

116 // Reviews

CITY: Manila

VENUE: Cultural Center of the Philippines

ARTISTS: Poklong Anading and Neil Fetting

TITLE: Normal Scheduling Will Resume Shortly

CURRENT WC: 648

Poklong Anading and Neil Fetting's exhibition, "Normal Scheduling Will Resume Shortly," explored the concept of urban disruption through drawings, photographs, videos, and installations inspired by the conditions of the artists' respective home cities of Manila and Melbourne. Curated by Vincent Alessi and installed throughout multiple spaces within Manila's Cultural Center of the Philippines, the exhibition plumbed the contemporary anxieties of city living, and revealed the networks seen and unseen that connect humans to the spaces in which we live.

Displayed in the Center's hallway was Anading's *Drawing in Circle No. 4 (Congressional Ave. to Roxas Blvd.)* (2000–18), a framed white, wooden disk shaded in with pencil alongside a cascading scroll of photographs tracing the artwork's journey from the artist's studio to the exhibition. Anading had rolled the wooden circle with one hand while holding a pencil to the panel with the other, tracing rings on its surface. He photographed the work among trash bags and debris along the way, imbuing his drawing-meets-performance project with the chaotic energy of Manila's streets. Fetting similarly collates accumulated urban imagery in *Flux* (2019), a 13-meter-long composition of collaged photographs showing black lines of rubber applied over cracks in Melbourne's roads—repair work that happens while most of the city's residents are asleep. Aligning the rubber tracks near-perfectly, Fetting appears to stitch these broken trails together in his patchwork installation. These works situate the city as body, and the arteries that hold it together.

The show's juxtaposition of the polluted natural environment and the diseased body effectively conveyed the interrelatedness of a city and its inhabitants, human and nonhuman alike. Fettling's *Catheterismo* (2019) bathed a corner of a small gallery in red neon light, while an audio recording of someone singing played in the background. This installation of 28 catheter bags suspended in mid-air is a contemplation of the artist's 28 days of sickness while in Manila, and his memory of listening to the driver's singing as he was being rushed to the hospital. *Catheterismo* formed a dialogue with *Seawall* (2019)—a collaborative project involving 13 artists, Fettling and Anading among them—that reflects on the physical corruption not of the body but of nature. The work is a two-meter-high barrier constructed out of assorted garbage, plastic bags, rubble, and stacked cages resembling traditional fish traps. At the Cultural Center, located by the famous Manila Bay where pollution now mars the once-famous sunsets, this great fence of rubbish subverts the idea of a seawall, which is used to limit coastal erosion, instead connoting the rift between man and nature created by our destruction of the environment.

The relationship between humans and nature is also explored in two works installed in each of the Center's two atria. Anading's *mankay* (2019) (a portmanteau of "man" and "fruit" in Dravidian) shows barren branches of the mango tree wrapped in colorful plastic packaging collected by the artist over the years. The work plays on the idea of creation and destruction, where mankind's fruit, plastic, decorates but also suffocates the tree. Fettling's *Timba* (2019) ("bucket" in Tagalog) on the other hand gestures at human vulnerability to natural forces. The installation of 40 suspended pails references vernacular means of harvesting water during shortages, implying human resourcefulness, yet during a massive downpour, these buckets fail to contain the deluge; rain spills over and the water returns to land.

"Normal Scheduling Will Resume Shortly" encompassed poetic reflections on urbanization, its impact on the natural environment, and the precarity of worsening living conditions that put inhabitants at risk in the face of manmade and natural problems. While Anading and

Fetdling offered possibilities for understanding and expressing these anxieties, the exhibition did not aim to provide a resolute salve. Rather, as the title suggests, the connections, congestions, and tensions of time, space, and people explored in the show revealed the ways in which these local interruptions have become ingrained in daily life.

JOHN ALEXIS BALAGUER