



OCA FLOIRENDO
Still Life At Ground Zero 2
 Acrylic and digital print on canvasboard
 12 x 12 in. / 30.48 x 30.48 cm.
 2012



OCA FLOIRENDO
It Can Happen To Anyone 1
 Digital print on canvasboard
 8 x 12 in. / 20.32 x 30.48 cm.
 2012

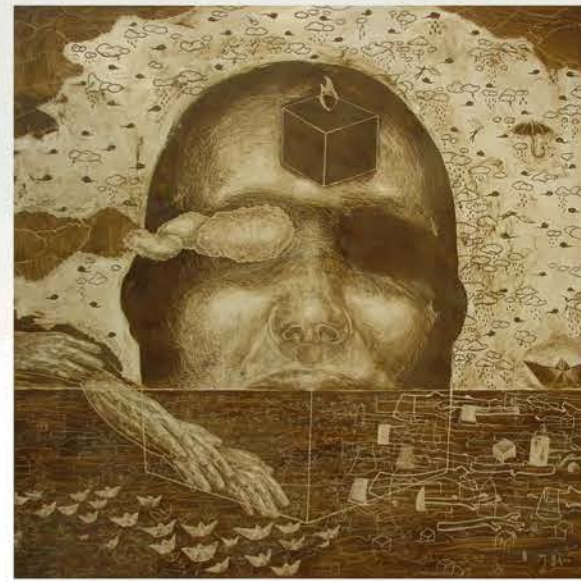


CHRIS GOMEZ

Preserving Memories 1
 Hand-altered photographs
 12 x 10 in. / 30.5 x 25.5 cm.
 2012

Preserving Memories 2
 Hand-altered photographs
 10.24 x 8.27 / 26 x 21 cm.
 2012

Preserving Memories 4
 Hand-altered photographs
 13 x 10 in. / 33 x 25.5 cm.
 2012



KURT LLUCH
Strongbox
 Flood silt on canvasboard
 48 x 48 in. / 122 x 122 cm.
 2012



KURT LLUCH
Silent Hammer
 Installation (log fragment, driftwood, flood silt, and loose book pages, made into paper boats)
 Variable dimensions
 2012



Silent Hammer (detail)



IVAN MACARAMBON
In Utero
 Small sculpture wrapped with ultrasound scan photocopies encased in plastic bottle.
 h-13, d-6.5 in. / h-33, d-16.51 cm.
 2012



IVAN MACARAMBON
A Finger For Pointing
 Acrylic on canvas
 17.5 x 24 in. / 44.45 x 61 cm.
 2012



IVAN MACARAMBON
Ark
 Acrylic on canvasboard
 30.5 x 24 in. / 77.47 x 61 cm.
 2012

Oca Floirendo acknowledges Rebecca Redondo and Mark Aldea for the images used for "It Can Happen to Anyone" (1 and 2); Chris Gomez acknowledges Gaps Sabuero for the images used in his works; Tin-aw Art Gallery would like to thank Leo Abaya for the exhibition design.



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WATER MARK

NICK ACA | MICHAEL BACOL
 ERROL BALCOS | OCA FLOIRENDO
 CHRIS GOMEZ | KURT LLUCH
 IVAN MACARAMBON



10 - 25 FEBRUARY 2012



NICK ACA
Survivor Series
Wood, print, acrylic, and slit
Variable dimensions
2012



Survivor Series (detail)



Survivor Series (detail)



ERROL BALCOS
Portrait Study
Charcoal on paper
17 x 13.5 in. / 43.18 x 34.29 cm.
2012

WATERMARK

Zola Gonzalez-Macarambon

It has been over a month since what seemed to be the wholesale destruction of humanity in the Cagayan de Oro and Iligan areas of Northern Mindanao. Tropical typhoon Sendong left everyone running the gamut of evacuation and recovery efforts – from the most controversially scheduled concerts “for a cause” to the more creative relief-distribution methods (“Bring Christmas to the Streets”) to the ironic “fun runs” for Sendong victims. Having very little or no collective memory of any tropical storm significant enough to seem insurmountable, people in these parts of the region have left themselves to the knee-jerk reaction to self-soothe, a manifestation of that primal shock at the unimaginable, ultimately, a symptom of deeper humanity – perhaps at its most confused but at its sincerest.

The mud has dried enough to create solid ground, the air rife with talk and reportage of the aftermath enough to sit the artists down and consider their modern encounter with an ancient threat, their apparent diminution amidst the disproportionate punishment of water present as temporary watermarks on the landscape, now become permanent memories. The artists Nick Aca, Michael Bacol, Errol Balcos, Oca Floirendo, Chris Gomez, Kurt Lluch and Ivan Macarambon were on different ground levels when the floods hit Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. From their vantage points – underwater, T V-front, roof, or hill top – the floodwaters took on relative degrees of peril, the sights and sounds of which, at any rate entreated more than sentimentalism that can almost be expected or deemed forgivable in calamity art.

And yet, there is art, as it always was and will be, and in the creation that ensued, art propped life in the artists’ attempts to deal with the tragedy. The resulting artworks span the range of subjects and treatments from ominous visions and symbolisms to visual memoirs and social criticism.

