



Utopia Hasn't Failed Me Yet
Gary-Ross Pastrana

GARY-ROSS PASTRANA
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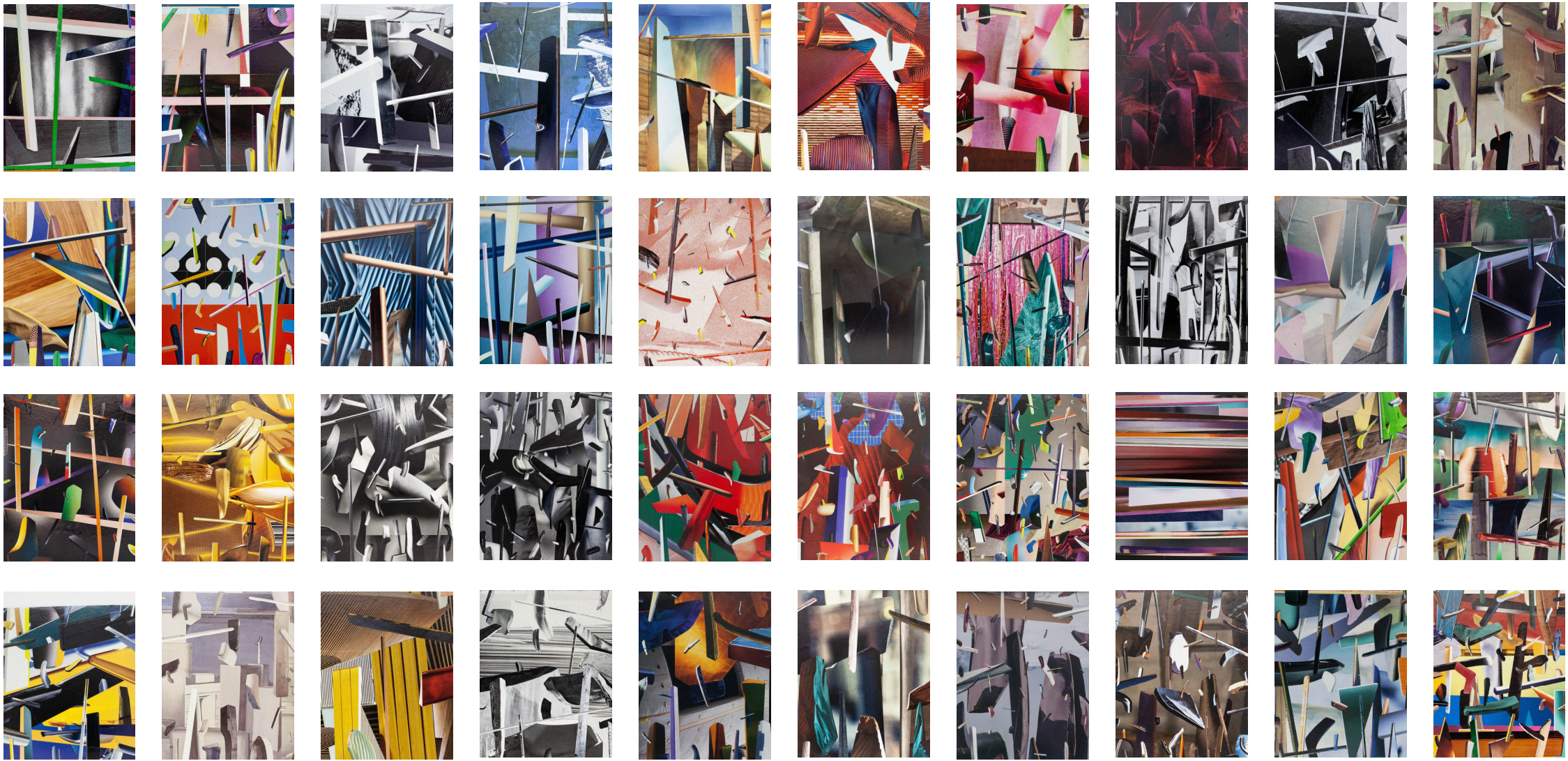
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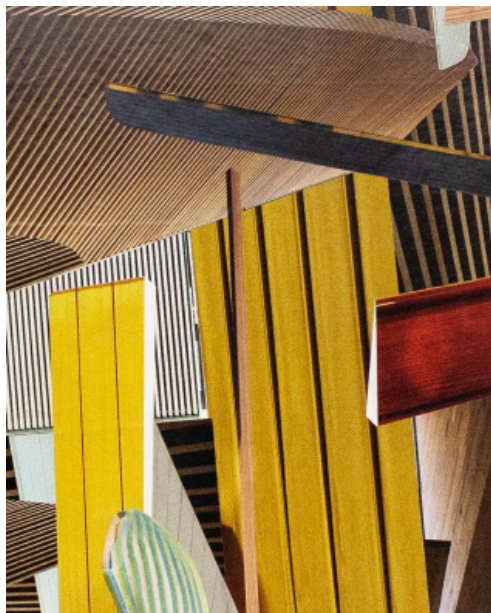
Gary-Ross Pastrana

