The background is a painting. On the left, a large, dark brown tree trunk with thick, gnarled branches dominates the foreground. The foliage is rendered in shades of purple, blue, and dark green. To the right, a smaller, bare tree with dark branches stands against a bright yellow and orange background. Below this, there are patches of green and pinkish-red, suggesting a landscape or a path. The overall style is expressive and abstract, with visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette.

# ECHOES OF UNDERGROWTH

HARIDAS  
CONTEMPORARY

JOHN MARIE ANDRADA

Haridas Contemporary is a gallery founded by Christiaan Haridas that aims to support and grow alongside Singapore's burgeoning contemporary art scene. The gallery endeavors to create a home for emerging and mid-career Singapore and Singapore-based artists, while maintaining a satellite program with regional artists.

With 17 years of experience in the Southeast Asian art market, Christiaan hopes to advocate for promising art practices that are sensitively crafted and offer interesting entry-points into the stories and concerns of contemporary life.

The gallery is committed to supporting artists throughout their artistic careers by seeding opportunities for exhibition, dialogue, and professional counsel. Haridas Contemporary will rally for exciting local practices to be recognised across regional and international platforms.

## FOLIAGE OF ELUSION

by Euginia Tan

How often have we tried to mark our ideas of growth? It is a process that eludes and empowers, albeit one we have tried to demarcate and demystify. Growth exists in abundance; teems in flourishing moments. Yet it also lurks at cavernous loss and despair. Though we can be blind to symptoms of growth, thick brambles of it continue to spill forth in light and darkness. While we adapt or struggle to present a mirage of reality, an undergrowth persists in our psychology.

Built on the melding of ethereal and corporeal facets of natural phenomena and human anatomy, *Echoes of Undergrowth* marks John Marie Andrada's second solo at Haridas Contemporary. Featuring sixteen new works comprising of fourteen paintings and two multi-media installations, Andrada seeks to lull the viewer into botanical dreamscapes as they piece together newfound focal points in nature and the physical body.

Observing the artist's colossal undertaking, this essay attempts to forage three interpretations of Andrada's undergrowth expansion. These are the presence of halos (particularly underground), the allusion of the celestial realm in tree roots and circulatory systems, and lastly how growth cycles conceal and reveal simultaneously.

## The Presence of Halos

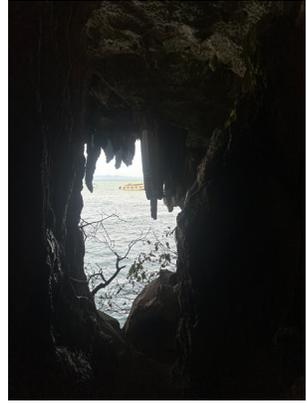


Image of cave by Auckland photographer Joseph Michael

In her process drafts, two images stick out to me as an identifier of Andrada's new series. These feature halos witnessed underground, their presence singeing into the viewer's fears, reliefs and existential tensions. Does a halo mean a way out, a hopeful escape or point of no return? Could a halo point to other signs of life? Was the halo imagined, a darkened mind yearning for its glow as respite?

The motif of subtle halos features in the works *at second glance*, *between caverns*, *hollow's glow*, *through the understory*, *where the meadows flourish*. Before we speculate how their halos were thoughtfully placed by the artist, let us first identify what halos are. Together with sundogs and light pillars, halos are a group of optical phenomena in the form of arcs, rings, pillars or bright spots. They are produced by the refraction/ reflection of light by ice crystals in the atmosphere.<sup>1</sup> There is much to dissect behind what emits a halo's glow.

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government. "Explainer: What are halos?" Last modified 22 November 2018. <https://media.bom.gov.au/social/blog/1917/explainer-what-are-halos/%F0%9F%98%8A>

In *at second glance*, you could choose to see one concentrated halo at the end of the trail, where a whiter patch of illuminated path beckons. Otherwise, you could also glimpse halos sharing their stately glow over the entire greenery; opal white landing and accentuating certain parts of plants, the blessed ones. For this painting, Andrada took reference from German artist Carl Joseph Begas' *Self-Portrait with Johann Peter Weyer* (1813). Andrada elaborates, "I toyed with how to place my hidden subjects as they would sit for a portrait. Unlike the other works in this show that have outlines of a figure, it might only be visible to me... Whether the audience sees it or not, it's still evident (to me)."<sup>2</sup>



Notes: tone down, currently too busy  
 more purples & pinks  
 diversify line weight of strokes.

Andrada's working sketches for *a second glance* (2026), with Begas' *Self-Portrait with Johann Peter Weyer* (1813)

2 Andrada, John-Marie. Reference notes to the author, 2 February 2026.

Indeed, the identical wandering figure(s) scrupulously embedded by the artist continue their trail towards a large tree's crowning halo in *where the meadows flourish*. From the base of a mammoth tree trunk, this halo is full and painted in blush. Its cherubic glow dispels our view of the branches atop this towering tree, obscuring delicately.

The final quality of a halo is usually determined by an unpredictable orientation of how ice crystals in the air scatter, this halo then takes on a semblance of a chosen path revealed by atmospheric light. This could reflect Andrada's tactic in scattering her concept and technique, which she has gleaned from various artistic case studies and reference images. "My strokes are patches of solid colours. They land in such a way where our eyes can optically mix them from afar, appearing differently again when the viewing distance is closer. It is quite like getting to know oneself or another, having to let each layer dry before developing and mixing the next batch of paints."<sup>1</sup>

For the paintings *hollow's glow*, *between caverns* and *through the understory*, the halo morphs into varying circular objects. Sometimes ovoid and egg-like, or oblong like a rounded door, evident and round as pulpy fibroids. At countless pitstops of our lives, we look back and see things unfold in a different light. The placement of events, like the wobbly positions of halos, emit other diameters in their rays as we ruminate at present, in hindsight. Andrada's inclusion of lush blooms in flattering tones enroute to each halo's occurrence exudes an optimism in her forthcoming chapter of creating. There is a certainty in this announcement of joy, a quiet comfort maintained in the thick of her woods.

