



A LONELY PICKET IN THE BALCONY

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

MAKAPATIBAY NG BATAS NA
MAGPAPALAYAN SA PANANALITA,
MAGPAPALAYAN SA PAMAHAYAGAN,
MAGPAPALAYAN NG MGA TAONG-BAYAN NA
MAGKATIPON AT MAGPETISYON
MAGPAPALAYAN UPANG ILAHAD ANG
KANILANG MGA KARAINAN"

A LONELY PICKET IN THE BALCONY

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ



WE ARE AT A CRITICAL JUNCTION. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS EXPOSED AND EXACERBATED SYSTEMIC IMBALANCES - POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL - WHICH HAVE BEEN FESTERING FOR SOME TIME, ALL WHILE RAVAGING THE GLOBAL POPULATION. WITH HIS LATEST EXHIBITION *A LONELY PICKET IN THE BALCONY*, LESLIE DE CHAVEZ PRESENTS HIS DIALOGICAL FINDINGS OF THE INTERWOVEN CAUSATIONS WHICH PRECIPITATED THESE 'UNPRECEDENTED TIMES'. THE ARTIST SPENT THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF THE WORLD'S LONGEST LOCKDOWN IN HIS QUEZON HOME, INCAPABLE OF PRODUCING ART; INSTEAD, HE TOOK THE FORCED HIATUS AS A MOMENT OF RESPITE TO REFLECT ON THE PHILIPPINES' TURMOIL. THEMES OF DEATH, PROTEST, RELIGIOUS EXPLOITATION, AND ECONOMY BESIEGED HIS QUOTIDIAN, AND HAS RESULTED IN A DELUGE OF CREATIVE OUTPUT.

A LONELY PICKET IN THE BALCONY TAKES ITS NAME FROM A PHOTOGRAPHIC CAPTION OF DAVID MEDALLA, MARS GALANG, AND JUN LANSANG PROTESTING THE 1969 OPENING OF IMELDA MARCOS'S VANITY PROJECT, THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES. THE THREE PERCHED ON THE FIRST BALCONY ABOVE THE CCP'S LOBBY WITH SIGNS THAT READ 'WE WANT A HOME NOT A FASCIST TOMB!', '*ABAS LA MYSTIFICATION*. DOWN WITH PHILISTINES!', AND 'RE:GUN/GO HOME'. THOUGH THE THREE WERE INVITED TO THE OPENING, THEY REMAINED OUTSIDE, VOICING THEIR DISSENT AGAINST THE DICTATORSHIP AND IMELDA'S NEOIMPERIAL PRIVILEGING OF EUROMERICAN ARTISTIC PRACTICES AT THOSE PASSING THROUGH THE DOOR. INDEED, MARIAN PASTOR ROCES CONCISELY SUMMARIZED THAT DESPITE IMELDA'S INSISTENCE ON SHOWCASING PHILIPPINE ART AT THE CCP, '[O]UTSIDE IS WHERE MOST FILIPINOS HAVE STAYED' WHICH ALSO POIGNANTLY APPLIES TO THE MARCOS' CONJUGAL DICTATORSHIP. WITH THE DETERMINATION TO AVOID FURTHER ANTIDIALOGICAL EXCLUSIVITY, DE CHAVEZ LOCATES HIS EXHIBITION AND PROTEST AT THE SAME LOCUS AS THE TRIO: AT THE ENTRYWAY OF A CULTURAL TURNING POINT.

THE EXHIBITION BEGINS, AND ENDS, WITH DE CHAVEZ'S *TALAHIB* AND *AN ARCHAIC EDIFICE TO THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS* WHICH ESTABLISH, AND SUBSEQUENTLY REMIND, THE VIEWER OF DE CHAVEZ'S EMANCIPATORY AGENDA AGAINST OPPRESSIVE FORCES - BOTH PHYSICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL. THE PHILIPPINES HAS REMAINED TUMULTUOUS WITH DANGEROUS POLITICIANS AT THE HEAD OF STATE FOR YEARS, SIMULTANEOUSLY REELING FROM THE MARCOS DICTATORSHIP, ECONOMIC IMBALANCES, SOCIAL DIVISIONS, AND THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS. WHEN PRESIDENT RODRIGO DUTERTE WAS ELECTED IN 2016, THE COUNTRY ENTERED AN ERA OF FEAR AND VIOLENCE THAT HAS SINCE RESULTED IN AN UNENDING 'DRUG WAR'. DE CHAVEZ COMPLETED *TALAHIB*, HIS SELF-PORTRAIT, IN NOVEMBER 2019 TO TAKE A DEFIANT STANCE AGAINST THE BLOODSHED: THE NEON LIGHT AND *TALAHIB* STALKS BOLDLY SIGNIFYING HIS INDEFATIGABILITY DESPITE HIS MISSING EYES AND COVERED MOUTH; THE PANDEMIC ADDED FURTHER MEANING TO THIS DIPTYCH, INCLUDING MASK-WEARING, ISOLATION, AND CENSORSHIP. NEARBY THE INSTALLATION *AN ARCHAIC EDIFICE TO THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS* ACKNOWLEDGES MARCOS AND DUTERTE'S EDIFICE COMPLEX WHERE BOTH HAVE PROFFERED GRANDIOSE - YET EMPTY - INITIATIVES TO HIDE THEIR CORRUPTION. FOR MARCOS, THIS INCLUDED THE CCP, AND FOR DUTERTE, HIS ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES. INDEED, THE 'GOD OF SMALL THINGS', BORROWED FROM ARUNDHATI ROY, ENACTS TUMULT DESPITE THEIR IDOLIC POWER - A CAUTIONARY REMINDER AS THE VIEWER ENTERS - AND LEAVES - THE EXHIBITION.

