

Exhibition installation of RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES (left and right walls), installation of rubbercut to serigraph prints on stretchable textile stuffed with foam and various objects, image size 25.4 x 38.1 cm (23 pieces), 2013 and TRANSFIGURATIONS (center wall) at the West Wing Gallery of UP Vargas Museum



MOLLIFIED installation of rubbercut to serigraph print on stretchable textile stuffed with foam and various objects. Two pieces joined. Sizes: 170.18 x 68.58 cm and 182.88 x 81.28, 2013



RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES (detail)



MOLLIFIED (detail)

MA. VICTORIA "AMBIE" R. ABAÑO

b. 1967

2003-present ■ Masters in Fine Arts
University of the Philippines, Diliman Quezon City
1990 ■ Bachelor of Science, Architecture
University of Santo Tomas, Manila City

SOLO EXHIBITS

2013 ■ TRANSFIGURATIONS, Vargas Museum, UP Diliman, Philippines
2012 ■ ISCP OPEN STUDIO ROOM 206, Brooklyn, New York, USA
SANCTUAIRE DE MEMOIRE, Alliance Francaise de Manille, Makati, Philippines
2011 ■ AMBIE ABAÑO OPEN STUDIO, Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, France
surFACE, Alliance Francaise de Manille, Makati, Philippines
2008 ■ PARISUKAT (AS PART OF SURVEY 8), Avellana Gallery, Pasay City, Philippines
2007 ■ ROMANCING THE LEAVES, Habi Interiors/Gallery, Makati City, Philippines
2006 ■ TRANSFIGURATIONS, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines
2001 ■ IN BLOOM, Casa Victoria Gallery, New Jersey, USA
2000 ■ FLORESCENCE, Main Room, Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines
1999 ■ IN BLOOM, Ad Infinitum Galleries, San Juan City, Philippines
1993 ■ MULA SA PUNLA, Philippine Art Center, New York, USA
FILIPINO-AMERICAN ANNUAL FAIR, Virginia, USA
1992 ■ FLOWERS AND BROMELIADS, Miami, Florida
LUNTIAN - KULAY NG BUHAY, Philippine Art Center, New York
1988 ■ AMBIE R. ABAÑO, UP Los Baños Art Gallery, UPLB Laguna

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITS

2013 ■ 27th AIAE Homecoming, Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines
FETE DE L'ESTAMPE, manifestampe - fédération national de l'estampe

lance la première Maire de Limeuil rue de Port, France
2012 ■ RBPMW ANNUAL MEMBER SHOW, RBPMW, New York, USA
ART NOW (FOR EVERYONE), SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City, Philippines
40 ARTISTS AT 40, San Beda College, Alabang City, Philippines
CURVED HOUSE, Blanc Gallery, Mandaluyong City, Philippines
ART OVER EASY, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines
BEYOND PRINTMAKING, Avellana Galleries, Pasay City, Philippines
PINOYPRINTMAKERS@GERMANCLUB2, German Club, Makati City, Philippines
UKIT, Philippine Women's University, Manila, Philippines
26th AIAE HOMECOMING, Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines
SMALL WORLD, Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati City, Philippines
ACC AUCTION, Finale Art, Makati City, Philippines
27th AIAE, Rajchadamnern Contemporary Art Center, Bangkok, Thailand
2011 ■ 26th AIAE HARANGAM MUSEUM, Kuala Lumpur
2010 ■ PENANG INTERNATIONAL PRINT EXHIBITION, National Art Gallery, Penang, Malaysia
2009 ■ SA LANGIT MONG BUGHAW, Tembi Contemporary, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
2006 ■ 7TH TRIENNALE MONDIALE D'ESTAMPES PETIT FORMAT, Chamalliers, France
2004 ■ ALLIANCE EN RESSONANCE, Alliance Francaise de Paris, France
2003 ■ 6TH TRIENNALE MONDIALE D'ESTAMPES PETIT FORMAT, Chamalliers, France

AWARDS / GRANTS / INVITATIONS

2012 ■ RECIPIENT, Asian Cultural Council Artist Residency Program (New York)
PHILIPPINE REPRESENTATIVE, Speaking House Art Camp, Kerala, India
2011 ■ RECIPIENT, Alliance Francaise de Manille Philippine Artist Residency Program Grant (Paris)
2006 ■ GRAND PRIZE, Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards
2003 ■ BEST ENTRY PRINT CATEGORY, Bantay Kalikasan Art Competition
1998 ■ FINALIST PHILIP MORRIS PHILIPPINE ART AWARDS, Glorietta Mall, Makati City
1987 ■ GRAND PRIZE PAINTING CATEGORY, AAP Open Art Competition



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Transfigurations 2, 1 and 3. Installation of rubbercut to serigraph print on stretchable textile stuffed with foam and various objects. Three pieces joined. Sizes from left to right: 233.68 x 137.16cm, 210.82 x 284.48cm and 228.6 x 142.24 cm, 2013

