

DEATH TO THE MAJOR VIVA MINOR

PATRICIA EUSTAQUIO

16 OCTOBER - 22 NOVEMBER 2008



01

Slab
catalogue

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silverlens gallery

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°SLab

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SLab Catalogue 01:
Death to the Major; Viva Minor - Patricia Eustaquio
SLab 2008
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CROSS MY HEART AND HOPE TO DIE...
Patricia Eustaquio's *Death to Major, Viva Minor*
by Donna Miranda

Translation threads along the tenuous borders of deception. Along comes the inevitable process of either reading too excessively into a piece of 'text' or totally missing the point. Such is the double-sided condition of having to look at 'something.' To take things as they are is usually the most difficult of tasks. For maybe it's the fear of boredom which hovers above any creative process. Yet even light, the purest of concepts, is never what it seems. Experiences and history cloud perception. Like a pill, the illusory tint feeds the machine of our imagination in turn igniting an obsessive preoccupation to painstakingly extract and make meaning out of nothing. There must always be a reason behind everything.

In performance, the artist is left to the task of merely setting up a situation on which consequent action shall take place paradoxically on the other side of the fence, where the spectator sits. Eventually what was once not known reveals itself, slowly lifting out of the frame the way an animal is being skinned, exposing both its strength and frailty. However the theatre unfolds as an imagined landscape and associates itself with that which we see in front of us in space: the systems and its procedures are gradually recognized; meaning emerges; and the mystique lifted to trigger the performance itself, like a bullet fired to the air. Never mind the seeming impossibility of isolating fiction from real life, the way memory keeps betraying our dreams and flirts with the present. What matters is how with such clarity of intent and zen-like persistence, the artist manages to preserve the tension and maintain the elasticity of time in the same manner that glass is tempered and bent. Good expeditions require sound navigation— if not precise maps and spatial instruments.

The pleasure of being transported out of the confines of the ordinary is a projected ideal we unconsciously carry. Now even more I have become fearful of the process of translation. Yet the half-witted perversion mixed with satisfaction of being let in into a secret is too appealing to pass. And so if a temporary resolve must be taken, translating accommodates a degree of constructive deception. Because no one wants to take things as they are.

Patricia Eustaquio's *Death to the Major, Viva Minor* lets in on this constructive deception, masking the beautiful and grotesque, lifting the veil and revealing the void that waits underneath. A reluctant ode to the twelve preludes of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, the show purposely aims for the simple virtuosity of music via its periphery. Despite the looming temptation of painting a visual metaphor for music, Eustaquio deliberately denies the viewer just this. No, this is by no means a visualization of a moving piece of music. The collection begs off the seductive appeal of metaphor that imbues projected fantasies on Bach's music. And yet it seduces us back to the composer's mind. The artist temporarily suspends her 'virtuosity' and instead heeds the opposite through "simple imitations: hollow odes and vacuous praises" (P.Eustaquio notes, 2008), and instead creates an argument for the other forms of art. Through a symphony of objects Eustaquio crafts, with mindful understanding of the behavior of the material she has chosen to work with, knits, lace, wood, leather, and ceramics. She meticulously fashions these delicate objects out of 'lowly' craft materials, which are often relegated to the 'decorative arts.' Hence orchestrating

for the viewer an absurd storybook picture within the shell of the gallery space where a piano school once stood.

As mentioned above, what we must understand primarily is that the works in this exhibition are inspired by Eustaquio's investigation of and into music choosing one of Bach's prominent work, the Well-Tempered Clavier. Considered as one of the most influential pieces of music in Western classical music, "for the profit and use of musical youth desirous of learning, and especially for the pastime of those already skilled in this study", the work is a collection of preludes and fugues for all 24 keys of the keyboard, indiscriminate of major or minor keys. It has since become a primary book used in piano schools to familiarize students with the entire range of the instrument. Eustaquio examines her own position of music: "If I were to talk above my head about music I realize I would be a monkey on a typewriter. And yet this is what I've set out to do in this collection...though perhaps it is with slight mockery that I produce works from it: an act justified by my absolute ignorance of music." Citing Schopenhauer who speaks of music as the highest form of art as it is the manifestation of will, of idea itself, the artist generates art likewise from its own language. If indeed music, and art for that matter, were a language then Eustaquio approaches it using child-like imitations, composing her own tribute to music: seemingly simple copies abstracted from the humble understanding of a listener.