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1

Ibid

## Celestial Roots, Circulatory Systems



Andrada's reference images/ working sketches of roots

The second segment will examine seven works around the celestial quality Andrada has brought out in her rendering of roots and circulatory systems. The works discussed here include *fervent foray*, *pulsing through phases*, *unfurling undertones no.1*, alongside the *vascular reverie* series comprising four paintings titled *vascular reverie no.1*, *no.2*, *no.5* and *no.6*.

In an afterword essay by sociologist Terence Heng for photographer Ore Huiying's exhibition *We Were Farmers* (Objectifs, 2021), he discusses her documentation of larger roots on their family farmland. "Rather than simply a documentation of farm life, we are treated to an everyday landscape of effort, emotion and exhaustion, the last being both literal as well as symbolic..."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, artists have used the catchment of roots in their art to speak on sprawling networks: Whether these roots touch on areas of kinship, psychological, surreal, the list continues to expand.

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2 Heng, Terence. *Afterword: We Were Farmers* by Ore Huiying. (Singapore, 2021).

Andrada's choice of zoomed in, limb-like roots existing in otherworldly dimensions serve as connectors to fantasy, rekindling in the viewer an aura of awe. As Heng elaborates further in his essay in a segment titled 'Agricultural Personification', "the presence of plants... also act as metaphors for, and are active participants, or actors, in the farm and family's journey."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Andrada has cast her variations of nature derived from caves, mangroves and rivers into celestial planes from the sky, heavenly bodies, magnifying the astronomy of human and plant anatomy. The paintings *fervent foray*, *pulsing through phases and unfurling undertones no.1* appear as scenes or tableaux of spectrums in theatrical possibilities—Were there once origins of tragedies, decay, bloodshed? Are there now remnants and offshoots of vague but enthralling beginnings?



Outlines of embedded silhouettes/figures:

Top Left to Right: *Beneath Burrows* (2025), *Meandering* (2025), *At Second Glance* (2026), *Vena Cava* (2026)

Bottom Left to Right: *Beyond the Tree's Hollow* (2025), *Where the Meadows Flourish* (2026),

*Hollow's Glow* (2026), *Pulsing through Phases* (2026)

The *vascular reverie* series are whorls of channels indicative of tunnels and journeys. Going back to Heng's analysis in *Agricultural Personification*, there are often circulatory stories arising out of "what the sociologist Paul Gilroy calls 'roots and routes', referring to various material things and cultural forms that migrants bring with them when they leave their point of origin, that continue to tie their identities in some tangible way."<sup>4</sup> When we define a circulatory and/or vascular system in the body, it usually traverses via our heart and blood. As a central tenet in her debut solo, Andrada's relocation to Singapore from the Philippines led her to mull on the premise of home, travel and lineage.

Extending into *vascular reverie no.1, 2, no.5 and no.6*, the influence of one's bloodlines and the circulatory ways we commemorate existences anchor the paintings. Uprooting and orbiting before discovering a pulse we need to resuscitate consistently, Andrada's roots and routes are simultaneously nebulous and cushioned. While the *vascular reverie* series twirl and cascade into familiar anatomical hues of pinks and blues, grounding plant plots are neatly tucked into crannies of larger tendrils.

Heng concludes his essay on *We Were Farmers* marking a physical closure, alluding to a spiritual continuation and inquiry, "Certainty is the one thing left unsaid... The farm no longer exists as a material anchor to life, and something or somewhere else must replace it... Of course, the farm's journey is linear and finite, but for the bodies and hearts of those still there, the search continues."<sup>5</sup> Though possibly revealed in her choice of titles, has Andrada moved on from a restless probing, into a renewed reverie? Can the artist reconcile her choice of both laying something down to rest, unto the gyre of immeasurable life?

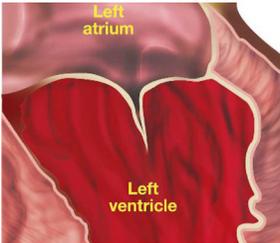
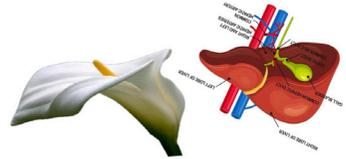
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4        Ibid

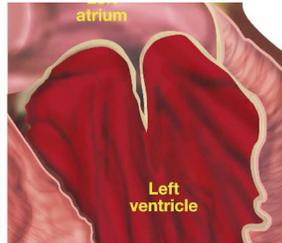
5        Ibid

## Elusive Growth Cycles

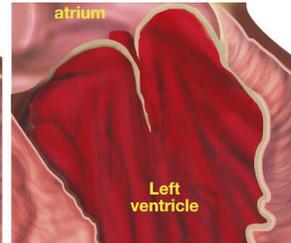
The last segment will explore the exhibition's final two paintings *as the leaves billow* (diptych) and *vena cava*, alongside two multimedia works *in the same vein* and *tabi tabi po*.



