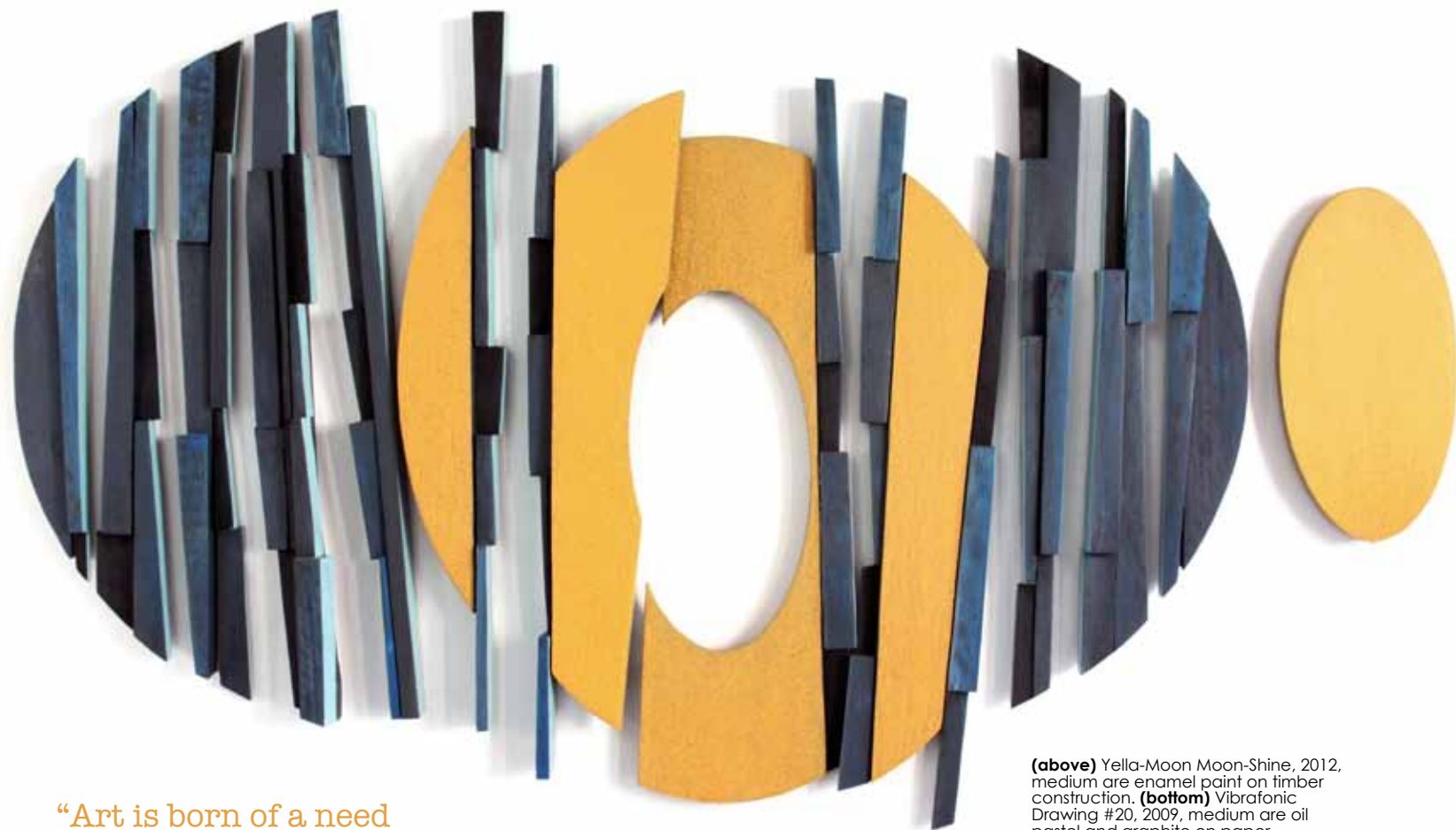


Vibrafonic Drawing #7.
2009, medium are oil pastel
and graphite on paper

Of Moons and Circles and Transformations

Australian artist Tony Twigg shares how
his art has evolved through the years

Text by **Astra C. Alegre**
Photos by **Tony Twigg**
Artist photo by **Gina Fairley**



(above) Yella-Moon Moon-Shine, 2012, medium are enamel paint on timber construction. (bottom) Vibrafonic Drawing #20, 2009, medium are oil pastel and graphite on paper

“Art is born of a need to make something, but realized through a consideration of how something might be made.”

