

## Katia Engel and Faozan Rizal: Of Nature, Human Nature and Nature's Humans

Probably since the dawn of art, artists have always looked to two places to explore their work: nature or the environment that surrounds them, and towards themselves or as a form of the exploration of self.

The one powerful connecting factor that I find in the works of Katia Engel and Faozan Rizal (individually or collaboratively), is the point that the exploration of both nature and humanity is done in one trip to a realm that is not only contiguous to each other but often times overlaps and mirror each other; that the nature of humanity itself is mirrored in the evolution of the environment we live in. The themes of space and where humans belong in it have always been the drawing point to the works of these artists.

Katia, shows us in her works how nature mirrors humanity and humanity mirrors nature and that we are only fragments of reflections of our collective selves. In her works, Katia builds carefully constructed layers of images that play with the deceiving stillness of nature and the turmoil that humans put themselves through in order to achieve that illusive stillness. But in Katia's works, it appears that it is almost always nature that holds up the first mirror.

While in the works of Faozan Rizal, it seems that humanity is holding up the mirror; and not to nature, but to humanity itself. In Faozan's works, humanity seems to hold a mirror onto itself and through the reflection we see in that humanity, we see our place in nature and how we live and evolve in it. That we humans become, who we are in response to how nature responds to us and the things we do. Bringing us back to point that the journey of the evolution of nature and humanity is one and the same.

Both artists seem to approach these similar themes from opposite perspectives, meeting in the center to make one eloquent, sincere, and articulate point: that the humanity of nature is the nature of humanity; all is contiguous and intertwined. And in this point is where the sheer significance, power, honesty, and beauty of the works of Faozan Rizal and Katia Engel can be felt.

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