**NORMAL**  
Valve leaflets close and prevent backflow into the atrium.



**PROLAPSE**  
Valve leaflets balloon upward as the ventricle contracts.



**REGURGITATION**  
Valve leaflets do not properly close, forcing blood back into the atrium.

Andrada's reference images/ working sketches for *as the leaves billow* and *vena cava* (2026)

Andrada had clear goals in mind for *as the leaves billow's* choice of presentation and title. “The title came as a fitting reference to billowing leaflets (mitral valve prolapse) with the unintended visual similarity. The diptych intends to bring out the coexistence of bright and lively parts of us, as well as the darker depths left unknown. Both panels allude to having something more in the distance, undefined and still developing with movement.”<sup>6</sup>

Likewise for *vena cava*, Andrada is vocal about elusive rhythms in growth, “Like rivers, we are bodies of water, constantly moving and morphing. There are two silhouettes embedded in this scene which I imagined could exist in precordial walls. With my current interest in caves and other natural motifs, *vena cava* came to mind since I was considering both anatomy and noun in mind (for a title).”<sup>7</sup>

A non-linear approach in viewing possibilities for these two works could reflect a dual sense of awareness, coupled with blind spots we possess when thinking of our internal mindscape or physical being. There are moments where the artist appears to lead us in a certain direction for our eyes/minds to wander. Blink once, twice, and your train of thought carries you somewhere else. When you will yourself to focus on the paintings (as a whole), entire portraits of the undergrowth reveal themselves inevitably.



Still-Shot of *in the same vein* (2026)

6 Andrada, John-Marie. Reference notes to the author, 2 February 2026.  
7 Ibid

Suspended at 3.4 metres, *tabi tabi po* plays with the illusion of internal/external space with sewn line works of silhouettes discreetly featured within the fourteen paintings. The spiral installation (which can accommodate one viewer at a time in its innermost part) is complemented with an evocative soundscape echoing the title phrase via a track submerged in water and birdsong. Created in collaboration with composer/arranger Paul Ng, the artists used manmade sounds to imitate organic reverberations. Apart from certain instances of synthesizers, a heartbeat pulse was in fact recorded with a contact microphone, while birdsong was re-created via whistling and human vocals.

The phrase *tabi tabi po* is rooted in Filipino folklore, acknowledging the presence of supernatural forces and kindly asking them for permission in moving onto their path. Translated to ‘excuse me’ or ‘please step aside’, the phrase is commonly uttered in rural areas at night, when cleaning or building fixtures in areas spirits may dwell. Andrada explains, “In taking reference nature photos for my practice, I’ve been saying ‘tabi tabi po’ a lot. Whether I am in Singapore or in a foreign country, the sentiment (to be respectful) remains. In *tabi tabi po*, since certain figures are unique to my eye, the viewer finally enters my actual point of view. As they venture forth inside the installation, there is a reflective layer in the back, where the viewer ends up seeing themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

The final video work *in the same vein* has a total runtime of five minutes. Filmed in darkness with a singular light source under a water-filled glass tank, distorted images from acquired laboratory scans float in a murky ultrasound. Andrada employs an arduous process creating water-receptive images, requiring coat after coat of sealant at different intervals. She mentions several painstaking experiments of these steps, so conscientiously calculated yet unpredictable in outcome. “Sometimes, the prints break because they contain static and turn brittle during the drying process. When I was developing prints in my final year (at art school), I used a different brand of acrylic spray. That product is no longer sold on the market, so I have had to navigate an optimal number of coats ever since.”<sup>2</sup>

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1       Ibid  
2       Ibid

As the water onscreen gushes with more ink, we realize we are not only fraught with growing pains. Wherever we come from, we are steeped in elusive cycles, saturated under rheumy circumstances. Like Andrada's seal-and-set system of image transfer, we coat our memories protectively. At best, they remain intact through the test of time. We glide into new experiences with ease, water and image running true to liberated growth. At worst, our reminiscence may shatter us— After all, in nature we are broken down through so many ways; eroding from the same countless bones, veins, days.

## ABOUT THE WRITER



Euginia Tan is a multi-disciplinary writer based in Singapore. She has experience in an array of written forms including poetry, prose and theatre. She has been writing curatorial essays for visual artists such as Melissa Tan, Esmond Loh, John Marie Andrada, Hu Qiren and Faris Nakamura, to name a few. Euginia's analysis explores and covers contemporary practices, their range of mediums as well as her personal take on creating conditions in Singapore, and its various impacts on artists.

**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

As the Leaves Billow, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 122 x (91 + 91) cm



