

In A Place Of Wonder (2014) – Kim Ng

## A"1"DERFUL DISINTEGRATION

Kim Peow Ng or Kim Ng has consistently explored the visual possibilities and meaningful connections that emerge between random images in his mixed media paintings, collages and ceramic as well as found objects or discarded materials modified accordingly to encapsulate his observations. Though known to many as a printmaker and ceramist, Kim confesses to be more of a maker of images who teases or draws out probable connotations from disparate marks, symbols, and metaphors by juxtaposing or contrasting them in his multidisciplinary approach. Kim, who holds two degrees from the UK (MA from the London Metropolitan University and MA from the University of Westminster), cites the works of Amish Kapok (b.1954) Robert Rauschenberg (1925- 2008) and Jean Michel Asquint (1960-1988) among many as pivotal influences. It is not surprising, given the concepts of duality, the use of popular images and personal marks that permeates his works. And the city is his bountiful hunting ground for materials that inspires him.

His latest solo exhibition "In A Place of Wonder" however highlights his preoccupations with current affairs affecting society.

Though it is convenient to say that art is subjective, especially when one is unwilling to form an objective opinion or perhaps it is unfashionable to have one when reading an artist's works -and to Kim's credit he does provide enough room for personal interpretation so that audiences can arrive at conclusions agreeable to his/her outlook or disposition- Kim is however, far from being an impartial observer when he sets these visual elements from life in a calculated and purposeful way. This is evident as a large portion of the works here, in various forms, dimensions and medium hints at manoeuvrings, shenanigans and foibles of human politics. IMHO, these are not works that hangs passively as eye candies or as sentimental odes to bygone eras, this latest series expects something more than mere

platitudes about beauty or pseudo-intellectual gymnastics favoured by the muddle minded(though one should be thankful that it is also short of the required solemnity expected in a wake or pomp).

“In A Place of Wonder” invites one to think about contemporary political and social events, its implications and the particular actors involved from both sides of the divide. With the manipulations of emotions, false accusations and unsubstantiated claims by competing forces bent on continuing or trying to establish a totalitarian grip on our thoughts, bodies and actions, it is obvious real politic are behind all the highly charged morality plays to sway the sentiments and focus of the masses from the many chronic economic quagmires currently besting the country as a result of unchecked corruption, unregulated wastage, questionable patronages etc. The growing number of political careerists operating behind facades of piousness and uprightness issuing daily religious injunctions or promoting vile racial bigotry with impunity against other fellow pretenders in a move to either maintain the status quo or to erect new ones has brought with it ridiculous ramifications that could tear the social fabric of society and create disorder in the country if left unchecked. Here, Kim Ng’s role is akin to an amused urban anthropologist, playfully documenting these developments, constructing possible scenarios and events that may have happened in an imaginary cacophonous dystopian metropolis much like ours today.

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Though having access to great natural resources, this society was able to build first world infrastructures and provide reasonably good amenities that money can buy, its people however were for years believed to be regressing back to superstition, mediocrity and apathy, all adversative in meeting today's fast paced challenges. Hovering above these circumstances are the amoral hedonists in power who wear the masks of liberalism without a committed policy of liberalization while liberally benefitting their relations and over generously rewarding their cronies and supporters to the detriment of the country's economic wellbeing. While the discontentment felt by the masses are real, they were exploited by competing self and class' interests and have now convoluted into a so-called clash of communal rights and spiritual values. The political mouthpieces from the alternative and mainstream too have joined in the chorus of distortion, shouting themselves hoarse, playing their roles to a hilt, to stupefy, electrify and pacify. All the debris and residue from these struggles however portend the impending socio-political or cultural meltdown of sorts. In actuality decay has set in, disintegration soon to follow, the tell-tale signs were already there for all to see but no one was around except for those one-eyed little napoleons and mini dowagers counting their petty losses and undeserved gains while the rest of the population went happily to the malls dressed up as unpaid walking talking advertising boards blindsided by conspicuous consumption.

It is not a good place to be when one is trapped between the existing but untenable state-crony capitalist system and a groundswell for a form of theocratic fascist regime. With the call for power to be either concentrated fully in the hands of a party of insatiable businessmen or a party of infallible "holy" men, a middle or third force is needed more than ever to serve as check and balance or a viable alternative to this imbroglio. Far from being alarmed and dismayed, Kim is invigorated by the fallout from these developments. The energy and the atmosphere, both irrational and unpredictable, unlock and foretell many possible outcomes. The actions and reactions, the cause and effects from the decisions made for us and the choices we exercise against those decisions are natural responses of life. There is logic in seemingly chaos, a method to madness and connections to random events which can be made sensible when we suspend the sentimental.

Kim's latest outputs are artistic statements that allude to the fact that life is a messy and unpredictable process of becoming or unfolding, like the lotus flower that grows and is nourished by dark waters, we are constantly moving upwards against the myriad forces of negatives and positives, each playing its natural role, competing, complementing and finally in complementarity, resulting in a momentary state of equilibrium, waiting for something to puncture its bliss, and have the whole process repeat itself again.

"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger" Nietzsche

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