

# YAVUZ GALLERY | PRESS RELEASE | 4 AUG 2018

## Above Sea Level

Solo exhibition by Ronson Culibrina

Curated by Ruel Caasi

Opening: 25 August 2018, 4-7pm

On view: 26 August to 16 September 2018

Yavuz Gallery is pleased to present *Above Sea Level*, the first solo exhibition of Filipino artist **Ronson Culibrina** with the gallery.

*Above Sea Level* presents scenes of a coastal town on the verge of decline due to human exploitation. Inspired by a crisis confronting the artist's own hometown in the Philippines, Culibrina's new works tell the tale of a town amidst a conflict between survival and progress, struggling to preserve ecological harmony and balance.

Culibrina veers away from apocalyptic, desolate depictions of a moribund ecosystem, instead visualising this conflict through frenzied, carnivalesque seascapes that appropriate humorous pop-culture references both formally and conceptually. A crowding of stilt houses, boats and fishermen sit amongst a floating McDonald's sign and *Balloon Dog* by Jeff Koons in one painting while Yayoi Kusama's polka-dotted tentacles rise up from the sea in another, chasing fishermen donning virtual reality sets. These interventions create chaotic yet playful scenes that picture an environment's deterioration from the forces of exploiting resources through both traditionally-established means and contemporary technologies. *Above Sea Level* captures Culibrina's reflections on his formative environment and the anxieties emerging from its rapid transformation, resonating with larger, global concerns of society's unsustainable and adverse mass consumption of the natural world.

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Ronson Culibrina's** (b. 1991, Philippines) practice bridges the gap between contemporary life with classical painting traditions, through interventions that tackle socio-political issues and reference old masters in Filipino art history. The language employed in his work runs a wide gamut of icons and images that reflect on a multitude of themes including the exchange of culture and trade; the phenomenon of globalization and subsequent diaspora; the dynamic between art and economy, amongst others. An advertising graduate from the Technological University of the Philippines in Manila, Culibrina has received distinctions from prestigious art competitions in the Philippines, most notably the Grand Prize of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) Painting Competition in 2009, and Special Citation from the Metrobank Art and Design Excellence (MADE) in 2014. He was chosen by Forbes as one of its *30 Under 30 Asia: The Arts* in 2016, and is currently shortlisted in the 2018 Fernando Zobel Prize for the Visual Arts in the Ateneo Art Awards. Culibrina has exhibited extensively locally and overseas, presenting seven solo shows across Singapore, Germany and the Philippines. *Above Sea Level* opens at Yavuz Gallery in cooperation with The Working Animals (TWA) Art Projects Manila.

**For inquiries and more information, please contact Caryn Quek at [caryn@yavuzgallery.com](mailto:caryn@yavuzgallery.com) or tel: +65 6734 3262.**

## YAVUZ GALLERY

9 Lock Road, #02-23, Singapore 108937 | Tel: +65 6734 3262 | [info@yavuzgallery.com](mailto:info@yavuzgallery.com) | [www.yavuzgallery.com](http://www.yavuzgallery.com)  
Opening Hours: Tue - Sat: 11am - 7pm, Sun: 1pm - 5pm | Mon & public holidays: by appointment only

## Selected Works



*Salva-Vida*, 2018, oil on canvas, 231 x 365 cm



*Above Sea Level 2*, 2018, oil on canvas, 152 x 213 cm

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*Pukot Boy (Scuba Ranger)*, 2018, resin and steel, dimensions variable

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