Utopia Hasn't Failed Me Yet (Notes On Collage Practice)

1. ***Origin.*** I trace back my first real engagement with collage in the summer of 1999, around the same period when I was in the early stages of developing my object/process/concept-based practice. It was clear to me then (as it was with my other peers who were also non-painters), that I had to take on a variety of 'day jobs' like stage design work, banner painting, minor graphic design jobs or whatever else is on offer in order to support my practice. When I began working on these projects though, I immediately found my compositional skills, and my use of color, the way I handled forms and the like to be under-developed and lacking. This realization prompted me to look back at my uninspired collage plates and rethink why I never really got interested in making them while in art school. Then, I pushed myself to start making small collages again, primarily as a kind of exercise, a way of enhancing my compositional faculties, to learn more about the use of colors and how to organize elements in a two-dimensional plane, all in effort to be better equipped at performing in my so-called 'day job'. From this very pragmatic beginning, it has gone on to evolve into a kind of self-generating, lifelong project, something that has stood side by side and has assuredly complemented my object/process-based practice.



005-10.13.2017
2017



009-10.17.2017
2017



013-10.21.2017
2017



014-10.22.2017
2017



017-10.25.2017
2017



022-10.30.2017
2017



025-11.02.2017
2017



038-11.15.2017
2017





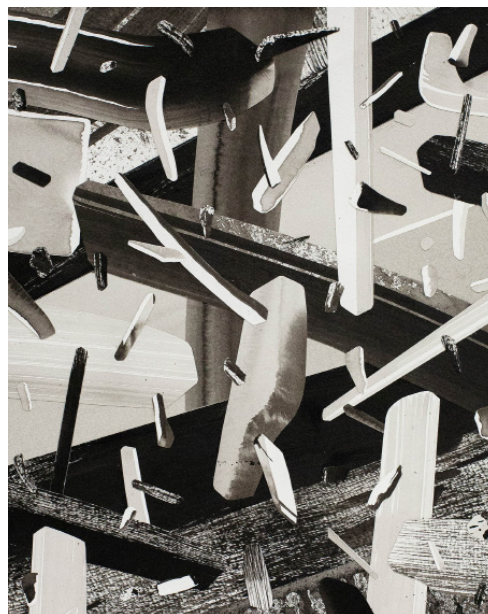
2. **Practice.** Since the beginning, I've always used certain parameters, restrictions, constraints as a kind generative and contextualizing tool in my collage work. This current project, wherein a single, 10x8in. work is to be done each day, was initially conceived as a way of developing a daily practice, something that I can sustain indefinitely, with minimal requirements for working space, material, or even time. It was also seen as a possible way of one day migrating or gathering all my collage-based ideas into a single, unified project. In the background, the pioneering conceptual artist On Kawara's Today series and other projects served as silent inspiration and guide.
3. **Guide.** The reference to On Kawara, upon closer look, perhaps leans more on the physical, operational aspect of creating a body of work, on how small yet consistent gestures can later possibly amount to something that approaches monumentality. And while his practice has been one of the highest exemplars of conceptual art, I also trace a slight performative aspect in it, especially in the way that the repetitive tasks become a kind of routine, something that his body must enact each day, like making a painting, sending a postcard or a telegram, in spite of varying circumstances. And while for him, the recurring subject matter and task are somehow already predetermined by what day it is or the time that he woke up, in my case, each new work functions more like a daily puzzle that I constantly need to solve
4. **Puzzle.** I approach each new work as one would, answering the crossword or sudoku puzzles that come in daily with the morning paper. Each day/work presents a new set of problems, albeit recurring and familiar, that I need to work out and continuously find a solution to. The main difference here is that I myself created the problem and the solution is always unspecified; In fact, I remain the only arbiter who decides whether I've already gotten it right or not. While it could get challenging at times, the sustained, daily aspect of this practice somehow generates its own momentum that then nudges and propels the series forward.
5. **Seriality.** A part of me imagines that each collage I produce is also a fragment, a segment in a series that builds up into a larger narrative, in the way that films are essentially made up of individual frames viewed in a certain speed and sequence. As currently conceived, the ongoing project is organized into sections or groupings of 40 works which are then defined primarily by the material utilized in each set.



