

These constraints are not to be seen as external to art, but as immanent critique, a necessary force in its will to form. This is how art survives its inevitabilities.

The works in Assembly Line may dwell on these speculations in varying degrees. They may, for instance, sort out the condition of the global in relation to the local or the national. They may strain to crack the code of the "post-industrial," the "post-modern," or the "neo-liberal" in light of a supposedly semi-feudal, semi-colonial political economy in the Philippines. They may venture into the realms of the "end of history" and the "end of work," phrases that grate on the ears of many who hold vigils for revolutions.

BW by CLAIRELYNN UY



MONITOR by MELVIN CULABA



The artists selected for this undertaking are up to the task of configuring the iconography and the facture of this milieu. We notice tendencies. On the one hand, **there is the persistence of painting that pursues its critical function of commentary and proposes visual cognates of social unease and urgency.** Ferdinand Montemayor, Joy Mallari, Juanito Torres, Claire Lyn Uy, Melvin Culaba, Kirby Roxas, and Raymond Legaspi harness the potency of figuration by investigating the charisma of possessions, at first imitating their tactile irresistibility, and then inflecting either expressionism or hyper-realism with the glaze of mystification, the crisis of a nervous stroke, or the edgy quality of obsession.

On the other hand, there is the effort to grapple with medium, with the very artifice of art as can be gleaned in Mark Justiniani, Alfredo Esquillo, Lirio Salvador,



HABOL HININGA 1 - 6
by MELVIN CULABA

and Pamela Yan who complicate the painterly, the graphic, and the sculptural with the perturbations of the personal, the political, or simply of play. They pierce through standard formats and methods and re-skill their talent so that they could imagine what popular and industrial technologies are able to craft.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: RED DOT, RED FLOWER, RED POW
by CLAIRELYNN UY



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
by PAM YAN



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: 077, 015, 020
by JUANITO TORRES

The disposition of artists to tinker with an array of machinations in social life widens the discourse of art making in Philippine culture and may be able to cross the hiatus between form and content, social realism and conceptual art, modernism and the post-colonial contemporary aesthetic.

In this exhibition, the concepts of "dehumanization" and "alienation" evoke fear and anxiety in the face of virtual and digital ascendancy and automation. Juxtaposed with the hand-made, the homespun, and the sentimental art might be provoked to engage in the idiosyncrasies of nostalgia, humor, protest, or melodrama. How does the theme of man and the machine hold up to relentless innovations in the time of late capitalism? And how does art, compromised as it is as a good for better or for worse, transcend this dynamic of capture? **Could the image elude it and play tricks on the senses, initiating not only an alternative economy but an alternative to economy itself as we know it?**

As a Filipino artist would ask: **Can art still disarm?**

These are queries that should prompt us to be skeptical of even the most progressive and radical wisdom as we stare at images that move us. This is but a fitting first foray for a gallery like Tin-aw, the Visayan vernacular for limpid and lucid liquid that is the vessel of current.



ONE OF A KIND DASTER FOR EVERYBODY
by RAYMOND LEGASPI



OPD
by JOY MALLARI



DONATION BOX 1 - 3
by ALFREDO ESQUILLO



SANDATA 8, SANDATA K, SANDATA A6, SANDATA A4
by LIRIO SALVADOR



TAN-AW
by MARK JUSTINIANI



Assembly Line

tin-aw
ART GALLERY

Gallery Hours:

Tuesday - Sunday • 10AM - 6PM
Monday - By Appointment

PHONE: 632 • 892 • 7522
Upper G/F, Somerset Olympia Makati
Makati Ave. corner Sta. Tomas St.
Makati City

tin-aw
ART GALLERY

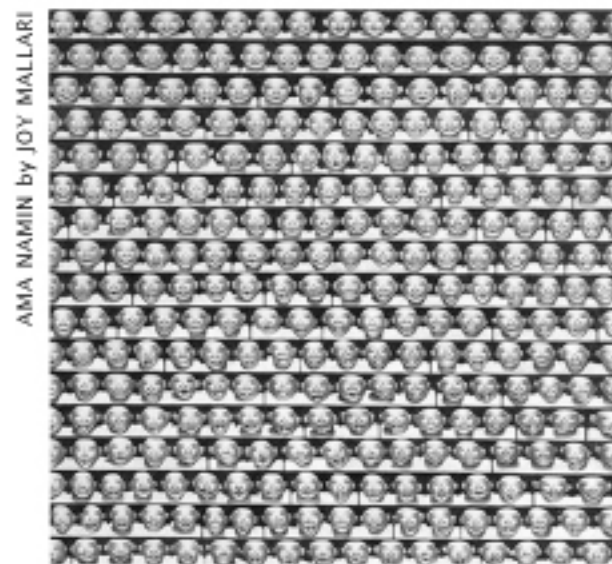
INAUGURAL SHOW
February 29 - March 21, 2008

The texture of repetition is apparent in modes that try to collect the multitude. Be it silkscreen that transfers image on surfaces, or the weave of a mat that meshes icons. The structure of the grid puts things in place and supplements the desire for excess.



