

JANE LOMBARD GALLERY



Island Time

An exhibition of artists living and working in the Philippines, curated by James Clar

June 23 – July 29, 2023

Jane Lombard Gallery is pleased to present *Island Time*, a group exhibition curated by gallery artist James Clar. Featuring a wide range of practices, *Island Time* explores the subjective notion of time and its social, cultural, and historical fluidity from the lens of emerging and mid-career artists living and working in the Philippines. *Island Time* will include work by **Poklong Anading, Miguel Aquilizan, Leslie De Chavez, Corinne De San Jose, Kiko Escora, Gregory Halili, KoloWn, Christina Lopez, Gary-Ross Pastrana, Luis Antonio Santos, Shireen Seno, and Derek Tumala**. The exhibition will be on view June 23 – July 29, 2023, with an opening reception held on June 23 from 6-8 PM.

Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media offers a theoretical foundation for *Island Time*'s central premise. Described as a concept that "...symmetrically and yet contradictorily...defines a modern West by producing an oppositional and premodern East," techno-Orientalism refers to "a collusive, futurized Asia" that "further affirm[s] the West's centrality."¹ Othering, in this framework, has served to bolster the Western position of technological and cultural superiority, while justifying the acts of dehumanization that underpin this carefully constructed hierarchy. From this lens, however, artists who have been subjected to the techno-Orientalist gaze have creatively subverted the dynamic to their own aims. The exhibition's title reclaims the term from its derogatory origins, often used to denote a

¹ David S. Roh, ed., *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 7.

JANE LOMBARD GALLERY

disordered, non-rigorous, non-Western environment that runs on its own mechanisms and systems. In an act of defiant decoloniality, such alternative temporalities are embraced by the selected artists as spaces to exist outside of Western hegemony. Within the psychological, conceptual, and communal realm of “island time,” Clar has curated a meaningful exchange between diverse artists at the leading edge of contemporary art in the Philippines, many of whom will be showing their work in New York for the first time.

The subjective and subversive aspects of time anchor the breadth of mediums and methods employed by the artists, as does their shared context of making work in the Philippines. Despite this throughline, the resounding commonality is, in fact, the lack thereof; multihyphenate, category-defying work like that shown in *Island Time* emerges from a place of complex identity, itself the result of hundreds of years of disparate histories, distinct cultural indigeneity, colonization from multiple countries, and postcolonial nationhood. Further complicating the notion of identity, many of the artists selected by Clar, and Clar himself, operate as “specular border intellectuals,” or what Abdul JanMohamed describes as “one who is ‘familiar with two cultures, [and] finds himself or herself unable or unwilling to be “at home” in these societies.’”² The liminal space such artists inhabit is closely tied to their expansive understanding of time, and the flexibility with which they can interpret and manipulate time as an artistic medium.

For example, **Poklong Anading’s** 60-minute video installation of the sunset and sunrise, recorded from his studio window, takes a literal approach to temporal ambiguity. Recordings of recordings of the magic hours of dusk and dawn, played on a monitor in the same window of his studio, create a layered, recursive moving image work in which reality is altered, and time is abstracted. Elsewhere in the exhibition, **Gregory Halili** combines different dimensions of biological and geological time in his work, using volcanic ash from the eruption of Mount Taal within his drawings of skulls on locally-sourced mother of pearl shells.

In **Corinne De San Jose’s** cyanotypes of slides from decomposing film reels, time is both an active agent of decay and a passive testament to the gaps in the archival record. The fragmented “media memory” of the Philippines complicates the passage of time and its collective perception, as looking to the future often assumes a stable version of the past. Also referencing the history of photography, **Gary-Ross Pastrana** explores the anachronistic nature of Philippine identity and experience in “COIN,” a deconstructed photograph made of filed-down silver from a USA Silver Peso Dollar that was distributed during the U.S. occupation of the Philippines; the work recalls the recent history of American colonization, as well as the silver-gelatin photographic process.

Other artists respond to the lasting effects of colonization as felt in present-day plights like political corruption, climate change, poverty, and the exploitative economy of foreign tourism. Reflecting upon the legacy of Christian missionaries in the Philippines, **Derek Tumala** created his work at the Manila Observatory, originally founded by Jesuit priests, adding a layer of religious context to the exhibition, while **Miguel Aquilizan’s** work introduces an environmental angle, dealing with the spread of Mahogany trees, an invasive species that creates agricultural dead zones in the forests.

With a seemingly innocuous title, *Island Time* challenges public expectations for a summer group exhibition, provoking viewers to confront the elements of history and identity that run counter to their preconceived notions of the islands and the people who call them home.

² “Worldliness-without-World, Homelessness-as-Home: Toward a Definition of the Specular Border Intellectual,” in *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed., Michael Sprinker. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1992, pp. 96-120. Quoted in Charles Park, “‘A Poor Man From a Poor Country’: Nam June Paik, TV-Buddha, and the Techno-Orientalist Lens,” in *Techno-Orientalism*, 214.

JANE LOMBARD GALLERY

Image: Poklong Anading, *dusk and dawn*, 2003. Single-channel video, CRT, 60 minutes. Edition of 7 + 1 AP.

About James Clar

James Clar (b. Wisconsin, 1979) lives and works in Manila, Philippines. Clar's work is an analysis and observation on the effects of media and technology on our perception of culture, nationality, and identity. His interest is in new technology and production processes, using them as a medium, while analyzing and critiquing their modifying effects on human behavior.

Clar received his BA in film and 3D animation and his MA in Media Art, the Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) from the Tisch School, New York University. His work has been exhibited at The Beams, London, UK; Ayala Museum, Manila, Philippines; Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia; Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, NJ; Pera Art Museum, Istanbul, Turkey; Can Framis Museum, Barcelona; Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea; Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, FL; Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE; MoMA PS1, New York, NY; Parasol unit, London, UK; The New Museum, New York, NY; Somerset House, London, UK; Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem and Shadai Gallery at Tokyo Polytechnic University, Tokyo, Japan. His work is included in the collections of the 21c Museum, Louisville, US, and the Yves Klein Foundation, Paris, France. Clar has been an artist in residence at Eyebeam Atelier in New York, NY; Fabrica, Treviso, Italy, and the FedEx Institute of Technology/Lantana Projects, Memphis, TN. James Clar is represented by Jane Lombard Gallery and Silverlens.

About Jane Lombard Gallery

Jane Lombard Gallery has an established reputation for bringing to the forefront artists who work within a global perspective/aesthetic relevant to the social and political climate of today. The gallery seeks to promote both emerging and mid-career artists in a variety of media – painting, sculpture, installation, and film – in the US, Europe, and Asia. Founded in 1995 in Soho as Lombard Freid projects, the gallery later moved to Chelsea, first to 26th Street, and later to 19th Street in 2010. The gallery is now located in Tribeca at 58 White St.

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