PROXIMITY SERIES NO.1: JOMAR AND NO. 2: NORA ECHOES THIS EXHIBITION'S LIMINALITY WHERE THE VIEWER IS UNSURE WHETHER THE TWO ARE ALIVE, THEIR VISAGES PERMANENTLY SUSPENDED IN TIME LIKE DEATH MASKS. EVEN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, THE PHILIPPINES WAS A POLITICALLY LETHAL COUNTRY: INSTALLATIONS LIKE *LARONG KOLATERAL*:

ALMUSAL, TANGHALIAN, HAPUNAN OR TO THE PERSONS SITTING IN DARKNESS MOURN THE MANY MURDERED. THESE NUMBERS INCREASED AFTER DUTERTE PLACED THE PHILIPPINES UNDER 'ENHANCED COMMUNITY QUARANTINE', AND HIS CRITICS HAVE ACCUSED HIM OF TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE PUBLIC'S DISTRACTION AND QUARANTINE TO JUSTIFY VIOLENCE AGAINST THE POPULACE, AS WELL AS IMPLEMENT DYSTOPIC POLICIES LIKE THE ANTI-TERRORISM LAW. DE CHAVEZ CONDEMNS THESE ACTIONS IN *ELEHIYANG MANHID NANG SISIDLANG WALANG MALAY* AND *KORONA AT KALASAG, KALASAG NG KORONA*. THE LATTER, ALONG WITH *POSTURA SA MGA PAGCCA ABURIDONG UALANG CASASAPITAN, LATIGO AT TINIK NANG BITUKANG HALANG*, AND *ANG PAG-UYAM SA DUGO NG PASKUA* FURTHER IMPLICATE DUTERTE AND MARCOS'S EXPLOITATION OF RELIGION FOR POLITICAL GAIN. DE CHAVEZ CONSTANTLY REFERS TO THE MARCOS ERA AS THIS DICTATORIAL LEGACY CONTINUES TO REVERBERATE IN THE PRESENT. THE ARTIST BORROWS THE SOCIAL REALIST'S VISUAL LANGUAGE, USED DURING THE MARTIAL LAW YEARS AS A TOOL FOR PROTEST AND SOCIAL CHANGE, IN PAINTINGS LIKE *ANG PAG-UYAM SA DUGO NG PASKUA, KALAKARAN BILANG ABSURD FASCIST SEMIOTICS*, AND *OMBROPHOBIA* TO DEPICT CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY'S REALITY. LASTLY, DE CHAVEZ REFLECTS ON THE GLOBAL CAPITALIST SYSTEM THAT ECONOMIC EXPERTS SAY HAVE FURTHER AGGRAVATED THE PANDEMIC THROUGH THE LENS OF HIS OWN COMPLICITY IN THE GLOBAL ART MARKET MICROCOSM WITH *I LIKE ART FAIRS AND ART FAIRS LIKE ME*.

FOR MANY, THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN A BREAKING POINT. THE PANDEMIC HAS ILLUSTRATED THAT EXISTING POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ECOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURES ARE DEFECTIVE. THIS BRINGS US BACK TO THE EXHIBITION'S LOCUS: THE DECISIVE IMPASSE. WITH THE END IN SIGHT FOR SOME, *A LONELY PICKET IN THE BALCONY* OPERATES IN REVOLUTIONARY PRAXIS, IDEOLOGICALLY AND IDEALLY STATIONED AT THE INTERSTITIAL PORTAL BETWEEN THE PAST AND FUTURE. WITH THIS EXHIBITION, DE CHAVEZ ENCOURAGES THOSE PASSING THROUGH THIS JUNCTION TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGICAL REFLECTION AND LIBERATING ACTION. AS PHILOSOPHER PAULO FREIRE WRITES IN *PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED*, "THOSE WHO AUTHENTICALLY COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE PEOPLE MUST RE-EXAMINE THEMSELVES CONSTANTLY... LIBERATION IS A PRAXIS: THE ACTION AND REFLECTION OF MEN AND WOMEN UPON THEIR WORLD IN ORDER TO TRANSFORM IT'

WORDS BY MARV RECINTO

¹ See Gerard Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture* (University of Hawaii Press, 2003).

² For a detailed first-account of the protest, see Jose F Lacaba, "'Down with Philistines!': David Medalla's Protest at the 1969 CCP Opening", CNN, accessed 24 May 2021, <https://cnnphilippines.com/life/culture/arts/2019/02/20/david-medalla-ccp.html>.

³ Marian Pastor-Roces, 'The CCP Art and Power Pas de Deux', in *Gathering: Political Writing on Art and Culture* (Malate, Manila: De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, Inc, 2019), 20.

⁴ Part of this title is taken from Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* where eponymous character causes small "fluctuations" which culminate in catastrophe.

⁵ Philippines: "Drug War" Killings Rise During Pandemic', *Human Rights Watch*, 13 January 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/13/philippines-drug-war-killings-rise-during-pandemic>.

⁶ Rebecca Ratcliff, 'Duterte's Anti-Terror Law a Dark New Chapter for Philippines, Experts Warn', *The Guardian*, 9 July 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/09/dutertes-anti-terror-law-a-dark-new-chapter-for-philippines-experts-warn>.

⁷ For Duterte, see Jose Mario C. Francisco, 'Challenges of Duterteism for Philippine Christianity: Revisiting Populism and Religion', *International Journal of Asian Christianity* 4, no. 1 (April 2021): 145-60, <https://doi.org/10.1163/25424246-04010008>. For example of Marcos, see Eileen Guerrero, 'Cults Began as Political Weapon, Ended Up Deifying Ferdinand Marcos With AM-Marcos Funeral', AP NEWS, sec. Archive, accessed 25 May 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/dd513de8cd2b947ff097e68d49d7de85>.

⁸ Vicente Navarro, 'The Consequences of Neoliberalism in the Current Pandemic', *International Journal of Health Services*, 7 May 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020731420925449>.

⁹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th anniversary ed (New York: Continuum, 2000), 61, 79.





