



Dina Gadia

LAND POETICS

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Not-Nostalgia and Two Scholia

by Raymond de Borja

In *Land Poetics*, Dina Gadia supplants her usual clever juxtapositions and shrewd wit with possibly the closest one can get to her works with depth of feeling. In contrast with her recurring semiotic preoccupations – with diagrams and floating signifiers (*Navigating the Abstract*, 2020), with gestures and affective states wrenched then recontextualized from pulp and comics material (*Situations Amongst the Furnishings*, 2017 and *Adaptable to New Redundancies*, 2013) – the images in *Land Poetics* are cut out and reappropriated with a starkness of style and simplicity that approaches pure punctum and indeterminacy.

"Very often," Roland Barthes says, "the punctum is a detail, i.e. a partial object." The thick black line moving down from the top side of the canvas then at a slight diagonal to rest on the text in *Land Poetics (Quality Container)* is in fact "the window frame of the door of a truck I once saw on EDSA," Gadia shares in conversation, "the text reminding me of the many containers -- vases, drinking glass, glass bottles... -- that have haunted my collage works for many years." The memory of that typeface on the truck door, first captured in a photograph, is then recalled here in paint, the red brushstroke carrying with it the quality one finds in urethane letterings on commercial vehicles.

In *Land Poetics (Encounters)* and *Trees*, analog print technology is replicated with burst brushwork and acrylic wash, the technological and cost constraints of past printing technologies here become painterly signature, perhaps posing the questions: what happens when our mass of personal, cultural, documentary visual materials are passed through painting's logic? What fields of discourse do they enter, do they open up?

But isn't nostalgia by default an already suspect sentiment, lying on a spectrum which at one end, less hysterical and all-veneer, triggers our consumerist drives and on another, farther hysterical end, pure fanaticism, feeds our mass passion for fascist figures and tendencies, ways of life?

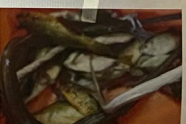
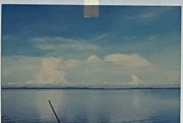
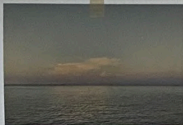
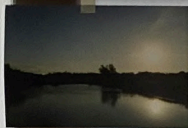


The garden, the one in *Land Poetics (Encounters)*, bushy, seeming façade to a deeper woods, Gadia shares, is in fact the unkempt "playground near my childhood home in Anda, Pangasinan." "This might look like a common palm tree, but it is not, it is called Silag and it bears small coconut-like fruit" she says of one of the tree images in *Under One Constant*. "This one here collaged with the bonsai is the flowering plant of a kamote."

In Gadia nostalgia is, as Frederic Jameson had said writing about Walter Benjamin's fascination for children's books, "conscious of itself." A nostalgia which like in Jameson, is borne out of some "remembered plenitude" but on the contrary, also, one that is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the present but sees the present as material and impulse to further map painting's expanded field. Field explorations that are especially cogent as painting's archive – its histories of factures, techniques, and aesthetic decisions – are sorted and tagged, statistically flattened to become the large universe of data for training generative AI models.

Perhaps the most allegorically-rich figure in all of *Land Poetics* is the snake found in *Land Poetics (Encounters)*, slithering, or more accurately, floating on the leafy floor, it's former physical cut-out studium not quite sinking to the ground it is reappropriated on. This snake is a stand-in for the actual snake, the many ones that Gadia encountered in her childhood playground. Specificity and detail, Gadia shares these stories and recalls them in her painterly sensibility, rescuing the images from the statistical universe of the studium to have them approach new meaningfulness in the generative spaces of the punctum.

And the expanded field that *Land Poetics* seems to be mapping, if one were to construct a Klein Group, as Rosalind Krauss did for sculpture's expanded field (i.e. sculpture being not-Landscape, not-Architecture), or as George Baker did for photography (i.e. modern photography being not- Narrative, not-Stasis) is a field that reconciles and recuperates the personal from the contemporary cultural-historical; one finds in *Land Poetics* both signature wit and genuine depth of feeling, mapped out in a field that begins as its topological starting point the terrain that is marked not-nostalgia.



Scholium 1:

What binds the works in the show, other than painterly sensibility, is negative space. The only work where negative space is almost not featured is *Land Poetics (A Collective View)* which is a painting of clouds reappropriated from jeepney art. What are clouds, amorphous, if not themselves negative space? The white spaces here do not invite us to fill them. One can think of them as larger scale ligatures linking the pieces, while containing them, and continuing Gadia's semiotic and textual impulses, haunting her works as would the negative space inside her quality containers.

