



León Gallery  
FINE ART & ANTIQUES

# The Kingly Treasures Auction 2024

30 NOVEMBER 2024 | 2:00 PM

**INCLUDING LOTS SOLD TO BENEFIT  
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA (ISM)  
FILIPINO SCHOLARS PROGRAM**





## Auction

30 November 2024  
Saturday, 2:00 PM

## Preview

Saturday to Friday  
23 - 29 November 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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FRONT COVER

LOT 31

**Carlos "Botong" V. Francisco** (1912 - 1969)  
*Tinikling No. 2*

LOT 21

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)  
*Rice Fields*



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Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1914 - 2012)

*Lavanderas by the Stream*

ANITA MAGSAYSAY-HO  
1984





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Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

*Little Girl*





# Message

*In support of The International School Manila  
Filipino Scholars Program*

The Filipino Scholarship Program at International School Manila (ISM) began in SY 1961-1962. For more than half a century, the Filipino Scholars Program has changed the lives of over two hundred students, and in some cases even the lives of their families. Today, the school currently has 25 Filipino Scholars, five in each level from Grade 8 to 12, who are some of the brightest and best of ISM students. They continue to hold key leadership positions, whether in student government, high school organizations, or clubs.

We would like to acknowledge the generosity of all those who have made this auction possible: Leon Gallery, Ken Hakuta, Lina Juntilla, Anton Ramos, Miguel Ramos, Tónico Manahan. Thank you for all your support of the ISM scholars.

Every bid, every gesture of kindness, and every item contributed or purchased is more than just a gift—it's an investment in the future of promising scholars who will go on to make meaningful contributions to our community and beyond.

With your support, we are changing lives, one scholar at a time.

William Brown  
*Superintendent*  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA



# Foreword

DEAR FRIENDS and CLIENTS,

The very blood of our valiant heroes watered the foundations and nourished the pillars of our nation. As we anticipate another new year filled with confidence and optimism, let us first pay tribute to their heroic legacies in this year's **The Kingly Treasures Auction 2024**.

Our year-end auction thrusts into the spotlight none other than our two most revered heroes, brothers in the name of independence, twin spirits who, through the mightiness of the pen and the defiance of the sword, sparked the struggle for independence: **Jose Rizal**, whose 128th anniversary of his martyrdom we will be commemorating on December 30; and **Andres Bonifacio**, whose 161st birth anniversary we will be celebrating on November 30, auction day.

Rizal's *Josephine Sleeping*, sculpted during his four-year exile in Dapitan, serves as an intimate memento of his last—and purest love, the beautiful Miss Josephine Leopoldine Bracken, the woman whom noted historian Leon Ma. Guerrero ardently described as the one and only woman who made Rizal "pause in his restless journeys" and "pierced the armor of his cold passion for his country and her rights and liberties."

*The Last Seal of the Katipunan*, the surviving twin of the seal used by Andres Bonifacio himself in his last days in 1897 is a striking symbol of the Supremo's enduring legacy as the father of the Philippine revolution. It surfaces after more than 127 years, from the collection of eminent scholar Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera.

Also a high point of this sale is **Guillermo Tolentino's Bust of Andres Bonifacio**, made of plaster cast from the original Bonifacio figure at the famous "Monumento". It was acquired by eminent Filipino historian and scholar Professor Ambeth R. Ocampo from Tolentino's widow. León Gallery wishes to thank Professor Ocampo for his trust in bringing this and other important pieces from his collection to auction, including a rare head study for **Hidalgo's** now-lost masterpiece *Per Pacem et Libertatem*.

**Carlos "Botong" Francisco**, foremost conjurer of monumental pantheons of Filipino heroes and virtues, graces this sale with his lyrical *Tinikling No. 2*, from the collection of Estefania Aldaba-Lim, the Philippines' first female cabinet secretary,



first female PHD in clinical psychology, an esteemed advocate of mental health and stalwart of children's rights. *Tinikling No. 2* embodies a favorite subject of Botong, one he would always return to.

The earliest **Anita Magsaysay-Ho** painting to enter the market has finally come home after 90 years. Titled *Lavanderas by the Stream*, it shows Fernando Amorsolo's penetrating influence in shaping the virtuosity of a young Anita Magsaysay.

We are also partaking in the culmination of **Fernando Zóbel's** birth centennial with the landmark offering of a rare blue *Saeta, Azul sobre pardo*. Alfonso de la Torre, author of Zóbel's catalogue raisonné, noted that only nine blue Saetas were ever painted by the modernist master.

The art of the indigenous peoples is exalted through our selection of Ifugao *bul'uls*. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Emil Marañon III, lawyer, collector, researcher, and expert on Philippine antiquities, for lending his much-needed expertise in this important subject.

In the spirit of this season of giving, we are partnering with the **International School Manila**, which will be auctioning several key lots—including a **Jigger Cruz** masterwork from his golden year of 2013 that set the trajectory for his meteoric rise to fame in the art market—in support of the ISM Filipino Scholars Program.

On behalf of Team León Gallery, thank you very much for joining us once again in a year filled with much excitement and fulfillment. We hope to see you in 2025 to accompany us on our continuing mission of sharing the best of Philippine art and championing the Filipino artist.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jaime L. Ponce de Leon".

Jaime L. Ponce de Leon  
Director

LEÓN GALLERY



## Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

### *Woman Vendor*

signed and dated 1995 (lower right)

gouache

11" x 8" (28 cm x 20 cm)

**P 200,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by West Gallery and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

*Woman Vendor* carries Malang's distinctive vivid hues and overlapping geometric forms. With blues and yellows dominating his color palette, this 1995 gouache painting depicts a woman—a recurring image of a Malang piece—surrounded by candles she's selling. Described by critics as a proficient colorist, he is not afraid of incorporating any color in his palette nor finding it hard to orchestrate it in his paintings. A master colorist with exceptional brushwork, Malang perfectly encapsulates the conscientious and rich Philippine life and culture in his canvases. Another quality of his works is that they don't require a lot of thinking and seeking for meaning; he makes his paintings to be interpreted literally. *(Jessica Magno)*



## Andres Barrioquinto (b. 1975)

### *Hated for Loving*

signed and dated 2006 (lower left)

oil on canvas

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

**P 300,000**

PROVENANCE  
Finale Art File

Though different from his elaborate surrealistic pieces, Andres Barrioquinto's *Hated for Loving* still carries the artist's penchant for storytelling. Featuring a close-up of a woman smoking, one can immediately notice the liberties Barrioquinto took as he depicts this woman; with a thick neck, bulbous nose, wide face, and bloodshot and darkened eyes, the viewer is immediately taken with the woman's hopelessness, or perhaps her torments. There is a story hidden as she stares unabashedly back at the audience, daring them to get close enough to find out. *(Hannah Valiente)*







3

## Roberto Chabet (1937 - 2013)

### a.) *Untitled*

signed and dated 1968 (lower right)  
mixed media  
14" x 11" (36 cm x 28 cm)

### b.) *Untitled*

signed and dated 1968 (lower right)  
mixed media  
14" x 11" (36 cm x 28 cm)

**P 100,000**

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, Manila

Roberto Chabet's mixed media works are emblematic of his prolific career and unique artistic vision. Often recognized as the "Father of Philippine Conceptual Art," Chabet was a pivotal figure in the country's contemporary art scene. These pieces demonstrate his enduring commitment to experimentation and his fascination with pushing the boundaries of traditional media. Known for a rigorous work ethic and a deep-seated belief in the importance of "daily practice," Chabet was reputed to create up to a hundred drawings a day.

Chabet's influence, however, extends beyond his individual works. He was also a mentor, teacher, and collaborator,

shaping generations of artists who have since carried forward his legacy of innovation and experimentation. His involvement with projects such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines and his establishment of Shop 6—an alternative gallery space for avant-garde artists—cemented his role as a driving force in Philippine art. His creative legacy has been preserved through extensive archives and exhibitions, allowing both his personal and professional life to be examined within the broader context of Philippine conceptualism. These archives, much like his watercolors, serve as a "time capsule," providing insights into his artistic process and highlighting his significant impact on the art world. The result is a timeless body of work that captures the essence of his artistic vision, balancing the ephemeral with the enduring.

These works also represent a key aspect of his broader oeuvre, in which Chabet often engaged with nontraditional materials and methods. From installations made of plywood and found objects to performances that dissolved traditional boundaries between creator and observer, Chabet's work consistently challenged conventions. His commitment to conceptual art was not merely a formal decision; it was a philosophical stance on the role and potential of art itself, as something that could exist outside the bounds of permanence and commodification. (*Jed Daya*)



**Tam Austria** (b. 1943)*Untitled (Sisterhood)*

signed and dated 2000 (upper left)

oil on canvas

24" x 18" (61 cm x 46)

**P 100,000**

Tam Austria's oeuvre revolves around the bustling yet relaxed countryside life. His canvases are adorned with folk motifs and the everyday lives of folk people, often featuring women and the unparalleled beauty of nature. His intricate brush strokes and ingenious sense of color perfectly capture the provincial allure in his works. What distinguishes Austria is his ability to infuse his pieces with his romanticist sensibilities, subtly blended with cubism, creating realistic images with varying lines and forms that bring his figures to life and suggest movement.

In this untitled piece, two women engaged in a conversation are illustrated, one tenderly holding her child and the other carrying a basket of seafood and fruits. This 2000 work is a testament to Austria's meticulous brushwork and keen attention to detail. Furthermore, this painting showcases his ingenious use of color: tonal colors contrasted with sepia-brown hues, exuding a nostalgic provincial feel. *(Jessica Magno)*

**Michael Cacnio** (b. 1969)*Tree House*

signed and dated 2010

brass

H: 12 1/2" (32 cm)

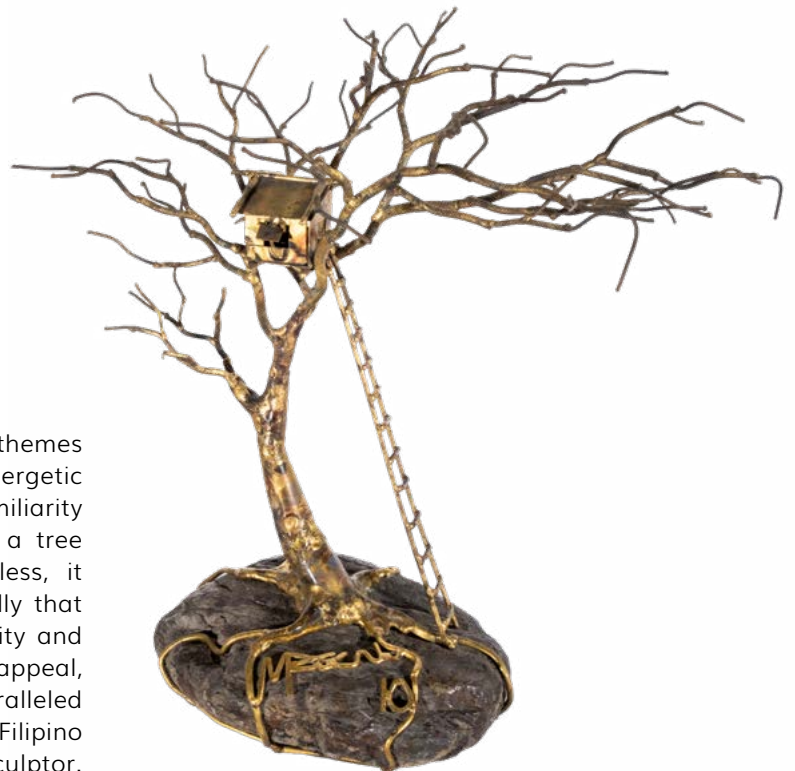
L: 10" (25 cm)

W: 12" (30 cm)

**P 200,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Tess Cacnio for confirming the authenticity of this lot

Michael Cacnio's masterpieces, with their themes of familial love and the innocent and energetic attributes of juvenility, bring forth a sense of familiarity and nostalgia. This piece from 2010 showcases a tree house devoid of any human figures. Nonetheless, it captures the allure of Filipino childhood, especially that of provincial life, as the piece evokes the simplicity and joy of rural childhood. More than its aesthetic appeal, Cacnio's sculptures are a testament to his unparalleled talent and deep understanding of humanity and Filipino heritage, cementing his name as a world-class sculptor. *(Jessica Magno)*







6

**Charlie Co** (b. 1960)

*Changing Time*

signed and dated 2009 (lower right)

oil on canvas

57 1/2" x 35 1/2" (146 cm x 90 cm)

**P 300,000**

PROVENANCE  
Finale Art File

Armed with a distinct art style that belies the disturbing and the somber, the works of contemporary artist Charlie Co aim to tell a narrative that would stay with its viewers for long.

"I'm a storyteller, just like many artists," he says as written in the Department of Tourism's digital magazine *7641 Islands*. And indeed, his 2009 *Changing Time* presents an interesting narrative. With the viewer's eyes drawn

immediately to the man at the center, shirtless with his heart noticeably ripped out, a visceral reaction is to be expected. The man's arms are being held back by two men dressed in formal suits. His face is painted white like a clown's but a singular black tear slips from his eye. At his feet lies a crow, pecking his feet bloody. Surrounding him are several perplexing elements – a stash of paintings at his feet, a crowd of mourners behind him, and gas lamps with figures trapped within them, among others. Combined with the vibrantly rich color palette used, *Changing Time* feels vaguely dangerous, warning of magic that should not be tampered with.

The visual language of Co embodies the zeitgeist of his time – visceral and vibrant, his surrealistic themes have captivated his patrons at large, garnering horror and awe at their terrific subject matters. (*Hannah Valiente*)





7

## Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

### *Mother and Child*

signed and dated 1981 (upper left)

oil on canvas

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

**P 300,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Christian M. Aguilar  
for confirming the authenticity of this lot

One of the most beloved subjects in human portraiture is the ever-enduring image of the mother and child, springing up in religious art and even beyond. For centuries, ceramics, stone, canvas, and sculptures bore the image of these people emphasizing the great importance with which motherhood was held throughout history.

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz was among the artists who tried his hand at this well-loved topic. With his flowy brush strokes and his indignant refusal to conform to the planes

of reality, he depicts a long-haired, light-skinned woman with her back perched on her lap. Like the women in his *Tres Marias* series, these women are dressed elaborately, their dresses belying their high status despite their apparent simplicity. His take on the mother and child theme takes a turn for the modern and yet it still retains that unbreakable bond of motherhood that transcends through time, a love that rose and fell and persisted despite all in this unending world. *(Hannah Valiente)*





8

**José Joya** (1931 - 1995)

*Daybreak Feast*

signed and dated September 01, 1980 (lower right and verso)

oil

22" x 14" (56 cm x 36 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

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

Jose Joya's artistry is a testament to his unwavering talent and dedication to the arts. Even as a kid, he already showed his inclination to the arts by drawing on the walls of their home and on the surface of his desk and book pages in school, which often got him in trouble with his parents and teachers. "I never understood why these should be left uncolored," Joya protests. His endless doodles, never leaving a space uncolored, would be a distinct feature of his acclaimed abstract paintings.

*Daybreak Feast*, with its large, kaleidoscopic brush strokes and impastos in arbitrary shapes and places, truly embodies the traits of an authentic Joya piece. Bursting with life, this orange-dominated oil painting, with hints of neutral colors, elicits a feeling of warm embrace against the cold breeze of the break of dawn. His vibrant palette brings forth an energetic and cheerful vibe, enough to boost you up through the day. Joya's strokes and colors, far from being random, are a deliberate expression of his feelings—his way of connecting to the world around him, creating a depth of artistic expression. *(Jessica Magno)*



# Life Through Rose-Colored Glass

## *An Orlina Masterwork*

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A graduate of Architecture from the University of Santo Tomas, Ramon Orlina's precise creation of lines and forms is highly manifested in his premier glass sculptures, earning him a reputable place in the art scene. Orlina's eccentric handiwork and profound understanding of space allow him to create sublime glass sculptures with a creative interplay between transparent and translucent areas, polished, matte, and frosted surfaces, or prismatic areas and smooth planes.

This 2017 piece, bearing an unconventional aesthetic appearance of clear and frosted surfaces of irregular forms and his experimental use of pink crystal, results in a transcendental imagery of the world beyond us. A powerful demonstration of Orlina's ingenious artistry, *Intergalactic* is a rare and unique pink crystal work, a privilege to behold, crafted by the masterful hands of the celebrated "Father of Philippine Glass Sculpture." (*Jessica Magno*)



ABOVE: Ramon Orlina © [pldthome.com/fibr-test/testimonials/ramon-orlina](http://pldthome.com/fibr-test/testimonials/ramon-orlina)

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**Ramon Orlina** (b. 1944)

*Intergalactic*

signed and dated 2017

carved pink crystal

17 1/2" x 9" x 3" (44.5 cm x 23 cm x 8 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

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

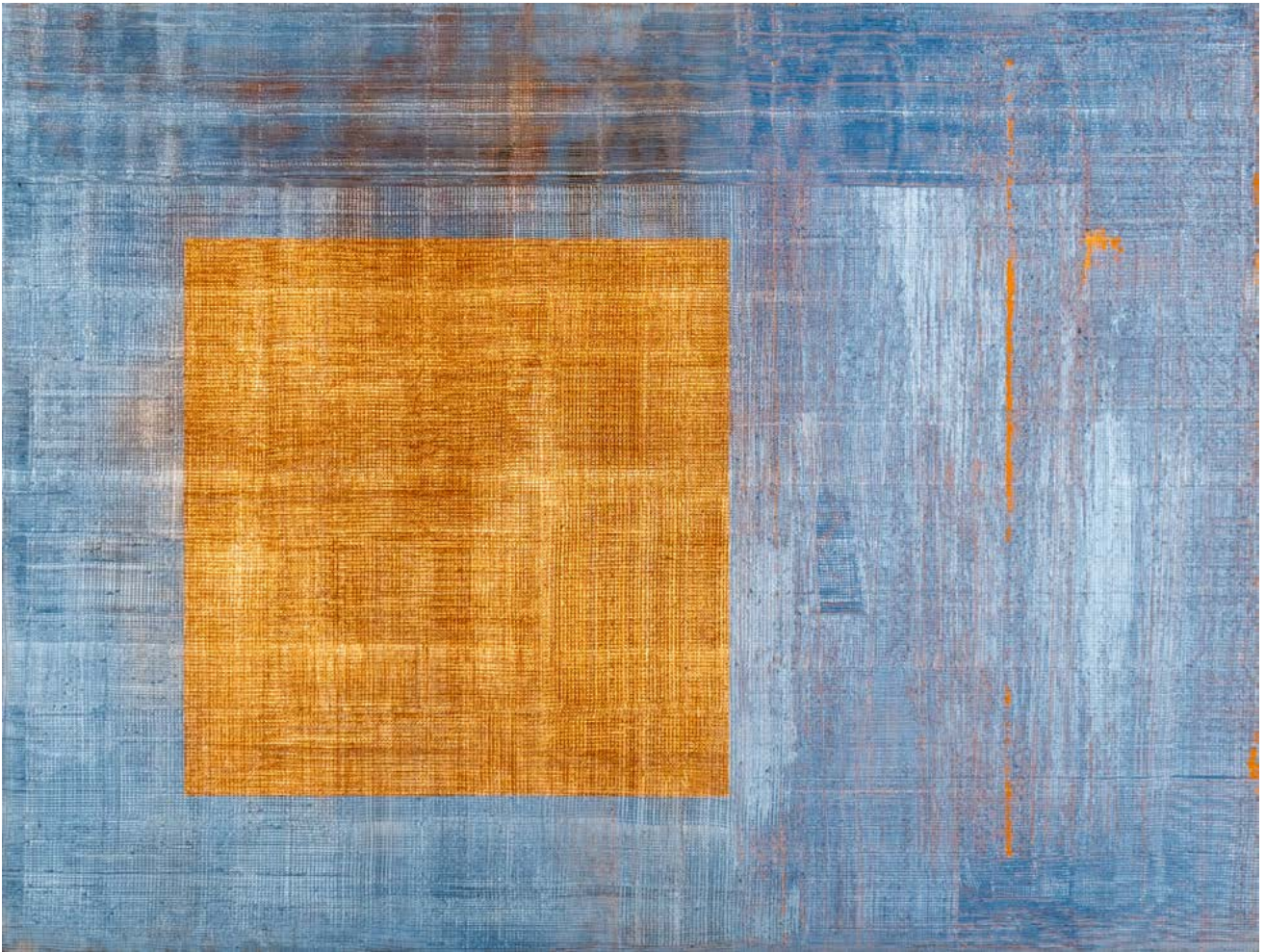
PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila









10

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**Norberto Carating** (b. 1948)

*Blue Sky after the Rain*

dated 2004

acrylic on canvas

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

**P 300,000**

PROVENANCE  
Galleria Duemila

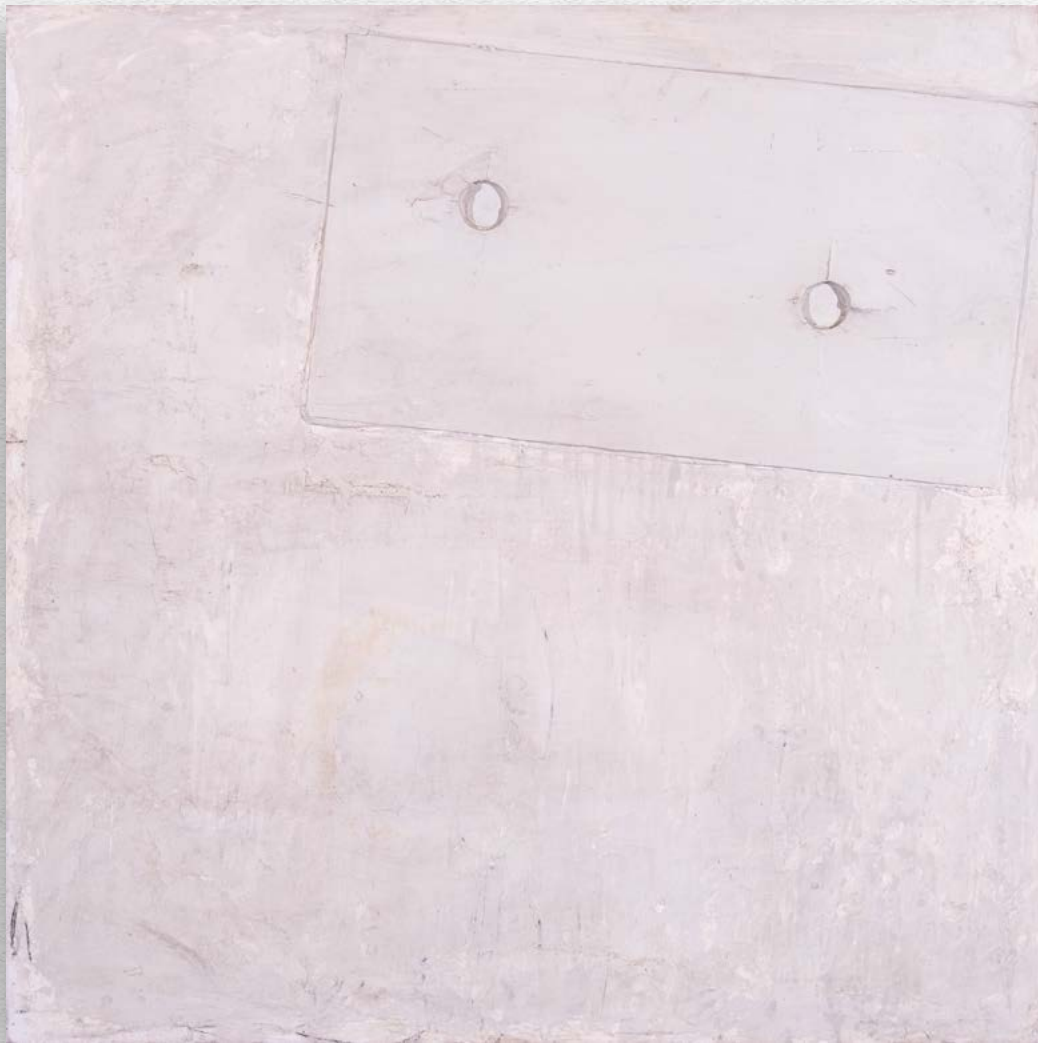
*"Some [works] appear very calm and vibrant, but the dark colors, if you peel layer after layer, are underneath. The dark colors, they're also me. The artist's art springs from his inner soul."*

—NORBERTO CARATING IN AN  
INTERVIEW WITH THE MANILA  
BULLETIN, JULY 10, 2021.

The horrors he witnessed while growing up at the New Bilibid Prison Reservation in Muntinlupa, where his father worked as assistant director, greatly affected Norberto Carating's personality. Coming to terms with his emotions, painting has been his outlet of expression, his artworks reflective of his timid and reserved nature. Carating's oeuvre is distinguished by its geometric forms and application of paint as if furrowed by a fine toothcomb. Additionally, it is made with thin layers of vibrant-colored paint over dark ones, or vice versa, allowing the colors underneath to peek through.

Despite the burst of colors and elegance brought about by the artist's use of metallic paint, there is an underlying melancholia in his every canvas, which the viewers can feel and relate to. "Those colors and strokes mask my depression," Carating confesses. "Yeah, it worked for a while. During the painting process, I felt happy and so free. But then I'd sleep it off, due to exhaustion, and then I'm depressed again." Yet, Carating's compositions, on the positive side, still exude a sense of comfort and reassurance that whatever unfortunate situation we are in right now shall pass, too. *(Jessica Magno)*





11

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**Bernardo Pacquing** (b. 1967)

*Gray I (Diptych)*

signed and dated 2003 (verso)

oil on canvas

33 1/2" x 33 1/2" (85 cm x 85 cm)

**P 200,000**

Bernardo Pacquing's approach to abstraction unfolds as a gradual, meticulous process defined by intricate gestures and layered textures. His works strip away context and recognizable forms, distilling shapes and spaces to their essential qualities, where the canvas itself becomes a dynamic surface. In doing so, Pacquing invites viewers to engage with each painting as an autonomous, self-sustained entity—vital, resolute, and devoid of external references. Influenced by midcentury ideas that blurred the line between art and existence, Pacquing's abstract compositions emerge as contemplative studies of texture, form, and space, evoking a Zen-like minimalism that

emphasizes balance and subtle tension. His technique combines measured, deliberate strokes with an exploration of urban decay, elevating overlooked aspects of everyday environments into powerful, large-scale artworks that reflect both the physicality and spirituality of urban life.

The artwork displayed here by Pacquing exemplifies this approach, featuring a predominantly white, textured surface punctuated by subtle, nearly hidden forms. The composition is minimalist, with hints of geometry that suggest a structure beneath the surface, yet remain intentionally obscured. The restrained color scheme and rough, uneven texture evoke a sense of both calm and intrigue, as if the piece is inviting the viewer to look deeper into its subtle variations and hidden details. This painting captures Pacquing's signature balance between strength and softness, where the emptiness of the canvas becomes a powerful element in itself, reflecting his exploration of form as an independent entity. (*Jed Daya*)





12

**Romulo Olazo** (1934 - 2015)

a) *Abstract Forms CAT. # 2062*  
 signed and dated 1984 (upper left)  
 tempera  
 9" x 12" (23 cm x 30 cm)

b) *Abstract Forms CAT. # 2064*  
 signed and dated 1984 (lower left)  
 tempera  
 9" x 12" (23 cm x 30 cm)

**P 400,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Finale Art File  
 and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot



Romulo Olazo © León Gallery Archives

Romulo Olazo's signature abstract and non-objective paintings and prints have been a staple of the second generation of the Philippine modernist movement – his four-decade-long Diaphanous series had been the standard for a long-term sustained study about a single topic.

Aside from his Diaphanous, Olazo's miscellaneous abstractions carry the introspective care his series has. His 1984 *Abstract Forms CAT #2062* and *Abstract Forms CAT #2064* portray his abstractions' visual depth and layers.

Olazo's background as a printmaker shines through as the transparency that came from the collographic method of layering and the stencil pattern method lifted from the serigraphic approach created a visual masterpiece.

A result of Olazo's years of experimentation and practice in both printmaking and painting, his abstractions are shining examples of the artist's legacy and magnificence, cementing Olazo in the annals of Philippine art history. (Hannah Valiente)



## Marina Cruz (b. 1982)

### *Open Closet*

signed and dated 2006 (lower right)

mixed media

36" x 24" (91 cm x 61 cm)

### P 170,000

#### PROVENANCE

The Space at Art Informal

The works of Marina Cruz often meld everyday subjects and transform them into pieces of art saturated with personal history and quiet nostalgia. "I find myself referencing personal objects, particularly fabric, clothing, dresses from my own family archive," she said on her artist website. "I like to explore domestic spaces and belongings and at the same time look into what makes a space a home, what makes us feel we belong."

That soft domesticity is evident in her 2006 *Open Closet*. In her almost otherworldly art style, Marina depicts the common image of a closet with its door open. If one peers out the window, one can see the silhouette of a tree's branch. Perhaps it is the soft colors or the almost cartoonish style but the work drives home the point of early childhood nostalgia with her playful compositional choices echoing a child's active imagination.

The palpable emotions Marina manages to inject in her portrayals of inanimate objects are embedded with memories and historical significance. She bridges the gap between the past and the present, between dreams and memories, and between reality and subconscious. (*Hannah Valiente*)



## 14

## Rodel Tapaya (b. 1980)

### *Untitled*

signed and dated 2005 (lower right)

mixed media

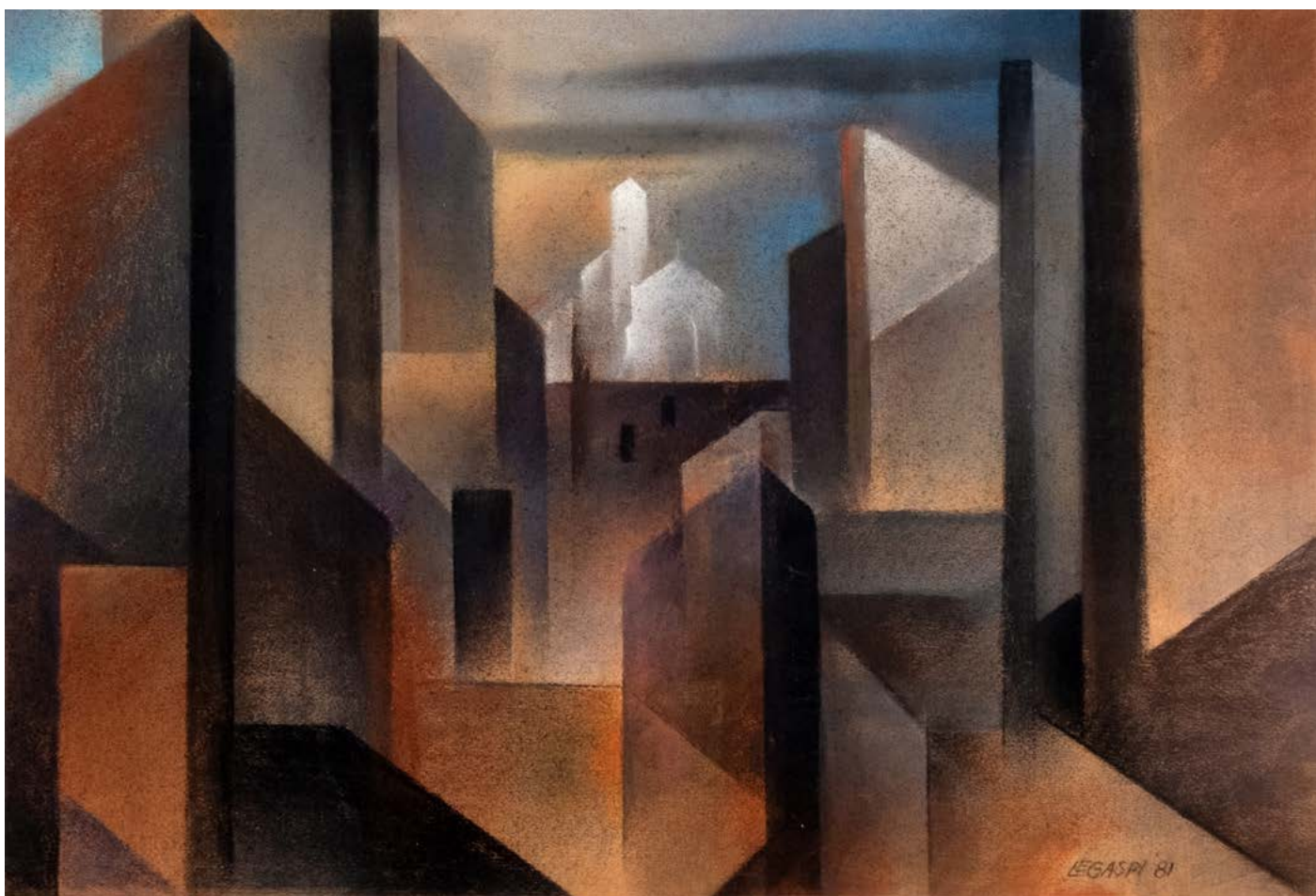
24" x 18" (61 cm x 46 cm)

### P 100,000

Rodel Tapaya is an award-winning contemporary artist known for his adept use of allegory and folklore in his masterpieces. His oeuvre is a product of his dexterous hands, profound understanding of materials, and substantial knowledge of his country's culture and history. Despite his surrealistic approach to storytelling, his compositions curiously embody a peculiar Filipino taste. This whimsical, untitled piece in 2005 is a testament to his distinctive artistry. Furthermore, Tapaya's illustrious works of reimagined folk narratives incorporated into contemporary realities continue to ornament the art scene, locally and internationally, earning him a distinction as one of the most sought-after Southeast Asian contemporary artists. (*Jessica Magno*)







15

**Cesar Legaspi** (1917 - 1994)

*Urban Views*

signed and dated 1981 (lower right)

pastel on paper

14" x 21" (36 cm x 53 cm)

**P 140,000**

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

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

Cesar Legaspi's artistry is a collection of works encompassing the evolution of Philippine modern art. A graduate of commercial arts and having worked in an advertising company, his adept use of pen and ink allowed him to manipulate his materials to yield different shades and tones, resulting in his canvases filled with geometric shapes of earth-toned, monochromatic palette. Legaspi's cubist-inspired works unveil the social injustice and hardships faced by the Filipinos during the declining socio-economic conditions of his time. Although revolving around the themes of poverty, disease, and suffering, his fragmented and overlapping planes nevertheless create a cohesive image that presents the resiliency of the Filipino people. In 1990, Cesar Legaspi was honored with the National Artist for Painting Award. (*Jessica Magno*)





16

**Macario Vitalis** (1898 - 1990)

*Untitled (Portrait of a Lady)*

signed (lower left and verso)

dated 1945 (verso)

oil on wood

13 3/4" x 10 3/4" (35 cm x 27 cm)

**P 100,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi and Claude Tayag for confirming the authenticity of this lot

Perhaps France played a pivotal role in Filipino painter Macario Vitalis' life and artistic journey. With his determination to learn and his passion for the arts, Vitalis ventured overseas to further his art studies. After a few years in the United States, he made his way to France, where he studied at the prestigious Academie de Montmartre. There, he worked in a restaurant owned by Camille Renault, who

welcomed him into his family and had his works exhibited and sold in his restaurant. Vitalis was also able to establish his own art studio and formed a bond with a group of influential modernist painters in the Parisian suburb of Puteaux, a relationship that profoundly influenced his works.

Having spent most of his life in France, Vitalis' works were inevitably influenced by the European post-impressionist masters. One of his earlier works, this 1945 piece features a portrait of a lady, one of the subjects he spent most of his time with while in a concentration camp during World War 2. Macario Vitalis' unique style of pointillism is highly evident in this oil painting, a harmonious blend of carefully thought-out daubs of bright colors in varying tints and shades, ingeniously creating an elegant portrait.

In 1986, Vitalis held a retrospective exhibition at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Main Gallery, putting on view over a hundred of his masterpieces. (*Jessica Magno*)





17

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**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)

*Sailboats*

signed (lower right)

circa 1963

oil on canvas

21" x 22" (53 cm x 56 cm)

**P 160,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Manila

While Oscar Zalameda's early works were watercolor paintings portraying his buoyant childhood years and the rich culture of his hometown of Lucban, he would be known for his cubistic art style later in his career. After completing a degree in Fine Arts at the University of Santo Tomas, Zalameda ventured alone to the United States and later to Europe to further his art studies. His multiple sojourns abroad, spent mainly

at sea, exposed him to diverse views, cultures, and experiences, each contributing to his would-be artistic expression. Furthermore, these travels led him to delve deeper into cubism and experiment with different styles and mediums.

Reminiscent of his early endeavors with abstraction, this piece is nonetheless a testament to Zalameda's mastery of any material and technique. The artist's profound understanding of colors allowed him to play with strokes of vibrant hues haphazard yet carefully thrown into the blank canvas, creating an abstract image evocative of his lavish life in Europe. Throughout his artistic career, Zalameda's dexterous hands created a number of works that not only embody his personal views and perceptions but also the bright colors of the world around him, inviting the audience to see the world through his eyes. *(Jessica Magno)*





18

**Edwin Wilwayco** (b. 1952)

*Birds of Paradise No. 28*

signed and dated 1992 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 24" (61 cm x 61 cm)

**P 120,000**

Renowned artist Edwin Wilwayco finds himself fascinated with abstraction. Through impressive explorations, signature brush works, and gestural marks, he uses this nonsubjective method to portray his many thematic series, including this lot at hand.

*Birds of Paradise No. 28* belongs to his many thematic works which echoes his fascination for nature. From watching his wife plant birds of paradise on a vacant lot one Saturday, Wilwayco was fascinated with this plant's

multifaceted appearance. Through this lot, he portrays the unique stages of growth of birds of paradise, resulting in his *Birds of Paradise* series in 1990 in which this lot is part of. With a warm color palette that suggests a hot summer afternoon, Wilwayco's *Birds of Paradise* is a work of formation and transformation, its leaves folding in on each other in a masterpiece that could only be described as nature.

During his student days at the UP Fine Arts, Wilwayco was under the tutelage of many seasoned abstractionists, among which was Dean Jose Joya. Art critic Cid Reyes wrote: "After over three decades of sustained dedication to abstract painting, Edwin Wilwayco has emerged, in my estimation, as the rightful artistic heir to the late National Artist José Joya, pioneer of Abstract Expressionism in the country." (*Hannah Valiente*)





19

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

*Abstraction 84*

signed, titled and dated 1976 (lower right)

watercolor on paper

14" x 21" (36 cm x 53 cm)

**P 400,000**

PROVENANCE

Carolina Guerrero collection

Color is the primary element of Hernando R. Ocampo's art. His canvases are filled with a vibrant spectacle of irregular geometric forms. However, despite his kaleidoscopic palette, his colors have a curious sense of Filipino-ness.

A balanced mix of cool and warm hues, *Abstraction 84* is a testament to Ocampo's unrivaled artistry and sublime understanding of color. Although Ocampo's works may appear simple, they are a result of a meticulous consideration of how each hue, tone, and saturation affect each other and influence the painting's tension and motion. Notably, his works are devoid of any actual objects, yet they manage to capture people's attention and recognition, leaving a lasting legacy as befits one of the forerunners of modern art in the Philippines. *(Jessica Magno)*





20

## Ronald Ventura (b. 1973)

### *Dialogue Box*

signed and dated 2006 (lower left)

oil on canvas

24" x 24" (61 cm x 61 cm)

**P 800,000**

#### LITERATURE

Ventura, Ronald, Primo Giovanni Marella, Adjani Arumpac, Alice G. Guillermo, Daniela Palazzoli, and Igan D'Bayan.

*Realities: Ronald Ventura*. Bologna, Italy: Damiani editore, 2011.

Full-color illustration and painting description on page 108.

#### EXHIBITED

West Gallery, Dialogue Box, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, 2006

*"[Ventura] moves from critically identifying pre-eminent trends in today's socio-cultural evolution to elaborating communicative strategies which prompt dialogue and awareness on the part of those of us who observe."*

—DANIELA PALAZZOLI, REALITIES:  
RONALD VENTURA

Ronald Ventura's oeuvre is known for its thought-provoking portrayal of the human body, layered against dark images rendered with intricate skill and keen attention to detail—a reflection of the artist's distinctive viewpoint and response to societal issues and conditions. The piece at hand is among Ventura's *Dialogue Box*, a series of oil paintings exhibited at the West Gallery in 2006. This specific artwork features a man lying on his back on an empty pavement, his arms covering his eyes. A dialogue box is coming out of the man's mouth, an indication that he's either deeply lost in thought or immersed in a dream while in deep slumber. Therefore, this work can allude to the harsh and depressing reality of poverty, a shirtless, homeless man sleeping on cold ground, and his thoughts and dreams filled with the hope for a better life.

Throughout his artistic career, Ventura has experimented a lot: from oil and acrylic paint to drawing with graphite and mixed media, his black and white paintings to his colored ones, and his small works to his monumental canvases and sculptures. Along with these experimentations is his enduring pursuit of understanding the human anatomy, which highly manifests in his works. Ultimately, his artworks are a testament to his inventive artistic prowess and ceaseless passion for the arts, earning him a position in the art field as one of the most sought-after and highest-selling Southeast Asian artists. (*Jessica Magno*)



## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Rice Fields*

signed and dated 1934 (lower right)

oil on canvas

19 1/4" x 26" (49 cm x 66 cm)

**P 5,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

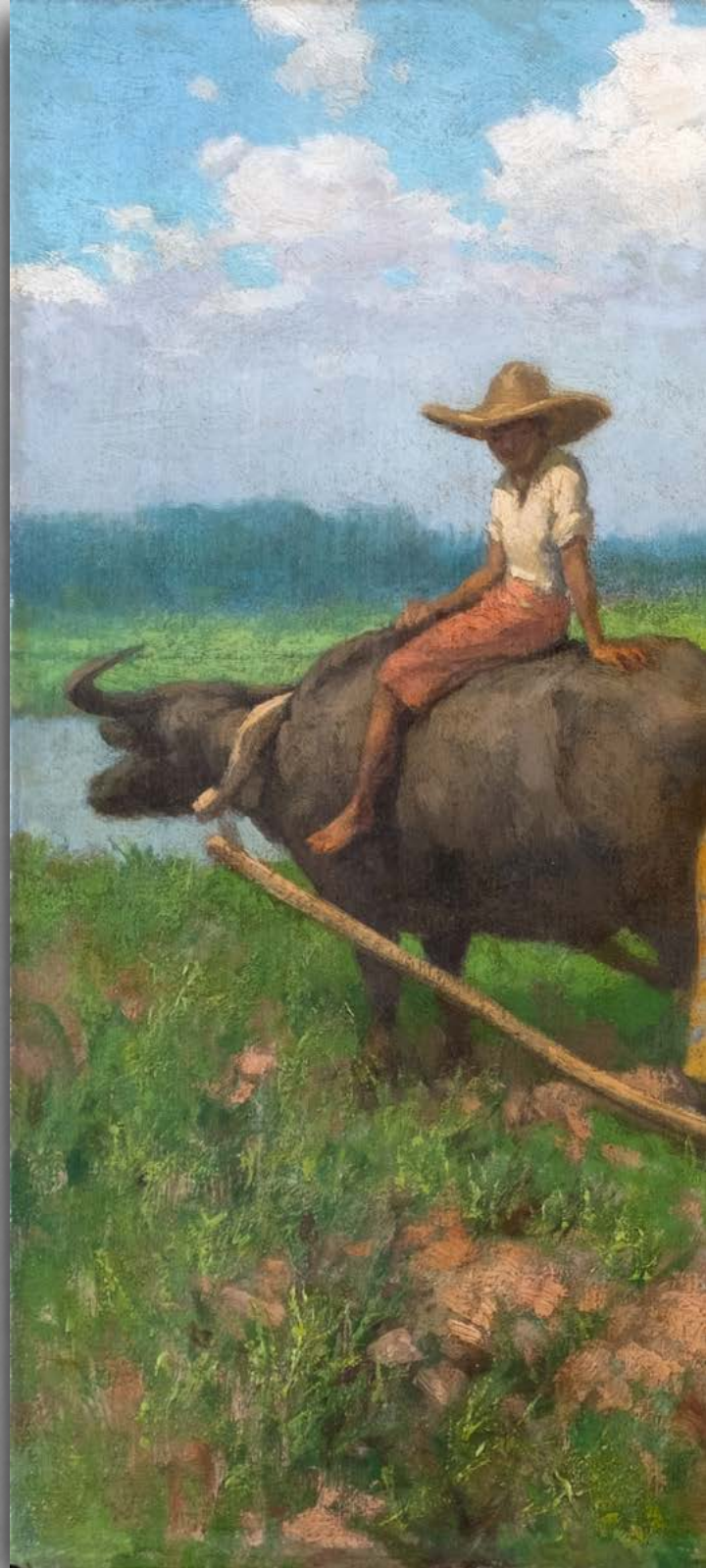
By the time the 1930s rolled in, Fernando Amorsolo had already risen to become perhaps the most influential Filipino artist of his lifetime and the next. Spending the past decade as a professor at the UP School of Fine Arts, Amorsolo became the quintessential Filipino artist with his *dalagas*, *lavanderas*, and pastoral Philippine scenes becoming the image many associate with Philippine art.

With this 1934 *Rice Fields*, Amorsolo's penchant for the Philippine countryside is evident as he portrays the cycle of rice harvest. His portrayal of the rice harvest is more romantic than the back-breaking reality of the work – he washes the scene in his signature bright Amorsolo sunlight, which in turn makes it a picture-perfect image of the otherwise difficult work. At the forefront are three figures, one of them perched atop a carabao with two women loading the harvest on the cart attached to the carabao.

With an admiration that bleeds into his oeuvre, Amorsolo portrays the bucolic Philippine countryside with the utmost affection, putting into canvas the appreciation our farmers deserve. (*Hannah Valiente*)



ABOVE: Maring Amorsolo with daughter Helen as models on a carabao-pulled cart.





# The Noble Filipino Farmer at Work





# Antonio Austria Immortalizes A Filipino Icon

## *Nostalgic Whimsey*



Professor Austria in a studio with a similar "Jeepney" Photo Courtesy of the Artist © Artes de Las Filipinas

Throughout his career, Antonio Austria had consistently found himself drawn to the Filipinos and their elements. He was a student of National Artist Vicente Manansala and the maestro's fondness for the Filipino is evident in Austria's work.

"I can identify with his jeepneys, vendors, and the Madonna of the Slums," Austria says, as recalled by an Artes de las Filipinas article. "I like the fact that his renditions were not done in a glamorous portrayal."

*Jeepney '85* echoes his penchant for Filipino imagery and maximalism. With a certain sense of *horror vacui*, Austria fills every nook and cranny of the canvas with colors and elements as he depicts the iconic jeepney and all the trinkets that fill the vehicle. Vibrant colors are used liberally, the hues almost clashing in their intensity but harmonious in their entirety. Very much in the same vein as Filipino maximalism, there is a sense of comfort embedded in the crowded canvas, banking on nostalgia and the consoling aura of the commonplace traditions one sometimes takes for granted. *(Hannah Valiente)*

22

**Antonio Austria** (b. 1936)

*Jeepney '85*

signed and dated 1985 (lower right and verso)

oil on canvas

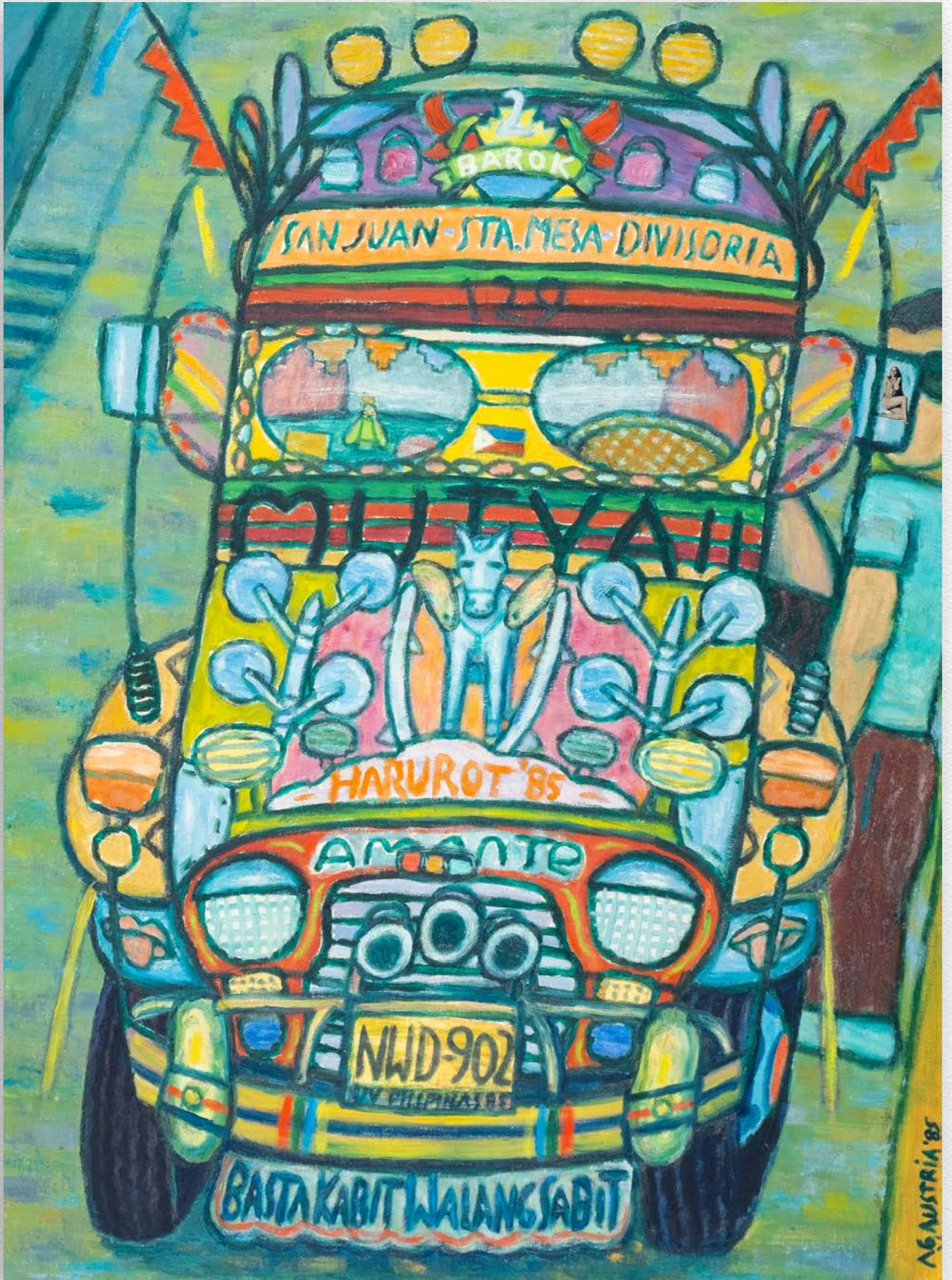
46" x 34" (117 cm x 86 cm)

**P 380,000**

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner





AGUSTRIA '85



# Flowers of Midnight Blossoms

— *Araceli Dans' Night of a Thousand Luxuriance* —

**A**raceli Dans' 2012 *Reyna de Una Noche 1* perfectly portrays the appeal of her delicate and rich oeuvre. With a mentor as illustrious as Fernando Amorsolo himself (who had let her into UP College of Fine Arts while she was still a high school senior), she embarked on her artistic journey that lasted more than eight decades, creating works after works that are recognizable based on her meticulous attention to detail.

Like the majority of her works, *Reyna de Una Noche 1* utilizes a pitch-black background to emphasize the subject matter, which in this case are three pairs of flowers, freshly blooming, nestled with lace. Vibrant yellows break the monotony of the plain background, with her attention to detail emphasized by an intricate rendering of the lace she so often incorporates in her works.

Throughout her career, Dans' particular brand of still life has made its mark in the Philippine art scene. "...I did not want to be like Amorsolo and so forth. I had to look for myself," she once said as quoted by a 2024 Lifestyle Inquirer article. "I found myself in still life [...] and I looked for original ways of doing still life. Why does everything have to be on a table? Why always fruits and flowers? Why not rags, objects inside old cartons?" This unorthodox perspective on still life made Dans a truly sought-after artist, her works emphasizing the delicate balance between elegant pieces and nostalgic Filipino history. (*Hannah Valiente*)



ABOVE: Araceli Limcaco-Dans © cfa.upd.edu.ph/2024/05/20/in-loving-memory-of-araceli-limcaco-dans/

23

**Araceli Dans** (1929 - 2024)

*Reyna de Una Noche 1*

signed and dated 2012 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

36" x 24" (91 cm x 61 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

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



The Queen of Still Lifes  
Paints the Dama de Noche



"Reina de Una Noche" By Anselmi Francisco Ramos 2012



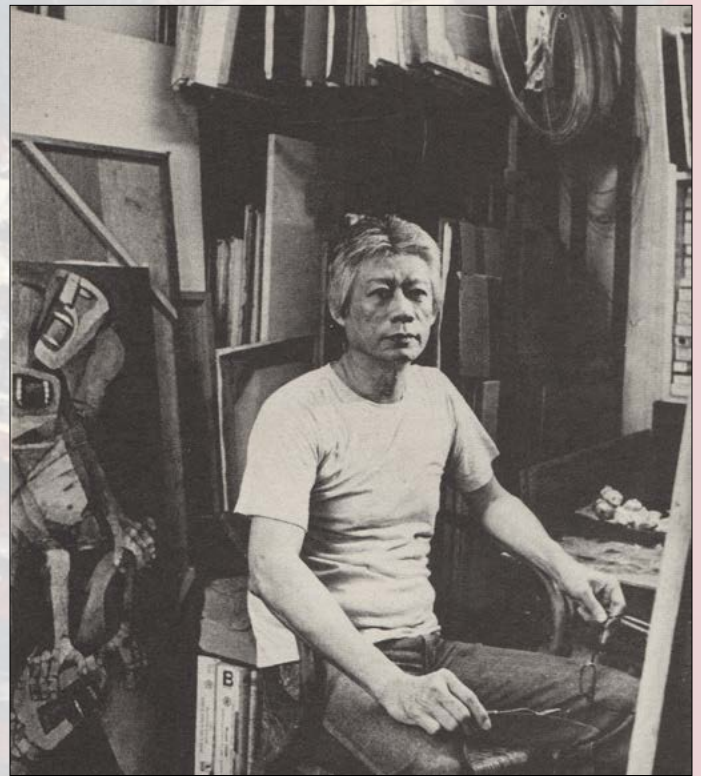
# Angst on the High Seas

From Ang Kiukok's Golden Period of the 1980s

The works of Ang Kiukok fuses Surrealist, Cubist, and Expressionist aspects, creating a visceral and vicious oeuvre that, as his Geringer Art biography quotes, "sustained a hard-edged evocation of fortitude and indignation in a hostile setting of screaming men, crucifixions and junk."

Amongst his works, *fishermen* and fish feature heavily, with this 1982 *Fishermen* finding its place within his oeuvre. The vibrant red background in its simplicity helps make the contorted aforementioned fisherman stand out. He stands with his head raised to the sky almost at an impossible angle; his torso is split open chest to knee, flayed open for the viewer to see the void that is his viscera. On the open space near his knee, a gigantic fish's head emerges from the depth.

Kiukok's works embody themes of agony, madness, and sorrow, providing a shining light in the modern Philippine art scene and setting a new tone for the development of Philippine modernism. (Hannah Valiente)



ABOVE: Ang Kiukok in his studio

24

## Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

### *Fisherman*

signed and dated 1982 (upper left)

oil on canvas

36" x 14" (91 cm x 36 cm)

**P 3,600,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Finale Art File confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila







# Geraldine Javier

## *The Quintessential Filipino Iconoclast*

by MILO SOGUECO

Years ago, I had the rare privilege of acquiring a painting by Geraldine Javier, one of the most promising young artists in the Philippines. Known for her hauntingly evocative works, Geraldine quickly became a standout figure in the art world, with collectors eagerly seeking her pieces. To count myself among those who own one of her works felt like an honor I hadn't quite expected but deeply appreciated.

I first encountered her art in the galleries of Mega Mall, where some of the country's most respected spaces—Finale, West Gallery, and more—gathered to showcase the best in Filipino artistry. Wandering through the exhibits, her work stopped me in my tracks. Here was a Filipina painter with a vision so powerful it felt universal. After months of admiring her work (and, admittedly, a little gentle stalking), we became friends. Eventually, Geraldine offered me a piece that felt deeply personal: *The Healer*, her reimagining of the mythic figure of Medea.

*The Healer* is both a striking and enigmatic piece. In it, Medea gazes out with an expression that seems to hold the weight of her choices—a look that is equal parts strength and vulnerability. She's draped in earthy, muted tones, but beneath the image lies a base of bright florals, contrasting life's softness with its inevitable hardships. Geraldine's Medea captures the essence of resilience and transformation, qualities I found myself needing at that point in my life, as I too was a struggling artist, searching for my path forward.

For years, *The Healer* has held a place of honor in my foyer, greeting every visitor who walks through my door. With her steady gaze and timeless presence, she both welcomes and unsettles—sometimes delighting guests, sometimes scaring



ABOVE: Milo Sogueco © Milo Sogueco archive

the young ones. But to me, she has been a quiet guardian and a source of inspiration, a reminder of my own resilience during moments of doubt. She's the first to greet me when I come home and the last to see me off when I leave, a silent witness to my journey.

Now, as I prepare to part with *The Healer*, I feel a bittersweet pull. This painting has been with me through so much, a talisman of strength that has inspired me year after year. Yet letting go is sometimes necessary, and this auction will help me build a new dream, a new home. I hope her next owner finds the same spark in her, the same reminder of healing and resilience, as I did. May she continue to be a symbol of transformation, quietly offering strength to all who encounter her.

25

**Geraldine Javier** (b. 1970)

*The Healer*

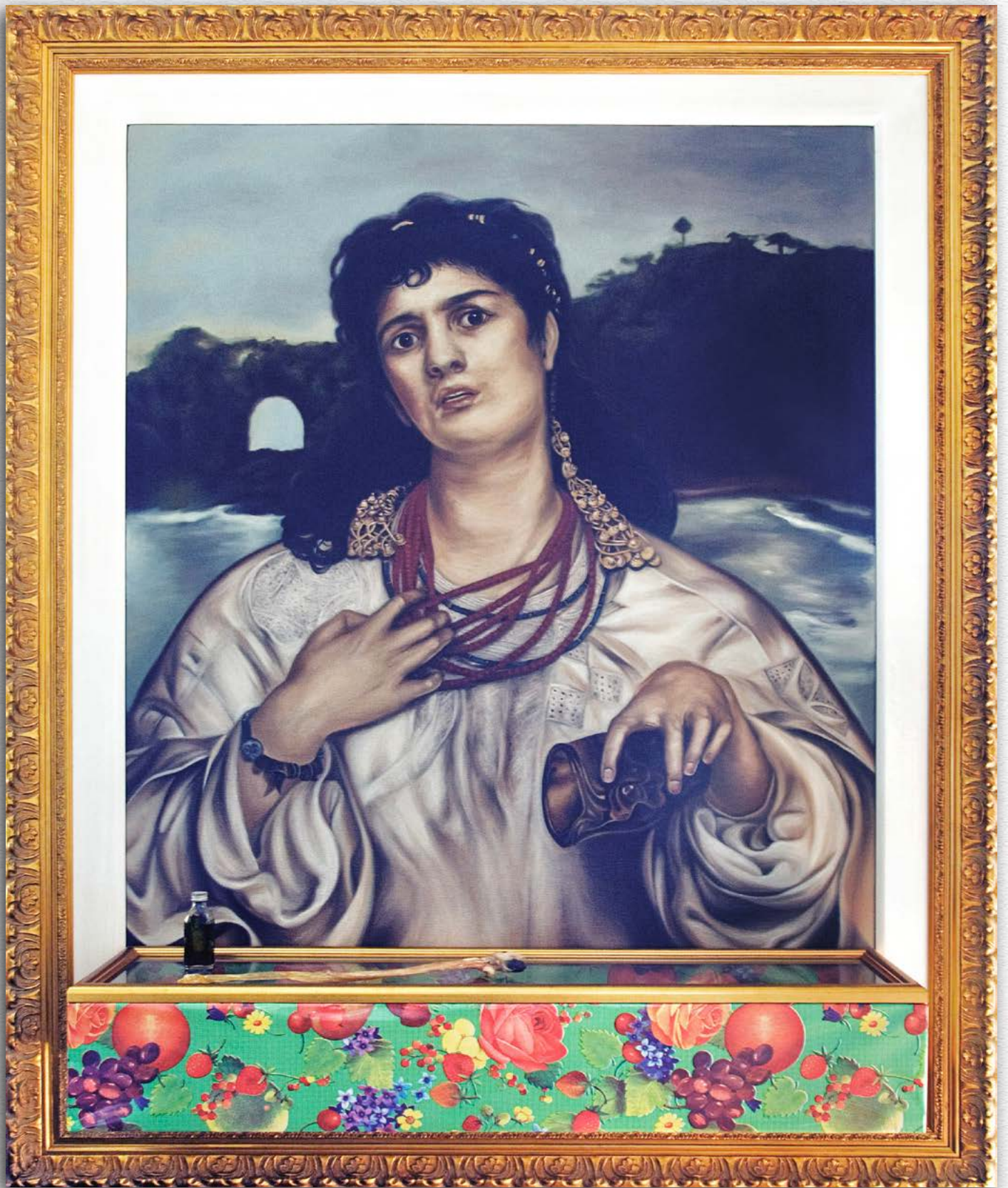
dated 2009

mixed media

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

**P 800,000**









26

**Justin Nuyda** (1944 - 2022)

*Mindscape Search - Strength in Unity*

signed and dated 2013 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

**P 1,700,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Galerie Joaquin confirming the authenticity of this lot

Justin Nuyda's *Mindscape series* is perhaps one of Philippine art history's most iconic abstraction series. Painting a picture of the sights and capturing a mind in quest, to paraphrase his website, his *Mindscape* works are an insightful view of one's everchanging inner world, made tangible into incredible abstractions

With 2013 *Mindscape Search - Strength in Unity*, his usual abstraction is interjected with another important aspect





of his life – his love for nature. A passionate lepidopterist (or a collector of butterflies), Nuyda has spent his time in the great outdoors, hiking in the mountains and forests in search of new butterflies to add to his collection. With that in mind, *Mindscape Search – Search in Unity* resembles a long-view perspective of the skies and the seas. Clouds float on the horizon, big and fluffy as it overlooks the land and the sea below, a perfect vision of what Nuyda might have seen in his myriad of hikes and travels.

However, his *Mindscape series* is as much the viewers' as Nuyda's. "This is why I entitle my artworks, 'Search Mindscape,'" he said in a 2021 Manila Bulletin article. "There will always be a narrative behind my artwork that will be challenging to express [...] On the other hand, viewers, in their individual ways, can define and redefine, with open-mindedness, the mindscapes that I paint." (Hannah Valiente)



# Portrait of an Ilustrado

## *A Dapper Spanish–Chinese Don*

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

The handsome gentleman Don Felipe Campomanes depicted himself wearing a white shirt, a black silk cravat with a gold-and-pearl stickpin/tiepin, an ivory waistcoat, a gold fob for his pocket watch, probably the requisite black dinner jacket, all under a long black coat with wide lapels. Gawad CCP awardee production designer Gino Gonzales described the menswear as “retro” for 1891 (which was already looking “twentieth century”), more from the 1880s or even the 1870s; logical as fashions in Filipinas tended to be a little behind those in Europe, not because of the lack of communication and materials as everything had been coming in through the Suez Canal since 1869, but simply because of the conservative values of those times in Manila.

