



TECHNO
UTOPIAN
POW MARTINEZ

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-
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13 JULY - 12 AUGUST 2017

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POW MARTINEZ' Techno Utopian is a strategy of surface reading and informational speed to enhance conceptual application of time, form, scale, and movement done through painting in order to test the limits of its interpretation and exchange. It coincides with Martinez' sound experiments through electronic music which creates a barrier of endurance and taste. Boldly, Martinez ponders on the fetish for technology, or the skeptical brand of utopian ideals and its prosthetic arm of progress, pitting technology against a theory of the taboo.

Straddling between two-dimensionality (pointing to the reality of the painting), and volume (the task of illusionistic representation), the paintings (especially that of the classical urns) are not mere signifiers of decoration - markers for the emptiness of space with an unnecessary and yet effective means of just showing something present: like a memento of the departed who is no longer with us but continues to live in eternal memory; relatively, putting all this to mind brings a critical discourse about absence - how images become substitutes for the real thing, and with that the task of painting as a receptacle for representation. Painting's custom is to provide us with a descriptive picture, the more deceptive as an illusion the better they say for it to merit any value on skill. Martinez' paintings accomplishes what it seeks, neither a fidelity to realism nor a certifying approval from the middling many; instead, the chase for Martinez is towards de-skilling, a late-conceptual answer to how we should use painting today thoughtful of the rumor of its demise as a practice for self-authenticity and its art historical obsolescence. Overall, Martinez follows a graphic but primitivist approach to his paintings: putting an emphasis on line and shape, with the rendering flat and prone to exaggerations with cartoon-like proportions. Philip Guston comes to mind in comparison, with both using the vulgarity of the paint material in pushing it to extremes as abstraction, then forcing its energy into a body that creates a hysterical mutation.

Martinez' paint handling this time around isn't as thrown with wildly abandon as he perfunctory does in previous work. Rather, there seems to be a certain cunning restraint running in the pictures that allows the painterly gestures to remain steady, organized rather than allover, generative rather than hermetic, well-designed rather than random. Over-reading the pictures, one could say they mimic the drone of the noise he tinkers with involving sound and music when he's not painting, or the look of absurdity taken from bit-mapped computer games which appeals to Martinez' existentialist approach to expression - bored with banality/flipping over fantasy, or just perhaps, Martinez is reaching artistic maturity for him to brush up his painter's forms, the way Guston did in moving away from the muck of abstract expressionism and towards a unique figurative/narrative style which nobody figured out until late, in order to articulate a language fit for today's post-internet vibe, reconciling subjectivity with a critical distance without loss of cool sarcasm vital for the neo-avant-garde.

In **TECHNO UTOPIAN**, Martinez paints a culture that eats itself, like cannibals leaving reason behind just to satiate its interests, presenting a shell of humanity that we strangely know less despite our speeding towards it. He depicts this cannibalizing culture as a form of critique over material competition, on the survival of the fittest; while on the other hand also, a metaphor for radical renewal and change, for the transubstantiation of the everyday into a form of augmented reality - painting as simulation, as artificial consciousness, life viewed off kilter from the other side. The paintings present a radical statement of the post-human condition where its protagonists mime the rituals of everyday life absent of essential meaning that is replaced by technology and other forms of social capture. They create a semblance of the norm as they go about in long cycles of time withdrawn, in repose, taking "selfies" or checking messages naked, toiling mindlessly picking up blocks, armed but unconcerned with the politics of the day. At best they are a cartoon version of ourselves, an exaggerated reflection removed from the real, a computerized game of chance and compromise, in comical form, providing laughter at the pitfalls and contortions we all perform in the quest for material satisfaction, need, desire, and survival. Martinez incites the viewer with an anxious look on the vanity of things measured by the speed of life and its offspring of alienation and social decay, exhibiting along the way a dose of paranoia by social contamination of the media type. Offering joy, the paintings turn into a stunning picture of existential agony, a quench in the thirst for meaning, a welcome salute to the apocalypse. Pow Martinez has long been exploring these themes of droll absurdity and banality with an explosive expressionism that serves as an aesthetic counterpoint to the zombie nightmare of tradition in the minds of the living and from the boredom of the unsuspecting status quo.

