



BRIGHTER
THAN
MANY
EVER SEE

ISSAY RODRIGUEZ

SILVERLENS

4 SEPTEMBER – 2 OCTOBER 2021
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

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ISSAY RODRIGUEZ

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ARTIST'S
STATEMENT





Notes on *Murraya paniculata* (An Array for the Saints), 2021

father's graphite drawing (left), solar on paper (right)

10.2h x 7w in • 25.91h x 17.78w cm (each)

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Notes on Murraya 'Ibarra Santos' 2001, 2021

direct reverse UV ink on glass

22h x 30w in

55.88h x 76.20w cm

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Notes on *Dracaena* 'Marea' 2001, 2021

direct uv print on satin

30h x 19.50w in

76.20h x 49.53w cm

[inquire](#)





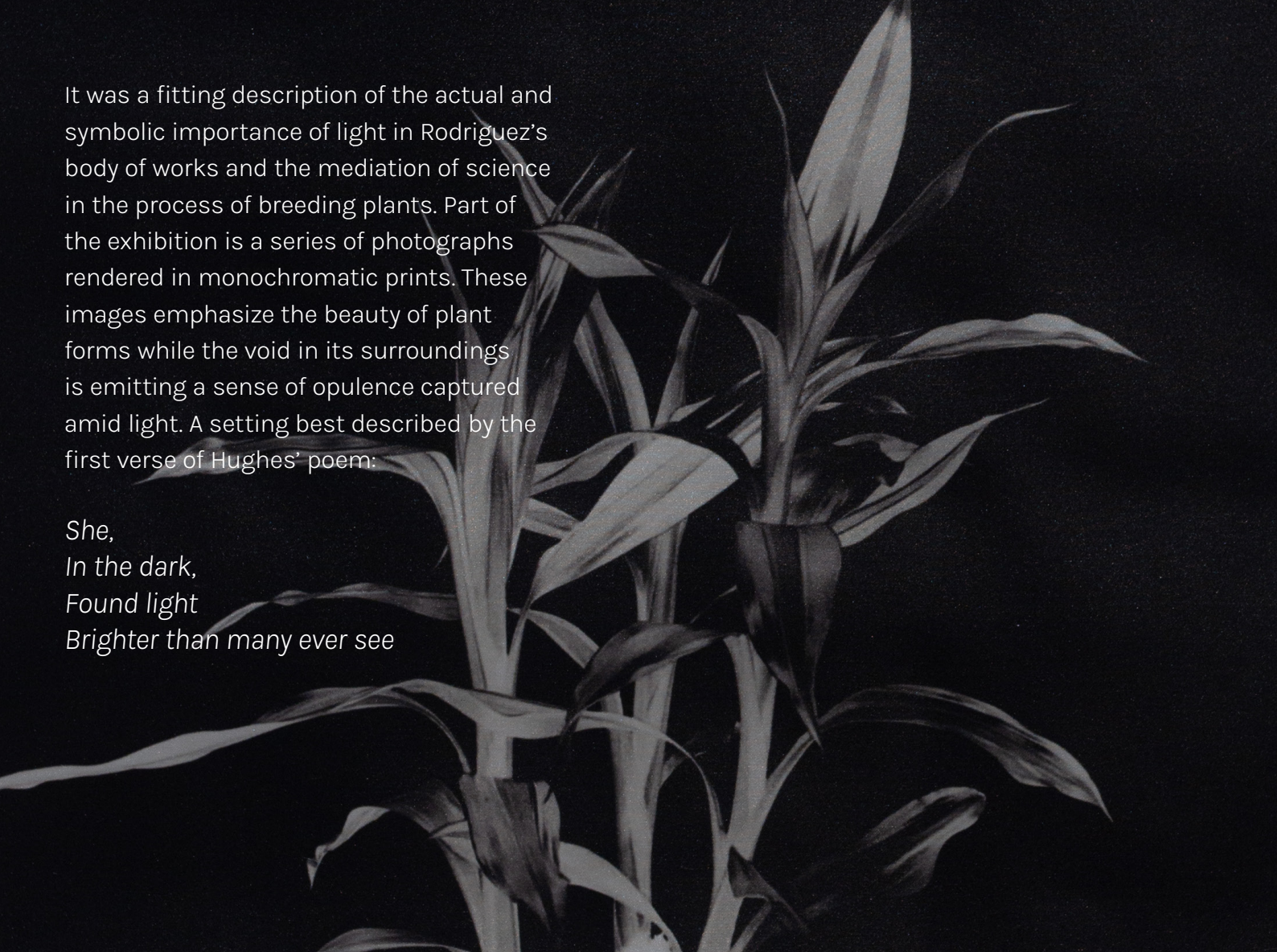
Continuing her investigation on the links between ecology and humanism, Issay Rodriguez's *Brighter Than Many Ever See* probes narratives and meanings found in the cultivation and domestication of ornamental plants. The artist's inquiry into this discipline begins with her family's small garden and extends to the halls of the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI). Working in collaboration with scientists from the institution, primarily with Senior science research specialist Fernando Aurigue of the agency's Atomic Research Division, Rodriguez has learned about plant breeding methods, which include unconventional approaches that use gamma irradiation where ionizing radiation causes random or directed changes in the DNA, thereby inducing mutations.

