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11 Jan 2013

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FRANK CALLAGHAN

MARIANO CHING

CHRISTINA DY

PATRICIA PEREZ EUSTAQUIO

DINA GADIA

LUIS LORENZANA

ISA LORENZO

WAWI NAVARROZA

GINA OSTERLOH

GARY-ROSS PASTRANA

HANNA PETTYJOHN

RACHEL RILLO

MARIA TANIGUCHI

RYAN VILLAMAEL

COSTANTINO ZICARELLI

*Ley Hunting, Pt 2*

curated by GARY-ROSS PASTRANA

show dates

18 Jan - 09 Feb 2013

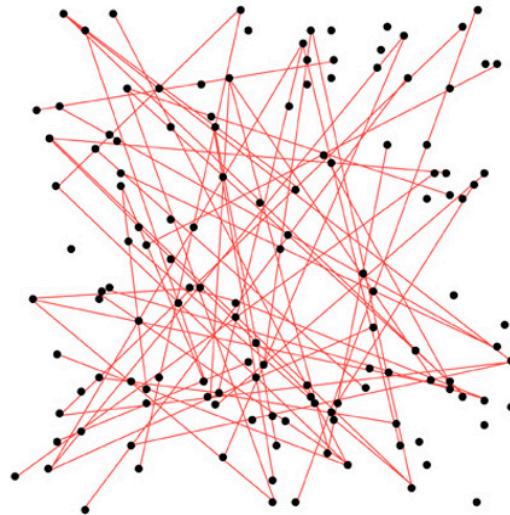
opening reception

18 Jan, Fri, 7-9pm

An Evening at Gillman Barracks

25 Jan, Fri, 7pm

## *Ley Hunting, Pt. 2*: SILVERLENS ARTISTS curated by GARY-ROSS PASTRANA



Words by Cocoy Lumbao

Makati, Philippines—before the year came to a close, Silverlens Galleries held its culminating show for the fifteen artists it represented. This saw one of the most multifaceted assemblies of works, both in form and conviction, to be held across Silverlens' three exhibition spaces. The works ranged from mediums as diverse as paintings, drawings, photographic prints, sculpture, and collage, done mostly by artists who started their practice not more than two decades ago. This places Silverlens Galleries as one of the art establishments that runs a more comprehensive coverage of contemporary art practices within the land, and one of the so-called alternative spaces enterprising enough to take root with a younger generation of artists. And while these artists work across diversified disciplines, all of them do so within the same breadth of a truly contemporary approach.

Even the concerns that emanate from each work pass off as varying as the medium themselves. It was a rich assortment of size, orientation and affectation—from the explicitly serene and esoteric to the implicitly gritty and offbeat, from the heavily expressionist and accidental to the downright technical and calculated of processes, which may serve as a stringent affair to sort. The task reserved for curating the show entails with it not only the premise to operate on a pre-formulated condition, but also the question on how to assert a kind of ideological or hegemonic structure that can surpass the mere straightforwardness of exposing a given collection and make it at least independent from a possibly random outcome. In anthologies in literature which is identical in the sense that it sums up a collection of works by different authors, the approach can be varied depending on the editor. It can be thematic, or towards a careful placement of which story is apt to follow the next to strengthen a message or to lead us into an idea, or merely alphabetical in ascending or descending order, neutral and objective. With the latter the reader flips the pages in his own choosing and is subject to his own idea or what suits his taste on what a satisfying sequence should be.

Inside the gallery we are confined to that physical plane where the movement of our own bodies is dependent. Skipping from one painting to a sculpture at the far end of

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the gallery without encountering other works is almost, if not truly, impossible. And this is where curatorial work is significantly varied from editorial work: it has to deal with a given space, and the inter-relationships of each artwork cannot be autonomous from the manner they are positioned within the space. And this is where Silverlens Galleries' flagship show for their represented artists becomes noteworthy, as it goes from mere exposition of art constructions into being itself a construct to expose.

The appointed curator, GARY-ROSS PASTRANA, known for his conceptual pieces and also part of the Silverlens' artists, took on the task as another avenue to explore the salient conditions of exhibiting a predetermined roster. His several years of experience curating group shows have already informed him of the primary role of the curator to mediate between the artworks and the viewing public's experience of it. With a given roster at hand and the condition that they are to work with their own dominant styles and themes representative of themselves, Pastrana is faced with two dilemmas: on how to reposition the case as a gallery event as opposed to an art fair, and how to hold the works together to save it from slipping into mere extravaganza. There were also two options to solve it in which he chooses neither: to forge an underlying theme or to position the works into a coherent narrative. The path he chose was the path circumscribed by the fabled ley hunters.