by Arvin Flores



image by Jessica de Leon (SILVERLENS)



New City Police

oil on canvas
63.82h x 51.30w in
(162.10h x 130.30w cm)
2015

we come in peace

oil on canvas
72h x 84w in
(182.88h x 213.36w cm)
2017





Motel Paintings 4

oil on canvas
28h x 22w in
(71.12h x 55.88w cm)
2017

Ass is the new face

oil on canvas
72h x 60w in
(182.88h x 152.40w cm)
2017



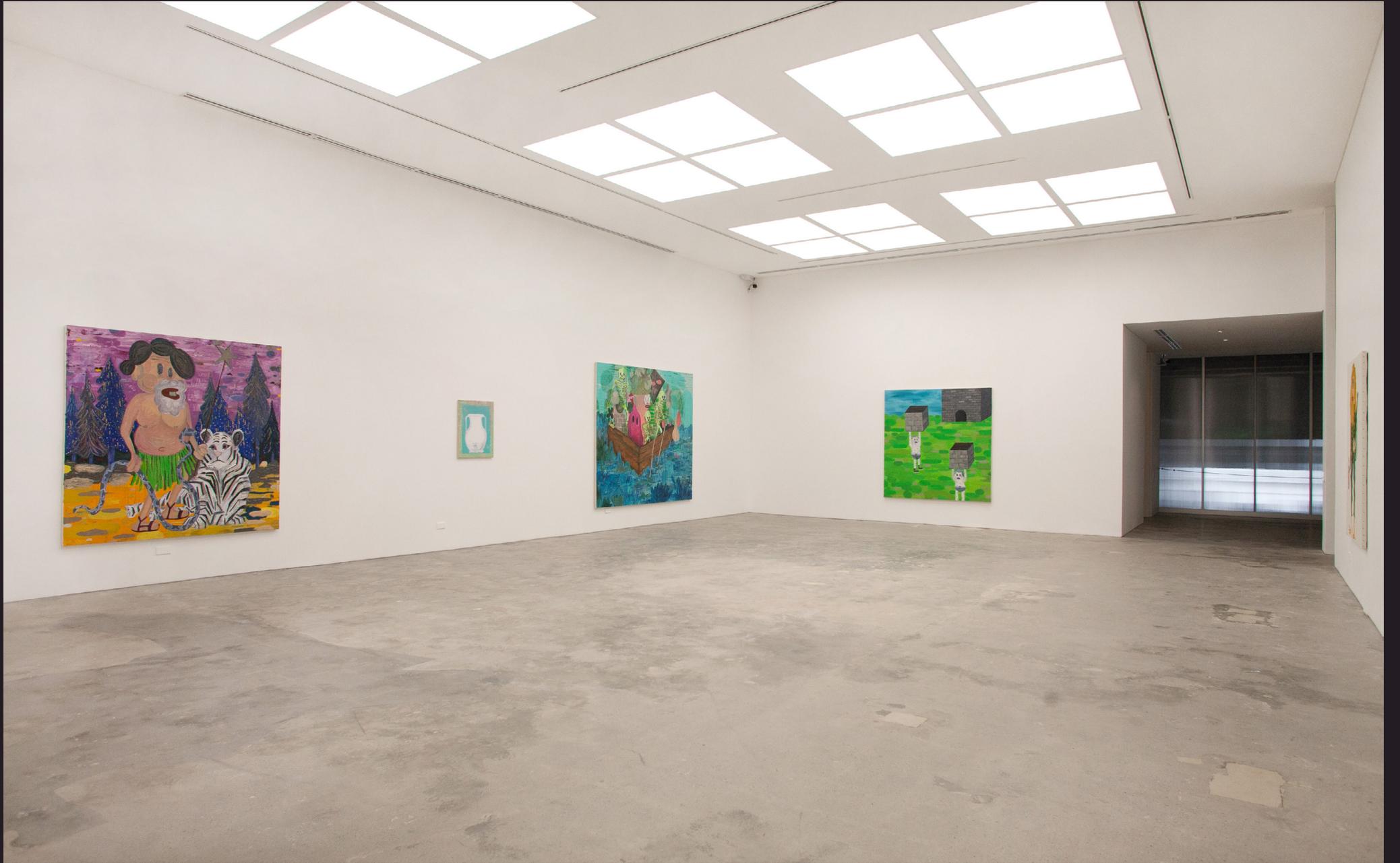


image by Jessica de Leon (SILVERLENS)