Campomanes was a handsome, flesh-and-blood Spanish–Chinese mestizo who was born in 1864 in Manila. A businessman with an artistic/creative bent, he married the heiress Dona Teodora Salgado y Basilio of San Fernando, Pampanga in 1899. Unfortunately, Don Felipe passed away five years into the marriage in 1904. A few of his small paintings still survive in the collections of Salgado descendants in Manila and San Fernando city/Sampernandu, Pampanga.

Born to a landed San Fernando, Pampanga family, Dona Teodora Salgado y Basilio (aka “Dona Dora”) was a legendary businesswoman who made her own fortune in Manila real estate (Escolta, Santa Cruz, Binondo, Quiapo, San Miguel de Tanduay [Malacanang area], Ermita, Malate, Dewey boulevard) and Pampanga, Bulacan, Tarlac “haciendas” agricultural lands. She married three times and had a preference for handsome, artistic men like the Spanish–Chinese mestizo businessman Don Felipe Campomanes, German jeweler and luxury importer Don Benito Ullmann, and the Spanish magician Dr Saa. As she had no children of her own even with three husbands, she left her large fortune between her three Salgado nieces and their children were the famous Macapagal–and Marcos–era jeweler Erlinda Salgado Miranda–Oledan (“Liding”) and the interior designer of Brunei’s royal palace “Istana Nurul Iman,” Albert Salgado Paloma.

A well-off young man’s education at the prestigious Dominican Colegio de San Juan de Letran (mostly Spanish and Spanish mestizos) and at the Jesuit Ateneo Municipal (mostly Filipinos and Chinese mestizos) during the last fifty years of the Spanish period (1848–98) emphasized the sciences, mathematics, and philosophy, and included heavy loads of European literature as well as the fine and applied arts.

Students like Joaquin Gonzalez y Lopez, Pedro Molo Paterno y Devera Ignacio, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera y Gorricho, Jose Rizal Mercado y Alonso, and Antonio Luna y Novicio were familiarized with Euripides, Virgil, Sophocles, Homer, Chaucer, Alighieri, Boccaccio, Shakespeare, de Cervantes, Descartes, Voltaire, von Goethe, Shelley, Austen, Dumas pere et fils.

Students like Rafael Enriquez y Villanueva, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo y Padilla, and Juan Luna y Novicio were exposed to the European masters Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarotti, Raffaello Sanzio, El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), Rembrandt van Rijn, Francisco Goya and taught drawing, painting, and sculpture by Spanish artists Cortina, Valdes, and Agustin Saez y Granadell and by pioneering Filipino artists led by Lorenzo Guerrero y Leogardo. Rizal’s contemporary Felix Roxas y Fernandez recalled that the Ateneo Municipal was hung with many reproductions of famous artworks from Europe as well as original works by local artists. Some talented students went on to take further art studies at the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura also in Intramuros, established in 1821 by Damian Domingo and the Real Sociedad Economica Filipina de los Amigos del Pais.

That golden “ilustrado” generation became earnest reformers and zealous revolutionaries and made their indelible marks on the last years of the Spanish period and on Philippine history as a whole.





27 PROPERTY FORMERLY FROM THE SALGADO FAMILY COLLECTION

**Felipe Campomanes** (d. 1904)

*Self-Portrait of Don Felipe Campomanes*  
signed "F. Campomanes" and dated 1871 (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
14 1/2" x 11 3/4" (37 cm x 30 cm)

**P 180,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, San Fernando, Pampanga  
Private collection, Spain  
Acquired from the above by the present owner





28

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**Romeo Tabuena** (1921 - 2015)

*White Rooster*

signed and dated 1967 (lower left)

acrylic on board

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

**P 450,000**

Romeo Tabuena's oeuvre perfectly melds his Filipino and Mexican inspirations. Born and raised in the Philippines, Tabuena first started his career with a series of exhibitions at the Philippine Art Gallery in 1949 in the same vein as the other Philippine Neorealists like Manansala, Ocampo, Saguil, and Legaspi. He has made his name for his near-monochromatic watercolor genre landscapes.

However, his style transformed when he moved to San Miguel de Allende in 1955. His style bloomed into a colorful,

prismatic style that features folk subjects broken down into basic shapes. He had been influenced by the colorful and artistic city, in which he lived until he died in 2015.

In his 1967 *White Rooster*, however, more than one decade since he moved to Mexico, Tabuena returned to an earlier art style with the piece echoing his darker, more proletarian pieces. Amidst the dark tones, the only shining light is that of the titular white rooster cradled against the man's chest. The history of cockfighting is rich in the Philippines – tracing back to the pre-Hispanic era, cockfighting has now become akin to a social function, the fights serving as almost a rite of passage for many young men. In this work, Tabuena still displays his Filipino tendencies despite his decade away from his native soil, proving just how deep-rooted his inspirations are. (*Hannah Valiente*)





29

**Juvenal Sansó** (b. 1929)

*With Grace and Grandeur*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1990s

acrylic on paper

20" x 26" (51 cm x 66 cm)

**P 500,000**

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

Sansó's paintings are ethereal and otherworldly, living very much in his own imagination... Sansó's delicate yet tough and subdued tones are a perfect nocturne. Juvenal Sansó told Cid Reyes in 1973: "...I start in an abstract manner. Slowly, the shapes emerge and evolve into reality, or anyway, my type of reality. I work on these canvases until I'm so saturated with them..." Cid Reyes asked: "What are these abstract forms you speak of?" Sansó replied: "Just abstract forms; they could be flowers, landscapes, anything. It's almost chaos." Sansó has remained faithful to this vision of reality, or surreality, prompting critic Eric Torres to write: Brooding images of desolation and fine traditional draftsmanship have remained rock steady elements in Sansó's paintings... proving in the process that artists need not to change styles if there is no intrinsic need to.



## Nicole Coson (b. 1992)

### *Untitled*

oil on canvas

78 3/4" x 51 1/4" (200 cm x 130 cm)

**P 700,000**

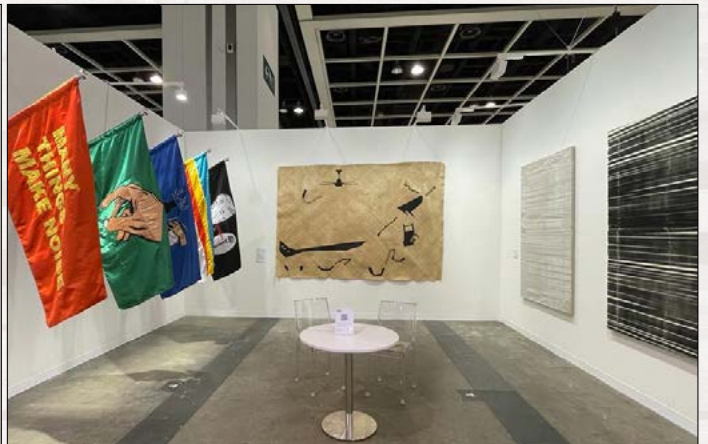
Accompanied by a certificate issued by Silverlens Gallery and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Silverlens

#### EXHIBITED

Silverlens, *Art Basel Hong Kong 2022* (Nicole Coson, Dina Gadia, Pow Martinez, Yee I-Lann), Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, 24 May - 29 May 2022



TOP RIGHT: Nicole Coson © [www.benhunter.gallery](http://www.benhunter.gallery); ABOVE: Installation Views © <https://www.silverlensgalleries.com/>

Nicole Coson, a Manila-born, London-based artist, navigates complex themes of memory, cultural symbolism, and the human psyche through her unique approach to visual art. After earning her Fine Arts degree at Central Saint Martins, Coson began her career with an exploration of abstract imagery that invites viewers into unfamiliar yet resonant worlds. Her work often draws inspiration from ancient Japanese rock formations, a reference to natural patterns that reflect her interest in the organic and the timeless.

Nicole Coson's work explores themes of presence and absence, capturing the fragile state between visibility and disappearance. In this series Coson prints images of Venetian blinds onto linen, meticulously painting each slat before pressing. Over repeated impressions, the blinds' structure degrades, symbolizing the tension between mechanization and materiality. The resulting images evoke both confinement and meditation, suspending the blinds in a state that reflects solitude's dual nature: as a space for reflection and an enclosure of fragility. (*Jed Daya*)







# Estefania Aldaba-Lim

## Collector and Cultural Icon

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

There are far too many 'firsts' begun by Estefania "Fanny" Aldaba Lim, a woman who was no stranger to challenges from a very early age.

Born into the conservative Aldaba family of Malolos, Bulacan, (her father was Provincial Treasurer), she nevertheless defied convention and expectations and appealed to her family to allow her to study in Manila. There, she became an over-achiever, graduating with degrees in the Liberal Arts and then in Education before the War at the Philippine Women's University.

It was, however, only after she discovered Psychology and earned a Master's Degree in it at the University of the Philippines, that she discovered her true calling and life's work.

Fanny would follow her dream to the United States, where she would reach the first of many achievements, at the University of Michigan as the Philippines' first female PHD in clinical psychology.

Summoned to serve on the staff of President Manuel L. Quezon during the war years, she would meet and fall in love with Luis Lim, son of the war hero Gen. Vicente Lim and feminist Pilar Hidalgo Lim.

In post-war Manila, Fanny immediately made her presence felt, becoming one of the first champions of mental health, an issue that is as relevant then as it is today, if not more so. She established the Institute of Human Relations at Philippine Women's University, and was a founding member and president of the Philippine Association of Psychologists and of the Philippine Mental Health Association.

From activities for the World Health Institute and the Girl Scouts of the Philippines, she came to the notice of First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos who quickly recruited her as a consultant in culture and the arts — as well as for community service.

In 1971, President Ferdinand E. Marcos named her to his cabinet, making her the first woman minister, with the portfolio of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

She was appointed the Philippine representative to UNICEF in 1977, and the United Nations made her the Assistant Secretary General for the International Year of the Children (1977-1979). She later became Philippine commissioner to UNESCO International Commission for Peace (1981-1988).



ABOVE: Portrait of Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim © UN Photo/Milton Grant: <https://media.un.org/photo/en/asset/oun7/oun7517021>

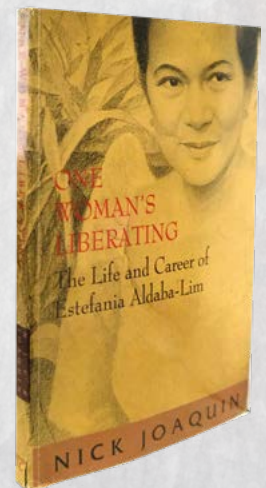
Fanny would be an ardent supporter of not just mental health but also children's rights, establishing the Museo Pambata in the City of Manila in 1994.

For her various contributions, she received the United Nations Peace Medal that year from then United Nations

Secretary General Kurt Waldheim.

Her very last act of community service was for Gawad Kalinga Aldaba Hills in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan on 6 January 2006. Two months after, on 7 March 2006, one day before International Women's Day, Fanny succumbed to leukemia.

She was survived by six children including Cecilia "CheChe" Lazaro, a noted broadcast journalist and tv producer.



ABOVE: A Book of Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim written by Nick Joaquin





ABOVE: Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim with the Former President Ferdinand Marcos and First Lady Imelda Marcos. Together with Bert Avellana, Alejandro and Irene Roces, Ding Roces, Jaime C. Laya, and Lourdes Villacorta at the laying of the cornerstone of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. EAL served as Cultural and Welfare adviser of the First Lady from 1966 to 1971. EAL private archives



BOTTOM LEFT: Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim with Mother Teresa, in the background is another Botong painting; TOP RIGHT: Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim with Pope John Paul II; BOTTOM RIGHT: Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim with the UN representative © EAL private archives



# Remembering Tita Fanny & The World of Botong Francisco

by Gaspar A. Vibal

After Botong's untimely death in 1969, there were very few Botongs left in private hands, mostly with personal friends or benefactors of the muralist. Due to his preference for large-scale work, most were done for institutions. From the 1970s, Susano "Jun" Gonzales became the go-to specialist in restoring these larger-scale paintings. Jun began as a fine artist but decided to specialize in painting restoration after his studies in Europe. During his prime, he was considered the go-to expert for saving artworks in precarious states. His leading advocate was Eleuterio "Teyet" Pascual, himself a chemist and a promoter of conservation studies. From his studies of Botong's underpaintings, canvases, and sketches, Jun became intimately connected with the master's work.

Going around with the art restorer Gonzales on his field surveys of privately owned works, only a few were to be found, mainly in the residences of prominent or influential women. There was the enormous and impressive mural of Pres. Ferdinand Marcos Sr., which First Lady Imelda Marcos specially commissioned in the family's ancestral home. There was a very rare sgraffito mural in Senator Helen Benitez's residence. The political activist and feminist Charito Planas proudly had three (!) privately commissioned murals ("The Code of Kalantiao," "The Legend of Maria Makiling," and the lovely prototype of "Pista sa Bayan," which Gonzales had assured me as being the sole work of the master). Charito had acquired them through her sister, the more famous Carmen, affectionately called Mameng, the one-time adversary of Manuel Quezon and a city councilor of Manila, whose art teacher was none other than Botong. Then, there were important paintings that were given by the National Artist and/or purchased by Dr. Solita Camara-Besa, an internationally recognized biochemist who had befriended the muralist.

Of the prominent women who had collected Botong, there was the equally famous Estefania Aldaba-Lim, whom my mother worshipped. She was not only glamorous but also

noteworthy for her mile-long accomplishments. Even before she distinguished herself as the first female secretary in a presidential cabinet, she had already become renowned for being the first Filipina PhD in clinical psychology, a recognized researcher and authority on children's mental health, and an advocate for women and children in the public sphere.

Encouraged by her numerous fans, supporters, and friends, she eventually left the Philippine government. She was called onto the international stage as an assistant secretary-general of the United Nations and co-convenor of the International Year of the Child in 1979. She became known for her practical, no-nonsense approach to addressing children's welfare on a global scale. Instead of wasting money on highly politicized and expensive international conferences, she advocated establishing national commissions in each country to address child poverty, lack of education, and malnutrition. Her worldwide advocacies were recognized with the United Nations' Peace Medal. In her later years, she could have just sat on her laurels but instead focused her last efforts on establishing the Museo Pambata with her daughter, Nina Lim-Yuson. Elegantly coiffed and equally sociable, she had a straightforward demeanor, simply introducing herself as Fanny while downplaying her enormous contributions to the country and the world.

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

*Mr. Gaspar "Gus" A. Vibal is the publisher of the all-important, authoritative reference monograph on Carlos "Botong" V. Francisco titled "The Life and Art of Botong Francisco" (2010)*





*"Of the prominent women who had collected Botong, there was the equally famous Estefania Aldaba-Lim, whom my mother worshiped. She was not only glamorous but also noteworthy for her mile-long accomplishments."*

—GASPAR A. VIBAL

TOP PHOTO: Ricardo, Patricia, Luis, EAL, Cecilia, Cristina, Alberto  
BETMOM LEFT: Delfin L. Lazaro, Luis A. Lim Jr., Ricardo A. Lim, Alberto A. Lim, Cheche Lim-Lazaro, Danielle Colet-Lim, EAL, Freda Colet-Lim, Carla Abreau-Lim, Nina Lim-Yuson  
BOTTOM RIGHT: Estefania Aldaba-Lim with the Botong painting in the background  
© EAL private archives











## BOTONG : THE POET OF ANGONO

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Manila in the Fifties was, quite simply, another time and another place. Glittering, glamorous, Manila was part Vegas, part L.A. Confidential, peopled by hardy entrepreneurs, some say, even buccaneers, who had walked through the flames of World War II and triumphed.

The country was bursting with optimism as well as a steadfast Filipino pride. The future was there for the taking. Men were making matches made in heaven with Miss Universe, couturiers like Ramon Valera and Salvacion "Slim" Lim were confecting visions fit for the Paris runways, and a revolving-door of celebrities from Tyrone Power, Gregory Peck (think 'Roman Holiday!'), Orson Welles, to William Randolph Hearst and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor populated the Manila society pages, while the local business aristocracy would routinely make it to Time Magazine. Sleek skyscrapers, housing nightclubs, theaters, as well as bustling multinational offices, jostled side by side to fill the skyline.

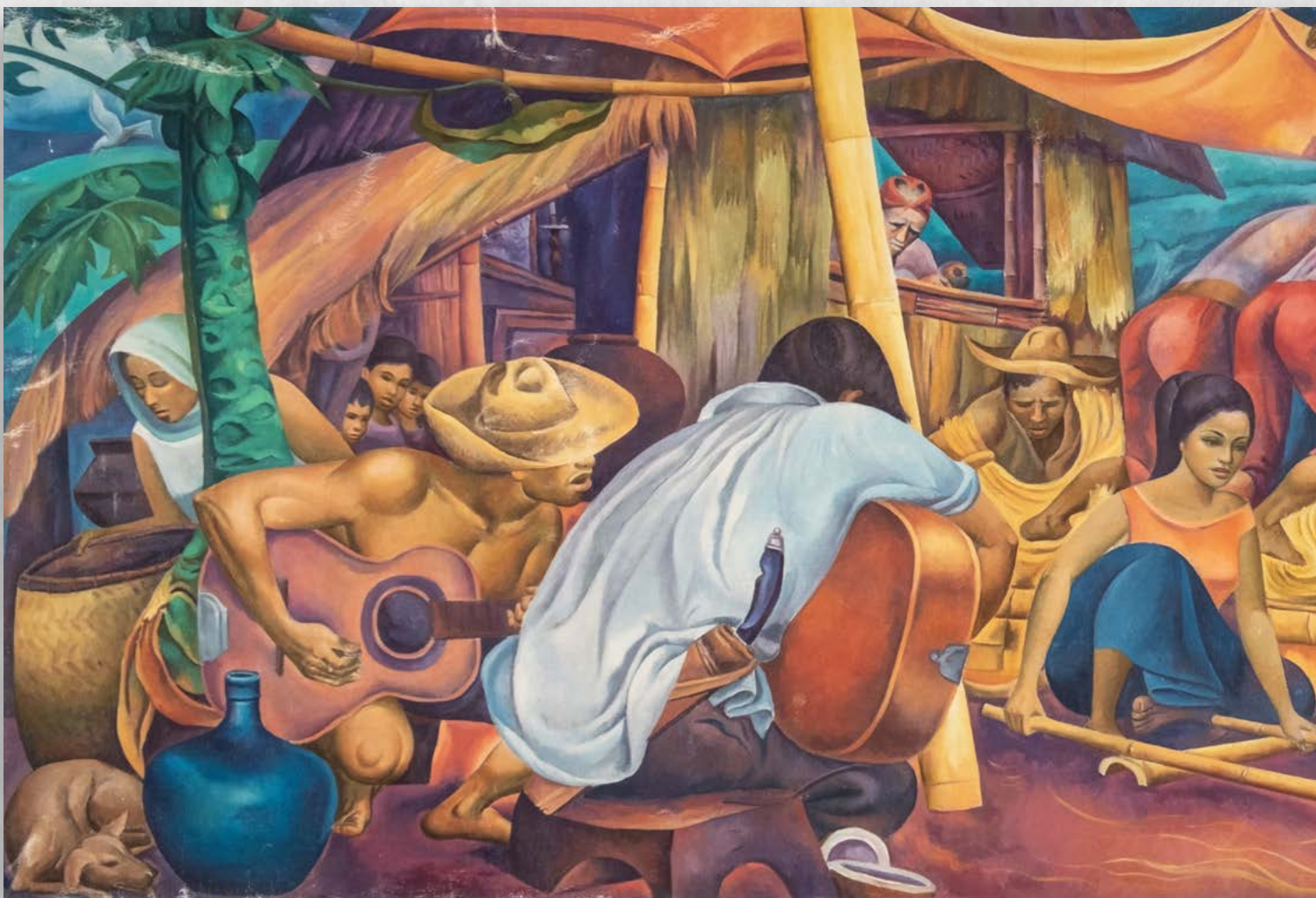
On this stage walked titans – who, for that time and place filled with the extraordinary, were not so different from everyone else. Carlos "Botong" V. Francisco began his career as an illustrator for empires that sold millions of copies a day. He also designed movie sets and costumes for the elaborate epics directed by Manuel Conde (our very own equivalent to Daryl Zanuck).

Botong shot to fame for his murals – the most famous landing him a two-page spread in 1953 in Newsweek for the Philippine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. He was moving from triumph to triumph, and had become the country's very own Diego Rivera. He was painting up a storm, creating masterpieces for City Hall, the Philippine General Hospital, as well as dozens of exuberant commissions for the spanking-new Manila cityscape.

Dubbed the "Poet of Angono", for the sleepy, lakeside fishing town which soon attracted a bevy of other artistic leading lights, including Manansala. Botong soon became most famous for his creation of a Filipino iconography – landscapes inhabited on one hand, by a pantheon of heroes from Bonifacio and Rizal – to their everyman equivalents in ricefields, mountain terraces. as well as lowland rituals. His works were all painstaking researched. Botong kept a scrapbook where he detailed the lore and legends of Angono; and according to his last apprentice, Salvador "Badong" Juban he also studiously collected artifacts from the various Filipino tribes and never began a work without first immersing himself in research.

Botong was the chief architect of the vision of the proud Malay, unsubjected by any colonial power.





# The Tapestry of Filipino Life by Botong Francisco

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by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Botong Francisco was the master of rendering men and their lives larger than either of them, of elevating the commonplace to the spectacular, and in the process, of creating myths and legends.

And he did this with the boldest of concepts — by focusing on the minutiae, the beloved, precise but often overlooked details that make the lives of the Filipino everyman, uniquely and particularly his own.

In *Tinikling No. 2*, he records the end of the harvest as a two-faced Janus: On one hand, filled with the jubilation of dance and song but also another cycle of hardwork and discipline.

The original owner of this work, the wonder-woman Estafania Aldaba Lim, is recorded by Nick Joaquin to have fallen in love with ballet when she watched a cinematic version of *Swan Lake* in a Malolos moviehouse as a girl. It's not surprising that this work that has the Filipino 'tinikling' (that must be

danced with both grace and skill while hopping between two bamboo poles) would capture her attention. The lead character sways to the sound of an imaginary tune a flower in her hair. It is a theme that Botong would return to, time and again. (*Tinikling No. 1*, otherwise known as 'Harvest Festival' now a lost work, was last seen in the collection of Malacañan Palace, and is dated 1962.)

Like that first *Tinikling*, the harvest ends with the grinding of the grain: two men put their backs to an unseen stone in the background. To the right, are a pair of men and a woman, pounding the rice with long pestles in a shared mortar called 'lusong'. Two women on either side of the work wield bilao (circular flat baskets) to separate the chaff from the life-giving grain. Another man seems to be gathering sheaves.

Surrounding this beehive of activity is the community of Angono brethren: a man strumming a guitar, three others gape entranced, drinking in the flow of life. There are three





LEFT: *Harvest Ritual (Tinikling No. 1)*, 1962 by Botong Francisco in the Malacañan Palace Collection.  
*Carlos V. Francisco: The Man and Genius of Philippine Art* by Virginia Ty-Navarro and Paul C. Zafaralla, Ayala Museum and Kansai Seminar House 1985, color illustration, pages 67-68.

boys as well as the town elder or shaman or apothecary 'hilot' who peers out of a window. (Botong typically portrayed this wizened figure in his paintings, and one suspects this character was a kind of alter-ego for the artist.) There are other figures that enrich this tapestry, peering here and there from the nooks and crannies of the work, another distinctive Botong conceit. The papaya and banana trees endemic to every small town in the Philippines book-end the piece, as do a glass jero-boam and a sleeping dog, a sheathed balisong and a gnarled tree trunk.

Interestingly, Botong has included a vignette of what appears to be an artist's home that we can glimpse through an open window: a candlestick on a dresser, and two paintings. It is, with this singular act of inviting the viewer into his home, Botong has allowed us to enter into his world, through the Kaleidoscope of Filipino Life.

**31** PROPERTY FROM THE ESTEFANIA ALDABA-LIM COLLECTION

## Carlos "Botong" V. Francisco (1912 - 1969)

### *Tinikling No. 2*

signed and inscribed "Tinikling No.2 from the Original by Carlos V. Francisco" (lower right)

ca. 1964

oil on canvas

41 1/4" x 121 3/4" (105 cm x 309 cm)

**P 24,000,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist, thence by descent



# Three Running Horses

## *Symbols and Success Through Teamwork*

Alice Guillermo posited that, "The power and fascinating quality of Legaspi's [paintings] stem from the feeling that they strike deep into subconscious reserves of energy and imagination. Aside from being dramatic metaphors of 'the human condition,' they are also visual correlatives of inner moods and psychological weathers." Known for confronting injustice and raising awareness of the circumstances of the working class, Legaspi was instrumental in the acceptance of modern art by redefining cubism using Philippine context. His distinctive geometric fragmentation disrupted the cubist idiom by altering angularity and merging forms through rhythmical delineation. Both part of the influential Thirteen Moderns and Neo-Realists, he localized Western visual art theory, spearheading modern artful conception and approach for subsequent generations of Filipino artists.

Despite his deuteranopia — red-green colour-blindness (red appearing as brown or pink, and green as beige) — he was a master colorist stating, "Colors don't come from my eyes, they come from my imagination." He was able to overcome this affliction by coordinating his palette with a color wheel, determining the hues based on the wheel's position. As a

result, his color palettes acquired a rich tint due to these contrasting tonalities. His undulant geometrical utilizations of structure and bisecting of bodies into greater facets which imbricate and slice through space in clear arched-cadences achieves an abundantly composed composition of hues and tones. He fully releases the articulate aptitude of color which creates a lush colorful atmosphere with a multitude of forms. Creating plangency in space, these layers of transparent movements constitute a polychromatic effect while his lambency enhances hues or de-materializes them into airy translucence. Curator Ditas Samson observed that, "The human torso was his vessel for visual expression..."

When he was a child, his lungs were filled with water, and so doctors had to periodically drain them and inject antiseptic. During this time, he would feel waters sloshing inside him. This is why the torsos in his paintings are fluid." In this work, it is unique that Legaspi's enthrallment is evident for figures both human and equine. His organic "biota" imagery is especially apparent, conjoining man and beast as one in a visceral weft. The two figures and three horses forms undulate to overlap to their own shared cadence of tonal synchronicity, fully expressing the rich texture of potential color.

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**Cesar Legaspi** (1917 - 1994)

*Three Horses*

signed and dated 1978 (lower right)

oil on wood

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

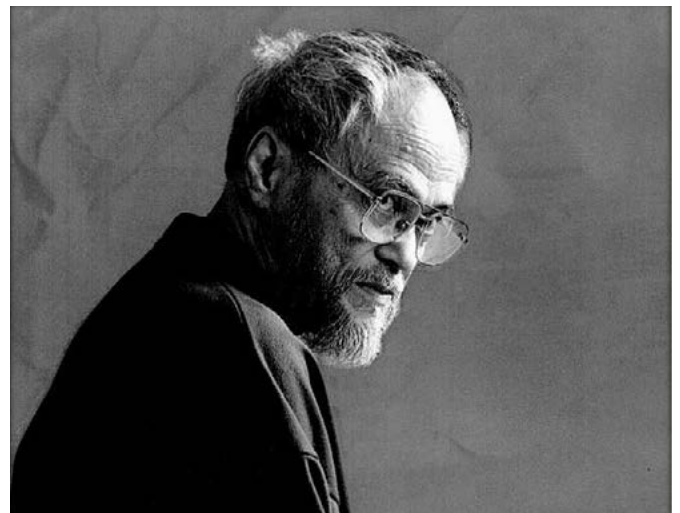
**P 5,000,000**

**PROVENANCE:**

León Gallery, *The Kingly Treasures Auction 2018*,  
Makati City, 1 December 2018, Lot 94

**LITERATURE**

Roces, Alfredo. *Cesar Legaspi: The Making of a National Artist*.  
Pasig: The Crucible Workshop, 1993. Full-color illustration and  
painting description on page 172.

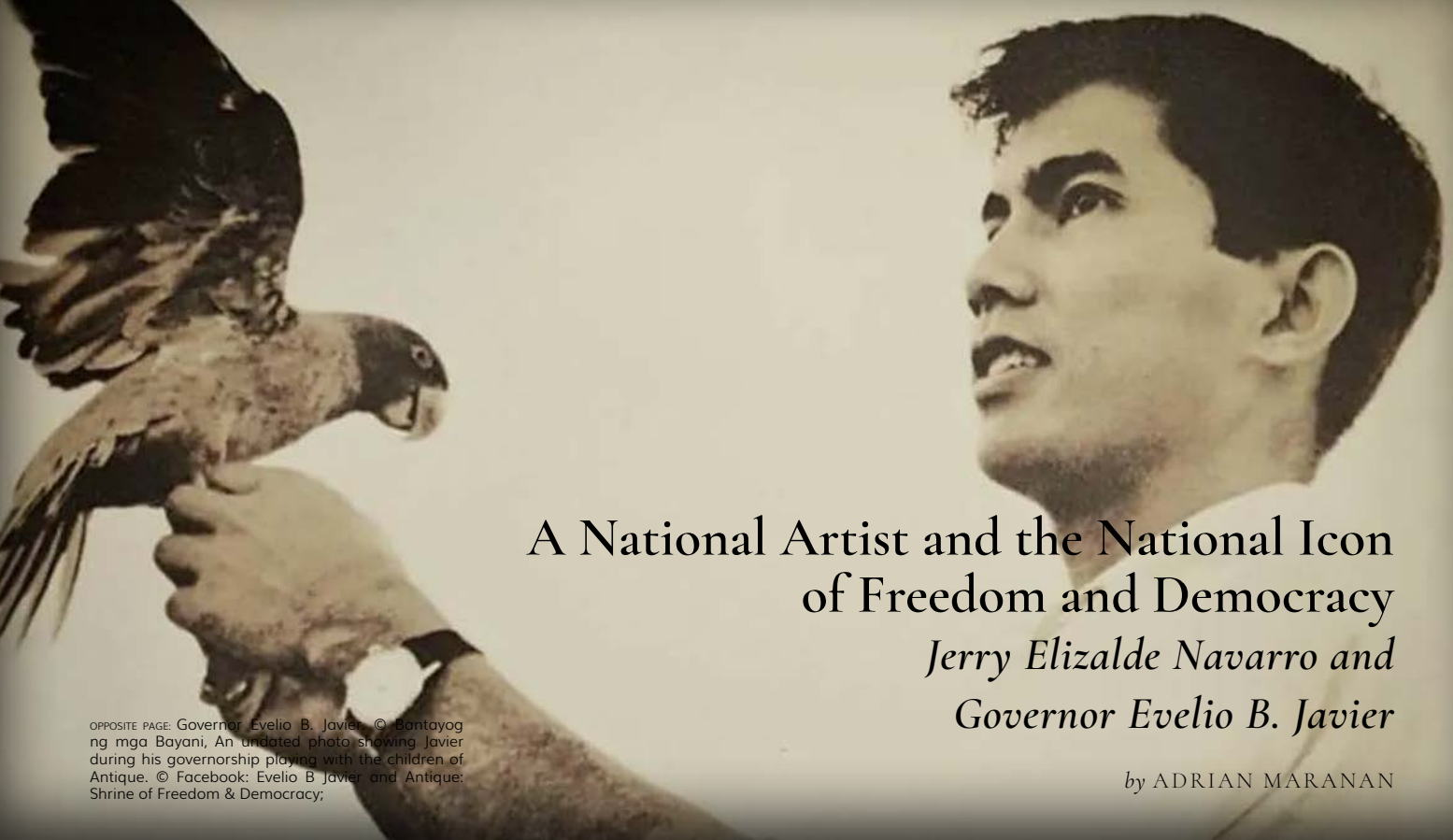


ABOVE: Cesar Legaspi © <https://x.com/artrepubliktv/status/846254131979337728/photo/1>









## A National Artist and the National Icon of Freedom and Democracy

*Jerry Elizalde Navarro and  
Governor Evelio B. Javier*

by ADRIAN MARANAN

OPPOSITE PAGE: Governor Evelio B. Javier. © Bantayog ng mga Bayani. An undated photo showing Javier during his governorship playing with the children of Antique. © Facebook: Evelio B. Javier and Antique: Shrine of Freedom & Democracy;

*"Politics is the concern of good and decent people."*

*"Our economy is in shambles, and our children are heirs to an almost unbearable national debt because good and decent citizens have abandoned politics to the corrupt."*

—FORMER ANTIQUE GOVERNOR EVELIO B. JAVIER

Color is the protagonist in National Artist Jerry Elizalde Navarro's oeuvre. In some of his works, color assumes a two-fold meaning: one as an indicator of joy and exuberance (aka his Bali paintings) and a symbol of the violent thunders of his turbulent socio-political milieu.

Navarro's fellow Antiqueño and former governor Evelio B. Javier is the protagonist in this poignant 1991 mixed media work. A reminder of a true patriot and uncompromising public servant, the work narrates that tragic hour on February 11, 1986, when the former governor Javier was assassinated in broad daylight. His shocking death would ultimately become one of the most powerful incendiaries that sparked the historic People Power Revolution of 1986.

### *Evelio B. Javier, the beloved son of Antique*

At 29, Evelio Javier (born Evelio Bellaflor Javier on October 14, 1942 in Hamtic, Antique) became the Philippines' youngest elected provincial governor at that time. He was an academic achiever but was destined to be a public servant from the get-go, serving as president of the Ateneo student council in college and, during his law school years, editor-in-chief of *The Guidon*, Ateneo's official student publication.

In 1971, Javier ran for the governorship of Antique—and won by a landslide. For the next eight years, Javier would pioneer people-centric programs aimed at holistic community



development. He instituted the annual Binirayan Festival in 1974, commemorating the legend of the ten Bornean datus and their families who escaped the tyranny of Rajah Makatunaw. The datus, led by Datu Puti, would barter Panay from the Ati people led by King Marikudo and Queen Maniwangtiwang through a golden *salakot* (*saduk*) and a long gold necklace (*manangyad*). For the annual festivities of the said event, Javier built the Binirayan Sports Complex. The festival and the sports complex were meant to be a source of pride for the Antiqueños.

"Despite lacking funds due to his refusal to kowtow to then President Marcos, Javier wanted to uplift Antiqueños who were culturally depressed amid a diaspora to nearby Negros Island and even outside the country," writes Mico Abarro in his February 2022 ABS-CBN news report in honor of the late governor.



Javier also instituted the Antique Upland Development Program through the help of the Ford Foundation, USAID, UP Los Baños, etc. The program became the first model for sustainable development in developing countries.

After declining to run for another term as governor, Javier pursued his scholarship at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, taking up his master's in public administration. He would return to the Philippines in 1983, in the days after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino



### *Javier as leader of the opposition to the dictatorship*

Javier was the key leader of the opposition in Panay against the Marcos dictatorship. In 1984, Javier ran for a seat as representative of Antique to the First Batasang Pambansa but lost in a heavily manipulated election to warlord Arturo Pacificador, an ally of the dictator and eventual majority floor leader of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan Party at the Batasan.

Unfortunately for Javier's side, seven of his supporters were ambushed on the eve of the elections on May 13, in what is infamously known as the Sibalom Bridge murders. Javier then filed a protest to the Supreme Court following the election incidents.

Javier then campaigned for Cory Aquino in the 1986 presidential snap elections, serving as Antique's chair of the UNIDO coalition and campaign director for the province. His defiance against the dictator and his support for Aquino in the name of restoring liberty and democracy would cost him his life.



TOP: A protest held at the Ayala Avenue right after the assassination of Gov. Javier. These protests would become precursors to the historic People Power Revolution. © Wikimedia Commons; MIDDLE: Evelio B. Javier Freedom Park, located in front of the Antique Provincial Capitol in San Jose de Buenavista. © Evelio B. Javier and Antique: Shrine of Freedom & Democracy; BOTTOM: Cory Aquino listens to Preciosa Javier as they keep vigil in the Ateneo chapel where the wake for Evelio Javier was held. Photo by Sonny Camarillo, People Power: The Philippine Revolution of 1986. Caption taken from the Flickr page of the Presidential Museum and Library.

### *Antique's "Ninoy Aquino"*

A few minutes past 10 AM on February 11, 1986, just outside the provincial capitol in San Jose de Buenavista, masked assassins working for Pacificador and riding a Nissan patrol jeep opened fire at Javier, who was resting on a lawn in the plaza just in front of the capitol building. He was taking a short break from safeguarding the ballots against theft and manipulation. Javier initially sustained gunshot wounds on his left shoulder and leg. Attempting to protect civilians, the bleeding Javier ran away from the capitol while the gunmen continued firing shots. Javier sought refuge inside a comfort room owned by Leon Pe but was found and cornered by his assassins. He was shot at point-blank range, his bloodied body lying on the cold floor.

Javier's body sustained 24 gunshot wounds. Unlike the ten Bornean datus, tyranny and death became inevitable for the outspoken critic.

Javier's death struck the final blow to the dictatorship. His body was flown to Manila, where a burial procession was held. Javier's body was laid in state at the Ateneo, where more than 20,000 people resoundingly voiced out their battle cries of justice for Javier and for the thousands of Filipinos who were subjected to detainment, torture, enforced disappearance, and brutal death under the regime. When Javier's body was flown back to Antique, another funeral procession was held that ran the 160-kilometer length of Panay Island and was joined by thousands of Panayanons.





TOP: Navarro's *A Foul Wind in February '86*, a 1986 acrylic on board work in which he first paid tribute to the memory of the slain governor. This piece precedes the work on offer. © Ateneo Art Gallery; ВОПЛОМ: Napoleon Abueva's bronze statue of Gov. Javier, installed at the exact location where he was murdered. © Facebook: Evelio B Javier and Antique: Shrine of Freedom & Democracy

On February 12, the Aquino campaign team released an interview with Javier that was filmed days before his death. Said the slain ex-governor, "Every time I move around Antique, I have to play cat and mouse with the goons of Pacificador. I have to be elusive." A 1990 article from the Los Angeles Times also tells of a ledger detailing that Pacificador was credited to have received one million pesos from the regime in exchange for killing Javier and ensuring the win of the dictator in the province.

By the end of February, democracy would be restored in the Philippines, ending the two-decade conjugal dictatorship.

Navarro's 1991 piece is actually his second work on the murder of Javier. The first one, bearing the exact same title as the work at hand, is a 1986 acrylic on board piece, in which Navarro paints a portrait of Javier in the center surrounded by armed figures, all in a Cubist style. In the 1991 work at hand, Navarro, ever the metamorphosing artist, yields to an abstraction reminiscent of a cubist collage style in a chilling reminder of Javier's death. Red paint reminiscent of blood can be seen in the center surrounded by a chaotic convergence of cut-out and pasted canvas, as if transporting one to the harrowing setting in which Javier was cold-bloodedly murdered. A small painted slab incised with "EVELIO" can be found in the upper center. Is it Javier's wounded head? Or is it Navarro reminding the viewer that our nation's foundation and the freedom and liberty we enjoy right now (however little or shallow they may be) and should be struggling to defend and cultivate towards humaneness are watered by the very blood of our heroes?

A year after Navarro painted this work, Republic Act No. 7601, otherwise known as "An Act Declaring February 11 Of Each Year Governor Evelio B. Javier Day, A Special Non-Working Public Holiday in the Provinces of Antique, Capiz, Aklan, and Iloilo," was passed on June 3, 1992. The plaza where Javier was killed is now known as the Evelio B. Javier Freedom Park.

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**Jerry Elizalde Navarro** (1924 - 1999)

*A Foul Wind on the 11th Day of February 1986*

*(The Murder of Evelio Javier)*

signed, titled and dated 1991 (side and verso)

collage, industrial paints, finishers

60" x 48" (152 cm x 122 cm)

**P 1,700,000**

PROVENANCE

Metropolitan Museum of Manila

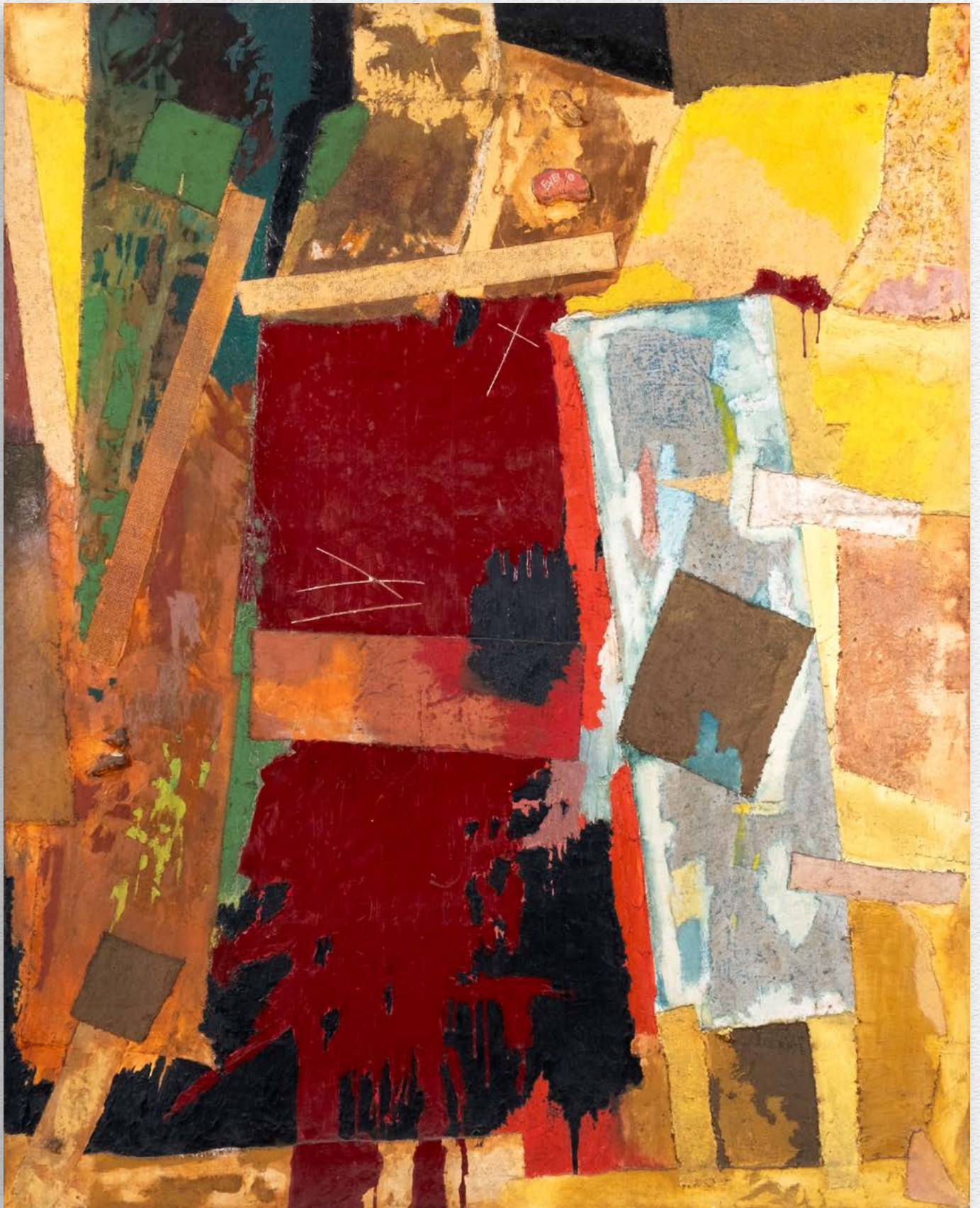
LITERATURE

Reyes, Cid. J. *Elizalde Navarro*. Manila: The National Museum of the Philippines, 2008. Full color illustration and painting description on page 246. Listed on page 272 as "A Foul Wind on the 11th Day of February '86" in the artist's "List of Artworks" (Appendix).

EXHIBITED

The Metropolitan Museum of Manila, J. *Elizalde Navarro: 45 Years of the Artist's Works (Retrospective Exhibition)*, Manila, November 1995







# Onib Conjures a New 'Madonna of the Slums'

by HANNAH VALIENTE

The subject of mother and child has been one of the most enduring images in the history of human portraiture. From sculptures to canvas, this image of the Madonna persevered through history, emphasizing just how important motherhood is held and revered.

Among the artists who have tried their hand on this subject is Onib Olmedo. The renowned expressionist manifests the highly tempestuous human emotions into physical appearance, rendering his figures in this 1988 *Mother and Child* distorted and disfigured. This warped quality did not evade the mother and child – in fact, he exacerbated it, exaggerating the face and eyes of his figures. Their misshapen figures are gripped with anguish and torture, conveying a glumness that is as palpable as any physical object.

In this *Mother and Child*, Onib paints a new 'Madonna of the Slums,' pushing the original vision of the downtrodden duo and elevating their humanity. Both their hopes and despair are evident in their distorted faces and Onib, adept at probing into the human soul without idealization, gave the view a filter-free image of the mother and child, both in their short-lived glory and inevitable demise.



ABOVE: Onib Olmedo © Gallery Arhcives

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**Onib Olmedo** (1937 - 1996)

*Mother and Child*

signed and dated 1988 (lower right)

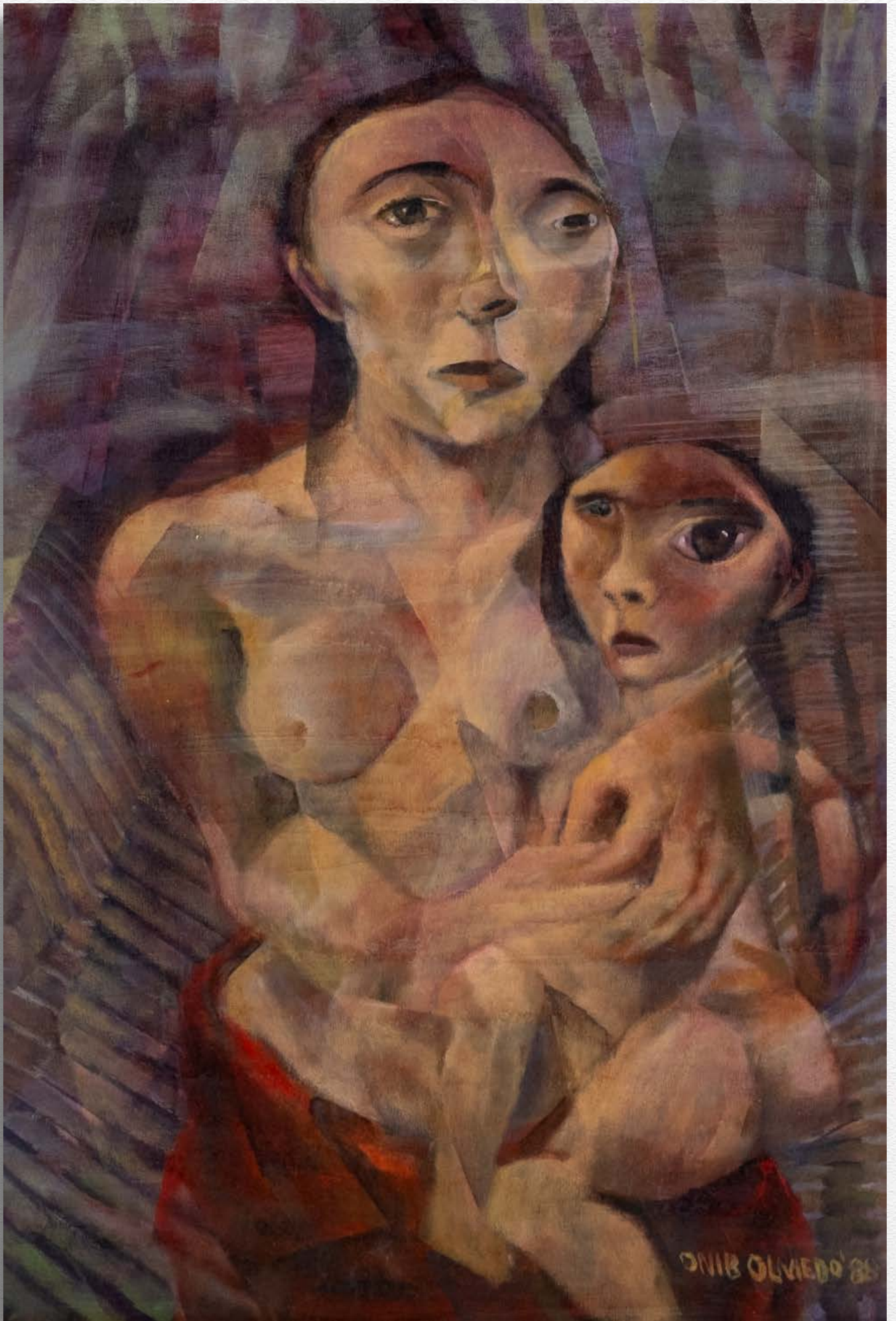
oil on canvas

36" x 24" (91 cm x 61 cm)

**P 800,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Gisella Olmedo-Araneta confirming the authenticity of this lot.







## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Lying Nude*

signed and dated 1947 (lower right)

oil on canvas

16" x 20" (41 cm x 51 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

Renowned for his sunlit, bucolic landscapes celebrating the glorious Philippine countryside, Fernando Amorsolo's artistry extends to a multitudinous collection of portraits and nude paintings. Yet, the Amorsolo "light" remains a constant, infusing his works with a serene tranquility, regardless of the subject matter.

Living in a predominantly Roman Catholic and highly religious country, the public display of the female body, even a tiny slip of skin, is considered an act of indecency. However, Amorsolo has a flair for preserving his Filipina maiden's dignity; their portrayal was not to gratify nor entice the spectator. Often depicted living in seclusion or having her body turned away from the viewers while preoccupied with her tasks, Amorsolo's women, from Cid Reyes' description, "still conveys an innate modesty and decency, propriety and grace."

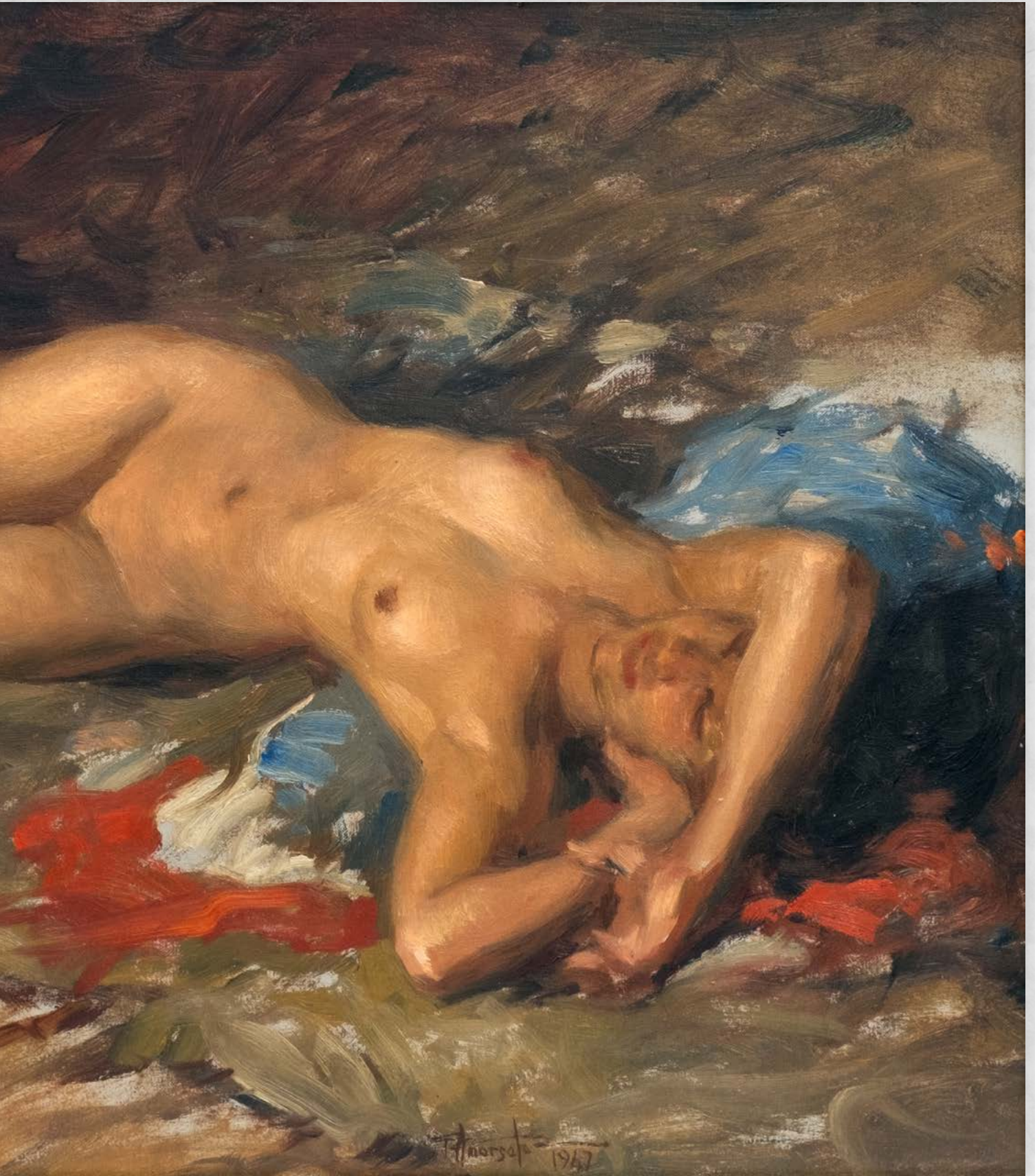
*Lying Nude* is a conspicuous demonstration of Amorsolo's great finesse in the art field. Embodying his romantic style, his fine brush strokes and skilled colorwork enliven this composition, evoking a deep and aesthetic appreciation of the female body. Moreover, this theme of Amorsolo's works exudes a great sense of empowerment and confidence within his subjects. "Though shorn of her clothes, she did not feel naked, was comfortable in her own skin, with not a tinge of guilt or shame suggested in her body language," Cid Reyes notes on Amorsolo's nude paintings. (*Jessica Magno*)



ABOVE: Fernando Amorsolo in his studio. 'Lying Nude' is in the background



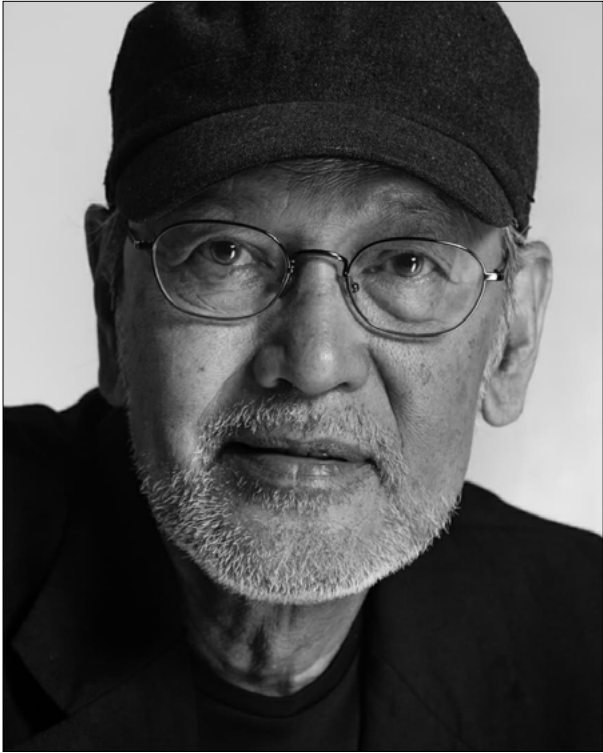






# A Trio of 'Sabels'

## *Bencab's Multiples in Motion*



ABOVE: BenCab © Instagram, pixmike photo collection.

Movement was a central tenet of Benedicto Cabrera's works. From his Sabel series to his multiple depictions of Isadora and her dancing, motion and movement has captivated Bencab and manifested itself in draperies and women posed mid-twirl.

This series of mixed media pieces, all done in 1970, portrays this fascination for movement and motion perfectly. Created in the same year as his conferment of the coveted Thirteen Artists Award, this lot is a perfect representation of Bencab's attunement to motion with these three pieces encapsulating this through his solid-colored platters amidst plain colorful background. There is a sense of drama with the curves and swerves, a magnificent place of a dance that has always been an interest for Bencab.

There is a method to his madness, a logic to his splatters. The artist's reverence for the human figure still retains, even if it is through abstract shapes. "Subjugating his natural talent for human figuration, Bencab opted to depict amorphous bodies and probe into the urgency of their emotional states," writes Krip Yuson in Bencab's monograph. (*Hannah Valiente*)

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### **Benedicto Cabrera** (b. 1942)

#### *a.) Sabel I*

signed and dated 1970 (lower right)  
mixed media  
10" x 9 1/4" (25 cm x 23 cm)

#### *b.) Sabel II*

signed and dated 1970 (lower right)  
mixed media  
9 1/4" x 10" (23 cm x 25 cm)

#### *c.) Sabel III*

signed and dated 1970 (lower right)  
mixed media  
10" x 9 1/4" (10 cm x 23 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, Manila



ABOVE: Two similar artworks by BenCab, (LEFT) Scavenger, 1968, 36 cm x 29 cm, acrylic on paper © Jaime & Bea Zobel de Ayala collection, Manila; (RIGHT) Misericordia No. 2, 1968, acrylic on paper, 34 cm x 36 cm © Cultural Center of the Philippines collection.







# Don Anselmo Trinidad

## *Pillar of Filipino Finance*



ABOVE: Former Manila Stock Exchange (MSE) Board of Governors (1963-1964), From left: Luis Ongpin-Secretary, Vicente Goquiolay-Vice President Anselmo Trinidad-President, Jose Marino Olondriz-Treasurer and Eduardo Eliger; © Facebook: The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc

Don Anselmo Trinidad would be a pillar of Filipino finance for several generations. Originally from Iba, Zambales, he would begin his career as a salaried employee of the Bureau of Internal Revenue in Manila. He would marry Josefa Benitez from Pinamalayan, Mindoro. (She was one of the first group of food demonstrators at the Bureau of Plant Industry under Maria Orosa and she would resign to tie the knot in January 1932.)

He would become one of the founding members of the Manila Stock Exchange alongside Mr. Long, nicknamed 'Shorty', Don Marino Olondriz, Mr. Sta. Maria, and Mr. Hagedorn.

The stock exchange boom of 1935 would transform the family fortunes and Don Anselmo would establish the first family compound on a large property on Consuelo Street in Singalong. (The family would later move to Forbes Park in 1965.)

Because of his sound business advice and practical acumen, Don Anselmo would become the confidante not just of the presidents of the country's largest corporations but also the leaders of the nation. One of them was Ferdinand E. Marcos —with him he formed a special connection. As a young guerrilla during the war years, Marcos had sought refuge at the home of Don Anselmo who was himself a member of the resistance movement.

Don Anselmo's name would routinely appear in the Official Gazette as a visitor to Malacañan to call on Presidents Ramon Magsaysay and Carlos Quirino. He would serve as the president of the Manila Stock Exchange for 16 years and was a co-founder of the Bank of Commerce and State Investment Corporation.

His daughter, former cabinet minister Josie T. Lichauco would reminisce in her column in the Philippine Star (on April 20, 2009) about her father's Amorsolo paintings "which dominated his sense of interest and fascination." Through his anecdotes, she discovered "the magic of Amorsolo's colors and the beauty of their intertwining hues." These were all hung in their house under Don Anselmo's "delicate and meticulous" direction.

She would furthermore recount that Amorsolo's daughter, Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo, would remark that Don Anselmo was one of the maestro's favorite clients alongside Don Luis Araneta, Don Andres Soriano, and Don Jorge Vargas. Sylvia would say that her father had "albums of different thicknesses and sizes that contained his sketches as early as the 1900s to the 1960s and these were never shown to the public except to this small circle of enthusiasts."





LEFT: Josefa Benitez and Anselmo Trinidad were married on January 2, 1932 in Lourdes Church in Intramuros; TOP RIGHT: Anselmo Trinidad with the founding members of the Manila Stock Exchange. Anselmo is standing on the far right, first row. (2) The board of Governors of the Manila Stock Exchange. Anselmo was president for sixteen years.



ABOVE: Former President Fidel V. Ramos, Jovito Salonga and Juan Ponce Enrile with Amelita Trinidad-Reyes, among others







**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Fruit Vendor*

signed and dated 1962 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

**P 2,600,000**

## Fruit of Prosperity *The Amorsolo Table of Plenty*

The works of Fernando Amorsolo need no introduction. Arguably the most famous Filipino artist of the 20th – and even the 21st – century, even the most casual of art enthusiasts are sure to recognize his iconic usage of light and shadow, the famed Amorsolo sunlight washing over his rural landscapes and pastoral scenes that endeared him to local and international patrons.

Like the rest of his oeuvre, this 1962 piece recalls a quaint and distinct Filipino scene. This time turning his head to a marketplace scene, this unmistakably Amorsolo piece depicts a woman displaying her fruits for sale. The vividness of the cut-open watermelon serves as the only vibrant shade here; the rest, from the mangoes to the bananas to even the woman herself, is washed in a warm hue, not quite exactly the famed Amorsolo sunlight but close enough to mark the National Artist in this piece.

In his life and beyond, Amorsolo's everyday sceneries have become the face of Philippine art. Whether it is to uphold the status



ABOVE: Detailed shot of the artwork.

quo or to question it, at the heart of it lies Amorsolo, and his lavanderas, dalagas, rural countryside, and like in this case, vendors continue their reign as major players in the Philippine art scene. *(Hannah Valiente)*



# Amorsolo and the Magical Dalaga

## *A Photograph by the Maestro*

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ABOVE: The reference photo used and taken by Amorsolo himself from *Amorsolo* by Alfredo Roces.

Fernando Amorsolo's illustrious artistic career reached its Golden Period in the 1930s, with the Amorsolo school of art becoming the prevailing art style followed by his contemporaries and budding artists. But besides his landscapes and genre scenes, Amorsolo extends his "light" to his dalagas and nude paintings.

Amorsolo's canvases are a profound manifestation of his undying love for his home country, each composition a celebration of the Philippines' culture and heritage. Inherently Filipino, this work from 1939 depicts two Filipina

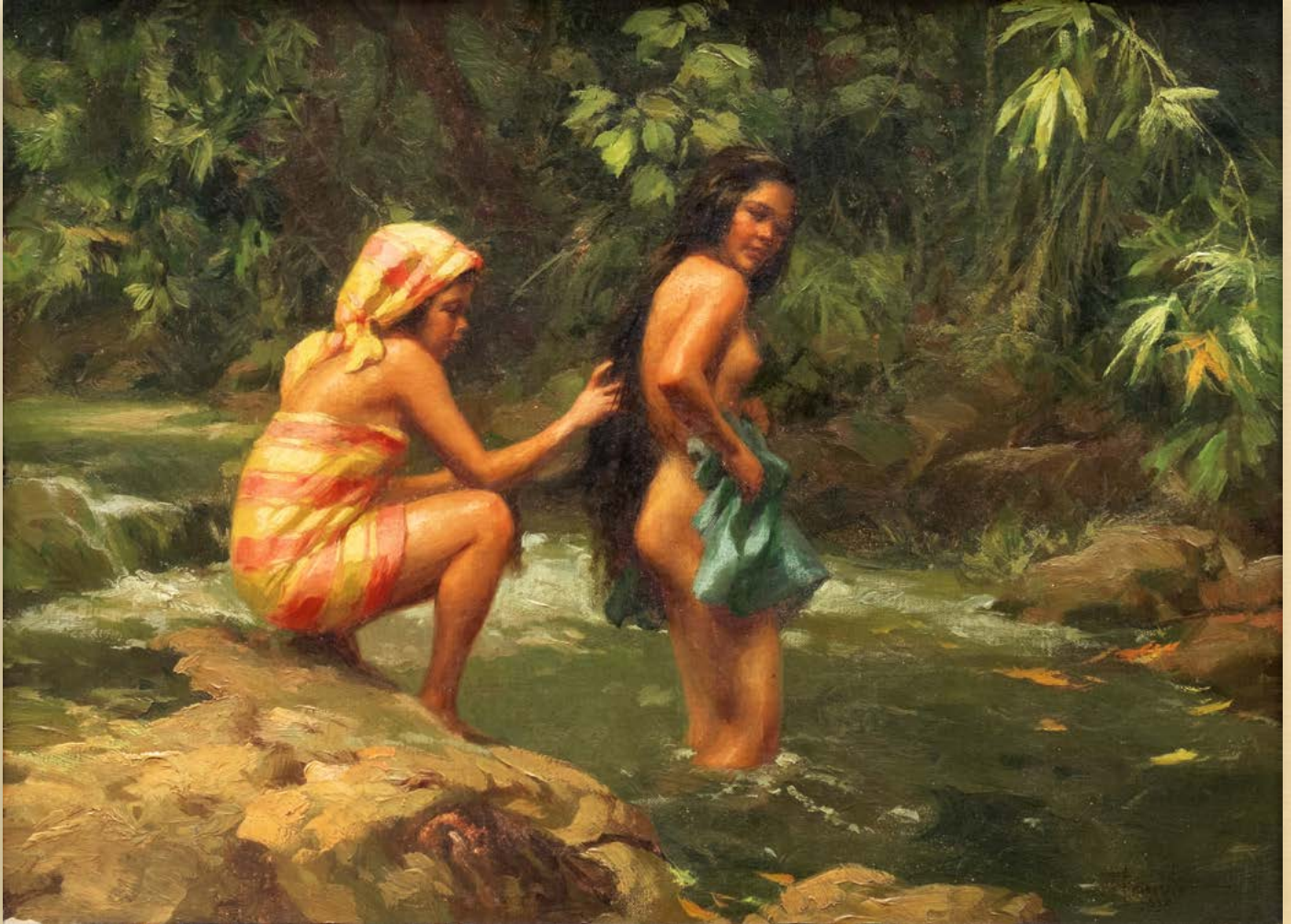
maidens taking a bath by the stream, a tradition practiced by our ancestors—maidens helping each other take a bath after doing their laundry.

