



León Gallery  
FINE ART & ANTIQUES

# The Asian Cultural Council Auction 2024

9 MARCH 2024 | 2:00 PM

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**JOSÉ JOYA**

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THE FIRST ACC GRANTEE FOR THE VISUAL ARTS



FRONT COVER (Detail)

LOT 87

**Jose Joya** (1931 - 1995)

*Yellow Abode*

THIS PAGE (DETAILED SHOT):

LOT 47

**Anita Magsaysay-Ho** (1914 - 2012)

*Planting Rice*



León Gallery  
FINE ART & ANTIQUES

# The Asian Cultural Council Auction 2024

Auction

9 March 2024

Saturday, 2:00 PM

Preview

Saturday to Friday

2 March - 8 March 2024

9:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Venue

G/F Eurovilla 1

Rufino corner Legazpi Streets,

Legazpi Village, Makati City,

Metro Manila, Philippines

Contact

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LOT 147

Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

*Tinikling*

Amorsolo 1960



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Asian Cultural Council Auction 2024

viii - ix

1 - 314

318

320

321

Foreword

Lots 1 - 184

Index

Terms & Conditions

Registration Form



THIS PAGE  
LOT 62

**Nena Saguil** (1914 - 1994)  
*Sans Titre (Untitled)*

NEXT PAGE  
LOT 117

**Marc Aran Reyes** (b. 1996)  
*In Between Moments*

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asian cultural council

# Message of The Asian Cultural Council Chairman

Filled with gratitude for the year that was, we recommence with greater optimism to move forward building a legacy that espouses the transformative power of the arts.

Since the Asian Cultural Council was founded in 1963, the goal of providing for the creative enrichment of artists through cultural exchange has never been more relevant. In 2000, we established the ACC Philippines Foundation to further the cause and enable more Filipino artists to benefit.

As we aim to actualize ACC's mission year after year, we seek the support of like-minded individuals and form alliances along the way to support our advocacy.

Foremost is our wonderful partnership with Jaime Ponce de Leon and Leon Gallery. Now on our 9th year of collaboration, we extend our deep admiration, respect and sincere thanks to Jaime and his team for their dedication and tireless effort that makes our fundraising auction an anticipated and successful event.



We also acknowledge the generous contribution of friends and patrons whose invaluable help and support through the years has been a source of encouragement and goodwill. We are forever grateful to everyone who has journeyed with us in this endeavor. Let this new year inspire us all with a renewed sense of purpose as we make each day better for everyone.

Welcome to the Asian Cultural Council Auction 2024!  
Cheers!

Ernest L. Escaler

*Chairman*

ASIAN CULTURAL COUNCIL  
PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION INC.



The First Lady and Honorary ACC Chairperson Liza Araneta Marcos together with ACC Chairperson Josie Natori, ACC Philippines Chairman Ernest Escaler, ACC Philippine Director Tess Rances and Philippine Board Members Mercedes Zobel, Maribel Ongpin, Ching Cruz, Malu Gamboa Lindo, Judy Kim and Dr Joven Cuanang.



## Foreword

DEAR FRIENDS and CLIENTS,

There is much to be grateful for and many milestones to remember with our first major auction of the year — the much-awaited Asian Cultural Council Auction of 2024.

This year, we mark the anniversaries of three of the country's most important modernist matters : Fernando Zobel's 100th year and the 110th for two fast friends and classmates at the College of Fine Arts of the University of the Philippines, Anita Magsaysay-Ho and Nena Saguil who were born just months apart.

All three are represented gloriously in this auction with Nena Saguil in particular, featured in four exceptional works from two touchstones of her career, the Philippine Art Gallery and the Ecole de Paris.

Anita Magsaysay-Ho returns to the spotlight once more with a painting on the iconic theme of *Planting Rice*, a gift of gratitude to her favorite doctor.

Incidentally, Nena Saguil and Anita Magsaysay-Ho have been named among the 5 Filipino artists who will be represented in the Venice Biennale's 60th International Art Exhibition. Curated by biennial's first Latin American curator, Adriano Pedrosa, their works will be showcased in the riveting show with the theme "Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere."

In an interview, the curator said "it highlights artists who are foreigners, immigrants, expatriates, diasporic emigres, exiled individuals, or refugees." Furthermore, it will spotlight "artworks created in the past century that are now points of reference for the new generations."

Nena and Anita's co-conspirators in the world of Neo-Realism and Modernist Art, H.R. Ocampo and Cesar Legaspi are to be found in these pages as well, with several exuberant exemplars.

Gems from the Don Eugenio "Geny" Lopez Collection, the man who had a ringside seat to the best of Philippine modern art across several generations, are also an important highlight. The Lopez Collection includes a rare heptatych (or 6-part) painting by Arturo Luz, a wonderful BenCab of dancing Sabels among many others. Fine furniture from a kamagong cabinet and a long dining table crafted by Omeng Esguerra are just some of the highly covetable lots.

The collections of Romeo Jorge and Assemblyman and Ambassador Pedro Conlu Hernaez of Negros Occidental are also featured.



Zobel, Saguil, and Magsaysay-Ho would exemplify the Filipino artist working abroad — tracing the footsteps of the bold spirits that came before them : Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo. Luna has two works, one entitled "*Ecce Homo*" from a turbulent period of his life, and is a mirror of his earnest attempts to rein in his emotions; as well as "*Landscape in Bilbao*", reflecting a period of calm in his life, and a lyrical work from his award-winning Roman period, titled "*Idilio*".

Two American captains of industry share to the world their collection : Mr. William Srpoule's extraordinary seascape by the gentle soul Resurreccion Hidalgo of sailboats off a Normandy coast and Mr. Demmet Howe's two masterpieces on the same theme — the Amorsolo tinikling, danced in sunlit fields and a rare rendition at twilight.

In addition, this Father of Filipino Classical Art, Fernando Amorsolo, has three outstanding works from his golden years, featuring the 'dalaga' going to market and washing clothes, as well as moving picture of the grown woman comforting her family, all three, symbols of Mother Philippines.

The two extraordinary gentlemen of the country's first foray to the Venice Biennale 1964 — Jose Joya and Napoleon Abueva — have unique, never-before-seen treasures to behold.

The Asian Cultural Council Auction is always an occasion close to our hearts, not least of all because it brings to the forefront the abilities of our young Filipino artists. In the ACC's honor, works by Jose Joya, their first-ever grantee for the visual arts, are among the highlights, as are important pieces from another ACC grantee, Roberto Chabet.

On behalf of Team Leon Gallery, allow me to invite you once again to enjoy, experience, and join this new adventure in Philippine art.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jaime L. Ponce de Leon". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jaime L. Ponce de Leon  
Director

LEÓN GALLERY

**Rosario Bitanga** (b. 1934)

*Composition in Green*

signed and dated 1982 (lower right)

oil on canvas

20" x 18" (51 cm x 46 cm)

**P 180,000**

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

One of the foremost Filipina abstractionists, Rosario "Charito" Bitanga's highly choreographed canvases reveal her natural predisposition for a highly intuitive work. Graceful and harmonious, her oeuvre features her intuitive and intimate relationship with color, her brilliant composition, and her musical arrangement of lines. Her 1982 *Composition in Green* shows the dynamism that characterizes her body of work: she utilized various shades of green and broad sweeping strokes to depict a relaxing image. Green is a color that represents nature, emphasizing its restful nature, and Bitanga, a graduate of the isolated and forested Cranbrook Academy of Art, perfectly encapsulates the peace evoked when one spends time with their environment. *(Hannah Valiente)*



2

**Jose Blanco** (1932 - 2008)

*Pasko Sa Nayon*

signed and dated 2006 (lower right)

oil on canvas

36" x 48" (91 cm x 122 cm)

**P 400,000**

The oeuvre of Jose Blanco emphasizes the tight-knit family values that permeate Filipino society. Using a style that art critic Alice Guillermo described as "folk realism", common Filipino graces his often giant canvas – farmers till the land, fishermen drag their haul of the day, a community gathers to eat for lunch, all done in his earthy palette and lush colors.

In *Pasko Sa Nayon*, the charm of Blanco's works is on full display with the added combination of the Philippine Christmas. Christmas in the Philippines famously spans months and *Pasko Sa Nayon* incorporates that; aside from the Blanco-typical folk genre subjects, a woman is also seen hand-making a parol. In his masterful hands, Blanco depicts the inherent festivities and closeness found in the Philippine pastoral. *(Hannah Valiente)*



### Mark Justiniani (b. 1966)

#### *Tiyog (Ilonggo term for Turn)*

signed and dated 1991 (lower left)

pastel on paper

17" x 14" (43 cm x 36 cm)

**P 100,000**

A renowned name in Philippine social realism, the oeuvre of Mark Justiniani features a multitude of social issues in his personal brand of surreal imagery. He delves into the sentiments of the masses, both rural and urban, as befits a member of artist-activist collectives like *Artista ng Bayan (ABAY)*, *Salingpusa*, *Sanggawa*, and *Sakay*. However, he veers away from his usual muses in this 1991 work. In an atypical fashion, Justiniani positions the figure not on his front but his back; even more interestingly, the figure appears to be fully clothed. One is left to wonder about what Justiniani depicts – what could this bewildering piece mean? Justiniani invites the viewers to look deeper into the work, evoking thought-provoking questions that probe just what about the clothed figure is laid bare. *(Hannah Valiente)*



## 4

### Benedicto Cabrera (b.1942)

#### *Punk Series*

signed and dated 1981 (lower right)

pastel on paper

22" x 16" (56 cm x 41 cm)

**P 400,000**

The works of BenCab have always contained, in one way or another, the spirit of rebellion. Thus, among Benedicto Cabrera's notable works from the 1980s is a series that celebrates the fervent spirit of the era. This collection, however, goes beyond a mere artistic endeavor; it serves as a dynamic homage to the rebellious spirit of the punk movement, particularly drawing inspiration from the energetic punk scene that emerged in the United Kingdom during the same era.

Cabrera's foray into the pop art realm within this series is not merely a stylistic choice; it is a deliberate engagement with the countercultural movement that defined the punk scene in the UK. The 1980s in the United Kingdom witnessed a resurgence of punk, marked by its distinct fashion, music, and anti-establishment ethos. Bands like *The Clash*, *Sex Pistols*, and *The Damned* were pivotal in shaping this subculture, influencing not only music but also visual arts and fashion.

In his interpretations of characters from the local punk scene, Cabrera captures the quintessential look, feel, and mood of



this counter-cultural movement. The vivid depictions in his punk series echo the rebellious aesthetics and unconventional elements that characterized the UK punk scene. The vibrant energy, bold self-expression, and anti-establishment fervor of this era find resonance in Cabrera's playful yet incisive artistic representations. *(Jed Daya)*



5

## Betsy Westendorp (1927 - 2022)

### *Painting # 334-86*

signed and dated 1986 (lower right)

oil on canvas

77" x 41" (196 cm x 104 cm)

**P 1,800,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Galleria Duemilla and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE  
Galleria Duemila

Although the Spanish-born Pintora de Principes was initially renowned for her works in portraiture of Spanish royalty and Manila's elites, Betsy Westendorp would eventually find her forte in nature painting— particularly becoming preoccupied with subjects of Philippine landscapes and flora. Elena Flores, a Spanish critic and friend of the artist, particularly noted the Philippine orchid as Westendorp's best subject, through which Betsy would peak in her artistry.

In the writings of art critic Cid Reyes, he points out Westendorp's preference for portraying the "living, 'breathing'" quality of flowers, as opposed to the ethos of floral vanitas paintings that fixated on symbols of death and the fleetingness of life. Nevertheless, the subject of death is not unbeknownst to the artist whose works would see a sentimental change in artistic direction soon after the passing of Antonio "Tony" Brias in 1976. The latter part of Westendorp's artistic career was preoccupied with the fleeting image of Philippine sunsets that she often saw with her husband Tony in their Manila Bay walks.

"I draw as I paint," the artist says of her works. It is an ethos that lives and breathes in the moment, and yet acknowledges the sheer passage of time as it seamlessly slips through one's fingers. Within the dainty, gossamer-like strokes of Betsy's floral paintings, there is a carefree sense of time embedded within. The flowers breathe life into themselves only by acknowledging their own nature of passage— a blooming towards its own death. (*Pie Tiausas*)



6 PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

## Juvenal Sansó (b. 1929)

### *The Mighty Portals / Landscape*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1970s

acrylic on canvas

16" x 33" (41 cm x 84 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Fundacion Sansó confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Juvenal Sansó's predilection for the beauty of nature is highly evident in his dreamlike landscapes and depictions of flora. Breathing life into his inanimate subjects, Sansó's innate angst transforms the scenery into an intimate depiction of possible stories woven into a flower's petals and the rocks on a riverside.

With the lot at hand entitled *The Mighty Portals / Landscape*, Sansó sets his sights on a dreamy waterfall in the middle of a thriving cliffside. Verdant greens and cool blues dominate the canvas, echoing the French daily morning newspaper *Le Figaro* which described Sansó as a "contemplative poet." His ethereal landscapes evoke a long-forgotten memory in an early morning light; as continues *Le Figaro*: "[His] landscapes that seem fantastic are authentic ... his flowers, masses of rocks, the fishing traps that look like stylized cathedrals, his tropical plants are all remembered so clearly that he can recreate them in his works."

Sansó does not paint merely for the sake of painting—the driving force of his prolific artistic career is a visceral compulsion for creation. This genuineness for his craft bleeds into his works – art, as he has said as reported by the CCP brochure, becomes a bridge of sorts for artists to sublimate their emotions into a masterpiece to connect from one individual to another. His oeuvre, whether they be full of anguished figures or forlorn landscapes, perfectly encapsulates the emotional connection his works evoke. *(Hannah Valiente)*



7

**Romeo Tabuena** (1921- 2015)

*Guitar Player*

signed and dated 1998 (lower right)

oil on canvas

39" x 31 1/2" (99 cm x 80 cm)

**P 340,000**

In October 1995, in celebration of his 40 years of residency in San Miguel de Allende, the Instituto de Bellas Artes, Centro Cultural Ignacio honored Filipino artist Romeo Tabuena with a major exhibition, followed by a similar exhibit in 1996, this one with the cooperation of the Philippine Embassy.

Like his background, the oeuvre of Romeo Tabuena shows the charms of both his homeland and the country he chose to live in. Culturally similar, the Philippines and Mexico share a loaded colonial background, in particular Spanish. Due to that, both countries are cultural mirrors, something that Tabuena finds himself drawn to.

The 1998 *Guitar Player* was created three years after Tabuena's 40-year celebration of residency in Allende and is a manifestation of his Filipino and Mexican heritage. Guitars are cultural icons in both the Philippines and Mexico, as both are staples in the country's music. This similarity is pointed out in *Guitar Player* which, unlike his earlier more transparent works, is stylized in an opaque blocky form with jewel tones, a result of his later Mexican sensibilities. A man holds an acoustic guitar close to his chest, a wide-brimmed hat adorning his head. With Tabuena's cubism, it is hard to figure out if the person is Filipino or Mexican and perhaps it does not matter. Romeo Tabuena's charm of being able to marry his appreciation for both Filipino and Mexican is on full display, creating a work that transcends physical space. *(Hannah Valiente)*



8

**Romulo Olazo** (1934 - 2015)

*Window Series*

signed and dated 1981 (lower right)

oil on canvas

18" x 18" (46 cm x 46 cm)

**P 700,000**

PROVENANCE  
Genluna Gallery

The 1980s have proved to be a fruitful decade for Romulo Olazo. Opening the decade as one of the five finalists of the 1980 Mobil Art Awards – a “first-of-a-kind event” as described by art critic Alice Guillermo – the next year 1981 saw two milestones for Olazo: he held his first one-man show outside of the country in Taipei, Taiwan and he was also named as one of “Five Outstanding Living Artists” by art critics Leonidas Benesa, Rod Paras-Perez, and Emmanuel Torres.

It was the same year that he made the lot at hand entitled *Window Series*. Utilizing a color palette of monochromatic blues, *Window Series* echoes the overlapping brush strokes of his *Diaphanous* series. However, it is more opaque than his other works, shedding the transparency that marked his oeuvre and therefore forcing the viewers to look past the ‘window’ and through the streets. Perhaps it is a view of the nightlife of Taipei during his first one-man show or maybe it is from back home – in whatever way, *Window Series* with its striking technique and harmonious color scheme provides a unique abstraction to an otherwise common sight. *(Hannah Valiente)*



9

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**Edwin Wilwayco** (b.1952)

*Climbing Vines #61 / Luminous Leaves*

signed and dated 1999 (lower right)

oil on canvas

34" x 32" (86 cm x 81 cm)

**P 160,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Galleria Duemila

**EXHIBITED**

Galleria Duemila, *Vine Series II*,  
Pasay City, November 1999

Edwin Wilwayco's "vine" paintings possess colors bursting at the seams and vivid brush strokes; they are fauvist portraits of the natural world. Wilwayco debuted his "Vine Series" in a 1998 solo exhibition at the Lopez Museum Gallery and would continue to showcase them in a 1999 one-man show at Galleria Duemila titled "Vine Series II," where the work at hand was exhibited.

The artist's *Vine Series* was born due to Wilwayco's studio being surrounded by lush gardens, which functioned as a miniature ecosystem in itself. In his artist's statement during his 1998 Lopez Museum Gallery show, Wilwayco said (as articulated by art critic Emmanuel Torres) that the vine paintings are meant to push his creative boundaries "over the edge" and "produce a tension more absorbing than that of the "vines" he has clung to long enough."

With their dynamic vitality, the vine paintings were a natural progression and an artistic evolution from the wild exuberance of his *Jeepney Fantasia* and the chromatic allure of the *Heliconia: Birds of Paradise*. The warm colors of Wilwayco's vines sing the praises of a sublime living and a sacred existence. As what *Climbing Vines #61* encapsulates, with its blazing reds, sinuous curves, and supple forms, Wilwayco's *Vine Series* exalts nature as our shared lifeblood and the firm giver of a much-needed respite amid the pains and adversities of a mortal existence. (*Adrian Maranan*)





10

**Justin Nuyda** (1944 - 2022)

*Glimpses of Tagaytay Highlands (Series XXIX)*

signed and dated 2001 (lower left and verso)

oil on canvas

18" x 24" (46 cm x 61 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by the heirs of the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

The works of visual artist Justin "Tiny" Nuyda are often described as "poetic" – indeed, his alluring and dreamlike canvases are experimentations in light and color. A founding member of the famed Saturday Group, Nuyda rubbed elbows with other geniuses of the Philippine art scene including National Artist for Painting H.R Ocampo and famed artist-writer Alfredo Roces.

*Glimpses of Tagaytay Highlands*, the lot at hand, depicts the titular Tagaytay in Nuyda's ethereal style. Known as the second Summer Capital of the Philippines for its cool climate, Tagaytay is a known tourist destination for anyone who wants a reprieve from the hot humid weather.



Justin Nuyda © León Gallery Archives

The lot at hand illustrates the mountainous terrain of Tagaytay, its sweeping hills and steep valleys translated into Nuyda's lyrical canvas. Utilizing a careful balance of color and form, Nuyda gives the viewer a panoramic view of the mountain line, masterfully recreating the charisma of a scene and giving it a fresh enigmatic twist. (*Hannah Valiente*)

a.)



b.)



c.)



d.)



## 11

### Juvenal Sansó (b. 1929)

#### a.) *Granite Strand*

signed (lower right)  
ca. 1980's  
acrylic on paper  
14 1/2" x 17 1/2" (37 cm x 44 cm)

#### b.) *Rocky Coast*

signed (lower right)  
ca. 1970's  
acrylic on paper  
12 1/2" x 15 1/4" (32 cm x 39 cm)

#### c.) *Vibrant Cove*

signed (lower right)  
ca. 1980's  
acrylic on paper  
12 3/4" x 15 3/4" (32 cm x 40 cm)

#### d.) *Serene Beach*

signed (lower right)  
ca. 1970's  
acrylic on paper  
12 3/4" x 15 3/4" (32 cm x 40 cm)

**P 700,000**

Each piece is accompanied by a certificate issued by Fundacion Sansó confirming the authenticity of this lot

In 1934, the Sanso-Pedret family crossed the globe to settle in the Philippines. Jose Sanso-Pedret, his wife Ramona Sanso-Pedret, and children Juvenal and Mina moved from Spain to the Philippines, boarding on a boat to start a new life and on the way, various sights would greet the family – the expansive blue sea as far as the eye could see, the yellow setting sun, the violet shadows. This would leave a great impression on the young Juvenal and his eventual works.

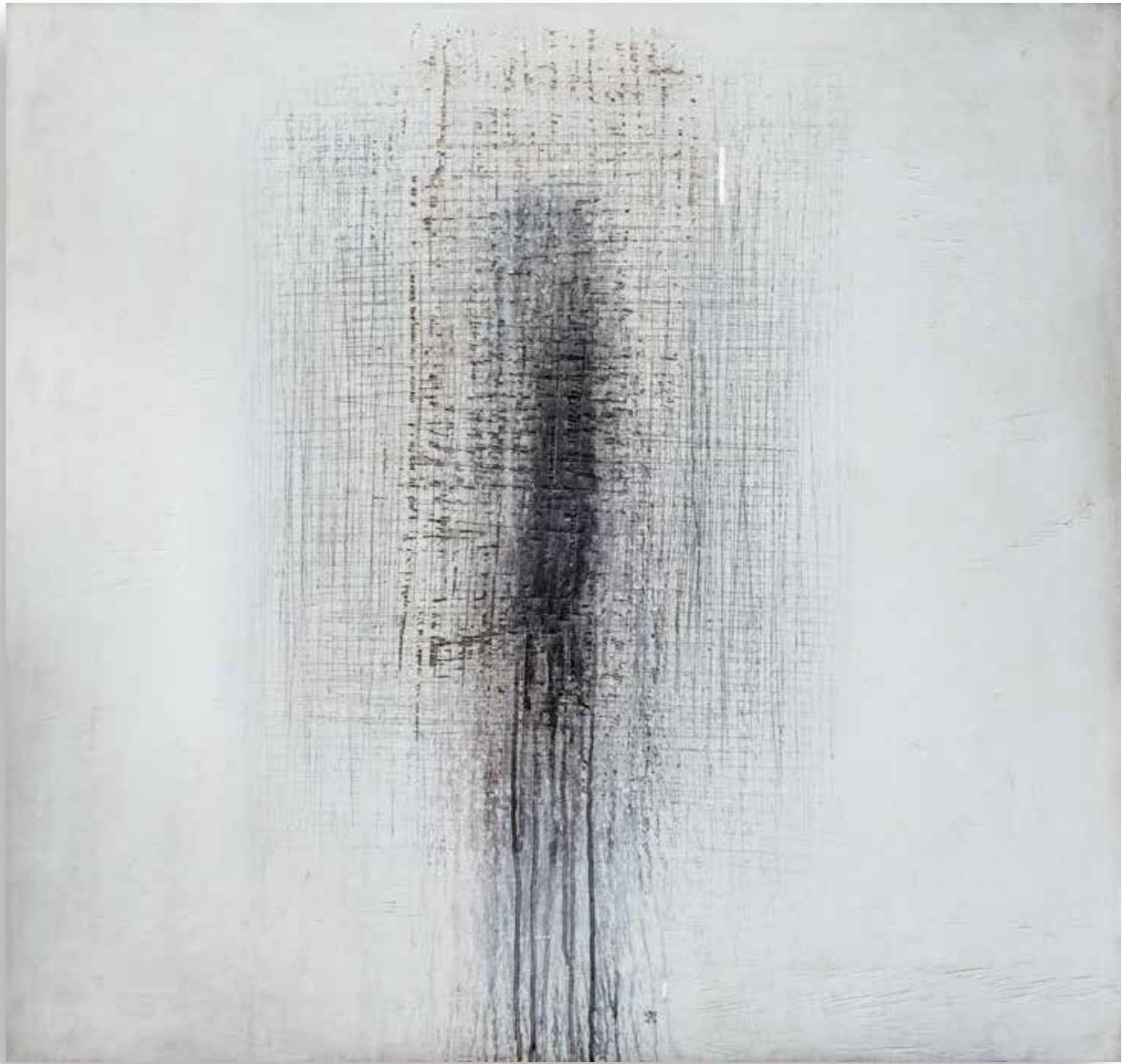
A mix of serenity and a disturbing unease permeate the landscapes of Juvenal Sanso. Devoid of human subjects, viewers are left to speculate on the empty spaces. The piles of stones and bodies of water seem to hold the answer to questions posed by the scenery; the blue skies emphasize the vastness of the space left unillustrated.

Sanso is no stranger to alienation: he was blue-eyed and blond in a sea of brown-skinned and brown-eyed Filipinos.

Among the Spaniards in Manila, his family too found no connection as they were Catalunians amongst Castellians. Then, when he left the country for Europe in 1952, he was a Filipino who spoke not a lick of the local languages.

"I was in complete anonymity and loneliness [in Europe], I just had to fend my way by myself," he said as recounted by Alfredo Roces in Sanso.

This sort of anguish is evident with the lot at hand. Containing four landscapes, Sanso's brilliant composition and innate sense of color give a sense of consciousness to the piece – a tranquil yet harrowed recollection of a landscape that borders on the real and the surreal. His usage of acrylic makes the suggestion of water, light, and plants easier with just a few deliberate squiggles. All these considered, Sanso's landscapes are a vestige of terrain devoid of human presence but not of human stories. *(Hannah Valiente)*



12 PROPERTY FROM THE DERRICK AND RIA SANTOS COLLECTION

## Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

### *Presence*

signed and dated 1977 (bottom & verso)

acrylic, pencil on marine plywood

37" x 39" (94 cm x 99 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

It is not uncommon for one to utilize a framework of Buddhism when trying to understand the works of Lao Lianben. Lao himself has stated in an interview that "Zen Buddhism principles, practices, and mysticism have always fascinated me. The image of Buddha is enigmatic—impregnable—quiet in form. I do not practice Buddhism, but I am intrigued by it. When I observe monks in their daily way of life, they allow me to imagine and create stories in my head. My eyes enable me to form ideas and come up with motifs for my paintings."

Thus, in relation to the direction of his practice, one can analyze this particular piece through a similar theory. Presence in Buddhist philosophy is closely tied to the fundamental teachings of mindfulness and awareness. The concept revolves around being fully engaged and attentive to the present moment, cultivating a deep awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, and surroundings. In the context of mindfulness meditation, practitioners aim to develop a heightened state of presence, often referred to as "sati" in Pali or "smṛti" in Sanskrit. This concept is notably expounded in early Buddhist texts like the Satipatthāna Sutta, where the Buddha outlines the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as a means to cultivate profound presence. Additionally, the Zen tradition, with its emphasis on direct experience and meditation, places great importance on the experiential aspect of presence. The works of contemporary Buddhist scholars such as Thich Nhat Hanh, Jon Kabat-Zinn, and Bhikku Bodhi further explore and articulate the significance of presence in the context of mindfulness practices, bridging ancient wisdom with modern psychology. (*Jed Daya*)

## Nona Garcia (b. 1978)

### *Planted 13*

dated 2017

oil on wood

78" x 44 1/2" (198 cm x 113 cm)

**P 700,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Arndt Art Agency, *Planted*,

Berlin, January 19 - March 9, 2018



Nona Garcia at the opening of her exhibition "Planted", Berlin, January 19 - March 9, 2018, at Arndt Art Agency and installation view of "Planted." Photo Courtesy: Hannes Wiedemann & Bernd Borchardt.

The work titled *Planted 13* hails from Nona Garcia's *Planted* exhibit that was mounted in 2018 in Berlin. Each painting showcased a solitary object, meticulously chosen from one of two distinct categories: indigenous artifacts and rudimentary guns. At first glance, the minimalistic presentation may convey simplicity and directness, but delving deeper reveals layers of profound meaning. These objects transcend their modest appearance, carrying intricate significance ranging from environmental and sociopolitical implications to personal histories.

According to Garcia herself: "It is a reflection of my direct environment. For the past four years, I've been living 250 kilometers away from Manila, in the mountains of the Cordillera. Here, you see clearly the relationship between man and nature. This area is also known for woodcarvings, from indigenous sculptures to homeware to souvenir items. I have been observing this for the past few years and have become fond of the material itself, as well as objects made out of it. In previous years, my paintings have been very large, almost mural-sized, and I wanted to go back to a more basic approach to painting."

The work, much like the others in the exhibit, goes beyond being a mere display of visual aesthetics; it serves as a multifaceted exploration into the interplay of objects, their inherent meanings, and the environmental and personal contexts in which they were brought to life. Garcia's artistic endeavor transforms seemingly ordinary subjects into a rich tapestry of stories, inviting viewers to engage with the intricacies and contemplate the broader implications embedded in each stroke of paint on wood. (*Jed Daya*)



**Fabian dela Rosa** (1869-1937)

*The Old Servant*

ca. 1917

signed (lower right)

oil on wood

14" x 9 1/2" (36 cm x 24 cm)

**P 700,000**

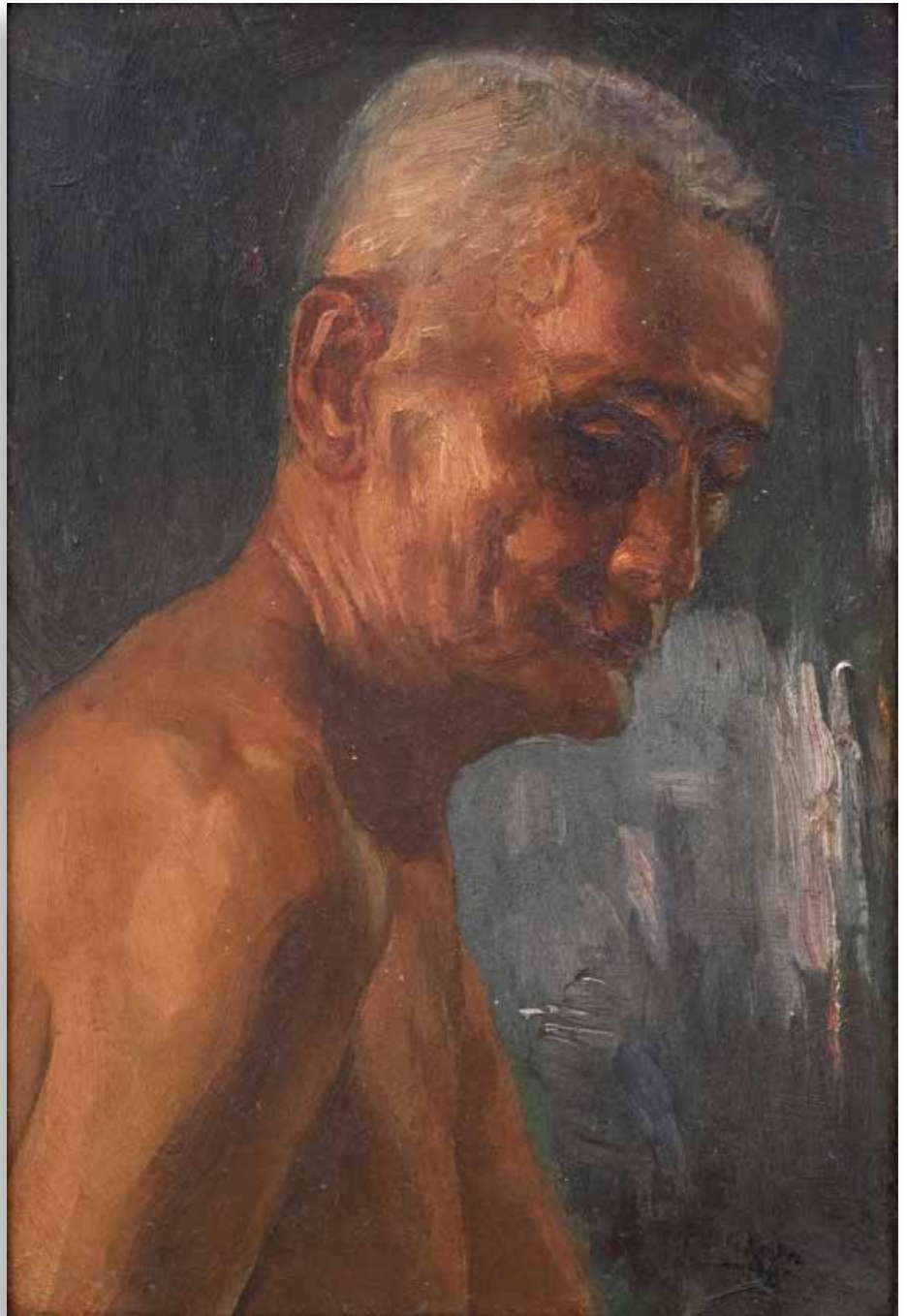
PROVENANCE

A gift from the Artist to Don Ariston Bautista Lin

Luciano P.R. Santiago would write, "Besides his inheritance from his parents, Dr. Bautista magnified his family fortune by founding the Germinal Cigar and Cigarette Co. A philanthropist of boundless generosity, he awarded the annual Germinal Prize. He also granted scholarships to brilliant Filipino students to widen their training abroad in their chosen fields. This included Fabian de la Rosa, now considered one of the greatest Filipino painters."

In the work of hand, the master Fabian de la Rosa has created a moving classical vignette of an old man. His confident strokes and coloration reflect the years of study in Italy thanks to a grant from Don Ariston Bautista.

The artwork would hang in one of the connecting rooms in the Bahay Nakpil-Bautista in Calle Barbosa in Quiapo. *(Lisa Guerrero Nakpil)*



Ariston Bautista-Lin.  
Photo from the Nakpil-Bautista collection.



15

**Betsy Westendorp** (1927 - 2022)

*Puerta de Hierro, Madrid*

signed, dated and titled 1984 (lower right and verso)

oil on board

30" x 30" (76 cm x 76 cm)

**P 700,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Carmen Brias Westendorp confirming the authenticity of this lot

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Madrid, Spain

**EXHIBITED**

Madrid, Spain, 1984



Puerta de Hierro, Madrid, Spain © Carlos Viñas

Renowned Spanish painter Betsy Westendorp has carved out a distinctive niche in the realm of realism over the course of her extensive career. Throughout decades, Westendorp has been celebrated for her ability to vividly and seamlessly capture subjects, effectively translating her perceptions and memories of both individuals and locations onto canvas. This dual capability extends beyond people to encompass her evocative portrayals of places, showcasing Westendorp's remarkable skill in visually articulating the intersection of personal recollection and artistic expression.

In this particular piece, we see Westendorp utilize her ability to unearth the lyricism of everyday life through a depiction of a

public monument. Situated in Madrid, the Puerta de Hierro holds a distinctive place in the city's landscape, much like Betsy Westendorp in the realm of art. This architectural landmark, over the years, has become an iconic manifestation of Madrid's history and cultural richness. The Puerta de Hierro, through its enduring presence, encapsulates the essence of the city, serving as a visual narrative of its past and a testament to the architectural grandeur that defines Madrid. Like Westendorp's skill in translating memories onto canvas, the Puerta de Hierro stands as a tangible representation of collective memory, portraying the interconnected tales of the city and its people with remarkable clarity and evocative power. (*Jed Daya*)



16

**Arturo Luz** (1926 - 2021)

*Rajasthan Temples*

signed (lower right)

ca. 2003

acrylic on canvas

36" x 48" (91 cm x 122 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot

In viewing Arturo Luz's works from his beloved *Cities of the Past* Series, one is immediately transported into the sublime glory of ancient civilizations and their profoundly unique contributions to the field of tangible cultural heritage. Luz's works in his *Cities of the Past* manifest the compelling power not only of one's imaginative faculty but more so the unbounded power and expressiveness of a reinvigorated psyche. Burdened and exhausted with his numerous responsibilities at the Design Center Philippines, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, and the Museum

of Philippine Art, Luz would gradually resign from each of his posts within the years 1985 to 1987. By 1988, Luz would embark on a revitalizing excursion across the Asian continent. With his newfound existence and artistic purpose came the genesis of the *Cities of the Past*, in which life is immediately breathed into lost civilizations, much like the "lost artistic life" he had just regained after decades of stringency brought by bureaucratic responsibilities.

Luz described the *Cities of the Past* as "composite images from memory. They are imagined, transformed, [and] invented." *The Cities of the Past* oeuvre comprises one in a series of iconic works of the artist during the 1990s, including *Celebration*, *Carnival Forms*, and *Forms of Amusement*; all of these are the most coveted in his oeuvre and thus have become the quintessential *Arturo Luz*. During that decade up to his final years, Luz kept returning to his original themes of the carnival and cityscapes—subjects that imbued him with satisfaction and earned him deserving acclaim in the early phases of his painting career. Likely realizing the significance of those watershed moments during that momentous Asian excursion, Luz had just encountered a joyous and fulfilling full-circle moment. (*Adrian Maranan*)

# Nena Saguil: Marking the 110th Year of her Birth

*Philippine Art Gallery to the École de Paris to the Venice Biennale 2024*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



L-R circled: Pablo Amorsolo, Irineo Miranda, Jean Edades, Dominador Castañeda, Guillermo Tolentino, Victorio Edades, Fabian dela Rosa, Fernando Amorsolo, and the 17 year old Nena Saguil at the Edades house in San Juan, August 2, 1931.

Simplicia “Nena” Laconico Saguil (1914 - 1994) — woman, modernist artist, insider of the ‘Philippine Art Gallery Group’, and then a member of the Ecole de Paris — may very well, through her life and work, trace the dizzying trajectory of Philippine art.

Juan Luna was the template for every Filipino artists seeking success abroad. This supernova would reach the zenith of his career in Paris, where he he would win a bronze for the masterpiece “Hymene, oh Hymenee” at the Exposition that commemorated the 100th year of the French Revolution and also gave the world the Eiffel Tower. That win would qualify him as ‘hors concours’, a master painter who needed no further competitions nor medals to establish his name.

In an interview in 1950, on the eve of her first solo exhibition at the Manila Hotel and under the auspices of the influential Art Association of the Philippines, she would reveal a familial connection to Juan Luna, referring to herself as “a niece” to the country’s most internationally accomplished and bemedalled artist, then as now.

Saguil would be called in later years by the legions of her admiring art critics, both in Manila and in Paris, as a special kind of seer whose art reflected a unity with the vibrations of the universe. Did she, too, catch glimpse of her future in France?

She began her formal training 20 years before in the School of Fine Arts of the University of the Philippines, learning to paint at the

feet of the classical painters, the heirs to Juan Luna and Resurreccion Hidalgo, none other than Fabian de la Rosa and Fernando Amorsolo.

There is a wonderful photograph of the 17-year old Nena sitting formally at a reception at the San Juan home of Victorio Edades — the man who defiantly brought ‘modern art’ to the Philippines — wreathed by the UP’s academic greats, Fabian de la Rosa (with a shock of white hair, in profile), his two Amorsolo nephews, but also Guillermo Tolentino, Irineo Miranda and Dominador Castaneda.. They were all her mentors and represented in one snapshot the forthcoming collision of the old and the new in Philippine Art.

Serendipitously, Nena had one bright-eyed female classmate at the University of the Philippines — Anita Magsaysay who was just a few months older than her.

Saguil and Anita would both find themselves standing at the edge of the smoking volcano of Filipino art. Anita, pedigreed and patrician, would first decamp to attend the avant-garde Cranbrook Academy of Art in the United States; Nena, on the other hand, would seek employment as an illustrator at the Tribune, a leading Manila newspaper at the time. No doubt this is where she would meet her future modernist confederates, including Hernando R. Ocampo and Lyd Arguilla who would found the Neo-Realist movement and the Philippine Art Gallery, respectively and in such quick succession that they would inevitably merge.



It would be obvious that by the time the iconic Philippine Art Gallery (the first to champion the cause of abstract art in the Philippines) opened a year later that Nena had left the warmth of Amorsolo's brilliantly-lit days to embrace the broad-shouldered shapes of Victorio Edades.

There are a series of works represented in this auction, the luscious "Still Life No. 2" that marry the bucolic subject matter of Amorsolo, and the idiosyncratic style of Saguil. "Still Life No. 2" would be shipped to the United States to be part of the the first international show of 21 abstract artists in New York, the Philippine Cultural Exhibition, which featured the leading figures of the Philippine Art Gallery in 1953.

Waldemar George, regarded as "the most important French art critic between the Wars" would describe that period as 'Gauguin-esque.' The Philippine Art Gallery on the other hand would choose to see the influence of Diego Rivera on Saguil's works which would gradually metamorphose into the purely abstract. The figures in "Three Marys" are now amorphous, faceless shapes, writhing in undisguised pain under Christ's Cross at Calvary.

In the same year, Nena had become the only woman to be invited to join Magtanggul Asa's landmark show, "The First Exhibition of Non-Objective Art in Tagala" at the PAG in December 1953. Nena would contribute two works, one of which was noted by Asa as among the "most distinguished."

All her works would reflect the immediacy and energy of a woman in the center of the action, for the PAG was an artistic vortex, attracting the best and brightest of the Philippines in painting and sculpture but also in poetry and politics, journalism and architecture.

In fact, Nena would be one of the female triumvirate of the time: Lyd Arguilla who founded the PAG, the prize-winning Anita Magsaysay-Ho and herself. At the Philippine Art Gallery, she reigned as 'Secretary-Treasurer' from 1952 to 1954. Lyd Arguilla carried the democratic title of 'Member-At-Large.'

But it was the siren call that Juan Luna and Resurreccion Hidalgo both heard that challenged her to seek other worlds. (Nena would say that as soon as she finished college, she began to save for her escape to Paris.) In 1954, she won a Walter Damrasch scholarship to study at the Ecole d'Art at the Palais de Fontainebleau; then would spend two more years in Madrid with a grant from the Institute of Spanish Culture, possibly recommended by the sympathetic fellow emigre, Fernando Zobel. She would return to France in 1956 to study at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, thanks to a scholarship from her teacher, Henri Bernard Goetz. She would never leave Paris again.

During that second return, according to friend and art critic Leonidas V. Benesa, "she would execute rectangular patternings under the spell of (Alfred) Mannesier," a non-figurative artist from the new School of Paris, and her mentor.



L-R: Nena Saguil, Victor Oteyza, Arturo Luz, Hernando R. Ocampo, Cesar Legaspi collaborating on a work of art, circa 1952. © Nap Jamir, Pioneer Studios



Nena Saguil in August 1950, This Week Magazine, before her first solo exhibit



Nena Saguil in August 1950, This Week Magazine, before her first solo exhibit



L-R Standing : Jose T. Joya, Cenon Rivera, Manuel Rodriguez, Arturo Luz, Victor Oteyza, Fernando Zobel. L-R Seated : Cesar Legaspi, Nena Saguil and Hernando R. Ocampo at the Philippine Art Gallery

Manessier was associated with the French movement of Lyrical Abstraction (*Abstraction lyrique*).

Interestingly, in an interview with Cid Reyes, Saguil would use the very similar term “Lyrical Cubism” to describe this series of her artworks. “I was doing these squares, no, not the Vasarely style — not rigid — but floating in different tones,” she would tell him.

More significantly, he also appeared to be an important influence not only on her artistic but also her spiritual development. The French artist, with the zeal of the newly converted, would seek to express through art his interest in mysticism, sacred art and the expression of spiritual ecstasy, concepts that would dominate Saguil’s art more and more.

The expression of her seeking the divine are represented by “Composition en Noir at Blanc (Composition in Black and White)”, (1958). For Nena Saguil, art critic Rod Paras-Perez would write, “Black can be as rich as color as any of the hues of the rainbow”

In “Sans Titre (Untitled)” (1959), one can witness Saguil as she whirls further into experimentation, with its heavy impasto and increasingly dense and mysterious shapes, in multifarious layers. There’s even a glimpse of Jackson Pollock’s drip paintings in this multi-layered masterwork.



President and Mrs. Ferdinand E. Marcos with Nena Saguil in Malacañan, c.1968, Collection of F. Sionil Jose.



TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: Nena Saguil, c.1968, Collection of F. Sionil Jose; Nena Saguil in the 1960s. BOTTOM LEFT & RIGHT: Nena Saguil with F. Sionil Jose and sons, (leftmost) Tonet and (rightmost) Alex in Tagaytay, c.1968, Collection of F. Sionil Jose.

It's a rare transitional work that appears to hurtle towards her future galaxies. Saguil, however, would repeatedly describe her own art as "intuitive", intended to reach God and the cosmos. The circular patterns were both mandalas as well as molecules, representing, "the you and the I."

"By transcending the time-space continua of Manila and Paris as she has done, Nena Saguil succeeds through the alchemy of her art to compensate for 'the evasion' by indeed quenching our own thirst for the absolute," Benesa would declare.

Towards the end of her life in 1990, she had begun to work on "soft sculptures", described by visiting reporter B. Carlo M. Tadiar, as "assemblages of odds and ends like cardboard forms that had been painted." He would regretfully write, "I did not want to talk about them. But then she never wanted to explain them to begin with."

Saguil — this enigmatic original — is one of the lost oracles and true treasures of Philippine art.



Nena Saguil in Munich, November 1970.

# Saguil's Gauguin Table

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Nena Saguil's first impulses were inspired by Gauguin, so said Parisian art critic Waldemar George. The lush colors, voluptuous shapes of this Frenchman in Tahiti are to be found in this early work, Still Life No. 2.

It's a countryside feast of fruit spread out on a bamboo table, under a bending banana tree, painted in the aftermath of World War II: There's an air of optimism in the painting, as expressed by the bright colors. certainly it was the end of a period of want and destruction.

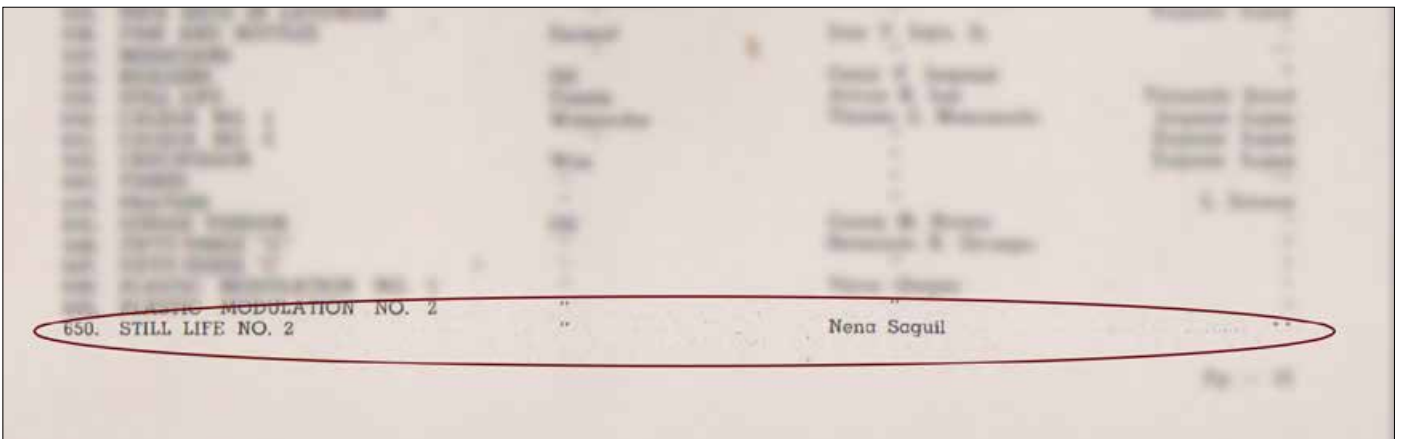
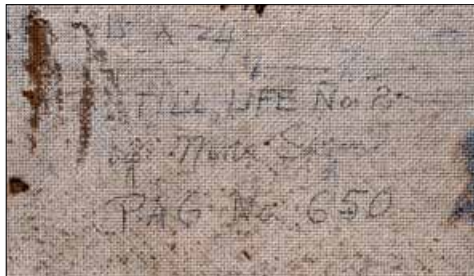
There is an array of fruit from that era: mangos and rice cakes, avocados and macopas, papaya and suha, but also duhat and a pile of mangosteen, one of them tantalizingly open.

Saguil would be at the intersection of the classical and the modern non-objective art in 1951. Schooled by

Fabian de la Rosa and Fernando Amorsolo, she would however embrace their diametrical opposites, Victorio Edades and Hernando R. Ocampo. She would take that important plunge to join the Neo-Realists as they merged with the Philippine Art Gallery.

She would be one of the rising stars of the PAG and the Art Association of the Philippines alongside her former classmate at the University of the Philippines, Anita Magsaysay-Ho. (They were just a few months apart in age, both born in 1914.)

Saguil's Still Life No. 2 would travel to the United States to be part of the landmark Philippine Cultural Exhibition, featuring 21 of the Philippine Art Gallery's roster. It was originally in the collection of PAG founder, Lyd Arguilla, making it doubly historic.



TOP RIGHT: Cover of Philippine Cultural Exhibition, 1953 - 1954; MIDDLE RIGHT: Still Life No.2, reverse showing listing as No.650; TOP RIGHT: Catalog entry, Still Life No.2, page 41; BOTTOM: PAG Catalog entry Still Life No.2, No.650, Ap - 12.



17

**Nena Saguil** (1914 - 1994)

*Still Life No. 2*

signed and dated 1953 (lower right)  
oil on masonite board  
17 1/2" x 23 3/4" (44 cm x 60 cm)

**P 2,200,000**

**PROVENANCE:**

Private collection, Davao

**LITERATURE:**

*Philippine Cultural Exhibition, 1953-1954*, Catalogue. Published by the Philippine Art Gallery, New York, 1953. Complete Catalog of Works Exhibited, Page 41;

Lyd Arguilla, Romeo Tabuena, Fernando Zóbel, *7 Years of the Philippine Art Gallery (1951-1957)*, Published by the Philippine Art Gallery, 1958, Listed as No. 650, Page Ap — 12.

**EXHIBITED:**

Philippine Cultural Exhibition, 1953-1954. *An Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by 21 Philippine Artists*. Arranged by the Philippine Art Gallery. Shown at the Carnegie Endowment International Center on 46th Street, New York City, from September 1 to October 1, 1953; at the American International Underwriters Building at 102 Maiden Lane, New York City, from November 16 to December 15, 1953; at the Chancery of the Embassy of the Philippines, Washington, D. C., from February 24 to March 9, 1954.

*Nena Saguil debuted in the Philippines under the aegis of Gauguin. She assimilated his rhythm and accepted his rules. Gauguin is for this Oriental an example of harmonious order and a point of focus.*

—WALDEMAR GEORGE, FRENCH ART CRITIC  
IN "THE ILLUMINATIONS OF NENA SAGUIL"



18

## Prudencio Lamarroza (b.1946)

### *Landscape*

signed and dated 1981 (bottom)

oil on canvas

44" x 24" (112 cm x 61 cm)

**P 140,000**

The 1980 Mobil Art Award is a veritable who's who in the Philippine art scene: the Philippine greats like Ang Kiukok, Jose Joya, Danny Dalena, and Onib Olmedo, among others, went toe-to-toe in a "first-of-a-kind event" as described by critic and Mobil Arts Award jury Alice Guillermo in her book *The 1980 Mobil Art Awards*. In the same book, she listed four artists as "Artists Beyond Categories" with one of the artists mentioned being Prudencio Lamarroza.

Prudencio Lamarroza's striking works are all incredibly his own; he utilizes colors, rhythm, and texture and spins them to create

radical and unique pieces. He draws from his vibrant childhood: growing up in Ambalayay, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, Lamarroza spent his childhood frolicking the banks of the Chico and Amburayan Rivers. Here, he found different sorts of stones – gray and smoothed out by the raging currents that, when polished by a wet cloth, glistened like gemstones under the vibrant sun.

This whimsical piece in turn is a love letter to his alluring childhood; it is an amalgamation of his boyhood in Tagudin. The rocks that are central to his artistic growth are clustered on the ground; the background as well as the foliage of the tree on the center of the canvas shows a river reminiscent of the Chico and Amburayan Rivers that Lamarroza played in as a child.

"Lamarroza's sense of art...is anchored in the past," writes Manuel D. Duldulao in *Prudencio Lamarroza: His Life and Art*. "Art is invention, but it is also remembering." (*Hannah Valiente*)



19

**Augusto Albor** (b. 1948)

*Temple*

signed and dated 2018 (lower right and verso)

titled (verso)

acrylic on canvas

48" x 48" (122 cm x 122 cm)

**P 400,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank the artist for confirming the authenticity of this lot

Augusto Albor relies on an innate sense of color to craft his minimalist canvases, creating a delicate interplay of color and surface geometry. His artistic practice has evolved into a refined visual system, allowing for an infinite array of vibrant hues set against neutral backgrounds. Initially gaining public recognition for paintings characterized by spontaneous sweeps of blacks and grays, Albor skillfully

integrates surface and depth, showcasing virtuoso painterly brushwork guided by the precision of grids. This technique transforms the canvas into a field of high-keyed blacks, enriched in specific areas with delicate accents of blues and reds.

In Albor's artistic realm, the surface of his work conjures a world where matter is distilled into a corroded field of energy, perpetually in a state of flux, transformation, and emergence. This deliberate departure from representational art allows Albor to embrace the intrinsic essence of abstract elements, unfettered by the constraints of mimicking the natural world. In essence, Albor's Terminus paintings serve as a testament to his unbridled creativity, where the canvas becomes a space for the exploration of fundamental abstract concepts, portraying a world in constant evolution. (*Jed Daya*)

# Ode to a Prima Ballerina

## From the Alpha Neo-Realist

When H.R. Ocampo made this loving homage to the legendary English ballerina Dame Margot Fonteyn (born Margaret Evelyn de Arias), the artist was at his most powerful in terms of visual language characterized by a sublime poetic lyricism and injecting evocative imagery and recollections.

The work at hand belongs to the final period of Ocampo's painting career: the "Visual Melody Period" of 1968 to 1978, which he described in a May 1972 interview with Cid Reyes and published in *Conversations on Philippine Art* as "approximating the properties of music," approaching his paintings "as if they were chamber music, which, I suppose, one can consider "pure music."

This period also saw the creation of what is perhaps Ocampo's magnum opus: the 1969 oil painting *Genesis*, which he deemed as the "full-flowering" of his Visual Melody and would eventually be transformed into a monumental tapestry for the main stage curtain of the CCP Main Theater (Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo). Ocampo's "Visual Melody Period" also coincided with a string of venerable honors bestowed upon the artist: the 1969 "Patnubay ng Sining," Araw ng Maynila Award, the 1976 "Diwa ng Lahi," the highest cultural award of the Araw ng Maynila festivities, and the 1977 Caloocan City "Outstanding Citizen Award."

Homage to Margot Fonteyn also shows Ocampo in one of his earliest experimentations in acrylic. Eminent art critic Rod. Paras-Perez writes in his article "Ocampo: A New Vision," dated August 12, 1974: "At 63, when most painters of the same generation have settled down to the use of one medium, Hernando R. Ocampo, post-war patriarch of modern art in the Philippines, takes to acrylic—likes it, and finds in the process, renewal."

In the same article, Ocampo even says that he approached an artist-friend for much-needed advice, who instructed him to use boards instead of canvas (the work at hand is painted on masonite board).

Back to the painting's subject, Dame Margot Fonteyn was among the most prominent international performers ever to grace the stage of the then-newly inaugurated Cultural Center of the Philippines. She was the "Prima Ballerina Assoluta" of the acclaimed British classical ballet company, the Royal Ballet (The title was accorded to her by Queen Elizabeth II, Patron of the Royal Ballet Company, in 1979 in honor of her 60th birthday.). Due to her numerous appearances at the CCP in the 1970s, Fonteyn became Manila's "ballet darling" and was bestowed the International Artist Award in 1976.

Ocampo was inspired to paint Fonteyn when he had the opportunity to watch the dame in one of her performances at the CCP in the early 1970s. The colors vary from earthy browns to ochres, seemingly evoking the stage floor of the Main Theater, which is made of Philippine mahogany. Ocampo's senses harmoniously collide into each other like the melodious concordance of string, woodwind, and brass instruments that likely accompanied Fonteyn's

*"My father was at the Embassy of Japan in Manila from 1974 to 1976 and he was 41-43 years old then. His position at that time was Counselor and Consul General (namely No. 2 of the Embassy). One morning, not that long since my father arrived in the Philippines in 1974, he was fascinated with one photo of a piece of painting in the newspapers. He says he still recalls that he flashed in an instant, "This is it!" The article mentioned that Hernando Ocampo has drawn this beautiful painting inspired by watching Margot Fonteyn on her stage. Kept holding the newspapers in his hand, he called his secretary right away and asked to acquire this painting.*

*He felt so satisfied and happy when he knew he managed to purchase this beautiful piece of art drawn by the wonderful artist of the Philippines.*

*Firstly, he thought he could hang this on the wall of his office in the Embassy, but he changed his mind and brought this to our residence in Dasmariñas Village in Makati, and hung it at the entrance so that everyone in our family could enjoy it every day. We brought this back to Japan and lived with this painting for half a century.*

*I have been wondering about the scenery when H.R. Ocampo drew this painting.*

*The drawing year is 1974, and the model is Dame Margot Fonteyn. Her hair looks undone and the colors of this painting are what to say, very Philippines—green, brown, and yellow. I couldn't get any imagination of the famous programs on classic ballet from this painting.*

*What did H.R. Ocampo watch?*

*This question has always been in my mind.*

*And one day, I happened to watch a bad-quality video on YouTube that was showing Margot Fonteyn dancing at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The music was 'Dahil Sa'yo,' which made me feel nostalgic and was known widely as the favorite song of the First Lady, Imelda Marcos.*

*As I was watching this video, I felt like I was hit by thunder. Margot with her hair down dancing to a great Filipino love song with three men, lifted by them so beautifully.*

*I became almost convinced and could not help thinking that this program might be the one that H.R. Ocampo watched."*

—HIROKO NATSUME

performance. The artist uses flat yet inherently and incessantly vibrant colors that metamorphose into each other seamlessly, in as much as those instruments resonated throughout the theater. One can imagine Ocampo's *Genesis* tapestry serving as a majestic backdrop to the evocative gracefulness of Fonteyn's ballerina virtuoso, as sublime melodies ranging from adagio to allegro accompany her enrapturing theatricality.

Thus, *Homage to Margot Fonteyn* depicts a revitalized sense of environment where music becomes a visually dynamic and lush experience through the act of painting, with both art forms exalting a sensitive awakening to one's lived experiences. (*Adrian Maranan*)





20

**Hernando R. Ocampo** (1911 - 1978)

*Homage to Margot Fonteyn*

signed and dated 1974 (lower right)

acrylic on masonite board

36" x 36" (91 cm x 91 cm)

**P 4,600,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired directly from the artist

Private collection, Japan

**LITERATURE**

De Jesus, Angel G. *H.R. Ocampo: The Artist as Filipino*. Manila: Heritage Publishing, 1979. Black-and-white photograph on page 62 and painting description on page 63.



ABOVE (L-R): President Ferdinand Marcos, Van Cliburn, Margot Fonteyn, Rudolf Nureyev, First Lady Imelda Marcos. RIGHT: Cover of *Alay sa Pangulo* souvenir program © PHILSTAR



21

**Ramon Orlina** (b. 1944)

*Optical Illusions*

signed and dated 2023 (bottom)

carved green glass

8" x 9" x 7" (20 cm x 24 cm x 15 cm)

**P 700,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist  
confirming the authenticity of this lot

The works of Ramon Orlina should be viewed in person to be fully appreciated. A licensed architect, Orlina's background manifests in his "form follows function" maxim, a principle commonly found in late 19th and early 20th-century architecture. Structure, form, light, and space are carefully considered and manipulated in pursuit of another Orlina masterpiece.

The 2023 *Optical Illusions* shows the best of what Orlina can offer: from cold blocks of glass painstakingly cut and polished (rather than the commonly used glass-blowing technique), the piece offers a unique three-dimensional experience unlike any other. *Optical Illusions*, like many Orlina works, can be viewed from multiple angles simultaneously with each view yielding a different emotional response than the last.

Ramon Orlina's works are a multidimensional experience, a magnificent affair that befits the Father of Philippine Glass Sculpture. To see it personally is to marvel at the way the light passes through to translucent glass and its sharply cut edges, showing a masterfully structured piece. (*Hannah Valiente*)

## Eduardo Castrillo (1942 - 2016)

### *Crucifix*

signed and dated 2002 (bottom)  
handcrafted sculpture in natural brass finish  
H: 36" (91 cm) L: 3 1/4" (8 cm) W: 19" (48 cm)

**P 120,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot.

One is hard-pressed to travel within Metro Manila and not encounter a work of Eduardo Castrillo. With monuments like the People Power Monument along EDSA and the Bonifacio Shrine in Ermita on his impressive resume, his monumental impact on Philippine sculpture cannot be understated.

However, despite the towering sculpture he is known for, Castrillo's small-scale works evoke a similar sense of awe. A recurring theme in his formidable oeuvre is the multiple depictions of Christ on the cross. Writer and artist Alfredo Roces writes that while Castrillo is no religious devotee, several of his works, including the lot at hand entitled *Crucifix*, show his understanding of the spiritual and his inclinations towards religious themes.

A handcrafted sculpture with a brass finish, Castrillo fashions Christ's impossibly small frame up on the cross. His body is incredibly famished with His ribs on full display and His head bowed in surrender. With his depiction of Christ's anguish and capitulation, there is no question of Castrillo's technical and creative prowess. (*Hannah Valiente*).



## Dante Silverio (b. 1936)

### *Antipolo Flower Farm*

signed and dated 2019 (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
20" x 25 3/4" (51 cm x 65 cm)

**P 200,000**

Dante Silverio wears multiple hats: he was a racer earlier in his life and then a basketball coach later on. Now, Silverio has made a name for himself in another field – as a prolific and capable painter.

*Antipolo Flower Farm* portrays the greener part of the city adjacent to the Philippines' national center. Full of lush greenery and clear skies, *Antipolo Flower Farm* is a pastoral view of the peaceful flower-picking hobby with a girl clad in vibrant blue carrying a basketful of plucked flowers. A proof of his mastery, Silverio depicts the tranquil scene in a dreamlike trance, utilizing soft smudged brushstrokes to portray the scene as if in a haze. (*Hannah Valiente*)



# Doña Dely Tambunting-Ongsiako

## The Consummate Philanthropist



The charming Hideliza ‘Dely’ Paraiso Tambunting was born a few days before Christmas to Don Antonio L. Tambunting from Tondo and Doña Aurora “Nena” Paraiso from Lumban, Laguna.

It was Doña Nena Tambunting who was the original empress who reigned over a bustling business empire. Her husband Don Antonio had inherited the Casa Agencia de Tambunting, founded in 1906 from his father Don Ildefonso and had made it a roaring concern. Doña Nena was also well-known for her various charitable causes, including the building of churches. At one time, she donated in one fell swoop 16 hectares of land in Muntinlupa for which she received the personal thanks of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Dely was the fourth child of the Tambunting’s seven children. She studied at the Assumption Convent for both high school and college. Here, she would become very good friends with Judy Araneta-Roxas, Bessie Bautista-Legarda and Aurora Silayan-Go. That bond that began in convent school would last a lifetime.

The four friends shared a love of culture and the arts. They met at least once a week throughout their lives.

During the 70s, the four ladies met Vicente “Mang Enteng” Manansala. They started to collect Mang Enteng’s paintings. Once a month, they would visit Mang Enteng in his house-cum-studio on the outskirts of Angono, Rizal. The quartet would also



OPPOSITE PAGE (LEFT): *Dely and Margarita*, oil on canvas, signed and dated Manansala 1973, Edmundo and Dely Ongsiako Collection.; OPPOSITE PAGE (RIGHT): Aling Hilda, Mang Enteng and Dely; ABOVE: Mang Enteng painting Tereret Tambunting Liboro.

dine out with Mang Enteng and his wife Hilda; and also throw dinner parties in their houses for Mang Enteng and invite their other friends. Mang Enteng would also advise them to collect other art works by other artists such as Ang Kiukok, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, H.R. Ocampo, and Cesar Legaspi.

Aside from collecting art, Dely would follow in the footsteps of her mother, making donations and supporting the Leaven of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Oblate Apostles of the Two Hearts, Alliance of the Holy Family International and Martha's Vineyard.

She would meet and marry Edmundo "Baby" de la Paz Ongsiako Sr in 1955. He was the fifth child of Dr. Ramon Ongsiako Sr. of Anao, Tarlac and Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija and Carmen de la Paz of

Marikina. They had three children: the very good-looking Antonio, Edmundo Jr., and Margarita.

Baby was a manager and an entrepreneur. He founded a rural bank in San Juan, engaged in deep water fishing, managed the Hacienda Ongsiako in Anao and Cuyapo and founded Print Diffusion Pacific, Inc. (PDPI), the then premier magazine and book distributor. Late in his life, he bought an IT Company called PowerNet Systems Corp. that is still thriving up to the present.

Baby supported Dely in collecting antiques, art works and other treasures.

Many of these artworks are now renowned book pieces. She left all her antiques and paintings to her three children.

**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)*Madonna and Child*

signed and dated 1977 (upper right)

oil on canvas

26 1/2" x 24" (67 cm x 61 cm)

**P 7,000,000**

## PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

## LITERATURE

Paras-Perez, Rod. *Manansala*. Manila: PLC Publications, 1980.

Full-color illustration and painting description on page 28.

Si Mang Enteng...*Encountering Manansala (Exhibition Catalog)*.

Manila: Metropolitan Museum of Manila, 2010.

Published on the occasion of the Vicente Manansala retrospective

at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila in 2010.

Full-color photograph and painting description on page 31.

## EXHIBITED

Tall Galleries, Metropolitan Museum of Manila,

*Si Mang Enteng...Encountering Manansala*,

Manila, May 20 - July 31, 2010



Vicente Manansala

The years 1949 and 1950 were a turning point for artist Vicente Silva Manansala. Already an established painter in the Philippines with a veritable amount of awards under his belt, Manansala received a six-month grant from UNESCO to study in Quebec, Canada by 1949 followed by a nine-month scholarship in Paris in 1950. The West was already abuzz with a multitude of schools of thought at the time and Manansala, forever a student, drank it all in, immersing himself in art as he had never done before.

"[For] a painter to be able to turn out a good piece of work, he must first have that feeling of consecration," he stated, "with a mind absolved for all ego and pretense, a soul dedicated to the creation at hand, and a spirit properly attuned to the release of the vital and straining energies within."

He opened himself up to the mass of art movements but a particular one caught his attention. As he submerged himself in his studies in Canada, he met Joseph Plaskett, a notable painter and an equally notable mentor who showed Manansala the process of creating an intense and active plane, pointing out the push and pull of shapes on the canvas. It continued in France, where for eight months Manansala studied in the Montmartre studio of Cubist Fernand Leger. While both these events did not turn Manansala into a full-fledged Cubist after Europe's own heart, they did leave him with enough appreciation for the movement to spin it and make it his own.

"I feel that I have yet to learn a great deal," mused Manansala after his fateful travel, published by Rod Paras-Perez in *Manansala Nudes*, "and that is mostly about

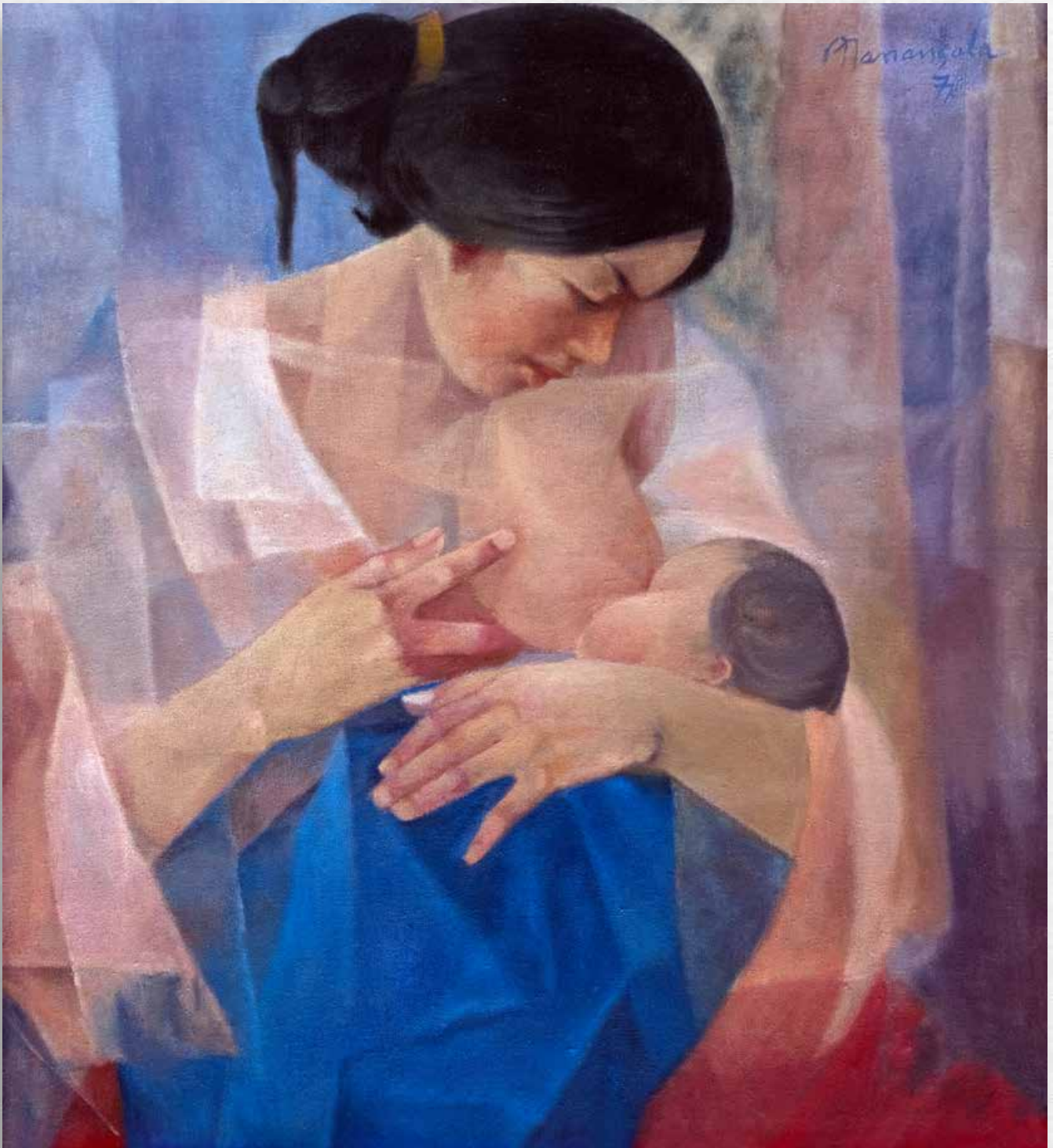
myself, my energies, my ideas, and the force and vitalities I have yet to awaken in me."

And so began Manansala's foray into his very own version of cubism: the transparent cubism. For the next few decades, Manansala refined this method, producing work after work that, unlike the style of analytic cubism, retained its essential forms, tones, and shapes that are expertly juxtaposed to be both delicate and translucent.

It was in his signature style of transparent cubism that Manansala unveiled another interpretation of the classic image of Mother and Child. This painting, entitled simply *Mother and Child*, was created almost 30 years after Manansala's first brush with Cubism and as such, it shows Manansala's cubism at a mature stage. Depicting a woman with her babe suckling at her chest, the figures were stylized using planes and geometric patterns. An air of protectiveness and love is evident in the way that the mother holds her child and the tender way she looks at them. He highlights the soft curve of the woman's neck and breasts and emphasizes the baby by swaddling them in blue, a striking shade contrasting the warm palette.

Manansala's *Mother and Child* was created in the twilight years of his career, a prodigious one that lasted almost 60 years. Through the years, Manansala continued to aim for greater heights, forever on a quest for betterment. He was never truly satisfied with his works, always looking forward to make the next artwork better. *Mother and Child* is a culmination of decades of practice, accolades, and studies, a preview of Manansala at his maturity and a celebration of his continued and relentless breakthroughs. (*Hannah Valiente*)

A Manansala Masterwork  
*On a Mother's Nourishing Love*



## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Lavanderas*

signed and dated 1966 (lower right)

oil on canvas

34" x 26" (86 cm x 66 cm)

**P 7,000,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.



Fernando Amorsolo

Fernando Amorsolo's name is synonymous with Philippine art itself. Arguably the biggest and most famous Filipino artist, his oeuvre is a view into an idyllic and nostalgic past with its sunlit pastoral landscapes and exceptional genre scenes evoking the long-forgotten glory days. On his canvases, Amorsolo's mastery of merging his subjects with their deep physical environment in a harmonious marriage is on full display, cementing his status as a giant in art history.

A penetrating theme of the postwar Amorsolo period is the overflowing nostalgia and a return to his golden years. The Philippines had found itself under Japanese occupation when Amorsolo was at the height of his career. He and his family lived in the Japanese-occupied Manila and he had front-row seats to the horrors of the wars. His works, while retaining their Classical-Romantic inspiration, depicted the ongoing tragedies: burning cities and women fleeing dominated his canvases. It makes sense that after the trauma of war, Amorsolo aimed to replicate the glory of his pre-war years. He painted its recurring themes and among the scenes he usually depicts is that of women washing on the river or the *lavanderas*, as is shown with the lot in hand.

His 1966 *Lavanderas* is among many depictions of such topics. Amorsolo's titular *lavanderas* are often seated

next to a batya or a tub; in some instances, young children accompany their mothers. This particular piece follows the latter with a child seated beside a woman washing the laundry. The woman, brown-skinned with her black hair tied, is drawn in the typical long-limbed lithe fashion as is usual with the Amorsolo women.

*Lavanderas* also shows Amorsolo's genius when it comes to colors and sunlight. The vibrant rays dapple over the river behind the woman, plunging the viewer right into the scene. "The full burst of Philippine sunlight which actually washes out color and produces a blinding glare, he added only as accents to bring out the nude's form," artist and critic Alfredo Roces notes. His talent with refraction elevates the painting to another level, his intimate knowledge of shadows and lighting transforming his work into an almost photographic memory that is profound and personal all at once.

Doing laundry is often seen as a banal chore but Amorsolo's *lavanderas* elevate the scene to an essential activity where community convenes. It is so quintessentially Filipino and in the words of Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo: "His iconic *lavanderas* – youthful, graceful, and modest – represent an ideal of Filipino, not European, beauty." (*Hannah Valiente*)



Fernando Amorsolo:  
*On a Mother's Care*



## Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1988)

### Landscape

signed, dated 1976 (upper left),  
and dedicated "To Dely, happy birthday, Dec 22, 1975,  
From Enteng & Hilda" (lower left)  
watercolor on paper  
12" x 16" (30 cm x 41 cm)

**P 200,000**

#### PROVENANCE

A gift from the artist to the present owner

The earnest friendship Dely Tambunting-Ongsiako formed with Vicente Manansala is immortalized in this watercolor work by the maestro. This piece, a birthday present from Manansala and his wife, Hermenegilda "Hilda" Diaz, to Doña Dely, even possesses a remarkable handwritten dedication by the artist himself.

Manansala once said in a May 1973 interview with Cid Reyes that he often uses watercolor as a medium "for relaxation" purposes, void of the obligations of any commissioned painting or mural. With his delicate and masterful control of every sweep of the brush, Manansala frees himself from the



burden of his prolific brush and liberates his spirit towards a realm of peace and quiet. This calming endeavor is made more passionate when elevated further into the context relating to the impeccable provenance of this charming work. (Adrian Maranan)

## Romulo Galicano (b. 1945)

### Landscape

signed and dated 1979 (lower left)  
pastel on paper  
15" x 21 1/4" (38 cm x 54 cm)

**P 180,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank the artist for confirming the authenticity of this lot

The influence of the Amorsolo of the South and his uncle Martino Abellana is evident in the works of Romulo Galicano. His works boast remarkable technicality, a product of his academic background at the University of the East and the private art lessons he got from Abellana when he was younger.

His 1979 work Landscape showcases Galicano's brilliance in shadow and colors. Depicting a provincial house in a shaded area, Galicano perfectly replicates the serenity of an early summer afternoon, the quiet that envelops the house as the family takes their afternoon siesta. The sunlight shines down from between the foliage of the trees, a bright pop of yellow



in an otherwise shadowy area. It is as if the viewer can feel the summer breeze on their skin and smell the fresh rural air – it is truly a nostalgic masterpiece from the Visayan Realist Master. (Hannah Valiente)

**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)

*a.) Nude*

signed and dated 1975 (upper left)  
charcoal on paper  
17 1/2" x 12" (44 cm x 30 cm)

*b.) Nude*

signed and dated 1975 (upper left)  
charcoal on paper  
12 1/2" x 19" (32 cm x 48 cm)

**P 400,000**

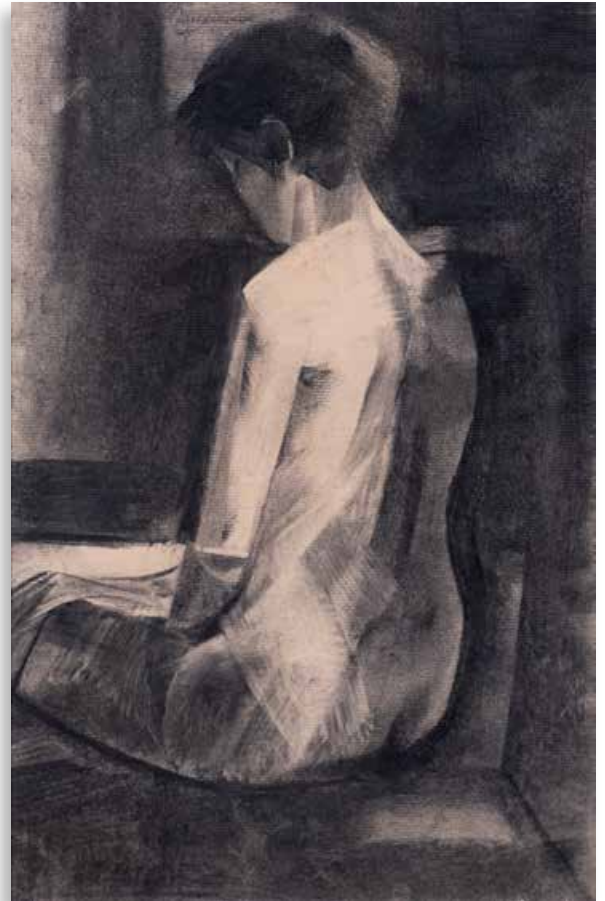
PROVENANCE

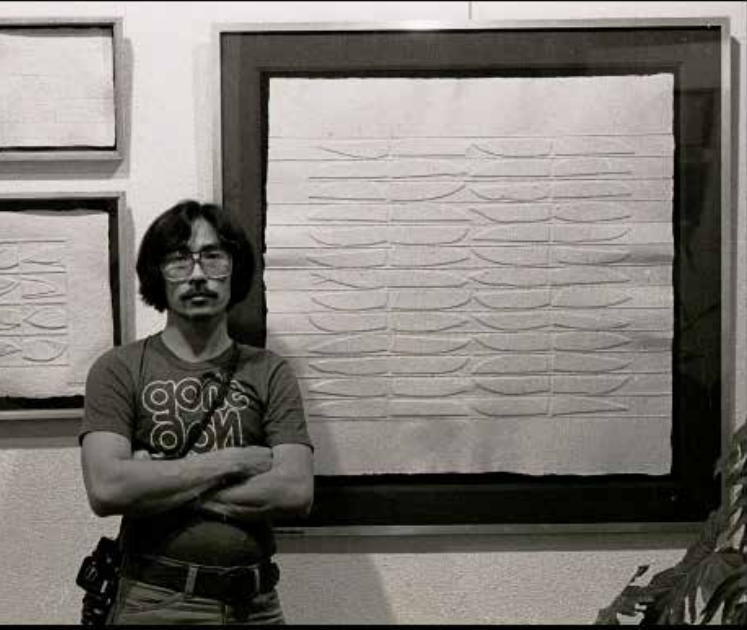
Acquired directly from the artist

At fifty-seven, an age when most artists remain complacent in their skills, Vicente Manansala went to the Otis Art Institute in California where he enrolled at its prestigious drawing program. By then, he was already an established painter with a veritable list of awards under his belt, but ever a tenacious artist, he was on a continuous journey of improvement.

The lot at hand, both nudes from 1975 and 1978, came after this period of study. They are studies that were drawn unconventionally for a nude: one focused on a woman's bare back, her head bowed and her shoulders in an alluring slope while the other one was drawn lying on her side, hips jutting out with a blanket draped over her knees. The angle of the latter portrait also differed from the traditional nude, with the viewer's perspective suggesting that they are standing in front of the woman.

In both cases, the figures are made up of overlapping transparent shapes with the dramatic play of geometric shapes and the proficient manipulation of colors, lights, and shadows creating a vision of a human figure. In these works, Manansala exhibits his proficiency with the human body, light and shadow existing harmoniously on the rendered flesh. As art critic Rod Paraz-Perez stated: "[Manansala] saw the nude as a mass of interactive forms, of basic interpenetrating geometric masses to be stated with the simplest of means." (*Hannah Valiente*)





# Philippine Abstract Art of the 60s and 70s

*“The decade of the 1960s was significant not only because it linked the representational painters of the immediate past with the expressionists and non-figurative painters of the succeeding generation. It also provided the nurturing environment for the encounter of different artistic traditions. In its hospitable environment, artists of at least three generations were challenged to develop their talents and set their own directions.... [Philippine art] completed its emancipation from the conventions of the past.”*

—ALICIA COSETENG, WRITING IN CHAPTER 6 (“THE TRANSITION TO MATURITY”) OF THE MONOGRAPH  
“ART PHILIPPINES”

The Philippine art scene was a very exciting one during the 1960s and the 1970s: avant-garde, propelled towards maturation, and “globalized” in the sense that it echoed international trends in the arts, particularly from the USA. While the preceding modernists and the succeeding neo-realists strived to steer Philippine art away from the overt romanticism and rigid confines of conservative art, the generation of Filipino painters during these two prolific decades signaled a transition towards the exaltation of the artistic process and the medium, rather than the subject and the forms.

By the early 1970s, the second generation of Modernists—the elite circle that comprised Arturo Luz, Fernando Zóbel, Jose Joya, and Lee Aguinaldo—had reached their artistic maturation. They had mounted numerous solo exhibitions, participated in group shows, and represented the Philippines in international biennales. Notable participations were Jose Joya at the 1964 Venice Biennale (dubbed “The Olympics of the Art World”) and Lee Aguinaldo and Arturo Luz at the 1971 Sao Paolo Biennale. Meanwhile, Fernando Zóbel had by then permanently settled in Spain, where he would now enter his golden age of the 1970s and produce three of his most iconic series of works: El Jucar, La Vista, and Serie Blanca.

In her essay “The History and Current Situation of Modern Art in the Philippines,” distinguished art critic Alice Guillermo writes that “Modernism in the Philippines...began its second phase with the arrival of Jose Joya from Cranbrook and Constancio Bernardo from Yale....” Guillermo further notes that while the first group of modernists, which included the “darlings” of the Philippine Art Gallery, “worked

under the influence of [Victorio] Edades in a modernism influenced by the School of Paris,...the new breed derived their art from the influential American art trends of the time, primarily Abstract Expressionism or gestural painting, and secondarily, Geometric Abstraction that harked back to the Bauhaus studies in optical perception.”

The bravura of Joya and his peers brought a monumental gravitas to the general acceptance of abstract art. Therefore, a younger generation of abstractionists would now emerge, inheriting the brash (and brush) of their predecessors. This fresh breed would include Rodolfo Samonte, Marciano Galang, and Cid Reyes. These artists secured the much-needed influence from the avant-garde artistic movements in America, particularly in New York, which had unseated Paris as the global art capital for the numerous revolutionary styles that sprang from it beginning in the 1950s.

In this grand opening salvo for the year, León Gallery unveils its selection of abstract art from the decades of the 60s and the 70s. Viewed in its entirety, the artistic styles in this selection all boil down to a penchant for minimalism, which reached its zenith in the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. “What you see is what you see,” as leading figure in Minimalism, Frank Stella, once wrote.