In understanding the transformation of plants, the artist associates the process to the renewal of human memories and experiences as we continue to co-exist with these life forms, especially in a time of a global pandemic when we are forced to stay inside our respective dwellings and confront our realizations on life and mortality. The title of the exhibition is an excerpt from a moving poem by the African American poet, Langston Hughes, which was written in 1931 for the humanitarian and deafblind author, Helen Keller. Hughes wrote his tribute to show how Keller's vision of life was a contrast to the darkness of her actual vision and how this bright vision is an inner power that radiates to accomplish great things amid struggles.



It was a fitting description of the actual and symbolic importance of light in Rodriguez's body of works and the mediation of science in the process of breeding plants. Part of the exhibition is a series of photographs rendered in monochromatic prints. These images emphasize the beauty of plant forms while the void in its surroundings is emitting a sense of opulence captured amid light. A setting best described by the first verse of Hughes' poem:

*She,
In the dark,
Found light
Brighter than many ever see*







**8 stalks for Growth
(notes on *D. braunii*),
2021**

cyanotype on paper
30h x 22w in
76.20h x 55.88w cm

[inquire](#)



The images reveal more than the poetic allusion to the scientific and artistic processes—they elaborate the intimate workings of plant breeding, leading us to think about these interventions; what we make of these findings becomes shared participation in visual culture and in meaning-making entrenched in the struggles of human-centric activities, economies, cultures, and the sciences such as occupations, domestic chores, scholarly pursuits, social interactions, and other related undertakings. Documenting these *life forms*, Rodriguez embarks on a pilgrimage to understand life from life and the ways in which we proceed to sustain it. In 2014, she began a series of cyanotype prints from sand patterns illustrating frequencies attributed to healing. This has evolved to producing imprints of flora and fauna, an exercise that looks beyond the ornamentality of these organisms. Our multi-generational relationship with plant domestication is borne out of the necessity to accentuate and aesthetically improve our surroundings to make our lives bearable. In this exhibition, Rodriguez contends this perspective as she continually observes both her mother and the scientists at PNRI as they tend to the plants. There must be something more about these practices that would surpass our notions of being guardians and keepers of another living species.





**Notes on chlorophyll mutants (*Dracaena* 'Sunbeam',
Freycinetia 'Golden Stairs', *Sansevieria* 'Sword of Ibe',
and *Schefflera* 'Sparkles'), 2021**

CAD prints | 22h x 30w in • 55.88h x 76.20w cm
direct reverse UV ink on transparency | 22h x 30w in • 55.88h x 76.20w

[inquire](#)





**Notes on chlorophyll mutants
(Schefflera 'Sparkles'), 2021**

CAD print

22h x 30w in • 55.88h x 76.20w cm



**Notes on chlorophyll mutants
(*Freycinetia* 'Golden Stairs'), 2021**

CAD print


22h x 30w in • 55.88h x 76.20w cm



**Notes on chlorophyll mutants
(Sword of Ibe), 2021**

CAD print

22h x 30w in • 55.88h x 76.20w cm



**Notes on chlorophyll mutants
(*Dracaena* 'Sunbeam'), 2021**

direct reverse UV ink on transparency
22h x 30w in • 55.88h x 76.20w cm



An aspect of the project is an attempt to build a collection of botanical prints from the PNRI archives, thus, applying artistic techniques to document scientific horticultural explorations. In doing so, Rodriguez prompts a discussion on the historicization of plant forms; botanical archives are instrumental in understanding ourselves and the environment we participate in, whether voluntary or involuntary.

