

DENNIS SIO MONTERA

VISUAL ARTIST

**A STATE OF INTROSPECTION | SOLO EXHIBITION
2017**

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A STATE OF INTROSPECTION | SOLO EXHIBITION
Qube Gallery, Crossroads Mall, Gov, Cuenco Avenue,
Kasambagan, Cebu City, Philippines
August 10 – September 9, 2017
Catalog Design and Lay-out: Dennis E. Montera
Consultant: Hui-Wen Lin, Ph.D.
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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dennis E. Montera also known by his artist name as 'SIO' was born in 1972 in the island province of Cebu, 570 kilometers south of the capital Manila in the Philippines. He obtained both his Bachelor of Fine Arts major in Painting and Master in Fine Arts from the University of the Philippines. His works are known for an employment of a method called 'addition by subtraction', that ultimately become multi-layered color field paintings. The symbolism of his work's content are appropriated from real life experiences and reflections on his surrounding environment. The artist's body of work is a testament to the non-figurative idiom that was popularized by the abstract expressionist movement in New York of the 1950's. The artist has been juror selected to international exhibitions such as the Asian International Art Exhibition in Seoul, East Java Fine Art Biennale in Surabaya, Trevisan International Art exhibition in Bolgna, and the Beijing International Art Biennale of China. SIO has also participated in numerous international art fairs including Art Tainan, Art Kaohsiung, Tokyo International Art Fair, Asia Contemporary Art Fair-Hong Kong, Art Apart Fair-Singapore, and ManilArt. He won first prize in the Philippines' prestigious GSIS Art Competition in 2010 and was awarded the University of the Philippines' Chancellor's Award for Creative Work in 2008 and 2010. He was awarded an artist residency grant by Le Cent Etablissement Culturel Solidaire in Paris, France in 2013 and was among the first recipients of the Dekana Award of the University of the Philippines Cebu in 2014. He is currently a professor of the Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines' constituent unit in his hometown of Cebu. His research on art and artists in the southern region of the Philippines have been presented in international conferences and published in prestigious academic journals. At the time of this particular exhibition collection, the artist was a Ph.D candidate as a recipient of an NCKU distinguished international scholarship and a U.P. research fellowship award to pursue a doctoral degree at the Institute of Creative Industries Design of the National Cheng Kung University in Tainan City, Taiwan.



Email: dennisonmontera@gmail.com

PRESS RELEASE

SumStar
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MONDAY 04 SEPTEMBER 2017



KRISTALLE KEKERT
kristallegarcia@hotmail.com

THE METROPOLIS

A State of Introspection

Marking his 20th year as a brilliant artist, Cebuano abstract expressionist Sio Montera had his most recent solo exhibit entitled "A State of Introspection" held at the Que Gallery at Crossroads. Sio has spent more than a decade as a full-time associate professor for the Fine Arts Program of the University of the Philippines and is currently based in Taiwan to finish his Doctorate in Creative Industries Design at the National Cheng Kung University.

"Montera is at a turning point," describes Adjani Arunpuc of Sio Montera's current artwork.

collection. "The titles of his works (How High You Go, The Struggle to Stay Low, I Am Because I Was, Youth Knows No Pain, Think of Yourself Less, et al.) are a peek into the turbulence of an ongoing reevaluation brought by dislocation and alienation. A few bright color fields break the largely monochromatic series, distributing a level of warmth to an otherwise overall somber wintry tone that sets the mood of the exhibition. Where history in old spaces steeped in culture is found at the bottom of peeling layers of paint, one finds here through layers of being an art educator, seeker, muse and market but instead in the impetus of meaning-making for the misgoverned, marginalized and emergent. In 'A State of Introspection,' what is unseen is the other as art professional inside a pull, patiently scratching and seeing through the strain to arrive at the surface."

Sio Montera's 'A State of Introspection' runs until Saturday, Sept. 9 at Que Gallery, which is open from Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Jude Bacalso, Honey Vergara and Joseph Michael Vergara

Kharen Palencia-Jadloc, Angeli Dizon-Abarca and Maria Alvarez

Rose Honnesty, Michael Hennessey and Alice Paso

Kareneth Leonardo and Peggy Leonardo

Ben Dangoso

The Monteras, Maitro, Maureen, Mivah and Sio

A. Karl Roque Jr.

Stephan Zenz

Ross Montera, Andrew Estafila and JR Dinglaza

International best-selling author Kevin Kwun visited Cebu City for a book signing event on Aug. 27 at SM Seaside City. A media gathering took place the day before at the mall's Sky Hall hosted by celebrity blogger Kriz Ly. W.

