



PALIMPSEST: MEMENTO MORI/ MEMENTO VIVERE

David Loew

Feb 24, 2024 - Mar 24, 2024

MUGNA GALLERY

Uypitching Building
KM 8 Dumaguete - Valencia Highway
Bong-ao, Valencia Negros Oriental
Philippines

 MUGNA

Unearthing seems to be the overall feeling when one encounters David Loew's current works.

Shifting remarkably from and between various media throughout the years, what remains is his predisposition towards layers: be it facades, backgrounds, piles, or stories. Every work that is made in his studio is a geological record of time, location and experience.

In the exhibition *Palimpsest: Memento Mori/Memento Vivere*, Loew draws from his career as a photographer, graphic designer, and painter.

Family is the first layer, or rather the base, the canvas if you will. Both parents being artists, and creativity valued highly, Loew has always seen himself as an artist. Over the years, he will be both creator, archaeologist and historian of his career. A key lesson he learned from this phase in his life is finding and appreciating art in anything and everything, throughout nature.

Finishing art school, a plethora of inspiration was added. From Hopper to Magritte, Bosch to Bruegel, from the *Twilight Zone* to the *Outer Limits*, even the Impressionists made an impression on Loew, but given his exploratory nature, his learnings from this period would also take a back seat as travelling around the world makes its mark.

Marks, traces, remnants; a palimpsest is the image that we see after countless layers of text, paint, or anything that has affected a surface has been peeled away, scraped off — but never completely erasing the previous.

Loew lived in Europe for some time, and then Shanghai, China, before finding himself in the City of Gentle People, Dumaguete, Philippines. Prior to this, he amassed a significant professional portfolio as a photographer and graphic designer, working on movies, designing book covers, among others.

At this point, he has been making works that are reactions to what he has lived. As an artist, his life is the main canvas, the world his palette. We are looking at the visible remnants of history — his story.

His works in recent years, abstractions in form, are also translations of the figuration in his past. Photographs layered over with paint, paint layered over with gestures, the artist's hand manifests.

Although seemingly indirect, this exercise of creation, feeling, and waiting is also an exercise in memory. Loew draws from, digs up all of his experiences that he can, but inevitably he works towards an understanding of the human condition: impermanence.

We are all subject to continuous growth and entropy, we age, our cells wither: remember that we must die. Yet this adage is juxtaposed with a simple reminder: remember to live. For it is in a life lived that our mortality has meaning.



KINESTHETIC

Mixed Media
Unframed: 117.5 x 135.8 cm | 46.2 x 53.4 in
Framed: 122 x 140.4 cm | 48 x 55.2 in
2024

160,000 PHP
2,857 USD



THE SACRIFICE / THE OFFERING

Mixed Media
Unframed: 84 x 137.7 cm | 33 x 54.2 in
Framed: 89 x 142.4 cm | 35 x 56.1 in
2024

120,000 PHP
2,142 USD



UPON REFLECTION

Mixed Media
Unframed: 94 x 91.6 cm | 37 x 36 in
Framed: 8.8 x 96.2 cm | 38.9 x 37.9 in
2024

90,000 PHP
1,607 USD



IDENTITY

Mixed Media
Unframed: 79.5 x 116 cm | 31.2 x 45.6 in
Framed: 121.2 x 83.7 cm | 47.7 x 33 in
2024

100,000 PHP
1,785 USD

1 USD = 56 PHP





BRIGHT RED PALE YELLOW

Mixed Media

Unframed: 183.4 x 48.5 cm | 72.2 x 19 in
Framed: 187.5 x 52.7 cm | 73.8 x 20.7 in
2022

75,000 PHP
1,339 USD



THE RED DOOR

Mixed Media

Unframed: 183.4 x 48.7 cm | 72.2 x 19.1 in
Framed: 187.6 x 53.3 cm | 74 x 21 in
2022



THE SPELL

Mixed Media

Unframed: 175.3 x 79.2 cm | 69 x 31.1 in
Framed: 180.4 x 83 cm | 71 x 32.6 in
2024

75,000 PHP
1,339 USD



TRIGONOMETRY

Mixed Media

Unframed: 172.5 x 91.4 cm | 68 x 36 in
Framed: 177.5 x 95.5 cm | 69.9 x 37.6 in
2023

105,000 PHP
1,875 USD

1 USD = 56 PHP



IN SEARCH OF A SYSTEM

Mixed Media
Unframed: 120.3 x 180.3 cm | 47.3 x 71 in
Framed: 124.7 x 184.6 cm | 49.1 x 72.6 in
2023

200,000 PHP
3,571 USD



MICROCOSM

Mixed Media
Unframed: 84 x 137.7 cm | 33 x 54.2 in
Framed: 125 x 104.5 cm | 49.2 x 41.1 in
2023

110,000 PHP
1,964 USD



CHAOS IN CONFLICT WITH ORDER

Mixed Media
Unframed: 120.3 x 180.3 cm | 47.3 x 71 in
Framed: 125 x 184.5 cm | 49.2 x 72.6 in
2023

200,000 PHP
3,571 USD



GRAVITY

Mixed Media
Unframed: 120.3 x 100.3 cm | 47.3 x 39.4 in
Framed: 124.6 x 105 cm | 49 x 41.3 in
2024

110,000 PHP
1,964 USD



FROM GULLY TO WALL I, II, III

Mixed Media

Unframed: 50.7 x 50.8 cm | 20 x 20 in

Framed: 55 x 55.2 cm | 21.6 x 21.7 in

2023



CONCEPTION

Mixed Media

Unframed: 113.2 x 48.8 cm | 44.5 x 19.2 in

Framed: 118 x 53 cm | 46.4 x 20.8 in

2023

50,000 PHP

892 USD

1 USD = 56 PHP

Artist Statement

Art is an exploration of our relationship with the world. All an artist can offer is his own unique perspective. I see the world both through the lens of a camera and the eye of a painter. The world is my palette. I love its textures, the tangled roots of an ancient tree, the complexity and color of rusted metal, or the peeling paint on an abandoned church wall.

