



FROM CLOCKWISE  
**YASMIN SISON**  
 TUG AND PULL SERIES NO.2  
 2011  
 OIL ON CANVAS  
 200 X 150 CM  
 TUG AND PULL SERIES NO.4  
 2011  
 OIL ON CANVAS  
 200 X 150 CM  
 TUG AND PULL SERIES NO.1  
 2011  
 OIL ON CANVAS  
 200 X 200 CM



MARIANDO CHING [b.1971, Philippines] studied Printmaking at the Kyoto City University of Fine Arts, Japan from 2002-2004 and graduated from the University of the Philippines in 1996 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting. Known for his elaborate, surreal and meticulously executed paintings, drawings and illustrations Ching has had numerous solo exhibitions including: *Even Bad Days Are Good*, Silverlens [SLAB], Manila, Philippines, 2011; *Strange Days*, Voice Gallery, Kyoto, Japan, 2010; *Dead Ends and False Starts*, Silverlens [SLAB], Manila, 2009; *We Are Not Afraid of You and We Will Beat Your Ass*, West Gallery, Manila, Philippines, 2008; *Between the Stars and the Sea*, Mag'net Gallery, Makati City, Philippines, 2008; *Dance This Mess Around*, UFO Mandaluyong, Philippines, 2004 and *Choke*, Finale Gallery, Manila, Philippines, 2004. Since 1996 he has participated extensively in group exhibitions and most recently in the Aichi Triennale, Aichi, Japan 2010; *Here Be Dragons*, Manila Contemporary, Manila, Philippines, 2009; *Futuramanila*, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong and Singapore, 2008; *Panorama 3*, Jonathan Levine Gallery, New York, USA, 2008; *Scab on My Brain*, Space 1026, Philadelphia, USA, 2007 and *Postmodernism is So Last Season*, Green Papaya Art Projects, Quezon City, Philippines, 2006.

Ching was a member of *Surrounded by Water* [1999-2002] a Manila based artist run space and his works have been collected by the Singapore Art Museum. In 2006 he received the prestigious Cultural Centre of the Philippines [CCP] 13 Artists Award.

YASMIN SISON [b.1972, Philippines] graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting [1997] as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities [1998] from the University of the Philippines. She has established a career as a respected painter whose work interrogates the theatre of human emotion through dramatic use of space, composition and expressive gestural brushstroke. She has had numerous solo exhibitions including *Spaces in Between*, Artesan Gallery, Singapore, 2010; *Into the Woods*, Finale Art Gallery, Manila, Philippines, 2009; *Turning Tides*, Finale Art File, Makati City, Philippines, 2008; *The Weight of Waiting*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2008; *Gingerbread Girls*, Finale Art File, Manila, Philippines, 2007; *Unmade*, Mag'net Gallery, Makati City, Philippines, 2006 and *Reading For Beginners*, UFO Gallery, Mandaluyong, Philippines, 2005. Exhibiting since the mid 1990's, recently she has participated in the following group exhibitions: *Love Letters*, Manila Contemporary, Manila, Philippines, 2010; *Latitudes: Encounters with the Philippines*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy, 2010; *Prague Biennale 4*, Prague, Czech Republic, 2009; *Things Said Amongst Us*, Nadi Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2009; *Spinning Sugar*, Mag'net Gallery, Quezon City, Philippines, 2008 and *Postmodernism is So Last Season*, Green Papaya Art Projects, Quezon City, Philippines, 2006.

Sison was one of the founding members of *Surrounded by Water* [1999-2002], a Manila based artist run space and in 2006 she received the prestigious Cultural Centre of the Philippines [CCP] 13 Artists Award.