043-11.20.2017
2017



045-11.22.2017
2017



051-11.28.2017
2017



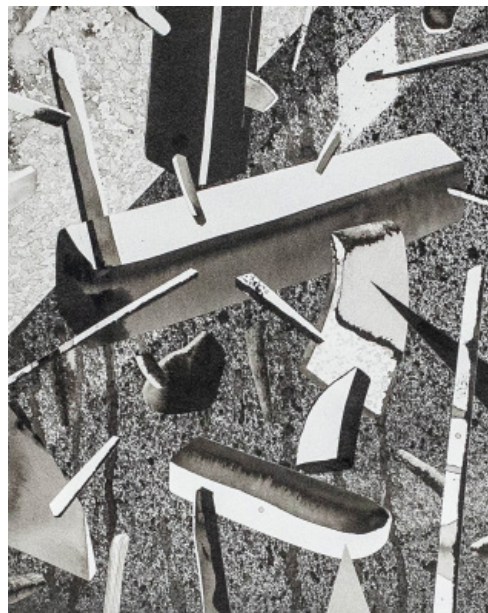
053-11.30.2017
2017



057-12.04.2017
2017



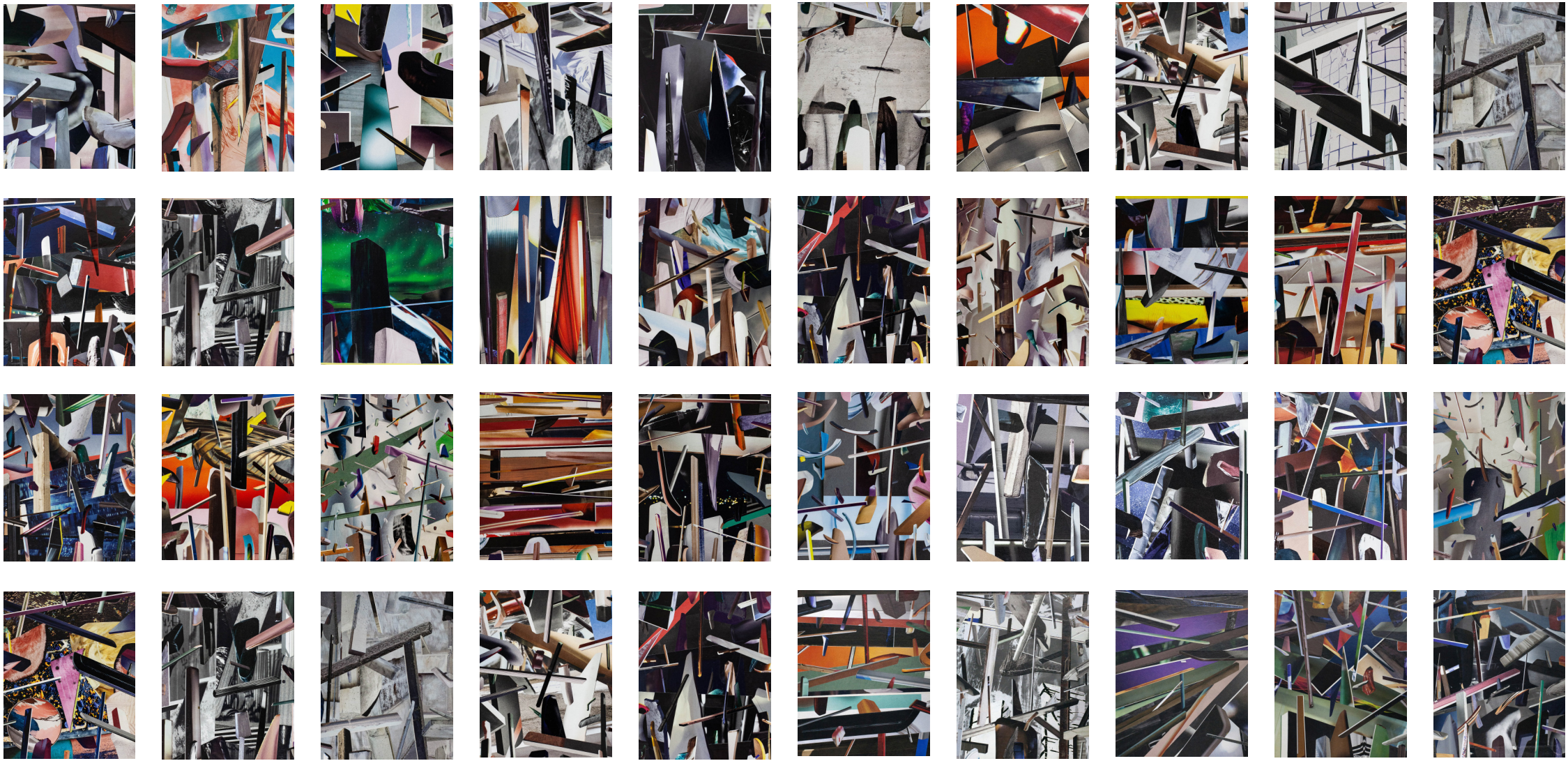
062-12.09.2017
2017



064-12.11.2017
2017



071-12.18.2017
2017

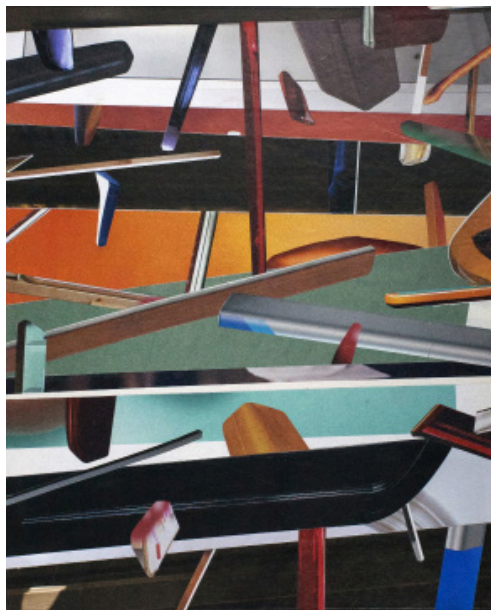




6. **Material.** I always try to maximize the interplay between the found the accidental. Magazine pages offer an immediate source of surface information that I can cut and shape into the various elements that end up populating my 10x8in working area. Other materials, like the ink and aerosol spray paint on paper, are materials that I had to prepare beforehand and that I later needed to sift through for incidental markings, some interesting overlaying of colors or textures, which I then extracted and reconfigured into new compositions. The ink, at times, was mixed with water and sprayed randomly onto the paper. Other times it was spilled directly from the bottle or spread with large brushes. Friends and studio visitors were also invited to apply the ink to the paper however they wanted. Rather than paintings, I see them more as ink-marks or impressions made on paper. The aerosol paint was also employed in this 'automatic writing' kind of manner. Sometimes the paper used was crumpled, folded or peppered randomly with masking tape before being sprayed on, to achieve variances. The current set utilizes printed screengrabs of videotape noises, various