



MAY TENGA ANG LUPA

RODEL TAPAYA

14 June - 9 July, 2022

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rodel Tapaya, born 1980 in Montalban Philippines, is a contemporary Filipino artist, celebrated as one of the most important painters working in Southeast Asia. His paintings are characterized by visionary narrative tableaux, melding folklore, historical and personal references into painterly figurations. By forming thought-provoking instantiations of myth and contemporary existence—such as beastly incarnations of gods beside factories and television antennas—his works are both a retelling and a continuation of the oral and pictorial tradition of his milieu. Affectingly intimate and eclectic, his process mines indigenous craft that functions as a parallel to the text and provides insight into an amalgam of pre-colonial culture and contemporary political ethos. “I just find myself looking into these folk narratives [...] which lets us see a map of the future,” he has said of his process.

Tapaya was a student at the College of Fine Arts of the University of the Philippines when he won the Nokia Art Prize in 2001. This gave him a grant to study at the Parsons School of Design and at the University of Helsinki. After a series of successful exhibitions, he moved his home and studio to Bulacan in 2006 where he currently lives with his wife, the painter Marina Cruz-Garcia, and their three children. His works are held in the collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Gallery of Australia, Michael and Janet Buxton Collection, Mori Art Museum, The Hori Science and Art Foundation, Singapore Art Museum, Bencab Museum, Ateneo Art Gallery, Iloilo Museum of Contemporary Art, Pinto Art Museum, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Deutsche Bank Collection, SEACO, and several international private collections.

Tapaya was awarded the Cultural Center of the Philippines Thirteen Artists Award in 2012 and was the inaugural winner of the Asia-Pacific Breweries Signature Art Prize in 2011.

ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

May Tenga Ang Lupa
Rodel Tapaya

May tenga ang lupa, may pakpak ang balita (The land has ears, the news has wings) is an aphorism that reminds us not only that contemporary realities have ancient roots but also that nonhuman actors matter in telling the story. In Rodel Tapaya's own words, it is these stories that give us existence: "... myths and folktales are our ancestors". The labyrinthine genealogy of folklore runs through these paintings to show us the fine line that separates imagination and falsehood. These works occasion contemplation of how massive disinformation is built upon a maze of folklorism that confuses our way of interpreting and remembering.

While the word tenga commonly means 'ears' in Tagalog, in other Austronesian languages, it also means 'center or middle'. Later on, it came to mean the half of a particular whole or the curve of a street or landscape. The word tenga thus points to the centrality of the organ of hearing and balance to the corporeal and environmental conception of our ancestors.

The idea that even animals and objects can listen and transmit private thoughts endures in our current age of surveillance capitalism; a time when unregulated social media increasingly threatens human autonomy and civil society. The works in this exhibition offer a glimpse into this unfolding crisis by retelling the version of events from history but in the shape of fables where animals take on human roles and plead with the reader to uncover the truth from the satire.

Cont'd.

ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

The main figure in the painting is Macario Sakay, who commanded the remnants of the revolutionary forces during the Philippine-American War. Sakay anticipated how the battle would rage on long after they were dead in the frontier of historical revisionism. Here, he is reimagined with eyes in his long hair and spread out wings that recall the iconic gesture of the man in Goya's *Third of May, 1808*. Like that man, Sakay remained defiant in the face of execution. His face in this painting shows anguish that is more worried than terrified. Asserting his humanity, Sakay stood in the gallows and appealed to fellow prisoners: "But I want to tell you that we are not bandits and robbers, as the Americans have accused us, but members of the revolutionary forces that defended our mother country." By painting Sakay as a bird of freedom and political awakening, the painter carries out the aspiration in his last words: "May our independence be born in the future".

¹ In some Tagalog translations of the Bible, it replaces the penultimate verses of Ecclesiastes 10 (..a bird on the wing may report what you say).



May Tenga Ang Lupa, May Pakpak And Balita
acrylic on canvas
300 x 700 cm | 9.84 x 22.97 ft
2022



Storm Bird
acrylic on canvas
243.84 x 335.28 cm | 8 x 11 ft
2022



Make One's Mouth Water
acrylic on canvas
335.28 x 487.68 cm | 11 x 16 ft
2022



Apparition
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



Chicken Army
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



Destruction
 acrylic on paper
 50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
 2016



Dragonfly
 acrylic on paper
 50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
 2016



Eight Headed Monster
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



Flight
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



Ice Cream Vendor
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



Kabunian
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



Mebuyan
 acrylic on paper
 50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
 2016



