

nicole coson
camouflage



NICOLE COSON

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Daoana. 2017**

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SILVERLENS

2263 Don Chino Roces
Avenue Extension
Makati City 1231
T +632.8160044
F +632.8160044
M +63917.5874011
Tue-Fri 10am-7pm, Sat 10am-6pm

www.silverlensgalleries.com
info@silverlensgalleries.com

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Synthetic Paradise: **On Nicole Coson's *Camouflage***

by Carlomar Arcangel Daoana

In the natural world, camouflage is a biological necessity, an implement of defense, an act of self-preservation. An immense variety of animals and plants either blend with their natural environment, making them hard to see (through a process known as “crypsis”) or assume the coloration of other more fearsome creatures (“mimicry”). In the battlefield, camouflage makes reconnaissance missions, stealth maneuvers, and military engagements executable, allowing a troupe to stun the enemy with its close proximity and firepower.

Featuring nine large-scale works accomplished through monotype printmaking, *Camouflage*, Nicole Coson's solo exhibition at Silverlens Galleries (2 December 2017 to 6 January 2018), captures and reterritorializes camouflage within the ambit of the optical, interrogating its capacity to imitate, blend into, and ultimately subsume reality. By radically repeating this dialect of deception, Coson re-engineers its idiom as a signifier that slides on—if not entirely repelled by—the surface of the real.