With his fine strokes and impressive use of color, Amorsolo splendidly captures the tranquil and content countryside life, evoking a sense of nostalgia that resonates with his viewers. Moreover, he delicately portrayed his maidens bathing in seclusion, away from the prying eyes and impure thoughts of their peers, vehemently keeping their dignity. Never failing to boast about his country in his every painting, Amorsolo truly is a cultural phenomenon in his lifetime and beyond. *(Jessica Magno)*



# Innocents in a River Glade

*From Amorsolo's Iconic Age*



**38** PROPERTY FORMERLY IN THE DON ANSELMO TRINIDAD COLLECTION

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Bathers*

signed and dated 1939 (lower right)

oil on canvas

16 1/2" x 22 3/4" (42 cm x 58 cm)

**P 2,400,000**



# A Roman Beauty by a Filipino Master

*Dama Romana by Fabian de la Rosa*

Amongst the notable portraitists in Philippine art history, no one deserves to be on that list as much as Fabian de la Rosa. Perhaps the most famous Filipino artist internationally during his heyday, de la Rosa's portraits spoke of the long-held tradition of commissioning for one's images, as many patrons are wont to do.

With this 1905 Seated Nude Study, created one year after he won his first gold medal at the St. Louis Exposition, de la Rosa turns a typical portrait (and indeed, a typical nude) onto its head. Portraying a naked woman on the beach, she looks over her shoulder, her arm and the rock outcrop she sits on artfully covering her. She stares wistfully at the distance, an expression reminiscent of the prim and proper portraits he creates.

In this refreshing twist, de la Rosa proves his prowess as a portraitist yet again, marrying his excellent skill in painting and portraiture to create this truly unique piece. (Hannah Valiente)



ABOVE: Fabian de la Rosa Photo credit Discovering the Old Philippines: People, Places, Heroes, Historical Events.

39 PROPERTY FORMERLY IN THE DON ANSELMO TRINIDAD COLLECTION

**Fabián de la Rosa** (1869 - 1937)

*Seated Nude Study*

signed, dated 1905 and inscribed "ROMA" (upper left)

oil on canvas

10" x 8" (25 cm x 20 cm)

**P 300,000**



F. de la Rosa  
ROMA 1909







ABOVE: President Corazon Cory Aquino celebrates her friendship with Dra. Angelita "Lita" Trinidad-Reyes

Even in her youth, Corazon “Cory” Aquino seemed destined to live and lead a genteel life. In her years as a grade school student at St. Scholastica’s College, she was described as unassuming by her fellow classmates, a top student who relegated herself to her books and enjoyed the “heavy” subjects that made the other girls groan.

“Quiet, but exceptionally bright” was how the Scholastica nuns described the young Cory who surpassed the 60 or so schoolgirls in her immediate grade level when she graduated as class valedictorian in 1943, just at the cusp of the end of the Second World War.

That is not to say Cory spent all her time alone. As recalled by fellow Scholastican Carina Tancinco Mañalac, Cory belonged to a small group of class nerds, including Celine Olaguer (the salutatorian of their batch), Aleli Bautista, and Angelita Trinidad, to whom she would gift these floral masterpieces decades later.

Lita, as she is more commonly known, sustained her friendship with Cory despite their paths and careers diverging. While Cory pursued a degree in French and Math (an unlikely combination that satisfied her intellectual curiosity), Lita followed medicine where she eventually served as one of Cory’s doctors.

Throughout her political career, Cory leaned against some of her Scholastican classmates. She held deep reverence and respect for the women she grew up with, with her word of honor and impeccable thoughtfulness an ingrained part of her interactions with friends. In line with her character, Cory’s continued friendship with Lita Trinidad-Reyes persists through the decades, lovingly made physical through her gifted works. (*Hannah Valiente*)

# The President and Her Doctor

## Cory Aquino and Dra. Angelita Trinidad-Reyes

While more popularly known as the first woman President of the Philippines, not many knew that Corazon Aquino was an artist herself. Taking her first art class in 1996, four years after her term as president, her art teacher Jeffrey Consumo lauded her as a natural, a fast learner who followed his instructions. Even at the start of her art journey, Cory held a particular fondness for painting flora, continuously painting even after her classes with Consumo ended.

The meek and resilient former president translated her demure disposition into her floral painting, as evidenced by her 1997 *Still Life* and 2007 *Roses Everywhere*. Both featuring vibrant reds and invigorating greens, these pieces show no sign of struggle or distress; instead, they focus on the simple commonality of these images.

“Wala pa akong nakita sa kanyang painting na malungkot. Very bright colors and flowers. Very upbeat, and I like that spirit — that very positive spirit,” Adamson University President Fr. Gregorio Bañaga Jr. said in a GMA News Online article.

Indeed, there is a sense of naiveté in her paintings, Cory’s calm and steadfast composure translating into a vibrant and pure oeuvre with its steady serenity the beating life force of her floral masterpieces. (*Hannah Valiente*)



**Corazon Aquino** (1933 - 2009)*Still Life*

signed and dated 1997 (lower left)  
oil on wood  
12" x 12" (30 cm x 30 cm)

**P 60,000**

## PROVENANCE

A gift from President Corazon Aquino  
to her friend Angelita Trinidad-Reyes

**Corazon Aquino** (1933 - 2009)*Roses Everywhere*

signed and dated 2007 (lower right)  
acrylic on canvas  
18" x 24" (46 cm x 61 cm)

**P 100,000**

## PROVENANCE

A gift from President Corazon Aquino  
to her friend Angelita Trinidad-Reyes





# The Neo-Realist Gamble

## *Winner Takes All in the Game of Art and Life*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

It's hard to imagine what Manila in 1945 must have felt like. Completely devastated, it was a place of jagged landscapes and people burying their dead.

But it was also a moment for renewal and re-invention.

In the years after the war, bookended by the years 1946 and 1947, the Manila art scene was seething with intellectual energy. This in itself was a completely remarkable phenomenon. Rising magnificently above the rubble of World War II, undeterred by the grim necessity of rebuilding the lives of an entire generation, the Filipino artist fought against all odds to keep the seven arts alive. In fact, it seemed to be an urgent responsibility to bring it back to life in the face of the direst of circumstances.

In 1948, the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP)— perhaps not officially the first of its kind because there were one or two other salon-oriented organizations in the 1920s — was founded. It was the brainchild of the tireless, energetic Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, a sugar planter's daughter.

Tellingly, its offices were to be found first on the ruins of the University of the Philippines (where the Supreme Court stands today) and later in the pock-marked remains of the National Museum. Its first competitive exhibitions would also take place there : Carlos "Botong Francisco" would win first prize for *Kaingin*, a work that portrayed subsistence farmers scabbling for land.

It spelled such a sea change that the next year *Edades* was publicly and dramatically called out in the press over the cause of modern art by no less than the venerable Guillermo Tolentino, respected sculptor and academic cohort of the grand old man Fernando Amorsolo at the University of the Philippines.

Thus, in 1949, the AAP would be sufficiently pressured by the figurative painters among its membership to announce two categories for their painting competitions : the 'Modern' and the 'Conservative.'

For one reason or another, these classifications were abolished in 1950 — allowing a group that had named themselves the 'Neo-Realists' to scoop up all the major awards in a grand slam of three back-to-back competitions. That feat cemented their reputations for generations to come.

Vicente Manansala would say, "*Edades* cracked open the door for Filipino modern art"— motioning with his thumb and forefinger to demonstrate the narrowest of spaces — "but it was HR Ocampo who kicked down the door."

Who exactly was this band of audacious brothers?

On June 9th, 1950 — exactly in the middle of the first year of the mid-century, the *Manila Times* (circulation : 1 Million readers a day) ran a small notice buried on page 5, headlined "AAP to Sponsor First Neo-Realist Art Exhibition."

It was scheduled the following weekend from June 17 to 25 at the Manila Hotel — and it would be the first time the word "Neo-Realist" would appear in public — the announcement went on to explain that it had taken its cue from the 19th-century literary critic, Francesco de Sanctis. "To create reality, an artist must have the force to kill it. But instantly, the fragments draw together, seeking one another, with the obscure presentiment of the new life in which they are destined."

Hernando R. Ocampo was the ringleader of this group that included Cesar Legaspi, Vicente Manansala, Romeo Tabuena, Ramon Estella, Victor Oteyza, and Nena Saguil.

If the AAP would be the first building block in the story of Filipino modern art, then the Neo-Realists were the second.

The Neo-Realists were also the country's first or first-known, properly accorded "social realists" — painting of the half-lives in Manila slums, the "*barong barong*" (a makeshift house made of discarded materials) that was home to almost all of post-War Manila.







Composed of writers and journalists, reporters and editorial cartoonists, they would become a force to reckon with; so much so that when the Philippine Art Gallery opened its doors as the first gallery exclusively to champion the cause of abstract art, they were natural allies.

Together, they would form a powerful ecosystem.

It was in the midst of this creative cauldron that this painting by Manansala was made — a portrait of the brothers-in-arms that would set the course of Philippine art as boldly as Juan Luna and Resurreccion Hidalgo and their heirs Fernando Amorsolo and Guillermo Tolentino did before them.

Manansala invites us into a mis-en-scene, as a fly on the wall of a house that could only be HR Ocampo's (the familiar wrought-iron lattice-work on the windows are a giveaway). Four men gamble on a game of chance, friendly foes all. Cesar Legazpi, HR's bestie and closest confidante, can be seen to his right. The other seats at the table are for Arturo Luz, the youngest of them, while Victor Oteyza makes the fourth in this hand.

Magtanggul Asa writing in the exhibition catalogue for what he would term "The First Exhibit of Non-Objective Art in Tagala", hailed HR Ocampo as "the Father of Non-Objective Art in the Philippines".



ABOVE: Vicente Manansala with Cesar Legaspi



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



BESIDE: Pangguinge, oil on canvas, 33.6 x 38.6 inches, unsigned, ASA Museum and Library Foundation





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**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)

*Neo-Realist Pangguinge*

signed and dated 1952 (upper right)

oil on wood

12" x 16" (30 cm x 41 cm)

**P 800,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila



# Zóbel's *Orilla*, His Last Series

## *Reveling in the Peace and Serenity of the Júcar Riverbanks*

by ADRIAN MARANAN

"As I paint, I eliminate all that is superfluous. My paintings are, I believe, quite simple: I don't want them to contain anything that might be distracting."

"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

In 1980, Zóbel visited Manila, in what would become the very last time he would spend time in his birthplace. Unfortunately, Zóbel fell ill due to a brain hemorrhage, an affliction that would still manifest even after he had already recovered. This unfortunate period in Zóbel's life triggered his depression, spiraling down into creative stagnation and anxiety.

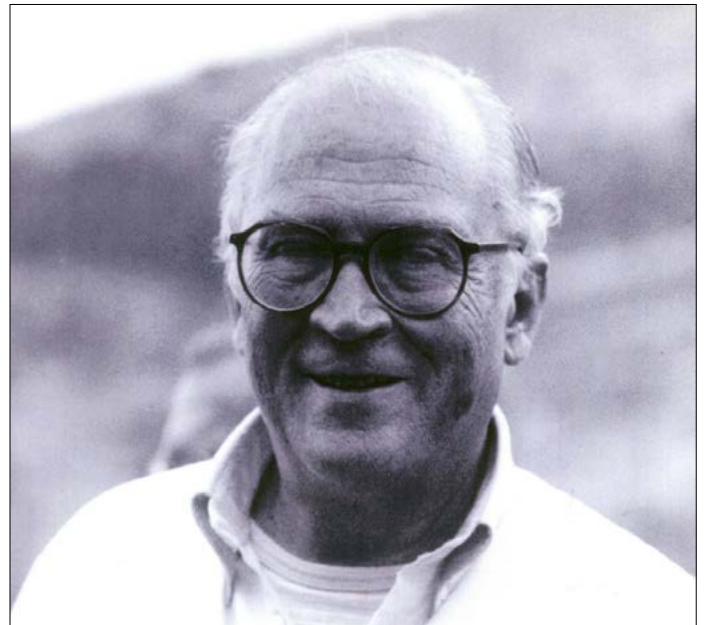
"Drawing now loses its central role of previous stages to fuse completely with color," Zóbel's biographer Angeles Villalba Salvador wrote. "He also starts to use new materials, such as the pencil for drafts and pastel. As a result of this depression, Zóbel destroys many of these pictures and devotes more time to photography, focusing once more on the River Júcar and its banks on the outskirts of Cuenca. These photographs are the starting point of his last series of paintings, *Las Orillas (Variaciones sobre un río)* (1979-1982)."

Zóbel's *Las Orillas* stemmed from his rediscovery that his life and art had always revolved around Cuenca and its River Júcar, flowing right through his heart and penetrating his soul more than ever.

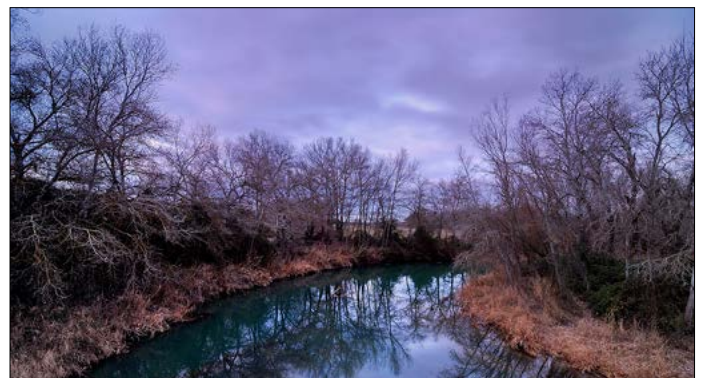
The majestic river became the remedy to Zóbel's desolation.

It can be remembered that in 1971, Zóbel started to manifest his profound love of Cuenca through his *El Júcar* series. Villalba Salvador wrote: "During this period, *Diálogos* is followed by series relating to Cuenca landscapes, anatomies, and football. Cuenca and its river, the Júcar, and the views from the high part of the city will be the central features in two of the landscape series of this period: *El Júcar* (1971-1972) and *La Vista* (1972-1974)."

The Spanish art and literature critic Juan Manuel Bonet wrote in his essay *Fernando Zobel: Revisited* that "it was the Júcar itself...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."



ABOVE: Fernando Zobel in 1981. Photo taken by Paola Luz







ABOVE, BOTTOM RIGHT, AND PREVIOUS PAGE: Different views of the River Jucar and its riverbanks during winter, sceneries that inspired Zobel's *Orilla 69*. © <https://www.booking.com/hotel/es/cuenca-amp-suites.nl.html>; Flickr, Gabriel González; Instagram, recreoperal

Wrote the esteemed John Berger in his landmark essay *Ways of Seeing*, "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe...Soon after we can see, we are aware that we can also be seen. The eye of the other combines with our own eye to make it fully credible that we are part of the visible world."

In essence, Zobel saw himself through the Jucar's glimmering reflections, seeing a man who still had his art as his never-ending source of saving grace and unfaltering spring from which his wearied soul drank forth, ultimately casting all his anxieties and doubts into his canvas.

In *Orilla 69*, subtitled *en Amarillo y Gris*, Zóbel suffuses patches of yellowish browns that evoke the Jucar riverbanks' dormant vegetation during winter. Zóbel painted the work on January 11, 1982, during the coldest month of the winter season in the Northern Hemisphere, where Spain lies. The soothing coolness of the canvas, emphasized by Zóbel's juxtaposition of the yellowish browns with the overall white-gray finish captures a cozy view of the River Jucar in winter.

The new year had just passed when Zóbel painted *Orilla 69*. In a way, the work encapsulates Zóbel's hopes for the coming of new days, in which he willfully continues to live and breathe the River Jucar's calming breeze as if it were his lifeblood. True enough, Zóbel intimately saw the river as inseparable from his earthly life, the balsam that nourishes his failing health yet still resilient soul.



Two years later, in 1984, Zóbel would die from a heart attack at the age of 60. In accordance with his will, he was buried in the San Isidro burial grounds, located in Cuenca's highest point and overlooking the River Jucar. Now, Zóbel and his beloved river are in a joyous and hallowed communion.



**Fernando Zóbel** (1924 - 1984)*Orilla 69. En Amarillo y Gris*

signed (lower left and verso), dated 1982

and inscribed "82-5, ORILLA 69 EN AMARILLO Y GRIS" (verso)

oil on canvas

59" x 39 3/8" (150 cm x 100 cm)

**P 14,000,000**

## PROVENANCE

Rafael Perez Madero Collection, Spain;

Fundacion Caja, Madrid;

Private Collection, Philippines (by 1990);

Acquired from the above

## LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero.

*Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022.

Listed as "nº 82-5" with full-color illustration and painting description on page 635.

## EXHIBITED

Obra Cultural Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros de Sevilla, Sala de Exposiciones El Monte,

*Fernando Zóbel (First Retrospective Exhibition)*, Sevilla, October 1983Museo de Arte Abstracto Español de Cuenca, *Fernando Zóbel. Rio Jucar*, Cuenca,

17 December 1994 - 16 April 1995

Sala de Exposiciones BBK (Fundacion Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa Fundazioa),

*Fernando Zóbel*, Organized by Rafael Perez-Madero, Bilbao, 1998Sala Amos Salvador de Cultural Rioja, *Zóbel. Espacio y color*,

Organized by Rafael Perez-Madero, Logroño, 1998









# Fire and Ice

## *By a Contemporary Master*

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Pacquing's art is characterized by an inventive use of materials that defies conventional expectations, often blurring distinctions between painting and sculpture. His works, infused with texture and density, invite a contemplation of form that challenges the viewer's perception of representation and abstraction. By incorporating everyday objects, he displaces the notion of fixed meaning, allowing interpretations to emerge from a space where affirmations and denials coexist. In his hands, abstraction becomes a flexible, almost tangible experience, encouraging viewers to embrace complexity and ambiguity.

Pacquing's contributions to abstraction break away from the rigid orthodoxy that can often constrain established art forms. His work, which has earned him significant recognition, including the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Thirteen Artists Award and a Freeman Fellowship for a residency in the U.S., exemplifies his commitment to pushing creative boundaries. Through his innovative style, Pacquing not only revitalizes abstraction but also advocates for a broader, more inclusive understanding of artistic expression that welcomes individuality and experimentation.

This piece by Bernardo Pacquing exemplifies his unique approach to abstraction, blending texture, material, and form to create a composition that feels both elusive and grounded. Dominated by a restrained palette, the artwork invites viewers into a subtle world where details emerge gradually, rewarding close inspection. The vertical line at the center hints at structural balance, yet the surrounding abstract forms and textures disrupt any sense of rigidity, creating a dynamic interplay between order and chaos. The muted colors and layered textures evoke a sense of quiet mystery, drawing on organic, almost elemental qualities that resonate with Pacquing's exploration of materiality. (*Jed Daya*)

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**Bernardo Pacquing** (b. 1967)

*Tongues of Fire*

signed and dated 2018 (verso)

oil on canvas

84" x 84" (213 cm x 213 cm)

**P 1,200,000**

EXHIBITED

Silverlens Galleries, *Once I Had A Vision...The Left Hand of Darkness*  
(*Tony Godfrey*), Taguig, 12 May to 10 June 2018











45

**Michael Cacnio** (b. 1969)

*Girl with Balloons*  
signed and dated 2014  
brass  
H: 18" (46 cm)  
L: 10" (25 cm)  
W: 12" (30 cm)

**P 200,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Tess Cacnio for confirming the authenticity of this lot

*"I draw inspiration from my childhood. As the youngest of the family, I was very carefree and playful. I was always out on the streets of Malabon playing the latest popular games."*

—MICHAEL CACNIO

Michael Cacnio's *Girl with Balloons* is another masterpiece from the master sculptor, celebrating the joys of our childhood years and demonstrating his unparalleled talent and deep understanding of humanity. Here, a little girl in a suspended running motion is presented; she's slightly leaning forward with her arms raised in the air while holding a bunch of colorful balloons—as if the wind is carrying her. Highly inspired by his healthy and bright upbringing, this meticulously crafted and delicately detailed brass sculpture perfectly captures childhood's carefree and sparkling attributes, inviting admiration for the artist's skill and evoking a sense of familiarity and nostalgia that resonates with his audiences. (*Jessica Magno*)





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**Federico Aguilar Alcuaz** (1932 - 2011)

*Untitled (Tres Marias Series)*

signed and dated 1984 (upper left)

oil on canvas

26" x 32" (66 cm x 81 cm)

**P 500,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Christian M. Aguilar confirming the authenticity of this lot

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz's *Tres Marias* series is among his most enduring body of works. Playfully depicting a triad of women huddled together as they converse silently and privately, the series was born out of his observation of the waitresses in the restaurants he frequents. From that humble beginnings started a series of paintings depicting these *tres marias* in their elaborate Spanish-style gowns lounging in their private rooms.

However, in this 1984 *Tres Marias*, Aguilar Alcuaz leaves his women (and the rest of the room they lounge in) a fresh new light, only coloring in the figures in broad, light strokes. This decidedly spare and modern air emphasizes a quality only hinted at in the rest of the *Tres Marias* series – the viewer is drawn like an unseen admirer into a quiet moment of beauty. Indeed *Tres Marias* is a refreshingly contemporary approach to a beloved theme. *(Hannah Valiente)*



# One of Garibay's Favorite Paintings

## *Re-contextualizing the Image of Christ Within the Filipino Masses' Sphere*

by ADRIAN MARANAN

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*"I have a very different image of Jesus Christ, which is that of a woman, a very ordinary-looking Filipino woman, who drinks with them and has stories to tell. The idea of laughing is very common among Filipinos—we laugh at our mistakes. It's all part of understanding the culture, and it's also part of contextualizing the concept of faith within the culture."*

—EMMANUEL GARIBAY, 1997 INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN BELLER, PUBLISHED IN BELLER'S BOOK "KRISTOLOGY AND RADICAL COMMUNION: THE WORKS OF EMMANUEL GARIBAY" (1999)

This 2011 work titled *Emmaus*, says Emmanuel Garibay, is one of his favorite pieces in his series of works about the post-resurrection event, narrated in the last chapter of the Gospel of Luke. In the story, two of Jesus' disciples, Cleophas and an unnamed one, were traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus, which the gospel wrote was seven miles apart. The two were discussing an earlier incident, in which the women who brought the spices to anoint Jesus in His resting place discovered that the stone had already been rolled away from the tomb, and two luminous figures, possibly angels, said that the man they are looking for has already risen. This incident caused the apostle Peter to rush to the tomb, only to find strips of linen lying inside

While the two disciples conversed, a man suddenly appeared and joined them, asking what they were talking about. The two, not recognizing that it was Jesus himself, were "downcast," interrogating the man, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

The three continued walking and discussing until the two disciples asked the man if he could come with them since dusk was beginning to fall. In the disciples' house, the man sat at the table, took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with them. The disciples, who had seemingly regained consciousness, shockingly realized it was the Lord all along. He suddenly disappeared after they had come to their senses, and they immediately returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming to the Eleven Apostles the good news of Jesus' resurrection.

The theme of *Emmaus* is a recurring subject in Garibay's works, one that he said "was a major series that got me a lot of attention and exposure in international ecumenical organizations." In the *Emmaus* works, Garibay hopes to convey a resonating message that many theologians may relate to, especially within the context of discourses on theology and Christology that are still dominated by colonial and Western viewpoints.

According to American theologian and catechist Fr. Alfred McBride, the gospel account of the encounter at Emmaus boils down to the theme of Christian spiritual growth, presenting "the evolution of the awareness of the two disciples, from despair over Christ's death to faith in his resurrection." Jesus' disciples went into hiding after his crucifixion, fearing that the Jewish leaders and the Roman guards could arrest them and execute them. After the encounter at Emmaus, the disciples regained their faith in Christ's resurrection and the promise of a new and everlasting life.

Similarly, Garibay appropriates this theme and recontextualizes the image of Christ, away from the Western, colonial concept and closer to the actual situation of the downtrodden. As Garibay said, "God is on the side of the poor and marginalized."

In this *Emmaus* painting from 2011, Garibay reprises the subject of men merrily drinking with a woman (likely a prostitute) possessing the stigmata, an allusion to Christ's omnipresence even in the face of the marginalized.





ABOVE: Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus* (painted in 1601 and now in the collection of London's National Gallery), one of the most famous paintings depicting Jesus' road to Emmaus appearance after his resurrection. This also served as one of the inspirations for Garibay's painting.

"I like this one," Garibay said in a recent interview with Leon Gallery about the work. "It is one of my most favorite pieces in the [Emmaus] series."

The painting is rendered in a synthesis of cubism and figurative expressionism, resulting in a frenzy of distortion that becomes clearer as one views it longer and deeper.

"I like how the figures and their expressions are more exaggerated," Garibay added. "This is a deliberate distortion [meant to further] echo the whole idea of disorientation."

In a 2011 interview with Daniel Nicholas, Garibay said of the general theme of his *Emmaus* Series—which is strikingly similar to the rendition of the work at hand, "I thought that by representing Jesus in a radically different way, that of a woman, and especially a woman who seems to be of ill repute, the painting would really challenge the viewers to carefully consider the implication of seeing Jesus in other people, especially those who are downtrodden, especially those whom society looks down upon."

BESIDE: Detailed shot of the artwork





## Emmanuel Garibay (b. 1962)

### *Emmaus*

signed and dated 2011 (lower left)

oil on canvas

50" x 60" (127 cm x 152 cm)

**P 1,200,000**

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

Garibay continues, "That's why in the picture, the disciples, the two men beside the woman, are laughing so hard because they have just realized their mistaken notion of Jesus. It's like a joke. All three are laughing at the joke. I guess this is a contrast between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of the resurrection."

Centuries of colonial rule have influenced how we perceive Christ. In virtually every Catholic church in the country, Christ is conventionally depicted as a Caucasian-looking man. However, the whole idea of Jesus being conformed to Western aesthetics and ideals only reinforces the hegemony of a colonial rule now disguised as "alliances," imperialist affinities that directly affect the welfare of the people and further exacerbate their lack of choice to free themselves from their forced subjection under cruel conditions and dispositions.

Jesus is a political figure, inasmuch as he resisted the ultra-conservatism of the Pharisees and scribes of his time. For Garibay, Jesus was "very much against conventional religiosity." He was much more visible in the presence of the people. He preached outside and served the poor, the sick, and the sinners. Recontextualizing Christ into the broader Filipino culture, bringing Him and associating Him closer than ever with the marginalized sectors of society brings about a faith that is liberating and empowering, not convicting and dependent on fear and punishment.

When the Church is dwindling, it should go back to the very foundations that built it—and that is, Jesus humbly served and gladly welcomed the diminished and disenfranchised into His arms, radically striving to liberate them from their oppressive circumstances.



RIGHT: Emmanuel Garibay © Rappler









# Jean-Claude Servan-Schreiber

*French Parliamentarian*



Resistance fighter, press man and Gaullist parliament member Jean-Claude had lived an interesting life. His parents are Robert Schreiber, who founded the first daily French financial newspaper *Les Echos* and Senator Suzanne Crémieux, a shining example of the careers Jean-Claude would eventually take on.

Despite these illustrious beginnings, Jean-Claude had first embraced a military career, serving as an infantry lieutenant from 1939 to 1941. However, the tumultuous context of the Second World War combined with his Jewish origins forced him to leave the army – despite quickly rising in the rank of lieutenant, he was unfortunately not absolved of the bigotry of his fellow soldiers. Though he eventually managed to help in the liberation of his country, he spent the years in between in exile and in concentration camps.

Following the whirlwind that was the war, Jean-Claude then followed his father's footsteps as he began to work as a sales director of *Les Echos*, a press founded by his father Robert and his brother Emile. In 1953, he participated in the launch of *L'Express*, an offshoot of *Les Echos* before eventually succeeding as the head of *Les Echos* in 1958.

His introduction to politics began, however, during 1965 to 1967 where he served as a representative of Seine in the French National Assembly under the Union for the New Republic.

For Andreï Makine, the author of Jean-Claude's biography *Lieutenant Schreiber's Country*, he embodied "self-sacrifice, honor, love of country, and true heroism," characteristics evident in his illustrious life. (*Hannah Valiente*)

48 PROPERTY FORMERLY FROM THE JEAN-CLAUDE SERVAN-SCHREIBER COLLECTION

**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)

*Grey, White and Yellow Abstraction*

signed (upper right)

ca. 1960

oil on canvas

35 1/4" x 45 1/2" (90 cm x 116 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Spain

*Grey, White and Yellow Abstraction* may not be fashioned in the same style as many of Oscar Zalameda's works but it still carries the same sensitivity to colors that they embody. Adept with the language of colors, Zalameda interweaves cream, gray, and blue in this abstract that echoes the works of the modernists that came before him.

The distinct quality of his work belies his European temperament, the unrepentant breaking down of shapes and forms akin to the Western abstraction than it is Filipino romanticism or Eastern sensibility. This work is more abstract than his usual works – unlike his more known style where the figure still retains its shape and form, *Grey, White and Yellow Abstraction* rejects figuration altogether, preferring to delve into pure abstraction instead.

As an artist, Zalameda combined aspects of abstraction, brutalism, and cubism in his works, but his earlier works encompass a more experimental approach to the medium and style itself. Like *Grey, White and Yellow Abstraction*, it often revolved around pure forms of abstractions between angle, shape, and light. With an expert understanding of colors, Oscar Zalameda found great patronage in his life and beyond. (*Hannah Valiente*)





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# The Abstractions of Zalameda







49

**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1981)

*Untitled*

signed and dated 1965 (lower right)

ink and wash on paper

29" x 21" (74 cm x 54 cm)

**P 300,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Spain

Vicente Manansala's abstractionism takes on many different forms throughout his illustrious career. In his "constant search for a unique expression," as Isabel Nazareno notes in his monograph *Discovering Manansala*, he has turned out a multitude of styles including but not limited to his consummate master of Transparent Cubism, the artist's own take in the harsh Cubist style melded with the romantic Filipino figures.

In this 1965 work, Manansala takes on yet another form of abstraction. Eschewing his sharp edges and harsh colors, this work basks in amorphous blobs done in ink wash on paper. He overlaps gray shapes on top of each other, making even this minimalist piece embody Filipino maximalism, which art professor Felipe M. de Leon Jr. writes is "a manifestation of the Filipinos' highly sensitive and expressive nature that is rooted in communal existence."

"Nothing stays stationary for Manansala," writes Rod Paras-Perez in *Manansala*. "His whims are mercurial, his interests varied." Indeed, as each shape ebbed and flowed into one another, Manansala proved yet again that another aspect in his art refused to remain stationary – his emotions in all their complexity remain as a primary driving force all throughout his oeuvre. (*Hannah Valiente*)





50

**Florencio B. Concepcion** (1933 - 2006)

*Untitled*

signed and dated 1997 (lower left)

oil on canvas

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

**P 700,000**

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

Despite his cartooning background and earlier impressionist period, Florencio Concepcion would find himself delving deeper into the world of abstraction in the 1950s

Concepcion's oeuvre is a profound expression of his innermost feelings and emotions. Instead of using direct objects and forms, his smeared-like but careful strokes and admirable colorwork fill his canvas with vibrant hues that resonate with the viewers, offering a poetic delineation of a subject or scenery. Additionally, Concepcion's pieces inexplicably radiate a sense of calmness and serenity despite its bold colors.

"In our cacophonous midst, there are still artists who recognize the imperative of silence, from whose works we can seek and find solace," art critic Cid Reyes writes in his column on Concepcion's works. His ability to bring out an array of emotions with just his colors and brushwork is a powerful testament to his indisputable artistry. (*Jessica Magno*)



# Bencab's Homage to the Bygone Days

## *Exploring the Indigenous Past*

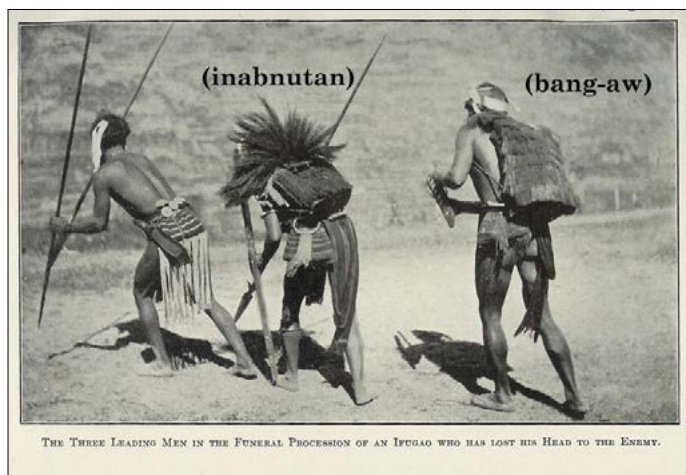
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The colonial past is something National Artist Benedicto Cabrera contends within his oeuvre. Through his various portraiture of *katipuneros*, Philippine heroes, and indios in their *baro't saya* at *camisa de chino*, Bencab revisits images of the past with a contemporary eye, reliving that racial trauma with decades and centuries separating the artist from the events depicted.

With this 1999 *Hunter's Pasiking*, Bencab turns to the pre-Hispanic image of the indigenous people of the Cordilleras. Portraying the Indigenous man by his back, his *pasiking* – or the basket-backpack common in the tribes of Northern

Luzon – takes center stage. He faces away from the audience, his face looking forward to a future that brings a series of events that assimilate the Indigenous people into the mainstream national community all the while stripping them of their native identity.

"I wanted to show how the whole process of colonization changed the Filipino," Bencab said in a 1978 interview with Cid Reyes. Indeed, here in *Hunter's Pasiking*, the Indigenous take their first step towards assimilation, a process that "probably benefited" them but also confined them in the "superficial trappings of Western culture." (*Hannah Valiente*)



ABOVE: Inabnutan and bangaw difference in construction © Shamekday, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

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## **Benedicto Cabrera** (b. 1942)

### *Hunter's Pasiking*

signed and dated 1999 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

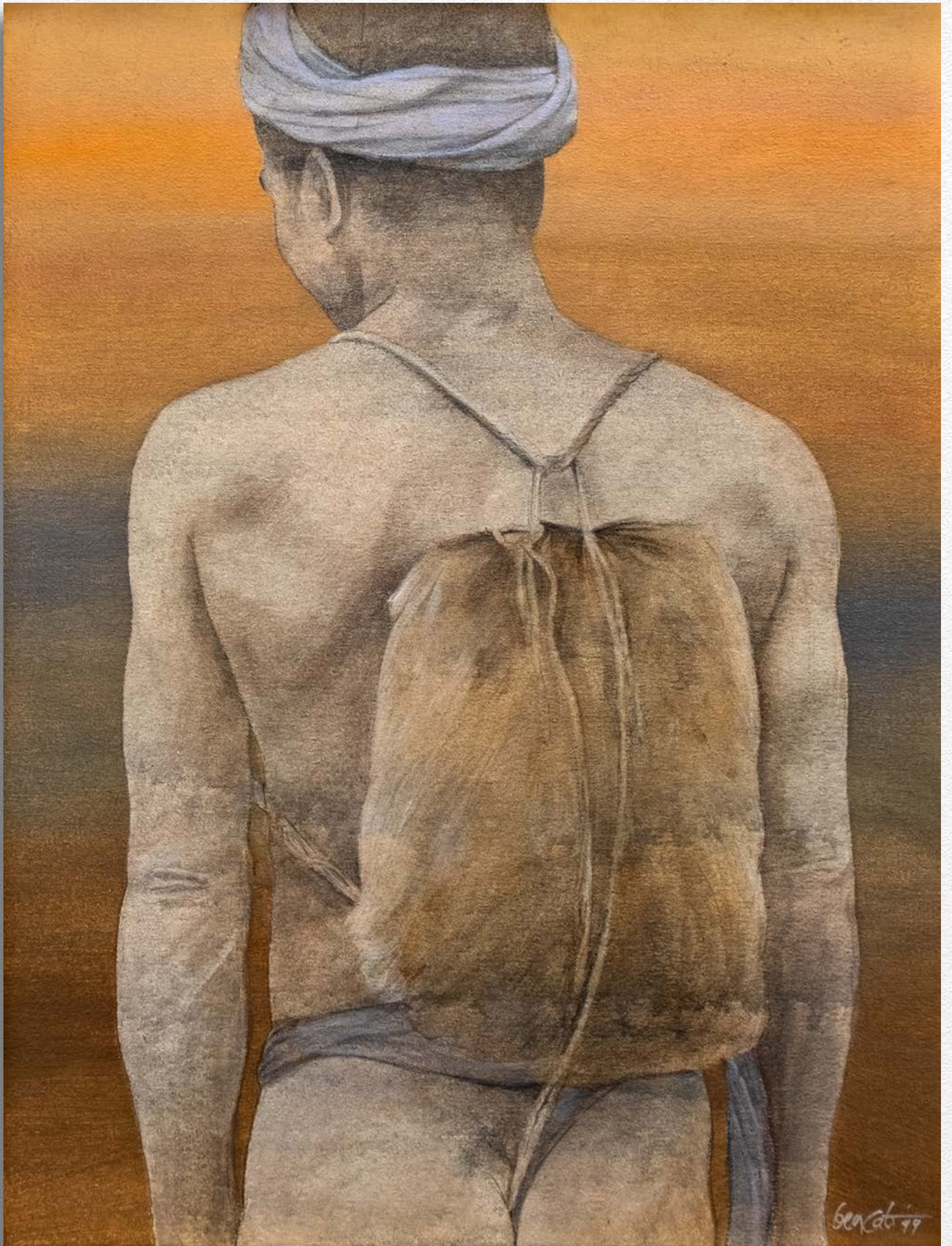
24" x 18" (61 cm x 46 cm)

**P 2,400,000**

PROVENANCE  
Boston Gallery

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# One of the Earliest Olmedos to Enter the Market

## *Mirroring Desperation into Distortion*

Even before his formal introduction to the art world with his shocking *Singkong Suka* in 1971, Onib Olmedo had found himself fascinated with the human condition and the people encompassing it. Having first worked as a racing steward (and later judge) at the San Lazaro race tracks, Onib was intimately acquainted with hope and despair, the desperation of the bettors hoping for a change of luck in the wind and the joy of the winners saturating his works from then on.

This 1970 work portrays such desperation and hopelessness in full display. Depicting a large figure slumped forward, this man is the image of despair with his shoulders sagging on the table he hunched over and his hand curled into a tight fist. This, combined with the somber color palette, creates a precursor to his grotesque *Singkong Suka* and perhaps is a common image at the San Lazaro race tracks he'd worked at.

"For him, people were not in the abstract as figments of the imagination but were real human beings of flesh and blood engaged in real daily struggles to survive," writes art critic Alice Guillermo in *Onib Olmedo: Dimensions of Depth*. "This humanistic perspective was his essential and lasting contribution to Philippine art. Of the modernists, it was this perspective which constituted his authenticity."



52

### **Onib Olmedo** (1937 - 1996)

#### *Napping*

signed and dated 1970 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

### **P 700,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Ms. Gisella Olmedo-Araneta for confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### LITERATURE

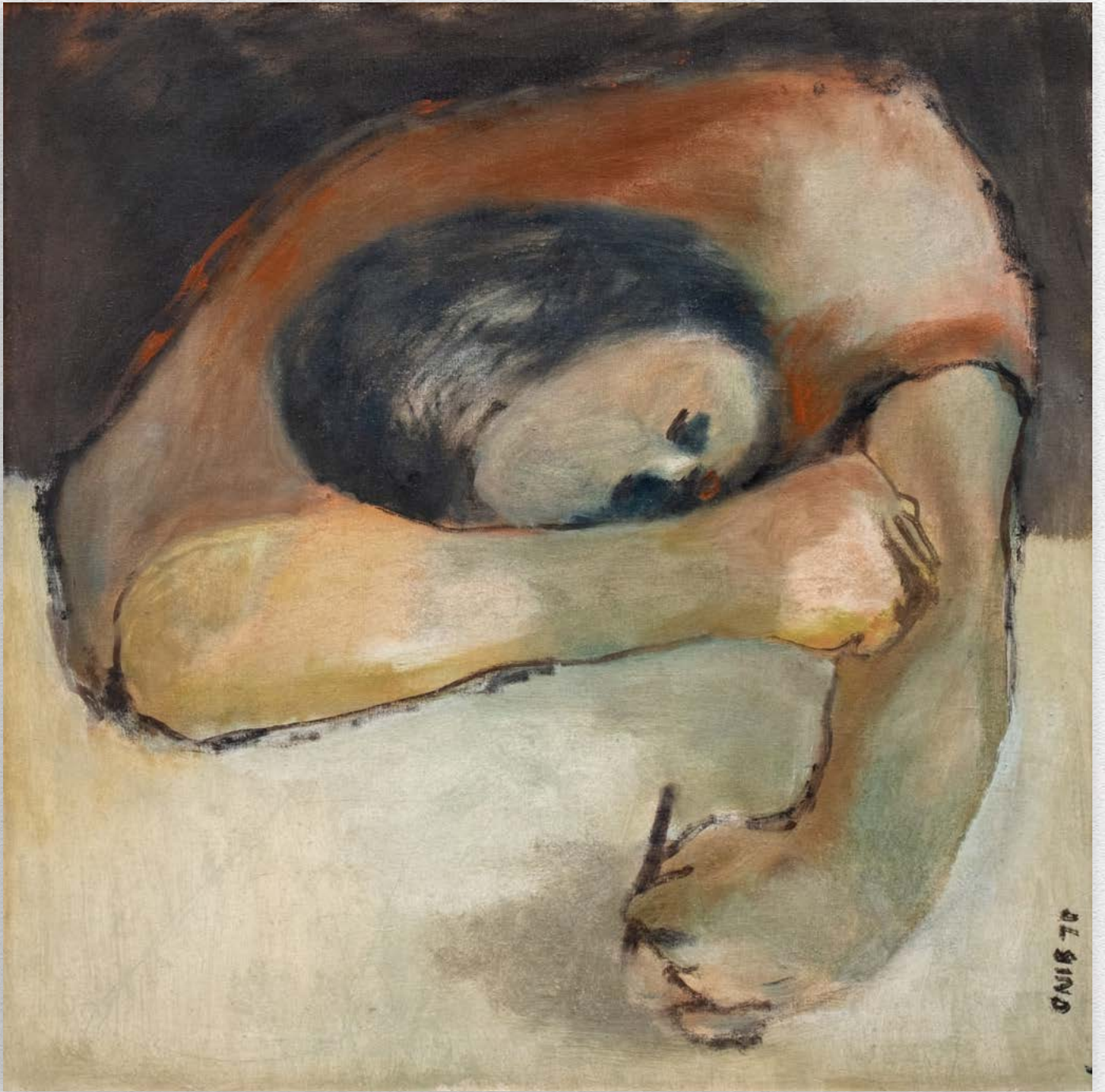
Rodriguez-Olmedo, Bettina. *Onib & Me*. Makati City: Leon Gallery, 2024.

Illustrated with painting description on page 20.

#### EXHIBITED

Solidaridad Galleries, *Three-Man Show* (Onib Olmedo, Vicente Reyes, Jose Pinga, Manila, 8 - 18 January 1971)





0218 70





53

**Betsy Westendorp** (1927 - 2022)

*Painting #850-95*

signed and dated 1995 (lower right and verso)

oil on canson paper

39 1/4" x 38" (100 cm x 97 cm)

**P 500,000**

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

Like Georgia O'Keefe, Betsy Westendorp was fascinated by the language of flowers. She first made portraits for the high society members of Spain before a fateful trip to northern Spain invigorated her interest in floras, a subject that would later be synonymous with her career.

In 1995 *Painting #850-95*, she returned yet again to her famed flowers. Depicting a cluster of sunflowers, Betsy's approach to floral painting was primarily influenced by her emotions, with each flower in the cluster loved as though it were the main focal piece itself.

"The flexible stems bend down and leap into the void showily and capriciously to the rhythm of a colorful cascade: white, rosy, purplish, yellow, red, they have the resplendent explosion of fireworks as they open into space, multiplying their number into handsome and kaleidoscopic figures," Spanish art critic Elena Flores tells of Westendorp's painting. "Over the background of shady, blue, earthy tones, the light at dusk or dawn indicates a shady location of dense vegetation, stands out a dazzling floral picture." (*Hannah Valiente*)





54

**Isabel Diaz** (b. 1943)

*Flow State*

signed (upper left)

ca. 1976

oil on canvas

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

**P 500,000**

PROVENANCE  
Galleria Duemilla, Inc

Celebrated for her expressive and magnificent depiction of florals, New York-based artist Isabel Diaz manages to translate the delicate flowers into a minimalist and poignant work, made even more impressive by the sheer size of the canvas she often uses.

"Her distinct ability to observe life's complexity with unobstructed clarity is reflected in the simultaneous depth

and simplicity of her work," says her brief artist biography on her website. Indeed, like many of her works, her 1976 *Flow State* captures life's sublime beauty and her fleeting charms. With a closeup look at these various flowers, plucked separately but arranged tightly as though a menagerie of bouquets were packed randomly together, this multi-layered piece evokes the vibrancy and brevity of life, the still-blooming flowers a tangible reminder of the sands of time slipping through, delicate and fragile but still lovely.

Private in life and career, Diaz is famously tight-lipped about the meanings of her works, telling Philippine Tattler, "When I paint a flower, it's just a flower. It's not like what people say about O'Keeffe. When she painted them, they say it symbolized something else." However, the vivacity he paints these still-life paintings allows for a deeply personal interpretation of the piece, evoking a unique emotional response from one viewer to another. *(Hannah Valiente)*



## Michael Cacnio (b. 1969)

### *Fisherman*

signed and dated 2000

brass

H: 14 1/2" (37 cm)

L: 5" (13 cm)

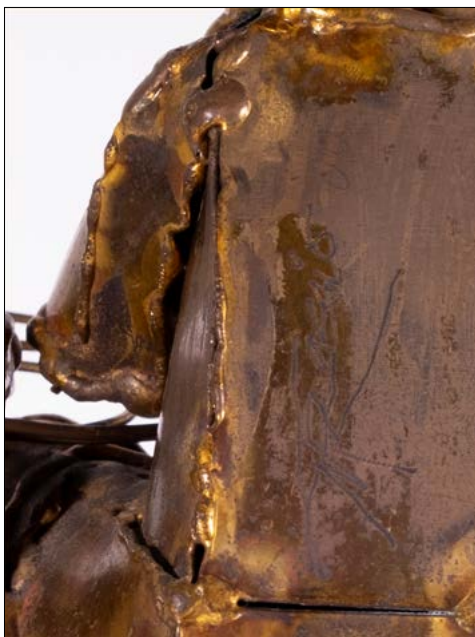
W: 5 1/2" (14 cm)

**P 300,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Tess Cacnio for confirming the authenticity of this lot

Like his father, the renowned visual artist Angel Cacnio, Michael carved his name in the Philippine art scene with works that proudly celebrate Filipino culture and heritage. Despite choosing a different art discipline from his father, Michael always acknowledges the significant inspiration and influence he received from him. A world-class Filipino sculptor, Michael Cacnio embedded his name in the industry with his social realist brass sculptures that testify to his pride in his Filipino roots.

Over the years, Cacnio has continued to delight his audiences with works that depict the joys and hard work of the Filipino people. As the lively youngest child in a loving family, his sculptures often revolve around themes of family, community, and childhood, making them relatable to many. Drawing inspiration from his fisherman grandfather, he also pays tribute to the hardworking folks of vendors and fishermen. The lot at hand is among the master sculptor's preeminent brass works, an intricately crafted image that celebrates the spirit of the Filipinos. *(Jessica Magno)*







56

**Rodel Tapaya** (b. 1980)

*Happy Wheels*

signed and dated 2020 (lower left)

acrylic on burlap

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

**P 800,000**

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

Rodel Tapaya's practice offers a vivid reimagining of Filipino cultural history, transforming ancient narratives into compelling commentaries on modern issues. His paintings draw from folklore and mythology, populating canvases with figures that serve as symbolic links between the past and present. Tapaya skillfully uses these mythic archetypes to explore contemporary themes, layering his work with both beauty and tension.

In this piece titled Happy Wheel, we are presented with a richly textured and layered work that exemplifies his dynamic approach to storytelling through symbolism and abstraction. In this portrait-oriented work, a chaotic assembly of shapes, eyes, hands, and wheels interweaves with one another, creating a frenetic tableau that appears both organic and mechanical. The varied elements seem to represent fragments of life and industry, reflecting Tapaya's interest in the intersection of human experience and societal structures. The prominent wheel motif, paired with pipes and disembodied eyes, suggests movement, surveillance, and perhaps the cyclical nature of life and labor. Tapaya's mastery in blending abstract forms with figurative hints allows him to create a surreal, dreamlike composition that engages viewers in a search for meaning. Like much of his oeuvre, Happy Wheel functions as both a visual puzzle and a commentary on the complexities of modern existence, inviting us to delve into the layers of cultural, historical, and social narratives embedded in his work. *(Jed Daya)*



# An Exceptionally Rare Blue Saeta

## One of Only Nine of Its Kind

by ADRIAN MARANAN

*"In a theoretical sense, I knew it was possible to paint abstractly, but Rothko's demonstration convinced me completely... I felt obliged to paint, but I had abandoned the need to represent. This left me in a vacuum. Almost at the same time, I discovered photography's ability to preserve the image in a manner I felt far superior to the resources of painting. I felt obliged to paint, but I had abandoned the need to represent. This left me in a kind of vacuum. A vacuum that turned into two years of experiments and into a huge pile of destroyed paintings, until I found my theme in the technique that led to the series of Saetas."*

—FERNANDO ZÓBEL, IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH RAFAEL PEREZ-MADERO, PUBLISHED IN PEREZ-MADERO'S "LA SERIE BLANCA" (1978)

In a fitting culmination to Fernando Zóbel's birth centennial celebrations, an extremely rare blue Saeta goes under the block in León Gallery's year-end sale. Titled *Azul sobre pardo* (Saeta 258), the work is one of only nine "blue Saetas" existing, as pointed out by Alfonso de la Torre, renowned Spanish art critic and author of the authoritative catalogue raisonné of Zóbel's works. In fact, one of the eight "blue Saetas," *Saeta 44*, now hangs at Singapore's National Gallery. Another one, *Ku III (Blanco sobre azul)* is in the Cultural Center of the Philippines Collection, while *Saeta 42 (Bermellon sobre azul ultramar)* is in the Ateneo Art Gallery. *Forma VI/Saeta VI (Raya amarilla sobre fondo azul transparente)* is in Madrid's Fundación Juan March Collection. *Pájaro de Fuego* (1959) is in the Del Monte Corporation Collection. *Forma IV – Saeta IV (Naranja sobre azul grisáceo)* (1957), *Corona II (Naranja sobre azul verdoso)* (1957), and *Saeta 50 (Rojo sobre negro azulado)* (1958) are in private collections.

Painted by the artist in Madrid, *Azul sobre pardo* was one of the works in Zóbel's first solo exhibition in Spain—*Zóbel: Pinturas y dibujos* held at Madrid's Galería Biosca. Zóbel's biographer, Angeles Villalba Salvador, notes that the exhibition was "the first time that Juana Mordo, the director of the Galería Biosca at the time, has held an exhibition of an abstract artist's work." Mordo would also become Zóbel's gallerist.

Zóbel's "Saetas" paintings remain one of the most coveted in his oeuvre as approximately only 85 to a hundred paintings in this series were said to be painted by the artist over a span of only two years, from 1957 to 1959.

### *Zóbel's Saetas as his first works of pure abstraction*

In a 1978 interview with his dear friend Rafael Perez-Madero, Zóbel remarked that he deemed his Saetas his first works on abstraction, "leaving aside a few unsuccessful experiments," he said. In 1953, Zobel first ventured into non-objectivism, gracing the landmark exhibition of non-objective art organized by the Philippine Art Gallery—"The First Exhibition of Non-Objective Art in Tagala," in which his two entries, *Snappers and Plaza*, were pronounced the "most distinguished" in the exhibition catalog authored by the esteemed poet-critic Aurelio Alvero aka "Magtanggul Asa." However, Zóbel destroyed many of his pre-Saetas non-objective paintings, as he found "such endeavors to be lacking in meaning and also somewhat incoherent," as Villalba Salvador puts it. One surviving work from 1953 was auctioned by León Gallery in September 2023.

But by 1954, Zóbel would finally bind his affinity for non-objectivism. While attending the Rhode Island School of Design as a resident artist, which was made possible through the support of his close friends, the couple James and Reed Pfeufer, Zóbel graced an exhibition of a then-unknown Mark Rothko titled *Recent Paintings* by Mark Rothko. He would visit the exhibition every day, trying to figure out the power those paintings of sheer color expressiveness had on him. Zóbel would write in his diary, "I am surprised at the way those gigantic colored squares resist being forgotten." In early 1955, while visiting the Alhambra in Granada, Zóbel marveled at its architecture, seeing them as evoking Rothko's distilled sophistication. He wrote in his diary, "With every single refinement, I can think of Rothko again."



Zóbel, who would abandon figuration owing to Rothko's pervasive influence, had questioned his Baroque sensibilities and the need for figuration when it is possible to reduce painting and still retain its expressiveness through the mere use of color. At the same time, towards the end of 1954, Zóbel had discovered that photography, "with its direct images, satisfies his desire to reproduce the themes to which he is drawn," as Villalba Salvador puts it. The art of photography, which his friend Ronald Blinks had introduced to him, added to Zóbel increasing agitation in his art.

Fast forward to 1956, Zóbel went to Japan on an Ayala-related business trip. Taking as many photographs as he could, Zóbel visited the Temples of Ryōan-ji, its sand garden in Kyoto, and the stone gardens of the Daisen Temple. Returning to Manila, Zóbel would renovate his house, imbuing it with a calming sense evoking Japanese Zen aesthetics.

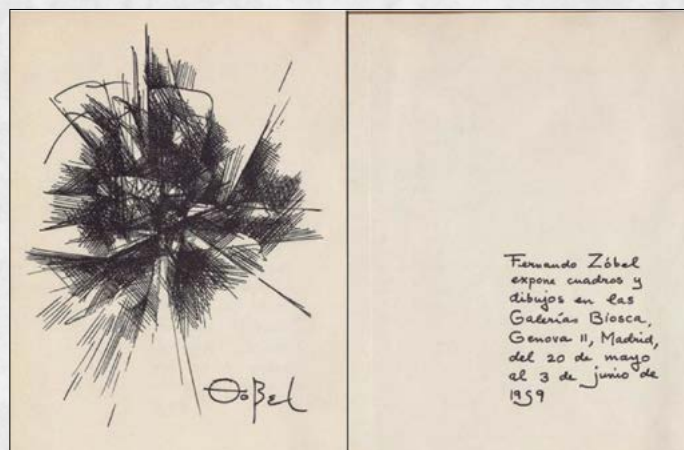
Memory, which would become integral to Zóbel's praxis in the decades to come, had shaped his soft spot for abstraction; it liberated his restless artistic vision.

### *The Saetas as a harmonious synthesis of the East and West*

Combining the Western (Rothko) and the Eastern (Oriental aesthetics), the Saetas of Zóbel were born. Permanently veering away from figuration, Zóbel turned to gestural painting as a means to capture movement through line—"the movement of leaves, of vegetation, of birds, of people; movement observed and felt, never imitated, yet, I hope, clearly expressed," as he said to Perez-Madero in a conversation.

In his *Saetas*, the dynamic spontaneity of Oriental art, particularly calligraphy that evokes a "swift yet confident" character, is combined with the influence of Rothko's color fields, with all the diversity of moods they elicit through the expressive ability of color.

Zóbel himself said in a March 24, 1972 interview with noted writer Armando Manalo, "My paintings in motion are closely related to Oriental painting. The series *Saetas* was inspired by Japanese sand gardens. All those lines, painstakingly drawn with a rake, give off a disturbing effect."



TOP AND MIDDLE: Two of the rare Nine (9) Blue Saetas in public collections; *Ku III*, (Blanco sobre azul), 1957. Cultural Center of the Philippines Collection. © Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings; *Saeta 44* (Blanco y amarillo sobre azul oscuro), 1957, auctioned by Leon Gallery in September 2017 and now in the collection of the National Gallery of Singapore; BOTTOM: Brochure of Zóbel's debut Spanish exhibition at the Galería Biosca in 1959, where *Azul sobre pardo (Saeta 258)* was exhibited.



In *Azul sobre pardo*, the lines, set against a Rothko-inspired backdrop of a rhapsody in blue and rendered through Zóbel's trademark hypodermic syringe loaded with pigment (an inspiration Zóbel got from a baker writing the words "Happy Birthday" in icing on a cake), capture a calligraphic energy that is impulsive yet so sure, dramatic and invigorating.

The language of Zóbel's *Saetas* is gesture and color thrust into a form of pure abstraction loaded with surface tension that is high-powered in process yet meditative in essence. Zóbel retains his Baroque sensibilities, albeit now distilled through linear elegance. Much like Oriental art, Zóbel's *Saetas* are spiritually charged paintings in which expression and inner essence triumph over form, and for Zóbel, they are a much-needed catharsis out of figuration's constraints in a rapidly modernizing world.

Zóbel's use of a syringe complements his pen in drawing, further enhancing the connection between Zóbel and Oriental art, which Antonio Magaz Sangro explains succinctly in the exhibition catalog of the artist's debut Spain show. "But the most expressive affinity between Zóbel's painting and Far Eastern calligraphy lies...in its improvisational style. That direct execution, both carefree and unwavering, which gives his paintings a fresh and spontaneous air. Yet, just as a Far

Eastern artist will not improvise, experimenting exhaustively with numerous prior drafts, so too Zóbel."

By the time Zóbel created *Azul sobre pardo*, Zóbel's Oriental influences had become much more robust, thanks to the archaeological discovery of numerous Chinese porcelains in the family's Calatagan estate in Batangas. This event prompted him to take lessons in Chinese painting and calligraphy under Professor Chen Bing Sun, dubbed the "Father of Chinese Brush Painting in the Philippines." One can see how Zóbel bestows the work at hand with the rapidness and spontaneous expression of calligraphic strokes in a pool of deep blues, a color traditionally associated in Orientalism with serenity and spirituality.

A blank canvas, colors loaded into a syringe and spattered with unbridled expression, and strokes and slashes of line seemingly penetrating right through the composition with their dynamic spontaneity were Zóbel's bridge to a fully realized abstraction. With the *Saetas*, Zóbel became not only the foremost champion of non-objectivism in Philippine art but also the one who fully united in harmony the Oriental and Occidental inside of him. Through this, Zóbel emerged as a true Filipino innovator, embodying and harnessing a lyrical type of abstraction that has become the lingua franca of a post-war world.

57

## Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

### *Azul sobre pardo (Saeta 258) / (Blue on Brown)*

signed and inscribed "258" (verso)

dated 1959

oil and metallic paint on canvas

27 1/2" x 39 3/8" (70 cm x 100 cm)

**P 18,000,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Aurelio Biosca, Madrid

Private Collection, Madrid

Acquired from the above

#### LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero.

*Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984)*.

Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022. Listed as "nº 59-17"

with full-color illustration and painting description on page 162.

#### EXHIBITED

Galería Biosca, *Fernando Zóbel expone cuadros y dibujos*,

Madrid, 20 May - 3 June 1959

The Link, Art Fair Philippines 2019,

Makati City, 22 - 24 February 2019

Galería Mayoral, *Zobel. An Artist From Three Continents*,

Paris, 19 May - 16 June 2022



TOP: *Azul sobre pardo* on view at the exhibition, *Zobel. An Artist From Three Continents*, held at Galería Mayoral, Paris in 2022. © galeríamayoral.com







# A Gift to Hubert de Givenchy's First Filipina Muse

by HANNAH VALIENTE

When 24-year-old Tetta Agustin flew from Manila to Rome in 1973, the young model had no idea she would land herself in one of the most illustrious fashion houses in Europe—and indeed, in the annals of Philippine fashion history as the first Filipina to model for Givenchy and Yves St. Laurent in Paris. With the world at her feet and her dreams right before her, Tetta is set to take the world by storm.

## Woman of Style

Standing five foot seven inches and boasting an enviable 21-inch waist, Tetta Agustin was first deemed too petite for Rome's fashion scene. First starting with modeling gigs in Manila, she caught the eye of Italian designer Renato Balestra who urged the then-24-year-old to branch out to Rome.

However, Rome disappointed her, as its statuesque models were far from Tetta's slim petite figure. "I did not work in Rome because when I went to see Emilio Pucci, he told me I was too petite for Rome fashion," she told Philstar in 2012. "He told me to go to France because he was quite certain I would have more chance to work in Paris."

And success in Paris she had. Almost immediately after landing, she found herself at the Catherine Harley Modeling Agency where she found herself hired on the spot by M. Hubert de Givenchy himself for his upcoming show. Givenchy was looking for an Asian model and despite already having one, a Vietnamese, one look at Tetta was enough for him to bump the prior model to sign her up on the spot.



TOP RIGHT: A young Tetta Agustin, newly arrived in Paris in 1973, with Hubert de Givenchy who signed her up to model for him; BOTTOM: Tetta Agustin celebrating her first birthday in Paris, with Givenchy at her side; © Tetta and Givenchy in a '70s photo from the personal collection of Tetta Agustin-Boverey; <https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/288930/givenchys-filipino-muse-remembers-gentle-giant/>







"I put on [Givenchy's] dress," she recalls in another 2018 Philippine Daily Inquirer interview. "Then finally, he walked into the room, looked at me, and nodded me on, to say 'thank you.'"

Thus begins her illustrious career in Paris. From 1973 to 1979, Tetta walked for Givenchy, rubbing elbows with elites like Audrey Hepburn, socialite Bunny Mellon, and former American First Lady Jackie Kennedy.

Givenchy himself had a huge impact on Tetta's life. Affectionately called "Papa" by the model, Tetta endeared herself to the "gentle giant" as he was called (Givenchy himself stands at six foot six inches). He took the young ingénue under his wing, introducing her to the international fashion world at large.