**EXHIBITION DATES 3 JUNE – 26 JUNE 2011**

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LEFT TO RIGHT  
**MARIANDO CHING**  
 TWO TRIANGLES  
 2011  
 PYROGRAPH AND ACRYLIC ON RECYCLED WOOD  
 104 X 109 CM EACH (X 2PCS)

**YASMIN SISON**  
 TUG AND PULL SERIES NO.3  
 2011  
 OIL ON CANVAS  
 200 X 200 CM

MARIANDO CHING & YASMIN SISON

# COLLIDSCOPE

vwfa



CLICK HERE FROM TOP  
 MARIANO CHING  
 X  
 2011  
 PYROGRAPH AND ACRYLIC ON  
 RECYCLED WOOD  
 101 X 105 CM EACH (X 2PCS)  
 REFLECTED L  
 2011  
 PYROGRAPH AND ACRYLIC ON  
 RECYCLED WOOD  
 TOP PANEL 101 X 92 CM  
 BOTTOM PANEL 101 X 46 CM  
 TRAPEZOID  
 2011  
 PYROGRAPH AND ACRYLIC ON  
 RECYCLED WOOD  
 TOP PANEL 102 X 66 CM  
 BOTTOM PANEL 102 X 91 CM

## COLLISION COURSE

BY EVA MCGOVERN

Celebrated Filipino artists Mariano Ching and Yasmin Sison present their latest bodies of work in *Collidoscope*, at Valentine Willie Fine Art, Singapore. As husband and wife their personal relationship naturally influences their practices as individual artists through connected discussion, response and shared family life. However far from being confessional, the exhibition instead shares their constructed visual theatres of tension and struggle through intricate details and emotional undercurrents that interrogate science fiction, fear, abjection, romance and dystopian/utopian dichotomies. Yasmin Sison presents large-scale paintings of children at play and in struggle against forest backdrops. From an involved parental perspective and a curious observer's position, Sison reveals the lives of children that in turn symbolise adult anxieties through her characteristic style of haunted painterly elegance. In response to his wife's work, Ching meticulously burns surreal images of animals and imagined worlds onto geometric wooden panels combining pulp illustration with Japanese katakana characters and post painterly abstraction. Depicting the reclaiming of nature on decaying man made detritus, his vision responds and contrasts to the sensual and dramatic tableaux of Sison's visual drama of myth making and myth breaking. Presenting painting, drawings on wood and installation, the exhibition presents a collaborative conversation of man made, natural and abstract subjects and styles.

Ching and Sison live and work in Cavite, a province located on the southern shores of Manila Bay 30 kilometres south of Manila. Their home is situated in a lush area surrounded by trees and flowers within a family compound filled with houses occupied by their relatives. Escaping the chaos of Manila for this peaceful sanctuary has influenced both of their works and approach to practice in intentional and unintentional ways: from the influence of the forest as both subject and protagonist, as well as the power of Nature to equalise and balance Man's manipulative effect on the environment. But the reason for their move was also based upon their personal needs as a family with a young child. It is this hidden subtext, that of the relationship between the two artists, that creates an interesting point of entry into the exhibition. Ching and Sison have been discussing each other's practices since their student days in the Nineties, their subsequent marriage has naturally led to many shared conversations, critique and commentaries. How they influence each other may not be immediately obvious but their intimate familiarity interweaves their individual threads of inquiry to create a constantly shared critical mass of ideas and artistic concerns that expand and contract throughout *Collidoscope*.

*Collidoscope* plays on the words 'collide' and 'kaleidoscope'. At first this may seem a curious title for the works on display but it is perhaps an appropriate hybrid to describe both the merging and intricacy of Ching and Sison's practices in this two-person exhibition, as well as the collision of forms and subject matter in each of their works. Mariano Ching's imagery, meticulously burned into geometric wooden panels, reveals the artist's continuing interest in science fiction, animation and illustration. The possibilities of such genres allow Ching to construct elaborate but ambiguous worlds that play with the status of the painting as object. As such, his delicately burnt incisions and surreal juxtapositions between animal and natural imagery with geometric shapes and man made forms create a paradoxical equation for audiences to consider.

Ching's personal migration from Manila to Cavite is a direct inspiration on his subject matter and loose associations can be made with his decision to use wood and branches that quote from his personal environment. His choice of wood burning is referred to by the artist as a process that is similar to the art of tattooing but instead of drawing on living skin, he has chosen a material that once alive, is now effectively dead. In addition his wooden panels were previously used for other practical purposes and in another act of reclaiming, Ching re-uses these pieces to make art objects. This notion of decay and recycling is a key component to his practice. Works such as *Reflected L* depict surreal natural forms enveloping or swallowing the detritus of life: such as houses and cars and his architectonic Japanese katakana characters – a reference to his love of Japanese anime and time spent studying in Japan. Spiders weave webs around these rusting impotent ruins and mysterious caboozes swallow and crush objects whilst running on a collapsing track. Although this is a rhythmic game between Man and Nature, Ching's foreboding subject is not a didactic plea for environmentalism but rather acts more as a platform for the artist's constant manoeuvring between surface, line, form and object. This sense of movement, emphasised by his incisions and geometric configurations, create intimate scratches, fissures and wounds across his surfaces further emphasised by the rupture of his katakana characters used to depict sounds such as Pow! and Vroom! This obsession with the graphic nature of line and colour reveal his dual position as an illustrator for children's books that compels a need for, however ambiguous, narrative movement.