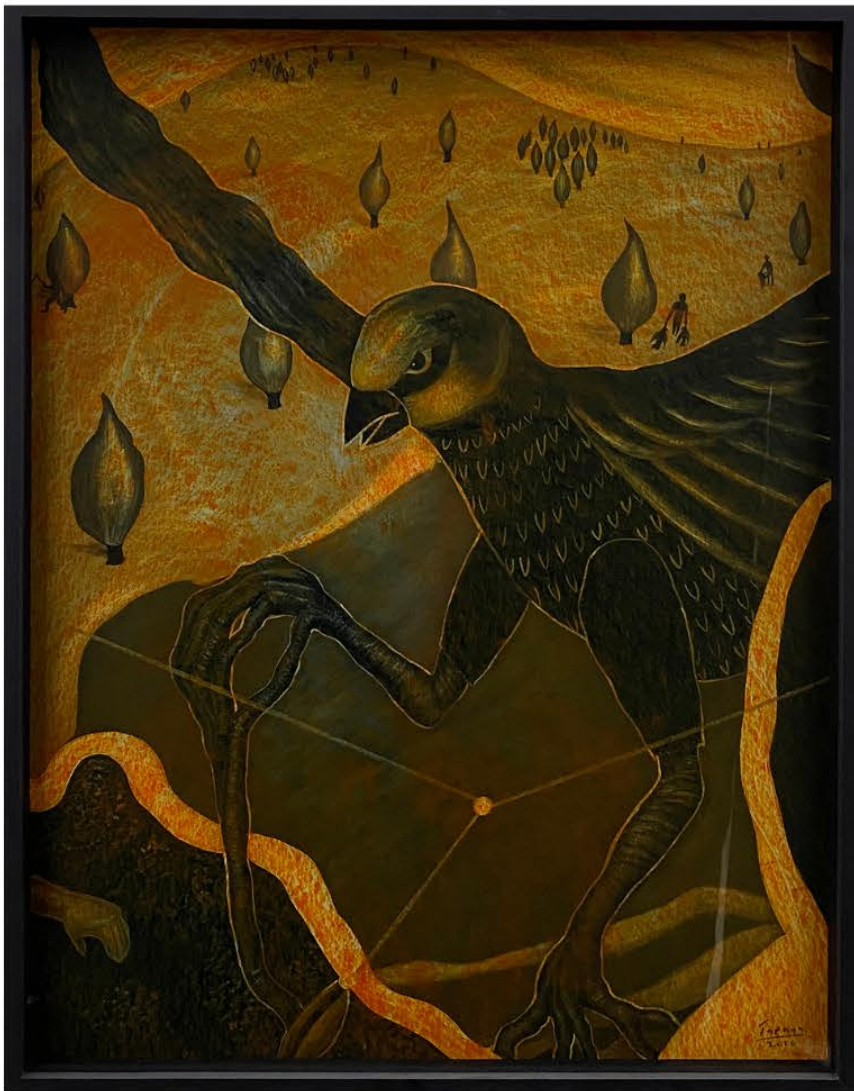
Men On Masks
 acrylic on paper
 50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
 2016



The Executioner
 acrylic on paper
 50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
 2016



The Forest Have Eyes
 acrylic on paper
 50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
 2016