"He would always ask me over to his atelier perhaps because I made the seamstresses laugh," Tetta said. "He treated me like his little girl."

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## From One Trailblazer to Another

Tetta's singleminded pursuit of her dreams bore great success. Armed with feistiness, she wouldn't take no for an answer. "The rejection stung, but it was more because I couldn't book a job than me being too petite," she recalls. "I came to Europe to model, and I refused to work if it wasn't going to be a job that I liked."

However, with Givenchy as a sponsor, Tetta soon found herself intermingling with illustrious guests in banquets and yacht parties and even private shows, where she developed friends with prominent women such as horticulturist and art patron Bunny Mellon, socialite and philanthropist Barbara Hutton, Wallis, Duchess of Windsor, and then First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy.

It wasn't only these high society women that Tetta endeared herself to. Upon her signing with Givenchy, Tetta sought out the model she replaced, a Vietnamese named Doti, and forged a lifelong friendship with her, even serving as godmother to Doti's child.

Kindness and spunk propelled Tetta's career. Her vivacious attitude endeared her to the staff of Givenchy, its clients, and the man himself, who is involved in Tetta's personal life as her daughter Tosca's godfather.

"Perhaps that's why we were always fighting, as if in a love-hate relationship. He would always ask me if I was getting married, and when. And my personality is, I'd get queasy about being asked," Tetta (or as Givenchy loved to call her, "Tetta the hardheaded") recalled their unique dynamic.

But still, she holds Givenchy in a place of respect. In half a jest, she said, "I like to say that he was the only gentleman left in Europe."

Even after leaving the modeling world to focus more on her many businesses, Tetta still carried her unique blend of feistiness and gratefulness moving forward. She had surrounded herself with like-minded mentors, friends, and colleagues, propelling her career to higher heights.

It is then unsurprising that she also found herself in acquaintance with the Philippines's first Filipina abstractionist Nena Saguil, close enough for the artist to gift her this abstraction piece. Like Tetta herself, Nena forged her own path back when few artists delved into pure abstraction, and even fewer of them women.

This untitled 1972 work, gifted to Tetta by Nena herself, echoes the freshness of Tetta's career. Utilizing a series of circles that overtake the canvas, one can discern the sun, the mountain, and the sea as he depicts a novel vision of the horizon. The work was created during what critic Emmanuel Torres categorized as the artist's lyrical abstraction period, with the piece done in shades of blues, pinks, and violets.

This gift bestowed on the model portrayed not just Saguil's impeccable handle on pure abstraction but also the paths both women took as the first Filipinas to excel in their respective fields. Both Nena Saguil's artistry and Tetta Agustin's career boast of their eminent characteristics, the two of them acting as trailblazers in their own right.



ABOVE: Saguil and the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris c. 1968, Collection of F. Sionil Jose





58

**Nena Saguil** (1924 - 1994)

*Untitled*

signed and dated 1972 (lower right and verso)

oil on canvas

19 1/2" x 23 3/4" (50 cm x 60 cm)

**P 500,000**

PROVENANCE

A gift from the artist to Tetta Agustin





59

**Rosario Bitanga** (b. 1934)

*River Moon*

signed and dated 2022 (lower right and verso)

oil on canvas

24" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

**P 240,000**

EXHIBITED

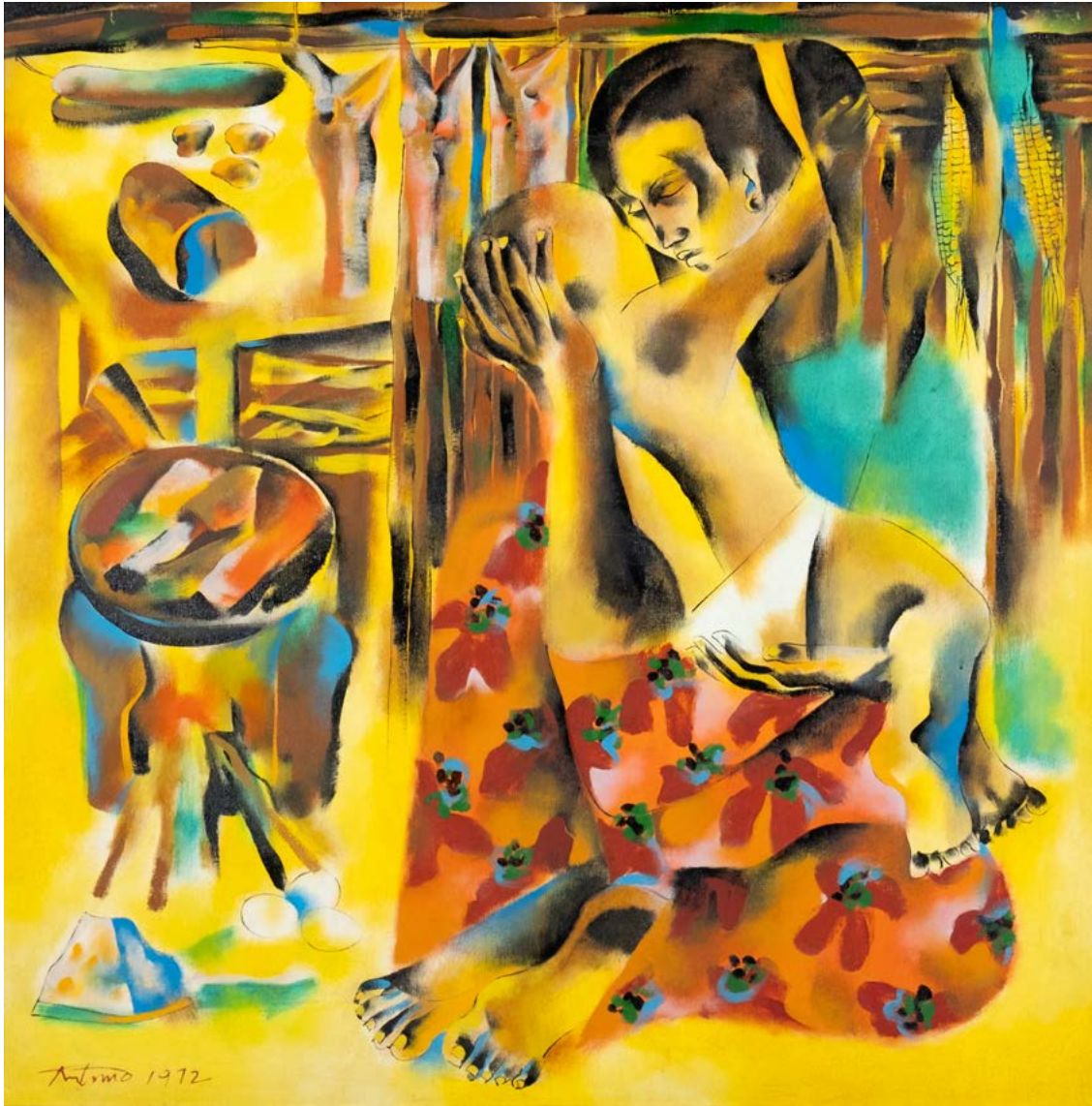
Leon Gallery, *Rosario Bitanga: Likha (Solo Exhibition)*

G/F Corinthian Plaza, Makati,

27 September - 11 October 2022

Among the first woman abstractionists in the country, Rosario Bitanga's virtuoso needs no introduction. As evidenced by her 2022 *River Moon*, her abstractions toe the line between figurative and abstract, with her penchant for motion still evident as the moonlight seems to ripple over the river despite the rigidity of the shapes she employed. Perhaps a leftover of her years as a pianist, there is a sense of fluidity to this piece that suggests musicality amidst the harsh edges of the piece, as befits an iconic Filipino abstractionist. (Hannah Valiente)





60

## Angelito Antonio (b. 1939)

### *Kusina Blg. 2*

signed and dated 1972 (lower left)

oil on canvas

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

**P 500,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank Mr. Marcel Antonio for confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

*Kusina Blg. 2* is another masterpiece by the acclaimed Filipino artist Angelito Antonio, an oil painting demonstrating a typical countryside household scene. This 1972 work is an image of a mother sitting on the ground and carrying her child while tending to the food she's cooking. Like his other works, this piece bears Antonio's developed cubism style and signature acidic yellow hue.

Antonio's oeuvre is a genuine representation of Filipino customs and way of life. It often features vendors, cockfighters, fishermen, as well as market, barrio, and household scenes, an array of subjects that somehow exude a sense of warmth and familiarity. Additionally, Antonio's exceptional colorwork manifests in his paintings, for he manages to tone down his bright colors by using black to outline his elements and create shadows to contrast his luminous palette. Hence, his pieces aren't overwhelming or too loud to look at.

Yellow is a unique distinction of an Antonio piece. And although this color often signifies joy and optimism, Antonio's figures feel otherwise, showing instead the opposite of the glorified countryside life. His images are populated with people whose facial expressions and body language have a hint of suffering, misery, and weariness embedded in them.

In 1970, the Cultural Center of the Philippines honored Angelito Antonio with the prestigious Thirteen Artists Award, a testament to the significance and impact of his artistry in the Filipino art scene. *(Jessica Magno)*



# Homeward Bound at Day's End

## *Amorsolo Takes Us Home*

by HANNAH VALIENTE

Fernando Amorsolo is perhaps one of the most famous Filipino artists of the 20th century and beyond. A master of light and color, his compositions and landscapes have managed to capture the nostalgia of the Philippine countryside, gaining traction overseas even as early as the 1920s.

This 1961 *A Man Leading Bullock Carriages at Sunset* was created in a year full of awards for the already decorated artist—he was awarded a diploma of honor in the field of Philippine painting from the Philippine Federation of Private Medical Practitioners, Inc., as well as a citation by the Rizal-Pro Patria Award. The painting, while occupying a similar subject matter as the rest of his oeuvre, was more somber in tone than the others. Set against the backdrop of a sunset, two carts being pulled by carabaos are awash in shadowy orange light. Perhaps the two figures are going home after a day of hard work, portraying an unofficial sequel to his famed planting rice paintings. Now, the romantic depiction of the rice cycle is no longer seen; in its stead is the silence after a backbreaking physical work, a stillness that depicts an ever-continuing cycle one must undertake, day after day and months after months.

*A Man Leading Bullock Carriages at Sunset* portrays not just an idyllic return to the past but the quiet moments of retrospection hidden between its depths, a quality that endeared and immortalized Amorsolo for the years to come.

61

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**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*A Man Leading Bullock Carriages at Sunset*

signed and dated 1961 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

**P 4,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo confirming the authenticity of this lot









# Olazo's Longest-Sustained Series

## *Diaphanous as His Legacy*

A painter and printmaker, Romulo Olazo continued to grace the Philippine art scene with his resplendent masterpieces, especially his highly acclaimed and most coveted Diaphanous series. Painted in the hoariness of his late age of 79, *Diaphanous Anthuriums #152 (CAT # 25390)* belongs to this illustrious collection and is a potent testament to his unbending artistry and ceaseless artmaking.

Olazo's ingenuity and skilled craftsmanship are evident in his many paintings of fine transparent screens in overlapping layers that result in airy, translucent compositions. The Diaphanous series, crafted with his delicate brushwork, evokes a fleeting sensation and a deep emotional response from his monochromatic palette, thus perfectly embodying the Japanese philosophical concept of "mono no aware"—beauty in transience. Indeed, this 2013 oil on canvas piece impeccably demonstrates Olazo's consistency and profound understanding of light and space, inviting a heartfelt connection with the viewers.

Perhaps age is but a number to the artist, for he kept on making sublime artworks that would be his legacy in his lifetime and beyond. In November 2014, Olazo mounted his last one-man show with a single painting titled *Diaphanous B-CCXXV*, the largest in his diaphanous collection, measuring 80 x 240 inches. (*Jessica Magno*)



Romulo Olazo © Romuloolazo.com

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**Romulo Olazo** (1934 - 2015)

*Diaphanous Anthuriums #152 (Cat # 25390)*

signed and dated 2013 (bottom)

oil on canvas

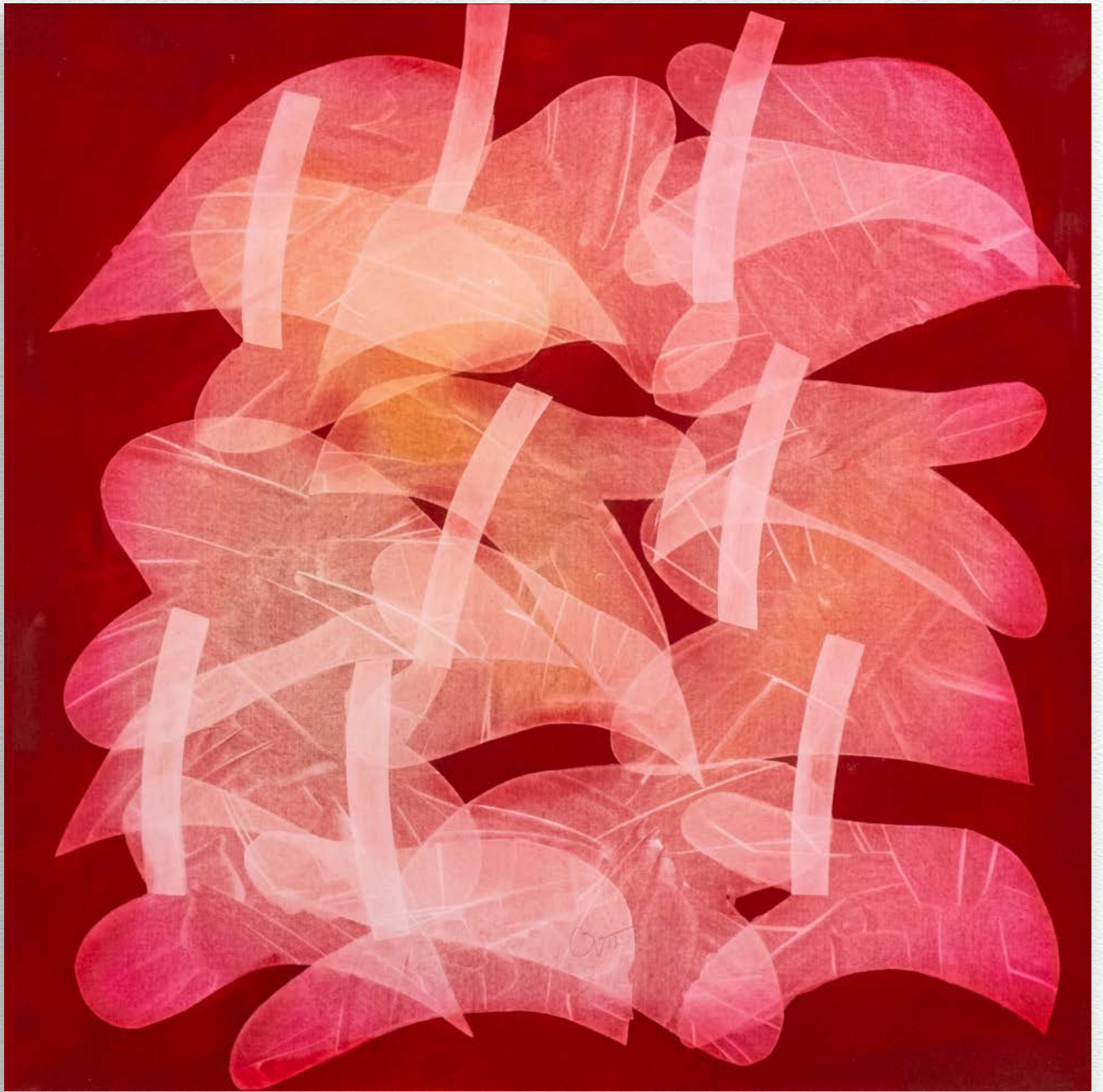
36" x 36" (91 cm x 91 cm)

**P 3,800,000**

PROVENANCE

Finale Auctions, *Fine Art*, Makati City, 18 May 2019, Lot 58.







**Oscar Zalameda** (1930 - 2010)*Sailboats*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1965

oil on canvas

25" x 31 1/4" (64 cm x 79 cm)

**P 600,000**

## PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

**B**efore Oscar Zalameda's iconic cubistic art style came to life, his works echoed Fernando Zóbel's style in its breeziness and swift brush strokes. His bon vivant lifestyle, born from his continuous travels around the world, meant extended time at sea, and the artistic Zalameda found himself enamored with the harsh, cutting waters and wild seas.

This untitled piece, created circa 1950s, was evocative of the early Zalameda. A prime example of his experimentations with abstraction, Zalameda played with colors, lights, and angles with his gestural abstraction comprised of expertly rendered cubistic elements that, in its abstraction, perfectly retain Zalameda's cohesive style. The cosmopolitan influences of his life are evident – he was starting to settle in Europe by the mid-1950s with earlier years of the decade spent in various art schools in the Philippines, America, and Paris.

Zalameda's sharp intuition when it comes to colors and hues reveals the vibrant world from which he draws inspiration. His works make a distinct vision, a blend of romantic Europe and the vibrant Quezon that results in a unique taste that helped him garner dedicated patrons within his lifetime and beyond. (*Hannah Valiente*)



ABOVE: Oscar Zalameda



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An Early Zalameda  
*Zalameda's Elegant Style Takes Center Stage*

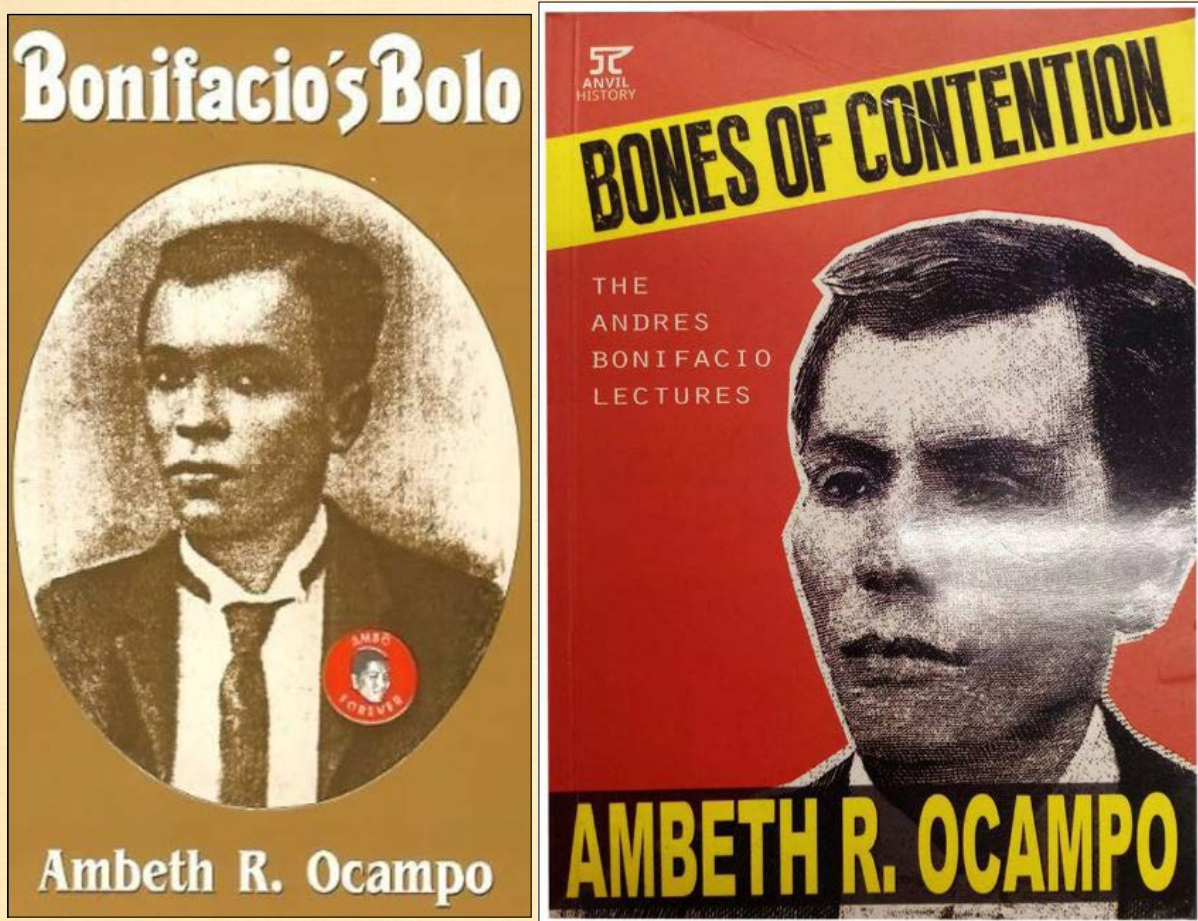




# A Treasure From a Historian's Vault

## *The Bonifacio Bust Cast from the 'Monumento' Original*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



ABOVE: Best-selling books and jampacked lectures on Andres Bonifacio by Professor Ambeth Ocampo make the hero come alive.  
© Both photos are from the Professor Ambeth Ocampo photo collection.

**A**relentless author of 35 books and over 3,500 essays and an equally tireless newspaper columnist for the widely-read 'Looking Back', a globe-trotting, sought-after lecturer and the universally adored Hermenegildo B. Reyes Professor of History at the Ateneo de Manila University, public servant and patriot (as chair of the National Historical Commission and National Commission for Culture and the Arts, he never drew a salary), Ambeth R. Ocampo and his nine lives would never run out of accomplishments and accolades.

There is one facet that is little-known : He is a serious collector of Philippine art and antiques with a taste for the delicious details that make each work completely special and that only he could hunt, find, savor— and of course, share with his thousands of readers and fans.

León Gallery is privileged to present four of the important artworks from his collection, revealed for the first time to the public—two of them of extraordinary historical import.

Professor Ocampo has written often about National Artist Guillermo E. Tolentino, the genius who created the towering Bonifacio monument in Caloocan, considered the most beautiful in the country. The secret of its power — the maestro once confided in a pre-war interview unearthed by Ambeth—comes from its remarkably lifelike expression and accuracy in detail. Tolentino, a spiritist, said he got details right from seances held in his home in Retiro street, as well as the bone structure of his surviving sister, Espiridiona.

The second work is an equally delightful morsel of both historical and artistic importance : a relic of the legendary 'Per Pacem et Libertatem' masterpiece by Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, that was obliterated in the dark days of the 1945 Battle for Manila. It depicts the battle-weary 'Filipinas' as she gazes beseechingly up at the unseen American goddess, Columbia.





ABOVE: The bust at hand was cast by Guillermo Tolentino from the face of his epic 'Monumento' of Andres Bonifacio © <https://whatmichaellikes.blogspot.com/> BELOW: Professor Ambeth Ocampo with two of Tolentino's sculptures, Rizal (right) and Bonifacio (left), at the 1997 exhibition of Tolentino's works at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila © from the Professor Ambeth Ocampo photo collection.





# Celebrating Guillermo Tolentino

## *The First National Artist for Sculpture (1973)*



*On His 51st  
Year  
as National  
Artist*

LEFT: Tolentino putting his finishing touches on the sculpture, RIGHT: Andres Bonifacio's only known photograph © Both Photos are from the Professor Ambeth Ocampo photo collection.

If there's one Filipino artist who will be forever be remembered for his "heroic" contributions to Philippine art, Guillermo Tolentino is inarguably a surefire answer. And by heroic, one need not look further than his monumental accomplishment of being the most illustrious "creator" of Filipino heroes—a sculptor *par excellence* for his unsurpassed ability to capture the image and likeness of our forefathers.

Andres Bonifacio is the centerpiece of Guillermo Tolentino's oeuvre, immortalized in his towering bronze *piece de resistance* Bonifacio Monument (colloquially known as "Monumento"), which was inaugurated in 1933 to honor the memory of the "Father of the Philippine Revolution" and the historic "Cry of Pugad Lawin" that ignited the flames of armed struggle against *Madre España*.

Tolentino's depiction of Bonifacio was borne out of the sculptor's extensive research on the hero—including reading books and primary sources and interviewing the hero's surviving younger sister, Espiridiona Bonifacio, for "more personal and first-hand enlightenment." Tolentino himself also conducted seances to obtain a greater accuracy in details.

The bust of Bonifacio at hand is one of a number of plaster casts from the original sculpture. For his classic work on the Bonifacio monument, Tolentino based the hero's likeness on the bone structure of Espiridiona and the only extant photograph of the revolutionary father dated 1896, in which he wears a coat and tie, instead of the wildly popularized white camisa de chino and screaming red kundiman pants. This iconography is clearly depicted in this plaster bust, so different from the unauthorized posthumous reproductions in cold-cast resin floating in the market today.

Tolentino's interpretation of Bonifacio veered from the prevailing notion of the "Great Plebeian: that had been hyped by Ramon Martinez's life-size, reinforced concrete sculpture titled Monument to the Heroes of 1896 (*Homenaje Del Pueblo Filipino a Los Heroes Del' 96*) that depicts a katipunero donned in the camisa de chino and kundiman pants rolled up above the knees and armed with a bolo on his right hand.

The eminent art critic Rodolfo Paras-Perez succinctly wrote about this deviation from the widespread yet faulty notions in his 1976 monograph on Tolentino.

*"The primacy of the idea or concept as the directing force is underlined in Tolentino's treatment of Bonifacio's clothing. Bonifacio wears a barong Tagalog. This, in itself, is not unusual. (The barong Tagalog was a common costume during Bonifacio's time). But what makes it stand out in Bonifacio is its fine detailing, as in the treatment of the embroidery. This is further carried in the holster of the gun and in the sheath of the bolo. Thus, Bonifacio is costumed not as the plebeian going to battle but, in a manner befitting a leader. Not as the reality of the situation demands but what the hierarchy of the concept dictates."*

Professor Ocampo acquired this work from Tolentino's widow, Paz Raymundo, in the 1980s. This bust was exhibited in late 1988 at the Museo ng Malacañang, in a show titled Tolentino: Iskultor ng mga Bayani, organized by the Museo ng Malacañang Foundation in a decade-long lead-up to the centennial celebrations of Philippine independence, then officially declared as the "Decade of Nationalism, 1988 - 1998." It was also featured in a 1997 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila. (*Adrian Maranan*)



**Guillermo Tolentino** (1890 - 1976)

*Bust of Andres Bonifacio*

inscribed with Baybayin that reads "BO-NI-PA-[S]-YO"

and with "Bonifacio" below it, both by Tolentino,

renowned authority in Philippine script

plaster of paris bust with bronze paint

plaster casts

H: 29" (74 cm)

L: 12" (30 cm)

W: 21 1/2" (55 cm)

**P 400,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired from the collection of the widow of Guillermo Tolentino, Paz Raymundo.

**LITERATURE**

*Tolentino: Iskultor ng mga Bayani*. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same title at the Museo ng Malacañang. Manila: Museo ng Malacañang Foundation, 1988.

Listed as "ANDRES BONIFACIO, Founder of the Katipunan" in the section "Exhibition Checklist."

**EXHIBITED**

Museo ng Malacañang, *Tolentino: Iskultor ng mga Bayani* (Organized by the Museo ng Malacañang Foundation in Celebration of the 'Decade of Nationalism, 1988 - 1998'), Manila, 28 September - October 1988

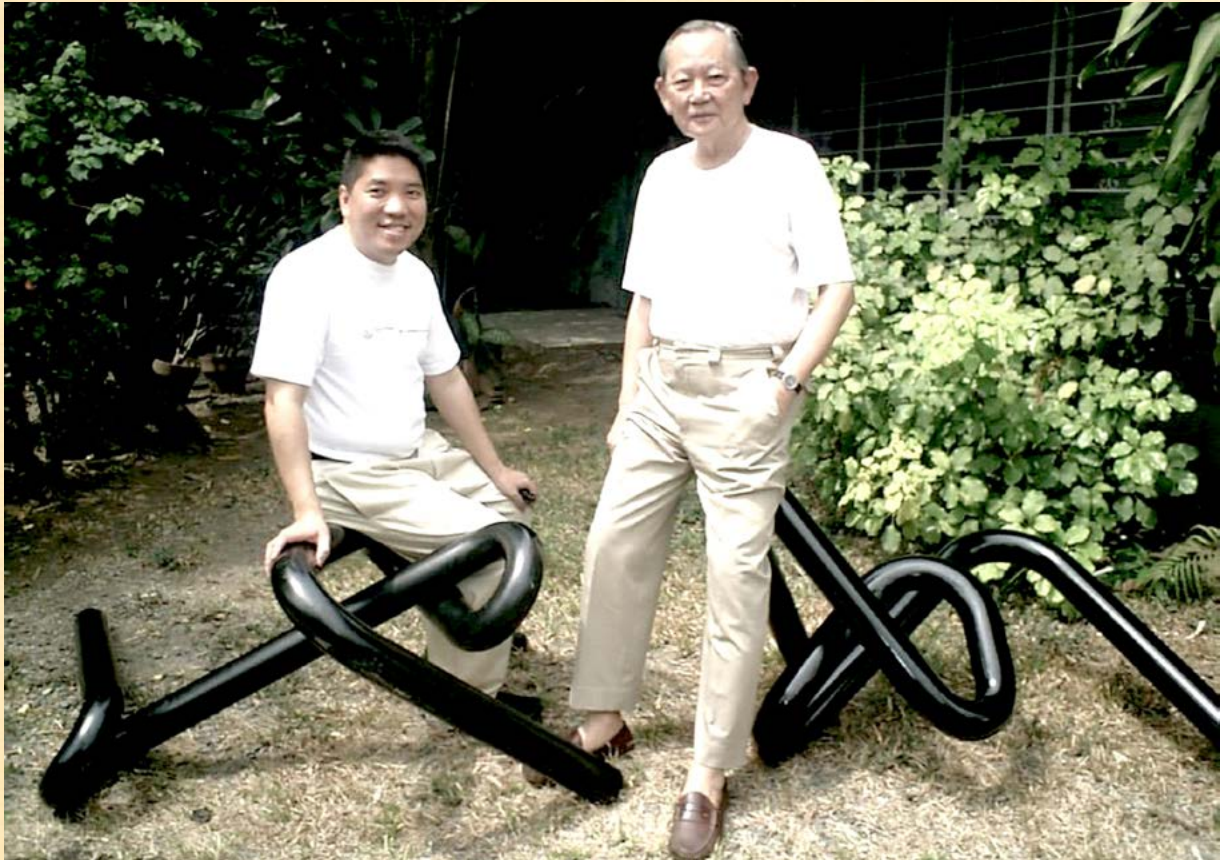
Metropolitan Museum of Manila, 1997





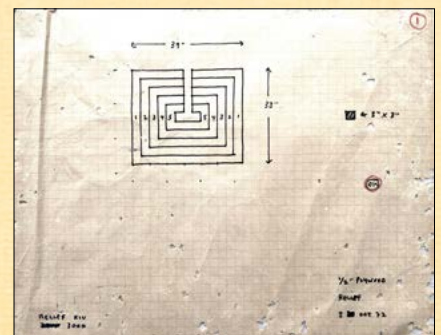
# The Spare Elegance of Arturo Luz

*From Ambeth Ocampo*  
*Curator for the 'Arturo Luz: First Light' Retrospective*



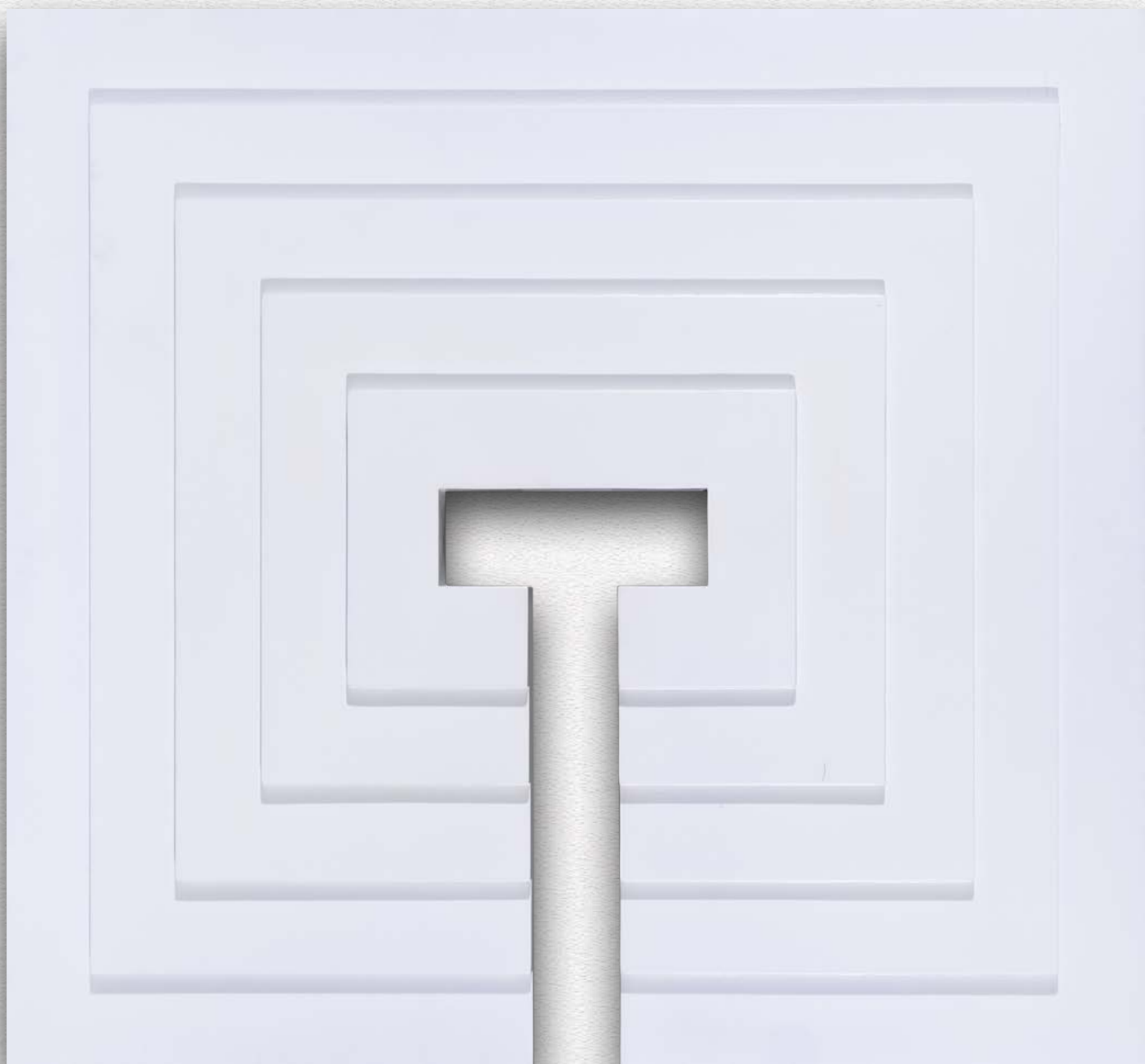
ABOVE: Professor Ocampo with Arturo Luz © Photo from the Professor Ambeth Ocampo photo collection.

While working on his Black on White and White on Black series, Arturo Luz drew heavily from the works of the acclaimed minimalist and brutalist artist Donald Judd. Here, Luz's creations speak for themselves. They manage to follow the traditional tenets of minimalism wherein the piece's primary goal is not to allude to any hidden meaning or message, but to direct the viewer towards the intrinsic nature of the art itself through shape, form, and space. He describes his works as "semi-representational and semi-abstract." Both his sculptures and paintings are characterized by simple lines and geometric forms. Among his peers and contemporaries such as Manansala, HR Ocampo, and Legaspi, he was the one who veered towards pure abstraction. His Minimalism was a stark contrast to works of other artists who had a preference for bright colors and canvases full of forms from corner to corner. Luz's aesthetic sensibilities were global and his subjects morphed from recognizable objects to mere artistic elements like lines and forms. Luz was described by art critic, Leo Benesa, as having "a Mandarin sensibility."



ABOVE: Relief XIV was based on this study by Luz dated October 1972 © Ambeth Ocampo archives





**65** PROPERTY FROM THE PROFESSOR AMBETH R. OCAMPO COLLECTION

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**Arturo Luz** (b. 1926)

*Relief XIV*

dated October 3, 1972

automotive paint on wood

33" x 39" (84 cm x 99 cm)

**P 800,000**

LITERATURE

Reyes, Cid. *Arturo Luz*. Makati City: Ayala Foundation and The Crucible for Globe Telecom, 1999.

Illustrated with artwork description on page 159.

EXHIBITED

Ateneo Art Gallery, *Arturo Luz: Sculptures*, Quezon City, 2004



# A Gift to a Fellow Modernist's Daughter

## *Fernando Zóbel and Paola Luz*

by HANNAH VALIENTE

Upon his return to Manila in 1952, Zobel fell into a group of young artists who exhibited at the Philippine Art Gallery, then the home court of the burgeoning modernism movement. Among his growing list of friends is Arturo Luz, a then-emerging abstract artist who would eventually rise to receive the highest accolade for the arts, the Order of National Artists.

Zobel proved such a close bond with the artist when, in 1980, he gifted Luz's daughter – and Zobel's goddaughter – Paola the lot in hand *Iris*. Paola who was then 16 at the time of *Iris*'s creation was already a passionate photographer at her young age, a love that started when a Japanese artist who exhibited at the Luz Gallery gifted the teenager with a Japanese camera. Her fervent love affair with photography grew and she celebrated her 18th birthday with an exhibition of her photographs at the Luz Gallery.

Zobel's *Iris* perfectly encapsulates young Paola's passion for photography. In a camera, the iris acts as the device's "eye;" more specifically, the iris is a circular device that controls the amount of light that enters the camera, that is the exposure that makes or breaks one's photo.

In one full swoop, Zobel's *Iris* not only serves as a truly thoughtful gift to his goddaughter but also serves as an analogy to Zobel's abstractive career. Like a camera's iris, Zobel's abstractions push the boundaries of light and shadow, of black and white and the grays in between, an experimentation that led to two of his most popular series: the *Serie Negra* which began in 1959 and ended in 1963 and his *Serie Blanca* series, a body of work that spanned from 1975 to 1978.

66 PROPERTY FROM THE PROFESSOR AMBETH R. OCAMPO COLLECTION

**Fernando Zóbel** (1924 - 1984)

*Iris*

signed (lower left and verso), dated 1980 (verso)  
and inscribed "para Paula, con un gran / abrazo, de su padrino" (lower left)  
oil on canvas  
16" x 16" (40.64 cm x 40.64 cm)

**P 1,400,000**


PROVENANCE

Acquired from Arturo R. Luz, Manila

LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022. Listed as "n° 80-58" with illustration and painting description on page 612.





para Peste, con un gran  
alago de su patrimonio

S. J. P.



# Hidalgo's Head Study for *Per Pacem et Libertatem* An Important Relic of An Immortal Work

by ADRIAN MARANAN



ABOVE: The House of Don Felipe Hidalgo; BOTTOM RIGHT: Close up view of the wall installation of *Per Pacem et Libertatem*

When the US flag had finally been "peacefully" hoisted over Manila after the formal end of the Philippine–American War in 1902, signifying a new era of yet another colonial rule in the Philippine archipelago, the American insular government needed an all-powerful medium to project its newfound supremacy manifested through the doctrine of "benevolent assimilation" to the islands. And what other means to convey this other than the all-important brush and paint, and of course, best handled by an all-powerful painter?

In 1903, after the Americans had established the Insular Government of the Philippine Islands, the US commissioned Félix Resurrección Hidalgo for a sum of 10,000 pesos to paint a monumental work depicting the "promises and achievements" of peace and liberty under American colonial rule. The painting, titled *Per Pacem et Libertatem*, was completed in 1904, just in time for Hidalgo's participation at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, where he presented the said work along with 23 other pieces, including *Oedipus y Antigone* and *El Violinista*. The Fair was meant to showcase America's place as a key imperial power.





BESIDE Study of Per Pacem et Libertatem (1903, oil on canvas, Eugenio Lopez Foundation Collection). Reproduced in Alfredo Roces' *Félix Resurrección Hidalgo and the Generation of 1872*; BOTTOM RIGHT: American and Filipino representatives in the Salon de Marmol of the Ayuntamiento de Manila, August 1905. The original mural painting of *Per Pacem et Libertatem* is in the background. © The Alice Roosevelt Longworth Collection of Photographs from the 1905 Taft Mission to Asia. Photographer: Burr McIntosh (1862-1942). Freer and Sackler Galleries, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art

Alfredo Roces notes in the monograph *Félix Resurrección Hidalgo and the Generation of 1872* that *Per Pacem et Libertatem* "hinges on allegory," possessing a "thematic device of having a woman represent a nation [that] was popularized by Eugene Delacroix's painting, *Liberty Leading the People*, (1830)." "It became a conventional device used by painters of the time; Juan Luna's painting, *Spain and the Philippines*, (1887) being yet another example," continues Roces.

The original *Per Pacem et Libertatem* would find its permanent home in the Marble Hall of the Ayuntamiento in Intramuros. It would, unfortunately, be one of the cultural casualties of the Battle of Manila in 1945.

The work at hand is a head study of a woman with a bandaged head meant as an allegory of a wounded Philippines. In the original painting, the injured woman submits herself to America, the lady of peace and liberty that would bring the islands to progress, represented by another woman, an angel-like figure representing enlightenment and education.

It is one of the surviving remnants of the now-lost masterpiece.

This head study was originally in the fabled collection of Félix Resurrección's nephew, Don Felipe Hidalgo, who resided and housed his treasures in the family's ancestral house on the famed Quiapo street, renamed in his uncle's memory. The work at hand was also said to be one of Don Felipe's most treasured in his collection.

In Don Felipe's collection could be found his uncle's own replicas of *Las Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho*, the original of which bagged the silver medal at the 1884 *Exposición General de Bellas Artes* in Madrid, and *La barca de Aqueronte*, whose original was conferred the gold medal at the 1893 *Exposición Internacional de Bellas Artes*, also in Madrid. There was also Luna's large, colored sketch of his *Boda Romana*, now famous as *the Hymen, oh Hyménée*.

In October 1958, the magazine *Mobilways* dedicated an entire issue focusing on the storied collection of Don Felipe Hidalgo, with biographical notes on Félix Resurrección and a reproduction of several of his major paintings. An article titled "R. Hidalgo," based on a biography of the artist written by the eminent Alfonso T. Ongpin, succinctly tells of the legend that was Don Felipe and his splendid trove. The article writes:



"As R. Hidalgo street rounds the curb at its Plaza del Carmen end, there stands on the corner of the next street of Tanduay a massive old house, high and aloof. Its only concession to the present is its new coat of pastel blue and cream, otherwise, it looks as if it belongs more to R. Hidalgo Street, only left out by some unhappy chance. Indeed, it belongs there, for it is the ancestral home of R. Hidalgo himself. Here are found a treasury of some of Hidalgo's masterpieces, along with a veritable museum of ancient armor, sculptures, clocks, oriental idols, old Chinese vases, plates, and other bric-a-brac that tell of a well-remembered past. Its present owner and custodian is Don Felipe R. Hidalgo, a nephew of the painter, who recalls the incidents behind each of his collector's items, and above all, recalls Félix Resurrección Hidalgo. He lights and re-lights his cigar and, with eyes agleam, takes pride in talking about his revered uncle."





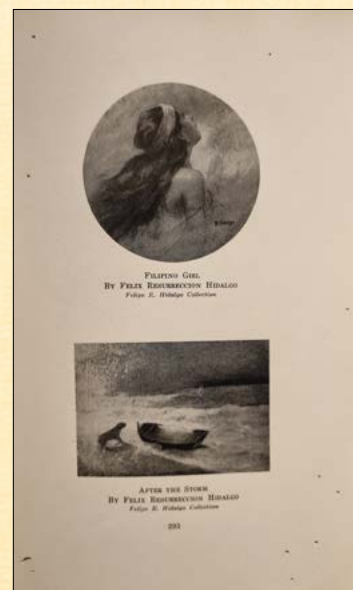
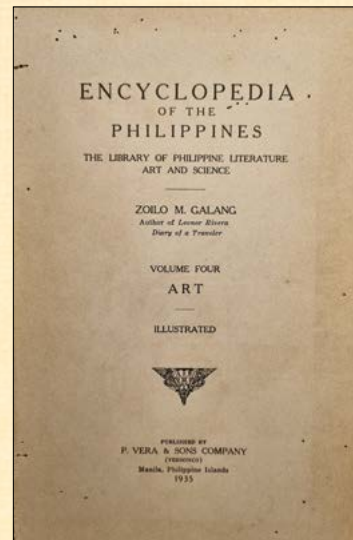
Another article ("Hidalgo Art Collection") from the same Mobilways issue notes that Don Felipe began collecting at the age of six and now possesses the "most varied" of all collections in the Philippines. It also wrote, "Don Felipe has about ten of his uncle's paintings and dozens of sketches, drawings, and embroideries."

The article continues, "He would prefer to live with the old paintings of his uncle and his contemporary Luna, with his memories of an age gone by that are still alive among the vases, the carvings, the delicate China, the figurines, and the quaint little odds and ends in the dim and quiet of his home."

A pre-war photograph published in the November 30, 1937 issue of *Foto News Magazine* shows that this head study was located on the second floor of the historic house, hanging on the wall alongside other Hidalgo and Luna portraits and surrounded by various important ephemera from China, Japan, and Europe.

The head study for *Per Pacem et Libertatem* was also featured in the fourth volume of the authoritative pre-war *Encyclopedia of the Philippines (The Library of Philippine Literature, Art, and Science)*, authored by Zoilo M. Galang, the pioneering Filipino writer in the English language who penned the first Filipino novel written in English, *A Child of Sorrow* (1921).

This charming piece serves not only as a poignant reminder of a lost masterpiece and the "what ifs" and "could have beens" associated with its unfortunate destruction during the war. It is an indispensable memento of that once glorious era of old-world opulence in the not-so-distant past.



BESIDE: This head study for Hidalgo's *Per Pacem et Libertatem* was featured in the pre-war *Encyclopedia of the Philippines* written by Zoilo M. Galang, the pioneering Filipino writer in the English language.

67 PROPERTY FROM THE PROFESSOR AMBETH R. OCAMPO COLLECTION

## Félix Resurrección Hidalgo (1855 - 1913)

*Per Pacem et Libertatem, Head Study*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1903

pastel with white highlights on paper

D: 14" (36 cm)

**P 700,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private collection of Don Felipe Hidalgo

### LITERATURE

Galang, Zoilo M. *Encyclopedia of the Philippines: The Library of Philippine Literature, Art, and Science (Volume 4: Art)*. Manila: P. Vera & Sons Company, 1935. Black and white illustration on page 293.

"The House of Hidalgo is a Great Art Museum, A Fortune is Invested in Oddities." *Foto News*, November 30, 1937. Captured in a black and white photograph of the second floor of Don Felipe Hidalgo's R. Hidalgo mansion.

"Preliminary Sketches Show a Meticulous Artist." *Foto News*, February 15, 1939. Black and white illustration with artwork description.



Hidalgo's *Per Pacem et Libertatem*  
Mirrors Luna's *España y Filipinas*



The Warrior "Filipinas"  
Beseeches America's "Columbia"





RIZAL'S  
ULTIMO AMOR :

*JOSEPHINE BRACKEN*

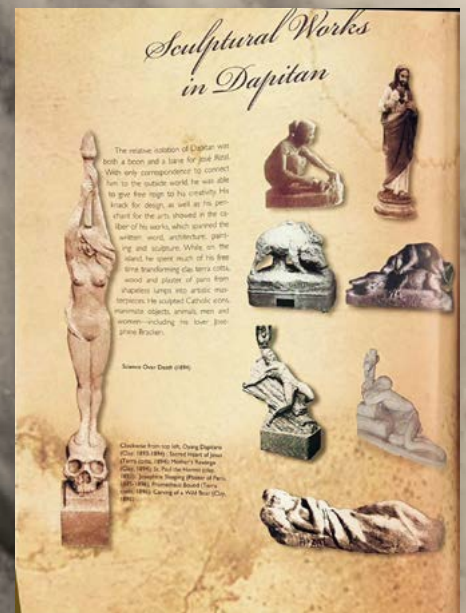


# RIZAL AS AN ARTIST

*A little-known fact about Jose Rizal was that he was an artist — who trained formally at the Manila Academia de Dibujo y Pintura, first as a painter and when a class for sculpture was opened for the first time, he enlisted in that artform as well. There is no doubt that Rizal was a genius and triumphed in everything he put his mind and heart into*

*Rizal was a sculptor skilled and respected enough to be accepted to exhibit at the annual Paris Salon of 1889 which opened alongside the Exposition Universelle. Rizal's entry was a bust of his close friend, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera. Juan Luna participated in both, exhibiting "La Chula" at the Salon and "Hymen oh Hymenee" in the Expo, winning a bronze medal..*

*'Josephine Sleeping' captures this facet of Rizal not only as a sculptor but also as a living, breathing creature of flesh and blood — adding intimacy and further fascination to this] legendary figure of Philippine history.*



ABOVE: Rizal's sculptures from the book "Lolo Jose".  
(Josephine Sleeping at bottom right)



# PUBLIC HISTORY, PRIVATE LIVES AND HIS DREAM OF LOVE

RIZAL AND THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

By the end of June 1892, as Jose Rizal stepped on the deck of the boat Don Juan that would take him from HongKong to Manila, it was already apparent that he had chosen a collision course with his destiny. His letters to his family, the Spanish governor-general and finally and most tellingly, one addressed 'To the Filipinos', spoke plainly. His biographer Leon Ma. Guerrero wrote that "he was ready to be shot, and in a way, was expecting it."

He conducted himself, therefore, with a certain devil-may-care air, checking into "the best hotel in the city" (Room 44, of the Hotel Oriente), traveling to Bulacan and Pampanga and Tarlac — and within a week of his arrival, on July 3rd, calling a meeting of the like-minded to found La Liga Filipina. Two days later, the houses he had visited in the provinces outside Manila were raided and copies of the Fili and various subversive pamphlets were seized. The very next day after that, he was sent to incarceration at Fort Santiago escorted by the Governor General's nephew, riding in his personal carriage. It was a quaint gesture of politeness, as if to say that it was all beyond Despujol's comprehension.

The scholar Jim Richardson notes, "By most accounts, when the Gaceta de Manila reported that he was to be deported from Manila to the south, Andres Bonifacio, Teodoro Plata, and Ladislaw Diwa and others had decided that it was time to proceed" with the plans for the Katipunan. It was July 7, 1892.

In a week, Rizal was roused from his sleep at midnight and sent on a slow boat to Dapitan and would begin his exile in Mindanao on July 17. It would seem that the Spanish colonial government had closed the book on Jose Rizal, the trouble-maker, agitator, and ring-leader, by dispatching him to a faraway town where he could do no more harm.

They would be mistaken because Rizal's exile had set into motion a greater, unseen danger. "While parish friar and police spy, informer and garrison commander, Archbishop and Governor General went chasing after the aproned brethren (of Masonry), the majority of them progressive principales and liberal ilustrados, Bonifacio was quietly but tirelessly working among the masses, whose huts did not seem worth a search, who could be scarcely suspected of being able to write their own names, let alone subversive propaganda, who congregated dumbly in cockpits, circus tents, and

dank alleys, and were presumably more concerned with keeping body and soul together and a shirt on their backs, than in the high politics of reform and revolution. These were the faithful, the submissive, the unspoiled... So it was that Bonifacio and the Katipunan escaped and grew," explained Guerrero.

The last four years of Jose Rizal's life run in parallel with the beginning of the most tumultuous periods of Philippine history. But for Jose Rizal, he sought to create a different Filipino utopia.

Between 1892 to 1896, "the four years and 13 days and some hours", Rizal would dance around the cold reality of his exile. He would farm the land, trade in hemp, design an unusual six-sided house and a working water system, build a school and teach, and then finally, he would allow himself to dream — a dream of love with an Irish orphan girl with blue eyes.

In January or February 1895, three years into his exile —it was a sentence of indeterminate length really, Josephine Leopoldine Bracken arrived with her adoptive father, George Taufer, an English engineer from Hongkong. Taufer had come to seek Rizal's help to cure his blindness and Rizal did indeed operate on his eyes. But then the unexpected happened, and Rizal would fall finally and hopelessly in love. And on February 22, Rizal asked for Josephine's hand in marriage over Taufer's vehement objections.

Josephine would accompany Taufer back to Manila but would soon return to Rizal's side, by July 1895, they would be living together as man and wife.

It is in this period, that the work, a depiction of a sleeping beauty, was created. Josephine lies outstretched on a classical Roman-style couch with a head-rest, covered in a thin blanket that outlines her waist and thighs. A hand modestly covers one breast, she half-smiles innocently in her sleep, tresses parted over her forehead. She is mother, child, and wife all at once.

Rizal has signed his name beneath her soft, placid form. It is an intimate and happy depiction of his life and love, a rare exception to his allegorical themes of machismo, knowledge and strength. Or is 'Josephine Sleeping' true to Rizal's inner self and a symbol of his life's concern and his beloved nation now in a deep slumber?





ABOVE LEFT: The Sunday Times Magazine article, June 14, 1970 featuring 'Josephine Sleeping'; ABOVE, RIGHT: Jose Rizal and BELOW: a pencil sketch of Josephine Bracken



“In the life of Rizal, Josephine Bracken plays a special part... that has been too long deprecated and obscured... She is the one woman whom Rizal loved; Leonor Rivera was a boyish fancy, the nostalgic phantom that haunted fitfully his years in exile; all the rest: Consuelo, Suzanne, Gertrude with her breakfast tray, Sei-ko and her tales of the samurai, Nellie the proselytizer, had never really made him pause in his restless journeys, never really pierced the armor of his cold passion for his country and her rights and liberties.

“If Rizal can be said to have ever loved anyone else but the Filipino Nation, than it must be said that he loved Josephine; he was her husband twice over, her open lover in defiance of all his innate propriety and sensibility; she was the one woman with whom he shared that most jealously prized of all his possessions, his name, and also his heart's intimacies.”

— Leon Ma. Guerrero, in the 'The First Filipino : A Biography of Jose Rizal'



*Josephine Bracken*











68

**José Rizal** (1861 - 1896)

*Josephine Sleeping*  
 signed 'Rizal' (bottom left)  
 ca. July 1895 - July 1896  
 plaster of paris  
 H: 2 1/2" (6 cm)  
 L: 9 1/2" (24 cm)  
 W: 2 3/4" (7 cm)

**P 7,000,000**

**PROVENANCE**  
 Collection of the family of Narcisa Rizal, sister of the Philippines National Hero, Jose Rizal, thence by descent

**LITERATURE**  
 Pictorial Album on Rizal (Album Pictorico Sobre Rizal), Foremost Filipino Hero, Martyr and Patriot, Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission, Republic of the Philippines, Manila. 1961, Black and white photograph, page 139.

Asuncion Lopez Bantug. *Lolo Jose: An Intimate and Illustrated Portrait of Jose Rizal*, Vibal Publishing, Manila, 2008. Black and white (sepia) photograph, page 136.

Sunday Times Magazine. *Rizal : Man of Many Minds*, June 14, 1970. Black and white photograph, page 30.



ABOVE: Rizal's hexagonal home in Dapitan. Below : Dapitan town in the 1890s.





ABOVE: Josephine Bracken

## Timeline of Rizal's Last Love Story

**17 July 1892:** Jose Rizal arrives in Dapitan, to begin his life in exile

**14 March 1894:** Josephine arrives in Dapitan with Taufer, according to her recollection, but it is believed that this is most likely, in the following year — since she recalls "a happy life of 20 months" with Rizal

**January to February 1895:** According to Rizal biographer, León Ma. Guerrero, Josephine and Mr. Taufer arrive in Dapitan to consult with Rizal

They stay a week before Rizal operates on Taufer's eyes. However, he can do little more for his blindness

**22 February 1895:** Rizal asks for Josephine's hand in marriage — and Taufer tries to commit suicide. Rizal stops him.

**Mid-March 1895:** Josephine accompanies Taufer back to Manila

**April - May 1895:** Josephine returns to Dapitan

**July - August 1895:** Josephine and Rizal live as man and wife

**31 July 1896:** Rizal ends his exile in Dapitan — after 4 years and 13 days.

**6 August 1896:** Rizal arrives in Manila with Josephine, ready to go to Cuba, Josephine lives with the Rizal family in this period

**3 Sept 1896:** Rizal sails for Spain

**29 Sept 1896:** He is told to stay in his cabin "until further orders"

**3 October 1896:** He reaches Barcelona

**6 October 1896:** Rizal is imprisoned in the Fort Monjuich prison — but is sent back to Manila on the same day

**3 November 1896:** Rizal arrives in Manila and is immediately taken to Fort Santiago

**26 December 1896:** Rizal's trial begins — after an investigation that began on 20 November, the case was declared ready for trial on the 17th, with the trial opening on the 19th

**28 December 1896:** The Governor-General Polavieja orders Rizal to be shot at 7 o'clock in the morning of 30 December.

**29 December 1896:** The death sentence is read to Rizal

**30 December 1896:** 5 o'clock in the morning : Rizal weds Josephine Bracken/





69

## Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

### *Listen to the Stone*

signed (lower left)

dated 2015

acrylic on canvas

24" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

**P 1,800,000**

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Lao Lianben's fascination with the tranquility of Zen Buddhism bleeds into his minimalist oeuvre. Captivated by the silence and meditation the religion practices, Lao's works invite introspection as he basks in the quietude his pieces evoke.

"Zen Buddhism principles, practices, and mysticism have always fascinated me," said Lao in a 2023 interview with Lifestyle Inquirer. "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."

This contemplative nature is evident in this 2015 *Listen to the Stone*. Depicting a row of nine stones lined up on top of an elevated plank, Lao experiments with textures as he portrays vertical lines akin to a pouring rain. Zen Buddhism, by virtue, is more than just meditation and contemplation—all manner of activities are considered practices for Zen discipline, aimed at focusing the mind to work towards spiritual awakening. As such, even landscape gardening could be a Zen practice in which the layout of one's garden corresponds to a Buddhist tenet. In this practice, rock and its position hold great importance, as large rocks symbolize stability, strength, and endurance, with the mindful way they are lined up representing vigilance and contemplation.

To listen to the stones, as the title suggests, means to embody "compassionate listening" – mere listening is not enough, for one must listen without judgment. Lao invites his viewers to dwell in deliberate silence and listen without preconceived biases. *Listen to the Stone* shows a core tenet of a Lao piece – and indeed, of Buddhism – which is to listen compassionately. They must earnestly take a path toward unbridled contemplation, the austerity of Zen with which one must live their lives. (*Hannah Valiente*)





70 PROPERTY FROM THE LEOPOLDO L. CORONEL JR. COLLECTION

### Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1988)

#### *Trees*

signed and dated 1955 (lower left)

watercolor on paper

24" x 18 3/4" (61 cm x 48 cm)

**P 240,000**

While Vicente Manansala is best known for his transparent cubism paintings, it is worth noting that he also explored realism earlier in his career, with his subjects focusing on landscapes and genre scenes. This 1955 watercolor painting yet again demonstrates Manansala's versatility and adaptability across styles and mediums.

This piece titled *Trees* features a forest-like topography amid Autumn, probably a scene he commonly observes in his overseas sojourns. Exhibiting his unrivaled proficiency, the artist expertly painted this piece using the wet-on-wet technique, dabbing the watercolor from a wet brush onto the damp surface of the paper. The colors seemingly blend with each other but still with distinguishable tree figures, creating an image of a soft and misty autumn forest against a clear blue sky.

A significant figure in Philippine art history, Manansala's ability to impress the local and international art scenes with his diverse masterpieces is a testament to his enduring artistic legacy. Shortly after his death in 1981, Vicente Manansala was named a National Artist for Painting. (Jessica Magno)



# Amorsolo and His Eternal Feasts

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Summer and sunshine are recurring delights of the Fernando Amorsolo painting. In this particular treasure, the master of the eternal feast crams an impossible number of the 'festejadas' (fiesta-goers). There are tiny tots and mothers and fathers, some have arrived from the fields, others by cart (there's a wheel of one in the picture) as well as by boat. In the foreground, a delicate banca perches on the riverbank, still brimming with fruit, waiting to be unloaded. A couple minds a pig roasting on a spit and an open fire. In the distance, a haystack of grain lets us know that it is harvest time and occasion for rejoicing. A pair of dancers appear to be floating above the crowd as they hop and prance the 'tinikling.'



ABOVE: Fernando Amorsolo with his palette

The spreading branches of a mango tree and a quaint nipa hut complete the view of a blissful life, combining all of the maestro's favorite elements of midday meals and fruit vendors and dancers in a single vignette.

Fernando Amorsolo was born at the tail-end of a Filipino summer in May. He would spend his boyhood south of Manila, where his father would go to try his luck and find his fortune. Life in the country was not to be for Amorsolo, with his pater's unexpected demise, and he found his way to the world of art through the good graces of an uncle, the by-then renowned Fabian de la Rosa, a cousin of his mother's. It would be a turn of events that the nation will always be grateful for, as Amorsolo captured the essence of Filipino life for the following generations in painting after painting such as this.

71

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Tinikling*

signed and dated 1955 (lower right)

oil on canvas

13" x 17 1/2" (33 cm x 44 cm)

**P 2,200,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo confirming the authenticity of this lot



A Joyous Harvest  
By the First National Artist





# Onward to Democracy

## *Joya Paints the Confetti Rallies of the 1980s*

by ADRIAN MARANAN

Jose Joya's acrylic collages are not only windows into the expressiveness of abstraction rooted in connectedness with nature; they were the artist's creative explorations of the concept of nationalism, which he had begun incorporating in his art beginning in the late 1960s. By the early 1970s, Joya delved into his acrylic collages, using finely grained, diaphanous rice papers reminiscent of the *kiping*, the colorful leaf-shaped rice wafers central to the celebrations of the vibrant Pahiyas Festival of Lucban, Quezon.

Joya's acrylic collages became representative of his reconnection with nature as an integral part of the praxis of abstraction—a oneness with nature's dynamic forces resulting in a gush of unbridled expressiveness. Moreover, this medium allowed Joya to reflect on and reconnect with his heritage, liberating himself from the confines of what he deemed as "too much Western influences."

"I have always thought that we, Filipinos, suffer from too much Western influences. It is good for us to start rediscovering our past," said Joya in 1973 in his comprehensive interview with Cid Reyes and published in the definitive monograph *Conversations on Philippine Art*.

*Confetti Revolution* is a homage to the "confetti rallies" that sparked in the Makati Central Business District, particularly along Ayala Avenue, and spread to other parts of the country, including Cebu and Davao. These rallies were pioneered by the "Monday Group," consisting of Francis Laurel, Pec Castro, Gus Lagman, Pete Estrada, Tony Mapa, Lito Banayo, Rafael Evangelista, and an anonymous eighth member, who, in the words of Evangelista in a Rappler article titled "*Who were really behind Makati's yellow confetti rallies,*" aimed "to mobilize the business community immediately after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino in 1983." The yellow confetti rallies became one

of the critical junctures of the broader protest movement against the dictatorship of Marcos, Sr., climaxing in the historic People Power Revolution of 1986.

Joya's use of rice paper matched the optimistic mood of the subject. Blots and streaks of yellow paint dominate the canvas, mimicking the yellow confetti raining throughout the stretch of Ayala Avenue from its high-rise edifices. *Confetti Revolution* sees Joya not only exploring his identity as a Filipino; he is reveling and partaking in history in the making. Like the *kiping*, which is synonymous with the spirited Pahiyas, Joya's *Confetti Revolution* is a festive celebration of the historic protests against the dictatorship, manifesting his solidarity with his fellow Filipinos in the promising march towards the restoration of democratic liberties.