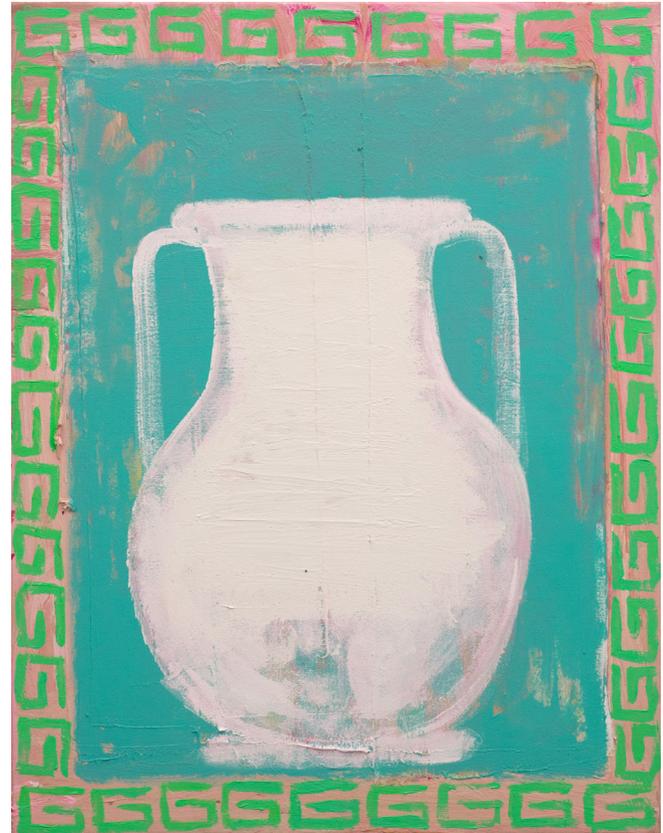


**yuppie turned into
a forest wizard**

oil on canvas
72h x 72w in
(182.88h x 182.88w cm)
2017

Motel Paintings 1

oil on canvas
28h x 22w in
(71.12h x 55.88w cm)
2017





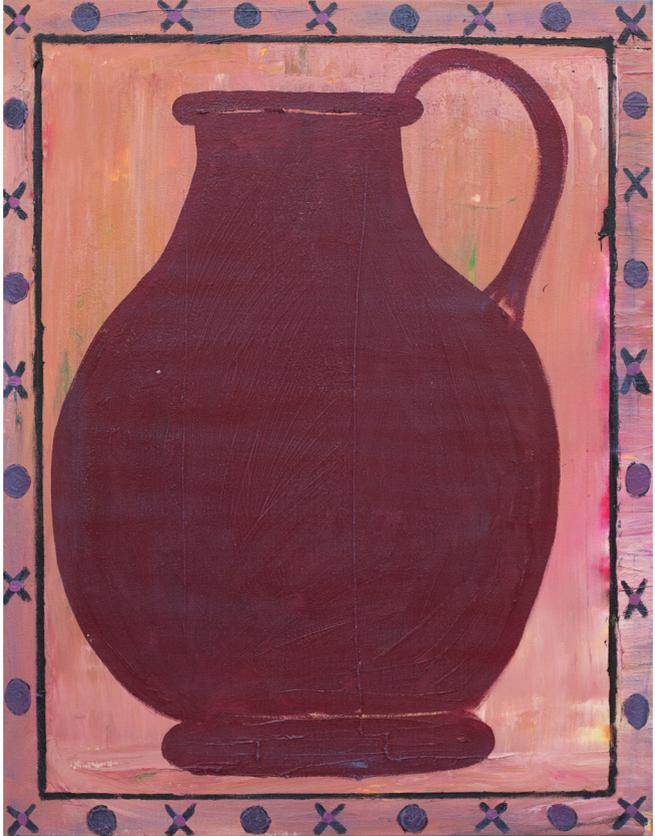
relax, we came to party

oil on canvas
84h x 96w in
(213.36h x 243.84w cm)
2017

babies building. 2017

oil on canvas
72h x 72w in
(182.88h x 182.88w cm)