Ley lines, much like constellations, are man-made constructs out of the sheer desire to draw connections and superimpose significance. In ley hunting, a practice which started as early as the 19th century, the objective was to seek out ley lines which were the alleged alignments of historical sites and monuments into straight lines. The lines formed between archeological sites of great importance like the pyramids, stone hedges, or ancient temples are believed to be interconnected. And for this reason alone their existence can be justified with whatever purpose those lines could have served: ancient track ways, spiritual pathways of cosmic energy, and for some, alien navigation routes.

The concept of the show **Ley Hunting** is neither thematic nor demographic. Tautologically speaking, it does not revolve around a concept but on the possibility of one. It seems to amplify further what the curator Andrew Renton has already taken into account about the practice: that curating is about "seeing where the creative act can possibly go...and we don't know where it can go." Pastrana, who has also worked with site-specific sculptures draws an affinity with the landscape and treats the gallery as such. Positioning the artworks as archeological sites, they only correspond to the lay of the land, or in this case the galleries' interior architecture. Like structures as diverse and removed from each other as the ruins in Angkor Wat and the statues in Easter Island, the connection ascribed to them by ley hunters are arbitrary and their alignment could be merely happenstance. Yet on the other hand, each may hold the corresponding link to a grand design. As Barthes claimed that all myth is merely speech, the show **Ley Hunting**, more than anything else, invites us to its own possible language.

With the opening of **Ley Hunting** in the Makati galleries, we are confronted at the onset of two possible landmarks—the two galleries situated across each other. One is the main Silverlens Gallery while the one across is Slab, and within Slab is another smaller section called 20Square. The narrow elevated walkway which connects the two galleries immediately reinforces the idea of the line drawn from one continent to another. If these are indeed two separate worlds then they contain their own unique terrain. Inside the main gallery the formation appears more vast and quiet, like an open country. FRANK CALLAGHAN's photographs of seascapes lie at the heart of it. They are

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flanked by WAWI NAVARROZA's and GINA OSTERLOH's own photographs on each side. Three sets of photographs, three dots on the same line to connect. And all three demonstrate the same fluidity in their flatness, from NAVARROZA's suspended narratives to OSTERLOH's homogeneously constructed dimensions. The line continues across the other wall as HANNA PETTYJOHN explores the visual transformations involved in doing portraits of faces through a glass plane. And moving to the adjacent wall is COSTANTINO ZICARELLI's drawings, where the fluidity continues if only through a sequence of literal and cultural images of doomed excess in a triptych called Lake of Fire.

Across the other side in the next room the landscape is more unpredictable. Immediately grabbing our attention are the larger (in terms of scale) and self-effacing works by MARIA TANIGUCHI and PATRICIA PEREZ EUSTAQUO, both shrouded ominously in black. Then set across each other from opposing walls are the series of photograms by ISA LORENZO and the drawings by CHRISTINA DY which are both monochromatic referents to expressions achieved out of a more calculated and technical process. Holding its own like a placid island in another corner are photographs by RACHEL RILLO with her brilliant refinement of life's minutiae transformations, and at the other enclosed section of the gallery called 20 Square are the wall-bound works of LUIS LORENZANA, RYAN VILLAMAEL, DINA GADIA, and GARY-ROSS PASTRANA, acting as coordinates of representational and abstract images of collage and paintings that converge on the primitive centerpiece in the form of a sculpture by MARIANO CHING.

These are just but one cluster of connections out of the many that can be drawn between their arrangements inside these galleries. As the show moves to Silverlens Singapore, we are to rekindle our assessment based on a possibly newer configuration, as the artworks submit right away to the demands of the space. A reduction in scale is inevitable, but almost all of the fifteen represented artists maintain the original concerns from the first show in Manila:

FRANK CALLAGHAN will still show an edition of his *Seascape* series, in continuing to demonstrate his inclination towards a restrained composition in photography. Likewise showing her previous work is WAWI NAVARROZA who, like CALLAGHAN, would prefer bolder images rather than the cluttered, and whose pictures echo a poetic strain that reverberates from the frozen moment, like they were part of someone's verse rather than of a snapshot. As for GINA OSTERLOH's work titled *Wide Group Dynamic*, her picture of a homogeneous tableau of card-boards is printed as adhesive posters comprised of 1000 sheets, re-interpreting the work as a mass-produced sheet of paper that further subdues the dimensionality of her perceived subject inside the picture.