Ching is also interested in the life of objects through his system of reusing and recycling and his lines often mimic the natural grain of his wooden surfaces, referencing the physicality of his medium. Influenced by post painterly abstractionist Frank Stella, he reminds audiences of the tension between the image and their status as objects. By purposefully using geometrically shaped pieces, he forces audiences to consider his work as 3 dimensional 'things' and not as mere surfaces. This is further emphasised by his choice of wood and its relationship to craft that results in objects of decoration. By merging these processes of skilful making, the vibrancy of illustration and the artistic need to expand and challenge form, Ching creates an arresting theatre of entropic decline that both delights and disturbs audiences to consider our relationship with the natural world.

Yasmin Sison reveals an alternate, but no less theatrical, natural world through her haunting images of children within elaborate forest backdrops. Whereas Ching presents a wry and ironic prose through his intricate forms, Sison contributes a type of Gothic poetry filled with both whimsy and anxiety through a sensual painterly approach. For the exhibition at Valentine Willie Fine Art she creates atmospheric tableaux that reveal pairings of children in various stages of interaction. Once again the influence of Cavite is clear and her child protagonists are that of her own son and nieces who play at home together everyday. However this is not a simple fairytale of childhood, but a far more complex psychological world filled with the contradicting forces of vice and virtue that make up the human spirit.

The child as subject matter provokes a consideration of innocence and the eventual succumbing to qualities of jealousy, anger, aggression and manipulation as maturity approaches. Sison comments that these children, lifted from her own autobiography, are imperfect creatures who fight, bully and challenge each other as well as their adult family members. Although it is unclear whether her embattled figures are physically arguing or merely play fighting, the mood is one of tension between multiple elements of form and concept, emphasised by a minimal earth toned colour palette and dramatic use of shadow and lighting. Positioning the audience in an uncomfortable voyeuristic role, Sison's subjects shift between being passive symbols of fear and nostalgia, as well as active participants who engage viewers in a tense exchange of recognition. Further destabilising her viewers, she roots her subjects in a timeless sense of the past by purposefully choosing more traditional and formal clothing for them to wear. This is a characteristic and continuing strategy of myth making and myth breaking by Sison. What emerges through this process is the conflict between idealistic stereotyping and a self-awareness of her protagonists trying to escape the confines of 'little girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice'. In turn, this understanding of Self becomes a symbol for the artist herself: her own struggles, conflicts and anxieties as an individual coping with the shifting challenges of professional and personal life.

Audiences however, must not ignore the stage for these scenes of childhood which is a crucial component to Sison's visual vocabulary. Here the forest is not so much a place of horror but what the artist describes as a 'call to adventure of the unknown and a way of realising one's potential'. Quoting from American mythologist Joseph Campbell the forest translates into a metaphor for self realisation through the obstacles and challenges it presents to the individual. With this in mind, Sison's forest then becomes a site of possibility not fear. The ominous sentiment in her work is therefore, merely the call to inner awakening. As a result, realisation her forest backdrop is an important subject and protagonist in another destabilising moment of clarity.

Although audiences can extract and observe the nuances of shared family life and environment through the imagined worlds of Mariano Ching and Yasmin Sison, it would be limiting to conclude interpretations there. *Collidoscope* instead presents the concerns of these two artists developing their multiple concerns as image-makers and provocateurs. Naturally, their immediate surroundings and community influence emerge in their work. However, by resisting straightforward confessional or narrative building, Ching and Sison present a multi-faceted window or kaleidoscope into their practice. Which, like the turning of this beloved children's toy is constantly shifting, fragmenting and reconfiguring its components, to create new forms and ideas about looking at both the inner and outer worlds around us.