

SILVERLENS

# YASMIN SISON

*Time is a Restless Sea*





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*Time is a Restless Sea*

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5 October – 4 November 2023





*Sisters (Sophie and Gabby)*, 2023  
watersoluble oil color on canvas  
48h x 72w in • 121.92h x 182.88w cm each (diptych)







*Bixie and her Yellow Beret (Too many Wes tiktok videos), 2023*  
watersoluble oil color on canvas  
72h x 48w in • 182.88h x 121.92w cm





*Sisters (Ingrid and Zoe)*, 2023  
watersoluble oil color on canvas  
72h x 48w in • 182.88h x 121.92w cm







*Growl and Oreo (after Chay Mondejar), 2023*

oil color on canvas

48h x 48w in • 121.92h x 121.92w cm







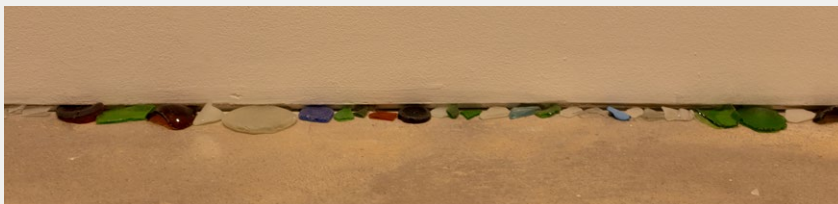
*Piggy the neighbor's dog (after Chay Mondejar), 2023*

oil color on canvas

48h x 48w in • 121.92h x 121.92w cm







*she sells seashells by the seashore*, 2023  
driftwood, broken tiles, coral, rock,  
plastic balls, sea glass, bones, seed  
dimensions variable















*Touching Stones*, 2023

watercolor on Arches watercolor paper (300gsm)

24h x 18w in • 60.96h x 45.72w cm

framed: 32.28h x 26.18w in • 82h x 66.50w cm





*Haraya at noon (after Likha Sison), 2023*  
watercolor on Arches watercolor paper (300gsm)  
24h x 18w in • 60.96h x 45.72w cm  
framed: 32.28h x 26.18w in • 82h x 66.50w cm







*Chay*, 2023

watercolor on Arches watercolor paper (300gsm)

24h x 18w in • 60.96h x 45.72w cm

framed: 32.28h x 26.18w in • 82h x 66.50w cm



*Vida and the broken red heel*, 2023  
watercolor on Arches watercolor paper (300gsm)  
24h x 18w in • 60.96h x 45.72w cm  
framed: 32.28h x 26.18w in • 82h x 66.50w cm







*Likha*, 2023

watercolor on Arches watercolor paper (300gsm)

24h x 18w in • 60.96h x 45.72w cm

framed: 32.28h x 26.18w in • 82h x 66.50w cm





*Dalawang Amihan, 2023*

watercolor on Arches watercolor paper (300gsm)

24h x 18w in • 60.96h x 45.72w cm

framed: 32.28h x 26.18w in • 82h x 66.50w cm



## *Time is a Restless Sea* by Yasmin Sison

The notion of quantum time does away with the classical understanding of Space-Time as a linearity, exploring the ideas of glitches in space-time, opening up the possibilities of parallel lives and turbulence. “The cosmos is constantly roiling like a tempestuous sea,” Sison writes. It ebbs and flows, following the shape of gravity, space, and time, all measured in extreme specificity, though eliciting changes that reverberate through time as we understand it.

In *Time is a Restless Sea*, Sison creates autobiographical paintings with fleeting moments captured and memorialised in pigment and canvas forever. Sison has been “recording” her family in paintings for over two decades. The paintings vary in scale and medium, though imbued with an earnestness and tenderness that is never cloying or overly sentimental, but with careful staging creates a tension between play and turbulence. The collection of work is almost entirely made up of source images taken during a family holiday at a privately-rented resort, after the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2020. Removed from the dangers that plagued everyone’s minds at the time, the chance to be a little bit freer, by the sea, surrounded by loved ones was a welcome reprieve.