This selection is a fitting homage and celebration to the continuing endeavor of the Filipino artist to break new grounds, herald new creative advances, and perpetually enliven an art scene with more dynamic expressions and articulations. (*Adrian Maranan*)

## Lee Aguinaldo (1933 - 2007)

### *Linear No. 46*

signed and dated 1966 (verso)

acrylic (aqua-tec) on wood

38" x 38" (97 cm x 97 cm)

**P 2,200,000**

PROVENANCE  
The Luz Gallery

EXHIBITED  
The Luz Gallery, Makati, August 16, 1967

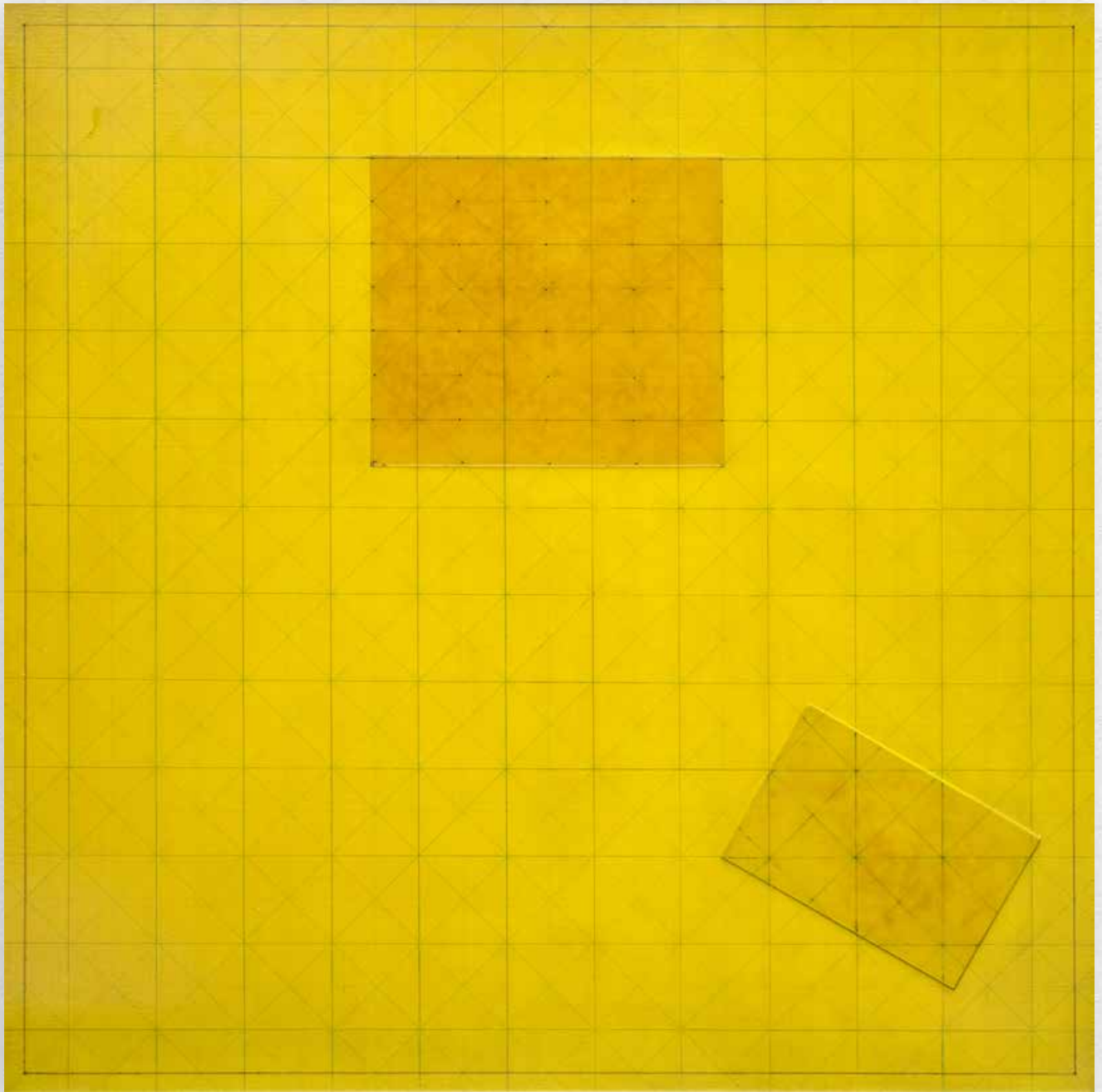


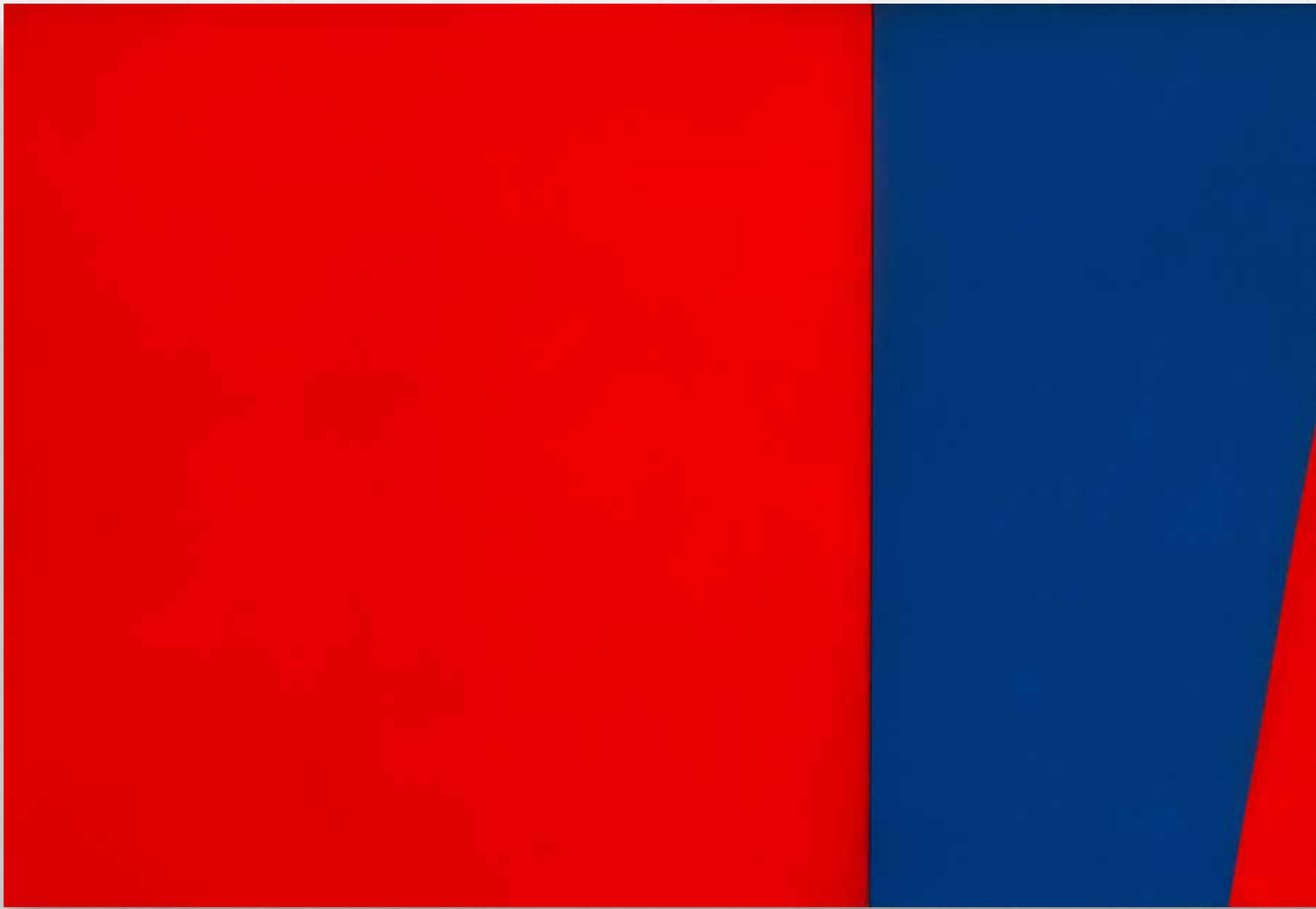
A selfie taken by Wig Tysmans (behind Lee) together with Aguinaldo and Melba Arribas.

Descended from an influential family linked to Emilio Aguinaldo, the country's first president and military leader, Lee Aguinaldo, a largely self-taught artist, gained prominence within Manila's elite circles from the 1950s to the 1970s and achieved recognition in both local and international art communities. During this period, he formed close connections with Arturo Luz, Roberto Chabet, Eric Torres, and found a mentor in Fernando Zobel.

Lee Aguinaldo's affinity for art was evident from childhood, and he made his initial foray into the art scene through the annual exhibit at the Philippine Art Gallery (PAG). Notably, he participated in the inaugural non-objective group art exhibit alongside notable artists such as Fernando Zobel, Vicente Manansala, H.R. Ocampo, Arturo Luz, Victor Oteyza, and Nena Saguil. His works, including the popular Linear series, challenged conventional Filipino perceptions of beauty, showcasing distinctive color sensibilities and

perspectives. The Philippine Art Gallery (PAG) became a recurring venue for exhibiting his art, emphasizing his calculated and precise application of acrylic pigments to achieve surface smoothness. This particular piece follows the usual naming convention that Aguinaldo has adopted not only for the aforementioned series, but also for his other explorations as well. Though exhibiting a sense of uniformity, each entry in the series unveils to us a different aspect in Aguinaldo's sense of order; a testament to his dedication to the core tenets of Modernism. *Linear No. 46* brings attention to the relationship of not only shape and line, a familiar approach to those fond of Aguinaldo's work, but the effects of seemingly fractional divisions between them. Such a method shifts the perspective and size of the forms of the artist's figures, effectively questioning what portion of our experience of the work is real or genuine; or even perhaps such a concept exists in the realm of representation in the first place. (*Jed Daya*)





30

**Marciano Galang** (b. 1945)

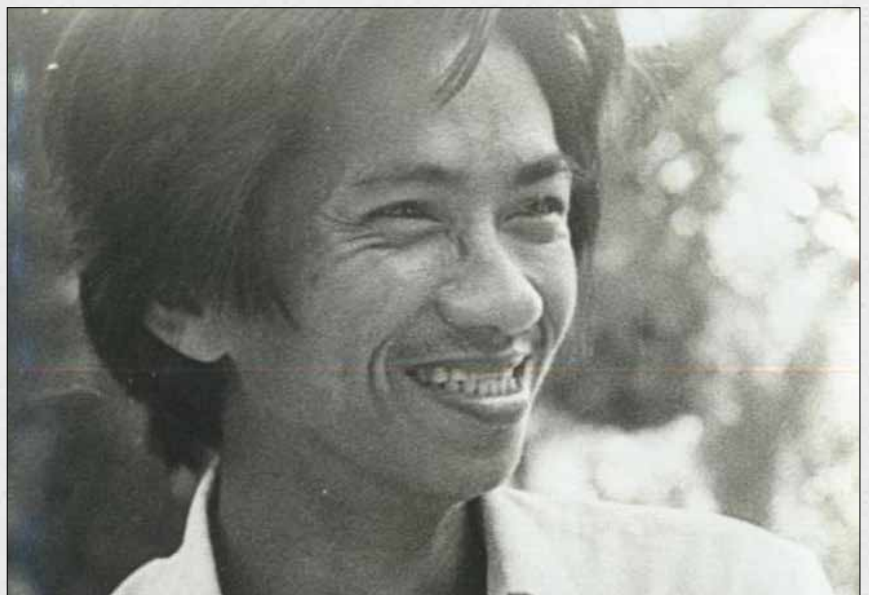
*Homage to Mary Bell*

ca. 1970

lacquer on wood

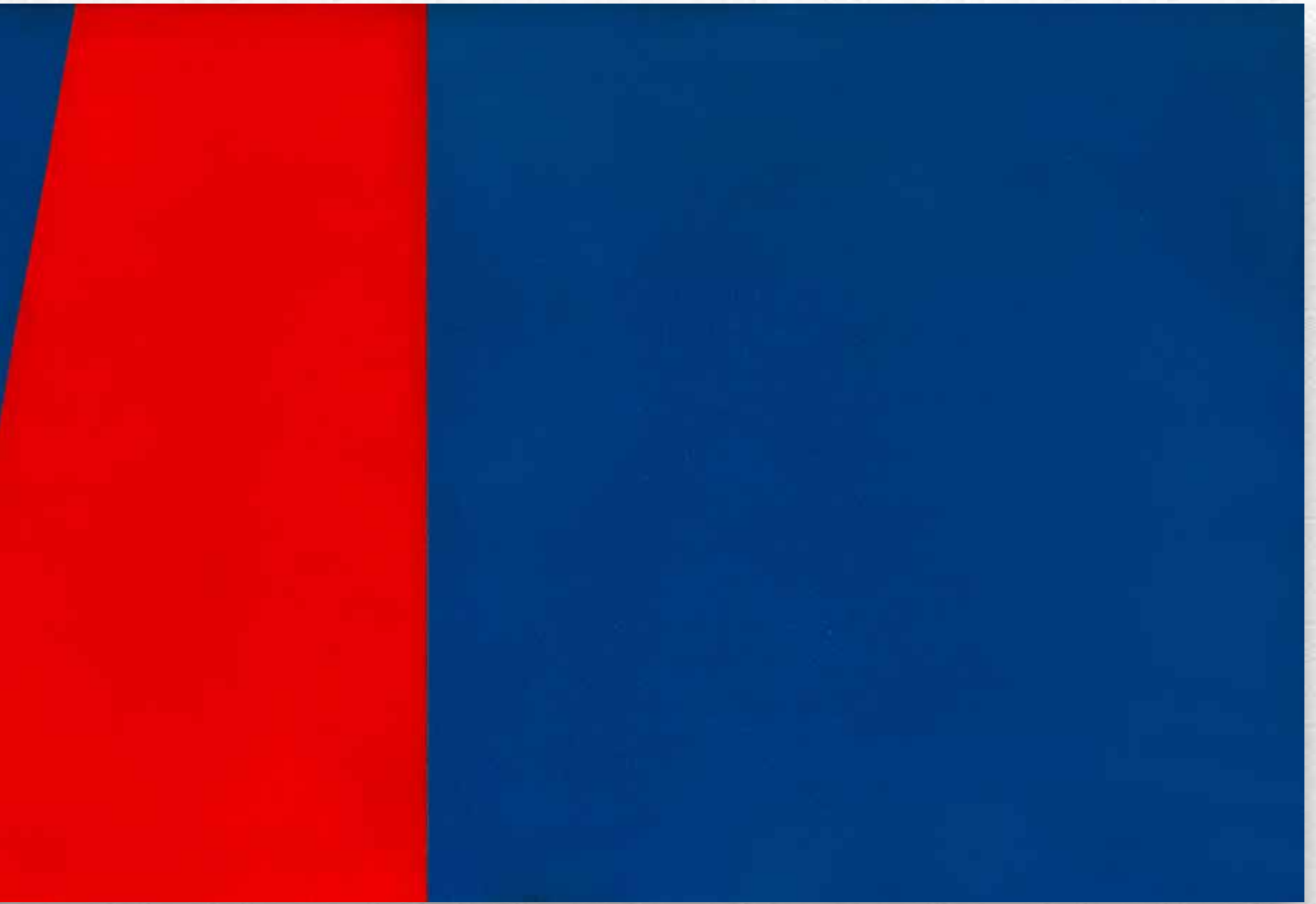
24" x 72" (61 cm x 183 cm)

**P 340,000**



Marciano Galang © Ateneo Art Gallery





In the book "The Struggle for Philippine Art," Marciano Galang's work and subsequent participation in the 1971 Paris Biennale was described as "wild and freewheeling" in the same vein as the exhibition itself. A grantee of the MM Castro Scholarship program, Galang started his career at a cultural and artistic crossroads, where artists dabbled in multiple mediums to create new art styles.

Galang had created a name for himself; he is best known for his abstractionist works and minimal and sparse canvases. This minimalist inclination is shown in his work entitled *Homage to Mary Bell*. Using a canvas that is wider than it is long, the painting is bare except for the alternating swatches of vibrant reds and deep blues. Mary A. Bell was a

self-taught African-American artist whose subjects revolve around women. She was little known throughout her life but an exhibit of her art (primarily in crayons on paper used in dressmaking) in the 1980s by Yale University propelled her works in the public consciousness, though posthumously.

Through his minimalist works, Galang explores the unexplored. "True art has no value other than being a reflection of man's relationship with the unknown," he said in 1967, in the decade before the completion of the piece. "It has no meaning other than a consciousness of being in the dark where one's perception of art is proof of the vastness which we are clearly a part of." (*Hannah Valiente*).

## Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)

### *Obu*

signed and dated 1970  
wood  
30" x 35" x 29"  
(76 cm x 89 cm x 74 cm)

**P 1,400,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, São Paulo, Brazil

#### LITERATURE

*11th São Paulo Biennial (Catalog)*. São Paulo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Government of the State of São Paulo, under the auspices of the Secretariat of Education and Culture, City of São Paulo, 1971. Published on the occasion of the 11th São Paulo Biennial. Listed as "Obu" on page 87.

Kalaw-Ledesma, Purita and Amadis Ma. Guerrero. *The Struggle for Philippine Art*. Quezon City: Vera-Reyes, Inc., 1974. Photographed at the 1971 São Paulo Biennale and reproduced in black-and-white on page 70, with the caption "The Philippine booth during the São Paulo, Brazil Biennale in 1971; Black-and-white photograph and artwork description on page 77

#### EXHIBITED

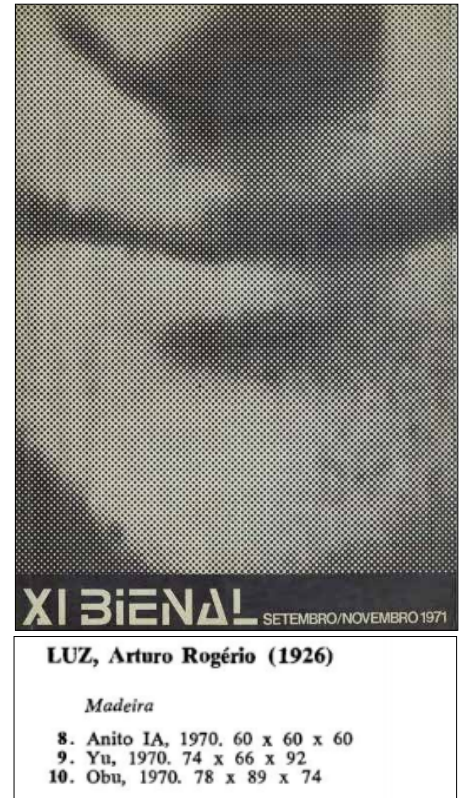
Parque Ibirapuera, *11th São Paulo Biennial*, São Paulo, Brazil, September 4 - November 15, 1971

In 1971, Arturo Luz became one of five Philippine representatives to the prestigious 11th São Paulo Biennial in Brazil, held from September 4 to November 15, 1971 at the Parque Ibirapuera, dubbed São Paulo's "Central Park." Luz's co-representatives consisted of Lee Aguinaldo, Jerry Elizalde Navarro, Lucio Martinez, and Marcelino Rodriguez.

Luz, who also acted as *comissário* (commissioner) of the Philippine delegation and exhibition organized by the influential Art Association of the Philippines, entered three hardwood sculptures, one of which is the work at hand titled *Obu*.

By the 1970s, Luz had already abandoned any vestiges of figurative painting (cyclists, musicians, carnivals, etc.) and transitioned to pure non-objective art. In a March 1973 interview with Cid Reyes and published in the latter's *Conversations on Philippine Art*, Luz succinctly narrates how he realized that figuration had become increasingly unappealing to his creative senses. He says:

*"I was slowly beginning to realize that for me, the subject was becoming less and less important, until, as a consequence, my paintings became simpler and simpler, and I eventually wound up with a few objects, mostly still life. It wasn't the subject as such that interested me, but the shapes, the linear structure."* Luz added that in his then-two-decade career, it has always been at the back of his mind to work in an entirely non-figurative, non-objective style.



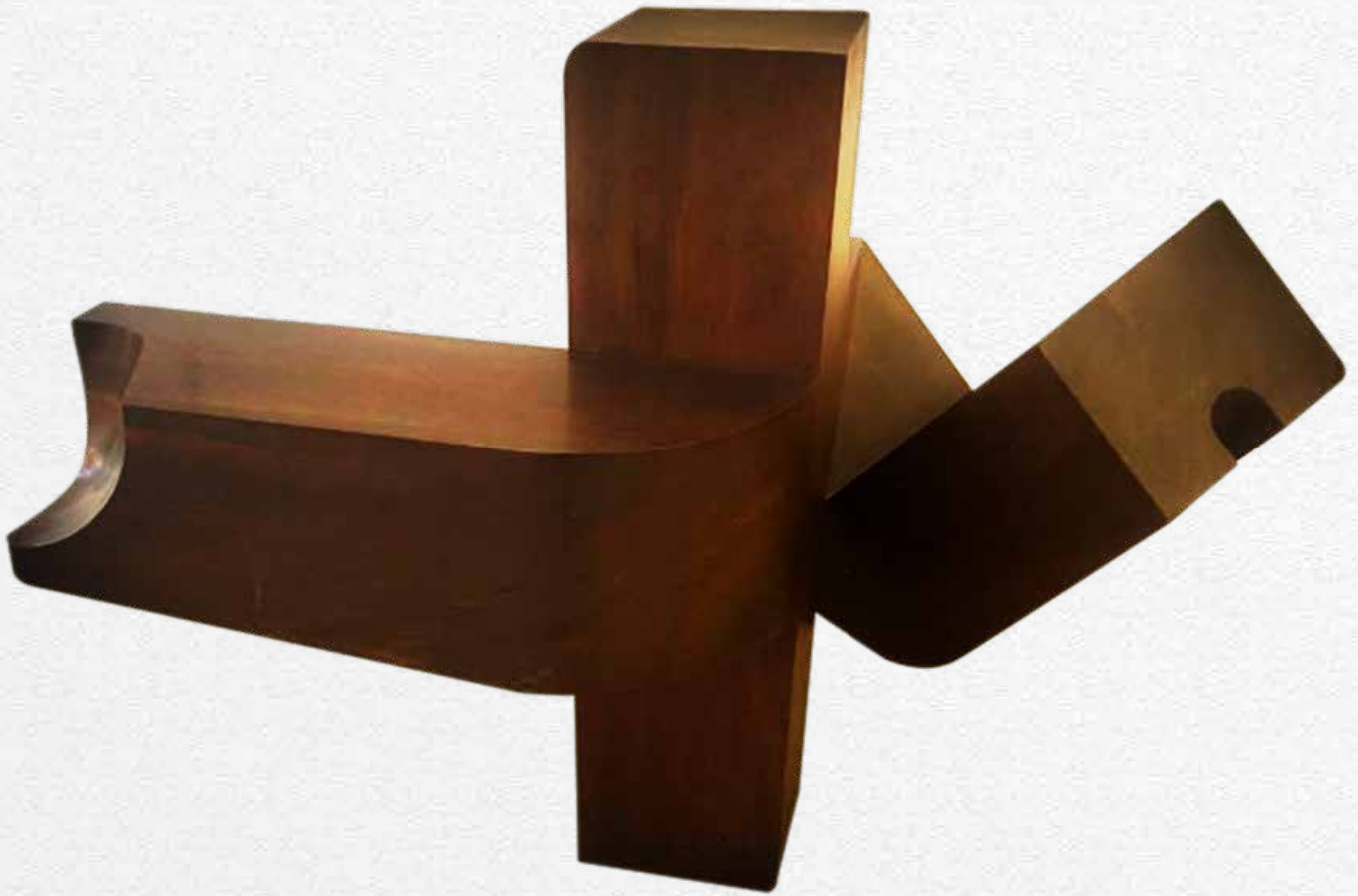
BOTTOM: List of Luz's entries at the 11th São Paulo Biennial;  
TOP: Catalog cover of the 11th São Paulo Biennial

Ever the metamorphosing artist, Luz's propensity for a non-objective visual language is clearly discerned in *Obu*.

*Obu* shows the profound influence of Japanese-American artist Isamu Noguchi, whom he admired for his "very Oriental feeling, which his sculptures evoke and the way he handles his material." But while Noguchi focused on organic abstract forms that evoke nature and life itself, Luz instead celebrated the solidity of a sculpture, its mass, volume, and the profound space it occupies. Luz's sculptures possess the aesthetics of dynamic illusion and seamless transition from one pattern or form to another. It becomes more interesting when contextualized into Luz's dynamic instinct for design, propelled by his immersion in design studies at the California College of Arts and Crafts from 1947 to 1949.

Nevertheless, Luz and Noguchi were united by the artistic maxim of distilling a subject's forms to the unvarnished purity of its essence.

It is also interesting to note that the Oriental-like title of the work at hand (and all related sculptures) was essentially invented by Luz, further strengthening the still-existing Neo-Realist impulse in him to destroy, create, and reinvent. "I had the patience then to still think of titles for my works," he jokingly reveals to Cid Reyes in a candid interview published in a landmark 1999 monograph on him by the revered artist-critic. (*Adrian Maranan*)



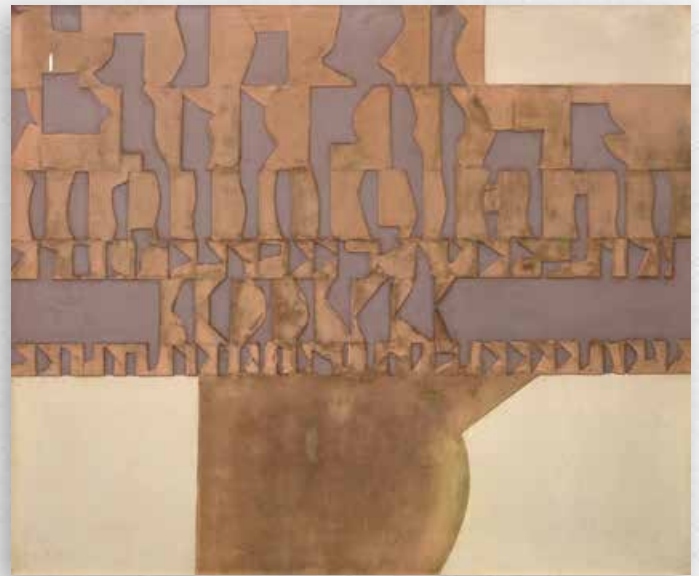
ABOVE: Different views of Obu. RIGHT: The Philippine booth at the 1971 Sao Paolo Biennale. Luz's Obu stands prominently on the far left.

*“...I think it’s a very logical step from the kind of painting I do. You see, I have always had a strong attraction for three-dimensional work. Perhaps, this is the reason why I have always enjoyed landscaping or moving furniture around the house. I like to deal with volume and physical space.”*

—LUZ, ON HIS CREATIVE IMPULSE TOWARD SCULPTURE, IN CID REYES’  
‘CONVERSATIONS ON PHILIPPINE ART’

*“The artists from the Philippines shown in this Biennial share one thing in common, and that is a desire to settle in their own terms the issues that confront the contemporary artist. They are bound neither by tradition nor styles, working simply as artists motivated by personal beliefs and varying individual backgrounds.”*

—ARTURO LUZ, IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILIPPINE PARTICIPATION AT THE 11TH  
SAO PAULO BIENNALE IN 1971, PUBLISHED IN THE CATALOG OF THE SAID EVENT



32

**Rodolfo Samonte** (b. 1941)

a.) *Gathering Darkness*  
 signed and dated 1972 (verso)  
 relief and lacquer  
 40" x 48" (102 cm x 122 cm)

b.) *Barricades*  
 dated 1972  
 relief and lacquer  
 40" x 48" (102 cm x 122 cm)

**P 240,000**

PROVENANCE  
 The Luz Gallery

EXHIBITED  
 The Luz Gallery, *Recent Paintings by Rodolfo Samonte*,  
 Makati, May 16 - June 6, 1972

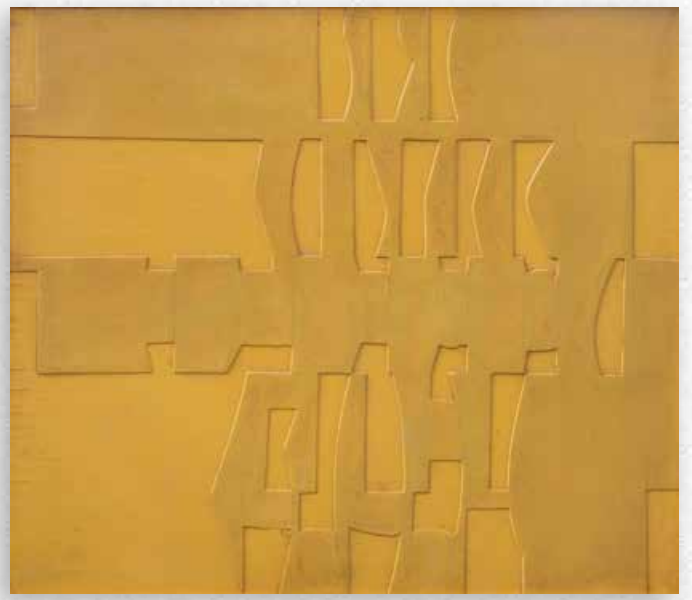
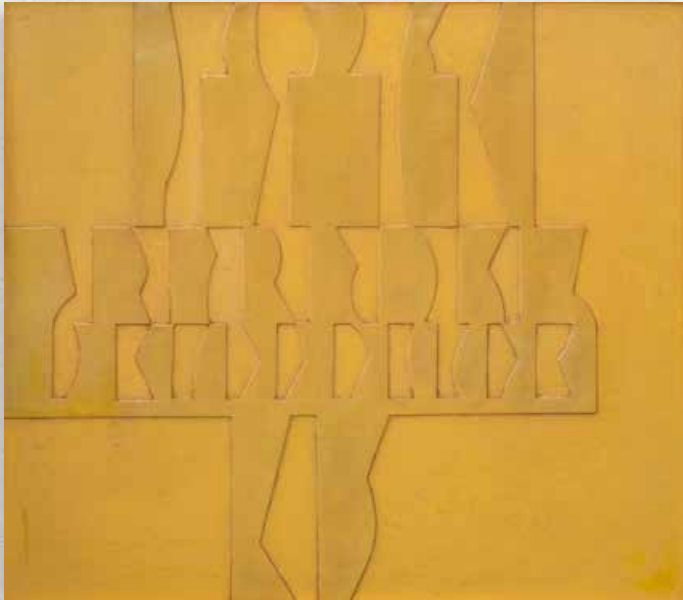


LEFT: Rodolfo Samonte in 1972. RIGHT: The invitation for Samonte's landmark 1972 exhibition at The Luz Gallery showcasing his first large-scale paintings.

*“In 1972, I embarked on a project that was designed to be ‘big.’ In a way, I was trying to get away from the strict confines of the print medium and its small format. But I didn’t want to make large prints. So, I decided to go into painting using lacquer paints. Lacquer seemed to be best suited for my purposes at the time, since I wanted to get away too from my ‘painterly’ silkscreens. Also, my shapes and forms seemed to come out more from a surface that was smooth and non-textural. Then, too, I was slowly moving into a reductive or minimal style. My paintings*

*were not just paintings; they were sculptures, too, since they were in relief, with the frames actually being part of the whole work. I also started working in monochrome at this time. In fact, they were more successful than the multicolored ones. All of this I exhibited at the Luz Gallery that year.”*

— RODOLFO SAMONTE ON THE ORIGINS OF HIS 1972 LACQUER PAINTINGS EXHIBITED AT THE LUZ GALLERY, IN CID REYES’ “CONVERSATIONS ON PHILIPPINE ART” (1989)



33

## Rodolfo Samonte (b. 1941)

### a.) *Savannah I*

signed and dated 1972 (verso)  
lacquer and polymer on wood  
28" x 32" (71 cm x 81 cm)

### b.) *Savannah III*

signed and dated 1972 (verso)  
lacquer and polymer on wood  
28" x 32" (71 cm x 81 cm)

**P 240,000**

PROVENANCE  
The Luz Gallery

EXHIBITED  
The Luz Gallery, *Recent Paintings by Rodolfo Samonte*,  
Makati, May 16 - June 6, 1972

These four works comprised Rodolfo Samonte's landmark show exhibition in mid-1972 at The Luz Gallery. The exhibition showcased Samonte's first foray into large-scale painting, a bold progression from the dimensional stringency of printmaking. Samonte employed lacquer in these works, favoring it for its fast-drying quality since he wanted to see the results of his work immediately.

Samonte started as a prolific printmaker in the late 1960s, mounting his debut solo exhibition in 1969 featuring his colored woodcuts (He had been doing the relief process of woodcuts since his student days at the University of Santo Tomas.). At the 2nd Philippine Association of Printmakers Annual Competition in 1969, Samonte bagged the first,

second, and fourth prizes in the relief category. The following year, he also effortlessly snatched the first and third prizes in the same category.

Samonte chose the more unorthodox path of printmaking; it was his stable source of income. He says to Armando Manalo in the May 28, 1972 issue of *The Philippine Sunday Express*: "If you are not an addict of the high life, you can live fairly well on the sales of prints. Graphics in this country is a young art, and the demand is steady."

By 1972, Samonte had become attracted to what he calls "the borderline between painting and sculpture." "I have always been interested in sculpture," he told Cid Reyes in a correspondence dated August 1978 and published in the latter's *Conversations on Philippine Art*. "All my relief works, whether they are prints or paintings, are expressions of my sculptural ideas." Also, Samonte revealed in the same correspondence that his transition from printmaking to painting was necessitated by the fact that he "was trying to get away from the strict confines of the print medium and its small format"; he wanted that "architectural" atmosphere.

Indeed, the four works at hand all possess that monumental feel, thanks to Samonte's painted relief style. Created in his visual language of reductionism, Samonte's geometric abstraction, influenced by Arturo Luz, seemingly evokes Mesopotamian reliefs, the storied hieroglyphics of Ancient Egypt, and even the Hispanic-period hardwood reliefs in the Philippines. As a result, Samonte allows himself to let loose, harnessing the transcendent character of both painting and sculpture. Pictorial quality is wedded with rhythmic projection and delicate illusions of depth and texture, thus resulting in works that appeal to the tactile imagination. (*Adrian Maranan*)



34

## Cid Reyes (b. 1946)

### a.) *Serrinha*

signed (verso) dated 1972  
automotive lacquer on wood  
39" x 36" (99 cm x 91 cm)

### b.) *Esplanada*

signed (verso) dated 1972  
automotive lacquer on wood  
37" x 35" (94 cm x 89 cm)

**P 200,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank the artist for confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE  
The Luz Gallery

The artistic practice of Cid Reyes is a unique one that combines the visual arts with the written word. Reyes belongs to the rare breed of practitioners that exemplify both theory, which is seen in his writings, and practice, which can be found in his art and art objects. His academic journey began with a Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from De La Salle University, setting the stage for a remarkable career. Subsequently, he secured a grant from the Italian government, facilitating his immersion in the world of painting at the renowned Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. Building upon this foundation, Reyes continued to hone his expertise in art history at the City Lit Institute in London, England.

Over the years, Reyes has showcased his works at prominent venues such as Solidaridad Gallery, The Hyatt Hotel, West Gallery, The Drawing Room, Ricco-Renzo Gallery, and Galerie Astra. Impressively, this trajectory has resulted in a cumulative total of 20 solo shows to date, illustrating the depth and breadth of his artistic contributions. Concurrently, as an astute art critic, Reyes has also made substantial contributions to the discourse surrounding Filipino art. His dual role as a creator and critic positions him uniquely within the art world, underscoring his multifaceted and influential presence. *(Jed Daya)*



35

## Hernando Ocampo (1911 - 1978)

### *Abstraction 109*

signed and dated 1977 (lower right)

acrylic on board

30" x 22" (76 cm x 56 cm)

**P 900,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Dr Victor Reyes Collection

National Artist Hernando Ocampo is one of the major and sublime colorists of Philippine art. Already a main player in the arena of Philippine modern art in the 1950s, his impact on Philippine art history cannot be overstated with Lyd Arguilla herself saying in 1962: "Modern art in the Philippines meant Hernando R. Ocampo. One was either for or against modern art as one was for or against Ocampo."

*Abstraction 109*, created in 1977, was a decade past Lyd Arguilla's statement and yet Ocampo's influence still holds. Containing Ocampo's signature vibrant colors and interactive forms, it is a study of both East and West influences – the concepts of Bauhaus are combined with a native sensibility.

The works of Ocampo look deceptively simple but his oeuvre results from a thorough process of consideration of each tone, hue, and saturation, their effects in relation to each other, and their effect on the painting's movement and tension. *Abstraction 109* utilized a warm orange and fiery red color palette and a dancelike flow to its delineated planes – proof of Ocampo's continued mastery of his art. (Hannah Valiente)



The Great Wall of China © The Washington Post

In mid-1972, Jose Joya, during his deanship at the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts (he was appointed in 1970 and would serve until 1978), embarked on a 16-day visit to China as chairperson of the Philippine First Educators' Group Delegation to the country. Joya was part of the Southeast Asia Regional Artists Conference, and he was tasked to formally present a letter of invitation to the Art Society of Peking to attend the said conference.

While in China, Joya visited the cities of Canton, Beijing, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Shanghai, where he came face-to-face with contemporary Chinese aesthetics, particularly socialist art.

In the book *Joya: Drawings*, eminent art critic Leonidas V. Benesa writes that while in China, Joya also "...did several sketches of ordinary people...as well as familiar sights and landmarks by the Pearl and Yangtze waterways." In a September 1973 interview with Cid Reyes and published in his *Conversation on Philippine Art*, Joya, himself one of the most traveled Filipino artists, also revealed that his trip to China was among the most memorable.

Joya's lingering memories of his Chinese sojourn are evident in this 1973 work, *Picnic at the Great Wall*. Here, we see Joya's trademark geometric block-like forms that resemble the ancient stones and bricks of the Great Wall of China. The composition is predominantly bathed in varying shades of yellow, with golden yellow serving as the standout hue. In Imperial China, golden yellow was a color reserved for the emperor. The color also refers to the yellow sediments of the Huang He River, popularly known as the "Yellow River," the birthplace of Chinese civilization. In the work at hand, Joya employs yellow as a historic reference to the Great Wall as the paramount symbol of Imperial China's commitment to safeguard its territory and civilization.

*Picnic at the Great Wall* would be exhibited at a landmark 1973 show at The Luz Gallery aptly titled "Joya: New Paintings." Esteemed poet, painter, printmaker, and titan of Philippine literature Hilario Francia, Jr. would comment on the show in his *The Philippines Daily Express* column dated November 30, 1973. He writes: "...It is evident now that his [Joya's] art and craft has finally reached a high point of development—requiring skills of a high order—that the observation of critic Leonidas Benesa that Joya is the foremost 'exponent of pure painting' is now adequately supported by his latest and most outstanding performance to date."

Furthermore, this work shows Joya's abandonment of the abstract expressionist language that characterized much of his paintings from the 1950s to the late 1960s. *Picnic at*

the Great Wall epitomizes Joya's transition from dynamic and vigorous abstract expressionism to spontaneous, lyrical geometric expressionism characterized by a further exploration of calligraphic-like patterns. Benesa notes that "...by 1967, the enthusiasm of the artist as a painter of abstract expressionist landscapes...appeared to have run its course..."

Joya's employment of geometric expressionism was a conscious attempt to integrate indigenous elements into his art. Although influenced by the serial style of Pop Art, which was the dominant style in America in the late 1960s when Joya pursued his Rockefeller and Ford scholarships, Joya's block-like figures, with their contiguous repetition and pattern, resemble more the recurring geometric patterns and shapes found in the art—particularly in textiles weaving and ornaments—of the indigenous peoples of the Philippines. Joya's employment of such can be traced back to 1967, upon his second New York sojourn. Of this, he says in the Benesa book: "At this time, the study of Philippine history engaged me. Digging into rare sources, I came across materials that gave light facets to Philippine history." This he had done as a contemplative search for personal artistic identity within the context of the collective cultural. It was in line with his creative pursuit of wedding his Filipino sensibility that flows through his blood with his landscapes of the psyche, "of the noumena rather than the phenomena," as Benesa puts it.

Interestingly, prior to this work at hand, Joya had also envisioned a design center at the UP campus integrating indigenous design/folk art.

Various factors also influenced Joya's venture into his native sensibilities: the nationalistic fervor of the 1960s characterized by the fueling dissent against US imperialism and solidarity with the wars of national liberation (particularly in Cuba, Vietnam, and the Philippines). Also, Joya's interest in Philippine history by the late 1960s coincided with its reevaluation from a nationalist historiographical standpoint, with Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino at the helm. As Joya says in the Benesa book, "Artists respond to interests prevailing during their times."

When Joya painted this work, the artist added a string of local and international recognitions to his ever-strengthening accomplishments. In 1973, he was awarded a "Citation for Meritorious Contribution to Art" by the influential Art Association of the Philippines during its 25th anniversary. That same year, the UP Alumni Association honored him with the "Most Distinguished Professional Award in Fine Arts." Just a year prior, in 1972, Joya was listed in the "International Who's Who in Art and Antiques" by London's Melrose Press. (*Adrian Maranan*)



# Joya and the Color of Kings: *The Imperial Yellow of Sun and Gold*



36

**Jose Joya** (1931 - 1995)

*Picnic at the Great Wall II*

signed and dated 1973 (lower right)

oil on wood

48" x 64" (122 cm x 163 cm)

**P 12,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Alexander Richard Joya Baldovino confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE  
The Luz Gallery

EXHIBITED  
The Luz Gallery, *Joya: New Paintings*, Makati,  
November 8 - 27, 1973

*"...It is evident now that his [Joya's] art and craft has finally reached a high point of development—requiring skills of a high order—that the observation of critic Leonidas Benesa that Joya is the foremost 'exponent of pure painting' is now adequately supported by his latest and most outstanding performance to date."*

— HILARIO FRANCIA, JR., WRITING ON JOYA'S  
NEW SET OF WORKS EXHIBITED AT THE LUZ  
GALLERY IN 1973, WHERE "PICNIC AT THE GREAT  
WALL" WAS SHOWCASED

**Romulo Olazo** (1934 - 2015)*Luntian (Diaphanous Series)*

signed and dated 1974 (lower right)

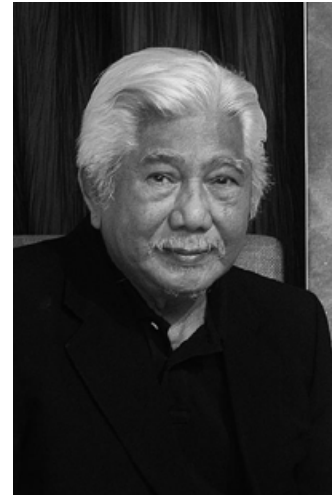
oil on board

40" x 26" (102 cm x 66 cm)

**P 2,600,000**

“Olazo experimented by switching pigment types, that is, from the traditional printer’s ink that registered flat and opaque images to the painter’s oil pigments that created translucent layers. This allowed him to achieve effects of light and texture. He then experimented further by cutting old newspapers as stenciled patterns. Pigment is applied with a brush or by a single run of the squeegee to as many as five layers.”

—MA. VICTORIA T. HERRERA, ON THE GENESIS OF ROMULO OLAZO’S DIAPHANOUS SERIES, IN HER ESSAY ROMULO OLAZO: A WILLFUL JOURNEY IN ART (PUBLISHED IN THE BOOK “ROMULO OLAZO”)



**1974** marked a turning point in Romulo Olazo’s then-burgeoning five-year career as a professional artist (He had just started in 1969 through the art of printmaking, particularly woodcut, although he began much earlier, albeit in the field of advertising, in 1959.). Just two years prior, in 1972, Olazo was among the recipients of the inaugural edition of the Cultural Center of the Philippines Thirteen Artists Award.

1974 also marked Olazo’s transition from advertising to full-time painting; he resigned as executive art director of the Philippine Advertising Counselors, Inc.

However, the most important singular event—that watershed moment—in Olazo’s career also happened in 1974: the birth of the *Diaphanous Series* paintings, signaling Olazo’s artistic coming-of-age.

The work at hand, titled *Luntian*, is one of Olazo’s earliest Diaphanous paintings. It comes from the same year when Olazo produced his first two *Diaphanous* paintings—the acrylic pieces *Takip Silim* and *Bukang Liwayway*, which he exhibited in June 1974 in the group show “Land of the Beautiful” at the Quad Gallery at the old Makati Commercial Center (now the Ayala Center).

Olazo’s *Diaphanous Series* was born from his printmaking practices of serigraphy and collography, which the artist started to explore in the early 1970s when he was still at

the Philippine Association of Printmakers. The celebrated art critic Alice Guillermo writes in her essay *Romulo Olazo: A Life for Art* that “the artist had his own press made and, thus, acquired a more intimate knowledge of the processes and materials.”

Deriving from his printmaking techniques, Olazo wedded his serigraphic approach of using painters’ oil pigments in tubes and applying them on stenciled patterns cut out from old newspapers with the collographic practice of layering until embossed images slowly appeared. When put on canvas, Olazo’s unique method resulted in a more translucent effect, delicate textures, airy tonal values, and specters of visual sublimities that exhibit a three-dimensional illusion.

In its earlier stages, Olazo titled his *Diaphanous* paintings by giving them subtitles in parentheses, such as this work at hand’s title, until such time that his wife, Patricia, designed a system in which a serial number composed of letters and Roman/Hindu-Arabic numerals conveniently helped in cataloging Olazo’s myriad works in one particular series.

Olazo’s experience and experimentation in printmaking not only helped him seamlessly transition into painting but also propelled him to heights he had never before conquered and eventually established him into the annals of Philippine art history. And now, the Diaphanous Series has become Olazo’s most significant tangible legacy to Philippine art. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Romulo Olazo:  
*The Earliest Diaphanous Offered at Auction*





## Roberto Chabet: *Father of Filipino Conceptual Art*

*“Roberto Chabet’s patently unmonumental works are responses to the Modernism that was in place in the Philippines in the 1960s, when he first entered the art scene. As a kind of breach accompanied by both fear and beauty, modernity for Chabet is “the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent...Having spent his childhood moving from one house to another, fleeing air raids and bombs that leveled most of Manila during World War II, Chabet’s modernity is signaled by the moments of catastrophe and destruction that he witnessed during his early years.”*

—RINGO BUNOAN, WRITING IN HER ESSAY “SEEING AND UNSEEING: THE WORKS OF ROBERTO CHABET,” PUBLISHED IN THE MONOGRAPH ROBERTO CHABET

Roberto Chabet has become one of the most influential figures in Philippine art, embodying that brash and experimental attitude in pushing the boundaries of both the subject and the medium toward an exaltation of the artistic process and the idea behind art itself.

Chabet studied Architecture at the University of Santo Tomas during his college years; he graduated in 1961 and briefly worked in Architect Angel Nakpil’s office. 1961 was also the year Henry Flynt coined the term “concept art” to refer to “an art of which the material is ‘concepts,’ as the material for ex[ample] Music is sound.”

Chabet first emerged as a promising abstractionist (Arturo Luz was one of his earliest luminaries) during his debut solo exhibition at The Luz Gallery in 1961. That same year, he won first prize for his painting “Orange Land” at the Art Association of the Philippines’ (AAP) Annual Art Competition and Exhibition.

Chabet would eventually shed this creative impulse like a second skin and adopt conceptual art in the late 1960s, particularly after his triumphant return to the Philippines in 1969 after receiving the John D. Rockefeller III grant (which he was bestowed as he had been appointed

as founding curator of the Cultural Center of the Philippines Museum in 1967) to study museum procedures and organization in the United States and observe the same procedures in Europe and Mexico.

Chabet had also been influenced by the American artist Jasper Johns, whose creative perception challenged the notions of traditional painting (e.g. the inclusion of three-dimensional objects in his paintings) and the ever-changing essence and significance of images and symbols.

But Chabet’s US sojourn made him turn towards the decisive path of conceptual art. In the US, conceptual art reached a zenith beginning in the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s as a reaction against the increasing commercialization of art, stressing that the concept behind a particular work of art—its process and the artist’s intention—should be valued more than the artwork itself.

Chabet would begin his transition to conceptual art through the art form of collage, then towards sculpture and installations. Chabet insisted on the importance of memory as integral to the artistic praxis. Through his use of perishable materials, debris, clippings, and other found objects, Chabet fosters the idea that “art is for the moment. Then it becomes memory.”

# Chabet: ACC Grantee For Museology



ABOVE: Roberto Chabet at work in his studio (June 1972). Photo courtesy: Philippines Sunday Express

“My works really are more properly the works of an art critic. I mean, they are works in which the concept behind the work of art is the art itself. These days—and especially in a country like ours where there are no art critics—the artist assumes the role of a critic by questioning the nature of art. And I don’t necessarily mean writing about it, the way an art critic would.”

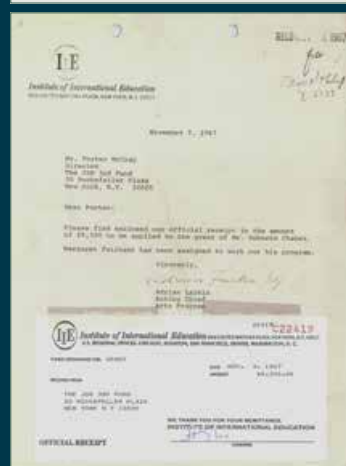
—ROBERTO CHABET, ON HIS MOTIVATIONS IN PURSUING CONCEPTUAL ART, PUBLISHED IN CID REYES’ “CONVERSATIONS ON PHILIPPINE ART”

During his curatorship at the CCP Museum (1967 - 1970), Chabet instituted the inaugural edition of the prestigious Cultural Center of the Philippines Thirteen Artists Awards, which he envisioned to exalt artists that "restructure, restrengthen, and renew artmaking and art thinking...that lend viability to Philippine art." Also under his leadership was the CCP able to acquire Victorio Edades' seminal 1928 painting *The Builders* and Napoleon Abueva's *Allegorical Harpoon*, his entry to the Philippines' historic participation at the 1964 Venice Biennale.

Chabet would resign from his CCP post in 1970 and teach at the UP College of Fine Arts in 1971 upon the invitation of its Dean, Jose Joya.

Feared but revered as a mentor, Chabet was nevertheless called dearly by his students as "Sir." Chabet honed the talents of generations of artists, now contemporary stars of the Philippine art scene, including Soler Santos, Nilo Elarde, Emmanuel Garibay, Marcel Antonio, Elaine Navas, Annie Cabigting, Nona Garcia, and MM Yu.

Roberto Chabet was a 1972 recipient of the Republic Cultural Heritage Award, precursor to the National Artist Award. He also received the 1972 Araw ng Maynila Award for the Visual Arts and the 1998 Centennial Honor for the Arts. (*Adrian Maranan*)



TOP: Letter from Malacañan to Mr. Porter McCray, director of the JDR 3rd Fund, dated 15 Nov 1967. BELOW: Official Receipt for the grant for Roberto Chabet.

## Roberto Chabet

*First Curator of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1967*

*Asian Cultural Council Grantee, 1968*

An artist in his own right, Roberto Chabet was appointed the first curator of the Museum of Fine Arts Gallery of the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1967.

As part of “the training program of qualified personnel to ensure the success of the Center”, Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos recommended Chabet for the John D. Rockefeller III Fund — the forerunner of the Asian Cultural Council. He was sent to the United States to study “museology” or “museum practices and organization.”

He would receive the grant in 1967. The ACC Archive contains the letter of appreciation from Malacañan as well as the official communication from the JDR 3rd Fund and remittance of US \$ 8,300.00

## Roberto Chabet (1937 - 2013)

### *Window*

signed and dated 1965 (verso)  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
36" x 36" (91 cm x 91 cm)

**P 3,000,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Finale Art File

#### LITERATURE

Bunoan, Ringo, ed. *Roberto Chabet*. Taguig City: King Kong Arts Project Unlimited, 2015. Full-color photograph on page 59 and painting description on page 58

#### EXHIBITED

Ateneo Art Gallery, *Windows to Conversations: Roberto Chabet, Lee Aguinaldo, Fernando Zobel*, Quezon City, October 6, 2011 - January 28, 2012



ABOVE: verso of the artwork "Window"

From October 2011 to January 2012, the Ateneo Art Gallery mounted an exhibit entitled *Windows to Conversation*, a group exhibition with works by Roberto Chabet, Lee Aguinaldo, and Fernando Zobel. *Windows to Conversation* is a part of *Chabet: 50 Years*, a year-long series of exhibitions celebrating Chabet's five-decade-long career.

Though miles of distance separate the triad, webs of indirect interactions and artistic inspirations connect Aguinaldo, Zobel, and Chabet. Aguinaldo and Zobel had been acquainted in 1952, a friendship that started during their respective overseas studies in the US.

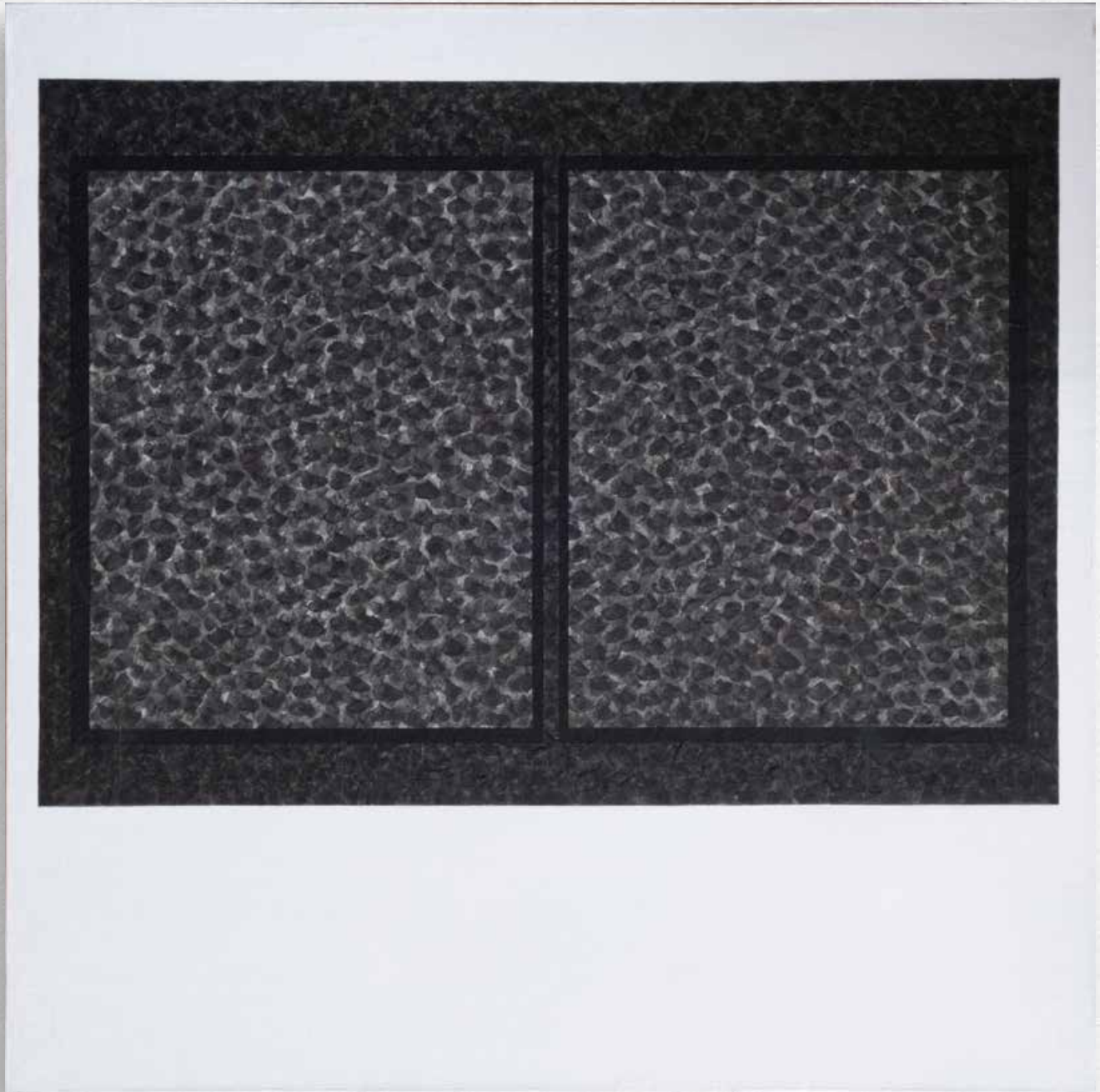
For Roberto Chabet, his introduction to this trio began with Lee Aguinaldo in 1962. Already an established painter, Aguinaldo gave the younger Chabet advice regarding his medium of choice.

Chabet's *Window* was a part of his *Windows* series and was included in the exhibit at the Ateneo Art Gallery. *Windows*

feature heavily in Chabet's oeuvre, either as subjects or metaphors to play with. German sociologist H.J. Krymanski noted that the window as a metaphor is associated with the "voyeuristic and inquisitive instincts of man."

In art, windows act as a framing device through which the viewers can look in. Ma. Victoria T. Herrera, the curator of *Windows to Conversation*, wrote: "As a metaphor, windows help the viewer 'frame' and 'focus' ... but while it allows us to look deeper into an enclosed space, the act of framing also limits our perspective."

Chabet's *Window* emphasizes the limitation inherent with this framing device and he made it the piece's strength. He imbues a mysterious allure to this piece, imploring the viewer to look past the aperture and into the void. He takes on the position of the viewers, blurring the lines of interrogator and interrogee in an absolute testament to his mastery of this subject matter—all as message, as framing devices, and as metaphors. (*Hannah Valiente*)



**Roberto Chabet** (1937 - 2013)*Forbidden Planet*

signed and dated 1985 (verso)

collage

42" x 39" (107 cm x 99 cm)

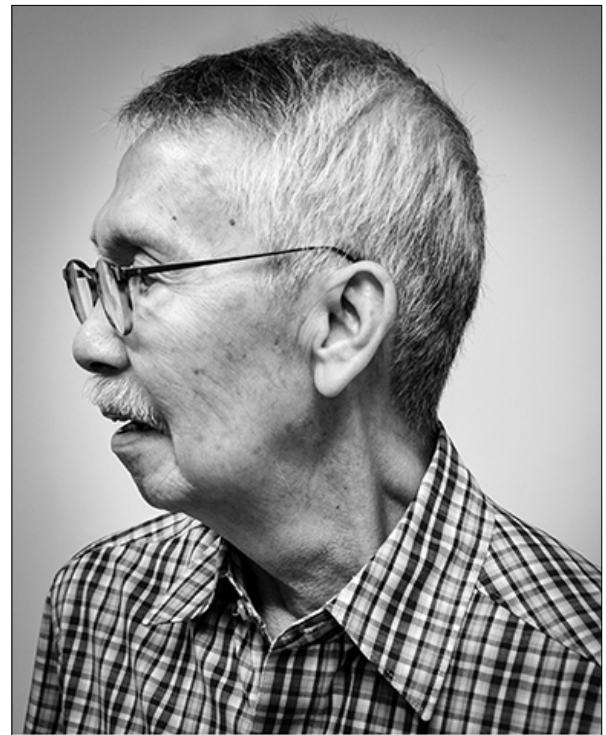
**P 300,000**

Having nurtured several generations of today's Filipino contemporary artists throughout three decades of teaching at the UP College of Fine Arts, Roberto Chabet is best known for his conceptual approach that paved the way for further experimentation and, in the words of artist and curator Ringo Bunoan, "a sense of playful criticality" in Philippine art. Although he embarked on an artistic career alongside the postwar Filipino modernists, Chabet stood out for his deconstructive treatment of medium and form.

"Drawing is the anchor to Chabet's expansive body of works," Ringo Bunoan writes, referring to Chabet's knack for experimenting with fragments or pieces of forms—the visible marks made before a drawing turns into an image. Such experimentations on form would culminate in Chabet's collages that he began to make in the late 1970s when he would gather various graphic, print, and illustrated ephemera—a miscellaneous collection of things which would later on expand in the 1980s to include maps, cartons, wrappers, lists, receipts, and postcards in his series of *China Collages*. This series, reaching up to over 300 works in Chabet's oeuvre, would become formative stepping stones towards a series of cosmos-themed exhibits later on such as *Other Planets* in 1993 and *Guide to the Night and Noonday Skies* in 2001.

The fixation with space or the idea of placement through displacement (of forms) is a recurring theme of Chabet's works, particularly evident in his collages. In the *China Collage* series, the maps, in place of any cartographic function, become abstracted places as various ephemera overlap to form an unpredictable arrangement, becoming intersecting pieces of time and space. Chabet expounds on this theme of displacement later on by evoking liminality as a sense of 'no-place' in *Other Planets and Guide to the Night and Noonday Skies*:

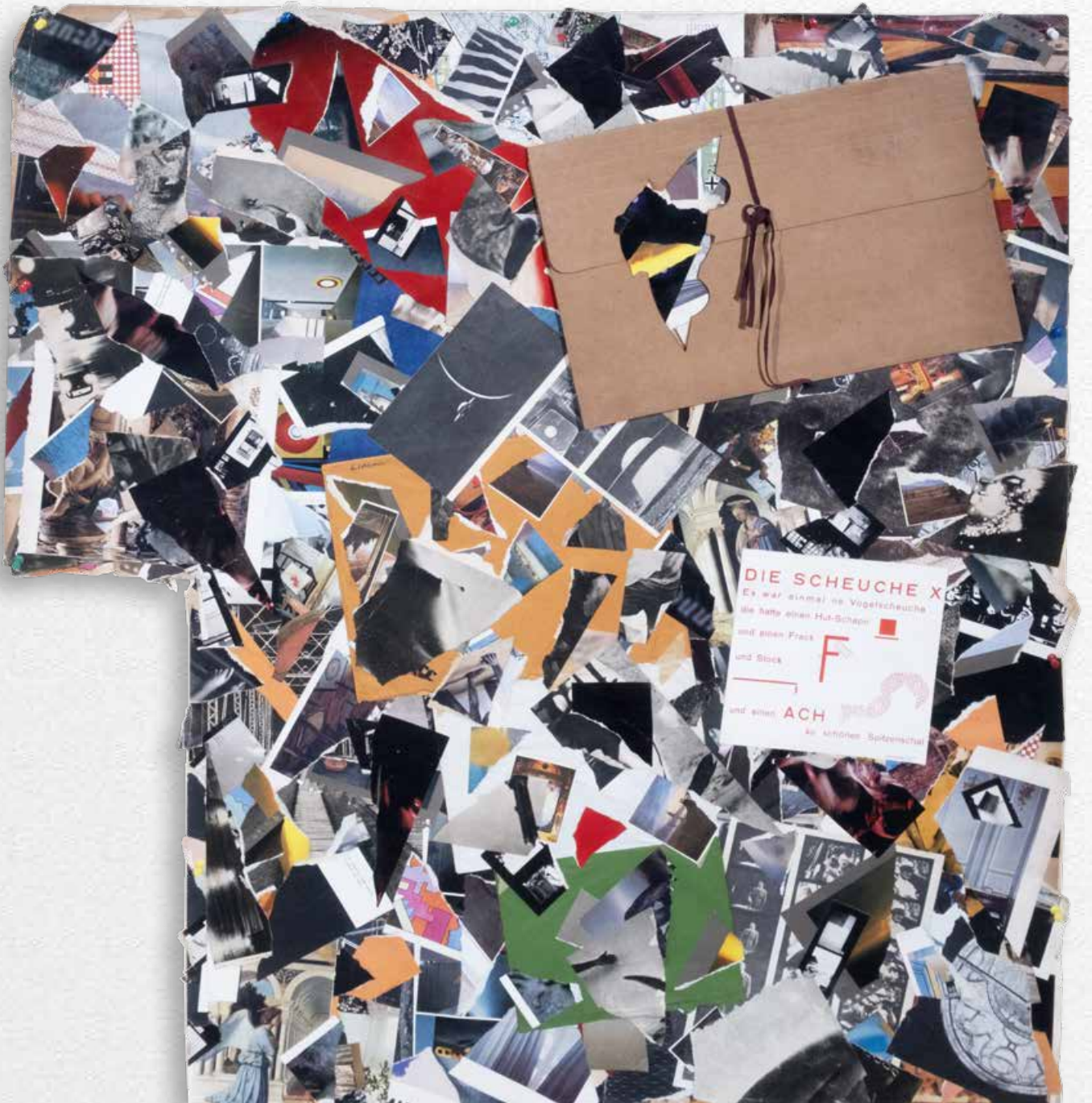
"The artist sees his territory not only as a specific place but as a departure point for an 'elsewhere.' The artist builds



boundaries and breaks down boundaries. Placement implies displacement... Art measures the artist's known place and the unknown 'no place' — a nowhere, a utopia that is glimpsed through the artist's metaphor. Metaphor is displacement."

In this 1985 work, Chabet refers to the 'no-place' as a forbidden planet of sorts. Solid blocks of red, green and yellow peek out amongst the scattered pieces of printed graphic and ephemera, torn and cut into fragments of space and time. Here, memories of former worlds are deconstructed and reconstructed into a new world or a 'no-place' of the artist's own making. The worlds of Chabet's collages thus float in and across space and time, here and elsewhere in the cosmos, like a forbidden planet light years away— either waiting to be discovered or yearning for a long distance connection. (*Pie Tiausas*)





**DIE SCHEUCHE X**  
Es war einmal ne Vogelscheuche  
die hatte einen Hut-Schapel  
mit einem Preis  
und Stock  
und einen **ACH**  
in schöner Spitzenstiel



40

## Kawayan de Guia (b. 1979)

### *Room #4 Rene Aquitania*

signed and dated 2006 (lower right)  
mixed media on canvas  
44" x 45" (112 cm x 114 cm)

**P 600,000**

PROVENANCE  
The Drawing Room

EXHIBITED  
The Drawing Room, *"Incubator"*, 28 July - 19 August 2008.  
The Incubator Series would win for Kawayan de Guia the Ateneo Art Award of 2008.

Kawayan de Guia's mixed media collages are an interesting and panoramic view of Filipino history and psyche. "The common Filipino is a maximalist, filling up every available space with forms and things," writes Prof. Felipe M. de Leon, Jr. in "In Focus: Life as Art – The Creative, Healing Power in Philippine Culture" and viewers are sure to marvel at de Guia's irreverent critiques that are full of cheeky imagery and loaded symbolism.

The lot at hand *Room #4 Rene Aquitania* was created in 2006, two years prior to his conferment of the prestigious Ateneo Art Award – Fernando Zóbel Prizes for Visual Art. It is an ode to fellow Cordilleran artist Rene Aquitania whose

works draw on the mundane to pose a critique on socio-political realities.

Rene Aquitania was born into a Philippine art scene that had been transformed during the time when— independent artist-run spaces proliferated the scene, a precursor of the horizontal, peer-to-peer relationships to come. These spaces helped breed a drastically different artistic landscape that cultivated experimental contemporary styles.

It was this bohemian atmosphere that preceded the piece. The canvas was constricted into a closed-off, almost claustrophobic room very similar to the aesthetic of liminal spaces. Though the work was done a decade before the term gained popularity, it embodied the liminality that pervades the aesthetic. The room is full of trinkets that span different periods of Philippine history – here lays a *bul'ul*, on another corner an analog television. Despite the full room, however, the place feels transitional, devoid of any elements to tether the work to a distinct period.

Kawayan de Guia reworks nostalgia into his pieces, creating an oeuvre that feels both dated and timeless all at once. He ditches conventional storytelling methods, using disconnected imagery that is as isolated to the other elements as it is coherent with each other. His visual vocabulary taps into the rich pool of our collective consciousness and with it, he expands the emotional depth and reach of his works. *(Hannah Valiente)*



41

**Bernardo Pacquing** (b. 1967)

*Cucumber (Cucumis Sativus)*

signed, dated 2015 and titled (verso)

mixed media

72" x 54 1/4" (183 cm x 138 cm)

**P 1,200,000**

PROVENANCE

Silverlens

LITERATURE

Bernardo Pacquing: *Half Full (Exhibition Catalog)*. Makati City:

Silverlens, 2015. Published to accompany the 2015 exhibition

*Bernardo Pacquing: Half Full* at Silverlens. Full-color photograph and artwork description on page 28.

EXHIBITED

Silverlens, *Bernardo Pacquing: Half Full*,

Makati City, June 10 - July 11, 2015

*Cucumber (Cucumis sativus)* formed part of Bernardo Pacquing's 2015 exhibition titled *Half Full*. The concept for the works—and the exhibition in general—sprang from the artist's encounter with hydroponics, to which he had assisted his son in completing a school project related to the process. The science of hydroponics is defined by the US National Agricultural Library as "the technique of growing plants using a water-based nutrient solution rather than soil."

"The water flowing, the roots sprouting out of the cup, the layering of growing media, and the only thing separating them in the bucket is air. It all looks seemingly incomplete," Pacquing expounds in an interview with *Artsy*.

"I entitled this show '*Half Full*' because, for me, it embodies the idea of absoluteness in the incomplete, the sublime in imperfection, rawness, and simplicity, the undying of the ephemeral and the beauty of impurity," Pacquing succinctly says. The result, as *Cucumber* exemplifies, is an overall sculptural feel, an architectural microcosm of innovation and alternative technology borne from contemporary needs for sustainability.

## Manuel Rodriguez Sr. (1912 - 2017)

### *Festival Boats*

signed and titled (verso)

ca. 1963

oil on canvas

40" x 30" (102 cm x 76 cm)

**P 1,400,000**

Manuel Rodriguez, Sr. started formulating his "*River Festival*" / "*Festival Boats*" series in the early 1960s. During that time, Rodriguez Sr. had just studied printmaking under a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship for Special Studies in Graphic Arts for two years at the Pratt Institute in New York City, earning his Diploma in 1962. Shortly after returning to the Philippines on February 28, 1962, he returned to managing his Manila-based Contemporary Graphic Arts Workshop (established in 1952 and formerly the Contemporary Arts Gallery before Rodriguez, Sr. left for New York). It was the first art institution in the Philippines to offer formal courses in graphic arts.

There, Rodriguez, Sr. taught graphic arts, freehand drawing, and oil painting and honed the talents of young printmakers; among them was Virgilio "Pandy" Aviado. It was a tender form of giving back to the Filipino art community what skills he acquired and honed abroad.

"Rodriguez lost no time in embarking on his mission to teach and promote print in his studio, in schools, and in far-flung provinces where he was welcomed with enthusiasm by the masses who were introduced to fine art.," writes Eva Florentino in her essay "Struggles and Triumphs" published in the monograph "*Manuel Rodriguez, Sr.: Into the Threshold.*"

Back to the subject of "*River Festival*" / "*Festival Boats*" series, Aviado, writing in his essay "Me and My Sensei" (pertaining to Rodriguez, Sr.), says that he was introduced to his mentor in 1963 and "saw Mang Maning develop his "*River Festival*" / "*Festival Boats*" series from various media."



ABOVE: River Festival / Bocaue Pagoda Festival © Pintakasi

Festival boats, or pagoda in the Filipino lexicon, hold a distinct place in Philippine religious festivities and native culture as well. In Bulacan, there is the famous Bocaue River Festival/ Bocaue Pagoda Festival, held annually every first Sunday of July in honor of the Holy Cross of Wawa, a historic (and miraculous) 19th-century Catholic relic. There was also once a grand fluvial procession held every second Sunday of February in the town of Pateros in honor of its patroness, Santa Marta.

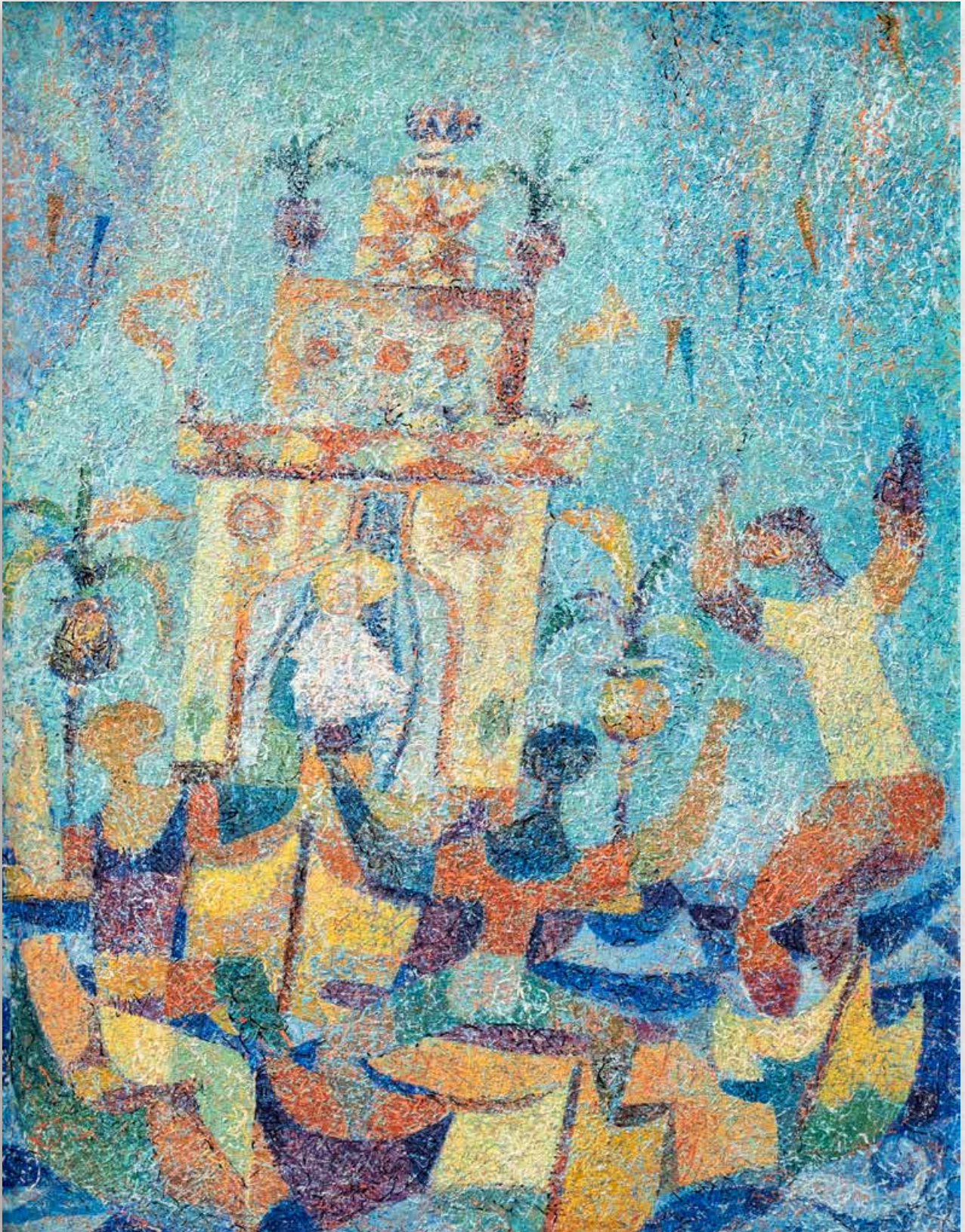


Other iconic pagoda festivals in the country include the one in Cardona, Rizal, celebrated every October 4 in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, and the "Pagoda-Caracol" in Malabon every December 8, coinciding with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

In this work from the early 1960s, Rodriguez, Sr. depicts a flock of joyous devotees surrounding a towering three-layered pagoda carrying the sacred image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There is a familial folk atmosphere that Rodriguez Sr. imbibes in the work: playfully quaint and flamboyant. Here, we can see Rodriguez Sr.'s early forays into his trademark "color vibrations," which he would only formally introduce three decades later in his 1993 Soho exhibition in New York. These "color vibrations" seemingly mimic the repetition and progression of patterns present in Philippine folk art and, thus, exhibit a unique interplay between form and color that highlights a celebration of identity rooted in communal existence.

"Art is prayer. It is silent worship. Art uses energy in a space we call love," Rodriguez, Sr. once said. Festival Boats, with its exuberant atmosphere, encapsulate a form of profound thanksgiving. And it is in this avenue that Manuel Rodriguez, Sr. steers this work—his thanksgiving to his Creator for the gift of art and the eventual honor and privilege of doing and teaching art as both a form of reverence to Him and giving back to the land that first honed his virtuoso. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Faith and the Fiesta  
*Rodriguez and the Riverine*



## Napoleon Abueva (1930 - 2018)

### *Chastity Belt*

signed and dated 1969

molave wood

H: 38" (97 cm) L: 26" (66 cm) W: 97" (246 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

#### LITERATURE

*10th São Paulo Biennial (Catalog)*. São Paulo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Government of the State of São Paulo, under the auspices of the Secretariat of Education and Culture, City of São Paulo, 1969. Published on the occasion of the 10th São Paulo Biennial. Listed as "Sociedade Defensiva" on page 79.

Duldulao, Manuel D. *Contemporary Philippine Art*. Quezon City: Vera-Reyes, Inc., 1972. Mentioned on page 68 as "Birth Control."

Reyes, Cid. Abueva. Makati City: PMFTC, Inc. for Philippine Art Awards, 2010. Mentioned on page 57 as "*Chastity Belt*."

#### EXHIBITED

Parque Ibirapuera, *10th São Paulo Biennial*, São Paulo, Brazil, September 27 - December 14, 1969

As the 1960s swung to a close, two Filipino artists emerged supreme: Jose Joya for painting and Napoleon Abueva for sculpture. No other Filipino artist during that fruitful decade came close to the international prestige and honor that Joya and Abueva brought to the Filipino nation.

In particular, throughout the 60s, Abueva broadened his creative horizons and international exposure in numerous biennales and exhibitions overseas. This impressive feat consisted of his participation in the New York and Seattle World's Fairs in 1962, the prestigious Venice Biennales of 1962 and 1964 (the latter with Joya), the 5th International Congress of Art in Tokyo in 1966 (also joined by Joya, critic Leonidas Benesa, and educator Virginia Agbayani), and his participation as a Philippine representative to the 10th São Paulo Biennale in Brazil.

The 10th São Paulo Biennale was held from September 27 to December 14, 1969, at the Ciccillo Matarazzo pavilion (a declared national landmark by Brazil's National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute) at Parque Ibirapuera, dubbed São Paulo's "Central Park." Established in 1951, the São Paulo Biennale is the world's second oldest art biennial after the Venice Biennale, which was inaugurated in 1895. The 10th iteration of one of the world's biggest art biennales gathered 446 artists from 53 countries, with the exhibited works totaling more than 2,500. The Philippine delegation comprised Abueva, Cesar Legaspi, Manuel Rodriguez, Jr., Noel Manalo, and Restituto Embuscado. Among Abueva's entries to this landmark biennale was the work at hand, humorously titled *Chastity Belt*.



ABOVE: Fachada da 10ª Bienal

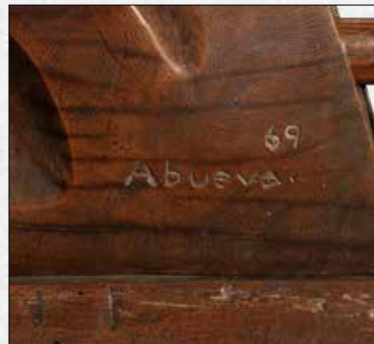
"Abueva's sense of humor, wit, and play can be seen in his recent works," writes Manuel Duldulao in his book *Contemporary Philippine Art*. "According to him, a weekly magazine called *Chastity Belt* "an entertaining piece of nonsense." Duldulao follows with a succinct description of the piece.

"It is actually an oversized male and female chastity belt, with two actually functioning padlocks, a magazine rack, and a stand for a tall drink. The male or female figure lies in the hard wooden board and is clasped shut into it by a hollowed block, thus prohibiting any other "endeavor" except drinking and reading."

*Chastity Belt* belongs to what Abueva calls "functional sculpture" (albeit with connotations revolving around double entendres and eroticism) and is made from molave, Abueva's favorite medium. Here, the artist combines whimsical practicality with a monumentality of scale and force and is able to bring out his inherent wit through a masterful aggregate of comedic realism and a sharp wordplay on the work's title.

Abueva was awarded the Republic Cultural Heritage Award, the precursor to the National Artist Award, in 1966. He was eventually conferred the honor of National Artist for Sculpture in 1976, technically making him a two-time recipient of the highest honor of the land for its venerable artists. (*Adrian Maranan*)

# Abueva's Entry to the 10th São Paulo Biennial



Different vies of the sculpture

# Napoleon Abueva: *Humor and Child's Play*

National Artist and modernist sculptor Napoleon Abueva transformed Filipino sculpture as we know it. His mastery of all kinds of materials including hardwood, metal, cement, marble, stone, and brass, among others, makes him a versatile artist able to create masterpieces from almost any material, landing him the lofty and well-deserved title of "Father of Modern Philippine Sculpture."

Abueva's works have been described as whimsical and fantastic and this is evident in his 1975 work *To Control*. A magnificent piece with eight sides, each face is labeled accordingly with each side containing carved-out figures and a phrase below it. The figures' compositions vary

but they consist of the same subject matter – a man or a woman and a child or three huddling near them. The viewer is transported into a story of epic proportions as they view the work from the first side to the eighth, watching as uncertainty surrounds the family.

There is a beauty in Abueva's *To Control*, a vulnerability he manages to etch into hardwood. Molave is one of the hardest woods to manipulate, its noted longevity translating in a notoriously difficult medium to sculpt from. However, Abueva's dexterity shines through whatever medium he uses, creating a tour de force that invites a deeper introspection. *(Hannah Valiente)*







44

**Napoleon Abueva** (1930 - 2018)

*To Control*

signed and dated 1975

molave wood

H: 50" (127 cm) L: 26" (66 cm) W: 44" (112 cm)

**P 700,000**



ABOVE: Other view of the bench

45

## Napoleon Abueva (1930 - 2018)

### *Bench*

signed and dated 1980

narra

H: 19" x L: 19" x W: 56" (48 cm x 48 cm x 142 cm)

**P 300,000**

Within the artistic realm of Napoleon Abueva, a diverse array of aspects surfaces in his work, showcasing his versatility and mastery across various styles. His portfolio encompasses the purely figurative, the fantastical, the constructional, the stylized, the abstract, and the functional, illustrating the breadth of his artistic exploration.

A noteworthy dimension in Abueva's oeuvre is his unwavering fascination with the functional side of sculpture. While many sculptors may prioritize the

*"I work on functional objects on the basis of sculptural problems, rather than utilitarian objectives, as diversions from pure sculpture."*

— NAPOLEON ABUEVA

utilitarian purpose of their creations, Abueva imbues each piece with an intrinsic sculptural essence. Take, for instance, his benches; before transforming into practical pieces of furniture, they stand foremost as sculptures in their own right.

Abueva's approach transcends the conventional perception of furniture, elevating it to the realm of art. The sculptural integrity of his benches is palpable, as he skillfully melds form and function, turning each piece into a visual narrative. (*Jed Daya*)



46

## Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)

### *Artefacts*

dated 2000

signed (lower right)

mixed media

24" x 48" (61 cm x 122 cm)

**P 1,400,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot

Painter, sculptor, and designer Arturo Luz elevated the Philippine art scene to new grander heights. For over 40 years, Luz created masterpieces that in its sophisticated austerity inspired a generation of artists and helped cement Luz's position as one of the most influential Filipino artists.

The 2000 *Artefacts* is Arturo Luz's minimalism at its finest. His mastery of multiple mediums is at full display – Luz's canvases may be minimal but it is not empty. Thin precise lines guide the viewer's eye across the sparse canvas; the work is monochromatic with a plain black background. The

only pop colors are three rectangles placed strategically near the edges of the work, colored in a bright red staple in a Luz canvas. Here, his innate sense of composition shines – the limited elements complement the bare spaces without making the canvas feel empty and lifeless. Even with scant details, Luz's meticulous form and sense of detail is alive and distinguished.

