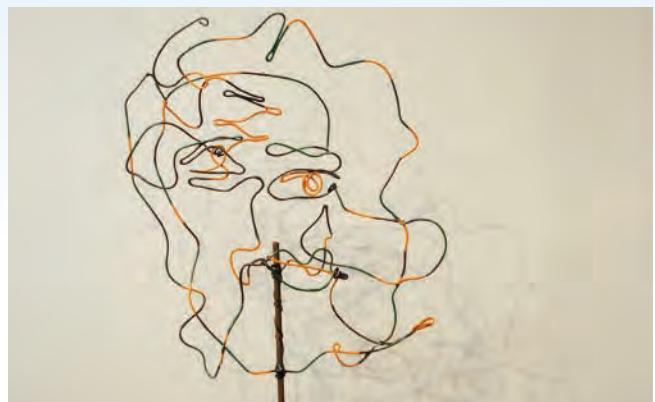




Alia Julia Pablo . POLYCHROME Mixed media, Variable dimensions, 2012



Alia Julia Pablo . POLYCHROME (detail)

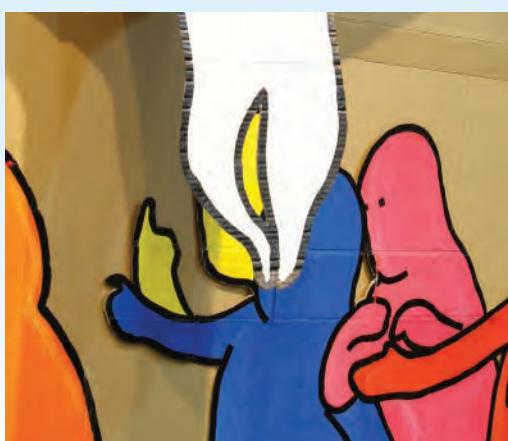
Cadiong transports these parodied forms into the meshed, flattened worlds of televised cartoons. His final salute seems embodied in the beer cans about to connect divine and earthly knowledge.

John Dave Cielo's piece embodies the notion of the surrogate and the act of self invention most strongly. *Feign* depicts stasis and flight. Three elements are conjoined by navels, one emerging from a headless body, the other from an industrial looking contraption. Cielo however regards these forms as false appearances and as elements of deception. Here he posits identity's elusive nature, profoundly claiming that no one is fully known to one's self. As such, *Feign* best illustrates the conundrum of contemporary existence.

Art critic Boris Groys succinctly maps this condition by considering the relationship between art and politics. In his



Ian Cadiong . IN HIS ABSENCE Acrylic on corrugated cardboard, Variable dimensions, 2012



Ian Cadiong . IN HIS ABSENCE (detail)

words, "politics has indeed become art and politics has already situated itself in the aesthetic field".<sup>3</sup> In this scenario, artists cease to produce images because the artist has become image himself. Groys calls this process 'self-design', an act than can either debilitate or invigorate. He insinuates that the production of the image of the self forces one to confront that image – "to correct, to change, to adapt and to contradict" it. This contrived surface is that which these young artists wish to make sense of.

Their reflections on time bide a leave taking, an eagerness coupled with anxiety when they face a world seduced and seemingly overwhelmed by signs. Their works gesture to a cognizance of this precarious state but are also imbued by a willingness to 'confront the self'. Their nuanced navigations of time signal a phase wherein they embark on yet another, more perilous journey, one that demands for art to be ever more introspective, immersed and responsive to the greater world that is its realm. ◎

<sup>3</sup> Groys, Boris. June-August 2009. "Self-Design and Aesthetic Responsibility" in E-flux Journal 7. [www.e-flux.com/journal/self-design-and-aesthetic-responsibility/](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/self-design-and-aesthetic-responsibility/), accessed 15 October 2012.



The Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA) is a government-run secondary school for artistically gifted and talented children and adolescents. It implements a special secondary education program committed to the conservation and promotion of the Filipino artistic and cultural traditions.