Yasmin Sison's *Gingerbread Girls* (2007). Courtesy of Finale Art File.



Yasmin Sison's *Into the Woods* (2009). Courtesy of Finale Art File.

Set against the sea, sky, and sand, nature becomes the foil to the protagonists in Sison's paintings. These paintings are monuments to the weight of the world changing in unpredictable ways, and Sison changing along with it: a rueful acceptance of what is and always has been impermanent. Sison also invokes American Buddhist nun Pema Chödrön's ideas of life as a dream. She writes, "More simply, regard everything as a dream. Life is a dream. Death is also a dream. Waking is a dream and sleeping is a dream. Another way to put this is that every situation is a passing memory."<sup>1</sup>

Almost three years after taking the photographs, Sison uncovers these saved memories and images and works through the most changes she had undergone since becoming a teenager by making these images into paintings. The process has been a little bit like growing up in reverse – thrown into the unpredictable and turbulent sea. However, some joy is anchored in a perfect picture, somehow.

These portraits are deliberately unplaceable in time, with the environment just as anonymous as well. Under her direction, the children in the photographs were asked to dress up in anachronistic garb and to place their bodies in active poses, creating a tableau of freedom and playfulness, amidst the suggestion of a storm and a violent sea behind them. Her sitters are always in costumes, putting on different identities, and becoming embodiments of what is other than themselves, sometimes standing in as symbols for something else. Sison imagines the possibilities of parallel lives, drawn to the unpredictability of Space-Time, and the mystery of quantum space.

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<sup>1</sup>Chödrön, Pema. *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living*. HarperCollins Publishers Limited, 2003.

It is interesting to elect a very still and static medium to express ideas of change and mutability, but that is what Sison's paintings embody. A product of contemplation of her own changes – beyond the body and within it – what this collection of paintings entreats is a sense of play amidst turbulence, an acceptance of the cyclic nature of things and the inevitability of change. These paintings serve as a reminder and as a recognition of the immutability of impermanence.

Sison contemplates the sea as the signification of the own changes she is going through – “me changing, the world changing in different ways” – all taxing and difficult to come to terms with. Nothing is predictable like the straight path of an arrow, and everything like a turbulent sea. She battles with her body and her own emotions and hormones ebbing and flowing unpredictably.