WORKSHEET by PAM YAN

But what if the images refuse to be contained and their repetition actually heralds change?



AMA NAMIN by JOY MALLARI

What if they mutate, like a hero's torso that resists its body, or faces of virile men that flesh out a catatonic cult?



CROSS-BREED by ALFREDO ESQUILLO



MASS PRODUCTION by JUANITO TORRES

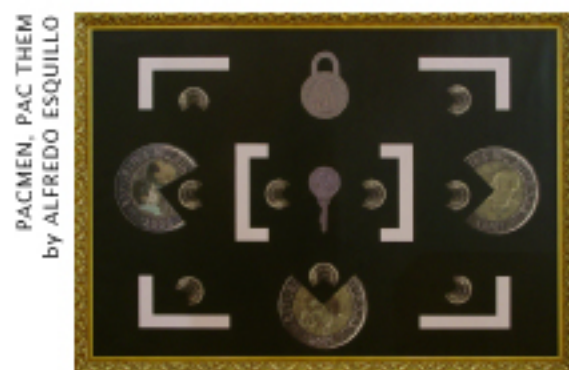
What if the figure falls apart altogether, reduced to pixels, caught in a glitch, trapped in tarpaulin in a mad game of avarice?



KONTROLADO by KIRBY ROXAS



THE GLITCH by RAYMOND LEGASPI



PACMEN, PAC THEM by ALFREDO ESQUILLO

And what if the metropolis, seen from above, shrivels up and morphs into an organism, at once hideous and wondrous as a microcosm, indulged seemingly beyond salvage, unlike stainless steel that becomes transport and electric guitar in an unexpected afterlife?



SANDATA 8 by LIRIO SALVADOR



I (WORK IN PROGRESS) by FERDIE MONTEMAYOR

These are unsettling scenes of a mass and its circulation. Appearances are nameless. Objects become commodities, infused merely with the allure of property like an automaton-carousel, or fall into decay like some frightening carcass, pregnant with hybrids and living in detritus.



SOME THING ABOUT MERRY GO ROUND by CLAIRELYNN UY



KAPAYAPAAN KAILANMAN by MELVIN CULABA

What kind of system creates this surplus, this ceaseless productivity? What patent of a machine makes this possible, and what sort of human being would cede robust, sanguine corpus to a ravenous assembly line? Between "moderated greed" and "communal action," sound bytes of the recent Filipino sensorium, choice can be immaterial.

The theme "man and the machine" was intimated by the early works of modernists in Philippine art as they responded to the pastoral imagination of what has come to be known as the Amorsolo school. Victorio Edades's *The Builders*, arguably a seminal painting in the post-Amorsolo oeuvre, speaks of a shift of the conception of labor, relocating its agency from the peasant of the province to the proletariat of the city, an inchoate mass of people in the quarry of the urban landscape, busily building modernity, their sinews distorted, their skin covered in grime and mud, posing against the idyll of the countryside.

In a mix of post-Impressionism, American realism, and perhaps European influences from the Armory Show, the polemicist-provocateur Edades reared a myth of modernism, which was able to draw the fertile interest of Carlos Francisco and Galo Ocampo. Their collaborative mural *Rising Philippines for Capitol Theater* is a telling reference to the discourse of progress at a time when a republic was being cobbled together under imperial tutelage.

In this instance, the extensive canvas takes in the spirit of art deco, the technology of cinema, and the idea of work, which according to Edades the Filipinos learned from the Americans. This notion of work would be carried through in the forties and the fifties, with the emergence of the neo-realists, artists who explored idioms beyond the incipient fantasies of Edades. Hernando R. Ocampo reflected on workers, from farmers to miners, in what historians consider as his "proletarian phase."

But it was Cesar Legaspi who diligently probed the relationship between man and the machine, most notably in his series *Gadgets*, in which the proletariat almost becomes an appendage to the mode of production. That such nexus is insinuated proves instructive because it foregrounds another character in the theater of toil, different from the peasant of Amorsolo and the lumpen, the vagrant and beggar of the post-war ruin, of many neo-realists.

As we view this exhibition, we are better served to think through certain contexts of how "art" struggles to understand, and in certain passions, to transform society through creative and critical labor that makes the affective life world. This is surely an untidy project as art itself is productive of and not merely a function or instrument of the "social."

And art itself is entangled in specific techniques of expenditure, capital formation, mechanical reproduction, surplus value, and so on and so forth. While there is no doubt that art is material and demands materialist sensing, the image it bears might slip through the registers of this logic.



ANINO by MARK JUSTINIANI