FOOD

The Tres Doble Naños at Red Lizard. These delicious naños and a bunch of other Mexican favorites are now up for grabs at their second branch, now open on the fourth level of Ayala Center Cebu. W.

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24 **LIFESTYLE** The Freeman
SATURDAY | September 16, 2017



People Places

For S. Traciño

Sio Montera's "A State of Introspection"

Cebuano abstract expressionist Sio Montera marked the 20th year of his career as an artist with an exhibit entitled "A State of Introspection" last August 10 at the Que Gallery in Crossroads. It was also his 20th solo exhibit and the artist-professor has called it a long way. He is currently based in Taiwan to finish his Doctorate in Creative Industries Design in the National Cheng Kung University, with support from the University of the Philippines-Cebu.

Adjani Arunpuc describes his current collection of artworks: "Montera is at a turning point. The titles of his works ("How High You Go," "The Struggle to Stay Low," "I Am Because I Was," "Youth Knows No Pain," "Think of Yourself Less," et al.) are a peek into the turbulence of an ongoing reevaluation brought by dislocation and alienation. A few bright color fields break the largely monochromatic series, disrupting a level of warmth to an otherwise overall somber wintry tone that sets the mood of the exhibition. Where history in old spaces steeped in culture is found at the bottom of peeling layers of paint, one finds here through layers of being an art educator, seeker, muse and market, but instead in the impetus of meaning-making for the misgoverned, marginalized, and emergent. In 'A State of Introspection,' what is unseen is the other as art professional inside a pull, patiently scratching and seeing through the strain to arrive at the surface."

Que Gallery is open from Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. The contact number is +6312 261 0696. More information is at www.quegallery.ph or email info@quegallery.ph.



Kareneth Leonardo and Peggy Leonardo

Jude Bacalso, Honey Vergara, Joseph Michael Vergara

Rose Honnesty, Michael Hennessey and Alice Paso

Kimiko Ono and Erna Coda

No-NonSense Feng Shui

Feng Shui Master Aldric V. Dolupines

Relationship Feng Shui Tips

business contacts, discounts and informal job support extended unconditionally. Like a big brother.

Second is the concept of trust and giving face. In short integrity and honoring one's word, even if no one is looking. Character.

Third is belonging, or the need to belong. The value of social acceptance. In the Western and Asian cultures, this is where the social rituals of celebrating successes like treating peers in a "blow out" for every promotion or social event is valued as it is imbued with the social recognition and acceptance of the host.

Fourth is "power" relations, the need for authority and power in any setting—social, personal or professional.

The earlier motivations are qualified under need for achievement and recognition.

Fifth is the Asian value of smooth interpersonal relationship, public or private.

These five motives can be enhanced in feng-shui by way of attracting positive vibes from coworkers, partners, even lovers by simply using lucky charms or amulets for attraction.

And these charms range from feng shui art to material objects.

These can also be geared to be on the aggressive side or to lead with authority among your peers in the office or expert boss monetary gains from careers, offering hefty promotions and recognition. Well, what better fuel to the engine of both personal and professional relationships when one has the way clear, so to speak.

In politics, whether office or real politics or the real world as in governance, there is only one rule—have a thick face and black heart! And often two lucky symbols are used: the Kuan Yin image or figure (means nobody can put one over on you personally and professionally) placed in the office and home facing the main doors and the tiger heads worn at the night wrist of a wannabe politician leader.

These key charms arise by the law of attraction principles imbued in feng shui. However, these are tempered by two Golden Rules.

First is the golden rule of filial piety and sisterly love of not doing unto others what you do not like done unto yourself. Commonly known as the law of giving retribution or you reap what you sow... simply put: karma!

Second is the ultimate law of responsibility. Every relationship carries with it the burden and challenges of being responsible for managing a relationship, business or personal or even love life! A simple but tall order often accepted by the mistaken notion that he or she who holds the gold holds a relationship! For this second law is anchored on right and true love for others, unconditional and humbly as much as possible.