TALAHIB, 2019

OIL ON CANVAS, NEON LIGHT
40H X 33.50W IN
101.60H X 85.09W CM

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HIINDI LAHAT NG DILAT AY NASISILAW SA LILIM NG PANGAKONG HIWINAG

THIS SELF-PORTRAIT WAS CREATED AS PART OF A 2019 PORTRAIT EXHIBITION THAT THE ARTIST ORGANIZED IN HIS HOMETOWN OF LUCBAN. DE CHAVEZ PAINTS HIMSELF AS THE ARTIST WHO IS CRITICAL AND NON-CONFORMING; BEING ABLE TO THRIVE WHEREVER THEY ARE PLACED—IN THIS CASE THE FIGURE LOOKS OUT WITH DEEP AND HOLLOW EYES INTO TALL GRASS (*TALAHIB*) ILLUMINATED BY LIGHT. ON THE NEON LIGHT A SHORT PASSAGE IS WRITTEN: “*HINDI LAHAT NG DILAT AY NASISILAW SA LILIM NG PANGAKONG LIWANAG*” REFERRING TO THOSE WHO VIEW PROMISES OF CHANGE WITH A CRITICAL LENS. THE ARTIST HAD NO INKLING OF THE 2020 PANDEMIC, BUT THE COVERING THAT OBSTRUCTS THE LOWER HALF OF HIS FACE IS BOTH A COINCIDENCE AND FORESHADOWING.



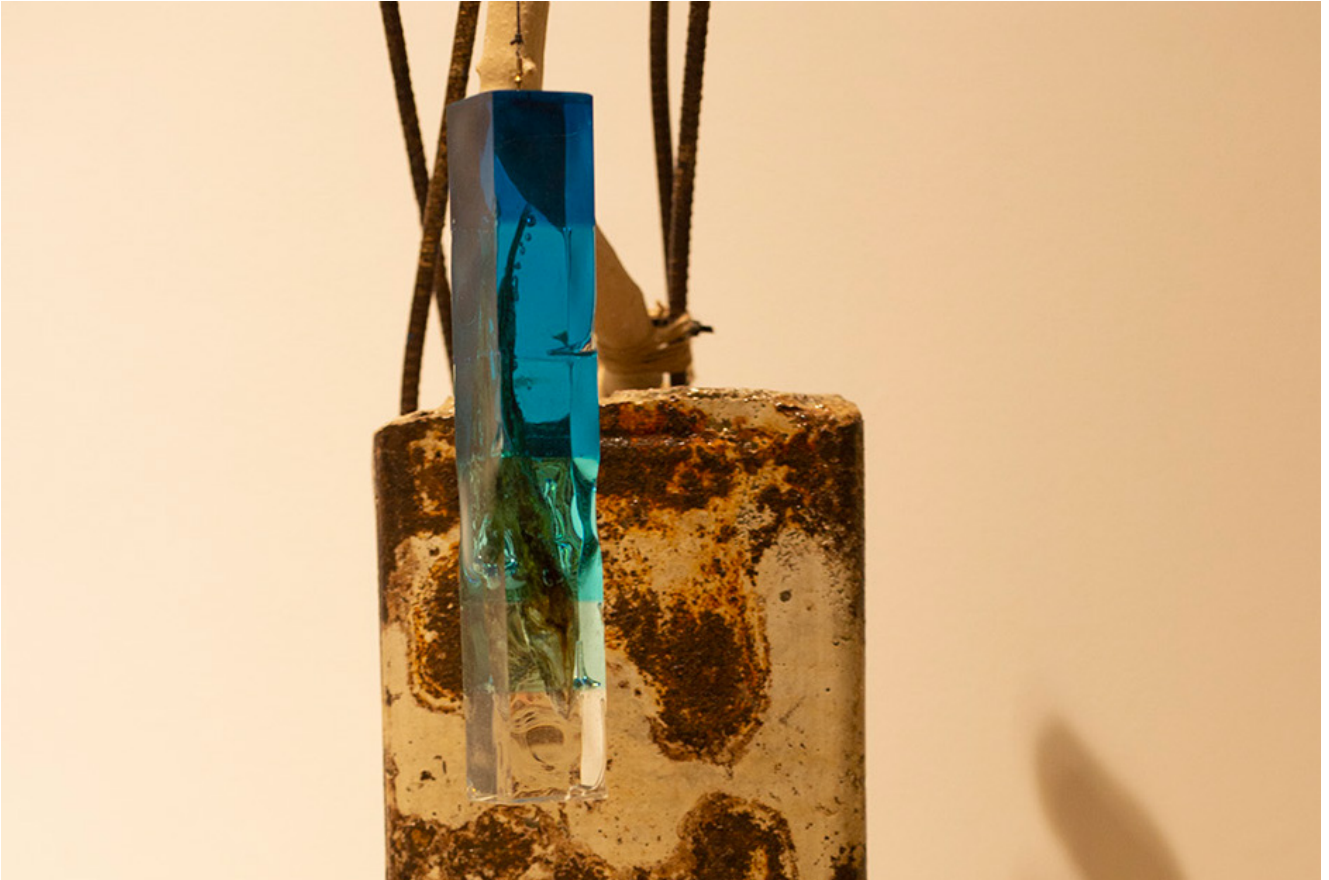


*AN ARCHAIC EDIFICE TO THE
GOD OF SMALL THINGS, 2021*

FOUND CONCRETE FOUNDATION, FRP, CAST
RESIN, CONCRETE, NYLON STRING
206H X 110W X 110D IN
523.24H X 279.40W X 279.40D CM

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THIS INSTALLATION REFERENCES THE MARCOS REGIME, WHICH CONSTRUCTED GRANDIOSE INSTITUTIONS, SUCH AS THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES, TO REPRESENT THEIR ADMINISTRATION - A STRATEGY BEING REPLICATED BY CURRENT PRESIDENT, RODRIGO DUTERTE. INCORPORATED INTO THIS WORK ARE COLOURFUL LITTLE RESIN BLOCKS, SUGGESTING NATURAL RESOURCES, THAT WERE INSPIRED BY THE COMPUTER GAME, MINECRAFT, WHERE WORLDMAKING IS THE OBJECTIVE AND BIG IDEAS ARE REDUCED TO BASIC UNITS. REINFORCING THE CONCEPT OF STRUCTURE, DE CHAVEZ LIKEWISE INCLUDES AGED CONCRETE INTO THE WORK, WHICH ITSELF IS IN THE FORM OF A RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE, AN ALTAR. A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, THIS WORK ULTIMATELY JUXTAPOSES RELIGION AND CORRUPTION TO ENCAPSULATE THE DEPLORABLE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.