Since its inception in 1977, the PHSA has strived to develop the expertise and potentials of its artists-scholars, faculty, and staff to achieve the school's thrust of instilling pride in the Filipino people's artistic and cultural traditions.

Aside from academic and artistic training, the PHSA provides its students with opportunities for cultural appreciation that will contribute to their development as artists for others. The experience of living away from home and integrating with peers in this special residential high school cultivates in the young artists an attitude of independence tempered by the spirit of cooperation as they create art together. The site of the school is a vital factor in making the PHSA a most ideal learning institution. The mystical mountain of Maria Makiling is deemed to be powerful source of inspiration for artistic endeavors among young artists and their mentors. From time to time, local and foreign artists hold interaction sessions with the scholars of the PHSA to firm up their resolve to work for national understanding through culture and art education. Determined in its belief that artists play a key role in national development, the PHSA continuously innovates programs that directly address the educational, social emotional, economic and cultural realities in the country.

Indeed, the creative works of our young artists celebrate past and the present view of their generation. By defining the past and the present, not only their works of art add value to our lives - they help us appreciate the future.



Audrey Faith Pacheco  
R-EVOLUTION (detail)



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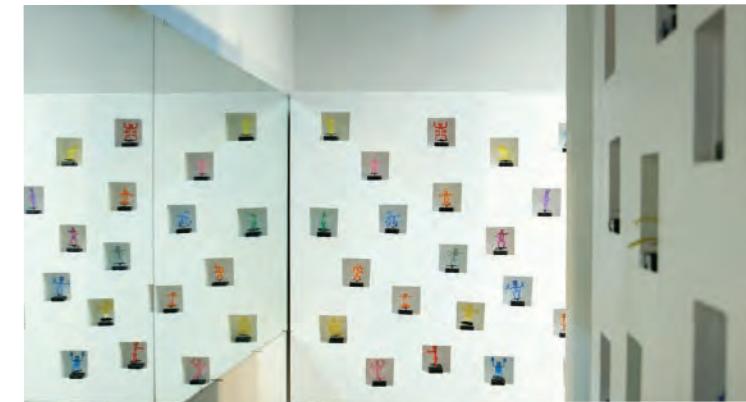
IAN CADIONG  
JOHN DAVE CIELO  
GAB FERRER  
ALIA JULIA PABLO  
AUDREY FAITH PACHECO



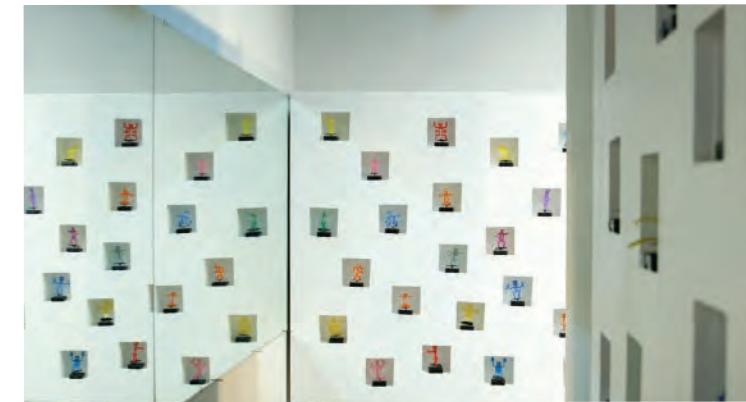
19 October - 3 November 2012



John Dave Cielo . KALULUWĀ (detail)



Audrey Faith Pacheco . R-EVOLUTION  
Clocks and plastic folders, Variable dimensions, 2012



Gab Ferrer . PERAMBULATORY IMPRESSIONS Ink and carved rubber, 144 x 144 in / 365.76 x 365.76 cm, 2012



Gab Ferrer . PERAMBULATORY IMPRESSIONS (details)