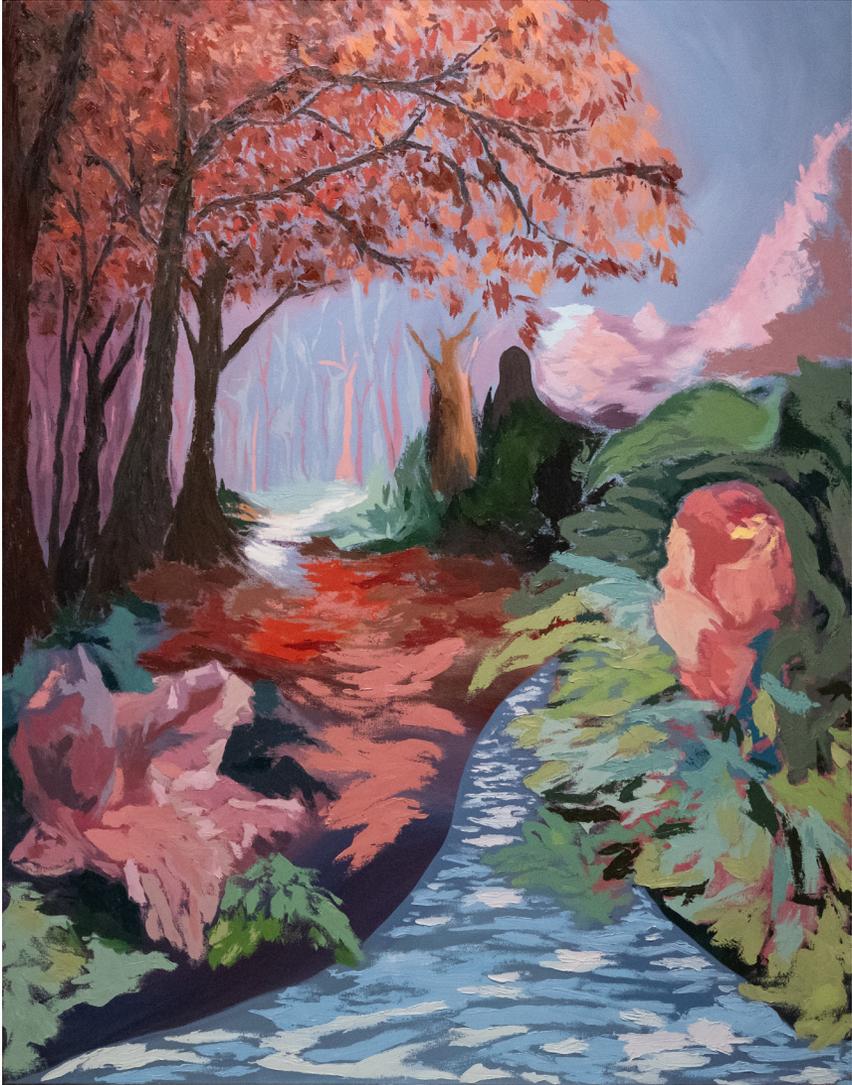
**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Vena Cava, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 120 x 150 cm



**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

At Second Glance, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 152 x 121 cm



**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Hollow's Glow, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 91 x 91 cm



**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Where the Meadows Flourish, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 102 x 76 cm



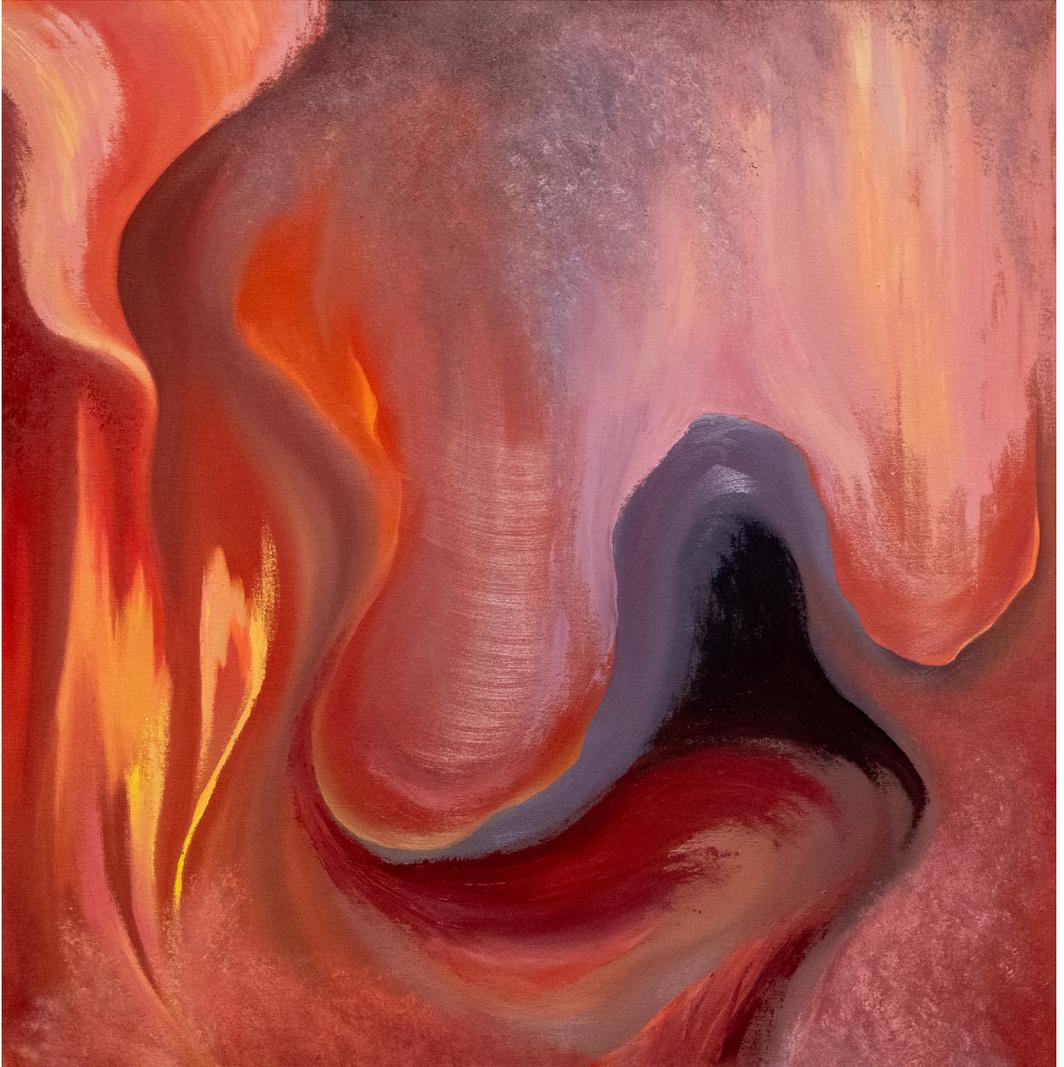
**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Pulsing Through Phases, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 76 x 76 cm



