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Aperture Presents the 20th Anniversary Edition of *An-My Lê: Small Wars*, with New Images and an Afterword by Ocean Vuong

New York, April 8, 2025—Aperture announces the twentieth-anniversary edition of *An-My Lê: Small Wars*, the acclaimed artist's first book, and a major monograph that centers the chaos of war and the tangibility of memory. Also marking fifty years this month since the Vietnam War ended on April 30, 1975, the publication features five additional images as well as a new afterword by Ocean Vuong, who discusses how the work resonates in the present.

For the past three decades, An-My Lê has used photography to examine her personal history and the legacies of US military power, probing the tension between experience and storytelling. First published in 2005, *Small Wars* brings together three interconnected series. In *Việt Nam*, Lê returns to the country she left in her teens and attempts to reconcile memories of her childhood home with the contemporary landscape; in *Small Wars*, she engages a small community of Vietnam War reenactors; and in *29 Palms*, she documents the preparations of marines in the California desert as they undergo training for conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. Taken together, this trilogy brilliantly presents a complexly layered exploration of the issues surrounding landscape, memory, and the representation of violence and war.

With great precision and clarity, Lê is able to evoke the work of nineteenth-century landscapes as well as the modern built environments of the New Topographics—but by weaving in her own personal narrative of refuge and return, she pushes beyond both to produce a uniquely revelatory body of work. *An-My Lê: Small Wars* is available at aperture.org/books.

Related public programs will include the Aperture PhotoBook Club on Monday, June 9, at 6:00 p.m. EDT. Aperture's executive director, Sarah Meister, will join the artist to discuss her work alongside longtime peer and friend Stephen Shore. This virtual program is free and open to all. Registration information is at aperture.org/events.

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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An-My Lê (born in Saigon, Vietnam, 1960) is a Vietnamese American photographer, filmmaker, author, and professor in the Department of Photography at Bard College. Lê came to the United States as a political refugee at age fifteen. She received a grant to return to her homeland just after US-Vietnamese relations were formally restored, returning several times between 1994 and 1997. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and MacArthur Foundation, and her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at major venues. Most recently a major retrospective of her work was organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. She is based in New York.

Richard B. Woodward (essay) was an arts critic whose essays were featured in dozens of monographs and catalogs and numerous publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *Bookforum*, *Film Comment*, *American Scholar*, *The New Yorker*, and *Vogue*.

Hilton Als (interview) is a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 2017.

Ocean Vuong (afterword) is the author of the critically acclaimed poetry collections *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (2016) and *Time Is a Mother* (2022), and the novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019). A recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship and the American Book Award, he was born in Saigon, Vietnam, and is professor of creative writing at New York University.

This reissue of *Small Wars* was made possible with generous support from Thomas R. Schiff and Mary Ellen Goeke.

About Aperture

Aperture is a nonprofit publisher that leads conversations around photography worldwide. From its base in New York, Aperture connects global audiences and supports artists through its acclaimed quarterly magazine, books, exhibitions, digital platforms, public programs, limited-edition prints, and awards. Established in 1952 to advance “creative thinking, significantly expressed in words and photographs,” Aperture champions photography’s vital role in nurturing curiosity and encouraging a more just, tolerant society.

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