Now, what of complex meanings and other tricks that the viewer usually expects in art? Naturally, as in any tribute, the work will be nit-picked for meaningful references or shallow intentions. The work cannot escape the scrutiny of a viewer who can't risk living in an absurd meaningless world created out of nothing. There is always a reason behind anything and Eustaquio stares back at us by literally confronting us with these 'shallow' objects that have been skinned from their original context in a process almost violent yet poignant at the same time. Psycho-genic Fugue, a sculptural crocheted piece, alludes to a full-sized piano assuming its volume and former shape. The crocheted white blanket, donning most homes to protect valuable furniture, stands in the absence of the piano as if it has stood there all those years, gathering dust—a witness to history, divested and castrated of its utility. A poignant remembrance of its past perhaps? Or a silent violent erasure of its past, leaving behind a dense fragment of its former self? A fitting contrapuntal response to an instrument that now stands there as a ghost— muted, static, absent, and yet captivating.

Whereas fragments meet to complete a big picture, Eustaquio holds off keeping the viewer in anticipation. She freezes the moment of comprehension whilst saying it is done. The fragmented paintings never complete themselves, or so we think. She resists the temptation of repeating herself by not 'finishing' the obvious, respecting the space between truth and comprehension, exhausting the connective episodes for a narrative that completes itself in vitro. The collection of works are like flashes of memory: fast, bright, complete and yet. An image of a torn violin lets us peak to its distinct anatomical

similarity to the human cavity while a pair of still lives show us a bird in differing states of death. The shaped canvases hanging against the wall seduce us into completing their four-cornered frames. Eustaquio mutes the big orchestral sound to amplify the hissing noise in the background. Working with chance and carefully choosing the seductive accidentals that come up, the artist creates within the gallery a distinct space for the viewer to pick up incomplete pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. The absent spaces beg our memory; the hollow events invite our experience. In fact, these fragments are all we need. For these fragments, artifacts of half-forgotten dreams, betray an epic narrative that begs its own resolve. They are the testaments of the frail beauty that lie between the intersection of celebration and lament. It is a place where music either calls its own repugnance like a song that becomes stuck in your head or incessantly rings in the background, like an ambient sound that has bled into the walls of a room. The subtle motions and processes of objects become so established they are ignored, as if their familiarity have led to their eventual disappearance, leaving behind a trace of its former self, a carcass left to rot through time, fossilized and hardened.

Memory according to Walter Benjamin "is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theater. It is the medium of past experiences as the ground is the medium in which dead cities lie interred." As we approach the past like an archeologist digging deeper into the ground, we ask ourselves how far back can we go? "He who has once begun to open the fan of memory never comes to the end of its segments." In *Death to the Major*; *Viva Minor* we are invited to stay in the folds of a path that traverses the intersections of opposing forces that between presence and absence, poignant and violent, dense yet hollow, anxious and calm.

DONNA MIRANDA is an independent dance artist living and working in the Philippines. She studied Anthropology at the University of the Philippines and received specialized training in contemporary dance both in Manila and in Europe, participating in several exchange program, intercultural dialogue and multimedia collaborative projects. In 2000, she co-founded Green Papaya Art Projects with Norberto Roldan, facilitating experimental platforms for contemporary dance practice in Manila. At the moment, she is occupied with The Lovegangsters, an open collective of free radicals, sound artists, dancers, hangers-on, autodidacts and designers working towards an promoting contemporary performance practice.















