



MADE
Metrobank Art & Design Excellence

This is not a chair.
Jowee Aguinaldo

September 6 - 27, 2025



Don't Take Your Seat

In Jowee Aguinaldo's first solo exhibition, the artist takes an ordinary piece of furniture, a chair, and turns it into a restless metaphor for the everyday struggles that shape our lives. This Is Not a Chair asks us to look closer at what we take for granted, to see how a familiar object can carry stories of power, absence, burden, and survival. Images of monobloc chairs, common in Filipino households, appear in varying iterations: stacked, carried, used as armor, boxed, and strewn with yellow police tape. Each depiction adds meaning, taking us deeper into this hardy object whose very material might outlast human lives.

In Never Ending Trip to Jerusalem, the childhood game of musical chairs is reimagined as a grim cycle. The players run in circles, chasing seats that never quite belong to them. The image, in all its soft-brushed detail, hardens into a portrait of inequality. Figures run themselves dry to the point of exhaustion while systems keep the rewards out of reach. As the artist cuttingly states, "only when their hearts stop does the music end." Other works ground these ideas more intimately. In Mahabag sa Hapag and Saan Ako Lulugar, chairs transform into tables and fragile shelters hand-carried restlessly into varying positions. They stand in for labor that feeds others but rarely sustains the worker, or for housing that demands endless adjustment without ever offering rest. Chair/Man is pure satire: a chair draped with clothes that sketch the outline of a leader, yet no actual body fills the seat. This is authority as costume, not service, with no tangible substance or hope for sustenance.

The sharpness continues in BAHAla Kayo Dyan, aiming at current issues concerning anomalies in flood control projects. Floods rise not only as natural disasters but as symbols of corruption, drowning infrastructure, private property, and people alike. Citizens are left to fend for themselves while officials pocket funds, offering clown-led spectacles instead of solutions. In Patas sa Gapas, the divide between landowners and farmers is laid bare. Side-by-side comparisons of one figure enjoying abundance and towering profits, and others enduring precarity, dangerously sharing the limited space and barely allowed to stand. And in Weight of Stillness, expression itself seems boxed in, showing how silence can be imposed even in a society full of noise. The smaller canvases of the This Is Not a Chair series distill these ideas into sharp fragments: exclusion disguised as inclusion, war cutting lives short, the weight of constraint on LGBTQ+ identities, and the quiet but forceful presence of absence itself.

Aguinaldo's oil paintings are carefully built through blending, glazing, and layering, but what makes them resonate is less about technique than urgency. The artist paints with the eye of an astute storyteller and the conviction of someone who knows these issues firsthand. In the end, this exhibition truly is not even about chairs at all. It is about who gets to sit, who is left standing, and who is never even invited to the table. Aguinaldo asks us not to look away but to face these questions head-on, and to recognize that the simplest forms around us often carry the heaviest truths.