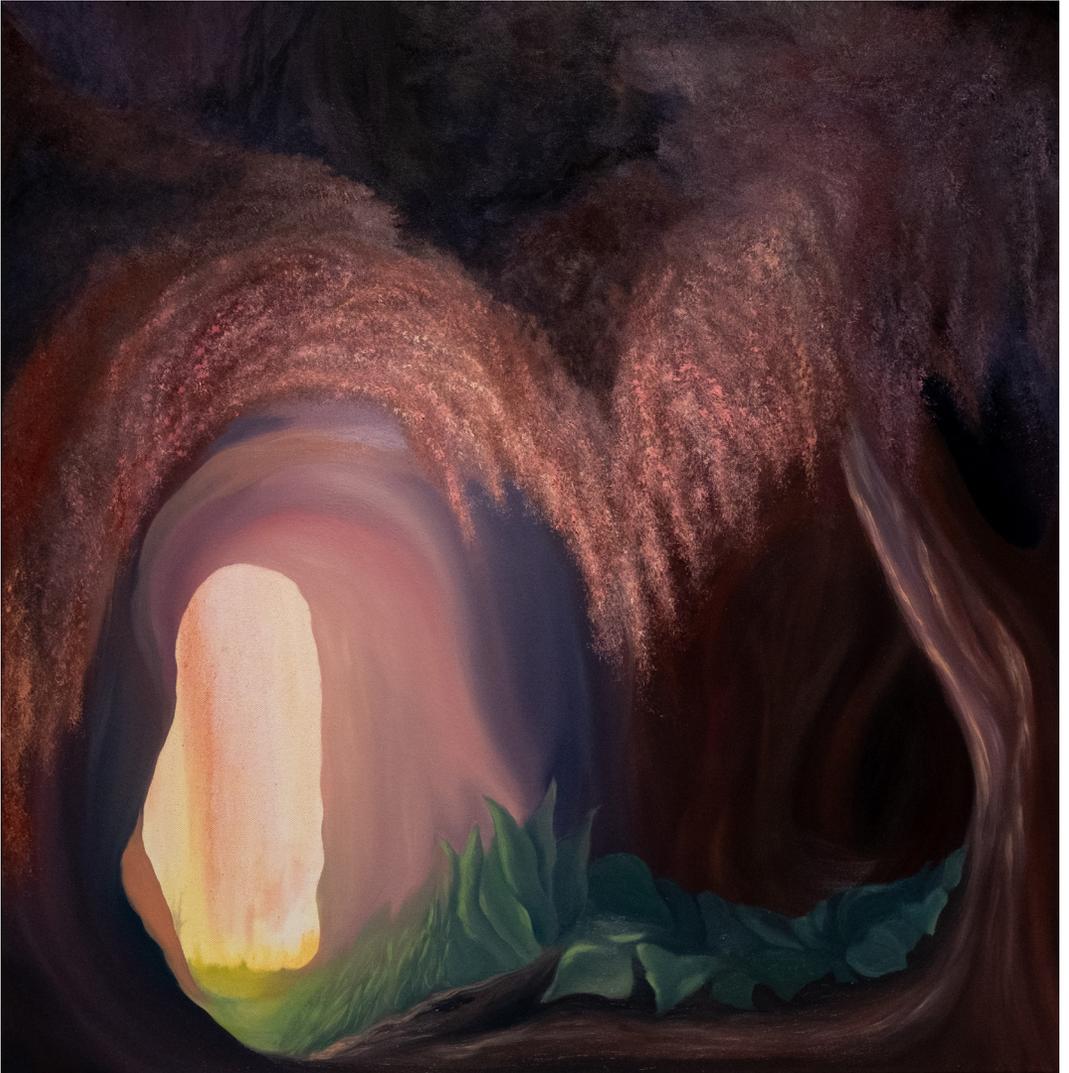
**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Fervent Foray, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 76 x 76 cm