static, broken and deteriorated images from the documentary Wild, Wild, Country. Initially I was amazed by how much recorded material they were able to gather from when this ultimately failed utopian project was first being dreamed of and later implemented in the early 80's. Then I began noticing the glitches, the broken images and missing details in the recordings. Somehow, I thought this could be an interesting metaphor and visually, they were also quite painterly and graphic and likewise came into existence in

an accidental manner. I like how these things are now being used to build new compositions, perhaps new models for dreamed up cities and other lofty ideas.

7. **Building.** For some reason, I've always related more to the idea of building, that a collage is a kind of picture or model that I build, closer to an object that I craft by hand rather than a picture that one draws or paints. I cut out each element and see it more than just a shape or a silhouette; each one is an individual object, something with dimensionality, depth and weight, something that responds light, force and gravity. At certain groupings, they may resemble anything from monolithic structures to visions of futuristic or premodern cities, other times they seem to depict floating bodies that are either drifting or falling, converging or caught in mid-explosion. This visual language has slowly and steadily evolved through the years, seemingly at its own autonomous direction and pace. I may have identified the materials and cut out all the forms, but rearrangement of elements seemingly follow an imbedded logic that stays true to the narrative and persists till the end.



32/40 III - undated
2017-2018



33/40 III - undated
2017-2018



34/40 III - undated
2017-2018



35/40 III - undated
2017-2018



084-12.31.2017
2017



085-01.01.2018
2018



096-01.12.2018
2018



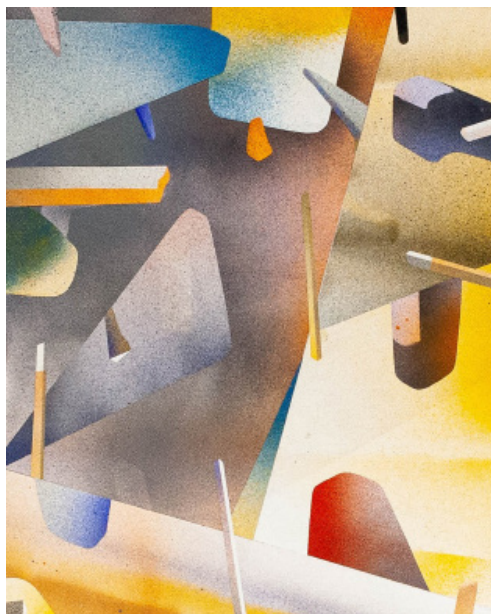
107-01.23.2018
2018





8. **End.** I've seriously contemplated abandoning my collage work, quite a handful of times already in the past. Like I said, I began this as a private exercise that I never really intended for other people to see. It was by chance, 4 years after I started, that someone heard of what I was doing and encouraged me to show what I've made so far. Around that time, I felt a disconnect between the collage that I was doing for myself and my object-based works, which I saw as my real work. It was only when I started looking at it in terms of process that I began to see a link, a glimmer of commonality that I've now slowly nursed to health. The current project is a further attempt at distilling and trimming away factors that I now see as irrelevant and extraneous in the way that I approach collage. Looking ahead, I sincerely hope that this daily practice is something that I can sustain for the long term, indeed up to the last day that I still physically, and perhaps mentally, can.

