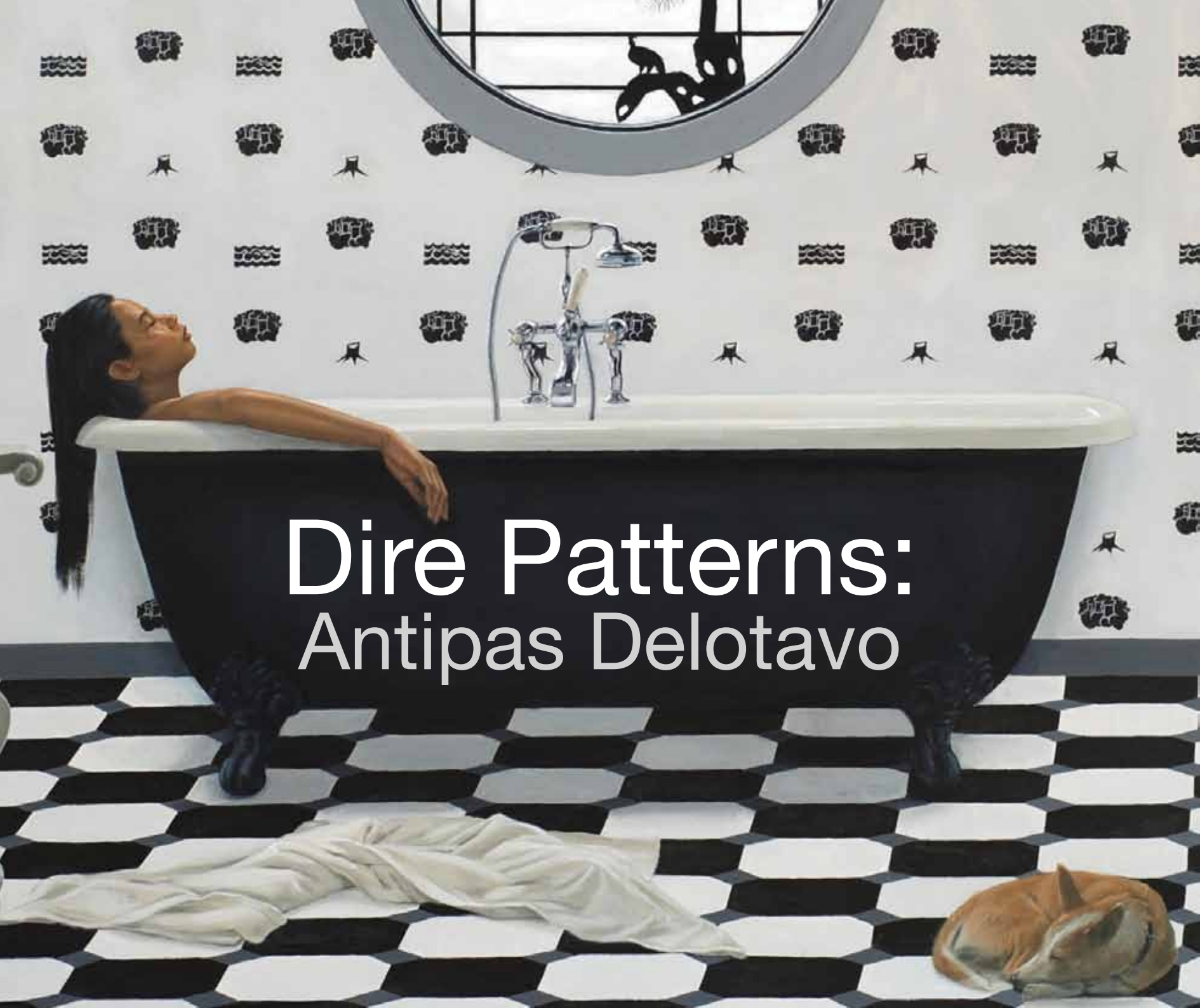

Dire Patterns:
Antipas Delotavo

NUS MUSEUM

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GALLERY + STUDIO

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Dire Patterns

Antipas Delotavo

FOREWORD

Antipas Delotavo's practice can be apprehended along parallel considerations of the formal and context. His realism, one that privileges images of labour and their conditions, is associated to the rhetorical play of class struggle framed under the banner of social realism in the Philippines. The regard for the body, as apparent index of such struggles, points to an orthodoxy of social realism as a refrain of ideology. Such regard, however, undermines the complexity that informs his imageries. Delotavo's realism is marked by a confluence of formal conventions, and a reconsideration of the tableau, settings and subjects. The archetypal imageries of the Filipinos, fed by iconic figures found in the paintings of Carlos 'Botong' Francisco, Fernando C. Amorsolo and the Neo-Realists formed part of the realist vocabulary that intersected Delotavo's prodigious abilities for the figure and naturalism, into which he proposes the real rather than the ideal, conscious in his regard against mannerist pitfalls.