ANG PAG-UYAM SA DUGO NG PASKUA, 2021

**OIL, METALLIC LEAF ON SHAPED CANVAS
90.55 IN • 230 CM (DIAMETER)**

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***LARONG KOLATERAL: ALMUSAL,
TANGHALIAN, HAPUNAN, 2021***

**CAST CONCRETE, LEAD, FOUND SLIPPERS, IRON
33.86H X 43.31W X 16.93D IN
86H X 110W X 43D CM**

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[▶ Click image to play video](#)

KORONA AT KALASAG, KALASAG NG KORONA, 2021

**FOUND ACRYLIC FACE SHIELD, GI WIRE, DECAL, ROTATING PLATFORM
30H X 60W IN (DIAMETER)
76.20H X 152.40W CM (DIAMETER)**

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**“HINDI DAPAT MAGPATIBAY NG BATAS NA
NAGBABAWAS SA KALAYAAN SA PANANALITA,
PAGPAPAHAYAG, O NG PAMAHAYAGAN,
O SA KARAPATAN NG MGA TAONG-BAYAN NA
MAPAYAPANG MAGPAKATIPON AT MAGPETISYON
SA PAMAHALAAN UPANG ILAHAD ANG
KANILANG MGA KARAINGAN”**

TEXT FROM KORONA AT KALASAG, KALASAG NG KORONA



KALAKARAN BILANG ABSURD FASCIST SEMIOTICS, 2021

OIL, METALLIC LEAF ON CANVAS

47.5H X 47.5W IN

120.65H X 120.65H CM (EACH) (TRIPTYCH)

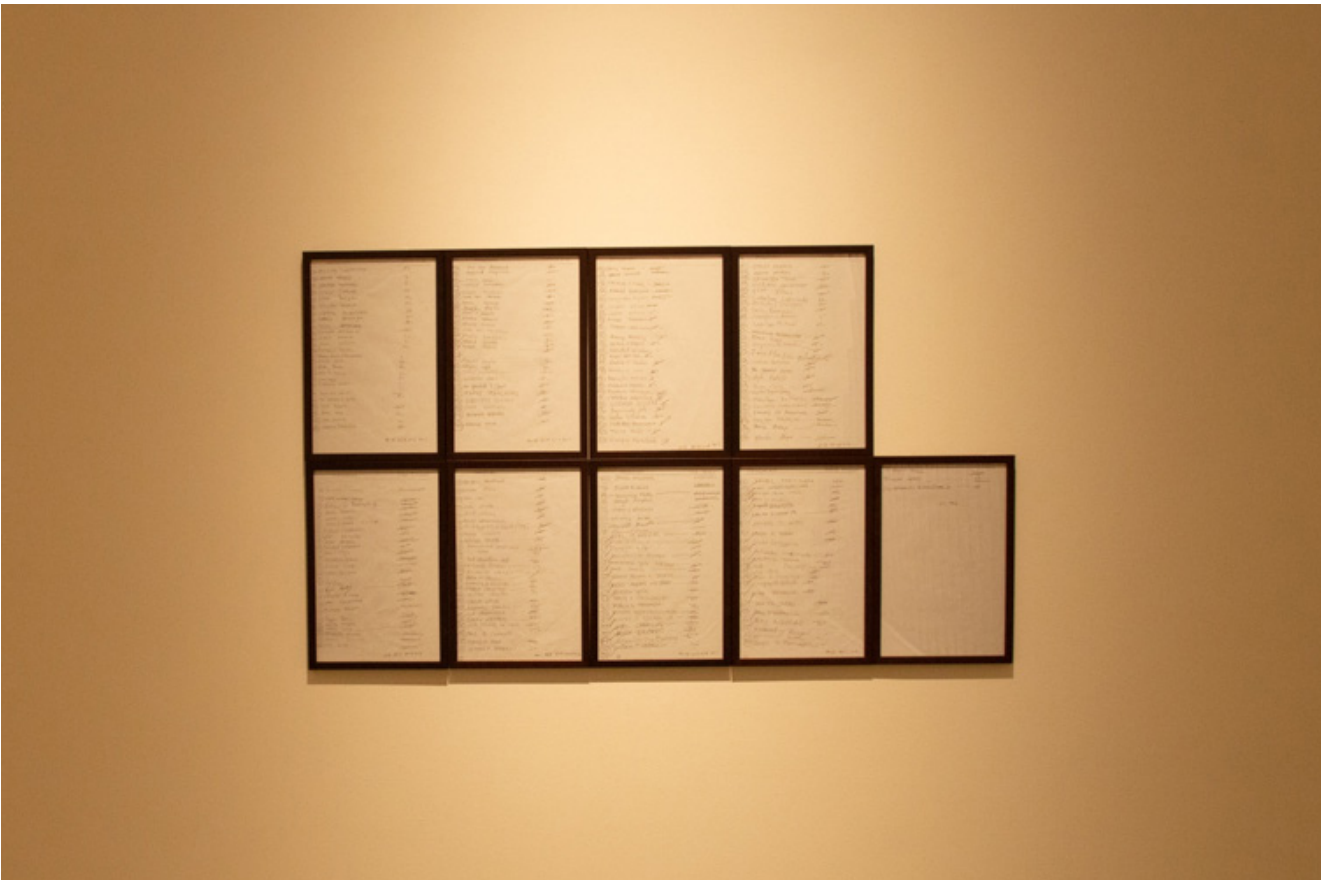
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TO THE PERSONS SITTING IN DARKNESS, 2018