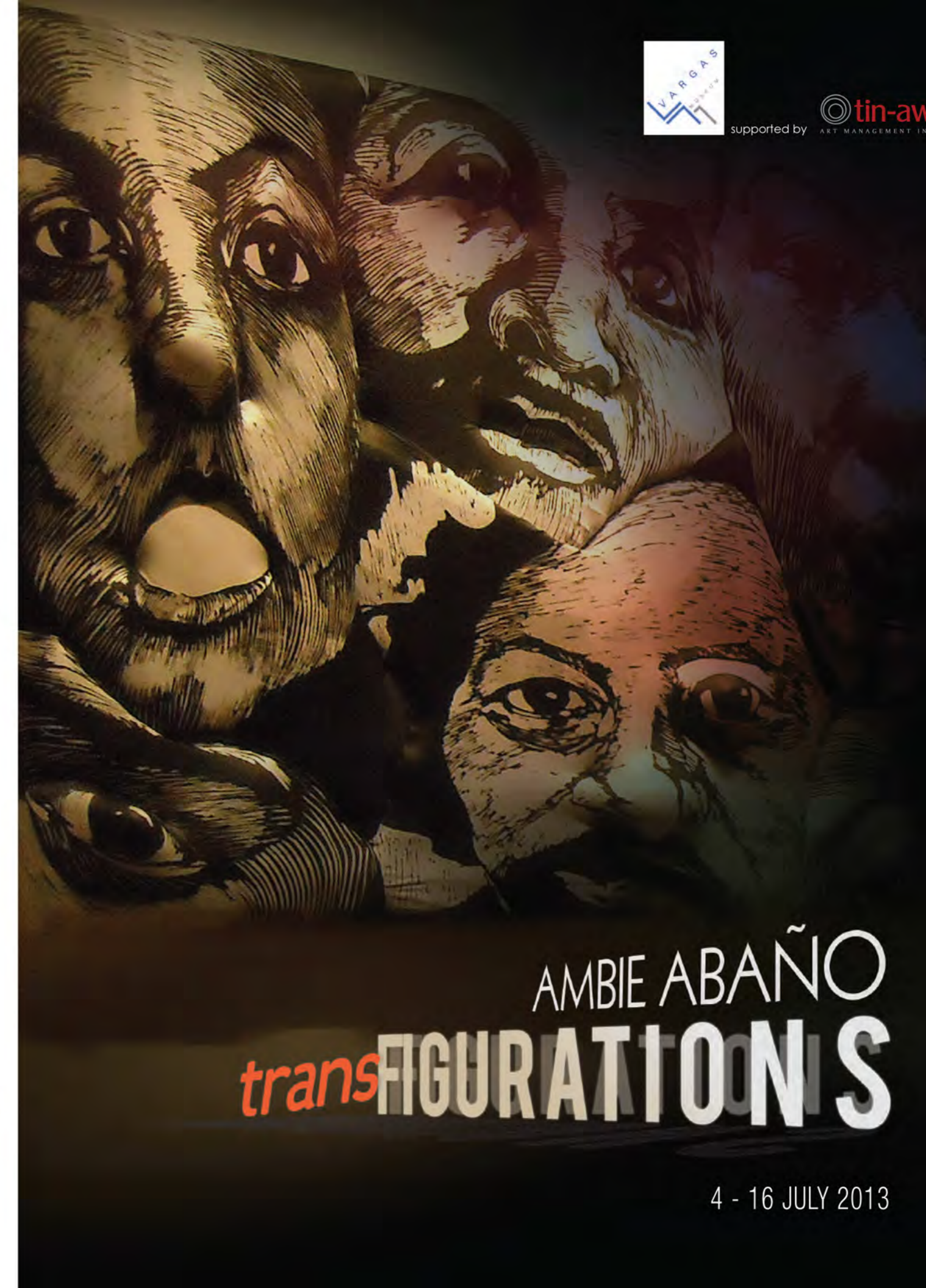
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AMBIE ABAÑO
transFIGURATIONS

4 - 16 JULY 2013



LEFT: AUTORETRATO Installation of rubbercut to serigraph print on stretchable textile, image size 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2013

ABOVE: PAYASO Installation of rubbercut to serigraph prints on stretchable textile stuffed with foam and various objects, image size 91.44 cm x 91.44 cm (three pieces), 2013



Exhibition Installation of MOLLIFIED, GURO, SALAMANGKERO, PAYASO, PILOSOPO at the West Wing Gallery of UP Vargas Museum



I LOVE THE RAINY DAYS Installation of rubbercut to serigraph print on stretchable textile on object, image size 91.44 cm x 91.44 cm, 2013



CONVERSATIONS 1 AND 2, Installation of rubbercut to serigraph print on stretchable textile on object, image size 91.44 cm x 91.44 cm (two pieces), 2013

Mark by line, mould by tint: Malleable forms in Ambie Abano's prints

By Tessa Maria Guazon

Ambie Abano's print portraits are uncommon. While they represent real people, their countenance in Abano's chosen medium are far from still. Traditional portraiture captures a sitter's character infusing it with underlying essence, image oftentimes petrified through medium's birthing. Abano's portraits on the other hand are shifty and unwieldy, the result of experimentation with traditional printmaking techniques and their combination with the immersive and multi-dimensional character of installation. Image production through this innovative practice reconstructs the conventional relationships borne by figure and ground. Abano redefines print's expressive qualities by layering and combining methods given and new, by rethinking ground and extending it to include the space of the viewer with utmost dynamism.