Delatavo's resistance against conventions and self-parody necessitates the articulation of the figure faithful to its referent, the working class, its conditions, and its milieu. This very practice is rooted into experience and context, as a series of unfolding events not merely to be regarded as broad historical shifts and ideological challenges, but rather confounding tribulations that impacted the minutiae of the realities of the everyday, and contributing to a sense of disenfranchisement and alienation. Delotavo invokes labour's asymmetrical relationship with the forces of economy and power, a relationship that is evolving rather than static, acknowledging shifts and transformations. In his works spanning from the 1970s, Delotavo prompts reflections into the questions of agency and status of the underclass seen in relation to militarism, dictatorship, the rise of 'people's power', and mobility of Filipino labour abroad and its consequences.

Practice cannot be held exclusive from the very ideals it proposes to project. If art making is to be positioned as a form of social or political activism, its relationship with the capitalistic structure that sustain it becomes a vexing question of complicity and resistance. *Dire Patterns*, Delotavo's latest series of paintings presented in this exhibition, is remarkable for its calculated regard to the artist's staunch convictions and reflections into the nature of art consumption. In each of the paintings exhibition, Delotavo's ornamented wall is intriguing for its reference to the shifts and slippages of significations, and the questions it poses to ideas, struggles, and the consequences of market aestheticism. Further, that very wall insists a separation that sustains differing realities, and as we spectate the interiors made visible to us, Delotavo cleverly frames our perceptive limits, an apt critique on reception and consumption.

Included in this modest publication are essay contributions by Alice Guillermo and Jose Tence Ruiz. A writer who has extensively written on Filipino art of the 1970s and beyond, Guillermo's essay positions Delotavo in a milieu of practice informed by changes and continuities of the visual landscape in a globalizing system. Tradition, religion, modernity, and popular culture find accommodation in Delotavo's *Dire Patterns*, an ensemble of 'parables' of the contemporary condition, each painting proposes a scenographic unity that unravels as elements are scrutinized and their relationships questioned. Ruiz's essay provides a biographical account of the artist, intertwining the artist's worldview and regard to society and art to his early childhood experiences. The NUS Museum is grateful to Alice Guillermo and Jose Tence Ruiz for their astute knowledge and perspectives. These accounts are significant in providing insights into art in Philippines and Southeast Asia. Further, the exhibition is also presented alongside the Museum's permanent exhibition of works by Ng Eng Teng. While these exhibitions should not be read simultaneously to one another, the respective artists' predisposition for the figure prompts common questions relating to the body as site of contestations along a range of fronts including its condition and the notions of self and agency.

This exhibition will not be possible without the energy and commitment of the artist. The NUS Museum wishes to thank Antipas Delotavo as well as congratulate him for the series of paintings presented in the exhibition. We wish also to thank Alice Guillermo for her curatorial insights. The project is developed in partnership with Artesan, we are grateful to Roberta Dans for her ideas and passion and we look forward to further collaborations.

Ahmad Mashadi
Head
NUS Museum

The first artwork I saw of Antipas Delotavo's was entitled *Kalawang* (Rust). It depicted four Filipino workers who had facial expressions reflective of hardship, poverty and pent- up anguish. Above the figures hovered a huge metal contraption and metal tools, all old and rusty: a saw, a hammer, a compass, a spade ... and then amidst all this, a new gun. At that time, violence was especially rampant in the city of Manila. The painting hinted the imminent disorder that was unfolding in Philippine society then, and the impact of the looming unrest was personally disquieting. It is this unique orientation towards looking at both the social context and the familiar details of his works that brings one to move outside of ourselves and experience another reality in society.

Delotavo holds a truly significant role in Philippine art history, whose approach borders on the emblematic and representational style yet retains the classical formalist method. His manner of art provides a point of convergence, not only for the two stylistic methods, but also bridges the experience of the viewer with the reality of his characters.
Such a style is strongly admired by the youth - and its influence has inspired many young contemporary Filipino artists of today.

As a gallerist, one cannot begin to describe the exhilaration one feels when an exhibition such as Dire Patterns: Antipas Delotavo finally comes into fruition. I am grateful to the NUS Museum, particularly Ahmad Mashadi, Mustafa Shabbir Hussain and Lim Qinyi, for recognizing the importance of such work, and allowing us to gain another perspective into our everyday tasks that make up the pattern of our daily lives, through the eyes and works of Antipas Delotavo.

Roberta Dans
Director, Artesan Gallery + Studio

The Reversals of Fortune

By Alice G. Guillermo

We are privileged to be in ‘interesting’ times, as the adage says, but this is indeed a mild way of expressing it, for we live in a world which is reeling feverishly from multiple crises of gigantic proportions involving economic, ecological, and cultural issues. Instead of sailing into a millennium of peace, the human perspective has been marked by wars, invasions, and conflicts stemming from the lust for money and power

Dealing with this subject in *Dire Patterns: Antipas Delotavo*, the artist, a social realist painter from the Philippines, demonstrates in his show at the National University of Singapore in association with the Artesan Gallery, his artistic and intellectual engagement with contemporary issues. In a style at once subtle and acute, he sheds light on the tensions, contradictions, and reversals that roll and erupt on the surface of the globe. Beyond the purely expository, his art is both revelatory and interrogative, posing questions and pursuing implications that linger in the mind long after the show.

Noble Gas (2010), Oil on canvas, 340cm X 202cm

Along with geological changes, the intellectual climate of the world has, over decades, undergone transformations and reversals to the point of losing its familiar landmarks and forms. All over the world, as in the artist's own hometown of Antipolo, associated with long iconographic traditions, the noble statues in the town square and public parks, drawn from classical mythology to Christian angels and saints, are now under threat from a flock of Walt Disney and anime figures that vie with each other in the same space.

But this does not operate only on one level. In the Philippines, as in many Asian countries, an irreducible discrepancy exists between our indigenous imagery and the Western cultural templates that have colonized our landscape. For these latter are derived (although often several times removed) from the lofty European academic traditions privileging marble, laid down from the royal houses of the European Renaissance, complete with their ratios and proportions, their gestures, once fraught with nobility, agony, and ecstasy, in their commanding and supplicating poses. But in their transplanted environment, their original intensity has been drained and replaced with hollow, suspended gestures.

Even the bright cartoon figures conveyed hither and thither by the 'noble gas' helium in children's balloons are not themselves of native provenance, but from the Walt Disney Studios in California or from the manga and mingei productions of Japan. It is incredible how Walt Disney's Cinderella and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, including his appropriation of various heroes and heroines of world cultures into White Western Mythologies (incidentally providing the commercial base for the ubiquitous whitening lotions) have so colonized our children's imaginations as hardbound templates that leave little room for alternative artistic initiatives. Even the national icons of the late 19th century, such as Jose Rizal, are garbed in a long winter coat suitable only for temperate climes. And so, these small, buoyant cartoon characters, now mainly from the generation of Hello Kitty! and the Pokemon monsters of more recent vintage tease, threaten of cajole the solemn canonical figures in their fixed stances and truncated poses uprooted from their original grounds of park and churchyard and left floating aimlessly in a vast, neutral and universal space.

The following three parables of the artist shows the global tapestry breaking at the seams by the exacerbated frictions of the economy, ecology, and culture in recent times, erupting in invasions, wars, and environmental disasters. Delotavo plays on the contrast between the genteel, sheltered interiors like intimate and fragrant cocoons and the stark, unmitigated exteriors. His figures are at the dead center of the contradiction, on the verge of an impending shock, a temblor of earth-shaking proportions beyond quotidian rituals of morning breakfast and the daily paper.

In the second parable of the artist, *The Nature of the Beast*, a young man in everyday clothes plays a morning round of music on a grand piano in a hall. The compactness of his unembellished figure signifies total absorption in his music which exists solely for him and his aesthetic pleasure. On one side of the space is a floor-to-ceiling stretch of glass, its square, wooden frames echoing the precise, mathematical structure of the piece. The daylight in the park mediated by the glass suggests the purity and clarity of the music, most possibly from the albums of Mozart and Hayden. But a stealthy contrast comes in between the repeated bull prints of the wallpaper and the shiny tiled floor of the hall calling to mind the domestic interiors of the 17th century Dutch masters.

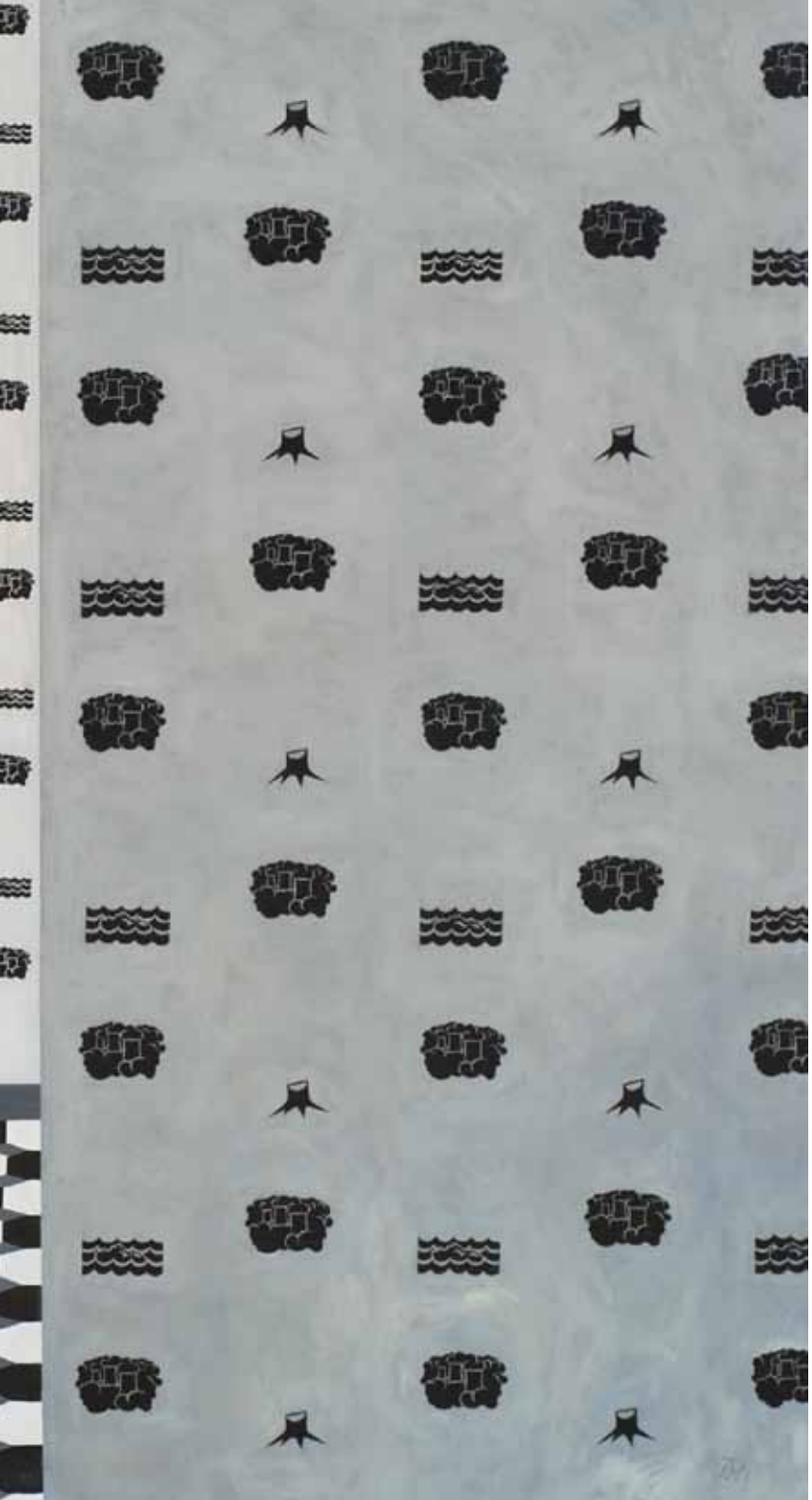
For lo and behold! Just outside this privileged realm is a massive, hulking bull advancing aggressively to knock down the sacrosanct hall of art and music— like the proverbial bull in a China shop, perhaps, noted for its sheer insensitivity to things of the spirit. The sneaking familiarity of the bull reveals itself in an instant. It is none other than the Bull of Wall Street, the very epicenter of the world's economic upheavals. Trampling the spiritual legacies of the world into smithereens, it will reduce everything in its tracks to Commodity, so that all paintings and the visual arts, music and its material ramifications are reduced to weights in a balancing scale. It is the idol of Corporate Capital in the twenty-first century, as it was the Golden Calf of Biblical times around which the idolaters danced in frenzy to the anger of the ancient God. But is this thick-skulled monster of any intelligence? Indeed, it is capable of all clever schemes and strategems in the name of Capital—strategies that will ensnare young, promising artists into thinking that the art market is the grand and sole arbiter. But at the same time, this prefigures the growing alienation of the artist from his own self, his vision as an artist, from his society of fellow humans, and from his values and loves as a sensitive human being.

Inspired by typhoon Ondoy, the third parable of Delotavo is set in a domestic interior—again playing on the contrast between indoors and outdoors. A young woman with long flowing hair luxuriates in an oversize bathtub. It is the only fixture in a white tiled room printed with stark, ominous

graphics hinting at recurring explosions. A chair holding a towel is the only other furniture, but it is there only to hint at the elite period style of the furniture in the rest of the mansion.

A round window in the upper section breaks the monotony of the massive bathroom. But the image outside is stark, unforgiving even. The puny trunk of a tree spreads its fragile branches as though to serve as shelter for the birds, but instead of cranes, as in traditional Asian painting, vultures drawn to the odor of death, wheel around the blighted tree. In the indoors, an abundance of water provides *Creature Comfort* for the indifferent woman of privilege, while outdoors the fast-spreading drought leaves miles of cracked earth, ruined crops, and the abandoned carcasses of humans and animals that are the result of ecological tragedy resulting from the prodigal wastage of the planet's limited resources. Concomitant to this is the unprecedented and extreme weather disturbances, such as global warming, massive flooding, earthquakes and tsunamis that take a great human toll. In fact, a hidden irony comes in the juxtaposition of two images in the mind of the artist, the woman luxuriating in the bathtub and a drowning woman swept away by the rampaging floodwaters. It is the day of the death-seeking vultures, as in a sotto voce tone the recurrent patterns of the wallpaper alludes to the pollution from coal-powered chimneys, the denudation of forests in rows of tree stumps, and women bewailing their condition—a Guernica in contemporary form.

The fourth parable of Delotavo, *Pas de Deux* is another indoor-outdoor scene separated by a large glass divider serving as a floor-to-ceiling window. In the interior of what seems to be the penthouse of a tall building, two dancers rehearse for a ballet recital. One of the girls in a *pas-de-deux* step stands facing the window in the proud, commanding pose of a classical ballerina, arms spanning space, indeed claiming space. But the *pas-de-deux* which essentially involves the close interaction of two dancers does not really take place because only one dancer plays her part. Beyond her space and among the rooftops below, the white smoke of an explosion fills the sky with its menacing mushroom cloud (its history includes Hiroshima and Nagasaki) from the exchange of high-powered firearms or a suicide bombing on the ground below, as is the reality of many places in the world today. However, the first dancer does not seem to move a muscle at the alarming sight but instead feels inexorably bound to complete the full course of the sequence. Beside her, the second dancer bends unperturbedly to adjust her leotards without a tremor of alarm



at the proximity of violence. Is it perhaps a violence to which they both acquiesce, as members perhaps of different cultures viewing it from opposite perspectives.

Meanwhile, the white tiles of the hall graphically echo the sounds of explosion with a sharp tattoo upon the wall in an ironic counterpoint to the graceful rhythms of ballet music, thus inserting an aural element in the image. Then, too, there are two big, butterfly kites of a non-Western culture, superimposed upon the wall. But they, too, gently subvert the ballet's utopian dream of flight, to which is also counterpoised the deadly, billowing cloud.

Among the committed social realists working in different styles, Antipas Delotavo is the most realist—which means to say that his art of painting is firmly based on well-honed, indeed, flawless draughtsmanly skills in anatomy, primarily, and adheres to the principles of ratio and proportion. It is an art based on the keen observation of nature, therefore, it does not idealize nor prettify which would thus fall into untruth. He privileges the cool, calculated line over the bravura of painterly impulse. But this, however, does not in any way hierarchize the two approaches. His art reminds us of a series of Magritte in which a landscape painting on an easel is positioned before a window, the view from which is identical to the painted landscape, except for a slight discrepancy that reveals itself where the edge of the canvas is tucked around the wooden frame. From this sharp uncluttered realism startling perceptions come into view from different layers at once, thus conveying a powerful focused image.

In the classical past, the fundamental artistic canon was the work of art as an integral or organic whole. It was to appear as a unified text with each part contributory to the meaning of the whole and all uneven ragged passages smoothed out for perfection. But theory in our time has reversed the canon. Instead of striving to produce a seamless text, the task of the artist—and of the critic, as Eagleton and later theorists have contended—is to lay bare in the visual or literary work the tensions and contradictory forces that rend the world today. Only this constitutes a vital step towards global awareness and healing which is the fundamental vision of art. Antipas Delotavo is an artist at the apogee of contradictions, but he negotiates the crucial line with subtlety and wit, as well as a cool and even temper, but who is also quick to flame in impatience at a society's uncaring and irresponsible indifference that threatens to plunge our world into the final cataclysm.

Creature Comfort (2010), Oil on canvas, 340cm X 202cm

The Policeman's Prodigy

By Jose Tence Ruiz

Antipas 'Biboy' Delotavo's bent for imagery touching on society and its tensions found quirky prefiguring in the sketching he did at his father's office during his primary school days. Said office was the Iloilo City police station and Biboy's father was then Police Captain Antipas Delotavo, Sr. The sketches young Biboy did were on the blank backs of expired police reports, clipped together, bound for the bin. Delotavo Senior, not really a man of the arts, was dutifully proud of his youngest child's precocity at drawing. He'd tag his little draftsman along where crime and the law met, and have him repurpose these documents of social rupture into drawing practice for one who would be one of Asean's most incisive portraitists.[1]

The Nature of the Beast (2010), Oil on canvas, 340cm X 202cm

Capt. Delotavo, by his son's account, was a self-made man, a former *hacienda* hand lent away by his own father Placido to a more prosperous sibling. The Captain ventured into the provincial police young, for adventure, employment and escape from neglect, and made a remarkably scrupulous account of himself, retiring decades later as a Colonel who raised nine children. Two of these would make their mark not in criminology, but in the accounts of late 20th century Philippine visual art.

By dint of his challenged upbringing, Capt. Delotavo failed to develop what his son claims was a definite ability to draw: He could manage a good caricature here and there and liked to copy James Montgomery Flagg's icon of Uncle Sam (The Recruitment poster saying I Want You…). In postwar Asia, art careers were seen to be quixotic and economically untenable, to the point that when the Captain's 6th child Victor (named for Victory Joe, the jubilant cry of liberation from the Japanese invaders of 1941) wanted to be a graphic artist, his father gave him a hard time. Victor, more famous in Manila as Vic, had to leave the Visayas and the start of an architecture course (which was then deemed the pragmatic path for any fledgling artist) and pursue his will in Manila. This was the late 60s, the era of worldwide youth ferment, and the first practising artist of Capt. Delotavo's brood proved himself to be a potent satirist and elegant print designer. Vic first enrolled at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila but dropped out soon enough, having been accepted to the prestigious Manila Times group on the strength of a layout he did for his Iloilo university magazine, *The Agustinian*. *The Manila Times* had also employed Benedicto Cabrera and Pablo Baensantos. Bencab had resigned to leave for Europe and Vic took his place. Vic's art director was Demetrio Diego, painter of the iconic Capas, a realist masterwork of festering survival in a Japanese WW2 stalag.

