

The year was 1966. I was drafted and critically wounded in combat in Vietnam. My injuries would forever change my life. During my long recovery, I became interested in fine art. Specifically the use of art to translate what I saw, experienced, and felt.

In 1971 the Veterans Administration determined I would be blind by age forty. Again my life was being taken away from me. Then, a miracle; I was sitting in the student lounge at Purdue. This Egyptian sculptor grabs me and says, "You are my son! You have eyes in your hands!" He swore that all sculptors had eyes in their hands and that he could teach me to sculpt blindfolded. By the time I left Nagub I had done many figurative sculptures through his kinesthetic techniques.

Two fundamentals took shape at that time: 1) My work is kinesthetic. It interacts with itself and the viewer inviting the viewer to feel. 2) Whenever I see or hear of someone who does something artistically that I am curious about, I find that person and become their student, or assistant, or employee, or the guy that sweeps the floor. Whatever it takes to learn. My purpose has been to gain the craftsmanship I need to speak my own voice about the relationships of world around me. I have learned to work with any media necessary to make my visions tangible. For example, I spent a year as a glass blower learning the skills for a project, Sin Loi - Desidario. You can see more results of my quest to date in my slides or on my web page; www.tuttibuonofinearts.com

My art include two Vietnam memorials (see resume). Perhaps my best-known and most ambitious work is the multimedia project Sin Loi - Desidario, commonly called "Tracers." by the media. (It gets a lot of press.) The premise of the work is that women and men who stayed home from the war were as much veterans as there men who served. The parents, wives, sisters, brothers, and girlfriends of combatants have to live with their own images of what their men went through. I believe life is a web and that all members of the web can feel change in distant parts of that web. Tracer's is a 13-foot by 6 foot painting of the dense Southeast Asian jungle. Within this painting is a shadow or silhouette of a female figure. The figure exists as life-size sculpture about nine feet in front of the painting. Neon tubes reach out from the painting and wrap around the life sized female figure. This may be a Vietnam scene, but it has universal truth about separation. I would be happy to forward some of the newspaper articles written about it. People are moved because they know Sin Loi's story. What I've expressed is inside them, also.

Robert Buono