

V2V XVIII

Escape From Nightmare: Thet Oo Maung

2023, 27 ¼" x 34 ½", acrylic on canvas

The contributors were Thet Oo Maung (storyteller), Ben Mchie, Kirk Allison, Sima Shahriar, Siro Amerson, Beth Andrews, Kimchi Hoang, and David Feinberg.

Thet Oo Maung is of Karen and Armenian mix-ethnicity from Myanmar. He also uses the name Stephen Minus while friends call him TOM for his initials. An artist and videographer, his videos included demonstrations against the military government. He was warned that he was on a list to be arrested, many of whom disappeared. He gathered his family and headed for the Thai border.

Thet, through interpretations of unfamiliar extemporaneous symbols made by the V2V team, creates Myanmar's military bombing of its own citizens, and also indicated is a deadly bus-van crash he and his brother were in that killed 12 people when they were children. The driver of the bus was also killed. He and his brother were in the front seat of the van and somehow survived whereas other children in the back of the van died.

In the midfield, a stylized Karen family begs for their life in front of stylized soldiers.

Thet's 5-year-old son drew Spiderman and placed him on top of the yellow vertical drip. Thet Oo Maung included it as Spiderman may save the day, at least in fiction. Each Voice to Vision participant added their own symbols to his artwork. The number four symbol would become a plane with contrail bombing a Buddhist temple.