"[Arturo Luz] knows abstraction and austerity," National Artist for Literature Jose Garcia Villa wrote. "The sense of space and balance, he distorts with intuitional rightness and grace — in other words, he is a real artist." (*Hannah Valiente*)



# Lilia Marquinez Palanca

## *The Good Doctor and Great Friend*

Lilia Marquinez Palanca graduated from medical school in 1959, then pursued specialty training in the Long Island College Hospital in New York. Her husband also graduated from the same school and pursued further training in urology at the same institution. Both being very nationalistic, they decided to go back to the Philippines after their many years of training. They started private practice at the De Ocampo general hospital in Nagtahan, Manila. As both a cardiologist and anesthesiologist, their partnership was a formidable union: a “dream team” as some people would call it. At that time they were the envy of a lot of their colleagues. Dra. Palanca would become a pioneer of acupuncture that she had discovered on a trip to China while her husband was part of the team that performed the first kidney transplant in the Philippines. Their achievements were recognized both here and abroad. Academically, they both were professors at their alma mater of the University of Sto. Tomas and could be credited to mentoring the many successful medical and surgical practitioners of today.

Dra. Marquinez Palanca's friendship with Anita started in the late 80's as they lived in the same condominium building on Roxas Boulevard. As her children recall, Mrs. Magsaysay-Ho, was a very private person, but would seek Dra. Palanca out for medical advice. As an internist-cardiologist, the doctor was well suited to address the painter's health concerns. Their relationship became so close that Anita Magsaysay-Ho even became a godmother of one of the doctor's daughters' weddings.

Nevertheless, the gift of the painting came as a complete surprise to Dra. Lilia who never dreamed of asking for anything in return. But more than the value of this masterpiece, it was their great friendship that was honored and remembered through this lyrical work.



TOP: Anita Magsaysay-Ho. MIDDLE: Dra. Lilia Marquinez Palanca. BOTTOM: Portrait of Dra. Lilia Marquinez Palanca by Anita Magsaysay-Ho, signed and dated 2001 with dedication "To dear Lily, with best wishes:".



## Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1914 - 2012)

### *Planting Rice*

signed and dated 1990 (lower left)

oil on canvas

36" x 30" (91 cm x 76 cm)

**P 18,000,000**

#### PROVENANCE

A gift from the artist

# Celebrating Anita Magsaysay-Ho's 110th

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

It may not be entirely accidental that there are so few paintings with the theme "Planting Rice" by Anita Magsaysay-Ho, despite the fact that its iconic subject matter would have been an important narrative in her overarching theme of the Filipina at work.

Perhaps the clue lies in the history of the "Planting Rice" painting which was made famous by the turn-of-the-century artist Fabian de la Rosa. For de la Rosa, this seminal work would win him a gold at the World's Fair of St. Louis in 1904 and would mark the passing of the torch from Juan Luna to de la Rosa himself, as the Spanish empire gave way to the North American.

It would be Fabian's nephew, Fernando Amorsolo, however, who would make "Planting Rice" famous across the archipelago, replicated in countless newspapers and magazines, and most importantly calendars that would grace Filipino homes across the country.

Anita Magsaysay-Ho's first formal training would be at the College of Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines over which both men presided: the former as influential dean and the latter as her instructor.

Anita would very soon shift allegiances from the classical school to the avant-garde world of abstract art championed by the Cranbrook Academy of Art where she went for post-grad studies as well as that melting-pot of cutting-edge art, the Philippine Art Gallery.

From the 1950s onwards, Anita would depict women harvesters, including several works entitled "Sheaves", showing females carrying long golden stalks of rice, a couple of them of women pounding the grain.

Magsaysay-Ho would very rarely depict the iconic scene of planting rice, with only one other documented titled "In



Anita Magsaysay-Ho

the Rice Field" (1962). Her description of "rich green tones and in the Impressionist style" would be the same as if it were written for the work at hand. "This is a scene from my childhood which I remember well — there is great dignity in their work."

In "Planting Rice", three women prepare the rice to be planted in the muddy fields. One woman in the background already stands in the pilapil, ready to press the shoots in the soft earth. The others hold the green stems gracefully as if they were doing a dance. The color palette is extremely soothing in cool blues and violets, very much different from Amorsolo's sunlit vistas.

For Fabian de la Rosa and Fernando Amorsolo, "Planting Rice" would also be a metaphor of female fertility, certainly a symbol of the docile, compliant Filipina woman, the dutiful helpmate of the farmer and his life. She would be silent, smiling, and self-sacrificing. In Anita Magsaysay Ho's delicate but firm hands, "Planting Rice" would become a story of the strong woman, fending for herself and achieving without boundaries. It's a worthy symbol on the occasion of her 110th anniversary, as one of the foremost of the Filipino Moderns.

This year, the Venice Biennale will celebrate Anita Magsaysay-Ho at the 60th International Art Exhibition, the centerpiece of the influential biennial, where her art and life will be celebrated in the group show "Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere."

It will not only highlight artists who are foreigners, immigrants, expatriates, diasporic emigres, exiled individuals, or refugees, but more importantly, spotlight artworks created in the past century that are now points of reference for the new generations."

Rare Rendition of the Iconic Planting Rice  
*A Homage to the Filipina Woman*





48

## Macario Vitalis (1898 - 1990)

### *Paysage*

signed and dated 1944 (verso)

oil on canvas

20 1/2" x 40 1/2" (52 cm x 103 cm)

**P 500,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Europe

Macario Vitalis's plight during the Second World War is an unfortunate one – born in Ilocos Sur, Vitalis left the country for San Francisco where he studied at the California School of Fine Arts. He had with him a Commonwealth of the Philippines, USA passport, allowing him entry to the US and later to Europe, where he stayed briefly in London before eventually settling in France.

However, it was this US passport that led to his incarceration in 1941. The Second World War had set its stage on European and Asian soil and when the Germans marched through France in 1940, Vitalis was noted as an "enemy of the state" due to his unfortunate passport (the Philippines at the time

was a Commonwealth of the United States) and in July 1941 was brought to Stalag 23 in Compiègne. Here he stayed for three years where he painted and drew scenes he saw in the camp before he was released in 1944.

The lot at hand *Paysage* was created in the year he was released. Following his incarceration, he returned to the western suburbs of Paris called Puteaux where he had settled prior to the war. It was here where he became acquainted with Camille Renault who owned the theater-restaurant "Big Boy" and with him came the Puteaux Group, a collective of artists associated with Cubism and Orphism who gave Vitalis his first encounter with Cubism.

*Paysage*, meaning "landscape" in French, is a Cubist depiction of a sprawling urban city. He uses bright luminous colors, using them less as an accurate depiction and more as an intuitive representation. The result is a vibrant piece that features yellow skies, violet roofs, and green shadows. With his extensive knowledge of cubist impressionism, Vitalis executes his vision elegantly with his dynamic color palette, expressive composition, and refined interplay of space and planes. (*Hannah Valiente*)





**49** PROPERTY FROM THE DON J. ANTONIO ARANETA COLLECTION

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892-1972)

*Nude*

signed and dated 1921 (lower right)  
pastel on paper  
9 1/4" x 10" (23 cm x 25 cm)

**P 300,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.

Fernando Amorsolo's depiction of the female form shows not only his celebration of and particular fondness for the female form but also the maestro's profound familiarity with the human anatomy. As a matter of fact, during his first year of higher art studies at the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts (1909 – 1910), Amorsolo was awarded a medal for achieving the highest excellence in anatomy. When Amorsolo studied in Spain under the sponsorship of Don Enrique Zobel, he even obtained permission from the Prado Museum to copy Francisco Goya's iconic *La maja desnuda*.



Fernando Amorsolo in his studio

In this particular 1921 piece, made a year after Amorsolo's homecoming from his brief yet prolific seven-month Spanish sojourn, the revered artist renders the female form using graceful lines and varied textures that capture Philippine classical realism at its finest. The result is a work that exudes gentleness and elegance in bodily expression. *(Adrian Maranan)*



50

## Benedicto Cabrera (b. 1942)

### *Larawan Series*

signed and dated 2005 (lower right)

acrylic on paper

22" x 14 1/2" (56 cm x 37 cm)

**P 800,000**

*"Brown is the color of Bencab's art."*

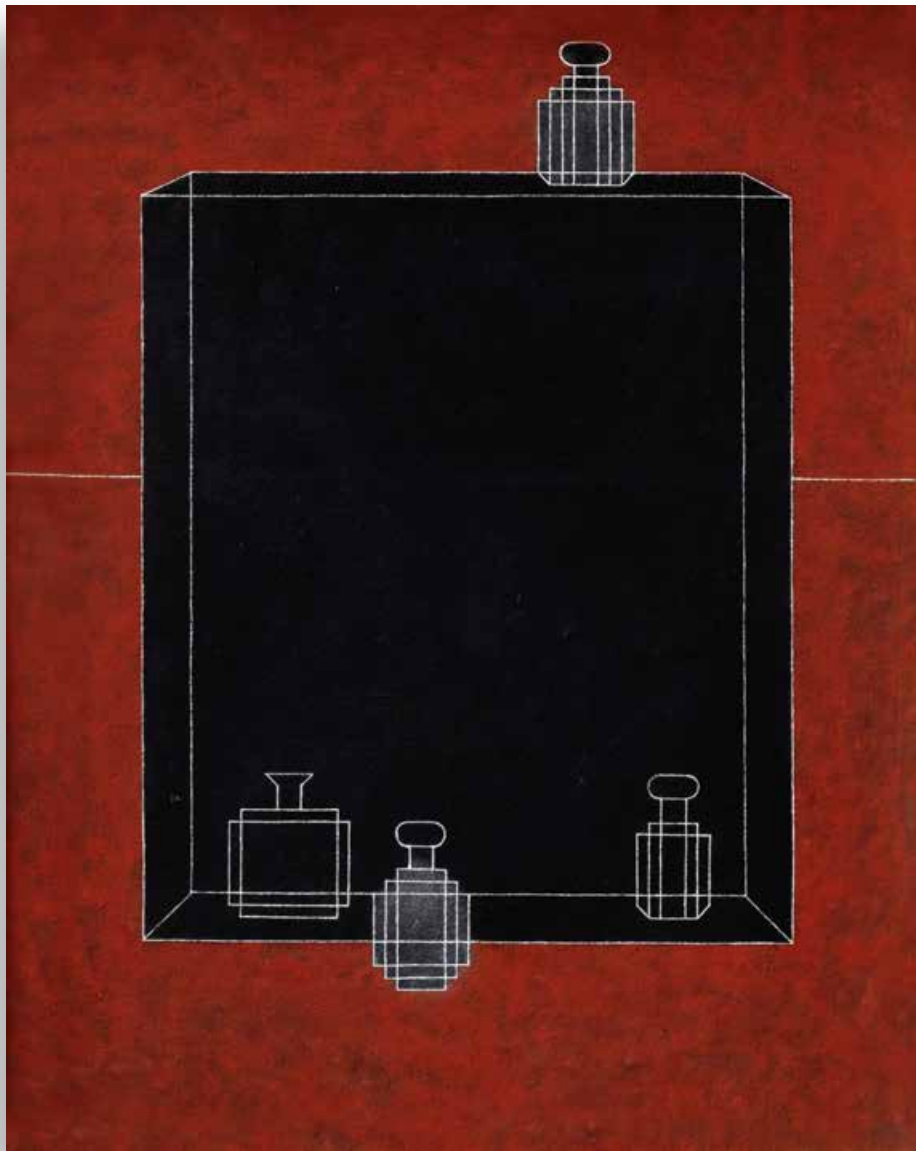
This is the bold statement of artist and art critic Cid Reyes in his essay "The Color of Nostalgia" in the 2002 Bencab book. From his earliest works of scavengers to his quintessential Larawan and Sabel series, Bencab's brush depicts the deep kayumanggi skin of his Filipino subjects, the sepia of the women's baro't saya, the brown on the common Filipino household items all done using his "Bencab brown."

This "Bencab brown" as described by Reyes is present in the lot at hand. Painted a year before Bencab was conferred the highly venerable title of National Artist in 2006, the artist

depicts a beloved muse – the common Filipino – in a plain camel brown background. The brown-skinned brown-haired figure wears a plain white camisa de chino and pants with their back facing the viewer. In contrast to a frontal depiction, Bencab emphasizes the back of the figure, guiding the eyes of the viewers past the canvas and into the unknown the figure peers into.

Bencab had left the country in 1969, settling in London to raise his family before returning permanently to Baguio in 1986. These seventeen years of expatriate life brought about a homesickness that led to him rediscovering his love for his country through maps, prints, and photos he could find in flea markets.

Thus, his works carry a certain love for his home country that is tempered with nostalgia and distance. Through the hunched figure in this work, Bencab manages to translate the uncertainty the Philippines faces as well as the yearning for a better and brighter tomorrow. *(Hannah Valiente)*



51

**Arturo Luz** (1926 - 2021)

*4 Bottles*

signed (lower right)

ca. 2000

acrylic on canvas

30" x 24" (76 cm x 61 cm)

**P 900,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot

In 1988, after resigning from his government posts, Arturo Luz embarked on a journey to Southeast Asia. Armed with a camera, Luz captured Cambodia's Angkor Wat, Indonesia's Borobudur, and Thailand's Sukhothai, even going past the Southeast Asian borders to Nepal, Pakistan, and India. These travels brought to Luz's attention the breathtaking beauty of Asia's ancient temple sites, inspiring him enough to create his *Cities of the Past* series.

This 1994 work *4 Bottles* comes from an extension of this series entitled *Objects of the Past*. Like the *Cities of the Past* series, which transformed the sceneries he encountered during his Asian sojourn into a composite recollection of the sites, *Objects of the Past* utilizes still-life to evoke an image of a distant culture. As written by Cid Reyes in Luz's monograph, Luz's still-life creates a "tableau of pre-Hispanic pottery and Chinese pottery."

In the lot at hand, the titular four bottles sit atop a box-like figure, white lines against black. Luz's brilliant composition emphasizes rather than negates the spatial isolation. Perspective is almost nonexistent, with Luz stating: "I want my viewers to be puzzled by it. I am not interested in the physical appearance of things but rather the nature of things."

Indeed, *4 Bottles* puzzles his audience in a way that is distinctly Arturo Luz. He strips his still life down to its core, powerful in its austerity and bold in its interrogation. Luz's works transcend mere aesthetics – it is a cerebral experience that paves the way for connection and self-discovery. Through his enchanting fusion of linearism and clever wit, Luz offers a contemplative intersection between the figurative and the abstract. (*Hannah Valiente*)



ABOVE: Architect Emmanuel "Manny" A. Miñana. Photo by Ed Simon / Bluprint

## Arch. Emmanuel Miñana: *Designing Homes and Art*

*"I have a deep affection for Filipino culture. However, I am not as drawn in expressing the nostalgic, literal or decorative iterations of what is Filipino. Instead, I am interested in abstracting familiar forms from the vernacular, hoping to reinvent our past with contemporary translations of simplicity, context, elegance and comfort.*

*"Through the language of light, energy, technology, craft, materiality and a sense of place, I endeavor to create peaceful, harmonious environments that capture soul and radiate spirit."*

—ARCHITECT EMMANUEL "MANNY" A. MIÑANA

Hailing from Cebu City, Architect Emmanuel "Manny" A. Miñana is one of the country's foremost exponents of Filipino modern architecture today. Armed with a BA in Architecture from the University of the Philippines in 1984, Architect Miñana would establish EA Miñana Architects (EAMA) in 1990, becoming its Principal Architect and steering it towards profound specialization in architecture design, architectural interiors design, furniture/fixtures/accessories design, and conceptual design. EAMA has also birthed numerous residential, corporate, commercial, religious, and institutional projects in the Philippines, Bali, Hong Kong, Kuantan (Malaysia), Lake Como (Italy), and Riyadh.

A distinguished and awarded architect, Miñana became the first-ever Filipino architect to be shortlisted in the 2014 edition of the prestigious World Architecture Festival (dubbed "The Oscars of Architecture") in Singapore for EAMA's Villa Marina in Cabuyao, Laguna.

In 2015, Architect Miñana received the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information Award for Excellence in Architecture. Then, in 2018, he was conferred the *Haligi ng Dangal* special citation from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. He was also the first recipient of the Beacon Seal of Excellence Award from the United Architects of the Philippines in 2020.

Having been mentored by and forged friendships with two titans of modern Filipino architecture, Leandro Locsin and Francisco Mañosa, Architect Miñana believes that "modern Filipino

architecture is the art and practice of designing buildings that are reflective of the mind and spirit of its people today."

Architect Miñana has also delved into photography, painting, art collecting, and philanthropy. At a very young age, he had already been well-exposed to the rudiments of art, having won a nationwide art contest organized by Air France and the Philippine Art Educators Association when he was only 12. One of the judges, Juvenal Sansó, praised Miñana's raw talent. Miñana's winning piece in that watershed exhibition, *Calesa*, was exhibited in 1974 at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, and at just 13, he was invited to the exhibition's opening.

He also pursued professional design programs at Harvard's Graduate School of Design from 1996 to 2011. Architect Miñana has been a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Manila since 2005. He is a member of the Manila Advisory Board of the International Care Ministries (ICM) and is a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Architect Miñana's first foray into art collecting began in 1979 when he acquired his first painting from Betsy Westendorp. He has since become dear friends with the eminent artist until her passing in 2022.

Architect Miñana first met Ronald Ventura in his studio in 2017. He was taken by the painting, *AIRHOME*, which struck him for its linear and architectonic quality. He acquired the painting directly from the artist shortly thereafter. (*Adrian Maranan*)



ABOVE: Mango Residence in Ayala Alabang Village; MIDDLE LEFT: Villa Marina in Sta. Elena, Laguna; MIDDLE RIGHT: Mango Residence in Ayala Alabang Village; BOTTOM: Villa Marina in Sta. Elena, Laguna, photos by Andrew C. Ong & Francisco Guerrero, EAMiñana Architects

**Ronald Ventura** (b. 1973)*Airhome*

signed and dated 2016 (lower right)

oil on canvas

84" x 60" (213 cm x 152 cm)

**P 8,000,000**

## PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

## LITERATURE

Paparoni, Demetrio. *Ronald Ventura: Works 1998 - 2017*.

Milan: Skira editore S.p.A., 2018. Full-color photograph on page 177 and painting description on page 174.

## EXHIBITED

Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei,

*Project: Finding Home-Ronald Ventura Solo Exhibition, Taipei, Taiwan, September 15 - November 20, 2016*

ABOVE: Arch. Emmanuel with Ronald Ventura; BELOW: *Airhome*, on display at Ventura's Project: Finding Home-Ronald Ventura Solo Exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) Taipei

Contemporary artist Ronald Ventura ranks among the leading figures of Southeast Asian art.

Whitestone Gallery in Tokyo writes: "Ventura's work features a complex layering of images and styles, ranging from hyperrealism, cartoons and graffiti. He views this layering process as a metaphor for the multifaceted national identity of the Philippines."

Ventura has received impressive accolades for his work since the late 1990s, including the 2001 Artist of the Year prize from Art Manilla and the 2005 Ateneo Art Gallery Studio Residency Grant in Sydney, Australia.

His first American solo exhibition, *Metaphysics of Skin* at Tyler Rollins Fine Art in 2009, garnered critical praise, as did *Project: Finding Home* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Taipei in 2016. One outstanding piece at Ventura's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) exhibition in Taipei in 2016 was *AIRHOME*. This oil on canvas was painted in 2016 as Ventura's homage to the Philippine nation's ubiquitous Overseas Filipino Worker or OFW.

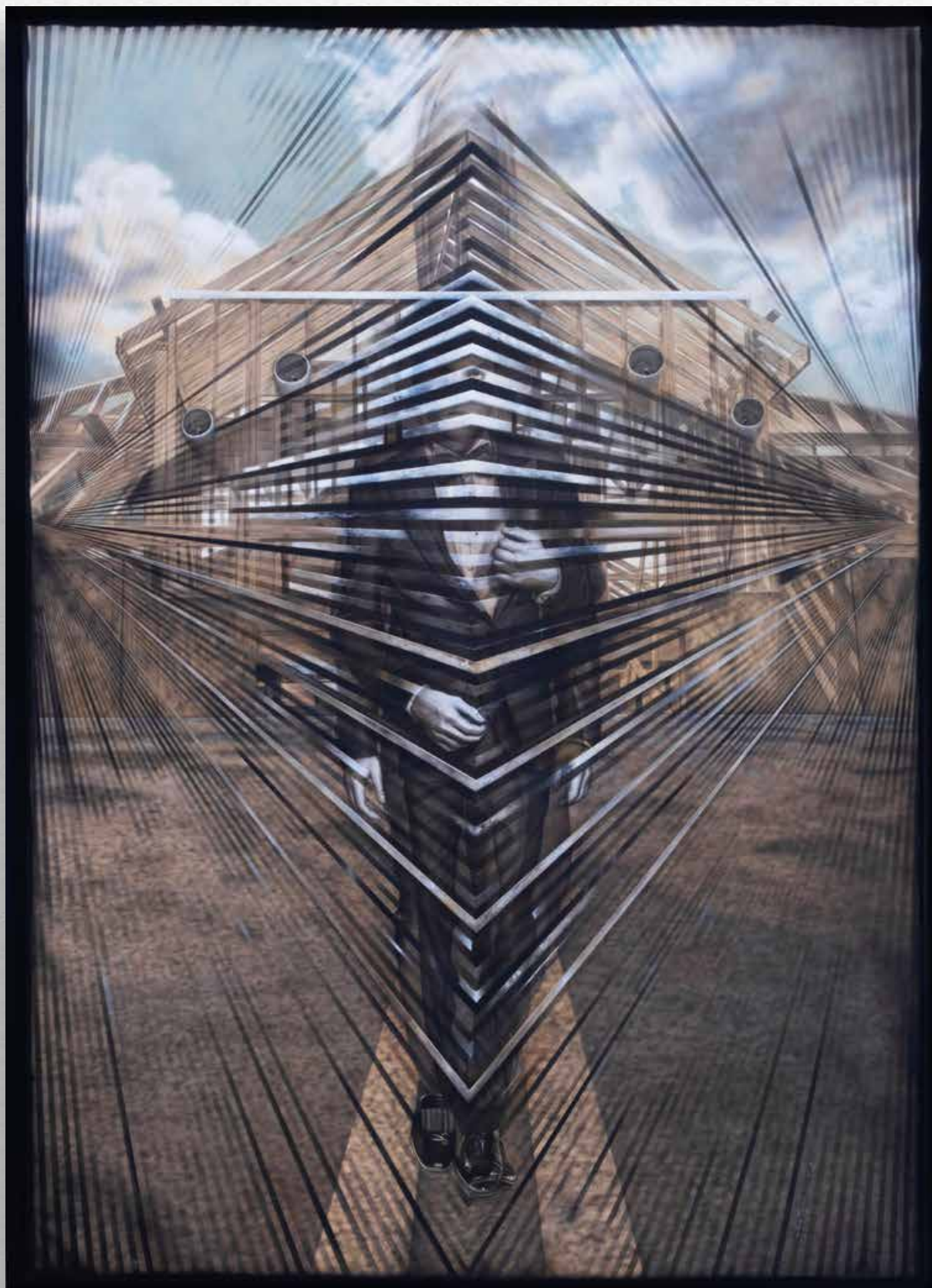
This strikingly complex and multi-layered painting focuses on the concept of national identity and the arrival of the OFW

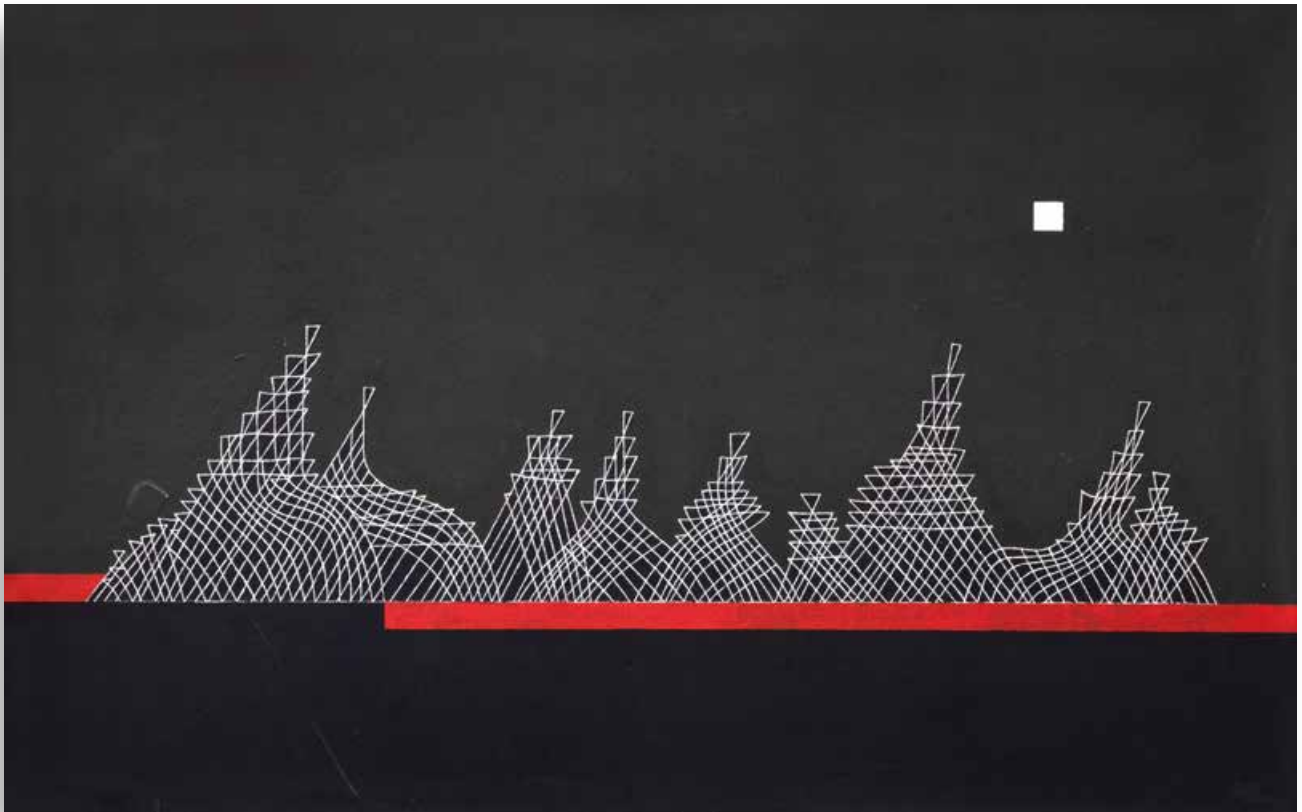
as modern-day national hero. Elegant and muted tones of taupes, browns and grays celebrate the sophisticated ascent symbolized in the painting's central figure: the Filipino construction professional and worker.

He is taking flight as he travels to various construction sites around the world: the Middle East, the Americas, Europe, Asia. In *AIRHOME*, he has left his native land and has replaced his home with a new, peripatetic existence. He is walking forward, as if out of the canvas, towards a prosperous future. This gentrification is symbolized by the figure's suit, dress shoes and self-assured stance, alighting in center stage at the intersection of an intricate two-point perspective composition. His expertise, skilled labor and sacrifice have brought honor to his family and country. A soaring jet further illustrates the drive and dynamic flight of this modern-day Filipino, a source of national pride.

Nowhere else in Ventura's body of work has there been such an artistic chronicling of the rise of the OFW. This important work, *AIRHOME*, embodies Ventura's statement on the socio-economic success of his country's OFWs in the last number of decades. (*Architect Emmanuel A. Miñana*)

The Miñana Ventura  
*Archetype for an Architect*





53 PROPERTY FROM THE DERRICK AND RIA SANTOS COLLECTION

## Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)

### *The Great Stupas*

signed (lower right & verso) dated 1995 (verso)

acrylic on canvas

30" x 48" (76 cm x 122 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot

The 1990s are considered a high point in Arturo Luz's artistic career, a renaissance and revitalization of all sorts. Towards the end of the preceding decade, the burdened Luz resigned from all his bureaucratic responsibilities at the Design Center Philippines, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, and the Museum of Philippine Art. He would then embark on an extensive trip all over Asia, visiting Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar), Pakistan, Nepal, and India.

Armed with a camera, Luz took beautiful shots of the ravishing ancient architecture of those countries: majestic temple complexes, monumental palaces, and sacred royal tombs. Right before his very eyes, Asian architecture seemingly soared into the hallowed expanse of his imagination.

The dynamic culmination of this wonder and awe was Luz's iconic *Cities of the Past* Series, one in a series of works during the 1990s that would become the quintessential *Arturo Luz: Celebration, Carnival Forms, Forms of Amusement, and Cities of the Past*.

Luz had begun exploring the subject of the city during the early part of his career, starting in the latter part of the 1950s. The inherent similarity of the earlier iterations of his urban subjects and the *Cities of the Past* lies in their neo-realist aim of reconstruction, albeit in two strikingly different modes: the former an allusion to the alienating aspects of urban living, especially in the post-war milieu.

The brilliance of the *Cities of the Past* lies not only in Luz's mathematical and geometrical precision but in his profound aim of reimagining, reconstructing, and perhaps "preserving" the grandeur of ancient Asian architecture and the thriving and sprawling spaces they had occupied before the influx of westernization in the guise of "globalization." In his *Cities of the Past*, history, cultural ingenuity, and heritage become alive more than ever. (*Adrian Maranan*)





54

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**Justin Nuyda** (1944 - 2022)

*Abstract*

signed and dated 1982 (lower left)

oil on canvas

24" x 28" (61 cm x 71 cm)

**P 700,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank the artist's estate  
for confirming the authenticity of this lot

Renowned as a highly esteemed modernist, Justin 'Tiny' Nuyda has artfully crafted a mesmerizing, lyrically surreal genre of art that captivates the observer. His artistic prowess is vividly evident in a spectrum of works, ranging from ethereal abstract compositions to the enchanting landscapes emerging from his acclaimed 'Mindscape' series. Nuyda, with finesse and technical adeptness, skillfully translates his stylized subjects into visually compelling expressions, showcasing an exemplary command of his craft.

Nuyda's oeuvre seeks to unearth the myriad images, ideas, and concepts that collectively occupy the human consciousness. In this exploration, the elements embedded in Nuyda's works strike a delicate balance between the familiar and the alien, symbolizing the vast possibilities of meaning within the intricate recesses of the human mind. Each brushstroke serves as an invitation into a world where familiarity intertwines with the enigmatic, beckoning viewers to delve deeper into the nuanced layers of interpretation. *(Jed Daya)*



55 PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A DISTINGUISHED FAMILY

**Arturo Luz** (1926 - 2021)

*Moonscape*

ca. 1960

enamel on canvas

16" x 60" (41 cm x 152 cm)

**P 5,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Metropolitan Museum of Manila

LITERATURE

Reyes, Cid. *Arturo Luz*. Makati City: Ayala Foundation and The Crucible for Globe Telecom, 1999. Full-color photograph and painting description on page 122.

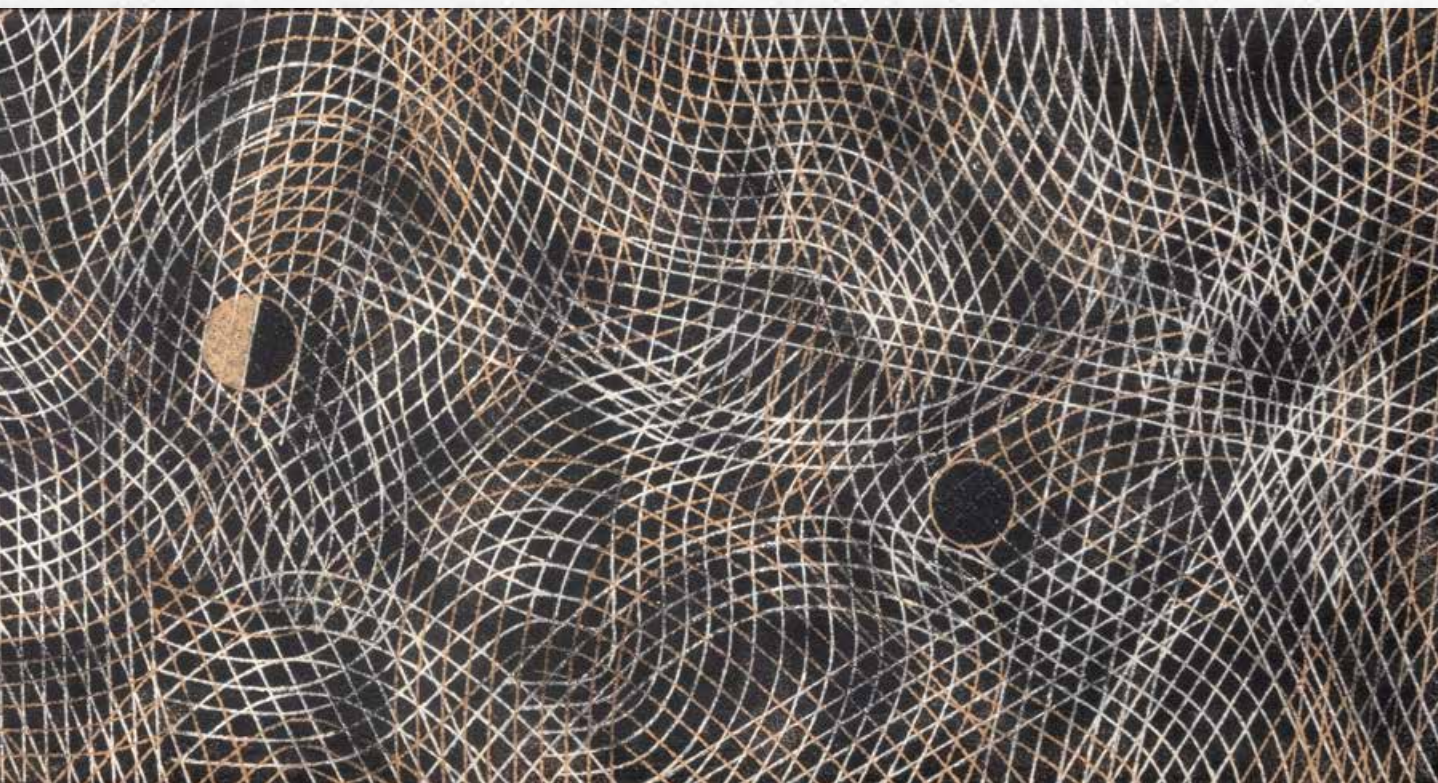
EXHIBITED

Metropolitan Museum of Manila, *Arturo Luz: A Retrospective*, Manila, 1995

A piece that forms part of Arturo Luz's early works, *Moonscape* comes from the artist's series of works in the early 1960s focusing on skyscapes. It is a progression from his earlier cityscapes of the late 1950s, a body of work that gave him two successive first prize nods at the Art Association of the Philippines Annual Art Exhibition: "*Venezia No. III*" at the 1958 Annual and "City" at the 1959 Semi-Annual.

Both the "cityscapes" and "skyscapes" series, in their form and essence, would trace their origins to the "carnivals" and "musicians" series that captured Luz's propensity for the starkness of linear forms. This penchant for lines, Luz says in Cid Reyes' monograph on him, was influenced by the prehistoric art found in the caves of Lascaux and Altamira and the American painter, illustrator, and cartoonist Saul Steinberg, whose eccentric linearity found reimagination in Luz's oeuvre. In fact, this penchant for linear forms would mark his triumphant coming-of-age in the post-war Philippine art scene: his first-prize win (for Modern painting) for "Bagong Taon" at the 1952 AAP Annual.

Much like his "cityscapes," Luz's "skyscapes" were rendered in rectangular canvases made intentionally by the artist to offer a panoramic expanse, an unbridled spectacle of the heavenly domain. In *Moonscape*, we are greeted by invigorating web-like, sinuous patterns that seemingly evoke wreaths of stars and billows of clouds blanketing a breathtaking universe of



tranquility that is the enigmatic night sky. Like the Japanese concept of shibui, Luz imbibes liberty in visual exegesis to the viewer; one can imagine that under the sweeping lines borne from Luz's logical spontaneity can be found a city lulled to sleep by the night sky, in which the baffling impenetrability of the still largely uncharted cosmos quiets us as it goes right past our weary eyes.

Luz's use of enamel, a ubiquitous characteristic of his early works, was necessitated by the fact that painting materials, especially oil, were innately expensive, and the post-war situation submerged the Filipino artist under the throes of financial constraints. Luz succinctly narrates in the Reyes monograph:

*"In the early days, none of us were concerned about the high quality of our material. We would grab just any material. We never worried that our paintings would survive after 200 years. We had no concern for the purity or sanctity of materials. Acid-free boards were unheard of."*

Nevertheless, Luz's exploration of enamel evokes the neo-realist spirit of experimentation in the immediate post-war period. "I preferred to use enamel. Although enamel is the crudest, worst possible paint an artist can use, I liked its viscosity..." Luz says in the same monograph. *"I would dip my brush in the can, then rub it on paper till the brush is nearly dry. Only then do I apply the brush on the canvas."*

*Just skimming the surface. I would use various colors. Yellow. White. Red. Black. In the end, you can't tell what color it is. It begins to shimmer and show its iridescence. Far greater is the idea that since the layers are so thin, so numerous, so dry, the painting becomes indestructible. After nearly fifty years, I have never seen a painting of mine crack, peel off, or change. That's my big satisfaction."*

Moonscape would be included in Luz's 1995 retrospective at The Metropolitan Museum of Manila, which he founded in 1976 and ultimately supervised as Director from 1976 to 1986. (Adrian Maranan)



ABOVE: A view of Arturo Luz's 1995 retrospective at The Metropolitan Museum of Manila, where Moonscape was exhibited. © Metropolitan Museum of Manila Facebook page

**Fernando Zóbel** (1924 - 1984)*Estudio*

signed (lower left &amp; verso) and dated 1965 (verso)

oil on canvas

18 1/4" x 30" (46 cm x 76 cm)

**P 5,000,000**

## LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel:**Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022.

Listed as nº "65-54 (M65-11)" with full-color photograph and painting description on page 321.

"Estudio II." *The Sunday Times*, March 27, 1966. Black-and-white illustration.

## EXHIBITED

The Luz Gallery, *Fernando Zóbel: One-Man Exhibition of Paintings*,

Manila, March 19 - April 1, 1966.



ABOVE: Estudio at Zóbel's 1966 exhibition at The Luz Gallery.

Fernando Zóbel's *Estudio* comes from the artist's watershed exhibition at The Luz Gallery titled "*Fernando Zóbel: One-Man Exhibition of Paintings*" from March 19 to April 1, 1966. *Estudio* accompanied a series of works that showcased Zóbel's triumphant return to color, which he starkly abandoned in his *Serie Negra* period of 1959 to 1962. Zóbel painted *Estudio* in Manila, finishing the work on December 2, 1965.

*Estudio* also came from the same year when Zóbel finally decided to establish his Museo de Arte Abstracto Español in Cuenca. It was in 1963 when the concept of establishing a permanent home for his collection of paintings formed within Zóbel's psyche. In April of 1963, Zóbel went to Toledo with artist-friend Gerardo Rueda, hoping to find a suitable location, but failed. After a few days, Zóbel was invited by another artist-friend, Gustavo Torner, "to spend the day in Cuenca to show him his house and take him around the city," as Villalba Salvador puts it. By June, the museum had begun to materialize, with Zóbel picking the location of the "Hanging Houses," which the Mayor of Cuenca, Rodrigo Lozano de la Fuente, had offered to the artist.

The conception of the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español reinvigorated Zóbel's creative mind. And with the delight he found in the vibrant and historic city of Cuenca came the

emancipation of colors in his canvas. Villalba Salvador notes: "Once he has decided to set up the Museum of Abstract Art in Cuenca, his trips to this city are constant; for years, it will be on the road and in the city that he will find most of his themes for landscapes, as in *Tarancón* (1964), *Balcones* (1964), *Carretera de Valencia* (1966) and many others which he will paint in the course of time. Little by little, the city and its surrounding area take possession of the painter, and Cuenca fills his notebooks, his pictures, and also his writing."

*Estudio* exudes a meditative calmness that emanates from the composition's central core, characterized by swathes of blacks (reminiscent of the artist's *Serie Negra*) surrounded by varying gradations of burnt ochres. Do they evoke the ebb and tide of Zóbel's beloved Jucar as seen from one of the windows of his Cuenca studio, that majestic river running through the heart of Cuenca, which invigorated Zóbel so much and made him return to color once more?

Spanish art and literary critic Juan Manuel Bonet writes in his essay *Fernando Zóbel: Revisited* that "Remember by painting" was "Zóbel's maxim." Maybe Zóbel, even though situated thousands of miles away from his dear Cuenca, wades in the ocean of his evocations as he begins to slowly immortalize the city and its river through his visual language of poetic lyricism. (*Adrian Maranan*)



*“The years elapsing between 1963 and 1975 constitute the longest stage in Zóbel’s painting. This year, he returns to color and slowly, the siennas, dark browns, ochres and greys start to appear...The theme of memory, hinted at in previous series, begins to take shape in this new stage, in which Zóbel, by means of forms, objects and imagination, seeks “to remember in pictorial terms”, as he himself put it. In the prelude to this colorist stage, Zóbel develops the idea of painting based on the memory of the experience lived.”*

—ANGELES VILLALBA SALVADOR, WRITING ON THE ARTIST’S CHRONOLOGY

**Juvenal Sansó** (b. 1929)*Unreined Growth*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1970s

acrylic on canvas

28 1/2" x 21 1/4" (72 cm x 54 cm)

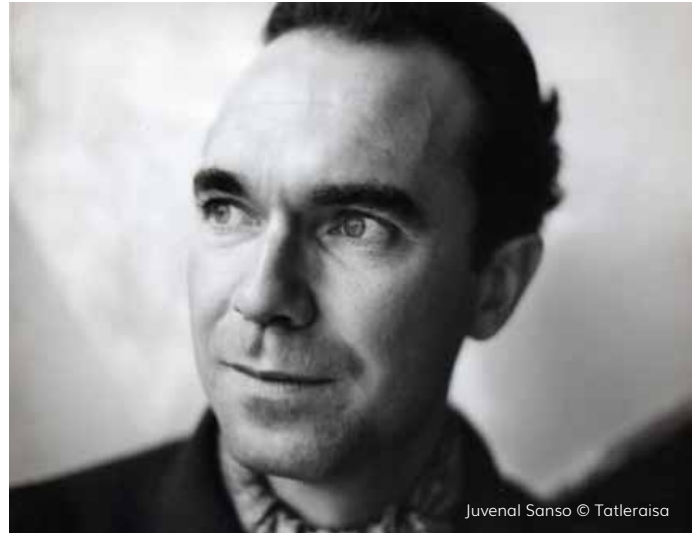
**P 1,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Fundacion Sansó confirming the authenticity of this lot

The landscapes and still-life on Juvenal Sansó took an invigorating transformation in the 1970s. The previous decades saw Sansó's "Black Period," where his oeuvre teems with twisted features and grotesque sceneries borne out of his harrowing experiences during the Second World War as well as the alienation he experienced growing up as a visible foreigner in the Philippines.

However, while working with his friend and mentor Edouard Georg, Georg told Sansó: "Why don't you do me a flower instead of this head? I would like to see you do a flower." The suggestion couldn't have come at a better time – the 1960s and 1970s were a period of travel for Sansó. He spent this time in Paris, Brittany, and the Philippines where he encountered vastly different landscapes. In the face of the constant and varying changes in his environment, Sansó's work slowly took on a tinge of romanticism, shedding the overt pessimism of his Black Period pieces.

*Unreined Growth* (ca 1970s) was created at this decisive period of Sansó's career. Bright and lively, the artist portrayed the vibrancy of the flora he encountered along his journeys. Perhaps it is the thriving plant life in Brittany or maybe a cluster of flora in the Philippines. Wherever it may be, Sansó depicts the beauty of nature in verdant greens and light yellows, a refreshing take on a commonplace theme.



Sansó knows how to extract from nature a specific image to evoke a powerful reaction. "He is ... poignant with rotting bushes and lichens," writes Parisien-Liberé's Frank Elgar. "When he interlaces leaves and flowers of imagination to form arborescent bouquets, impenetrable bushes, strange flora, like an obsession – all these are born from a poet's heart."

Indeed, Juvenal Sansó is a poet of a painter, masterful in his craft and *Unreined Growth* is veritable proof of his lyricism and unique sentimentality. (*Hannah Valiente*)

# Sanso's Eternal Blooms



**Hernando R. Ocampo** (1911 - 1978)

*A Song for the Month of May*

signed and dated 1976 (lower right and verso)

acrylic on canvas

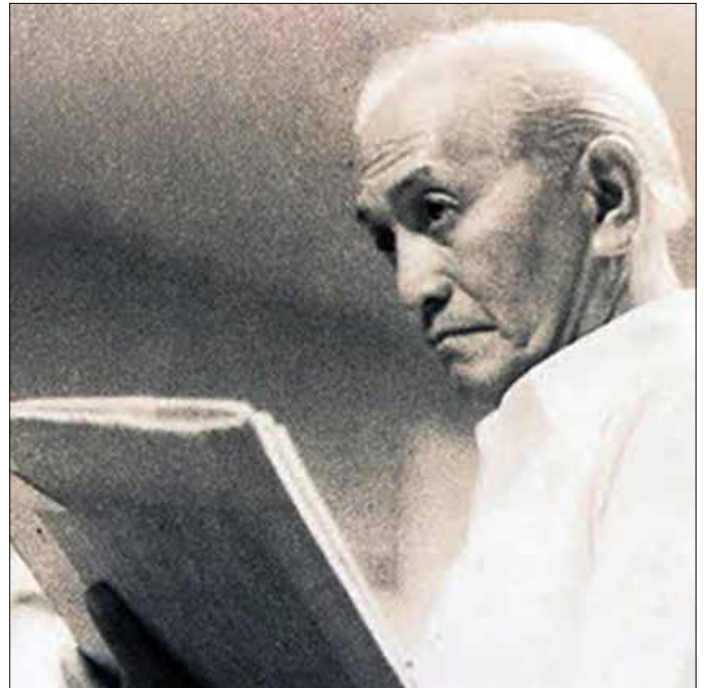
40" x 30" (102 cm x 76 cm)

**P 4,800,000**

**H.R.** Ocampo masterfully suffused his central imagery with a myriad of colors. The essence of color permeates these themes, demonstrating a disciplined strength yet profound sensitivity. Ocampo's canvases pulsate with the vibrancy of tropical sunlight, the verdancy of forests, the vividness of folk art, the flamboyance of town fiestas, and most notably, the radiant hues of the sari-manok, a bird revered in Muslim tradition. The specific use of morning greens, among other hues, accentuates the harmony and interplay of complementary colors, focusing the viewer's attention on the dynamic interrelation of color and texture. This synergy crafts a distinctive lyrical expressiveness, transcending the confines of the depicted subjects.

Ocampo articulates a preference for exploring the interplay of shapes, hues, values, textures, and lines within a given space, eschewing the mere replication of nature's photographic likeness. His artistic preoccupation lies with fabricating new dimensions of reality, defined by nuances of tension and dynamics, rather than depicting traditional emotional spectrums like hatred, love, or anger.

The lot at hand is situated within the context of Ocampo's later creative period, notably as he approached the final chapters of his life. The year 1976 marked a prolific phase in Ocampo's career, during which he ambitiously produced 65 new works to commemorate his 65th birthday. This phase of his oeuvre reflects a departure from the thematic preoccupations of his earlier years, which were predominantly imbued with political, philosophical, religious, and social connotations. Emerging from a generation profoundly shaped by the experiences of war and poverty, Ocampo's later works, including "A Song for

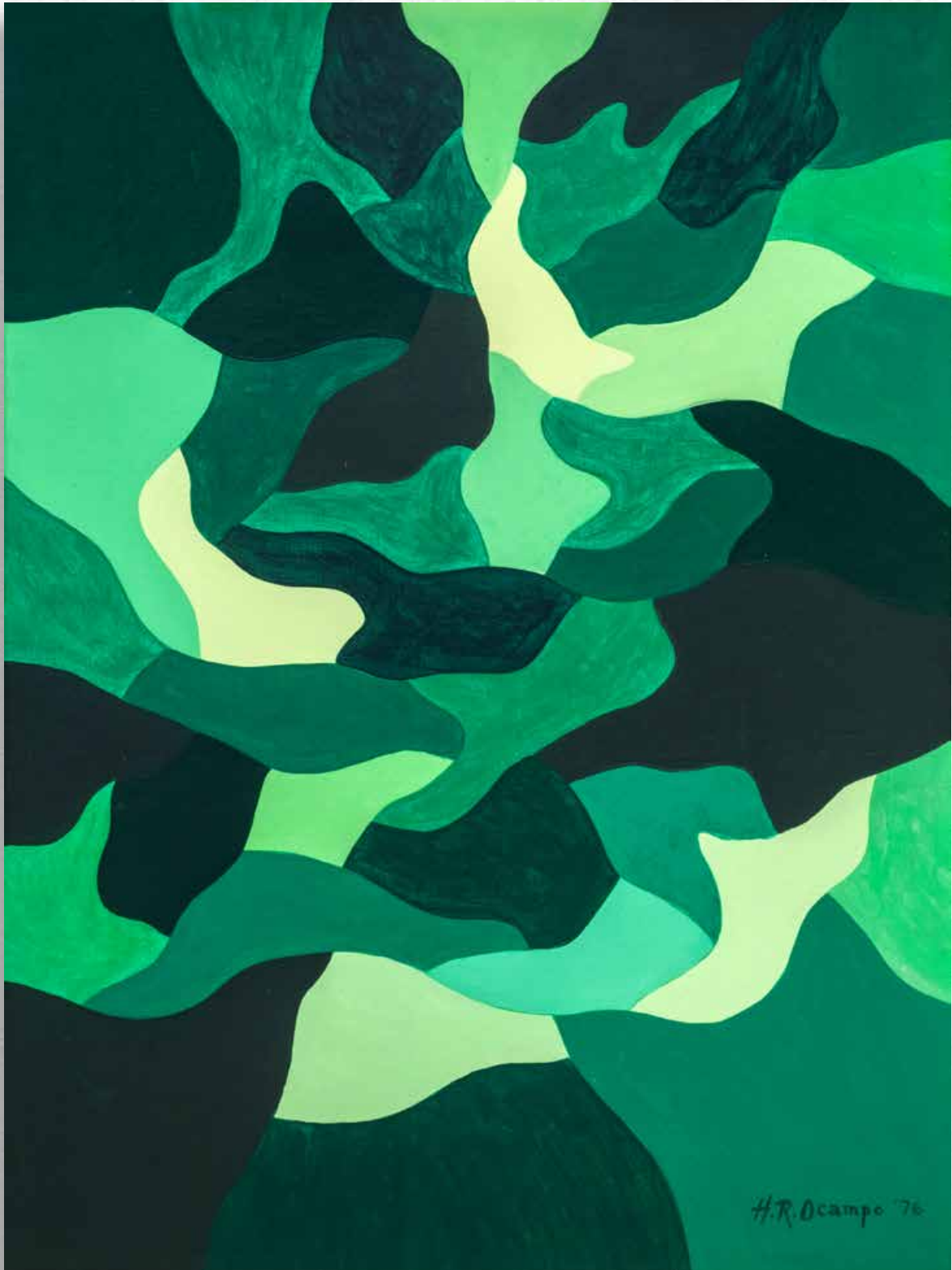


Hernando Ocampo © Galleria Duemila

"the Month of May," underscore a refined exploration of his artistic process. Here, the emphasis shifts towards an introspective study of color, line, shape, and form, demonstrating a nuanced evolution in his approach to art. This transition not only highlights Ocampo's mastery over visual elements but also signifies a deeper, more contemplative engagement with the medium, free from the explicit narrative constraints that characterized his initial phases of work. (*Ysabella Vistan*)



H.R. Ocampo  
*Homage to the Flores de Mayo*



## Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

### *Family*

signed and dated 1999 (lower right)

oil on canvas

36" x 60" (91 cm x 152 cm)

**P 7,000,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank the West Gallery for confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Ever the evolving artist, Mauro Malang Santos is noted for his distinctive and varying styles. Self-aware with his limited attention span, his differing aesthetic output is perhaps Malang's best selling point. "I certainly do not regard myself as a 'thinking' painter. ... I wouldn't know how to justify why I paint the way I do. There are no 'messages' in my paintings," he said in an interview with Cid Reyes. The end result is an emotion-driven oeuvre that is sure to evoke a deep-seated intensity from its viewer.

However, this lack of a uniform style does not mean Malang lacks discipline in his craft. "I do not believe in doing different subjects just for the sake of changing subjects," he said in the same interview. "I think you have to master one image, one form."

And commit to one image Malang does. Multiple depictions of *barung-barong*, flowers, and landscapes occupy his canvases and with the lot at hand, the muse that Malang depicts are women. A child in the 1930s, it was common for a young Malang to encounter women going about their way in their butterfly-sleeved dresses. It was a crossroad of tradition and modernism and Malang's women recalled the traditionality of the early 1900s while embodying the modernity of his times.

In this 1999 work, three figures – all big feet and big hands and pinpricks for eyes as is common with Malang's dramatizations – sat shoulder to shoulder; one figure held a toddler on her lap while another had a child clinging to her skirts. Malang shows off his cunning relationship with colors – deep blues undercut with vibrant reds and rich greens. "There is no color he avoids, no hue or shades that he cannot orchestrate in his palette," Cid Reyes writes and the lot at hand is an indubitable proof of Malang's unorthodox palette and headstrong character. (*Hannah Valiente*)



# The Malang Mothers

*The Fruit of Family*





60

**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)

*Flower Vendors*

signed (lower left)

ca. 1980

oil on canvas

30" x 36" (76 cm x 91 cm)

**P 700,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

Oscar Zalameda's artistic lexicon is characterized by cubist abstraction and a fidelity to folk motifs, situates him as a pivotal figure in modern Filipino artistry. His global sojourn, which saw him refine his craft in the cosmopolitan locales of San Francisco and Paris, infused his work with a European sensibility while preserving the indigenous soul of the Philippines.

In the tableau presented, Zalameda's affinity for native scenes is vividly apparent. The canvas is animated by the depiction of three flower vendors, captured in a moment of everyday grace, are portrayed with a sense of inherent nobility that Zalameda crafts through the interplay of muted yet richly hued tones.

The trio is enmeshed in an activity that is both mundane and sacred—their daily trade of flowers. The central figure, with a poise that commands the canvas, holds a profusion of blooms that inject a delicate vibrancy into the scene. Her companions, equally integral, engage in the subtle dance of their occupation. There is a sense of serene motion, of lives intertwined with the beauty they sell.

Zalameda's work here is a poignant reflection on the collective experience, a narrative told in the silent language of shape and color. His palette, while restrained, speaks volumes, suggesting the depth of the Philippine landscape and the spirit of its people. (*Ysabella Vistan*)



61

**Angelito Antonio** (b. 1939)

*Birdman*

signed and dated 1975 (lower right)

oil on canvas

36" x 36" (91 cm x 91 cm)

**P 400,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

When Angelito Antonio created this captivating piece titled *Birdman*, he had been teaching at the University of Santo Tomas College of Architecture and Fine Arts, where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1962. Antonio was also at the peak of his career, with his name and career showered with numerous accolades, including a first honorable mention nod at the 1968 Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual Competition and Exhibition and a "Best Work" recognition at the 1972 AAP Annual.

Perhaps what stands out in this particular piece is Antonio's use of multiple perspectives, which aids in conveying a bustling atmosphere characterized by a preoccupation with the necessity of subsistence. Not only do the swarming birds locked in cages that are being sold by the man evoke a sense of delicate commotion, but it also brings out a sense of vulnerability, an allusion to the ordinary Filipinos' everyday situation. In contrast with the warm yellows, which elicit feelings of joy and optimism, are the man's facial expression and body language: wearied and downtrodden due to socio-economic precarity. (*Adrian Maranan*)

## Nena Saguil (1914 - 1994)

### *Sans Titre (Untitled)*

signed and dated 1959 (lower right)

oil on canvas

31 1/2" x 38 1/2" (80 cm x 98 cm)

**P 3,800,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

At the time this painting was created, Nena Saguil was transitioning from a period she described a "Lyrical Cubism" — the logical heir to her studies with Alfred Manessier, a French abstract painter, a non-figurative artist from the new School of Paris, and her mentor.

Manessier was associated with the French movement of Lyrical Abstraction (*Abstraction lyrique*).

Interestingly, in an interview with Cid Reyes in his monumental "Conversations on Philippine Art," Saguil would use the very similar term "Lyrical Cubism" to describe this series of her artworks. "I was doing these squares, no, not the Vasarely style — not rigid — but floating in different tones," she would tell him.

More significantly, he also appeared to be an important influence not only on her artistic but also her spiritual development. The French artist, with the zeal of the newly converted, would seek to express through art his interest in mysticism, sacred art and the expression of spiritual ecstasy, concepts that would dominate Saguil's art more and more. (*Lisa Guerrero Nakpil*)

Saguil's pioneering contributions to modern art in the country are distinctive, marked by features that draw the observer into a profound connection with the vast universe or the enchanting expanse of space. This captivating oil painting, infused with surrealist undertones,

serves as a testament to her artistic mastery. It not only evokes a contemplative and meditative mood but also provides a glimpse into Saguil's cherished solitude—a solitude deeply intertwined with her spiritual influences as an artist.

The allure of this specific artwork lies in its ability to transcend the canvas, inviting viewers into a realm where the boundaries between reality and the mystic blur. Saguil's valued solitude is eloquently expressed, creating a visual narrative that resonates with the profound introspection inspired by her spiritual journey. The infusion of mysticism, a hallmark of Saguil's visual language, manifests prominently in this particular piece, further highlighting her distinctive ability to articulate the ineffable through her art. (*Jed Daya*)

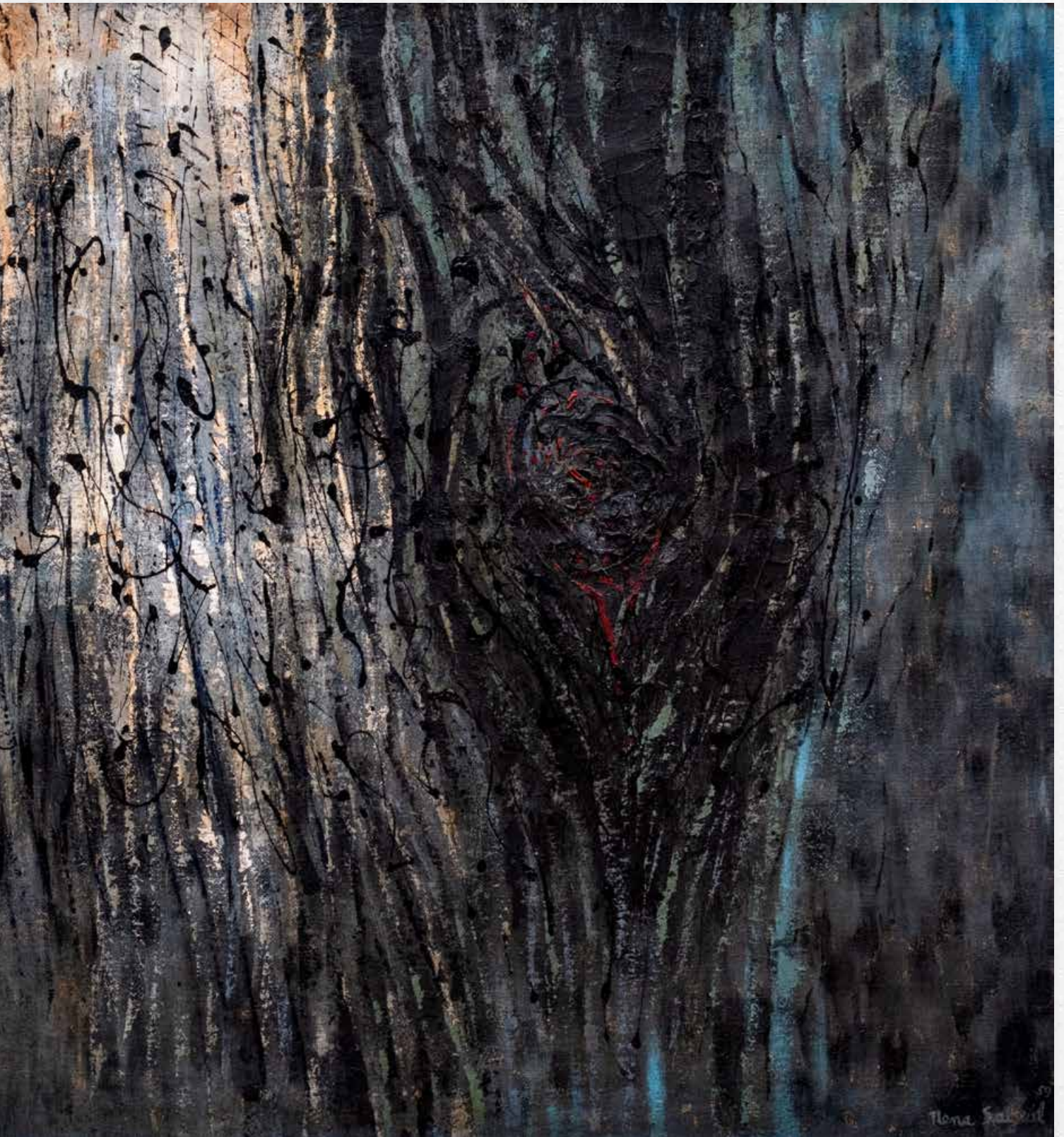


ABOVE: A work by Nena Saguil's Mentor Alfred Manessier, *A l'obscur*, 1959.



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Nena Saguil  
*Exploring Unseen Universes*



**Cesar Legaspi** (1917 - 1994)*Women*

signed and dated 1970 (lower right)

oil on wood

28" x 39" (71 cm x 99 cm)

**P 1,200,000**

## PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

Cesar Legaspi is a major figure in the history of Philippine modernism. Following the tragedy of the Second World War, Legaspi was among the young artists that took up the mantle and shook the Philippine art scene with their unorthodox styles and a disregard for traditions.

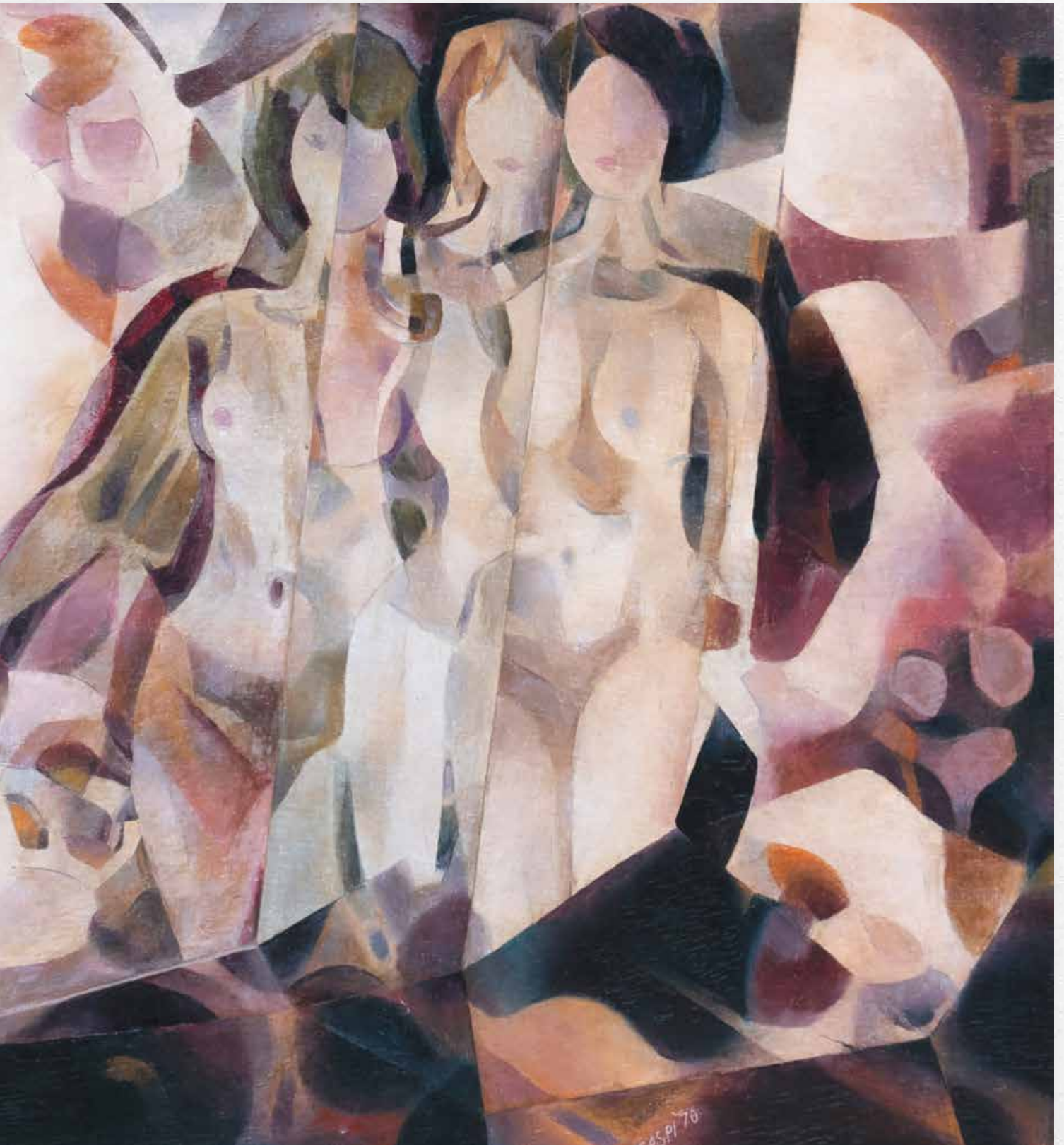
In his confrère, which included giants of modernism like H.R. Ocampo and Vicente Manansala among others, Legaspi stood out with his background in commercial art rather than fine arts. He was trained in pen and ink illustrations, a fact that made his deuteranopia or red-green color blindness more bearable in his line of work. He ran in the circles of illustrious artists and created a spattering of paintings but it wasn't until he decided to seriously pursue art in 1968 – the year he resigned from his post as the art director for the advertising company Philprom.

Created in 1970 – the decade that art critic Alice Guillermo noted as the maturity of his style – the lot at hand displays Legaspi's prismatic effects in full display. His expected composition directs the viewers to the focal point of the canvas: the three women occupying the right side. His attention to detail is shown most obviously in regards to his anatomy. The women, naked as their name day, were metamorphosed into a chromatic, almost abstract field with their torso vague abstractions of a body instead of a faithful rendition.

The human body is a distinct element in a Legaspi canvas, impressionable and visceral. They occupy a good portion of his oeuvre, and for good reason. "I think that even if I were to paint a completely abstract painting, I shall always be abstracting the human figure," he once said. "I can never get away from the figure." (*Hannah Valiente*)







## Benedicto Cabrera (b. 1942)

### *Refugees*

signed and dated 1974 (lower left)

acrylic on paper

18 1/2" x 14" (47 cm x 36 cm)

**P 1,800,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

In 1974, two years after Bencab debuted his homecoming, career-defining, and coming-of-age exhibition of his iconic Larawan Series at The Luz Gallery, the artist returned to London, where he had previously settled in 1969 and had met his then-wife, Caroline Kennedy. Back in the British capital, Bencab enrolled at the Camden Arts Centre, where he pursued special studies in sculpture and life drawing.

That same year, Bencab produced works imbued with formidable critiques against the socio-political landscape of his home country, then in its second year of martial rule.

In this work titled *Refugees*, we are greeted by a sepia-toned image of a family, with the patriarch leading his kin and the entire household carrying their scanty valuables. There is an immediate aura of vulnerability and anguish that are heightened by the subjects' facial expressions: fatigued, agonized, and poverty-stricken.

Many of Bencab's works in his Larawan series dealt with the tragic history of the Philippine–American War of 1899 to 1902 (although several groups, including the Moro people, continued the battle against the Americans until they were defeated at the Battle of Bud Bagsak in 1913). The Philippine–American War saw America solidifying its position as the most formidable imperial power at the turn of the century, with its presidents of that period, William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, being prominently vocal on their expansionist policies. The war traces its roots to the expansionist policies of the US; it saw the Philippines as a springboard to the lucrative Chinese trade and an "tool" to serve and patronize American business and enterprise.

In relation to the brutalities of the said war, there exists primary accounts, mainly from American soldiers whose letters were published by the Anti-Imperialist League (which counted among its members the influential writer Mark Twain) in its 1899 pamphlet *"Soldiers' Letters Being Materials For the History of a War of Criminal Aggression,"* which the League used in challenging America's imperialistic carnage.

Guy Williams of the Iowa Regiment writes: "The soldiers made short work of the whole thing. They looted every house and found almost everything, from a pair of shoes up to a piano, and they carried everything off or destroyed it."

Captain Elliot of the Kansas Regiment reveals: "Caloocan was supposed to contain seventeen thousand inhabitants. The

Twentieth Kansas swept through it, and now Caloocan contains not one living native."

Anthony Michea of the Third Artillery harrowingly retells: "We bombarded a place called Malabon, and then we went in and killed every native we met: men, women, and children."

There was also the infamous order of Brig. Gen. Jacob Smith to make Balangiga in Samar "a howling wilderness." He ordered: "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn: the more you kill and burn, the better you will please me."

In these accounts, one may have a profound insight into how the Filipino masses struggled to run for survival by fleeing from their original pueblo or barrio and settling in a secluded environment, away from the hostilities and bloodshed propagated by the US forces. And this is what Bencab distressingly portrays.

Bencab once said in an April 1978 interview with Cid Reyes and published in *Conversations on Philippine Art* that the idea behind the Larawan "was to make our colonial past reflect on our present." As a series of works created at a most harrowing period in our country's recent history, the Larawan Series acts as a mirror in which the present is seen as a continuing past.

When liberties were curtailed in the 70s, many Filipinos sought refuge in the masses' arms, where they lived in solidarity and organized and mobilized the broad range of the oppressed peoples against an authoritarian state; many even went underground and engaged in armed resistance.

Much as the Philippine-American War is seen as a continuation of the Filipino struggle for genuine sovereignty at the turn of the century, but this time against a new colonizer, Bencab's Larawan evokes an unfinished revolution. A sustained resistance. A protracted struggle. A never-ending yearning for genuine national sovereignty and democracy against the roots of the Philippines' continuing oppression and subjugation. That we must never again let our people be so acquiescent amid brutal imperial powers.

While the figures in the work at hand portray passive anguish and the diaspora brought by war, perhaps Bencab galvanizes us—the Filipinos of the present—to confront these societal ills and not just disregard them, an ill-fated situation that would only deliver us to the tribulations of servility and subservience masquerading as illusory refuge. (*Adrian Maranan*)



BENCAB, oil painting for Archipelago Magazine, Dec 1974. Page 32.



*“Is Bencab using the past to comment on the present? Is the Filipino impassive or merely passive? Like the propaganda, Bencab discovered the Philippine past in Europe, specifically in London, where there has long been a cult of the primitive: Swinging London hopped to Indian strings and African drums. And chic is suspect when the faces of two primitives are labeled “The Gentle Savages.”*

*“But the boy from Bambang has known urban jungle and should know that the Filipino today is not gentle and quite savage. That may be the ironic message of this last message of this latest phase in the art of Bencab (the backgrounds still have his youthful darkness). If he chills us with these pictures of Filipinos sitting, crouching, squatting, huddling together impassively, it may be to burn us with the thought that Filipinos must no longer sit, crouch, squat, and huddle together so passively.”*

—EXCERPT FROM THE CRITIQUE “THE EYE OF THE CAMERA IS MEDUSA’S” WRITTEN BY NATIONAL ARTIST FOR LITERATURE NICK JOAQUIN, PUBLISHED IN THE CATALOG FOREWORD OF BENCAB’S 1972 “LARAWAN” EXHIBITION AT THE LUZ GALLERY

# Important Ifugao Sculpture

## *The Rudolf Kratochwill Collection*

by FLOY C. QUINTOS

The four pieces offered are from a collection that was first formed in the early 1980s. Rudolf Kratochwill, an Austrian art dealer, first arrived in Manila as a young man in 1984. Inspired by the Philippine objects he had seen in Europe, he came searching for fine examples of Philippine Indigenous Art for his own collection. He opened a gallery in the Tesoro Building in Ermita that soon attracted the runners, dealers and collectors of that era. He himself admits that he was more of a collector than a dealer, who regularly shipped the very best objects he acquired to his family's estate in Graz.

Like many serious collectors of Tribal Art through the ages, he was equally interested in Contemporary art. He became co-owner and curator of 1335 Mabini, a space dedicated to the works of young and upcoming visual artists. The gallery represented important young Filipino artists like Kiri Dalena, Poklong Anading and Mark Salvatus.

The four objects offered here are representative of Kratochwill's deep interest in the form and styles of Cordillera sculpture, from functional to ritual pieces. The sheer range of objects and their functions, as well as the unquestionable authenticity of each, speak well for Kratochwill's discriminating and erudite eye. An eye honed by over forty years of exposure to Philippine Indigenous art.



Rudolf Kratochwill. © viennacontemporarymagazine



## A Kinabigat / Figured King Post

early 20th century

Kababuyan, Ifugao

narra wood with a glossy patina

H: 66 1/2" (169 cm)

L: 7" (18 cm)

W: 11 1/4" (29 cm)

**P 400,000**

This is the first time an authentic *Kinabigat /* figured center post, has been offered in auction. The *Kinabigat* counts among the most valuable of the Ifugao prestige objects, alongside the *Hagabi /* prestige bench, and the *Haldak /* figured shelf. In order to commission any of these three large objects for their home, an Ifugao couple had to be able to throw a series of *canao*/prestige feast over a prescribed number of years. This show of aristocratic largesse, once fulfilled, entitles the family to commission the carving of any or all of these three prestige objects. While the *hagabi* bench remained outside the home to be shared with the villagers, the *kinabigat* was stored in the home, a private symbol of a family's status in the community.

Installed into the crossbeams, it held up the entire thatched roof and ceiling through a central wooden disk inserted into the peg protruding from the figure's head. The anthropomorphic figure stood as a literal support for the ceiling and roof, while watching over the hearth, granary and all who lived within.

This massive and robust example features a male figure in high relief, the facial expression, focused and stern, the arms placed protectively over its chest and abdomen. Visible adze marks are seen on the surface. The patina is a dull, reddish-black sheen with the natural wood shining through in places. (FCQ)



## An Archaic Seated Bu'lul

Stylistically of the late 19th-century  
Hungduan, Ifugao  
narra wood with thick encrustation  
H: 24" (61 cm)  
L: 6" (15 cm)  
W: 6" (15 cm)

**P 750,000**

With his handwritten label:

"Batnag/Sitio Wangwang/Hungduan (Place of Origin)  
Antero (Runner), 1989 (Year of Purchase)

A fine example of an archaic *Bu'lul*, seated on a square, mortar-shaped plinth. The figure sits, erect and immovable, the arms crossed over the bent knees. The feet are slanted, sloping downwards over the edge of the base. This is a feature found in many large archaic *Bu'lul*. The thick encrustation covers the entire figure. Still, when viewed from the front and side, one is struck by the delicacy and balance of the sculpture. On the face, beneath the encrustation, are seen traces of shell (?) inlay in the eyes and mouth, giving the personage a haunting stare.

The piece was one of many Kratochwill acquired from the estate of the renowned scholar and writer, Joaquin Palencia after the latter's demise. While many of his purchases from the Palencia collection went on to other important collectors like Martin Kurer, this particular piece stayed on in his collection. (FCQ)



## Pair of Seated Bu'lul

late 19th early 20th century  
possibly from Iagawe, Ifugao  
hardwood with a natural patina

a. H: 17 1/4" (44 cm) L: 5" (13 cm) W: 6 1/2" (17 cm)  
b. H: 17" (43 cm) L: 6" (15 cm) W: 6" (15 cm)

**P 500,000**



This pair was also purchased by Kratochwill from the Palencia collection. Unlike pieces from Central Ifugao which are libated with the blood of sacrificial animals, pieces from Southern Ifugao, (Lagawe and Kiangan) are doused with *Baya/* rice wine. The resulting patina may be unfamiliar to those who imagine (wrongly) that all consecrated *Bu'lul* are encrusted with dried blood and soot.

This pair exemplifies the patina of pieces that have been libated with rice wine and then left in the *Alang /*granary to watch over the rice harvest. They are rounder and more robustly carved than many pairs from Lagawe, which have a flatter appearance. The lower limbs are delightfully rendered as barrel shaped trunks. The expressions are pert and focused. The libations of wine have enhanced the deep, rich red of the aged narra wood. This patina is very similar to the surfaces of sculpture from the Nias, Sumba and Leti peoples in the Indonesian archipelago. (FCQ)



## Figurated Stool / Small Table with Three Seated Caryatids Attributed to The School of Taguiling

early 20th century

narra wood

H: 19" (48 cm)

D: 16 1/4" (41 cm)

Similar object in the Fred Ten Hauten collection, Germany

**P 260,000**

### PROVENANCE

Roland Go, Baguio City (deceased)



ABOVE: An identical stool with three caryatid figures was published in the exhibition catalogue, "The Art and Culture of Northern Luzon, Philippines". Published by the Museum of the University of Groningen. October 1973

A charming and whimsical example of early, made-for-market carvings. In their effort to stop the internecine tribal feuds among the Ifugao, American administrators in the early 20th century encouraged the opening of cooperatives where Ifugao craftsmen could turn out sculpture, small pieces of furniture, decorative objects and novelties destined for the Western market. This stool or small table is an example of the objects turned out by the Ifugao carvers, whose traditional culture, spirituality and art forms were rapidly and irreversibly transformed by the influx of cash economies and international commerce.

While caryatid stools/ tables were often shipped abroad, or brought home as souvenirs by tourists, this piece remained here. It was formerly in the collection of the late Rolando Go, a reputable Antiques dealer based in Baguio city. He had found it in an old house along Burnham Park, built and previously lived in by an old American colonial family.

The style of the faces on the seated caryatid figures bear the hallmarks of the Taguiling style. Taguiling lived and worked during the early American pacification of the Cordilleras, and was the only Ifugao carver whose name is linked to both the production of sacred Bu'lul as well as made-for-market objects. An unusual detail is the second, middle layer for storage of sundry objects. Despite its decorative function, the object has a strong organic quality, a strength and simplicity that links it to an earlier Ifugao artistic tradition. (FCQ)





Macario Vitalis' encounter with Cubism began when he became acquainted with the Groupe de Puteaux (Section d'Or), proponents of Orphic Cubism that met regularly at 'Big Boy,' a theater-restaurant owned by Camille Renault located at 60 Avenue de la République in Puteaux, France. 'Big Boy,' named after Renault's physique, was a melting pot of different artists practicing different styles. It was also there that Vitalis had settled around 1936-37, a decade after he established residency in Montmartre, the heart and soul of the arts in Paris.

Around 1940, Vitalis would meet the Orphic Cubist Gaston Duchamp, also known as Jacques Villon, elder brother to the creative avant-garde Marcel Duchamp. During this time, Vitalis' artistic style still echoed the practice of the post-impressionists with his strong expressive sensibilities resulting from the distortion of forms and the employment of arbitrary colors.

Villon would have a profound influence on Vitalis' art.

But in July 1941, at the height of the Second World War, Vitalis was arrested by the Germans on grounds of his American citizenship, an unfortunate situation at that time since the Philippines was a Commonwealth of the United States. Vitalis would be imprisoned in a German camp in Compiègne, Northern France. Dispirited, Vitalis' artistic evolution was hampered, although he still painted, mainly portraits, while incarcerated.

Vitalis would only be released from imprisonment in 1944. Feeling a renewed sense of freedom, both personally and creatively, Vitalis reunited with Villon and his friends at the Section d'Or.

Vitalis would now embrace his Cubist identity and cast away his Post-Impressionist skin.

By the 1960s, Vitalis, who had now settled at Plestin-les-Grèves in the Brittany region of northwestern France (he first visited it in the summer of 1946 and would regularly make sojourns until 1957 when he settled there permanently), had again developed his style from Cubism to a cubist-impressionist amalgamation. This yet another artistic evolution in Vitalis had likely been reinforced by the breathtaking views of Plestin-les-Grèves and the Brittany region in general, in which an expressive coastline marked by towering rock formations are gently caressed by the resonating waves of the North Atlantic, offering an unfathomable ocean of creative stimulation for artist-subject relations. (This is in addition to the enduring influence of Villon, who wedded Cubism and Impressionism through his use of a luminous palette.)

*La Cene* belongs to this period in Vitalis' career, known as his "Plestin Period." An almost purely abstract image of the iconic Last Supper, *La Cene* is glaringly characterized by its luminous colors (interestingly, the Last Supper is also the Fifth *Luminous Mystery* of the Holy Rosary). This contrasts with Cubism's—especially its analytical phase—embrace of a somber, almost monochromatic palette. This luminosity in Vitalis' work harks back to the works of the Impressionists.

Following Villon's artistic maxim of "reducing everything to the absolute," *La Cene* preserves the geometric fragmentation of Cubism but retains color as an integral part of the composition, enhancing the work's linear structure and the expressive interplay between its planar forms and rhythmic framework. Much like Orpheus, the deity from which Orphic Cubism got its name, the vividness of the composition shrouds the subject in lyrical mysticality, befitting its religious theme. (*Adrian Maranan*)



69

**Macario Vitalis** (1898 - 1990)

*Last Supper (La Cene)*

signed (lower right and verso)

dated 1962

oil on canvas

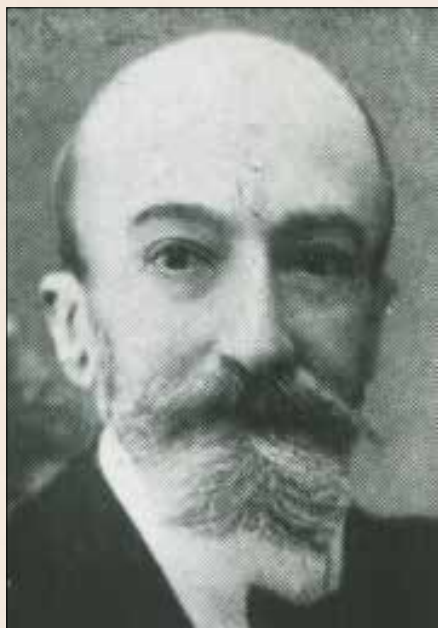
13" x 39 1/4" (33 cm x 100 cm)

**P 300,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Comité Vitalis  
confirming the authenticity of this lot

# Don Nicolás de la Peña Cuéllar

by JORGE MOJARRO



Nicolas de la Peña would have the power of life and death over Rizal and Luna, like a 19th-century Pontius Pilate

Nicolás de la Peña Cuéllar was born in Trujillo, (Cáceres) on February 21, 1852. He studied law and graduated in administrative law at the Central University (Madrid). He entered the army on May 12, 1875, obtained a position by competitive examination, and from January 12, 1878 until 1881 was lieutenant auditor of third class in the Captaincy General of the Balearic Islands. He soon became a prosecuting attorney of the Supreme Council of War and Navy. By then, Nicolás de la Peña, despite being barely 30 years old, had achieved two honorable decorations: Knight of Isabella the Catholic and Commander of Charles III

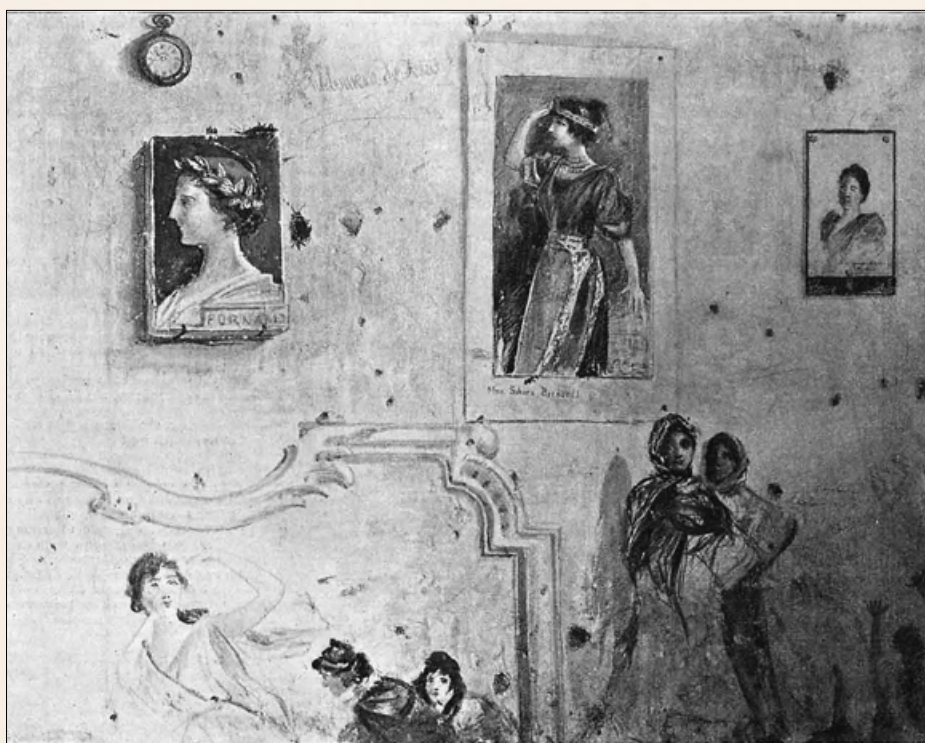
De la Peña left his post on February 1, 1899 and was sent to Cartagena as

a court-martial advisor to the army. Earlier, on December 15, 1898, a few months after the capitulation, he signed a prologue to the memoir *La Campaña de la escuadra norteamericana en Filipinas* (Cartagena, 1899), in which he accused the United States of not having respected international law and Spanish politicians of the war disaster. However, he made no mention of his execrable role in the process against Rizal.

