

## Post-Fair Press Release

### START Art Fair, 12-16 October 2022

16 October 2022

**One East Asia**, the Singapore-based gallery that has exhibited at START Art Fair every year since 2016, returned to the Duke of York's this year with a boutique collection of hyperrealist works by regular exhibitors **Abi Dionisio** and **Jayson Cortez**, joined by **Chelsea Theodossis** and **iSko Andrade**, all of whom live and work in the Philippines. A single print by the Pop Surrealist Indonesian artist **Roby Dwi Antonio**, whose star has recently risen in the international auction scene and whose work was previously included in One East Asia's booth at START 2021, was included in the carefully curated collection.

The entire collection sold out by the penultimate day, with all but one of the works going to new collectors who were introduced to Southeast Asia's rich art scene through the fair. To top it all, the gallery found the Holy Grail of the art fair circuit: young collectors. One was just 22 years old and buying their first ever artwork. A happy day for all.



Abi Dionisio  
*Flourish*  
2022  
Oil on canvas  
152.4 x 152.4cm

## Catalogue note:

**Abi Dionisio's** signature pairing of exquisite diminutive embroideries corresponding to large oil paintings revealing the stitchwork hidden on the reverse of the cloth will be a draw to London audiences, who have clustered around her works in gasping admiration for several years running. *Flourish* is an embroidered butterfly overlaid by flowers that assumes a more web-like, darker existence in the reverse view of the painted partner piece, giving a sense of the butterfly being caught in a trap of its own making. The metanarrative in Dionisio's work is always consistent: what we see on the surface hides the more complex, challenging and untidy reality that lies beneath.

**Jayson Cortez's** hyper-real images of his wife Tracey have also become a fixture in the British capital since his work was first exhibited by One East Asia in the show *Peninsular Practices* at the Redfern Gallery, Cork Street, in 2015, as part of Asian Art in London. *Mother's Details* depict his muse swathed in heavy white lace like an historic black and white photograph that has been retouched in colour with the armful of flowers that she clasps. Now mother to the couple's first child, this image of Tracey celebrates motherhood from both a personal perspective of "Mom, Mama, Mother" and a universal viewpoint of "nurturing life in the cycle of the human race" (artist's statement).

Thematically in keeping with the photorealistic tendencies in the group commissioned for START are **Isko Andrade's** *Strength and Growth* and **Chelsea Theodossis's** *One Fine Day 2*. Andrade's white lace, translucent ribbon and red cloth bundled up by a thin frayed rope can hardly be described as a still life, instead teetering between the appearance of a hastily-wrapped gift and the suggestion of something more threatening, like coercion and control. The title suggests escape, a moving beyond what has been set out by societal norms, and may reflect Andrade's status as the only male in a family of powerful women that he frequently celebrates through his work.

Theodossis's array of pots and containers with scissors and ribbon-tied bow suggest the uncanny lying beneath the everydayness of the objects represented. Looking for meaning results in fragmented truths, a postmodernist narrative encased within the illusion of reality. Her talent for trompe-l'oeil wizardry recalls the other-worldly strangeness work of Dutch artist Edward Collier (active 1662-1708), whose still lifes of written texts and writing accoutrements were produced for the English market from the 1690s. Collier's works still have the power to disconcert, and Theodossis's paintings exhibit the same quality.

The virtuoso painterliness on display takes a different turn in the final artist included in the show. The only non-Filipino in the group, **Roby Dwi Antonio's** *Epic Fight* brings into the mix the current of surrealism that is well established in modern and contemporary Indonesian art. Known for his Pop Surrealism, an international genre shared by a roster of artists including as Yoshitomo Nara and Mark Ryden, Dwi Antonio's work characteristically depicts large-headed child figures and hybrid creatures in macabre situations. *Epic Fight*, a fine art print on aquarelle paper from an edition of 200, is a textbook example of his discomfiting blend of pop culture and Northern Renaissance images of hell – just what collectors look for.

