



Pio Abad

Copyright © 2017 Silverlens Inc.
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or otherwise, without the prior written consent of the above mentioned copyright holders, with the exception of brief excerpts and quotations used in articles, critical essays or research.

**Text © 2017 Pio Abad
All rights reserved.**

No part of this essay may be reproduced, modified, or stored in a retrieval system or retransmission, in any form or by any means, for reasons other than personal use, without written permission from the author.

SILVERLENS

Lapanday Center
2263 Don Chino Roces
Avenue Extension
Makati City 1231
T +632.8160044
F +632.8160044
M +63917.5874011
Tue-Fri 10am-7pm, Sat 10am-6pm

www.silverlensgalleries.com
info@silverlensgalleries.com

COUNTERNARRATIVES

PIO ABAD

29 MARCH - 27 APRIL 2017

COUNTERNARRATIVES

Pio Abad returns to Silverlens, Manila with Counternarratives. In his second exhibition at the gallery, Abad continues his engagement with Philippine political history, specifically looking at the problematic cultural legacy of the Marcos dictatorship in light of recent attempts to rehabilitate this dark chapter in the nation's history. In a new body of work, he reconfigures familiar narratives and excavates dismantled iconographies in an attempt to understand the seemingly breath taking pace at which this history has unravelled.

The title of the exhibition, Counternarratives, is taken from a collection of short stories and novellas by the American author John Keene that draws upon multiple accounts—memoirs, newspaper articles and speculative fiction—to offer new perspectives on the past and the present. Abad uses the same approach throughout the exhibition, translating stories from historical residue into images and objects that reflect on acts of mythmaking, monumentalising and forgetting.

The exhibition opens with Untitled (Malakas), a series of seven screen prints repeatedly depicting the defaced hillside bust of Ferdinand Marcos. The 30 metre concrete monument was erected in Benguet in 1980 as the centrepiece of a proposed Marcos Park in expropriated tribal land. The construction was said to have displaced the Ibaloi tribe who were forced to sell their land at outrageously low prices. After the Marcoses were forced out of office in 1986, the Ibaloi slaughtered a carabao and a pig and poured the animals' blood into the bust in an exorcism ritual before filing a case to reclaim their land. While the case languished in the courts, the debate continued as to whether the bust should be removed or kept as a reminder of the atrocities committed during martial law. That decision was made when the bust was destroyed with dynamite by unnamed perpetrators in the early hours of December 29th 2002.

Repetition plays a central role in the exhibition, both as a visual strategy and an appeal to memory. The installation Studies from a Forgotten Monument occupies the gallery floor with 327 plaster casts of Anastacio Caedo's portrait study of Ninoy Aquino. In 1986, the renowned monument builder was commissioned to create a bronze statue of the national hero on the corner of Ayala Avenue and Paseo de Roxas in Makati. Caedo chose to immortalize Aquino at the precise moment of his assassination, shot in the head as he descended the steps of the China Airlines flight that brought him back to the Philippines after three years in exile. Caedo's portrayal was deemed too depressing, not in

keeping with the triumphal spirit that Ninoy's death brought to the political landscape, and it was subsequently replaced with a more conventional statue. Abad's installation revisits Caedo's version—its insistent portrayal of terror and sacrifice a more appropriate symbol for the less triumphant times of now.

The final works in the exhibition are a series of ten banners on silk, also entitled Counternarratives. The artist appropriates an earlier work, which depicts Imelda Marcos as the reincarnation of the ancient Assyrian queen Semiramis, as a recurring motif. In an autobiography published in 1980, Imelda recounts the events following her assassination attempt in 1972 when a man named Carlito Dimahilig lunged at her with a bolo knife. While recuperating in the hospital, she had a vision of Semiramis leading a huge crowd praying for her recovery and invoking her to rejoin 'the stream of life'. Imelda would later reveal that an Indian mystic had once told her that she was the reincarnation of Semiramis. Perhaps realising later that Semiramis lacked the iconic quality that Imelda required, a painting commissioned to commemorate the revelation inexplicably depicts Semiramis as the more familiar Egyptian ruler Nefertiti. This bizarre myth of reincarnation was among many that scaled the heights of political fantasy and misrepresentation during the Marcos regime. Myths that continue to enthrall as they lead to certain political ruin.