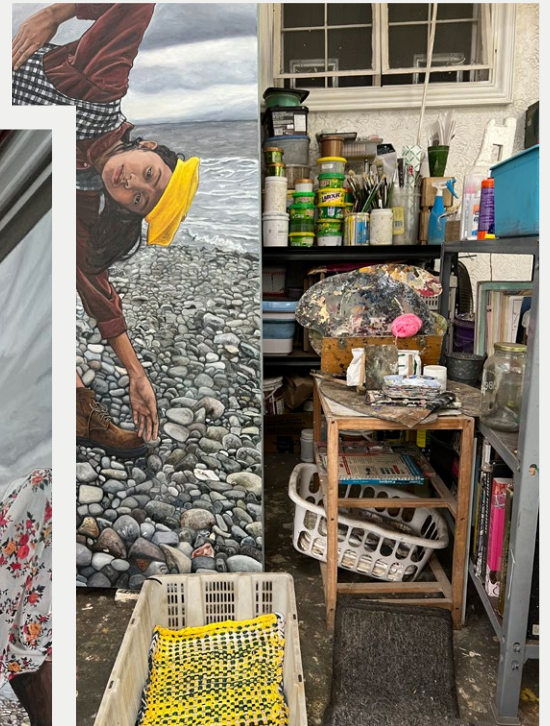
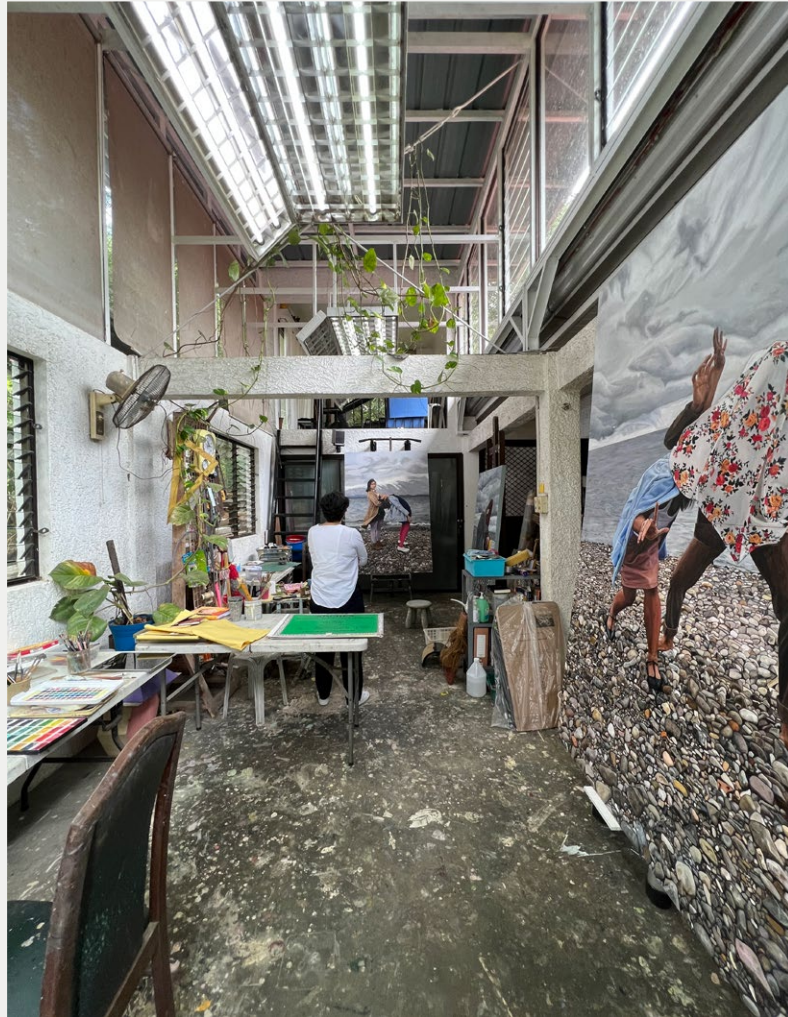
Scattered amongst the paintings are items Sison collected from the ocean, creating a bigger picture both of the environment they inhabited as well as the ideas she ruminates on. Some are transformed by the ebbs and flows of the ocean, gradually taking the shape according to what has affected them. Driftwood, sea glass, broken tiles and pottery all assume a form dictated by what has touched them. None are an echo or ghost of what they had been; they are all their own entities, taking the shape of whatever form has emerged from all these changes.



Sison sets before the sea (in this case, herself) a playfulness – embodied by her subjects, in their dress, poses, and demeanour – that is often hard to practice, especially when everything seems to fall apart around you. The acceptance of one’s fate, in face of restlessness and turbulence, and even going towards it with “lighthearted acceptance”: again invokes Chödrön’s suggestion of approaching life – and even death beyond it – as though it were a dream.

Sison’s hope is to emulate the children and the people she populates her works with: an acceptance of these changes with a sense of play and lightheartedness. “My wish,” Sison says, “like a stone skipped on a turbulent sea.”