In 1910 he was a senator of the Spanish Cortes for the province of Valladolid for the Liberal Party. By then he was already an academician of Jurisprudence and Legislation in Madrid. He must have died shortly after, as it is no longer possible to find news of him.



LEFT: Juan Luna in 1899. RIGHT: Juan Luna's prison cell in Fort Santiago covered with his drawings.





# The Patient Prisoner

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



© Cultura social, May 1914,  
Cover and p. 231 from  
Filipinas Heritage Library.

There is perhaps no better metaphor for Juan Luna's frame of mind in 1896 than this portrait of 'The Patient Christ', waiting for his fate to be decided while he languished in Fort Santiago. Would it be long years of imprisonment or even execution?

Luna had just narrowly escaped the guillotine in France, accused of the death of his wife Paz Pardo de Tavera. He had been imprisoned in September 1892 and had only been found innocent, by reason of his "savage temperament," only in the following year in February. He had withdrawn to Madrid to forget those unpleasant circumstances and then returned to Manila in his home country in 1894 with this younger brother Antonio, hoping to recuperate and find his lost happiness.

It was to be a bittersweet respite, however, punctuated by the brothers Luna opening a fencing school, Juan Luna's side trip to Japan and then, his return immediately after the discovery of the Katipunan and the first Katipunan's battle of Pinaglabanan. Juan and Antonio were to be swept up and arrested in the dragnet unleashed by these events and thrown into the Spanish dungeons.

Wrote M. Arias y Rodriguez (1850-1924) of Luna's prison cell, a miserable state of affairs : "The dungeon consisted of a small room about three meters long by two and a half wide: a meter from the floor was a wooden floorboard that occupied the entire cell to avoid the high humidity of the floor, located at a level lower than the patio. In front of the front door there was a square window with light iron bars. The half-bleached walls had an unequal surface, almost like a rough stone, and the innumerable holes and cracks on them showed that they had not been repaired for a long time." (This report appeared in *La Ilustracion Artistica*, 6 August 1900 and was reproduced by Lib Ramos along with the accompanying photograph.)

He noted, however, that Luna was able to have "books, colors and brushes" and thus, "for his pastime or leisure,

[Luna] adorned the rough walls of the so-called dungeon with his works."

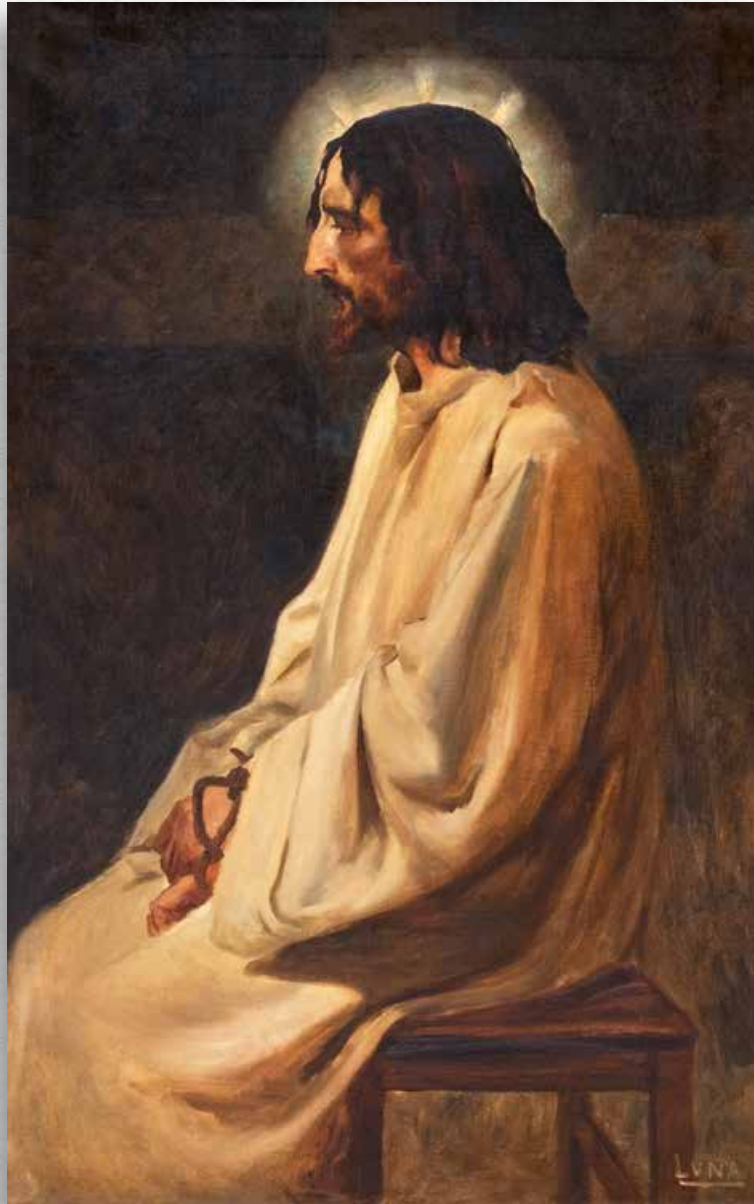
Despite these privileges, Luna must surely have suffered grievously from this second round of false accusations and imprisonment. While the colonial government and the friars were suspicious of all foreign-educated Filipinos — calling them "filibusterismos" — both brothers were in fact completely innocent of the accusation that they had participated in the armed revolt.

Once more, Luna would call upon the friendships made in Madrid with the highest echelons of the Spanish court and he would receive a pardon on May 27th, 1897, on the occasion of King Alfonso XIII's birthday 10 days earlier.

"Ecce Homo" would be a gift to Don Nicolas de la Peña, auditor-general of the Spanish Army and the man whose duties included recommending that Jose Rizal be brought to trial. He would, in fact, sign the sentence that would be read to Rizal on December 29th. The importance of this man would not be lost on Juan Luna and de la Peña's descendants would note that Luna himself would give the painting the name "El Cristo de la Paciencia."

In the work at hand, Luna paints a powerful portrait of "Ecce Homo", so called after the ironic words of Pontius Pilate as he presented Jesus Christ to the jeering mob. "El Cristo de la Paciencia" sits with two hands bound in front of him, helpless but steadfast; His face is bruised and wounded by the beatings of the Roman soldiers. He remains cloaked, however, in the white of purity and innocence. On His head, three rays represent His Godliness, as does the halo.

The painting thus presents two meanings : The first, an account of Juan Luna and his sufferings; but also, more importantly, perhaps, a coded message of defiance of the innocence of Jose Rizal. Rizal after all would meet his fate and glory at the firing squad a few months earlier at the very hands of the Spanish government, represented by Don Nicolas de la Peña.



70

**Juan Luna y Novicio** (1857 - 1899)

*Ecce Homo* ("Behold the Man") or  
*El Cristo de la Paciencia* (*The Christ of Patience*)

signed (lower right)  
ca. 1896 - 1897  
oil on canvas  
43" x 27" (109 cm x 69 cm)

**P 7,000,000**

**PROVENANCE**

A gift from the artist to the Spanish auditor-general  
Don Nicolas de la Peña upon his release  
from prison in Fort Santiago.

**LITERATURE**

*Cultura Social* (monthly magazine), May 1914, Manila.  
Black and white illustration identifying it as  
"Cuadro de Luna" on the cover as well as on page 231.  
Filipinas Heritage Library Collection.

## Cesar Legaspi (1917 - 1994)

### *Crucifixion*

signed and dated 1956 (lower right)

oil on masonite board

40" x 48" (102 cm x 122 cm)

**P 4,400,000**

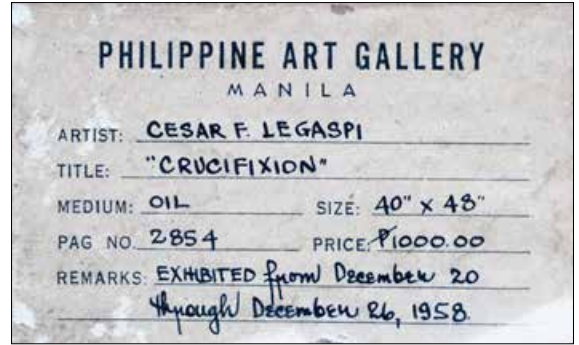
#### PROVENANCE

Philippine Art Gallery

Christie's, 20th Century Art Day Sale, Hong Kong, December 1, 2022,  
Lot 228

#### EXHIBITED

Philippine Art Gallery, *Annual Christmas Group Show*, Manila,  
December 20 - December 26, 1958



Philippine Art Gallery catalogue tag for "Crucifixion"

A monumental work from one of the Philippine Art Gallery's "Big Three" (the others being H.R. Ocampo and Manansala), Legaspi's *Crucifixion* would be featured in the PAG's year-end *Annual Christmas Group Show* from December 20 to 26, 1958, alongside works by Luz, Ang Kiukok, Joya, Magsaysay-Ho, Elizalde Navarro, and Malang.

Legaspi's choice of subject matter seemingly clashes yet inherently harmonizes with the time of the exhibition: the *joyous* Christmas season. At first glance, one may deem the subject of Christ's crucifixion incompatible with Christmas. But delving into Legaspi's neo-realist, expressionist impulses, the artist heralds that right from the start, the birth of Christ had already signaled an imminent sacrifice for the redemption of humanity—that there exists an underlying horror in Christ's nativity. The overall composition is somber and melancholic, a juxtaposition between two "*silent nights*": the infant Jesus cradled in His manger and the "Messiah" Jesus dying in harrowing pain from thorns and nails, crucified among thieves while a wailing Mother and grieving disciples forsakenly accept the will of the Divine.

*Crucifixion* is characterized by a "rocky" and jagged texture emphasized by sharp angles and austere, monochromatic, and stratified geometric forms. The piece exemplifies Legaspi's artistic maturation. No longer was he trying to steer towards a Botong-like style, whom he considered a luminary in the earlier phases of his career. Instead, Legaspi weds an expressionist, rugged distortion inspired by a stone quarry adjacent to their house at Horseshoe Drive, Quezon City (to which they had moved in 1947) and a Cubist configuration inspired by Manansala, who, in 1951, had returned from his nine-month study at the University of Paris' Ecole des Beaux-Arts under the mentorship of the

French cubist Fernand Leger. Of Manansala's influence on Legaspi, Alfredo Roces writes in the book *Legaspi: The Making of a National Artist*: "...on his return to Manila in August 1951, he was brimming with theories on cubism with which he regaled his circle of artist friends. Legaspi was one of those keenly receptive to Manansala's stories about museums, artists, painting techniques, methods, and trends." The overall result is a work that exudes sheer intensity in evoking a sorrowful scene.

There is also an inherent claustrophobic feel in this particular piece. Does it allude to Legaspi's eight-day harrowing incarceration and interrogation by the Japanese Kempeitai in October 1944 on the grounds of mistaken identity? "*I still shudder at the memory and can hear the almost mellifluous screams of those being treated to the water cure, see the seventy-year man staggering back from the interrogation room...Great fear and horror are, I suppose, part of the maturing and deepening process...I never prayed as hard as that. Every time I am in a tight spot, I pray,*" says Legaspi in the catalog for his 1978 retrospective at the Museum of Philippine Art.

After all, the piece exudes the neo-realist propensity for fragmenting a romanticized reality—shattering the tranquil hallowedness of Christmas and harking back to that fateful Christmas season of 1941, in which "peace" and "normalcy" would never come back again, where everyone would be left scrambling and fending for themselves amid a full-blown crisis and destruction, both in the physical and moral sense.

And with that, Cesar Legaspi's sheer maturation as a painter would result from a traumatizing devastation. (*Adrian Maranan*)



# Legaspi's Modernist Calvary



*When Cesar Legaspi came back from his studies in Europe in 1954, he was a self-assured, confident man. He no longer had to show his works to H.R. Ocampo for approval. He had gone on to painting, mostly forceful abstract male nudes, but did these now with a metaphysical interpretation...His figures were angular and massive. He had also conquered his handicap—his colorblindness. Where before, he would paint in monochromes, he could now paint luminous color combinations. He went on to lead the Saturday Group of Artists, originally started by H.R. Ocampo and Alfredo Roces, and soon became the dean of Filipino painters.”*

—PURITA KALAW-LEDESMA, WRITING IN THE BOOK ‘THE BIGGEST LITTLE ROOM: A HISTORY OF THE PHILIPPINE ART GALLERY’

## Nena Saguil (1914 - 1994)

### *Three Marys (Three Monks)*

signed and dated 1952 (lower right)

oil on wood

24" x 30" (61 cm x 76 cm)

## P 2,800,000

#### PROVENANCE

Collection of Mauro "Malang" Santos

#### LITERATURE:

Lyd Arguilla, Romeo Tabuena, Fernando Zobel, *7 Years of the Philippine Art Gallery (1951-1957)*, Published by the Philippine Art Gallery, 1958, Listed as No.584, Page Ap — 11.

#### EXHIBITED

*The Fifties*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, January 22 - February 28, 1971.

**T**hree Marys' by Nena Laconico Saguil was created at ground-zero of the Neo-Realists and the Philippine Art Gallery (PAG), who had both exploded on the Filipino art scene in such quick succession that they would inevitably merge.

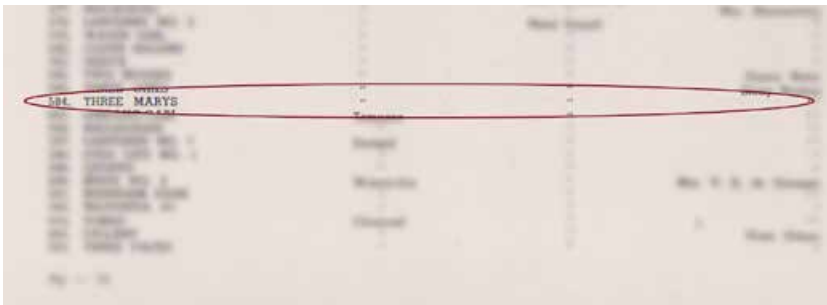
Nena was one of the important triad of women in art — counting Lyd Arguilla, founder of the PAG and Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Nena's friend and classmate from the U.P. College of Fine Arts. One could almost hear them being called the 'Tres Marias', so few yet influential they would be.

'Three Marys' is a portrait in fact of woman power, encapsulated by the ageless scene at the foot of the Cross at Golgotha, where Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of God, and Mary the mother of James the Lesser, would be gathered. They were the female disciples of Our Lord Jesus, in the same way that the three women were the foremost female exponents of modernist Filipino art. The voluptuous pinks and reds remind the viewer of their femininity.

The 'Three Marys' are represented in various stages of emotion, not only pain and mourning but also exaltation and courage, hope and faith. One figure has her back turned looking to the future, the other has her face (free of all expression like the others) upturned in awe, while the third is bowed down in solemn humility.

The trio are surrounded by a panoply of three crosses, five to be exact, with the fifth cleverly suggested by heavy black lines. It is as if Saguil wants to remind us that there were with these three crosses were three different men who lived three different lives — God the Son, and the good thief and the bad on either side of them.

As the final modernist flourish, Saguil paints a background for this parable that is not the forsaken mountain of Calvary but the concrete canyons of the big city : A tiled floor, three crosses that form large windows and a skyscraper with the same mystical number of three windows down its side. It is the ultimate Neo-Realist landscape of mind and heart. (*Lisa Guerrero Nakpil*)



PHILIPPINE ART GALLERY		
452 ARQUIZA, MANILA, TEL. 2-48-12		
PAG No.	584	
RECEIVED FROM:	Diana Lopez	
ARTIST:	Nena Saguil	
TITLE:	Three Marys	
EDITION	24 X 30	P. 20, 10
MEDIUM	SIZE	PRICE
FOR:	<input type="checkbox"/> ONE-MAN SHOW	<input type="checkbox"/> GROUP SHOW
<input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR DISPLAY	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSION	
DATE:	RECEIVED BY:	SIGNATURE

Cultural Center of the Philippines	
ARTIST	Nena Saguil
TITLE	Three Marys
DATE	
MEDIUM	
SIZE	24 x 30
PRICE	
CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES	

ABOVE: PAG Catalog entry, Three Marys, No.584, Ap - 11 . BOTTOM LEFT: PAG Sticker, confirming PAG Catalog No.584, but mistakenly titling it as "Three Monks". BOTTOM RIGHT: Cultural Center of the Philippines Sticker.

# Nena Saguil's 'Three Marys' *Modernist Portrait of Woman Power*



*The compositions that Nena Saguil paints pictorial stanzas of a continuous cadence. The figures emanate from each other. Their curves match and form plastic rhymes. Their volumes reduced to the essential evoke bas-reliefs.*

—WALDEMAR GEORGE, FRENCH ART CRITIC

# Poignant Image of Virgin-Martyr St. Ines

by AUGUSTO M.R. GONZALES III

This magnificent and hieratic image of Santa Ines de Roma, virgen y martir, 291–304 AD (Saint Agnes of Rome, virgin and martyr, 291–304 AD), carved in molave hardwood (*Vitex parviflora*) and polychromed, depicts a young "india" (Filipina) beauty (Santa Ines was only thirteen years old when martyred) with Oriental, Guanyin-like facial features --- heavily-lidded almond-shaped eyes, a fine nose, rosebud lips, cleft chin. She is dressed in "estilo Hebrea" (Hebrew style) with a long, ankle-length tunic and a cape draped around her arms. Santa Ines is shown with the attributes of her traditional iconography: the lamb (agnus), Bible, martyr's palm, and long hair (miraculously, her hair grew long quickly to cover her naked body as she was dragged through the streets after she was arrested; rendered in well-articulated Filipino "binihon" style); the traditional sword is missing. In a nod to Italian Renaissance depictions from paintings and prints brought by Spanish missionaries, she was carved with a topknot on her head as well as a string of pearls; santo collectors conjecture that the image must have worn a metal or silver tiara of sorts. As was the practice of those days, the image of heavy molave hardwood was hollowed out at its back to lighten it so it could be hoisted to the intended position high up in the retablo altar. The entire statue along with the base --- except for the book with the lamb --- was carved from just one trunk of molave hardwood. Were it not for the fact that it was found in Panay island and most probably crafted there, it could have passed for magnificent statuary from an old Augustinian church in Pampanga or one of the seven churches of Intramuros (Catedral de Manila,

San Agustin de Hipona [Agustinos], Santo Domingo de Guzman [Dominicanos], Nuestra Senora de los Angeles [San Francisco de Asis – Franciscanos], San Nicolas de Tolentino [Recoletos], San Ignacio de Loyola [Jesuitas], Nuestra Senora de Lourdes [Capuchinos] ) or those in the arrabales de Manila (Tondo, Binondo, Santa Cruz, Quiapo, Santa Ana). Devotions to Santa Ines de Roma, virgen y martir, were popular during the Spanish colonial period and Ines/Inez/Ynes/Ynez was a popular name for girls. This seventeenth century molave hardwood statue of Santa Ines de Roma, virgen y martir is every bit of the highest quality as those in the San Agustin Museum, Intramuros Administration, Luis Ma Araneta, and Paulino Que and Hetty Kho collections.

During the reign of Emperor Diocletian in 304 AD, there was a lovely young girl from a noble Roman family named Agnes. The beautiful Agnes had many young suitors from other rich families, all of whom she turned down with the conviction: "Jesus Christ is my only Spouse." The offended young men then submitted Agnes' name as a "Christian" to the Roman authorities, which was a de facto death sentence at that time.

Two versions of Agnes' story: The first related that a rich suitor, Procop, was so frustrated by Agnes that he brought her before his father, The Governor. He entreated Agnes with wonderful gifts if she denied her Christian God but she refused. He had her put in chains but her conviction only increased. She was sent to a brothel but angels protected her. She was finally condemned to death by beheading, but she was only too happy to die for her Christian faith.



## Santa Ines de Roma, Virgen y Martir

(Saint Agnes of Rome, Virgin and Martyr, 291–304 AD)

17th century

polychromed molave wood (*Vitex parviflora*)

H: 50" (127 cm)

L: 12" (30 cm)

W: 19" (48 cm)

**P 500,000**

### PROVENANCE

An Augustinian church in Panay island

The second related that the Prefect Sempronius had Agnes arrested, stripped naked, and dragged through the streets of Rome. As she prayed silently during the ordeal, her hair grew quickly to cover her naked body. The men who tried to rape her were all struck blind.

The son of Sempronius died immediately but was revived when she prayed for him. The prefect was grateful and inhibited himself from further judging Agnes' case.

Another judge was assigned and Agnes the Christian was summarily sentenced to death by burning at the stake. However, the wood would not burn and the few flames drifted away from her. The exasperated executioner then decapitated her; other accounts said he stabbed her at the throat. Her blood poured to the ground and the other condemned Christians soaked it up with their clothes.

Agnes was buried by the Via Nomentana in Rome. A few days after her execution, a close friend named Emerentiana (daughter of Agnes' wet nurse and the latter's contemporary) was found praying by her grave. She refused to leave the place and castigated the people for killing Agnes, after which she was stoned to death. She also became a saint. Constantina, daughter of Constantine I, was healed of leprosy after praying at Agnes' tomb. So many others were healed as well.

Many miracles were happening during her lifetime and more after her martyrdom. Saint Agnes of Rome, virgin and martyr, is a patron of purity, chastity, girls, virgins, victims of sexual abuse, and gardeners. Her feast day is commemorated every 21 January.



# Angelic Faith Burning Bright

by AUGUSTO M.R. GONZALES III



This pair of elegant female angels bearing torches (actually carved flames as candleholders) are in contrapposto poses and have beautiful faces, graceful hands and feet, draped Roman tunics, detailed wings, and cumulus cloud bases. The style of carving observed in their faces, hands, feet, hair, wings, tunics, and cloud bases date them squarely to the 1880s as actual dated productions from that time are very similar to them in design and execution. The original century and a half patina of the pair has been conserved. The media of baticuling softwood has preserved them from termites as the taste of the wood is unpalatable to them. Were it not for the fact that they were found in Panay island and most probably crafted there, they would have passed for beautiful statuary from an old Franciscan church in Laguna or productions of a master sculptor from the Gremio de Escultores in Santa Cruz, Manila.

During the Swinging Sixties, following the era's stylesetters architect Luis Maria Araneta ("Luis"/"Louie"), couturier Ramon Oswalds Valera ("Ramoning"), heiresses Consuelo Paterno Madrigal ("Chito"), Imelda de la Paz Ongsiako-Cojuangco ("Meldy"), Lourdes Tiaoqui Hidalgo-Tinio ("Lulu"), Maria Luisa Paterno Madrigal-Vazquez ("Ising") and their high society clique, it ironically became the mode to display all sorts of antique angels and torches in one's house --- specially a big pair like this in the living room or entrance hall --- during that time of relentless political and sexual liberation. At the turn of the twentieth century (1890-1910), it became the fashion in Philippine Roman Catholic churches to have a pair of angels bearing torches on pedestals flanking the main altar. That was decades before the misinterpreted reforms of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, and the priest still faced the altar, not the congregation, so the pair of angels like sentinels guarding God's throne, really served their purpose in the liturgy. That practice actually had precedents: from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, tabernacles in Las Islas Filipinas were flanked on both sides by three small kneeling angels bearing single candles, set on the three levels of the "gradillas" (tiers) of the main altar.

The Angelic Hierarchy according to Saint Thomas Aquinas OP in his "Summa Theologiae": Highest Hierarchy - Seraphim (six-winged beings who fly around God's throne praising "Holy, holy, holy!"), Cherubim (four-winged beings with four faces --- human, lion, ox, eagle), Thrones/Ophanim (all wheels); Second Hierarchy - Dominions/Lordships (govern the movement of the heavens), Virtues (spirits of motion who control the elements, govern nature, assist with miracles), Powers/Authorities (power over evil forces, power over men); Lowest Hierarchy: Principalities/Rulers (guide and protect nations, peoples, institutions), Archangels (God's messengers), Angels/Guardian Angels (assist people). After Aquinas, it all gets even more complicated because one discovers that only the Angels called Malakim are in human form like the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. The rest are not in human form and are all wings, all eyes, all wheels, all fire, all clouds, all wings and eyes, all eyes and wheels, all wheels and fire, all fire and clouds, etc. Had the late nineteenth century Filipino sculptors who crafted this pair of elegant angels known that, they would have certainly been confused.

## A Pair of Angels Bearing Torcheres (For A Main Altar)

ca. 1880s

an Augustinian church in Panay island

polychromed baticuling wood (*Litsea leytensis*)

without base: H: 60" x L: 13 1/2" x W: 25 1/4" (152 cm x 34 cm x 64 cm)

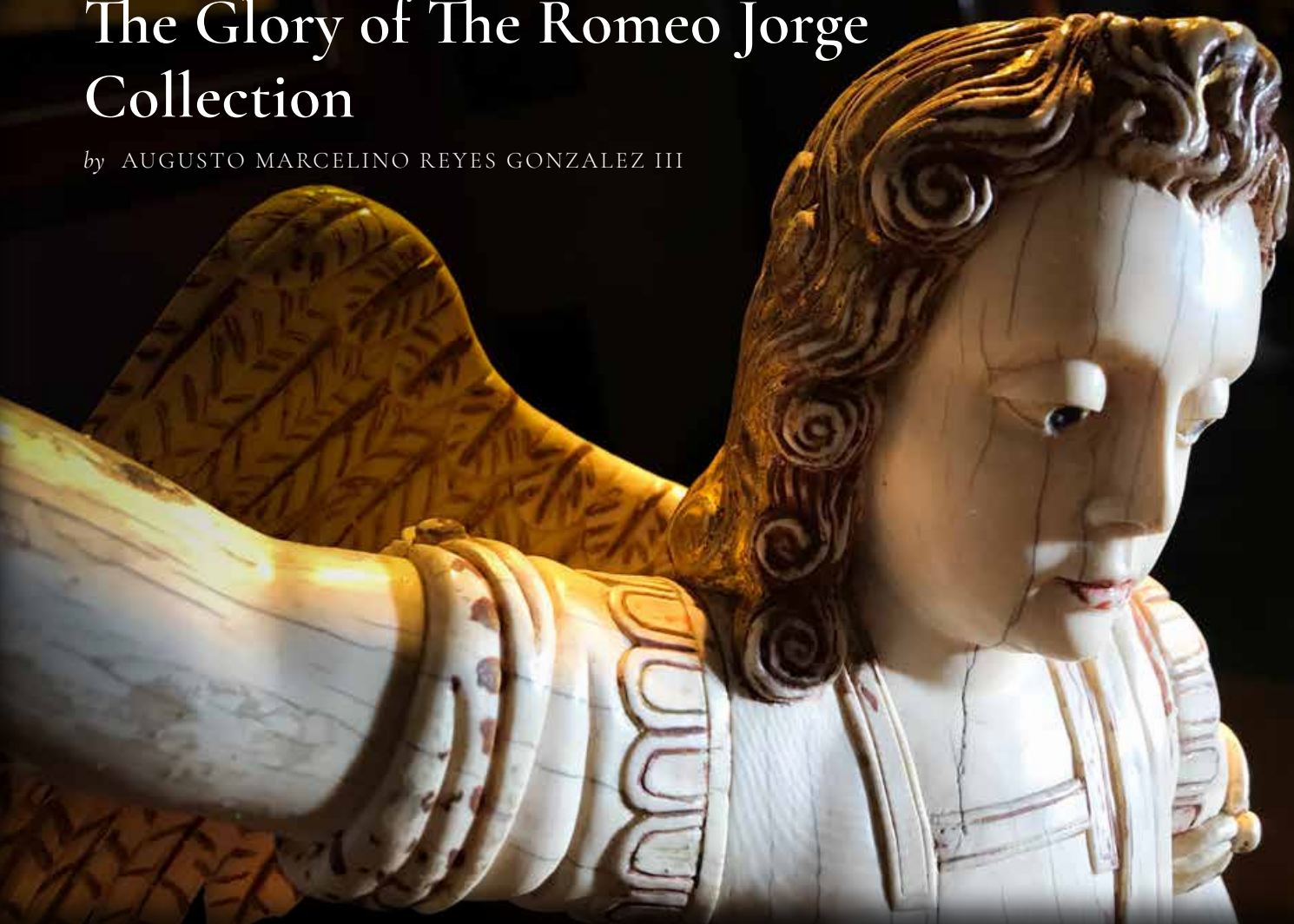
with base: H: 71" x L: 13 1/2" x W: 25 1/4" (180 cm x 34 cm x 64 cm)

**P 340,000**



# The Glory of The Romeo Jorge Collection

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III



At the Romeo and Nini Jorge residence in La Vista during the 1980s–90s, in a splendid assemblage of important Old Master art, antique Filipino furniture, and exquisite Filipino ivory and silver, and where soigneur receptions were held featuring the top performance artists of the day, this magnificent solid ivory Archangel took pride of place in the elegant living room atop an important Baliuag *comoda*. It was the glory of the famous Romeo Jorge art and antiques collection.

Saint Michael the Archangel is depicted as a young man dressed as a Roman soldier brandishing a golden sword and stepping over the Devil who is half-human and half-snake, half-fish, or half-dragon (he actually looks like a mythical "merman"). His features are distinctly Oriental with arched eyebrows, heavily-lidded eyes, a fine nose, and rosebud lips, although efforts were made to ensure large eyes. The expression is stoic and serious, but curiously detached. His hair is articulated with great baroque curls. He is dressed as a classical Roman soldier; his cape slung over his left shoulder. The wings are carved and painted gold to simulate eagle wings. He wears midcalf-length boots. The image stands on an ornate, neoclassical base of chased and repousseed silvergilt. The facial features and the overall style of this image has many similarities with the Hispano-Filipino marfiles --- large solid ivory images of the Cristo Expirante and the Virgen Maria --- at the Cathedral of

Sevilla and the Museo Oriental in Valladolid, Spain. These large Hispano-Filipino religious marfiles of an indeterminate European air, largely from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, were crafted by Sangley Chinese carvers and their indio assistants in Binondo, Manila; apparently, the other genre of large religious marfiles that hewed closer to classical Chinese models were crafted in southern China, also for the Spanish market.

This solid ivory image of San Miguel Arcangel is often compared to the famous solid ivory image of the same saint at the San Agustin Museum in Intramuros. The Mr Jorge image is far older than the one at San Agustin because Mr Jorge's is baroque from the seventeenth century and San Agustin's renowned image is neoclassical from the late eighteenth century at the earliest.

The story of such early, large Filipino-Spanish colonial ivory images is inextricably intertwined with the two hundred fifty year-long Galleon Trade between Acapulco and Manila which lasted from 1565–1824. The trip from Acapulco to Manila brought missionaries, Spanish officials, soldiers, merchants, adventurers, religious images both painted and carved (the famous images of "Nuestra Senora de la Paz y Buenviaje" of Antipolo, the "Nuestra Senora de la Salud" of Recoletos de Intramuros, the "Jesus Nazareno" of Recoletos de Intramuros, the "Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno" of



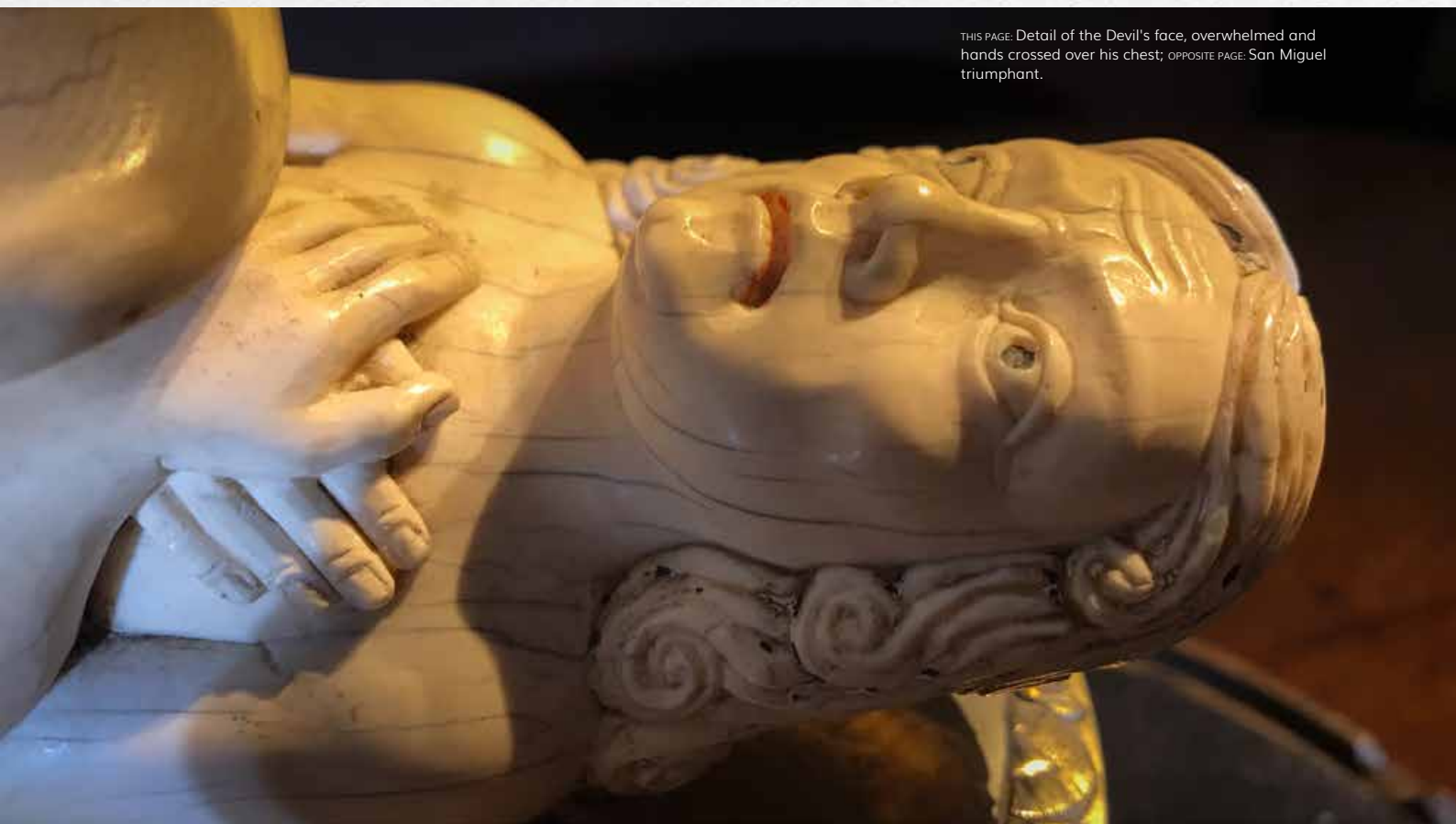
Quiapo, and several others), and most importantly the "situado" royal subsidy of silver coins to financially sustain the colony of Las Islas Filipinas (it wasn't until the establishment of the immensely profitable "El Monopolio de Tabacos"/ Tobacco Monopoly by Capitan General (Governor-General) Jose Basco y Vargas in 1782 that Las Islas Filipinas could begin to sustain itself economically; the "situado" from the Virreinato de Nueva Espana or Mexico was finally abolished in 1804). The "situado" was accumulated from taxes levied on the luxurious merchandise of the galleons in Acapulco supplemented by contributions from the royal safes of the "Virreinato de Nueva Espana"/Viceroyalty of Mexico. The return trip from Manila to Acapulco brought the splendors of the Orient -- Chinese silks, Indian cottons, Asian spices, gold, precious gems, ivory, etc. From Acapulco, the coveted goods were sent to Cadiz in Madre Espana and to the principal ports of the Spanish empire.

An observer wrote of the bustling international trade of Manila in 1633: "Manila cannot be compared to any other emporium of our monarchy, for it is the center towards which flow the riches of the Orient and the Occident, the silver of Peru and New Spain, the pearls and precious stones of India, the diamonds of Narsinga and Goa, rubies, sapphires, and topaz, and the cinnamon of Ceylon, the pepper of Sumatra and Java, the cloves, nutmeg and other spices of the Moluccas and Banda; fine Persian silk; wool and carpets of Ormuz and Malabar, rich draperies and blankets of Bengala, balm and ivory of Abada and Cambodia, perfumes...; and of continental China, uncut silk of all kinds, woven velvet and damasks, taffetas and fabrics of all kinds of texture,

design, and color; cloths and cotton blankets, gold-plated articles; embroideries and porcelains and other rich articles of great value and esteem; from Japan, amber and colored silks, desks, crates and tables of preciously lacquered and curiously decorated wood, and very good silver receptacles."

The Chinese who brought the ivory tusks to Manila were an industrious, pioneering, enterprising, and innovative lot who supplied every imaginable need and want of the natives and later on, after 1565, the Spanish colonizers. Capitan-General Guido de Lavezares wrote SM El Rey Felipe Segundo (HM King Philip II) in 1574: "The Chinese continue to increase their trade every year and they provide us many articles like sugar, wheat flour, animal fat, grapes, pears and oranges, silks, select porcelain, iron and other products that we needed in these lands before they came." Capitan-General de Lavezares perhaps did not know that Chinese traders had been coming to Las Islas Filipinas to trade since time immemorial and that they knew the islands and the inhabitants well (for example, the Chinese were documented as sourcing hardwood lumber from these islands as far back as the T'ang dynasty 618- 907 AD); it was actually the Spanish who were the newcomers to this part of the world. The Chinese goods were transported from the major ports of Canton (currently Guangzhou city) or Amoy (currently Xiamen city) in the southern coast as well as the smaller ports. The distance to Manila averaged from between 650-700 miles (1,046.1-1,126.5 km).

Capitan-General Manuel de Leon (1669-76) sent a special mission to China to encourage trade with the Spanish

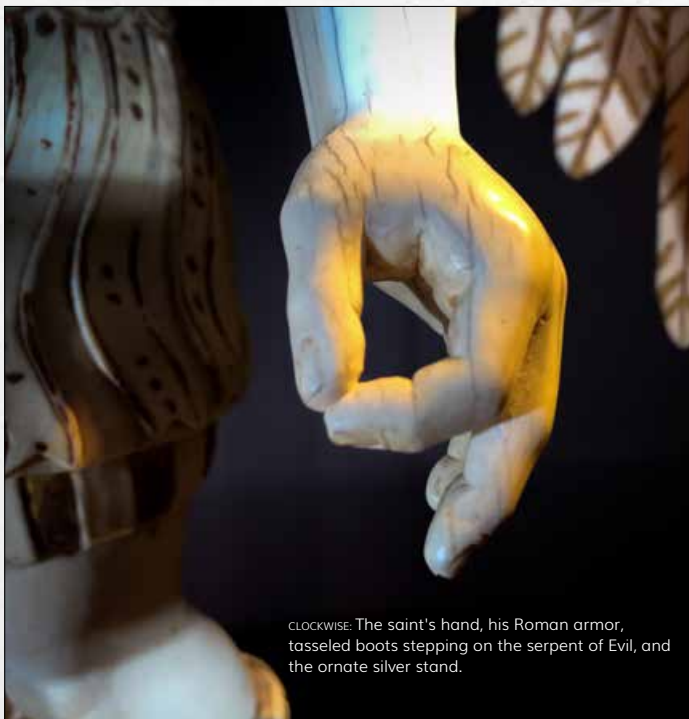


THIS PAGE: Detail of the Devil's face, overwhelmed and hands crossed over his chest; OPPOSITE PAGE: San Miguel triumphant.

in the Las Islas Filipinas colony. Afterwards, the Chinese merchants traveled to Manila from very distant places like Ning-Po (currently Ningbo city in Zhejiang) and the north of Che-Kiang province (currently Zhejiang, with Shanghai city and Jiangsu province to the north), which is Shanghai city and Jiangsu province. Every year by 1650, twenty to sixty Chinese junks would sail for Las Islas Filipinas; some were so large they could hold some two hundred to four hundred men. In 1574, six came; in 1580, from forty to fifty. By 1600, the average number was thirty to forty every year. The numbers hardly varied in the following years. Every season of sailing and selling was determined by the internal situations in China, possibilities of lucrative transactions in Manila, the safety of crossing the South Sea, and the perennial danger of pirates.

We have an idea of how these religious ivory images were crafted by referring to the history of the "de vestir" image of "Nuestra Senora del Santisimo Rosario" / "La Naval de Manila" of the Dominicans, the oldest documented Marian ivory image in the Philippines, presented to the Orden de Predicadores as a gift from Capitan-General (Governor-General) Luis Perez de Dasmaringas in 1593, in memory

of his deceased/assassinated father Capitan-General Gomez Perez de Dasmaringas. Capitan-General Luis Perez de Dasmaringas assigned his deputy Capitan Hernando de los Rios Coronel to oversee a Sangley Chinese master sculptor at the Parian (the original Sangley ghetto just outside Intramuros to the northeast --- currently the area of Liwasang Bonifacio, Manila Metropolitan Theater, Arroceros Forest Park; Binondo across the Rio Pasig was established in 1594 by Capitan-General Luis Perez de Dasmaringas) in creating the nearly life-sized ivory images of the Virgen Maria and Nino Jesus, and to ensure that they would not look Chinese or Oriental, as was inevitably the case with religious sculpture created by the Sangleys. Capitan de los Rios Coronel only succeeded to a point. The resulting images predictably looked more Oriental than European --- high arched eyebrows, heavy lidded almond eyes, plump cheeks, fine noses, rose bud mouths --- but nonetheless were very beautiful; the Virgen Maria took on the facial configuration of the Chinese goddess of mercy, Guanyin, along with the characteristic cheeks and jawline. The resulting images of the Virgen Maria and Nino Jesus were a tantalizing mix of East and West, presaging by centuries the global human features so desirable today.



CLOCKWISE: The saint's hand, his Roman armor, tasseled boots stepping on the serpent of Evil, and the ornate silver stand.



## San Miguel Arcangel

17th century

Binondo, Manila

ivory, silver, and gold

ivory santo: H: 19" (48 cm) L: 3 1/2" (9 cm) W: 13" (33 cm)

sword: 18k gold, 36 grams

virina: H: 35" (89 cm) L: 15" (38 cm) W: 23" (58 cm)

silver base: H: 4 3/4" (12 cm) L: 8" (20 cm) W: 11 1/2" (29 cm)

**P 4,200,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila



## A Santo Tomas De Villanueva OSA Relleve

late 18th to the early 19th-century (1775–1825)

molave hardwood (*Vitex parviflora*)

H: 58" x L: 3" x W: 39 1/2" (147 cm x 8 cm x 100 cm)

**P 400,000**

### PROVENANCE

An old Augustinian church in Ilocos Norte: possibly Laoag – Catedral de San Guillermo de Aquitania; Bacarra – San Andres Apostol; Dingras – San Jose, Esposo de la Virgen Maria; Piddig – Santa Ana, Madre de la Virgen Maria; Paoay – San Agustin de Hipona; Batac – La Inmaculada Concepcion; Sarrat – Santa Monica de Tagaste; Badoc – San Juan Bautista

## Patron of the Poor

by AUGUSTO M.R. GONZALES III

This molave hardwood relievo of the famously charitable Santo Tomas de Villanueva OSA (D Tomas Garcia y Martinez, Spanish, native of Fuenllana, 1488–1555) aka "The Father of the Poor" once formed part of a main retablo in a big Augustinian church in the Far North. It depicts him as a heavily-lidded, almond-eyed Augustinian friar disbursing alms to a heavily-lidded, almond-eyed disabled man with a cane; his archbishop's staff and miter behind him allude to his renowned humility. The relievo is of three conjoined molave panels and was definitely carved by a Sangley/Chinese craftsman. The material of (relatively) thin molave hardwood, style of shallow relief carving, and muted colors of the original polychrome all point to an Augustinian and Ilocos Norte provenance.



Paoay Church, Ilocos Norte © filmphilippines.com

Saint Thomas Villanova OSA was born rich in 1488, the son of a charitable couple who had a grains business; his father and mother regularly provided food and other needs to the poor in their community. He had a great devotion to the Virgin Mary; he compared her heart to "the burning bush of Moses that is never consumed." He entered the University of Alcalá de Henares at sixteen to learn the arts and theology and became a professor. He became an Augustinian friar at the age of thirty in 1518.

His accomplishments were many: He became Prior of his monastery, Visitor –General, and Prior Provincial for Castile and Andalusia. In 1533, he sent out the first Augustinian friar missionaries to Mexico. Charles V (King of Spain from 1516–56), who admired Thomas greatly as a preacher and counselor, appointed him Archbishop of Granada but he respectfully declined. He was appointed Archbishop of Valencia in 1544 and only accepted it when ordered by his superior. He was a hands-on archbishop who visited every parish with his assistant bishop Juan Segria to assess their situations and find solutions; an industrious and efficient man, he succeeded in organizing his see, which was a feat. He had organized boarding schools and high schools, a special college for Moors who had converted to Christianity, and seminaries by 1550.

Thomas was well-known as "The Father of the Poor" and for his great personal austerity. Donations freely given him were immediately passed on to the poor --- specially the orphans, abandoned women, and the ill. He had an advanced, insightful, and practical view of charity: "Charity is just not giving, rather removing the need of those who receive charity and liberating them from it when possible." He was far ahead of his time (by centuries) because he established a de facto Department of Social Welfare which practiced organized social action, welfare, and charity. He wanted the poor to value hard work, learn practical skills, and find gainful employment and trades. Thomas of Villanova --- ascetic, inspired writer, passionate preacher, archbishop who personally tended to the unfortunate in his see --- passed away in 1555 at the age of sixty-seven in Valencia, Spain. He was canonized by Pope Alexander VII in 1658. (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)



## Unidentified Apostle

18th Century  
ivory and wood  
H: 51" (129 cm)  
L: 12" (30 cm)  
W: 18" (46 cm)

**P 320,000**

PROVENANCE  
Probably Pangasinan or Cagayan Valley

This statue of an unidentified apostle must have stood in the retablo mayor or main altar of a church. The style of carving is very similar to santos found in the Dominican Ecclesiastical Province consisting of Pangasinan and Cagayan Valley. The image is shown with his right hand holding a staff and his left hand on his breast. The face and hands of the statue are of ivory, the former being a mask attached to the head. The ivory mask shows definite Chinese influence in the features, particularly the way the eyes are carved. The hair and beard are intricately and painstakingly carved with the individual strands of hair visible.

The image is shown wearing a maroon tunic and a yellow cape, both carved with intricate folds and decorated in the 2nd-class style of estofado gilding wherein squares of 22-karat gold leaf are first pasted on certain areas of the painted robes of a statue, after which foliate and floral patterns are outlined on the gold. When the areas outside the design are painted in the same color as the robes, the golden splendor of foliar and floral designs are revealed.

The statue stands on a base beautifully carved in the Mannerist Style with strapwork that is typically found in large 17th and 18th-century Philippine colonial santos.

-Martin I. Tinio, Jr.



## Pair of Ecclesiastical Armchairs

last quarter of the 19th-century (1875–1899)

Bohol Island

molave hardwood (*Vitex parviflora*)

each chair:

H: 41" (104 cm)

L: 25" (64 cm)

W: 26" (66 cm)

**P 200,000**



This interesting pair of ecclesiastical/church armchairs are made from molave hardwood and come from Bohol island in the Visayas. Although at first glance they seem to be from the 1920s, they were crafted earlier as the flat S-scroll armrests and front-facing cabriole legs with perimeter stretchers were no longer being done during the Jazz Age. Their ornate backrests with a mélange of native flowers, fruits, leaves, conch shells, and naïve flat scrolls hark back to the highly-carved bishop's chairs from the 1700s–1800s; so do the discreet, stylized Hapsburg double-headed eagles. There is also something in their high backs that allude to the "Carlos Trece" (Renaissance Revival) chairs of the 1890s. The plank seat was meant to hold a cushion. Overall, these are the types of interesting folk chairs very much in contemporary fashion as their eccentric forms mix well with new European furniture in modern interiors.

The religious and domestic aesthetics of Bohol island are unique. Classical European design flowed from the churches

and houses of Cebu city to those of southern Cebu and then eastwards to southern Bohol. While the architecture of the Jesuit, later Franciscan churches and the designs of their altars generally adhered to classical tenets with some charming folk interpretations along the way, the earthy Boholano character and inherent creativity manifested in the applied arts.

Ecclesiastical and domestic furniture were of solid construction and heavy, decorated with naïve carvings of classical architectural motifs like acanthus leaves, beadwork, egg and dart, tongues, spirals as well as flowers, leaves, fruits, and vegetables. Widely available, light-colored "Tugas" hardwood (*Molave/Vitex parviflora*) was the preferred medium. The results were distinctive and charming Boholano work. The nineteenth century Bohol comodas and aparadors were landmark productions of Boholano artistry, sensitivity, and eccentricity (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)

## Segmented Dining Table

last quarter of the 19th century (1875 – 1899)

Binondo, Manila

"golden narra" wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

H: 31" (79 cm)

L: 55" (140 cm)

W: 58" (147 cm)

**P 200,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila.



ABOVE: A similar piece "Dining Table" from the book *Likha: Enduring Legacies of Filipino Artistry* (Decorative Arts Collection of the BSP) p. 318 & 321

This elegant Victorian table is composed of the two ends of an opulent 1880s segmented dining table that had twelve leaves, seating twenty-four to twenty-six people at a time. The single tabletops are solid, 2" inch-thick (5.08 cm) pieces of "golden narra" wood supported by four feet of large, outward C-scrolls with crisply carved foliar and floral motifs connected at their midpoints by stylized braces. These magnificent dining tables for very rich clients were produced during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (1875–1899) by master Sangley/Chinese and Filipino craftsmen at their workshops and stores that lined Calle Misericordia in Binondo, Manila.

There are only three other segmented dining tables of this opulent 1880s type known to exist: 1) The long, segmented dining table of Capitan Maximo Molo Agustin Paterno y Yamson and Dona Teodora Devera Ignacio y Pineda in their block-long mansion on Calle San Roque, Santa Cruz, Manila purchased for the 1885 renovations; the parts were distributed among various Paterno-Devera Ignacio heirs in the 1920s; 2) The long, segmented dining table of Don Aniceto Lacson y Ledesma and Dona Rosario Araneta y Cabunsol at their 1880 "Casa Grande" in Talisay, Negros Occidental; currently with their Rosello-Claparols descendants; 3) The long, segmented dining table used for the signing of the 1899 Malolos Constitution, purchased by Central Bank Governor Jaime C Laya from top antique

dealer Severina de Asis, currently in the BSP Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas collection. The Romeo Jorge table consists of the ends of a fourth opulent, segmented dining table.

Filipiniana scholar Martin Imperial Tinio Jr postulated that segmented dining tables reached their popularity in the 1880s and that may well be true. However, segmented dining tables --- specially those with the earlier reeded and fluted legs --- were already in widespread use by the 1850s in Manila and Central Luzon. An 1850s watercolor by Jose Honorato Lozano in the Carl Johann Karuth album in the Ayala Museum collection depicts the grand house of Don Jacobo Zobel Hirsch the pharmacist in Intramuros with an impressive segmented dining table with reeded legs in a comedor which also had a tester bed. There are several examples of segmented dining tables in pre-1880 houses: among them the 1830 Gonzalez-de los Angeles (on the site of the present Iglesia ni Cristo), the 1860 Fores, the 1870 Gonzalez-Carrillo (Museo ng Baliuag) residences in Baliuag, Bulacan; the 1812 Bautista-Tanjosoy (which became de los Santos-Bautista) and the 1840 del Rosario-Tanchangco (which became Jacinto-del Rosario) residences in barrio Barasoain, Malolos, Bulacan; the 1821 Garcia-Yumul, the 1830 Sioco-Carlos (which became Escaler-Sioco), and the 1848 Arnedo-Sioco residences in old barrio Sulipan, Apalit, Pampanga.



The Romeo Jorge Dining Table  
*Victorian-Era Elegance*



## A Mesa Altar (Sheraton)

2nd quarter of the 19th century (1825 – 1850)

Baliuag, Bulacan

narra and tindalo wood (*Pterocarpus indicus* and *Afzelia rhomboidea*)

kamagong and lanite inlay (*Diospyros discolor*/*Diospyros blancoi* and

*Kibatalia gitingensis*)

H: 35 1/2" (90 cm)

L: 27" (69 cm)

W: 52 1/2" (133 cm)

**P 700,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila.

# The Romeo Jorge Baliuag Sheraton

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This sterling example of an early, 1825–50 Baliuag mesa altar or Sheraton from the Romeo Jorge collection is a combination of golden narra and red narra wood (both golden narra, which resembles the exquisite Chinese "huang-huali," and red narra come from different sections of one "*Pterocarpus indicus*" tree). The top is a single piece of golden narra; there is a narra patch on the lower right side, a repair to World War II damage. The three drawers are of golden narra; the bigger central drawer is bow-fronted or convex and the flanking drawers are concave. The drawers are decorated with bone and kamagong line inlays simulating panels with concave corners. There are no handles on the drawers, only the keyholes, as this particular piece was intended for the storage of valuables like jewelry and gold and silver coins, aside from its principal purpose, the display of the sacred images of the household. There is a "cenefa"/molding under the drawers decorated with diamond- and lozenge-shaped carabao bone inlays in a repetitive geometric pattern. The three aprons are of golden narra. The four legs as well as divisions of the drawers terminating in inverted round finials are all of red narra embellished with diamond-shaped carabao bone inlays in star patterns enclosed by linear carabao bone and kamagong inlays. The panel of stylized pennants at the back of the table serving as an apron, also of golden narra, is an important, omnipresent detail of the oldest mesa altar/altar tables in the Baliuag style.

A furniture-making tradition flourished in the town of Baliuag, Bulacan in the plains of Central Luzon from around 1800 until after World War II. It is postulated that the American traders from the East Coast (Boston and New York), busy with commodities trading in Las Islas Filipinas much more than the Spanish colonizers, capitalized it

for their purposes since the predominant forms and decorations were American Federal in nature. The furniture forms were derived from European neoclassicism but the style was particularly American Federal, the woods used for cabinetry were mostly golden narra with a few in tindalo and kamagong, the decorations were carabao bone, lanite, and kamagong inlays, with some very rare pieces decorated with MOP mother-of-pearl inlay.

The furniture workshops of Baliuag, Bulacan produced this type of neoclassical bone, lanite, and kamagong-inlaid mesa altar with a bowfront, three drawers, and four square, tapering Hepplewhite legs from 1825–50. The overall look is redolent of an English/American Sheraton-type sideboard and that was why local antique dealers and agents called such pieces as Sheraton.

This Baliuag mesa altar is of the specific type most sought after by collectors and connoisseurs. First, it is an early production from 1825–50, so the pieces were crafted one by one with much thought; there was the luxury of time and artistry; there were no cookie-cutter production lines yet. Second, the materials used are superior, mature woods since good lumber in the Central Plains, not the Sierra Madre mountains, was still plentiful at the time. Third, the neoclassical bone, lanite, and kamagong inlay decoration is restrained and elegant, almost sparse, yet consistently inventive; the overdone bone-inlaid follies of the mid-twentieth century had not been imagined yet. Fourth, it is rare, not many of the early type were produced and even fewer survived the destruction of World War II. That is why the appearance in the market of this specific type of early Baliuag mesa altar aka Sheraton is celebrated by collectors.



During the heady 1980s, Sheraton mesa altar/altar tables reached their ultimate desirability when the Intramuros Administration represented by Jaime C Laya, Esperanza Bunag-Gatbonton, and Martin Imperial Tinio Jr, and top collectors Paulino Que, Antonio Tanchoco Gutierrez, and Romeo Jorge were at the pinnacle of the collecting game. Advised by leading antique dealers Ramon Nazareth Villegas, Osmundo Esguerra, Romeo Bauzon, Antonio Lammoglia Martino, Terry Baylosis, Jean-Louis Levi and Willie Versoza, the top collectors waxed rhapsodic over the most beautiful and the rarest examples and admired the latest acquisitions of their peers --- one entirely in tindalo with a bowfronted central drawer and flanking concave drawers with magnificent, Penaranda-style floral inlay (according to Martin I Tinio, Ex Coll: Maria Tinio Romero-Buencamino estate, Ex Coll: Tinio-Imperial family; presently in the Casa Manila house museum - Intramuros Administration; it has an exact pair, Ex Coll: D M Guevara Foundation-Museo ng Buhay Pilipino, Maria Tinio Romero-Buencamino estate, presently in the Museo De La Salle, DLSU-D De La Salle University-Dasmaringas, Dasmaringas, Cavite); one entirely in kamagong with six drawers and six feet and inlaid with carabao bone (according to Ramon N Villegas, presently in the Paulino Que and Hetty Kho collection); one classical example in golden narra with six drawers and six feet and inlaid with carabao bone, kamagong, and an unusual blue stone (according to Antonio Lammoglia Martino, Ex Coll: Dr Eleuterio Montano Pascual ("Teyet") 1986, Antonio Lammoglia Martino ("Tony") 1984-1986, Antonio

Tanchoco Gutierrez ("Tony") 1984, Governor Macario Arnedo y Sioco-Dona Maria Espiritu y Dungo estate 1912-1984, bgy Capalangan, Apalit, Pampanga; Don Felipe Buencamino y Siojo-Dona Juana Arnedo estate 1850-1912, bgy Capalangan, Apalit, Pampanga; presently in the Jose Moreno ("Pitoy") estate, 1987-present). (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)

ABOVE: A similar piece from the book KASAYSAYAN volume 4, Life in the colony p. 255 BELOW: A similar piece from the book Likha: Enduring Legacies of Filipino Artistry (Decorative Arts Collection of the BSP) p. 272.



# Grooved Marble Center Table: *The Enduring Status Symbol*

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This important center table has a red grooved marbletop on top of a simple "cenefa" apron. It is supported by a baluster base of a reeded urn (known colloquially as "kalabasa" [squash]) over a turned circular stand with applied reeding decoration. The tripod feet emerge from the stand with foliar forms and unfurl to graceful, inwardly turning S-scrolls; the feet are secured to the stand by a flat plate. This red grooved marbletop table from the Romeo Jorge collection was famous for many years among major collectors who coveted it for its singularity; it was the only one in red marble known to exist in the whole country. Then it vanished from sight and consciousness along with the rest of the Romeo Jorge collection in the late 1990s. The only other colored ones known were the charcoal gray tabletops in the sala of Don Guido Yaptinchay y Gana and Dona Agustina Alberto y Sanchez de Carabaca in Binan, Laguna and its seeming twin in the Agra-Rivera ancestral house in Pila, Laguna. All that, until the advent of the Filipino auction houses and the unremitting repatriation of important Filipino art and antiques from Europe and the United States.

Marble, whether European or Asian but always considered European, was a genuine prestige item/status symbol for prosperous Spanish-Filipino, Chinese-Filipino, or simply Filipino families during the second half of the nineteenth century. It appeared on center tables and occasional tables in grand salas as in that of Don Pedro Sy-Quia y Encarnacion and Dona Asuncion Ventura y Michels de Champourcin in Tondo (The D Pedro Sy-Quias were in the business of importing Carrara marble from Italy, among many other business ventures; the 1880s sola pieza "Table of the Sphinxes,"

later sold in the 1890s to Don Placido Escudero de Leon and Dona Claudia Marasigan y Javier of San Pablo de los Montes, Laguna); appeared on dining tables in grand comedors as those of the Don Felix Pardo de Tavera y Gomez Artucha and Dona Juliana de Gorricho de los Santos family in Intramuros, and of the Angeles-David family in Bacolor, Pampanga; appeared as steps in entresuelos and azoteas as in the grand houses of Capitan Maximo Molo Agustin Paterno y Yamson and Dona Carmen Devera Ignacio y Pineda along Calle San Roque in Santa Cruz, Don Mariano Zamora and Dona Martina Molo Agustin Paterno y Yamson along Calle San Sebastian, and Don Flaviano Abreu and Dona Saturnina Salazar along Calle Sagunto in Tondo; and appeared in bathrooms as in that of Don Serafin Lazatin de Ocampo and Dona Encarnacion Singian y Torres in San Fernando, Pampanga (a thick white marble bathtub). Don Arsenio Escudero y Marasigan (+1978), a grand hacendero from San Pablo de los Montes and a younger contemporary of Jose Rizal at the Ateneo de Manila (indeed bested Jose Rizal and Juan Luna in drawing lessons by D Agustin Saez y Granadell), had a marked penchant for Italian Carrara marble --- the thicker, the better --- and added many pieces to his inheritance of the masterpiece "The Table of the Sphinxes" from his parents. He was able to acquire another long white marble table from a crumbling Intramuros palace (indeed a twin in length to "The Table of the Sphinxes"), several thick tabletops, thick benches, great urns, lifesized classical busts, and assorted items during his lifetime. Don Arsenio Escudero personified the elegant and sophisticated tastes of the late nineteenth century Filipino "ilustrado."

During the second half of the nineteenth century (1850-1899), every big "bahay-nabato" in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao had two round marbletop tables with tripod bases which underscored the high social status of the homeowners, be they hacenderos (plantation



A similar piece on the receiving area of Syquia Mansion  
Photo © Gian Carlo Jubela



## Grooved Red Marble-Top Center Table

last quarter of the 19th century (1875 – 1900)

red marble & "golden narra" wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

Height: 30" (76 cm)

Diameter: 39 1/2" (100 cm)

**P 260,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila.



owners), merchants, or both. There were essentially just two types of interchangeable baluster bases and feet: bases of reeded urns or upright acanthus leaves and the feet of ball-and-claw or alternating C-scrolls. These center tables were usually purchased from the Sangley/Chinese master cabinetmakers along Calle Misericordia in Binondo, Manila beginning in the 1850s; the white marbletops were imported by European businessmen from Carrara, Italy and those from southern China by Chinese traders. The one with a plain molded marbletop was placed in the center of the "caida"/entrance hall which was the family living room. The much more expensive one with multiple grooves on the sides of the marbletop --- the bigger, the more grooves, the more expensive, therefore the richer the owner (according to the Filipiniana scholar Martin Imperial Tinio Jr) --- was placed in the center of the "sala"/living room which was the formal reception room for important guests and occasions.

The biggest and grandest versions known of these grooved marbletop center tables are in the Syquia mansion museum/Don Gregorio Syquia y Encarnacion-Dona Estefania Angco

estate in Vigan, Ilocos Sur (reeded urn-shaped baluster base, ball and claw feet, circa 1860); the Don Aniceto Lacson y Ledesma-Dona Rosario Araneta y Cabunsol estate in Talisay, Negros Occidental (reeded urn-shaped baluster base, ball and claw feet, circa 1880); the Museo De La Salle, DLSU-D De La Salle University-Dasmaringas, Dasmaringas, Cavite (baluster base of stylized round acanthus leaves, feet of alternating C-scrolls, Ex Coll: Jose Maria Ricardo Yaptinchay-Abad Panlilio, Angeles-Gutierrez-David estate, Bacolor, Pampanga, circa 1880); the Casa Manila house museum, Plaza San Luis, Intramuros (baluster base of upright acanthus leaves, feet of alternating C-scrolls, Ex Coll: The estates of the siblings Don Feliciano Paterno y Devera Ignacio and Dona Adelaida Paterno y Devera Ignacio, Calle Aviles, San Miguel de Tanduay, Manila; originally from the Capitan Maximo Molo Agustin Paterno y Yamson-Dona Teodora Devera Ignacio y Pineda estate, Calle San Roque, Santa Cruz, Manila, circa 1870); and in the Paulino Que and Hetty Kho collection (reeded urn-shaped baluster base, ball and claw feet, Pampanga, circa 1860), Forbes Park, Makati city.



# The Magnificent Malacañang Armchair

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

The magisterial yet tasteful highback armchair is part of several similar suites that once graced the Palacio de Malacanang during the late Spanish colonial period in Filipinas (1870–1898), specifically the “Salon de Baile” (Ballroom). The slightly reclining arched back is surrounded by foliar, floral, and C-scroll piercework carvings topped with a cartouche surmounted by a coronet; it is supported by a distinctly rocaille C-scroll carving with foliar forms. The backrest is supported by a pair of “salomonica” columns (Solomonic/barley-sugar/barley-twist) topped by finials and resting on truncated baluster bases; the backrest still has the original 1880s caning (“solohiya”). From the columns, the baluster arms are fastened which terminate in the simplified pieds des bouches of inverted, tumescent cabriole legs which ingeniously serve as the arm supports and continue downwards through the seat with a conch shell motif to upright, tumescent cabriole legs with pieds des bouches feet; the rear legs are plain and splayed. What is interesting is that several of the motifs are also found in the unique tester beds, mariposa sofas, and armchairs attributed to the famous Sangley craftsman Ah Tay of Binondo.

The elegant suites of furniture at the Spanish Palacio de Malacanang were produced by Sangley/Chinese and Filipino master craftsmen in one of the ateliers lining Calle Misericordia in Binondo, Manila during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The style is popularly but erroneously called “Carlos Trece” (Carlos XIII) after a Spanish king who never existed; it was most likely a corruption of “Carlos Tercero” (Carlos III, Carlos Sebastian de Borbon y Farnesio), a great Spanish-Italian, flesh-and-blood monarch who reigned from 1759–1788. However, the style of the chair is definitely Renaissance Revival from the Isabelina period in Spain (S M Reina Isabel II, 1833–1868).

These highback “Isabelina” suites are well-documented in antique Philippine photographs. There are pictures of these specific Renaissance Revival suites --- single chairs, armchairs, settees, sofas --- in the old “Salon de Baile” of the Spanish Palacio de Malacanang in 1899, before the pragmatic American renovations and redecorations after the Spanish had left.

These impressive “Isabelina” suites from the Palacio de Malacanang are only rivaled in elegance by one other, more famous set --- the four Castilian Lion-crested Renaissance Revival suites of the affluent and exceedingly Hispanized Don Maximo Molo Agustin Paterno y Yamson – Dona Carmen Devera Ignacio y Pineda family --- produced by expert Sangley/Chinese and Filipino craftsmen in Paete, Laguna in 1880 under the auspices of Gobernador Francisco Ciriaco de Yriarte y Menendez (1821–1892), a gentleman of great style and taste --- which once graced their “Salon de Diez Puertas” (“Salon of the Ten Doors”) in their block-long palace in Santa Cruz, Manila. One of the magnificent Paterno suites is currently displayed at the grand Sala of the Museo De La Salle at the De La Salle University–Dasmarinas, Cavite.

As with any other Philippine government institution, there were periodic clearance sales at the Malacanang Palace to decongest offices and storerooms, usually conducted in bulk by efficient, no-nonsense personnel, and that was how many fine pieces of the national patrimony found their way to the outside world, like this armchair and many other considerable pieces (tables, desks, cabinets, etc) to the immense delight of collectors and connoisseurs. (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)



## A Malacañang Carlos Trece Armchair ("Isabelina" / Renaissance Revival)

last quarter of the 19th century (1875–1900)

narra wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

H: 53 1/4" (135 cm)

L: 23" (58 cm)

W: 27" (69 cm)

**P 120,000**

### PROVENANCE

Malacanang Palace collection;  
Palacio de Malacanang,  
San Miguel de Tanduay, Manila.



A front view of the piece



TOP AND BOTTOM (OPPOSITE PAGE): Aguinaldo State Dining Room, Malacañang Palace, 1945 © Private collection, Louis Nevin Hodges Sr., ABOVE (L-R): Similar piece (*Carlos Trece Chairs*) with the portraits of current and previous Philippine Presidents at the Malacañang Reception Hall; Aguinaldo State Dining Room, Malacañang Palace. © tatlerasia





## A Kamagong Comoda with Paw Feet

second quarter of the 19th century (1825 – 1850)

produced by a master craftsman from Candon or Vigan, Ilocos Sur or Manila

kamagong (*Diospyros discolor/Diospyros blancoi*)

H: 42 1/2" (108 cm)

L: 23" (58 cm)

W: 47" (119 cm)

**P 800,000**

### PROVENANCE

An old family from Malasiqui, Pangasinan



This significant kamagong comoda from 1825–50 has a framed, multipanel top. From the top, at the sides, two neoclassical kamagong columns with plain, slightly concave capitals, fluted shafts, and turned bases flank the comoda, as in an aparador. The two columns are attached to the kamagong frame of the top in an uncharacteristic but nonetheless correct way: the tops of the columns have been cut out to accommodate the 90 degree corners of the top frame; the traditional way has the top frame with concave cut outs to accommodate the tops of the columns. It has four drawers: each drawer front is adorned with an elongated neoclassical panel with concave sides of

double line inlay of lanite wood enclosing kamagong wood. The multipanel sides are likewise embellished with neoclassical panels with concave sides of lanite and kamagong line inlay. The cabinet sits on a convex molding which rounds off at the sides to support the two columns and continues to the back; there is no apron. Finally, the comoda is supported by four well-articulated, late neoclassical style paw feet carved from kamagong wood, set in the German Biedermeier style (1815–1848) with the two front and two rear feet at outward angles (the earlier Napoleonic French Empire style [1800–1815] would have had all the feet facing the front).

*"It has been a full thirty years since a significant piece of antique kamagong furniture has emerged from a primary source, an old family from Northern Luzon... Certainly, magnificent pieces have been emerging from unraveling private collections but no longer from their original owners. So the appearance of this splendid kamagong comoda direct from its original owners in Malasiqui, Pangasinan is cause for celebration."*

—AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

The dimensions of the kamagong wood used are comparatively modest because the Mabolo tree (*Diospyros discolor*/*Diospyros blancoi*) is usually slim and slender in a residential garden or barrio setting; it only becomes larger when it is very old and located in a deep virgin forest. Planks cut from the trunk are usually not longer than 5' feet/60" inches (152.4 cm) and not wider than 8" inches (20.32 cm); wood cut from the branches are even shorter and narrower.

It has been a full thirty years since a significant piece of antique kamagong furniture has emerged from a primary source, an old family from Northern Luzon. Not since the early 1980s to the mid-1990s --- when the great art and antique furniture collectors Jaime C Laya (for the Central Bank of the Philippines and the Intramuros Administration), Paulino Que, Antonio Gutierrez, Romeo Jorge, Richard Barnes Lopez, Jose Maria Ricardo Yaptinchay-Abad Panlilio (and the previous generation of equally great collectors Marie-Theresa Gallardo Lammoglia-Virata [Mrs Leonides Sarao Virata], Manuel Unchuan Agustines and Rosarito Prieto Caro, Antonio Tuason, Leandro V Locsin) assisted by the now-legendary antique dealers Osmundo Esguerra, Ramon Nazareth Villegas, Maria Cristina Consing Ongpin-Roxas, Romeo Bauzon, Terry Baylosis, Antonio Lammoglia Martino, Willie Versoza and Jean-Louis Levy, Gerry Esposo and Liza Ramos Rama, Leonora Gueco-Ignacio, Lina Cristobal --- have important antique kamagong furniture appeared in the market, deaccessioned by their original owners. Certainly, magnificent pieces have been emerging from unraveling private collections but no longer from their original owners. So the appearance of this splendid kamagong comoda direct from its original owners in Malasiqui, Pangasinan is cause for celebration.

During the 1800s, one of the major woes of the expatriates in Las Islas Filipinas was how to protect their expensive European and American clothes from being feasted on by a staggering variety of local insects, from molding green due to high tropical humidity, and from simply rotting away because of the inconstant weather which swung between searing heat and pouring rain. There were many ad hoc treatments for the omnipresent termites like sachets of "moras" roots (vetiver), woven grass valises ("tampipi"), wooden chests ("baules"), Chinese black lacquer chests and boxes of camphorwood ("alcanfor"), small wardrobes and commodes (aparadores y comodas) but they were all only temporary and nothing long-term. The natives suggested to the expatriates that the best possible, available solution was an aparador of local "camagon"/"kamagong" hardwood, which was invulnerable to termites and woodborers as well as the humidity; it was expensive, but it would protect their clothes. However, the kamagong aparador still had to be dragged a bit through the floor monthly to confound the termites, because they could still crawl up through the floor to the legs, through the crevices and cracks, and feast on the clothes stored inside, although they really could not chew on the kamagong wood itself.

Although "golden narra" (*Pterocarpus indicus*) reigned as the wood of choice for elegant domestic furniture in Filipinas from the 1840s onwards (favored by the Sangley/Chinese and Filipino craftsmen for its uncanny similarity to the exquisite Chinese "huang-huali" wood), "kamagong" wood and its variants remained prestige woods throughout the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. The most beautiful agglomeration of elegant neoclassical kamagong furniture was formerly found



in Ilocos Sur province, in that magical 61 kilometer-distance between Candon and Vigan towns. For some reason, Manila cabinetmakers found themselves in the area or Ilocano workmen found their way to Manila, worked there, and returned home to the Ilocos. The cultural exchange and technology transfers resulted in unutterably magnificent neoclassical furniture which was almost English and French in its quality; the designs ranged from Louis XVI, Directoire, Consulat, Empire, to Louis-Philippe.

Some of the outstanding extant pieces from the Vigan-Candon School are: an exquisitely proportioned cartonnier/vitrine with hairy legs and paw feet, Paulino Que & Hetty Kho collection, previously in the 1726 Formoso estate, Vigan, Ilocos Sur; a large kamagong and narra comoda with paw feet, early 1700s Carino estate, Candon, Ilocos Sur, private collection; a kamagong aparador with a piercework crest, balustrade, and finials, Filart mansion, Vigan; a pair of kamagong aparadors with massive pediment crests, serpentine fronts, and paw feet, Singson-Crisologo family, one of them from the Filart estate in the Eugenio Moreno Lopez Jr (Geny Lopez) collection, the pair still with the Singson family in Vigan, Ilocos Sur; a pair of kamagong and molave aparadors with serpentine fronts and paw feet, D M Guevara collection at the Museo De La Salle, Dasmariñas, Cavite; a pair of kamagong aparadors with "botoh" (paisley) carvings on the crest with balustrades and finials, Singson-Encarnacion-Rosario family, Manuel Martinez Dizon & Regina Palanca Gonzalez collection; a low but wide aparador with a carved crest, Stanley & Abby Chan collection, previously in the Romeo Jorge collection; an original kamagong aparador with delicate, repetitive inlay on the crest, Quema-Crisologo mansion, Vigan; a suite of Fernando Septimo/Louis XVI settee, armchairs, and chairs,

Syquia-Angco mansion, Vigan; a kamagong divan/daybed with bolsters and paw feet, Quema-Crisologo mansion, Vigan; a kamagong wdivan/daybed with bolsters, hairy legs and paw feet, Donato mansion, Vigan; and several others. This splendid kamagong comoda from Malisiqui, Pangasinan now joins this distinguished roster of magnificent furniture from the Vigan-Candon School.

Not to be outdone even with widespread World War II devastation, Manila, Central Luzon (Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija), and Laguna also have existing masterpieces of neoclassical kamagong furniture. There is a magnificent pair of solid kamagong aparadors with mother-of-pearl inlaid crests from the Don Isaura Gabaldon y Gonzalez-Dona Bernarda Tinio y Santa Romana estate (Manila and Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija; the Tinios and then the Gabaldons were the grandest hacenderos in Nueva Ecija with thousands of hectares to their names) which are now in the Paulino Que & Hetty Kho collection and in private collection. There is a similar but smallish kamagong aparador with a mother-of-pearl inlaid crest at the Casa Manila Museum in Intramuros, Manila (Intramuros Administration). There is a splendidly carved neoclassical, English Regency style (officially 1810-1830, actually 1795-1837) kamagong divan from the 1820s Dizon-Dayrit estate (Santa Ana, Pampanga) which is now in the Augusto M R Gonzalez III collection (formerly in the Rene Dizon collection; formerly in the Luis Ma Araneta collection). There is a magnificent pair of kamagong and molave aparadors with mother-of-pearl inlaid crests in the second floor hallway of the Big House of the Villa Escudero, San Pablo city, Laguna (AERA Arsenio Marasigan Escudero & Rosario Averion Adap collection). (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)

## A Mesa Altar in the Baliuag Style

Turn-of-the-20th-century (1890–1910)

Baliuag, Bulacan

"Golden narra" wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

Carabao bone, "Lanite" wood (*Kibatalia gitingensis*), and

"Kamagong" wood (*Diospyros discolor/Diospyros blancoi*) inlay

Baliuag, Bulacan

H: 40" (102 cm)

L: 28" (71 cm)

W: 57 3/4" (147cm)

**P 400,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Old Bulacan

This Baliuag "mesa altar" altar table is a traditional combination of "golden narra" and "red narra" woods. It has a multipanel top with concave moldings on the sides. It has a straight front characteristic of the later Baliuag altar tables from the turn of the twentieth century. There are five drawers of "golden narra" wood in two levels, three on top, two below. There is a distinct division between the two levels underscored by parallelogram-shaped carabao bone and kamagong inlay in a counterflow pattern and it extends to the sides of the table which are likewise decorated with bone and kamagong inlays as the front. The drawers are decorated with parallelogram-shaped bone and kamagong inlays in a rope pattern simulating panels with concave corners. Below the two side drawers are running patterns of alternating diamonds and dots. Underneath are "cenefa" aprons of golden narra with shallow C-scroll carvings punctuated with single diamond-shaped bone inlay. Under the middle drawer is a concave apron with parallelogram-shaped bone and kamagong inlay that follows its shape. The eight drawer divisions are adorned with parallelogram-shaped bone and kamagong inlay forming vertical rectangular panels sprouting stylized bone and kamagong florettes at their vertical edges. There are eight baluster legs with reverse urn feet; the four front feet are embellished with alternating bone and kamagong rosette inlays at their tops. Overall, the patterns of carabao bone and kamagong inlay decoration echo those of the earlier Baliuag "mesa altar" altar tables from the second quarter of the nineteenth century (1825–50).

From around 1800 until after World War II, a unique furniture-making tradition utilizing carabao bone and wood inlay developed in the town of Baliuag, Bulacan in the plains of Central Luzon. Due to the generally American Federal character (popular from 1790–1820) of the forms and decoration of Baliuag bone-inlaid furniture, it is inferred



ABOVE: A similar piece "Sideboard" from the book *Likha: Enduring Legacies of Filipino Artistry* (Decorative Arts Collection of the BSP) p. 273

that the American traders from the East Coast (Boston and New York), busy with commodities trading in Las Islas Filipinas much more than the Spanish colonizers, capitalized it for their purposes --- the import/export and souvenir trades. The furniture forms were still derived from European neoclassicism but the style was particularly American Federal, the woods used for cabinetry were mostly golden narra with a few in tindalo and kamagong, the decorations were carabao bone, lanite, and kamagong inlays, with some very rare pieces decorated with nacre/MOP mother-of-pearl inlay. The pervasive Spanish influence was externalized in the deliberate dispositions of the carabao bone, lanite, and kamagong inlay with hints of the Mudejar: of Andalusian and North African sensibilities (Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, southern Mediterranean).

The furniture workshops of Baliuag, Bulacan produced this type of neoclassical bone, lanite, and kamagong-inlaid mesa altar with a straight front, five drawers (three above and two below), and eight, simple turned baluster legs from 1890–1910. The overall look is still redolent of an English/American Sheraton-type sideboard and that was why local antique dealers and agents called such pieces as Sheraton.

For some reason, this general form is the predominant type of Baliuag mesa altar/altar table found in the central towns of Santa Maria, San Jose del Monte, Norzagaray, Angat, Bustos, San Rafael and the southwestern towns of Obando, Meycauayan, Marilao, San Jose del Monte of Bulacan. These were the old Norzagaray, Angat, San Rafael, and San Miguel de Mayumo towns before they were partitioned to form the new town of Remedios Trinidad in 1977 (the largest in land area in Bulacan province at 933 km<sup>2</sup>). Perhaps, they were better distributed in those places by their peripatetic sellers and makers. (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)



*"This Baliuag "mesa altar" altar table is a traditional combination of "golden narra" and "red narra" woods..."*

—AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III



## A Large Round Table (With a Substantial Single-Slab Top)

ca. 1920s

golden narra wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

H: 30 1/2" (77 cm)

D: 65" (165 cm)

**P 200,000**

### PROVENANCE

Bilibid Workshops

Private collection, Manila

# The Prestige of the 'Solo Pieza' Table

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This impressive, large round table of "golden narra" wood with a 2" inch- (5.08 cm) thick "sola pieza" (one-piece) top was crafted by the Bilibid workshops in the 1920s. The top sits on a circumferential band over a thick "cenefa" apron with a molding at the bottom. The large tabletop is supported by five, large, partially-reeded baluster bases resting on a scalloped multipanel base. The panel base is in turn supported by four equidistant plinth feet. The round table is distinguished because of its size and its prodigal use of precious golden narra

Good, mature lumber from Philippine virgin forests was plentiful during the early 1900s because the American colonial government had opened many highly profitable lumber concessions to American industrialists, businessmen, and influential Filipino politicians. Beautiful "golden narra," "red narra" (both *Pterocarpus indicus*), and other native hardwoods like tindalo/balayong (*Azelia rhomboides*), molave (*Vitex parviflora*), kamagong (*Diospyros discolor/Diospyros blancoi*) were made into elegant furniture; the models were invariably contemporary American furniture with a historical bent. The interiors of American colonial government offices in Manila began to resemble their elegant Beaux-Arts style counterparts in Washington DC.