Emblazoned in red on the silk surfaces are signs appropriated from political protests. An inventory of action often taken amidst a paucity of dissent—from David Medalla's placard "A BAS LAS MYSTIFICATION! DOWN WITH THE PHILISTINES!" which the artist held up during the opening night of the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1969 to "HISTORY HAS ITS EYES ON YOU" a line sung by George Washington in the musical Hamilton refashioned as an anti-revisionist sign during the protests against the recent burial of Ferdinand Marcos at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

Accessing and reimagining these artefacts from our collective political imagination, Pio Abad raises questions about how they might play into our current lives, when images that were once ridiculous now seem lethal and objects that used to be fragments of the past now appear to be glimpses into an increasingly perilous future.



Untitled (Malakas)

screenprint
1772 x 1378 in (4501 x 35 cm)
Editions 6 to 12 of 100
2017

image by Jessica de Leon (SILVERLENS)



COUNTERNARRATIVES I

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 39.37 in (100 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



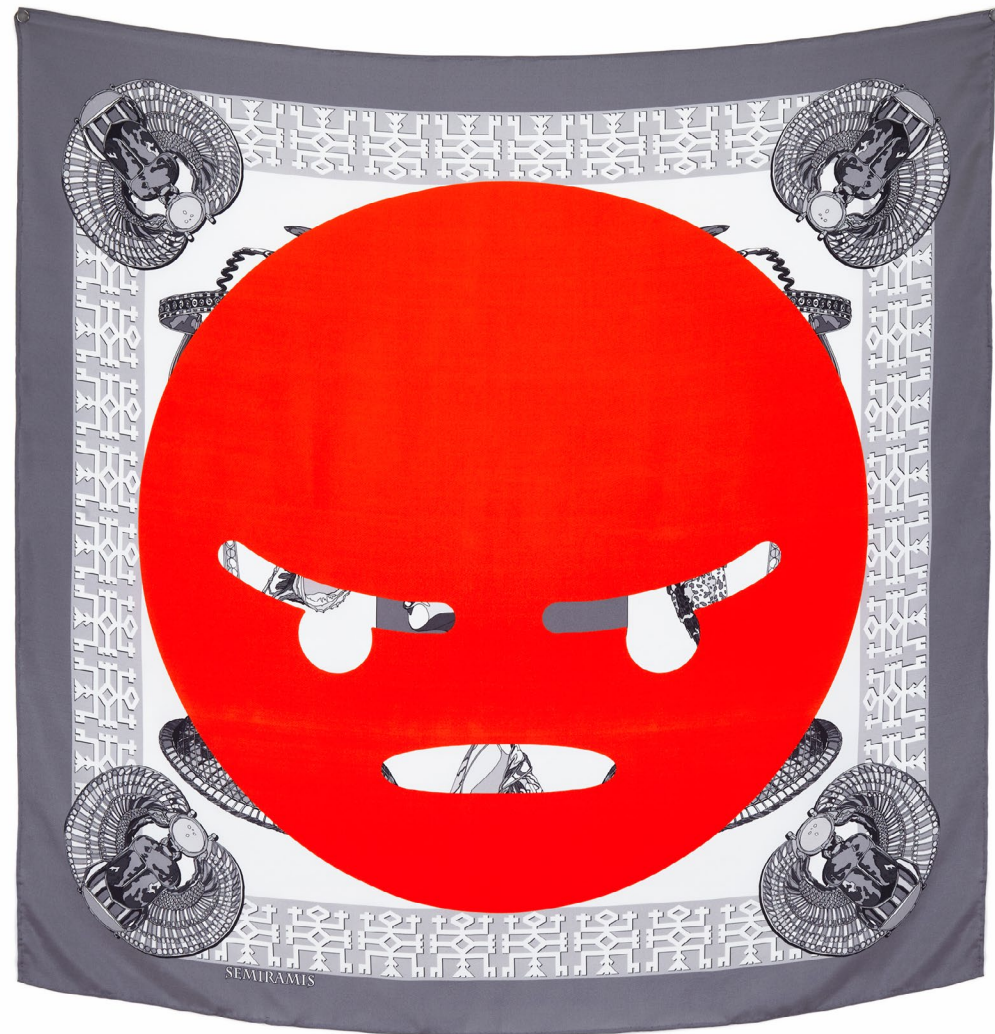
COUNTERNARRATIVES II

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 39.37 in (100 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



