

SILVERLENS

Catalina Africa

*Shrine in the Shape
of a Shadow*

10 Dec 2022 - 7 Jan 2023



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Catalina Africa's new solo exhibition in Silverlens welcomes us yet again to a spatial visualization of an environment. This environment is expressed in painting and settles into a site inhabited by images painted by elemental habitation, sculptures molded by the dimensional agency of their material, and videos in collaboration with humans attuned to non-human ecologies. A shrine is a location, site. A shape denotes a contour, frame. And the shadow suggests intermediaries between the visible and the invisible, transformation.

In the last six years, Catalina's works are frequently associated with her move to Baler, a piece of information that facilitates our perception of local architecture adapting to rocky cliffs, beachside palettes, weathered layers, and streams (whether rivers or creative consciousness). Besides place contextualizing an artist's immediate vocabulary, it is actually animated by the artist's participation in it. *Shrine in the Shape of a Shadow* arrived through tactility. Before images, mud was the first teacher for Catalina: its quality occurring between solidity and fluidity while simultaneously carrying these states. Mud demonstrates the feature of liminality but exists as a complete state, very much enlisting the condition of the painterly. Painterly, in the case of Catalina's works, means an approach attendant to material, contrary to the method of conceptualizing an image before the mark. Although the exhibition finds evident application to mud as material—such as the unfired ceramics and concrete in the paintings "Revealing the process of shapeshifting, participating in the processes of the earth" and the sculpture "Shrine in the shape of a shadow"—mud as method carry forward in the paintings. The 'in-between' and 'yet-to-form' is the nuance here, and structures like paintings and sculptures carry the potential of these passages in nature.

Through *Shrine in the Shape of a Shadow*, Catalina reflects on how her practice can deepen an understanding of nature's subtle actions. Edging closer to refining the routes that correspond to the

world, she begins with portals to enter landscapes.

"I wanted to create a portal, and I found out I'm a portal."

Catalina's paintings draw us to portals: the gravitational force come from the symbols in her paintings: pools, ragged spheres and reflective voids. These are focal points where essence is discovered to be spilling out or coalescing,, as if holding the spectrum of green in "Self portrait in multiple dimensions/ becoming a tree" or functioning as the scaffolding for the narrative unfolding in "Connecting to Core." The span of these two paintings shows the axis of Catalina's vocabulary as they play within the visual range of becoming. So, the images invite us between the quality of these dynamic forces, and sometimes a narrative is charted among these qualities.

For instance, "Self-portrait in multiple dimensions/ becoming a tree" first subsumes us in green as a color. Lime, moss, seafoam, and emerald, surf around islands of blues. Painting permits this relationship between color families, extending our optic experiences of the natural world. Framed like a cross-section of a tree, the piece visualizes the animation of life's relationship to its forms through the elemental and minute, and the ecologies of spirit that are veiled from our ocular limitations.

Visualization bridges the complex world and the human witness. Through Catalina's paintings and sculptures, imaging perceives and dignifies this process. Portals, then, make these extra-sensory ecologies relatable through form. The suite of distinct objects on the floor for the work "Revealing the process of shapeshifting, participating in the processes of the earth" is like the components of a compass directing our way into such numinous sites. The heart of this map on the floor is an image of a mound, its edges shaped by the river and its slope molded by picnickers' slips, slides, and



climbs. Weathered by time, climate, and humans, this sculpture of an embankment makes up a portal as it relates to 'deposits' of other objects around it: things of mud from the mound itself, incense, clay, light fixtures, and a video piece.

The passage of Catalina's perception of portal as a site makes a turn in another sculptural piece "Shrine in the shape of a shadow," where she discovers her self as subject. The elusive but constant 'shadow' steps into a shape, carved out of wood and supported by canvas, cement and epoxy. Assembled on this opaque silhouette are materials collected and constructed by the artist, demonstrating the relationship to sediment, and offering between the natural world and its human accomplices. The subject of the shadow is essential to Catalina's comprehension to the body as a portal to which things pass through or get carried. Considered as its own territory and landscape, shadow is like the negative space to a solid form's density. Shadow receives change, seasons, and other inconspicuous forces that actually accompany mechanized living.