Tessa Maria Guazon

# STALLING TIME



John Dave Cielo . KALULUWĀ Mixed media, Variable dimensions, 2012

Adrift may best characterize our existence in a world that thrives on metaphors and surrogates. Sociologist Stephen Pfohl unpacks the work of sorcery in this enchantment. What we know it seems are frail replacements for what was "once directly lived, simulations sold back to us as mesmerizing connections to what is real".<sup>1</sup> This lends an experience of the uncanny, a sense of the world becoming familiar and strange - "an enchanted encounter in a disenchanted world".<sup>2</sup> In this conflicted state of being, history is lost to us, drowned in a sea of "somnambulant signifiers" that summon us to partake of ritualistic forgetting and ignorance.

Selected artists from this year's graduates of the Philippine High School for the Arts demonstrate a keen intuition of this predicament. Choosing to imagine their suite of works as embodying the act of wandering aimlessly, swimming the currents of the world they inhabit, floating on a fragile surface, becoming weightless, all these speak of their grasp of such existence. What is unusual still is that none of them directly references the enticements of this hyper-networked world. Yet they all speak of relations and connections, of places ardently real, of present and past in forms light hearted and playful yet replete with discernment, long lost to jaded minds and deadened hearts.

Time is central to this world adrift. In a post-Fordist economy, time assumes a fluid, provisional nature, condensing and expanding according to the dictates of global roaming and other virtual modes. The itinerant, the transitory, and the migrant all embody

this permeable and provisional nature evoking experience suffused by anxiety and gnawing unease.

Audrey Faith Pacheco and Alia Julia Pablo approaches the question of time moored in the physicality of site. Pacheco's piece *R-Evolution* reflects on the ties between existence and time. If time is indeed the vast, infinite sphere against which we measure our being, how best can it demonstrate our evolution and survival? Pacheco frames a speculative answer by looking back to images carved and drawn by humans on cave walls. She forms them anew, reminding us that these images endure through the constant reinvention of meanings and symbols, an exercise that ensures survival.

Pablo on the other hand weaves whorls of time present (soon to pass) and future in delicate wire portraits of classmates, with whom she will soon part ways. In *Polychrome* we discern semblances and not exact likenesses. The installation ensemble is outlined against space framing and encapsulating an absent landscape, which to the artist may very well be Makiling, where her school is.

Opposed to the immaterial, almost hallucinatory space of virtuality, Gab Ferrer maps the palpable grit of the city. Ferrer records urban trails with the use of material found in Recto and Binondo in Manila. The rubber sheet on which she etches striated forms is the same material used for slipper soles.

*Perambulatory Impression no. 1* is a path through the city as well as record of its inherent contrasts, an impression etched in memory, a striving to adroitly recall things heard, seen and felt.

Ferrer depicts fixity and levity in contrasting ways. The vivid marks of her piece place in relief the porosity of its ground. The juxtaposition begins with technique and is continuously apparent in her fusion of our innate desire for the reassuringly permanent and our fascination for the fleeting and temporary, in this case memory. This can be seen as attempt to navigate time through place, the city's endearing familiarity and memory's shifting nature. The city for Ferrer may signify progress, modernity's follies and time's linear paths.

Ian Cadiong in marked playfulness combines the gravitas of the past with the hollow signifiers of our time. He reconstructs masterpieces in naif figures on cardboard. Like the ground on which they were drawn, the paintings assume a flatness made manifest through stark outlines and unalloyed colour. Hallowed space is transformed into the playful fantasy world of network entertainment. From the sanctum of cathedrals

<sup>1</sup> Pfohl, Stephen. 2010. "Digital Magic, Cybernetic Sorcery: On the politics of fascination and fear" in *Code Drift: Essays in Critical Digital Studies*. [www.ctheory.net/article.aspx?id=654](http://www.ctheory.net/article.aspx?id=654), accessed 16 October 2012.  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid