



17 - 31 May 2021

PROGRESS

KIM JEROME SANTIAGO

WRAPPING IS CARING

It is common to preserve an object; covering it with something could prevent the thing from any spoil. We keep food in containers, cameras in bags, glasses in its cases, and so do artworks, which we wrap for delivery to avoid any damage. We do this because we humans are sentimental beings who put value into things that we possess; hence, we take good care of them.

We are not only expressing our sentimental value towards objects, but also towards other people by loving and taking care of our loved ones. Parents' advice is a form of protection; a significant other's dear words are an act of preserving relationship; a leader's speech is an encouragement for his or her devotees, so on and so forth. This essence of protection is what Kim Jerome Santiago is trying to address throughout his latest paintings with a simple allegory – the act of plastic wrapping.

Progress really shows precisely the direct act of wrapping the artist's possessions and the loved ones, expressing the artist's sense of care towards these subjects emblematically. In this exhibition, Kim presents his six recent works that address his personal and artistic progress by portraying his loved ones and objects or possessions he owned. Kim is well-known for his adept and lifelike depiction of subjects – wrapped in a thin sheet of plastic. This wrapping-subject approach he employs in most of his works bears another layer of story, signifying memories that are meant to be captured or protected as the aides-mémoires for what he has become now.

Born in 1989 in Bulacan, Kim received his bachelor of fine arts at Bulacan State University, Philippines, majored in advertising. To date, he has involved in numbers of exhibitions locally and internationally, including in Singapore and Malaysia. Kim has also had five solo exhibitions since his involvement in the arts. Received several awards throughout the years, he was a top semifinalist in Metrobank Art & Design Excellence National Competition and nominated as the third place in the 42nd Shell National Students Art Competition.

Big and Small Art Co.
Robinsons Ermita

life experiences in general. It can be about failure, pain, struggles, joy, love or success. The painting offers a message about choices you made in the past that constitute what you are now today.

NAZRUL HAMZAH

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE WRITER AND THE ARTIST

Naz (N): Can you walk us through your latest series, the title and its relation to your latest body of works?

Kim (K): The title is 'Progress'. It represents myself who wants to explore, learn, improve, and move forward—both in life and in the art practice.

N: How does this new series differ from your previous solo exhibitions or previous works? In your earlier works, I notice differences in terms of the colour scheme or theme you used. Can you explain their significance?

K: My current works have become more minimalistic now. The pieces could be a set of a diptych as these works are all connected. As you noticed, the subjects I chose in this show are very different from what I always do – where I painted human figures in sepia. However, this show is more about things around me and the love of my life (my girlfriend) who gives colours to my life.

N: I had read an article from a source regarding your work and found out that sometime in 2008, you painted a photo of your mother when she was a child and titled it Balot (wrap). Tell us about this interesting experience and your decision or attempt to paint this photo.

K: Back then, I stopped attending school because of financial problem. I was struggling so hard in life back then. The university, where I studied, invited our group (among friends) for an exhibition entitled 'Bulacan Man Promdi North'. It was like an audition as that was my first group exhibition. I was clueless and did not know what I should paint. I don't even have art materials to start painting. Then I saw my mom's old picture when she was a child. The torn photo was wrapped with clear packaging tape. I said to myself, okay, I think this is it. Let's find ways and start painting. That was my first painting on canvas.

N: I presume it was the starting point of departure to your approach of wrapping subjects using a thin sheet of plastic, no? Can you give us some details on this discovery and how it is a significant encounter in relation to your art-making?

K: Maybe yes and no. It was my first painting on canvas anyway. After that, I did paintings that are not revolved in that style. I was still looking for my style back then. I didn't notice I have that already. Then there was Manila Art Fair 2010. I wanted to prove myself, so I took a challenge and tried to paint something I thought I could not do. I love that kind of thrill. Back then, 'Balot' did not look that decent for me, as it was the first painting and the first wrapping approach I incorporated. Therefore, during Manila Art Fair 2010, I painted my brother covered in plastic. This time I succeed the way I wanted it to appear. The painting was titled 'Conscience'.

N: I know that the audience can have their respective reading of your works, but from your insight, how do you want the audience to read the works?

K: As I said previously, it is an expression of my personal and artistic progress. This series can be in the form of a diptych because these paintings are all connected. The audience could refer to the title as it contains the literal meaning of these paintings. Back Story conveys life experiences in generals. It can be about failure, pain, struggles, joy, love or success. The painting offers a message about choices you made in the past that constitute what you are now today.

N: Can you share a bit about your reference(s) that perhaps have helped along the way in your art-making process? Maybe the artists that you look up to, some readings or philosophy that you have read?

K: Back then, seeing my family struggling has pushed me to become better. We are very poor back then. Hence the reason why my paintings in those days look gloomy and sad. Someone pointed that out to me. My family became my inspiration and dream that one day we will not be struggling anymore. My experiences also helped me in terms of breeding my ideas and helped me do my best, and nourished my growth.

Other than that, listening to songs could also inspire me in doing my works. Perhaps some movies, reading manga and watching anime which also help me in generating exciting ideas. Sometimes it's politics, what has been going on recently in our society. I also look up to many artists. I even look at student artists, too; as for me, I don't care about names. Seeing good art makes me want to make good art too.

N: Thank you so much for willing to be interviewed, and congratulations!

K: Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!



ARTWORK



Dreamer

122x91cm | Oil on Canvas | 2020

Dreamer is about achieving things in life. Through this painting, I wanted to express that it is okay to dream big. Never mind the negativity of other people. To dream is to take actions. So prove them wrong. To dream is also to fail many times, but that is fine as it is part of growth and success. Remember, when you dream, you rest too. This painting has a special place in my heart as the model is my girlfriend, and this is my first painting of her—a perfect representation of a dreamer. In the painting, she is inside my dream and is resting.



HOME

91x91cm | Oil on Canvas | 2020

It simply portrays a card box that is cut to the shape of a house. We all learn how to walk and talk back then from our home. It is also a place where we recharge either we have bad or good days. Whatever it is our achievement may be, do not forget where we come from.



Back Story

91x91cm | Oil on Canvas | 2020

Back Story conveys life experiences in general. It can be about failure, pain, struggles, joy, love or success. The painting offers a message about choices you made in the past that constitute what you are now today.



Pepsirobo

91x91cm | Oil on Canvas | 2021

Are just like kids playful mind. It is how I imagine things. These paintings don't have a deep meaning behind them and just about painting something I am interested in.



RoboCoke

91x91cm | Oil on Canvas | 2020

Are just like kids playful mind. It is how I imagine things. These paintings don't have a deep meaning behind them and just about painting something I am interested in.



On the way

91x91cm | Oil on Canvas | 2021

This piece is about the journey of our life. Things will come slowly but surely, and it is best for us not to rush something out. Good things take time, and our job is to do our best.



Inside Story

91x91cm | Oil on Canvas | 2020

This painting tells about looking at things from its cover. What is inside is for us to find out. So do not judge. It could be good or bad. Hence, do not be afraid to try new things.

KIM JEROME SANTIAGO

Born 1989, Bulacan, Philippines

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Advertising, Bulacan State University

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 Progress, A Solo Exhibition by Kim Jerome Santiago, G13 Gallery, Malaysia
- 2020 BUNGA, Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
- 2019 SENTIMENTS, Art Cube Gallery, Karivin Plaza, Makati City
SCENARIO, Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
- 2017 ORANGE, Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
- 2014 QUESTIONS, Altro mondo at the picasso, The Picasso Boutique Serviced Residences Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 Certain Ways to Perceive Things, Ysobel Art Gallery, Shops at Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
We Are One, Oneeastasia, Singapore
Mending Fence, G13 Gallery, Malaysia
How Opinions Are Made, White Walls Gallery, Makati
Something Is Out There, Finale Art File, Warehouse17, La Fuerza, Makati
- 2019 Everything the Same Way Iv, Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Rondo, Altro Mondo Arte Contemporanea, Makati Re: View, Bencab Museum, Baguio City
Cocoon, Altro Mondo Arte Contemporanea, Makati
Manila Art: Plurality, Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Aviary, White Walls Gallery, Manila House
Exclusive Access to New Works, Art Cube Gallery, Makati City
- 2018 Everything the Same Way Iii, Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Indelible Depiction, Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Manila Art, Ysobel Art Gallery, Smx Convention Center, Sm Aura Premier, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Through Their Eyes, Provenance Art Gallery, Shangri-La At the Fort
Elevate, Village Art Gallery, Alabang Town Centre, Muntinlupa City
Promdi North X Village Art, Village Art Gallery, Muntinlupa City
- 2017 Everything The Same Way, Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Re: View, Bencab Museum, Baguio City
Manila Art Collective Chemistry, Ysobel Art Gallery, Smx Convention Center, Sm Aura Premier, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
levate, Village Art Gallery, Muntinlupa City
Art Fair Philippines, The Link, Ayala Center, Makati City
- 2016 I Give You My Art, Provenance Art Gallery, Shangri-La At The Fort.
Rondo, Altro Mondo Arte Contemporanea, Ayala Center, Makati City
Can You Hear The Silence? Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Singulorum, Provenance Art Gallery, Shangri-La At The Fort
Art Fair Philippines, The Link, Ayala Center, Makati City
- 2015 Re: View, Bencab Museum, Baguio City
Manila Art, Ysobel Art Gallery, Smx Convention Center, Sm Aura Premier, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Worlds Apart, Altro Mondo Arte Contemporanea, Ayala Center, Makati City
Art Stage Singapore, Altro Mondo Arte Contemporanea, Marina Bay Sands
- 2014 Re: View, Bencab Museum, Baguio City
Next, Galerie Anna, Sm Megamall, Mandaluyong City
- 2013 Pagan Formula, Light and Space Contemporary, Bonifacio Global City
Artzoo, Art Center, Sm Megamall, Mandaluyong City
- 2012 Re: View, Bencab Museum, Baguio City
- 2011 Jose Rizal Figuras, Art Center, Sm Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Child, Big and Small Art Co, Sm Megamall, Mandaluyong City
- 2010 Mother and Child, Big and Small Art Co. Sm Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Art Singapore, The Contemporary Asian Art Fair, Singapore
Manila Art Fair, Smx Convention Center, Pasay City
Still Life, Big and Small Art Co. Sm Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Ave Figuras, Art Center, Sm Megamall, Mandaluyong City
6 O'clock Habit, Big and Small Art Co., Sm Megamall, Mandaluyong City
- 2008 Bulacan Man Promdi North, Big and Small Art Co. Robinsons Ermita

AWARDS

- 2012 Top Semifinalist Made (Metrobank Art And Design Excellence National Competition)
- 2009 3rd Place, 42nd Shell National Students Art Competition

ABOUT G13 GALLERY:

G13 Gallery identifies and collaborates with the artists that show potential, relevance, and depth in their works. The gallery aspires to develop synergy between artists domestically and internationally, and it achieves this through cross-border collaborations, residences, and exhibitions.

G13 Gallery aims to realize a greater appreciation for Asian art, has been actively participating in multiple regional art fairs over the past few years.

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Jan Gordin
2021

G13
gallery