- 01** **Denouement**
96 x 86 in • 244 x 219 cm
Oil on linen
2008
- 02** **Arteria Axillaris**
22 x 7 x 3 in • 57 x 17 x 7 cm
Ceramic (stoneware)
2008
- 03** **Psychogenic Fugue**
42.5 x 83 x 41 in •
108 x 212 x 104 cm
Crochet lace and epoxy
2008
- 04** **Horns (Deer)**
48 x 72 in • 122 x 183 cm
Oil on canvas
2008
- 05** **Horns (Columbine)**
48 x 48 in • 122 x 122 cm
Oil on canvas
2008
- 06** **Horns (Paine)**
48 x 72 in • 122 x 183 cm
Oil on canvas
2008
- 07** **Horns II (Deer)**
Glass vitrine, polymer clay and gem
2008
- 08** **Horns II (Columbine)**
Glass vitrine and polymer clay
2008
- 09** **Horns II (Paine)**
Glass vitrine and polymer clay
2008
- 10** **Reprise I**
98 x 86 in • 244 x 219 cm
Oil on canvas
- 11** **Reprise II**
98 x 86 in • 244 x 219 cm
Oil on canvas
- 12** **Untitled (piano)**
33 x 22.5 x 12.5 in •
83 x 65 x 32 cm
Carved leather and ceramic
2008

A Magna Cum Laude graduate of the University of the Philippines' Fine Arts program, Patricia Eustaquio's shaped canvas oil paintings are exquisite examples of color and technique in the tradition of the Dutch masters. She is also a working sculptor, using different materials such as leather, crochet, ceramic, and resin. Eustaquio's thought processes in creating her pieces are as well honed as her technique, marking her an exciting contemporary artist.

EDUCATION

- 2001 University of the Philippines - Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Painting, Magna Cum Laude,
Citations: Presidential Scholar, academic years 1998- 2001
Dominador Castaneda Award for Best Thesis
- 1997 United World College of the Adriatic, Trieste, Italy
International Baccalaureate Diploma, with Certificate in World Cultures
through a grant from the Italian Government and the UWC Endowment Fund

SOLO SHOWS

- 2008 *Death to the Major, Viva Minor*, Silverlens Lab (SLab), Makati City, Philippines
- 2004 *Swine*, Green Papaya Art Projects, Quezon City, Philippines

Death to the Major and Other Works
Magnet Gallery, ABS-CBN, Quezon City, Philippines
- 2003 *Split/Seam/Stress*, Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

- 2008 *Silverlens Gallery, Asian Contemporary Art Fair, New York*
Silverlens Gallery, ShContemporary, Shanghai, China
Silverlens Gallery, ArtHK08, Hong Kong, China
Three Young Contemporaries, Valentine Willie Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2005 *You Are Here, Valentine Willie Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
Flippin' Out: From Maynila to Williamsburg, Goliath, Brooklyn, New York
- 2004 *SENI Singapore 2004: Art and The Contemporary/Home Fronts*
Exhibit of Asian artists, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

PHILIPPINES

- 2005 *Parallel Stories, Art Center, Megamall, Ortigas, Pasig City*
- 2004 *Cancelled Metaphors, Art Center, Megamall, Ortigas, Pasig City*
The Sedimentation of the Mind is a Jumbled Museum
Vargas Museum, University of the Philippines
Inventory, The Cubicle, Pasig City
Magnet Gallery Resident Artists, Magnet + , Makati City
- 2003 *Picture This, Art Center, Megamall, Ortigas, Pasig City*
Under Construction, Big Sky Mind, Cubao, Quezon City
Dog Show, U.F.O., Mandaluyong City

°SLab

SLab (Silverlens Lab) is the gallery for Philippine contemporary art showing painting, drawing and sculpture. The two spaces are bridge-linked, the former being a piano warehouse and the latter being the auditorium.

SLab has two galleries, a 120 square meter main space for longer curated shows, and 20SQUARE, a smaller gallery for young artists, for projects curators are working on, and for collectors' and artists' consignments.

slab.silverlensphoto.com



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Having gained public recognition in Manila since its inception in 2004, the Silverlens Gallery (SLG) features 8-9 shows a year, representing a mix of emerging and mid-career contemporary Philippine artists, as well as established international artists. Silverlens shows photography and new media.

At the forefront of collecting Philippine art for the Silverlens Foundation, SLG provides consultancy for art collections and acquisitions. As both gallery and art foundation, Silverlens establishes the vital partnership between defining the market and shaping art history.

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