"I've been calling my paintings 'inner landscapes' for years, yet they resemble natural outer landscapes."

A site is animated by one's participation to it. Visibility is the process of visualizing the incomprehensible. Certain cartographic aspects in Catalina's work direct us to spaces that are familiar only because these spaces inhabit within. Guided by the twin lagoons in "Connecting to the Core", we are like the figure peeking from the corner of this red painting. Above this silhouette of a witness, there are currents that creep down from a flower in bloom: these roots are akin to the brain's neural networks. The pools come with distinct densities: the one above has a slit of a portal and the basin below is dark and voidlike, spilling texture off the edges. As strings of a harmonious tenor wrap between their reflection of each other, a

thread aligns them from their centers. The charge of this womb-like space surrounds all parts that perform autonomously.

The mirrored pools suggest the interplay of these spaces Catalina moves with—the inner and the external worlds reflecting one another synchronously. The rule of correspondence is at work in the works here: what is inside is also outside, that which moves above is activating the same way in what is underneath. That is why in "Divination Dialogue (Earth has wet dreams)" we encounter multiple views of place: a diagrammic landscape inhabiting spaces familiar in-situ. Delineations of strata give us an understanding that in this painting these layers are interdependent of each other, while the totality of the image gestures towards the malleable bounds of 'shape' and surface. Locating these relationships, the diptych associates with recognizable geological configurations by performing contact zones between material states. Earth and wetness do not only mean land and sea. Rather, motions as depicted by image, show how spaces also elude their distinct forms. Catalina's exhibition *Shrine in the Shape of a Shadow* demonstrates that painting is possible with the contingencies in nature. In-transition is complete if one engages with shapeshifting as a practice.

Siddharta Perez, in response to the artist Catalina Africa.

 **Catalina
Africa**

*Shrine in the Shape
of a Shadow*







Connecting to core

2022

acrylic, oil, oil pastel on canvas

36h x 48w in • 91.44h x 121.92w cm

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Kaleidoscopic Consciousness

2022

acrylic, oil, oil pastel, epoxy, shell on shaped canvas
92h x 23w in • 233.68h x 58.42w cm



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whatsapp





Divination Dialogue (Earth has wet dreams)

2022

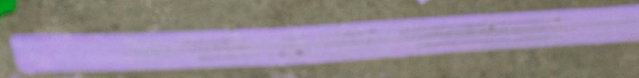
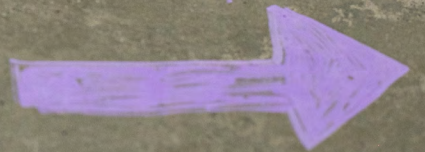
acrylic, oil, oil pastel on canvas, diptych

60h x 48w in • 152.40h x 121.92w cm each

60h x 96w in • 152.40h x 243.84w cm

[email](#)

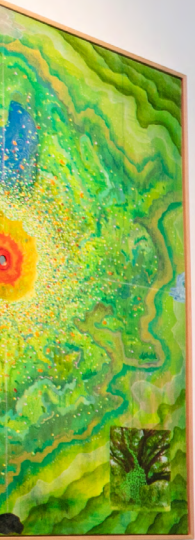
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***Revealing the process of shapeshifting,
participating in the processes of the earth***

2022

tarpaulin, unfired ceramic clay, stone, modelling clay, sticker,
acrylic sheet, charcoal, glass aquarium, sintra board print,
found corals, candle, mirror, cave sculpture, liquid chalk
dimensions variable





The body is a portal. There are always things passing through us.



I refuse to be disappointed, and consider these exploded shards as precious artifacts of my learning experience, as successful artworks in their own right.





Exploring empathy in liminal space - An experiment for reconnecting to inner constellations.