*Words by Carina Santos*



Photos of Yasmin Sison's studio



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## YASMIN SISON

### Bio

**With degrees in both Humanities and Fine Arts from the University of the Philippines, it is no wonder Yasmin Sison has a conceptual approach to her art. Sison is also a founding member of the art collective Surrounded by Water. Before becoming a full-time artist, she took several teaching jobs, the last and longest of which was as a pre-school teacher. Her interest in children also reflects in the way elements of childhood recur in her art. Her works have been exhibited across the Southeast Asian region. In 2006, she became a recipient of the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Thirteen Artists Award and in the following year she was shortlisted in the Ateneo Art Awards.**



## YASMIN SISON CV

b. 1972, Cavite, PH



*Sisters (Ingrid & Zoe), 2023*

### AWARDS

- 2007 *Ateneo Art Awards*, Shortlisted
- 2006 *Thirteen Artists Award*

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *Seeds for a Playground*, MO\_Space, Manila
- 2020 *Backyard Jungle Redux*, West Gallery, Manila
- 2019 *9/21*, Underground Gallery, Manila  
*A Mubble in a Pubble*, MO\_Space, Manila
- 2018 *A Girl's Guide to Building in Technicolor*, West Gallery, Manila
- 2016 *Invisible Garden, Art Informal*, Manila
- 2015 *Box Forts for Big Children*, Finale Art File, Manila
- 2013 *Playing House, Finale Gallery*, Manila
- 2012 *The Domestic Life of Pictures*, Silverlens, Manila  
*Storybook Collages*, West Gallery, Manila
- 2011 *Underneath the Sky*, Finale Gallery, Manila
- 2010 *Spaces in Between*, Artesan Gallery, Singapore
- 2009 *Into the Woods*, Finale Art gallery, Art Center, Manila
- 2008 *Turning Tides*, Finale Art File, Lao center, Manila  
*The Weight of Waiting*, Valentine Willie Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur
- 2007 *Gingerbread Girls*, Finale Art File, Manila  
*The Punky Brewster Sessions*, MAG:Net, Manila
- 2006 *Unmade*, MAG:Net, Manila
- 2005 *Reading For Beginners*, UFO Gallery, Manila
- 2003 *Interior Domain*, FINALE Art File, Manila
- 2002 *Stick Em Up!*, Surrounded by Water Gallery, Angono, Rizal
- 2001 *28 Days*, Surrounded by Water Gallery, Angono, Rizal
- 2000 *Kitchen Sink Drama*, The British Council Library, Manila
- 1996 *Apple Pickers from Japan*, Discovery Series, Hiraya Gallery, Manila
- 1995 *Powder Room*, West Gallery, Manila

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *Attitude and Practice*, Matsuo Megumi+ VOICE Gallery, Kyoto  
*Interiority Complex*, Eskinita Art Gallery, Manila  
*Exit the Pig, Enter the Owl and Gorgeous*, Underground Gallery, Manila
- 2021 *Pause to Reframe*, Alt Philippines, Finale Art File, Manila  
*Night Mirrors*, Finale Art File, Manila  
*Altered States*, Eskinita Art Gallery, Manila  
*How to Sew a Button*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- 2020 *Liminal Spaces*, MO\_Space, Manila