Accordingly, the artist finds this true as she became privy to her parents' childhood memories while working on the project. Recalling past events prompted by the images of plants, Rodriguez's father used to remember a time when he saw a religious procession that included a carrosa decorated with shrubs of *kamuning* or *murraya paniculata* coupled with calcium carbide lamps as fillers for floral arrangements in the 60s. It was a custom to use plants as decorations to adorn common materials and objects to indicate festivities in preparation for certain social and religious events, a ritual slowly vanishing in modern times.

Rodriguez reconciles this memory with facts from her research on the subject: that the variant of *kamuning* in her father's story back then may be different from the ones that can now be found in the present, which shows a gradual movement of epiphany that changes throughout generations and identities. Rodriguez holds out these contemplations by documenting these plants through photography and printmaking while considering these groundings and pledgings to keep the living samples intact, healthy, and undamaged.

Coincidentally, plant variants are often named after late scientists and those with compelling contributions to the sciences who have already passed. A proper tribute materializes through this for those who had offered their valuable time here on earth and labored hard to help us understand more about our environment and this world. Through these plants, their memories are kept alive.

- Gwen Bautista







Notes on Schefflera (Gentle Sky IV), 2021

cyanotype on paper

48h x 96w in • 121.92h x 243.84w cm

(sold as set with Notes on Schefflera 8/5)





Notes on Schefflera 8/5 and Notes on Schefflera (Gentle Sky IV), 2021

(left) sterling silver

6h x 10.50w in • 15.24h x 26.67w cm

(right) cyanotype on paper

48h x 96w in • 121.92h x 243.85 cm

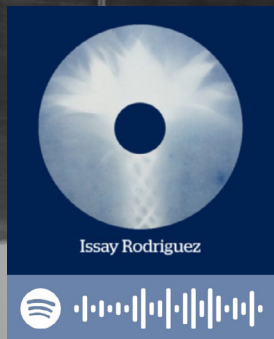
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Listen to Issay's studio playlist by scanning the QR code through your Spotify app or by clicking the image.



ISSAY RODRIGUEZ

Bio

Issay Rodriguez, Artist (b. 1991, Philippines) obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of the Philippines. She was a Jose Moreno Foundation scholar and received a bursary to attend the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris before graduating with the Outstanding Thesis Award in 2013.

Rodriguez's current art practice revolves around projects that deal with themes on humanism and ecology. Through research and community engagements enabled by artist residencies and inter-disciplinary collaborations, she is able to work on projects that allow oneself to think about how thoughts, emotions, and values can be explained or expressed through art and technology.

Rodriguez primarily works on drawings and cyanotypes but remains very open to other forms, considering specific sites or situations.

Recent projects and residencies include: DOON VR Project, art n/23 incubator space, (2020); B+, Bamboo Curtain Studio, Taipei (2019); VANISHING IN THE PROCESS: Exploration of Dream States and Symbolism, between LIR Space, Yogyakarta, and 98B Manila; Bellas Artes Projects in Bataan (both 2017-18); and a collaborative project for Viva Arte Viva 57th Venice Biennale (2017)

Her works were shortlisted for *Fernando Zobel Visual Arts Prize* (2018); awarded *Patnubay ng Sining at Kalinangan for Visual Arts* (2017); First Grantee: *Portfolio Art Prize | 10 Artists Helping Artists* (2020); *6th Filipino Artist Resident: Gasworks, London Artist Residency* (2022)

ISSAY RODRIGUEZ

Bio

b. 1991, Manila, PH



8 stalks for Growth (notes on D. braunii), 2021

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

- 2020 First Grantee: Portfolio Art Prize
(2020 Agents of Change: 10 Artists supporting Artists)
SPARTA Scholarship Program (Data Analyst pathway) by DOST, DAP, AAP, CB
- 2018 Ateneo Art Awards, Ateneo Art Gallery, shortlist
- 2017 Patnubay ng Sining at Kalinangan 2017, Patnubay ng Sining at Kalinangan sa Sining Biswal, 446th Araw ng Maynila
- 2013 Tanglaw ng Sining
Outstanding Thesis Award, University of the Philippines, Diliman
- 2012-13 Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris Scholarship, Exchange Student Program
- 2012 Everyone's VISION, Petron Print Making Category, semifinalist
- 2009-10 Jose "Pitoy" Moreno Scholarship
- 2009 Environmental Management Bureau-DENR, On-the-Spot Poster Making Contest, finalist