With death very recently at these artists-survivors’ heels, mortality as motif was natural if not peremptory. Chris Gomez’s “Preserving Memories” are hand-drawn chemical alterations on photos of post-Sendong wreckage. Ghostly apparitions come out of windows and hover over everything like the artist’s recollection of his neighbors washing out to their deaths. Chris Gomez framed these images of the macabre as anyone would a picture of a birthday party or the family dog – the artist’s ironic intention to make sure the tragedy is never forgotten. Variants of this same theme can be found in more portentous works as the mud encrusted drawings of driftwood and body parts by Errol Balcos. These early studies were found among the devastation and the artist thought they looked actually, eerily “in place,” as if they were created in prescience. Similarly, life hangs by a hair strand in Michael Bacol’s collage of portraits effaced by actual mud waters. Set on wood and laminated in resin, the faces pile unrecognizable and distorted, one on top of the other, as many of the dead were found in the days following the typhoon.

Other works walk the tightrope between sentiment and criticism as they strive to capture the essence of objects as they needlessly are after Sendong. Oca Floirendo’s digital prints put a highlight on the guts of homes spilled out into the streets like evidence of a massacre. In the complex of recklessness, greed, and inexperience, a child’s teddy bear, a sofa, an ottoman all represent the very real casualties of the calamity. Nick Aca’s “Survivor” series records the same experience with materials salvaged from a previous wreck. Thin lines etched on the wooden slabs stand for the different stages of a receding watermark. On its surface are transfer prints of Sendong aftermath photos wrapped on round wood tiles strategically placed to connote the dead, the survivors, and the survivors surviving. At first glance, the round tiles also look like bubbles rising up to the surface: hope floats.

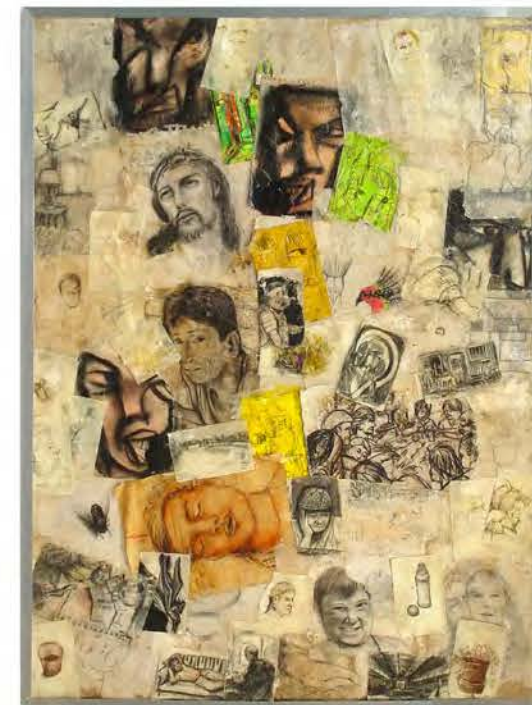
Fascinated by the creative and destructive nature of water, its dearth and glut of, Ivan Macarambon created works referencing flood stories since Gilgamesh and the Hebrew bible. Like the ancient Sumerian and biblical flood and all other deluge tales thereof, Sendong brought destruction and renewal, a signal of decay and rejuvenation – the story of life itself. The water bottle bears this burden of meanings as primary metaphor, repeating as images in the artist’s works as it did in the lives of people in the Sendong-affected areas. Survival stories of victims riding out the tragedy with water bottles as flotation device abound the news. Like the biblical “Ark,” the water bottle preserved people for a second chance at life. After the flood, with the main water pipes severely damaged, bottled drinking water meant life or death and the bottle became the “Angel” who saved or took away.

Kurt Lluch also perceives the duality in the nature of things. His “Strongbox” holds more horrors than Pandora’s as the artwork proceeds with its own mythmaking symbols like judgment represented by maulets rushing along the tide of logs that cleaned off a whole subdivision in Iligan City. On the one hand, the artwork is also replete with symbols of hope: the onslaught of relief from across the waters represented by hands that flock about like migratory birds and a paper armada that outsize the wreckage of wiped out houses. Even the medium the artist used echoes this same optimism. Coming in to his quarters after the flash flood, Lluch discovered his stretched canvases covered with mud. In reverse catharsis, he lifted off dirt from the canvases to reveal this piece.

Though the pieces in “Watermark” are largely and rather proudly pessimistic – medium and small-scale reconceptions of the artists’ personal and observed encounters with death – the artists still intend to show an undercurrent of hope for eventual recovery among both Cagayanons and Iliganons. With the artworks, the womb to tomb pervasiveness of water is met head-on and halfway by what the artists took as baptism by water. Defying the death tones and grim watermarks with which Sendong signed his work, the artists-survivors’ came out of the rush cleansed enough to create and give us “Watermark”.



MICHAEL BACOL
Sendong (Paghilum sa Lupang Pangako)
Oil on canvases with flood slit
45 x 45 in. / 114.3 x 114.3 cm.
2004 / 2012



MICHAEL BACOL
Sendong (Mixed)
Collage with fiberglass enforced resin
48 x 36 in. / 122 x 91.44 cm.
2012



ERROL BALCOS
Watermark 1
Pen and ink
5 x 8 in. / 12.7 x 20.32 cm.
2012



ERROL BALCOS
Watermark 2
Pen and ink
5 x 8 in. / 12.7 x 20.32 cm.
2012



OCA FLOIRENDO
Leadership Styles
Acrylic and digital print on canvasboard
12 x 12 x 4 in. / 30.48 x 30.48 x 10.16 cm.
2012

obverse - reverse