ISA LORENZO continues her series of photograms where she uses a combination of objects directly exposed to the photographic paper. The ambiguity resulting from the juxtaposition of two disassociated objects (like in *Waxing*, a figurine of a stag together with a zodiac medallion/seal) is subdued by the process of having them rendered equally into a unified object of light and shadow as if they were taken from the same surface. The same goes with RACHEL RILLO's works, whose masterful control over light coupled by the ingenious composition of her surprisingly mundane subjects, whether in photographic prints or Polaroid, eliminate all signs of banality to pass them off as great landmarks inside one of life's micro-events.

To bridge the gap between the photograph-based artworks towards the more material-based works of drawings, paintings and the plastic arts are the works of MARIA

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TANIGUCHI and PATRICIA PEREZ EUSTAQUIO. Their works offer a more contemplative reading through their conceptual framework, and are derived out of a direct response against popular imagery. As in MARIA TANIGUCHI's series of work called *News*, she goes back to the image-defying constructions of lines and blemishes. Like newsreels, the paper is constructed within the frame as if trying to align to each other in succession, and leaves an impression of a film outtake jammed inside the projector. The same attempt to construct her own visual compendium out of the hinges of popular imagery is PATRICIA PEREZ EUSTAQUIO, whose sculptural work also defies familiar forms, yet are usually riddled by familiar objects: crochet laces, ornamental figures and postcards. Her work is contemplation over the text brought about by the conjunction of each object to the concept behind the forms she makes.

Then to further this idea of placing concept behind craft are the paper works of RYAN VILLAMAEL and CHRISTINA DY. As Ryan Villamael cuts out from paper to create the symmetrical expression of an image in mind, CHRISTINA DY does so by drawing in detailed precision a wallpaper-like pattern, and then folds her paper to the shape of the embedded image from the pattern, in this case—of butterflies. The frailty of VILLAMAEL's cutouts is countered by the compactness of DY's ornate origami. In the other side of drawing on paper are the triptychs of COSTANTINO ZICARELLI. For the show in Singapore, he seems to portray another narrative that progresses from light to dark, closing full circle as the title suggests, *Verse, Chorus, Verse*. The two set of symbols superimposed against a generic backdrop offsets the plain-speak of the grim riders at the center who are portrayed as observers.

Moving on to a different type of portraiture is HANNA PETTYJOHN's painting, where she continues to place between her and her subjects the glass plane, using it as a transfiguring agent. DINA GADIA on the other hand employs the jovial sensibilities of pop imagery to create unease. Then rounding up the 15 works are the works of LUIS LORENZANA and MARIANO CHING who both dwell on the offbeat permutations of surrealist characters, though they seem to move in opposite directions as LORENZANA's works foray more to the fantastical while CHING ascribes back to the renderings of Art Brut.

Within the space of Silverlens Singapore these works again converge, and are again subject to be read for their multi-faceted qualities or even their hodgepodge appearance. But in the mix of all these it is inevitable: to draw combinations, to find sequences, to connect them through lines and to either say that all have been placed in perfect unison or have been perfectly out of place. And this kind of arbitrariness that is present everywhere among us whether with our relationships with places, objects or events, is the kind of construct that *Ley Hunting* does not necessarily yield helplessly to but embraces as part of the curatorial system. As the new works by the 15 artists represented are again gathered, it is up to us once more to lay the myth around them.

**Ley Hunting** curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana: Frank Callaghan, Mariano Ching, Christina Dy, Patricia Perez Eustaquio, Dina Gadia, Luis Lorenzana, Isa Lorenzo, Wawi Navarroza, Gina Osterloh, Gary-Ross Pastrana, Hanna Pettyjohn, Rachel Rillo, Maria Taniguchi, Ryan Villamael, & Costantino Zicarelli runs from 18 January - 9 February 2013 at Silverlens Singapore at 47 Malan Road, #01-25 Gillman Barracks, Singapore. Opening reception for the artist will be from 7-9pm on 18 January. The curator will be present. For inquiries please contact Neli Go, +65-9782-3013 or [neli@silverlensgalleries.com](mailto:neli@silverlensgalleries.com).