Among many others in the circle of President Manuel Luis Quezon, one prominent Manila family that furnished their residence on Rodriguez-Arias street (a cul-de-sac) in San Miguel de Tanduay (the area of Malacanang Palace) prewar with many sensible, solid Bilibid pieces was that of Don Nicanor Padilla y Escobar (1852–1936) and his English

mestiza wife Dona Ysabel Bibby y Pena (1872–1945). They had a large family of twelve children, all well-educated and noteworthy --- Narciso Bibby Padilla, Carmen Bibby Padilla-Lesaca, Mariana Bibby Padilla, Justice Sabino Bibby Padilla, Justice Ambrosio Bibby Padilla, Tomas Bibby Padilla, Benedicto Bibby Padilla, Alberto Bibby Padilla, Felix Bibby Padilla, Dr Florencia Bibby Padilla-Dualan. The Padilla-Bibby family lived in an updated 1840s bahay-na-bato which was transferred lock-stock-and-barrel by Nicanor's parents Don Tomas Padilla y Rosa (o ca 1830)





and Dona Celedonia Escobar to San Miguel de Tanduy, Manila in the 1880s from their hometown of Lingayen, Pangasinan. There was an informed, discerning taste for large "sola pieza" tables (thick one-piece tabletops), be they rectangular or round; massive cabinets with ornate Renaissance Revival carvings; and bulky, solid armchairs and chairs. Prewar Bilibid work captured the Filipinized Beaux-Arts grandeur President Manuel Quezon preferred for his Commonwealth tenure. Apparently, the conservative taste for sensible, solid Bilibid furniture pieces

filtered to the twelve Padilla-Bibby children because they also chose similar furniture pieces for their own houses prewar. That particular establishment taste prevailed and even the grandchildren selected similar furniture for their own houses postwar. Continuity, Padilla-style. Although this round table is not from the Padilla clan of real estate dynasts, they are representative of the affluent Filipino families who appreciated American-supervised, high-quality Bilibid work and used them in their residences. *(Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III)*

## A Neoclassical Kamagong Bookcase on Stand

second quarter of the nineteenth century (1825–50)

found in Santa Ana, Manila

made in Binondo, Manila

kamagong, narra, and alintatao (satin) wood (Diospyros discolor/  
Diospyros blancoi, Pterocarpus indicus, and Chloroxylon swietenia)

H: 72 1/4" (183 cm)

L: 21" (53 cm)

W: 39" (99 cm)

**P 400,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Old Sta Ana, Manila

The English-inspired ensemble has a crest of Gothic Revival fretwork rosettes with plinths and finials at the corners, set over the bookcase proper with its top molding of kamagong wood with satinwood marquetry dentils, over the glass-fronted narra wood and alintatao wood cabinet with concave diamond-shaped fretwork on kamagong frame doors; the sides are decorated with lanite and kamagong line inlay forming a vertical panel with concave corners. The bookcase is set on top of a kamagong and narra stand of Chinese Chippendale derivation with a framed top, two drawers with marquetry of chinoiserie fretwork in lanite, small rococo scroll brackets, and four square tapered legs with spade feet. The ensemble is inspired by the English cabinetmaker Thomas Chippendale and his chinoiserie line; classic English furniture designs by Thomas Chippendale (1718–1779), George Hepplewhite (1727–1786), Robert Adam (1728–1792), and Thomas Sheraton (1751–1806) entered Filipinas largely through cultural exchanges with venturesome British traders during the 1840s. The designs had also come from contact with the Spanish and the French, who both took on the fashions and styles of Great Britain, the new imperialist world power of the nineteenth century. In the hands of the master Sangley/Chinese and Filipino craftsmen, classic English designs took on a restrained, late neoclassicism geared for the local market.

Apart from Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte, Manila, Morong (Rizal), Central Luzon (Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija), Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, and Tayabas also have existing masterpieces of neoclassical kamagong furniture. There is a magnificent pair of solid kamagong aparadors with mother-of-pearl inlaid crests from the Don Isauro Gabaldon y Gonzalez–Dona Bernarda Tinio y Santa Romana estate (Manila and Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija; the Tinios and then the Gabaldons were the grandest hacenderos/landowners in Nueva Ecija with tens of thousands of hectares to their names) which are now in the Paulino Que & Hetty Kho collection and in the Antonio Tanchoco Gutierrez & Cecilia Fernandez

Berenguer collection. There is a similar but smallish kamagong aparador with a mother-of-pearl inlaid crest at the Casa Manila Museum in Intramuros, Manila (Intramuros Administration). There is a splendidly carved neoclassical, English Regency style (officially 1810–1830, actually 1795–1837) kamagong divan from the 1820s Dizon–Dayrit estate (Santa Ana, Pampanga) which is now in the Augusto M R Gonzalez III collection (formerly in the Rene Dizon collection; formerly in the Luis Ma Araneta collection). There is a magnificent pair of kamagong and molave aparadors with mother-of-pearl inlaid crests in the second floor hallway of the Big House of the Villa Escudero, San Pablo city, Laguna (AERA Arsenio Marasigan Escudero & Rosario Averion Adap collection). This exquisite neoclassical bookcase of kamagong, narra, and alintatao from Santa Ana, Manila now joins this distinguished roster of magnificent furniture from Manila and the adjacent provinces of Morong (Rizal province), Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija (Central Luzon), Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, and Tayabas (Quezon province). *(Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III)*



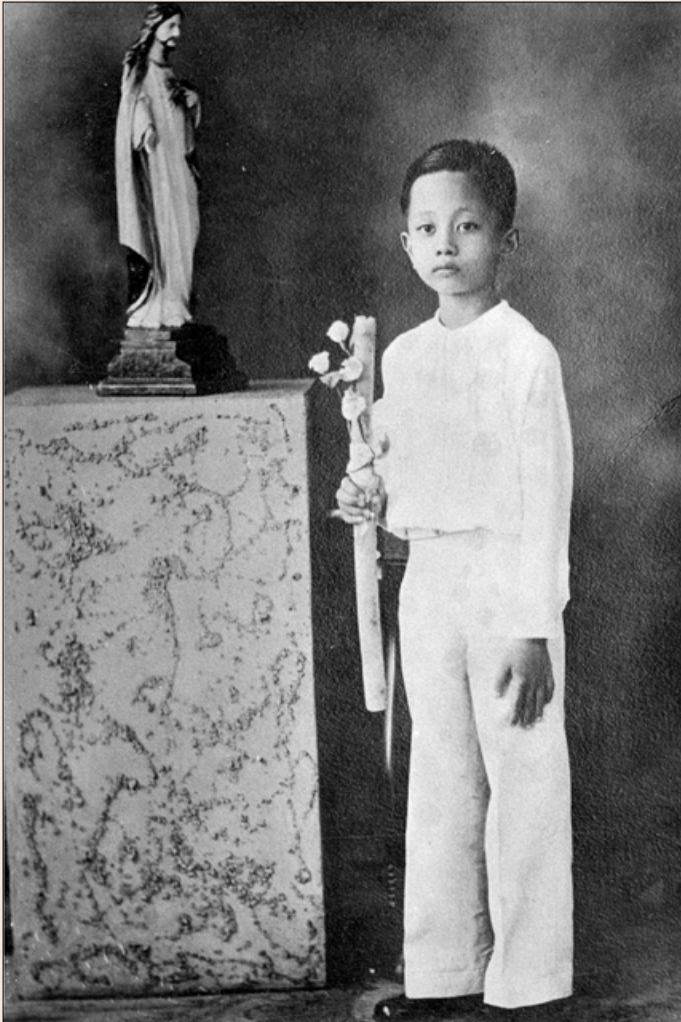
LEFT TO RIGHT: A similar piece "Ilocos book cabinet made of kamagong...Paulino and Hetty Que Collection" from the book KASAYSAYAN volume 4, Life in the colony p. 254 & Consuming Panssions Philippine Collectibles, p. 190.



# Classic Chippendale Chinoiserie



# The Legacy of Don Eugenio "Geny" Lopez Jr.



LEFT: A young Eugenio Lopez Jr prepares for his first Holy Communion; TOP: The Lopez family at home; BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: Geny while in exile in San Francisco during the 1970s; Geny with his uncle, vice president Fernando Lopez; © Lopez Museum, Tattlerasia

## The Legacy of Don Geny Lopez (1928 - 1999)

Don Eugenio "Geny" Lopez was born into a rarefied and highly sophisticated milieu, presided over by his father, the titan Eugenio "Eñing" Lopez, Sr., on November 4, 1928.

An over-active boy, he would eventually be sent to the Virginia Military Institute where he graduated in 1950. He went on to Harvard Business School and returned to helm what would become the country's largest if not most influential media conglomerate, ABS-CBN.

It was in the great tradition of his grandfather Benito Lopez who founded *El Tiempo*, the first daily newspaper in Iloilo. (Lopez, a nationalist, was also vice mayor of Iloilo City.)

But it would be Don Geny who would take the path of multi-media innovation, introducing microwave and satellite technology as well as introducing color television programming in the country.

By 1993, Geny would focus on Benpres Holdings, the mother company of the Lopez holdings in media, banking and power. He would next venture into telecommunications, infrastructure, property development and other utilities.



### **A Family Tradition of Patronage of the Arts**

A staunch nationalist, Don Geny's father also believed that "by preserving and promoting the Filipino heritage, his countrymen would eventually develop a sense of national pride that would enable the country to develop a unified spirit, ultimately resulting in ensuring a strengthening of a collective national soul in the succeeding generations."

Don Geny Lopez would pass away in June 1999 in San Francisco. He was 71. (*Lisa Guerrero Nakpil*)

# The House of Golden Memory

The very surname of Jose Joya denotes "jewel"—a crowning gem in the annals of Philippine art. Joya's success is attested by his many accomplishments throughout every decade of his career. He triumphantly closed his formative years of the 1950s when he won the First Prize for Non-Objective Painting at the 1958 Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual Competition and Exhibition and the Second Prize at the 1959 Annual for his now-iconic work *Space Transfiguration*.

With the dawn of the 1960s, Joya's success only went from strength to strength, constantly flexing his creative virtuoso. And it is in that festive atmosphere that Joya created this spirited work titled *Yellow Abode*.

*Yellow Abode* is a valuable memento from the same prolific year when Joya was granted two of his most important awards in his lifetime: the Republic Cultural Heritage Award, precursor to the National Artist Award (he was awarded the latter posthumously in 2003) and the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award. Writes Ileana Maramag in her article "Top Young Men of 1961 Named": "*Joya was selected for his accomplishments as the leading young (30) non-objective artist in the country today. An exponent of non-figurative art in the Philippines, his works have consistently won prizes too lengthy to list. Earlier this year, he won the Republic Cultural Heritage Award.*"

*Yellow Abode* is characterized by turbulent, dynamic strokes and rich slabs of impastos, much like the painter who had then become wealthy in accomplishments. The piece was among the works included in a Christmas group exhibition at the Luz Gallery that formed part of the first anniversary celebrations of Arturo Luz's brainchild (The Luz Gallery celebrated its first anniversary on December 4, 1961).

The onset of the 1960s can be seen as a budding climax, starting from Joya's formative years of the 1950s to being a champion of a lyrical type of abstract expressionism characterized by a dynamic oriental sensibility.

Joya's Cranbrook period from 1956-57 unleashed his abstract expressionist powers; he would abandon any traces of representation in his paintings. A quick investigation of Joya's works during this period would reveal the artist's earliest explorations of abstract expressionism.

"It was only during the late 1950s or early '60s that I started doing these Abstract Expressionist paintings," Joya said to Cid Reyes in a September 1973 interview and published in the latter's *Conversations on Philippine Art*. "From the American abstractionists [Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, Rothko, and Motherwell], I learned spontaneity and energy, the dynamic approach to abstraction."

At Cranbrook, away from the confines of academicism espoused by his alma mater, the UP School of Fine Arts, Joya sketched everything he saw. Eventually, he would yield to nature's "magic" and use twigs soaked in ink in his sketches. This discovery gave Joya a creative power so surreal that his imagination and emotions seemingly ran unbridled from within. This was the birth of Joya's abstract expressionist finesse.

Although then living in the Occident, this discovery in Joya was undoubtedly Oriental in sensibility, for Abstract Expressionism traces its roots in the spontaneous calligraphic drawing found in ancient Chinese scroll painting and its sublime oneness with nature's dynamic forces and elements that drew Joya in. Even Joya himself admitted in the Reyes interview that calligraphy has always played "a very extensive" role in his paintings; a single calligraphic stroke results in an inner landscape of the mind, born from nature and one with nature.

With paint applied in spontaneous, calligraphic-like slashes, *Yellow Abode* epitomizes Joya's embrace of that oriental sensibility. There is a central core, characterized by invigorated impastos, from which the painting derives energy. Joya states this is "a strong sense of oriental occult balance" or asymmetrical balance. From the central core of heavy impastos, slabs, streaks, and strokes of paint project themselves, evoking a strong sense of movement and thus creating dynamic balance. As with the subject of *Yellow Abode*, Joya depicts not the physicality of the titular "abode" but its essence. It is an "abode" in the spiritual sense in which solid swathes of yellows, the imperial color of prosperity in oriental culture, signify an endless source of power. As "abode" is defined as a place of dwelling from a denotational viewpoint, Joya's *Yellow Abode* sublimely expresses a place of dynamic contemplation; a reinvigorating haven for rest and calm; a return to his oriental roots.

Art critic Leonidas Benesa, writing in the book *Joya: Drawings*, notes that Joya practiced this "oriental occult balance" in the years immediately preceding and succeeding the 1964 Venice Biennale, considered the apex of Joya's career. "A landscape in the Chinese artist's way," characterized by wedding observation with developing "an unconscious feeling" for the "rise and fall of the visual motion...the so-called breathing spaces of Chinese calligraphic art," as Benesa puts it.

This "oriental occult balance" in Joya's artistic praxis would signify his transition into pure, lyrical painting centered on the dynamics of the inner mind, a retreat into an abode of enlivening meditation and self-expression. Thus, *Yellow Abode* is both a reminder of Joya further honing his creative muscle and what's yet to come in his career. Much like *Yellow Abode*, Joya would become an abode himself—a wellspring of creative power, a powerhouse of Philippine art. (*Adrian Maranan*)



**87** PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

**Jose Joya** (1931 - 1995)

*Yellow Abode*

signed and dated 1961 (lower right)

oil on canvas

32" x 32" (81 cm x 81 cm)

**P 16,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Alexander Richard Joya Baldovino confirming the authenticity of this lot

**PROVENANCE**

The Luz Gallery  
Finale Art File

**EXHIBITED**

The Luz Gallery, *Christmas Group Show*, Manila,  
December 22, 1961 - January 6, 1962

*"Jose Joya, this year's Outstanding Young Man in Art, justifies his position with a set of impression paintings and small studies in his vibrant and lush style. Totally abstract and evocative, the paintings offer considerable variety of feeling and color within an otherwise limited framework of freely moving and unrecognizable forms."*

—NATI VALENTIN ON JOYA'S NEW SET OF WORKS  
EXHIBITED AT THE LUZ GALLERY'S 1961 CHRISTMAS  
GROUP SHOW, PUBLISHED IN THEIR MANILA TIMES  
COLUMN "ALL ABOUT ART" (DECEMBER 22, 1961)

**Romeo Tabuena** (1921- 2015)*Pueblo en la Luz de la Luna (Village In The Moonlight)*

signed and dated 1962 (lower right)

oil on masonite board

36" x 40" (91 cm x 102 cm)

**P 700,000**

Romeo Tabuena's *Pueblo en la Luz de la Luna* (translating to *Village in the Moonlight* from Spanish) shows the artist's two sources of inspiration: his home country the Philippines and his chosen city of Allende, Mexico.

Tabuena's journey to Mexico did not immediately lead him to the country. After studying in the Philippines, his academic training first led him to New York in 1952 under American artist Will Barnet before it called him to Paris in 1954 at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière

His sojourn to Mexico in 1955 was meant to be a usual study trip like his New York and Paris one. However, when he arrived at the Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende, Tabuena immediately fell in love with the artistic town. Here he stayed for the rest of his life, raising a family with his wife Nina.

However, despite residing on the other side of the world, Tabuena did not sever his ties to the Philippines. He retained his Philippine citizenship, continuing to mount exhibitions in his home country. In 1957, he created one of his major works – *Filipiniana* (1957) was a mural exhibited at the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C.

*Pueblo en la Luz de la Luna* was created five years after *Filipiniana*'s creation. It still retained the sense of transparency that is typical of an early Tabuena work, airy and atmospheric that juxtaposed the blocky works he would create at the later phase of his career inspired by the aesthetic of Mexican muralists. Instead, it features a dreamlike depiction of the titular village. In jewel tones and soft interlocking cubist shapes, Tabuena's village takes shape, shining under the vibrant moon.

Tabuena's oeuvre is a celebration of his Mexican and Filipino cultures. Both countries share similarities in their pasts – they both were colonies of Spain, an occupation that still retains its cultural impact in the countries today. Half a world away, Mexico and the Philippines hold a mirror to each other, both in their past and present, and this interesting crossroads fascinate Tabuena as shown by the lot in hand.

Three years after Tabuena painted *Pueblo en la Luz de la Luna*, he reached another milestone in his career as he stood as the official Filipino artist and art commissioner from the Philippines in the Eighth São Paulo Art Biennial. (*Hannah Valiente*)

Romeo Tabuena  
*Modernist Moonscape*



**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)*Vendors*

signed and dated 1963 (lower right)

oil on canvas

39" x 27" (99 cm x 69 cm)

**P 16,000,000**

**1963** was a career high point for Vicente Manansala. That fortuitous year, Manansala was conferred the highly prestigious Republic Cultural Heritage Award, the precursor to the National Artist Award.

Manansala would also be featured on the cover of two reputable magazines of his time: *The Sunday Times Magazine* (which featured his work "*Birds in Flight*") and *The Chinese Weekly*.

*Vendors* come from that climactic year in Manansala's career. More than that, the piece comes from an exciting series of works that yet another makes Manansala a cubist virtuoso: the "*Stained Glass Series*."

By 1963, Manansala had been very involved in a series of works dubbed the "Stained Glass Series." The name of this body of work comes from the fact that it evokes the "leaded, cloison effect seen in stained glass," as eminent art critic Rod. Paras-Perez puts it in his monograph on Manansala. The series began when Manansala was awarded a Smith-Mundt-Specialist Grant to study stained glass techniques at New York's Greenland Studio under Le Compt from March to July 1960.

*Speaking of the interesting origins of this series, Manansala says in the Paras-Perez book: "I had this vision while I was riding the cable car in L.A. (Los Angeles). At that time, I was studying stained glass at Greenland Studio. I saw a stained glass on top of a table with lights under it. The vibration and scintillating color fascinated me. Sabi ko, "Pwedeng gawin sa painting ito!" [I said to myself, this can be done in my paintings!]."*

"It [Stained Glass Series] is a phase that gives to his works a vibrancy of color and a stronger surface assertiveness, which prefigures a pendulum-like swing into the recovery of pictorial depth," writes Paras-Perez.

1963's *Vendors* evokes leaded lights or leaded windows

(These are decorative windows created through came glasswork. This is made possible by soldering individual pieces of art glass through came strips (usually lead) and, thus, forming intricate designs.). Manansala uses this technique to render a diaphanous configuration of patterns that exude a vivid interplay between light, forms, and pictorial depth. Planes are fragmented through delicate gradations of color, which in turn makes distinguishing one figure from another easily identifiable, as "light" seemingly penetrates in a breeze through each and every plane.

At this point in his career, it had already become evident that Manansala's cubist language avoids fragmenting his forms to retain that inner sense of dignity and humanity to his subjects, the Filipino masses. In doing so, Manansala evokes the inherent power of the broad range of the oppressed masses as the supreme liberator of society, much like how he renders the titular vendors in this masterpiece: enigmatic faces that give off a penetrating gaze and statures showing dignified pride in their profound contribution as providers and makers of society's wealth.

With the subjects' diaphanous forms, *Vendors* also evoke that fortuitous day during Manansala's nine-month Parisian sojourn in 1950-51, where he studied at the University of Paris' Ecole des Beaux-Arts under the tutelage of the French cubist Fernand Leger, Picasso and Braque's close contemporary. Agnes Duval, writing in her article "Manansala," published in the April 1968 issue of *Solidarity: Current Affairs, Ideas, and the Arts*: "Window shopping one day [in Paris], he [Manansala] noted the interplay of reflected images on the plate-glass and the objects inside the window displays."

This felicitous encounter would mark the realization within Manansala of his now-iconic and much-beloved Transparent Cubism. This style would tangibly manifest itself in the early 1960s, beginning in his *Whirr Series*, depicting birds in flight. Thus, we see in 1963's *Vendors* Manansala situating himself at the cusp of a style that has become his most important legacy in Philippine art. (*Adrian Maranan*)





*Unlike in the style of analytical cubism, he does not fragment and dissect the human figure, leaving stray clues of its identity. Instead, he stays close to the figure, which he simplifies into its basic geometric structure. For Manansala, cubism was not a fragmenting or dehumanizing principle but a structuring one.”*

—ALICE GUILLERMO, IN HER CRITIQUE OF VICENTE MANANSALA’S MADONNA OF THE SLUMS (1950), PUBLISHED IN THE CCP ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILIPPINE ART

*“Manansala painted genre not as an example of a Filipino ideal but as a piece of reality. And his rural scenes were not the bucolic image of far-off villages but the rural aura of Manila. Compassion and verity were, for him, as meaningful as the beau ideal.”*

—ALFREDO ROCES, IN MANANSALA (1981)



**90** PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

**Arturo Luz** (1926 - 2021)

*Forms*

signed and dated 1968 (verso) each

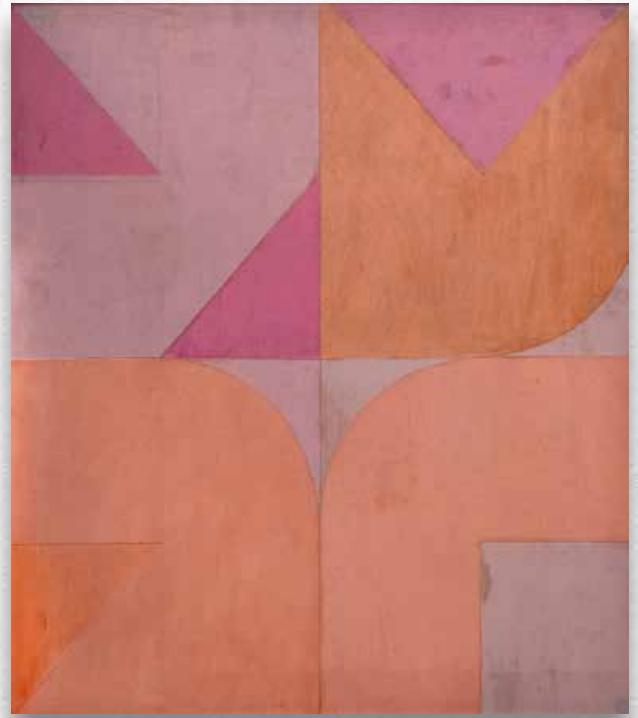
collage / mixed media

24" x 21" (61 cm x 53 cm) each

**P 3,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE  
The Luz Gallery



In 1969, in a one-man exhibition, Arturo Luz had shed any vestiges of figurative reality in his canvases. Gone were his circus performers, his musicians, his acrobats – in their place were patches of colors and papers in various expertly composed shapes in the same vein as Roberto Chabet's collages. The process is "tedious and mechanical" but as critic Emmanuel Torres writes in his column *Way of Seeing*, the exhibit is "a visual treat."

The series of work at hand was done a year before Luz's impactful exhibition. With his canvases now bare of human – or figurative – subjects, his muted colors and geometric shapes reduced his painting to its essence. Luz underwent almost chameleon-like changes throughout his career, going through different art styles, mediums, and periods. He consistently explored new areas instead of exploiting territories he had already mastered, resulting in an interesting and varied oeuvre that the lot at hand makes veritable proof of. (Hannah Valiente)

**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)

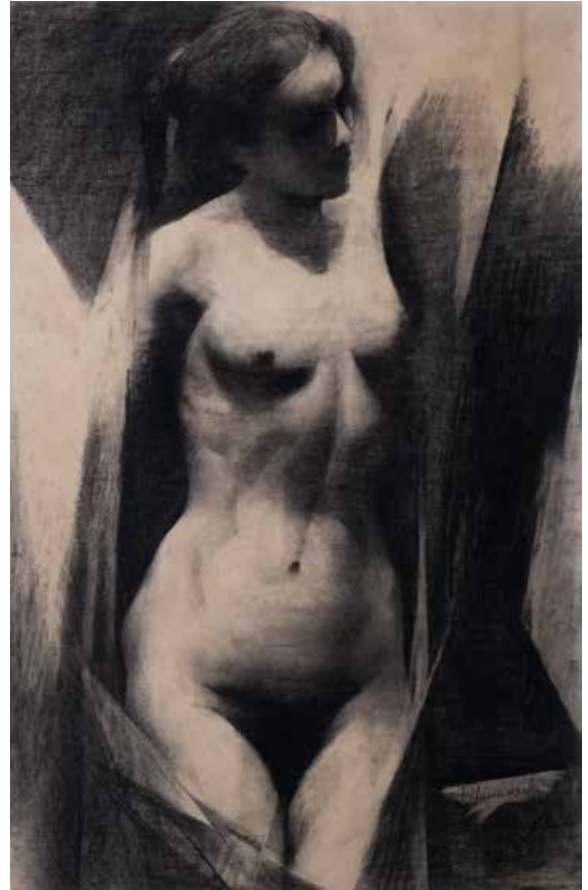
*Nude*

signed and dated 1967 (lower right)  
charcoal on paper  
39" x 25" (99 cm x 64 cm)

**P 600,000**

In 1967, Manansala's artistic odyssey took him to Los Angeles, California, where he enrolled at the Otis Art Institute to re-learn basic drawing. Initially, he viewed the model in segmented parts – the head, hands, torso, and so forth – and his drawings reflected this piecemeal perception. However, he began to see the figure as a cohesive whole. This holistic approach required him to capture the essential movement and structure of the figure in broad, unifying strokes, integrating the various elements into a singular, harmonious composition.

Drawing the nude form, in particular, held a special significance for Manansala. It was more than just an exercise in replicating human anatomy; it was an exploration of form and the interplay of light and shadow, rendered in warm chiaroscuro hues. The nude was a canvas through which he could explore the subtleties of light and shadow and the dynamic interplay of lines and curves. Manansala sought to capture not just the physical likeness of the human form but its innate grace, vulnerability, and strength. These drawings were a testament to his ability to convey the essence of the human experience through the simplicity of line and form. (*Ysabella Vistan*)



**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)

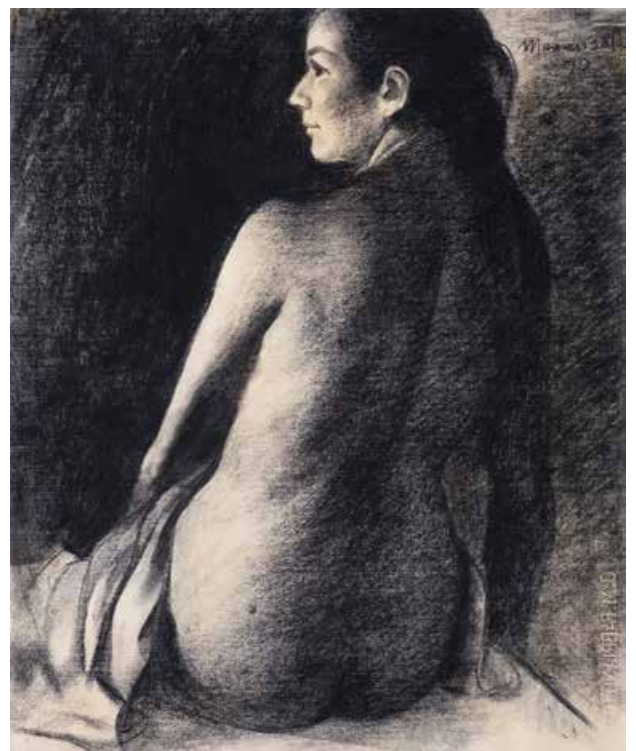
*Seated Nude*

signed and dated 1970 (upper right)  
charcoal on paper  
24 1/4" x 18 1/4" (62 cm x 46 cm)

**P 400,000**

Vicente Manansala's exploration of the human form in his late charcoal nudes, such as the lot at hand from 1970, represents a stark deviation from his earlier, color-saturated cubist works. These pieces showcase a minimalist aesthetic, utilizing the monochromatic palette of charcoal to emphasize the interplay of light and shadow. In this particular work, the subject sits, her back to the viewer, a solitary figure rendered in sweeping, confident strokes. Unlike the fragmented, bustling street scenes of his post-war oeuvre, this composition revels in its simplicity and tranquility.

Art critics and historians often note how Manansala's later works, such as this, serve as a bridge between his figurative and abstract periods. The form is discernible yet distilled to its essence, a confident balance between recognizability and abstraction. Manansala's late charcoals are not just representations of the human figure; they are contemplations of form, a dance between the definitive and the ethereal. (*Ysabella Vistan*)





93 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

### Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

#### *Landscape*

signed and dated 1976 (lower right)

oil on canvas

26" x 32" (66 cm x 81 cm)

**P 700,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Christian M. Aguilar for confirming the authenticity of this lot

The landscapes of National Artist Federico Aguilar Alcuaz are not a run-of-the-mill depiction of a terrain lifted from real life – though a mentee of prodigious Dr. Toribio Herrera, he forged his own path past his mentor's Amorsoloesque sceneries with his dynamic and natural art style, playful and dreamlike at the same time.

His *Landscape* (1976) depicts a quaint riverside in the country en plein air – rich blues and deep greens are used to illustrate the lush greenery with the stream cutting through the trees and the plain. Vibrant yellows highlight the scene, recreating the warm afternoon to an almost realistic extent. The brilliance of Alcuaz, however, shines through his impressionistic style – the leaves are depicted in spontaneous brushstrokes, the rippling water made alive by excitable dance-like sweeps. The end result is a realistic image that is warped as if in a dream, soft and intense all at once in a way that is typical for Alcuaz. (*Hannah Valiente*)

**Cesar Legaspi** (1917 - 1994)

*Women in Ecstasy*

signed and dated 1978 (lower right)

oil on marine plywood

32" x 48" (81 cm x 122 cm)

**P 4,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Galleria Duemila

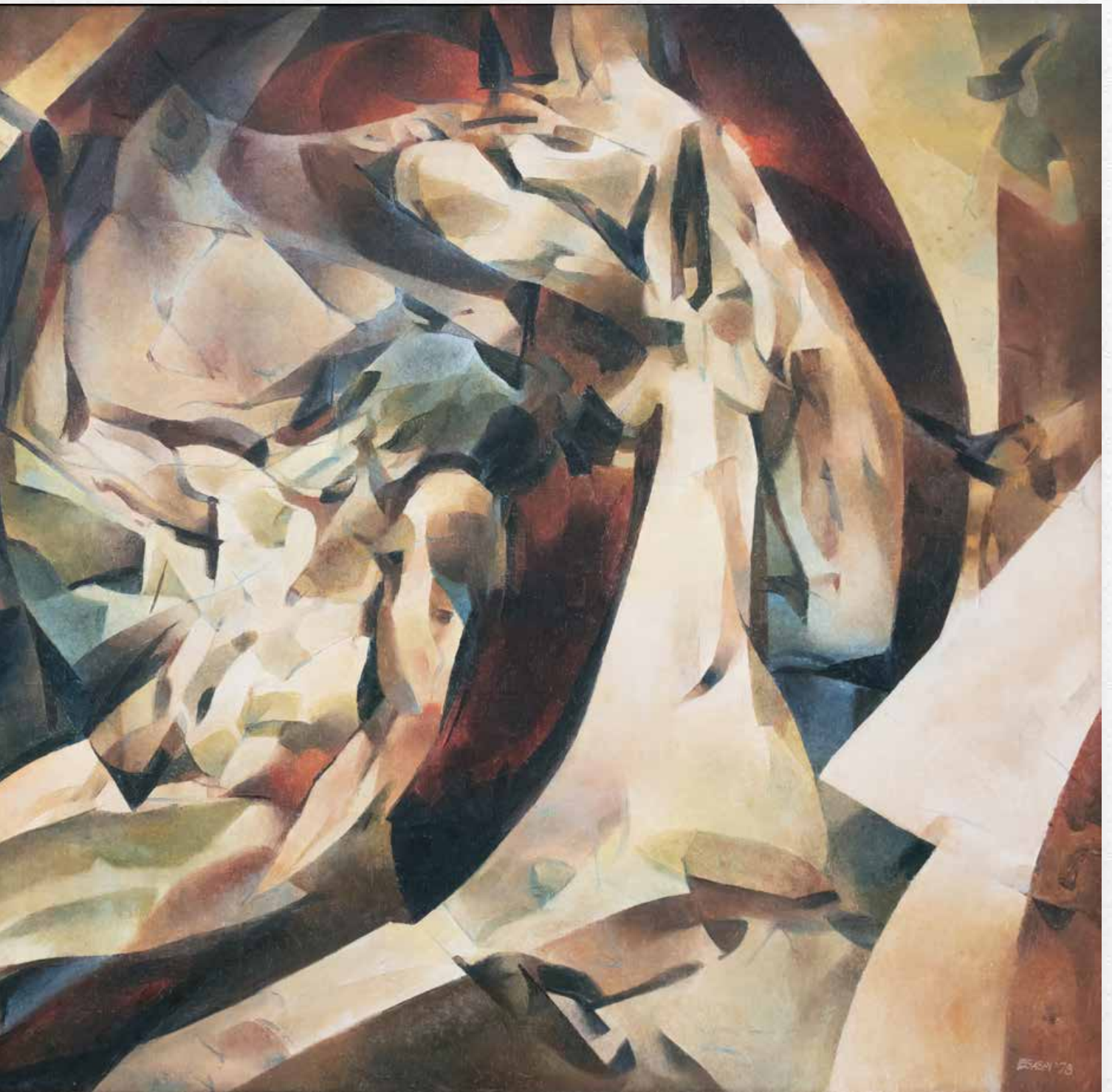
**1978** stands out as one of the most important years for Cesar Legaspi. In celebration of his four-decade-long career, he held *Forty Years of Legaspi, a Retrospective Exhibition* at the Museum of Philippine Art. In the same year, he served as the head of the Saturday Group of Artists, a post he held for 16 years until his death in 1994.

*Women in Ecstasy*, created during this hallmark year, is emblematic of the creative trajectory Legaspi's career took on. The Neo-Realistic element of distortion and fragmentation takes center stage. Objective reality no longer became the golden standard with which the artist must achieve – instead, it is only an undertone Legaspi imbues the piece with.

The decade prior saw Legaspi's swerve to abstraction and his realization of the style was met in the 1970s, coinciding with his 40th artistic anniversary. *Women in Ecstasy* showcases his masterful deconstruction of human anatomy. Though he depicted multiple nude women, sensuality and eroticism were barely touched upon. Instead, the earthy palette and composition imply collective support and resistance. These women, bare and naked, lean on each other in vulnerability.

Legaspi has harnessed the ability to break down objective reality into a subjective world based on the artist's inner visions. Under his masterful brush, Legaspi manages to transform his subjects (often of the toiling masses and the collective community) into a fragmented masterpiece akin to that of a church's stained glass windows, evoking a deep contemplation for his Cubist pieces. (*Hannah Valiente*)







95 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

## Romulo Galicano (b. 1945)

### *Ponte des Arts, Paris*

signed and dated 1983 (lower right)

pastel on paper

21" x 29 1/2" (53 cm x 75 cm)

**P 800,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank the artist for confirming the authenticity of this lot

In this charming Parisian scene, Romulo Galicano depicts the iconic Pont des Arts, a pedestrian bridge spanning the River Seine. It is a national historic monument declared by the French Ministry of Culture.

The Pont des Arts is a beloved spot for painters owing to its romantic panorama that cuts across the historic River Seine, the cradle of civilization of Paris, the city of love. The bridge has inspired numerous painters throughout history, from Matisse, Monet, Renoir, and Seurat, whose 1884-86 magnum opus *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* served as a pioneering work of the neo-impressionist movement.

During Galicano's European sojourn in the 1980s, the River Seine and its overarching Pont des Arts served as one of his muses, as exemplified by this 1983 work. In this piece, the building of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, one of the five academies of the prestigious Institut de France, can be seen



Pont Des Arts, Paris, France © GoogleMap

on the left. Depicted in the far right are two of the most iconic edifices in the Louvre Palace: the École du Louvre and the Pavillon de la Trémoille, seemingly covered in a dreamy haze that emphasizes Galicano's mastery of perspective (The two buildings are situated on the right bank of the Seine at a distance of more than half a kilometer from the Pont des Arts, while the Académie des Beaux-Arts is located approximately in front of the bridge, on the opposite side of the river.).

A stalwart of painting en plein air and profoundly observing nature as espoused by his uncle, mentor, and foremost luminary Martino Abellana, Galicano bathes the composition in an earthy palette, imbuing the piece with a soothing atmosphere that matches the charming and intimate setting of the Pont des Arts. (*Adrian Maranan*)





96 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

**Francesca Enriquez** (b. 1962)

*My Favorite Chair*

signed (lower left)

oil on canvas

48" x 48" (122 cm x 122 cm)

**P 300,000**

PROVENANCE  
Finale Art File

Francesca Enriquez exemplifies a sense of confident intuition and an unwavering dedication to her craft in her works. Her vibrant paintings, portraying colorful domestic interiors, evoke the spirit of Post-Impressionist masters like Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse. However, in a departure from these artists, Enriquez's compositions deliberately exclude human figures, transforming these domestic spaces into romanticized images. Within the worlds of Enriquez, the mundane is fully-realized through an almost meditative quality. In essence, Enriquez skillfully navigates between the realms of artistic intuition and a refined dedication to her craft, creating visually striking works that capture the essence of idealized domestic beauty. (*Jed Daya*)

**Onib Olmedo** (1937 - 1996)

*Ang Tanong*

signed and dated 1988 (lower right)

oil on canvas

36" x 24" (91 cm x 61 cm)

**P 800,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Ms. Gisella Olmedo-Araneta for confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Finale Art File

A distinct sort of distortion marks the works of expressionist Onib Olmedo. His body of works feature dramatic contortions, extreme angles, and flat figures paired with a muted color scheme that immediately grabs its viewer's attention. Drawn to the denizens of Sampaloc and Ermita, his canvases reflect the triumph of the human spirit in face of the anguish human frequently faces.

His 1998 *Ang Tanong* features the Onib-typical distortion – the lone figure on the canvas is depicted with gigantic hands and a disfigured face with mismatched eyes and asymmetrical features. Most interestingly, there is not one face but two, with the second one cradled on the figure's lap as if a child. One is pressed to look into the painting to find the answers to its titular tanong: why is the figure depicted with two heads? The background suggests a slum of some sort – does this have something to do with the two-headed figure?

*Ang Tanong*, as the title suggests, poses more questions than answers and therein lies Onib's charm. He paints with an almost fervent abandon, pushing distortions to its extreme to probe the depths of humanity. The viewer cannot help but press into the work to make sense of the distorted, to iron out the discrepancies and understand the incomprehensible. While there may be no clear-cut answers, Onib's works contain a subjective depth that captures the private psyche. They are a conversation between the viewer and the artist, each exchange as different as the next. (*Hannah Valiente*)



Onib Olmedo





98 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

## Araceli Limcaco-Dans (b. 1929)

*Sumbbrero ni Mang Temyong*  
signed and dated 1991 (lower right)  
watercolor on paper  
30" x 22" (76 cm x 56 cm)

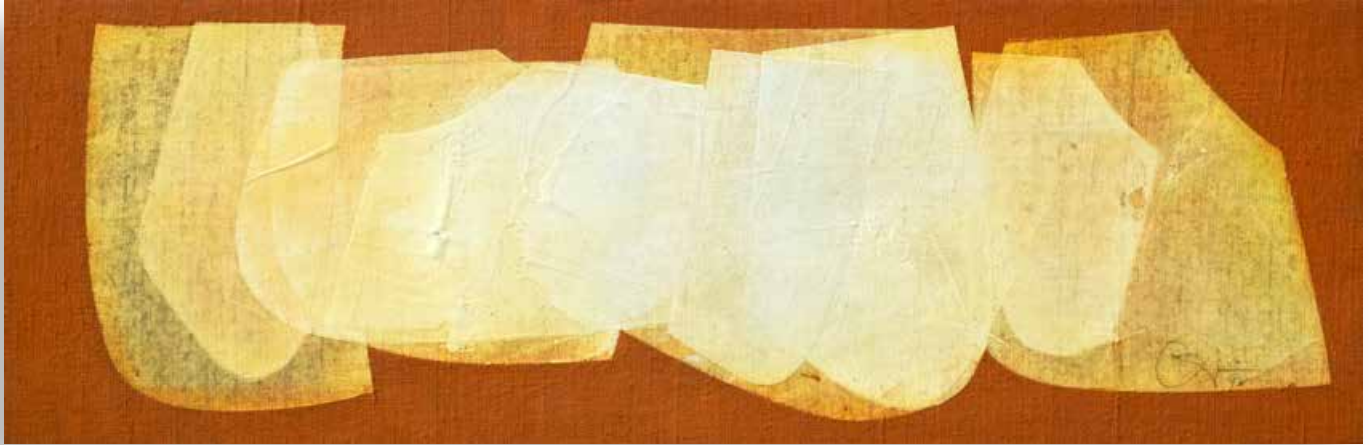
**P 700,000**

### LITERATURE

Goqingco, Leonor Orosa, Sylvia Mendez Ventura, and Maria Araceli Dans Lee. *Araceli Limcaco Dans*. Makati: Equitable PCI Bank, Inc., 2005. Full-color photograph on page 116 and painting description on page 152.

Dans' artistic legacy is notably adorned with masterfully rendered depictions of calado, a form of exquisite white-patterned embroidery on pineapple fiber associated with 19th-century Filipino women in the upper echelons of society. Her representation of calado stands as a celebrated hallmark of her artistic prowess, capturing the intricacies of this art form with luminous and exquisite detail. Dans' deep connection to the nationalist spirit is evident in her portrayal of calado, reflecting a profound appreciation for the cultural heritage and traditions of the Philippines.

The inspiration behind Dans' artistry extends to her reverence for 19th-century painters such as Damian Domingo and Simon Flores, luminaries of Filipino art during that historical period. Dans' dedication to capturing the essence of calado is not only a visual homage to the craftsmanship of Filipino women but also a tribute to the artistic influences that shaped her worldview. Through her canvases, Dans pays homage to the rich tapestry of Philippine art history, weaving together threads of tradition, nationalism, and the masterful techniques of her revered predecessors. (*Jed Daya*)



99 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

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**Romulo Olazo** (1934 - 2015)

*Mini-Diaphanous #33*

signed and dated 1992 (lower right)

oil on canvas

6" x 18" (15 cm x 46 cm)

**P 700,000**

Romulo Olazo's magnum opus the *Diaphanous Series* spanned an impressive four decades – with which he executed his vision, *Diaphanous* has lived a life that will be marked down in the history of Philippine contemporary art.

The series traced its beginnings from Olazo's printmaking practices, with Olazo's foray into his career as an artist. For the *Diaphanous Series*, he echoed the layers evoked in serigraphy and the inking from collagraph. The result is a series of works with layers of gossamer sheets that Victoria T. Herrera described as "veritable visions of light."

*Mini-Diaphanous #33*, created in 1992, was created almost two decades after the *Diaphanous Series* started. In those decades, Olazo's sensitivity and fluency in manipulating colors and spaces has sharpened, and *Mini-Diaphanous #33* gives a fresh interpretation to Olazo's original series. Notably smaller than his usual works, *Mini-Diaphanous #33* explores the relationship between light and matter in a tighter enclosed space. Overlapping abstract shapes of varying shades of translucence occupy the canvas, one on top of the other to recompense for the smaller space. The inexhaustibility and timelessness of Olazo's *Diaphanous* are continuously proven, with each work as much of a study of light and shadow as the one it preceded. "Olazo has achieved a complete oneness of technique and substance," writes Rod Paras-Perez and there is no greater proof of that than Olazo's *Diaphanous Series*. (*Hannah Valiente*)

**Lee Aguinaldo** (1933 - 2007)

*All Blue No. 7*

signed and dated 1993 (verso)

acrylic on marine plywood

36" x 36" (91 cm x 91 cm)

**P 2,700,000**

For Lee Aguinaldo, color assumes a palpable and self-sufficient physical presence. When arranged in planar compositions, it prompts the viewer to engage in an objective and analytical exercise. Employing oil as his medium of choice, Aguinaldo places significant emphasis on eradicating brushwork and any visible signs of handling. His aim is to achieve a completely flat and uniform skin of pigment, upholding the integrity of the picture plane. Aguinaldo contends that an elaborate spatial framework or an excessive use of color, decoration, or narrative could diminish the picture's potency. Instead, he suggests that a subject can be effectively conveyed through angles, lines, and sleek color surfaces. By minimizing distractions, the audience is better able to fully appreciate pure form, pure color, and pure arrangement.

Aguinaldo's bold and minimalist creations, though visually straightforward, leave a profound impact on the observer. His approach involves crafting only the essential elements of picture space, emphasizing a geometric frame with right angles that instills order and conscious rationality. Aguinaldo's preference for the square format in his landscape paintings is intentional and not arbitrary. This choice allows the subject to be immersed in an atmosphere of rationality, connecting the picture to a universal whole.

In his color fields, Lee Aguinaldo manages to convey deep psychological and philosophical significance through expansive, shapeless spaces. (*Jed Daya*)



Lee Aguinaldo © León Gallery Archives

Lee Aguinaldo  
*Windows of Calm and Imaginaton*





**101** PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

**Benedicto Cabrera** (b. 1942)

*Body & Drapery*

signed and dated 2006 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

24" x 18" (61 cm x 46 cm)

**P 3,000,000**

The drama of the draperies is an enduring theme that weaves its way into many of the works of National Artist Benedicto Cabrera. From his early Scavenger Series to his now iconic Sabel Series, Bencab often finds himself drawn to the stories told by those folds and fabrics. He depicts the movement inherent in the drapery clinging to the human body – his Sabels were decked in tattered clothing and plastic to protect themselves from the harsh Manila elements; multiple women grace his canvases, their flowing skirts reminiscent of a photograph Bencab found of dancer Isadora Duncan, his muse for his series *Isadora's Dance*.

This level of detail on fabric is highlighted with the lot at hand entitled *Body & Drapery*. A closeup of a woman's torso, only a sliver of her chest is seen. Instead, the majority of the space is dedicated to the blanket she has wrapped around herself. Every fold and wrinkle are highlighted and with no other markers to go off of, the viewer is left to speculate about the woman herself. The blanket itself is the main character of the story, an almost living breathing form with which the viewer can poke and probe for answers. She, in the same vein as *Sabel*, is a veritable treasure trove of interpretations and stories woven into an iconic masterpiece. *(Hannah Valiente)*





102 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

**Phyllis Zaballero** (b. 1942)

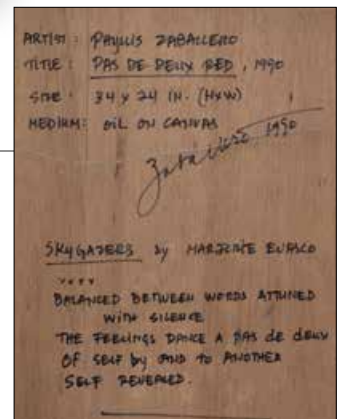
*Pas de Deux Red*

signed and dated 1990 (lower right and verso)

oil on canvas

34" x 24" (86 cm x 61 cm)

**P 120,000**



ABOVE: verso of the artwork

Phyllis Zaballero, an acclaimed and actively practicing visual artist and painter, is recognized for her vibrant artistic expressions, which take on a colorful character in both her figurative pieces and more abstract works. Her substantial contributions extend across diverse realms, encompassing study, lectures, curation, and exhibitions in Asia, Europe, and the United States.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics in 1965 and, in 1978, a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, magna cum laude, from the University of the Philippines. In the same year as her graduation, she received the Thirteen

Artists Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines, coinciding with her inaugural solo exhibition.

Notably, she has been the recipient of study and travel grants from the governments of the United States, England, France, Germany, and China. Additionally, Zaballero has enjoyed residencies at private foundations in Portugal and the United States, further enriching her artistic journey. Whether in her figurative pieces or more abstract creations, her art consistently radiates a vibrant and colorful essence. (*Jed Daya*)



103 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

## Onib Olmedo (1937-1996)

### *Mother and Child*

signed and dated 1995 (lower right)

pastel on felt paper

27 1/2" x 22" (70 cm x 56 cm)

**P 200,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Ms. Gisella Olmedo-Araneta for confirming the authenticity of this lot

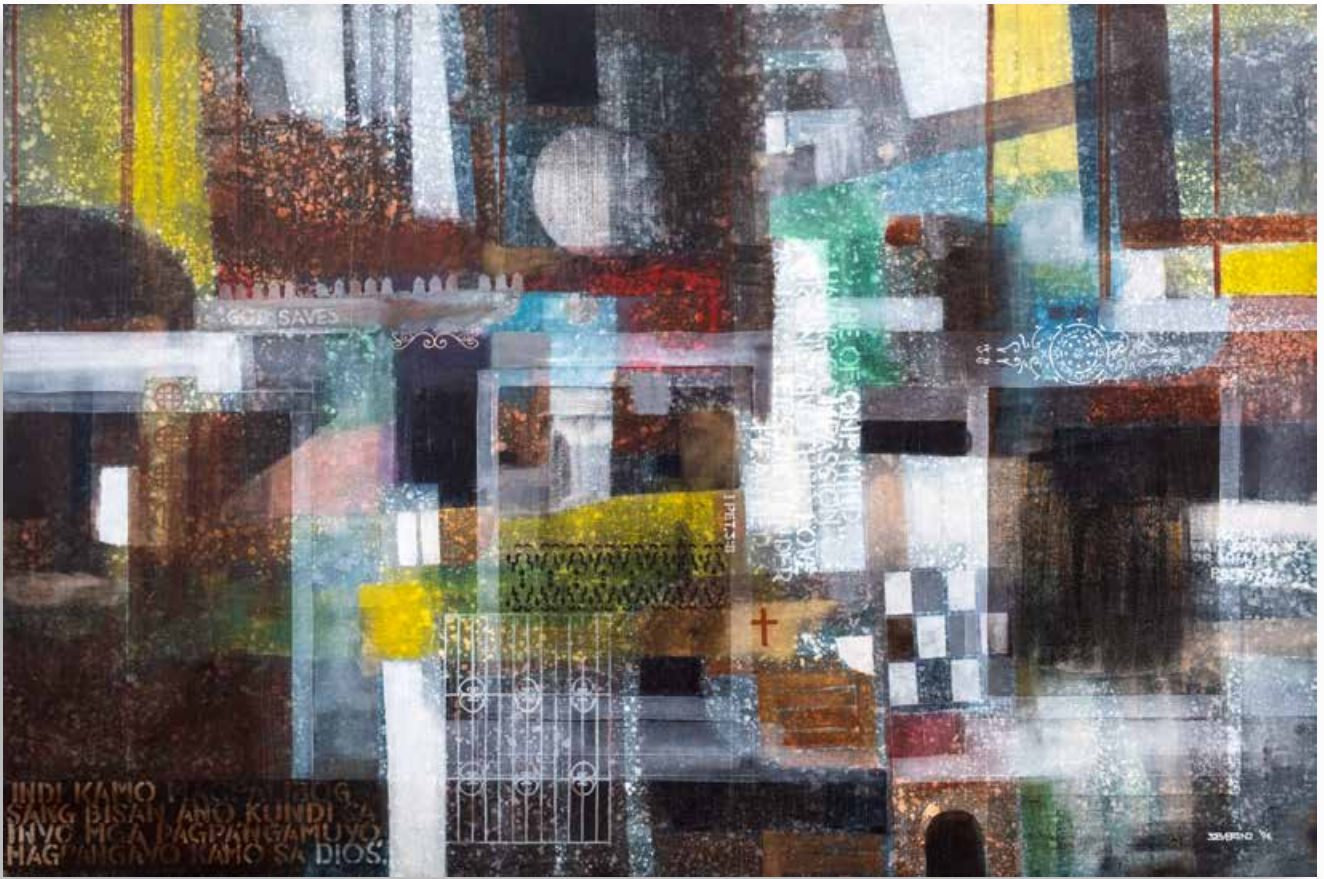
PROVENANCE  
Finale Art File

Onib Olmeda takes the classic Mother and Child image and distorts it to portray the depths of human anguish – instead of the typical warm loving image of a parent and her child, Onib's 1995 Mother and Child probes the tortured psyche emphasized by the Onib-typical diamond-shaped face, asymmetrical eyes, and bulbous noses.

It is their expressions, however, that captivate the audience. Art critic Alice Guillermo writes in *Onib Olmedo: Dimensions*

of Depth that the figures "gaze through and beyond [the viewer] as though following a vision." The artist gave no marker for the social background of the mother and child and therefore, the viewer is free to interpret the work as they wish. The mother's haunting, piercing gaze and the protective way she holds her child becomes a mirror for whatever incipient horror lies within the onlooker's mind, and thus lies Onib's charm – his ability to reflect upon the viewer their own fear.

Onib's figures are no mere abstractions – through his distortions, they transform into a flesh-and-blood person facing their own struggles. His works are "quiet, intense, and profound" and *Mother and Child*, created later in Onib's career, profess his art at his maturity and his sharpest. (*Hannah Valiente*)



104 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

**Lino Severino** (b. 1932)

*Vanishing Scene #273*

signed and dated 1996 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

32" x 48" (81 cm x 122 cm)

**P 100,000**

Lino Severino is best known for his *Vanishing Scenes* series of paintings that renders facades of the Bahay na Bato based on the ancestral houses of Vigan, Iloilo, and Silay City. Hailing from Silay, Negros himself, a city notable for its heritage zone with one of the most number of preserved ancestral houses in the country, it is perhaps no wonder that the artist has found a curious subject in the Bahay na Bato—an image that easily evokes constructions of home, history, and memory.

The postwar period saw emerging images of the *barong-barong* in Philippine modern art, portraying the city space in a transitory period as it headed towards something more ideally 'modern.' Severino, born in this same era, would

similarly portray transitory images of the city utilizing a different subject in his *Vanishing Scene* paintings in the late 20th century.

In this work, the building facade is curiously much less discernible compared to Severino's typical *Vanishing Scene*. The overlay of concrete-like textures in vibrant pops of yellow amongst the fading rust and rubble of paint evokes a ghost-like sense of things appearing and disappearing before the viewer's eyes. The facade of the Bahay na Bato is seemingly lost in a blur of city lights, rendering the walls an ever-changing palimpsest constructing notions of what the city must be like. In other words, the scene vanishes because the city is always in transit. (*Pie Tiausas*)

**Benedicto Cabrera** (b. 1942)

*Three Faces of Sabel*

signed and dated 2008 (lower right)

oil on canvas

48" x 60" (122 cm x 152 cm)

**P 18,000,000**

*"I thought she made a terrific image visually; I thought she made a terrific subject matter for my paintings. She used to gather these plastic sheets and wrap them around her body. They made the most beautiful abstract shapes."*

—BENCAB ON SABEL, IN CID REYES' CONVERSATIONS ON PHILIPPINE ART

It can be said that Benedicto Cabrera's iconic muse, Sabel, has two primary and iconic iterations: the scavenger of the 1960s that would not only mark Bencab's socio-political stances on contemporary issues but his career-defining moment as an artist and the graceful woman garbed in voluminous cloth and exemplifying the beauty of femininity.

Throughout his artistic journey, Sabel remained a constant companion to his brush and canvas. Over the years, Sabel has undergone several iterations: from the expressionist madwoman of the mid-1960s, the hard-edged, minimalist variation towards the end of the decade, the abstract expressionistic slashes of femininity of the 1990s, and back to the figurative expressionist lady of the 2000s—the iteration that has become one of the most coveted in Bencab's oeuvre owing to its graceful composition.

Indeed, Sabel has captured not only Bencab's heart and art but also captivated his audiences, with their attention drawn to the ever-metamorphosing image of the woman.

In this work titled *Three Faces of Sabel*—which Bencab painted two years after he was accorded the most venerable title of National Artist for

the Visual Arts in 2006—the artist enshrouds Sabel with the sinuousness of the drapery. Here, Bencab's expressionist flair is discerned; instead of Sabel's figure animating herself and evoking movement, it is the drapery that evokes reflex and gesture. Drapery animates life itself.

The tormented image of Sabel is nowhere to be found in this piece. Instead, Sabel exudes the gracefulness of movement akin to the delicate yet calculated swirling and twirling of a ballerina. The piece is also much in the same vein as Bencab's series of works beginning in the late 1990s that depict Isadora Duncan, the American dancer and choreographer hailed "The Mother of Modern Dance."

Bencab's illusion of dynamic energy and constant movement through his rich application of paint and lyrical, voluminous brushstrokes evokes a palpable sense of flesh.

The real-life Sabel died in 1972, of which her death was relayed to Bencab. This makes the gap between her passing and *Three Faces of Sabel* span a long period of 36 years. But with the drapery as an animating force, Bencab immortalizes Sabel, his perpetual muse. (*Adrian Maranan*)





# Osmundo "Omeng" Esguerra: *Manila's Romancer of Wood*

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III



Osmundo Esguerra, janitor turned gardener turned cigarette vendor would become himself a creator of wooden art © Photo courtesy LIFESTYLE.INQ & coconuts.co

*"His hunger for knowledge of wood was insatiable. Wood became his life. You could see his heart and hands guiding the tools in search of the right shape for the wood and to bring out the beauty of the grain."*

*"...he transmitted life into the wood, and the wood transmitted life to him. There was that unbreakable bond. The quality of his work remains unprecedented."*

—YOLA JOHNSON, ARTIST, CRAFTSWOMAN, AND  
OMENG'S LONGTIME FRIEND

Omeng came from Guimba, Nueva Ecija and worked for the patrician collector Antonio Tuason (Tony) of the legendary Manila clan in his sprawling Santa Mesa residence. He was exposed to very good art and antiques and Tony Tuason generously tutored him on their qualities. He became an entrepreneur. Omeng realized that he could make good money dealing with the old furniture and objects with which he had become familiar through the years. On a dare from Filipiniana scholar/jeweler/antique dealer Ramon N Villegas, he opened the "Osmundo" shop at the Manila Garden Hotel in Makati (now the Dusit Thani Hotel). Once there, he attracted a rich clientele, including the famed Zobel de Ayala family and the extremely affluent Paulino Que of the hardware and Hong Kong real estate empire.

Omeng struck up a close friendship and unofficial partnership with the respected scholar Ramon Villegas and they proceeded to forge new roads and ideals in the Manila art and antiques world. Both became incredibly successful. Omeng learned the art of exquisite Chinese wood finishes from antique dealer friends in Hong Kong; he became a good friend and collaborator of leading antique dealers Martin Fung, Alan Fung, and Gerald Godfrey and Charlotte Horstmann. And as the cliché goes, the rest was history.

During his lifetime, Omeng only had to look at and feel a piece of wood in order to know its species and approximate age. Omeng often took the patina/maturity, density, thickness, and the large dimensions of the wood (apart from construction, of course) as indicators of great age and authenticity.



## The Majestic Lopez Dining Table by Osmundo

contemporary

kamagong wood (*Diospyros discolor/Diospyros blancoi*)

H: 30" (76 cm)

L: 151 1/2" (385 cm)

W: 49 1/2" (125 cm)

**P 400,000**

PROVENANCE

Osmundo Esguerra workshops



This spectacular contemporary dining table of kamagong wood (*Diospyros discolor/Diospyros blancoi*) by the famous antique dealer/wood expert Osmundo Esguerra features a tabletop of 13 rare, 45.72 cm wide (18" inches), 121.92 cm long (48" inches) planks framed by the same wood in traditional "binandeja"—style (framed/mitered). As seasoned collectors and connoisseurs know, the dimensions of kamagong lumber are comparatively modest because the Mabolo tree (*Diospyros discolor/Diospyros blancoi*) is usually slim and slender in a residential garden or barrio setting; it only becomes larger when it is very old and located in a deep virgin forest. Planks cut from the trunk





are usually not longer than 5' feet/60" inches (152.4 cm) and not wider than 8" inches (20.32 cm); wood cut from the branches are even shorter and narrower. Therefore, the 13 rare, 45.72 wide and 121.92 long kamagong planks of this dining table are truly rare and difficult to find. For the base of this long dining table, Esguerra took inspiration from one of his favorite reference pieces: the early nineteenth century refectory table of "golden narra" wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*) from Pampanga that has a "sola pieza" top (one-piece) supported by a base of two pairs of turned and reeded balusters on plinths underscored by two pairs of ball and claw feet with the plinths connected by a long turned and carved

baluster stretcher in the palatial "comedor" dining room of the Museo De La Salle at the De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, Cavite (Jose Maria Ricardo Yaptinchay-Abad Panlilio Collection).

This long kamagong dining table was supplied to Eugenio Moreno Lopez Jr (Geny Lopez) by Osmundo Esguerra aka "Omeng," at that time Manila's foremost purveyor of the most exquisite wood furniture, antique and reproduction (from around 1978–2017). (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)

## A Kamagong Ilocano Comoda

2nd quarter of the 19th-century (1825–50)

Candon, Ilocos Sur

female kamagong (*Diospyros discolor/Diospyros blancoi*)

Length: 22" (56 cm)

Width: 42 1/2" (108 cm)

Height: 44" (112 cm)

**P 700,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Ilocos Sur



ABOVE: A similar piece "Comoda or chest of Drawers" from the book *Likha: Enduring Legacies of Filipino Artistry* (Decorative Arts Collection of the BSP) p. 270. BELOW: Close up views of the actual piece.



This Ilocano comoda of female kamagong wood from 1825–50 has a framed, multipanel top. From the top frame with concave receding moldings, at the sides, two "salomonica" (Solomonic) kamagong columns with ornate, acanthus leaf capitals with turned secondary and foliar tertiary bases, barley-twist shafts, and ornate, truncated reeded and turned urn bases flank the comoda, as in an aparador. The two columns are attached to the kamagong frame of the top in a simple, correct but uncharacteristic way: the tops of the columns have simply been attached to the underside corners of the top frame in the Candon way; the traditional way in Vigan has the top frame with concave cut outs to accommodate the tops of the columns. It has five drawers: each drawer front is framed with moldings of the same kamagong wood. The multipanel sides are embellished with neoclassical panels with concave sides of lanite line inlay. There are concave advancing moldings of the same wood at the base of the cabinet which run through the front and sides; there is no

apron. The comoda is supported by four turned urn feet in the same wood. It is representative of the Candon School in terms of the light-colored kamagong wood used (female), the feminine side of the late neoclassical style expressed, and the relative lightness of form and heft; there are still a few similar pieces extant in surviving bahay-na-bato in Candon city, Ilocos Sur.

This Ilocano comoda of female kamagong wood (*Diospyros discolor/Diospyros blancoi*) was supplied to Eugenio Moreno Lopez Jr (Geny Lopez) by Osmundo Esguerra aka "Omeng," at that time Manila's foremost purveyor of the most exquisite wood furniture, antique and reproduction (from around 1978–2017). Omeng came from Guimba, Nueva Ecija and worked for the patrician collector Antonio Tuason (Tony) of the legendary Manila clan in his sprawling Santa Mesa residence. He was exposed to very good art and antiques and Tony Tuason generously tutored him on their qualities. (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)

The Stately '*Candon*' Cabinet  
*From the Geny Lopez Collection*



This neoclassical "mesa altar" altar table of "balayong" wood from Batangas province has a multipanel top with receding moldings on the sides. The tabletop is supported by the four legs of the casing, with additional support provided by the four, thick guilloche brackets attached to the upper sections of the legs which run through the height of the piece (colloquially termed "Olympic" by antique agents and dealers; the repeating guilloche patterns of interlocking circles/ovals actually began in the ancient Near East, popularized in Classical Greece and Rome, and were still used in Medieval design). There are four drawers, two on top and two below, applied with "kamagong" strips edged with lanite line inlay flanked by etched rosettes, as well as individual rosettes, to simulate deconstructed panels with concave corners. The front of the casing is embellished with equidistant bone inlay of etched diamond-shapes flanked by etched rosettes on the kamagong frames surrounding the drawers. Underneath the three drawers is a triangular "cenefa"/apron of the guilloche pattern. The sides of the casing are two horizontal solid pieces of "balayong." The back of the casing are also two horizontal solid pieces of "balayong." Supporting the four sides of the casing are elegant, turned baluster legs with multiple rings characteristic of Batangas. Much thought and effort were spent on this piece by the Batangueno master craftsmen who produced it.

In serious Filipino art and antique collecting circles, the most revered trophy is a genuine "Batangas Uno" mesa altar of reddish-brown "balayong" wood (*Azelia rhomboides*) accented with kamagong wood (*Diospyros discolor*/*Diospyros blancoi*) on the tabletop and drawers. It is a Filipino-Batangas adaptation of a Chinese Ming dynasty altar table (1368–1644) with a framed tabletop, five drawers (three on top, two below), openwork flanges and aprons of unexpected French rococo-chinoiserie derivation (as in eighteenth century rococo altars in Philippine churches), four cabriole legs with ogee feet on stretchers with curved plinths. It is essentially both Sinitic and Filipino in character. The "Batangas Uno" mesa altar of the mid-eighteenth century was the apogee of Batangas cabinetmaking, preceded by less flamboyant rococo and baroque altar tables, and followed by the simpler "Batangas Dos" and neoclassical "Batangas Tuwid" models (terms proposed by Filipiniana scholar/jeweler/antique dealer Ramon Nazareth Villegas and antique dealer/wood expert Osmundo Esguerra in the late 1970s for identification purposes). The preeminent "Batangas Uno" mesa altar notwithstanding, all well-made antique Batangas altar tables are prestige furnishings for the affluent and will remain so in the years to come.

A deliberate Oriental geometry of scale and proportion, fine mature hardwoods, precise Chinese-style construction with classical mortise-and-dowel techniques, age-old durability

were the hallmarks of antique Batangas altar tables which made them highly desirable by the big collectors. The first to appreciate them prewar were the patricians Antonio Bantug, Manuel de Yriarte, Dr Arturo Cabarrus de Santos, and Architect Luis Maria Zaragoza Araneta. One of the first to display them in contemporary interiors postwar was Batangas aristocrat and interior decorator Rosario Mayo Dimayuga-Luz (mother of artist Arturo Dimayuga Luz), who mixed them with elegant new furniture by Gonzalo Puyat and Sisenando Baluyut. Architect Leandro Valencia Locsin and heiress wife Cecilia Araneta Yulo as well as their collector contemporaries Jaime Pfitz Zobel de Ayala and Beatriz Barcon Miranda, Manuel Unchuan Agustines and Rosarito Prieto Caro, and Marie-Theresa Gallardo Lammoglia – Virata (Mrs Leonides Sarao Virata) made them fashionable in the early 1960s, with Locsin installing a beautiful antique Batangas altar table, usually sourced from pioneer antique dealer Nene Cortes --- whether Batangas Uno, Batangas Dos, or Batangas Tuwid (terms coined by Ramon Villegas and Osmundo Esguerra in the late 1970s) --- in each prestigious residential project as a distinct signature.

During the heady collecting days of the early 1980s, when Jaime C Laya (for the Central Bank of the Philippines and the Intramuros Administration), Paulino Que, Antonio Tanchoco Gutierrez, Romeo Jorge, and Richard Barnes Lopez were the emerging big collectors, Filipiniana scholar/jeweler/antique dealer Ramon Villegas and antique dealer/wood expert Osmundo Esguerra --- who both had tony shops at the Manila Garden Hotel (now the Dusit Hotel) --- mentored them on the classic beauty and quiet refinements of antique Batangas furniture, spurring a competitive demand for decades to come. (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)



# Classic Refinement A Rare 'Olympic' Altar Table *From the Geny Lopez Collection*



108 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

## An "Olympic" Batangas Altar Table

3rd quarter of the 19th-century (1850–75)

Taal, Batangas

balayong wood (*Azelia rhomboides*)

H: 37 1/2" (95 cm)

L: 22" (56 cm)

W: 49 1/2" (126 cm)

**P 1,200,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Batangas



ABOVE: A similar piece from the book *Likha: Enduring Legacies of Filipino Artistry* (Decorative Arts Collection of the BSP) p. 260.  
OPPOSITE PAGE: Close up view of the actual piece.

**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)

*Maliputo*

signed and dated 1979 (upper right)

watercolor on paper

18" x 24" (46 cm x 61 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

LITERATURE

*Si Mang Enteng...Encountering Manansala (Exhibition Catalog)*.

Manila: Metropolitan Museum of Manila, 2010.

Published on the occasion of the Vicente Manansala retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila in 2010.

Full-color photograph and painting description on page 33.

EXHIBITED

Tall Galleries, Metropolitan Museum of Manila,

*Si Mang Enteng...Encountering Manansala*,

Manila, May 20 - July 31, 2010

In this 1979 watercolor, the canvas unfolds as a deliberate departure from the familiar realm of maternal and filial motifs which predominantly defined his earlier work. Renowned for his commitment to representing reality, Manansala did not believe in purchasing perishable food solely for artistic endeavors.

In a departure from traditional artistic practices, Manansala was known to create spontaneous watercolor renditions of freshly cooked dishes, meticulously laid out on banana leaves. This deliberate placement on the periphery of the dinner table introduces a nuanced dynamism, inviting contemplation on the precarious balance between tradition and modernity.

His dedication to authenticity, whether amidst the bustling marketplace or shared meal, distinguishes Manansala as an artist devoted to encapsulating the beauty of Filipino culture in its most unadulterated manifestation.

At the venerable age of sixty-nine, Manansala's keen eye for detail provides a glimpse into the artist's evolving exploration of form, color, and subject matter. *Maliputo* stands as a testament to Manansala's ability to continually refine his artistic expression, showcasing his adaptability and willingness to embrace diverse aspects of Filipino life in his artistic repertoire. (*Ysabella Vistan*)



# Manansala's Humble Feast for the Eyes



# Carlos P. Romulo (1899 - 1985)

## *General, Gentleman, Patriot*

*“It has been said that each man lives many lives,”* Carlos Peña Romulo wrote. *“The oddity of mine is in their complete diversity. Each might have been lived in a different country and a different age.”*

Newspaper editor, army general, university president, ambassador, foreign minister, national artist, president of the United Nations General Assembly—any one of these illustrious positions would be enough to culminate a career or even define a life. Romulo packed all these accomplishments into one legendary lifetime.

Romulo grew up in the town of Camiling in the province of Tarlac. He was born within the Spanish walled city of Intramuros on January 14, 1898, at the twilight of one colonial regime and the dawn of another. His father, Gregorio, fought in the revolution for Philippine independence against Spain and, until surrender, the United States.

In World War II Romulo was aide-de-camp to General Douglas MacArthur. As a journalist he wrote a series of articles, after a tour of the Far East, about Japanese imperialism. For this he won the Pulitzer Prize in journalism.

His skill at using words made Romulo the logical choice to become “the Voice of Freedom,” which broadcasted news of the war effort to Filipinos and Americans alike. Often contrary to Japanese propaganda, Romulo’s reports earned the ire of the enemy, who put a price on his head. But Romulo kept broadcasting until the Fall of Bataan, and abandoned his post only after MacArthur’s strict orders to leave. He flew first to Australia, eventually ending up in the United States in exile, leaving behind his wife, Virginia Llamas, and four sons.

Standing only 5’4” in his shoes, Romulo often made fun of his height. His book *I Walked With Heroes* opens with the anecdote about being the newly elected president of the United Nations—the first Asian to ever hold the post—and having to be “perched atop three thick New York City telephone books” just to see and be seen by all the delegates below the podium.

Romulo—whose lifelong dream was to help build a body such as the United Nations—resolved to make the Philippines “the big voice of small nations.” As a signatory of the charter forming the United Nations in 1945, he spoke the memorable line, “Let us make this floor the last battlefield.”



ABOVE: CPR broadcasting through OWI, 1945. MIDDLE: CPR with his sons, ca. 1976. BOTTOM: CPR with his wife Virginia, January 1953.



Dubbed by his colleagues "Mr. United Nations," he served as president of the UN Security Council four times, in 1981, in 1980, and twice in 1957.

Despite the triumphs, Romulo hit low points in his life. His eldest son Carlos, Jr., died in a plane crash in 1957, and his beloved wife of forty-four years died in 1968, near the end of his terms as president of the University of the Philippines, his alma mater, and, concurrently, Secretary of Education.

"I had to be outstanding," he once wrote, "to make the greatest effort to win, to prove I was capable not in spite of having been born a Filipino but because I was a Filipino."

Romulo served a total of eight Philippine presidents. His career as a public servant spanned more than fifty years, including seventeen years as Secretary of Foreign Affairs and ten years as the Philippines' ambassador to the United States. As a soldier he was a brigadier general in the US Army, receiving the Purple Heart and the Silver Star for his service during World War II, and a major general in the Philippine Army. As a writer he authored sixteen books, two plays, and works of poetry. In 1982 he was named a National Artist for Literature by the Philippine government. He was also conferred the first *Bayani ng Republika* Award for his outstanding service to the Filipino nation and the rank of *Raja* of the Order of Sikatuna, an honor usually reserved for heads of state.

He retired in 1984, intending to spend time writing with American author Beth Day, whom he married in 1979. It was a time of great uncertainty, as Benigno S. Aquino had just been assassinated, an incident for which Romulo felt deep disappointment. He died in 1985, having served on the boards of a number of prestigious Philippine corporations. "The General," as he was widely known, had received more than one hundred and fifty awards and decorations from other nations as well as over seventy honorary degrees from universities all over the world. Extolled by *Asiaweek* as "A Man of His Century," he was the most admired Filipino in international diplomacy of the 20th century.



ABOVE: Gen. Carlos P. Romulo signing the UN Charter on behalf of the Commonwealth of the Philippines on June 26, 1945.  
BOTTOM: CPR, 1982

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)*Lavandera*

signed and dated 1956 (lower left)

oil on canvas

18 1/2" x 14 1/4" (47 cm x 36 cm)

**P 1,700,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.

*“For the first time, the true color of the Philippines was transferred to canvas in all its blinding brilliance. Curiously enough, the lesson seems to have been lost on his self-styled followers. Paradoxically, it is the moderns who have used the tool and who are most indebted to him for liberation from the ‘brown sauce’ of academic painting...Amorsolo, by his craftsmanship, set a high standard, and again, paradoxically, it was the opponents of his style who profited: they could not afford to paint less well or less skillfully than the leader of the older group.*

*“[Amorsolo was] the man who, with endless patience, kindness, and good humor, taught me almost twenty-five years ago to mix my first colors and to use my first brushes. In fact, he has taught an entire generation of painters to paint and perhaps, the moment has come to thank the teacher.”*

— FERNANDO ZOBEL, ON HIS HOMAGE AND INDEBTEDNESS TO HIS NAMESAKE, THE “MAESTRO” AMORSOLO, PUBLISHED IN HIS ARTICLE “FERNANDO AMORSOLO, HIS CONTRIBUTION” IN THE INSURANCE LINE PERIODICAL (1960)

By the 1950s, Fernando Amorsolo had already solidified his legacy in Philippine art. When this first decade of Amorsolo’s “twilight” years had begun to materialize itself, the venerable artist had already received the much-deserving recognition fitting for an artist whose art and style had imprinted themselves on the nation’s collective psyche..

In 1948, Amorsolo was accorded a one-man retrospective exhibition sponsored by no less than the influential Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) at the National Museum of the Philippines, where he mounted 60 paintings.

Two years later, in 1950, Amorsolo would be given the privilege to participate in the Missionary Art exhibit in Rome, where two historical paintings by the maestro were showcased: *“Faith Among the Ruins”* and *“Baptism of Rajah Humabon.”*

In 1952, Amorsolo stepped down from his post as Director at the UP School of Fine Arts after an almost two-decade steadfast supervision of one of the country’s premier artistic institutions. He would now have the opportunity to devote all his time to painting.

In 1956, the year the work at hand titled *Lavandera* was painted, Amorsolo was bestowed an Award of Merit by then-President Ramon Magsaysay upon the Civic Assembly

of Women of the Philippines’ (now the National Council of Women of the Philippines) recommendation.

Even in his post-prime period, Amorsolo still steadfastly pursued and caressed Philippine sunlight as if it were his beloved wife. This pursuit is exemplified by the work at hand. Although not exuding the *plein air* quality of his “Golden Period” paintings, *Lavandera* still shows Amorsolo’s ingenious depiction of the transience of sunlight and the nuances of its varying degree of penetration amid a thick, verdant forest inhabited by towering trees, hay-like grasses, and pristine rivers and streams. Through this mastery, Amorsolo’s name has become synonymous with Philippine sunlight, the *maestro* from which succeeding generations of Filipino artists gained creative luminescence.

Amorsolo’s graceful *dalaga* still retains her role as the protagonist—the endearing muse—in the artist’s canvas. For Amorsolo, she is a veritable reminder of a bygone era, a glorious period in which the idyllic pastoral is exalted as the sturdy foundation of the Filipino nation. The natural allure of Amorsolo’s dignified *dalaga* may have the eminent Carlos P. Romulo to this work. He became the Filipino nation’s resonating voice in the often-turbulent international arena. After all, Romulo was a man who, in his own right, embodied that same sheer refinement in the same veins as Amorsolo’s *dalaga* and the *maestro* himself. (*Adrian Maranan*)

The Carlos P. Romulo *Amorsolo*  
*Lavandera in a River Glade*





111 PROPERTY OF AN OLD MANILA FAMILY

## Jorge Pineda (1879-1946)

### *Picking Duhat*

signed and dated 1932 (lower left)

oil on canvas

26" x 18" (66 cm x 46 cm)

**P 700,000**

Jorge Pineda occupies a prominent yet often overlooked position in the history of Philippine genre painting. Pineda virtually distanced himself from reveling in the sheer romanticism espoused by his peers, particularly Fernando Amorsolo. Instead, Pineda basked in his brand of realism characterized by a straightforward depiction of everyday living, void of the "glamorous sensuousness Amorsolo pursued all his life," as art critic Emmanuel Torres writes in the August 1973 issue of the Archipelago magazine and republished in the book *Kayumanggi: Biographies of Filipino Visual Artists*. Pineda "celebrated the homespun, creating simple impressions of daily life with disarming casualness and piquancy," Torres also notes.

Such artistic endeavor is evident in this 1932 piece titled *Picking Duhat*. Here, Pineda showcases his concern with the prosaic and the mundaneness and habituality of everyday living. The composition is not bathed in the exuberance of a conservative's palette nor the inherent romantic sensibility emphasized through a nostalgia for the sweet pastoral that often comes out as schmaltzy. Instead, Pineda's is a celebration of the rural in its ordinary, day-to-day (run-of-the-mill, if one may deem it) business.

Such visual articulation can also be seen as an influence of the 19th-century British painter and illustrator Charles W. Andrews, whom Pineda—the leading illustrator of his time, contributing to leading periodicals, including *Renacimiento Filipino*—admired in his lifetime. In line with his role of informing rather than persuading, Andrews produced straightforward illustrations for *Ilustracion Filipina* from 1859 to 1860, depicting people, places, and events as they happened in real time.

Therefore, Pineda's works possess a distinct charm that takes a step further towards a modernist approach to painting. (Adrian Maranan)



112

**Teodoro Buenaventura** (1863 - 1950)

*Nipa Hut at River's Edge*

signed and dated 1925 (lower right)

oil on board

30" x 32" (76 cm x 81 cm)

**P 700,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Estate of an American whose father had served in the US Navy

Teodoro Buenaventura's 1925 depiction of a serene bahay kubo is among the earliest masterpieces by one of the distinguished pillars of Philippine genre painting to come to market. Buenaventura's works are deemed rare, for many of his pieces did not survive the cultural destruction brought by the Second World War.

Bahay Kubo showcases Buenaventura at the height of his artistic prowess; he was among the country's undisputed

landscape painters of the first half of the 20th century. The composition is bathed in golden swathes of light beams emanating from a majestic sunset. Void of any depictions of human figures, except for a reference to human habitation, Buenaventura's Bahay Kubo offers an interesting insight into Filipino philosophical concepts centering on harmony and collective identity, that is, the perception that humans are inherently part of nature. Thus, landscapes, in the Filipino sense, are images of humanity themselves, and a tranquil landscape runs in parallel to a Filipino viewpoint of envisioning and building a strong yet imagined sense of nationhood, especially when put into the context of a part victorious, part tragic independence significantly interrupted by the American occupation.

When Buenaventura created this piece, he had been teaching at the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts for a prodigious 16 years, serving as an instructor in Elementary Drawing. (Buenaventura was also one of the founding teachers of the said institution, which was formally established in 1909.) (Adrian Maranan)

## Jose John Santos III (b. 1970)

### *Abstract Reasoning*

dated 2014

epoxy relief

15" x 12" x 15" x 11 1/2"

(38 cm x 30 cm x 38 cm x 29 cm) (moulds)

12" x 9" (30 cm x 23 cm) (casts)

**P 1,000,000**

#### PROVENANCE

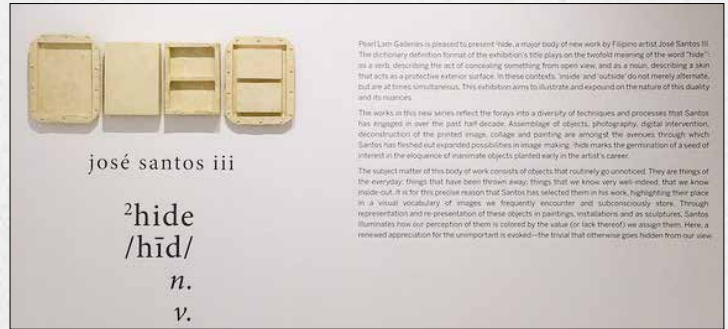
Pearl Lam Galleries

#### LITERATURE

Ruoh Ling, Keong, Leo Abaya, and Kenneth Tay. *<sup>2</sup>hide*. Singapore: Pearl Lam Galleries, 2014. Published to accompany the exhibition *<sup>2</sup>hide* at Pearl Lam Galleries in 2014-15. Featured on the catalog's front and back covers; Full-color photograph and artwork description on page 47.

#### EXHIBITED

Pearl Lam Galleries, *<sup>2</sup>hide*, Co-organised by Artinformal Gallery, Singapore, November 22, 2014 - January 8, 2015



ABOVE: Wall Installation of *Abstract Reasoning* in *hide*. Singapore exhibition at Pearl Lam Galleries, 2014. BESIDE: *Abstract Reasoning* as featured in the front cover of the exhibition catalog for *hide*.

# An Evocative Jose John Santos III

## From a Monumental Singapore Exhibition

**A**bstract Reasoning was the centerpiece of Jose John Santos III's monumental 2014 exhibition at the Pearl Lam Galleries in Singapore titled "<sup>2</sup>hide." Pearl Lam Galleries, a leading cultural institution promoting contemporary Asian arts, described the exhibition as "a major body of new work...This new series creates a heightened awareness of everyday objects by imbuing them with expanded meaning and new associations. It is a specific, interrogatory, and novel engagement with the duality of interiority and exteriority embedded in commonplace objects."

In 2009, Santos III departed from figuration. "<sup>2</sup>hide" was a continuing endeavor for the artist in his deeper introspection on his creative process and focusing on mundane found objects.

In that landmark show, viewers are immediately greeted by this intriguing work made of four separate slabs of epoxy relief.

The term "abstract reasoning" refers to our ability to solve problems, understand complex concepts, and analyze patterns; it is profoundly related to harnessing our critical and logical thinking. When we delve into abstract reasoning and thinking, we are confronted by visuals (shapes, images, etc.) rather than words or numbers. These forms are arranged in a structured mesh of patterns and appear in an ordered progression that tickles the mind's ability to recognize problems, find solutions, and reach a logical conclusion. Abstract reasoning is often employed in college admission exams and aptitude tests.