ABOVE: Jose Joya

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**José Joya** (1931 - 1995)

*Confetti Revolution*

signed and dated December 16, 1984

(lower right and verso)

acrylic collage

30 1/4" x 22 1/2" (77 cm x 57 cm)

**P 1,700,000**

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







# Pacquing's Introspective Abstractions

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**B**ernardo Pacquing's work subverts traditional notions of fixed forms, emphasizing the fluid, organic shapes present in everyday life. This approach allows his art to embrace contradictions—holding space for affirmations and denials to coexist. Through his choice of materials, Pacquing invites viewers to question what is considered valuable, revealing beauty and depth in the often overlooked or discarded elements of urban environments.

Pacquing's mixed media works draw inspiration from the unnoticed traces of urban life—a mosaic of ephemera and debris that he collects from city streets. By repurposing these fragments, he breathes new life into the mundane, crafting artworks that serve as both reflections of and commentaries on the urban landscape.

The artwork displayed here by Pacquing embodies his unique approach to abstraction. With two large, dark shapes that resemble simplified, overlapping forms, the piece plays with balance and movement against an expanse of white. The dark shapes, disrupted by seemingly spontaneous marks and red linear elements, suggest both solidity and fragmentation, creating a tension that draws the eye. This composition evokes a sense of fluidity, as if the forms are caught in motion, emphasizing the transient and fleeting nature of his materials and ideas. Pacquing's use of mixed media here not only reinforces his themes of displacement and revaluation but also transforms the canvas into a dynamic space where form and meaning intersect unpredictably.



ABOVE: Bernardo Pacquing © <https://theartling.com>

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## **Bernardo Pacquing** (b. 1967)

*Female Front with White Line*

signed (verso)

dated 2005

oil on canvas

60" x 48" (152 cm x 122 cm)

**P 800,000**







## Jes Aznar

*Hearing Here Lies Love on the Ipod at the Food Court for the First Time 1/1*

signed and dated 2024 (lower right) each

photographs

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

**P 700,000**

LITERATURE

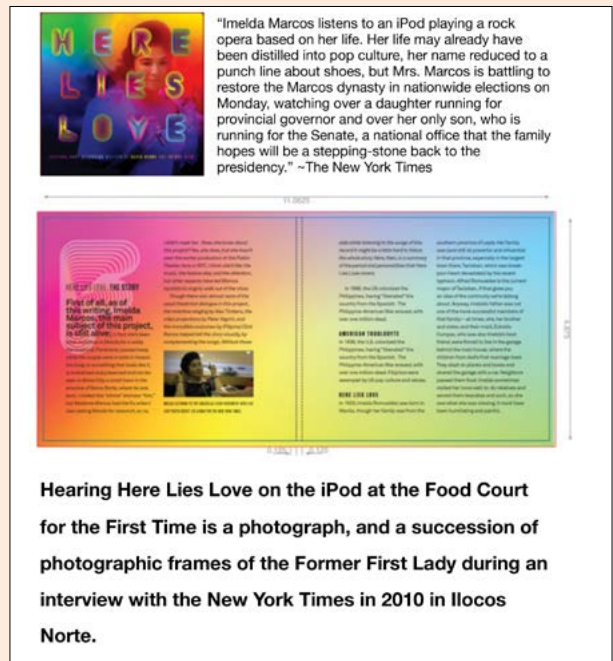
Norimitsu Onishi. "Dynasty at Stake, Imelda Marcos Campaigns With a Vengeance." *The New York Times* (New York City), May, 8, 2010.

## Here Lies Love

It was not the first time photographer Jes Aznar met Imelda Marcos, the former First Lady who had been out of the public eye for years following the 1986 People Power Revolution. Yet, there was something incongruous and surreal about this encounter, which took place in a bustling food park inside a mall in Ilocos Norte, where she had chosen to eat alongside her aides and supporters. In this setting, she unveiled her family's plan for a political comeback, with her son Bongbong's bid for the presidency.

The flick of her pinky finger, a musical album created exclusively about her by one of the greatest living musical geniuses, David Byrne, her signature "Imeldiffic" reaction upon hearing Bryne's *Here Lies Love* on her iPod and an interview with the world's largest newspaper conducted in a public food court—these were all unmistakable signs of a force that simply refused to fade into obscurity.

This decisive moment, captured by Aznar, would prove historical for the Philippines, culminating years later in May 2022 when Bongbong would win the presidency in a landslide victory.



The New York Times published Imelda's story and photos in 2010. In 2014, David Byrne leased Aznar's photograph for a reprint of *Here Lies Love*, adding Imelda Marcos's image to the album cover.

## About the Photographer

Jes Aznar is both a visual artist and a photographer, distinct in his approach to each medium, having been trained both locally and internationally. His work focuses on uncovering unique images and stories through research and innovative methods.

He is a photographer who believes that photography, as a contemporary modern communication medium, should challenge established constructs and develop its own visual language, distinct from that of painting.

Veering away from traditional subjects and often enduring physical feats or long, protracted projects, Aznar has cultivated a unique visual perspective, earning him recognition as one of Southeast Asia's leading photographers.





Clockwise from top left, Imelda Marcos listens to an iPod playing a rock opera based on cigarettes in Nueva Era, crowns a beauty pageant winner and comforts the family of a...

# Dynasty at Stake, Imelda Marcos C...

From Page A1

mand Marcos Jr., 52, known as Bongbong, said: "Immediately that got our attention. It doesn't frighten us, but it certainly defined what could happen should he become president."

He added: "I thought these issues were resolved 24 years ago. You won. The government fell."

Over the years, the Marcoses have patiently worked at re-establishing their political power from their stronghold here, in the province of Ilocos Norte, where the younger Mr. Marcos, his older sister Imee and first cousins have, in rotation, held the seats for governor or the House. An early run by Mr. Marcos for the Senate failed, but he earned plaudits as governor by becoming the first person to erect windmills in the country and building tourism.

This time, Mr. Marcos is con-



Ferdinand Marcos Jr., a candidate for th with his wife, Liza, and sons, Simon, left, a...

## More than ideology, family rivalries have always defined a country's politics.

sidered a very strong candidate for one of the 12 seats open for election in the Senate, the legislative body that has produced most of the country's past presidents. Older voters may associate the Marcos name with martial law, political repression and cronism. But in a country where half the population is under 22.5 years old and history is taught poorly, many young voters interviewed outside the Marcos redoubt here, like Jeffrey Zamora, a 31-year-old caretaker, said they knew little about the Marcos legacy.

Asked whether the family hoped that a Senate victory would allow the late president's sons to run for the presidency next time, Mariano Marcos, a first cousin, said, "Oh, yeah, that's what all of us are hoping and working toward."



Imee Marcos, the eldest daughter of Ferdinand Marcos, campaigning for provin...

But Mr. Aquino's run for the presidency, his lead in the polls and his comment about the Marcoses' wealth complicated matters, creating a family feud over which of Mr. Aquino's opponents to back for president. When the dust settled, the Marcoses found themselves in need of a candidate for the House. With no one in the younger generation interested in politics yet, the family turned its matriarch to run for the House seat being vacated by her son,

(PREVIOUS PAGE) TOP: Here Lies Love album cover with Jes Aznar's photo; (THIS PAGE) Tearsheets of NYT article



The Shape Of Brilliance  
Victoria cluster earrings in platinum with diamonds, \$5,000.

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

VOL. CLIX . . . No. 55,034

# The New York Times

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2010

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## More Bomb Scares in Times Square

The bomb squad checked a suspicious bag in Times Square on Friday, finding rocks and other items. It was one of two alerts that led to the area's evacuation. Reports of suspicious packages have risen since the failed car bombing last weekend, officials said.

## 'We All Were Sure We Were Going to Die'

By IAN URBINA and JUSTIN GILLES

NEW ORLEANS — Nearly 50 miles offshore at the Big Oil rig floating on a glassy-calm sea, a newspaper landed story on a recent morning of April 20, carrying four executives from BP, the oil company. The men were visiting Deepwater Horizon to help her crew for its shutdown safety.

All over the ship, men snapped heads from their beds. There came a second explosion, even louder than the first. They later struggled to describe it — a herald of workers' deaths, a jet engine exploding. But a half-dozen rig workers interviewed this week said that moment. "We all were sure we were going to die," said Don Dewdney, 30, a supervisor on the rig.

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## British Parties In Negotiations On a Coalition

By JOHN F. BURNS

LONDON — The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have intensive talks on Friday to fashion an unlikely marriage that would allow them to restore a government quickly and after an election that denied any party a clear majority.

David Cameron, the Conservative leader, said the talks between the parties had been "constructive" and urged quick action as negotiators raved to conclude before the markets open Monday. The two parties are far apart on some policy issues, but many Conservatives' desire for Liberal Democrats' demand to end the change Britain's current electoral system. But both parties suggest a compromise could be struck.

"We must sort things out, as quickly as possible, for the good of the country," Mr. Cameron said, and added: "The national outlook is bleak; the world is in a recession."

On Friday evening, Mr. Cameron called Nick Clegg, the Liberal Democrat leader, and made what he called "a big, open and constructive offer" to the face of voters' rejection of Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the Labour Party, which has governed Britain for 13 years.

The terms of the deal could include a formal coalition or a loose arrangement resembling the Liberal Democrats' remaining on the opposition benches. But backing a Conservative government in return for a raft of policy commitments to the smaller party. But before any of the details are worked out, Mr. Cameron was struggling to outline a new political landscape that seemed filled with uncertainties, as well as significant risks. There is a prospect of a weak and possibly unstable alliance in power, just when decisive government is most needed to deal with a budget deficit that has soared to a record.

## ORIGIN OF SCALP ON WALL STREET ELUDES OFFICIALS

A day after a harrowing plunge in the stock market, federal regulators were still unable on Friday to answer the one question every investor's mind: What caused that near panic on Wall Street?

Through the day and into the evening, officials from the Securities and Exchange Commission and other federal agencies hunted for clues to a range of electronic trading records from the nation's increasingly high-tech stock market.

But, maddeningly, the cause or causes of the market's wild swing remained elusive, leaving what amounts to a \$1 trillion question mark hanging over the world's largest and most celebrated stock market.

The initial focus of the investigation appeared to center on the speed trading networks that interact with one another and with exchanges like the New York Stock Exchange. Most investors are unaware that these competing systems have fractured the traditional marketplace like the Big Board at the dawn of the 21st century.

The silence from Washington came a pull over Wall Street, where shaken traders returned to their desks Friday morning, but the uncertainty remained on edge, as the uncertainty over what caused the day's wild swings added to the worry over the running deficit in Greece.

In a joint statement issued after the close of trading, the S.E.C. and the Commodity Futures Commission said they were still investigating the matter.

## White Pages May Go the Way Of the Rotary-Dialed Phone

By PATRICK MCGEEHAN

The digital age may claim another victim.

The residential White Pages, those inches-thick tomes of time-worn telephone listings that may be as useful as doorstops and dog-eared across New York later this year.

Verizon, the dominant local phone company in the state, has announced on Friday that it will end the annual delivery of millions of White Pages to all of its customers in New York. The company estimates that it would save nearly 5,000 tons of paper by ending the automatic distribution of the book.

Only about one of every nine households uses the hardcopy listings anymore, according to Verizon, which cited a 2008 survey.

Product Stewardship Institute, an environmental group in Boston, says it tends to pile up, but many people are finding that they don't need them, but they can't find a way to make them disappear.

When residential directories are looking up numbers online or calling directory assistance, the phone book for many people, it seems, has gone from indispensable to unusable.

"The books have been a very successful business," said Susan Cassel, executive director of the Institute.

She herself has been creating a rural directory here in a campaign that has been underway for some time, but she is not sure if it will be successful.

On a recent Sunday evening, she attended a festa where she was introduced as "the woman who will be the winner."

## Dynasty at Stake, Imelda Marcos Campaigns With a Vengeance

By NORIMITSU ONISHI

RATAC, the Philippines — At a multi-food court here, where she was sitting with respect cover-up campaign for the House, she inserted iPod cards on either side of her bouffant collar. She had just accepted an offer to return for the first time to "Here Lies Love," a new musical about the Marcoses and Ferdinand Marcos's rise to power in the Philippines. Removing the cards, she said in an exaggerated tone: "I'm flattered! I believe it!"

Her life may already have been a musical. Pop culture, her mother's shock, but a punch line about the Marcoses and Ferdinand Marcos's rise to power in the Philippines. Removing the cards, she said in an exaggerated tone: "I'm flattered! I believe it!"

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Imelda Marcos, running for a House seat, attended a pageant last month in Ilocos Norte.











**Abdulmari Imao** (1936 - 2014)*Sarimanok*

signed and dated 2010 (lower left)

acrylic on canvas

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

**P 300,000**

The sarimanok is featured heavily in Abdulmari Imao's oeuvre. The first and so far only Muslim Filipino National Artist, Imao exalts the Indigenous culture of the Philippine south as he incorporates traditional motifs in his work like he does in this 2010 *Sarimanok*.

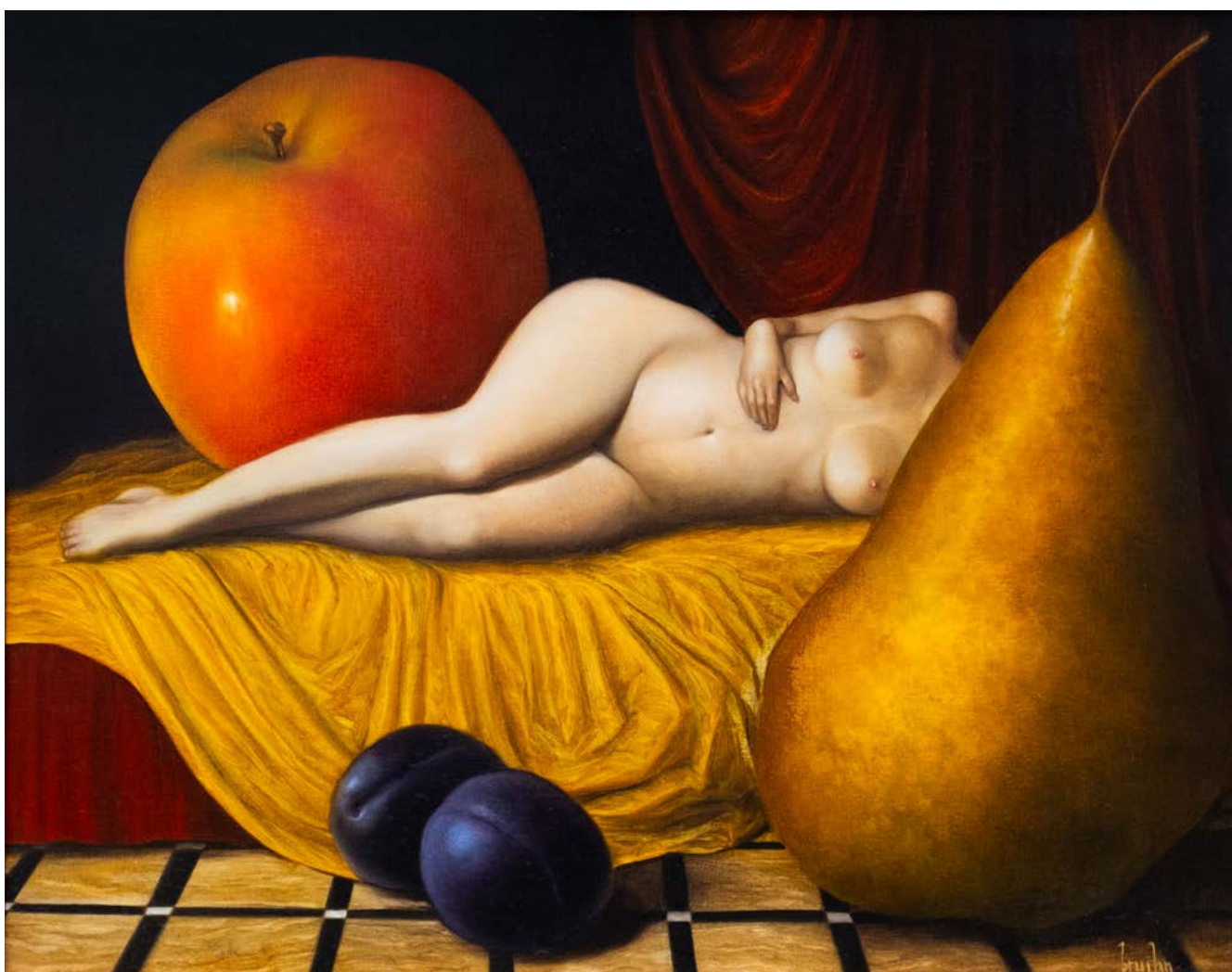
With broad swathes of colors and thick black outlines, Imao's *Sarimanok* is among the artist's lively depictions of the celestial rooster. He uses curving, definite lines to portray the legendary creature, a mythical bird that finds itself lodged amongst many other Southeast Asian myths and legends, with one such creature including the serpent naga of Malaysia.

With this particular *Sarimanok*, Imao employs brightly captivating colors that command attention with each block of colors. The delicate balance between the vibrant colors and the traditional themes creates an almost seamless melding of native and contemporary. It is a portrayal of the Indigenous Philippine culture that is different from the common illustration of the pastoral Tagalog countryside, setting his works apart from the multiple genre pieces of his time and establishing a truly unique Filipino identity, and acting as a cultural bridge between the region and the country. (*Hannah Valiente*)



ABOVE Abdulmari Imao © Facebook: Jovel Lorenzo. Art Plus Magazine





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**Brian Uhing** (b. 1975)

*Untitled*

signed (lower right)

oil on canvas

14" x 18" (36 cm x 46 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

The works of contemporary artist Brian Uhing meld the classical beauty of the traditional masters and his surrealistic, unconventional humor. Veering towards traditional and contemporary, his works echo his artistic influences, which include artists like René Magritte, Marcel Duchamp, and Balthus.

"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.

Indeed, in this untitled work, Uhing manages to blend surrealistic humor and traditional art style as he depicts a naked woman lounging across a bed. With her face covered, one can only focus on her voluptuous curves; beside her are gigantic fruits – one pear, a pair of blueberries, and an apple, all an obvious allusion to her curvaceous body.

"My process is very traditional. I lean towards the Venetian and Flemish practice of painting," he said in his Artsper biography. "Regarding Surrealism, those elements are not added for the sake of being fanciful and strange but are tightly meshed within the narrative of the piece. My work requires that you take the time to string together the story, and in there lies the reward!" (*Hannah Valiente*)



# Reminiscences of a Young Anita Magsaysay

## Home Is Where the “Art” Is

by ADRIAN MARANAN

There exists an old photograph of the maiden Anita Magsaysay, wearing her graduation toga, published in the March 5, 1936 issue of the *Graphic*, the leading weekly English magazine in pre-war Philippines. Magsaysay's painting was featured as the cover, along with a succinct description of her around that time.

*“Painter Pablo Amorsolo once spoke glowingly to us about the ability of Miss Anita Magsaysay, this week’s cover artist. She is another School of Fine Arts product, who took up painting and cartooning, and graduated in 1934. Many of her paintings have been exhibited in many art exhibits in Manila and one of her works has been sent to Spain for exhibition there. Miss Magsaysay is from San Antonio, Zambales, but lives in Manila with her father, Engineer Ambrosio Magsaysay of the Metropolitan Water District. Her residence is 413 Paz, Paco, Manila.”*

In her dynamic twenties, Anita had already shown that she was an artistic heavyweight, a future pillar of what would become the road to Philippine modernism, notwithstanding the woman in her who had been deemed as only “second best” in a highly patriarchal society.

Behind all of this, the young Anita sparkled—and blossomed—with all the support she had inside her loving home.

In her memoirs, Anita wrote of several in her family that contributed to the flowering of her virtuoso. She had her *mama*, Amalia Corpus, who she recalled “enjoyed watching me draw the illustrations of the children's books that I was doing for Father Bishop Marrow, my boss. She patiently erased the pencil marks I had left on the pen drawings for the Catholic readers, *My Jesus and I*.” [Anita illustrated the images of *My Jesus and I*, a set of readers for children studying in Catholic schools. It was Anita's first job, illustrating for the book from her UP years up to her New York studies in the late '40s. The work was offered to her by her UP professor Vicente Dizon, who was then leaving for the US and needed an immediate replacement for his illustration duties for the children's book.]

Anita also talks of her nana, her grandmother Ramona Corpus, whom she spoke lovingly as someone who was a “jewel—even the memory of her is still a treasure to me—always to be cherished.”



ABOVE: Anita's parents, Ambrosio and Amalia, in the 1930s



Anita remembers that it was her beloved nana who first discovered her first love that was drawing during her primary schooling. "She is always drawing on any piece of paper she finds," Anita recalls her nana's words. This after her nana noticed that she loves drawing but hated the piano lessons, which she and her sister also named Ramona took. She recalls that it was her nana who suggested that then eight-year-old Anita get drawing lessons, which was materialized through drawing lessons at home with Irineo Miranda, a UP Fine Arts professor and noted artist of the time.

"Mr. Irineo Miranda was my first teacher," Anita recalls. "My first drawing was the portrait of a negro, in black and white, from a Saturday Evening Post illustration."

Anita then wrote that it was in the comforts of her nana's lap that she drew this very first drawing, and from then on, forged a path towards the arts. "[Nana] will always be my inspiration, my model, and my ideal," Anita remarked.

Anita recalls that it was her papa, Ambrosio Magsaysay, who bought her "first paint box of beautiful pine wood, complete with all the oil colors and brushes" when she started attending the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts. "I treasured it and was so proud of it," Anita wrote.

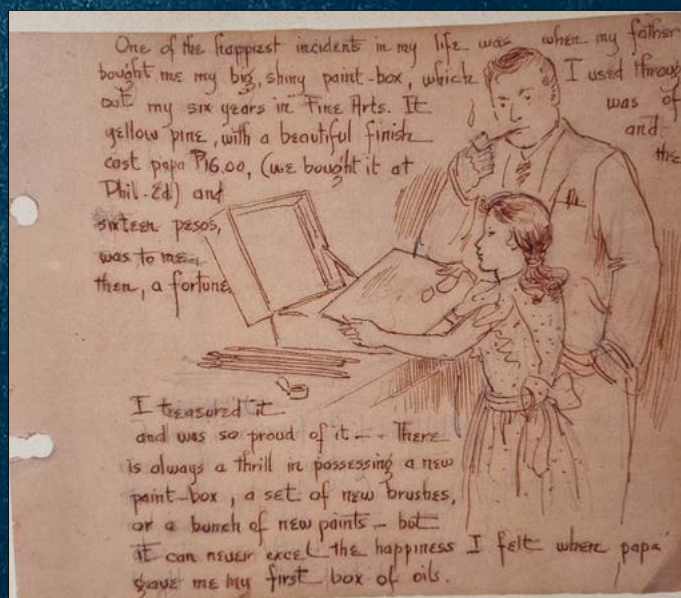
Anita further said that she used this paint box throughout her six years of Fine Arts study and reminisced that none of her succeeding purchases of paint box could ever surpass the joy she felt from her father's present. For Anita, it was a precious remembrance of her father who never wavered in sincerely expressing to her that her own thriving passion is part and parcel of what she is as a human being.

"When I look back, I remember that Papa was never worried about whether I would be able to support myself with my painting," Anita wrote. "He encouraged me in my work."

Ambrosio imbued his young daughter with the value of seeing the beautiful in every corner of the living world. He said to Anita, "Do not portray the ugly things of our country, try to find the beauty that is there."

And so, Anita was ready to take on a mission of finding the inherent virtues even amidst the deplorable condition man has brought upon their existence. She would find—and paint—the joys of hard work, the radiant strength and tenacity amid pain, and above all, the dignity every human possesses. After all, love, joy, and harmony were all that Anita experienced at home, qualities she would impart on her canvases.

TOP TO BOTTOM. Anita's 1945 portrait of her grandmother, Nana; A page from Anita's diary depicting the moment she drew her first drawing while sitting on Nana's lap; Anita's recollection of her profound joy when her father gifted her her first paint box.





# MEMORIES OF PROFESSOR FERNANDO AMORSOLO

by ADRIAN MARANAN

When Anita's Nana died, the then 13-year-old girl needed a diversion from the piercing grief. Irineo Miranda then convinced Anita's mother, Amalia, for her daughter to be sent to the UP School of Fine Arts." To make me forget my irreparable loss, which was Nana's death," Anita wrote.

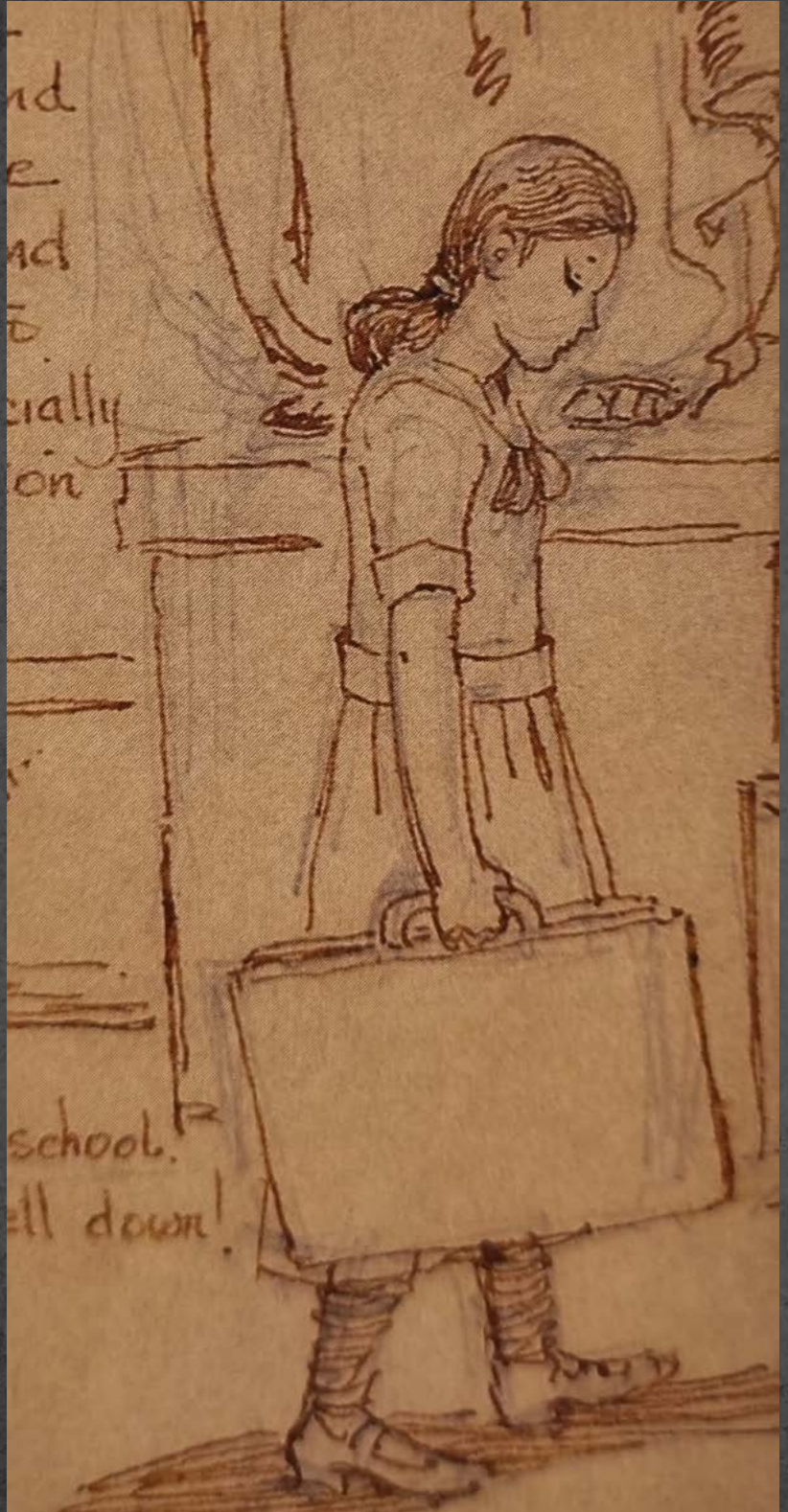
"...My parents consulted Dr. Garcia [Arturo Garcia, then UP regent] to allow their thirteen-year-old daughter to take courses there," Anita said. "I was accepted and eagerly enrolled. My studio courses in drawing and watercolor started after my afternoon classes at school. I was then in my second year of high school at the Philippine Women's University. I attended school always accompanied by a maid since I was only thirteen."

In 1931, during her second year of Fine Arts studies, Anita weighed in on whether to take up medicine or continue with painting. "After [my high school] graduation, I entertained some thoughts of taking up medicine, but by then, I had already spent two years in the UP School of Fine Arts," Anita noted.

She continued, "I was drawing and painting from nature. Besides, I loved what I was doing. So, I told my parents I would rather just go on with my painting, and my parents agreed. When I think back now, my parents never brought up the question, 'Can that profession feed you?' In those days, that would have been the usual reaction to such a decision. On the contrary, my parents were happy with my resolve."

Anita continued her Fine Arts studies at the UP and became classmates with Galo Ocampo and Cesar Legaspi, with whom she would share the distinction of becoming among the "Thirteen Moderns" who first challenged the primacy of conservative art.

The UP School of Fine Arts, located at the corner of Vermont and Pennsylvania Streets in Malate, was described by Anita as "a nondescript square building, two stories high, and painted in an ugly grey color." But however dull its building was, the inside was very much brimming with creative talent, helmed by the country's most respected artists of that time.



ABOVE: Anita's depiction of herself at 14. She wrote in her diary, "When I was fourteen, I was very shy, and I walked to the School of Fine Arts without looking right or left; NEXT PAGE (LEFT TO RIGHT): Anita's sketch of herself walking to the UP School of Fine Arts while carrying all her painting equipment; Amorsolo would assign his students to go to various places in the environs of the UP School of Fine Arts to paint landscapes. Here is Anita painting at the Paco Cemetery, her first landscape that also gave her her first medal in painting.



"Professor Fernando Amorsolo was a kind, soft-spoken man."

— ANITA MAGSAYSAY-HO, INTERVIEW WITH CID REYES, OCTOBER 1984,  
PUBLISHED IN "CONVERSATIONS ON PHILIPPINE ART" (1989)

Dirty curtains stained by students cleaning their paint brushes, a ladies' room where the women could eat their sandwiches by the window whenever hunger struck, and janitors tirelessly cleaning the hopelessly messy place were ubiquitous but heartening sights for the student Anita, a memory forever etched on her. It was in the fine mess of the school halls where Anita won her very first medal in painting: a landscape she did of Paco Cemetery, which was, coincidentally, also the first landscape she ever painted.

Fernando Amorsolo, then the country's most famous and renowned painter, was Anita's teacher in landscape drawing. Her other teachers were Fernando's brother Pablo, who taught decorative art, and Vicente Dizon, who handled graphic arts.

Amorsolo's influence so penetrated the young Anita's mind and style. "During our time, I would think Fernando Amorsolo was the most influential. We all used to paint like him," she would say in an October 1984 interview with art critic Cid Reyes. "We had no basis—an idea or criterion—of what good art really was. That's why, even then I was already advocating for some kind of a museum, even just a museum of prints. We had no museum at all. Since Fernando Amorsolo was our teacher, and his paintings were so beautiful, we all painted like him."

There was a particular instance when a restless Anita became bent on Amorsolo's critiques of her works. "I so wanted him to critique my progress," she wrote in her memoirs. "I had begun a painting of a scene of the Paco

Cemetery. I began with a leafless *calachuchi* tree. He did not arrive. Weeks later, I was forced to add the sprouting flowers and leaves without him. He finally arrived after I had added the tombs and the church, but he never came back."

Anita continues, "He taught landscapes during the day and drawing at night. For a living, he painted portraits and landscapes for his patrons. When my two friends and I painted in a vacant lot in front of the La Salle College, the place was still rural, marked by a typical nipa house among trees. To keep myself amused, I added chickens, then a monkey. This time, Professor Amorsolo never showed up. When I think of it now, how could dear Professor Amorsolo have managed? His students were sent to paint landscapes all over the city—some in the ruins of Intramuros and other places."

Then Anita came to her senses and arrived at the reasonable conclusion that the very reason why Amorsolo never came back was he juggled painting commissions and his teaching profession. After all, Amorsolo was the country's most sought-after painter, reveling in his "Golden Period" of tropical landscapes bathed in the ever-glorious Philippine sunlight, dynamic impastos, and general acclaim from the entire nation, who had found an affinity in his works that were widely reproduced in colored calendars and daily and weekly periodicals.

From Amorsolo, Anita learned the value inherent in total commitment and perseverance to one's art, the source of an artist's living and breathing.





# The Earliest Anita to Enter the Market

## *The Very First Appearance of Anita's Iconic Women*

by ADRIAN MARANAN

On September 21, 1958, *This Week* released its selection of "Six Outstanding Filipino Painters," chosen by a veritable panel of judges from the various fields of the arts. Anita Magsaysay-Ho emerged triumphant, the only woman who earned a spot in the highly publicized list. The secret that earned her a spot? It's all in her depiction of women in all their glorious delight.

As a fitting culmination to Anita Magsaysay-Ho's 110th birth anniversary and the worthy recognition of her maiden participation at the recently concluded 60th Venice Biennale through her 1944 Self-Portrait, the earliest known work by the revered modernist has come home to the Philippines. Here, Anita's now iconic women make their grand debut in a piece highly influenced by her esteemed professor, Fernando Amorsolo.

This 1934 piece, titled *Lavanderas by the Stream*, is the earliest painting by Anita Magsaysay-Ho to come to the market. This work is a rarity; every monograph written about Anita has always started her chronological presentation of works in the 1940s, missing the gap that could be filled by her earliest works from the 1930s. This work fills that gap in Anita's visual chronology of her oeuvre, a veritable window into her conservative beginnings before she metamorphosed into a pioneering Filipina modernist.

When Anita created this work, she was in the final year of her studies at the UP School of Fine Arts. Students in their fourth year are required to take up the course "Advanced Landscape Painting," helmed by none other than Fernando Amorsolo. A description of the course from the 1932-33 General Catalogue of the University of the Philippines details that classes in this course are conducted in the nearby open localities selected by the professor.

Anita wrote in her memoirs that Amorsolo sent off his students to travel to different locations within the School of Fine Arts environs and paint there on the spot.

Anita depicts in the work at hand—painted *en plein air*—a scene from rural Malate, particularly the vicinity of nearby De La Salle College, a less than 2-kilometer walk from the School of Fine Arts and "at the time was still a rural area," she recalled. Anita wrote in her old diary about a moment when she and her classmates/friends, Amparing and Consuelo, painted "a beautiful landscape" with "some bedraggled nipa huts among clumps of bamboos" in the background. That diary entry is accompanied by Anita's sketch reminiscing about that moment, a drawing depicting a scenery similar to



A. Magsaysay

**P**AINTER PABLO AMORSOLO once spoke glowingly to us about the ability of Miss Anita Magsaysay, this week's cover artist. She is another School of Fine Arts product, who took up painting and cartooning, and graduated in 1934. Many of her paintings have been exhibited in many art exhibits in Manila and one of her works has been sent to Spain for exhibition there. Miss Magsaysay is from San Antonio, Zambales, but lives in Manila with her father, Engineer Ambrosio Magsaysay of the Metropolitan Water District. Her residence is 413 Paz, Paco, Manila.



TOP TO BOTTOM: A clipping from the March 5, 1936 issue of the *Graphic*, the leading weekly English magazine in pre-war Philippines, showing a photo of a young Anita wearing her graduation toga; Anita's self-portrait in her twenties/thirties;









BESIDE: A page from Anita's diary depicting her with friends/UP classmates Amparing and Consuelo sketching in front of the De La Salle, the scenery which most likely inspired the setting of the work at hand.

the work on offer. The setting of *Lavanderas by the Stream* also bears similarities to a particular anecdote in Anita's memoir, in which she waited for Amorsolo in the vicinity of La Salle to come and critique a painting she did of the locale (a story recounted in the previous essay).

One can also imagine in the work on offer how Anita enthusiastically painted this piece, all the while waiting for Amorsolo to assess her progress. Amorsolo's influence can be heavily discerned, especially when viewed from the context of his *plein air* landscapes. There are the human figures outlined through colors and candid impastos; the short and swift strokes that seemingly pulsate and breathe life into the composition; and the contrast of areas of light and shadow achieved through the manipulation of texture and tones. Of course, there are the *lavanderas*—a favorite of Amorsolo and the theme of humans living in harmony with nature. Anita learned from Amorsolo the practice of priming the canvas with gray paint, resulting in a pastel-like quality that complements the luminosity of oil paint. "All of us painted our canvases in grey," Anita said to Cid Reyes in an interview.

This painting is an image of radiance and serenity, which would eventually be translated into Anita's modernist practice.

Even as a modernist, the "Amorsolo effect" was still apparent in the way Anita depicted her women as delightful and serene in their labor, emphasizing the dignity inherent—and that should be endowed to the most precious of all endeavors. This is much like Amorsolo, who blessed her *dalaga* with all the world's exuberance.

While she eventually forged her formidable path to modernism, Anita never renounced her conservative upbringing. "She staunchly believes that one can learn true art only by studying the basic principles set down by the classicists," writes an article in *The Sunday Times Magazine* following her historic win at the 1952 AAP." For Anita, a good painting is a good painting, whether conservative or modern.

What binds the modernist Anita and the pre-war, conservative Anita is that both embodied and found bliss in women at work. With the sheer warmth of its tones, the composition naturally exudes the vitality of living. Here lies Anita's joy and confidence, enlivened by the loving home where she grew up surrounded by people, especially her Nana and her mother Amalia, who nurtured her with unwavering support for her passion for the arts.

Anita would say in an interview seven decades later, in May 2005: "In my works, I always celebrate the women of the Philippines. I regard them with deep admiration, and they continue to inspire me—their movements and gestures, their expressions of happiness and frustrations; their diligence and shortcomings; their joy of living. I know very well the strength, hard work, and quiet dignity of Philippine women, for after all, I am one of them."

Here in this work is presented—for the very first time in Anita's canvas—the peasant and rural women whom Anita exalted, and who would also put her at the forefront of Philippine post-war painting, perfectly materialized in her historic First Prize win at the 5th AAP Annual in 1952 for her now iconic *The Cooks*.



# Anita in Her Amorsolo Era



77

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

*Lavanderas by the Stream*

signed and dated 1934 (lower left)

oil on board

18 1/2" x 14 1/2" (47 cm x 37 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA



**Ramon Orlina** (b. 1944)*Flying Kick - 2021*

signed and dated 2021

carved green glass

10 1/2" x 11 1/4" x 4 1/4" (27 cm x 29 cm x 10 cm)

**P 1,500,000**

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



ABOVE: Ramon Orlina © galeriejoaquin

The leading artist in Philippine glass sculpture, Ramon Orlina's groundbreaking cold-cutting method of glass earned him the title of the "Father of Philippine Glass Sculpture." His expertise in this method is evident in this 2021 glass sculpture, which echoes his early works with its sharp, jagged edges that are expertly crafted with light, form, and translucency in mind. With an intimate knowledge of light and depth, he creates a truly interesting experience that can be viewed from every possible angle. It is a dialogue between the sculptor and the audience, a harmonious connection between light, shadow, and luminosity to create every possible sensory effect.

*(Hannah Valiente)*









## Ronald Ventura (b. 1973)

### *The Heart*

signed and dated 2000 (lower left)  
oil on canvas  
93" x 142" (236 cm x 361 cm)

**P 14,000,000**

#### LITERATURE

"'Innerscapes' on view at the West Gallery." *Manila Bulletin*, September 30, 2000.

#### EXHIBITED

West Gallery, *Innerscapes*, Megamall, Mandaluyong City, September - October 2000.

Ronald Ventura's *"The Heart"* (2000) is among his early works that precede his stratospheric rise in popularity and artistic fame. It is from a period in his evolution, well before combining comics, whimsy and color into his works. Here, he was enamored with exhibiting his prowess and knowledge of anatomy, composition and symbolism using an almost-monochrome palette. This piece, a spheric representation of a heart, revealing its inner pinings--- to include the carnal, the passionate, the conflicted and the macabre---in an almost planetary presentation. It is as if to say, that heart is THE world, and peace and sanity gravitates to it like its moon. Furthermore, the subject and imagery, presentation and artistic caliber were unseen in popular art in the period when it was created---making it a pioneering and significant contribution to art of this generation, and subsequently, the ones that followed.

*"The Heart"* shows his early mastery of lights and shadows and of visual metaphors. As such, it has become an indelible and undeniable piece showcasing the level of work that is beyond a mere promise. While it stands alone remarkably, it too shows a beginning in the development of skills which enabled the creation of a long body of work that has become his own invented genre which he now so masterfully reigns over.





# From Ventura's Debut Solo Exhibition

*Exploring the Innercapes of the Human Psyche*







80

**Elaine Navas** (b. 1964)

*The Remains of the Day*

signed and dated 2009 (lower left)

oil on canvas

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

**P 380,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Singapore

Elaine Navas fosters a practice that foregrounds both sensuality and materiality. Originally graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Ateneo de Manila University, Navas redirected her path toward the fine arts, later earning a degree from the University of the Philippines' College of Fine Arts. This formal pivot laid the foundation for her exploration of color, texture, and form, leading to a body of work that engages both the intellect and the senses.

Navas debuted her artistic voice with her solo exhibition, *Still Life, Still Spaces*, at West Gallery, which offered viewers an early glimpse of her deft handling of texture

and form. Her career swiftly gained recognition: she was awarded Honorable Mentions at both the 1995 Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards in Manila and the 2004 Philip Morris Singapore Art Awards—acknowledgments that cemented her emerging stature in the regional art scene.

Her work transcends mere visual impact; the tactile quality of her layered surfaces invites viewers to encounter the painting beyond sight alone, fostering an immersive engagement with each piece. In this work, Elaine Navas exemplifies her characteristic use of thick, impastoed strokes to depict the ordinary with a sense of weight and presence. The painting, with its earthy palette and layered textures, captures the rugged, tactile quality of its subjects—what appears to be a collection of vegetables and produce suspended in plastic bags. By rendering these humble items with such careful layering and dense brushwork, Navas elevates them to a nearly monumental status. Her strokes echo the textures of the bags and the leaves, evoking a sense of physicality that invites the viewer to feel the painting as much as to see it. In this work, Navas draws our attention to the overlooked and the commonplace, transforming them into objects of reflection and quiet reverence, suggesting that beauty and depth can be found in the most unassuming of subjects. (*Jed Daya*)





81

## Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

### a) Vendor

signed and dated 1957 (left)  
acrylic on board  
8 3/4" x 3 1/4" (22 cm x 38 cm)

### b) Farmer

signed and dated 1956 (left)  
acrylic on board  
8 3/4" x 3 1/4" (22 cm x 38 cm)

**P 200,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank West Gallery and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

Mauro "Malang" Santos is a painter, illustrator, and one of the most celebrated Filipino figurative artists. He creates canvases that burst with life, devoid of the depressing tones surrounding the Philippines during his lifetime. Malang's pieces, known for their bold colors and overlapping geometric shapes, feature Filipinos at work and in their daily lives. He is a master colorist who, with his dauntless color palette and unparalleled brushwork,

successfully presents in his pieces the microcosm of Philippine life and culture.

Both made with acrylic on board, the paintings at hand showcase Malang's humble beginnings as a painter. Vendor (1957) and Farmer (1956) offer images of archetypal scenarios in the native folks' neighborhoods: a woman vendor roaming the streets to sell her products and a farmer aboard his carabao while doing farmwork. Significantly manifested in these early works is Malang's expertise in color. Here, the artist used solid, muted colors to create his figures and separate them from one another. Behind the vendor are lines of dried tree branches against a calming blue sky. On the other hand, the farmer's back is adorned with barung-barongs in vibrant blue hues, one of the would-be distinctive elements of Malang's art.

Having worked for magazines early in his life, Malang is adept at layout and design and has received numerous awards in these categories. He was also a cartoonist and made illustrations for several comic publications. Furthermore, he held a number of solo and group exhibitions, including a few three-man shows with his sons Steve and Soler. In 1981, the Museum of Philippine Art organized a retrospective exhibit encompassing Malang's 25-year history and legacy in the art scene. (Jessica Magno)



# THE *Last Seal* OF THE *Katipunan*

*Only Surviving Twin of Bonifacio's Seal Discovered*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

**T**he Kataastaasang Kagalanggalang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (the Supreme and Most Noble Society of the Sons of the Country) or Katipunan was more than a secret society.

It had visionary intent: To secede from Spain and return to a time before the arrival of the Spanish when the Philippines was free and sovereign, and its people not enslaved. "The ambition in its (foundational) document the 'Casaysayan, Pinagcasunduan, Manga Dakilang Cautosan' of 1892 was colossal," writes KKK scholar Jim Richardson, "declaring independence not just as a goal, but an action taken," a status already attained by its very proclamation.

The Katipunan's seals were graphic symbols of its momentous aspirations — the sun and its rays which would light the path to freedom, and under which a free country would flourish, together with the 'Ka' of ancient Tagalog script to signify the Katipunan itself, the instrument of liberation. The 'Ka' could also stand for the utopian ideals of 'Kalayaan' (Liberty) and 'Kapayapaan' (Peace).

This seal thus encapsulates the historic vision that inspired Bonifacio to found the Katipunan in 1892.

Fast forward to mid-November 1896. Just before Bonifacio left Balara to make his fateful journey to Cavite, he created a 'Mataas ng Sangunian' or 'High Council' to act as the Katipunan's governing body in the 'Northern District', which covered the district of Morong and the provinces of Manila, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija. To serve as the Council's 'Mataas na Pangulo' (High President), Bonifacio appointed Isidoro Francisco, a leather manufacturer who had once belonged to the Liga Filipina, and as 'Mataas na Kalihim' (High Secretary) he appointed Julio Nakpil, a piano teacher from a wealthy background who had also been an active member of the Liga. It is not known whether Bonifacio made any other appointments before he left, but in his letter to the Mataas na Sangunian dated December 12, 1896, written from Cavite, he ratified the authority of a number of councilors (Kasanguni) elected to the body, and also approved



ABOVE: Andres Bonifacio

*On the 161st Birth Anniversary  
of Andres Bonifacio, an important  
artifact of the Philippine  
Revolution appears.  
To be seen by the general public  
for the first time in more than  
127 years.*

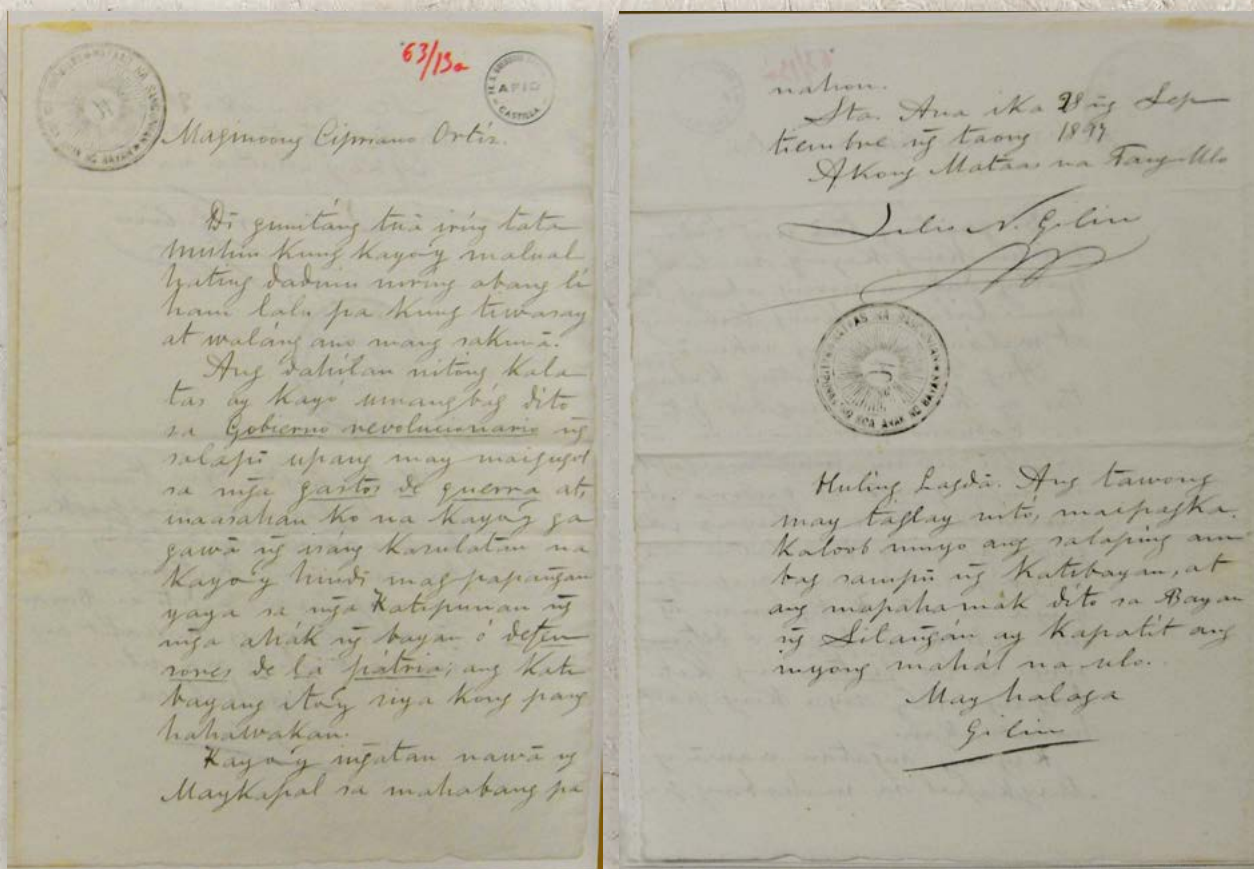


the election of Hermogenes Bautista as commander (Punong Hukbo) of the army of Pantayanin (near Antipolo), which was where the Mataas na Sangunian was initially based.”

By January 1897, Nakpil had taken over from Francisco as ‘Mataas na Pangulo’ and he continued to hold that office in the coming months, through the tumultuous aftermath of the Tejeros Convention which saw Emilio Aguinaldo elected as the new leader of the Revolution, undermining the position and influence of the Supremo. These events would crescendo with a failed counter-coup, Bonifacio’s trial, and finally his tragic assassination in the foothills of Maragondon on May 10, 1897.

As soon as Bonifacio was dead, Aguinaldo gave orders for a “Departmental Government of Central Luzon” to be created which would replace the existing Katipunan government over a wide area, including the four provinces over which Nakpil’s High Council had jurisdiction.

Nakpil was invited to join the Departmental Government as “Minister of Development.” He accepted the post, but at the same time, in his own words, he “hinted at the continuation of the Katipunan”. The Katipunan, he firmly believed — even without Bonifacio — continued to hold sway, having paid the price through the blood and tears of its men. It should not, and would not, be so easily cancelled.



BESIDE: This seal is stamped twice on the two pages of a letter sent by Julio Nakpil to Fr. Cipriano Ortiz, the parish priest of Paete, Laguna, on 28 September 1897. [Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental, Madrid, Sign. 63/13]. This collection of documents of the Franciscan order are from its friars in Asia, with the majority from the Philippines, and spans 1582 to 1902. The Tagalog text of Nakpil’s letter, together with an English translation, is included in Jim Richardson’s book *The Light of Liberty: Documents and Studies on the Katipunan, 1892-1897* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013), pp. 296-99. At the foot of the letter, Nakpil gives his title as “Mataas na Pang-Ulo” (High President) and his address as “Sta. Ana,” which is likely to mean a small sitio by that name situated up the mountain near Paete where the Tatlong Krus now stand. © Illustration: [kasaysayan-kkk.info](http://kasaysayan-kkk.info), by Jim Richardson, on ‘Kamaynilaan and Morong, August 1896 - September 1897’.

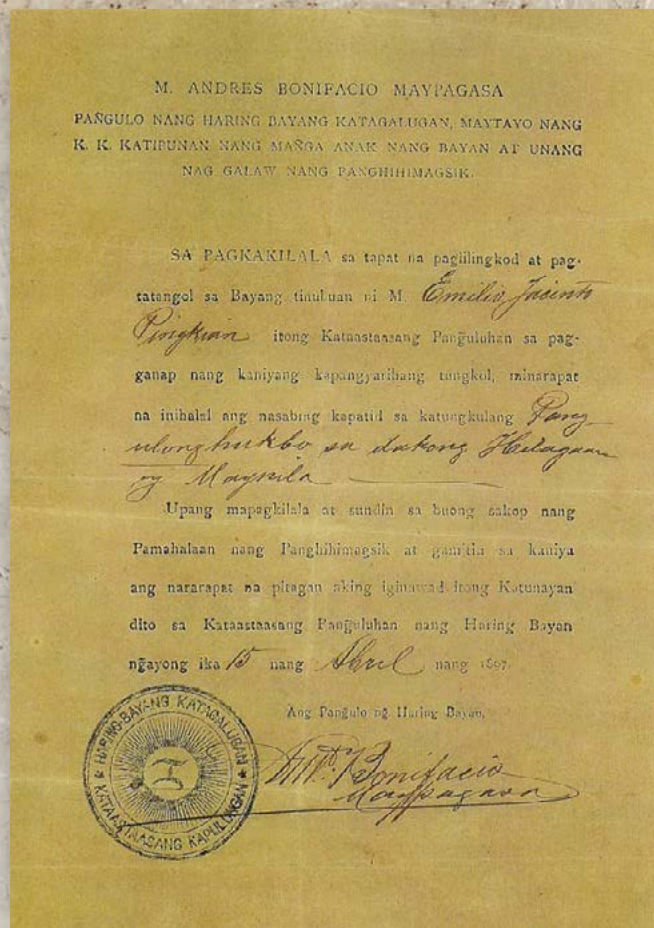




LEFT: Julio Nakpil © Collection of the Heirs of Julio Nakpil; RIGHT: Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera at his desk. Collection of Trinidad Pardo de Tavera. Collection of Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera.

From the standpoint of Aguinaldo and his advisers, Nakpil had gone “off message”. Not without reason, they suspected that he wanted the High Council to remain in existence, with him still as its president. Aguinaldo’s camp did not want the Katipunan name to be discarded, or its symbols to disappear. They still regarded themselves as Katipuneros. But they absolutely did not want the Katipunan to continue in its old form, with civil or military units that challenged and conflicted with the Republic’s own. When they got to hear about Nakpil’s dissent, to quote Nakpil again, “Mr Emilio Aguinaldo took this ill and without any further explanation ordered Generals Severino Taino and Pio del Pilar to assassinate me.”

The ink-stamp confirms that “continuing the Katipunan” was more than a notion in Nakpil’s head. It was a vow made not just to a friend and ally but a sacred trust to a cause greater than him or even Bonifacio. And that the Katipunan was the only way forward to that goal. He did actually try to keep some form of Katipunan organization alive. The locus of the ‘Mataas na Sangunian’ may have moved south, to Laguna, but Nakpil’s letter to the parish priest of Paete makes plain his ongoing commitment to fighting under the Katipunan’s banner. Writing more than four months after Bonifacio’s death, Nakpil beseeches the priest to contribute to the ‘expenses of war’, and to make a written statement pledging ‘not to cause any harm to the Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan, or defenders of the fatherland.’ More poignantly, it is a twin of the seal that Andres Bonifacio would use in the last days of his life in 1897 for the ‘Kataastaasang Kapulungan’!



The twin seals of the Katipunan: (Topmost) Andres Bonifacio’s seal of the Kataastaasang Kapulungan, used in his last days and which is now lost forever. Below it, the stamp of the Mataas na Sangunian of the KKK, catalogued by TH Pardo de Tavera and the actual last remaining seal of the Katipunan





82

## The Katipunan Seal

ca. 1897 (August-September)

Engraved with the words 'Mataas na Sangunian - Katipunan ng Mga Anak ng Bayan (High Council - Society of the Sons of the Country); the two phrases separated by two 5-pointed stars.

The center of the Seal is a sun with multiple rays, at the center of which is the ancient Tagalog symbol for 'Ka'.

Total Height: 3 inches (7.5 cm), composed of a round metal seal of .75 cm in thickness, connected to a wooden handle of turned wood with a knob at the end.

**P 1,600,000**

### PROVENANCE

A gift from Julio Nakpil to Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera and from thence to its present owners, through an unbroken line of succession.

T.H. Pardo de Tavera would relate in his documentation that this seal was used 'since the beginning of the Katipunan, which further research has refined its timeline.'





## Artist's Portraits of Andrés Bonifacio and Procopio Bonifacio

Three photographs: Andres in coat & tie,  
Andres in Rayadillo Military Uniform & Procopio.

**P 500,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

These three images, two of Andres Bonifacio (1863-1897) — in formal wear and in military uniform — and one of his brother, fellow revolutionary Procopio Bonifacio (1873-1897), are artist renderings of these two famous brothers' portraits. It is necessary to point out that the portraits until well into the twentieth century were made slightly sideways in order to fully show the face and one ear, which served as identifying elements. Generally speaking, all photos from the 19th-century Philippines are considered extremely rare, unless they are part of newspapers or magazines.

Andres Bonifacio was the first of six siblings born into a humble family in Tondo. His mother was from Zambales, while his father was from the town of Taguig. He was named Andrés after the patron saint of Manila. After having carried out the most diverse trades to earn her living and having previously widowed, she married Gregoria de Jesús - from a higher social class - at the Binondo church in 1893. He founded was part of the Katipunan, held the position of leader of the

revolution once hostilities began and was undoubtedly a charismatic character who knew how to direct the destiny of the Philippines in the battle until his replacement by Emilio Aguinaldo and his subsequent execution — one of the darkest episodes of the Philippine revolution. In the opinion of Milagros Guerrero: "As commander-in-chief, Bonifacio supervised the planning of military strategies and the preparation of orders, manifests and decrees, adjudicated offenses against the nation, as well as mediated in political disputes. He directed generals and positioned troops in the fronts. On the basis of command responsibility, all victories and defeats all over the archipelago during his term of office should be attributed to Bonifacio".

The greatness of Andrés Bonifacio has perhaps overshadowed the brilliant life of Procopio, the third of the Bonifacio brothers. Executed like his brother after a summary trial, Procopio was part of the Katipunan under the nickname of Pisaw and is credited with extending the revolution to Mindoro, his wife's island of origin. (*Jorge Mojarro*)



# The Brothers Bonifacio





## Rare Photograph of Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo at His Easel

Unknown photographer

Dated March 1891

Dedicated "To my dear friend, (unreadable) Hidalgo

Signed Paul Peerxxx (paper torn)

whole item: 9 1/4" x 7" (23 cm x 18 cm)

image only: 6 3/4" x 5" (17 cm x 13 cm)

**P 100,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

This rare photograph of Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo at his easel in his studio is unusual for two reasons: first, it reveals Hidalgo's process for large-scale masterpieces, and second, provides a rare behind-the-scenes look of his personal life. Could this be an elusive glimpse of his model and constant muse, Maria Yrritia?

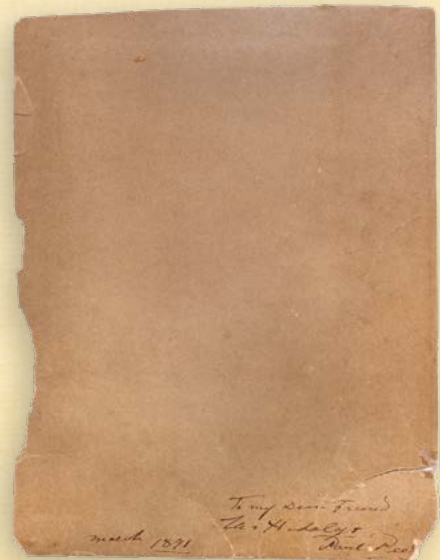
She sits perched on a chair, waiting patiently beside him, book in hand, and a pet dog at her feet. A porcelain umbrella stand does double-duty to contain Hidalgo's paint brushes, a tumble of sheets or canvases is at the bottom of a tall staircase with more than 12 steps. Hidalgo sits poised, seemingly in mid-air, carrying an enormous palette and a long paintbrush. Alas, only the faint outlines of the painting-in-progress can be seen.

The photograph does not appear to have been commercially produced as in the carte-visite in the previous lot, but a special print by the photographer.

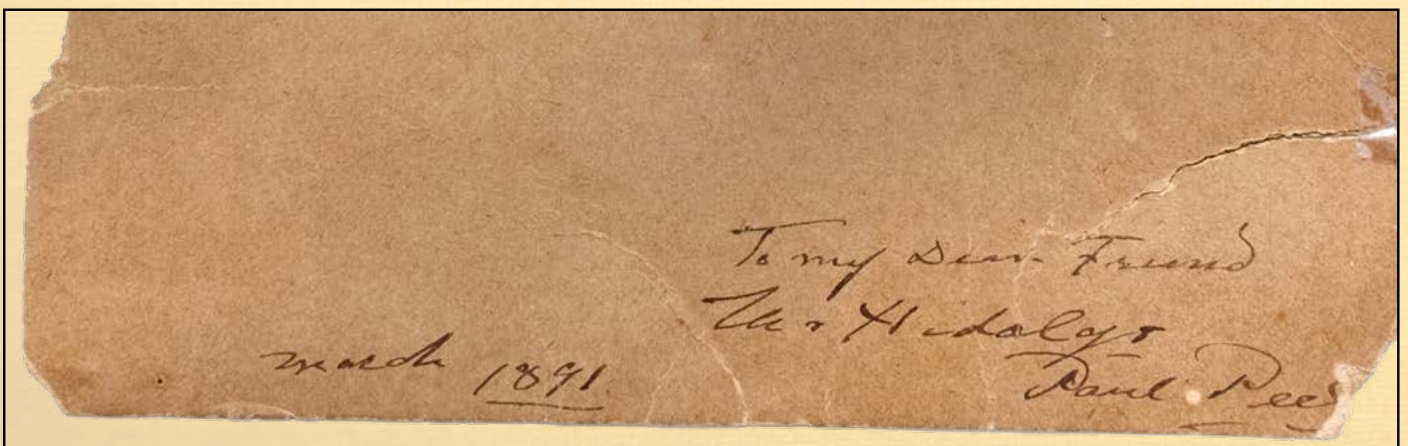
Hidalgo was known to be an early adaptor for photography and he may have counted the mysterious Paul as one of his comrades in the new obsession. (Lisa Guerrero Nakpil)



(FRONT)



(BACK)





León Gallery  
FINE ART & ANTIQUES

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# Spanish Colonial Military Uniforms: Designs and Documents, Manila, 1832.

ca. 1832 - 1834  
ink on paper

P 100,000

PROVENANCE  
Don Felipe R. Hidalgo Collection

The first document was written by the Secretary of the Army division, José del Valle, and signed in Manila on October 27, 1832. This official explains that, responding to the provisions approved in 1831 concerning the uniforms of the army and officials, and following the indications of simplicity and economy, he had designed the uniforms for the secretary and the officers of the Defense and Royal Treasury departments. Del Valle declares he has made them following instructions and without having seen the uniforms that were being used at that time in Spain, Cuba or Puerto Rico. He asks a high authority — a certain Enríquez, who answers him in a document signed two days later — to approve his designs for the uniforms, given that at that time they did not exist so that the officials could attend to their work with due decorum.

Uniforms are distinguished between dress uniforms and everyday uniforms. The designs and insignia —the flags of Spain, the castles and lions, the embroideries with silver and gold thread — are very varied and respond to the hierarchy of each officer. These uniform designs, which were finally approved in Madrid in January 1834 — as indicated in the brief final document — were those used by Spanish colonial officials until 1862.

This is a unique document, which is not usually found in private hands, but in historical archives, such as the General Archive of the Indies in Seville, or in army archives. *(Jorge Mojarro)*




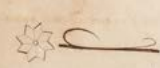


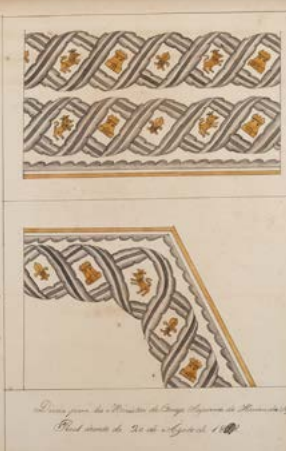


proyecto de un uniforme para el ejército de este Reino...  
de un uniforme para el ejército de este Reino...  
de un uniforme para el ejército de este Reino...