by Gary-Ross Pastrana



117-04.06.2018
2018



119-04.08.2018
2018



122-04.11.2018
2018



124-04.13.2018
2018

collage (acrylic and aerosol on paper)
11.69h x 8.27w in • 29.69h x 21.01w cm



127-04.16.2018
2018



130-04.20.2018
2018



132-04.22.2018
2018



149-05.08.2018
2018





152-06.18.2018
2018



153-06.19.2018
2018



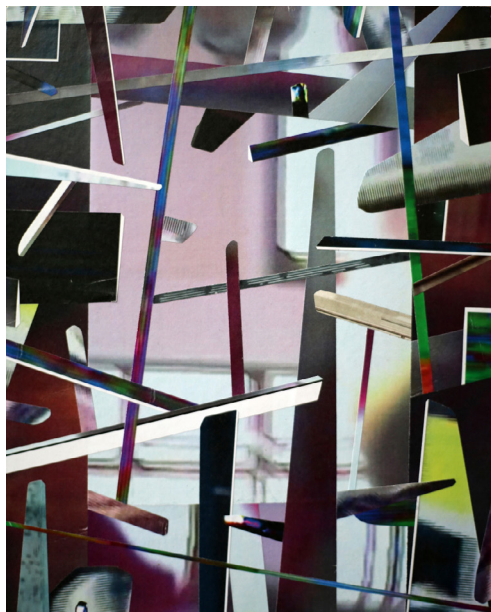
154-06.22.2018
2018



155-06.25.2018
2018



156-06.26.2018
2018



157-06.29.2018
2018



158-06.30.2018
2018



159-07.01.2018
2018



GARY-ROSS PASTRANA

Bio

Gary-Ross Pastrana's practice has been one of the most persistent in terms of investigating the real relationship between ideas and objects. His conceptual pieces, although loaded with poetic intensity, remain unobtrusively subtle and even almost quaint in their appearance. Coiled photographs, woven tales from found pictures in the internet, sawed off parts of a boat shipped to another country, his shirt tied into a pole to commensurate a flag, these are the slightest of turns Gary-Ross has his objects make to create a new text within.

Born in 1977 in Manila, he received his Bachelors degree in Painting from the University of the Philippines where he was awarded the Dominador Castaneda Award for Best Thesis. He has gained considerable experience and exposure within the region, with residency programs in Bandung, Kyoto and Bangkok and most recently at the Center for Contemporary Art, Singapore. Pastrana is a recipient of the CCP Thirteen Artists Award in 2006. He has shown at the Singapore Art Museum, Metropolitan Museum of the Philippines, the Jorge B. Vargas Museum and was part of the 2012 New Museum Triennale and 2008 Busan Biennale. In 2004, he co-founded Future Prospects art space and has since continually organized exhibitions in Manila and abroad.

AWARDS, RESIDENCES, AND GRANTS

2016	Finalist, Sovereign Asian Art Prize
2015	NTU Center for Contemporary Art, Gillman Barracks, Singapore
2010	Bangkok University Gallery, Bangkok
2009	The Making of New Silk Roads, Arthub/BUG, Bangkok, Thailand
2008	Japan Foundation, Jenesys Program, Kyoto
2006	13 Artists Award, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
2004	Asian Cultural Council, Bangkok University Gallery and Big Sky Mind Exchange Project, Bangkok

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018	<i>Utopia Hasn't Failed Me Yet</i> , Silverlens, Manila
2017	<i>_*Clock Map Knife Mirror*_</i> , ROH Projects, Jakarta, Indonesia
2016	<i>The Untamed Wall</i> , Silverlens, Manila
2014	<i>99%</i> , Silverlens, Singapore and Mo_Space, Manila <i>Summa</i> , Jorge Vargas Muesum, Manila
2013	<i>On (or before) Photography / The Silver + Gelatin Works</i> , Silverlens, Manila
2011	<i>Vivo Fragmenta</i> , Bangkok University Gallery, Bangkok
2009	<i>Indivibilis</i> , Silverlens, Manila
2008	<i>New Collages</i> , Silverlens, Manila
2004	<i>Stray Bullets</i> , Finale Art File, Manila
2003	<i>Actuality/Virtuality</i> , IAF Shop*, Fukuoka City <i>Detour/Set/Fraction</i> , Green Papaya Art Projects, Manila
2002	<i>Echolalia</i> , Finale Art File, Manila
2000	<i>Sustaining Symmetry</i> , Big Sky Mind, Manila