I have written a lot of bios and artist statements in the past. Most have been very brief discussions about my work and my personal vision as an artist, a list of galleries, shows, and clients. But this will be my first attempt at a deeper look into my public and private life as an artist.

I have always been fascinated by the natural beauty, eventual decay and the rich texture of the world around me. Everything we touch becomes an artifact of our life, a piece of our personal history.

As an artist I am in fact a historian of my own life experience and the world around me. In my work I seek to explore the relationship between the world we live in and the world we have left behind moment by moment. Shards of pottery dug up after a thousand years reflect a moment in some person's life, now long forgotten.

I am often asked how long I've been making art. And my answer is always the same: there was never a time that I didn't identify as an artist.

Exactly how much of that is the way I was raised or genetics is hard to say. Both of my parents were artists and creativity in the family was highly valued. So there was a lot of nurturing in that direction. But at the same time genetics clearly played a role.

There is no question that growing up in a family of artists had its advantages. In addition to being an artist my mother was a school teacher, scholar and world traveller. The same is true for my father. He was also a graphic designer and one of his greatest accomplishments was designing the house he lived in for 30 years.

My brother, sister and I were taught to appreciate art with trips to museums, galleries, art fairs and artist studios. But in addition to our exposure to culture we were taught to see the world through the eyes of an artist, to appreciate the delicate color of a sunset or the natural beauty of driftwood found on the beach sculpted and shaped by weather, water and time.

We were taught to believe that the world of art was all around us. My father was especially fond of taking us on "found art" walks along the railroad tracks, in fields and through empty lots. We would undoubtedly find something to collect and save by the end of the day that would end up on our walls as part of our collection of found art.

Art was also a part of holiday traditions in our family. Christmas, Easter and Halloween were opportunities to make things. My mother was best at this. When we were children and throughout her life she created beautiful and elaborate Christmas cards. Decorating Christmas cookies and coloring Easter eggs were family traditions and often a competition. On Halloween our costumes were always creative and handmade.

The influence of my parents didn't end there. They both loved to entertain, so as children, we often met artists, writers, musicians and intellectuals. It had more of an effect on me than my brother and sister as this helped shape my view of what I could become. I'll say one last thing about growing up with parents as artists. In addition to all the benefits there was one thing I've had to struggle with.

Both my parents were strongly opinionated, and if I'm being honest, art snobs. They were quick to point out what they thought was bad art or clichéd, cheap or overly sentimental and some of those biases were passed on to me. Among the most destructive was their belief that being a commercial artist and a fine artist were incompatible and if you chose the former you would live a life destined for compromise and the latter destined for poverty.

I've come to believe that the idea of being an "Artist" is a social construct, a romantic invention, an identity. But at some point it is also a choice, one that places demands on us and challenges us. As we answer those challenges we get better at what we do, stronger, sharper, more sensitive, more creative. At the same time not terribly different from people who choose to be executives, chefs, policemen or teachers.

Choosing the identity of an artist also comes with a set of values, and of course each individual decides for themselves exactly what those are. For some it's a calling, others a profession, and still others a religion. Exactly how we see ourselves is dependent on the culture that we were born into and that unique moment in historical time. And yet, at the moment that we take our first breath, all that changes. The crush of historical events shapes us, the advance of technology leads us, the condition of our body limits us and economic circumstances define us. As we live our life from one moment to the next all these things change.

In my life, I've been a fine art painter, illustrator, graphic designer, commercial photographer, a product designer, publisher, writer, fine art photographer and finally a digital artist and wet media artist. I have come to terms with the conflict between fine art and commercial art. The way I've answered that question is by asking myself, who is the client, am I doing this work for myself, or someone else, it's that simple, and both are ok.

Artist Profile

My early work was deeply influenced by the lonely interiors by Edward Hopper, whose haunting images captured my imagination; Reginald Marsh whose inchoate cities and gritty realism always impressed me; and the surreal worlds of Rene Magritte, Hieronymous Bosch, and Pieter Bruegel. Though different from one another, I found their styles appealing. What really drew them to me was the narrative in their images, the way they could tell a story. On a personal level the impressionists held the most sway. The romance of the life they led was in many ways a model for me as the artist and drifter that I've become.

I have described my work at various times as surreal, allegorical, deconstructed and of a speculative realism. Being influenced as much by the storytellers of film and television as I have by other painters, I found myself drawn to early television shows like The Twilight Zone and The Outer Limits, where human behavior was examined in grainy black and white. There was also fascination in the worlds created in Blade Runner and Dark City.

Chicago-born David Loew is an accomplished artist and photographer. He has had numerous solo exhibitions as well as group show participations throughout the United States, Europe, China, and the Philippines. Loew has worked with companies as varied as Playboy magazine, HBO and Miramax Films; but he is best known in the publishing industry, where as a professional graphic artist and digital illustrator, he has created cover art for over 250 titles, including those by prominent authors such as Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates, Mary Higgins Clark, Ruth Rendell, Len Deighton and Derek Van Arman. He lives and works in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.

For Inquiries:

Mugna Gallery



+63 949 356 1711



+1 212 874 3050



vince.lopez@mugnagallery.com



www.mugnagallery.com

