

# CARINDERIAS, CABALLOS AND OTHER MANILA SHENANIGANS

**FRANCIS COMMEYNE**

## FRANCIS COMMEYNE

b. 1988

2011 ■ College of Fine Arts Major in Studio Arts  
Magna Cum Laude, College Valedictorian  
University of the Philippines, Diliman  
Quezon City, Philippines

### SOLO EXHIBITION

2012 ■ CARINDERIAS, CABALLOS AND OTHER MANILA SHENANIGANS, Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati, Philippines

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2012 ■ SMALL WORLD, Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati, Philippines

2012 ■ THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: JOSE RIZAL, Manila Contemporary, Makati City, Philippines

POST NO BILL, Manila Contemporary (in partnership with Tin-aw Art Gallery), Makati City, Philippines

IMAGINING IDENTITY: 100 FILIPINO SELF-PORTRAITS, Finale Art File, Makati City, Philippines

DOS POR DOS (2 X 2), 371 Art Space, San Juan, Philippines

2011 ■ THE COLLEGE GUYS, 371 Art Space, San Juan, Philippines

XING E. JACINTO, Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati City, Philippines

SURVIVALISM, Light & Space Contemporary, Fairview, Philippines

PETIT FORMAT: P.A.P FINE PRINT EXHIBITION, Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), Pasay City, Philippines

2010 ■ 3D, Mag:net Gallery, Katipunan, Philippines.

ULTRAMARINE, New Eastwood Mall, Libis, Quezon City, Philippines

YOU MUST SEE BEFORE YOU DIE..., Mag:net Gallery, Katipunan, Philippines  
BLAME THE SAVAGES, NCCA Gallery, Intramuros, Philippines

### AWARDS & HONORS

April 2011 ■ College Valedictorian  
Outstanding Thesis Award

2010-2011 ■ Thesis Crantee of the College of Fine Arts, U.P. Diliman.

Aborted Delicacy (Calamansi Flavor) (detail)  
Closed - 13.25 x 11.5 x 4.5 cm.  
Open - 13.25 x 23.2 x 4.5 cm.



ART GALLERY  
Upper G/F, Somerset Olympia Makati  
Makati Ave. corner Sto. Tomas St.  
Makati City

GALLERY HOURS  
Monday - Saturday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

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10 November - 1 December 2012



**CHICKEN GALORE**  
Various objects in wooden cigar box  
Closed - 14 x 24 x 4.25 cm.  
Open - 28 x 24 x 4.25 cm.  
2012



**PORK GALORE**  
Various objects in wooden cigar box  
Closed - 24 x 14 x 4.25 cm.  
Open - 24 x 28 x 4.25 cm.  
2012



**MAKESHIFT DINER (Installation)**  
Acrylic, spray paint, hook, towel, metal cup with forks & spoons, wooden shelf & stools  
Dimensions Variable



**CABALLO 2: TOURISTIC SHIT & THE FILIPINO AESTHETIC (PART I)**  
Acrylic & plastic magnets on wooden ironing board  
Standing - 98.7 x 75 x 35.5 cm.  
Folded - 110 x 13 x 37 cm.  
2012

**CABALLO 5: THE RETURN OF SUPER LECHON**  
Acrylic on wooden ironing board  
Standing - 100 x 76 x 36 cm.  
Folded - 111 x 12 x 40 cm.  
2012



**CABALLO 4: EL CRIMEN DEL PADRE BANGUS**  
Acrylic on wooden ironing board  
Standing - 99 x 76 x 35.5 cm.  
Folded - 110 x 12.5 x 37cm.  
2012

**CABALLO 9: THIRD WORLD SETTING, FIRST CLASS CUTS**  
Acrylic, plastic magnets, wooden cigar box,  
plastic comb & scissors on wooden ironing board  
Standing - 100 x 78 x 37 cm.  
Folded - 112 x 13 x 40 cm.  
2012

**FRANCIS COMMEYNE**



ART GALLERY



THE ALMOST FORGOTTEN NARRATIVES & ALTERED STATES (PART I)  
Acrylic on canvas  
121.9 x 91.4 cm.  
2012



THE ALMOST FORGOTTEN NARRATIVES & ALTERED STATES (PART II)  
Acrylic on canvas  
121.9 x 91.4 cm.  
2012



CABALLO 11: FILIPINO ALTAR  
Acrylic & various objects on wooden ironing board  
Standing - 98.5 x 74.5 x 35.6 cm.  
Folded - 109.5 x 13.25 x 37 cm.  
2012

# Catching Up with Country

by Patrick D. Flores



ABORTED DELICACY  
Various Objects in wooden cigar box  
Closed - 13 x 11.5 x 3.10 cm.  
Open - 13 x 23 x 4 cm.  
2012