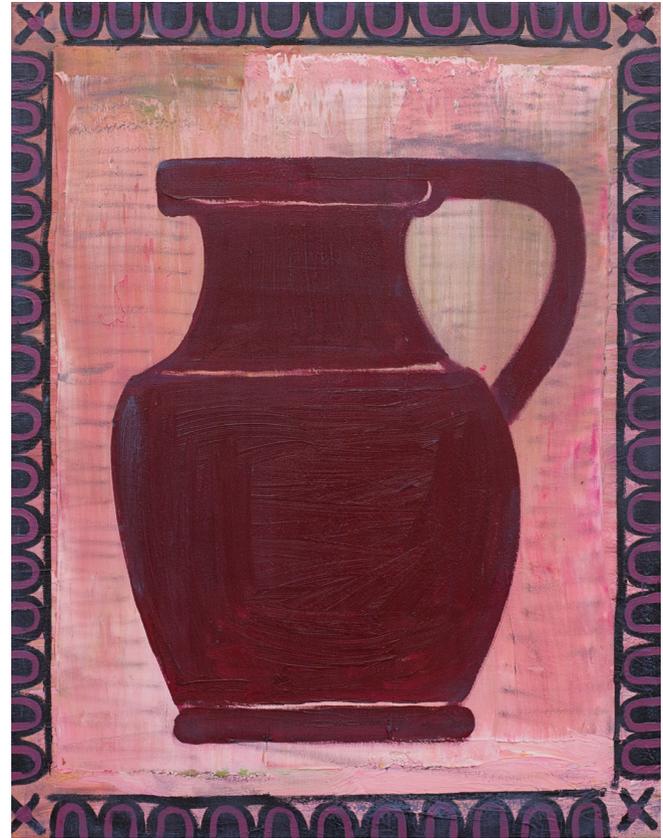


Motel Paintings 2

oil on canvas
28h x 22w in
(71.12h x 55.88w cm)
2017

Motel Paintings 3

oil on canvas
28h x 22w in
(71.12h x 55.88w cm)
2017



POW MARTINEZ

Bio

Pow Martinez is a recipient of the Ateneo Art Awards for his

1 Billion Years exhibition at West Gallery, Philippines.

He exhibits internationally and has worked with different media, including sound. His recent group exhibitions include *Bastards of Misrepresentation* New York and Berlin editions, *Salvation on a Nest of Vipers* in Melbourne, Australia, and *Complete and Unabridged* in Osage Gallery, Hong Kong. Pow has also held a number of solo shows in major galleries in Manila, most recently, *psychedelic behavior* in West Gallery.

Martinez's paintings belie their grotesque subject matter with the inebriably beautiful surfaces and a wide-ranging, daring use of color. Mutants, monsters, demons, deviants, and freaks lurch, sit, and appear to transform amidst weirdly lit landscape or disintegrating urban scenarios, or emerge from a painterly graffito mess, but, as his more abstracted works insist, Pow's ability to render intriguing relationships between forms and surfaces ensure his works are endlessly compelling-- an experience akin to a beautiful nightmare.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 *Techno-utopian*, Silverlens, Manila
and now back to our regular programming, Art Informal, Manila
- 2016 *Advanced Human*, Random Parts, Oakland
a man without a hobby is worthless, TAKSU Gallery, Singapore
- 2015 *psychedelic behavior*, West Gallery, Manila
From the bitter abyss, Megumi Ogita Gallery, Tokyo
- 2014 *May Cause Profound Mental Retardation*, Pablo Gallery, Manila
Caught between honor and revenge, how far will one man go, Silverlens, Manila
dogs playing poker, Manila Contemporary, Manila
- 2013 *1 bit*, Mo_Space Project Room, Manila
Losing my edge, Pablo Gallery, Manila
Medieval woodcuts, Finale Art File, Manila
- 2012 *Sploshing*, Finale Art File, Manila
Low Res, West Gallery, Manila
Cyborg Scallops, Silverlens, Manila
- 2011 *Nature Paintings*, NOW Gallery, Manila
Destroyed Planets, Pablo Gallery, Manila
Cut Hands has the Solution, West Gallery, Manila
Easy Listening Paintings, Mag:net Gallery, Manila
- 2010 *march of the pigs*, Lost Projects, Manila
hyper blast abomination, Mag:net Gallery, Manila
- 2009 *the brutal gardener*, Mag:net Gallery, Manila
one billion years, West Gallery, Manila
- 2007 *pathetic doggy paddle*, Mag:net Gallery, Manila