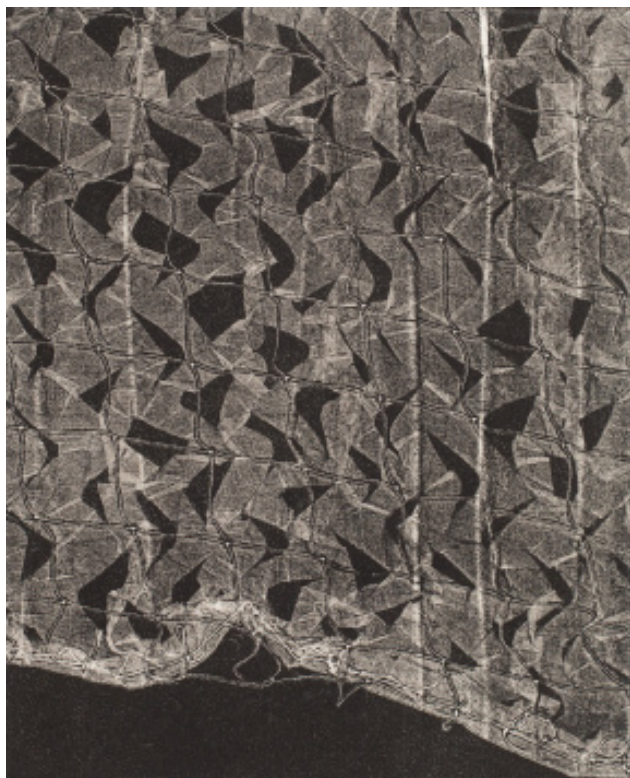




Untitled
oil on canvas
160h x 130w cm
(62.99h x 51.18w in)
2017



Untitled
oil on canvas
160h x 130w cm
(62.99h x 51.18w in)
2017



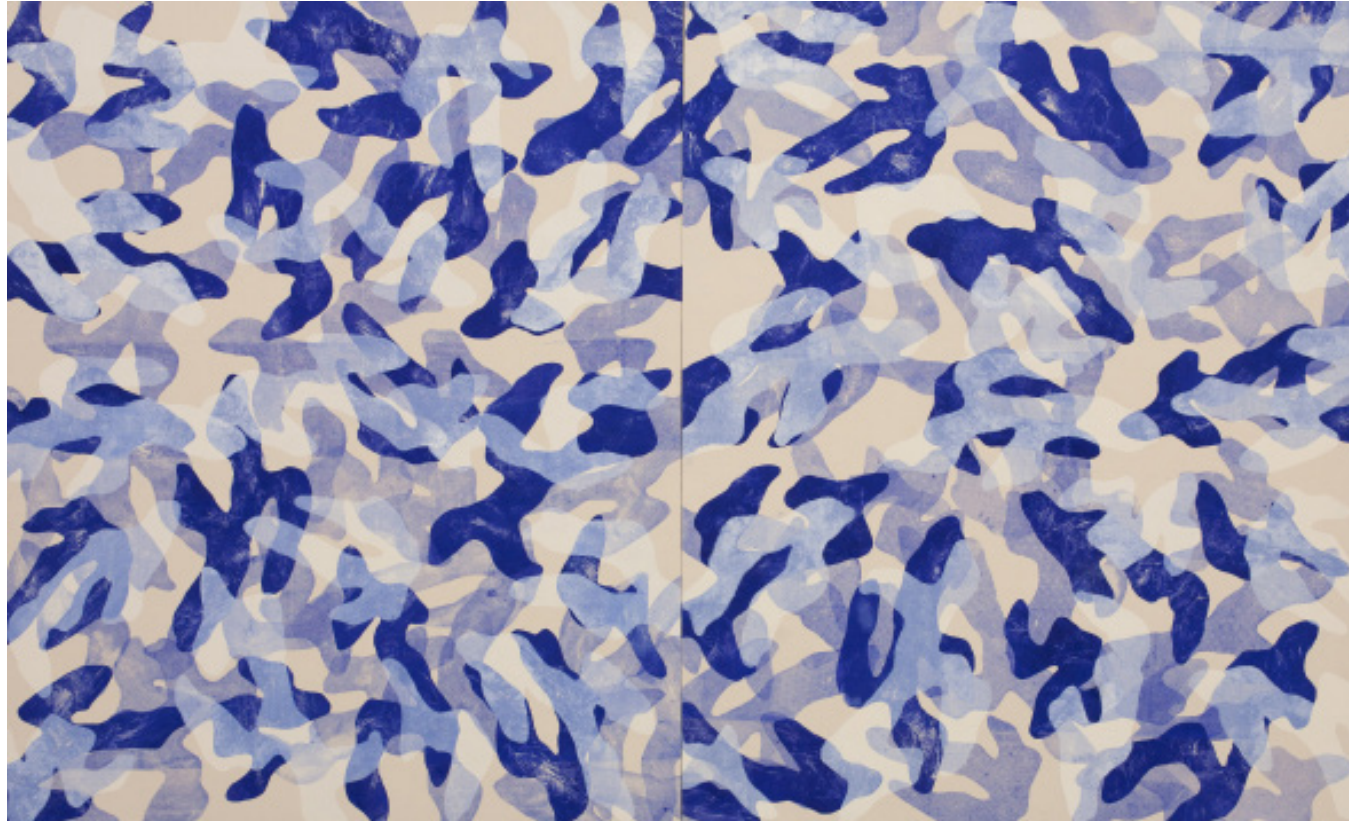
Untitled
oil on canvas
20h x 16w in
(50.80h x 40.64w cm)
2017

In each work, camouflage registers as a language of abstraction, whose free-floating shapes work within a strict palette of tonalities—gradations of a certain hue—contrapuntal with spectral, almost translucent whites. The negative space of the canvas functions as the field that holds the constellation of forms, whose overlaps create the impression of depth. It is the veracity of the visible world—shape in conjunction with space—that is being asserted.

While her previous works also share the same preoccupation in evoking dimensionality, this exhibit is more suggestive in its roundabout strategy of indexing nature. Her earlier works rely on an extractive process of translating Zen garden stones and Chinese scholar rocks into their elemental outlines, but by choosing to reference camouflage, Coson this time operates within the mediated field of a human sign in a daring attempt to transgress its legibility.



Untitled
oil on canvas
160h x 260w cm
(62.99h x 102.36w in)
2017



Untitled
oil on canvas
160h x 260w cm
(62.99h x 102.36w in)
2017

Historicized, the works gesture at the aesthetics of subterfuge employed by expansionist power. It was in the country when American soldiers, wanting to quell the growing Philippine revolt, opted for khaki—in lieu of blue—uniforms. They would eventually strategize this color to become the skin of disguise and evasion, as ubiquitous as tanks and bombs during wartime. To disappear into the landscape is to disempower the enemy. To camouflage is to colonize.

As an act of exposure and negation, the exhibit drains camouflage of its militarized context and its tactical functionality in its capacity of holding a mirror to what is essentially another mirroring device, thereby canceling out its insidious agency. Reconfigured as the artist's own language, employed in her own terms, Coson's camouflage emits only the slimmest silhouette of the originating sign.