COUNTERNARRATIVES III

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 39.37 in (100 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



COUNTERNARRATIVES IV

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 39.37 in (100 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



COUNTERNARRATIVES V

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 39.37 in (100 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



COUNTERNARRATIVES VI

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 39.37 in (100 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017





COUNTERNARRATIVES VII

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 39.37 in (100 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



COUNTERNARRATIVES VIII

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 39.37 in (100 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



COUNTERNARRATIVES IX

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
39.37 x 78.74 in (100 x 200 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



COUNTERNARRATIVES X

unique acid dye print on hand-stitched silk twill
78.74 x 39.37 in (200 x 100 cm)
Edition of 1 + 1 AP
2017



Studies from a Forgotten Monument

327 plaster casts of Anastacio Caedo's portrait study of Ninoy Aquino
dimensions variable
2017

image by Jessica de Leon (SILVERLENS)

PIO ABAD

Bio

Pio Abad (b. 1983, Manila, lives and works in London) began his art studies at the University of the Philippines before receiving a BA from Glasgow School of Art and an MA from the Royal Academy Schools, London. He has had solo exhibitions at Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow; 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney; Gasworks, London and Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art. He has also participated in group exhibitions at Kadist Foundation, Paris; EVA International Biennial, Limerick; e-flux, New York City; Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Mackintosh Museum, Glasgow; and the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila. Forthcoming projects include exhibitions at Art Basel Encounters, Hong Kong; Silverlens, Manila and Oakville Galleries, Ontario.

Pio Abad’s practice is concerned with the social and political signification of things. His work, in a range of media including textiles, drawing, installation and photography, uses strategies of appropriation to mine alternative or repressed historical events, unravel official accounts and draw out threads of complicity between incidents, ideologies and people. Often taking on the form of domestic accessories, Abad’s artworks glide seamlessly between these histories, enacting quasi-fictional combinations with their leftovers.

EDUCATION

2009 – 2012	Masters in Fine Art, Royal Academy Schools, London
2004 – 2007	BA (hons) Painting & Printmaking, Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow
2002 – 2004	BA Fine Art, University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines

SOLO EXHIBITION

2019	(upcoming), Oakville Galleries, Ontario
2017	Counternarratives, Silverlens, Manila Not a Shield, but a Weapon, Art Basel Encounters, Art Basel Hong Kong (with Silverlens)
2016	Notes on Decomposition, Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow Pio Abad: 1975-2015, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney
2015	A Short History of Decay, Silverlens, Singapore
2014	Some are Smarter than Others, Gasworks, London The Collection of Jane Ryan and Willam Saunders, Vargas Museum, Manila Designs for a New Society (Ali), Art Fair Philippines, Manila
2013	Every Tool is a Weapon if you Hold it Right, Silverlens, Manila For Anti-Imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship, Zabłudowicz Invites: Zabłudowicz Collection, London
2012	Oh! Oh! Oh! (A Universal History of Infamy), PLAZAPLAZA, London 1986 – 2010, Royal Academy Schools Show, London Dazzler, Duchy Gallery, Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art
2008	Here Lies Love, Market Gallery, Glasgow

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017	Soil and Stones, Songs and Souls, Para Site, Hong Kong Recouvrir, Ensabler, Copier, Traduire, Restituer, Kadist, Paris Translación, Inaugural Exhibition, Curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
2016	Soil and Stones, Soul and Songs, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila Metatextile: Ruptured Narratives, Exchanged Values, Edel Assanti, London Still (the) Barbarians, EVA International Biennial, curated by Koyo Kouoh, Limerick, Ireland South of the Southeast: A Further Surface, curated by Patrick Flores and Anca Mihulet, Guangdong Times Museum, China