We mentioned that Capt. Delotavo wasn't exactly a man of the arts. That said, being a police officer in the southern provinces had some oblique aesthetic payback. Young Vic and Biboy, in their late and pre teens respectively, sons of what might be a town sheriff, were allowed free into the local cinema houses, a token of appreciation for municipal law and order. This wasn't really bribery; more like civil society slipping perks to its public servants. The Delotavo boys found their latent visual sensibilities sparked by the silver screen, even if at times these were but C-Class outtakes of World War 2 newsreels spliced into a soft-core slant. Biboy recounts a grainy pastiche of what looked like women in holocaust nudity, a pirated surrogate for real eros double featured with what may have been the Hollywood rehash of the day. To this day, Biboy and Vic Delotavo are solid film buffs, with Vic

As in other social models, peasant origins were possibly transcended by becoming military, even police, and a conduit to social ascendancy could proceed from this.

having become one of Manila's most sought after film print promo designers. Biboy of course, is more a painter who is fast mastering video making, but if for one moment one gleans some cinematic residue in his compositions, one would not be far-off from the truth. Those dark afternoons at the Maya moviehouse of Iloilo city had something to give Social Realism.

Young Biboy knew he could draw well. The ogling at the police station and, later, the hormone-driven demand for nudes by his high school mates reassured him that what he drew had an effect. His eldest brother, Nono, who followed more in the Captain's footsteps, served as security officer for the Iloilo ports. Being near the mouth of trade allowed Nono to come into possession of 60s vintage *Playboy* Magazines, which aside from their sexpots, had prime examples of American Illustration, from Alberto Vargas to Brad Holland, from Robert Indiana to Tom Wessleman to Will Eisner to Marisol. Together with the free movies, the complimentary Playboys augmented young Biboy's visual lexicon. This author joked him that no wonder he had it for human figuration.

Policeman or Portraitist: Class Access

More apropos to the large paintings at hand, Biboy Delotavo, in spite of the disparity of career choice, shared something more with his namesake police dad. Both of them had worked their way into an occupation whose skill set was applicable across class boundaries. A policeman's constituency ranged from indigents to landlords, and if one was to be valued as an upright public servant, a police officer was expected to retain his class status as that of the military citizen in classic social hierarchies: that of a Spartan petit-bourgeois. Any richer and he'd be suspected of being on the take. Any poorer and he'd be seen as less than upright, maybe even verging on renegade, vice-ridden or wasted.

While artists are allowed more economic latitude, Biboy opted to feature the socially downtrodden in his main SR repertoire and yet was way too good a portraitist to escape the notice of Philippine Society's Top 500. This author can vouch that Biboy still remains statistically middle class in his economic footing but has had the privilege of smooth access into the palatial sanctums of not a few portrait clients. He often jokes how in the early 90s, when he made a client call in his beige VW Beetle, the security guards, being attuned to the limos, beemers and benzes of his client's enclaves, would preemptively discriminate against him, as if trying to shield their bosses from contamination by this wretched Beetle owner. This brings to the fore a still prevalent attitude in the Islands: The poor harbour more internecine contempt for their fellow poor than they have for the rich masters who may ultimately be shown to have made and kept them poor.

Several Filipino artists have merged lower class origins with access to *cacique* patronage. Fernando Amorsolo and Victorio Edades were among them. Romulo Galicano from Cebu shone in the late seventies and is a premiere portraitist among Manila's *crème de la crème*, even in the 21st century. Biboy Delotavo, by comparison, is not a mainstay of this trade. But he has had his share. His choice of subjects may have worked against him on occasion, but his skill is often enough able to win him commissions in spite of what appears to be a contradiction with his personal Social Realist agenda.

Sugared Society

Any less than cursory student of the emergence of the Philippine nation will have noted a particularly sclerotic flow of democratic impulse in the environs of Central Visayas, particularly Panay Island, where one finds Iloilo and eastward neighbor Negros Island, where the Sugar Capital of the Nation Bacolod is found. Historical intersections have carved this destiny and character. The development of the sugar monocrop from the mid 1850s, abetted by the introduction of then state-of-the art milling facilities gave birth to a culture that had large tracts of sugar land, heretofore underdeveloped, in the hands of a creole minority who offered subsistence wages to migrants from the adjoining islands. This structure became the skeleton of an obese disparity of wealth, with a minute segment of Negros population, the landowners and millers taking the lion's share of agribusiness revenues and developing a wealth disproportionately parallel with even European Capitals. Similar situations, fueled simultaneously by the rising demand for sugar in Europe and America in the late 19th and 20th centuries, obtained in Cuba, Haiti, the Honduras and Puerto Rico. The distance that Bacolod had from the rest of Latin America kept its slave labour free from being African. Destitute neighboring Ilonggos, and impoverished refugees from northern Mindanao sufficed. (2)

Biboy Delotavo's paternal grandfather Placido rose to be a sugar farm superintendent *(encargado)* in this agro-export scheme and this afforded his children a measure of emancipation from an otherwise tenacious cycle of recurrent slavery. As in other social models, peasant origins were possibly transcended by becoming military, even police, and a conduit to social ascendancy could proceed from this. Placido's father, whose first name Biboy does not recall was not even surnamed Delotavo. He was a peasant, a possible holdout from the Filipino wars of guerilla resistance to the American occupation of 1898 whose original surname was Depakagibo. Señor Depakagibo was said to have been apprehended and tortured by the Americans for having scars on his shoulders. These were scars from bearing two water jugs on a bamboo plank, but his captors claimed they were from the shouldering of a rifle.

