

## Press Release

### FOST Gallery | Art Jakarta 2022

Elaine Roberto-Navas | Sebastian Mary Tay | Yeo Tze Yang



Yeo Tze Yang, *Welcome (Salah Guna Kuasa) (The Abuse of Power)*, 2019, Oil on canvas, H130 x W180 cm

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<b>Exhibition Venue</b>	Art Jakarta Jakarta Convention Center Booth B7
<b>Exhibition Period</b>	26 – 28 August 2022
<b>About the Presentation</b>	<p>FOST Gallery is delighted to return to <i>Art Jakarta 2022</i> with a presentation of works by Elaine Roberto-Navas, Sebastian Mary Tay and Yeo Tze Yang. This presentation juxtaposes the virtual and the real world; truth and fiction; the digital and the analogue.</p> <p>We will debut Sebastian’s newest series of photographs, <i>Aletheia</i>, named after the Greek goddess of truth. The term was used in Greek philosophy, and later reinterpreted by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to mean elucidation in the ontological world. Each print features a cropped hyper-saturated mountain-landscape, like a shape-shifting portal offering a glimpse into a fragment of the metaverse.</p> <p>Flanking these abstracted landscapes in our booth are paintings by Elaine and Tze Yang, firmly rooted in everyday reality. Elaine’s three paintings are part of her larger series <i>Grocery</i>, each showing an ingredient, common in any Asian kitchen. Here, the paintings are of a different type of poultry, raw and unadorned; a sense of honesty permeates. It is also perhaps a poignant foretelling of the current global food crisis. A similar sense of truth-telling is reflected in Tze Yang’s paintings of abandoned shopfronts, found in any fast-paced Southeast Asian city, growing upon itself (<i>Smashed Glass Door</i> and <i>Welcome (Salah Guna Kuasa) (The Abuse of Power)</i>). He meticulously recreates the graffiti that had been casually scrawled and sprayed. His singular painting of a pair of jeans sprawled on the road, is titled humorously <i>Seluar Joget (Dancing Pants)</i>.</p>

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**About the Artists**

**Elaine ROBERTO-NAVAS** (b. 1964; Manila, Philippines) is essentially a sensualist. As she paints, she caresses her subjects with such knowing affection, where the rivulets and creases of their weathered flesh are all the more made corporeal by her buttery impastoed strokes.

Stroking is, however, not a mere incidental verb here, when writing especially of painting, particularly of Elaine's works. Derived from the Old English word *strican*, meaning to pass over lightly or to smooth or to flatter, similarly Elaine "flatters" her ruined and worn subjects with the "regal" affectations of a thing or matter that is so possessed of a life, affirming their very existence in the world, their matterhood and materiality vivified further, in their worn states, their physical bruising, their much use and weathering. This is much evident on her series of chairs taken after Michael Wolf's photographs where the chairs, mostly contrived from found pieces of wire, foam, cloth, bricks or refurbished again from the discards of Shanghai's aggressively bustling new commercial economy, are seemingly dented with the leaden anatomies of its sitters. They cease to become mere objects of curiosity for its very form, but curiosities in their speculated personal histories/biographies.

On the other hand, her series of gates are all about surface where object and subject matter become one, its very surface "heavily marked and swirled by paint as it enunciate the incurred scratches, dents and oxidation of the gates themselves. These paintings become stand-ins for the real thing, the gate itself which distinguishes between the "other" and the "familiar", intrusion from belonging, fortress from a sense of home, a threshold interpolating both exteriority and interiority at the same time. Yet the brilliant luminance of the paint itself seductively beckons, the surface willing to yield to touch, but only in its tactile suppleness. What can only be unlocked are the doors to one's imaginings underneath these striated surfaces, opening the possibility of narratives but at the same time bookend-ed by this tenuous ambiguity of disclosure and secrecy which the artist has the prerogative to do so for the reluctant admission to autobiography."

Elaine's feel for surface seems undifferentiated from the puckered skin of hanging fowls and wilted salad greens from their electric vibrancy, yet viewed up close they tend to defocus on what's depicted but see instead exuberance, the delight of its making — manic, intense, matter made oleic flesh, it's matter- of fact meatness swimming in a black roux void. It's gut-feel painting that eats at our very notion of mortality.

Her portraits plead for the same memorialization, suspending time, and the process of diminishment of individuated physiological features that are rather roughly hewn, carved as if it were raw marble or striated meat, scratched and warped as the peeling baseboards of a wooden house that's long seen a procession of deaths and births of its inhabitants. But these 4, portraits are not nostalgic keepsakes nor are they a factual record of Elaine's sitters, they are moreover testaments to Elaine's keen attachment to them, preserving their essence yet not stooping to their being mere flesh and bone, but rather as matter surrounded in an aura of precarious obsolescence.

