

Eduardo Joaquin

MAGIC SING

OCTOBER 7 – OCTOBER 10

“And the spirit we seek will enter us both and make us complete.”

— Air Supply, 1985

And I say unto you: there is only power in the song.

For I was raised in the Church.

I know the language of prayer.

I know the movement of worship.

I know the feeling of possession.

I have heard the voice become spirit and seen the body become vessel.

But I tell you: I have witnessed the true extent of this power.

And I confess unto thee, its source lies within the hallowed walls of Karaoke.

Karaoke is congregation.

Before karaoke, there was the harana: the Filipino serenade, the voice offered across a distance; the song as courtship, invitation, vulnerability, proclamation. The voice was already relational. It was already a means of dissolving the boundaries between individual worlds. The voice became the butterflies in the stomach, the blood rushing through the heart, the heat rising into the cheeks. It became the stars, the moon, every galaxy in the night sky reflected in the eyes of the beloved. Through the voice, the distance between two bodies collapsed. What was felt internally became audible. What was private became an offering.

And then came the machine.

~~Daisuke Inoue:~~

Roberto Legaspi del Rosario. Tito Bert

The Sing-Along System.

Patent UM-5269 June 2, 1983 and UM-6237 November 14, 1986

Does it matter who created the machine? Some say one, others another. Let us not speak of invention as though invention belongs only to who builds the machine.

What is a machine without the people who give it meaning?

Even in the house of song, there is sorrow. Seven recorded fatalities in Filipino karaoke bars over the singing of Sinatra's "My Way", remind us that we gather not as saints, but as human beings.

Behold the microphone.

An instrument of possession.
An instrument of confession.
An instrument of transformation.

Give the microphone to the quiet one, and watch them become loud.
Give it to the reserved, and watch them become possessed.
Give it to the body that has spent its life containing itself, and watch it surrender.

The voice belongs to everyone.

My blood is Filipino, my consciousness is Hawai'i, and my soul is New York City
My inheritance is not participation.
My inheritance is to serve.

To make room.
To feed.
To gather.
To celebrate.
To insist that another person belongs.

My blood is hospitality.

And so I do not come to the social as an artist discovering relation. These are not aesthetics but my condition. I come to it as someone who understands that relation is already a condition of my existence, my history, my family, my culture.

The karaoke microphone is its primary and most powerful medium.

Sing, then.

Take the microphone.
Enter the congregation.
Give your voice to the universe.

For there is magic in the song.

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All works listed clockwise relative to gallery entrance.

Sing-Along System

Monitor, amplifier, microphones

Dimensions variable

Banig

Oil on unstretched canvas

72" × 108"

Sunset 2

Milk crate, light fixture, rice paper, chain

Dimensions variable

My Way

Oil and dinuguan on unstretched canvas

40" × 27"

Parol 1

Rice paper, barbeque sticks, super glue, stretcher bars, LED.

9" × 12"

Parol 2

Rice paper, barbeque sticks, super glue, stretcher bars, LED.

9" × 12"

Parol 3

Rice paper, barbeque sticks, super glue, stretcher bars, LED.

9" × 12"

Dagkotanan

Wax, action figures, bowl, polyurethane sealant, artificial foliage, balsa wood, artificial lei, rhinestones, LEDs, rosary

Dimensions variable

Sunset 2

Milk crate, light fixture, rice paper, chain

Dimensions variable

Blinds (Bird of Paradise)

Oil on panel

48" × 36"