

version of the ongoing work features photographic documentation of the Marcoses' array of silverware mounted on thin aluminum sheets. In another iteration of the work, dated 2014–20, the artist printed postcard reproductions of Imelda's collection of old masters, which visitors to the exhibition in Manila were invited to take. Both troves of objects were seized by the Presidential Commission on Good Government in 1986 and subsequently auctioned off by Christie's. The translation of paintings to postcards might seem democratizing but Abad also accentuates the fetishized quality of the objects from the Samuels Collection with his intricate ink-drawing technique, as well as that of the gaudy silverware by way of the sheen of the images' aluminum mounting.

Perhaps the most compelling edition of the work is a collaboration between Abad and his wife, jewelry designer Frances Wadsworth Jones. The two artists set their sights on Imelda's jewelry collection, which was confiscated by customs officials in Hawaii upon the couple's arrival on the island as they went into exile. Abad and Wadsworth-Jones cast earrings, necklaces, and brooches in 3D-printed plastic filament: washed-out stand-ins for the brilliant baubles they represent. The duo also rendered the collection in augmented reality, allowing anyone with a smartphone to access and virtually place the jewelry in their own surroundings. The last room of the gallery contained a series of abstract paintings dedicated to the memory of people who fought against the dictatorship. In them, abstraction becomes a language of remembrance, as each color and shape bears the weight of the life of a politician, community organizer, or student who struggled against the Marcos regime. Bookending the exhibition, the emptied office and these memorials of activists were subtly hopeful proposals for the recasting of history by succeeding generations.

—Carlos Quijon Jr.

## MELBOURNE

### Lyndell Brown and Charles Green

ARC ONE GALLERY

To look at the eleven paintings in Lyndell Brown and Charles Green's exhibition "The Last Cool Skies" was to behold only the most recent pages from the duo's much vaster atlas of paintings and photographs, which they have been assembling since their beginning to collaborate more than thirty years ago. Like all their work, these new paintings announce themselves as fragments—each a hyperrealist composite of smaller images, including tree-lined roads, rocky outcrops, a mandala, historical photographs, art-historical references, and a spread from a children's book. Each painting is a metonym for the impossibility of capturing a subject in its totality and complexity. This is apposite for the expansive global subjects that Brown and Green often gravitate toward, including the Apollo lunar landing, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and—foremost in this show—climate catastrophe. And each painting is a monument to a kind of representational failure, one that is, crucially, not mourned by the artists but mined for its own suite of aesthetic and philosophical possibilities. Brown and Green's interest in examining the limits of representability is further dramatized by their commitment to Photorealistic painting.

In *Into the White Light*, 2020, the canvas is scattered with trompe l'oeil images of objects in a state of decay: fading historical photographs, scrunched-up paper, creased maps, torn edges. Alongside imagery of Buzz Aldrin on the moon, an Italian exploring party in Alaska, and a marketplace in Jerusalem, the artists tellingly depict Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, 1970, via a photograph taken at such a low, oblique angle that the curvature of the iconic Land-art work almost disappears into itself. *Spiral Jetty*'s inclusion here—as in many other

works by Brown and Green over the years—is a testament to the artists' commitment to unfurling Smithson's concept of entropy as it relates to the category of history painting.

*Into the White Light* is also a meditation on surface. It depicts the cratered moon surface morphing into a snowcapped mountain, then into a cloudy skyline, and then into a crumpled sheet of white paper, creating a topographic patchwork. The depiction of folded and scrunched-up paper is an enduring trope in the artists' work, recalling the *pliage*, or folding method, Simon Hantaï began using in 1960 to produce spatially complex paintings. Brown and Green's amassing of image fragments on the canvas gives a sense of culturally and geographically distinct terrains being folded into one another, or at least made to touch. But the pair's emphasis on loss and entropy avoids any facile connotations of a frictionless globalization.



Lyndell Brown and Charles Green, *Into the White Light*, 2020, oil on linen, 59 7/8 × 59 7/8".

*Activism Is Learning*, 2020, also emphasizes the decay of images subject to folding and crumpling—namely, in the central image of a deity (an aging poster that the artists acquired from a hashish shop in Kathmandu, Nepal, in the 1970s) and a crinkled ukiyo-e print. As in *Orpheus*, 2020, the detailed Photorealism of the upper half of *Activism Is Learning* gives way to broad areas of paint dragged across the canvas, not unlike Gerhard Richter's squeegee strokes, in the lower half. Here, the twilight country sky bleeds beguilingly into an abstract field of field of blue, revealing the painting as a material as well as a mimetic object. A similar effect is achieved in the protest placard held by a child in *Portrait of the Writer, Alex Miller*, 2022, where the phrase OUR PLANET is inscribed in block letters on blank primed canvas, the raw materiality of which punctures the hyperrealistic image of the dark and glossy winding road from which it has been cut.

*Portrait of the Writer, Alex Miller* is one of four paintings based on the artists' photographs of striking school students in their hometown of Castlemaine, Victoria, Australia. Together, the works announce climate crisis as a major preoccupation of this body of work. The exemplification of what Timothy Morton calls a "hyperobject," climate crisis is upheld in these paintings as a philosophical model of sorts—a vast entity that threatens to defy comprehension. As Morton says, you can't see a hyperobject, only its fragments.

—Helen Hughes