

Nicholas GRAFIA  
*Free Verse Spirit*  
April 30 – June 04, 2021

Peres Projects is pleased to present *Free Verse Spirit*, Nicholas Grafia's first solo exhibition at the gallery, on the occasion of Gallery Weekend Berlin.

In this exhibition, Grafia invokes the free verse poetic tradition – a genre known for breaking down the structures and rules of poetry, moving the medium closer to vernacular speech. The method has also been associated with difficulty – both in terms of a reader's ability to understand free poetry, but also for its association with difficult and political content. Grafia takes up this question of how to approach difficulty in art – what to do with work that is overwhelming and hard for us to unpack.

*Free Verse Spirit* also relates to Grafia's interest in oral histories – folk traditions that are either never written down, or somehow degraded in the translation between voice and text. Grafia's work is rooted in a research-based practice, through a reading of theory as well as archival study. For this exhibition, the artist draws from traditional Philippine folk lore in a meditation based on heritage and racialized identity. The paintings that make up the exhibition explore what is lost forever with these oral traditions, and what can be reclaimed through an affective, visual translation.

This imagery intersects with the artist's interest in film culture and celebrity images which circulate as contemporary folk lore. Humor, pastiche and ambivalent juxtapositions are a critical motif in these works, paying homage to the visual history of comic books – both mainstream and its amateur counterpart; fan fiction. Grafia explores the overlap of these different visual languages and how they contribute to the cultural maintenance of identities, considering narratives excluded from official histories and staging ruptures in the archive.

Drawing on ancestral and epigenetic knowledge, and informed by a research practice in queer, feminist and post-colonial writings, the artist weaves together worlds that are personal, political and surreal. Grafia's work straddles the genre of both auto and exofiction, extracted from personal experience the artist renders larger visible national and global narratives.

Nicholas Grafia (b. 1990, Angeles City, Philippines) stages interventions into the historical archive, by weaving research, popular culture, as well as personal and art histories into their bright visual works, along with addressing themes of racial and sexual vulnerability by examining who is in- and excluded from official narratives. Grafia completed his MFA at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 2019. Recent solo exhibitions include the Kunsthall Aarhus, Aarhus; Anderson's Contemporary, Copenhagen; and KOENIG 2 by\_robbygreif in Vienna; and group exhibitions at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; and the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen Düsseldorf in Dusseldorf. Grafia has upcoming solo exhibitions at the fiebach minninge in Cologne and the Düsseldorf Sponsorship Award, and will participate in upcoming group exhibitions at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; The Contemporary Art Museum of Luxembourg, Luxembourg; Mountains, Berlin; GOLD+BETON, Cologne; and Copenhagen Contemporary in Copenhagen.

Please note that attendance will be subject to all local COVID-19 related requirements at that time. We will publish updated info prior to the event.

Peres Projects is open Monday through Friday, 11 am – 6pm. For further information and sales inquiries, please contact Javier Peres (jp@peresprojects.com), Nick Koenigsknecht (nick@peresprojects.com) Benoît Wolfrom (ben@peresprojects.com) or call at +49 (0) 30 275 950770. For press and media inquiries, please contact media@peresprojects.com or +49 (0) 30 275 950770.