

EVAPORATING WETWORKS

SANTOS x SOH

A DUO ART EXHIBITION



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LivingwithArt Midview City 18 Sin Ming Ln
#01-10/30 Midview City, S573960

27 SEPT '24
FRI 630 pm



GALLERY
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Tan Boon Liat Building



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EVAPORATING MEMORIES

A Duo Exhibition by SANTOS x SOH

"The game of memory is won or lost on one criterion: Do you leave the formation of memories to happenstance, or do you decide to remember?"

- Gabrielle Zevin

This duo exhibition between Billy Soh, an experienced contemporary artist, and Amanda Lapus Santos, an abstract-expressionist painter, was born out of a shared interest in the art of cyanotype printing. Cyanotype is a 'slow-reacting photographic light-sensitive process, which produces a cyan-blue print used as a monochrome imagery applicable on a range of forms such as blueprints.' Through experimentation on different cyanotype techniques, Soh and Santos wished to explore stories of objects and spaces that have drastically changed or have disappeared entirely. Shared anecdotes of childhood memories, snacks and family dishes, places of amusement, of worship- all reveal a juxtaposition of cultural pasts in Singapore and the Philippines, and their parallels. The process involved unearthing old photographs and recounting childhood nostalgia, and essentially discovering ways of bringing these blurred memories 'to light' on both canvas and paper.

Rhapsodies in Blue, the collection of works made by Santos, is what the artist considers as her 'treasure box' of things that fascinate her, stir whimsy, even worry and longing, all in the shades and complimentary hues of blue.

Volatile Landscapes is a body of work by Soh that displays his many years of technique-honing with the volatile liquids and chemicals, and exposure timings involved in this particularly versatile art of printmaking. Among these works of geometric shapes, valleys, waves, and photographs of old Singapore, is his award-winning piece *I Lift Up My Eyes to the Mountains*, which garnered the UOB Painting of The Year 2019 Highly Commended Award.

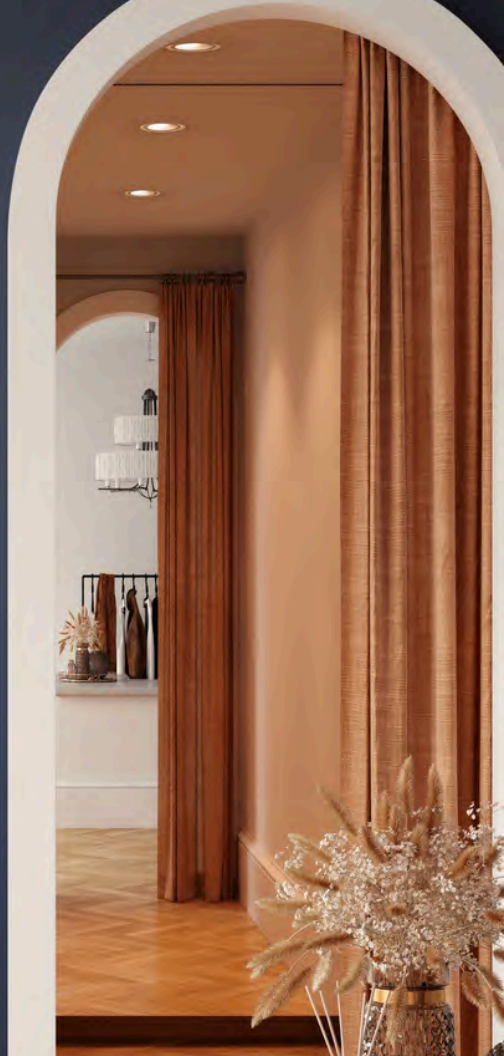


En Bloc

Amanda Lapus Santos and Billy Soh

Cyanotype on calico cotton fabric with soda ash

80 x 140 cm / 2024



How do we truly feel when local landmarks, historic buildings, are torn down in the name of progress? Many may argue that the older, decrepit structures are more of an eyesore and have fallen out of style in terms of architectural trends. Others may say it is a necessity as populations grow. But what of cultural conservation? What of the memories built on the backs of familial generations? This elongated cyanotype work explores that desire to preserve what is no longer there or en route to destruction.

Made using a freehand illustration of the Pearl Bank Apartments (demolished March 2020) stacked on top of the Golden Mile Complex (sold to a consortium for "redevelopment" in 2021) as a negative exposed to UV lights.



