

With and Against the Grid

Jao San Pedro's Solo Exhibition

Exhibition Notes by Gatch Gabi Gabrielle

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There is a rigidity to the grid. It has an imposing nature, and emanates dictation and mandate. Those who look over and stand with a posture as to affirm their lordship. Uniformity of every centimeter of each square. Insistence on alignment. You could drop a fruit on the edge of these lines and see the halves drop to the floor, cut into parts, and the grid would assign specific symmetry to the fallen parts.

But the grid is a thing that is built. It overestimates its power, so preoccupied with illusions of its grandeur that it forgets that it is within a much larger envelopment that dwarfs it. The manmade grid is beholden to the cycles of time and nature. It forgets that there is a natural world that carries on outside of its dictates, where beings do as they might in ways don't conform to their rules and formulae. The grid forgets that it borrows the rules it is so in love with from that very beyond, and that that beyond has made so much more than that which the grid borrows from.

There are those who, within the confines of the grid, weave themselves into its corners and across its spaces, like roots and vines spreading about. They do this as masters of the grid attempt to insist upon positioning them as chess pieces square within the center of each box, straightly lined up. And much like roots and vines, the grid begins to stretch and bend to the rhythm and movement of their growth. Some forms are retained, but the entanglement becomes more prominent and bends and breaks the grid into shapes and modes it could not have imagined. Shapes and forms that may have always been, and just overlooked and ignored by the grid in its self-absorption.

Tree roots cracking through concrete. Vines that climb fences. Man-made structures overtaken by overgrowth. The entanglement that grows as it does eventually wins, and also peacefully closes its eyes in the slumber as time eventually envelops it too.

In this series of work, Jao San Pedro looks upon the rigid and imposing grid, and weaves whispered shouts of growth and her being into its structure, bending and breaking it.