The bottom line in keeping a lasting relationship is by being in your ways with feng shui applications, and with lucky charms as well.



JAIME PICORNELL
pluperfect

Sio Montera & Adeste Deguilmo at Qube

OPENING today at Qube Gallery in Crossroads, Banilad, is a one-man show of the latest works by Adeste Deguilmo titled "Distortus II". It will be on display up to October 10. Adeste is one of Cebu's most highly rated artists. His forte is portraiture. This exhibit shows a different aspect of his artistry.

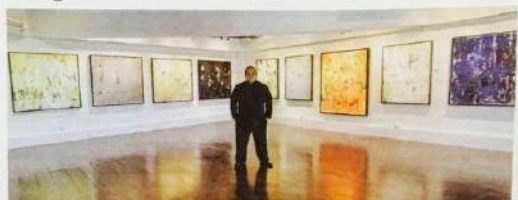
Qube has just wrapped up (August 10 to September 9) a fabulously colorful exposition by Sio Montera titled "A State of Introspection."

The show was in celebration of Sio Montera's career as a painter. This was also his 20th solo art exhibit. He is acclaimed as an outstanding abstract expressionist. On the other hand, he has been known to do some very good portraits.

His innate good taste was evident in this show, the opening of which constituted a major social event. Roy Nanko was there, and so was the ever youthful Gil Maningo who is preparing a show for January.

Right now Sio Montera is based in Taiwan to finish his doctorate in Creative Industries Design at the National Cheng Kung University with the support of the University of the Philippines Studies Fund, as a tenured faculty of the Fine Arts Program of UP-Cebu.

Our photos today come from A-List to give you an idea of what was exposed.



SIO Montera at his exhibit in Qube Gallery



ROSS Montera, Andrew Estrella and Al Bingsosa



DR. KHAREN Palencia-Judice, Dr. Anzeli Dean Alvarez and Mago Alvarez



KENNETH and Peggy Leonardo



PROFESSOR | Karl Roque II



STEPHAN SZCZ



NADI BOGDANCHKOVA



RIE Bacalis, Norey Vergara and Richard Vergara



RAMING Dada and Luca Dada



ROSE and Richard Hermosillo with Alex Plaza



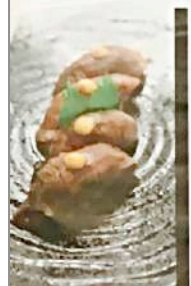
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ROBIE BEEF ABURI SUSHI, with a dollop of spicy Japanese mayonnaise. I'm dying to know what you think of this one.



SESAME SEED panna cotta topped with a caramel crisp and coconut ice cream, all made from scratch!

on jolly, it sign receive



photos by Michael Doman

The triptych in front of us goes by the name *Familia Ante Omnia, Family Above All*. It also goes for a cool half million. It is acrylic on canvas, mostly in white, and measures 182 cm x 122 cm each. And at a cursory glance looks not unlike a whitewashed wall that has chipped in certain places through time, revealing glimpses of color underneath, like secrets painted over. Or mistakes.

"Palimpsests," Sio says in a statement on his 20th show, to mark his 20th year in painting. It is a word I have never

encountered, and that always excites me. A few quick flicks on my smartphone and I am beaming at how it all comes together now. "Palimpsests are manuscripts or piece of writing material on which the original has been effaced to make room for later writing but of which traces remain."

In a wider context, "something reused or altered, but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form." Sio's take on it is as artsy as his oeuvre, plastering it on the ceiling to explain the pieces. "The results are palimpsests that chronicle the time-consuming meditative process of the creation of art. These are also documentations of the material conditions of the process of re-education, from adjusting painting processes such as scripping on paint to suit economic constraints as a scholar, to unlearning the myriad layers of preconceptions brought by expertise through reception of new methods." A statement obviously culled from a dissertation for his PhD in Creative Industries Design

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SIO MONTERA and his brood: Nikara, wife Maureen, and eldest daughter Mweath in front of, appropriately, *Family Above All*

Filipina aesthetician introduces own US-based skin care line

Marie Suzette Good from Camiguin Island, Philippines is glad to finally be able to share her imported skin care products to her co beauty aficionado kababayans.

Founded in California, USA, Suzette Skin Care (SSC) is now ready to cater to the Filipino beauty needs.