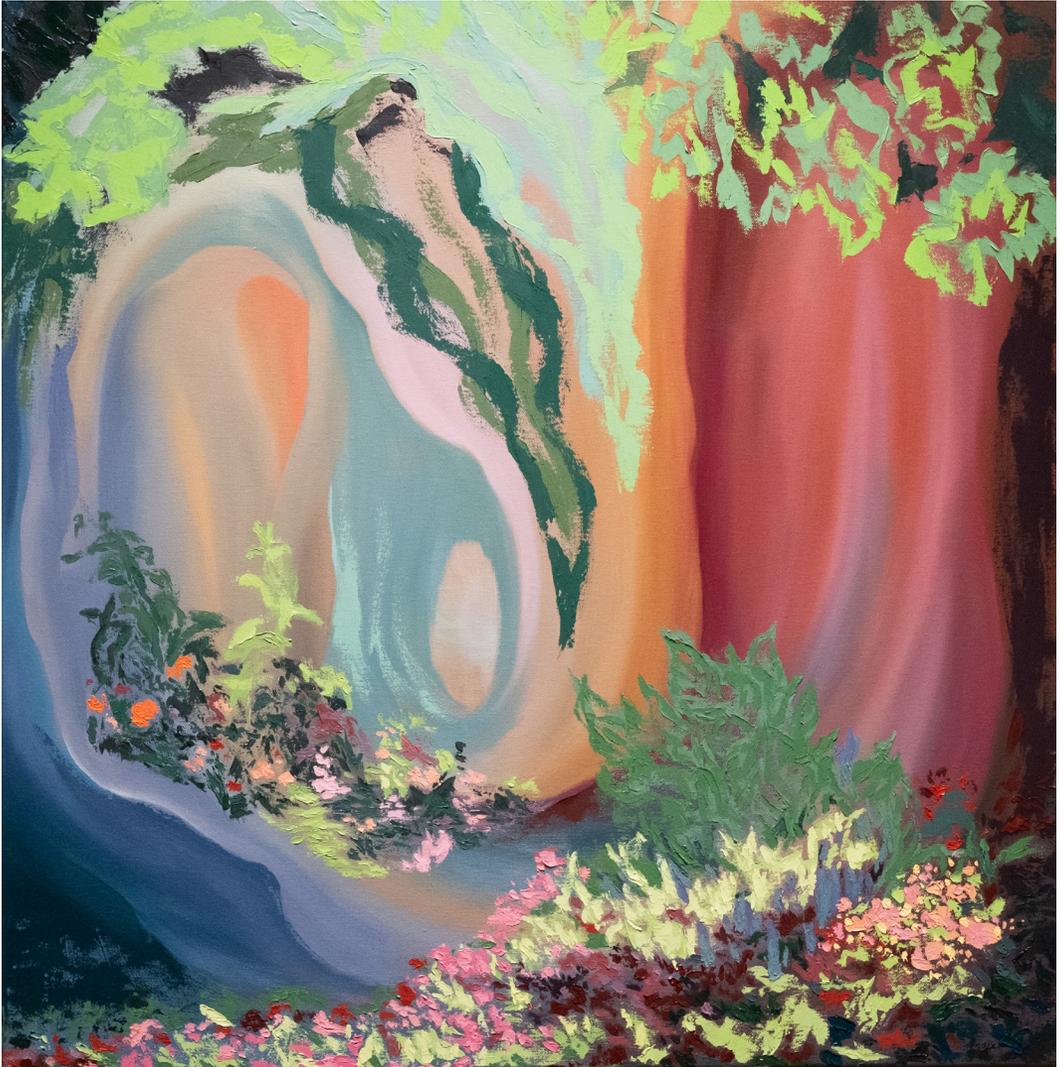
**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Between Caverns, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 76 x 76 cm



**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Through the Understory, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 76 x 76 cm



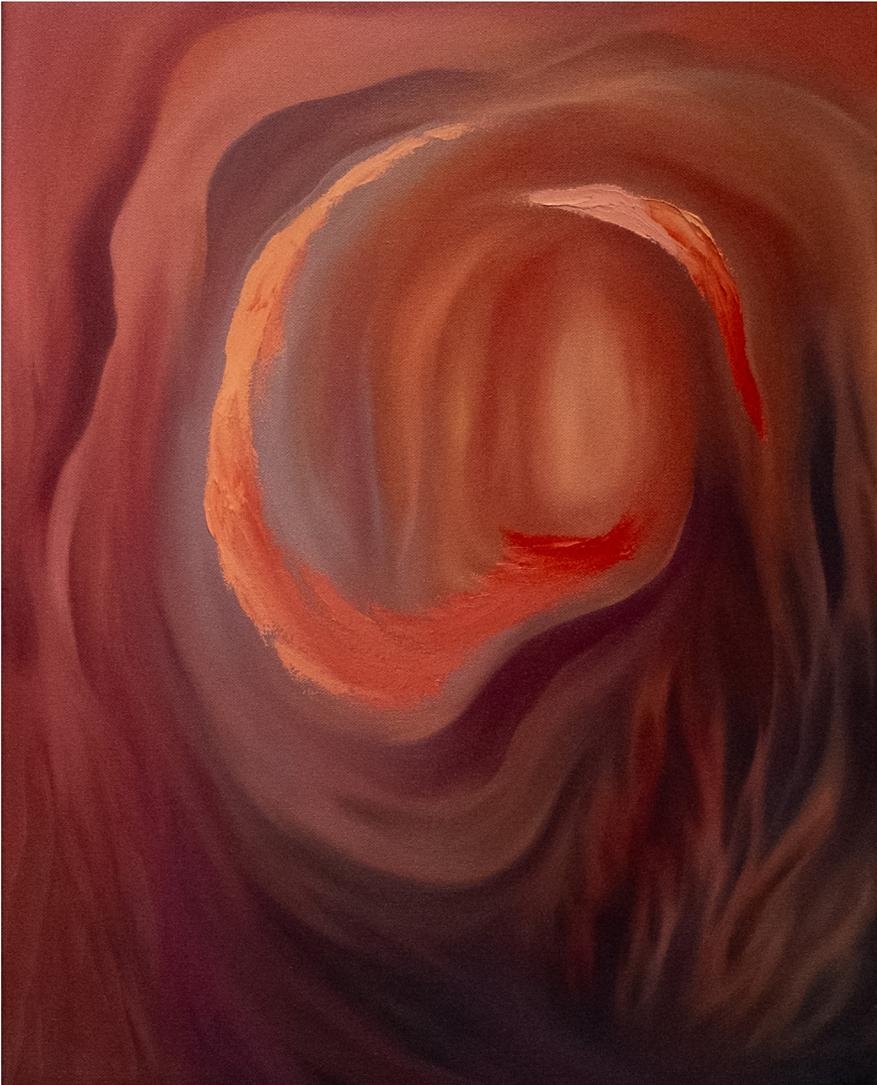
**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Unfurling Undertones No. 1, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 50 cm



