



MUJER DE LA GUARDIA
Oil, etching, relief, and repoussé on copper
33 x 24 inches
2011



BAYI ENVUELTA
Oil and etching on copper
33 x 24 inches
2011



MANANG MAGDA
Oil and etching on copper
33 x 24 inches
2011



BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB
Oil and etching on copper
33 x 24 inches
2011

LEE PAJE
b. 1980

- 2005 to 2009 ■ Bachelor of Fine Arts major in Painting, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines (Magna cum Laude, Best Thesis)
- 1998 to 2002 ■ Bachelor of Arts major in Communication Arts, Miriam College, Quezon City, Philippines

SOLO EXHIBITION

- 2011 ■ MATER POTESTATEM, Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati City, Philippines

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2010 ■ PULL D STRING 2 STOP Galerie Anna, SM Megamall, Ortigas, Mandaluyong City, Philippines
 - SMOKESCREEN Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati City, Philippines
 - 32010 Kaida Art Gallery, Quezon City, Philippines
- 2009 ■ PANGATAWANAN MO NAH! U.P. Vargas Museum, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
 - ATAT Tin-aw Art Gallery, Makati City, Philippines
 - DEGREE SHOW The Corredor Gallery, U.P. College of Fine Arts, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
 - DIG IT TOO! Whitebox Gallery, Cubao Expo, Quezon City, Philippines
- 2008 ■ OBRA Big & Small Gallery, Robinson's Place Ermita, Manila City, Philippines
 - WEATHER & EMOTION Tam-awan Village, Quezon Hill, Baguio City, Philippines
 - SYMPOSIUM SERIES The Corredor Gallery, U.P. College of Fine Arts, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
- 2007 ■ AssoRtmenT U.P. Faculty Center, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
 - LETRAS U.P. Faculty Center, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines



SANCTUS CUNNUS
Choclit (liquer filled chocolates)
Variable
2011

Para Series in collaboration with Abril Valdemoro
Special thanks to Trisha Carranceja for assisting in the production of Sanctum Cunnus



A R T G A L L E R Y

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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Lee Paje
MATER POTESTATEM

CURATED BY LEO ABAYA



A R T G A L L E R Y

5 - 26 August 2011

TERTIAPARA
Oil on relief
32 x 29 x 9 inches
2011



PRAY (RE)TELL

by Leo Abaya

As the title of the exhibition suggests, we begin with power; power as the control man exercises over events and situations from a position of privilege that asserts in order to consolidate and perpetuate itself in the cause of an interest. Best understood in terms of relationships, we see power positionally, referentially and coercively in government and institutions, social structures, ideologies, cultural and professional practices, personal life, even in the very negation of all of the above.

The oversimplified model provides that one has control and another is the subject of that control. A less naive view would be that it is a multidimensional process. But the fact remains that in order to have it, one must have a currency in order to obtain it. This currency comes in the form of elective or delegated authority, social class, wealth, force, knowledge, and relationships, within which are traditional and expedient practices that are based on a set of values. And since more currency forms are held by very few, the negligible and residual ones held by many become, by comparison, occluded, hidden or invisible. As invisible, they tend not to be consciously thought of and become routine, banal, unremarkable, inert or mere part of the fabric of upbringing.

It is in this occlusion and invisibility that public, institutional, explicit, overt and persuasive power exerts itself and sets up standards upon which everything else is implicitly measured. To cite a few examples: if not identified, notions of scientific discovery or advancement will be assumed as Western, if not Japanese. Similarly, when the heroism of an unidentified character is noted, receptors of information will assume the character to be a man. Those who are successful and hold important responsibility in the public sphere are assumed to be heterosexual. If identified as woman, a suspected criminal suspect will be assumed to be from the servile and poor sectors of society. Nurture and mothering are assumed innate in women. In conjugal unions, the reproductive should take precedence over the sexual, and everything pre-Hispanic is assumed as indigenous and more Philippine, ad nauseum.

These become the norm and the template. They permeate into porosity of life and become one of the key ingredients of myth making. In my view, something becomes a myth when it is plucked out of its original time and authentic context in service of power or its exercise thereof. This arguably may very well be a model whose refinement has been ongoing for millennia. This model manifests visibly in various forms imagined and imaged as it were in scholarship, literature, politics, social practice, ritual and art.

And so it seems for the works in this exhibition. Painted images of woman in various mythic incarnations sit side by side with a repetition of a stylized female orifice, whose source is also used as form-image of edible sculptures intended for actual consumption, celebrate female power and can qualify as a worthy addition to the idiom popularized by the likes of Judy Chicago in certain aspects or Brenda Fajardo in another.

Painted on a pre-fabricated matrix of a sexually ambiguous bust silhouette, the imagery narrate woman as bearer of knowledge at the onset of modernity as well as that in the Judeo-Christian genesis myth, woman as interceding agent of the divine as Theotokos and Babaylan rolled into one, woman as *femme fatale* in the form of indigenous amazon and the Biblical Samson's fall, woman as steward of the universe in Manobo folklore and of manhood as Lilith, woman in the form of predator/victim in birth and death as *manananggal/aswang* and Mary Magdalene, woman in the form of a princess as the Visayan *binukot*, a teller of tales and as subject of a tale and woman as Goddess in the form of the fertility deity Ikapati and Virgin Mary.

What seems like a singular assertion of feminine power is eroded by the curious liberty in employing a non-uniform framework in the iconographic deployment for each piece. It seems that some sort of common womanhood is being determined by favoring difference as expressed in the interpenetration of woman types, sharing complementary, contrary or non-sequitur narratives, compromised by the ambiguity of the sexual identity of the silhouette within which they occur; precarious, having abandoned the less perilous wall in favor of the precarious free-standing frame set-up.

What these point out is a portent of instability, a breakdown of the archetypal imaging of woman and an appeal to return to the origin, asserted in the Para series, which, apart from replacing the normative place of painting, singularly depict the vaginal orifice as the petal/gate/frame from which subjectivity is initiated by a corporeal, pre-verbal, pre-cultural consciousness of otherness; the viewer being compelled to see himself/herself in the mirror within.

Present society lacks the same stability of those which have been nurtured and educated in myths whence archetypes were or are reinforced and perpetuated. As Campbell and Moyers in *Power of Myth* have suggested, there are no longer myths that are effective in the present by which individuals can relate to their role in the world. But at the same time, in government, the church, literature, popular culture, professions including those of art, myths and archetypes abound. As touchstone or sideshow, they maybe here to stay, but the question is: does art still have the power to reconfigure, reassemble, retell, recast the narratives, even to the point of its confusion or dissolution into mere imagery, form or surface? Is it sound to say that engagements like this exhibition are symptomatic of the theoretical assumption that their potency has ebbed and represented thus? How right is it to say that its diminution is related to the times when the practice of life becomes more necessary than the practice of theory? ©



QUINTAPARA
Oil on relief
33.5 x 30.5 x 8 inches
2011



QUARTAPARA
Oil on relief
30 x 33 x 8.5 inches
2011



ANG BUNSOD NI MARIA BABAYLAN
Oil and etching on copper
33 x 24 inches
2011



PRIMERA ILUMINADA
Oil, etching, wood, repoussé on copper
33 x 24 inches
2011



PRIMAPARA
Oil on relief
43.5 x 44 x 9 inches
2011



SECUNDAPARA
Oil on relief
41.5 x 43.5 x 9 inches
2011



SEXTAPARA
Oil on relief
34 x 32.5 x 8 inches
2011



NEGRITA ALA DELILAH
Oil, etching, wood, relief on copper
33 x 24 inches
2011