Santos III's Abstract Reasoning explores the representation and recontextualization of our ability to harness our own thinking. Presented in a horizontal manner akin to an entry in an aptitude test, the work touches on our innate capability of reconfiguring and reevaluating the objects we encounter every day but we

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*“...It pays perhaps to return to the artist Jose John Santos III’s curious observation of the word “hide.” As he notes, there is something troubling about the word: as a noun, it suggests at once a surface, a skin; but as a verb, it suggests a desire to conceal. We encounter in the word a troubling ambivalence between outside and inside, between revealing and concealing... What the artist wishes to focus on is the sense in which there seems to be something left that we have not said, something else that is yet to be seen, thought, or articulated. Our everyday veneer of familiar and ordinary objects is in fact, never static but charged, each with the “hidden” potential always to become something other than themselves. To put it differently, these objects are no longer merely the stuff inert furniture of reality. Rather, they are, in Santos III’s view, equally as dynamic as reality itself.”*

— KENNETH TAY, IN HIS ESSAY “EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED,” PUBLISHED ON THE CATALOG OF JOSE JOHN SANTOS III’S “HIDE” EXHIBITION

*“The subject matter of this body of work consists of ordinary objects that routinely go unnoticed. They are things of the everyday; things that have been thrown away; things that we know very well, indeed, that we know inside-out. It is for this precise reason that Santos has selected them in his work, re-situating them in a visual vocabulary of images we routinely encounter and subconsciously store. Through representation and re-presentation, a heightened awareness of everyday objects is experienced, illuminating how our perception of these objects is colored by the value (or lack thereof) we imbue them with – and how the nature of their objecthood is, in turn, tempered by our perception. Here, a renewed appreciation for the unimportant is evoked – the trivial that otherwise goes hidden from our view.”*

— PEARL LAM GALLERIES, ON JOSE JOHN SANTOS III’S EXHIBITION, “<sup>2</sup>HIDE”

nevertheless dismiss. Like an aptitude test, does the artist encourage us to know the next answer to this seeming pattern? Does he want to ask us which comes first in this series of reliefs? Or maybe, Santos III embodies us to view the object in relation to its medium: epoxy as a versatile everyday object used as a coating or adhesive for quick and convenient household repairs.

Contextualized within the exhibition’s title “<sup>2</sup>hide,” the artist unveils the shrouded and often neglected importance of everyday objects, and how they harness our ability to solve problems and make living and breathing manageable. The artist rationalizes the ordinary and sheds light on the importance of these objects in our everyday realities and functioning. In doing so, Santos III buries the adjudged banality of these objects—the often-disregarded gravitas they hold—and profoundly seeks their importance.

This harkens back to our reality, tracing the roots of our functionality and acquired intelligence and skills to the curiosities of childhood. Because where do we first gain experience and learn to navigate this topsy-turvy world? It is from everyday realities concretized in everyday objects. From the mere scribbling on papers to the profound resourcefulness and quick-wittedness acquired through using what is readily available, these objects become part and parcel of our shared reality and intelligence. In doing so, memory becomes integral to the overall artistic process of Santos III; the evocations of both the artist and his viewer are brought to the fore.

Furthermore, Abstract Reasoning embodies the exhibition’s main objective: the renewed appreciation for the “unimportant” and “trivial” and how these objects ultimately contribute to a renewed sense of living and being. (*Adrian Maranan*)







**Nena Saguil** (1914 - 1994)*Composition en noir et blanc (Composition in Black and White)*

signed and dated 1958 (lower right)

oil on canvas

39 1/2" x 28" (100 cm x 71 cm)

**P 3,800,000**

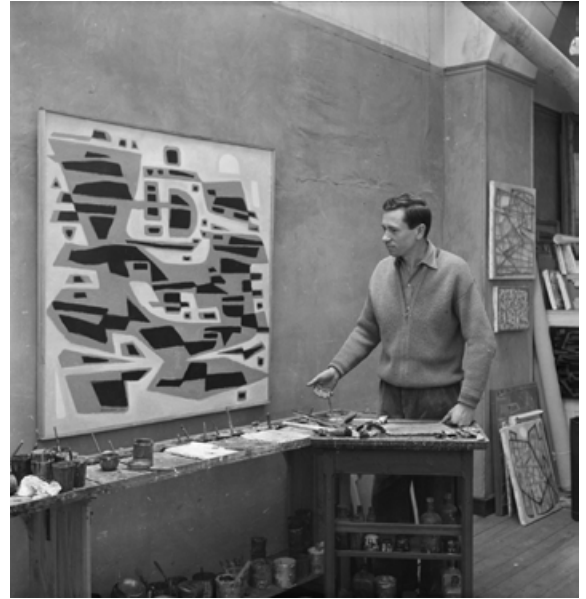
Accompanied by a certificate issued by Finale Art File confirming the authenticity of this lot

## PROVENANCE

Private collection, France

# Saguil's Self-Titled "Lyrical Cubism"

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



ABOVE: Portrait of Alfred Manessier, Saguil's most important mentor and was associated with the French movement of Lyrical Abstraction (Abstraction lyrique). (photo by Denise Colomb)

Striking out on her own from the Philippine Art Gallery to make her own mark in the Ecole de Paris, it is not surprising that Nena Saguil would absorb Picasso's cubism in the same way that she drank of the heady air of one of the greatest art capitals of the world.

Her friend and fiercest defender, Leonidas V. Benesa would chronicle her "rectangular patternings" under the influence of one of her most significant mentors in the late 1950s, Alfred Manessier (1911-1993).

Manessier was associated with the French movement of Lyrical Abstraction (Abstraction lyrique). Interestingly, in an interview with the art critic Cid Reyes published in his "Conversations in Philippine Art," Saguil would use the similar term of "Lyrical Cubism" to describe this particular series of her artworks. More significantly, Manessier also appeared to be an influence not only on her artistic but also her spiritual development.

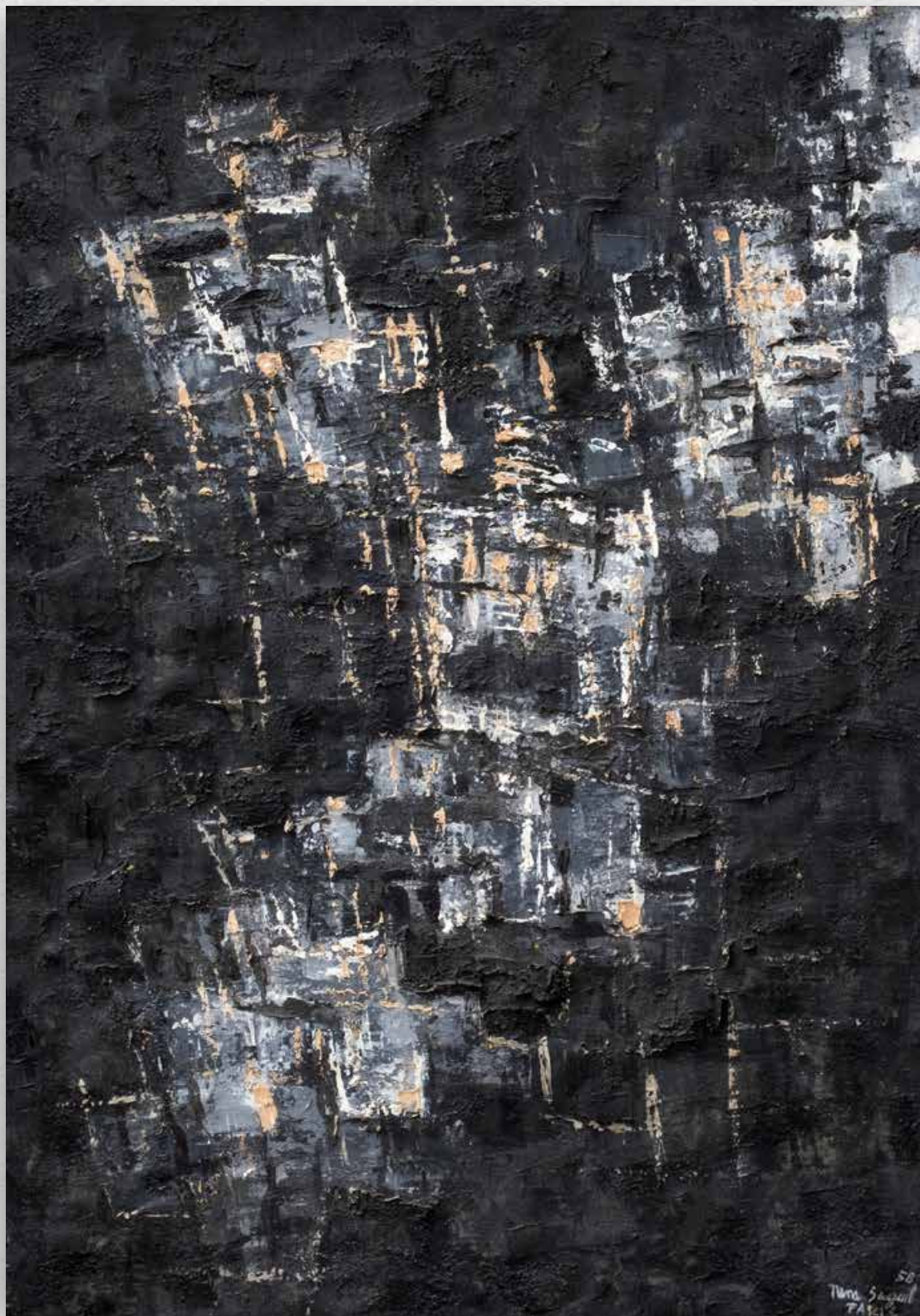
Notes from the Guggenheim Museum archives offer these insights: "In 1943, Manessier experienced a religious awakening during a three-day retreat to a Trappist monastery. Soon after he converted to Roman Catholicism and began to pursue an increasingly ascetic lifestyle.

"In 1945 his compositions started to recall stained-glass windows and turned more abstract, although figurative elements connected to religion and landscape continued to appear. His paintings allude to religious meanings through their titles and through combinations of discernible symbols and abstract imagery."

The French artist, with the zeal of the newly converted, would thus seek to express his interest in mysticism, sacred art and of spiritual ecstasy, concepts that would dominate Saguil's art more and more.

The work at hand pictures a dark universe that seems to be traveling in space. It is illuminated by an other-worldly light that comes from fallen stars and fragmented moons. It is one of the rare examples of Saguil's "Lyrical Cubism" that draws from the original elements of the Ecole de Paris or School of Paris.

Cid Reyes would later write, "The late critic Leo Benesa wrote of "stillness" and "nightness" as distinguishing qualities of her paintings. Her works affirm the consistent themes of Saguil: order and serenity, the solitude and mystery of the cosmos, and exploration of man's sense of eternity."



*Along the way, she leaves us traces of her spiritual explorations, carvings whose very surface speak of a richly textured earth, precious paintings, the best of which are surely among the most beautiful of this time.*

— DAVID MEDALLA



115

**Augusto Albor** (b. 1948)

*Terminus-92*

signed and dated 1981 (bottom)

mixed media

20 1/2" x 24 1/2" (52 cm x 62 cm)

**P 220,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE  
The Luz Gallery  
Galeria Lienzo

Abstractionist Augusto Albor is known for his captivating minimalist canvases. Along with his contemporaries, he adheres to the minimalist aesthetics set forth by the minimalist artists that came before them like Arturo Luz and Fernando Zobel – his works are restrained, impassioned, and elegant, with a startling discipline that manifests itself in his precise layering.

This impressive control over the medium is displayed in the 1981 work *Terminus-92*. A streak of color peeks behind a thin layer of paint akin to a silk screen. One can imagine the painstaking effort Albor puts into this piece – first to color the vibrant piece and then to slowly layer the translucent paint enough to form a film but not enough to cover the colors completely. His art is electrifying and harmonious, with his influence succinctly described by no other than National Artist Arturo Luz as such: "Augusto Albor is quite simply the best that the Philippines has to offer." (*Hannah Valiente*)



116

**Ayka Go** (b. 1993)

*Traces: Deconstructed Butterfly Pattern*

signed and dated 2022 (side)

oil on canvas

diameter: 48" (122 cm)

**P 300,000**

EXHIBITED

Tang Contemporary Art, *A Dream Within A Dream* (Group exhibition featuring Ai Weiwei, Ayka Go, Dinh Q Le, Gerald Davis, Raffy Napay, Wang Jian Wei, Yue Minjun, and Yunizar), Bangkok, March 31 - May 3, 2022

*"Is all that we see or seem  
But a dream within a dream?"*

—EDGAR ALLAN POE;  
A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

Contemporary Filipina artist Ayka Go confronts the often obtuse nature of reality with *Traces; Deconstructed Butterfly Pattern*. The work itself was exhibited as part of the group show titled "A dream within a dream" at Tang Contemporary Art. Curated by Rome-Bangkok based curator and art critic Michela Sena, the show brought together a group of groundbreaking artists in an attempt to construct and understand the essence of what makes up reality. For Go, reality seemingly exists in simultaneous layers. According

to Tang Contemporary: "Ayka Go' world is the construction of a metaphysical reality: in a suspended atmosphere, random details of everyday life are enlightened by the lenses of her unconscious and suddenly reality appears as we had never seen it." As the information suggests, the piece reveals to us that not all is what it seems. Wherein the actuality of an object is constantly in flux, seemingly ruled both by the confined and the possibilities of our own imagination. (*Jed Daya*)



117

**Marc Aran Reyes** (b. 1996)

*In Between Moments*

oil on canvas

42" x 84" (107 cm x 213 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

Within the walls of an ethereal manor, a mesmerizing tableau unfolds, captured in the timeless sonata of light and shadows. In this otherworldly masterful piece, a spellbinding figure stands in serenity beside the grand piano, evoking enchantment through the melancholic melodies that echo within the colossal chamber.

The maestro of evocative canvases, Marc Aran Reyes unveils yet another mesmerizing creation entitled "In Between Moments." The artist captures the quintessence of a tranquil interlude where his muse becomes the focal point of a narrative suspended between reality and reverie.

In the embrace of monochrome, Marc Aran takes on an air of serenity, while an enchantress of sound conjures



harmonies that transcend time, her presence both simultaneously impelling and numbing. The artist's palette bathes the composition in a poetic glow, transforming the ordinary into a visual symphony. Her gentle stance, bathed in the soft glow of an unseen luminescence, casts a spell that resonates with the very essence of the quiet melody.

Beyond the grand entryways, landscapes unfurl as a dreamscape, a surreal backdrop that enhances the allure of the moment. The artwork invites the viewer to step into a world where the ordinary dissolves, replaced by the fantastical, where music and melancholy coalesce in a mesmerizing symphony. Rendered through the timeless medium of oil on canvas, Marc Aran and his artwork transport the observer into a surrealistic scene where the charm of a picturesque moment is frozen in perpetuity.

Marc Aran's attention to detail paints a portrait of a fleeting moment - a pause in the rhythm of life where simplicity meets grandeur. The grand piano, an elegant companion in this visual odyssey, stands as a witness to the interplay of light and shadow that defines the composition.

Through the colossal wall openings, landscapes beckon, suggesting a world beyond the immediate, contributing to the enigmatic nature of the artwork.

"In Between Moments" is a glimpse into a realm where the magic of the visual and the aural converge, magnifying quiet spaces where time seems to linger, leaving an indelible mark on the soul, and finding solace and resonance in the quietude of the in-between.

## Brian Uhing (b. 1975)

### *Don Quixote*

signed (lower left)

oil on canvas

17" x 13" (43 cm x 33 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, *Contemporary Discoveries*, Hong Kong, September 12, 2023, Lot 5537

#### EXHIBITED

Art Verité Gallery, *Procession of the Slightly Mad* (Joint Exhibition with S-Ann Ch'i), Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, May 6 - May 15, 2021

“When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies? Perhaps to be too practical is madness. To surrender dreams — this may be madness. Too much sanity may be madness — and maddest of all: to see life as it is, and not as it should be!”  
— Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*

Don Quixote peers from inside the canvas, fixing his soulful gaze on the audience. On his head, in lieu of a hat, is an upside-down box with the word 'fragile' embossed on the side. He is dressed in tattered cardboard boxes. On his hand is a bright red pinwheel; behind him is a window looking over a winding rural road with the mountains on the horizon.

In a masterful move, contemporary artist Brian Uhing evokes the classical masters while simultaneously subverting the uptight stereotype that comes with a traditional art style by injecting his signature humor. Growing up in an environment that nurtured his artistic inclinations, the influence of artists like René Magritte, Marcel Duchamp, and Balthus is highly evident in his works.

"If I could marry the richness of Titian's work with the humor of Magritte, that would be something I wouldn't mind seeing," he once told ANCX. One look into Uhing's oeuvre is proof enough that he manages to combine this unlikely pairing, as evidenced in his work *Don Quixote*.

*Don Quixote*, the titular character in Miguel Cervantes's 17th-century novel, is a middle-aged nobleman obsessed with knighthood and chivalry. Armed with a vivid imagination, he sets out to become a knight to protect the helpless, perceiving his ordinary rural scenery as grandiose medieval adventures. Although his delusions often lead him to comical misunderstandings, *Don Quixote* is an image of idealism, courage, and chivalry.



© Art Verité Gallery, Art Verité Gallery, *Procession of the Slightly Mad* (Joint Exhibition with S-Ann Ch'i), Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, May 6 - May 15, 2021

Uhing's work is a visual treat brimming with symbolism and humor. In *Don Quixote*, the character's "armor" is actually made of flimsy cardboard, symbolizing his delusions of being a chivalrous knight when, in fact, he is a middle-aged man in the province. The window behind him depicts a pastoral scenery, clearly devoid of the grandiose castles that often plague his fantasies.

However, on his hand is a pinwheel, bright red amidst the cool tones. A pinwheel is a visual representation of a carefree childhood, of youthful energy in a cycle of stopping and starting. Don Quixote may be a man in the throes of his delusions, but his genuine desire to protect the helpless remains his driving force. In this masterful work, Uhing utilizes his classical art style, vivacious humor, and brilliant symbolism to strike this delicate balance.  
(Hannah Valiente)



Brian Uhing  
*Tilting at Windmills and Legends*



# Laurent Fries/ Martin Waldseemüller / Claudius Ptolemy

## Tabula Undecima (XI) Asiae

1525, second edition

woodcut on paper

handcolored

15" x 21" (38 cm x 53 cm)

### P 1,000,000

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired from Baynton-Williams, Belgravia, London, October 1980



ABOVE: VeritTabula Undecima (XI) Asiae (found at the other side of the map)

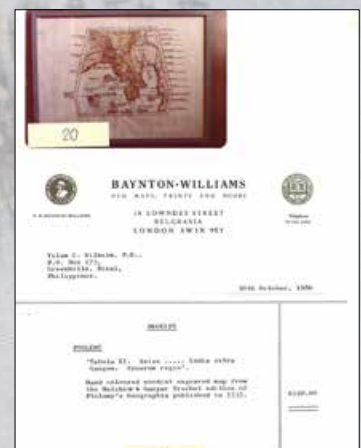
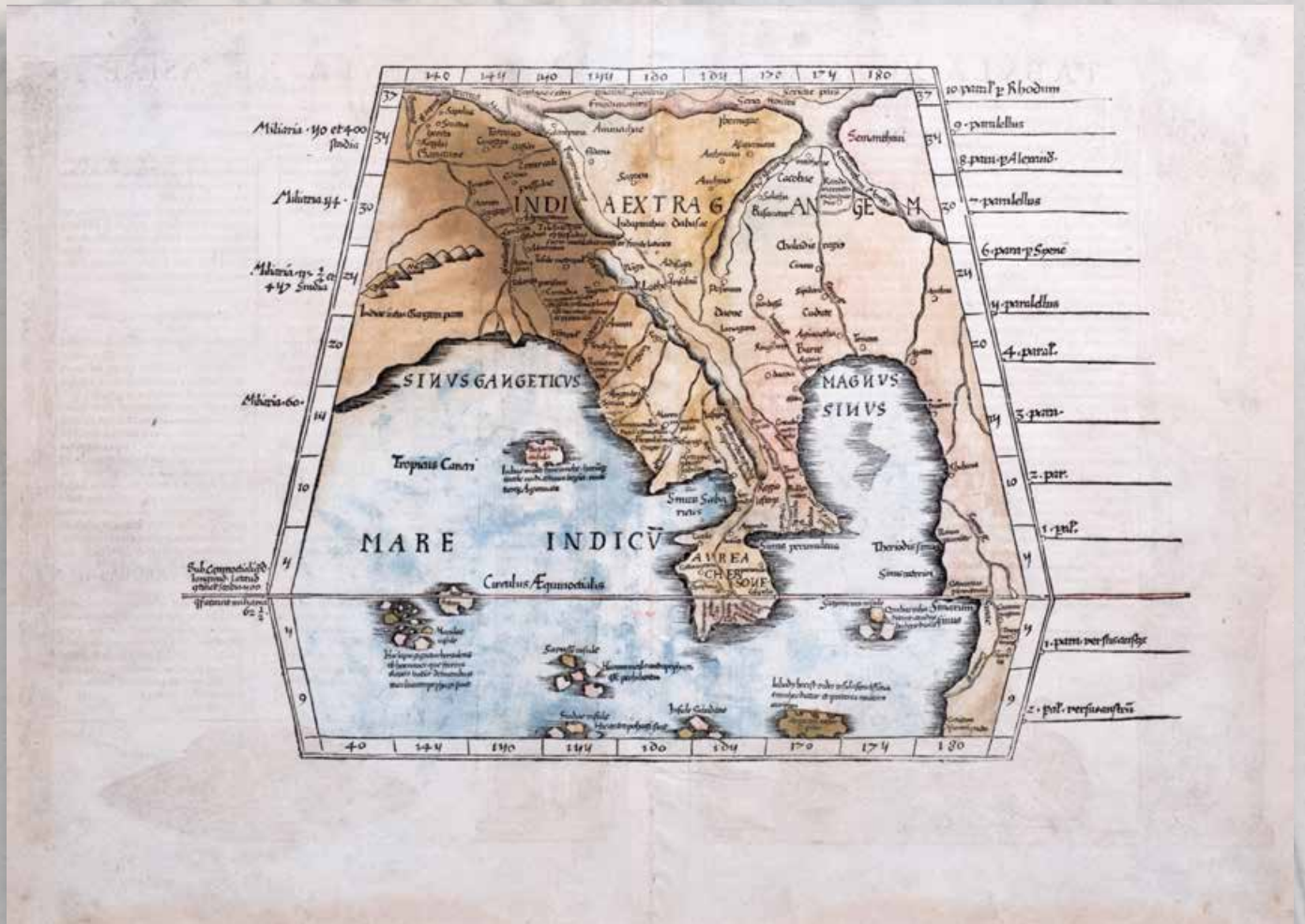
This is Laurent Fries' version of Ptolemy's eleventh map of Asia, covering the "southeastern corner" of the known world. The map shows "India beyond the Ganges" and covers the eastern part of the Indian Ocean, prominently showing the Malaysian Peninsula or the Golden Chersonese as the Greeks called it.

Fries' map is a reduced copy of Waldseemüller's eleventh Ptolemy map of Asia, with the Malaysian peninsula, the

islands of Maniolae (by some identified with Manilla), and the legendary huge sea port of Cattigara, possibly corresponding to Canton. It is furthest places in the Far East that the Greek merchants visited for trading.

This is an example from the early 1525 Strassburg edition. The woodcut decorations on the back are attributed to Albrecht Dürer, who also made the famous woodcut print of the armillary sphere in this atlas. (Leen Helminck)

# Map to the Riches of the East



ABOVE: Receipt for payment for the Tabula Indecima Map made out to Mr. Vilem Cyril Wilhelm

# First Accurate Map of the Far East: *Rare and Sought-After Van Linschoten Map*

Described as "The first accurate map of the Far East; A scarce and very sought after map from Jan Huyghen van Linschoten's legendary Itinerario."

The cartographer Jan Huygen van Linschoten "was for five years in the service of the archbishop of Goa whom he accompanied on his journeys in the region of the Indian Ocean."

In addition, "This map, a continuation of Linschoten's map of the Northern Indian Ocean on the same scale, covers the entire Far East, from Java to Japan. A scale of degrees is provided along the upper and lower edge, indicating latitude at intervals of 5°. A cartouche in the upper right corner contains a bilingual title summarizing the territories depicted here. A cartouche in the middle along the upper edge contains scale bars in Dutch and Spanish miles and below these the name of the engraver with the year and the date of the design. The seas contain drawings of ships and sea monsters as well as two fully drawn compass roses.

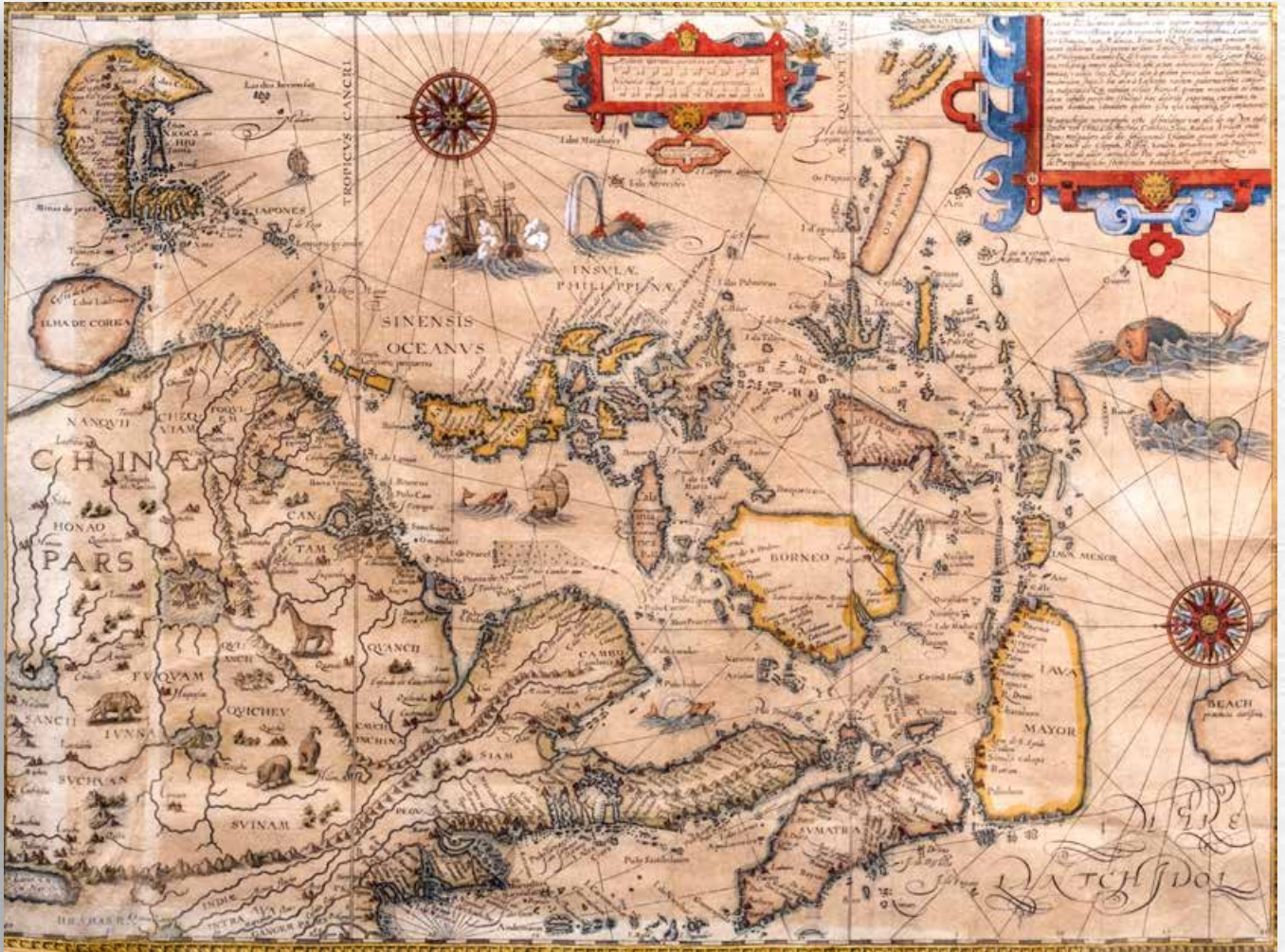
Map experts have further described "This map of 1595 is one of the earliest engraved maps presenting the Portuguese knowledge of this area with such accuracy. The left half of Petrus Plancius's 1592 map of the Moluccas served as the model for the depiction of the Philippines, a large part of the present-day Indonesian archipelago, and the islands lying in between up to the Tropic of Cancer. When composing his map, Plancius made use of manuscript maps by the Portuguese cosmographer and mapmaker Bartolomeu Lasso...A notable improvement over the older maps is the completion of the mapping of the Philippines. When the Spanish administration was moved from Goa to Manila, the gaps in knowledge about this island archipelago were considerably reduced, and existing information was improved. These advances in knowledge reached Europe through Portuguese maps and found their way into the printed maps, among other sources. Plancius's map and the map in the Itinerario must be counted among the earliest ones to reflect the up-dated information on the Philippines into account.

## Jan Huygen van Linschoten

(1563-1610)

Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, a Dutchman born in Delft, was secretary to the Portuguese Archbishop in Goa between 1583 and 1589. These experiences were recorded in the *Itinerario*, which was first published in Dutch (Amsterdam: 1595-1596), and contains the most comprehensive account of the East and West Indies available at the end of the sixteenth century. As well as including important travel accounts from contemporary Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish sources, it is the first work to include precise sailing instructions for the Indies and also includes an account of America. (Leen Helminck Antique Maps)





120 PROPERTY FROM THE VILEM CYRIL WILHELM COLLECTION

**Jan Huygen van Linschoten** (1563 - 1611)

*Map Title (Translated) : 'The true depiction or illustration of all the coasts and lands of China, Cochin China, Cambodia, Siam, Malacca, Arracan and Pegu, likewise of all the adjacent islands, large and small, together with the cliffs, riffs, sands, dry parts and shallows; all taken from the most accurate sea charts and rutters in use by the Portuguese pilots today!'*

dated 1638  
copper engraving  
15" x 20" (38 cm x 51 cm)

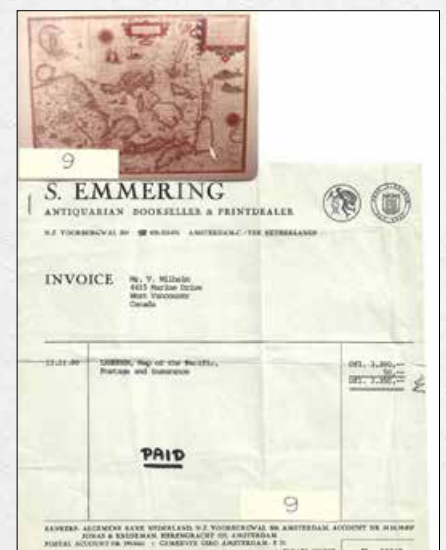
**P 1,000,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired from S. Emmering  
Antiquarian Bookseller & Print Dealer, Amsterdam, 1980.

**CONDITION REPORT**

Fair but stained/ discolored, typical however for Linschoten maps as only a very few are in original condition.



ABOVE: Receipt for payment for the Van Linschoten Map made out to Mr. Vilem Cyril Wilhelm

## Pay Slip for the Tiradores de la Muerte or the "Marksmen of Death" (A Sharpshooter Battalion founded by Gen. Antonio Luna)

dated April 15, 1899

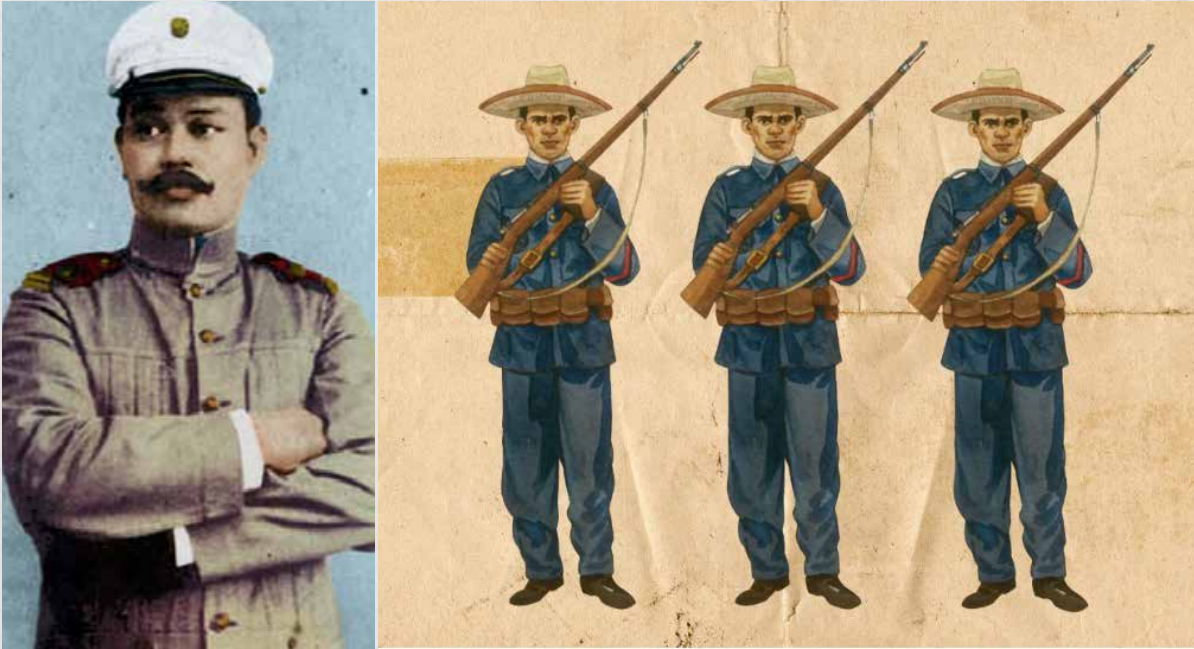
signed by General Antonio Luna with his official seal in blue on ruled paper.

6 1/4" x 8 1/2" (16 cm x 22 cm)

### P 500,000

#### PROVENANCE

Local 'Bayanihan' bourse.



The fearsome but innovative Gen. Antonio Luna, founder of the "Tiradores de la Muerte, or Marksmen of Death" The Tiradores de la Muerte, from the Presidential Museum and Library, © Courtesy of Esquire Magazine.

The fiercest general of the Philippine-American War was Gen. Antonio Luna. He was also its most innovative. Luna put together a sniper group that legend has it began with just eight volunteers. He armed them with what was considered state-of-the-art weaponry, the Spanish Mauser 1893 that fired the first of smokeless cartridges, making it indispensable in its stealthy operations.

This and other information are drawn from the essay "Tiradores de la Muerte: The Philippines' First True Special Forces" by Mamerto Adan.

Adan would recount the unit's major engagements as follows, "The function of Luna's rifle unit was to spearhead the assault in battles, meaning they were on the frontlines to lead the attack. They also participated in various guerrilla warfare against the Americans. When Malolos fell, Luna, his sharpshooters, and his troops never gave the Americans an easy victory. His forces were heavily outnumbered, with only 5000 strong against the 15000 American soldiers under Arthur MacArthur Jr. What seemed to be an easy campaign for the American forces lasted from March 25 to 31. Though the battle for Malolos only left 8 casualties on the American

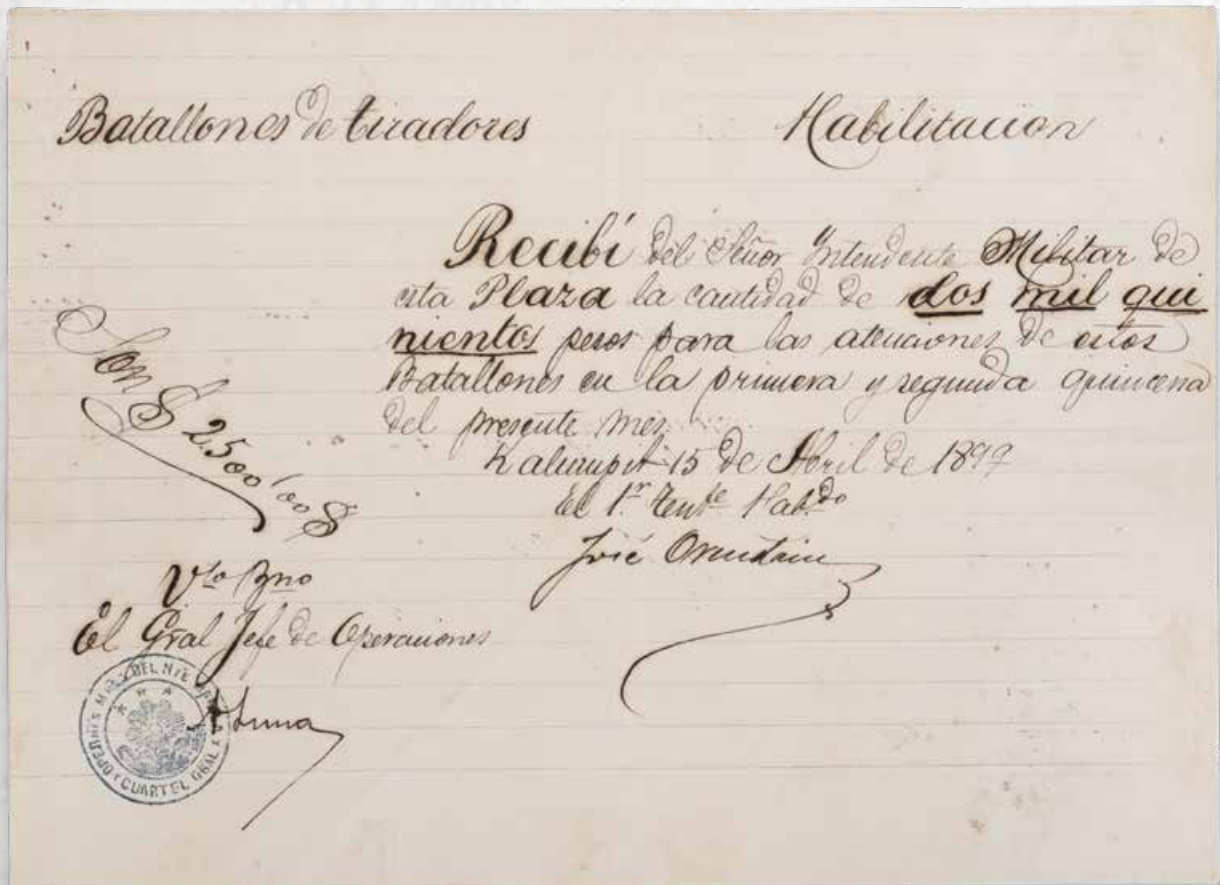
side, the whole campaign costs the American forces 56 dead and 478 wounded."

Ultimately, Adan said, "the Americans learned to respect Luna and his sharpshooters."

He writes, "A month later (April 25 to 27 1899) the Battle of Calumpit broke out, and once again Luna went into the field with his sharpshooters leading the charge. It was an American victory, though casualties were disputed. Luna's claim is 700 dead on the American side against the 200 dead Filipinos, but the Americans put the deaths at only 22 with 127 wounded."

The "Tiradores de la Muerte" would give its name to "the elite unit of the Philippines, the Light Reaction Company, which is considered to be the local version of the Delta Force for good reason." Their insignia bears the image of an eagle, with the words "Tiradores de la Muerte," Spanish for the "Marksmen of Death." This unit motto perfectly defines the special forces unit, yet it was actually derived from the name of another group of elite soldiers who fought in the Philippine-American War."

# Hen. Luna's Snipers of the Philippine-American War



Transcribed :

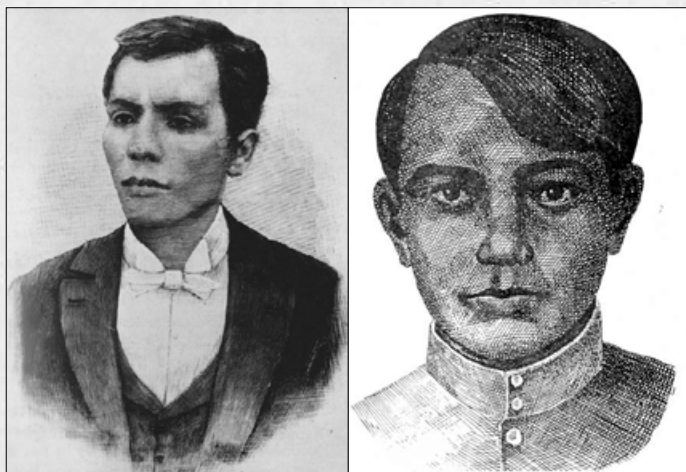
Batallones Tiradores. Habilitacion  
 Recibi del Señor Intendente Militar de esta Plaza la  
 cantidad de dos mil quinientos pesos para las atenciones  
 de estos Batallones en la primera y segunda quincena del  
 presente mes.  
 Kalumpit 15 de Abril de 1899  
 El 1º Tente Habdo  
 Jose Orendain  
 (In figures on the side) Son \$2.500,00\$  
 Vto Bno El Gral Jefe de Operaciones  
 A Luna  
 (Stamped) Operaciones Mre del Nte, Cuartel Gral

Translated:

Sniper Battalion. Authorized Disbursement.  
 Receipt for 2,500 pesos as payment for the "atenciones" of  
 the "Batallones de Tiradores" (Sharpshooter Battalions) for  
 the first and second fortnights of April 1899.  
 Signed for by Lieutenant  
 José Orendain (Paymaster).  
 Calumpit, 15 April 1899.  
 "Visto Bueno" or Approved.  
 signed by Antonio Luna as "El Gral Jefe de Operaciones".

# The Kartilya ng Katipunan: The Most Important Printed Document That Would Create the Filipino Nation

by PROF. MICHAEL CHARLESTON "XIAO" BRIONES CHUA,  
PH.D. FILIPINO PUBLIC HISTORIAN



ABOVE (L-R): Andres Bonifacio known as 'Supremo' and Emilio Jacinto known as the 'Utak ng Katipunan'

The Kartilya ng Katipunan is the most studied of all texts from the Philippine Revolution today. At the time this printed version was circulated, it was an indispensable primer to the men who wished to join the movement that made us a Nation specially during the lead up to the National Revolution that started on August 1896.

According to Epifanio de los Santos in Spanish, "Before the approval of the famous Cartilla (primer) of Emilio Jacinto, Andres Bonifacio had already prepared a similar primer, but he withdrew it because Emilio Jacinto's seemed better to him."

Most are familiar with the list of thirteen items known as "Mga Aral nang mga Katipunan ng mga A.N.B." (Rules of the Association of the Sons of the People), attributed to Emilio Jacinto, but this was actually part of a longer document called "Katipunan nang manga A. N. B. – Sa may nasang makisanib sa katipunang ito" (Association of the Sons of the People – To those who may desire to affiliate with this Association).

For many years our source of the text that appeared in books came from the Spanish translation by Epifanio de los Santos in his short biography of Jacinto, and his son José P. Santos's *Buhay at mga Sinulat ni Emilio Jacinto*.

What is the nature of this document "Katipunan nang manga A. N. B. – Sa may nasang makisanib sa katipunang ito" or the Kartilya? Some of those who argue that the Katipunan was our first government, and Andres Bonifacio our first president, say that this is a constitution.

Richardson clearly demonstrated in his study of the Kartilya that the document is largely drawn from the masonic documents which have two parts—the "Programa Masonica" and the "Codigo Masonico." First it has a preamble of the objectives and principles of the Katipunan, expectations and commitment which Richardson calls the La"yon" part, and then a set of teachings called the "'Aral part.

The Tagalog words that resound loudest in the Kartilya, beyond a doubt, are the equivalents of the Enlightenment's defining watchwords: Liberty ("Kalayaan"), Equality ("lahat ng tao'y magkakapantay"), Fraternity ("kayong lahat ay magkakapatid"), Reason ("Katuiran"), Progress ("Kagalingan") and Enlightenment itself ("Kaliwanagan"). Most, perhaps all, of these Tagalog equivalents had already been employed by ilustrado writers like Rizal and Del Pilar before the KKK was founded.

And why was a moral code made into a list and not a constitution as a primer? Because the Ten Commandments resonated in a Catholic country. It was easy to follow and so familiar, many others adopted its format. Apolinario Mabini had his own, and so did Gregoria de Jesus, too.

There are traces of Rizal in the first "'Aral which was lifted from *El Filibusterismo*, "A life which is not dedicated to a great ideal is useless. It is a pebble lost in the field without forming part of an edifice."

The Kartilya encapsulates the Filipino idea of human rights based on "pakikipagkapwa-tao." However, the Kartilya was more personal than the Constitution's Bill of Rights and was directed at the reader in the style of "kasabihan" or "salawikain."

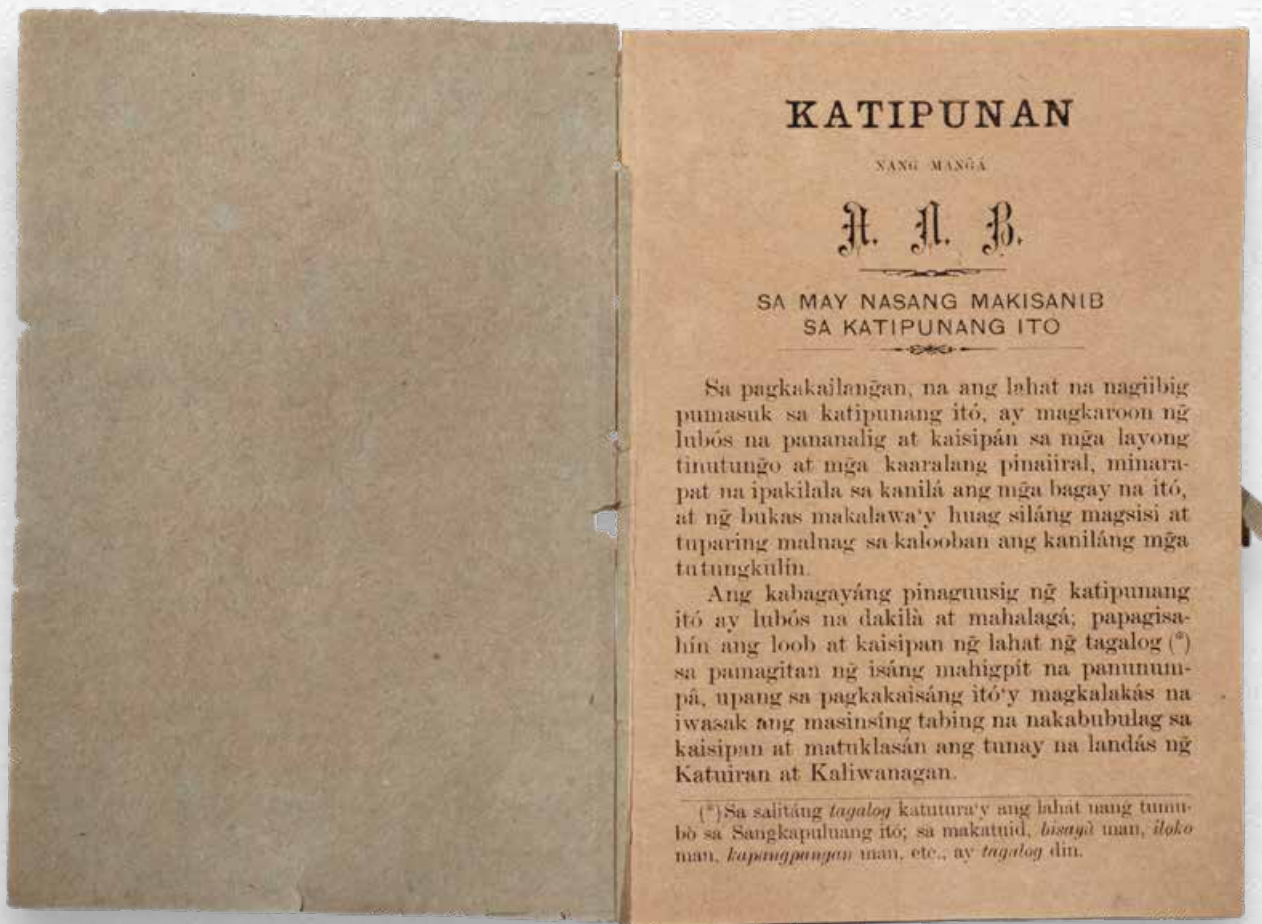
This is how Jacinto taught equality, "Whether one's skin is white or black, all persons are equal; it is possible that one may be surpassed in intelligence, in wealth, in beauty, but never in humanity." He also said, "Defend the oppressed and fight the oppressor." Jacinto said about women's rights: "Consider the woman not as a mere object of pleasure but as a partner and companion in the difficulties of this life; earnestly respect her weakness and remember your mother who bore and raised you."

Jesus said, "Do to others what you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12); so, Jacinto revised the golden rule to say, "Do not do to the wife, child and sibling of others what you do not want others to do to your wife, child and sibling."



The “Kartilya” is the best known of all Katipunan texts. Making manifest the KKK’s principles and teachings, it was printed as a small pamphlet for new members. It is the only document of any length set in print by the Katipunan prior to August 1896 that is known to be still extant.

—JIM RICHARDSON,  
FOREMOST KATIPUNAN SCHOLAR



122

## Emilio Jacinto (attrib.) “Katipunan nang manga A. N. B. – Sa may nasang makisanib sa Katipunang ito” (“The Kartilya”).

Printed for those applying for membership in the Katipunan.

Manila, ca. January, 1896

8 pages, 7 with printing and a grey paper cover

6" x 4 1/4" (15 cm x 11 cm)

**P 500,000**

### PROVENANCE

Epifanio de los Santos estate in 1988.

### LITERATURE

"Only known extant original Cartilla ng Katipunan".

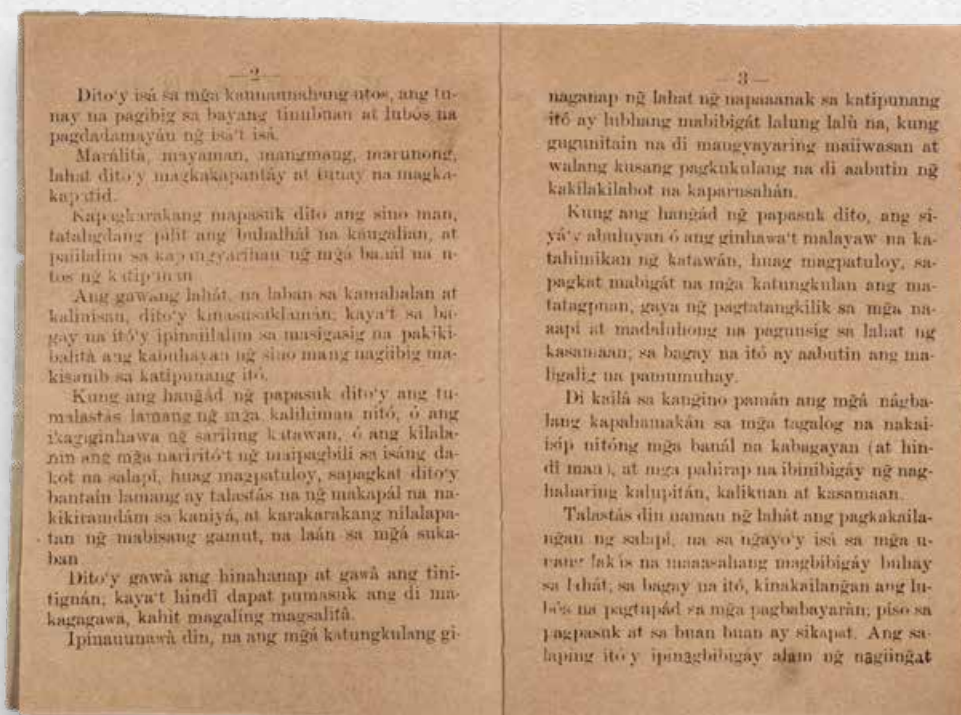
Philippine Free Press page showing photograph of the Cartilla, dated August 24, 1929.

*The Tragedy of the Revolution*, Adrian E. Cristobal, Studio 5 Publishing Inc., 1997.

Full color photograph of first page on page 46 with description on page 47

The earliest reference to the Kartilya yet found is in the minutes of a Supreme Assembly meeting held in December 1895, which say the manifesto ("pahayag") will be priced at 4 kuala per copy. The Kartilya was still in use during the first phase of the revolution, and Bonifacio was planning to print more copies shortly before he was killed. It may still have been used during the second phase of the revolution, for a version survives in the Philippine Insurgent Records that is stamped with the seal used by Artemio Ricarte in 1899.

—JIM RICHARDSON,  
FROM "THE LIGHT OF LIBERTY"



Hence, the Kartilya, cannot be classified as a purely enlightenment text or merely a nativist text. It is sophisticated in terms of its cosmopolitanism and universality as something influenced by masonry and the enlightenment, yet, it retains the spirit of the indigenous which made it relatable to the populace, that they were willing to give their life to its promise of redemption, mentioned in the 14th often-left out passage of the "Aral":

"When these doctrines have spread and the brilliant sun of beloved liberty shines on these poor Islands, and sheds its sweet light upon a united race, a people in everlasting happiness, then the lives lost, the struggle and the suffering will have been more than recompensed."

But the "Layon" part, though often neglected since it seemed very particular to the Katipunan, is significant in the reading of Philippine History for three reasons: 1) It tells you of the Katipunan's clear concept of the Nation as a whole country, contrary to the early notion that their concept of the Nation was limited to the Tagalog people. The footnote clarification on uniting the hearts and minds of the Tagalogs defines it as all of those who were born in the archipelago which included Visayans, Ilocanos, Kapampangans, etcetera are also Tagalogs, perhaps invoking the old meaning of taga-"alog" as people from the river delta, as all Austronesians

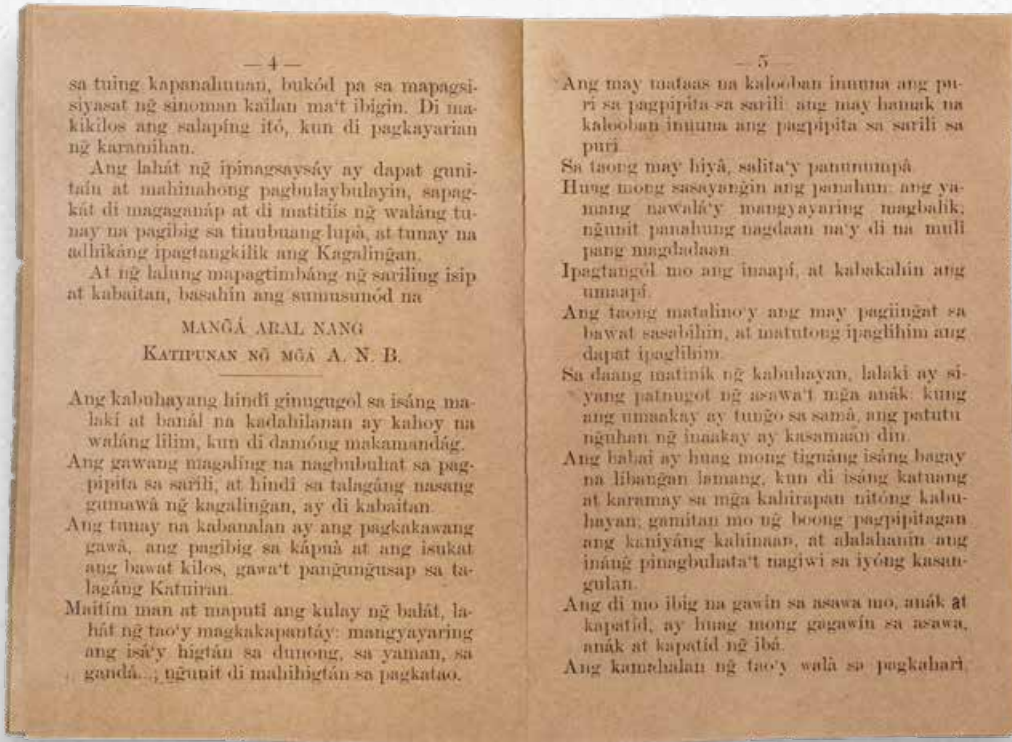
are maritime people; 2) It clarifies that the primary law in the Katipunan was not violence or the wanton killing of the enemy as critics say, but to love; 3) The list of expectations and commitments to be done tells us of the great sacrifices our forebears were willing to give just to make us free, including the offering of their lives to the cause of their children's future.

When the revolution broke out and Katipunan chapters, particularly the Magdalo Council, gave up its traditional initiation rites to mass recruitment for the contingency of the fighting, some of the new members perhaps did not internalize the Kartilya anymore and did not even count themselves as members of the Katipunan, which led to the misunderstanding of Bonifacio's intentions for the Nation and which ultimately also led to the unfortunate event in the birth of our Nation: the death of its Father.

Yet, the Kartilya, like Filipino Culture, is the melding of influences of the East and the West. Contrary to the notions of elitists that the Katipunan as a movement is archaic and outdated, it was as modern as it could be at the time with a clear concept of the nation we should become based on enlightenment, reason, righteousness and the Filipino perspective. Its words were a call to action, to fight but also to love. It is without a doubt the document that gave birth to the Filipino Nation.

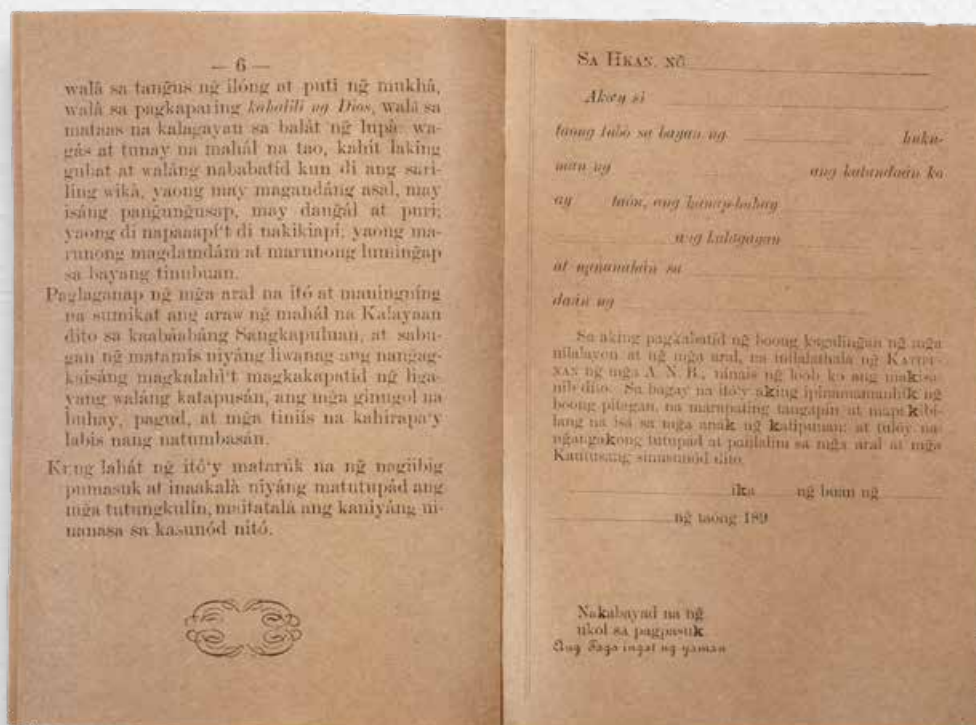
Authorship of the Kartilya has always been credited to Emilio Jacinto, and there is little doubt this attribution is sound: it dates back to the Sensacional memoria of Isabelo de los Reyes, whose sources included several senior KKK veterans, and it has never been challenged. Bonifacio, the story goes, had originally intended that his "Decalogue" should be printed and handed to new recruits, but he then read Jacinto's Kartilya and decided it was superior.

—JIM RICHARDSON,  
FROM "THE LIGHT OF LIBERTY"



While it bears no date, one possible clue could be the "k"s on the application form (p.7) which don't match the other letters. The Katipunan's typesetters, it is said, had a shortage of certain letters in 1896 and had to get them from different sources.

—JIM RICHARDSON,  
FROM "THE LIGHT OF LIBERTY"



## Diosdado Lorenzo (1906-1983)

### *Chinese Mandarin*

signed and dated 1936 (lower right)

oil on canvas

25" x 19" (64 cm x 48 cm)

**P 600,000**

#### LITERATURE

*A Retrospective Exhibit of the Works of Diosdado M. Lorenzo (Exhibition Catalog)*. Manila: 1969. Published on the occasion of the Diosdado Lorenzo retrospective at the Manila Hilton in 1969. Illustrated.

Benesa, Leonidas V. *Diosdado Lorenzo (Exhibition Catalog)*. Manila: Museum of Philippine Art, 1978. Published on the occasion of the Diosdado Lorenzo retrospective at the Museum of Philippine Art in 1978. Listed as "Chinese Mandarin" on page 10.

Guillermo, Alice G. *Disodado Magno Lorenzo: Art Rebel to Legend*. Makati City: Philippine-Italian Association & Tantoco-Rustia Foundation, 2009. Full-color photograph on page 35 and painting description on page 34.

#### EXHIBITED

Manila Hilton, *A Retrospective Exhibit of the Works of Diosdado M. Lorenzo*, Manila, March 27 - April 24, 1969

Museum of Philippine Art, *Diosdado Lorenzo: Retrospective Exhibition*, Manila, March 2 - April 30, 1978

If Victorio Edades lashed the earliest scourges against the preeminence and overt romanticism of the conservatives led by Fernando Amorsolo, Diosdado Lorenzo was the one who gashed the inflamed lesions and accelerated the fueling rage of the "Amorsolo School" and its followers. Although deemed conservative in subject matter, Lorenzo traversed through the modernist line in his stylistic choices and conscious decision to align with and befriend the modernists, particularly Edades and Galo Ocampo. Lorenzo's works, disfavoring a conservative's polished finish, omit romantic tendencies in favor of subtle expressionistic distortion and delicate impressionistic impastos.

It was in Europe where Lorenzo was introduced to modern art, away from the classical tradition espoused by the UP School of Fine Arts, his alma mater. There, Lorenzo visited the museums of Spain, Italy, and France and became influenced by the works of Vincent van Gogh, whom he considered "first" among his "great favorites," as he once revealed in a 1977 interview with Cid Reyes and published in the latter's *Conversations on Philippine Art*. It was from van Gogh and the Impressionists that Lorenzo "learned the use of impasto...which conservative academics had found inimical, and the repeated application of patches of colors in juxtaposition," as the eminent art critic Alice Guillermo writes in her book on the artist.

Returning to the Philippines in 1934 from his six-year European studies in Madrid (Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando) and Rome (Reale Accademia di Belle Arti), Lorenzo mounted a homecoming exhibition in January 1935 at the Philippine Columbian Club, where Edades also held his historic solo show in 1928 that spearheaded the introduction of modern art to the country (Interestingly, it was Edades who encouraged Lorenzo to have his homecoming exhibition at the said venue.).

Lorenzo, galvanized from the sweet acceptance of his art in Europe, notably his 1934 debut solo exhibition in Rome, which showcased mainly portraits of his wife Lina and Italian landscapes and garnered the general acclaim of Italian artists and critics, had only high hopes for his homecoming. Although he won the praises of the critics, writers, and cultural cognoscenti for his homecoming show, with *The Philippines Herald* newspaper dedicating an entire lead story with the headline "Modern Art Makes Formal Bow with Exhibition of Lorenzo's Paintings," Lorenzo became frustrated over the conditions of Philippine art at this time.

"He expressed disappointment with the Philippine art market that seemed to impede the development of his art because the public had a wary regard for artists outside the Amorsolo school," writes Guillermo. "Besides, he was vexed with buyers haggling over the prices of paintings in the exhibit."

Dismayed, Lorenzo and Lina traveled to Hong Kong in 1935 and would settle there until 1937. Hong Kong became Lorenzo's creative haven, free from the frowning of an opposing art movement and the lack of local support. He established the Accademia di Belle Arti, Hong Kong's first art educational institution. "This was a rare move by a Filipino artist who fast gained a sizable following of students and collectors," writes Guillermo. "For this initiative, he was praised warmly, not only in the colony but in many parts of the world, noting that it was headed by a Filipino artist. The governor of Hong Kong himself, through his deputy, wrote him a letter acknowledging him for this worthy effort and showing interest in its curriculum."

In Hong Kong, Lorenzo painted mainly character studies depicting ordinary natives, such as the work at hand titled *Chinese Mandarin*. Lorenzo's impressionist-cum-expressionist flair is discerned in his manner of depicting an elderly Hongkonger with such dignified sophistication. The intensity of Lorenzo's warm palette, dominated by browns, signifies reverence for the elderly in traditional Chinese culture. The browns symbolize the earth, where the elderly have stood for the longest time and thus have acquired the profoundness of wisdom and the vitality of life. This rings true, especially in Hong Kong, where traditional Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist teachings revolving around filial piety are espoused and followed. (*Adrian Maranan*)



*“Lorenzo was the first Filipino painter to attract attention to paint as paint on canvas, in impasto, so that color and texture were one. This was anti-academic to a shocking degree in the 1930s, although as Edades himself noted then, Lorenzo’s paintings after his return from Italy were not that rough texturally, and were even in cool tonalities.”*

— LEONIDAS V. BENESA, IN HIS ESSAY “DIOSDADO LORENZO: THE OTHER REBEL IN PHILIPPINE ART” PUBLISHED IN THE CATALOG OF LORENZO’S 1978 RETROSPECTIVE AT THE MUSEUM OF PHILIPPINE ART



Lorenzo shown here with Italian sculptor Oseo Acconci in Hong Kong in 1937



124

## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Sunset in Manila Bay*

signed and dated 1943 (lower right)

oil on panel

8" x 11" (21 cm x 30 cm)

**P 1,400,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.

#### PROVENANCE

Private Collection, France

During the Second World War, Amorsolo documented the atrocities of the Japanese imperial forces and painted them on his canvas "with no interest in pleasing his customers. He did many oils right on the spot as the emotion moved him. He must have reacted to the need to record the chaos around him," as Alfredo Roces puts it in his monograph *Amorsolo*.

However, Amorsolo remained adamant and strived to steer towards his own artistic endeavors of periodically going outside to paint the majestic sunlight of his motherland. This he had done amid a violent period in our country's history. (Amorsolo and his family were not exempted from succumbing to the pits of financial throes. He had lost his post as Director of the UP School of Fine Arts, which had closed down due to the university being transformed into a Japanese garrison.)

Amorsolo's *Sunset in Manila Bay* exemplifies this unswerving pursuit. Painted in 1943, the height of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, the work is noticeably painted en *plein air*, as evidenced by Amorsolo's quick, loose brushstrokes and thick impastos, which shows Amorsolo's creative exhilaration as he strived to capture the majestic transience of Manila's famed sunset and its final outburst of light before dusk settles in.

Amorsolo says in an interview published in Neal Cruz's 1960 article on *The Insurance Line* titled "Sketches and the Man": "Light changes very rapidly, and you have to be fast in order to catch the mood with which you started out. This is particularly true with sunsets. A sunset sky will turn from red to orange to yellow in a matter of minutes." Amorsolo would add that he limited himself to "fifteen minutes...when painting a sunset scene."

The composition is spontaneous and fresh, with bold strokes showing a preference for the continuous search for a refreshing activity amid the intensifying trauma of the ongoing war. *Sunset at Manila Bay* exhibits a master in dynamic action, translating his veritable impressions of the moment and painting as a balsam for the wounded soul. Perhaps, like the brevity of sunlight and the imminence of another dawn comes Amorsolo's enshrouded hopes to see his motherland be set free from foreign oppressors—an intense yearning struggling to free itself, at least onto the master's canvas. (*Adrian Maranan*)



125

## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Fire Tree*

signed and dated 1945 (lower right)

oil on canvas board

9" x 11" (23 cm x 30 cm)

**P 1,700,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.

#### PROVENANCE

Private Collection, France

Amorsolo, an esteemed patriarch of Philippine painting, presents a tableau of pastoral grace in this canvas. A virtuoso of light, Amorsolo's deft chiaroscuro breathes life into the Philippine landscape, a technique reminiscent of, and inspired by, the great Joaquin Sorolla. The composition is anchored by a majestic, fire tree, its vivacious orange and red blossoms offering a visual symphony that contrasts with the lush greens of the surrounding foliage.

Here, the brilliance of the Philippine sun is not just seen but felt, as it caresses each leaf and bloom of the fire tree, which stands as a sentinel over the scene. Beneath its canopy, the rhythms of rural life unfold near a stone church. Each stroke

of Amorsolo's brush is a testament to his classical finesse and romantic sensibilities, a dance of light that narrates a visual symphony of daily life.

Amorsolo's work is rich in the hues of Philippine identity and culture. The everyday activities of the country folk, depicted with such elegance and are elevated to poetry. They are a part of the nation's treasures that continue to shape the Filipino perception of heritage and collective identity, making Amorsolo's legacy as enduring as the land he so loved to paint. His work remains highly sought after by connoisseurs and art aficionados alike, and remains a testament to his prowess in the Filipino art world. (*Ysabella Vistan*)

**Benedicto Cabrera** (b. 1942)*Mother and Child*

signed and dated 1996 (lower right)

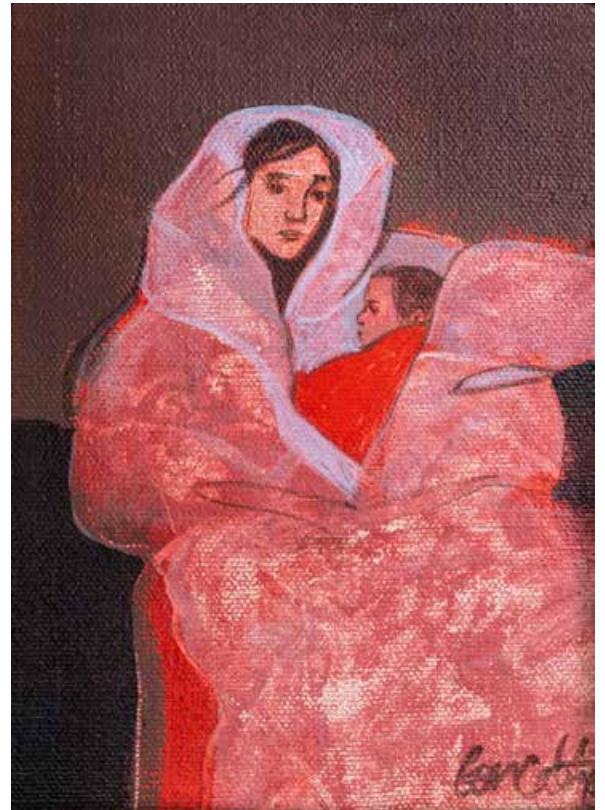
acrylic on canvas

7" x 5" (18 cm x 13 cm)

**P 300,000**

In a 1978 interview with Cid Reyes, National Artist Benedicto Cabrera identified two influences in his artwork: the harsh quality of Spanish painter Francisco Goya's paintings and, for the lot at hand, the German artist Käthe Kollwitz and her work involving the Mother and Child theme.

"I was naturally drawn to her work," said Bencab. "Compared to Goya's work, Kollwitz's art is much more tender and sad." This touch of tenderness is seen in his own rendition of the Mother and Child. In a Bencab-typical painting, the woman is draped in an exorbitant amount of fabric, a study of textiles. Her child is swaddled to her chest, wrapped in the same cloth the woman has around herself. The monochromatic orange used emphasizes the warmth of the scene and the austere atmosphere emphasizes rather than diminishes Bencab's dexterity. (*Hannah Valiente*)



127

**Bernardo Pacquing** (b. 1967)*Untitled*

signed and dated 1999 (lower left)

mixed media on board

21" x 15" (53 cm x 38 cm)

**P 100,000**

Bernard Pacquing's distinctive visual language presents itself through a gradual and intricate process of labyrinthine gestures, akin to the meticulous construction and grafting of an artistic landscape. Remaining committed to pushing the boundaries of artistic expression, Pacquing persistently explores his craft by incorporating an array of diversified found objects. In doing so, he purposefully challenges and disrupts conventional approaches to aesthetic delineation, form, and value.

Pacquing's oeuvre extends beyond the canvas, symbolizing a dialogue between the artist and the evolving language of abstraction. Each piece is a deliberate exploration of the symbiotic relationship between artistic intention and the inherent qualities of the materials he employs. In this way, Bernardo Pacquing stands as a trailblazer, reshaping the landscape of contemporary abstraction with his innovative techniques and profound engagement with the expressive potential of found objects.







128

**Jigger Cruz** (b. 1984)

*Untitled*

signed and dated 2023 (lower left)

oil on canvas

44" x 31 1/2" (112 cm x 80 cm)

**P 1,800,000**



Jigger Cruz stands as a prominent Filipino artist, celebrated globally for his immersive and sensory-rich artworks. Employing innovative methods like impasto, cutting, burning, and paint spraying onto both canvas and frames, Cruz's paintings delve into the intrinsic material aspects of the artistic medium. In this work Cruz seemingly explores the definition and limitations of the medium of painting through an arguably contemporary and guided process. Through his

aforementioned use of technique, Cruz forces the audience to see globs of paint as parts of a unified whole. A concept that is not too far removed from what traditional painting is, but something that is arguably contemporary at its core. Simultaneously, his subject matter spans a spectrum from the weight of historical narratives to religious themes, effectively engaging with social and political issues prevalent in contemporary Philippines. (*Jed Daya*)

**Alfonso Ossorio** (1916 - 1990)#12 '67 ("*Arimula*")

1967

signed (lower right), dated and dedicated "For Fernando Zobel" (verso)

mixed media

25" x 13" (64 cm x 33 cm)

**P 2,200,000**

## PROVENANCE

A gift from the artist to Fernando Zobel

## EXHIBITED

Cordier &amp; Ekstrom, 978 Madison Avenue, New York, March 1967

## Ossorio to Zobel : A Gift Exchanged Between Patrician Artists

For Ossorio, the choice of the word "congregations" had religious resonance, his wild, weird and wonderful aggrupations were intended to be like a flock of the faithful, bound together in a single act of worship. In many ways, they were the sum total of his experiences as an artist, dating from his early years exploring primitive art at Harvard, his exposure to Celtic iconography, to the Filipino folk references in his St. Joseph the Worker murals, and to the experimentalist perspectives of Abstract Expressionism; even to his interactions with the mosaic tables create by Lee Krasner, Pollock's widow, would figure into these works. For him, "congregations" were the three-dimensional progression of his earlier works. "There was no way of stirring things up enough by doing it with traditional means," exclaimed Ossorio to one interviewer.

This series returned Ossorio to his surrealist roots (although Ossorio would refuse to be pigeonholed by that term), utilizing a variety of are objects (versus "found"). 12'67 (*Arimula*) his "Congregations" in full bloom as the works he showed in 1961, when he participated in the Museum of Modern Art's exhibit, "The Art of Assemblage."

His other term for these obsessive treatments were "horror vacui" (the fear of empty spaces), filling like his good friend Pollock the "canvases" end to end, tampering with traditional vanishing points, breaking all the rules, and building them up again. He sought new materials and new effects. It was to become the style Ossorio for which would be best known (at least to a new generation of critics and collectors.

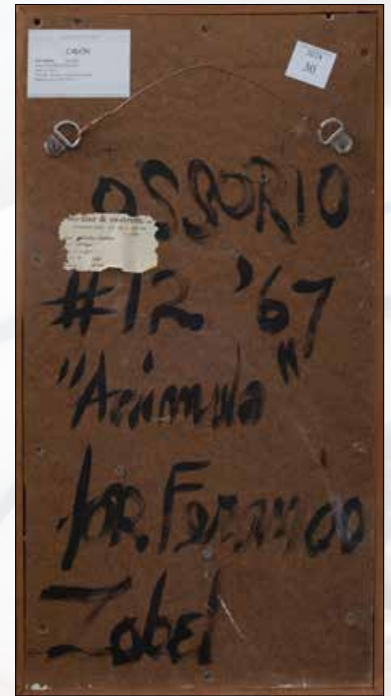
Ossorio was born in Manila, on August 2, 1916, to a background as patrician as that of Fernando Zobel y Montojo, if not more so — if that were at all possible. Ossorio would be shipped off to various English boarding schools, before going to the United States, where his father had taken up permanent residence. He would be enrolled in the exclusive

Portsmouth Priory, a Benedictine abbey, on Rhode Island. (Ossorio's graduation from there would be mentioned in the same breath in the society pages alongside a lunch tendered by Mr and Mrs W.H. Vanderbilt on their yacht.)

In 1934, Alfonso entered the hallowed halls of Harvard University, emerging in 1938. He would take up residence a few years later in a ranch in New Mexico. There he would meet the gallerist Betty Parsons, also vacationing in the desert sands, a divorcee whose family had lost their fortune and is said to have hocked her engagement ring to bankroll her artistic career. Parsons would invite Ossorio to join her roster of artists, which eventually included Mark Rothko, Robert Rauschenberg, as well as the then-equally unknown Jackson Pollock, who would become a great friend and ally in the Abstract Expressionist movement.

It would not at all be surprising that the paths of these worldly, artistic scions would cross. 12'67 *Arimula* (following Pollock's penchant for coded numbers) would be testament to common horizons. Interestingly, there is a handle of a blackened silver spoon in this particular assemblage, possible a witty jibe at his fellow aristocrat for which this work was handpicked as a gift.

Wrote the New York Times reviewing this very show where the work at hand appeared at Cordier & Ekstrom in 1967. "You would hardly think that Mr. Ossorio could have found the time, since his last show, to stick together the thousands of glass eyes, beads, mirrors, animal horns, shells and unidentifiable objects that make up his spectacular assemblages. But here is another big show in his devilishly gaudy manner. He seems more than ever to be creating decorations and votive objects for an expensive and high-spirited pagan ritual — to be performed, of course, in the best company." (*Lisa Guerrero Nakpil*)





*"Votive objects for an expensive and high-spirited pagan ritual  
— to be performed, of course, in the best company."  
—JOHN CANADAY, THE NEW YORK TIMES,  
MARCH 11, 1967*

# Fernando Zóbel's Beloved River *Júcar*

## In Honor of His 100th Birth Anniversary



Fernando Zóbel in Cuenca, 1978. Photography by Luis Perez-Minguez

*"[Cuenca] would become the city dearest to him, the one we most closely identify with him; the place where he would be buried. The first of two series painted at that time and which he began in 1971 is titled El Júcar, for the river that so enthralled him...He strove to understand himself as a painter of waterscapes and relied on the mechanisms of memory to figure out what would lead him to devote an entire series of paintings to the Júcar in its flow through Cuenca. In fact, it was the Júcar itself and its shades of green, so incredible on their own, that governed Zóbel's movements: the way he wandered so close to the water, looked at himself in its surface as if in a mirror, the way he expressed the sweetness of light among the trees."*

—JUAN MANUEL BONET, WRITING ABOUT ZÓBEL'S ENCHANTMENT WITH THE JÚCAR RIVER, IN HIS ESSAY "FERNANDO ZÓBEL, REVISITED" (ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY SOFIA M. STARNES)

As we fervidly anticipate the 100th birth anniversary of Fernando Zóbel this August 27, 2024, a captivating work from his highly acclaimed, widely celebrated, and lyrically spiritual *Serie Blanca* takes centerstage.

The 1970s are considered the pinnacle of Zóbel's artistry and career. During that prolific decade, he produced his most contemplative, spiritually charged series, with *El Júcar* and *La Vista* initially setting the introspective tone of Zóbel's 1970s.

In 1975, Zóbel began to produce a body of work that would eventually become the zenith of his artistic career: the *Serie Blanca*. His biographer, Angeles Villalba Salvador, writes in her chronology of the eminent artist: "After twelve years spent studying color, in the final pictures of *La Vista*, Zóbel's painting becomes predominantly white. He thus commences the series, *Serie Blanca*, which he will continue until 1978."

Villalba Salvador would describe the *Serie Blanca* as "characterized by infinitely degraded whites, which distribute spaces and volumes and seem to lose themselves on the edges of the canvas. Whites approaching blues, greys and greyish browns fuse with the virgin whiteness of the canvas or paper in such a way that the whole thing becomes the background. With *Serie Blanca*, the thematic aspect is broadened: light, volume, form, gesture, anatomies, still lifes, and, of course, themes from the history of art."

Zóbel would debut his *Serie Blanca* works in a November 1978 exhibition titled "*La Serie Blanca: Pintura 1975 – 1978*" at Madrid's Galería Theo. A mere seven months before this exhibition, on April 23, 1978, Zóbel would paint the work at hand, titled *El Río V*, in Cuenca, Spain.

*El Río V* comes from an offshoot series of the *Serie Blanca* titled "*El Río*." Spanish art and literary critic Juan Manuel Bonet writes in his essay "*Fernando Zóbel*,



Fernando Zóbel painting in his Madrid Studio, 1978 Photography by Luis Pérez Mínguez

*"I have often worked with issues of color, but always in the abstract. Actually, the starting point is the extremely unusual Júcar River as it flows through Cuenca, where it displays an array of colors the likes of which I have not seen elsewhere."*

—FERNANDO ZÓBEL, INTERVIEW IN 'EL PAIS,' MARCH 3, 1982

*Revisited*" that "*El Río*" is "a subsequent series... which Zóbel had actually begun in 1976, unfold[ing] on the verge of total whiteness."

The *El Río* series is again inspired by the Júcar, the enthralling river flowing right through the heart of Zóbel's beloved hometown of Cuenca. It can be remembered that Zóbel settled in Cuenca in July 1963, where he would envision the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español (formed from his extensive collection of Spanish abstract paintings, which he started collecting in 1958) and in the following years, the artist would find himself reveling in wonder and awe with the city. Zóbel would prodigiously paint landscapes centering on Cuenca. This city would also fill his notebooks, pictures, and writings, as Villalba Salvador puts it.

One of the windows of Zóbel's Cuenca apartment-cum-studio overlooks the mouth of the Júcar, whose sinuous flows had so enthralled the artist that he dedicated

three entire series (including the *Las Orillas* of the 1980s) immortalizing its meandering magnificence.

Furthermore, Zóbel's favorite restaurant in Cuenca, the Recreo Peral, also fronts the Júcar. Bonet reminisces in writing: "There, on more than one occasion, I observed the joy that filled Zóbel and radiated from him. He strove to understand himself as a painter of waterscapes and relied on the mechanisms of memory to figure out what would lead him to devote an entire series of paintings to the Júcar in its flow through Cuenca."

We see in the work at hand, *El Río V*, Zóbel's perennial homage to Cuenca and the enthralling River Júcar that flows right through the city's heart. Bathed in swathes of whites, the canvas is penetrated by varying gradations ranging from blacks, greys, and washed-out browns that are situated within an orderly yet dynamic linear configuration. This likely evokes the banks of the Júcar and the ebb and flow that eternally caresses them, as if



The Artist's Studio in Cuenca in the 1970s, where he painted *El Río V*

*"[La Serie Blanca] is not a matter of abandoning color to paint in black and white but of gradually reducing color until all that remains is warm greys and cold greys."*

— FERNANDO ZÓBEL, IN RAFAEL PEREZ-MADERO'S 'LA SERIE BLANCA,' 1978

leaving every memory of those who marvel at the river's sight.

Devoid of the vividness of color, Zóbel exalts memory as an integral part of his artistic praxis, one that uses the contemplative mind and the introspective soul in remembering and rendering images of lyrical magnificence that left the artist in sublime ecstasy. With the seemingly endless whites and a delicate interplay between color and value that gives much prominence to the power of contemplation, we come face to face with an image of dazzling luminosity. The pictorial composition metamorphoses into a reflective space.

*El Río V* sees Zóbel wallowing in an unfaltering spirituality that the Júcar had seemingly become his own religion and perpetual succor. This would highly manifest itself toward the end of his earthly life when he saturated

his canvases with more ethereally poetic images of the Júcar and Cuenca, his beloved muses.

As per his last will, Zóbel was laid to rest in 1984 at the San Isidro Cemetery in Cuenca's highest part, overlooking the Júcar. Even in the afterlife, Zóbel remained as one with the Júcar, delighting in sustained thought on the river that gave him and his art so much life and spirituality.

As long as the Júcar and its dazzling flow remain, Zóbel's memory remains in perpetuity.

Much like the enigmatic river that so penetrated him and was forever adored in the hallowed tabernacle of his psyche, we honor his memory on his birth centennial for his contributions to the flowering and flourishing of Philippine abstract art. (*Adrian Maranan*)



130

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**Fernando Zóbel** (1924 - 1984)

*El Río V*

signed (lower left and verso), dated 1978, and inscribed "El Río,  
78-28" (verso)

oil on canvas

40" x 40" (102 cm x 102 cm)

**P 8,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Galería Theo, Madrid

LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022. Listed as nº "78-28" with painting description on page 574.

