

9 NOV - 7
DEC 2024

this desire, to break

Con Cabrera
Lyra Garcellano
Veronica Lazo
Kat Medina
Shireen Seno



this desire, to break

this desire, to break, a phrase excerpted from the philosophical essay by Boris Groys titled *The Others and The Sames*¹, contemplates on the act of breaking away from the constructed identities we embody, as well our individual associations with society and perceived communities. For Groys, this impulse to “break from one’s community” is obsolete, more so, to talk about self-identity that is removed from the established notions of community. However, this exhibition recognises this shared desire to break, perhaps, is crucial to formulating identities from being the sames and/or becoming the others. Break here is viewed as a form of rupture— a disengagement from our own personal ideologies and beliefs as we coexist with each other in our own different subworlds.

The exhibition includes seminal video works that articulate notions of both belonging and unbelonging to a particular place. The birds as central imagery in Shireen Seno’s moving image (*A child dies, a child plays, a woman is born, a woman dies, a bird arrives, a bird flies off*, 2019) evoke memories of migration. The montage of different species of birds reveals various migration typologies that relate to our capacity to adapt and eventually thrive across changing terrains. In her monologue for *Sweep* (2014), Lyra Garcellano speaks of a certain kind of alienation linked to conditioned fear of being bypassed by the world. Here, the viewers are confronted by fast-paced transitions and rapidly changing sceneries— from vivid to abstracted landscapes— while being prompted “to imagine a home that could possibly imagine us back.”

In the new iteration of an ongoing project “*Artist as Citizen, Artworld as Nation*” (2018 to present), Con Cabrera reflects on the embedded meanings and gravitas of these words/phrases within contemporary realities. First manifested in the form of a banner and a zine in 2018, and now embroidered on silkscreen frames, these texts show their close affinity with one another and their correlations with the rest of human societies. The intermingled relationships between concepts are also explored in Veronica Lazo’s series of collages on wood with metal etch (*Diversity and its Shadow [1-3]*, 2024; *Heterotopia [1 and 2]*, 2024). Her combination of materials, layer after layer, brings forward concepts of breaking and coming together, construction and deconstruction in relation to world-building. Kat Medina’s meditation on her own artistic practice echoes surrounding ideas on our shared sameness. By directly weaving on a household object for her piece *A canvas and comfort to recurring tension* (2022 to present), Medina demonstrates her own approach to object-making and materiality to explore the possibilities for meaning-making through craft.

A presentation of the varying concerns and even the unconcernedness that stem from bearing the burden of being perceived to belong to specific groupings and social classifications, this desire, to break serves as a query rather than a proposition to distinguish our inherited or produced identities from each other. It is through the littlest desire for breaks that enables us to co-exist despite the paradoxes of being the sames and being the others. (James Luigi Tana)

¹ Groys, Boris. “The Others and the Sames.” *e-flux*, 23 September 2023, www.e-flux.com/notes/561766/the-others-and-the-sames

Con Cabrera

ARTIST AS CITIZEN, ARTWORLD AS NATION

2018 to Present

Embroidered texts on silkscreen frames,
4 parts, 45.72 x 40.64 cm each

ARTIST AS CITIZEN, ARTWORLD AS NATION: Iterations, interpretations, interactions, 2022

Digital color print (with contributions from Sidd Perez, Lou Javellana, 10,000 Flowers, and Zeus Bascon)

This ongoing project explores the concept of “Artist as Citizen, Artworld as Nation” anchored on Arthur Danto’s *The Artworld* and Maria Serena Diokno’s *Becoming a Filipino Citizen: Perspectives of Citizenship and Democracy*. It attempts to confront the meanings and roles of the words, segmented and as a composed cluster. I am working on manifestations of my continued contemplation articulated in the essay *Formation Through Envisioning an Artworld Public: Identifying Members as Citizens and the Artworld as a Nation* published in the book *Traffic* in 2017. First work for this project was a banner complemented by a zine *Compilation of Writings, 2015–2017* for the exhibition *Periphery* in Batangas, 2018. (Con Cabrera)





Lyra Garcellano

Sweep, 2014

Single-channel video with audio

2 min 39 sec

In this global view, *Sweep* can be interpreted as staging the peculiar form of alienation characteristic of finance-dominated global capital: the experience of being bypassed, always close to the circuits of value but kept at once on the move and at a standstill, as the world passes one by. Here the experience of bypass to be thought of less as loss of one's own self, than as its interdiction. Not so much loss of life, as it's being kept at bay. Bypass is the experience of not getting somewhere -- anywhere -- even as one is running (operating, trading, fleeing) all the time, as if one is running in place, for life.

— From Neferti X.M. Tadiar's *Remaindered Life*, Chapter 11, *Bypass and Splendor*. Duke University Press, 2022. pp. 302-3.