DIGITAL PRINT ON ARCHIVAL PAPER, FOUND T-SHIRTS, HANGERS
INSTALLATION SIZE VARIABLE

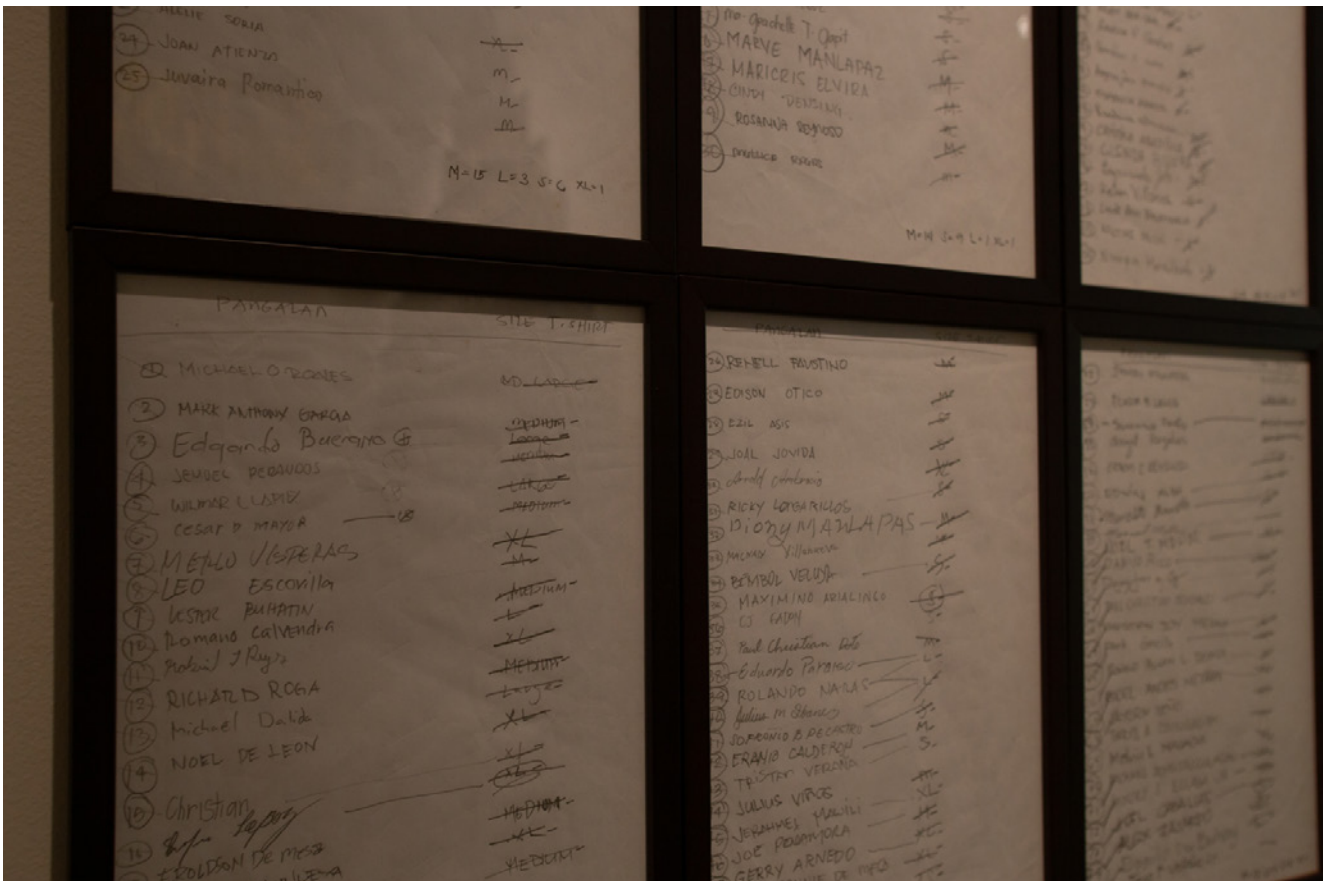
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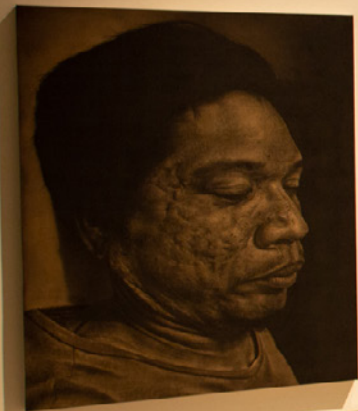
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THIS TOWERING INSTALLATION ENTITLED *TO THE PERSONS SITTING IN DARKNESS* WAS FIRST EXHIBITED IN DE CHAVEZ'S 2018 EXHIBITION, *THE ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE* AT THE ARARIO GALLERY IN SHANGHAI, CHINA. THE WORK ITSELF IS COMPOSED OF NEARLY TWO HUNDRED PORTRAITS, SILHOUETTES OF MALES AND FEMALES, FROM THE DISTRICT PENITENTIARY OF LUCENA CITY. ACCOMPANYING THESE IMAGES ARE THE INMATES' NAMES, AS WELL AS A CLOTHESLINE OF YELLOW SHIRTS THAT SYMBOLISE THEIR UNIFORMS. THE TRIANGULAR COMPOSITION OF THESE PHOTOGRAPHS SUGGESTS THE PYRAMIDICAL POWER STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION, AND IS INTENDED TO ADDRESS THE FILIPINO PEOPLE, WHO THE ARTIST BELIEVES RESIDE IN DARKNESS - EVEN THOSE OUTSIDE PRISON WALLS, WHO CONDUCT THEIR LIVES UNDER THE ILLUSION OF FREEDOM.