1785  
El Rey  
El Ministro de Hacienda de la Nación...

Distintos para el uniforme de los empleados en el Ministerio de Hacienda de la Nación, así los que gran del fuero político de guerra como los civiles.

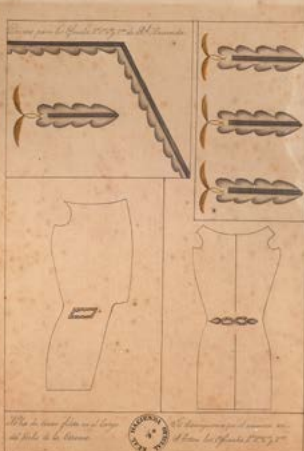
<p>— <i>Capitán</i> —</p>  <p>Collar de este tamaño en la posición, uno en el cuello y dos en cada manga.</p> <p>— <i>Capitán</i> —</p>  <p>Seis flores iguales en cada uno de los puños.</p>	<p>— <i>Capitán</i> —</p>  <p>Seis flores iguales en cada manga. En la manga izquierda al de la izquierda.</p>
	<p>— <i>Meritorio</i> —</p>  <p>Doquiera al rededor del cuello y puños y tres botones en cada uno de ellos.</p>



Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



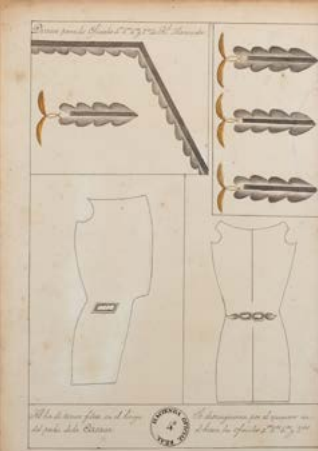
Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



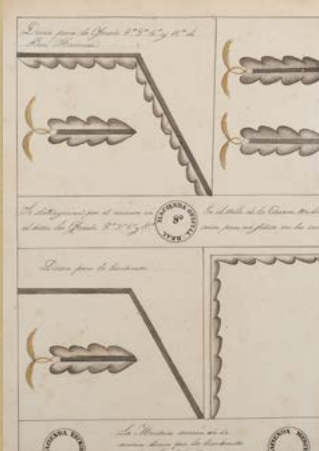
Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



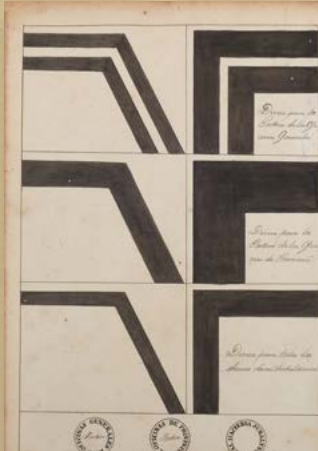
Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



Distintos para el Ministerio de Guerra...  
Real decreto de 24 de Agosto de 1785



# Hidalgo and the Indios Bravos

## *At the Exposition Universelle Paris 1889*



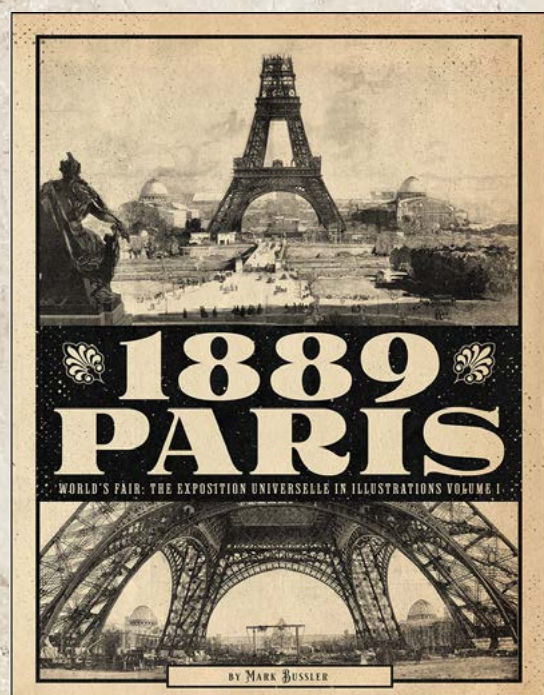
Grand Palais 1889 and universal exposition 1889

It was no accident that the generation of Rizal's Indios Bravos would find such resonance in the Year 1889 and the Paris Exposition Universelle. It was, after all, the 100th year of the French Revolution and the precepts of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' that would inspire them all to envision a different future for their own country.

Juan Luna by then was the most acclaimed, having brought home the gold for the Spoliarium in 1884 and igniting a feeding frenzy among the media of the time that would make him the most famous painter in Spain.

But there were new horizons to be conquered, chief of which was Paris which was the world's center for the arts. It was a time for the ilustrados to stand up and be counted in making the voice of the Filipino heard.

Joining Luna in his quest were his brothers-in-law the sculptor Felix and the scholar Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, fellow painter Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, and no less than Jose Rizal himself (who would exhibit a bust of TH Pardo de Tavera at the Salon de Paris 1889.)



Grand Palais 1889 and universal exposition 1889 book © <https://cgrpublishing.com/>





(FRONT)



(VERSO)

86

### Exposition Universelle Ephemera

a.) Carte de Visite (Calling Card) Photograph of Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo  
Reverse: his address at No.65 Boulevard Arago is indicated. Below it, also handwritten, the words “Espagne — Beaux Arts” (Spain - Fine Arts) in whose pavilion he would exhibit.  
Photograph by Photographie Universelle, 7 Rue Claude Bernard

b.) Carte d'Exposant (Exposition Pass) issued to Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, with his signature (glued to the Carte de Visite)

4 1/4" x 2 1/2" (11 cm x 6 cm)

P 100,000



## Letter to Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, from the Exposition Management, the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique, des Beaux-Arts et des Cultes.

Letter to Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, from the Exposition management, the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique, des Beaux-Arts et des Cultes. It grants Félix Resurrección Hidalgo permission to work on his painting within the Palais de l'Industrie, indicating that it would be exhibited at the upcoming Salon. The letter also instructs Hidalgo to coordinate with Mr. Thomas, the conservator architect of the Palais.

**P 100,000**

Transcribed:

Paris, le 12 mars 1889  
Monsieur,

Vous avez demandé l'autorisation de terminer dans une des salles du Palais de l'Industrie un tableau que vous destinez au Salon prochain.

J'ai l'honneur de vous annoncer que l'autorisation que vous sollicitez vous est accordée. Vous voudrez bien vous entendre à cet effet avec M. Thomas Architecte Conservateur du Palais.

Recevez, Monsieur, l'assurance de mes considérations distinguées.  
Le Directeur des Bâtiments Civils et des Palais Nationaux,

(signature)

Addressed to: Monsieur Félix Resurrección Hidalgo, artiste peintre.

Translated:

Paris, March 12, 1889  
Sir,

You have requested permission to complete in one of the halls of the Palais de l'Industrie a painting that you intend to exhibit at the upcoming Salon.

I have the honor to inform you that the requested authorization has been granted. Please coordinate this matter with Mr. Thomas, the architect and conservator of the Palais.

Receive, Sir, the assurance of my distinguished regards.  
The Director of Civil Buildings and National Palaces

*(Translation provided by Mr. Martin Arnaldo.)*





MINISTÈRE  
DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE  
DES BEAUX-ARTS ET DES CULTES.

BEAUX-ARTS

DIRECTION  
DES BÂTIMENTS CIVILS  
ET DES  
PALAIS NATIONAUX

1<sup>er</sup> Bureau

BÂTIMENTS CIVILS

Palais de l'Industrie.  
mm

Paris, le 1<sup>er</sup> Mars 1887

Monsieur,

Vous avez demandé l'autorisation de terminer dans une des Salles du Palais de l'Industrie un tableau que vous destinez au Salon prochain.

J'ai l'honneur de vous annoncer, Monsieur, que le local nécessaire vous est accordé. Vous voudrez bien vous mettre en rapport, à ce sujet, avec M. Chomaz, Architecte Conservateur du Palais et en outre avec M. le Président de la Société des Artistes Français, qui est concessionnaire de la plus grande partie du Palais à partir du 1<sup>er</sup> de ce mois.

Recevez, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.  
Le Directeur des Bâtimens Civils et des Palais Nationaux.

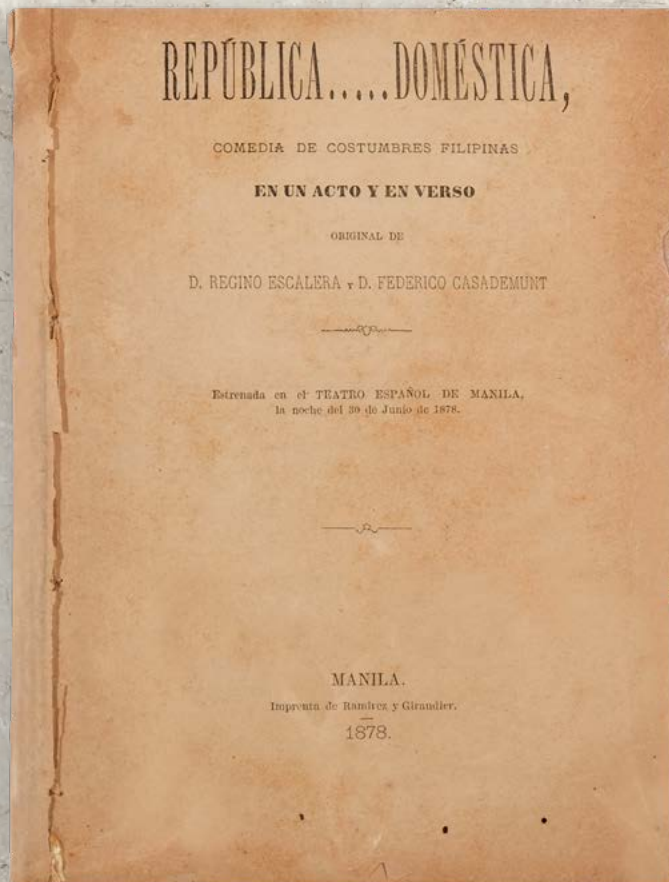
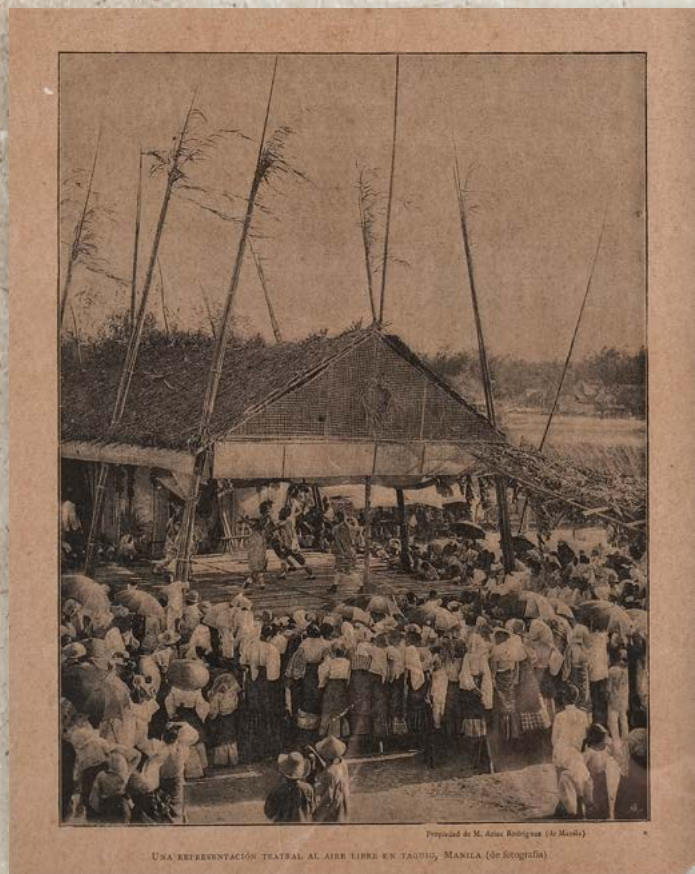
mm court

Monsieur Félix Lidalgo, artiste peintre, 5 Boulevard Arago



# Turn-of-the-Century Philippine Theatre

by JORGE MOJARRO



88

## Regino Escalera & Francisco Casademunt

*República... Doméstica. Comedia de Costumbres Filipinas En Un Ccto y en verso.*

Manila: Imprenta de Ramírez y Giraudier, 1878.

**P 100,000**

This is a play in Spanish typical of those performed in Manila in the second half of the 19th century. Its authors were Spanish, although the action of the play takes place in the Philippines and some of the characters are local. Theater was one of the major entertainments for

Filipinos during those decades, people of all social classes used to join in the streets, and comedies of entanglement, with absurd romances, funny lines with happy endings were usually preferred, as in this play subtitled "comedy of Philippine manners".

This book, *República... Doméstica* is extremely rare. One only copy is known to be at Harvard University, and there is probably another at the National Library of the Philippines.





89

## Juan Luna y Novicio (1857 - 1899)

*Untitled*

signed (lower right)  
watercolor on paper  
4 1/2" x 7 1/2" (11 cm x 19 cm)

**P 600,000**

### PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist; Andres Luna de San Pedro Mrs. Grace Luna de San Pedro Mrs. Elizabeth Troster Mrs. Ruth Francis Mario Alcantara (The majority of the collection was purchased by Far East Bank and Trust Company and later on donated to the National Museum of the Philippines)

León Gallery, *The Magnificent September Auctions 2018*, Makati City, 8 September 2018, Lot 19.

Juan Luna's watercolor sketches, even in its simplicity, belies the vigor he has as a realist. Like many artists, Luna worked in quick, random sketches, eager to jot down the simplest of landscapes on sketch pads and scrap papers, and notes on the interplay of light and shadow, such as he has done in this untitled piece. With the horizon clear in the distance, Luna portrays a calm afternoon in the plaza square, a beautiful image that could be the nexus of a full-blown concept, event, painting, or sculpture.

The whole corpus of Luna's sketches includes a magnificent view of late 19th-century Europe where even the seemingly random figures are emblematic of their social status. As E. Aguilar Cruz wrote in 1975: "Even Luna's most casual oil sketches during his Paris period cannot conceal the vigor of his style as a realist." (*Hannah Valiente*)



# Important Philippine Almanac 1850

**GEOGRAFICO, ESTADISTICO, HISTORICO,**

DE LAS

**ISLAS FILIPINAS**

DEDICADO

**A S. M. EL REY**

por los M. M. R. R. P. P. Misioneros Agustinos Calzados

**FR. MANUEL BUZETA**

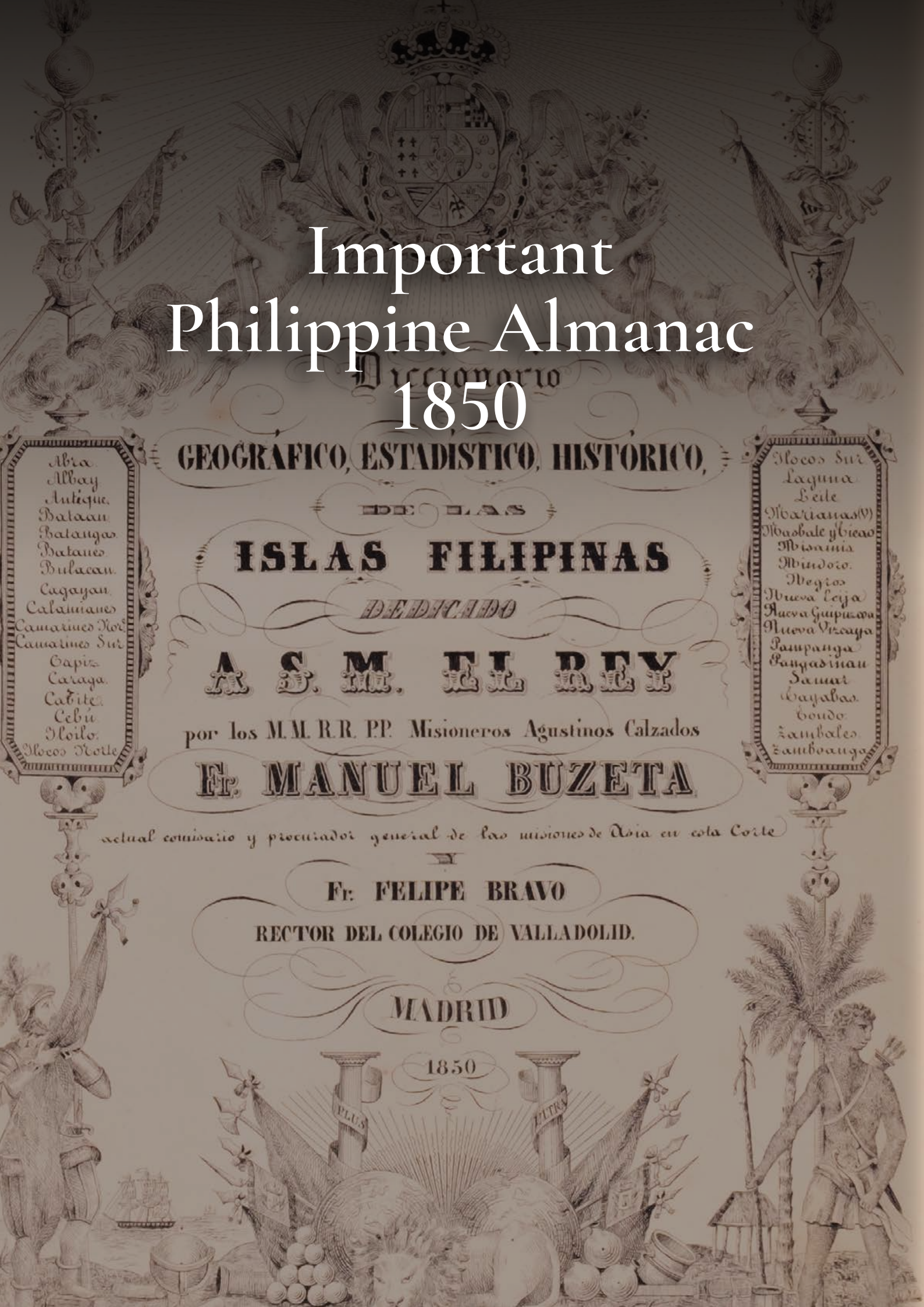
actual comisario y procurador general de las misiones de Asia en esta Corte

**FR. FELIPE BRAVO**

RECTOR DEL COLEGIO DE VALLADOLID.

**MADRID**

1850



Abra.  
Albay  
Antique.  
Bataan  
Batangas  
Batanes  
Bulacan.  
Cagayan.  
Calamianes  
Camarines Nor.  
Camarines Sur.  
Cepiz.  
Caraga.  
Cebu.  
Cebu.  
Iloilo.  
Iloilo Norte.

Ilocos Sur.  
Laguna.  
Luzon.  
Marianas (V).  
Masbate y Bicoa.  
Misamis.  
Mindoro.  
Negros.  
Nueva Loja.  
Nueva Guipuzcoa.  
Nueva Vizcaya.  
Pampanga.  
Pangasinan.  
Samar.  
Sulawesi.  
Tondo.  
Zamboanga.



## Fray Manuel Buzeta & Fray Felipe Bravo

*Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico, de las Islas Filipinas*

*[Geographical, Statistical and Historical Dictionary of the Philippine Islands]*

Madrid: Imprenta de D. José C. de la Peña, 1850. Two-Volume Set

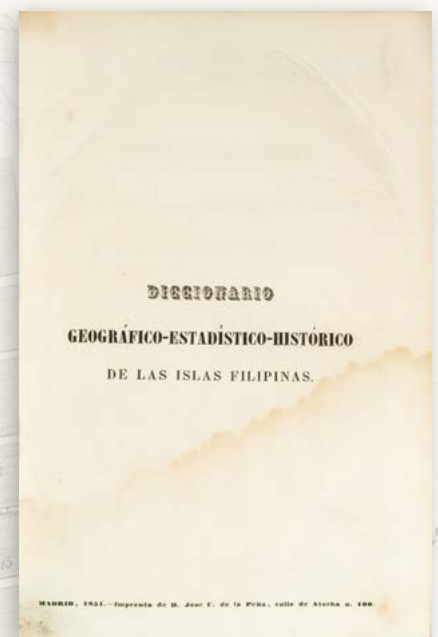
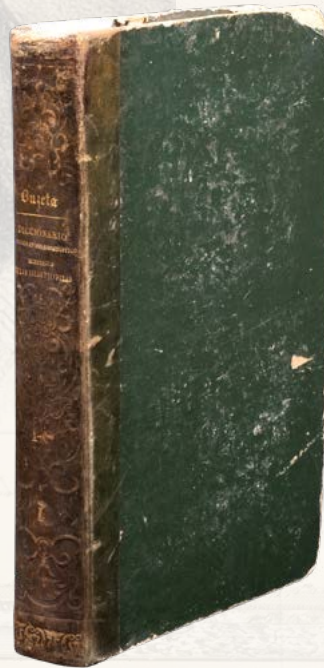
**P 50,000**

This work, the fruit of the labor of two hardworking Franciscans, was for many years the most important reference tool for everything related to the Philippine Islands, especially about its population, the economy, and the administration.

Volume I contains a long introduction describing the archipelago, its history from its geological formation, human development until the arrival of the Spaniards, the different ethnic groups and some of their customs, natural wealth, most important geographic features, imported and exported products, etc. It also contains several statistical tables with information about Camarines and Bisayas. There is a map of Manila.

Volume II contains the references of all the encyclopedic entries from D to Z, and comes with numerous statistical tables related to the population of the provinces of Misamis, Laguna, Leyte, Ilocos Sur, Mindoro and Iloilo (in 1818), table of kilometer distances between the most important localities, the distribution of the parish priests of the archbishopric of Manila (Cavite, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna, Batangas), Nueva Caceres (Bicol) and Nueva Segovia (Cagayan, Isabela, Ilocos, Pangasinan and Nueva Vizcaya), tables of the tax contribution by provinces, government budget expenditures in 1847, table of imported and exported products, and table of entries and exits of ships from the port, with their corresponding customs earnings. The amount of information collected is so rich that it is still an obligatory reference for researchers today, and it is especially useful for tracing Philippine localities -with information about the founding of each town- and Philippine geographical features - rivers, mountains, bays, lakes, etc. - that have changed their names over time.

To find this two volume set in good condition is very rare. This is a classic of 19th-century Filipiniana bibliography. *(Jorge Mojarro)*





# A Retana Royal Flush

## A Rare & Complete Five-Volume Collection

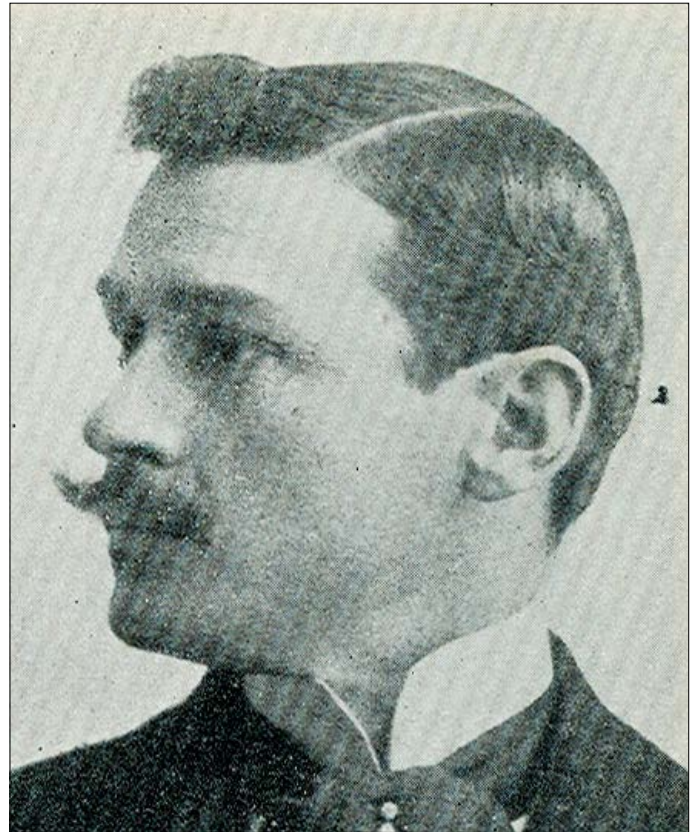
by JORGE MOJARRO

**W**enceslao E. Retana is considered the modern founder of Philippine Studies. He was an official of the Spanish administration in the Philippines who stayed in the archipelago for six years during which he amassed a huge collection of Philippine books. This large collection passed into the hands of Tabacalera, and this company later sold it to the National Library of the Philippines, where most of them are preserved.

It had come to Retana's notice that many of the books, rarities themselves at that time would eventually disappear, especially the titles published in Manila, as many of them were printed on fragile rice paper. With the aim of preserving for posterity these texts (both printed and manuscript) of importance to Philippine history, he conceived a project to publish them under the title *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino [Archive of the Philippine Bibliophile], a monumental bibliographic study.*

This laudable enterprise was first published in four volumes in 1895 and 1898. Retanae sought to relaunch it with a fifth volume in 1905, but, Spain having lost the Philippines in 1898, the collection did not enjoy the interest of the Spanish public.

In these five volumes, numerous texts of undoubted interest in the writing of the history of the Philippines are made accessible to the scholarly reader, and without this publication they would still remain unknown. Some of the texts included are:



ABOVE: Wenceslao E. Retana (1862 - 1924)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Título En Español</i>	<i>Título En Inglés</i>	<i>Vol.</i>
1583	Domingo de Salazar: Relación de las cosas de las Filipinas	Account of the affairs of the Philippine islands	3
1649	Verdadera relación de la grande destrucción que por permisión de nuestro Señor, ha auido en la Ciudad de Manila	True account of the great destruction occurred in the city of Manila, with God's permission	1
1740	Manuel del Río, OP: Relación de los sucesos de la misión de Ituy.	Account of the events in the mission of Ituy	2
1721	Noticias de lo sucedido en la Ciudad de Manila en Octubre de 1719. (Asesinato del gobernador Bustamante).	News about what happened in Manila in October 1719 (Killing of Governor Bustamante)	5
1750	Juan de Archedra, SJ: Relación de la entrada del Sultán Rey de Joló Mahamad Alimudin en esta Ciudad de Manila	Account of the entry of the Sultan of Sulu Mahamad Alimudin, in this city of Manila	1
1895	José Castaño, OFM: Breve noticia acerca del origen, creencias y supersticiones de los antiguos indios del Bicol	Brief report regarding the origin, beliefs and superstitions of the ancient natives of Bicol	1
1905	Felipe G. Calderón (comp.): Documentos relativos a la época de la Revolución.	Documents dealing with the time of Revolution	5



**Wenceslao E. Retana** (1862 - 1924)

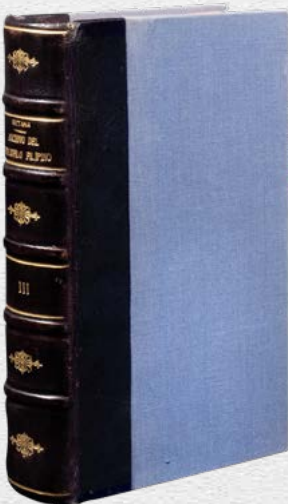
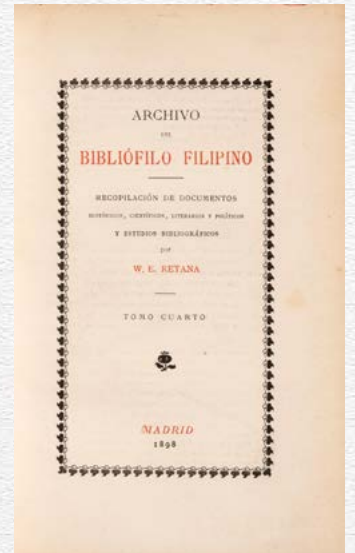
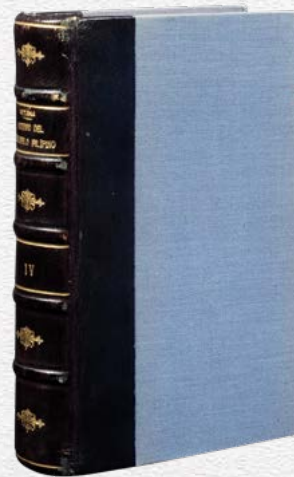
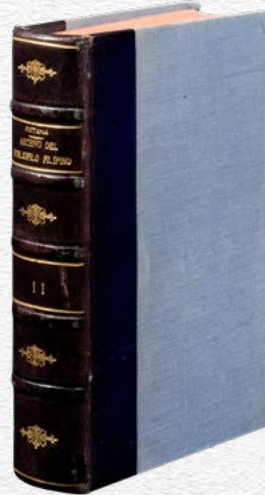
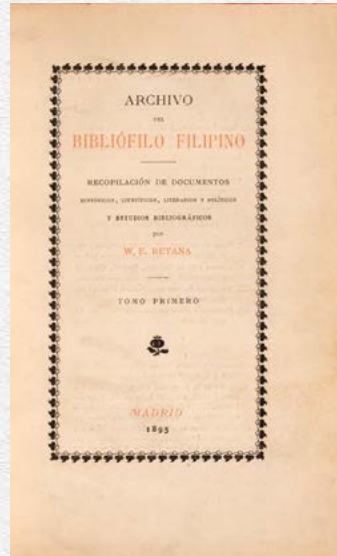
*Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino*

[*Archive of the Philippine Bibliophile*]

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**P 50,000**





# Amorsolo's Lavanderas as Images of Harmonious Communal Living

## *Humans in Harmony with Nature*

by HANNAH VALIENTE

Fernando Amorsolo is a name that needs no introduction, inside and outside of art circles. Arguably the biggest and most famous Filipino artist, Amorsolo courts the Philippine countryside in his extensive oeuvre, turning in romantic visage of the pastoral landscapes and exceptional genre scenes that evoke the oft-forgotten past.

Throughout his career, Amorsolo returns again and again to his favored subjects and among that list are the *lavanderas*. Often in a hidden, covered river, Amorsolo's titular *lavanderas* are often depicted with a *batya* or a tub, with children running around their mothers as they wash their laundry in the river.

This particular piece, a *Lavanderas* work from 1948, portrays a group of four women dressed down to their simple clothes as they hand wash their clothes. Behind them are two children playing on the shore, safely nestled in their own world. Their brown skin shines supple under the Philippine sun, making the clear water sparkle under its light.

As he turns the banal chore of laundry into a fundamentally social activity, Amorsolo's *Lavanderas* is teeming with the artist's impeccable sense of colors and sunlight. The famed Amorsolo light shines on the figures and into the sparkling clear water, producing a blinding glare that is beautifully realistic. His talent with refraction elevates this piece to another level – as he melds his intimate and practical knowledge of light and shadows to create an almost photographic image of the scene.

"His iconic *lavanderas* – youthful, graceful, and modest – represent an ideal of Filipino, not European, beauty," his daughter Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo speaks of his father's famous bathers. Indeed, his *Lavanderas* shines upon the beauty of the Filipino art scene, providing a romantic view of the pastoral Philippine countryside.

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**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Lavanderas*

signed and dated 1948 (lower right)

oil on canvas

20" x 26" (51 cm x 66 cm)

**P 5,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA







# Telesforo Sugcang: Portraitist of Kings, Generals, and Heroes

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Telesforo Sugcang came close to becoming that unicorn-like creature, the Renaissance man. He was a painter and sculptor, but also had an ear for music and would compose pieces with religious themes unlike his paintings which were mainly historical. Sugcang was an educator as well — and that impetus would put him eventually at odds with Manila's artistic elite.

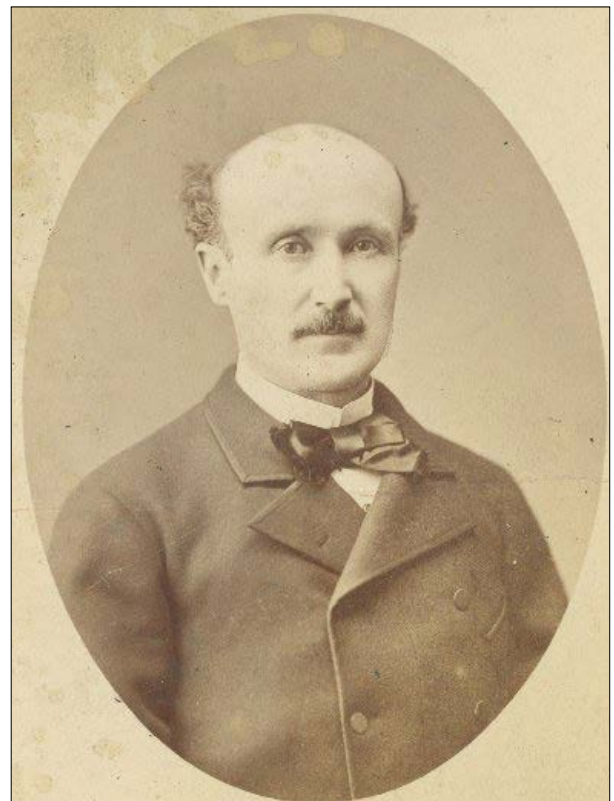
Sugcang was born into the principalia of Capiz, (his father would become a man of means as a capitán-municipal), and he would be sent to Manila first to study in the Colegio de San José and later at the Colegio de San Juan de Letran. In the capital, he would receive private art lessons with Lorenzo Rocha. That would serve him in good stead when he gained admission at the Manila Academia — where he would be a classmate of none other than José Rizal in both painting and sculpture.

He would meet Rizal again in Madrid, when Sugcang received one of the two prized scholarships to study at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid from 1884 to 1888. This artist would stay on for another five years, sustained no doubt by allowances from his prosperous family.

Sugcang's portraits would be noted for their formal elegance and accuracy — one of José Rizal received much acclaim when first discovered in Madrid. When the portrait at hand was produced, Sugcang had also by then painted Victor Balaguer, the minister for the Overseas possessions and for whom an important museum has been named, General La Corte, and the Infant King of Spain, Alfonso XIII.

This portrait of Joaquín Olemdilla y Puig dates squarely in this period. A physician and pharmacist of note, Olemdilla is dressed in a scholar's robes, with a medallion of his profession on a silken rope. He has stern and lively eyes with a ruddy complexion of good health.

Sugcang would return to Manila in 1893 and would receive a royal appointment in the Escuela de Artes y Oficios at Iloilo, teaching modeling and engraving.



Joaquín Olemdilla © <https://bibliotecavirtual.ranf.com/>

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**Telesforo Sugcang y Puig** (1855 - 1916)

*Retrato de Joaquín Olemdilla*

signed, dated 23-10-90 and inscribed Madrid (lower left)  
oil on canvas

28 1/2" x 23" (72 cm x 58 cm)

**P 1,400,000**

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, Spain





Madrid 23-10-90  
A. Jucyany





# Natividad “Nena” Hautea del Rosario– Villanueva

(22 September 1935 – 04 June 2021)

**N**atividad del Rosario was born on 22 September 1935 in Iloilo.

Nena's mother, Gertrudis Hautea–del Rosario of Iloilo, was a graduate of the UP Conservatory of Music and was a protégé of Dr Alexander Lippay, who founded the MSO Manila Symphony Orchestra. She taught Nena the rudiments of music at a young age; she was determined that her daughter would become the spectacularly successful pianist she wanted to be herself.

Young Nena was a natural at the piano: she was a child prodigy. She was the first Filipina child prodigy for piano and the first Filipina pianist to enter the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia at only eleven years old in 1946. She was taught by renowned professors Isabelle Vengerova, Ilona Kabos, Abrams Chasin, and Vladimir Horowitz. After winning a piano contest sponsored by the New York Times, twelve year–old Nena had her debut performance playing Mozart's Concerto in D Minor with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under maestro Igor Buketoff at the Carnegie Hall. She received her Artist's Diploma from the Curtis Institute in 1956. Her favorite

performing artists were Myra Hess, Rudolf Serkin, Vladimir Horowitz, and the Philadelphia Orchestra with Eugene Ormandy.

Nena performed locally and internationally: UST University of Santo Tomas, UP University of the Philippines Conservatory of Music, FEU Far Eastern University Auditorium (Manila's main theater postwar), CCP Cultural Center of the Philippines, PCIB Francisco Santiago Hall, and several other local venues. The young Nena performed at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and at the Carnegie Hall in New York. The adult Nena performed in many of the world's capitals: Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna, Madrid, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore. Paris was Nena's favorite city.

Natividad Hautea del Rosario (“Nena”) married Generoso Gonzaga Villanueva Jr (“Osso”) of Bacolod, Negros Occidental and they had five children.

Nena del Rosario–Villanueva was a recipient of the Gawad CCP, among several local and international awards.

Natividad Hautea del Rosario–Villanueva passed away on 04 June 2021.

94 PROPERTY FROM THE NENA VILLANUEVA COLLECTION

**Arturo Luz** (1926 - 2021)

*Javanese Temple Complex*

signed (lower right)

dated 2000

acrylic on canvas

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

**P 1,800,000**

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

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist





In 1988, following his resignation from his post at the Design Center Philippines, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, and the Museum of Philippine Art, Arturo Luz embarked on a pilgrimage to the ancient temple sites of Asia – from Indonesia to Thailand, from Cambodia to as far as Nepal, Pakistan, and India, Luz was faced with beauties far better than imagined, invigorating his already inspired oeuvre.

So inspired was the artist that even almost one decade later, Luz was still creating works inspired by his Asian trip. This 2000 *Javanese Temple Complex* followed the style he used in his *Cities of the Past* series, wherein he gave not literal, realistic versions of the towering temples but composite images from

memory. "They are imagined, transformed, invented. None directly based on one source," says his monograph written by Cid Reyes. As such, the *Javanese Temple Complex* is a reimagining of the temples themselves, reduced to straight lines and gold paint that stands out against the plain black background. The result is an image of royal resplendency and a callback to the sublime beauty of the past.

The elegant precision with which Luz approached his architectural artworks belies the rich historical background of the place itself. In a marriage between mathematical precision and reductive discipline, his *Cities of the Past* is a simplistic but unmistakably Asian design, giving way to a unique series of landscapes. (Hannah Valiente)



# The Arch. Leandro V. Locsin Batangas "Uno" Mesa Altar

BY AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

*The most coveted piece of antique furniture sought by serious Filipino art and antique collectors since the postwar years is a genuine "Batangas Uno" mesa altar from the second half of the eighteenth century (1750–1800), rendered in mature and dense golden brown "balayong" or burgundy red "tindalo" hardwood ("Afzelia rhomboidea," depending on which section the timber was cut). The type belongs to a series of remarkably crafted, Sinitic, Batangas "mesa altar" altar tables identified and described by top Filipiniana scholar/jeweler/antique dealer Ramon Villegas and antique dealer/wood expert Osmundo Esguerra in the late 1970s as "Batangas Uno" for the ornate rococo prototype (1750–1800), "Batangas Dos" for the transitional streamlined version from ornate rococo to linear neoclassical (1775–1825), and "Tuwid" for the linear neoclassical archetype (1825–75).*

—AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

After ten long years, a genuine "Batangas Uno" mesa altar finally makes an appearance at the Leon Gallery for the Kingly Treasures Auction 2024 on 30 November. The provenance is from a prominent Negros Occidental and Iloilo family in Forbes Park that is recognized by the major collectors. It is a major event at the Leon Gallery.

This Batangas Uno mesa altar (or "comoda de Batangas" as per prewar National Museum director Mr Manuel de Yriarte) has an impressive, solid top of balayong hardwood with receding moldings; impressive because wide-width balayong hardwood ended with the 1800s, according to antique dealer and wood expert Osmundo Esguerra. It is supported by a casing topped with a cornice of dentil moldings. There is ostensible, additional support from the flanges with shallow relief carvings of stylized dragons, phoenixes, cranes, carps, and other lucky Chinese animals as well as rococo cartouches with intricate fretwork attached to the sides of the casing. The entire front of the casing, the drawer surrounds, is comprised of moldings; the two vertical moldings on the sides have two hole marks each which once held decorative brass studs with gadrooned details. The mesa altar has three drawers, two on top of one. The drawers are inlaid with "lanite" line inlay to simulate rectangular panels with concave corners. The sides of the casing are two horizontal panels of balayong separated by a molded bar. The back of the casing are two horizontal panels of balayong separated by a bar. The upper panel is punctured in the center by a protruding bar from inside the casing; it is a bar installed under the tabletop midway to the

drawer wood runners of the upper level; ostensibly, it doesn't seem to serve any purpose but it has been observed in other Batangas Uno altar tables; perhaps it's simply a tradition, perhaps it's the cabinetmaker's signature or mark. There is a thick molding at the bottom of the casing. Underneath the casing is an apron similar to the flanges, again with shallow relief carvings of stylized dragons, phoenixes, cranes, carps, and other lucky Chinese animals and cartouches with intricate fretwork. There are four cabriole legs with ogee feet on squashes, standing on ogee plinths connected by stretchers in the traditional Chinese manner.

The comoda de Batangas now known as Batangas Uno was already known to the cognoscenti of the last quarter of the nineteenth century who started to collect the unappreciated but valid remnants of the islands in search of the new Filipino national identity --- Don Jacobo Zobel y Zangroniz, Gobernador Francisco de Yriarte y Menendez, Dr Joaquin Gonzalez y Lopez, Don Pedro Alejandro Paterno y Devera Ignacio, Dr Trinidad Hermenegildo Pardo de Tavera y Gorricho, Dr Maximo Viola y Sison, Don Enrique Zobel de Ayala, et al. As "ilustrados" (enlightened/learned/erudite ones), they all had an understanding and appreciation of eighteenth and seventeenth century Filipino ecclesiastical and domestic furniture, although not all collected them. It was a golden time for Filipino art and antiques: World War II had not happened yet and there were a lot of really old things lying around in Manila and the provinces.

In the early years of the twentieth century to the prewar Commonwealth era, art and antiques collectors like Manuel Alveyra de Yriarte (inherited the de Yriarte collection from his governor father), Alfonso Roa Ongpin (concentrated on old master paintings and historical memorabilia), Felipe Kleimpell Hidalgo (formed a staggering collection of art from his uncle Felix Resurreccion-Hidalgo y Padilla and antiques with his Padilla inheritance), Antonio Verches Bantug Sr (pioneer collector of wooden santos and antique furniture), Dr Arturo Cabarrus de Santos (bought everything aristocratic and beautiful), Arsenio Marasigan Escudero and wife Rosario Averion Adap (he liked Italian Carrara marble, she liked everything), Dr Jose Lerma (a very good eye for beauty), Atty Salvador Zaragoza Araneta and wife Victoria Ledesma Lopez (young heirs to great wealth) carried on the late 1800s "ilustrado" flame in art and antiques collecting. The 1929 Escudero-Adap "Big House" at the Villa Escudero preserved the late 1800s "ilustrado" way of life as Arsenio Escudero was a contemporary of Jose Rizal et al at the Ateneo Municipal in Intramuros. The Araneta-Lopez villa in Mandaluyong "Victoneta 1933" was noted for its large Fernando Amorsolo mural "The First Baptism" and its collection of European and Filipino heirloom furniture.



Postwar, Arch Luis Maria Zaragoza Araneta led the pack in the appreciation and collection of Filipino art and antiques. Elder brother Jose Antonio Zaragoza Araneta joined him in the quest, as well as good friends Consuelo Paterno Madrigal, Benito Fernandez Legarda, and Marie-Theresa Gallardo Lammoglia-Virata. Abstractionist artist Fernando Montojo Zobel de Ayala was a keen observer of the arts and culture scene. They all felt that too much was lost during World War II. They were all DBF "de buena familia" ("of good family"). It was still a generation who knew each other. The prewar traditional values still prevailed.

Soon after in the early 1960s, a younger generation of equally avid art and antiques collectors led by Arch Leandro Valencia Locsin and wife Cecilia Araneta Yulo followed suit. The younger group included Jaime Pfitz Zobel de Ayala and wife Beatriz Barcon Miranda, Vicente Tirona Paterno and wife Socorro Trinidad Pardo, Jaime Velayo Ongpin and wife Maria Isabel Vallejo Garcia, and Manuel Unchuan Agustines and wife Rosarito Prieto Caro. What was remarkable about the younger group was how well they lived with chic urban residences, stylish summerhouses, frequent travel, private jets, private boats, prizewinning horses and dogs, etc.

Arch Locsin held a great fascination for the comoda de Batangas and, whenever possible, he always included genuine examples as focal points for the living rooms in his early residential projects from the late 1950s onwards. When top Filipiniana scholar/jeweler/art and antiques dealer Ramon Nazareth Villegas discovered that fact in the late 1980s, it led to countless inquiries about residences designed by Arch Locsin in Forbes Park, Dasmaringas village, Urdaneta village, San Lorenzo village, and elsewhere as well as the affluent families who lived in them as he tirelessly searched for genuine Batangas Uno altar tables.

The 1970s saw the dominance in the Manila art and antiques world of the First Lady, Madame Imelda Trinidad Romualdez (Mrs Ferdinand Edralin Marcos), who collected only the very best. Alongside her were Dr Eleuterio Montano Pascual the chemist and the closed-in Blue Ladies: Lourdes Tiaoqui Hidalgo (Mrs Vivencio Huerta Tinio), Maria Luisa Paterno Madrigal (Mrs Daniel Earnshaw Vazquez), Zita Bartolome Fernandez (Mrs Raymundo Feliciano), Imelda de la Paz Ongsiako (Mrs Ramon Uychuico Cojuangco), Carmen de la Paz Ongsiako (Mrs Edmundo Mercader Reyes), Maria Soledad Cuyugan Oppen (Mrs Eduardo Murphy Cojuangco). Madame Marcos was offered the very best art and antiques during her prime, enabling her to accumulate a vast, world-class collection which she stored in her various houses all over the country.

During the 1980s, it was the turn of Paulino Que, Antonio Gutierrez, Romeo Jorge, Jaime Laya, Atty Jose Mari Trenas, the Zuellig brothers, and Jose Maria Ricardo Yaptinchay-Abad Panlilio (who created the fantastic Museo De La Salle), as well as leading antique dealers who assembled their private collections Romeo Bauzon, Antonio Martino, Antero



ABOVE: Philippine International Convention Center, Manila designed by Arch. Leandro Valencia Locsin © historyofarchitecture.weebly.com; pinterest.com

Baylosis, Willie Verzosa and Jean-Louis Levi, Maria Cristina Consing Ongpin-Roxas, and the phenomenal Severina de Asis. By that time, art & antiques collecting had become very discriminating, very selective, and very competitive. Only the very best would do for the top collectors. It was the era of "Big Money can buy Everything!"

Ramon Villegas dutifully kept a mental inventory of genuine Batangas Uno altar tables and their current owners. He had mentally listed thirteen authentic Batangas Uno altar tables before his August 2017 sudden passing: those of Paulino Que (two), Atty Jose Mari Trenas (Ex Coll: Dr Arturo Cabarrus de Santos), the one of Manila Hotel (Ex Coll: Arch Leandro Valencia Locsin), Stanley Chan, and others. Of course, a few genuine Batangas Uno altar tables have emerged publicly since that time, leading to a longer list.

This particular Batangas Uno mesa altar, set for auction at the Leon Gallery's Kingly Treasures Auction 2024, was also in Villegas' mental roster.



Top Filipiniana scholar/jeweler/art and antiques dealer Ramon Villegas, himself a proud Batangueno, wrote about Batangas altar tables: “Batangas has a long history as a trading center, as shown by excavated materials from Lemery, Tanauan, Calatagan, and other pre-Hispanic sites. In the nineteenth century, the province was particularly successful in cultivating sugar and coffee. The natural resources around Taal Lake, renewed by the periodic eruption of the volcanic vents at its center, provided feisty Batanguenos with enough means to build towns with impressive structures that contain sophisticated furnishings.”

“Typical Batangas furniture of the early nineteenth century were altar tables, chairs, pillow racks, and beds. The Batangas altar table is basically a chest of drawers on tall legs. There are two basic forms: one is the ‘kilo’ (bent or curved), the table with cabriole legs on stretchers with ogee feet; the other is the ‘tuwid,’ the table with straight or tapering legs.”

“Both forms, made in tindalo wood, have two versions: one elaborate, and the other simple. Based on construction, stylistic comparison, and dated pieces, a date of 1740 to 1840 can be given for the groups (assuming two generations of craftsmen and two ateliers) labeled Batangas Master I and Batangas Master II. These craftsmen probably worked in what is now the town of San Pascual.”

“Another typical Batangas altar table descended from the work of the Batangas I and II masters makes use of the Ming chain, carved in shallow relief or fretted on the flanges and apron. All of the above pieces were made toward the mid-nineteenth century, with kamagong, lanite, and carabao bone inlays on the drawer structure and the drawers themselves.” --- Ramon Nazareth Villegas (1953–2017)

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The Batangas “Mesa Altar”/Altar Table:

A “mesa altar” or altar table for the sacred Christian–Roman Catholic images of the household was one of the earliest pieces of Filipino furniture. The earliest prototypes from the late 1500s–early 1600s were copies of Ming dynasty tables. Sometime in the 1600s, based on church inventories, these morphed to the massive altar tables with legs decorated with Oriental grotesque masques (adapted from the Asian goddess “Kala”) and ball-and-claw feet all on stretchers, colloquially termed “dinemonyo” (“with a demon”). The confluence of European/Spanish–Filipino Roman Catholic church architecture and decoration in the Gothic, Plateresque, Renaissance, Baroque, Churrigueresque, Rococo, Neoclassical, Revivalist (Neo–Gothic, Neo–Louis XVI, Neo–Renaissance/Napoleon III/Deuxieme Empire, etc), Beaux–Arts styles with ancient Chinese technical expertise and excellence in craftsmanship led to interesting European/Spanish–Filipino–Chinese hybrid designs that gradually filtered into houses and furnishings all over Las Islas Filipinas.

Still in the Sinitic tradition, a high point of the “mesa altar” was reached in the second half of the eighteenth century (1750–1800) with the “comoda

de Batangas” (as per Manuel de Yriarte, prewar director of the National Museum) or “Batangas Uno” altar table, (according to Ramon N Villegas and Osmundo Esguerra), an ornate extravaganza of golden brown “balayong” or burgundy red “tindalo” hardwood (“Afzelia rhomboidea,” depending on which section the timber was cut) and black “kamagong” hardwood with three to five drawers; flanges and apron with shallow relief carving of stylized Chinese lucky animals --- dragons, phoenixes, cranes, carps, etc as well as rococo cartouches with fretwork; occasional inlays of “kamagong” wood and carabao bone; all supported on cabriole legs with ogee feet over stretchers. The ornate Batangas altar table was succeeded by a streamlined version with cabriole legs on stretchers, some with serpentine drawer fronts, the “Batangas Dos.” The linear neoclassical “Tuwid” mesa altar followed from 1825–75. The interesting thing is that both the “Batangas Uno” and the “Batangas Dos” types of altar tables were made well into the first half of the 1800s (1800–50). The Sinitic tradition ended there as copies of Western European – Victorian tables became all the fashion during the second half of the 1800s.

Naturally, the most coveted piece sought by serious Filipino art and antique collectors since the postwar years is a genuine “Batangas Uno” mesa altar. According to Villegas and Esguerra, the “Batangas Uno” prototypes were made by a master cabinetmaker who had his atelier in the area of what is now Taal town.

There were possibilities of other master cabinetmakers, different ateliers, other style progressions (reverse? transverse?), indeed alternative narratives also in search of the true origins of Batangas furniture, but these were never raised by their antiquaire contemporaries, despite occasional quiet oppositions. These theories of Villegas and Esguerra have not been challenged thus far. It will take another generation of Filipiniana scholars and many more years of intense research to reconfigure, refine, diminish or bolster the Villegas and Esguerra theories on classical Batangas furniture. In any case, the said series of Batangas altar tables currently known as “Batangas Uno,” “Batangas Dos,” and “Tuwid” have long been possessions of prestige by their own merits --- classic designs and good proportions, high quality of materials, and expert craftsmanship --- and will continue to be so in the years to come.



ABOVE: An 18th century Batangas I Mesa Altar from the Paulino and Hetty Que collection © Consuming Passions, Philippine Collectible by Dr. Jaime C. Laya





95 PROPERTY FROM THE ARCH LEANDRO VALENCIA LOCSIN COLLECTION

## A Batangas Uno Mesa Altar

Last quarter of the 18th century (1775 – 1800)

Balayong Wood ("Afzelia rhomboides")

H: 37" (94 cm)

L: 23 3/4" (60 cm)

W: 52 1/4" (133 cm)

**P 800,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Batangas



*It was during the heady, early 1980s that top Filipiniana scholar/jeweler/antique dealer Ramon Villegas and antique dealer and wood expert Osmundo Esguerra reintroduced the timeless beauty and quiet refinement of antique Batangas altar tables to eager collectors and earnest scholars and created a lasting demand that has outlasted fleeting fashions in architecture and interior design. Serious collectors and scholars appreciated 1) the deliberate Oriental geometry of scale and proportion, 2) the exceptionally fine mature hardwoods, 3) precise Chinese-style construction with classical mortise-and-dowel techniques, and 4) age-old durability of Batangas altar tables.*

*The Paulino Que and Hetty Kho Collection in Manila/Makati has the most extensive, most impressive, and most important collection of antique Batangas furniture, classic and primitive, in the entire Philippines.*

—AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III



# An Elusive Batangas Masterpiece

## *In the Tuwid or Olympic Style*

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This mesa altar of balayong or tindalo wood is what is now generally known in the trade as mesa altar na tuwid because of its straight, usually tapering legs and, because of the pattern of interlocking circles on the aprons and the flanges, is locally called the 'Olympic' style, the interlocking circles being the logo of the International Olympic Games. This piece stands on four straight legs tapering slightly towards the bottom. The front legs are bordered with line-inlay of lanite on either side of a series of ovals that are half inlaid with kamagong while the other half are inlaid with lanite. An eight-pointed sunburst composed of diamond-shaped lozenges half in kamagong and half in lanite decorate the upper part of the leg beneath the table top. The altar table has straight aprons in front and at the sides, all carved with a pattern of interlocking circles.

This authentic and elegantly understated example of an Olympic altar table from Batangas province has an impressive, single, thick piece of balayong hardwood for its top, with receding moldings on the sides; impressive because wide widths of balayong ended with the nineteenth century, according to antique dealer Osmundo Esguerra, Manila's foremost wood expert. The one-piece tabletop is supported by the four legs of the casing, with ostensible support provided by the four, thick, shallow relief guilloche brackets attached to the top outer sections of the legs which run through the height of the casing. The casing is outlined with "lanite" and "kamagong" line inlay. There are three drawers, two on top of one, applied with lanite and kamagong line inlay to simulate panels with concave corners; there are conventional brass keyholes and drawer pulls. The long drawer below is embellished with a star of alternating spokes of lanite and kamagong. Underneath the three drawers is a "cenefa"/apron of the guilloche pattern, again in shallow relief. 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 straight, slightly attenuated legs. The two front legs are decorated with very interesting "sol y sombra" (sun and shadow/shade) alternating lanite and kamagong inlay: the upper portions have two bands of alternating lanite and kamagong inlay, the upper band edged with kamagong lozenges and the lower band edged with lanite lozenges; the lower portions have five lozenges each of alternating lanite and kamagong inlay; indeed, a distinctive, signature feature of this particular piece. The innovative inlay on the legs was the work of a design genius.

The Batangas mesa altar in all its forms was the result of trade and cultural exchanges with the intrepid, indefatigable, and industrious Chinese traders, usually from Fujian province in southeastern China. The Chinese were recorded to have been importing hardwood lumber from these islands since the Tang dynasty (618–907), but it was very likely that they had been doing so long before that time. There is the theory that Chinese furniture was brought here by the traders and

the natives taught the rudiments of Chinese cabinetmaking for commercial purposes back in the homeland. There is a lack of documentation of Chinese furniture made from Philippine tropical hardwoods in the mainland. What is well-documented was the use of Philippine hardwoods for residential construction, specially by the rich Chinese-Filipinos. The early Chinese-Filipino taipan Chai Zi Shen aka Mariano Velasco Chuachengco constructed his villa with more than sixteen buildings in Jinjiang (now Quanzhou) with lumber from his copra hacienda which was the whole of Basilan island. The early Chinese-Filipino taipans Dee C Chuan, Dy Pac, Yu Tiong Cuan, Uy Hsiu Liong, Benito Siy Cong Bieng, et al built their European-style summer villas in Golangyu island (now Kulangsu island) off Amoy, China (now Xiamen) using Philippine hardwoods.

The master craftsmen of Batangas expended all possible efforts to produce their splendid mesa altar/altar tables. They started with the prototype altar tables in the 1600s–1700s, reached an apogee with the magnificent "Batangas Uno" ("comoda de Batangas") types in the mid-1700s, streamlined to the elegant "Batangas Dos" types from the end of the 1700s to the early 1800s, and tapered to a graceful end with the "Tuwid" types of the mid-1800s. That centuries-long process witnessed the Batangas master craftsmen maximize their abilities and surge to artistic heights, honor their Sinitic heritage, and further innovate on their craft. The quest for Batangueno excellence in cabinetmaking was accomplished.

It was during the heady, early 1980s that top Filipiniana scholar/jeweler/antique dealer Ramon Villegas and antique dealer and wood expert Osmundo Esguerra reintroduced the timeless beauty and quiet refinement of antique Batangas altar tables to eager collectors and earnest scholars and created a lasting demand that has withstood fashions in architecture and interior design. Serious collectors and scholars appreciated 1) the deliberate Oriental geometry of scale and proportion, 2) the exceptionally fine mature hardwoods, 3) precise Chinese-style construction with classical mortise-and-dowel techniques, and 4) age-old durability of Batangas altar tables.

Batangas altar tables --- by their classic designs and good proportions, high quality of materials, and expert craftsmanship --- have become valued possessions through the centuries and will hold their values in the future.

Top Filipiniana scholar Ramon Villegas, a proud Batangueno, wrote about the "Olympic" "mesa altar"/altar table: "Another typical Batangas altar table descended from the work of the Batangas I and II masters makes use of the Ming chain, carved in shallow relief or fretted on the flanges and apron. All of the above pieces were made toward the mid-nineteenth century, with kamagong, lanite, and carabao bone inlays on the drawer structure and the drawers themselves."





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## An Olympic Mesa Altar

(Batangas Mesa Altar)

Mid 19th Century (1825 – 75)

Balayong Wood ("Afzelia rhomboidea")

H: 25 1/4" (64 cm)

L: 51 3/4" (151 cm)

W: 23 1/4" (159 cm)

**P 800,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Batangas







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## A Pair of Rare Laguna Comoda

19th Century

Narra (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

a.) H: 48 3/4" (124 cm); L: 25" (64 cm); W: 47 1/4" (120 cm)

b.) H: 48 3/4" (124 cm); L: 25 1/2" (65 cm); W: 47 1/4" (120 cm)

**P 900,000**

PROVENANCE

Acquired from Ma. Cristina "Kit" Ongpin-Roxas, 1995





This interesting pair of ornate commodes made of narra wood, with five drawers and a pair of Solomonian columns from the last quarter of the 19th century, is of a type found in the remote towns of Laguna province — Majayjay, Liliw, Nagcarlan, Magdalena, Pagsanjan. The drawers feature relief carvings of leaves and fretwork of Neo-Renaissance/Second Empire inspiration. An interesting Filipino folk feature is the woven cane design inside a medallion on the plinths of the columns. Many examples of this

type feature characteristic, exaggerated C-scroll feet, colloquially called "susong" (snail) by antique dealers and their scouts. Such ornate pieces of late Victorian inspiration furnished the houses of the "hacendero" land-owning class in Laguna province during the late 1800s up to the pre-war. There is an excellent example of this type of variant, ornate, Laguna commode in the magnificent collection of the Don Arsenio Escudero family of San Pablo, Laguna. (*Augusto M.R. Gonzalez III*)



**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Under the Mango Tree*

signed and dated 1955 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 34" (61 cm x 86 cm)

**P 7,000,000**

**B**elonging to Fernando Amorsolo's *Under the Mango Tree* series, this 1955 version illustrates a bountiful harvest season, albeit from a different angle. With his skilled and delicate brush strokes, the master painter profoundly captures the hard work and familial affection of the countryside life: farmers working in the rice field under the heat of the blazing sun while their families cook and wait for them to eat together under the shade of the mango tree. Amorsolo's usage of this plant is a significant cultural representation, for it is the country's national fruit and a symbol of abundance and prosperity. Warmer tones are used in this piece, adding a sense of warmth that spreads through his audience.

Amorsolo is known for his paintings of the tranquil and content rural life graced by the light from his concocted sun rays, which prompted art essayist Alfredo R. Roces to write about the maestro, "He invested rural people with dignity and country life a feeling of contentment." Regarded as the "master of rural landscape," Fernando Amorsolo can turn any blank canvas into a buoyant image of his beloved country and fellowmen. Amorsolo's genre and historical paintings offer captivating landscapes and portraits and elicit a great sense of belonging to the Filipino nation, making him a cultural phenomenon in his lifetime and beyond. (*Jessica Magno*)









# The Famous Azcarraga Family Portraits

## By the Master Juan Arceo

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

The affluent Spanish lady in the portrait --- probably a widow --- is dressed in the European women's fashion of the 1850s: a black dress, lace collar, blue-beribboned pagoda sleeves with passementerie/tassel trimmings, blue-beribboned and ruffled lace cuffs, corseted and gathered tight waist, and a billowing crinoline skirt with a horsehair petticoat. Her hair is swept up in a loose chignon. She is suitably bejeweled: girandole earrings of gold and diamonds, a brooch of gold and diamonds on her chest, a long chain of gold with a Victorian locket (or a Filipino "alfajor" or "tamburin" pendant), and a gold and diamond ring on the ring finger of her right hand. It was the elaborate midcentury fashion set by Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Empress Eugenie of France.

This mid-nineteenth century portrait was acquired by a keen-eyed Spanish-Basque collector from an arts and antiques dealer in Valencia, Espana who casually mentioned that it had come from "Familia de Azcarraga." The provenance linked it to General Marcelo de Azcarraga y Palmero (1832-1915), a distinguished Prime Minister of Spain under SM El Rey Alfonso XIII from 1897, 1900-01, 1904-05. General de Azcarraga was the only prime minister of Spain with Filipino blood as his mother was a Spanish-Basque mestiza from Albay province in the Bicol region --- Sra Da Maria Isidra Palmero y Verzosa de Lizarraga. General de Azcarraga had an illustrious military and political career with many royal awards. He married an American-Cuban railway, banking, and warehousing heiress Srta Margarita Fesser y Diago and they had five children: Carlos dA y F, Margarita dA y F de Trenor Palavicino (1o Marquesa de Turia), Maria dA y F, Jose Maria dA y F, and Maria del Carmen dA y F. General de Azcarraga established his family in Madre Espana.

General Marcelo de Azcarraga was the second of the many children of General Jose de Azcarraga y Ugarte of Bizkaia, Euzkal Herria (Vizcaya, Basque country) and his Spanish mestiza wife Sra Da Maria Isidra Palmero y Verzosa de Lizarraga of Albay province in the Bicol peninsula. The de Azcarraga-Palmero family spent many happy and prosperous years in Manila. One of General Jose's occupations was operating a bookstore along the prestigious Escolta. The couple General Jose and Dona Maria Isidra commissioned the local painter Juan Arceo (Juan Arceo) of San Fernando de Dilao (now Paco) to depict them with two of their children in full European attire along with the "india" governess in native dress on 16 February 1824. Almost four years later in November 1827, they commissioned Arceo again to depict two of their younger children Jose and Pilar de Azcarraga y Palmero in full European attire with the "india" governess in native dress. Even in those early days, oil portraits were expensive in Manila, and Arceo certainly charged the de Azcarraga y Palmero family a few gold coins for his works.