The Giant Bird
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



The Great Drought
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



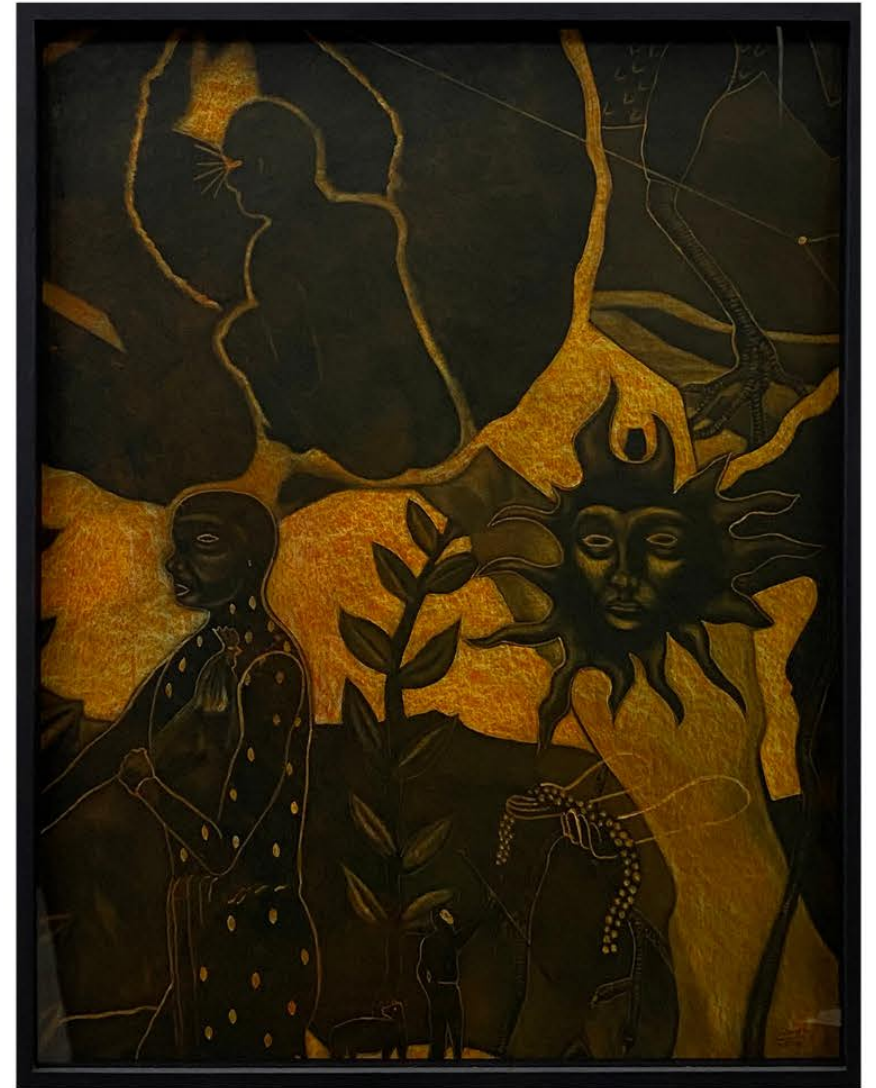
The Healer
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



The Sacrifice
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



The Science of Lambs
 acrylic on paper
 50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
 2016



The Sun and Lumawig
 acrylic on paper
 50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
 2016



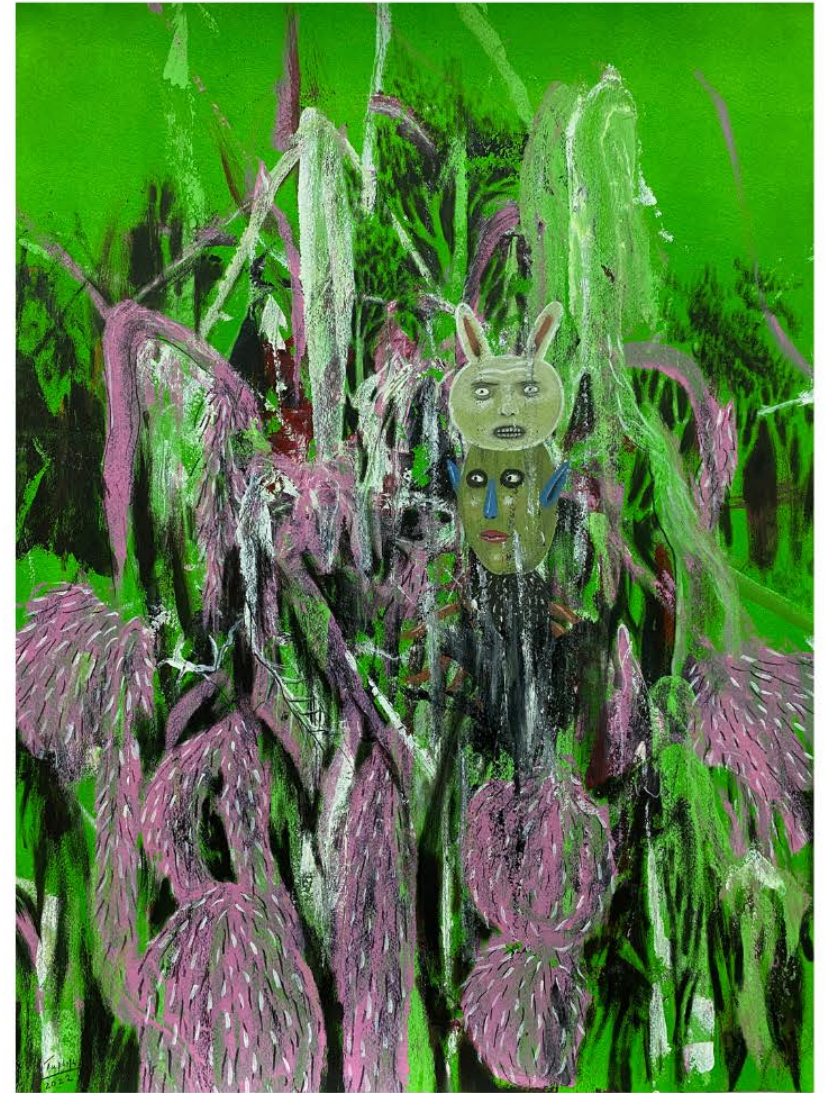
The Traveller
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