## Artist Biographies

**Abi Dionisio (b.1987)** gained a Bachelor of Fine Art with a Major in Advertising Arts from Bulacan State University in 2009. The same year she was awarded first prize in the Painting category in the Art Association of the Philippines Annual Art Competition. Since then she has won many prizes and nominations; she was amongst the Top 12 Semi-Finalists in the Metrobank Foundation Art Competition, Philippines in 2011 and 2012; a Finalist in the Art Renewal Center's International Arc Salon Competition, New Jersey, in 2015; Top 5 National Awardee at the Philippine Art Awards in 2016; and she received the Bulacan *Gintong Kabataan* (Golden Youth) Award for Visual Arts in 2017.

One East Asia introduced Dionisio's work to the London audience for the first time at the START Art Fair 2018 and she has been shown frequently at the annual fair ever since.

**Jayson Cortez (b.1986)** originally studied Civil Engineering but changed direction to pursue the arts, graduating with a Bachelor in Fine Arts with a Major in Advertising from Bulacan State University, Philippines, in 2010. Since then, Cortez has exhibited his paintings widely in both solo and group exhibitions throughout the Philippines. Cortez received the Gintong Kabataan Award in 2015 Arts and Culture by the Bulacan government and clinched the Jurors choice Luzon Art Award (Philip Morris Philippine Art Award) in 2014.

One East Asia hosted Cortez's first solo show in Singapore, *Portal*, in 2015, and his two-man show with Welbart, *Beautiful Mind*, was held at the gallery in 2017. His work is was introduced to London audiences by One East Asia at the group show *Peninsular Practices: Contemporary Southeast Asian Art*, which took place at the Redfern Gallery for Asian Art in London 2015.

**Chelsea Theodossis (b.1993)** studied at Centro Escolar University (CEU) but is entirely self-taught as an artist. She was a semi-finalist in the Metrobank Art and Design Excellence Awards in both 2018 and 2019. She was a Finalist for her work *Solace* in the Still Life category of the Art Renewal Center's 15<sup>th</sup> International Salon, exhibited at Sotheby's New York and the European Museum of Modern Art, Barcelona. Her first solo exhibition in 2020 at the Ysobel Art Gallery, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. She made her initial entry to the London scene with One East Asia at START 2021.

**iSko Andrade (b.1996)** graduated from Bulacan State University in 2017 with a degree in Fine Arts with a Major in Visual Communication. He won the Grand Prize for oil on canvas painting at the 2015 Philippine National Oil Company Art Awards and a special citation at the Metrobank Art Awards in 2018. His first solo show was at the Eskinita Art Gallery in 2019, followed by another at the Yuchengco Museum in 2020. Most recently his exhibition *Solace* took place at the Art Cube Philippines. One East Asia's participation in START 2022 represents the first time his work has been shown in London.

**Roby Dwi Antonio (b.1990)** is a self-taught Indonesian Pop Surrealist inspired by Renaissance paintings, films and manga, amongst other sources. His work has featured in numerous gallery and museum shows. Recent solo exhibitions include five in 2022 alone, including *Rumpus*, which was shown concurrently at three of contemporary gallery NANZUKA's Tokyo outposts, as well as *Mystique Moonlight* at Gana Art Bogwang, Seoul, and

*Intensity, Intimately* at Galerie Stephanie, Quezon City, Philippines. His work is well known at auction, with a record price of US\$321,000 set for *Asih* at Christie's Hong Kong in 2022, which featured in the July 2022 edition of *Art Daily*. His work has also been featured in articles for *WHITEWALL*, *Art Business News* and *HYPEBEAST*.

## **Notes to Editors**

ONE EAST ASIA is a Singapore-based art advisory and management organization founded in April 2010. It is dedicated to enriching the appreciation of Southeast Asian Art globally through exhibitions in Singapore and London, international art fairs and not-for-profit education events.

One East Asia is the sole, officially appointed representative of the Sudjojono Centre in Singapore, dedicated to preserving the legacy of the great Indonesian painter S. Sudjojono (1913-1986).

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