According to Suzette, the main highlight of SSC is their fruit-based ingredients. Red wine, grapes, blueberry, tomatoes, cherry, and pomegranate are the main ingredients of their products.

"My products are natural and Eco-friendly. This is why it is fit and safe for any skin type, any age, and any race," she said during SSC's launching event last August 13.



Skin care has always been Suzette's passion. She studied Aesthetics at the International School of Beauty in California, USA and with her husband's grape farm in the States, she was inspired to take her passion to the next level by creating skin care products out of grapes and red wine.

SSC has twelve beauty products for skin cleansing, ton-

ing, repairing, moisturizing, and repairing. These products are priced at around P1,500.

Suzette Skin Care is now gradually distributing their products nationwide. For the meantime, interested buyers may contact 09178876365 or send an email to suzetteskincare713@gmail.com for orders or inquiries.

(Diana Mae Domingo)

PRESS RELEASE

zele | events

SIO MONTERA'S "A STATE OF INTROSPECTION"

Cebuano abstract expressionist Sio Montera marked the 20th year of his career as an artist with an exhibit entitled *A State of Introspection* last August 10 at the Qube Gallery in Crossroads. *A State of Introspection* is his 20th solo exhibit and the artist-professor has indeed come a long way. He is currently based in Taiwan to finish his Doctorate in Creative Industries Design in the National Cheng Kung University, with support from the University of the Philippines' Doctoral Studies Fund as a tenured faculty of the Fine Arts Program of the University of the Philippines in Cebu.



Sio Montera



Dr. Kharen Palencia-Jadloc, Dr. Angeli Dizon-Avarez, and Marin Alvarez

Stephan Zenz

Jude Bacalso, Honey and Joseph Vergara



Kenneth and Peggy Leonardo

Nadia BogdanChikova

Prof. J. Karl P. Roque Jr.

Kumiko and Ema Onda



Rose Hennessy, Michael Hennessy, and Alice Plaza

Ross Montero, Andrew Estafia, and JR Dinglas

SOLEA WEDDING FAIR

Cerequiam inibe caudam facientes si tum res pribela pareo ciego hebabie te egeret tam me idumus etiam videno tiane, quamquid amedestem antiquus hor in thio pemei with hystria et, standi igma rei cobusum paelethia offendi hest? Innoyigna, visoco oiborat. Fiam nune si qdam vobis. Lari patio ne quodestum idn itibus patio et, utrae tem premabu ere, nos in hi halemehena, quam suffico itingquo.



Model wearing Philip Santos



Jessie Lantimica, Philip Santos and Colleague, Princesa Empacera, Ross Manabat, Wendell Quisido and Anthony Romoff



Shelia Campasido with Bridesmaids, Sheila L. S. Macaron and Rober, May Ann Santos and Regina de Guzman



Model wearing Marc Crossart

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ABSTRACT MODULATION

Sio Montero's A State of Introspection at Cebu's Gube Gallery.



During "Sio" Montero, who is in the gallery of the lines of Sio's Vision and Romance, is undoubtedly one of the Philippines' most active and recognizable abstract artists. Montero, who spends most of his time in Southern Taiwan, where he is pursuing a Master in Creative Industries, is also a Filipino artist whose practice is primarily based outside of the Manila capital region. This situation has put him in a position of

being able to present his work as a unique proposition—a Cebuano artist trained in UP Cebu's Fine Arts program who eschews the idyllic and conservative *arte del pinoy* genre name, of which Cebuano artists are known for. As the Director of Gube Gallery, Cebu's most prominent contemporary art space, he is influential in a new wave of artists seeking greater recognition outside of the Visayas, even as they seek to change the view of art within it. Montero thus has



imagines a heavy responsibility to both the country and his art.

His art, however, has remained above it all—an colored homage to abstraction, even as it remains refreshingly Filipino. "Montero focuses on the uniquely Filipino understanding of aesthetic as both a hermeneutic process," wrote the late scholar and fellow Cebuano Roelison Raras-Cabero, "... as well as an epistemic order that weaves the individual, society, metaphysics and material existence together into a dialectic and introspective experience."

