

**That's life: Thursday January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**TH: Thuy**

**That's Life tune**

*Thu Ha's dream of coming to northern Europe has finally come true. Like other Vietnamese who have visited Sweden under various co-operation programs, Ha returned home with a strong impression about the land and people of this Scandinavian country. VOV5's That's life today will introduce visual artist Nguyen Thu Ha, who has won a prize for designing the logo for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vietnam-Sweden relationship and whose heart is still embedded with her memories of Sweden.*

**That's Life tune**

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**Voice insert in Vietnamese:**

*"I spent 6 weeks in Sweden on an exchange program in 2006 under the cultural co-operation project between Vietnam and Sweden. It was great luck for me as I had an opportunity to think out of the box. The trip brought about many changes, helping me to expand my knowledge of the world. This is very significant for an artist. All the findings and discoveries made on this trip have become the materials to broaden my vision and enrich my thinking, opening up many art ideas".*

Ha recalls her trip to Sweden 3 years ago. The Swedish winter with the temperature falling down to minus 17 is deeply entrenched in the mind of the young visual artist. The first impression of snow was especially strong for a girl who came from a tropical country.

Ha is sitting in her blue jacket decorated with yellow buttons, a harmonization of colors typical of the Swedish flag. It makes me curious as there must be something special about her choice.

And indeed, Ha said that it was her intention to wear this jacket, which has become part of her Swedish memory. Before leaving for Stockholm in winter 2006, Ha learned that it was very cold in northern Europe and would not be easy to find a

jacket of her small size in that European country. There was also another reason for her to design her own jacket:

***Voice insert in Vietnamese:***

*“With an idea coming from the blue and yellow colors of the Swedish flag, I designed this jacket for myself hoping that it could be a keepsake of my first trip to Europe. Without a doubt, this jacket which has kept me warm during the cold days in Sweden has become part of my memory and reminds me about my unforgettable days in that faraway country.”*

The young student of the Hanoi Fine Arts University returned to the country after the cultural exchange program with the best impressions a snowy Sweden, where she stayed for a month and a half. It wasn't a long time, but it was memorable. ***(Insert music on the background)*** There is a reminiscence of the European winter in the way she talks. The nostalgia makes her eyes dewy with tears as she talks about her impression of Sweden and Swedish people:

***Voice insert in Vietnamese:***

*“The trip has left a very strong impression on me. Sweden is peaceful while Swedish are open and friendly. Here I made close Swedish friends who later came to visit me in my home country. This has helped to create a strong impression about the land and people of Sweden.”*

***Music...***

The then fine art student has now become a visual artist, who has participated in a number of community art activities in Vietnam and in other regional countries. When there was a launch of a competition among the students who have been to Sweden under the cultural exchange programs to make a logo for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sweden-Vietnam diplomatic relations, Ha decided to participate. She understands that the embassy wanted to involve those students in the hope that they would contribute their thoughts and feelings about Sweden to their art work. Ha thought about this before coming up with the logo idea:

***Voice insert in Vietnamese:***

*‘Firstly, I thought about the information that needed to be included in this logo, such as the colors of both countries’ flag and, the number of 40 as it is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I combined the colors of Sweden and Vietnam, which are red, yellow and blue. These three colors are the three basic colors in fine-art. The logo is made up from 3 concentric circles. The smallest circle is red, which symbolizes Vietnam, the next circle is blue, symbolizing Sweden and the largest one is yellow, which is the common color of both flags. This design suggests that we are unified through exchange while retaining our identities.’*

Bearing in mind the main focus of the celebration, featuring the exchange and co-operation between the two countries, Ha started her art work. With the yellow circle embracing the two smaller ones, Ha has succeeded to display the close co-operation between the two countries over the past 40 years. This idea was also inspired by a sweet memory of Sweden, where her mind was broadened with new findings and her heart was filled with love and affection:

***Voice insert in Vietnamese:***

*“I was very happy to join in this event. I didn’t think about winning a prize, I just considered it as an opportunity for me to contribute and to challenge myself. Keeping my feelings about Sweden close at heart, I designed the logo. In my opinion, if we do something wholeheartedly with our best efforts, we will get the result that is true to our passion. This is the best gift that I’ve ever had. I feel that my efforts have paid off.”*

The young artist couldn’t hide her happiness. The cold of Hanoi’s winter failed to fade away the red stain on her cheeks and the little stars shining in her eyes. Her passionate feelings for Sweden remind me of what Swedish ambassador to Vietnam Rolf Bergman said recently: that Vietnam and Sweden are far and distant but close at heart./