution that combines traditional shaping techniques with modern shaping.

Promoting and preserving can involve a variety of methods depending on the product or work; the artisan and artist will use the painting and engraving technical processes in line with the person's ideas and aesthetic needs. As a result, the first answer is to re-manufacture engraved lacquer products utilizing Binh Duong lacquer's traditional processes and materials, but with a different theme and basic shapes to create a mineral space on the background of the painting. This is a strategy to promote the Binh Duong applied lacquer brand, which has made a name for itself around the globe with products such as Thanh Le lacquer, Tuong Binh Hiep lacquer, and Dinh Hoa lacquer. A classic example is the Lotus work (Figure 05), which uses traditional lacquer processes, engraving, and spreading to create lotus leaf patterns, soft and flexible curves, and shaping based on the shape and color presented. The blocky, rough appearance of the thorns, stalks, and lotus leaves is enhanced by a V-shaped alder tool and the method of hooking alder into the hollows of the lotus petals. The image of the Sen work, while simply composed using the traditional lacquer engraving technique in Binh Duong province, is generously arranged, and the expression is close to the style of artistic creation that is modern painting, which has created open space on the painting's surface.

Furthermore, the author arranges the artwork engraved with orchid branches (Figure 06) in an oblique, harmoniously balanced manner, leading the viewer's eye from top to bottom. A group of orchids is depicted in the painting's middle, utilizing the alder and sunken hook techniques. Orchid leaves and orchid branches are sculpted using a painstaking engraving method that involves the continual repetition of thin vertical and diagonal engraving lines that alternate in the direction of the leaves and branches. The use of color in each feature makes the painting more distinct from the composition's subject matter.

In addition, one way to promote painting and engraving techniques is to combine the process of making pure painting works with other techniques such as embossed drawing, rough coating, gilding, or engraving to produce a modern visual style. For example, the work Rural (Figure 7) is an experimental style that returns to its origins by combining traditional lacquer techniques with engraving techniques. The artist sketches the shapes for the painting's composition, hand-paints them in numerous layers, then smoothes them several times to create a flat painting surface with space for a dark iridescent background to paint on and a white patch. Outside, there are cliffs and caverns. These areas and lines are both hard and thin as a result of poor grinding. Rattan grass branches sprout from inside the rock, sculpted gently in a gentle, natural curve, starting at the base. The painting's space emphasizes the image of a baby bird perched on a blade of rattan grass, giving the viewer the impression that the chick is looking out into the enormous space. The image of the bird is carefully produced using painting and engraving techniques. The work Rural has struck viewers' hearts because of its humane content, and Images of nature, birds, and animals relax and enjoy contemporary life while observing nature. The author is quite careful in creating the notion of the bird gazing forth without being trapped in a lifeless birdcage. However, the work Rural not only has serious substance, but it also has a manner of expression that combines painting and engraving techniques with other traditional lacquer techniques to create a modern visual style.

In general, the incorporation of methodologies into painting works is a positive new experience for certain current painters in Binh Duong province. This experiment intends to explore new

directions while also promoting the historic value of lacquer in the Binh Duong region, namely engraving techniques. However, merging painting and engraving processes into painting is a difficult undertaking. Because engraving is a realistic art, the lines are firm yet narrow. As a result, the artist must shape and organize the painting on the plane in a way that is both stylized and creative in order to match the realistic image of the etched paint in a consistent and harmonious manner on the painting face.

3. Conclusion

Lacquer in Binh Duong province has experienced many ups and downs, but it has now reformed itself to reclaim its position in the local and worldwide markets through a variety of applied lacquer goods with high artistic value. Binh Duong province boasts a varied range of lacquer painting methods, including submerged, embossed, lacquered, diving, gilded, and engraved paintings.

To make a name for lacquer in Binh Duong province, from materials to techniques, the artist must not only shape and construct paintings in their own particular style but also discover a unique creative approach that is appropriate for each individual. Combining tradition and modernity, from outward form to internal content, with the goal of maintaining and promoting historic values as well as the technical and intangible cultural quintessence of the place... This will pave the way for a new direction in lacquer painting in Binh Duong province today, a step toward preserving ornamental lacquer art with forms such as minimalist shapes and many spaces on the decorative surface to accommodate the artist's style. Painting and engraving techniques are used to portray the substance of a common theme, such as nature, people, and the region of Binh Duong, using repetitive and interspersed etched lines.

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