

For her solo exhibition *Bleed* at Kunsthalle Bern, Sung Tieu continues her ongoing enquiries into architectures of power embedded in institutional and bureaucratic frameworks – structures that have shaped statecraft, historiography, and the global distribution of knowledge. For her commission she centres her focus on Switzerland's entanglement in colonial economies, particularly through the rubber trade in Vietnam and the scientific gains extracted from colonised territories, which contributed to the advancement of Western medicine and industry.

Tieu brings to the fore the life story of Swiss-born physician and bacteriologist Alexandre Yersin. Working in Vietnam in the 1890s, Yersin identified the bacterium responsible for the bubonic plague, co-founded the *École de Médecine de Hanoi*, and imported and introduced the cultivation of rubber and quinine trees. These initiatives laid the groundwork for the establishment of rubber plantations across the country – most notably those operated by Michelin, which in 1925 opened the largest rubber plantation and factory in Vietnam, remaining under corporate control until nationalisation in 1975. The newly commissioned artworks situate the Michelin company within this nexus, showing how its dual investments in rubber extraction and culinary authority exemplify the entanglement of industrial exploitation with cultural hegemony.

A muted yellow hue permeates the exhibition. The colour is charged with contradictory histories: in Vietnam yellow has long been tied to imperial authority and sovereignty, while in the Western imagination, it became a racialized, derogatory shorthand for Asian bodies. Tieu brings these tensions to the fore, drawing out different empires' visual codes, their taxonomies, and their lingering resonance. But even more so, the artist delves into the technocratic details of the colonial project of universality that gave birth to western systems of measurement, value and more.

In foregrounding the legacies of colonialism and imperialism in relation to Vietnam, *Bleed* reflects on the afterlives of plantation economies and the infrastructures that sustained them, asking how their logics continue to shape the regulation, measurement, and consumption of bodies today – within a global condition we call Plantationocene.