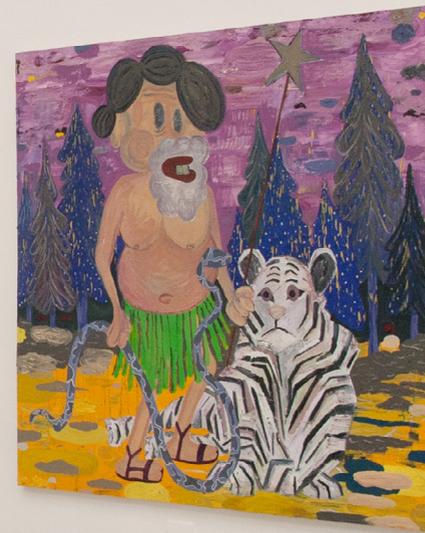
GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

- 2017 *Translación*, Inaugural Exhibition, Curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
- 2016 *WASAK! Reloaded*, Arndt, Singapore
WASAK!, Arndt, Berlin
- 2015 *No Singing Allowed*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2014 *Brave New Worlds*, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Philippines
- 2013 *manila vice*, MIAM, Sete, France
pirates, Megumi Ogita Gallery, Tokyo
- 2012 *bastards of misrepresentation*, Topaz Arts, New York
- 2011 *Confessions of a sinner*, Manila Contemporary, Manila
Post local, Silverlens, Manila
Greatest Hits, Bastards of Misrepresentation, doing time on Filipino time, 8 Salon, Hamburg

- Hide the Women and Children*, Mo_Space, Manila
Salvation in a nest of vipers, Y3K, Melbourne
Complete and Unabridged, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2010 *bastards of misrepresentation, doing time on Filipino time*, Fries Museum, Berlin
serial killers from tate modern to taksu Singapore, Taksu, Singapore
beautiful inside my head forever, Silverlens, Manila
sirens hall, Mo_Space, Manila
in fairness, Finale Art File, Manila
happily unhappy, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- 2009 *selected memory*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
one small step for man, one giant leap for woman, Mag:net Gallery, Manila
welcome to the jungle, Art Informal, Manila
- 2007 *shoot me*, Mo_Space, Manila
i have nothing to paint and i'm painting it, Manila Contemporary, Manila
Sungdu-an 4"extensions," Cagayan de Oro University
- 2006 *the blank show*, West Gallery, Manila
long goodbye, Mag:net Gallery, Manila
Strait from the source, Future Prospects, Manila
missing vocabularies, Green Papaya Art Projects, Manila
- 2005 *common and uncommon goods*, Future Prospects, Manila
other matters, Future Prospects, Manila

EDUCATION

- 2004-2006 *Kalayaan College*, Painting
 2002-2004 *University of the Philippines*, Visual Communication



SILVERLENS

SILVERLENS (Manila). Through its artist representation, institutional collaborations, and exhibition programming including art fairs and gallery partnerships, SILVERLENS aims to place its artists within the broader framework of the contemporary art dialogue. Its continuing efforts to transcend borders across art communities in Asia have earned it recognition from both artists and collectors as one of the leading contemporary art galleries in Southeast Asia. SILVERLENS was founded by Isa Lorenzo and Rachel Rillo in 2004.