

The Hybrid Guest
Rhine Bernardino & Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen



17 October – 5 December 2020
PV. Friday 16 October, 4 to 8 pm*

***RSVP Essential**

The duo exhibition *The Hybrid Guest* questions perceptions of the female identity within the context of contemporary Western society by setting side by side the practices of Filipino-born artists Rhine Bernardino and Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen.

Originating from a visceral necessity to manifest their presence in space, an urgency to 'be seen' beyond their singularity – both practices exist within the realm of the *displaced* and the *in-between*. As immigrants residing respectively in Copenhagen (Cuenca Rasmussen) and London (Bernardino), they articulate the political through the body and its manifestations.

Endurance, repetition, struggle and participation is what connects both practices, primarily originating from a performative stance which develops into a multimedia body of works encompassing photography, sculpture, installation, video and sound.

The 18-year age gap reverberates throughout the work and opens up reflections on the progression of Performance Art as genre. Cuenca-Rasmussen's artistic roots refer to the historical Performance Art of the '60s and '70s, grounded to an intimacy with earthly materials and their symbolic and historical references. She regularly uses tar, clay, sand, pig blood and buttermilk, but also procedures such as song writing and choreography - turning performances into uniquely staged masquerades. Cuenca-Rasmussen also challenges historicization through re-enactments of notable performances, reappropriating stereotypes with kitsch artifice and stagecraft. Through irony and sharp sarcasm, Cuenca Rasmussen provocatively challenges social conventions while mocking the rigorous academic art debate and its consumers' logic.

A purity of form characterizes Bernardino's work, reducing the experience to its most primitive and essential representation. Constantly working and seeking different ways of co-creating with indigenous communities and travelling to rural locations (Tasmania, Northern Territory, Australia, Southern Philippines, among others), the artist chooses everyday materials such as inflatable balloons and toilet paper, as well as bodily fluids including

snot, menstrual blood and hair. The meticulous labour involved in the process of making often echoes the gravitas of her performances, as seen in ***The Earth Died Screaming While I Was Sewing*** (2016 -), an installation of toilet paper sheets sawn together with threads of hair.

Both interested in human behaviours and the condition of the self versus *an* other, the chimerical works of Bernardino and Cuenca Rasmussen are often uncannily interfering with notions of feminisation, ultimately seducing and repelling.

As part of the exhibition, Bernardino's ***Faith, Hope, Charity*** (2020) is a performance work which comes to life solely from the moment of its acquisition. It is essential that a buyer wishes for a miracle* to happen for the performance piece to begin. Over a 40-day period the artist will explore the spiritual possibility of achieving a transcendental experience by inhabiting a room from sunrise to sunset, writing the Bible page by page as part of her devotional and monastic endeavour to perform acts of belief and faith.

The work will ultimately be sold in the form of a long film and a sealed box. The new reiteration of the piece, originally performed in 2013, seeks to simulate the dedication of a devotee. Can epiphany be reconstructed? Can wilful prayers, dedication and devotion lead to something scientifically or empirically unexplainable? It also questions the value of immaterial labour, situating the body as a paramount catalyst for action and change.

The tensions between the representation of clichés, taboos, accepted stereotypes and mysticism, define the exhibition's dynamics. *The Hybrid Guest* is the accidental visitor, a chance comer, a suspicious stranger. It is both the artists themselves and the visitor who are prompted into an ambiguous environment wherein the works' potential is hidden within their layers of experience.

Works on display include: ***Regla Series*** (Bernardino, 2016-2017) and ***Blood Flags*** (Cuenca Rasmussen, 2014). In the basement, the on-going work ***Territorial Pissing*** (Bernardino, 2020 -) and ***Tow with the flow*** (Cuenca Rasmussen, 2018 – Commissioned by ART 2030), an installation and a film by Cuenca Rasmussen engaging students from New York and Copenhagen in a collective participatory process. ***Mobile Mirrors*** (Cuenca Rasmussen, 2010 -) will also be performed live on the Opening Night and exist as a sculptural piece throughout the duration of the exhibition.

*The artist will perform the work only if the miracle one wishes is something out of one's control, does not wish violence or ill will towards any sentient being and is something that cannot be bought. Bernardino will be concentrating energies on meditating and praying for a miracle to happen to an object placed inside a sealed box when the performance begins. From sunrise to sunset, she will refuse her body food and water; the performance will be live-streamed daily in the gallery space and on the website. The one and only condition is that the box one purchases should not be opened; otherwise, it will all be void and the miracle will never happen or it will be broken.

Curated by Linda Rocco

Rhine Bernardino (Manila, 1988) is a London-based artist, independent curator and researcher with a background in filmmaking. She has participated in several programmes and residencies as well as exhibited her work internationally including commissions in the public sphere, such as: Viva ExCon Biennale, Philippines (2020-2021), Guest Projects, London (2020), International Visitor Programme, Office for Contemporary Art (OCA), Norway (2020), Australia Council for the Art's Future Leaders Programme (2018-2019), Volta Art Fair, Basel (2018), Tira Tira, Pineapple Lab, Manila, PH (2018), The Rising,]performance space[, UK (2018), [R]EVOLVE. Performance Art Festival, Uppsala, Sweden (2016), Infecting the City Public Arts Festival, Cape Town (2014), EXCENTRICITÉS VII Performance Art Festival, Besançon, France (2016), PerfoArtNet Performance Art Festival, Bogota, Colombia (2016), POW! POW! ACTION & PERFORMANCE ART FESTIVAL, San Francisco, California, USA (2016).

Lilbeth Cuenca Rasmussen (Manila, 1970) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Copenhagen. Through her practice, Cuenca Rasmussen navigates between different kinds of realities and extremes, creating perfectly staged theatre performances, music videos and raw documentaries. Her work is based on a mixture of personal confessionals and political commitment, approaching issues such as identity, gender and social relations. In 2011 Cuenca Rasmussen participated in the Venice Biennale in the Danish pavilion with *Afghan Hound*. In 2012 she was awarded the Eckersberg Medal. Recent exhibitions include *Hybridization* (solo) Charlotte Fogh Gallery, Aarhus (2020); *Seafocus Art Fair Singapore* with The Drawing Room, Singapore Biennale, SAM, Singapore (2020); *Personal Structures, TIME SPACE EXISTENCE*, Palazzo Mora, (GAA Foundation) Venice (2019); *From here we stand- National Identity* (solo), Horsens Art Museum, Denmark (2019).

image credits: Rhine Bernardino, *Regla Series* (2016-2017); Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen, *Blood Flag (Philippines)*, 2014