(Collaboration between Isabell Kittel and Catalina Africa)

2022

single channel video (00:14:23), no sound

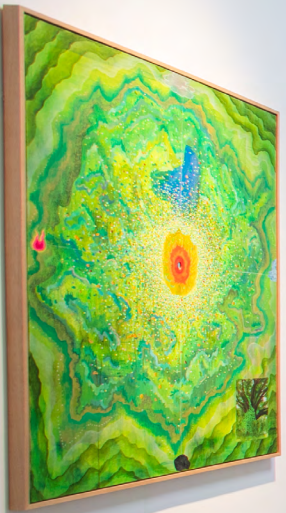
Edition 1 of 3

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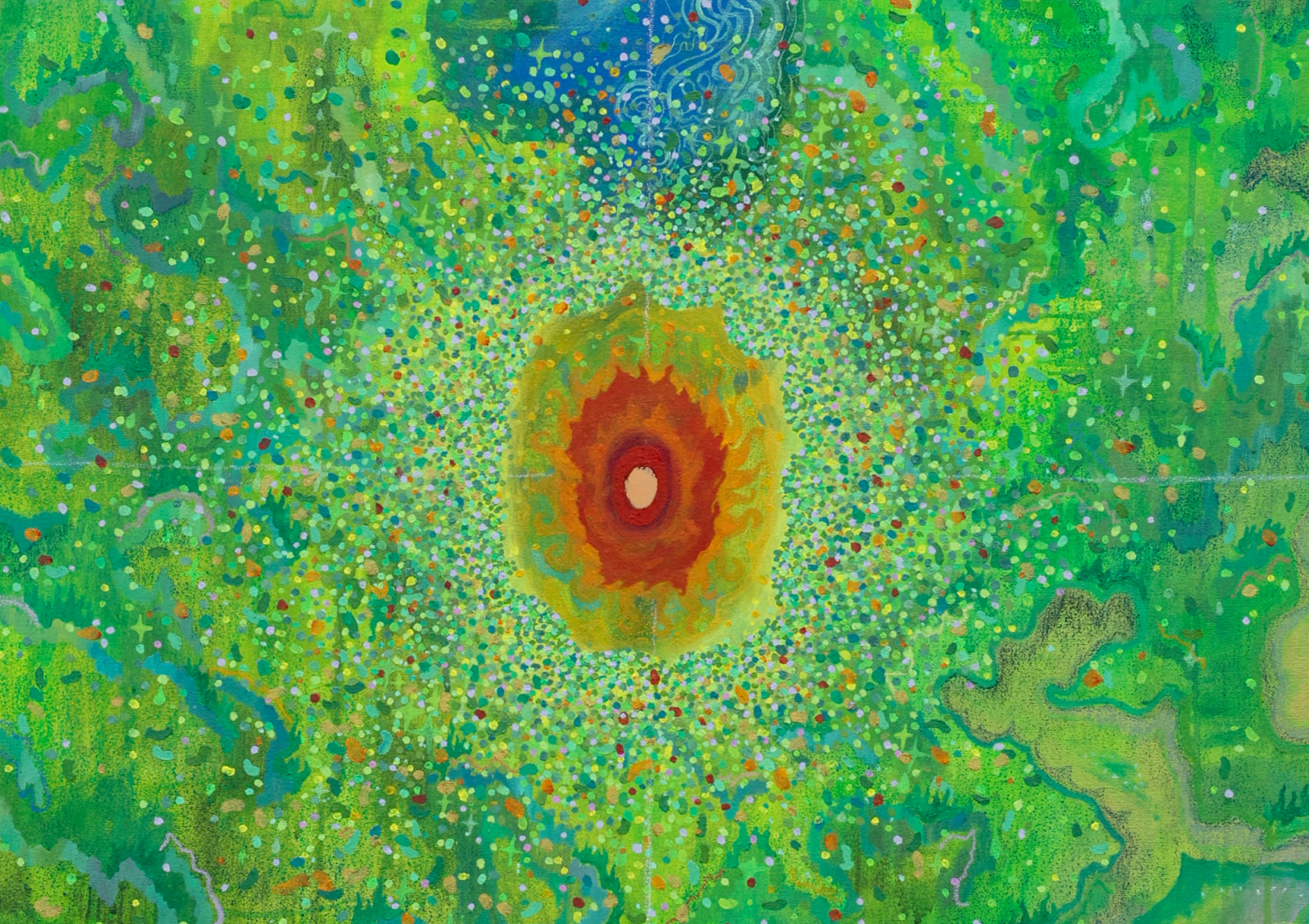
***Self portrait in multiple dimensions /
becoming a tree***