## YASMIN SISON CV

- Drawing with Water*, West Gallery, Manila.  
*a. work b. Play c. \_\_\_\_\_*, West Gallery, West Avenue  
*Bloom 2020*, online exhibition
- 2019 *Far Away but Strangely Familiar*, Danubiana, Meulensteen Art Museum, Bratislava
- 2018 *Destructure*, MO\_Space, Manila  
*Christmas Show*, Finale Art File, Manila  
*ORDO AB CHAO*, Silverlens, Manila  
*Pinto Manhattan 2*, Tribeca, New York  
*Pintokyo*, Shibuya, Tokyo
- 2017 *Merry Christmas (I Don't Want to Fight Tonight)*, Underground Gallery, Manila  
*Helping Hands*, Pinto Art Gallery, Antipolo  
*UG3 A Collage Show*, Underground Gallery, Manila  
*Let the Right One In, Let the Wrong Ones Go*, Underground Gallery, Manila  
*Melted City 4*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- 2016 *They Speak to You by Association*, Galleria Duemilla, Manila  
*Surrounded by Water and Friends, Pelampung di Bawa Kursi Anda (Life Jacket Under your Seat)*, Langgeng Art Foundation, Jogjakarta  
*Surrounded by Water and Friends, Pelampung di Bawa Kursi Anda (Life Jacket Under your Seat)*, Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Short span*, Post Gallery, Manila  
*Mariano Ching/Yasmin Sison*, Owen James Gallery, Brooklyn  
*They Speak to You by Association*, Galleria Duemila, Manila  
*Shelf Life*, Underground Gallery, Manila  
*Occupation*, Underground Gallery, Manila
- 2015 *Bangkal Paintings*, Underground Gallery, Manila  
*Babel*, Underground Gallery, Manila  
*You Must Change Your Life*, Equator Art Project, Singapore  
*Turtles All the Way Down*, Special Exhibits, Art Fair Philippines, Manila  
*The Last Dog Show (Come Back When You're Famous)*, Finale Gallery, Manila  
*Melted Cities*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- 2014 *BOOKENDS*, Blanc Gallery, Manila  
*Fan Fiction*, West Gallery, Manila  
*Tabletop*, Altro Mondo, Manila  
*What Does it All Matter, As Long As the Wounds Fit the Arrow?*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila  
*Picture Life*, Tin-Aw Gallery, Manila  
*Imaging Philippine Flora: 1877 to the Present*, MET Museum, Manila  
*Brave New Worlds*, MET Museum, Manila  
*Do You Believe in Angels*, Mo\_Space, Manila

## YASMIN SISON CV

- 2013 *Picture Imperfect*, Mo\_Space, Manila  
*Beast/Bloom for thee:Biota Etc*, Canna Gallery, Indonesia  
*Monogashi*, Silverlens, Singapore  
*Stacking Up*, Mo Space, Manila  
*The Mona Lisa Project*, Bulwagang Fernando Amorsolo, CCP  
*Haven't We Met Before*, Art Stage Singapore, Singapore
- 2012 *Chimera*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore  
*Build*, Blanc Peninsula, Manila  
*Painting the Sublime*, Manila Contemporary, Manila  
*A&L: The Parallel Lives Museum*, U.P. Vargas Museum, Manila  
*Readymade China Girls*, MO Space, Manila
- 2011 *Scribble Stage*, Finale Gallery, Manila  
*Strip 2011: Painters as Photographers*, Curated by Rachel Rillo, Silverlens, Manila  
*To Be Continued*, Osage, Hong Kong  
*Collidoscope*, VWFA, Singapore  
*Line and Space*, Mag:net Gallery, Manila  
*Love Letters*, Manila Contemporary, Manila
- 2010 *Latitudes. Encounters with the Philippines*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan  
*Games for Growing*, Blanc Peninsula, Manila
- 2009 *DimeBag 3*, Shoe Box Diorama, Mag:net Gallery, The Columns, Makati and West Gallery, Manila  
*In the Ocean Without a Boat or a Paddle*, Blanc Gallery, Manila  
*Post Tsunami Art*, Marella Gallery, Milan,  
*Prague Biennale 4*, Karlin Hall, Prague  
*Things Said Amongst Us*, Nadi Gallery, Jakarta
- 2008 *Spinning Sugar*, Mag:net Gallery, Manila  
*In Between Days*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- 2006 *Dog Show*, Green Papaya Arts Project, Manila  
*13 Artists Awards*, CCP Complex, Manila  
*Balancing Act, Future Prospects*, Marikina Shoe Expo, Manila  
*The Way We Get By*, West Gallery, Manila  
*Post Modernism is So Last Season*, Green Papaya Art Projects, Manila
- 2005 *Innocent When You Dream*, Finale Art Gallery, Manila  
*Fragile Youth with Artificial Legs*, Theo Gallery, Manila  
*SBW exhibit at Saguijo*, Theo Gallery, Manila  
*On Paper*, Magnet, ABS-CBN, Manila
- 2004 *Museum of the Mind is a Jumbled Playground*, Vargas Museum, UP Diliman, Manila  
*Cancelled Metaphor*, Art Center, Manila
- 2003 *Dogshow*, UFO, Mandaluyong, Manila, Cubicle, Pasig City  
*Portalet*, Linya Gallery,Tibanga, Iligan City