**Jose Joya** (1931 - 1995)*Untitled*

signed and dated 1959 (lower left)

oil on canvas

17 3/4" x 24 1/2" (45 cm x 62 cm)

**P 5,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Alexander Richard Joya Baldovino confirming the authenticity of this lot

## PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila



Jose Joya

This untitled 1959 work comes from the same prolific year as the iconic *Space Transfiguration*, Joya's beloved favorite and award-winning piece (it won second prize at the 1959 AAP Annual). The work at hand captures the same dynamic bravado of *Space Transfiguration's* brush strokes. Here, we see Joya fully embracing his abstract expressionist identity rooted in his oriental sensibilities.

The 1950s are considered formative years for Jose Joya's burgeoning artistry. In the early years of the decade, Joya graduated *magna cum laude* at the University of the Philippine School of Fine Arts, becoming the first student to achieve such distinction.

In 1954, he traveled to Europe armed with a scholarship at Madrid's Instituto Cultura Hispanica, where he only stayed for nine months. Afterward, Joya embarked on an artistic field trip, visiting museums in France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and England. His creative senses would be reawakened upon seeing the works of the great European masters. "You can just imagine the tremendous impact of all these works of art on someone like me who came from the other side of the globe," Joya said in a 1973 interview with Cid Reyes and published in the latter's *Conversations on Philippine Art*.

Joya was granted a Smith-Mundt-Fulbright scholarship grant to study his master's in fine arts at Michigan's Cranbrook Academy of Art. There, Joya encountered, for the first time, the dynamic impulse and vigorous strength of the Abstract Expressionist visual language that had been raging in the American art world, espoused by the likes of Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, Rothko, and Motherwell.

"In America, I got exposed to the New York School of Painting," Joya said to Cid Reyes in a September 1973 interview published in the latter's *Conversations on Philippine Art*. "From the American abstractionists, I learned spontaneity and energy, the dynamic approach to abstraction."

During his Cranbrook period, Joya produced his first abstract expressionist work, titled *Poetry in Color*, which Leonidas Benesa describes in the book *Joya: Drawings* as a work filled with "an explosion in color" and a "natural result of his experiences and experiments with gesture drawing, which fill[ed] up several sketch pads and sketchbooks."

It is the same creative brash that can be seen in the work at hand. Characterized by a kinetic impulse so dynamic in technique, this particular piece stands as a singular testament to Joya's virtuoso that gives prominence to the unbridled gush of emotions rather than the rigidity of academicism to which he had previously been attuned to while in college.

It can be remembered that during his Cranbrook years, Joya discovered how a single twig soaked in ink and then calligraphed on paper can result in a gush of expressiveness rooted in harmony with nature. Like the old Chinese masters, this "liberated his imagination," as Benesa puts it. Joya's Oriental sensibilities—a sublime oneness with nature that pays reverence not only to its physical, realistic form but, moreover, its elements that come into play and the metaphysical energies that are dynamically captured in a single bravura of a calligraphic stroke—is perhaps his most important legacy to Philippine art, captured in this microcosm of his great art that is this 1959 piece. (*Adrian Maranan*)



Joya's Abstract  
Expressionist Bravura  
From the same year as *Space Transfiguration*



**Angelito Antonio** (b. 1939)*Market Scene*

signed and dated 1979 (lower left)

oil on canvas

36" x 60" (91 cm x 152 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

## PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

"Filipino in context, color, and flavor" is perhaps the best descriptor for the art of Angelito Antonio. His predisposition for the folk genre, a penchant he shares with fellow artist and wife Norma Belleza, is evident throughout his oeuvre – brown-skinned figures dominate his canvases, either cockfighters, vendors, or a family unit. His unique and intense use of color made Antonio's work stand out with his masterful use of tension elevating his pieces even further.

With this lot in hand, the charms of Angelito's art are on full display. Using a deep and saturated color scheme, with his characteristic luminous yellow shade the primary color used. Figures crowd at the corners – women gather together gossiping while others sweep the floor or pound the rice or do their chores. Several Filipino iconographies are seen throughout the canvas: a nipa hut, a durian, a banana, a wooden mat. With an oeuvre teeming with a love for his home country, Antonio is regarded as one of the pillars of modern Philippine art, crafting for himself a distinct aesthetic that draws in collectors and connoisseurs alike. *(Hannah Valiente)*







# Gov-General Narciso Clavería y Saldúa

Conqueror of Balanguingui, Sulu

by JORGE MOJARRO



Clavería is mainly known in Philippine history for having been the governor who imposed by decree in November 1849 the obligation of Filipinos to bear surnames. To this end, he published a *Catálogo Alfabético de Apellidos* [alphabetical catalog of surnames] for the subjects to choose from. Most of the surnames were Spanish, but the catalog also included Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano

and Hiligaynon words. Clavería is also the name of a coastal town in Cagayan. Less known today, however, is his role in the fight against Moorish piracy, which had been harassing the Christian peoples of Mindanao and Bisayas for two centuries.

It must be said of this governor that he was one of the last examples of men of arms and letters in the Spanish army; that is to say, military men who combined knowledge of the art of

war and bravery with a love of literature, history and erudition. Narciso Clavería y Saldúa, Count of Manila, was born in Gerona in 1795 into a military family. His military career was meteoric, as he was already a lieutenant at the age of 16. He took part in numerous warlike engagements in Spain during the 1820's. He also had to go into exile on two occasions due to his political preferences.

In 1844 he was appointed governor and captain general of the Philippine Islands, and arrived in the Philippines on July 13 of the same year. After visiting several islands in order to know the reality of the archipelago, he decided to launch a military expedition against the island of Balanguingui, in the Sulu archipelago, because it was a nest of pirates that infested the seas of the southern Philippines.

The expedition against Balanguingui had some precedents: in January 1845 the Sultan of Sulu and some local datus agreed on the full Spanish sovereignty of the archipelago. In addition, to avoid foreign infiltrations - the French had tried to buy Basilan - Clavería ordered in 1846 the construction of the Pasanhan fort in Basilan. This fort created some discontent among the local chiefs. Clavería, in response, to curry favor, authorized the construction



ABOVE: The warriors and ruler of Balanguingui, by Jose Lozano

of a mosque in Basilan. However, there were pirates in Sulu, outside the datus and the sultan, who continued to defy Spanish sovereignty and used Balanguingui as a base for their pillaging activities. In response, Clavería ordered an expedition with 19 warships under the command of Captain José Ruiz de Apodaca, which was reinforced with troops in Dapitan and Zamboanga.

First, taking advantage of the low tide, they approached to take the fort of Balanguingui, which was being bombarded from the sea. In this first scuffle, twenty-five pirates and seven soldiers died on the Spanish-Filipino side. The capture of the fort of Sipac was more difficult, as the pirates defended themselves by discharging their rifles. The resistance caused the death of many civilians. On the Spanish-Filipino side, sixteen soldiers died, among them a Spanish captain; on the Moorish side, three hundred forty corpses were counted. The third fort was taken by surprise, so there was no fighting, as the pirates decided to flee on foot. In retaliation, the Spanish-Filipino forces cut down seven thousand coconut trees, burned the seven villages and dismantled the forts.

Finally, on February 25, the troops, together with the wounded, prisoners and freed captives, departed victorious from Balanguingui for the port of Zamboanga. The victory was celebrated with festivities in both Zamboanga and Manila.

Clavería was awarded the Laureate Cross of San Fernando and was named Count of Manila and Viscount of Clavería by Queen Isabel II. Since piracy activity affected not only the Philippines, but also the Dutch East Indies, the Dutch governor congratulated Clavería by letter for his success. Trade in the area could be reestablished after another expedition to Sulu led by General Urbiztondo -Clavería's successor- for some years and piracy as an activity ceased due to the fear of being devastated again.

In the opinion of historian José Montero y Vidal, "the need for the expedition cannot be argued, because the insolence of the pirates had terrorized the towns of Bisayas and had interrupted trade between those ports. Given the importance of the forts surrendered, the means of defense available to their defenders and the very few forces available to the commanding general (500 men), it is unquestionable that as a military triumph no one can dispute its merit".

Many of the pieces taken from the Muslim pirates, among them two cannons, were taken to the Artillery Museum in Madrid. Clavería returned to Spain to serve as senator for life, but died in June 1851 due to an illness he contracted during his stay in the Philippines

# Long-Lost Lozano Portraits of Empire

## *Rare and Important Tipos del Pais of Muslim Filipinos*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



Attack on the Pirates on Island Fort of Balanguigui, Sulu  
*Desembarco Del Ejercito Español En Balanguigui (Filipinas) En 1847 Liderado Por Claveria*

The scholar Ramon N. Villegas would write the following about José Honorato Lozano y Asuncion: "Born in Manila, Lozano may have been trained by Chinese painters or Filipino painters skilled in Chinese painting techniques. But from his works, it is obvious that Lozano may have also trained with Domingo, or someone who studied at his academy. Lozano's common folk are quite similar in perspective, lighting and over-all treatment to Domingo's, as well as other contemporaries.

"The Spanish government commissioned Lozano to depict episodes from the history of the colony to be displayed during a fiesta in the district of Santa Cruz, Manila in 1848.

"In 1859, the writer Rafael Diaz Arenas, mentioned that Lozano was "a watercolorist without rival". Lozano painted in the costumbrismo tradition, (that is, the literary or pictorial interpretation of local everyday life, mannerisms, and customs, primarily on the Hispanic scene, and particularly in the 19th century); thus, supplying the demand from foreign visitors for souvenirs of Manila. He also painted in oil."

This highly important artwork depicting costumes of the Muslim Inhabitants and the layout of pirate fortifications from a long forgotten battle between the mighty Spanish Armada and the pirates in Balanguigui, Sulu dates from 1848.

The portraits, which would be a kind of "Tipos del Pais" are extremely rare depictions of Filipino Muslims. All the other 'Costumbrista' paintings would record only the men and women of Manila, at best Northern Luzon. Four of these Claveria paintings are of warriors: four more are couples of high standing— datus and their wives —and there is one female, dressed in an expensive indigo garment; for a total of nine finely-wrought images.

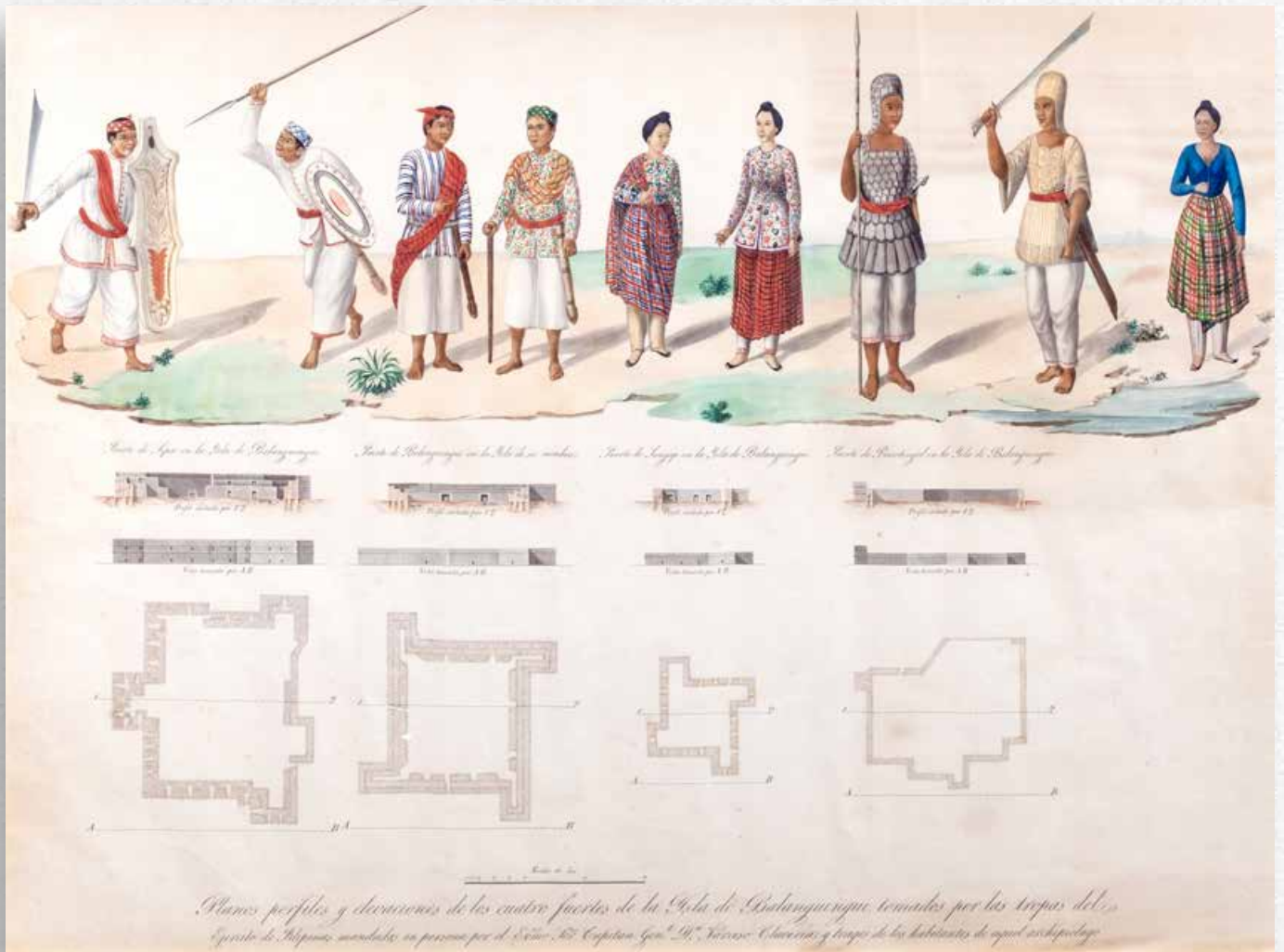
The first fighter brandishes a long sword known as a 'kampilan' along with a shield called the 'kalasag'; while the second is poised to strike with a shield and a shorter sword. Shields of this size were often used as weapons as well. Even more impressive — and unique — is the depiction of a Muslim warrior in armor with chain mail, or the 'kurab-a-kulang', worn with a metal helmet and headdress of links. The armor is entirely unique to the Mindanao tribes. Examples of these in brass and carabao horn are to be found at the National Museum of Anthropology in Madrid, most probably acquired as war booty.

The other figures are men and women of the ruling class; the men carry sheathed swords or clubs, hanging from their belts; one carries a long staff, which in Luzon would be known as a "baston de mando", or "cane of command". They wear kerchiefs and are richly adorned in patterned silks. Curiously, only the women are shod in black slippers; while the men are barefoot.

No doubt these paintings would have caused a sensation in Manila at their unveiling, offering a look at never-before-scene tribes from Mindanao.

Four carefully drawn plans of the forts that were captured by the Spanish forces are also depicted, as further proof of the hard-won achievements of the Governor-General.

This Balanguigui painting by Lozano were originally thought to have been lost to time since it was last seen in public display in Manila in 1848. As it turned out, Governor General Claveria brought the artworks with him back to Spain when his term ended in 1849 as part of his personal collection. He died two years later in 1851 and the Lozano artworks were forgotten and thought to have been lost forever until it resurfaced in 2015 when the private estate of Gov. Gen. Claveria was auctioned off by his descendants in Madrid, Spain.



133

**Jose Honorato Lozano** (1821 - 1885)

*People and Forts of Balanguigui, Sulu Archipelago*

ca. 1847 - 1848

gouache / watercolor on paper

21" x 29" (53 cm x 74 cm)

"Planos perfiles y elevaciones de los Cuatro Fuertes de la Ysla de Balanguigui tomados por las tropas del Ejército de Filipinas mandadas en persona por el Excmo. Sr. Capitan General Don Narciso Claveria y trajes de los habitantes de aquel archipelago" ("Plans in profiles and elevations of the Four Forts of Balanguigui Island taken by the troops of the Army in the Philippines commanded personally by the His Excellency Captain-General Don Narciso Claveria and the costumes of the inhabitants of that archipelago)" dated 1847

**P 3,800,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Commissioned by Governor-General Narciso Clavería y Saldúa directly from the artist.

**EXHIBITED**

In a renowned exhibition to commemorate the Balanguigui Victory, Manila, 1848.



134

**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)

*Flower Vendor*

signed (lower left)

ca. 1975

oil on canvas

33" x 28 1/2" (84 cm x 72 cm)

**P 600,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

Oscar Zalameda's distinct cubist works and inclinations for the folk genre made him one of the most recognizable and sought-after modern Filipino artists. Leaving the country in 1953 to study in San Francisco, Zalameda later continued his education at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts and the Sorbonne in Paris. This odyssey left him with an oeuvre that boasts of European flair. Despite that inclination, however, Filipino themes continue to grace his magnificent canvases.

Throughout his career, Zalameda has created multiple depictions of flower vendors. Usually comprised of women with flowers either at hand or in pots, Zalameda's vendors are an interesting outlook into the beauty of the Philippines through the lives of everyday people. With the lot at hand, his delineated shapes and muted jewel tones depict the titular flower vendor in his unmistakable cubist style. Her posture is relaxed, and the easiness with which she carries the bundle of flowers suggests this to be a common occurrence for her. Perhaps she is in the middle of doing her work of rearranging the flowers or maybe she is gathering the flowers bought by a customer. In any way, Zalameda's elegant and contrasting colors combined with his introspective folk scenery opens its doors wide for its viewers to take a closer look and contemplate its possible meaning. *(Hannah Valiente)*





135

**Norma Belleza** (b. 1939)

*Gold Fish Vendor*

signed and dated 1986 (upper left)

oil on canvas

30" x 42" (76 cm x 107 cm)

**P 300,000**

PROVENANCE  
Kulay Diwa

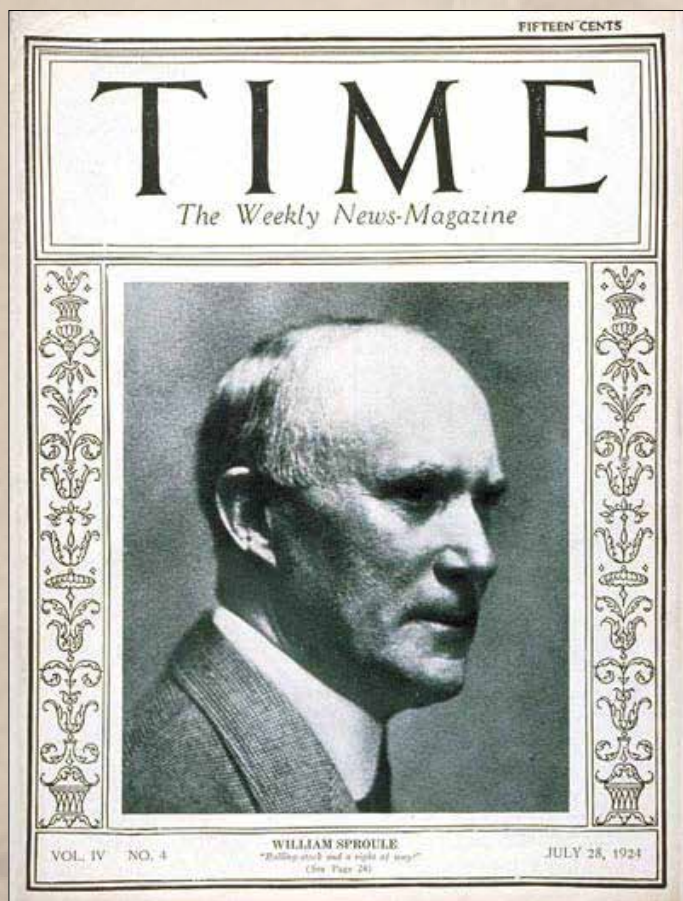
If they are lucky, one might be able to see a peculiar sight in the streets of the Philippines: dozens of plastic bags half-filled with water and tied with enough air within. Get a little closer and you will see an even odder sight: a fish, alive and swimming within the enclosed plastic bag.

Norma Belleza's *Gold Fish Vendor* puts her own vivid twist to this scene. Known for her folk genre proclivities, Belleza's works have evolved from her early dark pieces into brighter,

more vibrant paintings. In this piece, a man bends down to cradle a plastic bag with a goldfish inside, with several other bags of fish around him. Belleza's lively childhood offers an enduring influence on her work. "I was a frequenter of the market," says Belleza in a 1987 interview with Cid Reyes. "Whenever I was there, I would catch sight and carefully observe the goods sold by market vendors, such as vegetables and fish." The vivacious atmosphere translates into Belleza's short distinct brushstrokes and a compelling color scheme, adding an unmistakable native flair that elevates the piece. Her compelling sense of color, her brilliant sense of composition, and her maximalist perspective emphasize the Filipino resiliency that Belleza consistently finds herself drawn to. *(Hannah Valiente)*

# The Railway Tycoon and Resurrección Hidalgo

## *William Sproule : Banker, Industrialist, Patriotic Public Servant and Patron of the Arts*



© <https://content.time.com/> William Sproule, July 28, 1924  
TIME Magazine Weekly Cover

Noted the New York Times on the prominent railway man William Sproule, former head of the Southern Pacific Railway Company on January 2, 1935 : “Mr. Sproule was born in County Mayo, Ireland in 1855. He was graduated from the University of Dublin. Late in life, he married Mrs. Mary Louise Baird-Baldwin, the mother of two children, but was himself childless.

“In training, experience and traditions, Mr. Sproule was characteristically Western. Except for five years in New York, virtually all of his life out of college was spent on the Pacific Coast. He was closely associated with the extension of the great railroad system by which he was first employed as freight clerk in

1882. He was the first administrative head of a great trunk system to maintain headquarters in the Far West; and retired from the presidency of the Southern Pacific Railway in 1928.

“Although most of his active years were associated with railroad building and operations, he was connected with a number of oil and industrial concerns. He was made president of Southern Pacific, after serving a year as head of the Wells, Fargo Express Company.

### Rose Steadily From The Ranks

The news report continued, “Starting with the Southern Pacific as a clerk in the freight department at San Francisco in 1882, he rose within 5 years to the position of assistant general freight agent. After ten years he was made general traffic manager, in which capacity he served until 1906, when he severed connection with Southern Pacific to become associated with the American Smelting and Refining Company as traffic manager, director and member of the executive committee.

“In 1910, he took the presidency of Wells, Fargo Company, resigning the next year to become a director and president of the Southern Pacific Company.

“In the early days of the World War, when the government was calling the best transportation brains of the nation to its assistance, he was appointed chairman of the western department of the Railroad War Board.

“He served in many public capacities and was a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of the Twelfth Reserve District, a member of the San Francisco Commission, supporter of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, a substantial patron of the arts, and a former president of the Bohemian Club, San Francisco.

“He was a talented public speaker and on the occasions when he broke his reserve to talk in public, commanded attention on business and economic topics.

“He was reticent to an unusual degree, however, even declining to make known his age.”



# Resurrección Hidalgo and His Adventures of the Sea



136

**Félix Resurrección Hidalgo** (1855 - 1913)

*Barcos de la Vela (Sailboats)*

signed and dated 1908 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 37" (61 cm x 94 cm)

**P 12,000,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. William Sproule of San Francisco, United States of America.



Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo in his studio.

## About the Artist

### Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo y Padilla

by Ramon N. Villegas

*Hidalgo (1855 –1913) is acknowledged as one of the great Filipino painters of the late 19th century.*

*He earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy at the Universidad de Sto. Tomas in Manila, and intended to go on to law. Instead, he continued with courses at the Escuela de Dibujo y Pintura, where he excelled. In 1876, his lyrical *La Banca* (The Boat) and other paintings, were sent with other Filipino art works to the American Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia (where Simon Flores' *La Orquesta* (The Orchestra) was awarded a silver medal.) In 1877, the Ayuntamiento of Manila sent him on an art scholarship to Spain. He stayed in Europe for most of the rest of his life.*

*Hidalgo won the silver medal while Juan Luna won the gold medal in the 1884 Madrid Exposition of Fine Arts. Members of the Philippine reform movement in Europe celebrated the double-win at a banquet where Rizal toasted the two painters' good health and cited their win as evidence that Filipinos and Spaniards were equals.*

*The two painters's awards in a way symbolize their painting styles. Luna was bright and bold; Hidalgo was more shaded and delicate. Like Luna, he eventually painted en pleine aire, or out in the open, out of the studio. While Luna painted sunlit landscapes, Hidalgo preferred moonlit scenes and marinescapes.*

*In 1912, he visited Manila for six months. His mother, who had not seen him for 30 years, wanted him to be with her in her last days but he decided to return to Europe. The following year, Hidalgo died in Barcelona.*

For Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, scion of the landed Padilla family, life was a delicate balance between the demands of his mercantilist grandfather and mother and his own desire for gentler pursuits. Rizal correctly described the stark contrasts between Juan Luna and Resurreccion Hidalgo: If Luna was the sun, Hidalgo was the moon, with all the mystery and yes, even uncertainty that conveyed.

He may as well have also described the vital earthiness of life in Manila versus the atmospheric days of Hidalgo's life in Paris.

Hidalgo would paint ethereal beauties in fields of flowers, women in gardens and glades but he would be best known for his portraits of the rivers and seas. (Not all were so serene as his Philippine scene *La Banca*: There is for instance his famous *La Barca de Aqueron*, depicting the boatman of Hades.)

Water, however, would best convey not only Hidalgo's character — introverted, understated and gentle — but also the distances of escape that the ocean presented from Manila and his responsibilities. It would be a parable of the unfettered life and adventures in art.

Remarkably, there are photographs of two paintings titled "*Barcos de la Vela* (Sailboats)" that exist in the Collection of Alfonso T. Ongpin, both painted at the same time in 1908 as the work at hand.

*Barcos de la Vela* is a vista of boats skimming the waters, illuminated by a glorious sunrise outlined in heavy impasto. The sailboats glide on the sea towards a happy future. (Lisa Guerrero Nakpil)



ABOVE: The *Barcos de la Vela* series by Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, photographs by Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, now in the Collection of Alfonso R. Ongpin.



137

**Justin Nuyda** (1944 - 2022)

*Search 7515*

signed and dated 1975 (lower left and verso)  
oil on canvas  
38" x 25" (97 cm x 64 cm)

**P 800,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by the heirs of the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

There is something so intensely poetic about the landscape of abstractionist Justin Nuyda. An avid lepidopterist, Nuyda has spent his childhood and beyond exploring the Philippine forest with his father and uncles who had passed down their interest to the impressionable Nuyda. They would climb mountains, chasing down butterflies to study and collect. On the way, Nuyda would encounter the majestic beauty of the skyline from a higher altitude and the beautiful colors on a butterfly's wings.

"In art, there are unusual colors that just can't go with each other but they exist in a butterfly," says Nuyda as written by Jay Bautista in the 2017 Vision Petron FOLIO. "For example black and yellow. With a thin line of gray you can put them together. How light to dark is. You can witness that in a butterfly, most colors exist in them already."

That unique and natural sense of color is showcased in his 1975 *Search 7515*, created three years after his Thirteen Artists Award conferment. At first glance, the colored daubs and streaks remind one of the blue skies and the brown desert as far as the eye can see. It also reminds the viewers of the blue and brown shades found in his beloved butterfly's wings.

Nuyda's works are a love letter to the nature he often finds himself conferred with. Through his abstractions, he finds an internal world in which his mindscapes could take place. "He paints a picture of the sights and captures the sounds within a mind that is not lost, but simply in search," says his website. *Search 7515* portrays a lovely sky that reflects the restless search undertaken by wanderers. (Hannah Valiente)



138 PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

## Juvenal Sansó (b. 1929)

### *The Stalwart Companion*

ca. 1960s

oil on canvas

18" x 24" (46 cm x 61 cm)

**P 900,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Fundacion Sansó confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

In 1957, Juvenal Sanso returned to the Philippines following his European sojourn. His studies brought him first to Italy then later to Paris where his academic training taught him the technical ropes for various mediums and styles.

However, his return to the Philippines revitalized a deep-seated nostalgia that eventually transformed his works. In a monograph by Alfredo Roces, Roces identified the fishing village of San Dionisio, Paranaque as a driving force for Sanso's gradual swerve to romantic surrealism.

*The Stalwart Companion* is created at the intersection of Sanso's Black Period and his romantic surrealism. Dramatically somber shadows fill the canvas and yet, a hint of romanticism tinges the piece. A view of the rolling rocky mountainside is a constant friend of the wanderlust Sanso who had spent the better part of his adult life in a constant state of travel.

"Sanso is still on the move, has made several trips around the world," writes Times Magazine. "His lovely landscapes of Brittany, Manila, and Manhattan omit the human presence, [making] nature the actor in richly detailed but desolate dramas." Indeed, *The Stalwart Companion* earns its place among Sanso's ethereal landscapes that transcend time and space. (*Hannah Valiente*)



139

**Abdulmari Imao** 1936 - 2014)

*Sarimanok Series*

signed (lower left)

acrylic on canvas

36" x 24" (91 cm x 61 cm)

**P 400,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

Imao's artistic journey is particularly notable for his incorporation of the Sarimanok, a motif that traces its origins to the story of a celestial rooster in the first of seven heavens. This motif resonates across various Southeast Asian cultures, finding parallels in the serpent naga of Malaysia, among other examples. These thematic linkages set Imao's practice apart within the Philippine art community, establishing it as something uniquely and authentically his own.

Imao's artistic expressions pulsate with life, energy, and an unwavering passion for creation. His featured work, adorned with bright, vivid, and arresting colors, captivates the observer. The palette he employs not only tickles the eyes but also commands attention, each block of color enticing the senses. What makes Imao's art truly exceptional is the delicate balance that exists among these vibrant elements—a harmonious unity that speaks to his artistic mastery.

One can appreciate how Imao seamlessly combines traditional motifs with contemporary vibrancy. His art becomes a visual symphony that transcends cultural boundaries, inviting viewers to immerse themselves in the rich narratives and shared mythologies that connect the diverse cultures of Southeast Asia. Abdulmari Imao's Sarimanok becomes not just a masterpiece but a cultural bridge that spans the collective heritage of the region. *(Jed Daya)*





140

**Eduardo Castrillo** (1942 - 2016)

*Enduring Beauty*

signed and dated 2008

brass

H: 12 1/2" (32 cm)

L: 31 1/2" (80 cm)

W: 18 1/2" (47 cm)

**P 260,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

Whether it be a life-size statue or an abstract sculpture, public monuments are so intertwined with their environment that one cannot be imagined without the other. Ermita is inconceivable without the grand monument of Bonifacio and the Katipunan Revolution near the Manila Hall; Loyola Memorial Park without Pieta feels hollowed out. These works have one thing in common: both were created by the prolific sculptor Eduardo Castrillo.

The natural heir of National Artists Guillermo Tolentino and Napoleon Abueva, Castrillo forged his own path, paying no heed to what was conventional at the time. Sculpture as a medium remained largely untouched by the modernist

movement and it was through Castrillo's innovation that energized the lagging practice. His artistic journey may have been a long one – it took Castrillo a series of unrelated jobs before he fully committed to his craft – but the end result is a satisfying one with an oeuvre that spans from monumental statues to miniature sculptures.

The lot at hand, created in 2008, was crafted during the latter part of Castrillo's career and it shows Castrillo at his maturity. A sculpture on the smaller side

(at least in comparison to his colossal public monuments), this work has a brass finish and is masterfully sculpted with sweeping edges. Years of experience bleed into this piece – there is a physicality to sculpture, a hands-on method that requires its sculptor to craft and sweat for the challenge of taming the solid medium used. Castrillo's years in his craft are evident when one observes his carefully simplified forms and his elegant yet powerful forms, a veritable proof of his ability to transform a medium as tough as brass into a refined sculpture. *(Hannah Valiente)*



## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Ang Mga Ulila*

signed and dated 1952 (lower right)

oil on canvas

20" x 16" (51 cm x 41 cm)

**P 4,000,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Spain



A photograph of the lost, perhaps earlier, iteration of "*Ang Mga Ulila*," as reproduced in Alfredo Roces' 1972 monograph *Amorsolo*. The caption of the photo reads as "Detail from *Ang Mga Ulila*. No data. From the photo collection of the artist."

In *Ang Mga Ulila*, Amorsolo reprises a subject of the same title, published in Alfredo Roces' 1975 monograph *Amorsolo*. The piece is now deemed lost, as pertinent data about its existence has yet to be recovered; only a photo of the anguish-filled composition exists, drawn from Amorsolo's photo collection of his works and reproduced in the Roces monograph.

1952's *Ang Mga Ulila* is a "one-of-a-kind work," a rare relic of that lost masterpiece.

There has indeed been no peacetime ever since the Second World War concluded, as National Artist for Literature Nick Joaquin writes in the opening spiels of the 1982 Filipino classic film *Oro, Plata, Mata*. "So vast now seems the difference between what we have become and what we were before disaster struck that, in the Philippine vernacular term, "peacetime" means exclusively all the years before December 8, 1941," writes Joaquin. "There has been no "peacetime" since then."

Tormented by the war, Fernando Amorsolo possessed a lingering trauma, which would become an unabating catharsis translated into oil and canvas. During the war, Amorsolo, then living in a house along Calle Azcarraga (now Recto Avenue) and near the Far Eastern University that became a Japanese garrison, struggled to find his way toward providing sustenance for himself and his family. The University of the Philippines had closed down due to the Japanese occupation, and Amorsolo temporarily lost his teaching and directorship jobs. He would also beg for commissions and sales for his paintings, and as Roces puts it in his monograph: "Art collector Don Luis Araneta recounted how Amorsolo would come to his office with a small landscape and ask, somewhat hesitantly, if he could possibly get P30.00 for the work."

But there remained within Amorsolo a sense of social responsibility; he would depict the horrors and violence of the war, no matter how painful. With his collection of up-to-date newspapers, "Amorsolo painted his pictures of the war with no interest in pleasing his customers...He must have reacted

to the need to record the chaos around him," Roces writes. He also adds that since Amorsolo was diabetic, "the war years made medication extremely difficult." "Businessman Chick Parsons recounted that right after the Battle of Manila, he traveled about on motor scooter bringing drugs for the sick. Among those in need of insulin was painter Amorsolo, whom Parsons found lying in bed in a dim corner of his studio."

Years after the war had ended, Amorsolo would continue to paint its harrowing images, somewhat a form of emotional and mental amelioration and a profound protracted cleansing of the inner psyche. It was as if Amorsolo was "vomiting" all his agonizing memories and "peeling off" all the scarring ordeals of the war.

This is exemplified in this 1952 piece. A mother clutches her infant while her young daughter tightly holds onto her yellow skirt. The child's face is filled with fear, anguish, suffering—and defiance. Burnt ruins lay behind them, helplessly standing still from the catastrophe of war, a stark reminder of a landscape once filled with the rosy promises of every passing morning.

The family struggles towards an elusive path to survival as they exhaustingly escape from likely death and the ensuing carnage.

Amorsolo's *dalaga*—now a tormented mother—has been stripped of her penetrating innocence, quaint charm, and graceful femininity.

A cross lays on the ground, facing directly upon the dreary heavens. It is a grim reminder of the Divine's seeming absence amid His people's suffering and death in those "*three fateful years without God.*"

During the year Amorsolo painted this work, he would retire from the directorship of the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts and focus solely on painting, possessing the luxury of time for moral recuperation from the seething rage of the preceding decade. (*Adrian Maranan*)

## A Rare Relic of a Lost *Amorsolo* Masterpiece



*“The war years were, for Amorsolo, a different experience. Fire and smoke were literally put down on canvas, as well as scenes of conquerors and victims, prisoners in Japanese trucks, civilians sitting out an air raid, fleeing evacuees, all were jotted down as part of an artist’s war journal.*

*“Out of this war experience, the “dalaga” of Amorsolo was depicted as a Madonna in state of shock, kneeling over a dead husband, or clutching a baby in the midst of ruins.”*

— ALFREDO R. ROCES, IN “AMORSOLO” (1975)

## Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

### *Kambal*

signed and dated 1996 (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
11" x 11" (28 cm x 28 cm)

**P 400,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist  
confirming the authenticity of this lot

"Just to master one subject or medium can take a lifetime," says Mauro Malang Santos and one look at his oeuvre proves his belief in his maxim. His canvases feature a montage of Filipino culture, repeating throughout his career. The lot at hand, entitled *Kambal* (1996), joins the ranks of one of his favored muses – women.

A constant muse from childhood to canvas, Malang's women are immortalized through a multitude of paintings. *Kambal* follows the usual depiction of his female subjects—dramatized with their big feet and big hands and pinpricks for eyes. A mother holds her twins on her knee, hands wrapped protectively over her children.



In the same year as the creation of *Kambal*, critic Rod Paras-Perez described Malang's brushwork as "intimate...with a measured sense of order." *Kambal* showcases Malang's impeccable sense of control – his definite strokes and melodic relationship with colors give the piece his signature painterly charm – a quaint outlook of the Philippines's folk scenery. (*Hannah Valiente*)

## Justin Nuyda (1944 - 2022)

### *Nude*

signed and dated 1983 (lower left)  
pastel on paper  
24" x 18 1/2" (61 cm x 47 cm)

**P 300,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank the artist's estate for  
confirming the authenticity of this lot

Nuyda's perception of abstraction goes beyond the mere act of transcending visual limits; it's about uncovering a dream concealed within reality.

Reminiscent of Nuyda's masterpieces, the female form is delicately portrayed in an ethereal, almost ghostly manner, transcending conventional representations. Nuyda's masterful strokes breathe life into shapes and curves, bringing a harmonious fusion of colors and forms that bring the artwork to life.

In this dreamscape, women's bodies become a canvas of poetic expression. Critics have aptly described his work as "poetic," and nowhere is this more evident than in the contemplative gaze upon "Nude." It is an open invitation to lose oneself in the misty elegance of the artwork, where each stroke has its own narrative.



Nuyda's artistic journey, rooted in a Fine Arts degree from the University of Santo Tomas in 1966, has been adorned with accolades. Nuyda's legacy is etched in his ability to beckon observers into a world where reality and dreams coalesce in a mesmerizing dance of colors and shapes. (*Ysabella Vistan*)



144 PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

## Juvenal Sansó (b. 1929)

### *Peculiar Intensity*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1970s

oil on canvas

29" x 36" (74 cm x 91 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Fundacion Sansó confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

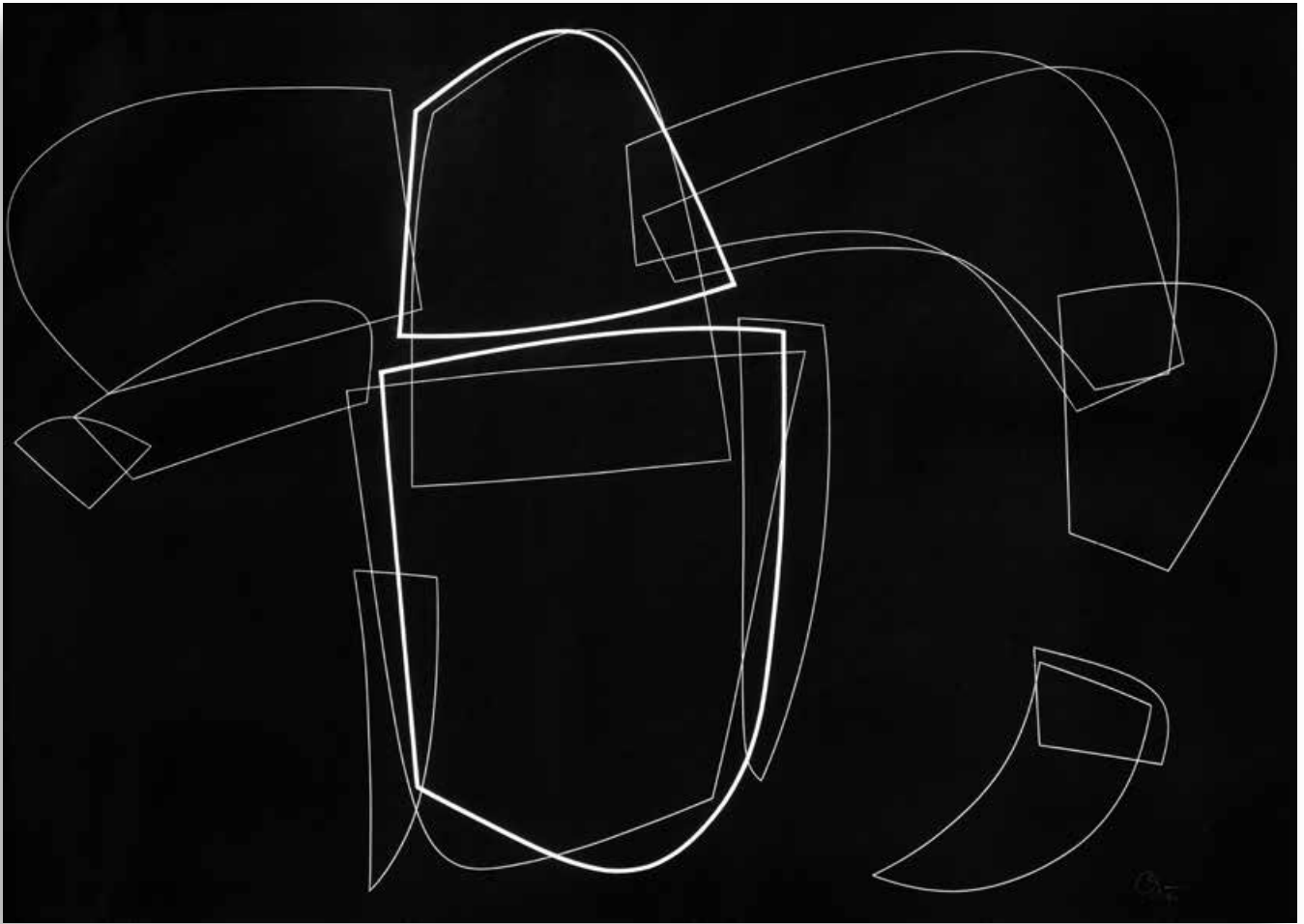
The 1960s and 1970s were decades of prolific travels for Juvenal Sansó. Throughout these visits, he was in constant flirtation with multiple muses – his springs and autumns are spent in lively Paris; his summers in the ruggedly picturesque Brittany; and his winters in the tropical Philippines.

Whether the constant travel is borne out of a sense of wanderlust or restlessness, the nostalgia it had invoked on Sansó has mellowed out his angst-filled works. The 1960s saw the overlap of his "Black Period" where grotesque

forms permeate his canvases and what critic Alfredo Roces defined as Sansó's "nostalgic Philippine themes" where his works eased into romantic surrealism.

This overlap is evident in the lot at hand. Entitled *Peculiar Intensity*, the work evokes the scenes Sansó beheld as he visited Brittany, a peninsula northwest of France that offers a breathtaking view of the seas. Deep melancholy imbues *Peculiar Intensity* in the same vein as his Black Period pieces; however, the vibrant orange breaks through the pensive blues and greens, a shadow of Sansó's upcoming romantic surrealism.

In an essay about his Brittany experience, Sansó wrote: "This landscape was so beautiful ... I had no language to express it yet." And yet, through *Peculiar Intensity*, Sansó manages to translate to canvas the untranslatable. His landscapes are wistfully attractive, a window to the prolific travels he has undertaken in constant search of the ever-elusive muse and a veritable proof of Sansó's mastery over a uniquely personal visual language. (*Hannah Valiente*)



145

**Romulo Olazo** (1934 - 2015)

*Permutation Series*

signed and dated 1990 (lower right)

acrylic on paper

30" x 42" (76 cm x 107 cm)

**P 600,000**

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Romulo Olazo's Permutations Series unveils a vast neutral expanse that serves as an expansive canvas, upon which delicate lines emerge from the void. Olazo's artistic creations consistently maintain a refined and ethereal quality, never losing their filmy elegance. The Permutations Series transcends mere visual art; it envelops the viewer's entire field of vision, effectively blocking out the distractions of the mundane world and transforming the surroundings into an immersive environment.

Olazo embarked on this series with the intention of eliciting the enchantment of space and silence through a visually gratifying arrangement of pictorial elements. Though the artist was known for his groundbreaking use of a unique silkscreen process in his Diaphanous series, Olazo surprises admirers by revealing that works belonging to the Permutations series are meticulously hand-drawn. This revelation adds an additional layer of appreciation for the intricacy and dedication present in his works.

Throughout his artistic journey, Olazo consistently addresses themes of simplicity, directness, layered elements, spatial development, and a meditative and contemplative atmosphere. These elements remain integral to all his works, creating a harmonious blend of artistic principles. The clarity of form found in the Permutation series is noteworthy, as it neither fully conforms to plastic nor pictorial conventions, showcasing Olazo's mastery over a unique visual language. *(Jed Daya)*



146 PROPERTY FROM THE LEOVINO MA. GARCIA COLLECTION

**Lao Lianben** (b. 1948)

*a.) Cloud Thinking 1*  
 signed (lower right) dated 2004 (lower left)  
 acrylic, modelling paste on canvas  
 12" x 9" (30 cm x 23 cm)

*b.) Cloud Thinking 2*  
 signed (lower right) dated 2004 (lower left)  
 acrylic, modelling paste on canvas  
 12" x 9" (30 cm x 23 cm)

*c.) Zen Cloud*  
 signed (lower left)  
 acrylic, modelling paste on canvas  
 9" x 12" (23 cm x 30 cm)

**P 800,000**

Lao Lianben's canvases bear veritable proof of his fascination with Zen Buddhism principles, practices, and mysticism. While not a practitioner, the qualities of the impregnable Buddha bleed through his minimalist work resulting in an oeuvre that is stripped of superfluity that puts forth a solemn, serene sensibility in line with the artist's Zen proclivities.



Verso of the artwork

His inclination towards Buddhism manifests itself in this series of works entitled *Cloud Thinking 1 and 2* and *Zen Cloud*. The Buddhist tradition has been using clouds as a metaphor throughout the years – the sūtra entitled *The Great Cloud* described it as a harbinger of rain that contains the qualities needed to nourish its believers. Clouds are known for the life-sustaining rain they produce, however they are also known for their transience.

With its monochromatic palette and unique manipulation of texture, Lao's *Cloud Thinking 1 and 2* and *Zen Cloud* encapsulate the ephemerality the clouds represent. With his mastery of minimalism and composition, Lao reinforces the beauty in quietude through the evocative questions posed in his modest canvases. *(Hannah Valiente)*



*The 'Tinikling' is one of the most skillful of Filipino dances, requiring the nimblest of movements and the deftest of grace to escape the rhythmic staccato of bamboo poles that close and open around the dancers' ankles. It's a dance that requires both speed and talent. That magic is wonderfully immortalized in both Amorsolo works.*

## Captain of Philippine Industry and His Bamboo Dreams

**D**ennett “Den” Farwell Howe, born on 30 May 1909 in Dedham, Norfolk, Massachusetts to William Farwell Howe and the former Jenniebelle Dennett. He had two siblings, Sallie Gordon Howe and John Prentice Howe. He was educated at Amherst High School where he was Class President and Editor-in-Chief of the school paper, The Gold Bug, and graduated in 1926. Following is a write-up on him in the Amherst High School Annual of 1926:

*“Den’s the boy after our own heart. Who doesn’t know and admire him from the humblest Freshman to the mightiest Senior? He works to win and plays fair. In games, at practice, and in school he is always the same true sport. Our only regret is that he doesn’t dance. Den, when are you going to learn?”*

He went to Amherst College and was in college when his father, William, passed away in 1928. Dennett F. Howe was an Industrial Engineer by profession. He was working as a supervisor in Manchester, England in 1939 when his daughter, Susan, was born Cheshire, England in 1939 as per Report of

Birth of Child Born of American Parents dated 17 June 1939. He worked for Procter & Gamble Manufacturing Company of Cincinnati, Ohio and was assigned in various locations worldwide in his many years with the company. Procter & Gamble’s original soap manufacturing plant founded by two English immigrants, William Procter, a candlemaker, and James Gamble, a soapmaker, in 1837.

In addition to its best-selling PURICO and Star Margarine, new and better products were developed: Mayon and Star edible oil (1951), Luto, Perla (1949), Ola (1955), and Oso (1957) laundry soap, Gleem toothpaste (1957), Dari Creme margarine (1959), and Primex shortening (1961). Products developed by P & G’s parent company like Camay beauty soap (1950), Tide detergent (1957) also entered the Philippine market.

Dennett Farwell Howe (1958-1962) was the fourth top American executive sent to the Philippines by the P & G parent company in Cincinnati, Ohio to head P & G-PMC’s operations.





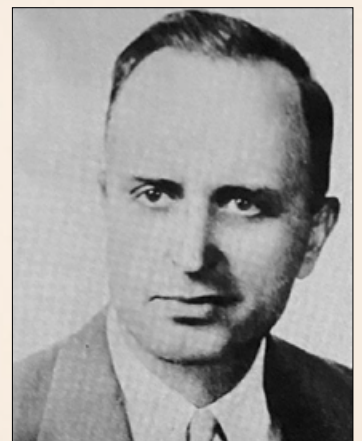
CLOCKWISE: The dynamic Dennett Howe in his duties at P&G, with the Philippine First Lady, Linda Garcia; the original company headquarters on San Luis Street, Ermita, and at a sales conference for Star Margarine

In 1958, at the time Dennett F. Howe was appointed Vice President and General Manager of Procter & Gamble PMC in Manila, the company with its extensive and modern manufacturing facility located at 1120 Velasquez Street, Tondo, Manila, was then the largest manufacturer of soap, synthetic detergents, and edible oil products in the Far East. The company likewise manufactured toothpaste and exported copra cake, glycerine, and finished products.

Promotions were done house-to-house, through print ads, TV and radio sponsorships and commercials.

Procter & Gamble's main office was housed in a modern three-storey concrete building located at Calle San Luis (now T.M. Kalaw Street), Ermita, Manila overlooking Rizal Park at Luneta. It was inaugurated by Manila Mayor Arsenio Lacson in March 1952 and was said to have cost P 1-M. Said to have been the "best office in town," it had a new switchboard system which serviced 70 locals at the company headquarters and 80 locals at the Tondo plant.

It could rightfully be said on hindsight that Dennett F. Howe was among the Procter & Gamble PMC executives who were in the forefront of the voluntary Filipinization of the company. The Howe family was comfortably housed at No. 12 Molave Street, South Forbes Park, Makati, close to the Manila Polo Club, the Santuario de San Antonio Parish Church, and the plaza where Acme Super Market was located. (IPR)



ABOVE: Dennett Farwell Howe, General Manager of Procter & Gamble in Manila,

## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Tinikling*

signed and dated 1960 (lower left)

oil on canvas

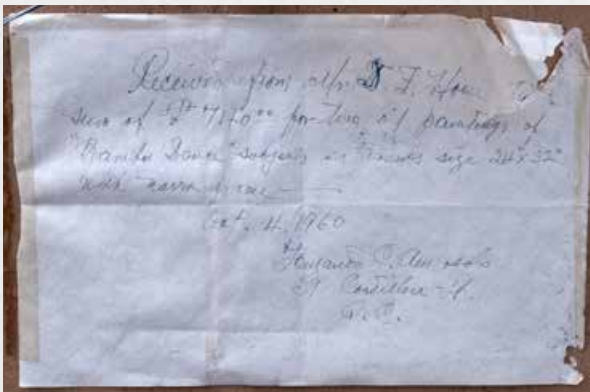
24" x 32" (61 cm x 81 cm)

**P 7,000,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the the artist as evidence by a handwritten receipt for payment signed by Fernando Amorsolo himself



"Two paintings, both entitled "Bamboo Dance," were purchased by an American executive, Dennett Farwell Howe, directly from artist Fernando C. Amorsolo himself in 1960 as evidenced by a handwritten receipt signed by the artist himself which reads thus:"

"Received from Mr. D.F. Howe the sum of P 740.00 for two oil paintings of "Bamboo Dance" subjects and canvas size 24" x 32" with narra frame.

Oct. 4, 1960 Fernando C. Amorsolo  
39 Cordillera St. Q.C.

To give his home a Filipino touch, Dennett Howe purchased a pair of paintings both entitled "Bamboo Dancers" directly from eminent artist, Fernando C. Amorsolo, for the princely sum of P 740.00 or P 370.00 each.

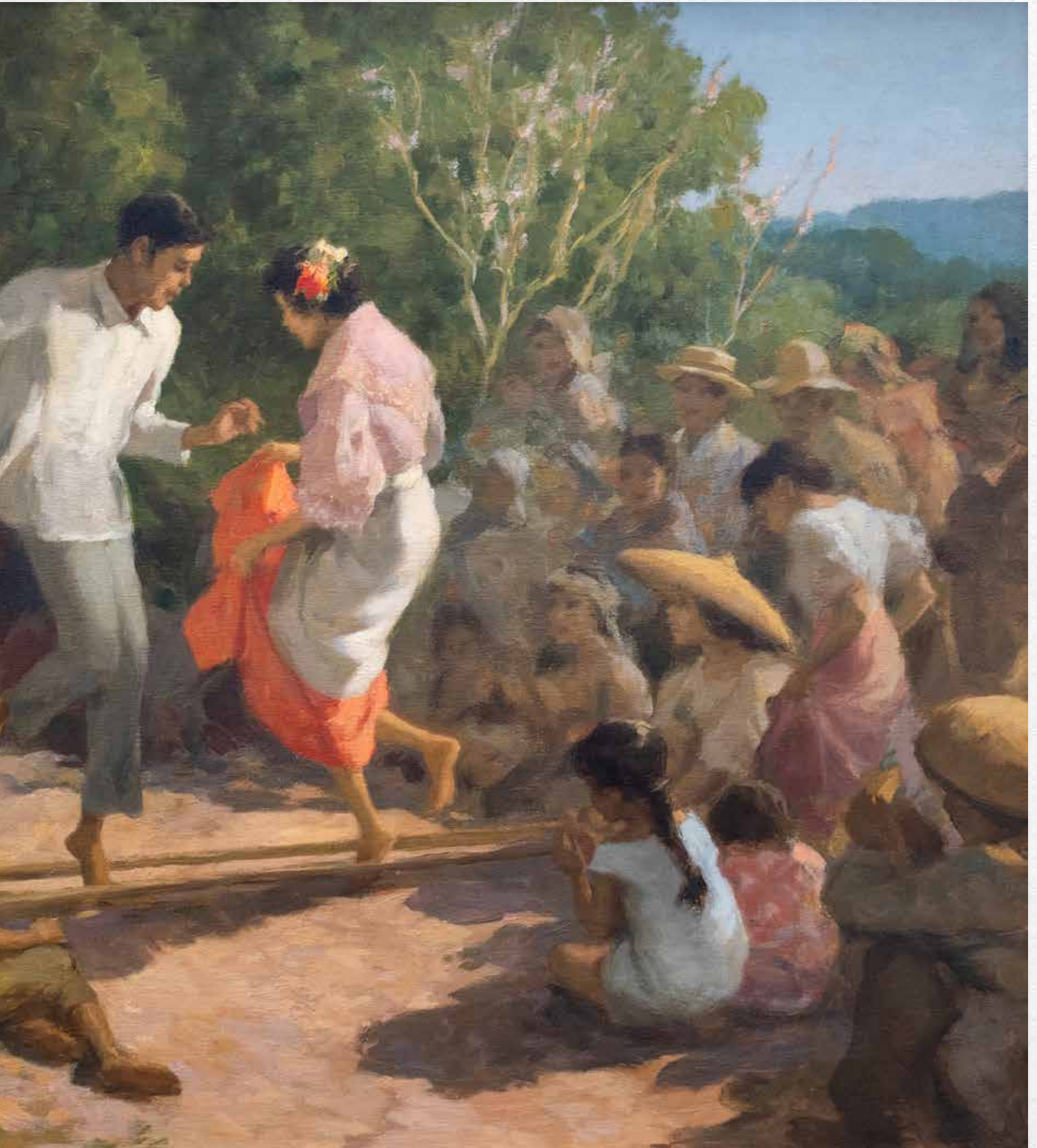
The pair of Bamboo Dancers paintings from the Howe Collection are worthy examples of Fernando C. Amorsolo's Tinikling series, most of which belong to important private and museum collections. Among the earlier examples are *Maytime in Antipolo* (1943) from the Bangko Sentral ng Piliipinas Collection, *Tinikling* (1947) from the Alice Eduardo Collection, *Tinikling* (1950) from the GSIS Museum Collection now at the National Museum of Fine Arts of the Philippines, *Fiesta* (1953) from the Del Monte Collection, and several *Tinikling* paintings from the collection of Congressman & Mrs. Michael Romero. (*IPR*)



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# The Dance of Filipino Life

*Immortalized by Fernando Amorsolo*



**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Tinikling*

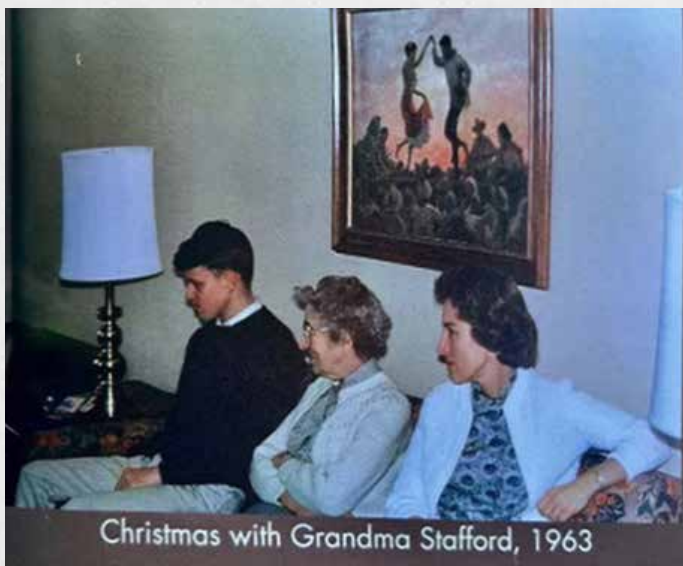
signed and dated 1960 (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
24" x 32" (61 cm x 81 cm)

**P 7,000,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired directly from the the artist as evidence by a handwritten receipt for payment signed by Fernando Amorsolo himself



Christmas with Grandma Stafford, 1963

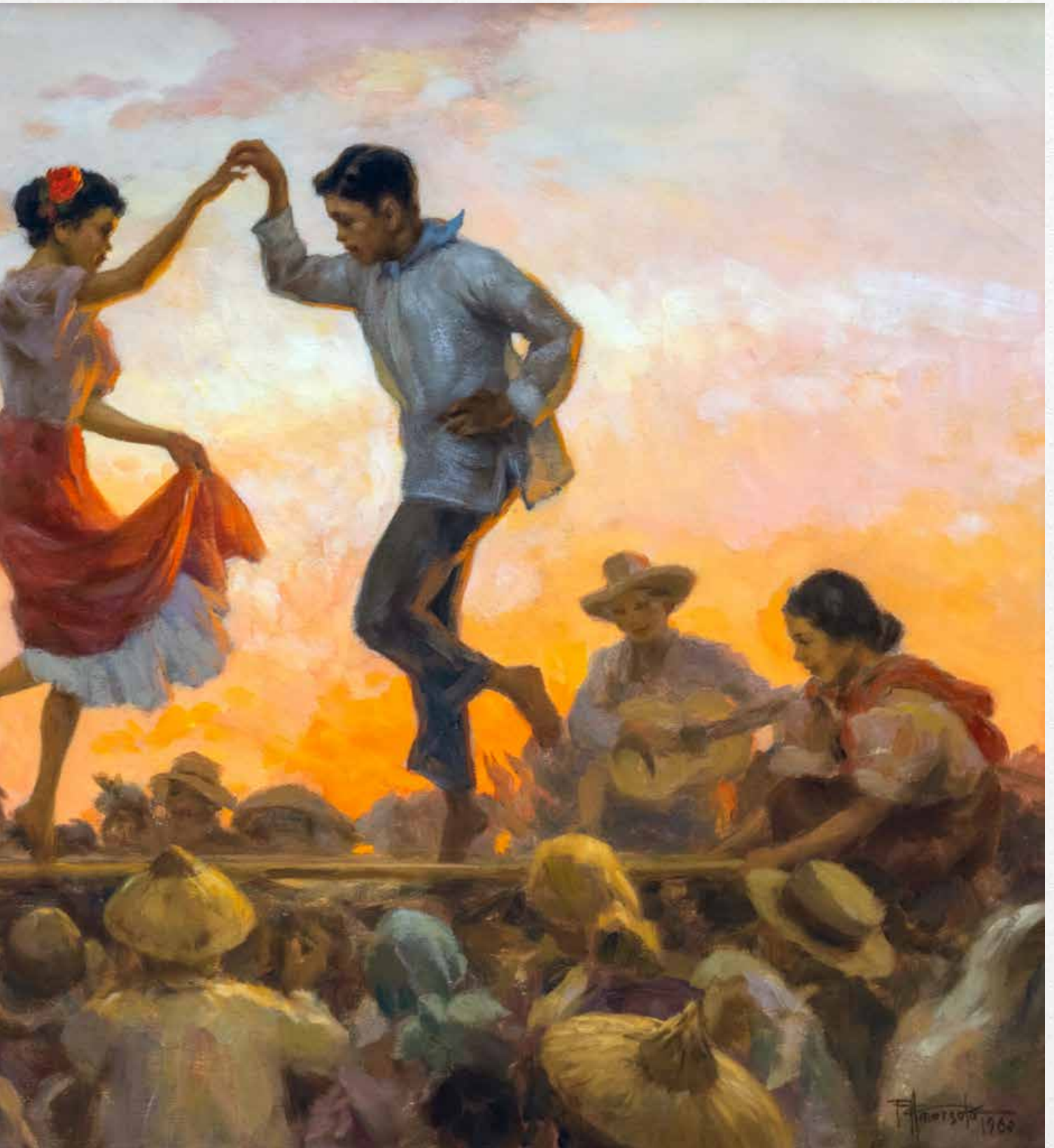
ABOVE: Bamboo Dancers at Dusk hanging in the Dennett Howe home in the United States.

One of the two Bamboo Dancers paintings, both dated 1960, can be seen in a family photo labeled, "Christmas with Grandma Stafford, 1963," was most probably taken in the U.S., a year after family patriarch Dennett F. Howe ended his stint in the Philippines. It is quite an unusual variant of Fernando C. Amorsolo's *Tinikling* series, most of which, like the other pair of Bamboo Dancers depicted the idyllic life in rural Philippines, the Filipinos' love for festive gatherings or "kasiyahan" and as art historian Eric Torres described them, "captured on canvas the vibrant tropical sunlight." In contrast, this rendering of the Howe Bamboo Dancers appears to have been painted at sunset, the dark silhouette of the pair of dancers contrasting with the warm colors of the setting sun. The pair float above the spellbound crowd; the twin bamboo poles seem magically suspended in the air to create this unique and vivid dance of life.

It must have been poetic that one of Dennett F. Howe's Bamboo Dancers paintings was done by Maestro Fernando C. Amorsolo at sunset, coming as it was at the long sunset of Dennett F. Howe's life. (IPR)



A Rare Tinikling at Sunset  
*by the Maestro Fernando Amorsolo*





149

**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)

*Blue Abstraction*

ca. 1957

signed (lower right)

oil on canvas

36" x 25 1/2" (91 cm x 65 cm)

**P 700,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Paris

Oscar Zalameda is a trueborn son of Lucban, Quezon – despite the jetset life brought about by his studies in San Francisco then Paris and later in Mexico, his oeuvre still boasts the resplendence of his hometown. Men toiling in the fields, vendors selling their wares, and local scenes feature heavily on his canvases, their luminous colors reflecting his home country's vibrancy.

Though he eventually delved into the cubism that would be synonymous with his name, his early works are experiments in abstractions that evoke Fernando Zóbel's gestural ones. The lot at hand entitled *Blue Abstraction* (created around 1957) was made during Zalameda's stay in Europe in the mid-1950s. *Blue Abstraction* contains the staples of Zalameda's early gestural abstractions but now, the beginnings of his cubism are evident – amidst the spontaneous brush strokes is a clearly delineated rose. Lines running through the canvas create different planes, an echo of his future geometric abstractions.

*Blue Abstraction* features the two periods of Oscar Zalameda's art – his gestural abstraction and his sophisticated breezy cubism. This crossroad of style provides a refreshing view of Zalameda and proof of his proficiency in color harmonies and abstractions. (Hannah Valiente)



150

**Marina Cruz** (b. 1982)

*The Study in Mono*

signed and dated 2021 (lower left)

oil on canvas

48" x 48" (122 cm x 122 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

Visual artist Marina Cruz takes everyday objects and transforms them into photorealistic paintings filled to the brim with nostalgia and intimacy. Her journey began in 2001 when she unearthed her mother's baptismal dress, who was at the time often sick. "Imagining my mother as a child seemed so surreal. The dress made me 'experience' the childhood she once had," she said. "I felt that I needed to preserve that memory. I realized the value of time, the

value of life. You really have to savor every moment with your loved ones because you can never go back."

Marina explores the intimacy of inanimate objects, in particular that of clothes, as shown in this 2021 work. In a black-and-white closeup of a denim coat, Marina shows off her chops as she masterfully manipulates lights and shadows, a clear manifestation of meaning inherent in a well-loved object. There are signs that the clothing was well-used: the collar was lopsided, the fabric itself wrinkled.

Through her wonderful still-life paintings, Marina delves into the story every object holds dear to its heart. (*Hannah Valiente*)

## Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

### *Thinking of Zen*

signed and dated 1994 (lower left)  
acrylic, modeling paste, pencil on burlap  
40" x 60" (102 cm x 152 cm)

**P 3,400,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

*“The ensō contains the perfect and imperfect; that is why it is always complete.”*

—KAZUAKI TANAHASHI (B. 1933), JAPANESE  
CALLIGRAPHER, ZEN GURU, AND ENGLISH TRANSLATOR  
OF JAPANESE AND CHINESE BUDDHIST TEXTS

For Lao Lianben, painting is an invigorating exercise centering on creative solitude and dynamic contemplation. Profoundly influenced by the tenets of Zen Buddhism, Lao's creative praxis revolves around painting as an act of both seeing and contemplating; it is Zen encountered, experienced, lived, and nourished.

It is in this sustained practice of living and creating under the influence of Zen that Lao's 1994 work titled *Thinking of Zen* can be contextualized. Here, we are immediately struck by a captivating image of the circle in the center, delicately engraved in an almost perfect manner. In Zen Buddhism, the circle or the ensō is the supreme symbol of enlightenment.

Traditionally, drawing the ensō requires spontaneity, and its creation involves the utmost freeing of the mind from any inhibitions, ultimately allowing the hands (and the entirety of the body) to be liberated from tension. A clear mind calmly yet fervidly situates itself in the arena of the present, reveling in expressive composure.

Depicting the ensō is meditation in itself, for it manifests our innermost being, emancipating all our repressed thoughts and emotions.

In Lao's *Thinking of Zen*, the artist appropriates the ensō and renders it in an almost perfect manner (as opposed to its traditional depiction as an imperfect, open circle) as an implication of a human desire for perfection, as well as the ultimate knowledge and acceptance of the world as being inherently imbued in contradiction and struggle, and thus, the need for a

dynamic meditation in which even the most mundane of activities become profound contemplation in themselves.

Lao also employs grids in various areas of the composition. In cartography, grids determine the absolute location of a specific point on Earth using latitude and longitude. In doing so, Lao points out to a spiritual panorama of the psyche, in which his mind—and the artist himself—indulge in a captivating silence that becomes a revitalizing experience.

Incisions that form delicate gradations resulting from Lao scratching the canvas with a pointed material evoke spontaneity, which in turn captures the artist letting the unbridled flow of his expressions gush from his inner being, “purifying” and “relieving” himself in the process in order for him to create such a masterpiece that becomes a balm for one's being. These incisions also allude to a mind that straddles the boundaries between knowing and not knowing, learning and unlearning, strengths and flaws. Thus, we are transported back into the concept of the ensō, where the mind realizes the harmony of things and the body freely drinks and creates from the fountainhead of a realized peace and quiet.

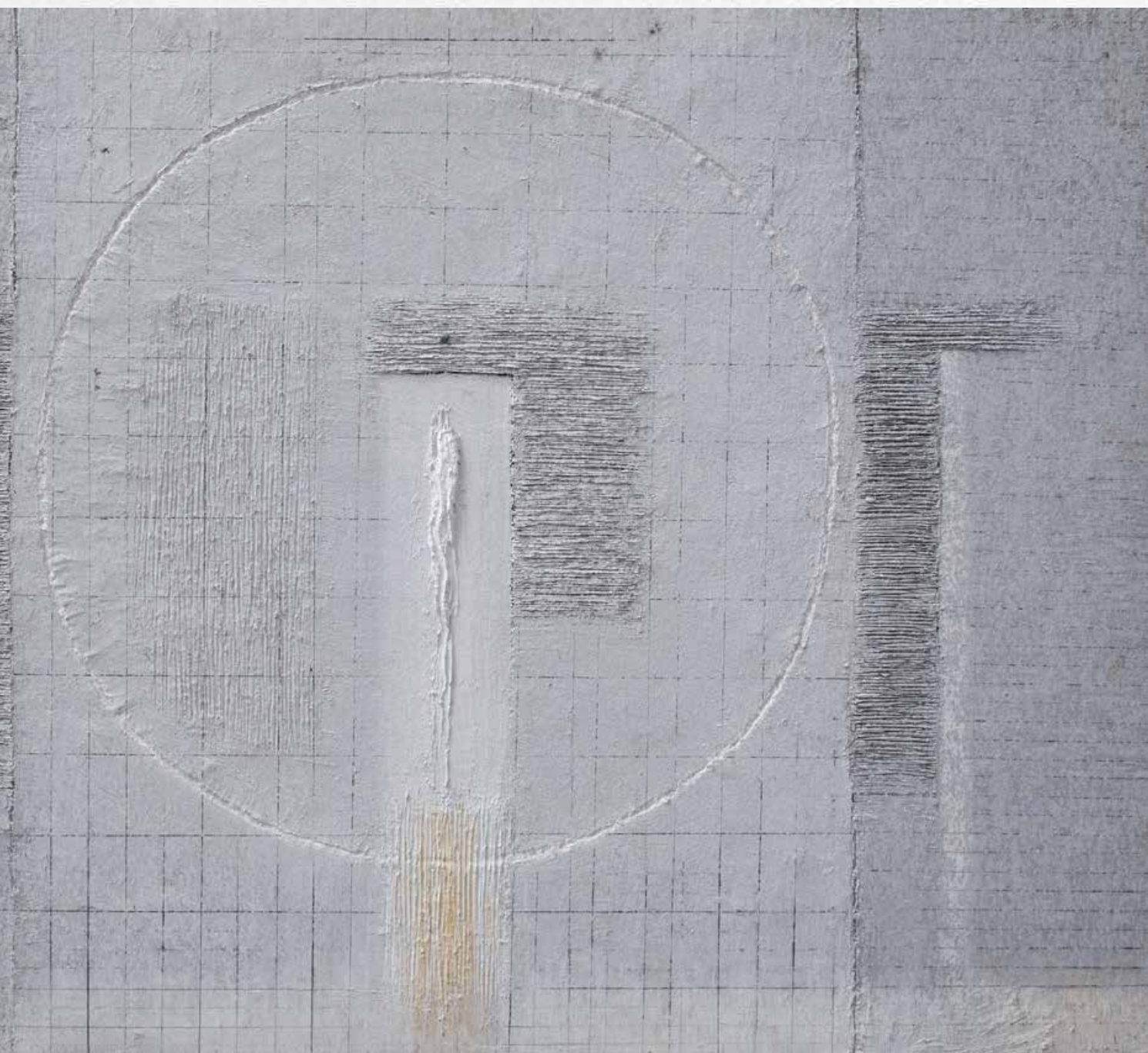
Lao's *Thinking of Zen* encompasses an emancipating practice, a place of no inhibitions, of unbridled contemplation, towards a cathartic and transformative enlightenment. And as always, Lao shows us a disciplined spontaneity, distilling only the essential through an austere palette that overflows with an energy that is the spirit of soothing and empowering Zen. (*Adrian Maranan*)





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Circle of Quietude:  
*Lao Lianben and Vistas of Zen*



**Arturo Luz** (1926 - 2021)*Carnival Forms II*

signed (lower right and verso)

dated 1993

acrylic painting / collage

72" x 48" (183 cm x 122 cm)

**P 3,400,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot

## PROVENANCE

León Gallery, *The Magnificent September Auction*, Makati City, 10 September 2022, Lot 83.

Arturo Luz's propensity for the festive can be traced back to the 1950s. It started in 1952 when Luz witnessed a somewhat playful scene: four men riding a single bicycle. "The sight struck me as very Filipino," Luz shares. Luz translated this scene into a 1952 work titled *Bagong Taon*, which depicts silhouetted figures of cyclists. "In the painting, I added the tooting horn...[It] had a sense of celebration, performance, joy of life. This was the granddaddy of them all," says the artist.

According to Cid Reyes, in his 1999 book on the artist, *Bagong Taon*, with its depiction of the tooting horn, suggested another celebratory series: the musicians, notably in *Musikero*. Luz remarks: "In Manila, musicians with neither talent nor jobs then made a living by serenading from door to door. They go about in pairs, forming the most unlikely duos, with their clarinet and drum, cymbals and horn."

In 1954, Luz and another PAG fellow Cesar Legaspi received a grant from the Spanish embassy. With the help of another PAG stalwart, Fernando Zóbel, the two obtained scholarships from the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica. At the end of their studies in 1955, Luz solely explored Europe.

Luz found Europe as an exuberant continent, enkindling a nostalgia for his native Philippines. During these travels, he created numerous drawings of the places he visited. Luz's acrobats would manifest themselves in these drawings for the first time. These works hark back to the bizarre scene Luz witnessed in 1952, in which the four men resemble acrobats skillfully balancing on tall unicycles. But it was in sunny Madrid, with the spirit of its annual 'Carnival' still lingering, where the carnival theme would emerge from Luz's creative fountain. Reyes says of this period: "The series, which he called *Carnival Wall*, contained the single common image of the Ferris wheel rendered as a circular shape with spokes emanating from the center.

In the latter half of the 1950s, covering Luz's return to the Philippines, he devoted himself to the subjects of carnivals and musicians. Reyes writes: "The carnival theme shifted from the simplest renditions of Ferris wheels to the most elaborate and filigreed versions." Thanks to these festive

themes—and his modernist virtuoso—Luz emerged as a critically lauded, revered artist.

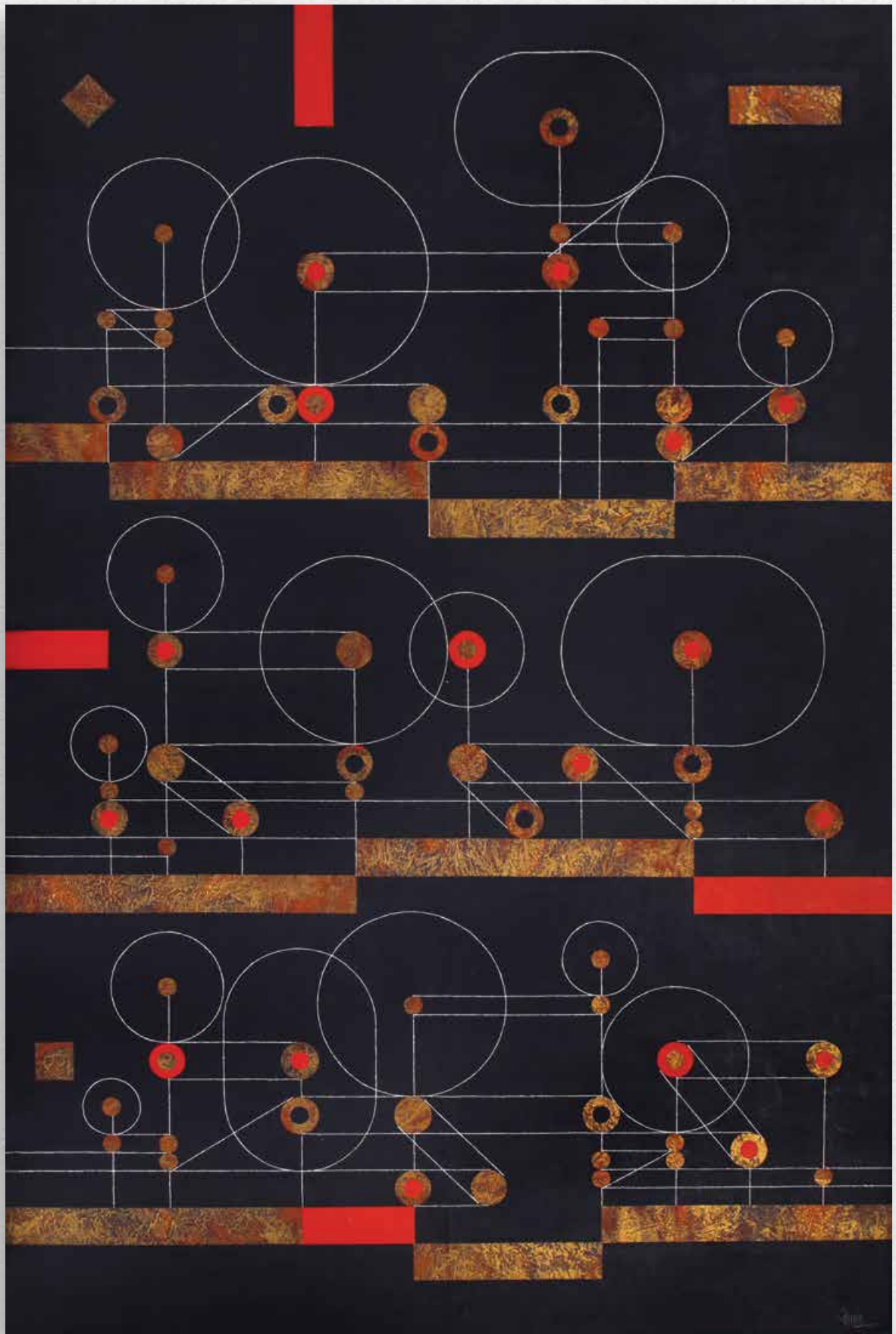
From the 1960s to the 1980s, Luz temporarily cast aside his penchant for the carnival and explored other themes in various media: sculpture, collage, and burlap.

Like the gradual circular motion of the Ferris wheel, Luz would finally come full circle four decades later. In the 1990s, he embarked on his most iconic, grandest, and sustained series of works—*Celebration*, *Carnival Forms*, and *Forms of Amusement*. Particularly in the *Carnival Forms* series, to which the work at hand belongs, Luz evokes the exciting and nostalgic atmosphere of a carnival executed through his rigorous discipline, solid mathematical instincts, and a harmonious relationship between linear forms and colors, albeit applied sparsely.

Reyes writes that Luz further reduced the subject into its most elementary forms in these works. The artist uses circles of varying sizes to evoke the figures of towering yet calming Ferris wheels. Oblongs and ovals represent the rousing drops, rises, turns, and sudden speeds of the winding roller coasters. The shapes overlap, suggesting the carnival's vibrancy, especially when seen from a certain distance.

Luz employs crumpled paper for the bases and loops of the roller coasters and the main axles of the Ferris wheels. "I had to destroy the smoothness of paper," Luz says. The easiest way to destroy the surface of the paper is to crumple it, to rid it of its shiny, metallic quality. Having done that, the paper is straightened flat and glued on plywood. When paint is applied on that crumpled surface, you get these intricate webs of lines. It's an interesting effect you won't get another way."

Indeed, in its origins and technical brilliance, Luz's *Carnival Forms* is a celebration of all sorts. It is a testament to his versatility in reconfiguring on a much grander scale the various subjects that had previously lingered in his spirited imagination, thus capably surpassing his own creative genius. (*Adrian Maranan*)



## Three Filipino Art Nouveau Frames

First quarter of the 20th century (1900 – 25)

San Miguel de Mayumo, Bulacan

golden narra wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

a.) 40" x 26" (102 cm x 66 cm)

b.) 39" x 26" (99 cm x 66 cm)

c.) 39 1/2" x 25 1/2" (100 cm x 65 cm)

**P 300,000**

### PROVENANCE

Pablo Tecson Family

San Miguel de Mayumo, Bulacan



ABOVE: Simon Ocampo Tecson : Leader In The Siege Of Baler

Senior collectors like to say that these singular Filipino art nouveau frames were "made for the rich" as they are not the poorly-conceived, banal, mediocre types seen in antique shops today. These valuable frames came from the landed and prominent Tecson (y) de Ocampo-Santiago y Mossesgeld family of San Miguel de Mayumo, Bulacan and they once hung in the "caida" entrance hall of their beautiful 1880 "bahay-na-bato" with interesting English "Neo-Gothic" and Spanish "Mudejar" (Moorish, Andalusian-North African) architectural details. The frames are topped by S whiplash curves and the large photographs are set into ovals formed by single bamboo stems; all around the frames are carved native flora like "cadena de amor," "catmon," "ampalaya," "gabi," as well as whiplash curves. The high quality and unique design of the customized frames point to the atelier of Isabelo Lacandola Tampinco, the Father of Filipino Art Nouveau (sometimes called "estilo Tampinco"), and his contemporaries at the "Gremio de Escultores" in Santa Cruz, Manila. The three frames feature photographs of Tecson-Santiago family members: Dona Juana Mendoza de Tecson (ca 1870-1930), Dona Mercedes Tecson y Mendoza, et al.

The Tecson is one of the old "hacendero" landowner clans of San Miguel de Mayumo town, Bulacan along with the Siojo, Buencamino, David, Revilla, Santiago, Viola, Ponce, Tantoco, Sempio, Mossesgeld, and de Leon clans. The family gave Filipino history Don Pablo Tecson (y) de Ocampo the Revolutionary Brigadier General, 1899 Malolos Congress representative, Bulacan Governor, Secretary of Agriculture (1859-1940) and his younger brother Don Simon Tecson (y)

de Ocampo the Revolutionary Brigadier General and Colonel, Hero of the 1898-99 Siege of Baler, Philippine-American War veteran, Guam exile (1861-1903).

Don Simon Tecson de Ocampo married the heiress Dona Tomasa Santiago y Mossesgeld, daughter of the extremely affluent hacendero Don Simon Santiago y Bautista also of San Miguel de Mayumo town. In 1880, the couple built an imposing "bahay-na-bato" highly notable for its English Neo-Gothic and Spanish "Mudejar" architectural details (Moorish, Andalusian-North African), features rarely found in late nineteenth century Filipino architecture; similar innovations were usually only found in the residences of the Europe-educated "ilustrados." The house featured a handsome "escalera principal" interior staircase with a pair of life-sized putti for newel posts; a "caida" entrance hall with a glass skylight (the only bahay-na-bato to have one); a "sala" living room and "cuarto principal" master bedroom surrounded by "persianas" (louvered windows and walls); and sumptuous furniture --- among others, a spectacular and singular Neo-Gothic tester bed in golden narra wood, slept on by General Emilio Aguinaldo. The high level of artistic taste and style manifested by the Tecson-Santiago couple was truly extraordinary. The splendid 1880 Neo-Gothic "bahay-na-bato" of Don Simon Tecson and Dona Tomasa Santiago was purchased from the clan by its extremely affluent Mendiola-Tecson branch in the early 1990s and is currently very well-conserved, refurbished, and fastidiously maintained after decades of benign neglect (The M in the SM empire; aside from ShoeMart, SM also stands for Sy-Mendiola; Mr Mendiola was the accountant-partner of Mr Henry Sy Sr during his early years in business). (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)





154

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892-1972)

*a.) Portrait of Alberto T. Cacnio*

signed and dated 1963 (lower right)

oil on canvas

28" x 22" (71 cm x 56 cm)

*b.) Portrait of Elsie Z. Roa*

signed and dated 1963 (lower right)

oil on canvas

28" x 22" (71 cm x 56 cm)

**P 400,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.



Alberto T. Cacnio & Elsie R. Cacnio . Photo courtesy from the family



By the mid-1950's when they were wed, Alberto Tejuco Cacnio already had a flourishing law practice, while Elsie Zamora Roa was a Professor of some repute at the UP Conservatory of Music teaching classical voice culture to hopeful sopranos. Although they married at a relatively late age, their union nevertheless produced two children, Carlos and Gina.