MESSAGES IN BOTTLES  
Various objects in wooden cigar box  
Closed - 24 x 14 x 4 cm.  
Open - 24 x 28 x 4 cm.  
2012



The artist begins as a sightseer, an avid one at that. As a child he moved around quite often with his parents across different continents, honing his wandering eyes to take in as much as well as to make sense of the mingling stimuli. Then, the traveler settles, inflecting his history of sightseeing with the sensibility of an excited resident or a wistful returning sojourner. When he takes this pause, he recovers a place, which he has seen before but is in the present reviewed through the lens of a re-acquaintance and a possible coming to terms with a past that is now before him. He engages with the place that is the Philippines, which is a part of his heritage, his mother being a Filipino. With his body in place after years of trips back and forth, he looks at what used to be a distant object with renewed disposition as an intimate subject, not fully fathomed nor completely intuited, but ceaselessly made fascinating, cherished for its charms.

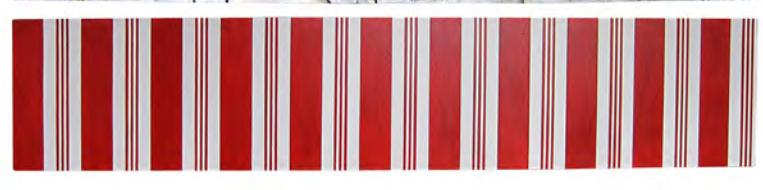
There is a sense of nostalgia involved in this revisit, this recourse to memory, thus the quaintness in the work, marked by a graphic quality that alludes to an exposure to and a fondness for surfaces and appearances. In a way, Francis Commeyne grasps this world with a cosmopolitan outlook that is aware of the prospects of rendering a different culture exotic in all its fraught implications. But then again, what is the exotic but the impasse generated by the very human failure to understand the other; it is a foil to the equally compelling argument about the very human capacity to converse across difference and to translate it in myriad idioms? This exhibition is yet another translation of local color in an imperfect affair.

In the works of Commeyne, three modes are brought to the fore.

First is the image of everyday life in the Philippines, like facades of makeshift houses, the wear and tear of time and weather and poverty revealing patterns that engage his artistic sensibility. Are these attritions prettified? Are they streamlined to their decorative contours? Do they become ornaments of survival, testaments to an enduring city and its persevering natives?

Second are boxes that offer compartments or niches in which he places things from here and there that remind him of the material culture of Philippine life, which suffuses much of what he is laying out in this exhibition. And this is quite copious: utensils, food, drinking sessions, cigarette vendors, bystanders, street signs, junk shops, slippers, beads, religious artifacts, and so on. These quotidian signs are novel to him and might be revivified through his art. What is most poignant in this remembrance is the efficacious oil, the liniment that his late mother had used to relieve him of all sorts of ailments. It might be in this memory of her touch, the maternal sentiment condensed in the oil that the artist could discern a trajectory to the culture; this would be more aesthetic and indexical rather than iconic or iconographic.

Third are morphing objects like the ironing boards that resemble surf boards. He is drawn to these horse-like contrivances and links them to the silhouette of elongated platforms for surfing as a reference to how tourism would like to picture the Philippines as emblematic of sun and sand.



SET UP SHOP  
Acrylic & color pencil on canvas  
152.4 x 152.4 cm. triptych  
2012

Large panel - 91.4 x 152.4 cm.  
2 smaller panels - 30.5 x 152.4 cm. each

At this point in Commeyne's renewal of ties with his country, the level of reckoning lies somewhere between the exotic and the souvenir. This has implications. On the one hand, it confronts him with the prospects of mystification, of reducing the local to the strange and therefore the interesting. On the other hand, it compels him to be attentive to the predicaments of culture, specifically of transforming it aesthetically in his art, to be more critical of his own attitude about it and the necessity to work on it to entitle him to home and partake of the politics of belonging. This gesture or maneuver will allow him to transcend the curiosity with which he currently scans the environment and become more inquisitive instead, more prone to interrogation, and in the long term overcome his instinct as a "Third culture kid."

The critic Susan Stewart in the book *On Longing* asserts that: "The souvenir is by definition always incomplete. And this incompleteness works on two levels. First, the object is metonymic to the scene of its original appropriation in the sense that it is a sample...Second, the souvenir must remain impoverished and partial so that it can be supplemented by a narrative discourse, a narrative discourse which articulates the play of desire." And here hovers the potential of Francis Commeyne's forays into culture: the sharp faculty and feeling of repossessing that which is remembered and of reliving it with a story and a telling that supplement the claim to birthright. ©