For Montero's latest exhibition at Gube Gallery, the artist titled *A State of Introspection*, the artist seems readily machine in his abstract sensibilities. In the process, he has moved in his more general strokes and colors to work with organic, layers that are thoughtfully spaced between stark backgrounds. As

typical of Montero, there is a highly considered quality to his work. "The Golden Age of Romanticism," for instance, is quite literally dominated by gold, but reveals the operation of affection in small streaks of red. One imagines Jackson Pollock with admiration, or Rothko without vapors. It is a Filipino Cebuano, take on Abstract Expressionism that Montero breathes energy in.

The exhibition notes, written by Adriel Aranzano, describes Montero's process in detail: "... he smudges, painting less to eight thin acrylic layers, with a special oil-based lubricant in between the layers to aid in the eventual peeling process. And then, the painstaking carefully controlled peeling/scraping/scorching on several layers under torch. The results are polychrome that channel the time-consuming, meditative process of the creation of art."

The exhibition, *Montero: 2019*, represents a new milestone in the career of this important abstractionist.

©LOCKWOOD ARANZANO "The Golden Age of Romanticism" Philippine Daily Inquirer, 11/17/19, 4th Section, 10A/11



PRESS REVIEW

EDITOR: Luis A. Quibranta III @lu3live
 DESIGNER: Wiericka V. Hipolito live@sunstar.com.ph #SunSta-LIVE

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CULTURE / PEOPLE / ART / LEISURE / TRAVEL / FASHION / FOOD

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

CHERLEE G. SALLERA / 17000

The passage of time creates an oxidation, like the aging of silver, which acquires an even richer tone every passing day. Time does the same thing to people, and as time goes by, each gets better in his respective trade, acquiring a mastery of more skills and techniques.

In his 20th solo exhibition entitled "A State of Introspection," Sio Montera opens a part of himself to his audience which they haven't seen before.

"It's taking a deeper look at where I am now as an artist and also as an educator. This is like a necessary pause for me to evaluate where my art making will go from here," said Sio.

"This is like a big journal of the things that I remember and consider to be steps toward the betterment of myself and as an artist."

With many years of experience in the art industry, Sio opens a new door. With his artworks, he straggles his audience with a different technique, quite different from the revolution in abstraction that the younger Sio had started.

"I guess the shift in material choice and also production process also signifies the maturing of my art making or my craft," he said.

Having used to mix acrylics with paint, he now expresses himself on the canvas using a process known as "addition by subtraction" which gives primary importance to the peeling off of paint and revealing what is hidden beneath.

The peeling off is a symbolic representation that at some point shedding will give a better understanding of what was thought to have been forgotten.

"It has now led me to understand art as a universal entity. Not just a few select people can acknowledge it, it's more global in a way that people

THURSDAY | August 17, 2017

The **Freeman** LIFESTYLE 17

Montera's Introspections

By Yasunori Ramon Suarez Taguchi

The definitive driving force that scores the aesthetic sensibilities of Cebuano abstract expressionist Dennis "Sio" Montera yields compelling visuals that bear undertones of euphoria and ennui.

A forerunner in the development of contemporary abstraction in Cebu, Montera opened his 20th solo show on August 10 in Oube Gallery at The Crossroads in Banilad with pieces that tell a story without need for a storyline.

The show, titled "A State of Introspection," takes its theme from Montera's forays in the creative arts field in the last two decades, within which he built and continues to build his creative oeuvre.

A graduate of the Fine Arts Program of the University of the Philippines-Cebu, he is currently finishing his Doctorate in Creative Industries Design at the National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan. The two places confront Montera with creative parallels, as Tainan City in Taiwan and Cebu City in the Philippines share common similarities in terms of economic roles, historical background, and a number of developing creative communities.

What the artist has "seen" in Cebu and in Tainan have brought forth the Introspections that he brings to this show, captured on canvas. Montera uses combinations of wet-brush, stippling and etching techniques in the pieces in the exhibit, which runs until the first week of September.

With the process over-embodied in abstract expressionism, the artist noticeably trades on creative spontaneity in depicting the world, in capturing what otherwise ely intuition and emotion can perceive.