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 *(upcoming, November 2018) Signum Contemporary Objects: Storage of Memories*, A-11 Gallery, Manila
(upcoming, September 2018) The Extra Extra Ordinary, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila
(upcoming) Imago Mundi Highlights, Imago Mundi Musuem, Treviso, Italy
Never Is A Promise, two-man show with Herman Chong, inaugural show, Calle Wright, Manila
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
- 2017 *Counterfeit Monochromes*, MO Space, Manila
Curated by Federico de Vera, Ayala Museum, Manila
The Other Face of the Moon, Asia Culture Center, Korea
Sydney Contemporary, Carriageworks, Australia
Melted City 4, RISD ISB Gallery, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island
Translación, Inaugural Exhibition, Curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
- 2016 *The Immeasurable Here*, curated by Jason Wee, Outlet Gallery Brooklyn, New York
Extended Play, Vinyl on Vinyl, Manila
Art Basel, Silverlens, Hong Kong
Practising Habits of the Day, curated by FormContent, ICA Lasalle, Singapore
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila
- 2015 *I submit to the wisdom of the body*, Silverlens, Manila
Eagles Fly, Sheeps Flock - Biographical Imprints, Curated by Khim Ong, South East Asia Platform Art Stage Singapore
Exhibit 101: Curated by Vera Mey, The Lab, CCA, Singapore
Art Taipei, Silverlens, Taipei
Exhibit 101, With Li Ran, The Lab, Singapore
The Vexed Contemporary, curated by Joselina Cruz, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila
You Must Change Your Life, Equator Art Projects, Singapore
Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens, Manila

- Art Basel*, Silverlens, Hong Kong
Art Stage Singapore, Silverlens, Singapore
- 2014 *Still/Moving: A Triple Bill on the Image*, curated by Sam I-Shan and Alexander Supartono, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
Art Taipei, Silverlens, Taipei
Afterimage, SAM at 8Q, Singapore
stick up don't move smile (reinventing black, 1957 to today), Finale Art File, Manila
What does it all matter, as long as the wounds fit the arrows?, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
New Natives: Survey of Contemporary Filipino Art, Lightbombs Contemporary
The Bold Sopranos, curated by Arianna Gellini, Gallery Exit, Hong Kong
- 2013 *Art Basel*, Silverlens, Hong Kong
The Philippine Contemporary: To Scale the Past and the Possible, curated by Patrick D. Flores, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Manila
Ley Hunting, Silverlens, Singapore
- 2012 *Ley Hunting*, Silverlens, Manila
Marcel Duchamp in South-East Asia, curated by Tony Godfrey, Equator Art Projects, Singapore
Encounter, Experience, and Environment, curated by Eugene Tan, Gillman Barracks, Singapore
The Ungovernables, Curated by Eungie Joo, New Museum, New York
- 2011 *Immemorial*, curated by Steve Elland and Peewee Roldan, Chan Contemporary Art Space, Darwin
Islands, Espace Louis Vuitton, Singapore
VOLTA 7, Basel
Points of Ellipsis, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong
Complete and Unabridged, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2010 *Chûte*, Curated by Hikaru Miyakawa, Aichi Triennale, Nagoya

