

DISTANT TRAVELERS

RA Tijing

May 5, 2023 - 3pm

Orange Project

Bacolod City



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DISTANT TRAVELERS

a solo exhibition by R A Tijing

The pop surrealist paintings of RA Tijing utilize storybook charm and symbolism for social critique. His ongoing series “Distant Travelers” illustrate the dangers faced by migrants in seeking greener pastures. In the largest painting, sheep are crammed into a boat—the sheep representing innocent migrants, their vessel unseaworthy, with the possibility of capsizing. Behind them in the distance are clues of war: missiles shooting into the air, fire, and smoke. And aboard with them is a fox, signifying a human trafficker. While migrants leave in desperation to find safety and economic security, they are victimized by syndicates who abuse their human rights. Characters such as fox in sheep’s clothing lure them with the meat and cheese of foreign lands, snake-like creatures hiding in the trees, sharks in the water, all portray paradise in disguise.

The “Portrait of a Traveler” series are symbolic portraits of migrants in life vests. One of the paintings depicts a migrant wearing a tire instead of a life jacket, showing the desperate need to escape even without proper safety essentials. In “The Stopover,” a mother sheep and her children pause to rest during their voyage. More snake-like creatures and kidnappers scouting them from behind trees serve as reasons why not all who travel in groups will survive.

Turning an eye to the Philippine diaspora, two paintings feature the “Balikbayan Box”, a packing cardboard box used by and associated with Filipinos working abroad in their generous habit of sending gifts home. Colorful balloons replace the single hot air balloon, suggesting the uncertainties of overseas workers. They may either emerge successful in their goals or dismally lose their lives, a fragile situation, dependent on where the wind blows.

The painting “The Prospectors” moves even closer to home. Tijing refers to his hometown, the island of Negros Occidental, where verdant landscapes have become barer over the years, as subdivisions and other manmade structures have developed over them. A fox in a white suit is a businessman exploiting nature, traveling to look for places to mine for profit. The trees have less branches for birds to land, hovering vultures (the harbingers of death) pretending to be angels and logged down trees an expression of nature suffering.

Yet not all Tijing’s works are about perils and menace. “The Traveler” is simply a tourist visiting Europe; likewise, “The Picnic” simply embodies a traveler who picnics, hikes or journeys to make new discoveries, the weather conditions ideal. Through his distinct visual imagery, Tijing invites audiences to look deeper into the dark realities and complexities of even the most pleasant and idealized human stories.

Text by Stephanie Frondoso



Distant Travelers VII

Acrylic on canvas

60 x 72 inches

2023

Code: OP2023-RA-001

PHP 420,000.00



Distant Travelers V
(Balikbayan Box 1)

Acrylic on canvas
42 x 48 inches
2023

Code: OP2023-RA-002

PHP 149,000.00



Distant Travelers III
(Prospectors)

Acrylic on canvas
30 x 40 inches
2022

Code: OP2023-RA-003

PHP 95,000.00



Distant Travelers VI
(The Stopovers)

Acrylic on canvas
42 x 48 inches
2023

Code: RA2023-RA-004

● PHP 149,000.00



Distant Travelers IV
(The Picnic)

Acrylic on canvas
24 x 24 inches
2023

Code: OP2023-RA-005

● PHP 55,000.00



Distant Traveler XII

Acrylic on canvas
18 x 18 inches
2023

Code: OP2023-RA-006
PHP 35,000.00



Distant Traveler XI

Acrylic on canvas
18 x 18 inches
2023

Code: OP2023-RA-007
PHP 35,000.00



Distant Traveler VIII

Acrylic on canvas
42 x 48 inches
2023

Code: OP2023-RA-008

PHP 149,000.00



Distant Traveler X

Acrylic on canvas
42 x 48 inches
2023

Code: OP2023-RA-009

PHP 149,000.00



Distant Traveler IX

Acrylic on canvas
42 x 48 inches
2023

Code: OP2023-RA-010

PHP 149,000.00



Bantay

Ink and Acrylic on Paper
11 x 8.5 inches
2023
Code: OP2023-RA-011
PHP 16,000.00 ●



Sheeple

Ink and Acrylic on Paper
11 x 8.5 inches
2023
Code: OP2023-RA-012
● PHP 16,000.00



The Picnic

Ink and Acrylic on Paper
11 x 8.5 inches
2023
Code: OP2023-RA-013
PHP 16,000.00 ●



Distant Traveller

Ink and Acrylic on Paper
11 x 8.5 inches
2023
Code: OP2023-RA-014
PHP 16,000.00