Underworld
acrylic on paper
50 x 65 cm | 19.69 x 23.62 in
2016



Humble Abode
acrylic on paper
55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
2022



Grassland
acrylic on paper
55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
2022



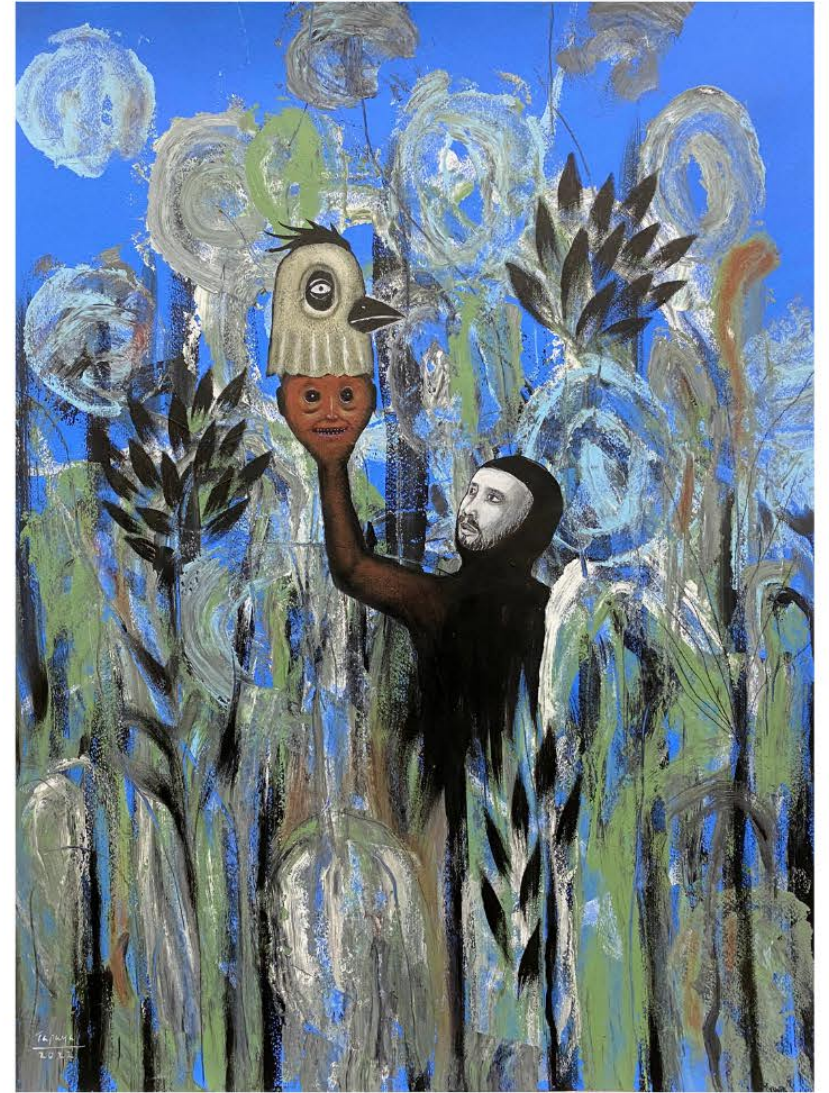
Makes The World Go Round
 acrylic on paper
 55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
 2022



Mystery
 acrylic on paper
 55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
 2022