To avoid being on the order-of-battle of the Yanqui occupiers, Señor Depakagibo changed surnames, adopting a monicker he was said to have picked while hiding in churches: Del Octavo (Of the Octave). Depakagibo reinvented himself away from persecution by becoming Del Octavo. It may have eventually devolved into Delotavo, considering that Biboy's ancestors were generally unlettered and transmitted much through the oral.

The main point of my little ancestral digression is to point out that Biboy Delotavo sensed atavistically the disparities of wealth and human opportunity even before he formalized his fraternity with a Marxist worldview. It was not an academic awareness, but one more intuited by minute recollections that would always slide into any retelling of ancestry. To recap, here was an occasional if reluctant portraitist of the wealthy subliminally aware that his ancestors were peasants. One thinks of the disparities of Goya's infernal private visions as opposed to the regal commissions he fulfilled in the court of Charles IV of Spain. Biboy's infernos are less diabolical though no less discomforting. His monarchs rule kingdoms of capital.

Nevertheless, the point I have been carving out up to this stage becomes more evident: The icons, the distinct visual markers of Biboy Delotavo have mirrored an itinerary influenced by his mileu, ancestry and deep talent. We start from that ineradicable street profile of an old laborer with his chest strategically poised at the "bolo-tip" of a Coca-Cola logo (*Itak sa Puso ni*

Mang Juan); then there are the lumpen-proletariat types blurred away with calsomine whitewash as if they were urban eyesores (*Kalburo*), to t-shirt turbanned peons juxtaposed against an entire aedificium of Imeldific power centers (*Mga Bayaning di-Kilala* and *Kalupkop*), to a recent shift where the dispossessed are viewed from within the chic interiors of those blessed with the materialism of a minority (*Gayak*). He has even presented his take on Singapore in 2008 (Street : Guide)

The most recent series we have here at the NUS, *Dire Patterns,* has expanded on the idiom of inside looking out, and progressed to depict some stereotypical insiders while activating wallpaper motifs to summarize current global concerns: 1. An emancipated lady soaking away corporate or personal stress in her tub as her wallpaper inventories collective collapse by way of forest disappearance, rising ocean levels and coal energy emissions; 2. A virtuoso pianist approaching an arpeggio while a raging bull market is about to go berserk and stampede into his bubble of classic calm; 3. Two nubile ballerinas going through a *pas de deux* as a mushroom cloud, one more associated with car-bombs of the marginalized rather than atomic peacemakers rises outside their French vitrine and; 4. A pantheon of global heroes, perpetuated in stone or steel, surrounded by plastic balloon characters, figments of Pop TV, the Internet, Animé and the video-gaming frenzy in a sordid *minuet* between the long standing heroes and their ephemeral surrogates.

Here therefore is a mature Biboy who has seen both sides, has entered both milieux, has made his choices and offers his take on our besieged present. It is a 2010 reiteration of 70s Social Realism, with the tempering of wisdom, where the alarm is whispered and couched through a silent squirming at complacency as opposed to the last three decades where dictums of the revolutionary fervor were enunciated in hushed oratory.

Two Vital Subsets

Let me trail off with a few final biographical tidbits. Biboy Delotavo went to Manila, inspired by his brother Vic's achievements. He in fact lived with Vic in his early soujorn thoughout the 70s and early 80s and, through Vic, met Pablo Baensantos and Jess Abrera. Many factors would come into play, some we had hinted at, some left unmentioned, but suffice to say this convergence was vital to the founding of *KAISAHAN* in 1975. Others would come in, but Delotavo, Baensantos and Abrera were one motive subset within the emergence of Social Realism in the Philippines.

Pas de Deux (2010), Oil on canvas, 340cm X 202cm

There's another important subset, and with this, we come full circle to the story of Police Captain Delotavo. This must be, however, taken with a grain of salt, as sons recounting their father's lives may sometimes be feverish with bias. That being said, Biboy stresses that his father was a man of integrity, one reputed to have pushed away bribes (at least the non-cinematic ones) and struggled to uphold a commonsensical and apolitical platform of what was basically right or wrong, as a policeman, as a guerilla during the second world war, and as a police officer in the advent of modernism, devoid of sophistry, fortified with day-in-day-out consistency. If one were to calculate that the art of Social Realism steeped itself in moral questions and configurations, might one be too fanciful in extrapolating that, maybe, this again was another of those genetic templates that the policeman, Antipas Senior, may have unconsciously bequeathed his youngest and namesake, him who none of us have ever, all these 35 years, called Junior? artesan

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Notes:

1. This author has been an acquaintance and colleague of Antipas 'Biboy' Delotavo since 1975 and has culled the above narrative and its contributing anecdotes from this long association as well as from two formal interviews. The first was held in Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila on July 24, 2002. The next and more recent one was held in Quezon City and in Antipolo on March 25, 2010. Many of his family's narratives are transcribed from Biboy's own oral transmission and recall. This author therefore has opted to hazard fidelity in all of Mr. Delotavo's reminiscences.