Just as love excludes you in many ways, land,



It's like love that warms you...only to leave you
dead cold.



It's like love that warms you...only to leave you



Veronica Lazo

Diversity and its Shadow (1-3), 2024

Wood, paper, metal sheet
30.97 cm x 43.27 cm each

Heterotopia (1 and 2), 2024

Metal sheet on wood and 3D print on wood
30.97 cm x 43.27 cm each

The images that Veronica Lazo uses in her collages contain visualisation of flows, glitches, layers, and patterns that refer to a method of thinking and composing. Through abstraction of seemingly merging and splitting elements, Lazo structures her composition to produce images that visually overwhelm, evoking themes of destruction and rebirth, euphoria and terror. The process of combining different materials and layering them into a single abstracted image reinforces Lazo's ongoing interest in world-building.





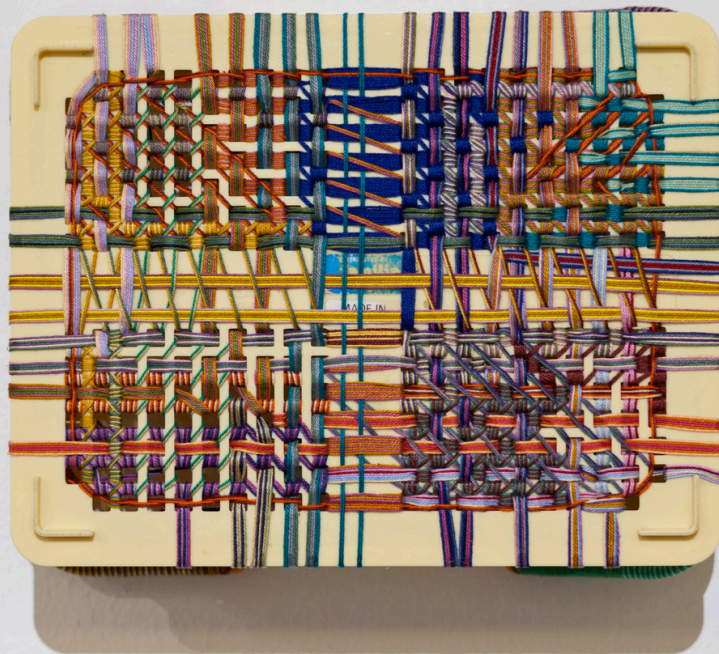
Kat Medina

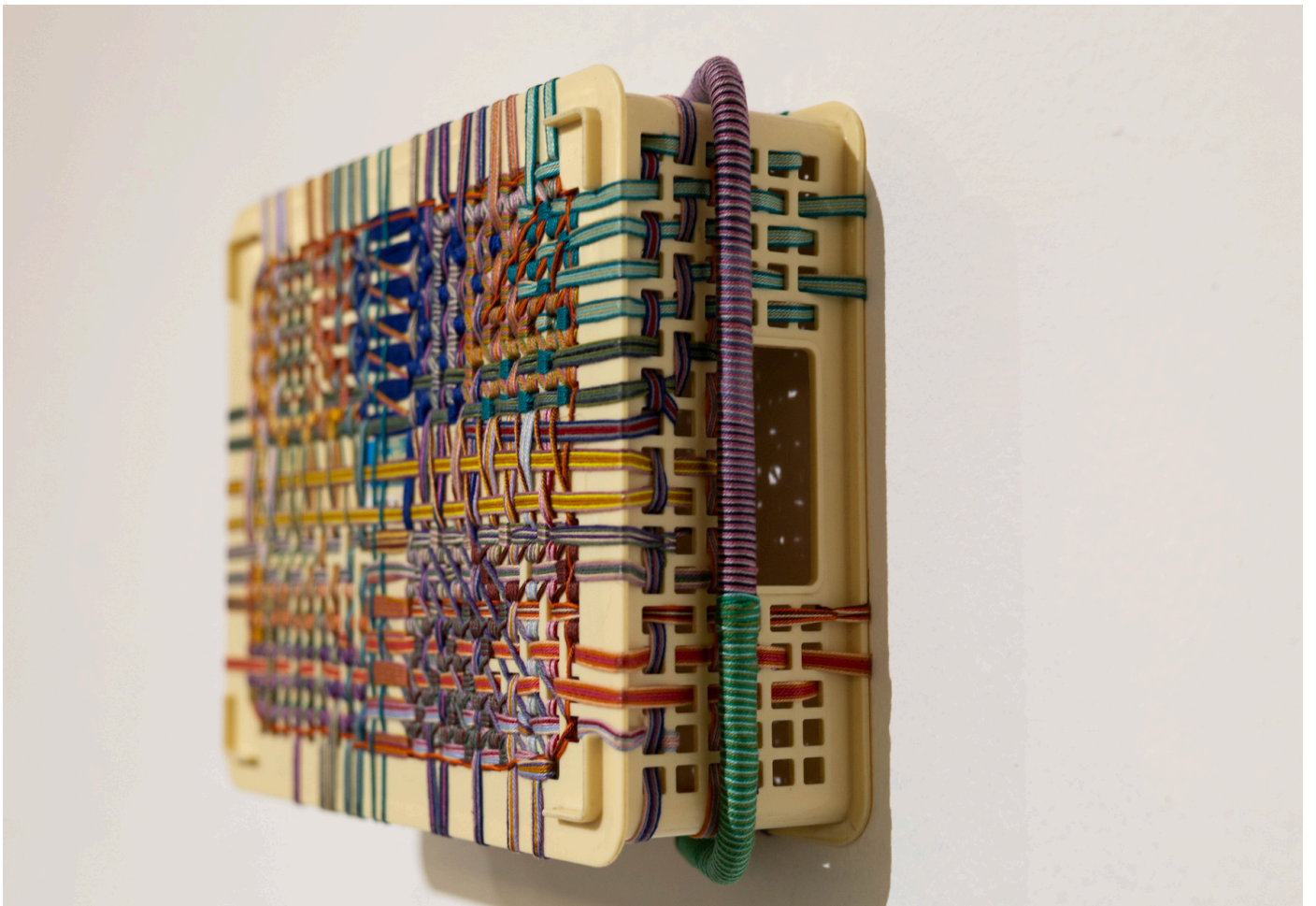
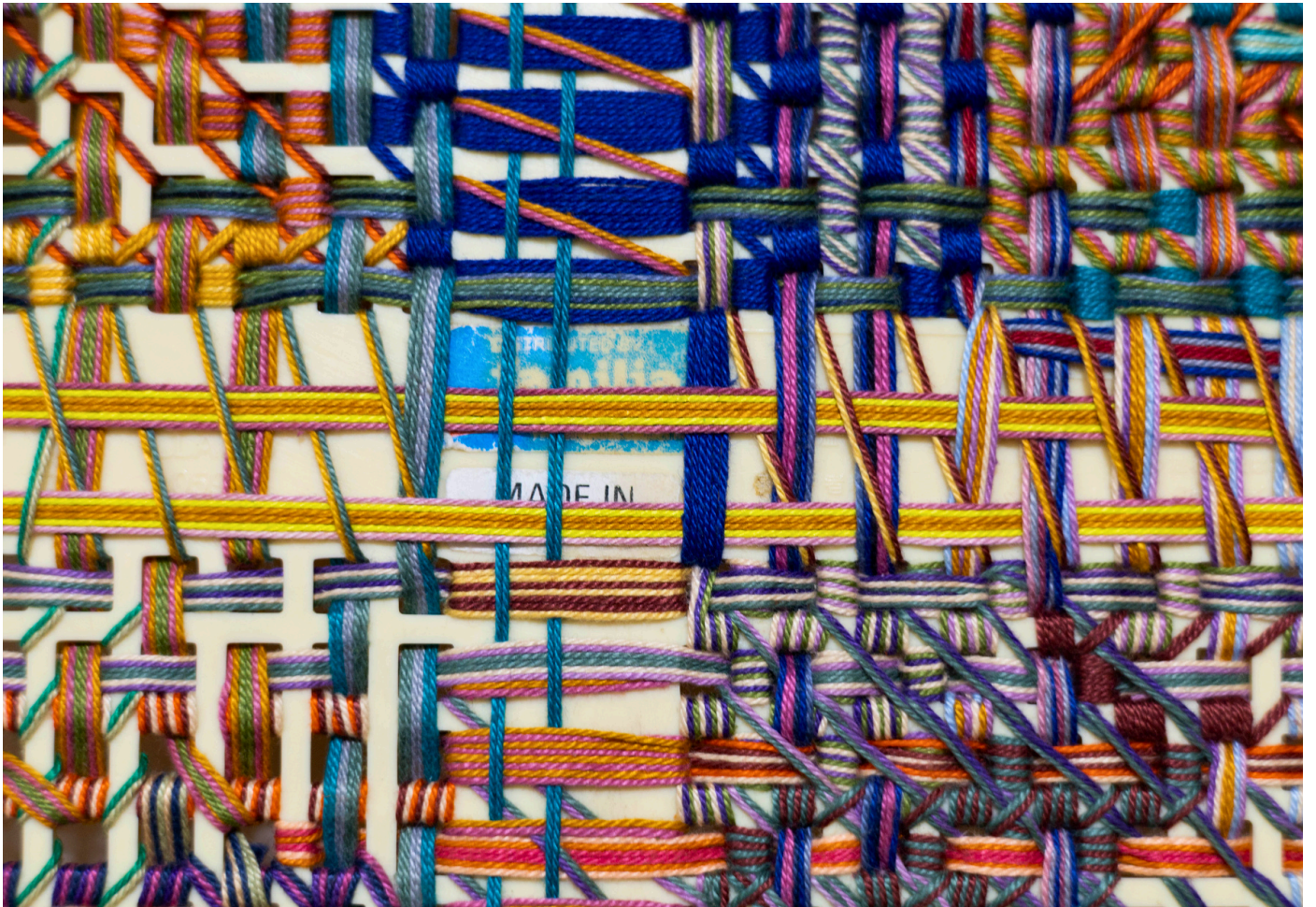
A canvas and comfort to recurring tension, 2022 to present