Childhood Snacks and Wrappers

Amanda Lopus Santos and Billy Soh

Cyanotype on calico cotton fabric

139 x 84 cm / 2024



Santos and Soh discussed childhood snacks that seem to endure the test of time, and the others that seem harder to find these days, but still evoke cheerful nostalgia. Illustrations of Bazooka and Tattoo bubble gums, street-side fish balls and fish satay sticks, halo-halo shaved ice dessert, White Rabbit candy and HAW Flakes, were illustrated as if all were spread out on a tablecloth- onto cellulose acetates as negatives; and stencils of jagged wrappers, balloons, and bite marks were hand-cut for the light-coloured soda-ash markings as borders.



Two Churches

Amanda Lopus Santos and Billy Soh

Cyanotype on paper with soda ash

108 x 46 cm / 2024



First print using UV-lamp exposure;

Born out of a conversation between the two artists on how they were raised with their religions, and the nuances in dissimilarities between them. In the center are quick sketches of the San Sebastian all-steel church in Manila, which fascinated Santos for both its heritage and decay; and of St. Matthews Anglican Church in Singapore, where Soh attended preschool as a toddler;

with soda-ash (sodium carbonate) stencilled urban skylines lining the top and bottom



Two Churches with City and Sky

Amanda Lopus Santos and Billy Soh

Cyanotype on paper with soda ash

159 x 97 cm / 2024



Second cyanoprint using UV-lamp exposure;

Sensitising involved volatile fluids, which dictated its own shape and the repositioning of same hand-drawn sketches of the San Sebastian Church and St. Matthews Anglican Church;

with cloud outlines and urban skyline using soda-ash stencilled markings



Barong Tagalog

Amanda Lapus Santos and Billy Soh

Cyanotype on paper with soda ash, graphite, and ink

102 x 46 cm / 2024



The front of this cyanotype was made with exposure of the *barong Tagalog*, 'an embroidered long-sleeved formal shirt for men and a national dress of the Philippines. The Barong combines elements from both the precolonial native Filipino and colonial Spanish clothing styles. It is traditionally made with sheer textiles woven from *piña* (pineapple fibres) or *abacá*; although in modern times, materials like organza silk are also used.' Santos used her 7-year-old-son's actual barong and own chest x-ray, ultrasound and pregnancy test images as negatives, along with other Filipino imagery on the sides like the *baro't saya*, the feminine equivalent of *barong Tagalog*, a statue of Lapu-Lapu, and photos of typical Filipinos during Spanish colonial times. Written in the center is the legend of the Philippine national flower, the *sampaguita*. The artwork is a reflection on the difficulties of raising her son and daughter away from their hometown, and how this brings about concerns on whether they would forget or simply be disinterested in their own heritage. At the back, Soh used multiple exposures and applications of sensitiser, along with his own crumpling technique to create the mountain-ridge-like texture.

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH



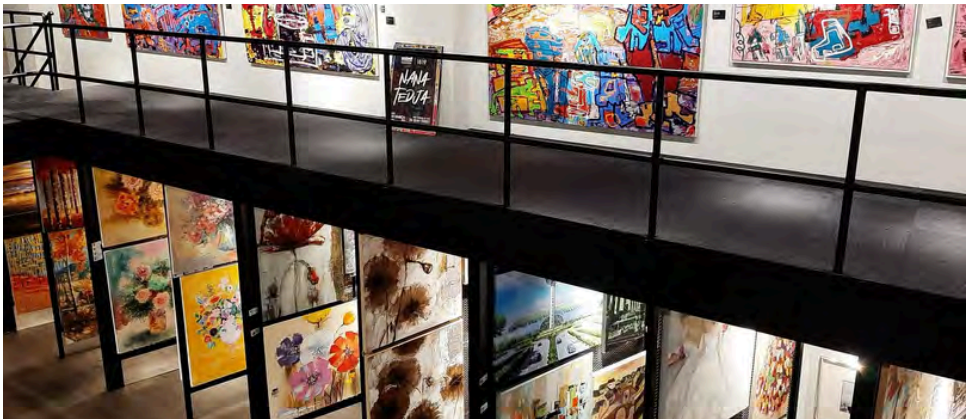
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