2. A succinct but useful account of how the Sugar Industry in the Philippines became the less than democratic enterprise that many accuse it to be can be found in *Roots of Dependency : Political and Economic Revolution in the 19th Century Philippines*, Jonathan Fast and Jim Richardson, Foundation for Nationalist Studies, Quezon City,1979. One might also further look up *An Anarchy of Families: State and Family in the Philippines,* Alfred W. Mc Coy, Editor, Ateneo De Manila University Press 1994 and *The Philippines: Fire on the Rim,* Joseph Collins, The Institute for Food and development Policy, San Francisco, CA USA 1989

Glossary:

hacienda - very large agricultural estate; in this context the crop is sugar cane
cacique - ruling elite, associated with ownership of large haciendas or industry
Illonggos - Filipinos coming from the Central Visayan Islands, primarily but not only from Iloilo
Itak sa Puso ni Mang Juan - A bolo or machete aimed at the heart of Mister John
kalburo - cheap whitewash made from calsomine or calcium carbonate mixed with water
Mga Bayaning di Kilala - Unsung Heroes
Kalupkop - The stainless steel or aluminum filigree sheets used to decorate horsecarts or ice cream wagons in Manila
Gayak - Attire, wardrobe or costume
KAISAHAN - Unity, Oneness, Solidarity

ANTIPAS DELOTAVO

Born in Iloilo City in 1954, Antipas Delotavo studied at the University of San Agustin, Iloilo City and majored in Fine Arts at the Philippine Women's University College of Fine Arts and Music in Manila. Part of the Kaisahan group of painters who are also known as Social Realists, he has been part of numerous shows, exhibiting both in the Philippines and abroad. Some of these exhibits include Critic's Choice in 1979; Travelling Exhibit of Concerned Artists of the Philippines in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Adelaide in 1984; The 14th Asian International Art Exhibition in Fuokoka Asian Art Museum, Fuokoka, Japan in 1999; Art of Resistance at The Puffin Room in New York City, 1999 and Identities versus Globalization at the Chiang Mai Museum in Thailand in 2003. In 1990, his achievement in the visual arts was recognized with the conferment of the Cultural Center of the Philippines Thirteen Artists Award and he was also selected to paint the official portrait of then Philippine President Corazon Aquino. He has been mentioned in numerous publications such as A Century of Realism in Philippine Art and Protest/Revolutionary in the Philippines: 1970-1990.

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NUS Museum is a comprehensive museum for teaching and research. It focuses on Asian regional art and culture, and seeks to create an enriching experience through its collections and exhibhitions. The Museum has over 7,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The ***Lee Kong Chian Collection*** consists of a wide representation of Chinese materials from ancient to contemporary art; the ***South and Southeast Asian Collection*** holds a range of works from Indian classical sculptures to modern pieces; and the ***Ng Eng Teng Collection*** is a donation from the late Singapore sculptor and Cultural Medallion recipient of over 1,000 artworks. A fourth collection, the ***Straits Chinese Collection***, is located at NUS Baba House at 157 Neil Road.

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10am - 7:30pm (Tuesdays - Saturdays)
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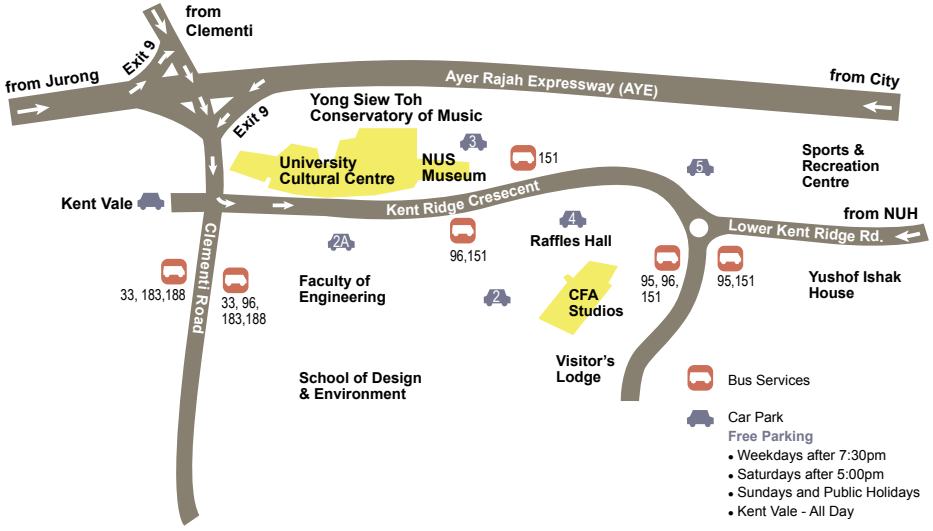

Getting Around:
SBS Bus No. 96 from Clementi Bus Interchange / No. 151 from Hougang Central Interchange / No. 33 from Bedok Interchange
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