RESIDENCIES

- 2021 GASWORKS Residency for Artists based in the Philippines
Gasworks, London
- 2019 BAMBOO CURTAIN STUDIO | Creative Talents Residency Program
(participated with Anjo Bolarda / CC)
- 2017 Bellas Artes Projects, Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar, Bataan, Philippines
- 2017-18 Asia in Darwin 2017: Vanishing in the Process, Darwin Community Arts, Yogyakarta, Indonesia/Manila, Philippines

BIENNALE PARTICIPATION

- 2017 *57th Venice Biennale: Viva Arte Viva!*, Central Pavilion, Giardini

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 ..., Silverlens, Manila
- 2016 *Capitol Gains*, First United Building Community Museum, Binondo, Manila
blueprints, Silverlens, Manila
- 2015 *She Dug A Well So Well*, 1335 Mabini, Manila
- 2014 *Observatory*, Art Informal, Manila
Mise En Abyme, Light and Space Contemporary, Manila

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2019 *Primary Drives*, Silverlens, Manila

ISSAY RODRIGUEZ

Bio

b. 1991, Manila, PH

- 2018 *Equivalent/s*, Silverlens, Manila
TIRADA: 50 Years of Philippine Printmaking 1968-2018, Cultural Center of the Philippines
To eat is to survive to be hungry, 1335 Mabini, Manila
Vanishing in the Process, PAN// Project Space, Manila
- 2017 *Asia Now Paris Asian Art Fair*, 9 Avenue Hoche, Paris
parle pas français, merci, UP Fine Arts Gallery, Manila
Manila: Hidden in Plain Sight, Metropolitan Museum of Manila & universities in Manila
Making Waves, Bellas Artes Projects, Bataan
CTRL + ALT, Para://Site Projects, Manila
- 2016 *Indescribable Figure 2.0*, Jing Lü Gallery, Taiwan
Art Dubai: 10th Marker Exhibition, Madinat Jumeirah
Impact Through Design, JMI M.F. HUSAIN Art Gallery, New Delhi
Restorative, UP Bulwagan ng Dangal, Manila
- 2015 *On/Line*, Artery Art Space, Manila
Rapid Cycling, Project Space Pilipinas, Lucban, Quezon
Re:Tracings, First United Building Community Museum, Manila
World Photography Day, JMI M.F. HUSAIN Art Gallery, New Delhi
Nonfiction, Project 20, Manila
Repulse, Makna Seni Jakarta, Indonesia
Four Generations of UP Fine Arts Graduates, Corredor Gallery, UP College of Fine Arts, Manila
I Went to the Forest to Live Deliberately, Art Informal, Manila
- 2014 *Refrain*, 1335 Mabini, Manila
Luminescence, BSP Gallery, Metropolitan Museum of Manila
Objection, PAN/// Project Space, Manila
Busted, NCCA Gallery, Manila
- 2013 *Dark Side of the Sun*, Art Informal, Manila
Dinner Party, Blanc Gallery, Manila
College of Fine Arts | Degree Show, UP Vargas Museum, Manila
- 2012 *Mental Jungle*, Cour Chimay, ENSBA Paris
Souterrains de Paris: Priere et Repose, Amphitheatre d'Honor, ENSBA Paris
- 2011 *Art by the Squarefoot*, Vietnam University of Fine Arts, Hanoi City & Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam
What a Pillow is Not: Unconscious, Mag:net Gallery, Manila

ISSAY RODRIGUEZ

Bio

b. 1991, Manila, PH

EDUCATION

2021 University of the Philippines, Diliman College of Education | CPE Program

2008-2013 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Studio Arts, Painting,
University of the Philippines, Diliman

2012-13 Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris Exchange Student Program

1996-2004 St. Scholastica's Academy, Marikina City

ISSAY RODRIGUEZ

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