On this Day...
 In 1892, the ultimate blonde, Anne West, was born in Brooklyn. She was Billie Holiday's mother and a jazz singer, and as a child was called "the baby voice." Based on her biography, other jazz 1970s show "Yes, she stepped into the limelight in her first film with her celebrated reply to a hit-and-miss girl "Goodman" (1948) the film "Lullaby of Birdland" (1950), reppig 4006, 1001

On the Inside Looking In, mixed media on canvas

Crossing Paths for a Reason, acrylic on canvas

Top-Down, Bottom-Up 5, acrylic on canvas

Top-Down, Bottom-Up 4, acrylic on canvas

Things Would Have Gone on If World Was Just the Way, acrylic on canvas

Exhibiting artist Dennis "Sio" Montera

BOOK REVIEW
 Cooked Little Road to Seno-Flora Area

"Happiness" By Heather Harpham (Holt)

"I wanted to have the drive with my wife, the 1000 mile drive, to see the world."

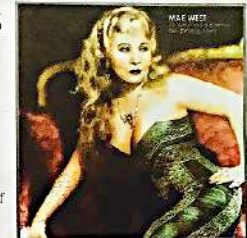
Heather Harpham and Dennis Holt are both other artists, and in this narrative they are both creative and successful. They were both creative and successful, in the obvious manner.

She was a creative and her California upbringing would suggest, and her disposition which called for her to go to the States. Brian, as the other hand, occupied the imagination of the two. Cooked in the perfect line inside, she felt to his writing.

This creative work also includes Harpham's always unexpected and unexpected because of her own experiences. What Harpham and Holt's relationship, and the relationship, the two New York, Harpham's first experience to see their

about 1000 books. Cooked in the States. Brian, as the other hand, occupied the imagination of the two. Cooked in the perfect line inside, she felt to his writing.

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Oube

SIO MONTERA
08.10.17

An invitation to the reception night and collectors preview 6pm - 9pm crossroads banilad, cebu city

a state of introspection until 09.09.17

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CURATORIAL NOTES

The year 2016 recorded the coldest winter in Taiwan. In this worst of circumstances, Dennis Montera created his gentlest paintings—the *Winter Itch* and *Pinyin* series. These featured muted color fragments layered translucently one upon another, all in stark contrast to his previous color-laden, highly-texturized body of works. This newfound aesthetics of sparsity, borne in a strange country, follows through in a collection of oeuvres for his twentieth solo exhibition, *A State of Introspection*.

Patinas

Montera is currently based in Taiwan to finish his Doctorate in Creative Industries Design in the National Cheng Kung University, with support from the University of the Philippines' Doctoral Studies Fund as a tenured faculty of the Fine Arts Program of the University of the Philippines in Cebu City. He is a member of the Executive Council of the Committee on Visual Arts of the National Commission for Culture and Arts, as well as an officer of Pusod, The Open Organization of Cebu Visual Artists Inc., an organization championing marginalized artists and art communities from the regions. He is also the director of Qube Gallery, one of the few active art galleries in Cebu City. The multitude of discourses he has been amassing as an artist, educator, art advocate, gallery director, among others, correlate to the density of layers piling on his abstractions on canvasses through the years that have defined his art practice.

The layers point to a seeking. A graduate of the Fine Arts Program of the University of the Philippines in Cebu City, the first formal fine arts school outside the capital, and then an educator in the same school for the next fifteen years, Montera continuously explores the definition of the painterly through experimentation of new processes introduced by new materials. Informed by an institution steeped in traditional representational art, his gesturals are arguably acts of aggression. He translates defiance as tactility of differences, Integrating bitumen and texturizers with acrylic paints in his works.

The penchant for representing heterogeneity through layers and textures indicates a preoccupation with disparity and, consequently, hierarchy. Here is a learned artist who locates his identity in the Other sphere twice over—schooled and flourishing in a precarious arts community outside of the art capital; and working with a genre that is not quite the choice of the conservative collector patronage in his city, whose taste is cultivated by centuries of religious art-making.

Parallels and Professionalization

Montera's academic and advocacy trajectory naturally led him to take up doctoral studies. His current academic research is a comparative study of the design management of creative professionals between two peripheral creative communities, Tainan City in Taiwan and Cebu City in the Philippines. Both locales have striking similarities in terms of historical background, economic roles in present society, and a growing tourism and cultural hub.