## YASMIN SISON CV

- Silent Declarations*, Valentine Willie Fine Arts, Malaysia  
*Cut*, Mag:net Gallery, The Loop Tower, ABS/CBN Compound, Manila  
*Densities, Making Sense of Dense Cities*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
- 2002 *Feast of Conversation*, Atelier Frank and Lee, Singapore  
*Utopia*, Art Seasons, Singapore  
*Mainstream*, Surrounded by Water Gallery, Angono, Rizal  
*Conversation*, Art Center, Manila  
*Fixation*, Lopez Museum, Manila
- 2001 *Space Meeting Place*, Ayala Museum, Manila  
*Cool Pieties*, Art Center, Manila  
*Surrounded*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
- 2000 *Faith and the City*, Earl Lu Gallery Lasalle SIA College of Arts, Singapore, ABN AMRO House, Malaysia, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur  
*Grand Royale*, Big Sky Mind, Manila  
*Video Take*, Openbare Bibliotheek van Leuven, Brussels  
*True Confessions*, Art Center, Manila  
*Dog Show*, Surrounded by Water Gallery, Angono, Rizal  
*Into the Rabbit Hole*, Surrounded by Water Gallery, Angono, Rizal
- 1999 *Cracks and Abyss*, Art Center, Manila  
*Dog Show*, Surrounded by Water Gallery, Angono, Rizal  
*The Today Show*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila  
*The Incredible Lives of Alice and Lucinda*, Surrounded by Water, Angono, Rizal  
*Topology of Signs*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila  
*Coordinates*, Boston Gallery, Boston, Cubao
- 1998 *X-prints*, Australia Centre  
*No Preservatives Added*, Surrounded by Water Gallery, Angono, Rizal  
*Crossroads: Terminal Baggage*, Australia Centre  
*Views from Elsewhere*, SM Megamall Artwalk, Manila
- 1997 *Inner Child*, Ayala Museum, Manila  
*Breaking Appolonians, Filipina Artists: 1975 to the present*  
Alliance Francaise de Manille
- 1996 *Dangerous Metaphors*, Artwalk, SM Megamall, Manila  
*Delatang Pinoy: Yes, the Filipino Can!*, Hiraya Gallery, Manila  
*Mula Filibustero hanggang kay Marimar*, UP Vargas Museum, Diliman
- 1995 *Painting by Numbers*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2002 - 2006 Cavite Institute, Silang, Cavite  
Teacher, Preschool Level

1999 - 2002 Surrounded by Water Gallery Mandaluyong, Manila

## YASMIN SISON CV

Volunteer Staff/Member  
1999 - 2006 Ayala Museum  
Instructor, Ayala Museum's Escuela sa Museo  
1998 -2001 St. Scholastica's College Malate, Manila  
Lecturer, Department of Fine Arts  
1998 - 1999 St. Benedict College Alabang, Muntinlupa,  
Lecturer, Department of Arts and Letters  
1993 - 1994 Cavite Institute Silang, Cavite  
Teacher, Primary Level  
Summer 1992 Cultural Center of the Philippines, Summer Visual Arts Workshop  
Coordinating Center for the Visual Arts Facilitator

### **EDUCATION**

2001 University of the Philippines - Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines  
MA Art Education  
1994 - 1997 University of the Philippines - Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines  
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Painting  
1992 - 1993 University of the Philippines - Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines  
Certificate for Professional Education  
1988 - 1992 University of the Philippines - Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines  
Bachelor of Arts in Humanities, Cum Laude

**YASMIN SISON**

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**CARINA SANTOS**

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