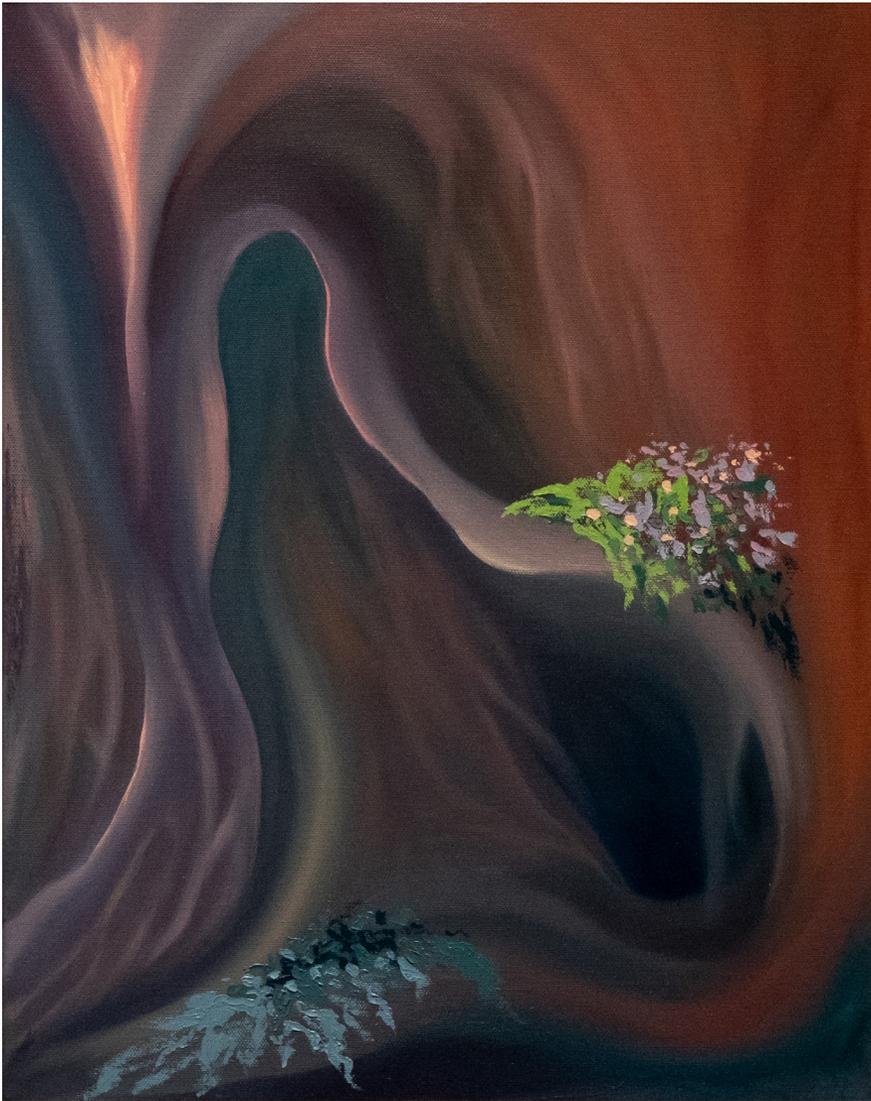
**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Vascular Reverie No. 1, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 40 cm



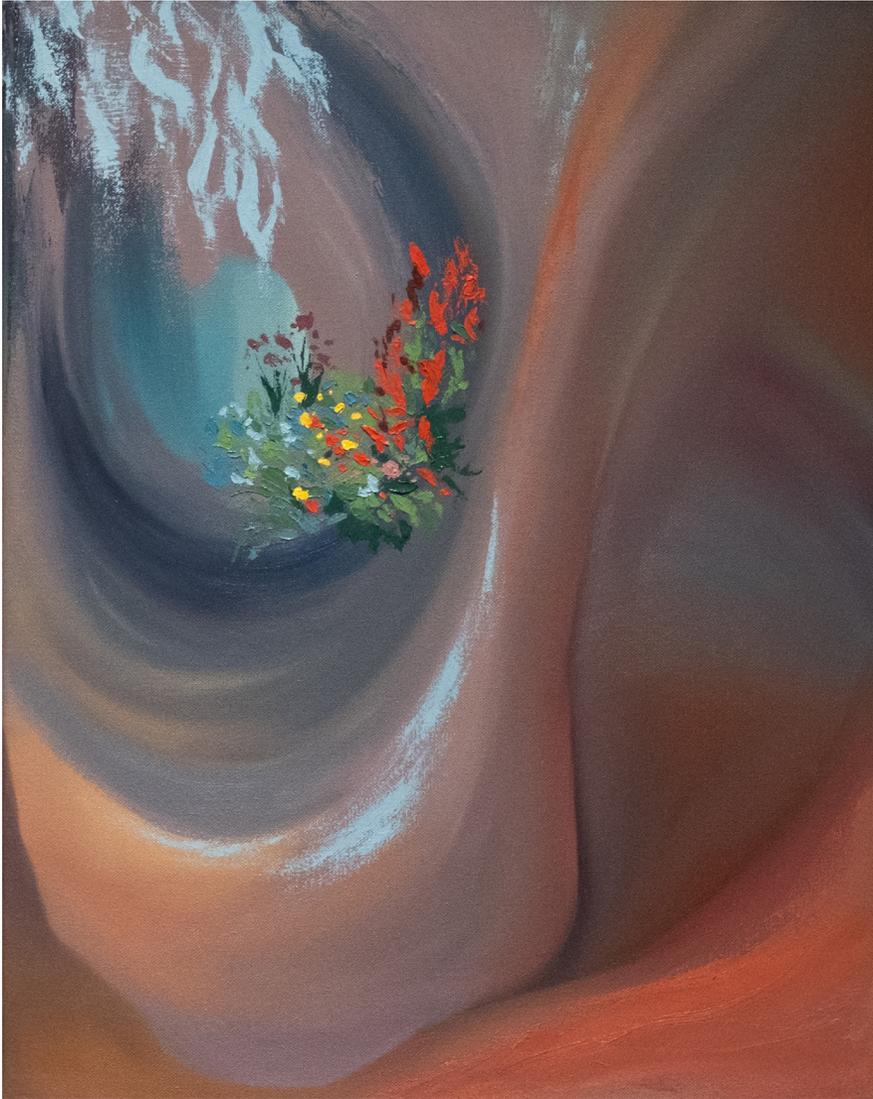
**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Vascular Reverie No. 2, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 40 cm