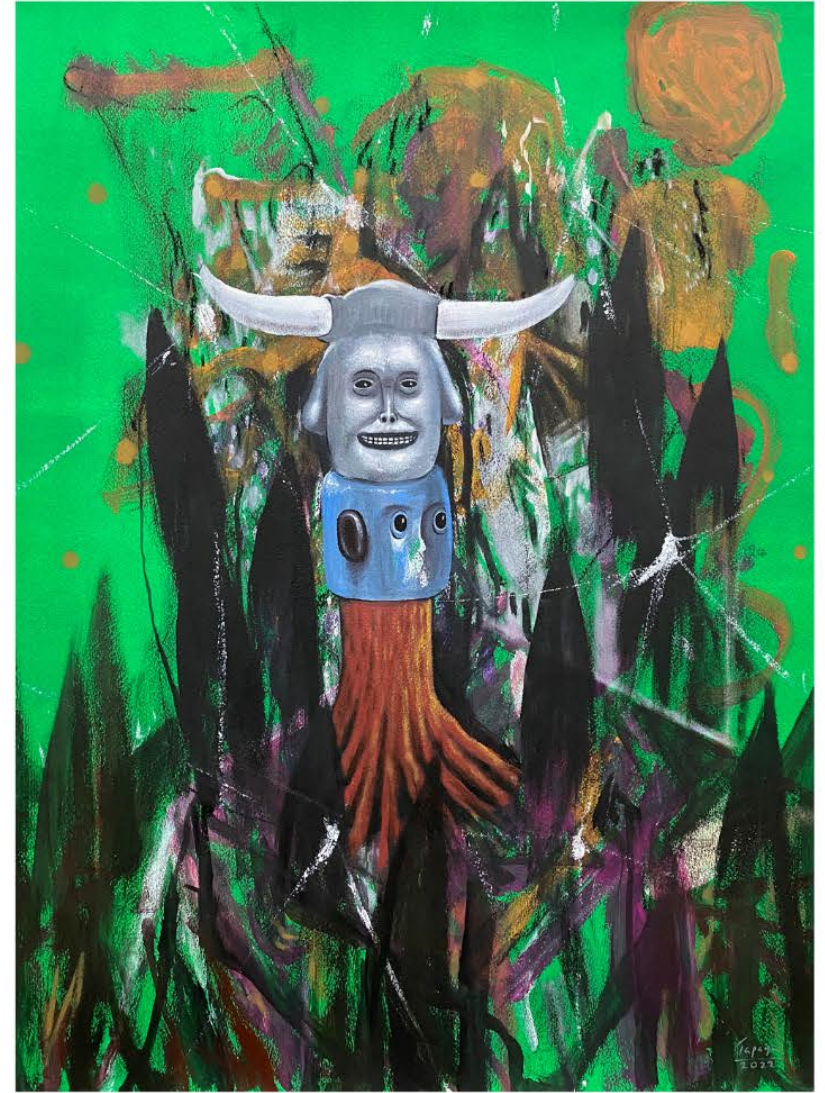
Bird Whisperer
 acrylic on paper
 55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
 2022



Point of View
 acrylic on paper
 55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
 2022



Spark
acrylic on paper
55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
2022



The Guardians
acrylic on paper
55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
2022



Shadow
acrylic on paper
55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
2022



Wilderness
acrylic on paper
55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
2022



Sleepless
acrylic on paper
55.9 x 76.2. cm | 22 x 30 in
2022



Ang Araw
epoxy, sawdust and metal
49 x 26 x 38 cm | 19.29 x 10.24 x 14.96 in
2022



Ang Bagyo
epoxy, sawdust and metal
50 x 15 x 15 cm | 19.69 x 5.91 x 5.91 in
2022



Ang Gabi
epoxy, sawdust and metal
53 x 15 x 27 cm | 20.87 x 5.91 x 10.63 in
2022



Ang Gubat
epoxy, sawdust and metal
52 x 15 x 28 cm | 20.47 x 5.91 x 11.02 in
2022



Ang Kalbo
epoxy, sawdust and metal
49 x 15 x 15 cm | 19.29 x 5.91 x 5.91 in
2022



Ang Payaso
epoxy, sawdust and metal
48 x 21 x 44 cm | 18.9 x 8.27 x 17.32 in
2022



Ang Chismis
epoxy, sawdust and metal
49 x 15 x 22 cm | 19.29 x 5.91 x 8.66 in
2022



Ang Ulap
epoxy, sawdust and metal
47 x 26 x 41 cm | 18.5 x 10.24 x 16.14 in
2022



Liwayway
epoxy, sawdust and metal
47 x 19 x 24 cm | 18.5 x 7.48 x 9.45 in
2022



Mapanganib na Paglalakbay
epoxy, sawdust and metal
70 x 15 x 15 cm | 27.56 x 5.91 x 5.91 in
2022
Not for sale



Tahimik
epoxy, sawdust and metal
49 x 15 x 16 cm | 19.29 x 5.91 x 6.3 in
2022

THE
DRAWING ROOM
CONTEMPORARY ART



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