Cotton thread on found object

20 cm x 26 cm x 7.8 cm

(*Artificial Identity*) I made this work for my solo exhibition Abacus at No Gallery last September 2023. It is also in line with a series I started for Mono8 in July 2022. Weaving on house objects came about during the pandemic; to live with objects felt like a “natural” transition to work with them in the studio. I felt these objects were filters to thoughts occurring in my head while going about my daily routine. I often thought of weaving as a sort of work that melded with one’s thinking process: a tug in the wrong direction redirects you in its material presence, and whatever happens smoothly rewards its maker with an object that reminds a viewer of patience. It is a craft that “deceives” (I lack a better term for this); it involves a lot of balance, with tension of thought and dexterity for the material. I cannot say I am a traditional weaver. I observe and read how certain products of weaving— textile, tapestries and blankets are representative of meaning, culture and technology. I have often identified with them through my interest, but in my practice, I relate them to objects, visually (as painting) and what it may mean to produce craft today. To weave over a readymade basket is silly (hopefully funny) and redundant but I don’t think it is in vain. Aren’t there others who rely on craft to make a living despite the insistence of machine made products? Is it a luxury to use one’s time to reflect and meditate in one’s thinking, despite many forms of education and entertainment to pass the time? Should the process of craft making, a delicate threshold of place and identity, redefine itself in comparison to today’s society and politics? (Kat Medina)





Shireen Seno

***A child dies, a child plays, a woman is born, a woman dies,
a bird arrives, a bird flies off***, 2019

Single-channel video with audio, ProRes, HD video on artist-made USB
2 min 27 sec

Over the past few years, I have been working on a series of studies of the migration of birds in and out of the Philippines, a kindred project to a feature-length film I'm writing called "The Wild Duck", inspired by memories of my father's migration to the United States in the early 2000s. The project aims to deal with migration in various forms and times. Birds, and ducks in particular, are like role models for humans — they find ways to survive by various means across varied terrain. I hope to bring together a mix of species, migrating across different generations of moving image media. (Shireen Seno)





ARTWORLD

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Con Cabrera is a visual artist, independent curator, and educator. She embeds her projects into the navigation of the human condition influenced by propositions on identity and nationhood, the politics of labor, and ideology; finding balance of theory and practice. In her works, she grounds her conceptualization and production to writings on art, culture, and history. Her works have been shown in the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, US, and Taiwan.

Lyra Garcellano's research centers on the exploration of art ecosystems and historical narratives, and her output is often presented as installations, paintings, moving images, comics and writing. She is particularly interested in how prevailing models in the art world impact artistic practice. Her book "Elsewhere: Writings on Art" and published by Grana Books was released early 2024.

Veronica Lazo is an artist and industrial designer whose works are commentaries that re-evaluate how civilization interacts with nature. Responding to modernist notions of natural resources, and the intersections of craft, industry, and technology, Lazo's work re-appropriates forms, imagery and process to challenge the imaginary of dominant ecosystems. Lazo received her BFA from the University of the Philippines, Diliman, where she teaches as part of its Industrial Design faculty. She has joined residencies and exhibitions across the Philippines and Singapore. She was recently named one of the finalists at the Ateneo Art Awards – Fernando Zóbel Prizes for Visual Art for her first solo exhibition.

Kat Medina is a painter who utilizes elements of craft-making in her works. She explores making places through architectonic nuances in gesture and in the configuration of color. She has been involved in thinking about craft and object-making in the face of popular production. As a painter, she de-materializes the process of mechanical production through deliberate mark-making. She takes from the world of known objects to a world of performing.

Shireen Seno is an artist and filmmaker based in the Philippines. Her work addresses memory, history and image-making, often in relation to the context of home. Together with John Torres, she founded Los Otros, a Manila-based collective that is a laboratory and platform committed to the intersections of film and art. Her works have been presented at Tate Modern, London (2021), Asia Culture Centre, Gwangju, South Korea (2020) and Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany (2019), among others. Seno was a recipient of the 2018 Thirteen Artists Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines and a Film Fellow of the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin program in 2022.



THE
DRAWING ROOM
CONTEMPORARY ART

For inquiries, please contact us at:

✉ info@drawingroomgallery.com

📍 @drawingroommanila