The exhibition *Transfigurations* showcases portraits of five editions each, to be installed according to attributes of the space of display. Abano shares how the final outcome is to great degree premised on the incalculable, noting how the installation itself unfolds on site. While the initial stages of rendering the portraits abide conventional methods of linocut and serigraph, subsequent processes rely on the innate attributes of ground and surrounding space. Abano chooses to work with tractable and malleable materials. She notes her love of woodcut, the way wood grains and knots as well as tools and pulse carve the resulting image in concert.

Ambie Abano's art is founded on continuing exploration of the possibilities of print, from surface to space, from flatness to volumetric spatiality, from potent image to surrounding expanse. Her prints are singular in their approach to spatial complexities and treatment of sequence. And thus, like the human persona an edition can never be like the others, very much like the shifting imprints we make on the world.

Image is embodied by five portraits in the exhibition: conjurer, sage, philosopher, jester and self. They are rendered in monochrome print on spandex, aura strongly personified by linear marks of varying widths and weights. Individual features are further accentuated by solidly rendered borders as well as volume conjured by stuffing underneath. Consider for example, portraits stretched taut over everyday objects such as umbrella and plastic chair. Grafting portraits over commonplace objects situates the profound well within the sphere of quotidian. This layered approach to medium and presentation while rooted in Abano's rigorous training in techniques of print is invigorated by her constant quest for innovative ways 'to manipulate form and surface'.¹ Preferring the directness of monochrome print, she explains that whatever method employed her preference for a specific visual quality remains. It is imagery powerfully and directly conveyed through monochrome's impact. For Abano, though prints are produced in multiples, one cannot surmise that a copy is exactly the same as the others. The large portraits printed on spandex are presented in series of fives, either morphing subtly or forcefully into each other. The exhibition's title takes from this metamorphosis, conjured through image, form and surrounding space.

The artist's print installations embody the strata that lie at the core of printmaking made even more complex by her conception of prints as installations. She has taken printmaking, a centuries-old form and its techniques to meld

with installation, approaching the project that is image production with unflagging interest in expanding the bounds of traditional medium. Such practice is comparable to those of Thai printmakers Prawat Lauchaoren and Phatynos Buddhacharoen. Anne Kirker writes of their art as having "operated beyond the established canons...entering local and global arena in a guise completely at odds with traditional expectations of printmaking or the graphic arts".² Notably, both Prawat and Phatynos explored in recent pieces print's 'extended' and indeed extensive reconfiguration of the medium's sculptural, spatial and time-based potentials. In their works as well as Ambie Abano's, a "collage of meanings.... a rich, synthetic field of relationships" is produced.³

Abano's portraits hinge closely to perceived presence, her interest piqued by features of people's faces. Yet her imagery is pervaded by a sense of indeterminacy, as the faces may either confirm or belie character. Such is her description of print: as 'having its own temperament', an unlikely association as printmaking greatly relies on technical draughtsmanship and precision.⁴ For Abano the crafting of image can be regarded as performative, wherein image is imbued life, its contours defined by installation's fertile range. And while we marvel at the



PILOSOPO Installation of rubbercut to serigraph prints on stretchable textile stuffed with foam and various objects, image size 91.44 cm x 91.44 cm (two pieces), 2013



SALAMANGKERO Installation of rubbercut to serigraph prints on stretchable textile stuffed with foam and various objects, image size 91.44 cm x 91.44 cm (three pieces), 2013



GURO Installation of rubbercut to serigraph prints on stretchable textile stuffed with foam and various objects, image size 91.44 cm x 91.44 cm (three pieces), 2013

technical virtuosity of her handling of line and form, we also wonder at the numerous configurations she summons of print.

The spandex prints appear like flayed skins or discarded masks, cast about in space yet anchored firmly to vision and touch. This emphasis on discovery and broadening of the perceived limits of the art of print endows Abano's works simultaneous timeliness and enduring quality, facilitated by skilful handling of form and rigorous rethinking of method. The portraits speak of propitious presence, their animated visage a chorus of shifting forms. Encountered in space, viewers are drawn to reflect on the essentially fragmented state of selfhood that so defines contemporary existence. ■

1 Interview with the artist, 20 June 2013

2 Anne Kirker, 2005. "The Extended Matrix: New Dimensions in Thai Printmaking" in Canberra: Pandanus Books, 298.

Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacificed. Caroline Turner.

3 Kate Davidson and Michael Desmond, 1996. *Islands: contemporary installations from Australia, Asia, Europe and America*. Canberra: National Gallery of Australia quoted in Kirker, 302.

4 Interview with the artist, 20 June 2013.