Scholium 2:

Preparing to write the essay this morning, I printed draft number zero – a loose assemblage of notes, sentence-thoughts, and diagrams that will eventually become the essay. But I didn't realize I had run out of black ink. So, of three pages of drafts, only two lines of texts were printed, off-center on two separate pages, and only because they were highlighted in green and written in white font. The first sentence said: "But we suspect nostalgia." The second line of sentences is by Svetlana Boym, it said: "Somehow progress didn't cure nostalgia but exacerbated it. Similarly, globalization encouraged stronger local attachments."

Works Cited:

Baker, George. "Photography's Expanded Field." *October*, vol. 114, pp. 121–40. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York City, NY: Vintage Classics, 1993.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York City, NY: Basic Books, 2001

Jameson, Frederic. "Walter Benjamin or Nostalgia." *Salmagundi*. No. 10/11 (Fall 1969 – Winter 1970), pp 52 – 68. Saratoga, NY: Skidmore College, 1970

Krauss, Rosalind. "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." *October*, Vol. 9 (Spring, 1979), pp. 30 – 34. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1979







Under One Constant, 2024

acrylic on canvas

20h x 16w in • 50.8h x 40.6w cm



detail from *Under One Constant*, 2024

Land Poetics (Quality Container), 2024
acrylic on canvas
28h x 38w in • 71.1h x 96.5w cm





QUALITY
CONTAINER

detail from *Land Poetics (Quality Container)*, 2024





Under One Constant, 2024

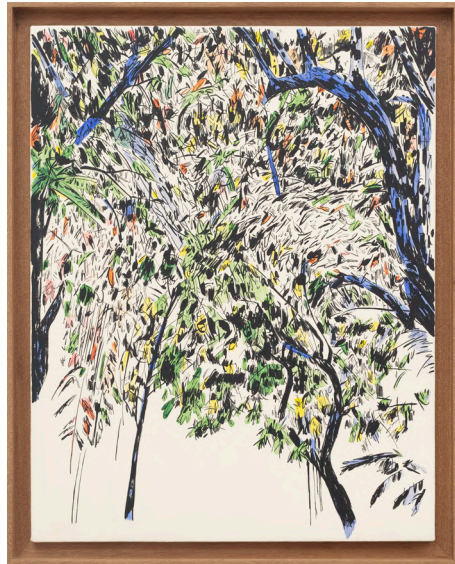
acrylic on canvas

20h x 16w in • 50.8h x 40.6w cm



detail from *Under One Constant*, 2024

Under One Constant, 2024
acrylic on canvas
20h x 16w in • 50.8h x 40.6w cm





detail from *Under One Constant*, 2024



Trees, 2024
acrylic on canvas
32h x 38w in • 81.3 x 96.5 cm





Land Poetics (Encounters), 2024
acrylic on canvas
32h x 42w in • 81.3h x 106.7w cm





detail from *Land Poetics (Encounters)*, 2024





Land Poetics (A Collective View), 2024

acrylic on canvas

28h x 38w in • 71.1h x 96.5w cm



detail from *Land Poetics (A Collective View)*, 2024



DINA GADIA Bio

Dina Gadia (b.1986, Pangasinan, Philippines; lives and works in Manila, Philippines) is an artist recognised for her visually arresting and playfully representational style. Imbued with her signature pop sensibility, her collages and paintings combine ambiguous text and other quotidian expressions with popular printed matter such as “B” movie posters, album covers, pulp, comics, and other obscure images.

By reframing images of previous generations as her own, she evokes large localised contexts and people to critically interrogate issues regarding postcolonial attitudes, disparate economic realities, and female inequity. Always tough, but also raw and humorous, her deadpan narration told via ironic visual puns eliminates any trace of sentimentality or self-righteous judgment in her creations.

She has exhibited extensively since 2005, leading solo presentations both locally and internationally in New York, Taipei, Singapore, and Tokyo. She was a member of the Bastards of Misrepresentation, a group of ambitious, avant-garde individuals gathered by the acclaimed contemporary artist, Manuel Ocampo; Gadia exhibited with the group in New York back in 2012, in a survey show that demonstrated Manila’s dynamic art scene. She was a finalist for the Ateneo Art Awards, a respected award for emerging artists, in 2012 and 2018. In 2018, she was awarded the prestigious national Thirteen Artists Awards by the Cultural Center of the Philippines. In 2019, Gadia participated in City Prince/sses at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.