In looking at these works, the viewer is led to confront the flatness—and the bankruptcy—of mimicry, the signifying shapes that constitute it. In the Baudrillardian sense of the spectacle, the works foreground and intensify the signs if only to vivify the real they have replaced: the mottled, unfiltered, unmediated visible world. Nicole Coson's works—which are, in her own words, “synthetic paradise”—recalibrate and refresh perception so that it may pierce into and inhabit new clarities.





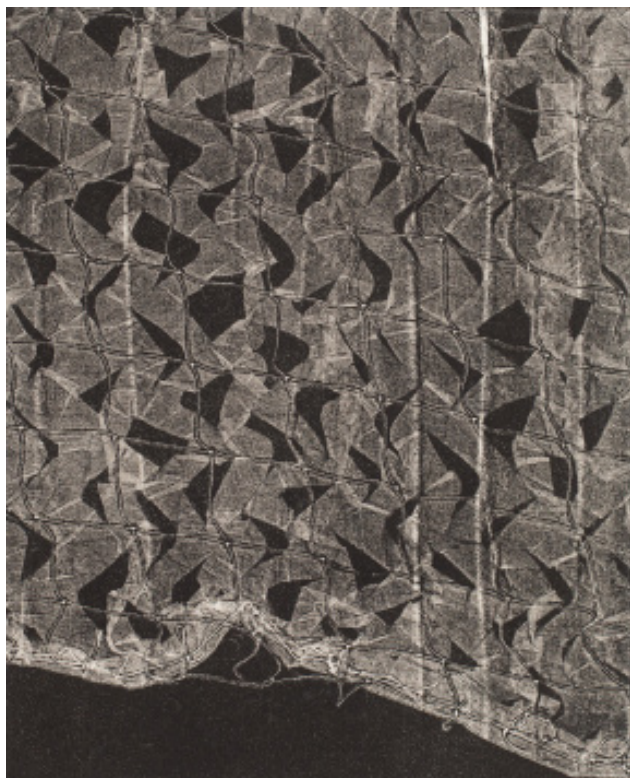
Untitled
oil on canvas
160h x 260w cm
(62.99h x 102.36w in)
2017



Untitled
oil on canvas
160h x 130w cm
(62.99h x 51.18w in)
2017



Untitled
oil on canvas
160h x 130w cm
(62.99h x 51.18w in)
2017



Untitled
oil on canvas
20h x 16w in
(50.80h x 40.64w cm)
2017



Untitled
oil on canvas
48h x 84w in
(121.92h x 213.36w cm)
2017

NICOLE COSON

Bio

Nicole Coson (b. 1992) is an artist raised in Manila and currently based in London. Coson works on a variety of media with a focus on analogue printmaking methods and techniques. Her first solo show in Manila titled “Spirit Captures” took place in West Gallery in 2013. She completed her studies in Fine Art graduating with first class honours in Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design in 2014, that same year she was also nominated for the prestigious New Sensations award by Saatchi Gallery. She then went on to do her first solo show titled “How to Appear Without a Trace” at Display Gallery in London one year after completing her studies, her second solo show in London “Process of Elimination” took place the following year.

SOLO SHOWS

- 2017 *Camouflage*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2016 *Process of Elimination*, Display Gallery, London
Process of Elimination, Finale Art File, Manila
- 2015 *How to Appear Without A Trace*, Display Gallery, London
Ghost, Stamperia Del Tevere, Rome, Italy
How to Appear Without A Trace II, Asia House, London
- 2014 *Untitled*, Finale Art File Gallery, Makati City
- 2013 *Spirit Captures*, West Gallery, Quezon City

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 *Art Fair Philippines*, The Link, Makati
- 2016 *START Art Fair*, Saatchi Gallery, London (solo booth)
- 2015 *Undisciplined*, NA Collective, London, UK
Di Carta, Palazzo Fogazzaro Schio, Vicenza, Italy
Collection of Small Paintings, The Contemporary London, London, UK
- 2014 *Field Trip*, Display Gallery, London, UK
Fine Arts BA Degree show, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London, UK
Print /3, Arcane Gallery, London, UK
- 2013 *Dis/location*, INIVA (Institute of International Visual Arts), London, UK
Curious Limbo: Scavenger Sale, Post Gallery, Manila, Philippines

NOMINATIONS

- 2014 Nominated for the Saatchi New Sensations Award

EDUCATION

- 2010 - 2011 Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at Central Saint Martins, London
- 2011 - 2014 BFA Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, London



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.