They built a tasteful chalet to Alberto's specifications in Loyola Heights and soon after, inspired by a mutual liking of art, started to acquire paintings, chief among them from the most prominent Filipino master of them all at that time, Fernando Amorsolo. The two major Amorsolo works in their collection are *Binyag ng Panganay* and *Morning Dip*.

It was serendipitous that Don Alfonso Ongpin, the preeminent Filipino collector, was married to Esperanza Roa, a sister of Elsie's father, Alfredo Roa. Thus, the Cacnios were able to acquire from Don Alfonso a pair of seminal

works: a portrait of a lady entitled "La Mujer Europea" and attributed to Fabian de la Rosa and another one titled "Jugando Naipes" by Eusebio Santos. The latter painting was featured in an article by the late Eric Torres, an Ateneo Professor and prominent art critic. Also in their collection were a select few works by Juan Arellano, who, as it turned out, was not only a pioneering architect but also a prolific painter.

After Alberto Cacnio died in the '70s, his children moved to the U.S., and his widow Elsie would spend most of the year living with them. Eventually, Elsie became too feeble to travel and had to be moved to a hospice run by nuns in Laguna. She passed away in 2023 at the age of 100.

Over the years, the family had let go of the Cacnio paintings piece by piece. Amorsolo's portraits of Alberto and Elsie Cacnio offered at this auction are the last remaining paintings in the Cacnio-Roa collection.

**Betsy Westendorp** (1927 - 2022)*1272 (Atmosferografias Series)*

signed and dated 2011 (lower left)

acrylic on canvas

78" x 69" (198 cm x 175 cm)

**P 2,400,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Manila

*"It is true that in the study of the heavens, the skies, with poetic intent, we have sublime examples of open-air compositions of the artists of all times and styles, although there are a considerable number of them in the 17th century, especially the Dutch. Hobbems, Rusydael, Van de Velde, Van Goyen, Rembrandt, Cuyp, and others have brought to their paintings all that can be found in a landscape: houses, figures, hills and mountains, aerial views, as well as the English and Spanish landscape artists, without forgetting the seascapes. But none of them has chosen exclusively the view of the sky as selectively as Betsy Westendorp."*

—ELENA FLÓREZ, IN "CRITIQUE OF ELENA FLÓREZ." TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH BY ISABEL BRIAS WESTENDORP.

Betsy Westendorp's *atmosferografias*, or paintings of the atmosphere, are her philosophical-cum-artistic inquiry and exploration into the sublime transcendence and otherworldliness of the vast celestial space. They are "portraits of the spirit," if one may deem it. Westendorp's love affair with the heavens started in Manila—the Pearl of the Orient overlooking a historic bay known for being the mise en scene of a majestic sunset.

In the early 1950s, Westendorp and her husband, Tony, lived at the Ramona Apartment along Dakota Street (now M. Adriatico). "At five o'clock, my husband, Tony, came home from San Miguel," shares Westendorp in a conversation with art critic Cid Reyes. "Their offices were near Malacañang, in Arlegui. He would pick me up and go to Manila Bay. Take a stroll...enjoy the view and the sunset."

However, Westendorp would only start painting the celestial atmosphere in the 1970s and would continue to do so even after her husband died in 1976, likely a visual eulogy to her departed other half, an allusion to his metamorphosis from the physical world to the spiritual realm. Westendorp would also progress from the Manila Bay *atmosferografias* to the more hallowed ones—metaphysical inquiries cutting across space and time.

It was the Spanish art critic and Westendorp's dear friend, Elena Flórez, who would christen Westendorp's sky paintings as "*atmosferografias*" after a laborious scanning of many

Spanish dictionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries. "The manner she interprets it, the originality of the theme, and the absence of previous references moved me to search for the proper explanation so as to bring it to these pages with the purpose of delving into the matter," Flórez writes in a critique of Westendorp's works.

The monumentality of Westendorp's *atmosferografias* evokes an artist's romantic journey into the spiritual. In these paintings, Westendorp has not only emancipated her emotions but the totality of her being as well.

Immersed in an overwhelming, seemingly infinite space, any viewer of Westendorp's *atmosferografias* is palpably transported into the sublime, a world so vast and transcendent that all possibilities seem unbounded. As one drifts from one billow of cloud to another and explores the contrasts of heavenly light made possible by the artist's refinement in color, the theatricality of the cosmos takes center stage, and Westendorp's palette of emotions becomes an earnest revelatory experience.

Furthermore, there is an infinite horizon not captured on Westendorp's canvas, giving visual authority to the viewer on how far they would go to expand their creative horizons and go beyond mere orthodox thinking. Just like the lushness of her trademark floral gardens that evoke beauty in impermanence, Westendorp's celestial coliseum, engulfed in all its rapturous beauty, offers a cosmic balsam for the lost and wounded soul. (*Adrian Maranan*)





# The Magic and Mystery of Westendorp's Atmospheres





156 PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

**Jose Joya** (1931 - 1995)

*Autumn in Edo*

signed and dated 1985 (lower right and verso)

acrylic-collage

16" x 28" (41 cm x 71 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Alexander Richard Joya Baldovino confirming the authenticity of this lot

Although Jose Joya initially gained renown as a landscape painter and realist, he would go on to become a pioneer of abstract expressionism in Philippine art. This reorientation of his artistic journey came aptly at a time when the abstract expressionists of New York—the likes of Rothko, Pollock, and de Kooning—were making waves in the Western art world for their masterful skill in bringing out the expressiveness

of paint without rendering figurative subjects. While Joya had only studied in New York briefly from 1956 to 1957, the abstract expressionist ethos of the time would manifest in a full transformation of his artistic vision.

Although the abstract expressionists were generally known for their experimentations in paint, what we have here is a gestural collage that combines acrylic and rice paper. Joya takes the abstract expressionist ethos and brings out the possibilities of feeling from an experimental combination of mediums. Taken as among the artist's visual travelogues, the result is a gestural collage that evokes a unique sense of place—a memory of the landscape recalled as a patchwork of impression and feeling. (*Pie Tiausas*)



157

**Bernardo Pacquing** (b. 1967)

*Lies Beneath a Hammer and a Paperweight*

signed and dated 2001 (verso)

house paint, oil and pencil on canvas

60" x 60" (152 cm x 152 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

PROVENANCE  
West Gallery

Bernardo Pacquing's nonrepresentational art is a perfect example of how his fascination with the expressive potential of modern abstract art translates into his works. Using a myriad of objects with no notable relation to one another (both in functionality and aesthetics), Pacquing's works introduce paradoxes and coexisting ideals within one canvas.

*Lies Beneath a Hammer and a Paperweight* evokes both the calmness and chaos as is usual for a Pacquing piece. Unlike some abstractions, he focused on translating the objective reality into organic recognizable shapes, and like his method in *Lies Beneath a Hammer and a Paperweight*, his subjects retain their discernible figures yet are still obscure enough to preserve their mysterious allure. An image in the vague shape of a hammer hovers at the top half of the canvas, the monotony of the monochromatic piece broken by a splash of pastel pink, blue, and yellow.

Pacquing's abstraction is a relief from the dogmatism that clamps down on any extensive schools of styles, bringing in a unique spatial awareness in tandem with his Zen-like collection of ephemera. *(Hannah Valiente)*

**Juan Luna y Novicio** (1857 - 1899)

*Landscape in Bilbao*  
 signed (left)  
 ca. 1893  
 oil on wood  
 12" x 17" (30 cm x 43 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

# A Peaceful Oasis in Juan Luna's Life

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Having weathered the most turbulent periods of his life — that would crescendo into the destruction of his marriage and his subsequent trial — Juan Luna would nevertheless emerge unscathed. He would be acquitted and released from prison in February 1893 and quit Paris for Madrid, the city where his fame and good fortune had begun. Luna would be seeking a place of safe harbor.

Luna scholar Martin Arnaldo notes that he would stay for the winter and spring in the Spanish capital and then in July head for Bilbao to summer by the sea. At the invitation of his powerful friend, the Senator Victor Chavarri, he would come to Portugalete in Bilbao and stay for almost a year. While there, he would be commissioned to paint the steel mills owned by Chavarri's partner, Don Martinez Rivas; and would also chronicle the quaint villages and farms that surrounded the northern city. He would stay till April 1894, creating a series of works known as his 'Bilbao period'.

One work from this period titled "Puesto de Sol (Sunset)" in the collection of the Lopez Museum dated 1893 is from this very period, with a similar vista of a forest and a small town behind it.

The landscape at hand similarly captures one of those picturesque villages and farms all the way to San Sebastian. Red tiled roofs punctuate the green landscape. A large structure with a pair of wooden doors propose a barn. A brown newly-plowed field is in the foreground; behind it are haystacks and a traveling cart pulled by a horse.

Juan Luna was the master of the painted suggestion, creating in a few short strokes, interesting characters and their stories. It's in the somber quiet of the afternoon, in the middle of the famous Spanish siesta when time has stood still and would find that peace at last in Basque country in northern Spain. The painter longs for that same quietude.



ABOVE: Puesta de Sol, 1883, Collection of the Lopez Museum.

### About Ambassador Pedro Conlu Hernaez Senator, Diplomat, Founding Father of Bacolod

A dynamic public servant from Negros, Don Pedro Conlu Hernaez was born in Talisay on December 12, 1899 to Rosendo Espinosa Hernaez and Teofila Echebrecho Conlu. He would obtain his degrees from San Juan de Letran as well as from the Escuela de Derecho; he was admitted to the Philippine bar in 1921.

One of his most outstanding contributions to the development of Negros was as founding father of the city of Bacolod, being the principal author of the bill that proposed its creation as a chartered city in 1938.

President Manuel Roxas would appoint him as member of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations. He would later be appointed by President Carlos P. Garcia as Philippine Ambassador to Spain from September 15, 1960 to March 31, 1962. In Madrid, he would discover first-hand the artistry of Juan Luna.



ABOVE: H.E. Hernaez as he presents his diplomatic credentials to Gen. Franco as Philippine Ambassador to Spain, 1960. Collection of Manila Nostalgia.

# A Summer of Freedom

*Juan Luna's Bilbao Period*



# Loida Nicolas Lewis

## *Philanthropist and Patriot*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



Loida Nicolas Lewis is Chair and CEO of TLC Beatrice, LLC, a family investment firm. An attorney by profession, admitted to practice in the Philippines and New York, Mrs. Lewis was the first Filipino woman to pass the New York bar without having studied law in the United States.

### TOP OF HER CLASS

Mrs. Lewis graduated in the top 10% of her class from the University of the Philippines College of Law and a cum laude graduate of St. Theresa's College, two of the Philippines' premier educational institutions. She was a member of the UP Law Review Editorial Board and the UP Student Council. She received the Student Catholic Action Award upon her college graduation.

### ROOTS, BUSINESS AND ADVOCACY

Loida comes from a family of entrepreneurs: in 1937 her father started Nicfur Enterprise, which became famous as a furniture manufacturer in the '60s.

In 1995, she landed on the cover of *Working Woman* magazine as Top Business Woman in America, when she assumed leadership of TLC Beatrice International and steered it to \$2 billion revenues. From 1997 to 2000, she liquidated the company as her late husband would have wanted.

Loida chairs the Reginald F. Lewis (RFL) Foundation, which donated to educational institutions while Mr. Lewis was alive

— such as Harvard Law School, University of the Philippines, and Howard University, among others. The foundation also supports the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore, MD.

She is one of the founders of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA), a civic advocacy group in the USA. She also co-founded the Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund (AALDEF), and the US Pinoys for Good Governance (USPGG).

### SUSTAINABLE PHILANTHROPY

She is Founder and President of The Lewis College in the Philippines, which offers quality education from K-12 to college, as well as TESDA accredited courses, to her fellow Sorsogonans. About thirty percent of college students are on scholarship.

She also supports church-based microfinance such as People's Alternative Livelihood Foundation of Sorsogon, Inc. (PALFSI) which, since 1998, has lifted 20,000 families out of poverty in the province where she was born.

Loida values her faith, and she was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the National Catholic Reporter in the US. She is fluent in Filipino (including her native dialect in Bicol), English, French and Spanish



159 PROPERTY FROM THE LOIDA NICOLAS LEWIS COLLECTION

## Benedicto Cabrera (b. 1942)

### *Harvest*

signed and dated 2000 (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
24" x 18" (61 cm x 46 cm)

**P 3,400,000**

Many of Benedicto Cabrera's women evoke a certain brand of nostalgia that is derived from old sepia photographs. From his portrayal of indigenous women in their butterfly-sleeved dresses to his iconic portrait of the vagrant Sabel, Bencab presents a classic image of Filipino women that spans the almost 60 years he'd spent as an artist.

His 2000 *Harvest* is another iteration of Bencab's women. Dressed in a bright yellow dress, light denim pants, and a

warm blue shawl, the woman holds in her hands a bundle of harvested grains. In a 1978 interview with Cid Reyes, Bencab indulged in his hesitance on using bright colors, stating, "I have always been partial to dark colors and lots and lots of sienna...I just cannot make a good color combination with colors like yellow, orange, and red." However, the past twenty years seem to have favored Bencab and *Peasant Woman* portrays his works in a different warmer light. She is far from the tortured Sabel – her relaxed posture and serene smile put her at odds with the frenetic and frantic Sabel – but she contains her archetype with her layers and layers of flowing clothes.

Alice Guillermo once wrote in 2007 that the *Sabel* series is the quintessential Ben Cabrera and while *Harvest* is not *Sabel*, it still features Bencab at his finest. Through his innate sense of colors and lyrical composition, this work joins the prestigious ranks of Bencab's Filipino women. (Hannah Valiente)

## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Mango Vendor*

signed and dated 1933 (lower right)

oil on canvas

18 1/2" x 13" (47 cm x 33 cm)

**P 6,000,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo for confirming the authenticity of this lot.

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

*"Faced with Americanization and urbanization, the national identity sought to reaffirm itself in the pastoral life of the Filipinos. The dalagang Filipina was glorified."*

—EXCERPTS FROM ALFREDO ROCES' "AMORSOLO"

*"What first strikes one in Amorsolo is his brilliant technical mastery. There is nothing labored about him; his brushstrokes are broad, sweeping...He is a most sensitive colorist, and may perhaps even be said to have brought a new palette to his art. So strikingly original is his color scheme. And how wonderfully cool his tones are!"*

—IGNACIO MANLAPAZ, IN HIS ESSAY "CERTAIN FILIPINO PAINTERS," PUBLISHED IN THE MAY 1933 ISSUE OF THE PHILIPPINES MAGAZINE (VOL. 29, NO. 1)

The 1930s encapsulate Fernando Amorsolo's "Golden Period." Amorsolo welcomed the prosperous decade showered with much acclaim. In 1931, he became the Philippine representative to the Paris Exposition, exhibiting his work *"The Conversion of the Filipinos,"* which art critic Alfredo Roces describes in his monograph on the artist as one of Amorsolo's "first themes, one which became a favorite over the years. (variations of the theme were *"The First Mass," "The Baptism of Humabon,"* etc.)."

From 1933 to 1934, Amorsolo worked on the murals *"The Dance"* and *"The History of Music"* for Juan Arellano's brainchild, the iconic Manila Metropolitan Theatre.

At the onset of the decade, Amorsolo had become the most famous Filipino painter of his time and certainly the most acclaimed, prolific, and sought-after.

In this charming work at hand from Amorsolo's golden age, we come face-to-face with one of Amorsolo's earliest depictions of his bustling market scene and one of the earliest iterations of the "Mango Vendors" or "Fruit Vendors" subject to come to market. Roces writes in the Amorsolo monograph: *"Through the thirties, Amorsolo remained highly imaginative and active, periodically going outdoors, painting and seeking other subjects... Stimulated by the nostalgia around him for the changing*

*country life, he painted rural life as genre rather than aspects of city life."*

Amorsolo's impressionistic flair is remarkably evident, a foremost influence by the Spanish impressionist Joaquín Sorolla. Characterized by a loose, quick, and "pulsating" brush work and broken colors, the piece exhibit not only the spontaneous quality of *plein air* painting (a spur-of-the-moment character, as particularly evident in the loose rendering of the human figures' faces and their garments) but the artist's genteel disposition as he revels in sweet nostalgia for the glory days of an idyllic countryside, a place he once called home during his youth (Amorsolo spent his boyhood amid vast rice fields and tranquil abaca plantations in Daet, Camarines Norte.).

The piece basks in the warm gaiety of the sunlight. Noticeably, Amorsolo strategically positions his illuminating device in the central subject, the dalaga. This emphasis displays Amorsolo's enduring homage to the image of the *dalagang Filipina*, which, for him, is the consummate personification of what he aims to project in his genre paintings: giving prominence to a kind of enlightened nationalism (amid rapid modernization and Americanization brought by the American colonial masters) that aims to cast light on the pastoral as the fundamental root and earnest collective identity of the Filipino nation. (*Adrian Maranan*)



# An Amorsolo Harvest

*From His Golden Years*



*“Before the war, I used to go to the provinces to paint scenes from life...”*

—FERNANDO AMORSOLO, INTERVIEW WITH JOSE QUIRINO AND PUBLISHED IN HIS PHILIPPINES FREE PRESS ARTICLE “MAN WITH THE GOLDEN BRUSH” (JULY 1958)

**Nguyen Trung** (b. 1940)*Girl Holding Lotus Flower*

signed and dated 1991 (lower right)

oil on canvas

39" x 39" (99 cm x 99 cm)

**P 700,000**

## PROVENANCE

Sothebys, *Southeast Asian Paintings*, Singapore,  
12 October 2003, Lot 114.

Nguyen Trung © cucgallery

A pillar of Vietnamese modern art, Nguyen Trung is widely acclaimed for his figurative realist expressionist paintings. He was born when Vietnam was still under the hegemony of the French Empire under its collective colony known as French Indochina, which consisted of the modern-day nations of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and parts of China.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the country's subsequent unification and embrace of Socialism, reconstruction, remodification, and realignment of values, especially in the cultural and collective sense, took place. Artists conformed to the revolutionary aesthetics of promoting socialist values by producing works of art that mirrored the masses' struggles, sentiments, yearnings, and successes in achieving their liberation: first, from colonialism and, eventually, from imperialism.

Nguyen Trung, who was born and raised in the province of Soc Trang, South Vietnam (the stronghold of the French-backed State of Vietnam and then the US-backed Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) during the Cold War), remained adamant about his artistic maxim of creative individuality, even in the subsequent reunification of Vietnam in 1975 and the triumph of Socialism in the country.

Nguyen chose the more determining path of figurative realist expressionism. He preferred to exalt in his canvas a kind of visual poetry basking in sublime lyricism and ethereal tranquility. He strived to promote Vietnamese traditional values.

Vietnamese women became such endearing muses for Nguyen's own creative emancipation. During the early 1990s, Nguyen shifted back and forth from figuration and abstraction, making him a pioneer of Vietnamese abstract art. But what remains coveted and acclaimed in his outstanding oeuvre is his depiction of Vietnamese women, which he started exploring in the early 1960s and whose graceful femininity is complemented by the delicate forms of the lotus flower, Vietnam's national flower.

A highly meditative piece, this 1991 work depicts a woman dressed in her ethereal áo dài. This traditional Vietnamese dress gained a resurgence by the 1990s; it became a standard everyday attire for many students, office workers, and virtually every Vietnamese woman, whether engaging in casual routines or attending formal events.

The woman can be seen delicately holding a lotus flower with its petals closed. The composition is bathed in a dreamy haze dominated by pastel-like light blues as if suggesting a metaphysical dominion.

In Vietnam, the lotus flower, particularly the white lotus, symbolizes purity of mind and spirit. A flower sacred to the country's three dominant religions (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism), the lotus remains as a metaphor for strength and resilience, for the Vietnamese see the seemingly inviolable purity of the lotus flower amid it being naturally situated in muddy waters. Furthermore, the closing of its petals at night and its invigorating blooming at the onset of dawn evoke a sense of optimism and confidence in whatever the future may hold.

Nguyen then uses this unique attribute of the lotus flower as an all-encompassing symbol of integrity and the capability to rise much stronger above every adversity. As the sacred lotus flower is seen as rising above the limits of space and time, perennially blooming on each occasion, Nguyen expressively espouses the importance every new dawn brings: a renewed chance at living, being, and breathing, a revitalized hope for the gift of a dynamic and transformative enlightenment.

Nguyen Trung is one of Vietnam's national pride; he has represented his country in numerous international exhibitions over the course of his prolific six-decade career, including Paris (1990), Singapore (1992-95), Japan (1996), South Korea (1997, 2000), Italy, France, and the US (1998), Taiwan (1999), Thailand (2001), and the UK (2012). Nguyen's works are in the venerable collections of the Vietnam Fine Art Museum, Ho Chi Minh City Fine Art Museum, Italy's Museo Biblioteca Archivio di Bassano del Grappa, and Singapore's National Gallery and United Overseas Bank. (*Adrian Maranan*)

# Beauty as Serene as a *Lotus Flower*



*“It seems that only art can bring love and peace back to our soul. Only art can bring us that salvation as we become more and more immersed in a modern life without a personality, a living hell full of anger, hatred and violence that we gradually forget to apologize and forgive. We let gestures of love and understanding slip from our memory.”*

—NGUYEN TRUNG

**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)

*Bathers*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1970

oil on canvas

38" x 38" (97 cm x 97 cm)

**P 600,000**



ABOVE: National Artist Jose Joya (4th from left), dinner at Philippine Plaza, Maurice Arcache with newshens Deedee Siytangco (left, foreground), Tere Orendain (beside Joya), Ernie Evora Sioco (second from right) and Thelma Sioson (foreground right) (Photo from Thelma Sioson San Juan)

*Tere Orendain is one of the country's most esteemed lifestyle and culture writers and editors. She was editor-in-chief of the "Life and Leisure" section of the Philippines Daily Express, more popularly known as the Daily Express. Orendain also ser the Women's Journal, one of the country's oldest and longest-running women's magazines, established in 1973.*

*Orendain's creative strength primarily lies in writing about the arts, traveling, food, and hospitality. She had rubbed elbows and shared stories, gossips, and laughter over sumptuous feasts and meals with many of society's best: Maurice Arcache, Deedee Siytangco, Ernie Evora Sioco, Thelma Sioson, Jorge Arago, Marita Manuel, and even National Artist Jose Joya. (Adrian Maranan)*

*B*athers shows Oscar Zalameda's brilliant manipulation of shapes and planes. One of the most renowned Filipino cubists of the 1960s, Zalameda portrays a sophisticated image of the aforementioned swimmers. His signature "soft" cubist style is paired with a harmonious color palette, creating a distinct image despite the abstraction. At the forefront lounges a woman, arm over her head and hip juttud out. Behind her is another woman kneeling and, if one squints, another figure mid-dive. It speaks highly of Zalameda's talent that he can tell an instantly recognizable story in abstract form; he possesses a personal style that saddles the line between abstract and representational, creating a highly harmonious canvas. (Hannah Valiente)

# Zalameda's Portraits of Women For a Woman Writer





163

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**Augusto Albor** (b. 1948)

*Untitled*

signed and dated 1997 (lower right)

oil on canvas

40" x 31 1/2" (102 cm x 80 cm)

**P 280,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank the artist for confirming the authenticity of this lot

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired directly from the artist

Augusto "Gus" Albor has cemented his place as a stalwart of the Philippine art scene. Throughout his illustrious career, Albor mounted almost yearly shows and created an impressive body of work that is distinctive for its minimal color registers, subtle details, and sensual musicality.

It was in 1997, around the time of his show at the Finale Art File and West Galleries, that he created the lot in hand. An abstraction in its purest form, Albor holds precise control over the canvas with his accurate brushstrokes and restrained color schemes, utilizing overlays and underlays to imitate an effect of translucence and a pop of color. Minimalist as his works may be, his oeuvre is built on a painstaking foundation.

"To achieve that Zen-like level of minimalism in one's work, a maximalist work ethos is required," Igan D'Bayan wrote in a Philstar article. Albor's works undergo a process of distillation, of sifting through what is necessary to what isn't and tirelessly pursuing it. Being simple, as The Crucible Gallery's Sari Ortiga said, is so complicated, and Albor's works are veritable proof of that. *(Hannah Valiente)*



**164** PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

**Justin Nuyda** (1944 - 2022)  
*Untitled (Mindscape Search Series)*  
signed and dated 1991 (lower left)  
oil on canvas  
30" x 30" (76 cm x 76 cm)

**P 1,200,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank the artist's estate for confirming the authenticity of this lot

**PROVENANCE**  
Acquired directly from the artist

Justin Nuyda's first and greatest love lies past his canvases and paint brushes – it lies within nature, through the iridescent wings of butterflies.

Along with his father and uncles, young Nuyda would roam through their farms to catch butterflies with their exploration eventually growing to forests and mountains where previously undiscovered butterflies roam freely. An avid lepidopterist, Nuyda's collection grew to become the

fourth-largest collection of Philippine butterflies in the whole world, attracting attention from all corners of the world.

This work was created in 1991 – two years before Nuyda published the first issue of his journal *Fil-Kulisap* – and it bears the labor of his love for butterflies. Using his gestural brushstrokes, Nuyda depicts the mountains he so often frequents in search of his butterflies. In a wide shot, Nuyda offers a unique perspective of his ballpark – from the light blue skies to the white clouds down to the rich brown soil of the mountain, Nuyda fuses the delicate beauty of the butterflies with the awe-inspiring beauty of nature.

Nuyda's abstractions are an ethereal view of the vastly personal inner mindscapes. Through his deft manipulation of elements, his works are imbued with a deeply personal charm and a captivating allure that invites a closer introspection. *(Hannah Valiente)*

# "Emong" Borlongan: *Friendship that Shelters*

**B**arkada forms part of Elmer Borlongan's earlier oeuvre. The artist painted the work at hand when he was still a part of the artists collective "*Sanggawa*," which emerged out of the "*Grupong Salingpusa*" and was founded in December 1994 by Borlongan, Mark Justiniani, Karen Flores, Joy Mallari, and Federico Sievert. *Sanggawa* mainly worked on large-scale paintings and murals and depicted themes of Philippine history, politics, and folklore, wedding them in an exciting intersection that cuts across contemporary Filipino society. The *Sanggawa* painted in a unified style, opposing an individualistic culture and society.

The year Borlongan painted *Barkada*, he had found success in the international arena and relished the savor of heightened global exposure. In 1996, Borlongan was selected as artist-in-residence at the ARCUS Interactive Residence in the Arts at the Ibaraki Prefecture in Japan. This opportunity allows international artists to encounter and experience the Japanese contemporary art scene and promotes regional development through the arts.

By 1996, Borlongan's works had been prominently exhibited in several international galleries, including his 1994 participation at the "Fourth Asian Art Show" at Japan's Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, a 1995 group exhibition at Sydney's Ray Hughes Gallery, and 1996 group shows at the Singapore Art Museum, Brisbane's Queensland Art Gallery, and the Asia Society Galleries in New York.

He also received a travel grant to Sydney, Australia in 1996 from the Australia Center in Manila.

In 1994, Borlongan was conferred the prestigious Cultural Center of the Philippines Thirteen Artists Award with fellow *Salingpusa* artists Justiniani and Montemayor.

*Barkada* also encapsulates Borlongan's artistic maturity: his full embrace of a figurative expressionist visual language, which was, to a certain extent, influenced by his *Sanggawa* period. Of his creative evolution, he succinctly writes in the monograph *Elmer Borlongan: An Ordinary Man, An Extraordinary Life*:

*"I started doing Botong-inspired works in 1982. I was veering away from realistic and impressionist representation of subject matters learned from the Sena school. Victorio Edades influenced my artmaking in terms of form and content using a modern approach. My social realist period was from 1988 up to 1992. My first solo show at Boston Gallery in Cubao in 1993 was moving towards figurative expressionism influenced by Onib Olmedo, Danny Dalena, and Jaime de Guzman."*

Moving away from the influence of Fernando Sena, from whom he received his first artistic training as a young boy (Borlongan would also serve as an apprentice at Sena's workshop, and Sena would be the one to tell Borlongan to hone his artistic prowess at the UP School of Fine Arts.), Borlongan began to incorporate distortion as a heightened visual device emphasizing the miserable human condition, especially that of the ordinary Filipino.

*Barkada* is a ubiquitous Filipino term, an all-encompassing word that, from a denotational viewpoint, means "circle of friends" but can also mean a sense of shared humanity, a chosen family bonded by shared struggles, common interests, and most importantly, a profound sense of belonging and solidarity. In this thought-provoking work, a *barkada* composed of (adolescent) children dressed similarly in oversized white shirts.

The composition is explicitly solemn, characterized by a somber palette, and further heightened by a backdrop possessing a jarring combination of colors.

The subjects' eyes are filled with blackness and emptiness. The girl in the center, possessing a penetrating, haunting gaze, holds a small umbrella, to which her clique takes shelter against the elements. While at first one may think of an inherent teenage angst present in the figures' stances, the pictorial symbol of a small umbrella says otherwise. Here, we are shown a harrowing image of poverty—"*isang kahig, isang tuka*" ("from hand to mouth," having only the meager resources that would be shared by all members of a household).

In another annotation from the Borlongan book, the artist says:

*"I was a volunteer for a foundation helping street kids in Palanan, Makati on Saturdays during the early '90s...The life of the children was a source of inspiration that captured my compassion for the less privileged."*

The figures' faces are rendered similarly, and they all share a similar clothing style, perhaps symbolizing the poor's shared hardships and collective struggle against a fragile socio-economic situation that only caters to the few elite. Their blank stares allude to the phrase "*pagtirik ng mata dahil sa gutom*."

Despite the outpour of international acclaim, Borlongan never once forgot to look back at the plight of his fellow countrymen, emphasizing that the impoverished deserve as much dignity and the right to a decent, nourishing, and comfortable living. (*Adrian Maranan*)





165

**Elmer Borlongan** (b. 1967)

*Barkada*

signed and dated 1996 (upper left)

acrylic on canvas

30" x 24" (76 cm x 61 cm)

**P 2,200,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist  
confirming the authenticity of this lot



ABOVE: Elmer Borlongan (encircled) together with the Salingpusa Artists in the 1990s  
© Pinto Art Museum

**Romeo Tabuena** (1921- 2015)*Still Life*

signed and dated 1989 (lower right)

oil on canvas

36" x 43" (91 cm x 109cm)

**P 600,000**

## PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

Throughout history, still-life portraits have been a staple for many artists. A tableau of the life lived by the humans before they left the canvas, a still-life painting expresses a world devoid of its inhabitants but still bearing their reflections. Even without humans present, the flowers and the bowl of fruits on the table all tell a story – these objective facts are depicted through the subjective lens of the artist, each yielding a different story.

For Romeo Tabuena, his still-life paintings show his inclinations toward the Filipino and Mexican cultures. Born in the Philippines, Tabuena's brief sojourn to Allende, Mexico turned to a permanent residence when he fell in love with the tight-knit artistic community. Here his translucent and fluid forms took on a blocky opaque quality akin to the Mexican sensibilities at the time, bright and luminescent featuring every color on the spectrum.

*Still Life* (1989) features Tabuena's blocky cubist forms. Using vibrant colors, Tabuena depicts several items displayed atop a table – a fan, watermelons, a fruit basket, a jug, and a cage of birds. From the watermelons that are locally grown in these countries to the guitar that feature heavily in each country's local music, these items are culturally loaded in both the Philippines and Mexico.

"[Tabuena is] a gentle soul who appreciated ... the many similarities between Mexico and the Philippines," Bibsy M. Carballo said and his oeuvre shows his ever-growing appreciation. His works transcend geographical boundaries, marrying the culture of his hometown and the country he chose to live in to create culturally and visually vibrant pieces. (*Hannah Valiente*)



Romeo Tabuena:  
*Fruit and Song*





167

**Jose Joya** (1931 - 1995)

*Untitled / Abstract*

signed and dated 1960 (lower right)

oil on wood

11" x 18" (28 cm x 46 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Josefa Joya-Baldovino confirming the authenticity of this lot

**PROVENANCE**

León Gallery, *The Spectacular Mid-Year Auction 2018*,  
June 9, 2018, Lot 67

This is another work that comes between his 1959 "Space Transfiguration" stage and the Yeseria stage. In 1957, Joya went to the United States for further studies. He was exposed to the abstract expressionist movement as it was becoming an establishment there. At the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, Joya fell under the influence of his mentor, Zoltan Sepeshy. Sepeshy was a firm believer in this aesthetic. Joya's abstract expressionism - sometimes known as action painting — was of a more dramatic, bravura laden type. Instead of the palette knife or syringe, he started to use huge brushes and trowels, much like a mason. This work was done in 1960, just two years before the 1964 Venice Biennale, but it paved the way for the period of "breaking loose in Venice".

In 1972, Alfredo Roces told Cid Reyes: "After his travels and scholarship abroad, Joya introduced these large scale

canvases, something not very common at the time. He has carried on with his abstract expressionist paintings, very poetic and lyrical. Then after that, he started to use more vigorous forms, which are closer to the works of de Kooning and characterized by slashes." Also, in 1972, Manuel Duldulao told Cid Reyes: MD: "He was beginning to make a name for himself in the art scene. At that time, to hang a Joya abstraction in your wall was to risk the ridicule of your friends. Cid Reyes: "Why?" MD: "Joya's paintings were then considered visual atrocities. People thought they were done by a child in fifth grade. They were shocked to heart that you had to pay for these paintings. Now the same friends who used to laugh at me 10 years ago are in for another shock." He was of course referring to the sky-high prices that buyers had to pay for a Joya, and that was 1972. Joya's abstract expressionist reputation — of New York school - was still to be given a wider audience with his participation in the 32nd Venice Biennial in 1964, for which had painted very large works in thick paint applied in semi automatist, gestural manner.

Art critic Eric Torres described such works as expressive not much of statements as of states of feeling. "Most of the participating countries had constructed their own pavilions and each cost about P200,000. Because this was the first time that the Philippines had participated in this Biennale, we had been allotted an adequate but small room by the host country. However, this space was good only for one exhibit." But what a huge, lasting legacy from such a small exhibition room. And in the same vein, what an equally huge, lasting legacy from the 1950s New York School.



168

**Kawayan de Guia** (b. 1979)

*Room #5 Agnes Arellano*

dated 2007

mixed media on canvas

39" x 41" (99 cm x 104 cm)

**P 700,000**

**PROVENANCE**

The Drawing Room

**EXHIBITED**

The Drawing Room, "Incubator", 28 July - 19 August 2008.

The Incubator Series would win for Kawayan de Guia the Ateneo Art Award of 2008.

Contemporary Filipino artist Kawayan de Guia pays tribute to a mentor and guide in the work titled Room #5 Agnes Arellano. postmodern and contemporary examinations of present-day Filipino society, as well as reflections on traditional precolonial and colonial culture. His fascination with the convergences among modern, traditional, and indigenous cultures is rooted in personal encounters, notably with family members who passionately champion the arts and culture in their hometown of Baguio.

In this particular piece, de Guia utilizes the artistic practice he had developed over the years to celebrate a fellow artist

that aided de Guia in his works. Filipina sculptor Agnes Arellano is recognized for her surrealist and expressionist creations primarily in plaster, bronze, and cold-cast marble. Arellano's artistic focus can be seen as an exploration of the inner worlds contained within the mind and the soul. De Guia worked with Arellano for two years after finishing high school. During the time, Arellano imparted to him both her techniques and her philosophy. De Guia stated that: "I was still young. In Japan, I stayed in a temple in Saitama. I was very much interested in Buddhism, because of the influence of Agnes. I was very angry at the world at that time. We were all punk. We were really angry because we went through such a frustrating time in school. You know it's a sort of seeking-yourself stuff."

In the work we see figures and forms reminiscent of Arellano's own practice residing within a room. From sculptures that feature a sort of surrealist morphology to scenes that bring about a sense of meditative reflection, de Guia's work is both an homage to a mentor and a testament to how far he has come. *(Jed Daya)*

**Geraldine Javier** (b. 1970)*Odd Sights, Strange Sounds*

dated 2008

oil on canvas

72" x 96" (183 cm x 244 cm)

**P 3,000,000**

## PROVENANCE

Primo Marella Gallery, Milan

Acquired directly from the artist

## EXHIBITED

Primo Marella Gallery, *South East B(l)ooming*, Milan, Italy,

February 10 - April 2, 2009

A common thread amongst the works of Filipina contemporary artist Gerladine Javier is their ability to draw you in through use of uncanny yet subtle ways. Her pieces look and feel they are suspended between reality and the illusory, bringing to light an almost metaphorical existence within what is perceived to be mundane.

Her works are imbued with a sense of profundity, given that Javier herself often focuses on the conceptual aspect of her work rather than any sort of emotional response. In this piece we are let in a room of sorts whose walls are decorated with head mounts, and whose floor is overgrown with wildgrass. Upon first glance, viewers of her work are already thrust upon the surreality of Javier's works. The use of taxidermy as a visual device is nothing new. Javier's work draws similarities to another notable female artist; Georgia O'Keeffe. In O'Keeffe's skull series we are presented with her fascination with the natural forms of skulls, particularly those of animals found in the desert landscape of New Mexico. O'Keeffe worked with various mediums that depicted the remains of different animals, including oil on canvas and pastels. The choice of medium allowed her to experiment with different textures and color palettes, further enhancing the expressive qualities of her representations. The series reflects a deep connection to the environment that surrounded her and a contemplative approach to the cycles of life and death.

In a similar fashion, Javier presents with a new way of seeing things originally thought to be taboo. Here we see ourselves in an in-between. A space where life and death, the primal and the modern, man and nature, exist in a sort of juxtaposition with each other. Yet their opposition is not hostile. Instead, this surreal coming-together of objects and symbols can be read as a descriptive stance on the current state of affairs, wherein no matter how many divisions we draw amongst ourselves, in the end everything will once again collide and coalesce with each other. (*Jed Daya*)







170

## Hugo Yonzon, Jr. (1924 - 1994)

### *Boats*

signed and dated 1959 (lower right)

oil on masonite board

22" x 28" (56 cm x 71 cm)

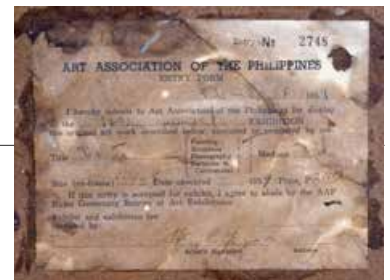
**P 100,000**

#### EXHIBITED

*Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) 12th Annual Exhibition and Competition, 1959*

Hugo Yonzon, Jr.'s *Boats* was the artist's entry to the 12th Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual Exhibition and Competition in 1959, the same event where Joya's now-legendary *Space Transfiguration* bagged the second prize. In this piece, the titular boats are rendered starkly, veering towards an almost geometric manner and towards abstraction.

Before venturing into painting, Yonzon, Jr. was an accomplished cartoonist; he was the brain behind the popular cartoon strips of his time, "*Sakay*" and "*Moy*," published in *The Manila Times*. He had also won the first



prize for caricature at the 1951 AAP Annual and another 1st prize, this time for photography, at the 1953 iteration.

As the 1950s progressed, Yonzon, Jr. slowly transitioned into painting, reaching his flowering as a full-fledged painter in the 7th AAP Annual in 1954, where he won the coveted 1st prize for modern painting for his piece *Harana*. The eminent Fernando Zóbel, writing in his article "The Seventh Annual AAP Art Exhibition," published in the *Philippine Studies* journal, notes that in that year's Annual, "the most interesting work came from comparative newcomers." He would then cite Yonzon, Jr.'s award-winning work as deserving of its accolade.

In the same article, Zóbel describes Yonzon, Jr.'s work as reminiscent of Luz "in its use of a linear, basically geometrical composition" and of Manansala's technique, "particularly in the dramatic use of dark color—also a fitting description for 1959's *Boats*. In addition, Yonzon, Jr.'s emphasis on texture through his employment of seemingly vibrating patches of colors palpably appeals to the tactile imagination. (*Adrian Maranan*)



**Arturo Luz** (1926 - 2021)*Cubi # 6*

signed and dated 2021

stainless steel

5" x 5" x 5" (13 cm x 13 cm x 13 cm)

**P 160,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot



Arturo Luz's swerve towards sculpture in the 1960s was not surprising, least of all to the artist himself. A pioneer of the Philippine Neo-realist movement, Luz first began his career in the arts with painting and sketching, picking up a pen and paper to draw his mother's portrait and discovering his aptitude for the craft in the process. His early works were figurative before veering to abstractions. "The important elements were line, composition, relationships," says Luz regarding the switch. "The net result was that I dropped the subject."

"I think [sculpture is] a very logical step from the kind of painting I do," Luz continues. "I have always had a strong attraction for three-dimensional work ... I like to deal with volume and space."

Made from stainless steel and in Luz's typical small-scale model, *Cubi #6* showcases Luz's aforementioned talent in manipulating volume and space. *Cubi #6* was created at the twilight of Luz's career and thus features his craft at its maturity. A cube balancing on its side, Luz has elevated his geometric minimalism to a three-dimensional form, the empty spaces left within the cube telling as many stories as the sculpted ones do. (*Hannah Valiente*)

**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)*Landscape*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1960

mixed media on paper

15 1/2" x 20" (39 cm x 51 cm)

**P 160,000**

Zalameda's sailboats are not just vehicles upon the water, but vessels carrying the narrative of a well-traveled life. The sailboat is more than a recurring figure; it is a symbol of his worldly travels and a nod to his Filipino heritage. His depiction of sailboats, inspired by the picturesque European coasts, are infused with the lively spirit of his birthplace, Lucban, Quezon.

This work, through its cubist geometry and chromatic harmony, extends an invitation to embrace the dualities of life – the calm and the festive, the local



and the international. Reflecting on his career, Zalameda's paintings stand as a testament to his perception of the world as a place of bliss, a continuous festival of colors and shapes. In this seascape,

the sailboats are a celebration of Zalameda's artistic journey, a journey marked by international prestige yet anchored in the heritage of his homeland. (*Ysabella Vistan*)

**Justin Nuyda** (1944 - 2022)

*Mindscape: Moods of Batanes*  
signed and dated 2008 (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
36" x 48" (91 cm x 122 cm)

**P 2,200,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank the artist's estate for confirming the authenticity of this lot

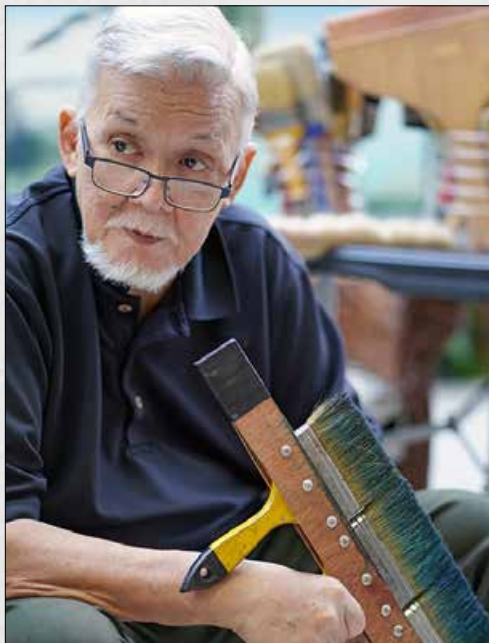
**PROVENANCE**

Acquired directly from the artist

Nuyda's abstractions serve as a conduit to his internal world, rendering visible the landscapes of his psyche. These mindscapes are more than mere aesthetic ventures; they embody a philosophical inquiry into perception and cognition. This space does not merely depict a scene but encapsulates a dynamic process of seeking and perceiving, a visual metaphor for the cognitive act of exploration.

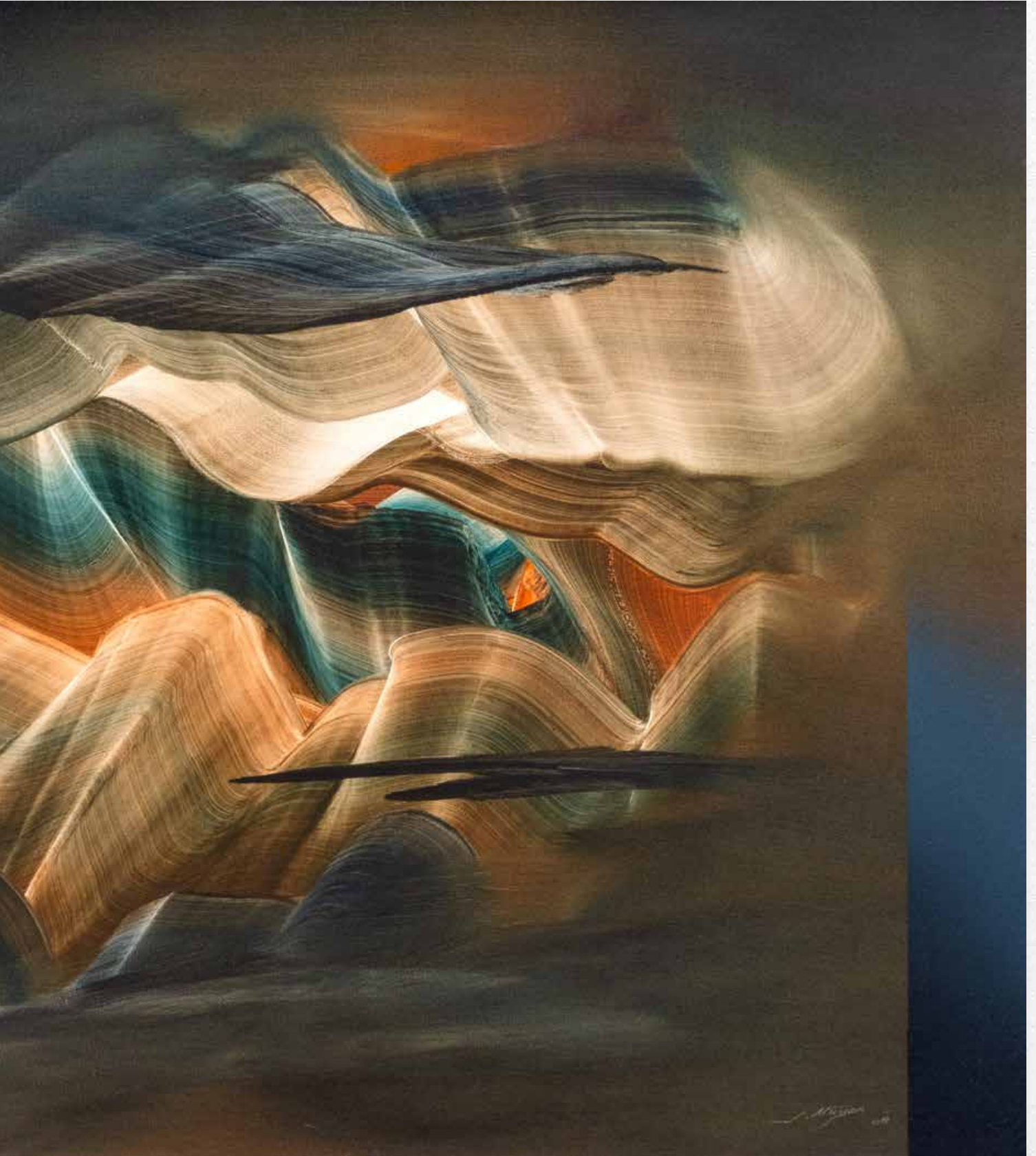
Tapping into his experience as a lepidopterist, the artist creates his renowned mindscape that blends the ornate patterns and vibrant colors of butterfly wings. This osmotic fusion of art and science results in a hypnotizing representation of the mind's terrain, where the delicate beauty of butterflies intertwines with the vastness of the natural world.

"Mindscape: Moods of Batanes" offers a panoramic interpretation of Batanes' topography, a locale renowned for picturesque landscapes. Through a deft manipulation of chromatic and formal elements, the artist constructs an immersive experience that transcends mere representation, inviting a contemplation of the scene's intrinsic charisma while endowing it with an enigmatic allure. (*Ysabella Vistan*)



ABOVE: Justin Nuyda in his studio





## Rafael Enriquez y Villanueva (1850 - 1937)

### *La Bailaora (The Flamenco Dancer)*

signed and dated 1881 (upper left)

oil on canvas

24" x 20" (61 cm x 51 cm)

**P 800,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Artcurial, Sale of Old Masters & 19th Century Art, France, 23 September 2023, Lot 528, titled Portrait de Jeune Femme à la Rose (Portrait of a Young Woman with a Rose)



ABOVE: Rafael Enriquez (seated leftmost, with the first faculty of the School of Fine Arts of the University of the Philippines).

Like Luna and Hidalgo, Rafael Enriquez was among the ilustrados who found their metier in Madrid and Paris. Born in Naga, then called Nueva Caceres, he would next take the familiar route of study at the Ateneo Municipal and then the Universidad de Santo Tomas, both in Manila. He also enrolled in the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura, then under the direction of Don Agustin Saez, where he had his first artistic training, according to the eminent biographer of Filipino men of art and science, E.A. Manuel.

He would next sail to Spain to study law and like Hidalgo, once he had discharged his familial duties would enter the world of fine arts at the Royal Academy of San Fernando in Madrid.

He would, however, find the French capital and its more libertarian atmosphere more conducive to his art.

In 1879 he would move to Paris and stay for the next eight years, the same period in which this work at hand was created.

Enriquez would become a noted portraitist and his sitters would include European aristocracy such as the Marques de Rivera, the Marques del Togo del Valle as well as the Duque de Banns, in no small part as a result of marrying into their circle. He would marry a noblewoman from Antequera, Andalucia, the daughter of the Marques de Zela.

His daughter would recall in later years that the best of his works were to be found in Europe where he lived longest and had the best commissions. This is true indeed for the work at hand, *La Bailaora (The Flamenco Dancer)*, the portrait of a young flower of Andalucia — from his wife's hometown — and its spring festivals or ferias, where song, dance and romance are in the air.



The dancer is dressed in the traditional black and red of the flamenco, a richly embroidered manton de Manila thrown on her shoulders. These large shawls were favored by the performers to cover their arms, their swirling long fringes accenting their movements. In her hair is the traditional gold peineta (comb) and roses. Enriquez has used the lightest hand to outline the tendrils of her hair, the red coral beads of her necklace, flushed cheeks and pretty smile. Roses are particularly Spanish symbols of the flamenco, the bullfights, the parades — and courtship. Enriquez has painted two roses, one a bud, the other in full bloom as symbols of the promise and fulfillment of love. (Lisa Guerrero Nakpil)

Rafael Enriquez:  
*The Flamenco Dancer of Andalusia*



## Santiago Bose (1949 - 2002)

### *August Deities*

signed and dated 1976 (verso)

mixed media

44" x 32" x 2" (112 cm x 81 cm x 5 cm)

**P 400,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Government Service Insurance System (GSIS)

A common answer to the question: *What is Contemporary Art?* is oftentimes along the lines of picking a specific date or decade in which art, more or less, began to shed off its predominantly Modernist inclinations. Others might suggest that Contemporary Art is Modernism's logical next step given advancements in technology. While some posit that Contemporary Art is merely a chronological marker, pertaining to art created during (arguably) the 80s to the present day no matter its style or subject. But such answers do not seem to satisfy. For if they did, scholars alike would no longer be using such a question as a fundamental jumping point for their practice. Though vague and obtuse, in a place where words cannot easily reach is a nagging feeling that there are works whose ethos cannot be located purely within the Modern; and to call them contemporary merely only because of happenstance does not fit the bill either. These works are unabashedly novel, but more importantly striking in the way they are able to dissect the world around them. The works of Santiago Bose belong to such a group.

Though one cannot deny the talents of Bose, it is important to note that his artistic practice was not born in a vacuum. The philosopher Thomas Kuhn posits that great ideas are not merely born from bouts of genius, but are products of their time, circumstance, and culture as well. Kuhn introduced the concept of "paradigm shifts" to describe the fundamental changes in the scientific worldview that occur when a prevailing scientific paradigm is replaced by a new one. According to Kuhn, scientific progress is not a smooth, cumulative process but rather a series of revolutionary changes. Kuhn distinguished between "normal science" and periods of scientific revolution. In normal science, researchers work within an accepted paradigm, solving puzzles and anomalies that arise within that framework. Normal science is characterized by a stable set of beliefs, methods, and practices shared by a scientific community. One can argue that such an approach can also be applied to art. Among the reasons as to why the Sistine Chapel was adorned with High Renaissance instead of Abstract Expressionism was because of the paradigm of what art was and what it is allowed to be. Such can be said for Bose, who developed his practice in a not only rapidly-changing and industrial landscape, but one that is increasingly aware of its surroundings.



*August Deities* acts as an object of remembrance. Comprising materials and objects once thought to be antithetical to art, the work presents itself as aesthetically and culturally aware of its existence. Here we see figures rising from, or perhaps bathing in some sort of river; their faces obscure but their body bare. Their background features a landscape that the work may be read as among Bose's foray into religiously and mysticism; but in a mode that is not entirely idolatry, but one that practices reverence through a sense of awareness. The materiality of the work can be interpreted as a critique of the establishment that came before it. Thus, *August Deities* is an act of remembrance in the way it reflects an awareness of what came before the contemporary condition, a recognition of our present predicament, and a call to action for what is yet to come. (*Jed Daya*)





176 PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

**Justin Nuyda** (1944 - 2022)

*Frozen in Time*

signed and dated 1988 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 34" (61 cm x 86 cm)

**P 1,400,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank the artist's estate for confirming the authenticity of this lot

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired directly from the artist

Mindscapes, or the mental landscape with which an individual operates to understand their thoughts, emotions, and feelings, feature heavily in the oeuvre of abstractionist Justin Nuyda. With each mindscape unique and personal to the individual, Nuyda's ethereal works explore the gripping inner world that constantly shifts throughout time.

The 1988 *Frozen in Time* is a view into a winding inner landscape. Using a monochromatic icy blue, *Frozen in Time* contains the sweeping hills and valleys of someone's mind. Blue often connotes wisdom, serenity, and stability but icy hue used by Nuyda twists the meaning of the color – it is now cold and nigh unforgiving. The mindscape is now a frozen desert to be mindful of.

Justin Nuyda is known as one of the pillars of Philippine modern art. An avid lepidopterist, both the butterflies and nature itself are a mainstay in his works. *(Hannah Valiente)*





177

**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)

*El Obispo (The Bishop)*

signed and dated 1965 (lower right)

oil on canvas

47" x 41" (119 cm x 104 cm)

**P 700,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Europe

Aside from his charming vistas and exuberant landscapes, Oscar Zalameda was a known portraitist of society's *crème de la crème*—prominent figures in politics, business, entertainment, and even religion.

*El Obispo* was painted in 1965 during Zalameda's extensive international exposure marked by exhibitions at New York's Asia House Society and Galerie Achard (1964 and 1965, respectively), Mexico's Palacio Nacional de Bellas Artes (1965), and Rome's Galleria Il Carpine

(1965). The work depicts an unnamed bishop in his full regalia. At his back is a religious coat of arms with a banner bearing the inscription "Mihi vivere Christus est," a Latin epitaph that means "For me to live is Christ." It is a shortened version of the passage from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians (1:21), "Mihi enim vivere Christus est et mori lucrum," which translates to "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Zalameda imbues the sitter with a dignified bearing fitting for such a prominent position within the Catholic Church hierarchy. *El Obispo* is a veritable reminder of Zalameda at his absolute creative prime. (*Adrian Maranan*)

**Ronald Ventura** (b. 1973)*Toxic*

signed and dated 2011 (lower left)  
oil on canvas  
48" x 36" (122 cm x 91 cm)

**P 4,000,000**



Ronald Ventura © Lifestyle Asia

It would be disingenuous to speak of Filipino contemporary art without mentioning the contributions of Ronald Ventura. Ventura's creations present a collage of diverse elements drawn from pop culture, art history, and everyday life.

At the core of Ventura's artistic philosophy is a rejection of artistic confines, a conscious departure from the establishment of a cohesive narrative. In doing so, he invites his audience into a realm where traditional boundaries blur, giving rise to a new aesthetic that challenges preconceived notions. This defiance of convention has not only widened the scope of Filipino art but has also redefined the parameters of artistic possibility in the Philippines.

The emergence of what can be labeled as a new breed of Filipino maximalism finds its roots in Ventura's innovative approach. His artworks serve as a beacon for artists seeking to push the boundaries of their creativity, encouraging them to embrace the abundance of possibilities within the realm of artistic expression. Ventura's influence extends beyond the confines of his canvas, permeating the broader artistic community and inspiring a generation of artists to explore the limitless potential inherent in the fusion of diverse elements.

In Ventura's 2011 work titled *Toxic*, his groundbreaking approach to maximalism is coupled with another deep-seated interest of his; the steampunk aesthetic. Though the style is nothing new, with the earliest examples of the style popping up during the 80s, Ventura helps take steampunk beyond its predominantly Western and Victorian dispositions. He does so by incorporating a biomorphic and almost ecological sense to his works. This can be seen in this piece wherein the hard-edged and industrial elements are not only depicted alongside organic materials, but fused within them, creating a sense of harmony not only in its composition but within the lived worlds of the piece.

Ronald Ventura's imprint on Filipino contemporary art is indelible, transcending mere acknowledgment to a celebration of his transformative impact. His artworks, characterized by their multiplicity, fragmentation, and rejection of cohesive narratives, have paved the way for a Filipino maximalism that continues to shape and redefine the landscape of contemporary art in the Philippines. (*Jed Daya*)

Ventura  
*A Modern Jungle of Dreams*



**Lao Lianben** (b. 1948)*Buddha*

signed (lower left)

dated 2007

mixed media on burlap

22" x 20" (56 cm x 51 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Blanc Gallery confirming the authenticity of this lot

One is hard-pressed to describe a Lao Lianben piece without evoking its Zen Buddhist inspiration. Though not a practitioner himself, the impregnable image of Buddha provides a never-ending well of inspiration for Lao whose works embody the simplicity espoused by the religion.

Siddhartha Gautama, most known as the Buddha, is a śramaṇa (a wandering ascetic) and religious teacher who professes a life of mendicancy and meditation. This meditation is highlighted in his 2007 work aptly titled *Buddha*.

In *Buddha*, Lao invites his viewers to revel in the quietude as Buddha immerses himself in his meditation. There are three main types of depictions of the Buddha images – first the sthānaka or the standing Buddha, the sayana the reclining Buddha, and the āsana or the seated Buddha. Lao's Buddha imitates the latter form, with his hands resting palm upward on his lap in *dhyāna mudrā*.

Among the teachings of Buddha is the *Satipatthāna Sutta* (and the subsequent *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta*), the foundation of the contemporary Buddhist meditation practice. To meditate, one must focus on their body (*kāyā*), contemplating on their consciousness (*cittā*) and the teachings (*dhammas*) as they do so.

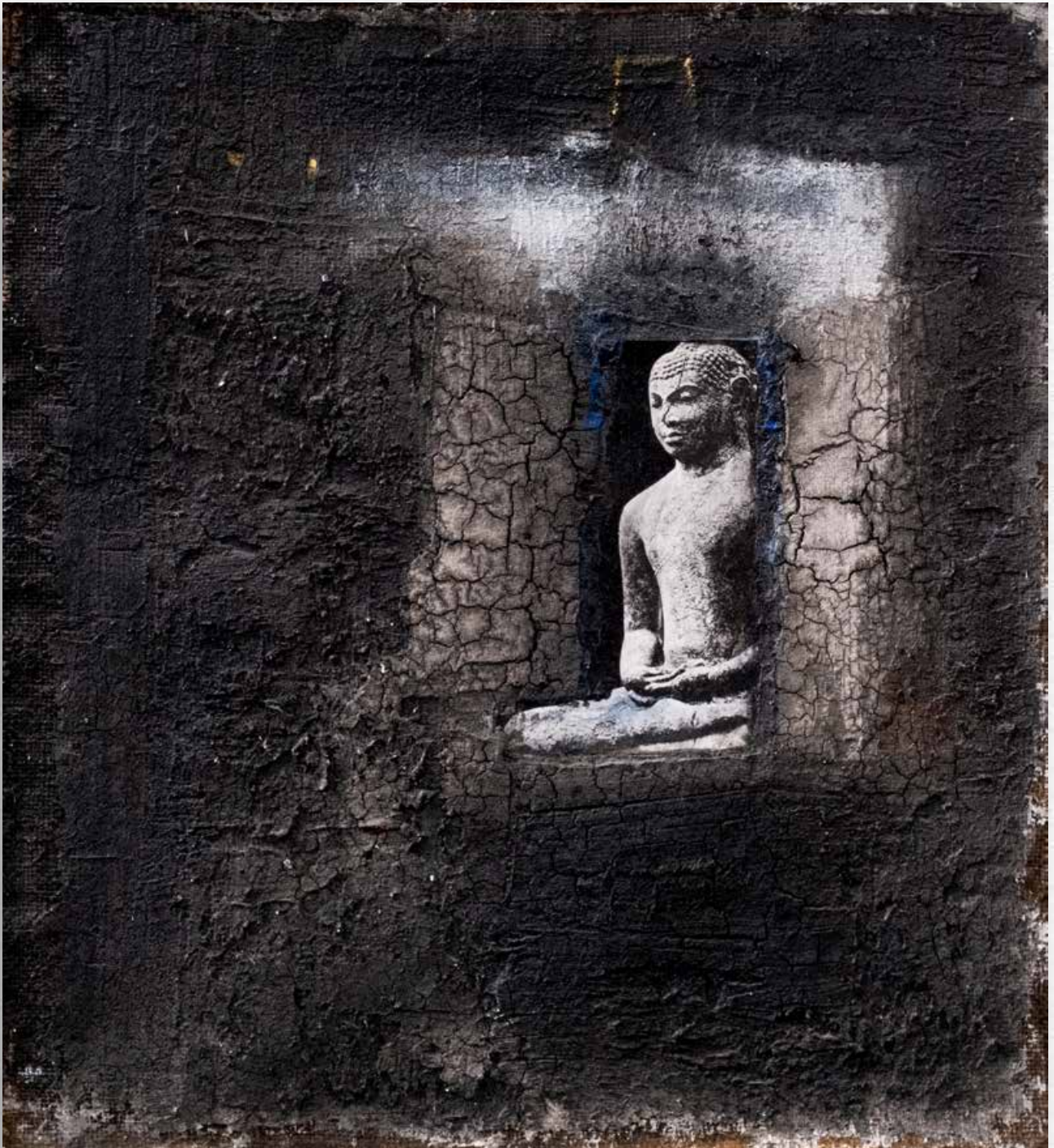
Here, Lao puts into the forefront the very essence of his works: introspection. In a fast-paced world where slowing down means possibly missing out on a multitude of things, meditation is a daunting task. Yet, Lao puts a premium on contemplation, encouraging his viewers to see for themselves the gateway to spiritual enlightenment brought about by deep deliberation and purposeful meditation.

As written by Bodhidharma (founder of Zen Buddhism): "Not thinking about anything is Zen. Once you know this, walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, everything you do is Zen ... Freeing oneself from words is liberation." Through *Buddha*, Lao reminds us that amidst the hustle and bustle one experiences daily, they must immerse themselves in meditation and quietude, taking on the winding path toward enlightenment. (*Hannah Valiente*)



# Lao Lianben

*Discovering the Secret Buddha*





180

**Hernando R. Ocampo** (1911 - 1978)

*a) Abstract*

ca. 1960  
oil on board  
11" x 8 1/2" (28 cm x 22 cm)

*b) Abstract*

ca. 1960  
oil on board  
11" x 8 1/2" (28 cm x 22 cm)

**P 400,000**

PROVENANCE  
Acquired directly from the artist

The visual language of abstractionist and master colorist Hernando R. Ocampo is wholly unique to himself. His distinct interlocking shapes with clear-cut colors herald Ocampo as the Father of Philippine Modern Abstraction, a fitting title for one of the significant figures of neo-realism in the Philippines.

Two abstract pieces of Ocampo hail from his self-proclaimed "transitional" period that spanned from 1945 to 1963. Geringer Art described this as a "period of intense creativity" with a proclivity for a more stylized and more abstract design, color, and texture. This transitional period also saw the opening of the Philippine Art Gallery (PAG), where many modernist painters found their second home. These modernist inclinations translated into vibrant yellows and warm reds, abstract yet emotional. His composition is highly organic and fluid, juxtapositioning different broken color strokes following the style of the Impressionists.

Ocampo's sense of colors is highly impressive. "His colors are rich," critic Ricaredo Demetillo writes, "suggestive of beneficence and tenderness, pure greens, warm reds and oranges, lovely purples and juicy yellows." These pieces display Ocampo's mastery of color, tonal values, and textures, making the work an aesthetic experience for the viewer to enjoy. Ocampo's paintings are dynamic, resonating widely and ingraining itself in contemporary Filipino tastes. *(Hannah Valiente)*



181

**Juvenal Sansó** (b. 1929)

*Viridian Coast*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1970

acrylic on paper

21 1/4" x 30 1/2" (54 cm x 77 cm)

**P 800,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Fundacion Sansó confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE  
Galeria Lienzo

The landscapes of Juvenal Sanso straddle the line of dreamlike and surreal, evoking a wistful image in proof of his mastery of the craft. Subdued yet poignant, this Sanso lot at hand entitled *Viridian Coast* marries the iridescent quality of the moonlight dappling through the darkening water as the jagged quality of the rockbed.

A poetic painter, Sanso's enigmatic works reflect his journey. A pilgrim in a never ending pursuit of his art, he rarely remains long in one place. This restlessness results in a juxtaposition of serenity and anguish, an emotion that he achieves with an effortless finesse. "Sanso is a contemplative poet," said Le Figaro, a French daily morning newspaper. "His landscapes that seem fantastic are authentic." (*Hannah Valiente*)



182

**Federico Aguilar Alcuaz** (1932 - 2011)

*Untitled (Still Life)*

signed and dated 1960 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 32" (61 cm x 81 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Christian M. Aguilar confirming the authenticity of this lot

Though known for his abstractions, Federico Aguilar-Alcuaz presented us a unique perspective on light and the material world through his still lifes, meticulously painted within the serene confines of his studio, where time was a generous companion to reflection. What likely constitutes the enigma of Alcuaz's artistic prowess is his genuine approach to life, nature, and the expansive world. This essence reverberates authentically in his oeuvre, where a refined and sophisticated perspective governs his art seamlessly and without interruption, minimizing the intrusion of commonplace considerations.

In the realm of his artistic process, Alcuaz derived immense pleasure from his chosen materials, showcasing an adept ability to bring forth their optimal qualities and unveil the mysteries of color and tone. His art is a testament to his delight in the tactile and the chromatic, as he skillfully navigated the canvas, translating his unique way of seeing and feeling into a composition that stands as a testament to his unwavering dedication to the pure and uninterrupted expression of his artistic vision. *(Jed Daya)*





183

**Jojo Legaspi** (b. 1959)

*Untitled*

signed (lower right) and dated 2007 (verso)

pastel on paper

39 1/2" x 27 1/2" (100 cm x 70 cm)

**P 1,400,000**

PROVENANCE  
The Drawing Room

Jose "Jojo" Legaspi, with a primary focus on psychology and memory, interprets the human condition and personal experiences using subdued colors, simple lines, and minimalistic backgrounds. Renowned for his extensive use of monochrome, he portrays figures in states of distress, repression, and isolation. Although his works are often characterized as unsettling, it is the provoked existential unease that gives these explicit visualizations a profound impact. This particular work by Legaspi takes an arguably more subtle approach. Wherein the often explicit nature

of his practice is now hidden within the subtle yet eerie gesture of the figure. Here we see a woman's fingers in a pointing position, gesturing towards something beyond the frame. Yet her eyes are fixed upon the viewer. Is the work and act of condemnation? If so, who or what is it pertaining to? Perhaps it could also be an invitation. One that critiques our subconscious decision to participate in certain acts ingrained to us as members of society.

Legaspi earned degrees in zoology and biology from the University of Sto. Tomas before pursuing fine arts. His interests span exploring mainstream perspectives on religion, sex, and gender identity in Philippine society. Influenced by his upbringing in a family of artists and intellectuals, his artistic approach is intellectual. Legaspi sees himself as a philosophical artist, creating art not entirely for entertainment but to provoke thought and disturb the comfortable. (*Jed Daya*)



# Jorge B. Vargas (1890 - 1980)

## *Public Servant with a Legacy of the Arts*

Amongst the politicians left to run the country in the face of incoming Japanese troops, Jorge B. Vargas had certainly left his mark on Philippine history.

Born on 24 August 1890 in Negros Occidental, Vargas first began his political career as the secretary of Speaker of the House of Representatives Sergio Osmeña before becoming the secretary of the Senate President Manuel L. Quezon in 1919. Quezon eventually became the first president of the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1935.

Vargas and Quezon's close political relationship was evident when Quezon appointed Vargas as the Executive Secretary to the President in 1935, gaining the nickname of "Little President" due to his role as Quezon's "eyes and ears" in various government corporations.

During the Pacific War, Vargas was appointed the Mayor of the newly created City of Greater Manila. Under his leadership, he declared Manila an "Open City" in order to spare it from possible destruction.

Vargas also served as the first Philippine Ambassador to Japan from 1943 to 1945, where he was conferred the distinction of the Order of the Rising Sun, First Class on October 1, 1943 alongside Jose P. Laurel.

Beyond public service, Vargas was also a patron of the arts. He was an avid collector and was a member of, among others, *Asociación Filatélica de Filipinas*, Art Association of the Philippines, and the Philippine Booklovers Society.

Towards his twilight years in March 1978, Vargas donated his personal collection of memorabilia to his alma mater, the University of the Philippines. This became the foundation of the Jorge B. Vargas Museum, which started as a private museum in a Mandaluyong compound in 1983 before the collection was transferred to the UP Diliman campus in 1986.

Vargas—as a patriot and a patron—held an important role in preserving both Philippine sovereignty and Philippine art. *(Hannah Valiente)*



TOP: Jorge B. Vargas (1890-1980) with President Manuel L. Quezon; BELOW AND NEXT PAGE: Various of Jorge B. Vargas; Photos collection of the Jorge B. Vargas Filipiniana Foundation



# Juan Luna's Idyll of Romance

## "Idilio" of Perfect Love

In the decade that 'Idilio' was painted, Juan Luna was at the zenith of his fame: In 1881, 'The Death of Cleopatra' had won a silver at the Madrid Exposition, trumped shortly thereafter by a gold in 1884 for 'Spoliarium'. It was a victory that would win the devotion of the general public in Spain, (not to mention the Philippines), attract the admiration of the Spanish King — with the happy aftermath of persuading his beloved Paz Pardo de Tavera to marry him in 1886.

'Idilio (Idyll)' has a special meaning in the Spanish language: not merely the peace of perfect happiness, but a kind of love that is dreamlike and other-worldly.

Juan Luna's "Idilio" is set in a fairytale place, somewhere between night and day: A dark, mysterious forest surrounds a nymph, two tall trees are backlit by the fiery reds of sunset. The beauty wears flowers in her hair and she is surrounded by purple irises that are clearly painted as if it were daylight. Luna intends to convey the moment when life and time have come to a standstill. It's a magical garden of love. He paints the mythical character in the garments of the 19th century, with a draped corset. The color of her robe is a rich gold, the folds outlined in creamy streaks of impasto, as are the petals in her hair.

"Idilio (Idyll)" is a romantic twin parable of a joyful period in this painter-patriot's life: when he would have achieved both artistic and personal fulfillment, the golden age of happiness that created the spectacular "Hymen oh Hyménée". The maiden captured in love's thoughts could easily have been one of the ten bridesmaids depicted in his opus depicting a Roman wedding. It's a heady combination of rich silks, symbolic flowers, and a beautiful love-struck woman.

Luna, a keen student of Roman and Greek mythology, portrays a virgin goddess — a depiction of 'Iris', goddess of sea and sky and thus protectress of the rainbow, represented by the blooms in the painting. She is also the picture of idealized love, the 'Idyll' herself, lost in her own imagination, enthralled (like Luna) with the very idea of love and its perfection.



ABOVE: Collection of the Filipinas Heritage Library with the permission of the Jorge B. Vargas Filipiniana Foundation

The great Alfonso R. Ongpin, collector, scholar, and friend of Juan Luna's son, Andres Luna de San Pedro, would state in an interview in *This Week Magazine* in 1957: "Contrary to the suppositions of some art experts, Luna made several copies of his works. He made copies of the *Blood Compact*, the *Battle of Lepanto*, *People and Kings*, *Cristo*, and *Madre del Amor Hermoso*. In fact, I had the good fortune and opportunity to admire these original canvases with their copies and preliminary sketches before they were destroyed, converted into ashes, at the liberation of Manila in 1945."

Two photographs are now in the repository of the Filipinas Heritage Library that reference two separate works. The first, with a frame identical to the work at hand, is not described with a date. The second one is titled "Idilio — 1899". Both are by Juan Luna but are of different sizes and with different details. Both have been described as from the Jorge B. Vargas collection.

The work at hand is therefore the earlier of the two. "Idilio" is clearly one of those works that enthralled Juan Luna, in the same way that his great masterpieces "Blood Compact" and the "Battle of Lepanto" pre-occupied him. It is a depiction not of glory and war but of love and peace.



184 PROPERTY FROM THE DON JORGE B. VARGAS COLLECTION

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**Juan Luna y Novicio** (1857 - 1899)

*Idilio (Idyll)*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1880s

oil on canvas

28 1/2" x 15" (72 cm x 38 cm)

**P 4,000,000**



LOT 158

Juan Luna y Novicio (1857 - 1899)

*Landscape in Bilbao*

LVNA





LOT 38

**Roberto Chabet** (1937 - 2013)

*Window*



# INDEX

## *Paintings and Sculptures*

**A**  
 Abueva, Napoleon 67-68, 69-70, 71  
 Aguilar Alcuaz, Federico 162, 309  
 Aguinaldo, Lee 43-44, 171-172  
 Albor, Augusto 28, 201, 283  
 Amorsolo, Fernando 37-38, 78, 191-192,  
 219, 220, 247-248,  
 255-256, 257-258,  
 267-268, 277-278  
 Antonio, Angelito 98, 231-232

**B**  
 Belleza, Norma 238  
 Bitanga, Rosario 1  
 Blanco, Jose 1  
 Borlongan, Elmer 285-286  
 Bose, Santiago 300-301  
 Buenaventura, Teodoro 194

**C**  
 Cabrera, Benedicto 2, 79, 103-104, 173,  
 177-178, 221, 276  
 Castrillo, Eduardo 32, 246  
 Chabet, Roberto 57-60, 61-62  
 Cruz, Jigger 222  
 Cruz, Marina 260

**D**  
 de Guia, Kawayan 63, 290  
 dela Rosa, Fabian 18

**E**  
 Enriquez, Francesca 166

**G**  
 Galang, Marciano 45-46  
 Galicano, Romulo 39, 165  
 Garcia, Nona 17  
 Go, Ayka 202

**H**  
 Hidalgo, Félix Resurrección 239-242

**I**  
 Imao, Abdulmari 245

**J**  
 Javier, Geraldine 291-292  
 Joya, Jose 53-54, 153-154,  
 229-230, 271, 289  
 Justiniani, Mark 2

**L**  
 Lamarroza, Prudencio 27  
 Legaspi, Cesar 101-102, 117-118,  
 163-164  
 Legaspi, Jojo 310  
 Lianben, Lao 16, 252, 261-262,  
 305-306  
 Limcaco-Dans, Araceli 169  
 Lorenzo, Diosdado 217-218  
 Lozano, Jose Honorato 233-236  
 Luna, Juan 113-116, 273-274,  
 311-314  
 Luz, Arturo 20, 47-48, 72,  
 80, 85, 87-88, 159-160,  
 263-264, 294

**M**  
 Magsaysay-Ho, Anita 73-76  
 Malang Santos, Mauro 95-96, 249  
 Manansala, Vicente 35-36, 39, 40,  
 157-158, 161, 187-188

**N**  
 Nuyda, Justin 8, 86, 243, 249, 284,  
 295-296, 301

**O**  
 Ocampo, Hernando R. 29-30, 52,  
 93-94, 307  
 Olazo, Romulo 6, 55-56, 170, 251  
 Olmedo, Onib 167-168, 175  
 Orlina, Ramon 31  
 Ossorio, Alfonso 223-224

**P**  
 Pacquing, Bernardo 64, 221, 272  
 Pineda, Jorge 193

**R**  
 Reyes, Cid 51  
 Reyes, Marc Aran 203-204  
 Rodriguez Sr., Manuel 65-66

**S**  
 Saguil, Nena 21-26, 99-100, 119-120,  
 199-200  
 Samonte, Rodolfo 49, 50  
 Sansó, Juvenal 4, 15, 91-92, 244, 250,  
 308  
 Santos, Jose John III 195-198  
 Severino, Lino 176  
 Silverio, Dante 32

**T**  
 Tabuena, Romeo 5, 155-156, 287-288  
 Trung, Nguyen 279-280

**U**  
 Uhing, Brian 205-206

**V**  
 Ventura, Ronald 83-84, 303-304  
 Villanueva, Rafael Enriquez y 297-298  
 Vitalis, Macario 77, 111-112

**W**  
 Westendorp, Betsy 3, 19, 269-270  
 Wilwayco, Edwin 7

**Y**  
 Yonzon Hugo 293

**Z**  
 Zaballero, Phyllis 174  
 Zalameda, Oscar 97, 237, 259, 281-282,  
 294, 302  
 Zóbel, Fernando 89-90, 225-228

## *Antiques and Ephemera*

**A**  
 A Kamagong Comoda with Paw Feet 141-144  
 A Kamagong Ilocano Comoda 183-184  
 A Kinabigat / Figurated King Post 107  
 A Large Round Table 147-148  
 A Malacañang Carlos Trece Armchair 139-140  
 A Mesa Altar (Sheraton) 135-136  
 A Mesa Altar in the Baliuag Style 145-146  
 A Neoclassical Kamgong Bookcase on Stand 149-150  
 A Pair of Angels Bearing Torcheres 123-124  
 A Santo Tomas De Villanueva OSA Relleve 129-130  
 An "Olympic" Batangas Altar Table 185-186  
 An Archaic Seated Bu'lul 108

**E**  
 Emilio Jacinto (attrib.) 213-216  
 "Katipunan nang manga A. N. B. – Sa may nasang makisanib sa Katipunang ito" ("The Kartilya")

**F**  
 Figurated Stool / Small Table with Three Seated Caryatids 110  
 Attributed to The School of Taguiling

**G**  
 Grooved Red Marble-Top Center Table 137-138

**J**  
 Jan Huygen van Linschoten 209-210

**L**  
 Laurent Fries/ Martin Waldseemüller / Claudius Ptolemy 207-208

**P**  
 Pair of Ecclesiastical Armchairs 132  
 Pair of Seated Bu'lul 109  
 Pay Slip for the Tiradores de la Muerte or the "Marksmen of Death" 211-212

**S**  
 San Miguel Arcangel 125-128  
 Santa Ines de Roma, Virgen y Martir 121-122  
 Segmented Dining Table 133-134

**T**  
 The Majestic Lopez Dining Table by Osmundo 179-182  
 Three Filipino Art Nouveau Frames 265-266

**U**  
 Unidentified Apostle 131



LOT 136

**Félix Resurrección Hidalgo** (1855 - 1913)  
*Barcos de la Vela (Sailboats)*

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León Gallery, all the participants of the event, processes, and transactions shall be guided accordingly by these rules:

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LOT	DETAILS	BID AMOUNT

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I recognize and concur that I will bid in conformity with the said Terms and Conditions.  
I am accountable for the information I have provided above, and in the event that my bank details may have changed, I will inform Leon Gallery immediately.

Signature over printed name



LOT 129

Alfonso Ossorio (1916 - 1990)

*Arimula*



378  
B. BORLONGAN  
1998

LOT 165

**Elmer Borlongan** (b. 1967)  
*Barkada*

(BACK COVER): LOT 89

**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)  
*Vendors*

León Gallery

FINE ART & ANTIQUES

FERNANDO AMORSOLO (1892 - 1972)

*Paoay Church*

signed and dated 1958 (lower right)

oil on canvas

12 1/2" x 18" (32 cm x 46 cm)



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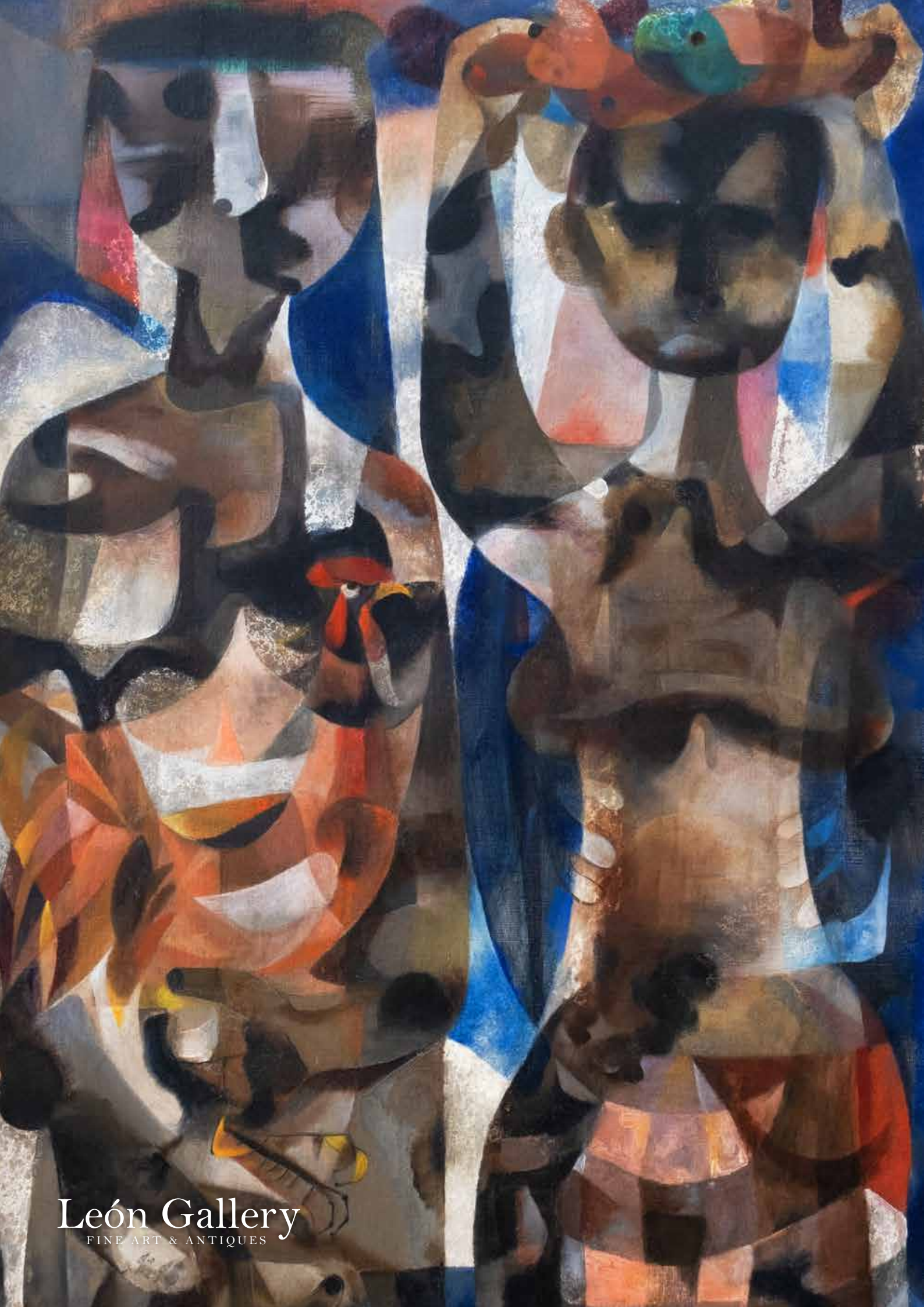
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