- Kaye O'Yek



BAHAla KAYO DYAN

Oil on Canvas

24 x 24 Inches



CHAIR/MAN
Oil on Canvas
36 x 24 Inches
2025



PATAS SA GAPAS
Oil on Canvas
24 x 12 Inches each (diptych)
2025



MAHABAG SA HAPAG

Oil on Canvas
36 x 48 Inches
2025



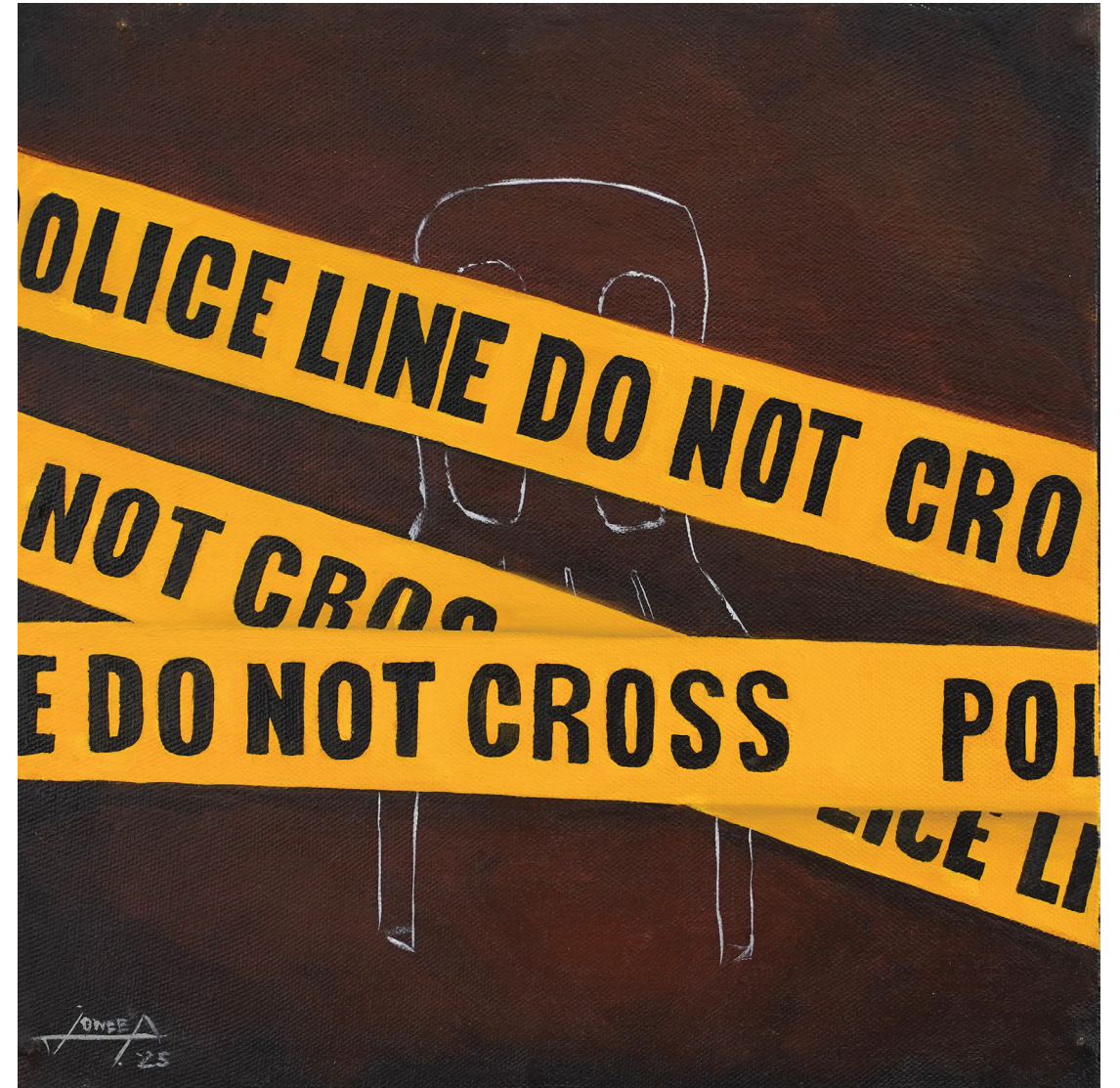
NEVER ENDING TRIP TO JERUSALEM

Oil on Canvas
48 x 72 Inches
2025



SAAN AKO LULUGAR

Oil on Canvas
36 x 36 Inches
2025



THIS IS NOT A CHAIR, THIS IS A VOID

Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 Inches
2025



THIS IS NOT A CHAIR, THIS IS A VOID

Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 Inches
2025



THIS IS NOT A CHAIR, THIS IS EXCLUSION

Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 Inches
2025



THIS IS NOT A CHAIR, THIS IS WAR

Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 Inches
2025



WEIGHT OF STILLNESS

Oil on Canvas
18 x 11 Inches