PROXIMITY SERIES NO. 1: JOMAR, 2021

CHARCOAL ON PAPER ON CANVAS

47.24H X 60.04W IN

120H X 152.50W CM

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PROXIMITY SERIES NO. 2: NORA, 2021

CHARCOAL ON PAPER ON CANVAS

47.24H X 60.04W IN

120H X 152.50W CM

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***PELEHIYANG MANHID NANG SISIDLANG
WALANG MALAY, 2021***

**DRIED PIG INTESTINE, LED LIGHTS, WHITE SAND
INSTALLATION SIZE VARIABLE**

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OMBROPHOBIA, 2020

OIL AND GOLD LEAF ON PANEL
52.5H X 44.75W IN
133.35H X 113.67W CM (FRAMED)

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I LIKE ART FAIRS AND ART FAIRS LIKE ME, 2021

FRP, MIRRORS, JUTE STRINGS, ALUMINUM, BURLAP, FOUND OBJECTS,
PLASTER BANDAGE, GOLD LEAF ON LASER PRINT, PAPER
INSTALLATION SIZE VARIABLE

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THIS SATIRICAL INSTALLATION IS THE ARTIST'S MOCKING COMMENTARY ON CAPITALISM, WHICH HE REGARDS AS THE ROOT OF THE VIRUS, THE VEHICLE OF THE PANDEMIC. A PUN FROM JOSEPH BEUYS' 1974 PERFORMANCE EXHIBITION, *I LIKE AMERICA AND AMERICA LIKES ME*, DE CHAVEZ EMPLOYS THIS WORD PLAY TO QUESTION HOW THE GENERAL PUBLIC VIEWS AND CONSUMES ART, IN CONNECTION TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HEALTH CRISIS. CRITICAL OF THE GLOBAL ART WORLD, WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE SPREADING AND TRANSFERENCE OF THE VIRUS, DE CHAVEZ ALSO REINFORCES ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROPAGATION OF CAPITALIST STRUCTURES. LOADED WITH SYMBOLISM, THIS INTERACTIVE WORK CONDEMNS THE OBJECTS, APPARATUS, AND ESTABLISHMENTS THAT ENGAGE IN THE DESTRUCTIVE SYSTEM THAT ACTIVELY DAMAGES THE NATURAL WORLD, DISPLACES RESOURCES, STARTS WARS, AND WIDENS THE GAP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES.











LATIGO AT TINIK NANG BITUKANG HALANG, 2021

FRP, BAMBOO, BRASS, RATTAN, IRON, PLASTER OF PARIS
INSTALATION SIZE VARIABLE

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FASHIONED AFTER A ROSARY, THIS MASSIVE SCULPTURAL PIECE IS A CONTRADICTION THAT PLAYS ON THEMES OF THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE. UPON CLOSER INSPECTION, THE OBJECT OF DEVOTION LOSES ITS MEANING AND BECOMES A THREATENING ARTIFACT. HEADS OF PHILIPPINE PRESIDENTS RODRIGO DUTERTE AND FERDINAND MARCOS REPLACE THE BEADS; THE CROSS IS FASHIONED OUT OF MOLDED .38 CALIBER GUNS—WEAPONS COMMONLY FOUND IN CRIME SCENES RELATED TO EXTRA JUDICIAL KILLINGS IN THE COUNTRY—WITH AN ENCAPSULATED FIST MADE OF DECAYING PLASTER OF PARIS AT ITS HEART.





"Nasaan sa pinakalaking kailangan" - Ilang arap sa ting na katatagan nangangail. "Tinatatanda ka kayang katataganang gamawala ng mamama kayang gamawala ng maabuhin?" - Ilang mamama sa ting na maabuhin, mal sa kailangan



***POSTURA SA MGA PAGCA ABURIDONG UALANG
CASASAPITAN, 2021***

INK, GOLD LEAF, FRP, ALUMINUM, LACE, DRIED PIG INTESTINE
51H X 60.50W IN
129.54H X 153.67W CM

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"ANG TAPAT DING PAG AMO SA CANILA ANG CATAMPATANG PAGPAPA ALA ALA SA MGA BALINONG LOOB NA NAPADALADALA LAMANG SA TUCSONG SINGAU NG LUPA"

- TEXT FROM POSTURA SA MGA PAGCA ABURIDONG UALANG CASASAPITAN



DE HAVEL
1821


EVOKING A FLAG COMMONLY FOUND IN RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS, THIS PIECE IS MADE OF DRIED PIG INTESTINE WITH AN INK DRAWING OF CHRIST AT ITS CENTER, APPROPRIATED FROM ALBRECHT DURER'S *MAN OF SORROW, SEATED*. SURROUNDING CHRIST'S HEAD IS A PRAYER WRITTEN IN GOLD LEAF, FORMING A HALO. THE TEXT IS DERIVED FROM 19TH CENTURY REVOLUTIONARY APOLINARIO DE LA CRUZ, BETTER KNOWN AS HERMANO PULE: A FILIPINO WHO FOUNDED HIS OWN RELIGIOUS ORDER AS A MEANS TO FIGHT SPANISH RACISM AND SUPPRESSION. THE WORK TOUCHES ON THEMES OF FAITH AND FANATICISM.



"Naniniwala rin po ba kayo sa kasamaang kailangan?" Tanong niya sa tinig na bahagyang nangangatal. "Naniniwala ba kayong kailangang gumawa ng masama upang gumawa ng mabuti?"

- Elias, Kabanata 50: Tinig ng mga Inuusig, Noli Me Tangere

"NANINIWALA RIN PO BA KAYO SA KASAMAANG KAILANGAN?" TANONG NIYA SA TINIG NA BAHAGYANG NANGANGATAL. "NANINIWALA BA KAYONG KAILANGANG GUMAWA NG MASAMA UPANG GUMAWA NG MABUTI? - ELIAS, KABANATA 50: TINIG NG MGA INUUSIG, NOLI ME TANGERE



"Hamonawit na gin buhat sa kasamang katulagan" "Canoing nito sa linya sa Subayong nangangata!" "Hamonawit na kayong katulagan gumawa ng masama upang gumawa ng maabuti!"

