



THE SENTINEL
Graphite and pastel on canvas
183 x 122 cm.
2013



BUILDER'S BONES
Graphite and pastel on canvas
183 x 122 cm.
2013



BROOD WARS
Graphite and pastel on canvas
122 x 183 cm.
2013

KINGDOM ANIMALIA

by PATRICK D. FLORES

When Kurt Lluich sees the human condition, he sees, or better still, sees through the nature of animals. Perhaps, the reverse is true as well: when he observes the behavior of fauna, his vision is troubled, even vexed, because he discerns in it the lives of people playing out, sordidly and fantastically. In this exhibition, the artist conceives of his project of depicting themes alluding to both social situation and personal crisis through the lens of the fable, a narrative device and a strategy of reading that necessarily displaces and transposes. The passage of figure and meaning from a critical human mind to the evocation of the animal world to precisely imagine the constitution of the human is the impulse that shapes this production of insight and form. What strikes us in this endeavor is the peculiar and curious relationship between the human and the animal, the effort to cross the binary and to think about the possibility of a different notion of the category of the animate. Therefore, it is not only the contrast or the parallel between the two that is grasped; the moment of traversing the gap between them carves out a delicate and urgent argument. This is his commitment to the ancient Aesop, the central intelligence of the fable, in which at the outset, hybridity reigns in kingdom animalia that is at the same time the world of

humans. The ties between these two realms substantially unsettle obsessions about the human and its other and the state beyond its ascendancy. Thus, the title of the exhibition *Therianthropy*, which refers to the radical morphing of human into animal and the complications it inscribes in our common sense belief in our own nature and those of others, in concepts of the beast and the pet, of fellow and creature.

This effort of Lluich begins with the technique of constructing the visual apparatus. According to the artist: "My creative process starts with covering the whole surface of the canvas with pastels, the graphite on top added next. I gradually shape the subjects with the use of rubber erasers, removing the graphite and partly the pastels to form the final images, a painstaking process that parallels my attempt to uncover hidden truths."

Lluich explores the tricky medium of pastel and graphite to flesh out a discourse of admonition, a cautionary tale of the human foible. It is a medium that is difficult to enlist to conjure a fulsome subject with vast implications, from individual moral frailty to collective violence. Its fragility is seen in the way it smears, shedding its grain that cannot seem

to cohere easily and must be put in place, so to speak. Then, there is the graphic overlay that gives the picture its necessary contours, as well as the sheen that comes in tension with the granular effect of the pastel. After all, both pastel and graphite partake of the properties of wax.

Then, the artist takes to drawing and demonstrates appreciable skill in the discipline, building up his pictures of considerable scale. This method consists of marked repetition, a keen attention to line and its thickets that contrive an ornament or pattern within a matrix of figuration. Because he is interested in taking such a delineation to the level of commentary, it finally achieves a mixture of comic-book whimsy and editorial-cartoon urgency, an aesthetic that has enchanted many Filipino artists who search for a compelling language to visually translate the phantasmagoria of a corrupt society. In the hands of Lluich, we see yet another expression of this disposition.

That said, the challenge for the artist is to overcome the conventions of illustration and the tendency to simply visualize discourse. Instead, he might need to probe the idiosyncrasies of painting so that material (thoughts as well as tools) and technique mutually inform each other to

accomplish the task of art and its political, ethical gesture. Moreover, inasmuch as he is drawn to allegory, he has to diligently nurture a more dense forest of signs that is commensurate with the vigor of his graphic adornment. This would require, however, a distinct compositional structure and a particular treatment of pigment, something that is well within the reckoning of Lluich whose gift for imagery and juxtaposition is quite apparent.

The prevailing atmosphere of this current corpus of paintings is grim and somber, imminent in its grayness, relieved only by stray semblances of what may well be patina. For an artist who started out young in Mindanao, it is significant to find his works assembled for an exhibition in Manila. They are part of the incipient, tentative phases of a potentially vital career in painting, pressured by the expectation to be relevant, revealing signs of lively talent and expression and an earnest consciousness that is sensitive to the predicaments of the world. Such an interplay of sympathies cannot not have a future worthy of fable. ©



GRAB, MARK, HOLD, AND GUARD
Graphite and pastel on canvas
122 x 122 cm.
2013



WEANING
Graphite and pastel on canvas
153 x 122 cm.
2013



TIES THAT BIND AND THE SLOW BURN
Graphite and pastel on canvas
153 x 122 cm.
2013



BRITTLE
Graphite and pastel on canvas
122 x 122 cm.
2013

KURT LLUCH

b. 1984

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 = THERIANTHROPY, Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati City
- 2013 = PASTICHE, Nova Gallery, Makati City
- 2012 = WATERMARK, Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati City
- 2010 = KONTEMPORARYO, Museo de Oro, Xavier University Campus, Cagayan de Oro City 12x9, West Gallery, Quezon City
- 2008 = PHILIPPINE ART AWARDS, Museum of the Filipino People, National Museum, Manila
- 2007 = PHILIPPINE ART AWARDS, Waterfront Insular Hotel, Lanang, Davao City
"IN CONVERSATION: TÊTE-À-TÊTES WITH BOBI V", Pasilyo Fernando Amorsolo and Pasilyo Guillermo Tolentino of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines
- 2006 = PHILIPPINE ART AWARDS, Museum of the Filipino People Bldg., National Museum, Finance Road, Rizal Park, Manila
- 2005 = DIVERSIONS (DIVERSE VERSIONS), Linya Gallery, Tibanga, Iligan City
- 2004 = METROBANK ART AND DESIGN EXCELLENCE NATIONAL COMPETITION EXHIBIT Metrobank Plaza, Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City
- 2003 = BUKLOD, Kulay Diwa Galleries, Sucat, Paranaque
- 2002 = PANGHITABO (OCCURRENCES), Surrounded by Water Gallery, Cubao, Quezon City
PAGHIKAY, Linya Gallery, Door 4, G&S Padilla Bldg., Tibanga, Iligan City
- 2001 = PANIT BUKOG 2 TRAVELING EXHIBIT, Dugukan Gallery, Davao City
- 2000 = SUNGDUAN 2000 NATIONAL TRAVELING EXHIBITION, Cultural Center of the Philippines, NCR, Luzon, Visayas Mindanao
- 1999 = SALABUUK, 2ND MINDANAO VISUAL ARTS CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION Zamboanga Del Norte Convention Center, Dipolog City
- 1998 = PUNDOK BISWAL PARA SA KASAULUGAN SA SENTENARYO, Museo de Oro, Xavier University Campus, Corrales Ave., Cagayan de Oro City
- 1997 = TAGBUAN 1ST MINDANAO VISUAL ARTS CONGRESS & EXHIBIT, Saint Paul's Seminar House, Bonbon, Cagayan de Oro City

SELECTED AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

- 2013 = REGIONAL FINALIST - PHILIPPINE ART AWARDS
Philippine Art Awards 2013
- 2007 = REGIONAL FINALIST - PHILIPPINE ART AWARDS
Grand Aguila Ballroom, Waterfront Insular Hotel, Lanang, Davao City
- 2006 = FINALIST - PHILIPPINE ART AWARDS
Museum of the Filipino People Bldg., National Museum, Finance Road, Rizal Park, Manila

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Councilor Frederick W. Siao



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GALLERY HOURS
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THERIANTHROPY
KURT LLUCH

6-31 December 2013

