

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Paolo Arao

Never Too Much

March 27 – May 2, 2020

Opening Reception: Friday, March 27th, 6 - 8 pm

Free and open to the public/ Artist in Attendance

David B. Smith Gallery is pleased to present *Never Too Much*, a solo exhibition by Brooklyn-based artist Paolo Arao. Featured in the gallery's project room, Arao's geometric sewn fabric paintings reference woven textiles and ethnic patterns from the Philippines, reinterpreted in kaleidoscopic fabric compositions.

Fabric, a material that seemingly begs for human touch, is something we all have a level of familiarity with. Whether it is clothing worn or removed from the body, commercially bought, hand dyed, or recycled weathered canvas, Arao harnesses the tactility and multiple interpretations of fabric, often alluding to its central relationship to the human body.

Precisely sewn together into tapestry-like wall works, Arao's background in painting is evident in his mastery of color and composition. Paired with his conceptual link to his identity as a gay Filipino-American, Arao's works simultaneously reach back through history and into the future as powerful symbols of representation and beauty.



Image: Paolo Arao, *Back and Forth, Forever*, 2020, sewn cotton, denim, wool, felt, nylon, canvas, 36 x 45 in. (91.4 x 114.3 cm)

Gathered from disparate sources, carrying the psychic or physical traces of the hands that manufactured or the bodies that wore the textiles used in his fabric paintings, there is a legacy of nuance woven into the fibers of each work. Written into each color choice, use of various types of fabric, and overall composition, is a steadfast trust in process and faith in intuition. Regarding this body of work, Arao states, "In my sewn paintings, the stability of geometric forms is disrupted through the use of altered patterns and asymmetry, creating a space that's dynamic and shifting – much like the concept of queerness itself." Flexible, open-ended, and bounding with vibrant color, Paolo Arao's *Never Too Much* bears an embedded personal history as well as an immediate sense of celebration and vitality.

About Paolo Arao

Paolo Arao is a Brooklyn-based, Filipino-American artist working in painting and textiles. He received his BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University and was a participant at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Arao has shown his work in numerous group exhibitions both nationally and internationally and has presented solo exhibitions at Glass Box (Seattle), Western Exhibitions (Chicago), Franklin Artworks (Minneapolis), Jeff Bailey Gallery and Barney Savage Gallery (NYC.)

Residencies include: The Museum of Arts and Design, NYC, the Millay Colony, Studios at MASS MoCA, Vermont Studio Center, Lower East Side Printshop Keyholder Residency, NARS Foundation, Wassaic Project, BRIC Workspace, Atlantic Center for the Arts, and the Fire Island Artist Residency. He is a recipient of an Artist Fellowship from The New York Foundation for the Arts. His work has been published in *New American Paintings*, *Maake Magazine*, and *Esopus*. He is currently an artist-in-residence at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, NE.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Art in America* and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works" and *The Denver Post* declared that it is the "premiere commercial space" in Denver. The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.