DINA GADIA CV

b. 1986, Pangasinan, PHL



Things That Hold 4, 2022

AWARDS

- 2018 *Ateneo Art Awards*, shortlist, Ateneo Art Gallery, Manila
13 Artists Award, awardee, Cultural Center of the Philippines
- 2012 *Ateneo Art Awards*, shortlist, Ateneo Art Gallery, Manila

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *Land Poetics*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2020 *Navigating the Abstract*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2017 *Malady of Association*, Owen James Gallery, New York
Situation Amongst the Furnishings, Silverlens, Manila
- 2016 *Never Landscape*, West Gallery, Manila
Vase, Floral and Other Substitute, Pon Ding, Taipei
- 2015 *Select The Right Bad Picture*, Clear Edition and Gallery, Tokyo
Non-Mint Copy, Owen James Gallery, Brooklyn, New York
At Odds With The Visual, Silverlens, Manila
- 2014 *Let's Talk About Feelings*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- 2013 *Adaptable to New Redundancies*, Silverlens, Singapore
Convenient Culture Prop, Silverlens, Manila
- 2012 *Primal Salvo in Vibracolor*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2011 *Regal Discomforts*, Blanc, Manila
- 2010 *Contra-Affair*, Silverlens, Manila
How Does That Grab You Darling, Blanc, Manila
- 2009 *Ultra Plastic Style Now!*, Hiraya Gallery, Manila

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *12x9x35*, West Gallery Manila
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
- 2022 *Aquifer*, Silverlens, Manila
Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre
Tracks & Markings II, Giant Dwarf Art Space, Rizal, PH
S.E.A Focus 2022: All States No State, Tanjong Pagar Distripark, Singapore
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
- 2021 *Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila
After Exertion, Futur:st, Manila
Binding II, Blanc Gallery, Manila

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- 2020 *Anticipating the Day*, Silverlens, Manila
Try Pushing A Big Tree, Silverlens, Manila
Searching Sanctuary, Silverlens, Manila
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
- 2019 *I Meet My Bodhisattvas in the Streets*, Artery Art Space, Manila
WXXX, West Gallery, Manila
Far Away But Strangely Familiar curated by Tony Godfrey, Danubiana Museum, Bratislava, Slovakia
City Prince/sses, Palais de Tokyo, Paris
Count the Waves - Visualizing Invisibility, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
Taipei Dangdai, Silverlens, Taipei
- 2018 *13 Artists Awards 2018* Recipients' Exhibition, Cultural Center of the Philippines
Ateneo Art Awards 2018 Finalists' Exhibition, Ateneo Art Gallery, Manila
You Don't Need a Room the Size of a Football Field, Sampaguita Projects, Manila
Tirada: 50 Years of Philippine Printmaking 1968-2018, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
Group Exhibition, Art Informal, Manila
World Memory: Hybrids from Heterotopia, Artery Art Space, Art Fair Philippines
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
- 2017 *A Collage Show*, Underground Gallery, Manila
Withdrawal Syndrome, curated by Jigger Cruz, Project 20, Manila
Fresh Cut, New Blood, curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, MO space, Manila
Manila Hidden in Plain Sight, Metropolitan Museum of Manila
Melted City, curated by Louie Cordero and Jordin Isip, Rhode Island School of Design
Rider, two-person show w/ Allan Balisi, Artery Art Space, Manila
Art On Paper 2017, Owen James Gallery, Pier 36, New York City, New York
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
Allan Balisi & Dina Gadia, Clear Edition & Gallery, Tokyo
The New Normal, Owen James Gallery, Brooklyn, New York
Allan Balisi & Dina Gadia, Clear Edition & Gallery, ArtStage, Singapore

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- Melted City IV*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- Translación*, Inaugural Exhibition, Curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
- 2016 *AquaArt*, Owen James Gallery, Miami
- Exchange Rates 2016*, Owen James Gallery, New York
- Masks*, curated by Kult and ASHU, Diesel Gallery, Tokyo
- Short Span: Works on Paper*, Post Gallery, Manila
- Binding*, Blanc Gallery, Quezon City
- Art on Paper*, Owen James Gallery, Pier 36, New York
- Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila
- Art Fair Philippines*, West Gallery, Manila
- 2015 *Bangkal Paintings*, curated by Nilo Ilarde, Underground Gallery, Manila
- PaperViews15: Rapid Cycling*, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban
- The In Image from Way Out*, Underground, Manila
- Dry Rub*, Post Gallery, Manila
- Art Fair Philippines*, Manila
- Just Mad6*, Owen James Gallery, Madrid
- Maphilindo*, Balai Seni Lukis Sabah, Kota Kinabalu
- Melted City 2*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- 2014 *Bookends*, curated by Mariano Ching, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- Brave New Worlds: My Utopia in your Dystopia*, curated by Manuel Ocampo, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Manila
- The Shadow Factory*, curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Singapore
- Tabletop*, organized by Mariano Ching, Altromondo, Manila
- Hang 'em High*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- Art Fair Philippines*, Manila
- Neo Folk Showcase*, Ikkan Gallery, Singapore
- 2013 *Still*, Blanc, Manila
- Tones of Home*, Blanc Gallery, Manila
- The Mona Lisa Project*, Bulwagang Fernando Amorsolo, Cultural Center of the Philippines
- Manila Vice*, curated by Manuel Ocampo, Musée International des Arts Modestes (MIAM), Sète, France
- Ley Hunting Pt. 2*, curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Singapore
- Art Fair Philippines*, Manila