2022

acrylic, oil, oil pastel, mirror, canvas
60h x 48w in • 152.40h x 121.92w cm

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Shrine in the shape of a shadow

2022

wood, canvas, cement, epoxy, beads, shells, stones, Ziploc, found seeds, woodshavings, woodglue, found coral, anatomical hand model, oil paint, glitter, pins, spray paint, googly eye, monkey skull, dried mugwort, acrylic paint, soil, LED lights

36h x 48w x 21d in • 91.44h x 121.92w x 53.34d cm

A human skull is the central focus, resting on a dark, textured rock. To its left, a pink candle is partially melted, with several pink petals scattered around it. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a cave or a similar environment. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the skull and the candle.

My body—a cave, microcosms, landscapes embedded within,
subterranean realms made visible with my own hands.
I have created an emblem, totem, a doppelgänger.
I have brought forth form from the invisible realm!
I have created a ritual for my own becoming.



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CATALINA AFRICA

Bio

Catalina Africa (b. 1988, Manila) graduated from the University of the Philippines with a BFA in Painting. Active in showing with various galleries locally, she is an emerging young talent that redefines the way we look at art by way of painting, sculpture, collage and other mixed media to produce ambivalent configurations that unsettle the familiar. Africa currently lives and works in Baler.

CATALINA AFRICA

Bio

b. 1988, Manila, PH



Divination Dialogue (Earth has wet dreams), 2022. acrylic, oil, oil pastel on canvas

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *Shrine in the Shape of a Shadow*, Silverlens, Manila
Spiralling in Starlight Vision, Art Informal, Makati, Philippines
- 2019 *The Quality of Sunlight is a Filter Through Which Our Thoughts and Feelings Pass*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2018 *Time Moving in All Directions (Featuring Conversational Adornment by Tanya Villanueva)* Finale Art File, Makati, Philippines
- 2017 *The End of a New Me (Programs for a Personal Paradise)* Finale Art File, Makati, Philippines
- 2016 *Studies on the Movement of Water*, Finale Art File, Makati, RP
- 2015 *Reverse Boomerangs And Other Exercises For Pleasure (warm up/cool down)*, Silverlens, Makati
Reverse Boomerangs And Other Exercises For Pleasure, 1335 Mabini, Manila
- 2014 *The Dermis Probe and other Full Circles*, 1335 MABINI, Manila
- 2013 *Bull & Sceptre*, Art Informal, Greenhills, Quezon City
Floating Corner, Finale Art File, Makati City
Amazonia Sexy Beast, MABINIEXTN, Makati City
Delayed Craftification, Galerie Anna, Manila
Kinky Tribal Disco, 1335 MABINI, Manila
- 2012 *The Mystery of the Abstract Jogging*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2011 *Sugarwater*, Krem Contemporary Art, Quezon City, Philippines
- 2010 *The Etymology of Disaster*, West Gallery, West Ave., Quezon City, Philippines