The notion of creative/cultural industries/economies is relatively new, introduced at the turn of the century with aims at transacting through creativity, knowledge and information rather than the traditional resources of land, labour and capital. A cursory look at criticisms of this model generally points to lack of theoretical clarity in policy definitions. The dichotomy of the creative industries between Tainan and Cebu, for example, according to Montera, lies in the structure of their respective development strategies. The former capitalizes on a strong top-down creative identity policy supporting infrastructure building and facilitation of preservation and promotion of cultural and historical assets, while the latter operates mainly on export-oriented policies such as enhancing arts and crafts for international quality exportation, supporting BPO industries as job opportunities for local talents, and harnessing creative communities for tourism. The discrepancy in the implementation of similar visions reveals the nebulous nature of such a conception of a sustainable creative ecosystem.

CURATORIAL NOTES

This ambiguity is precisely the overarching concern that has guided Montera's practice and career. Underpinning his brand of identity politics is a discernment of the lack pedagogical backbone in current local creative industry plans that can yield infrastructures truly beneficial for artists in the Philippines, more so for those in the margins. Case in point, Cebu City was named as the ASEAN City of Culture in 2011 and yet most of its Fine Arts programs graduates, unable to pursue art practice due to lack of opportunities, have mostly been absorbed by BPO industries if not struggling with small-scale art enterprises.

It is in this context of urgency that Montera negotiates valuation of art that he produces/teaches/circulates, striving to nuance the position of the Other by tracing axes of powers—economy, culture, education, et al—that restrict art practice outside the Capital. In the process, he has racked up expertise so as to bequeath his voice with authority, the most recent of which is his doctorate degree. This increasing professionalization is directly proportional to the perceived magnitude of the challenges that surround his art practice and its attending concerns, perhaps an act of taming for it (art practice) to become what one can refer to as a Foucauldian docile body, to better harness its socio-economic and pedagogical potentials.

Palimpsest

The haze with which Montera grapples with is apparent, literally, in his recent works. As the title implies, *A State of Introspection* necessitates the unpacking of the conditions of production that have brought about a visible change in the artist's visuality and operation. His foray into another country certainly is an influence. He recounts how the "rows of old shop-houses in Tainan city's historic areas that have been converted into craft shops, galleries, and cafes are now popular tourist attractions under Tainan's "Old House, New Life" program to contribute to urban revitalization as part of their government's push to develop the creative industries." Montera particularly fetishizes the peeling paints in the old spaces that lay bare the rich history of the culture.

This time, in pursuit of replicating the weathered look of peeling paint, Montera subtracts from the process his trademark employment of heavy surface textures for more than a decade. Instead, he modulates, painting four to eight thin acrylic layers, with a special oil-based lubricant in between the layers to aid in the eventual peeling process. And then, the painstaking carefully-controlled peeling/scraping/scratching to reveal layers underneath. The results are palimpsests that chronicle the time-consuming, meditative process of creation of art. These are also documentations of the material conditions of the process of re-education, from adjusting painting processes such as scrimping on paint to suit economic constraints as a scholar, to unlearning the myriad layers of preconceptions brought by expertise through reception of new methods.

Montera is at a turning point. The titles of his works (*How High You Go, The Struggle to Stay Low, I Am Because I Was, Youth Knows No Pain, Think of Yourself Less*, et al) are a peek into the turbulence of an ongoing reorientation brought by dislocation and alienation. A few bright color fields break the largely monochromatic series, distributing a level of warmth to an otherwise overall somber wintry tone that sets the mood of the exhibition. Where history in old spaces steeped in culture is found at the bottom of peeling layers of paint, one finds here—through layers of being art educator, advocate, gallery director—an informed artist at the core. This palimpsestuousness is a vantage point that has been consistently utilized to impart to students and colleagues that the struggle for cultural/artistic/creative identity is beyond seeking muse and market but instead in the mapping of meaning-making for the misgoverned, marginalized, and emergent. In *A State of Introspection*, what is unseen is the Other as art professional inside a pall, patiently scratching and seeing through the strata to arrive at the surface. — **Adjani Arumpac**

The writer studied BA in Film at the University of the Philippines and cinematography at the Mowelfund Institute. She specializes in the documentary film genre and her works have been recognized and shown in numerous international film festivals. She is also an art writer, working with artists and local and international galleries on curatorial texts of exhibitions. Her interest in bridging the medium of documentary film genre and modern art practices manifest in her documentary films that have been translated and integrated in installation works exhibited in Manila, Lucban, Guangdong, Berlin, Hong Kong and Paris.