Elaine Navas is a Fine Arts graduate of the University of the Philippines and also a Psychology major from the Ateneo de Manila University. She won the Juror's Choice Award at the Art Association of the Philippines in 1994 and received Honorable Mention in the Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards in 1995 & Singapore Art Awards in 2002 & 2004. She exhibits frequently in Manila and Singapore.

Text courtesy of Lena Cobangbang.

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**Sebastian Mary TAY SSA** (b. 1989, Singapore) is an interdisciplinary artist and educator who graduated from The Glasgow School of Art with Master of Research and Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Fine Art.

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In recent years, Tay's works have been exhibited in the UK, Lithuania, Singapore, Malaysia, and China. Selected exhibitions include *Something Above; Somewhere Beyond* at FOST Gallery (solo exhibition, Singapore), Glasgow Open House Arts Festival (group exhibition, UK), *Bus.Stop.Art* (public installation, Singapore), *Frame & Frequency* (group exhibition, USA), *Sandstorm in an Hourglass* (group exhibition, Singapore), *Utopia* (group exhibition, UK), and The Society of Scottish Artists annual exhibitions. Tay's works showed at The Royal Scottish Academy on multiple occasions; he also received the Royal Glasgow Institute prize and the Royal Scottish Academy Latimer Award. In 2020, Tay partook in Meta Open Arts residency programme, where he made a site-specific photographic print measuring twenty-five metres and across three walls. In 2021, he was involved in a collaborative project between Meta Open Arts and Messenger in the making, and subsequent launching, of a 360° augmented reality filter, titled *Seeking Starlight*.

Various institutions have invited Sebastian for talks and guest lectures in recent years; they include City of Glasgow College (UK), The Royal Scottish Academy (UK), Mount Florida Studios (UK), The University of the West of Scotland (UK), DECK (Singapore), Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Singapore). Tay is currently an adjunct lecturer at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, LASALLE College of the Arts, and Nanyang Technological University. His research interests and teaching areas include art history, contextual studies, art theory, contemporary art practice, philosophy, critical theory, photography history, photography theory, photography practice, black and white darkroom photography, alternative processes.

Tay is an elected Professional Member of The Society of Scottish Artists. He is based between Singapore and Korea.

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**YEO Tze Yang** (b. 1994; Singapore) is a visual artist with a primary focus on representational painting. He was conferred the Silver Award, UOB Painting of the Year in 2016. He graduated from the National University of Singapore in Southeast Asian Studies in 2019.

Tze Yang makes art about the human experience through depictions of the unnoticed; observing people, places and objects in his immediate surroundings. A self-taught painter, he allows his ideas to emerge self-reflexively with the focus on "getting the work done" first.

As a painter of daily life, Tze Yang takes his cues from art movements like Realism in painting, film, photography and literature. The artist sees his practice as an opportunity to explore, question and toy with the orthodoxies and expectations of him as a figurative painter.

Painting is the trunk of the tree that is Tze Yang's artistic practice, from which he branches into non-painting mediums such as electronic media and writing. The result of such a process is an accumulation of images, thoughts, emotions, stories and memories that in turn become allegories of both the artist's life and the stories that his audiences weave into his works.

Tze Yang's works have been exhibited extensively in Singapore, including The Substation, the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, and has shown regionally. His works are part of the National University of Singapore collection and the UOB collection as well as private collections in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, Switzerland, Denmark, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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**Selected Images**



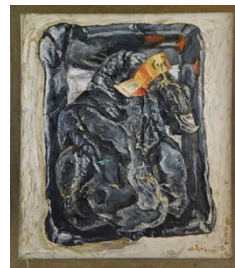
YEO Tze Yang  
*Smashed Glass Door*  
2018  
Oil on canvas  
H150 x W200 cm



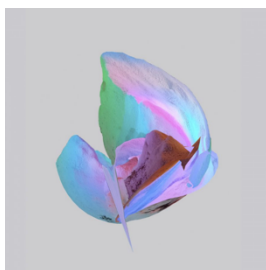
YEO Tze Yang  
*Seluar Joget (Dancing Pants)*  
2019  
Oil on canvas  
H60 x W120 cm



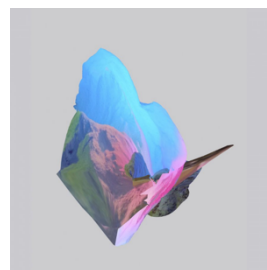
Elaine ROBERTO-NAVAS  
*Grocery Painting I*  
2003  
Oil on canvas  
H97.8 x W83.2 x D2.5 cm (frame)



Elaine ROBERTO-NAVAS  
*Grocery Painting II*  
2003  
Oil on canvas  
H97.8 x W83.2 x D2.5 cm (frame)



Sebastian Mary TAY  
*Collapsing*  
2022  
Digital photographic collage  
H50 x W50 cm



Sebastian Mary TAY  
*Folding*  
2022  
Digital photographic collage  
H50 x W50 cm