- Elia, *Katutulan*, Pring ng Hagi, *Pring ng Hagi*, *Pring ng Hagi*

THIS PASSAGE FROM JOSE RIZAL'S *NOLI ME TANGERE* IS AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN TWO CHARACTERS, IBARRA AND ELIAS, AS THEY DISCUSS NECESSARY EVILS OF SOCIETY. THE CONVERSATION POSES THE LARGER QUESTION: IS IT ACCEPTABLE TO EMPLOY EVIL MEANS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE GOOD? THE ARTIST REFERENCES THE PHILIPPINES' CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE OF PUNITIVE AND CRUEL MEASURES IN ORDER TO REACH AN IDEAL "GREATER GOOD".



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LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

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A LONELY PICKET IN THE BALCONY

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

14 MAY - 11 JUNE 2021

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

Bio

Leslie de Chavez (b. 1978, lives and works in the Philippines) has been widely recognized for his incisive and sensible forays into history, cultural imperialism, religion, and contemporary life. Responding to urgent material conditions through his deconstructions of master texts, icons, and the symbols of his times, de Chavez strikes a balance between iconoclasm and an affirmative outlook to the relevance and accountability of art to one's milieu. Leslie de Chavez has held several solo exhibitions in the Philippines, China, Korea, Singapore, UK, and Switzerland. He has also participated in several notable exhibitions and art festivals, which include the Singapore Biennale 2013, 3rd Asian Art Biennale in Taiwan 2011, 3rd Nanjing Triennial in China 2008, First Pocheon Asia Biennale in South Korea 2007. A two-time awardee (2010/2014) of the Ateneo Art Awards for Visual Art, Leslie de Chavez is also the director/founder of the artist-run initiative Project Space Pilipinas, in Lucban, Quezon. He is exclusively represented by Arario Gallery (Korea) since 2006.

“My practice has involved the creation of diverse art forms that scrutinize various issues in Philippine society such as history, colonialism, religion, imperialism, miseducation, power struggle, contemporary culture, politics and social values. My process entails the resurfacing of historical templates, re-examining contemporary social discourse and rediscovering introspection as methods to pin down the truth about the many realities we Filipinos experience. As an artist, I believe that responding through art to our continuous victimization from the chronic conditions of our society can be truly liberating.”



Portrait courtesy of MM Yu

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

Bio

b. 1978, Manila, PHL



Ombrophobia, 2020

GRANTS, RESIDENCIES AND AWARDS

- 2011 *Leipzig International Art Programme*, Leipzig
- 2010 *Goethe Institute*, Travel Grant (Art Forum 10), Berlin
Ateneo Art Awards, "Shattering States", Manila, Prize winner
- 2007 *Neo-Emerging Artists Residency*, Dangsan Studio, Seoul
- 2005 *IASK Goyang Art Studio*, Asian Artists Fellowship Program
Beppu Asia Biennale of Contemporary Art 2005, Beppu Art Museum
- 2003 *Metrobank Foundation Young Painters' Annual*, Manila, 2nd Prize
- 1999 *Oblecine: Film and Video Art Festival*, University of the Philippines, Honorable Mention
UP President's Committee on Culture and Arts, 1st Film and Video Art Festival, 3rd Prize
- 1998 *UP President's Committee on Culture and Arts*, Most Outstanding Student Artist
Gawad Chancellor, Student Achiever for National Competitions, University of the Philippines

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *A Lonely Picket in the Balcony*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2018 *Higa sa Hangin (Lying Down in Air)*, Finale Art File, Makati City, Philippines
The Allegory of the Cave, Arario Gallery, Shanghai, China
- 2017 *SaLang#1: Craft-Mine-Crap*, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon, Philippines
- 2016 *Stirring the Ashes*, Level 2 Rizal Library Special Collections Building, Ateneo de Manila University, Manila
The Sleep of Reason, Arario Gallery, Seoul
- 2015 *Under the Influence*, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon
Unfolding Encounters, Cornerstone Gallery, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool
- 2013 *Nameless Presence*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2011 *God Is Busy*, Arario Gallery, Cheonan
- 2010 *Buntong Hininga*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2008 *Banana Republic*, Avanthay Contemporary, Zurich
- 2007 *Red-eyed Brother*, Arario Seoul, Seoul
Leslie de Chavez, Arario Beijing, Beijing
- 2006 *Tropical Delight*, Window Gallery, Gallery Hyundai, Seoul
Ichimaseyo (Do Not Forget Me), Goyang Art Studio Gallery
- 2004 *San Ysidro Dismayado*, Pahiyas Festival, Lucban, Quezon
- 2003 *Bahid (Stain)*, Kulay Diwa Galleries, Manila

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *The Shelf Life of Being*, Mono8 Gallery, Manila, Philippines
- 2020 *London Biennale: Masks, Mirages and the Morphic Mirror*, New York, London, Berlin, Lucban
Quarantined Lives, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon, Philippines
Ready but Postponed or Cancelled, A+ Works of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Pacific Crossings, Triangulations pt.III: Dispatches from Manila, Lost Frames, Philippines
- 2019 *Yellow Ambiguities*, Ateneo Art Gallery, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines
Far Away But Strangely Familiar, Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum, Slovakia
+63 / +62, Silverlens Galleries, Makati City Philippines

