

Aphorisms by Citizen Troll

By Clara Balaguer

(no video available for privacy reasons)

What can the individual citizen—from a political left minority, with little to no programming skills—do to resist tropical authoritarianism fed by online misinformation? In response, notes (and not answers) from a three-year process of performative research on the ideological troll as archetype, profession, and socialized (gender-fluid) behavior, set to the backdrop of the Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte (a.k.a The Punisher). Duterte’s allegedly “benevolent” dictatorship is characterized by policies that promote state-sponsored violence, institutionalized misogyny, and neocolonial loss of sovereignty promoted through grassroots and astroturfed online mobilization, disinformation, and, of course, trolling.

Clara Balaguer (PH) is a cultural worker. From 2010 to 2018, she articulated cultural programming with rural and underserved communities in the Philippines through the Office of Culture and Design, a residency space, and social practice platform. In 2015, she co-founded Hardworking Goodlooking, a cottage industry publishing haus interested in horror vacui, thickening research on the post-(or de-)colonial vernacular, collectivizing authorship, and the value of the error. Currently, she coordinates the Social Practices course at Willem de Kooning Academy and teaches Experimental Publishing at Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. Frequently, she operates under collective or individual aliases that intimate her service in a given project, the latest of which is To Be Determined.