	<i>Minimum Yields Maximum</i> , Monte Vista Projects, Los Angeles
	<i>Serial Killers</i> , Taksu Gallery, Singapore
	<i>Immemorial</i> , Jorge Vargas Museum, Philippines
2009	<i>Thrice Upon a Time</i> , Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
	<i>NAT-4: Work From Manila</i> , OK Mountain, Austin, Texas
2008	<i>Busan Biennale</i> , Sea Art Festival, Busan
	<i>Futuramanila</i> , Osage Gallery, Hong Kong/Singapore
2007	<i>Metropolitan Mapping</i> , Hong Kong Cultural Center, Hong Kong
	<i>Manila Envelope</i> , Worth Ryder Gallery, Los Angeles
2006	<i>Aesthetics/Dietetics</i> , Curated by Mizuki Endo, GAMeC, Bergamo
2005	<i>Daejeon Fast</i> , Gallery Banjiha, Daejeon
2004	<i>Cross Currents</i> , BUG, Bangkok

ORGANIZER/CURATOR

2016	<i>MAPS</i> , ROH Projects, Jakarta
2013	<i>Space and Two Points</i> , Silverlens, Singapore
	<i>Bernardo Pacquing Max Balatbat</i> , Silverlens, Manila
	<i>Rélikt</i> , Silverlens, Singapore
	<i>The Midnight Marriage</i> , Silverlens, Manila
	<i>Ley Hunting Part 2</i> , Silverlens, Singapore
2012	<i>Ley Hunting Part 1</i> , Silverlens, Manila
	<i>Ghost Chasing Ghost</i> , Finale Art File, Manila
	<i>The Porous Border</i> , g23 Gallery, Bangkok
2011	<i>Complete and Unabridged</i> , ICA, Singapore/Osage Gallery Hong Kong
	<i>On the Radar: Six New Symptoms</i> , Silverlens, Manila
2010	<i>Broke+Louie Cordero+Poklong Anading</i> , Manila Contemporary, Manila
2009	<i>Tears, Cuts and Ruptures: A Philippine Collage Review</i> , Silverlens, Manila
	<i>Archetypes</i> , New designs by Stanley Ruiz, Silverlens, Manila

	<i>Land Of Promise</i> by Gail and Marija Vicente, Silverlens, Manila
2008	<i>Futuramanila</i> , Osage Galleries, Hong Kong, Singapore
	<i>Untitled, (Four Filipina Artists)</i> , Kyoto Art Center, Kyoto

EDUCATION

University of the Philippines - Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Painting

Dominador Castañeda Award for Best Thesis 2000

PUBLICATIONS

	"The Vexed Contemporary." La Sallian Education INnovators Foundation. 2017
	Cover image. Esquire. Manila: Summit Media. October 2016
	Art Asia Pacific. Hong Kong: Art Asia Pacific. Issue 88. 2014
	"Still Moving: After Image." Singapore: Singapore Art Museum. 2014
	Marc Bollandsee. "Southeast Asian Contemporary Art Now." 2013
	Ho, Louis. "Perdido Eden." Art Asia Pacific. Accessed April 2013. http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/
	WebExclusives/PerdidoEden
	New Museum. "Gary-Ross Pastrana." New Museum Triennial: The Ungovernables. UA: Skira Rizzoli
	Publications, Inc. 2012
	"The Porous Border" Catalogue. Bangkok: Srinakharinwirot University. 2012
	"Tomorrow, Today." Contemporary Art From The Singapore Art Museum (2009-2011). Singapore: Singapore Art Museum. 2012
	"Marcel Duchamp in South-East Asia" Catalogue. Singapore: Equator Art Projects. 2012
	"Vivo Fragmenta." Catalogue. Bangkok: Bangkok University Gallery. 2011
	"Thrice Upon A Time." Philippines. Singapore: Singapore Art Museum. 2009
	"The Philippine Yearbook: 61 Artists That Will Change The World." Manila: The Fookien Times
	Yearbook Publishing Company. 2009
	"Busan Biennale 2008." Catalogue. 2008. pp. 114-115
	Papaya: Absolut Magazine. Green Papaya Art Projects. September 2008



ABOUT SILVERLENS

Through its artist representation, institutional collaborations, art consultancy, 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.