“I once stood on a beach at Real in Quezon province, watching a man build a house. There was a structure and he was slowly sifting through a pile of wood, finding bits that he could add to the house that he was building,” Australian artist Tony Twigg shares. “My pictures are made in the same way. They are an accommodation of the ideal within the possible, which I think is essentially Filipino.”

Twigg first came to the Philippines in 1995. When he arrived in Manila, he met Gus Albor. “He had a particular commitment to his work. I admired him for it, and it seemed to give me permission to devote more of myself to my work.” They became good friends and it was only after that Twigg realized that his friend was a celebrated artist. “I got to see the accepting generosity with which he approached his work and the pleasure he permits himself to find in it, and I find that inspirational.”

“Being in Manila seemed to give me permission to make art and to be the artist I hoped to become,” Twigg relates. “I felt that I could understand the Filipino way of putting things – pieces of wood, days and events, shows, ideas – things in general together. My work resonates with



Filipino people and I think that it is because it is made in a Filipino manner.” He also acknowledges Silvana Diaz, director of Galleria Duemila, for her tireless work in promoting his work to a Filipino audience.

His last solo show, *Moonbathing* was drawn from a large body of work that was presented as exhibitions in Singapore, Kuala

Lumpur, and in Galleria Duemila in Manila. “The idea that presented itself as I worked was to take a form, an oval shape from the center of one of my circular works and place it at the side of the work. Pretty much in the same way that the moon was born of earth,” Twigg relates. “It was an event that twisted and distorted my compositions into forms that I recorded in various works



(left) Tony Twigg working in his studio in Pasay. (bottom) A detailed look at how the artist makes his pieces



some of which could be exhibited in several different ways. The resulting works often had a kind of musicality or improvisational quality that happily belied the precision with which I need to place each element of the work.”

“The Manila edition of *Moonbathing* was unique in that it also included a number of drawings made some years earlier that were my first experiments with the proposition of reordering the fragments of a divided circle,” Twigg adds. “Their inclusion brought a depth to the show both conceptually and in the terms of media that added diversity to the show.”

“The simplest description of my work these days is that it is a circle sliced into vertical stripes then rearranged into a composition that reflects the original circular form and an articulation of my own invention,” Twigg explains.

Many who view his works would consider them as sculptures but for Twigg, he considers them as paintings. “I describe my work as painting, which puzzles many people because they think of it as sculpture. They see an object or a collection of objects

arranged on a wall and think sculpture,” he shares, “while I see the subject of a painting with the unnecessary background removed and think picture.”

“Art is born of a need to make something, but realized through a consideration of how something might be made,” Twigg shares. “The way things are made is the crucial aspect of art, it cannot be taught, it must be found and until it is found one might make paintings or sculptures but not art. Once it’s found it hardly matters if it is classified as painting, sculpture, installation, drawing, carpentry, or even puppetry, because it’s all those things simultaneously.”

Twigg started drawing, painting and making things as a child. “Then as I made my way through art school and on to working in the studio I felt the need to include various aspects of performance and story telling in my work. I think that my art grew out of a reconciliation of that story telling with my idea of painting.”

He studied painting in college, has a graduate diploma in Professional Art Studies and a Master of Arts degree in Visual Art. Twigg shares that through the years, “I think

that the form of my art has shifted between overt and covert story telling while the content has remained fairly constant. In my younger years it was important to me that my audience comprehended the narrative of my work. Now, it is of no importance. Whatsoever,” he says. “Of course there are questions of shape, color and line, questions about the proximity of one form to another that form a vocabulary that is intuitively mine. It was once employed to describe a particular subject while over time that same vocabulary has become the subject of my work.”

“I think that as we grow as artists our work becomes apparently more simple and for me that has meant that I now hope for an emotive resonance rather than an understanding on the part of my audience,” Twigg remarks. “I have no message that I want to tell people and there is no message in my art although I am more than happy to share it with anyone who cares to look at it – it being a collection of forms that fit together in an apparently coherent manner.”

For the next five years, Twigg says, “My only goal is to make another show, somewhere, somehow.”