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

Bio

- 2018 *Once I had a Vision, The Left Hand of Darkness*, MO Space, BGC Taguig City, Philippines
SaLang, West Gallery, West Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines
- 2017 *Voice of Asia*, Arario Gallery, Shanghai, China
- 2016 *Between the Street and the Mountain: Four Artists from the Philippines*, Arario Gallery, Shanghai, China
- 2015 *PaperViews 15: Rapid Cycling*, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon, Philippines
The Vexed Contemporary, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, St. Benilde, Manila
Asia Talk to Asia, Jeju Museum of Contemporary Art, Jeju
You Must Change Your Life, Equator Art Projects, Singapore
- 2014 *Pulse*, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon
Really? Arario Museum in Space, Seoul
PaperViews 14: On Immanence, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon
Multiple Languages, Silverlens, Manila
Complicated, with Mike Adrao and Ea Torrado, Lopez Museum, Manila
Unbearable Lightness of Being, Finale Art File Manila
Concurrence, West Gallery, Manila
Art Fair Philippines, Manila
- 2013 *No Random Nonsense*, Boston Gallery, Manila
If the World Changed, Singapore Biennale 2013, Singapore
- 2012 *Panorama: Recent Art from Contemporary Asia*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
Artists With Arario 3, Arario Gallery, Cheongdam
- 2011 *3rd Asian Art Biennial: Meditation, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts*, Taiwan
Rundgang 2011, Leipzig International Art Programme, Leipzig
Self Camera: Repositioning Modern Self, Changwon Asian Art Festival
We Was There, Yuchengco Museum, Manila
- 2010 *Beacons of Archipelago*, Arario Gallery, Cheonan
Nanjing Biennale, Nanjing Museum, Nanjing
Rainbow Asia, Seoul Art Center, Seoul
Collection Show 2010, Arario Gallery, Seoul
Reflections, Bupyeong Art Center, South
Artists With Arario, Arario Gallery, Cheonan
- 2009 *We Said Our Piece*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
- 2008 *3rd Nanjing Triennial*, Nanjing
- 2007 *First Pocheon Asia Biennale*, Pocheon, South Korea
- 2006 *Bikini in Winter*, Alternative Space Loop, Seoul
- 2005 *Beppu Asia Biennale of Contemporary Art*, Beppu Museum
- 2003 *Urbanisasyon*, Kulay Diwa Galleries, Manila
Buklod, Kulay Diwa Galleries, Manila
- 2002 *Recent Works*, Kulay Diwa Galleries, Manila
Surface, Ayala Museum, Manila

ART-RELATED ACTIVITIES

- 2015 *Director*, First Lucban Assembly: Pamumuhunan, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon, Philippines
- 2014 *Curator*, PaperViews 14: On Immanence, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon,

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

Bio

Philippines

Curator, Multiple Languages, Silverlens Galleries, Manila, Philippines

Curator, Unbearable Lightness of Being, Finale Art File, Manila, Philippines

2013 **Collaborator**, Southeast Asian Art Group Exchange Residency, Kuala Lumpur, Jogjakarta, Manila

2012 **Collaborator**, Southeast Asian Art Group Exchange Residency, Kuala Lumpur, Jogjakarta, Manila

2011 **Collaborator**, Southeast Asian Art Group Exchange Residency, Kuala Lumpur, Jogjakarta, Manila

Project Manager, We Was There, Yuchengco Museum

2010 **Collaborator**, Seoksu Art Project, Supplement Space Stone & Water, Anyang

Project Manager, Reflections, Bupyeong Art Center, Incheon

2009 **Project Manager**, Plastic Syndrome, Artist Exchange & Exhibition, Art Space Plastic, Incheon

Project Coordinator, Artriangle, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2008 **Project Coordinator**, Tenggara: Recent Paintings from Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Liverpool, UK

2007 **Director**, Project Space Pilipinas, Manila, Philippines (to date)

2005 **Co-curator**, First Dumaguete Open Biennial Terra Cotta Art Festival

2004 **Assistant curator**, In Memory of a Talisman: The Works of Santiago Bose

2003 **Curator**, Urbanisasyon, Kulay Diwa Galleries, Manila

ART FAIRS PARTICIPATION

2021 **Art Fair Philippines**, Manila, Philippines (Silverlens Gallery)

Art Jakarta Virtual, Jakarta, Indonesia (Arario Gallery)

2019 **Art Basel Hong Kong**, Hong Kong (Arario Gallery)

Art Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia (Arario Gallery)

2018 **Art Stage Singapore**, Singapore (Arario Gallery)

2017 **Art Stage Jakarta**, Singapore (Arario Gallery)

Art Stage Singapore, Singapore (Arario Gallery)

Art Fair Philippines, Manila, Philippines (Silverlens Gallery)

2016 **Art Stage Singapore**, Singapore (Arario Gallery)

2015 **Art Basel Hong Kong**, Hong Kong (Silverlens Gallery)

Art Fair Philippines, Manila, Philippines (Silverlens Gallery)

Art Stage Singapore, Singapore (Arario Gallery)

2014 **Art Fair Philippines**, Manila, Philippines (Silverlens Gallery)

2013 **Art Fair Philippines**, Manila, Philippines (Silverlens Gallery)

Art Stage Singapore, Singapore (Arario Gallery)

2012 **Art Stage Singapore**, Singapore (Arario Gallery)

Art Hong Kong 12, Hong Kong (Arario Gallery)

2011 **ManilArt 11, Manila**, Philippines (Silverlens Gallery)

Art Stage Singapore, Singapore (Arario Gallery)

2010 **ManilArt 10, Manila**, Philippines (Silverlens Gallery)

Art Hong Kong 10, Hong Kong (Arario Gallery)

2009 **Art Taipei 2009**, Taiwan (Arario Gallery)

Art Hong Kong 09, Hong Kong (Arario Gallery)

2008 **Pulse Miami Contemporary Art Fair**, Miami, USA (Arario Gallery)

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

Bio

Kunst Art Fair, Zurich, Switzerland (Avanthay Contemporary)

ARCO Art Fair 2008, Madrid, Spain (Arario Gallery)

2007 *Art Beijing Art 2007*, Beijing, China (Arario Gallery)

First Asian Contemporary Art Fair (ACAF), New York, USA (Arario Gallery)

EDUCATION

1999 *University of the Philippines*

BFA in Painting, Cum Laude

SILVERLENS

www.silverlensgalleries.com

MARV RECINTO

About the writer

Marv Recinto is a Filipino arts writer and editor based in London, specialising in contemporary art of the Philippines and Southeast Asia. Raised in Manila, Singapore, and San Francisco, she studied Art History and Anthropology in New York and obtained her MA at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. She is presently the Managing Editor for ARTMargins, MIT Press; a contributing writer to ArtReview Asia; and recently organised / moderated the conference, 'Art and Democratic Struggle in Myanmar: 100 Days After the Coup' (Transnation x Arts of the Working Class).

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ

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MARV RECINTO

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