ABOVE: Azcarraga Family in Manila by Juan Arceo (1824 and 1827). © <https://www.reddit.com/>



ABOVE: Marcelo Azcárraga Palmero © Káulak <https://es.wikipedia.org/>



The interesting provenance ties in because contemporary de Azcarraga descendants still reside in Valencia and Madrid. The most prominent descendant, the Marques de Turia, maintains residences in the two cities.

The late art professor, critic, and historian Dr Santiago Albano Pilar aka Jack Pilar spoke consistently of three early Filipino portraitists: Juan Arceo/Juan Arzeo (1795–1865), Damian Domingo (1796–1834), and Severino Flavier Pablo (1805–75). Their works are mostly in museums, churches, and great private collections. However, erstwhile unseen and undocumented works from old family collections still appear occasionally at auctions, to the great delight of collectors and to the confusion of scholars and researchers. There is still an elusive, unseen 1830s Severino Flavier Pablo portrait of D Josef Sioco (1786–1864), ur-ancestor of the Arnedo, Escaler, and Gonzalez clans of barrio Sulipan, Apalit, Pampanga in a very private Manila residence.

Top art connoisseur, scholar, and dealer Pacifico Gonzales is described by venerable, senior art and antiques dealer Maria Cristina Consing Ongpin– Roxas as "having the best eye for Filipino masters in the Manila art business." He is very familiar with the Spanish art, gallery, and estate sales scene, studied the painting intensely and did not evaluate it as Spanish, but Filipino. Despite the Victorian hairstyle, dress, and jewelry, some details about the face with its Oriental cast, the hands, the armature, distinctive brushwork, and flattened perspective were unmistakably Filipino. He posited that it is the work of the painter Juan Arceo (1795–1865) or less likely the younger Ysidro Arceo (1840–1900), who painted the portrait of Urbana David formerly in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Collection and now in the National Museum.

Esteemed multimedia artist and portraitist to Manila high society and culturati Rafael del Casal took a first look at the portrait and thought it Spanish. Everything Spanish. "Yes, there were naïve artists in Spain in the nineteenth century. Even in the eighteenth, seventeenth...". However, upon his close inspection, there were details that were not quite Spanish after all: the rendition of the face, the hands, the armature, distinctive brushwork, and flattened perspective. Del Casal is a conservative who thinks that to attribute the portrait to an early Filipino artist from around 1775–1825 is a stretch. However, he concedes that it was entirely possible that a Spanish lady, indeed any Spanish expatriate, could have commissioned an oil portrait of herself in all her European finery from a Filipino artist in Manila while in residence here. Similar to this one.

Gawad CCP awardee production designer Gino Gonzales described the lady's dress as "1850s, Victorian, lace collar, pagoda sleeves, lace cuffs, crinoline skirt." It was the fashion in Paris at the onset of the reign of Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie, the Empire Deuxieme/Second Empire period 1852–70. For Gonzales, due to the fact that the portrait was made in Manila, it was highly possible that the lace collar and cuffs were of local, embroidered "pina" (pineapple) textile instead of the standard French,



ABOVE: Azcarraga Family in Manila by Juan Arceo (1824 and 1827). © <https://www.reddit.com/>

British, or Belgian lace. Gonzales explained further that local embroidered "pina" pineapple textiles --- every bit as exquisite as the finest European lace --- were exported from Manila to Europe during the nineteenth century.

Few works of the early Filipino painter Juan Arceo/Juan Arzeo are in existence, but what survive are major works. There are signed large paintings of saints and bishops in the collections of the San Agustin Church and Convent Museum, the IA Intramuros Administration, and the Museo Franciscano in Manila, Philippines as well as in the Museo Oriental of El Real Colegio de los Padres Agustinos in Valladolid, Espana. Recent additions to his known works are the two signed family portraits painted in Manila from the Azcarraga estate in Madrid, Espana which emerged at auction in late 2015 and which have since been repatriated to the Philippines. The one of the Azcarraga y Palmero family with the "india" governess (General Jose de Azcarraga y Ugarte and his wife Sra Da Maria Isidra Palmero y Verzosa de Lizarraga and their children) was dated 16 February 1824 and the one of two children with the "india" governess (Srto Jose and Srta Pilar Azcarraga y Palmero) was dated November 1827. This "Portrait of a Lady" (possibly of Sra Da Maria Isidra Palmero y Verzosa de Lizarraga in her 50s?) from the 1850s is attributed to Juan Arceo/Juan Arzeo and comes from the same Azcarraga estate in Madrid and Valencia, Espana.



Arceo was born in 1795 in Manila during the closing years of the eighteenth century (however, the surname Arceo points to Pampanga, where many have carried it for centuries, even before the Claveria decree of 1849 which required Filipinos to finally carry surnames; Pampanga is not far from Manila through the old riverine route, it is only 45 minutes by boat from the mouth of the Rio Pasig). He resided in San Fernando de Dilao (now Paco, Manila), then a part of Tondo. He was already 26 years old when the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura was established by the 25 year-old Damian Domingo y Gabor (1796–1834) supported by the Real Sociedad Economica Filipina de los Amigos del Pais in 1821. Manila was officially opened to international trade in 1835 when he was 40 years old (Cebu in 1860, Sual, Iloilo, and Zamboanga in 1855, Legazpi and Tacloban in 1873; however, foreigners --- specially the Chinese, Indians, Arabs, British, and Americans --- had been trading continuously because the archipelago was essentially porous and anti-foreigner laws toothless); the government of SM La Reina Regente Maria Cristina de Borbon had abolished the bankrupt Real Compania de Filipinas in 1834; in 1785, SM El Rey Carlos III had granted the Real Compania de Filipinas (a spinoff from the erstwhile Compania de Caracas) founded by his crony, the colorful Spanish-French Basque Conde Francisco de Cabarrus y Lalanne (1752–1810) the monopoly on the export and import trade of indigo, coffee, sugar, spices, and cotton in Filipinas and adjacent colonies; it was relatively shortlived as its profitable operations had dwindled by 1800.

Arceo passed away in 1865 during the last years of the old order, before SM La Reina Isabel II was deposed in 1868, just before real intellectual and material modernity came to Filipinas with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and only seven years before the watershed Cavite Mutiny of 1872, which changed the history of Filipinas forever.

Juan Arceo lived at a time of great transition when Las Islas Filipinas was emerging from the shackles of Spanish colonialism and joining the international community and it set the stage for the length and breadth of his splendid artistic oeuvre.

Juan Arceo was the maternal uncle of another notable early Filipino painter, Antonio Malantic y Arceo of Tondo, Manila (1820–85), who undoubtedly learned the rudiments of art at his talented uncle's atelier. There are four signed works of Malantic in existence: "La Divina Pastora" 1855; "Don Narciso Padilla y nieto Felix Resurreccion-Hidalgo" 1859; "Srta Soledad Francia y Fernandez" 1870; "Srta Inocencia Francia y Fernandez" 1870. Many were destroyed during World War II, as the portraits of Don Hilario Jose Claudio Francia, his wife Dona Teresa Fernandez, son Prudencio Francia y Fernandez, and other Lavadia, Fabella, Fernandez relatives in Pagsanjan, Laguna. And countless others in the "arrabales" (districts) of Tondo, Binondo, Santa Cruz, (Calle San Sebastian), and Quiapo, in Manila. However, more forgotten works by Malantic are emerging from private collections, specially in Spain. Owing to better exposure and reference materials from Europe (the Suez Canal made cultural exchanges expedient), it turned out that Malantic's post-1870 portraits were already in the current European Romantic style and comparable to those of far younger artists Juan Luna y Novicio (1857–1899) and Felix Resurreccion-Hidalgo y Padilla (1855 –1913), something which was hardly available during the far older generation of Juan Arceo (1795–1865) and Damian Domingo (1796–1834).

99 PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

## Attributed to Juan Arceo (1795 – 1865)

*Portrait of a Senior Lady of the Azcarraga Family*

*(Possibly Sra Da Maria Isidra Palmero y Verzosa de Lizarraga in her 50s)*

(1850 – 75)

oil on canvas

32 1/2" x 24" (83 cm x 61 cm)

**P 700,000**

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Spain









# John William Haussermann

## King Midas of the Philippines

by ADRIAN MARANAN

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*Judge Haussermann, who still owns a small-town bank in Ohio, is probably the most respected man in the Philippines, and his prestige with the natives is second only to that of the U.S. High Commissioner."*

—LIFE MAGAZINE, "THEIR GOLD MINES ARE THEIR ACE IN THE HOLE," 13 FEBRUARY 1939

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John William Haussermann was one of the most powerful names in Philippine business during the pre-war period. Born on December 14, 1867 in Ohio Township, Clermont County in Ohio, Haussermann was a lawyer by profession, armed with a Bachelor of Laws degree he obtained from the University of Cincinnati in 1889. Haussermann arrived in the Philippines in 1898, serving as 2nd Lieutenant of the 20th Kansas Volunteers of the US Army during the Spanish-American War, which resulted in the turnover of the archipelago from the Spanish crown to the American empire.

Haussermann was Judge Advocate during the Philippine-American War and, eventually, City Attorney of Manila in 1900. He would be promoted to Assistant Attorney General of the Philippines in 1902. Haussermann resigned from his government post and returned to private law practice, becoming the head of Coudert Brothers from 1903 to 1906, which became Haussermann & Cohn and later, Haussermann, Cohn, & Fisher.

But Haussermann struck gold when he became president of the Benguet Consolidated Mining Co. in 1913, the country's oldest and most prolific gold mining corporation. Haussermann had also previously received stocks from the company's American founders since he drafted the company's articles of incorporation in 1903, when he was still practicing law.

A March 8, 1948 article from *TIME Magazine* titled "Mining: Return of the King" recounts how Haussermann crossed paths with mining. The article writes: "It was a disaster that had made Haussermann a miner. In 1911, a typhoon swept northern Luzon, flooded the tiny Benguet Co.'s only mill, bankrupted the owners, and left the Bank of the Philippine Islands with a worthless batch of loans. To retrieve its stake, the bank picked Haussermann, Benguet's lawyer, who had come to the islands in 1898 as a second lieutenant and

had stayed to become an assistant attorney general in the new Philippine government."

*TIME* continues: "Judge" Haussermann floated 200,000 shares of new stock, borrowed \$75,000 from the bank, built a new mill, and started mining ore. In two years, he paid off the bank's loan to Benguet. Gradually, he increased his own stock holdings out of earnings until he owned a controlling interest of about 30%. (His original investment was eventually worth \$460,000.)"

In 1915, Haussermann successfully revived Benguet Consolidated from the ashes. In 1917, the company's first mining community—located at Antamok—finished construction. From its revival in the mid 1910s until 1932, the Benguet Consolidated's gross output reached PHP 36.7 million according to Haussermann's report published in the 1933 yearbook of the Port of Manila and other Philippine ports.

He would serve as president until 1915, resigning from the top post "because of a protracted absence from the Islands," writes in *Men of the Philippines: A biographical record of men of substantial achievement in the Philippine Islands* (1931). The record also notes that Haussermann "took the office of vice president... and is also one of the active managing directors of the corporation." By 1939, however, Haussermann had returned to the presidency and had become general manager of Benguet Consolidated according to Miguel Cornejo's all-important *Commonwealth Directory of the Philippines* (1939). There is also a record in the August 1934 issue of the *Philippine Magazine* that Haussermann signed contracts "as President and General Manager of the Benguet Consolidated Mining Company to take over the management of three new mines—those of the Abra Mining Company, the Southern Cross, and the Consolidated Mines."





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### Dealer's Deal

Tubby, easygoing Fred Emich holds a \$6,000-a-year state government job in Illinois, but for good & sufficient reasons he has never forgotten that twelve years ago he was a Chevrolet dealer. Last week his long-extinct dealership made Fred Emich a millionaire, at least on paper.

Emich lost his dealership because General Motors ruled that he was doing a bad job. Emich charged that it was because he ran his own little financing company, which cut into the business of General Motors Acceptance Corp. Prodded by an attorney for the Government (which had started an antitrust suit against G.M. and their Acceptance Corp.), Emich sued G.M. for \$435,000. He asked triple damages under the antitrust law.

Last week, after four months of testimony, a federal jury in Chicago awarded him the full amount of his bill. The damages: \$1,235,000. G.M. will appeal.

### MINING

#### Return of the King

On his "Pond Run Farm" near New Richmond, Ohio, roly-poly John William Haussermann packed his bags. He put in some of his favorite blue suits, a clutch of flashy ties and plenty of cigars. Then he kissed his wife goodbye, took a last look at the Ohio River, where he swam as a boy, and drove into town to take the train.

Last week, at 80, the gold king of the Philippines was on his way back to the islands to rebuild his war-shattered empire. Since war's end, John Haussermann had been busily scraping up money and shipping off equipment to rebuild the mining villages and mill plants wrecked by the Japanese. A trickle of gold was already coming from his mines. But bustling Mr. Haussermann thought it would come out faster if he was on the spot. Twice before, he had picked up the pieces of his Benguet Consolidated Mining Co., and fitted them together, until in 1941 they made a \$100,000,000 empire.

**Ill Wind.** It was a disaster that had made Haussermann a miner. In 1911 a typhoon swept northern Luzon, flooded the tiny Benguet Co.'s only mill, bankrupted the owners, and left the Bank of the Philippine Islands with a worthless batch of loans. To retrieve its stake, the bank picked Haussermann, Benguet's lawyer, who had come to the islands in 1898 as a second lieutenant, had stayed to become an assistant attorney general in the new Philippine's government.

**"Judge"** Haussermann floated 300,000 shares of new stock, borrowed \$75,000 from the bank, built a new mill and started mining ore. In two years he paid off the bank's loan to Benguet. Gradually, he increased his own stock holdings out of earnings until he owned a controlling interest of about 20%. (His original investment was eventually worth \$450,000.)

**Blown Good.** In 1926 things looked dark again; Benguet's ore was running low. The other stockholders wanted to dissolve the company and split up the



FRED EMICH  
In a verdict, pay dirt.

\$750,000 on hand. Instead, John Haussermann stubbornly insisted on spending some of the cash on prospecting. He won the gamble; a rich new strike put him in a position to buy a lumber company, a power station, and a \$300,000 controlling interest in the Balatoc Mining Corp.

Balatoc (also on Luzon) turned out to be the most profitable mine in the islands and Haussermann became one of the biggest gold producers in the world. By 1940, his mines employed 10,000 Filipinos, produced 1,200,000 tons of ore—about one-third of the islands' gold output—and earned their stockholders \$4,000,000 a year.

Haussermann, who had quit the islands in 1940, sat out the war on his New Richmond farm. Since war's end his company has spent \$5,000,000 on reconstruction, expects to spend another \$5,000,000. Benguet is now mining about 1,000 tons of ore



"JUDGE" HAUSSERMANN  
After a typhoon, a gold strike.

TIME, MARCH 8, 1940



OPPOSITE PAGE: John William Haussermann. THIS PAGE (LEFT): Time Magazine; March 8, 1948, No. 10 © <https://time.com/vault/issue/1948-03-08/page/98/>; TOP RIGHT TO BOTTOM: Aerial view of the Antamok Gulch, one of the principal mines of the Benguet Consolidated Mining Co.; Igorot miners of Benguet Consolidated Mining Co. posing for a photo as they undergo changing of shifts. © LIFE Magazine, 13 February 1939; The Benguet Consolidated Mining Co. was also instrumental in building schools for the Igorots. © LIFE Magazine, 13 February 1939;

Haussermann also helmed the acquisition of the Balatoc Mining Company in the late 1920s, effectively merging what would become the two most powerful mining companies in the Philippines by the 1930s and ushering the city of Baguio towards a golden age of prosperity. Haussermann was elected president of the Balatoc Mining Co. in 1927 and would steer the company towards reaching a gross output of PHP 11.8 million in only five years, as Haussermann reported. He also had a \$300,000 controlling interest in the company. In 1932, the Benguet and Balatoc companies generated "four-fifths of the gold mined in the Philippines," as Haussermann wrote in 1933, "or more than P 8,000,000 of the total output amounting to P 10,000,000."

By 1940, *TIME Magazine* notes, Haussermann's mines "employed 10,000 Filipinos, produced 1,200,000 tons of ore—about one-third of the islands' gold output—and earned their stockholders \$4,000,000 a year." By 1941, the same magazine wrote that the Benguet Consolidated Mining Company had become a 100-million-dollar empire.

Haussermann was now the Philippines' (and America's) undisputed "King of Gold." Under his economic genius, the Philippines became the number one gold producer in all American states and territories, a status it would enjoy until World War II.

Due to his influential status, Haussermann acquired and became president of the North Luzon Power Company. He was also director of Philippine-American Drug Co., Manila Hume Pipe & Tile Co., Peoples Bank & Trust Co., and the People's Mortgage & Investment Co. Haussermann also held the positions of vice-president of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and of the national council of the US Chamber of Commerce.

Haussermann left the Philippines in 1940 and returned to Ohio, where he spent the "war years." He returned to Manila in May 1948 and immediately oversaw the reconstruction of the war-shattered mining company and its villages, which had started a year earlier.



# Memories of the Baguio Gold Rush

## *A Golden Memento for the Gold King*

by JESSICA MAGNO



Recognized as the "master of rural landscape," National Artist Fernando Amorsolo continuously graced the Philippine art scene with his sunlit landscapes, sometimes populated with archetypal Filipino folk activities. Moreover, his artistic virtuosity is not just a skill but a force that shapes the emotional impact of his paintings, demonstrating the power of his artistry

The Cordilleras have always been one of the maestro's favored subjects, using it as a background, a breath of fresh air, in contrast to the hardworking and diligent country folks. Other times, Amorsolo just wanted to flaunt the magnificent mountain view. Nonetheless, his skilled hands and well-thought-out plotting of strokes and utilization of

colors create masterpiece after masterpiece that profoundly resonates with the viewer's emotions, sparking a sense of warmth and nostalgia.

Baguio Scene was painted at the height of Amorsolo's career in 1937. Here, he showcased a group of Ifugaos walking on the mountainside. Carrying big containers of their belongings, a little kid in tow, and a man holding the leash of four domesticated dogs, these people resemble a family migrating to a different part of the mountain. Bearing the ever-present "Amorsolo light," this oil painting is a blend of his fine brush strokes and mastery of colors, resulting in a warm yet tranquil imagery, a testament to Amorsolo's exceptional artistry.



# Road to Market for the Northern Tribe



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**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Baguio Trail*

signed and dated 1937 (lower right)

oil on canvas

20" x 26" (51 cm x 66 cm)

**P 4,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist



# IFUGAO TREASURES

From the Collection of Hugo Bunzl

by EMIL MARAÑÓN III







The Ifugao "*bululs*" are statutory "*guardians*" consecrated to ensure their human counterparts' wealth and nobility. However, since Ifugao is an agricultural society and that wealth and nobility are intimately tied with rice cultivation, bululs are often mistakenly reduced to being "*rice gods*" in the popular consciousness. This, however, is not entirely accurate as while they are beseeched to ensure bountiful harvest and to guard and multiply the rice stored in the granaries, they have other uses like in healing rituals

Stylistically, an Ifugao "*bulul*" can be classified as either "*archaic*" or "*realistic*". The "*archaic*" style is often attributed to the "*early period*", characterized by abstraction, minimalism, and reduction of the human form to the bare minimum. The time period of this style is wide, ranging from as early as the 15th to the 16th century to as late as the early 20th century. This stylistic shift to "*realism*" in the early 20th century is attributed to the entry of the Americans to the unconquered Philippine Cordillera and the resulting proliferation of carving workings that catered to the colonizers' demands for souvenirs. As Ifugaos are not only master carvers, but clever entrepreneurs, they also adjusted their carving style to suit the taste of their American customers, not only mimicking their faces, but even injecting comical qualities to make them attractive to their new market.

These pieces being offered by Leon Gallery from the early 20th century capture this exciting period of artistic evolution, with the curious blending of the old sensitivities and the new style.



## A Standing Bul'ul

Early 20th century

Ifugao

Narra hardwood with thick encrustation

H: 19 1/2" (50 cm); L: 6 1/4" (16 cm); W: 6 3/4" (17 cm)

**P 260,000**

The first of the lot is a ritually-used standing *"bulul"* by Tagiling (alternatively spelled as *"Taguiling"*), possibly from Kababuyan, a barangay in Hingyon, Ifugao where most of this type would come from. His works are not only the most representative of the style of the period, but he is even credited as the one who started the style and paved the way for the shift. He was first *"mythified"* in George Ellis' article in the seminal book *"People and Art of the Philippines"* (1981) which began the collecting frenzy over Tagiling's works. That while most of his works are souvenir carvings, Tagiling would occasionally work on ritual objects like bululs which are highly-sought and prized. Tagiling's style were later replicated by other carvers which works are called *"Tinagiling"* or *"in the manner of Tagiling"*.

Due to the popularity of his works, his style is also the most faked in the market. So determining an authentic *"Tagiling"* work as against a *"Tinagiling"* and a pure fake has always been tricky. Echoing with full agreement the observations of the esteemed expert, Floy Quintos, the hallmarks of Tagiling's works are the following:

*"pronounced noses with shrap nostrils; arched brows and carefully delineated eyes; prominent cheekbones; pursed lips suggesting in many examples, a grin or smirk; flaring and very detailed ears, with cartilage fully delineated; finely carved collar bones; indentions in the fingers and toes indicating knuckles and toenails; and indications of ankle bones, wrist bones, shin bones; and lastly, a sense of Western proportion with slimmer waists, broader shoulders."*

This specimen being offered with provenance traced to Floy Quintos himself carry not only all these hallmarks of an authentic Tagiling, but it has the expected signs of age and an exceptional encrusted patina proving its prior ritual use.

*(Emil Marañon III)*





## A Standing Pair of Bul'ul and A Punamhan

### a) A Standing Pair of Bul'ul

Early 20th century

Central Ifugao

Narra hardwood with thick encrustation and bits of handwoven cloth

male: H: 18 1/4" (46 cm); L: 4 3/4" (12 cm); W: 5 1/2" (14 cm)

female: H: 18" (46 cm); L: 4 1/4" (11 cm); W: 5 3/4" (15 cm)

### b.) A Punamhan

Early 20th century

Ifugao

Narra hardwood

H: 9" (23 cm); L: 6" (15 cm); W: 21 1/2" (55 cm)

**P 260,000**

The second lot is a standing pair of bulul, with the style attributable to Central Ifugao. Contradistinguished from Tagiling's work discussed earlier, this pair maintained the over-all form, style and stiffness of the earlier Ifugao bululs. However, we can already observe glimpses of modernist features like in the execution of the eyes, eyebrows and clavicles which add a realistic flair to the carvings. It is also in good condition, with the male bulul still donning its original "wanoh" or loincloth. The pair also comes complete with a ritual box called "punamhan" which is used to store ritual objects and implements. Like most traditional "punamhan", this ritual box has a daintily carved pig-head handles which indicate its usage in rice-related rituals ("*hongan di page*") that mainly invoke agricultural gods which are represented by animal symbols.

(Emil Marañon III)

These pieces came from the collection of Hugo Bunzl, a renowned Italian collector of Philippine contemporary arts and a member of the Tate Modern (UK) Advisory Board. He acquired all the pieces being offered from Maria Closa, who, in turn, acquired them from the late Floy Quintos. Both Maria Closa and Floy Quintos are, of course, renowned and respected dealers and collectors of Philippine ethnographic arts, particularly those from the Philippine Cordillera.

*The writer personally thanks Maria Closa for confirming the provenance through a personal correspondence.*

(Emil Marañon III)





# In Praise of the Abstract Maestro

*Lao Lianben to José Joya*

Lao Lianben's *Homage to Joya* is, as the title suggests, a tribute to Lao's profound reverence for the pioneer of Filipino abstract expressionism and one of his most influential luminaries. Both drawing on Orientalism, Joya's and Lao's oeuvres couldn't be further from each and yet, *Homage to Joya* manages to blend Lao's Buddhist inspirations and Joya's Oriental sensibilities.

Portraying a vertical column with elements that feel most at home at a Joya abstraction, the touch of Lao presents itself in the *ensō* which is a common theme in his oeuvre. This circle drawn in a single, uninterrupted stroke may or may not be unbroken and represents enlightenment and the Zen state of mind which emphasizes mindfulness and intentionality in everything one does.

Simple yet grand, dynamic yet restrained. Lao Lianben's work is a master class of balance and inhibition, a clear adherence to Zen Buddhism's tenet of the *kanso*, meaning simplicity. He elevates minimalism by extracting the essence of experiences, ideas, and emotions and delineating it into an abstraction that taps into the consciousness of the human soul. At the core of Lao's visual language is stillness, a sense of simplicity that comes with a quiet and intense understanding of things both seen and unseen. *(Hannah Valiente)*



Lao Lianben © Shaira Luna

103 PROPERTY FROM THE DR. LEOVINO MA. GARCIA COLLECTION

**Lao Lianben** (b. 1948)

*Homage To Joya*

signed (lower left and verso) and dated 1981 (verso)

collage, acrylic on canvas

72" x 36" (183 cm x 91 cm)

**P 5,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

Acquired directly from the artist

EXHIBITED

Leon Gallery, *Passion and Compassion: The Lao Lianben Collection of Dr. Leovino Ma. Garcia*, Corinthian Plaza, Makati City, 19 March - 3 April 2024





OM-3

The OM-1



# Bencab's Perennial Muse

## *Painted in the Same Year as His National Artist Proclamation*

by ADRIAN MARANAN

*"I have always been fascinated by drapery, movement, and forms. I was attracted to the real-life Sabel because of the sculptural forms that she exhibited when she would wrap herself with plastic material to protect herself from the elements."*

—BENCAB ON HIS FASCINATION WITH THE DRAPERY, IN THE ARTICLE "BENCAB CREATES FIRST SABEL SCULPTURES," LUXARTASIA, 5 JANUARY 2013

*"When Bencab found his Sabel, his work may have been halfway done, as Baudelaire might construe, but the artist's sheer prodigiousness through the decades, has elevated the subject, so long as the artist is alive, into a continuing and refreshing work-in-progress."*

—CID REYES

Throughout Bencab's six decades of prolific art practice, Sabel has seen constant iterations and reinventions: from the social realist-inspired and lyrical expressionist scavenger, who became the modern-day Sisa when Bencab debuted the subject in his debut solo exhibition at the Gallery Indigo in 1966; to the geometric minimalist version and the abstract expressionist form; and finally, to the elegantly draped woman of the 21st century. Through this woman—who, for Bencab's part, perfectly echoed and embodied the words of the French art critic and poet Charles Baudelaire, "Once an artist has found his ideal subject, his work is halfway done"—the venerable artist found a constant companion to his brush and canvas, one that Bencab had successfully molded into different art currents all the while without losing the subject's essence.

In Sabel, Bencab discovered that it was her cape-like sheets covering her body that invigorated the figure itself. The plastic sheets of the scavenger *Sabel*, which would eventually transform into the drapery mimicking the art of dance, serve as the foundation for whatever style Sabel was cast into. It was through Sabel that Bencab finally integrated his equal fascinations with the drapery, movement, and forms.

When Bencab was bestowed the most honorable title of "National Artist for the Visual Arts" in 2006, the citation of his proclamation writes, "Bencab's exploration of form [has found] his way out of the late neo-realism and high abstraction of the sixties to be able to reconsider the potency of figurative expression...."

Indeed, Sabel became the anchor to which Bencab wedded his excellent draftsmanship of the human figure and his constant search for a personal creative idiom. In turn, the "Sabel" of the 21st century, perhaps the most famous and coveted of all his "Sabels," gave Bencab his distinct and identifying mark, his most recognizable work and style. From the plastic sheets and ragamuffin clothes of the earlier Sabels, the quintessential muse was endowed with the classic elegance of the drapery, conferring unto her the gracefulness of dancing.

In this 2006 iteration of Sabel, which Bencab painted two months before he would be proclaimed National Artist, there still exist hints of the plastic sheets that once covered the woman as the artist saw it in the early 1960s in the vicinity of Bambang in Tondo, Manila. However, Bencab's gestural refinement, akin to an abstract expressionist's lyrical dexterity, enriches a layer of buoyant passion. Here, Sabel, the scavenger, is nowhere to be found. Instead, she is a woman of undying charm and beauty, further indicating Bencab's pride in his art, a sense of achievement and well-being.

The Sabel in this work, gifted with the animating and dramatic expressiveness of the drapery, very much evokes Isadora Duncan, the American dancer and choreographer revered as "The Mother of Modern Dance" and whom Bencab explored in his art starting in the late 1990s. In the same vein as Duncan, the work at hand captures the swirls and billows of the pioneering dancer's dress, which is achieved through her spirited dance moves. Bencab emulates this through his brisk strokes.

Bencab once said in an interview with Cid Reyes in April 1978 that he became "fascinated" with the image of Sabel as "she made a terrific image visually." "I thought she made a terrific subject matter for my paintings," Bencab remarked. "She used to gather these plastic sheets and wrap them around her body. They made the most beautiful abstract shapes." And so, Sabel embodied Bencab's never-ending delight in the harmonious wedding of the figure and the drapery. Although Sabel died in 1972, she remains Bencab's consummate exploration of his fascination for the centuries-old art of the drapery and how it endows immortality to one's ephemerality through a sweeping vision of motion and energy.

And since the plastic sheets that once covered Sabel's body have been transformed into a life-inducing and life-animating element that is the drapery, Sabel would live on forever as Bencab's perennial muse.





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**Benedicto Cabrera** (b. 1942)

*Sabel*

signed and dated 2006 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

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

**P 14,000,000**



**Rodel Tapaya** (b. 1980)*Urban Sprawl*

dated 2018

acrylic on canvas

118" x 196 3/4" (300 cm x 500 cm)

**P 5,000,000**

## EXHIBITED

Tang Contemporary Art, *Myths and Truths*, Beijing 2nd space,  
3 November - 15 December 2018Busan Exhibition and Convention (Bexco) Center, *Art Busan 2019*,  
30 May - 2 June 2019The Link, Ayala Center, *Art Fair Philippines 2020*,  
Makati City, 21 - 23 February 2020

**R**odel Tapaya remains as one of the most celebrated and influential Filipino painters of his generation, and a prominent figure in Southeast Asian contemporary art. His work serves as a bridge between past and present, weaving Filipino cultural narratives with contemporary issues to offer compelling commentary on modern life. By drawing deeply from Filipino folklore and pre-colonial myth, Tapaya's paintings resonate with allegorical depth, transforming traditional stories into profound reflections on today's social, political, and environmental challenges.

Tapaya's use of folk aesthetics and mythical characters gives his artwork a unique narrative power, allowing his figures to transcend their origins and speak to universal themes. His intricate compositions merge imagination and reality, history and present-day concerns, creating surreal worlds that hold a mirror to contemporary society. The influence of German Expressionism, as well as the Mexican muralists, is evident in Tapaya's use of vivid color, dense figurative forms, and a flat application of paint, bringing both aesthetic richness and social critique to his work. Tapaya's narratives, often filled with surreal landscapes and symbolic characters, expose the interplay between humankind and nature, underscoring the repercussions of human actions on the environment.

In his exploration of the relationship between scientific truth and Filipino mythology, Tapaya's paintings embody anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss's view that myths operate within us, shaping our perceptions unconsciously. Through these works, Tapaya creates scenes of forests, mountains, and other landscapes that feel both familiar and otherworldly. By juxtaposing ancient mythical elements with contemporary environmental crises, he invites viewers to consider how human ambition and exploitation of nature can lead to disasters—our own "earthquakes." This layered approach illuminates how folklore and myth remain relevant, revealing the timeless nature of these narratives and their resonance with today's ecological and societal issues.



In this visually arresting piece, Tapaya masterfully intertwines elements of Filipino folklore with vivid imagery that speaks to contemporary social issues. The painting is a dense, surreal landscape populated with a variety of symbolic figures and objects—a skeletal animal, masked characters, and figures adorned in traditional garb—all set against a backdrop of contrasting colors and textures. The composition is both chaotic and structured, with flames, barren trees, and floating objects that evoke a sense of tension between destruction and resilience. Tapaya's use of polka dots, bright





colors, and exaggerated features lends a dreamlike quality to the work, emphasizing the duality between myth and reality. Each character seems to hold allegorical meaning, serving as conduits for stories that have roots in ancient Filipino mythology while addressing modern themes like environmental degradation, cultural identity, and human impact on nature. The piece invites viewers to explore the layers of Tapaya's narrative, reflecting on how traditional beliefs continue to shape contemporary life and societal concerns in the Philippines. (*Jed Daya*)

BESIDE. Wall installation of the artwork in Tang Contemporary Art, Myths and Truths, exhibit





**José Joya** (1931 - 1995)*Murmurlo*

signed and dated 1961 (lower right)

oil on canvas

34" x 46" (86 cm x 117 cm)

**P 16,000,000**

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

## LITERATURE

*The Internationalists: Zobel, Joya*. Published to accompany the Leon Gallery exhibition of the same name at Art Fair Philippines 2023. Makati City: Leon Gallery, 2023. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 22.

## EXHIBITED

The Link Ayala Center, *The Internationalists: Zobel, Joya* (Leon Gallery at Art Fair Philippines 2023), Makati City, 17 - 19 February 2023

In 1961, Jose Joya reached another milestone in his artistic career. Awarded with the Republic Cultural Heritage Award (the precursor to the Order of National Artists, an award with which he too was conferred posthumously in 2003), this explosive opening to this decade signaled the magnificent upturn trajectory that Joya's career would take him as he ushered in a new wave of abstract paintings.

This 1961 *Murmurlo* echoes the resolution Joya had reached when he was caught in the crossfire between his traditionalist mentors and modernist peers. He married the two extremes, creating abstractions that mimicked flow and fluidity that spoke to the conservative senses. Here, he sought not to destroy his image as many Western abstractions tend to do; instead, in a true Asian fashion, he molded them and enhanced its conflicting elements to create a truly cohesive piece that spoke not only to the wholeness of the image that it created but also the parts that it is constituted of.

"Jose Tanig Joya distinguished himself by creating an authentic Filipino abstract idiom that transcended foreign influences," says his National Artist citation, "and constitutes an important landmark in the development of Philippine modern art to which he infused new energies, concepts, and values in line with the theme of nationhood." (Hannah Valiente)









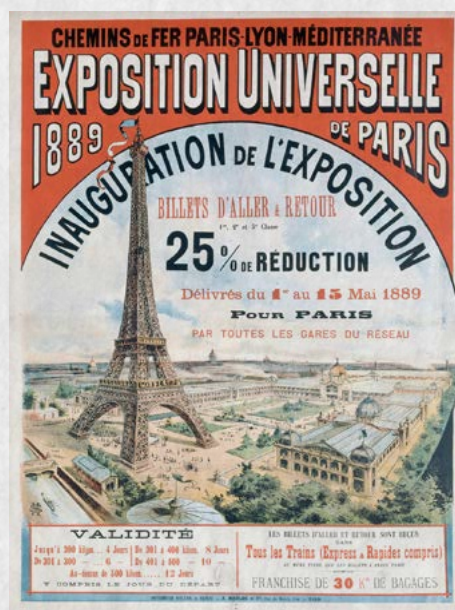
# THE PORTRAIT OF RAIMUNDA CHUIDIAN ROXAS

## *Older Sister of the Legendary Tycoon Telesforo Chuidian*

by ISIDRA P. REYES

In 1890, at the time Félix Resurreccion Hidalgo painted the *Portrait of Raimunda Chuidian Roxas*, Hidalgo's name was already firmly established in Europe. Hidalgo had just scored a triumph at the 1889 Paris Exposition Universelle with his *La Barca de Aqueronte* which had just won a Silver Medal and would win even more medals at the *Exposicion General de las Filipinas* in Madrid and a Gold Medal at the *Exposicion Internacional de Bellas Artes* in 1893. An engraving of his portrait, *La Parisienne*, graced the cover of Madrid's *La Ilustración Española y America*, in 1889 and affluent European art patrons and Filipino expatriates would visit his studio at No. 65 Boulevard Arago in Paris to commission paintings, mostly portraits of themselves. Among his most renowned portraits were those of prominent Filipino personalities and their wives and daughters, some of whom were residents or frequent travelers to Paris. Among such Filipino personalities who have graced Hidalgo's canvases were Teresa Tuason, Benito Tuason Legarda, Madam (José?) Ramirez, Madame Eduardo Boustead (mother of Nelly Boustead), Pedro Paterno, and his beautiful wife, Luisa Piñeyro y Merino, whose portraits were highlights of León Gallery's *The Ilustrado Trove* auction in 2022.

*The Portrait of Raimunda Chuidian Roxas* (1890) depicts a distinguished-looking middle-aged lady with Oriental features, dressed in a rich striped silk taffeta dress with a ruffled collar in sheer black fabric, with an ornate brooch on her bosom, her upswept wavy hair topped by a headpiece in black fabric. On one hand, she holds a folded fan. Her bearing bespeaks the assured look of one born to great wealth.



Poster, Exposition Universelle de Paris, 1889. Source: Wikipedia

### Who was Raimunda Chuidian Roxas?

Raimunda Chuidian y Chuaquico was born in San Pedro Makati (presently the City of Makati) on 15 March 1846 to José Antonio Chuidian (hispanized from the original Chuy Dian), and Silveria Chuaquico. José Antonio Chuidian, born circa 1820, was said to have originated from Xiamen (formerly Amoy) or Shanghai, China and emigrated to the Philippines when he was still a young boy of twelve in 1832 as can be traced from the first document signed by him dated 13 September 1832. After he had set up business in Manila, José Antonio converted to Catholicism and married a Chinese mestiza named Silveria Chuaquico (born in the Philippines circa 1825), a daughter of a long-established Chinese mestizo family in Manila. They had four children, Roberta, Candelaria (1844-1934), Raimunda (1846-1905), and Telesforo Antonio (1855-1903).



# THE DUCHESS OF THE RUE DE BABYLONE



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**Félix Resurrección Hidalgo** (1855 - 1913)

*Portrait of Raimunda Chuidian Roxas*

signed and dated 1890 (lower right)

oil on canvas

28 1/2" x 22 1/2" (72 cm x 57 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection

**DOCUMENTATION**

Black & white photo of Portrait of Raimunda Chuidian Roxas.

Source: Chuidian Family Archives courtesy of Carmen Chuidian Chao & Patrick Chuidian

**P 8,000,000**



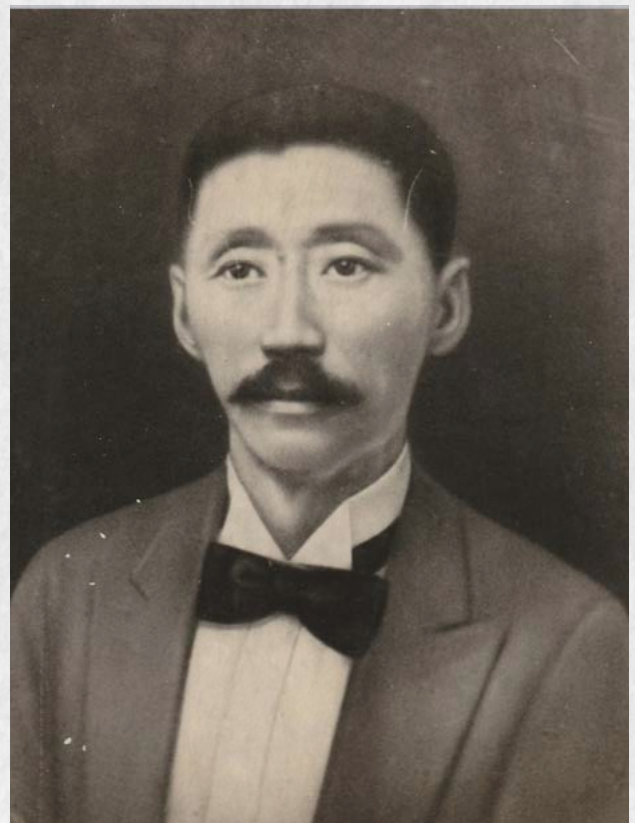
José Antonio later purchased a store in Escolta, Manila from a Basque merchant and named it La Puerta del Sol, which Ramon Zaragoza described in its heyday as "the most elegant and complete department store in the Philippines, specializing in silverware, chandeliers, household goods, clothes, toys, perfumes, etc.," all the accouterments of fine living enjoyed by the upper class of 19th century Manila. Apart from running La Puerta del Sol, José Antonio also traded sugar, coffee, rice, tobacco, and abaca. Upon his demise sometime between 1869-1871, his wife, Silveria, and son, Telesforo Antonio took over the running of his businesses

The burden of taking over his father's businesses fell mostly on the shoulders of the young Telesforo Antonio Chuidian, born in Binondo, Manila on 5 January 1855, who was still a student at the Ateneo Municipal in Intramuros, Manila when his father passed away. Among his classmates at the Ateneo Municipal were Benito Cosmé Legarda y Tuason, who became Resident Commissioner of the Philippines to the U.S. Congress, and León Ma. Guerrero y Leogardo, the Philippines' first licensed pharmacist. To attend to his father's businesses, the young Telesforo quit school. He had his widowed mother, Silveria, three sisters, Raymunda, Candelaria, and Roberta, and later as many as nineteen children to support. While he was said to have fathered nineteen children, only eleven could be accounted for from three different women: his legal wife, a Dutch-Spanish mestiza named Juana Urbano, a Spanish mestiza named Dolores Cerrudo, and Sofia Lopez, a niece of José Rizal.

At twenty two, he was already an established businessman. Thereafter, he ventured into more businesses, establishing a business partnership together with his uncle, the lawyer Manuel Buenaventura, and sisters, Candelaria Chuidian de Marcaida of San Jose de Navotas and Raymunda Chuidian de Roxas of 21 Calle San Vicente, Binondo, Manila. The partnership was named Chuidian, Buenaventura, y Cia. for purposes of exporting sugar, coffee, rice, abaca, and indigo dye, as per incorporation papers dated 29 December 1882 found at the National Archives. The partnership likewise provided crop loans to the coffee growers of Lipa and the sugar planters of Balayan and Nasugbu, all in the province of Batangas, with land as collateral. As most of these landowners could not repay their loans, Telesforo and his



Portrait of Telesforo Chuidian y Chuaquico. Oil on canvas. Félix Martinez y Lorenzo, late 19th century. Source: Filipinos in the Gilded Age, León Gallery



Portrait of Telesforo Chuidian y Chuaquico. Source: NHCP Collection

business partners were able to acquire at least four large haciendas in Batangas. To expand their real estate portfolio, they invested in valuable real properties in Manila.





Chuidian Family Portrait. Shown in the photo are Telesforo Chuidian, Telesforo's children, Telesforo's legal wife, Juana Urbano, and sisters, Candelaria, Raimunda, and Roberta. Source: Colorized photo courtesy of Yvette Christine de Marcaida Poe, a descendant of Candelaria Chuidian de Marcaida..

Telesforo lived in style. A portrait made by the Filipino artist, Felix Martinez y Lorenzo dated circa late 19th century depicts a flattering image of Don Telesforo Antonio Chuidian in formal, European fashion with perfectly groomed hair, mustache, and beard. Shown as one of the highlights of Léon Gallery's *Filipinos in the Gilded Age* landmark exhibit in 2016, the portrait was purchased by Don Telesforo's descendant, Ricky Chuidian Delgado, to keep this valuable memento of their patriarch as a family treasure. Dr. Laureano Viado, an eminent Filipiniana aficionado, noted having seen Don Telesforo grow his fingernails, which in Chinese culture was a symbol of preeminence in high society. He developed a liking for Arabian horses and was a prominent member of the elite Manila Jockey Club. He was also one of the founders of the Club Filipino and became its first president. According to José Alejandrino, Don Telesforo's son-in-law, José Rizal modeled the character, Kapitan Tiago, in his novel, *Noli Me Tangere*, after Don Telesforo himself.

Don Telesforo was also one of the top financiers of the Philippine Revolution together with Don Mariano Limjap, Crisanto de los Reyes, and Pedro Pablo Roxas y Castro. Upon the outbreak of the Revolution, Don Telesforo was implicated, arrested, and imprisoned in Fort Santiago for about six months. His businesses suffered. However, upon the establishment of the First Philippine Republic, he was given a hand in financial matters and was named a member of the Commission on Paper Money and together with Don Pedro Paterno and Mariano Limjap, were authorized by the government to sign the paper bills issued by the Republic.

On 4 July 1899, he was appointed *jefe de administracion de 1.a clase* with the right to use the signs and insignias of a brigadier general. Upon the collapse of the First Philippine Republic, he was imprisoned anew, this time by the American authorities but was released not long after.

While the Roxas family's origins, as discussed in Salvador Araneta's essay, "The Roxas Lineage," published in the book, *1030 R, Hidalgo: The Family*, is "shrouded in the mists of time," with origins going as far back as the first century after the discovery of the Philippines "when we find the name Francisco de Rojas, son of Pedro de Rojas and Inés Martinez, a native of Granada who sailed for the Indies in 1527."

Félix Roxas y Fernandez, whose reminiscences of the Roxas family and their elite circle were compiled in the book, *The World of Félix Roxas*, considers their line descended from Antonio Roxas y Ureta as the "poor branch" while those descended from Domingo Roxas y Ureta, namely Margarita Roxas de Ayala, José Bonifacio Roxas, and Mariano Roxas, the forebears of the current Ayala, Zobel, Soriano, and Roxas clans, as the "rich branch."

Belonging to the "poor branch" of the family, some of the children of Antonio Roxas y Ureta, including Félix Roxas y Arroyo, and Felipe Baldomero G. Roxas, benefited from the largesse of their rich Roxas relatives.

Felipe Baldomero G. Roxas was born in San Fernando de Dilao (now Paco), Manila on 29 February 1840. According to his biographical sketch in the book, *Discovering Philippine Art in Spain*, he was orphaned at a young age and was adopted by his grandparents, Antonio Roxas y Ureta and Lucina Arroyo Roxas. At the time of his adoption, his grandparents were already blessed with fifteen children, the older ones of whom were over twenty years older than him. Among his adoptive siblings were the architect, Felix Roxas y Arroyo; Juan Roxas, the father of the unfortunate Francisco Luis Roxas y Reyes who was one of the thirteen martyrs of Bagumbayan and great grandfather of the Archbishop of Reims, Monseigneur Éric Marie de Moulins de Amieu de Beaufort; and Mariano Léon Roxas married to Carmen Gomez de Arce, the parents of Rosa Roxas married





Photo of Sps. Felipe Baldomero G. Roxas and Raimunda Chuidian y Chuaquico. Source: León Gallery & Chuidian Family Archives courtesy of Jaffy Jurado

to Jose Zaragoza de Aranquizna, the parents of Carmen Zaragoza, wife of Don Gregorio Araneta, and Natividad Roxas, wife of Demerio Tuason, among others.

According to Regalado Trota Jose's biographical essay, "Felipe Roxas: The Fine Art of Living Well," published in the book, *1030 R. Hidalgo, Legacy in Art*, the young Felipe obtained his first art lessons at the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura, whose manner of instruction was patterned after that of the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. Its reopening in 1845 was due largely to the efforts of his cousin, Mariano Roxas y Ubaldo (1820-1864), the youngest son of Don Domingo Roxas. Among the school's esteemed students were artists Juan Luna, Félix Resurreccion Hidalgo, Justiniano Asuncion, and Rafael Enriquez. Another cousin, Mariano's older brother, the wealthy businessman and landowner, José Bonifacio Roxas (1818-1880), generously granted Felipe a scholarship to Spain and France. In Madrid, he studied at the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando and was influenced by his mentor, Federico de Madrazo y Kuntz (1815-1894), to specialize in landscapes. Upon moving to Paris, he studied painting and piano. It was in Paris where Felipe found his element and would soon go back to his beloved city.

It is not known exactly how Raimunda Chuidian y Chuaquico met her husband, Felipe Baldomero G. Roxas. But with both the Roxas and Chuidian families owning and managing vast haciendas in Batangas and businesses in Manila, it is not far-fetched to believe that the two met in Batangas or Manila or were matched by their families.

No records have been found of their marriage either. However, on 9 January 1882, their *unica hija*, Maria del Consuelo Felisa Chuidian Roxas, was born, presumably in Manila.

By 1889, Felipe Roxas was back in Paris with his wife, Raimunda, and daughter, Consuelo, in time for the 1889 Exposition Universelle, held from 15 May to 6 November, in celebration of the centenary of the Storming of the Bastille which marked the beginning of the French Revolution. The main attraction was the 330-meter tall Tour Eiffel which stood triumphant over the Champs de Mars. Other attractions were the *Galerie des Machines*, the *Palaces of Fine Arts and Liberal Arts*, the pavilions of participating nations, and Charles Garnier's *History of Human Habitation*.

Félix, Raimunda, and their daughter Consuelo took up residence at 6, Rue de Babylone, in front of the Bon Marché Square in the 7th arrondissement of Paris. As written by Regalado Trota Jose in his essay, "Felipe Roxas: The Fine Art of Living Well," published in the book, *1030 R. Hidalgo, A Legacy in Art*:

"The Rue de Babylone was in a strategic location., being walking distance from the *Musée Rodin*, the *Dôme* and the *Palais des Invalides*, the *Palais et Jardins de Luxembourg*, and the artistic churches of *St. Germain-des-Pres* and *St. Sulpice*. D. Felipe must have been very pleased with his home. Here he started a magnificent collection of books and paintings to which he kept adding by acquiring one or two works of at least two French artists from the annual Salon des Beaux Arts held at the *Champs-Élysées*.

He maintained a regular schedule. Mornings he spent at the Louvre or any of the other nearby museums, especially the Museum of Contemporary Art in the former Musée du Luxembourg (different from the Palais du Luxembourg and located some distance across the river from it.) He enjoyed making copies of the paintings displayed... He also limned works of his own. Afternoons were





Facade, 6, Rue de Babylone, Paris. This was the Paris home of Felipe Baldomero G. Roxas and wife, Raimunda Chuidian Roxas where they entertained friends and family visiting Paris. This was where Felipe died after suffering a cerebral attack in Marseilles. Source: Google Maps

reserved for his piano Lessons, when he could indulge in his favorite composer, Chopin. D.

Felipe's dinners were renowned throughout the Filipino community in Paris, for he was an artist of the kitchen as well as of the studio, He attended all the evening concerts, and was privileged to hear such great musicians as Sarasate and Paderewski.

Félix Roxas, Jr., the son of Architect Felix Roxas y Arroyo, in the book, *The World of Félix Roxas*, gives us glimpses into the life led by Félix Roxas and his wife, Raimunda, while in France.

Felipe Roxas noted that *"the last Filipinos to arrive from Paris were Felipe Roxas, his wife Raymunda Chuidian. This family became popular because of a seven-color parrot which always accompanied them on their trips and attracted attention everywhere they went."*

The most tragic account on Felipe Roxas and his wife, Raimunda Chuidian, can be found in the article entitled, "Madame Bertrami:"

"When the Philippine mission to Washington, D.C. in 1898 failed, one of its members, Dr. José Lozada (of Batangas), was the last to arrive in Paris. ...Lozada was very well entertained by Felipe Roxas and his wife, Raymunda Chuidian, who went as far as to accompany him to Marseilles with their daughter, Consuelo. He

decided to set sail from that port to Hongkong on board one of the ships of the Messageries. On the day of his departure, Don Felipe invited him for lunch to the most famous French restaurant of Marseilles, the Chez Passot, which specialized in fish and seafoods.

No one could imagine the melodramatic incident that would occur there. During dessert, when everyone appeared to be having a good time, the host suddenly felt ill, stammered, and fell over the table. Being a physician, Dr. Lozada gave Don Felipe every form of help, which was in vain because the victim of cerebral attack did not respond to any treatment. Don Felipe lost consciousness and could not recognize anybody. Dr. Lozada's ship was leaving at four that afternoon; he had his ticket and baggage properly taken care of. And much as he disliked to, he had to bid goodbye to that sorrowful family who, aside from being far away from home, found itself suddenly in that hopelessly critical situation. After seeking the services of one of the most renowned doctors of the city, the wife decided to return to Paris and sent a telegram to Felipe Agoncillo, an intimate friend. On the following day, my friends and I met the grieving family at the railroad station. Don Felipe was still alive, but had only a few hours to live. He died in less than 24 hours at his residence on No. 6, Rue de Babylone, in front of the Bon Marché Square.

A record of his death was found in the French civil register which stated that Felipe Roxas died on 14 April 1899 at his 6 Rue de Babylone residence in Paris. The record further stated that his was born to Bonifacio Genaro Roxas and Maria Gatchalian and was married to Raymunda Chuidian



and was fifty years of age. He was awarded a Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur. The other entries are not very legible.

His remains were temporarily buried at the Cimitière de Bagneaux, located southwest of Paris. His remains were later exhumed for transport and final burial at San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila where his grave marker could still be found with the following inscription:

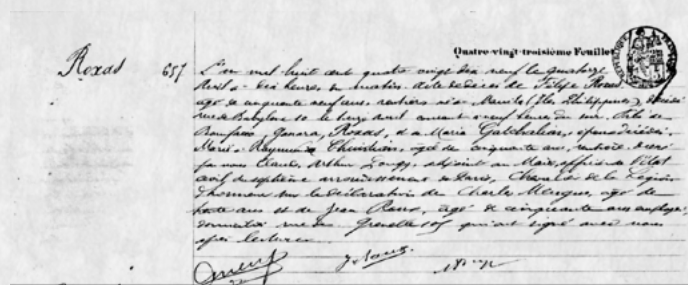
R.I.P.  
 FELIPE BALDOMERO G. ROXAS FALLECIO EN PARIS  
 EL 13 DE ABRIL DE 1899  
 A LA EDAD DE 59 AÑOS

It is not known if his widow, Raymunda, and daughter, Consuelo, left Paris immediately after Felipe's passing. What is known from accounts of E. Arsenio Manuel in his biographical entry for Telesforo Chuidian in his *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, Vol. 1 is as follows: "In Feb. 1901, he (Telesforo Chuidian) sailed for Europe together with four children (Adela, Horacio, Telesforo, and Roberto)) and returned in Nov. 1902. He died the following year (11 April 1903) of tuberculosis of the larynx which he contracted in Fort Santiago (where he was incarcerated twice). His remains, which were first buried at the Cementerio General del Paco as stated in his 5th Death Anniversary announcement in *El Renacimiento*, are in the family mausoleum in Cementerio del Norte, Manila.

Did Raymunda and Consuelo stay in Paris for a few years after Felipe's death and only sailed back to Manila together with Don Telesforo in November 1902? Did Don Telesforo and his children stay with Raymunda and Consuelo at 6, Rue de Babylone during their almost two-year sojourn to Paris?

Raymunda passed away at age 59 years not long after her brother's death. Her grave marker could be found at the Sala de Profundis of the San Agustin Church with the following inscription:

RAYMUNDA CHUIDIAN Y DE ROXAS  
 59 AÑOS + 4 ABRIL 1905  
 TU HIJA



Entry, death record of Felipe Baldomero G. Roxas who passed away at his Paris family home at 6, Rue de Babylone after suffering a cerebral attack while dining at Chez Passot in Marseilles. Source: heritage.com



Tomb marker of Raymunda Chuidian y de Roxas, Sala de Profundis, San Agustin Church, Intramuros, Manila. She passed away on 4 April 1905 in Manila two years after the passing of her brother, Don Telesforo. Source: Chuidian Family Archives, courtesy of Patrick Chuidian and Jaffy Jurado

Surrounding a figurine of an angel was the inscription:

“CREO EN LA RESURRECCION  
 DE LA CARNE” (I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE  
 BODY/FLESH)

Felipe and Raimunda's *unica hija*, Maria del Consuelo Felisa Chuidian Roxas, born on 9 January 1882, followed the footsteps of her father, Felipe, and became a painter. She married a Spaniard, Salvador Gómez Sanchez, on 10 October 1922 in Manila.

An Annotated List of Known Art Works of Felipe Roxas appended to Regalado Trota Jose's essay, "Felipe Roxas: The Fine Art of Living Well," published in *1030 R. Hidalgo Legacy in Art*, lists six artworks done by Felipe Roxas in France, five





Don Telesforo Chuidian Mansion, San Miguel, Manila. Originally designed by Architect Félix Roxas as the home of Don Enrique Barretto y Ycaza, it was later acquired by Don Telesforo and housed the San Miguel Brewery.  
Source: Chuidian Family Archives



Don Telesforo Chuidian's House, Balayan, Batangas. Source: Derrick Gerardo Manas & Ver Bayaborda, History of Nasugbu FB Group



Black & white photo of Portrait of Raimunda Chuidian Roxas.  
Source: Chuidian Family Archives courtesy of Carmen Chuidian Chao & Patrick Chuidian

of which were in the collection of Consuelo Roxas Chuidian de Gomez, and one which belonged to the collection of Enrique Zobel. It is possible that the painting at hand, *Portrait of Raimunda Roxas* by Félix Resurreccion Hidalgo, signed and dated 1890, was brought home by Raimunda and her daughter, Consuelo, upon their return to Manila from Paris sometime in 1902 and may have been passed on to family members. Though it is not in the catalogue of paintings by Félix Resurreccion Hidalgo published in Alfredo Roces' *Félix Resurreccion Hidalgo & The Generation of 1872* (1995), a black and white photo of the portrait exists in the Chuidian Family Archives and was shared with the author by family members. Although the family knew that Raimunda was the subject of the portrait, they had no information—until now—on the portrait's artist or its date which can only be seen when one examines the actual painting or a high resolution photo of it.

Just like the *Portrait of Don Telesforo Chuidian y Chuaquico* (late 19th century) by Félix Martinez y Lorenzo which was deemed lost and resurfaced in León Gallery's *Filipinos in the Gilded Age* exhibit and auction, the resurfacing of Félix Resurreccion Hidalgo's *Portrait of Raimunda Chuidian*

*Roxas* must be another cause for celebration of Raimunda's descendants who have been most generous in sharing information about their Abuelita Raimunda and their fascinating family history.

The author would like to extend her thanks to the Chuidian family, especially Carmen Chuidian Chao, Patrick Chuidian, Charisse Chuidian, Menchu Eleizegui Laureano, Yvette Christine de Marcaida Poe, and Jaffy Jurado for their valuable help by providing information, documents and photographs which gave life to the story of Raimunda Chuidian Roxas. And to the descendants of Raimunda, many thanks for your help.



# Manansala's Parisian Period of 1950-51

## An Artist In Search of a Pure Creative Expression

by ADRIAN MARANAN

*"I like to think that my stay in Paris is the most alive segment of my life. And my life in Paris began at the receiving end of kindness and hospitality. It is only through such routes that a foreigner can feel at home in Paris, through kindness, friendliness, respect, and hospitality, of which the Parisien abounds.*

*"I had a number of friends in Paris, and it was with a kind heart and a warm wisdom that they led me into the inner corridors of the true and finer aspects of living in Paris. And in such secure atmosphere, my sensitivity was sharpened, my sense of observation rendered acute, my emotions screwed tight, attuned, not only to the purpose for which I was sent to Paris, but also to the artistic climate that is most invigorating to the creative impulses, most prodding to the development of new approaches, and fresher lines of endeavor in the rediscovery of the elements of good and fine art. Not along the surface, and therefore mildly superficial elements, but more of the profound, the deeper, and penetrating elements that strike at the marrow of vital sources from which great art springs."*

—VICENTE MANANSALA'S REMINISCENCES ON HIS "PARISIAN PERIOD" OF 1950-51, EXCERPT FROM THE ESSAY "MANANSALA ON PARIS," PUBLISHED IN ROD. PARAS-PEREZ'S "MANANSALA: NUDES" (1989)

This early work by Manansala from his Parisian Period of 1950-51 shows the modernist maestro bridging the gap between his academic past and his neo-realist inclination, the distillation of the figure yet retaining its humanistic essence. This painting had recently been rediscovered in a private collection in the South of France, which Manansala visited during his Parisian sojourn as evidenced by a watercolor work depicting the scenic island of Port-Cros, now home to a national park.

### Manansala's "Identity Crisis" of the Early '50s

At the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Banff in Alberta, Canada in 1949, Manansala felicitously had his first brush with Cubism through Joe Plaskett. In his all-important monograph on Manansala, Rod. Paras-Perez notes that the artist's initial dabble into Cubism while in Canada would take hold of his artistic vision, albeit gradually.

"Manansala left Canada without having done enough cubist landscapes akin to Joe Plaskett's," Paras-Perez writes. "But the germ of a vision was already in him. There was exasperation in his inability to produce a body of works in the newfound direction. He knew with certitude that future paintings would be touched by the vision."

Manansala's primary luminary, Botong Francisco, and his style would still take hold of his identity. He would then admit in a 1973 interview with Cid Reyes that not only did he emulate the essence of Botong's style, but also the "feeling." However, this influence disturbed Manansala, as he was now in his middle age and still unable to master a style of his own. Also, the Filipino modernists' resolve to break away from the Amorsolo tradition was only getting more intense, further spurred by the destruction brought by the war. Manansala had a "creative identity crisis." Aside from casting away his "Botong-ness," he had to find a way to bridge his partiality for figurative painting—honed at the UP School of Fine and shaped to modernity by Botong's influence—and his newfound experience of total abstraction that is Cubism.



## A Filipino Boursier in The City of Lights

In September 1950, the French Government awarded Manansala the privilege of being a boursier or scholar at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts of the University of Paris. He became the first Filipino to be accorded such distinction. The scholarship, which was secured by Jacques Grobois of the French international news agency Agence France-Presse from the French government, was originally given to H.R. Ocampo, who sadly declined it as he was his family's breadwinner. It was then given to Manansala, whose plane tickets were paid for by Pura Villanueva-Kalaw.

Manansala came under the artistic guidance of venerable masters, including the cubists Fernand Leger and Andre Lhote, the great Fauve Maurice de Vlaminck, and the French modernist Jean Lombard. He also frequented the *Lapin a Gill*, the famous Montmartre cabaret once frequented by the likes of Picasso, Braque, and Matisse.

An interesting footnote in Manansala's Parisian sojourn is that unlike other artists, he relatively did not experience major financial struggles. Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, in her *Weekly Women's Magazine* article titled "One Year of the PAG," writes that "Manansala...who studied and observed in Paris...sold every painting he produced in that discriminating city." This ease of financial burden was also assisted by the pension grant given to Manansala by the Roseville College in Sampaloc, Manila before he left.

## In Paris, Manansala's Creative Core Was Shaken

In the former global art capital, until everything else shifted to New York, Manansala found dynamic solace. In fact, he himself said that his stay in Paris was "the most alive segment of my life." He visited museums, such as the Louvre, trying to uncover the feeling of each artwork he saw, rather than looking at what technique was used.

In Paris, his distinct Cubist identity began to be solidified through his studies with Leger. But it was the French painter Gen Paul, dubbed "The Last Great Painter of Montmartre," that greatly influenced Manansala.

Manansala did not escape the spellbinding charm of hilly Montmartre—the heart and soul of bohemian Paris that birthed the great styles of Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism and a place once called home by van Gogh, Braque, and Picasso among others. In his reminiscences, Manansala raved on Montmartre's "exuberant air of freedom and tolerance." It was in this place that he befriended Gen Paul, whom he fortuitously met at a café and had a chat with (Manansala recounts that he did not recognize Gen Paul at first until a friend came and slapped him on the shoulder, saying it was the person whom he wanted to meet since his arrival in Paris.).

"[Gen Paul] used to invite me to his atelier, and I talked to him and watched him while he worked, and then he would haunt the cafes of Montmartre and talk about things most intimate to artists and painters," Manansala recounts. "[In him], I found again the definitions of true art."