	Art Basel, Hong Kong
	Art Fair Philippines, Manila
2015	Udlot-Udlot, curated by Inti Guerrero, Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong
	Corruption: Everybody Knows..., curated by Natasha Ginwala, e-flux, New York City
	The Vexed Contemporary, curated by Joselina Cruz, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila
	South By South East curated by Patrick D. Flores and Anica Mihulet, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong
	Art Basel, Hong Kong
	Art Fair Philippines, Manila
2014	The Bold Sopranos, Gallery Exit, Hong Kong
	Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
	Pre-pop to Post-human: Collage in the Digital Age, A Hayward Touring Exhibition
	Project 06: Conflict: Art and War, Contemporary Art Society Space, London
2013	Image/Object, Furini Arte Contemporanea, Rome
	A Conspiracy of Detail, Mackintosh Museum, Glasgow
	Reading Vogue, 68 Square Metres Art Space, Copenhagen
	Market Forces: A Friction of Opposites, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong
2012	Dazed and Confused Emerging Artist Awards, London
	London Open, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
	Alptraum, Green Papaya Art Projects, Manila
2011	Premiums 2011, Royal Academy of Arts, London
2010	Bad Igloo Lust, The Royal Standard, Liverpool
2009	Fears That I May Cease To Be, Generator Projects, Dundee
	Diaspora Project, curated by Ong Keng Sen, Edinburgh International Festival
	Self-made Cavalcade, Art's Complex, Edinburgh Art
	Festival and Academie der Bildenden Kunst, Munich
2008	Bloomberg New Contemporaries, Liverpool Biennale of Contemporary Art,
	Pio Abad/ Allison Gibbs/ John Thomson, Intermedia Gallery, Centre of Contemporary Art, Glasgow
	The Golden Record, Collective Gallery, Edinburgh
	Autarchy, Studio Warehouse Gallery, Glasgow

A painting, a guitar, a wig and a wheelie bag, curated by Jim Lambie, Kelvinhaugh Arches, Glasgow

Art futures 2008, Bloomberg Space, London

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2015	Ateneo Art Awards, Winner
2014	Ateneo Art Awards, Finalist
2013	Ateneo Art Awards, Finalist
2012	Dazed and Confused Emerging Artist Awards, Finalist
	Deutsche Bank Award for Creative Enterprises
2009	Scottish Arts Council Creative and Professional Development Fund, Grant Recipient
2008	Bloomberg New Contemporaries, Selected Artist
	Studio Project 10, Market Gallery, Artist in Residence, Glasgow
	Scottish Arts Council Creative and Professional Development Fund, Grant Recipient
2007	Springboard Programme, Artist in Residence, Cove Park
	Studio Warehouse, One-Year Studio Grant, Glasgow
	William and Mary Armour Travel Bursary

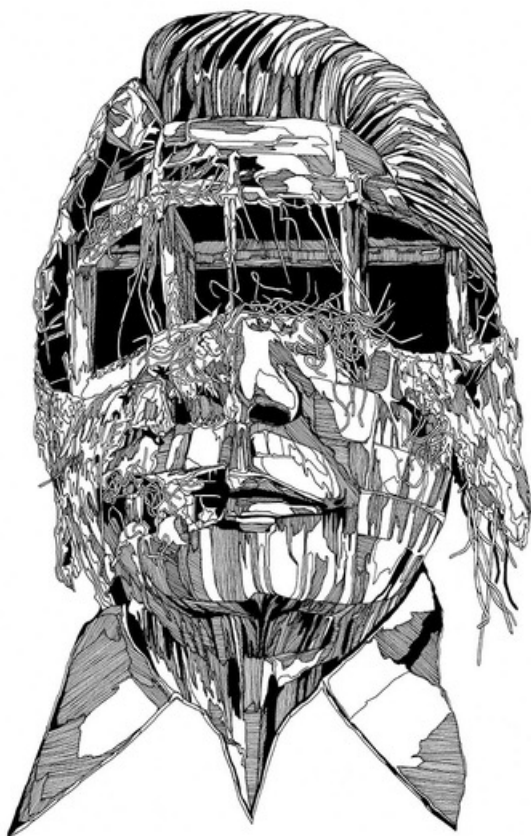
COLLECTIONS

Freelands Foundation Collection, London

Zabludowicz Collection, London

Hiscox Collection, London

The McManus Museum, Dundee, Scotland



SILVERLENS

SILVERLENS (Manila), Through its artist representation, institutional collaborations, and exhibition programming including art fairs and gallery partnerships, SILVERLENS aims to place its artists within the broader framework of the contemporary art dialogue. Its continuing efforts to transcend borders across art communities in Asia have earned it recognition from both artists and collectors as one of the leading contemporary art galleries in Southeast Asia. SILVERLENS was founded by Isa Lorenzo and Rachel Rillo in 2004.