**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Vascular Reverie No. 5, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 40 cm



**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

Vascular Reverie No. 6, 2026, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 40 cm



**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA & NG XIN KAI PAUL**

Tabi Tabi Po, 2026, Mixed Media and Sound Installation, Single Stereo, .wav loop audio  
340 x 800 cm / 19 min 18 sec

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**VIEW 1**

**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA & NG XIN KAI PAUL**

Tabi Tabi Po, 2026, Mixed Media and Sound Installation, Single Stereo, .wav loop audio  
340 x 800 cm / 19 min 18 sec

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**VIEW 2**

ECHOES OF UNDERGROWTH

**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA & NG XIN KAI PAUL**

Tabi Tabi Po, 2026, Mixed Media and Sound Installation, Single Stereo, .wav loop audio  
340 x 800 cm / 19 min 18 sec

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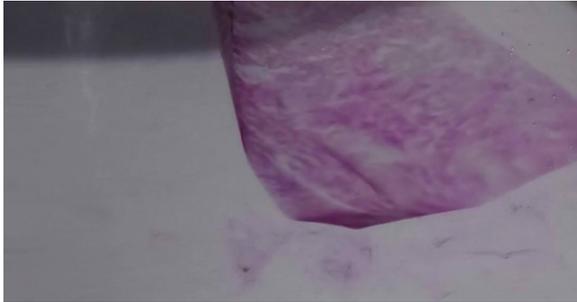


**VIEW 3 (DETAILS)**

ECHOES OF UNDERGROWTH

**JOHN MARIE ANDRADA**

In the Same Vein, 2026, Single-Channel Video, No Audio, 16:9 Aspect Ratio, 5 mins



## ABOUT THE ARTIST



**John Marie Andrada** (b. 2001, Philippines/ Singapore) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work spans painting, installation, sculpture, photography and video. Growing up and taking root in a once foreign country, she moves between mediums and draws from personal recounts to reflect on the complexities of identity, time and the human experience. Defined by an ongoing investigation of how narrative and visual language can intertwine, her practice blends figuration and abstraction, driven by an intuitive, experimental approach to image-making.

Andrada graduated with a BA in Fine Arts (First Class Honors) from LASALLE College of the Arts in partnership with Goldsmiths, University of London in 2023. In 2024, she debuted her first solo with Haridas Contemporary, Singapore. She was a recipient of The Winston Oh Travelogue Award (2023) and exhibited in DECK's Undescribed #9 helmed by John Tung and Robert Zhao. Her works have been nominated for International Takifuji Art Award, Japan (2022), featured in Project 3V (Visualize, Voice and Vision) at FassArt Gallery, Istanbul (2021), 9th Dali International Photography Exhibition (DIPE), China (2021), and received the Special Choice Award for the 41st Daegu International Grand Exhibition, Korea (2022).

## EDUCATION

- 2022 Bachelor (First Class Hons) of Fine Arts, Goldsmiths, University of London by LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore
- 2021 Diploma in Fine Arts with Distinction Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Echoes of Undergrowth, Haridas Contemporary, Singapore
- 2024 Breadth of Air, Haridas Contemporary, Singapore

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Art SG 2026, Haridas Contemporary Booth, Singapore
- 2025 Telluria - Curated by Tan Siuli, Appetite, Singapore
- 2025 Small Things Brought Together, Haridas Contemporary, Singapore
- 2024 PULSE, Haridas Contemporary, Singapore
- 2024 DECK Undescribed #9, Singapore
- 2024 The Critical Craft Collective Lab, Singapore
- 2023 Haridas Contemporary Inaugural Exhibition, Haridas Contemporary, Singapore
- 2022 Project 3V (Visualize, Voice and Vision) at Earl Lu Gallery, Singapore
- 2021 9th Dali International Photography Exhibition (DIPE), China
- 2021 Project 3V (Visualize, Voice and Vision) at FassArt Gallery, Istanbul
- 2021 Between Dilitantes and Dissertations at McNally School of Fine Arts
- 2021 Between Desires, Meandering Landscapes at Brother Joseph McNally Gallery
- 2017 Documenting Serangoon Road Heritage at The URA Centre, Singapore

**AWARDS**

- 2023 The Winston Oh Travelogue Award, Singapore
- 2022 41st Daegu International Grand Exhibition Special Choice Award, Korea
- 2022 International Takifuji Art Award Nominee, Japan
- 2017 Documenting Serangoon Road Heritage at The URA Centre, Singapore

HARIDAS  
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Sunday: 12 noon – 5 pm

Wednesday by appointment only

Monday, Tuesdays & Public Holidays: Closed

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