

Kulay Diwa Gallery of Philippine Contemporary Art

PRESS

Aaron Bautista

RUSTIC SCENES

Aaron Bautista's abstracts could hardly be called non-representational.

Because his paintings actually do represent something, be it a forgotten landscape taken from a dream, or the convicted patron saint of a land crying on the swift, relentless verge of urban development. His works whisper a silent story, or perhaps, plunges its viewers into a cerebral activity of interpreting images according to one's own understanding of visual metaphors painted in wild, spontaneous layering of colors and everyday objects that one could often find on streets and ongoing construction sites.

Rustic Scenes is all about the ongoing development of the artist's hometown Angono, towards the fast-paced track of urbanization. What was once a calm, uninterrupted land of rice fields and is now surprisingly an industrial haven of paved roads, and constructed modern houses. The nipa huts are long gone, and the reminiscent spots of green pasture where children used to play are now replaced either by basketball courts, or the pullulating number closed, box-like houses called computer shops. However, with these ideologies and comparisons at hand, Bautista says that he is not purely against urban development. It just happens that the system of expansion itself is not perfect, consisting of both negative and positive components. "Perhaps on some aspects it's too much." The artist explains "they should've at least left some areas as they were."

And within the said concept of development, Aaron, incorporates the usage of familiar construction materials such as corrugated boards, nails,

and even enamel paint, because for him, Angono is still in a fragile, “under-construction” state. His solid layering of gold on large areas of his works usually depict land, or to be more specific, the old rice fields where he once dreamed, played, and somehow thought that he would be an artist someday. The masterful play of interlacing black lines are usually the field lines where farmers grew their rice and other semi aquatic crops. If his paintings are to be viewed closely, more details would be noticeable, such as the recurring patterns of birds and cows.

His works might deceive the limiting constraints of form and representation, but they are perfectly presented in a contextual narrative outline, so that the viewer could find it comfortable to structure the order of his spontaneous, unrestrained strokes into one solid image and idea.

Bautista’s canvasses definitely follows the basic aesthetic premises of abstract art, but eventually breaks them down in terms of idea and visual depiction, absolutely implying that his fierce movement of colors and thick drippings of paint are not merely random emotional upsurges, but concrete existing likenesses of things that we see, and sometimes, refuse to see.

I could hardly define Aaron Bautista's masterworks as abstract.

...Dave Lock



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