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *Phantasmapolis*, Asian Art Biennial, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
Out of Every Pore a Universe Breaks, Vargas Museum, University of the Philippines Diliman
- 2020 *3rd Kamias Triennial*, Kamias Special Projects, Cubao, Philippines
- 2019 *Maharlika*, Pablo Gallery, Cubao, Philippines
Self Affirmations in a World of Appearances, Gotta Believe in Magic and the Altar of Mountain Boys by Jol3na, Arte Bettina, Makati, Philippines
Cell Splitting Mirrors in the Refuge of a Clock (2 man show), Kaida Contemporary, Philippines
- 2018 *Venus in Firs*, Project20, Quezon City, Philippines
Earth Has Wet Dreams, Baler, Philippines
Soft Pockets, Sampaguita Projects, Philippines
Art Central Hong Kong, Finale Art File Booth

CATALINA AFRICA Bio

- 2017 **ESCAPE from the SEA**, Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur
Paralyzed by Paradise, Artery Gallery, Cubao, RP
- 2015 **I went to the forest to live deliberately**, Art Informal, Quezon City
Wild Legend, Juming Museum, Taiwan
Groundswell, Museo de Baler, Aurora Province, Philippines
Bull in the Heather, Gallery Anna, Manila
Uncolordinated, Kaida Gallery, Manila
The Philippines Contemporary: Directions, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Philippines
- 2013 **Kinky Tribal Disco**, BAR 1335 Mabini
Picture Imperfect, MoSpace, Taguig
Instant Craftification, Gallerie Anna, Megamall, Q.C.
- 2012 **A piece of the Company**, Now Gallery, Makati City, Philippines
Olfactory Pussy presents the Fishnet Strangling She-male Accupuncture Bitchfest or the Y2K Babes, Finale Artfile, Makati City, Philippines
Readymade China Girls, Mo Space, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Philippines
Flaneur in the Insular Cities, Howl Space, Haitung, Taiwan
Hairy Things, Pablo Gallery, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Philippines
- 2011 **Love Letters**, Manila Contemporary, Makati City, Philippines
Womb Vox, Kaida Gallery, Quezon City, Philippines
SURVIVALISM, Light and Space Contemporary, Fairview
Readymade: Remade and Unmade, Mo Space, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Philippines
Flowershow: Contemporary Takes on the Floral, Krem Gallery, Kamuning, Quezon City, Philippines
Hatemail, Manila Contemporary, Makati City, Philippines
Confessions of a Sinner, Manila Contemporary, Makati City, Philippines
On the Radar: Six New Symptoms, Silverlens, Makati City, Philippines
Daily Digest, Ishmael Bernal Gallery, UP Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
Betwixt Oil and Water, Kaida Gallery, Quezon City, Philippines
- 2010 **You Must See Before You Die of Shingles Because We Are The Masters of The Universe**, Mag:net Gallery, Katipunan, Quezon City, Philippines
The Unnameable, Manila Contemporary, Makati City, Philippines
Megadeth, Kamuning Barangay Basketball Court, Quezon City, Philippines
- 2009 **Blame The Savages**, NCCA Gallery, Intramuros, Manila, Philippines
Seeing You, Seeing Me, Manila Contemporary, Makait City, Philippines
Less Told Love Stories, 2-man show at I Love You Store, Cubao Shoe Expo, Cubao, Philippines
Bayan ni Nanding versus the postmodern world, Manila Contemporary, Makati City, Philippines

CATALINA AFRICA

Bio

2008 *Interpenetrated*, Faculty Centre, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City

Ethereal Contingencies, West Gallery, Quezon City, Philippines

2007 *Outside the White Cube*, group show at Ayala Walkway, Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines

SPECIAL PROJECTS

2018 Organized *Earth Has Wet Dreams*, an outdoor group exhibition on the beachfront of Baler

EDUCATION

2007-2012 University of the Philippines
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting

AWARDS

2017 shortlisted for Ateneo Art Awards

2015 shortlisted for the Ateneo Art Awards

RESIDENCY

2019 TRADES AiR, Honolulu, Hawaii

2015 Baler Artist Village, Aurora Province

2014 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, USA

2013 1335 Mabini, Philippines

CATALINA AFRICA

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SIDDHARTA PEREZ

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