DINA GADIA CV

- 2012 *Bastards of Misrepresentation: NY Edition*, curated by Manuel Ocampo, New York
Other, curated by Lisa Chikiamco, Altromondo, Manila
Ley Hunting Pt. 1, curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
Just Leave the Itch Alone, (two-person show w/ Allan Balisi), Pablo Gallery, Manila
From the Black Lagoon, D.A.G.C., Manila
Art HK 12, Hong Kong
Fishnet Strangling She-male Accupuncture Bitchfest or The Y2K Babes
curated by Jeona Zoleta, Finale Art File, Manila
- 2011 *It Doesn't Snow in Manila*, Art Informal, Manila
Pulse Miami Art Fair, Miami
Recent Prints, D.A.G.C., Manila
Hats On, Bottoms Off, Blanc, Manila
On the Radar: Six New Symptoms, curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
Touch Me: An Exhibit of Artist' Books, curated by Angelo V. Suarez,
Hiraya Gallery, Manila
Flatfield, West Gallery, Quezon City
Survivalism, Light and Space Contemporary, Quezon City
Departure Area, Republikha Gallery, Quezon City
We Are Not Aimless, Manila Contemporary, Manila
- 2010 *His and Hers*, Blanc, Manila
Sirens Hall, organized by Mariano Ching, Mo Space, Taguig
Happily Unhappy, curated by Louie Cordero and Jordin Isip, Blanc, Manila
Paper Panic!, (two-person show w/ Mark Salvatus), Silverlens, Manila
- 2009 *Saturday Fun Machine*, organized by Mariano Ching, Finale Art File, Manila
Tears, Cuts and Ruptures: A Philippine Collage Review, curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
Pottymouth, Blanc, Manila
If You Only Walk Long Enough, Studio 83, Singapore
Welcome to the Jungle, Art Informal, Manila
Kasibulan PasyonNasyon, Cultural Center of the Philippines

DINA GADIA CV

- 2008 **Boxed 3**, The Cubicle, Pasig City
Tutokkk, Blanc, Manila
Amor Solo, Amores Muchos, Hiraya Gallery, Manila
Outwotowwot, Big Sky Mind, Quezon City
- 2007 **December Show**, Blanc, Manila
Four Corners, Fashion + Art Gallery, Quezon City
Boxed 2, Cultural Center of the Philippines
- 2006 **Plugged V**, Big Sky Mind, Quezon City
Strange Things and Other Life Forms, Chunky Far Flung Gallery, Quezon City
- 2005 **Plugged IV**, Big Sky Mind, Quezon City
Definition of Undefined Colors, Pablo, Quezon City
Wallpaper*, Big Sky Mind, Quezon City

EDUCATION

- 2002-2006 Far Easten University - Manila
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Advertising

PUBLICATIONS

Ladrado, Portia. "Filipino artists showcase works at one of Europe's top contemporary art museums." CNN Philippines Life. Accessed 25 June, 2020. <https://cnnphilippines.com/life/culture/arts/2019/6/25/palais-de-tokyo-filipino-artists.html>

Chen, Junni. "2 Young Filipino Artists to Watch: Pow Martinez and Dina Gadia." Art Radar Journal. Accessed 31 July, 2017. <http://artradarjournal.com/2017/07/312-young-filipino-artists-to-watch-pow-martinez-and-dina-gadia/>

"Philippines: Intertropical Convergence Zone." Luciano Benetton, Project Space Pilipinas, Young Joo Ko. (2015)

"Dina Gadia." Art Republik: Japan Rising. November 2015. p. 164-166

Bastards of Misrepresentation. Re:Surgo!. 2012.

De La Paz, Christiane L. "Dina Gadia's Assembling Collage of Contemporary Art." Artes De Las Filipinas. Accessed July 2011. <http://www.artesdelasfilipinas.com/archives/110/dina-gadia-s>

"The Comics Timing of Dina Gadia." The Swank Style. 11 January 2010

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