Manansala continues, "I spent long hours listening to him talk, or watching him work, and always, in many eloquent ways, he projected that importance of deliberate persistence to search for the true expression, the true condition of mind, body, and soul dedicated to the clear approach to beauty, truth, and the basic and significant."

Through Gen Paul, Manansala arrived at a consequential endeavor, which, in his own words, is "to search for the true and pure expression."



OPPOSITE PAGE: Manansala painting the streets of Paris, especially the *Lapin a Gill* area. Photo and caption from the book *Manansala* by Rod. Paras-Perez. ABOVE: Manansala in his Parisian studio. © Manansala by Rod. Paras-Perez; BESIDE: The Maestro Painting Paulo of Lapin a Gill © Manansala by Rod. Paras-Perez;



## *Nude In An Armchair, A Turning Point in Manansala's Career*

This 1950 work titled *Nude in an Armchair* sees Manansala venturing into a resolution. The nude figure was where Manansala wedded his conservative training and flourishing yet still anxious modernist identity.

"For many artists like Manansala, who have been trained in the classical tradition, drawing the human form is still the peak to be scaled, the Mount Everest that unlocks vistas of fine painting," Paras-Perez writes in the book *Manansala: Nudes*. Not only that "it remained for him the ultimate test of good draftsmanship," as Paras-Perez notes, but it "remained his regular affirmation and paean to discipline and virtuosity."

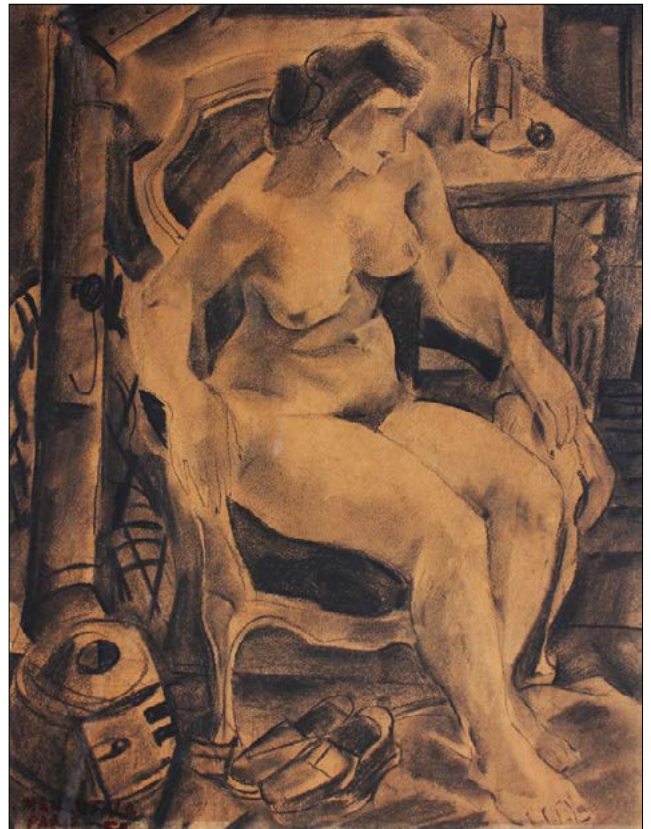
In the work at hand, the background and the flooring are essentially rendered in a cubist configuration. Characteristic of Manansala's future trademark practice, he eschews depth in favor of flatness, in which background and foreground visually merge into one. Notice that the background and flooring are homogenized through the shunning of depth, a fundamental of Cubism. Colors are whimsical, much like in the manner of the Fauvists. This is likely an influence of Vlaminck and of Gen Paul, whose manner of using color is in line with spontaneity and fluidity. This kind of color application also evokes Manansala's dynamic character as a master colorist.

The nude figure stands out from the composition through its relative brightness, her skin luminous, with tinges of white and varying gradations of tones showing Manansala experimenting on a transparent effect. The subject possesses a bold elegance that still evokes Botong's style. Smooth brushwork characterizes the entire composition, consistent with Manansala's classical training.

At the same time, the figure retains the adherence to the human body's form and proportion, the necessity to maintain its naturalistic essence while distorting it at the same time. This not only highlights Manansala's dexterity in the human figure cultivated through his conservative schooling but also a foreshadowing of his future style, in which he preserves the sheer realism of a particular subject through delicate planes of superimposed transparency, a reminder of his Neo-Realist identity to fragment and recreate, drawn from the harrowing experiences of the world war and the restoration of humanity amid the ruins.

Manansala certainly knew that to free one's creative mind, one must first subscribe to the traditions to learn how to break them. *Nude in an Armchair* shows Manansala in transition, bridging the gap between his conservative education and his appetite for neo-realist boldness, a harmony among technique, form, and essence, and personal expression, paving the way for his iconic Transparent Cubism.

A charcoal drawing by Manansala, done at the same time frame as the work on offer, was auctioned by Leon Gallery in 2017, depicting the same model, with her hair tied up, sitting in the same chair in the same room. Manansala learned from Gen Paul the importance of experimenting on various expressions until one arrives at the "true and pure expression." Manansala writes, "I have watched him, day after day, work on the linear representation of a model playing with a guitar. Every day, he did the same stint again and again, yesterday's effort a different work from today's and tomorrow's another expression of the same model."



TOP: A sketch by Manansala done around the same time as the work on offer depicting a very similar subject. Leon Gallery, The Kingly Treasures Auction 2017, Lot 73; BOTTOM: Manansala's watercolor painting of Port-Cros in the South of France, the region where the work at hand, *Nude in an Armchair*, was recently rediscovered in a private collection. The watercolor work was auctioned at Leon Gallery in *The Spectacular Mid-Year Auction 2018*, Lot 152.



# Bridging the Gap Between the Conservative and the Modern



108

**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)

*Nude*

signed, dated and inscribed Paris, 1950 (lower left)

oil on wood

22" x 18" (56 cm x 46 cm)

**P 500,000**

PROVENANCE

Saint Pail Auction, *20th Century Art - Design - Street Art*,  
La Colle-sur-Loup, France, 19 May 2024, Lot 107



# The Viscera of Ang Kiukok's Works

## Turning the Ordinary into the Gut-wrenching

*"[Kiukok] can stretch an image without resorting to contrivance or fabrication. Thus, in his paintings, a checkerboard becomes an aerial view of landscapes; a head crowned with thorns, a stopcock; the bones of a forearm, a fish; wings, [a] clipping shears."*

—ESPERANZA BUNAG GATBONTON, THE PRIVATE WORLD OF ANG KIUKOK

Viscerally shocking, the figures in Ang Kiukok's work do not merely embody the emotions they convey – they are the personification of them. Pain, suffering, and terror are almost tangible as one peers into his canvas. Taking after his mentor and professor Vicente Manansala, Kiukok's cubistic inspiration broke down his subjects into jagged, strict shapes.

With *Fish* (1989), Kiukok portrays the body of a fish, splayed open for the viewer to see its bones. There is barely any fanfare on his depiction of the animal – only bare bones and a plain background, drawing to attention the distinct

sense of disquiet and anxiety this image produces. Without anything else to look at, the viewer is forced to look at the fish in its barest qualities, its sharp angle prodding at the viewer's perspective.

Acerbic wit is a staple in the works of Kiukok. He is unafraid to be upfront with angst, overflowing his oeuvre with heavy-headed symbolism and equally heavy subjects. As such, his works become a brutally honest look at his surroundings, his situation, and the world he moves in. (*Hannah Valiente*)

109

**Ang Kiukok** (1931 - 2005)

*Fish*

signed and dated 1989 (upper left)

oil on canvas

24" x 24" (61 cm x 61 cm)

**P 3,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Finale Art File confirming the authenticity of this lot



1962 KOC 89





## Collaboration

**Emmanuel Garibay** (b. 1962)

**Rene Robles** (b. 1950)

*Untitled (Fusion Series)*

signed and dated 2003 (lower left and lower right)

oil on canvas

75" x 104 1/4" (191 cm x 265 cm)

**P 1,000,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank Mr. Emmanuel Garibay for confirming the authenticity of this lot

**R**ene Robles and Emmanuel Garibay are two artists with vastly different art styles; it would have been hard to imagine a piece with the two of them together. Forever the rebel, Robles has questioned art and the role of the artist throughout his career. He was assertive as befits the founder of the art movement "assertionism" whose underlying principle contends that art has the power to assert, transform, and ascend.

"It has spun off as a new art movement—quite ahead of its time—representing a more developed aesthetic, a bold style and strong, unique composition," writes his website.

On the other hand, Emmanuel Garibay's art draws heavily on his keen sociopolitical consciousness. A known name in the Philippine social realism circle, Garibay portrays ordinary people in varying senses of political, religious, and social complexity.

"It is the richness of the poor that I am drawn to and which I am a part of, that I want to impart," he once said.

However, this lot, a part of Garibay and Robles's Fusion series, proves well enough that their different art styles mesh well. Each artist proves their essence, asserting and transforming the canvas to truly embody Garibay and Robles both together and alone in their aesthetic.

"Rene Robles' assertionism and Garibay's Realistic paintings were great when fused together, especially because they are very different from each other," Momentous Art writes of this exhibition. Indeed, Garibay and Robles have managed to do what not a lot of artists can – they shared a canvas and managed to shine a light not just on their collective prowess but the individual strengths with which they approached this collaboration. (*Hannah Valiente*)



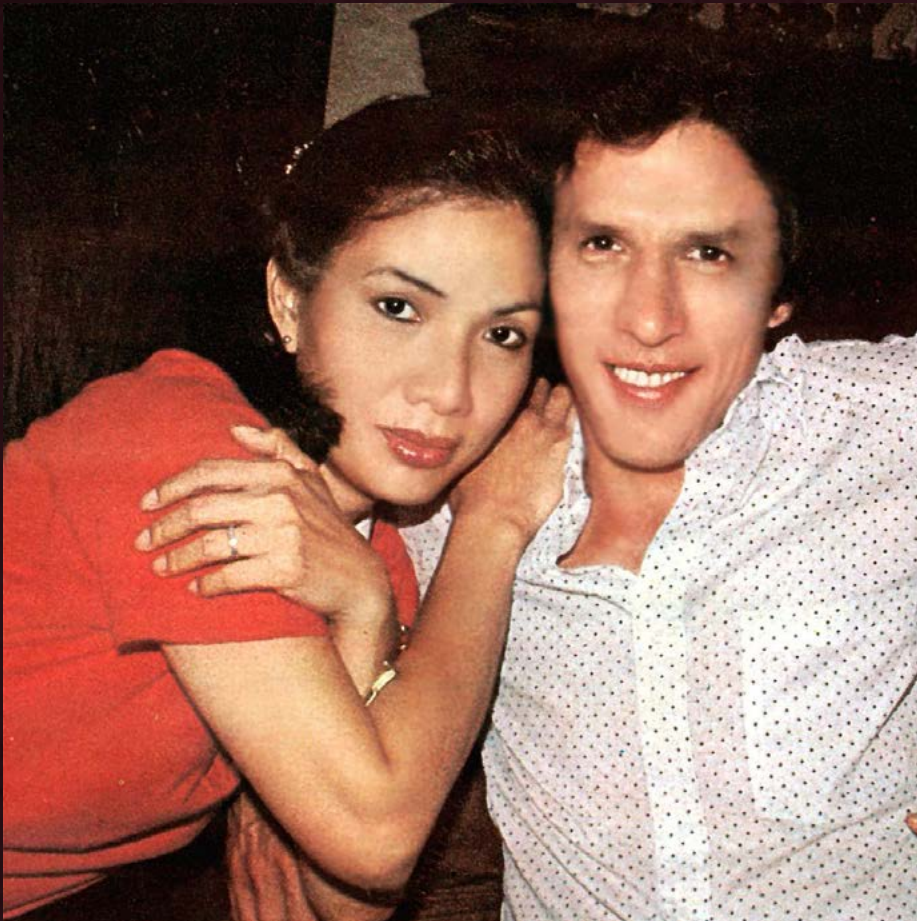






# The Freddie and Beth Webb Collection

*A Treasure Trove Built on  
the Blessings of Love and Gratitude*



Carlos Webb was worried and uncertain of the future. It was World War II and the Japanese forces had just occupied the Philippines. He was concerned for the safety of his family. And rightfully so, he had six children and his wife, Adelaide Nelle Webb, was pregnant with their youngest child. She gave birth later that year to their youngest child. A son they named, Freddie.

Freddie Webb was a natural athlete. He possessed tremendous energy and he ran fast, quite fast. He joined the track team of Colegio de San Juan de Letran. Later he would be offered to tryout for its basketball team. This was the beginning of his love for the sport of basketball, which would later span decades.

In 1962, while playing in a band for a party, he met then debutante Elizabeth “Beth” Pagaspas. The eldest of five sisters, Beth had thoughts of attending college and taking up law. But Freddie had won her over, and they were married the following year. Having six kids between them, Freddie would work while Beth looked after their children.

In 1972, Freddie was selected to join the Philippine Olympic Basketball Team, in Munich. At that time he was also campaigning for a councilor seat in Pasay City. Upon his return, he was greeted by a gathering of well wishers, because even in his absence he had just won a councilor seat for the City of Pasay.





Earlier, the couple had purchased their very first artwork. A black and white watercolor painting by Leon Pacunayen. It was also during this time when they were introduced to various galleries and artists. At one time, even hosting the illustrious Saturday Group, for a session at their home.

Upon retiring from basketball in the late 70's Freddie Webb began his successful coaching career. It was at this time when the couple was impressed upon seeing a painting by Cesar Legaspi. They liked how Cesar Legaspi depicted the male form. They then decided to ask Mr. Legaspi if they could commission a work, but using basketball as the subject. Though Mr. Legaspi was not quite familiar with the sport, he agreed, but said he had to research first. In 1979 they took possession of the work, a one of a kind work by the Philippine National Artist featuring sports as its subject.

Through the years, Freddie and Beth have been fortunate to collect works by various artists, sometimes directly from the artists themselves. After 61 years of marriage, they continually recollect their beginnings, count their blessings, and never forget to say thanks.



**Mario Parial** (1944 - 2013)

*Higantes Festival*

signed and dated 1979 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

**P 300,000**

In the early 1970s, the Cultural Center of the Philippines bestowed upon highly talented young artists what would eventually become the coveted and prestigious Thirteen Artist Award. Among its early recipients are some of what would become the pillars of the Philippine Modernist movement, including the up-and-coming figurative modernist Mario Parial.

Painter, printmaker, and photographer Parial embodied the Filipino aphorism of maximalism. A pioneer in depicting folk religious imagery, he explored native themes like folk imagery, mythical figures, and the common life of the everyday Filipino, just as he did in this 1979 untitled piece. Echoing the typical Filipino festival, Parial's *horror vacui* or fear of empty spaces manifests itself as he fills every nook and corner of the canvas with Filipino elements. He recalls the iconic Higantes Festival with their giant papier-mâché puppets. Around the figures are the festival goers, their joy evident as they paraded their *higantes*. In a typical Mario Parial fashion, no inch of the canvas was left untouched, either by decoration or by color, and it speaks of the artist's skill that none of it looks cluttered or outbalanced. There is a "native expression of unadulterated glee" in his oeuvre, making his works a delight to behold and a catch for many collectors to have. (Hannah Valiente)



TOP: Higantes Festival © Jilson Tiu









112 PROPERTY FROM THE FREDDIE AND ELIZABETH WEBB COLLECTION

**Angelito Antonio** (b. 1939)

*Isang Umaga sa Baryo*  
 signed and dated 1984 (lower right)  
 oil on canvas  
 36" x 36" (91 cm x 91 cm)

**P 500,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank Mr. Marcel Antonio for confirming the authenticity of this lot

Angelito Antonio's oeuvre is a celebration of his unwavering love and affection for his home country. Always present in his canvases are the daily lives and activities of the native folks, such as vendors, fishermen, cockfighters, and market and barrio scenes, a testament to the richness of Philippine culture and tradition, instilling a sense of pride and appreciation for our heritage.

In this untitled oil on canvas work, Antonio exhibited a common scenario in the natives' neighborhood. Two women are seen in the picture; one is crouching down while holding her arm and inside the comfort of her hut, while the other is outside, seemingly passing by while carrying a basket full of freshly harvested bananas. On one side of the image, banana trees are lined up, and inside the house is an altar—a must-have in Filipino households. A red circle also adorned the yellow sky, signifying the sun at its height.

Bearing his signature cubism with fragmented forms and a palette of vibrant colors against shades of yellow, adding darker hues to create shadows and depth, this 1984 piece is undoubtedly crafted by the hands of one of the master painters in Philippine art history. In 1970, Angelito Antonio was included in the inaugural Thirteen Artists Award list by the Cultural Center of the Philippines. *(Jessica Magno)*



**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)*Nude*

signed and dated 1981 (upper left)

charcoal on paper

35 1/2" x 23 1/2" (90 cm x 60 cm)

**P 500,000**

## PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Despite his status as a proficient painter, Vicente Manansala always remembers to return to his roots as an artist. "Drawing is the most important weapon a painter must possess. Without it he is as at a loss," he once said, as quoted by Rod Paras-Perez in *Manansala Nudes*.

This steadfast pursuit for improvement and constant return to the basics led Manansala to the Otis Art Institute in 1967. Already fifty-seven with a veritable list of accolades below his belt Manansala continued his journey for improvement. This refresher invigorated the artist's oeuvre, returning to the image that was the primary interest of classic art and molding it to his unique vision.

As such, this 1981 *Nude* shows the height at which Manansala scaled to stand side by side with the masters of the past. Showing immense knowledge of light and shadows, nude is a way to show the interconnectivity of one's body, its anatomy flowing from one part to another while each part can stand on its own.

"Manansala's nude studies ... thus present a surface flatness with planes hinting at a highly uneven grid," Paras-Perez says. "And suggested within was the figure, with gestural contours or textures. Dark and light definitions tended to be within broadly stated planes often disposed axially. Diagonal movement into the pictorial space were tightly controlled and sparsely used, almost like accents." (*Hannah Valiente*)





**Juvenal Sansó** (b. 1929)

*Jagged Shore*

signed (lower right)

dated 1976

oil on canvas

25 1/2" x 36" (65 cm x 91 cm)

**P 1,200,000**

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

PROVENANCE

Galleria Duemila, Inc

The traumatic events and experiences of the Japanese Occupation led Juvenal Sanso to diverge from his time's prevailing bright, sunlit paintings. Instead, he has a penchant for twisting ordinary images and painting them in his own light and perspective. This resulted in canvases of grotesque and surrealistic imagery, transporting his audience into a contrasting, dark realm

With its hazy, dream-like composition, *Jagged Shore* is a quintessential Sanso landscape. Here, the venerable artist portrayed an unsightly side of his beloved Brittany coast. Under the twilight sky is a thrashed, jagged shore adorned with scattered mossy rock formations, tiny grasses sprouting in-betweens. His masterful brushwork and expert utilization of colors give a detailed depiction of the plants and stones, while the sky and water appear like a smooth blend of colors, captivating the audience with his unique portrayal of the coast.

Indeed, *Jagged Shore* is a testament to Sanso's artistic prowess and mastery of his style. It was painted in 1976, the same year he held a one-man retrospective exhibit and released a portfolio of 10 lithographs on Philippine subjects in commemoration of the Manila World Bank and the International Monetary Fund summit meetings. (*Jessica Magno*)



ABOVE: Juvenal Sanso in his studio





# The Enigmatic Surrealism of Juvenal Sanso's Landscapes







ABOVE: Justin Nuyda © Leon Gallery Archives

115 PROPERTY FROM THE FREDDIE AND ELIZABETH WEBB COLLECTION

## Justin Nuyda (1944 - 2022)

### *Search Mindscape*

signed and dated 1980 (bottom and verso)

oil on canvas

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

**P 1,000,000**

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

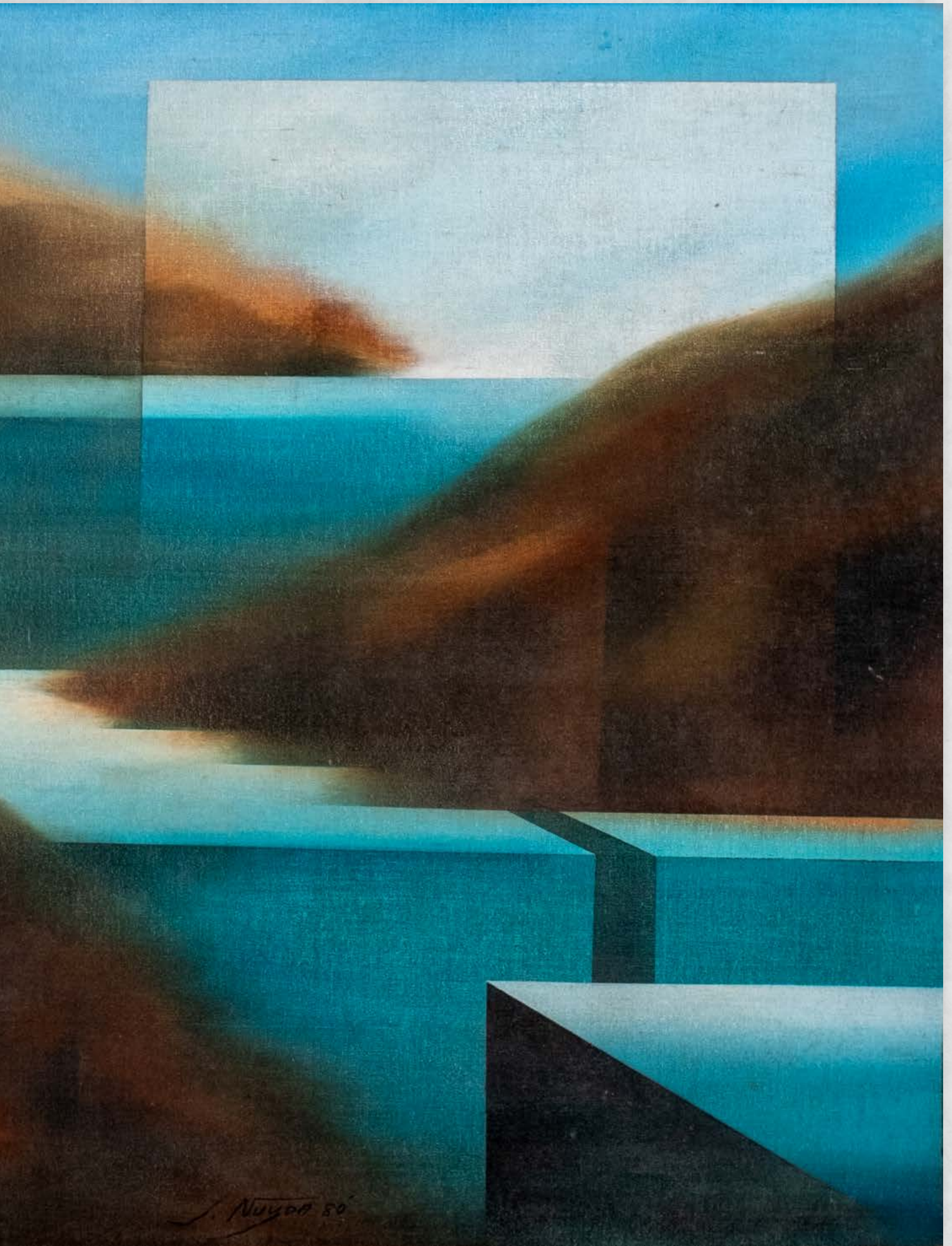
**M**indscape occupies the forefront of Justin Nuyda's oeuvre. A mental world, as per philosophical studies, is a nonmaterial manifestation of one's inner world and is unique and personal to each individual. Contrasting to the physical world whose elements could not be contested, a mindscape is subjective, a place that may be reminiscent of (but not necessarily conform to) various corresponding objects. As such, the result may be a familiar image interlaced with mythical and magical elements.

That is the case in this 1980 *Search Mindscape*. Echoing the mountains Nuyda frequents as an avid lepidopterist, this particular mindscape turns that image on its head by depicting the rolling hills residing on top of three-dimensional blocks. Through this, it cuts through the image already in the process of completion and inserts a unique modernist vision.

"He paints a picture of the sights and captures the sounds within a mind that is not lost, but simply in a quest," his website's artist bio says. "His abstractions are trembling in the brink of reality; from surreal to real, turbulent to placid, and barren to beautiful." (*Hannah Valiente*)











116

**Onib Olmedo** (1937 - 1996)

*Untitled (Lady with Her Jar)*

signed and dated 1970 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

**P 240,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Gisella Olmedo-Araneta confirming the authenticity of this lot.

Expressionist Onib Olmedo first broke into the Philippine art scene in 1971 with his *Singkong Suka* series. Shocking and intense, this exhibition at the La Solidaridad portrayed Onib's fledgling distortion and skewed perspective, leaving the usual gallery viewers shocked and repulsed" as they take in his emaciated figures.

This 1970 *Untitled (Lady with her Jar)* was created a year before Onib's official introduction to the art scene and unlike his pieces before and after, *Lady with her Jar* is much paler and more subdued than his usual oeuvre. The woman he portrays lacks the usual distortion of his figures; instead, she is portrayed more linearly and more realistically. Onib incorporates deep, earth colors, melding the brown of her skin to the color of the clay pot she holds, and even washes the entire canvas with this earthy yellow-brown hue. Her hair blends into the tree behind her, creating a tangible comparison between the woman and Mother Nature.

Even in his undistorted piece, Onib's proletarian sensibility shines. The simplicity with which he portrays this woman shows his deep appreciation for the masses, the sense of hope amidst trial and suffering shining brighter than ever before. (*Hannah Valiente*)



**Tam Austria** (b. 1943)*Mother and Child*

signed and dated 1982 (upper right)

oil on canvas

36" x 24" (91 cm x 61 cm)

**P 220,000**

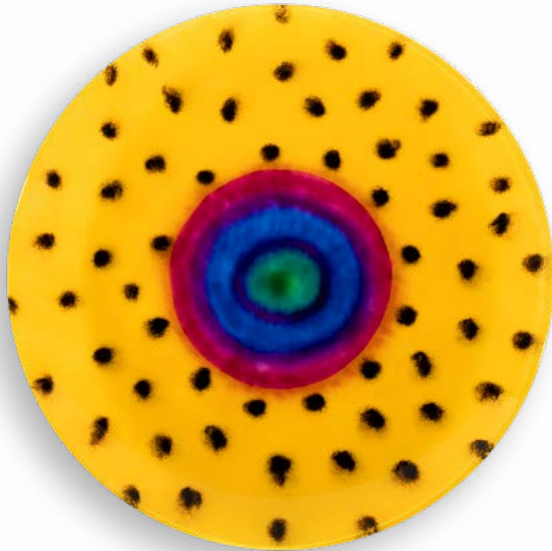
Tam Austria belongs to the long line of Filipino artists who have spent their artistic career enamored with the provincial Philippines. Born and raised in Tanay, Rizal, the beauty of his hometown became his lifelong muse as he went against the grain and continued to persist in the old tradition of realistic genre pieces.

"I don't know. It seems pertinent for me," Austria replied when asked if his art is pertinent for the times.

This loyalty to his subject matter is evident in his untitled 1982 piece. Austria's romanticism is evident as he portrays a mother and her child in the rice fields. She cradles her child close to her chest, her wide-brimmed hat covering both of them from the heat. There is the influence of Cubism in his works – a melding of the traditional and the modern – and yet, the severity of the Cubistic method of shattering an image to its most basic of shapes conflicts with Austria's romantic ideals. As such, this image still retains the figurative visage of the duo with his Cubistic inspiration showing itself through his usage of colors and shapes. Sharp edges and abrupt corners imitate the quality of common Cubist works. In a way, Austria through his works bridges the gap between cubism and romanticism, the provincial and the contemporary as he injects the comforting image of the provincial Philippines with a refreshing shock of modernism. (*Hannah Valiente*)







118

**Pacita Abad** (1946 - 2004)

a.) *Blackberries* (Scandinavian Glassworks Series)

b.) *Lanzones* (Scandinavian Glassworks Series)

c.) *Longans* (Scandinavian Glassworks Series)

signed and dated 2004

H: 1" (3 cm) each

D: 14 1/2" (37 cm) each

**P 100,000**

Leon Gallery wishes to thank Mr. and Mrs. Jack Garrity for confirming the authenticity of this lot



Pacita Abad is not recognized as among the most well-known Filipino artists on the international stage for nothing. Her vibrant, dynamic works that capture the diversity and resilience of the human condition that reflect her experiences as well. Abad's journey into the art world began in the United States, where she initially went to pursue a law degree in San Francisco. However, drawn by an irrepressible creative spirit, she abandoned law to follow her passion for painting—a decision that marked the beginning of a remarkable 30-year career. Her bold choice set her on a path that would take her across continents, immersing herself in different cultures and producing art that speaks to the shared experiences of people worldwide.

During her time at Lindshammar, Abad created an impressive series of 80 unique, hand-painted glass pieces. These 13-inch plates featured her characteristic bold colors and intricate patterns, showcasing her versatility and her willingness to experiment with new media. Abad's glass paintings brought a luminous quality to her signature style, combining her love of color and texture with the transparency of glass. Her work here led to additional glassware products based on her designs, further exemplifying her boundary-pushing creativity and adaptability. Abad's Scandinavian experiences not only expanded her artistic techniques but also underscored her reputation as a groundbreaking artist, whose bold expressions of cultural diversity continue to inspire collectors and enthusiasts across the world. (*Jed Daya*)





119

**Federico Aguilar Alcuaz** (1932 - 2011)

*Untitled (Idealized View/Landscape)*

signed and dated 1973 (lower left)

oil on canvas

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

**P 500,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Christian M. Aguilar confirming the authenticity of this lot

**1973** found contemporary artist Federico Aguilar Alcuaz roaming the streets of Europe. With exhibitions in the Netherlands, Austria, and Spain, among others, Aguilar Alcuaz's European (specifically Spanish) inspiration blossomed in that period, with that inspiration evident in his 1972 *House View*.

In loose, flowy brush strokes, Aguilar Alcuaz portrays the view outside the window of a house that overlooks the city. The sky and the seas merge on the horizon, with the little houses dotting the roads to and from the town. "[His] Spanish landscapes and cityscapes are neither run-of-the-mill pastoral scenes imbued with ethical profundity nor based from real-life settings," his monograph from Crownplas Museum states, "but culled from memory and emotion for a particular city and environs." Indeed, *House View*, more than anything, evokes a quiet sense of nostalgia, a comfort that a morning spent in a childhood home brings. (*Hannah Valiente*)



# Amorsolo's Post-War Hopes of Prosperity and Abundance

When liberation happened in the early months of 1945, the nation was in a frenzy; there was the constant question of whether to survive and push forward to living a hopeless (and godless) life or spiral down along with the whirlwind of destruction. There was an uncanny haze filled with the still resounding remnants of heavy artillery and bombs, the haunting memories of those who tragically lost their lives to the war, the ruins of irreplaceable heritage, and the fears and anxieties of a people who had lost their morals and morale amid the scramble for survival.

*Everything, and everyone,  
was in absolute uncertainty.*

When the war unfortunately struck, painting commissions significantly lessened for Filipino artists, including Fernando Amorsolo. Manila's *crème de la crème*, including the Zobel de Ayalas, the Aranetas, the Vargases, the Madrigals, all of whom were Amorsolo's top clients at the time, restrained in art collecting, fearing for the uncertainty of their cherished troves amid the impending destruction. Furthermore, the war made scarcity a norm, taking a toll on Amorsolo's much-needed painting materials.

In his landmark monograph on the artist, critic Alfredo Roces details of an incident, in which "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."

However, for Amorsolo, his brush and paint became his unfailing companions to the precariousness of the war—and became instruments of cathartic healing for the scarred artist. His daughter, Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo, said in a recent interview with Leon Gallery, "Papa said, "There is no single moment that I remember that I don't want to paint or draw. That was his passion that he kept on [painting and] drawing."

Even amid the violence, Amorsolo kept his art closer than ever, resolute in drawing and painting the horrors his countrymen were all helplessly facing.

By the war's end, Amorsolo labored to regain his life and living. "While Manileños in 1945 were picking up pieces to start life again, Amorsolo parlayed his artistic skill for needed cash and US army goods by doing quick sketches of GIs," Roces writes in the all-important monograph on the artist. "His quick eye and sure pencil served him through those "honky tonk" days right after the war."

Once again, Amorsolo depicted the peace and idyll of his beloved countryside in his canvas. But this time, it was not anymore in the context of a renewed sense of *Filipinismo* amid the relentless surge of Americanization and the optimistic anticipation for the peaceful transition into becoming a fully sovereign nation. Amorsolo sought to capture an image of the not-so-distant past as mirrors reflecting that poignant yet tender hope for a new dawn.

This petite market scene from 1945, painted in the immediate aftermath of the war, encapsulates a hopeful return to normalcy in the face of physical and moral destruction. The market serves as a metaphor for prosperity, its hustle and bustle evoking regaining the elusive path towards progress through the rebuilding of a reinvigorated sense of solidarity in the community.

Notice in the work how Amorsolo intended to position the lighting in the upper left side of the work for it to cast its luminosity onto the face of the woman, acting as a metaphor for Inang Bayan encapsulating a nation's shared aspirations for a renaissance, a homecoming to another promising day of life-sustaining pursuits. (*Adrian Maranan*)



ABOVE: An earlier rendition of Market Scene, painted by Amorsolo in ca. 1942 at the height of the Japanese Occupation. An interesting narrative is achieved when contrasted with the 1945 Market Scene, painted in the immediate days of the liberation period. Leon Gallery, The Kingly Treasures Auction 2023, Lot 90





120

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Market Scene*

signed, dated 1945 and inscribed "Manila" (lower right)

oil on canvas

15 1/2" x 20 1/2" (39 cm x 52 cm)

**P 4,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA



# Fascinating Flora

## *Nena Saguil's Captivating Floral Still-life*



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

Simplicia "Nena" Laconico Saguil (1914 - 1994) was a pioneering Filipino modern artist. In 2006 President Arroyo posthumously awarded Saguil a Presidential Medal of Merit. She was known as a feminist, a mystic and a recluse. She spoke of being a lonely child in a large family. Not wanting to attend Catholic school, as her conservative parents wished her to, Saguil instead studied art at the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts where the artist Anita Magsaysay was a classmate. Saguil was awarded a certificate in painting in 1933.

It was not surprising that after World War II, Saguil was able to complete her studies at the University of the Philippines. She found herself in the circle of Hernando R. Ocampo and his many artist friends. During this period Saguil became increasingly interested in modern art, and was attracted to the work of Pablo Picasso. She completed her Bachelors Degree in 1949, earning an Award of Excellence. Her works of this period include a satirical self portrait entitled |"Vanity" showing a woman preening before a mirror, a take-off on a work by Monet. She also produced a number of floral still lifes painted with a light, Impressionist touch. One of these, dated 1950, is in this exhibition. Saguil eschews traditional composition. Her flowers are strewn on a surface seemingly in disarray. She barely attempts to be botanically correct, but the blooms appear to include frangipani or plumeria, hibiscus, and lilies. Some colors and textures hint of languorous softness; some suggest robust resilience. In the language of flowers, plumeria symbolizes "waiting for love"; they lie beside what

appear to be bluebells, which may symbolize humility and love. The hibiscus symbolizes "delicate beauty" and "perfect bride". Interestingly, the orange lilies, which may symbolize "hatred" are sustained in a glass full of water. They are surrounded by a multitude of orange blooms rendered with slashed fiery impasto, which lie fuming beside an empty earthenware pot, which may allude to virginity and solitary life.

We have no evidence that Saguil was conversant with the Victorian language of flowers. But was she subconsciously expressing the frustrations of her 36 years of life? She was not that successful in her relationships, and she maintained the myth that she was 10 years younger than she really was. Nevertheless, this still-life is evidence of her efforts to break from the academic mold and that in her art she lay in the full embrace of modernism. At the time this painting was done, around 1950, Saguil became active in the newly formed Philippine Art Gallery (P.A.G.) run by Lyd Arguilla, serving as a volunteer watching over the gallery. Saguil exhibited there and became associated with other notable Philippine modernists.

In 1956 Saguil moved to Paris to further her studies at the Ecole des Artes Americaine. Her work often contains a sense of spirituality and religious feeling, in which she subsumed her earlier aspirations and desires. Her inner landscapes or "inscapes" represented her journey from the Material World to the Spiritual. But her later works lack the vibrant energy and intriguing contradictions of her early paintings.





121

**Nena Saguil** (1924 - 1994)

*Still Life with Flowers*

signed and dated 1950 (lower right)

oil on canvas

22" x 28" (56 cm x 71 cm)

**P 1,200,000**

PROVENANCE

León Gallery, *The Spectacular Mid Year Auction 2017*,  
Makati City, 6 October 2017, Lot 133

(Curator's Note : We have the rare privilege of presenting an essay by the renowned scholar and collector Ramon N. Villegas on this very work by the mid-century modern, Nena Saguil.)

\*THIS LOT IS SOLD TO BENEFIT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MANILA





122

**Jigger Cruz** (b. 1984)

*Sudden Flesh in a Fountain of Blues*

signed and dated 2013 (lower right)

oil on canvas

without frame: 22" x 36" (56 cm x 91 cm)

with frame: 32 1/2" x 44 1/2" (83 cm x 113 cm)

**P 1,600,000**

PROVENANCE

León Gallery, The Magnificent September Auction 2013,  
Makati City, 28 September 2013, Lot 137

**\*THIS LOT IS SOLD TO BENEFIT  
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA**

Internationally known abstract expressionist Jigger Cruz' most desirable and rare paintings are his early works where he paints a figurative image on his canvas, then purposefully overpaints and obscures the figure until it is totally recessed into the background of the painting.

This is his most original and signature style. This painting is from Jigger's golden year of 2013 when within a short period of two years, Jigger stormed the international art world and collectors worldwide clamored for his highly original works. His works were shown in galleries and art fairs from Hong Kong to Berlin to Venice to New York and Los Angeles.

This painting, which was purchased by a well known international collector at Leon Gallery in 2013, and has stayed in the same collection for the past 10 years, set the trajectory for the sudden global meteoric rise of Jigger. It was the first Jigger painting to sell for over a million pesos, and it set the pace for the next Jigger work to sell at Sothebys Hong Kong a month later for 8 million pesos.

This is a work coveted by major museums in the US. It is now being sold for the benefit of the Scholars Fund of the International School Manila.





123

**Kim Hamilton Sulit** (b. 1990)

*Nocturnal Pictures 1*

2017

found objects, wood shavings, polyresin

H: 51" (130 cm)

L: 19" (48 cm)

W: 42" (107 cm)

**P 200,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Art Provenance Gallery and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

**\*THIS LOT IS SOLD TO BENEFIT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA**

Kim Hamilton Sulit's art occupies a wide range of styles. From drawing to painting to assemblage to object-making, the talented artist often draws inspiration from the images between memories and experiences, capturing that elusive sensation through elements that directly lead to the viewer's sense of self-reflection.

With this 2017 *Nocturnal Pictures 1*, Sulit turns to assemblage as he portrays a strange but impactful scene. Using several toy soldiers he positioned to face the growing tree he plants in the middle, the viewer is left with a distinct sense of quietude, the kind of silence that befalls before an irreversible shift happens. Here, the toy soldiers may surround the massive enemy but its size still trumps them, no matter how many they are. Through this, Sulit depicts the quiet before something massive unequivocally changes the scene.

When asked about what he wants the audience to take away from his art, he says, "I want to leave it to them but I also want them to reflect and try to make their own personal connections with my work." Indeed, Sulit's greatest strength shines through this piece – that is, his ability to create an emotionally poignant piece that speaks to the audience as much as it spoke to its creator. *(Hannah Valiente)*





124

**Mariano Ching** (b. 1971)

*Pale Moments after the Explosion Series*

dated 2013

oil and acrylic on canvas

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

**P 200,000**

\*THIS LOT IS SOLD TO BENEFIT  
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA

Mariano Ching is a Filipino-Chinese painter, illustrator, and photographer. With their whimsical aesthetics, his paintings transport his viewers to a surrealist and otherworldly realm. *Pale Moments after the Explosion Series* is among Ching's psychedelic works. The piece, with its scenery resembling an explosion wreckage, showcases the artist's skilled brushwork and adept knowledge of colors, transforming it into a first-person point-of-view experience. Its kaleidoscopic colors and hazy, dream-like composition allude to the perspective of someone high in substance, a recurring theme in his pieces.

Ching's artistic career is a testament to his versatility as an artist. He experimented with various materials and techniques, leading to a diverse range of artworks, including drawing, painting, wall installations, and sculpture. This not only showcases his dedication to learning but also his unwavering passion for the arts. In 2006, he was among the recipients of the Thirteen Artists Awards by the Cultural Center of the Philippines. (*Jessica Magno*)





Slowly the hour-hand of the clock moves round;  
 So slowly that no human hath power; To  
 see it move! Slowly in shine or shower; The  
 painted ship above it, homeward bound; Sails,  
 but seems motionless, as if aground; Yet both  
 arrive at last; and in his tower; The slumberous  
 watchman wakes and strikes the hour; A mellow,  
 measured, melancholy sound. Midnight! The  
 outpost of advancing day! The frontier town and  
 citadel of night! The watershed of Time, from  
 which the streams of yesterday and tomorrow  
 take their way; One to the land of promise and of  
 light; One to the land of darkness and of dreams!

125

**Norberto Roldan** (b. 1953)

*Grand Central (Diptych)*  
 signed and dated 2015 (right)  
 oil and acrylic on canvas  
 36" x 60" (91 cm x 152 cm)

**P 400,000**

\*THIS LOT IS SOLD TO BENEFIT  
 THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA

Norberto Roldan's installations, assemblages, and painting revolve around the collective history and memories of an object or place recontextualized into a different circumstance

"It builds the context for storytelling without giving the whole story," he tells of his usage of assemblages in his works and indeed *Grand Central (Diptych)* portrays Roldan's storytelling prowess. Both pieces in black and white, one side was a depiction of a woman sleeping on a

train, her legs crossed and her chin resting on her chest. Her wide-brimmed hat covers her face but her posture belies her exhaustion. The other painting is a passage, stark white text on a plain black background. Telling a prose about time, it perfectly complements the painting on its left, a woman stuck in time and frozen in wait.

In 1986, Roldan founded Artists in Asia, a progressive sociopolitical art group. In 1990 he initiated VIVA EXCON (Visayas Islands Visual Arts Exhibition and Conference), the longest running biennale in the Philippines and in 2000 he co-founded Green Papaya Art Projects in 2000, the longest-running independent and multi-disciplinary platform in the country. (*Hannah Valiente*)



# Leo Valledor

## *High Priest of New York Cool*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



LEFT PAGE: Leo Valledor with his diptych, *Echo* (for NEXT PAGE: (1) Leo Valledor, *For M*, 1966, 20 in. x 120 in (50.8 x 304.8 cm), acrylic on canvas is in the permanent collection of the SF Moma. (2) Leo Valledor with his diptych, *Echo* (for John Coltrane).

Leo Corpuz Valledor was a key figure in the New York Art scene of the 1960s.

Valledor could easily have been a character straight out of the mystery-thriller about California life, *L.A. Confidential*. His mother ran card games out of her house and would eventually be shot (and subsequently die) for her trouble. His father, on the other hand, "followed the crops up and down the coast" but whose primary occupation was being "a playboy." That father would disappear for long spells, finally abandoning his family for good when Leo was just a child. Valledor would thus be orphaned at age 12 and would essentially raise himself.

The San Francisco where Leo grew up was in the Fillmore district which was seething with jive and jazz clubs. In a series of interviews for the Archives of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution, his cousin and fellow artist Carlos Villa, would describe their neighborhood as "a ghetto within another ghetto within a metropolis."

The Filipinos of the area belonged to an association called the Native Sons of Lapog. Lapog was a small town in Ilocos Sur, the Philippine province from where many of the first wave of migrants came.

By all accounts, Valledor had a fractured background, an Asian heritage that had an uncanny command of the English language and a grasp of stateside culture, thanks to his parents' American colonial teachers. Additionally, he would have a coming of age in an atmosphere of African-American zootsuits and the lifestyle of the Mexican rasquache (or low-rider culture.)

"He was pretty much by himself," exclaimed Villa. "And yet, at about 16 and 17 years old, he was doing these paintings in his house that were ten-by-ten-foot abstract paintings." Valledor would get by thanks to the idea of the Filipino extended family, possibly renting out rooms in the house he inherited to the fleet of uncles and manongs (the Ilocano term for an older male) who would arrive "fresh off the boat."

Valledor would receive a scholarship for the California School of Fine Arts—which opened an entirely new world for him and would eventually lead him to New York City. He would declare that he had fallen in love with abstract art.

In the authoritative *Reimagining Space : The Park Place Gallery Group* in 1960s New York, Linda Dalrymple Henderson would write, "To understand the history of a gallery as unprecedented as Park Place, one must look first at California, where the majority of its members attended art school and met each other.

Valledor was a key piece in the puzzle. As a founding member of the Park Place group, he brought with him his formative experiences in the melting-pot "ghettoes" of San Francisco's Fillmore, where he would be imprinted with an atmosphere of art, painting, poetry, and music. This was further reinforced by the communal nature not just of the Six Gallery but also of his Filipino background.

Park Place would become an address from which alliances and creativity would flow. Villa would remember, "Park Place was a loft building down in Tribeca, and it was





on one of the streets that one of the Twin Towers was built. And at Park Place, they had a \$35 a month rent , So I had a loft as soon as I got there to New York. I was connected."

Valledor was thoroughly well-connected in an age brimming with possibilities in the civil rights movement and the space race. Martin Luther King would give his "I Have A Dream" speech in the 1963 March on Washington; a man would be on the moon by 1969.

The Park Place shows attracted attention almost as soon as the space opened. Its exhibitions featured paintings and sculpture together, revolutionizing the way that new, avant-garde artists could present their art in marked contrast to the more conservative Madison Avenue galleries. Its cavernous spaces invited the creation of large works and interactions with sculpture, music, and the spoken word.

Park Place became a significant part of the New York art scene until the late 1960s, putting a face on the city's art scene for young artists and leading the move to Soho as a center for happenings that would in turn become the lightning rod for a whole new scene. It made art blisteringly cool. Paula Cooper, who would go on to establish her own gallery, was its second director.

Valledor would eventually return to his native California where he would continue to produce his avant-garde art.

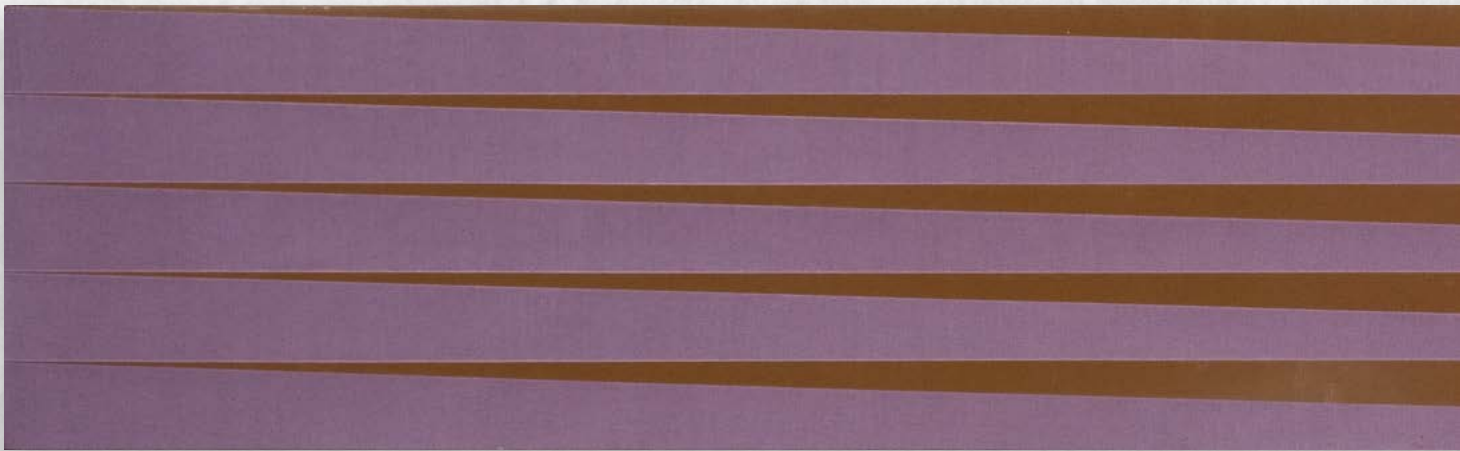
Five of Leo Valledor's works are in the permanent collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). In 2019, The Whitney Museum of American

Art, New York acquired two paintings by Leo Valledor for its permanent collection: Odelight and Serena, both from the year 1964, both acrylic on canvas and each measuring 35 15/16 x 109 1/2 inches. They were a generous gift from Valledor's fellow Park Place founder, the sculptor Mark di Suvero.

Leo Valledor is regarded as a pioneer of the Minimalism movement that would dominate the American artistic landscape throughout the 1970s.







126

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**Leo Valledor** (1936 - 1989)

*Lull*

signed and dated 1967 (verso)

acrylic on canvas

15" x 98" (38 cm x 249 cm)

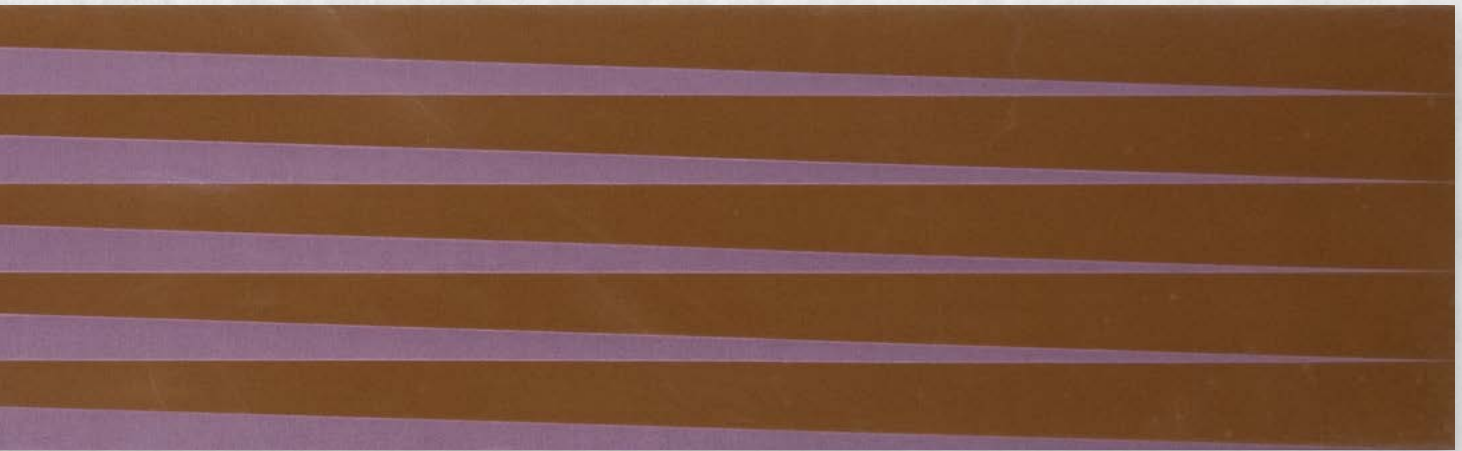
**P 1,600,000**

PROVENANCE

Brian Gross Fine Art

\*THIS LOT IS SOLD TO BENEFIT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA





Leo Valledor was one of the few Filipino-American artists to gain significant recognition in the Western art scene during the 1960s. Born in California, Valledor was of Asian heritage—descended from the first few Ilocano migrant workers—with a seasoned command of the English language and culture, owing to his parents' education under American colonial teachers. Abandoned at a young age, Valledor learned to fend for himself, and by his mid-teens, he was already doing monumental abstract paintings.

Valledor's artistic journey took a significant turn when he received a scholarship to the California School of Fine Arts, a pivotal moment that broadened his horizons. This opportunity eventually led him to New York City, where his passion for abstract art flourished. Here, he became associated with

the Park Place group, a groundbreaking collective that challenged the art scene of the 1960s. Creating a platform for young artists to express themselves, their exhibitions brought together paintings and sculptures that are a stark contrast to the conservative galleries on Madison Avenue. Additionally, Park Place's cavernous expanse encouraged the creation of large-scale works and the exploration of the interaction between different art forms.

Leo Valledor's art is marked by monumental canvases and minimalistic composition, with angular shapes and a palette minimized to two colors. His 1967 *Lull* is a testament to this. Painted at the height of his illustrious career, as its title suggests, this work exudes a calming and soothing vibe, contrasting his fractured background. *(Jessica Magno)*



# Of Portraiture and Friendships

## *Juan Luna and His Elaborate Eye for Detail*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



ABOVE: Juan Luna in his Paris studio showing a similar artwork of the *The Old Man* © <https://www.kollectivehustle.com/>

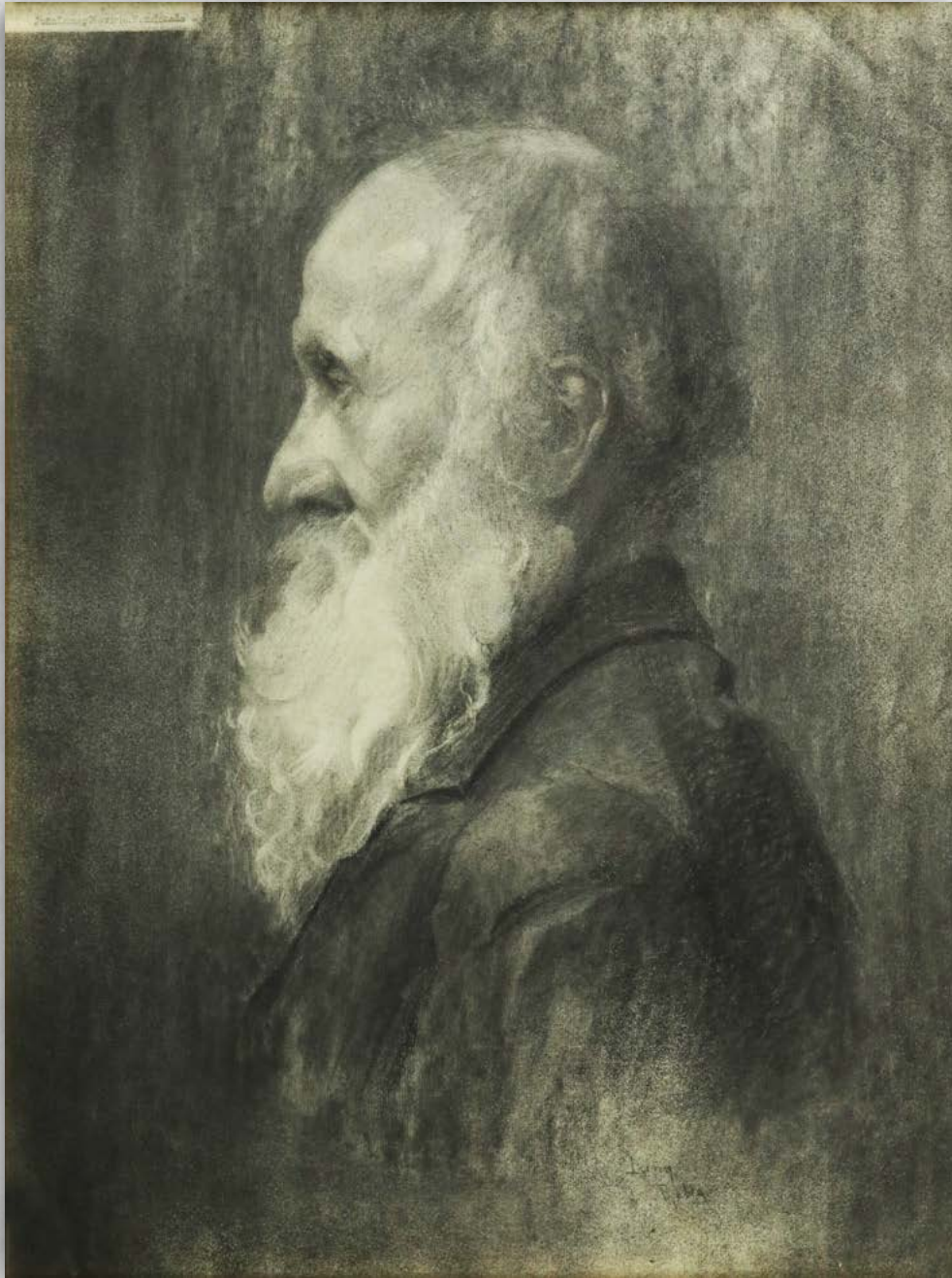
In 1878, Juan Luna decamped from Spain, feeling that he had learned all that he could from the Royal Academy of the Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid — and to follow his professor, Alejo Vera y Estaca (1834 - 1921) to Rome. Alejo Vera had, in fact, "obtained a position at the newly-created 'Spanish Academy' in Rome" and furthermore, had quite a few portrait commissions awaiting him. He recruited his star pupil Luna to join him in the Italian capital. From Vera, Luna would learn a fascination for Pompeii; (many of these paintings from this locale are now at the Philippine National Museum.) More importantly, he would be influenced by the refined historical style of his mentor, that would allow him to eventually best the European salons' criteria for classical themes with his works "Death of Cleopatra" and "Spoliarium." Luna would take up residence in Rome at 33 Via Margutta, in the artist's colony in that address. His neighbors and friends were other artists and they would sketch and draw the many colorful characters in this bohemian neighborhood.

This charcoal portrait of the old man is signed, "Luna, Roma" and at the top catalogued with "Juan Luna y Novicio, Pensionado", the usual description to works submitted by Luna as part of the conditions of his scholarship from the Manila Academia. (Luna's scholarship provided for a year at the Madrid academy and a second year anywhere in Europe; in Luna's case, Rome.) More interestingly, on the reverse, is another unfinished portrait of a gentleman

and beneath it the words "Propiedad de mi abuelo Alejo Vera" (Property of my grandfather Alejo Vera), and an unreadable signature, P —. The sketch's features happen to have a resemblance to Vera. An equally tantalizing connection is to a photo of Luna, circa 1889 to 1890. By this time, Luna had become the toast of the European salons. Luna arrived in Paris in 1885, fresh from his triumph for 'Spoliarium' at the Madrid exposition the previous year. He had painted that opus while in Rome, where he had spent over 5 years soaking in the atmosphere of the Eternal City and perfecting the vivid style that would make him famous. In the photograph of his studio is 'Aesop', c. 1881, hanging between an elaborately-curtained door and a suit of armor.

The original 'Aesop' (c. 1638) was commissioned by King Philip IV of Spain for his hunting lodge but by the 1800s hung in the Prado, where Luna would have gone to study these and other works by Diego Velasquez. To the left of Luna is another painting of the Roman wedding ritual, 'Hymen o Hymenee', created in 1889 and entered in the Universal Exposition of Paris of the same year. (It received a bronze medal.) On the easel is a portrait of a white-haired and bearded gentleman. It is a finished work, having been set into an ornate frame. One can read his signature on the bottom right, less readable is a longer dedication, which suggests this painting may be one of a friend. The work at hand is perhaps a study for this portrait; united by Luna's verve and painstaking eye for detail.





127

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

*The Old Man*

signed (lower right), Rome, undated, c. 1878 - 1885

charcoal on paper

23 1/2" x 18" (60 cm x 46 cm)

**P 1,400,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Heirs of Don Alejo Vera Private Collection, Manila

León Gallery, *The Spectacular Mid-Year Auction 2017*,  
Makati City, 6 October 2017, Lot 83

\*THIS LOT IS SOLD TO BENEFIT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA



# Movement and Color

## *A Masterpiece from the Serie Blanca*

by HANNAH VALIENTE

Zobel's *Serie Blanca* is perhaps the zenith of his career. After a series of experimentations with colors, he has now turned to white and its endlessly lyrical possibilities.

"It is not a matter of abandoning color to paint in black and white, it is a matter of gradually reducing the color until there is nothing left but warm grays and cold grays," Rafael Pérez-Madero writes about *Serie Blanca*. Indeed, *Serie Blanca*, if possible, pushes his oeuvre to its extreme, becoming more self-sufficient in its bareness. Its lyricism is laid bare, harmony, tranquility, and order evident despite the apparent emptiness of the piece.

As such, *Tomás II* belongs to such a series, echoing what his biographer Angeles Villalba Salvador describes as "characterized by infinitely degraded whites, which distribute spaces and volumes and seem to lose themselves on the edges of the canvas." With precise and painstaking vision, Zobel pushes white to its absolute limits, creating a unique brand of minimalism that transcends into pure non-objectivism that is both intricate and sublime.

"This time it is not a theme that is worked to exhaustion, as in previous cycles. The theme is even broader, using more subjects to be based on, landscapes, still lifes, gestures, movements, lights, contrasts, etc., although this is only an anecdote of which there is hardly any trace left," Pérez-Madero adds. "This time, it is a matter of achieving the maximum with the minimum of resources. "



ABOVE: Reed Pfeufer and Fernando Zóbel in Cuenca, ca. 1975. © Eric Pfeufer

128

**Fernando Zóbel** (1924 - 1984)

*Tomás II*

signed (lower left and verso),

dated 1978 and inscribed "TOMAS II, 78-61" (verso)

oil on canvas

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

**P 7,000,000**

#### LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero.

*Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984).*

Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022. Listed as "nº 78-61"

with full-color illustration on page 579 and painting description on page 578.









# Amoroso's Ship of Dreams

## *A Rare Seascape at Sunset*

by JESSICA MAGNO





Spending much time painting and doing commissions, there were also times when the maestro Fernando Amorsolo would be in a slump and need a breath of fresh air. Hence, hunting and traveling have been his favorite pastimes. He would go boating and hunting with his friends, bringing home the birds he shot to preserve and use as models in his drawings. Amorsolo also frequented the countryside, basking in the magnificent landscapes and fresh air and enriching his knowledge and perception of the townfolks' customs and traditions. These trips and observations allowed him to create a number of works perfectly encapsulating the glorious countryside life.

"These frequent sojourns to the countryside afforded Papa the chance to depict the activities of the rural folk as well as their values and traditions," Sylvia Amorsolo Lazo, the maestro's daughter, recollected in *Maestro Fernando C. Amorsolo: Recollections of the Amorsolo Family* published in 2009. "On several trips to far-flung provinces, Papa would occasionally stop for several minutes, producing a quick sketch of one or two scenic views. Alternatively, he would take a picture of the scenery which he would immediately transfer to canvas as he reached his studio," she added.

Although most known for his idyllic rural scenes, Fernando Amorsolo did a lot of portraits, pencil sketches and studies, and astonishing landscape paintings, too. Devoid of his usual rice fields and harvest season themes, *Seascape* unfolds a breathtaking view of Mount Mariveles, probably one of the views that captured his attention during his travels. Here, the maestro depicted a coastal area against the magnificent facade of Mount Mariveles, a fisherman's boat docked at the shore, basking in the light of the setting sun. Filled with the vibrant colors of sunset and cool tones of the slightly darkening sky, this painting evokes warmth and relaxation.

Painted in 1957, a decade after the Philippine liberation, *Seascape* is a delicate balance between reality and dream. With his skilled strokes and brilliant colorwork, he captures the essence of a peaceful Philippines, a time of grace and optimism. Yet, this scenery seems like a distant dream, a past that one longs to return to, a feeling brought by the shadows of war. Nevertheless, Amorsolo's works never fail to highlight the rich Philippine culture and tradition, a testament to the country's timeless beauty, preserving it for generations to come. (Jessica Magno)

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## Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

### *Seascape*

signed and dated 1957 (lower right)

oil on canvas

16" x 24" (41 cm x 61 cm)

**P 3,600,000**



Mount Mariveles as seen from Manila Bay © thetravelad



# MALANG

## *Celebrating the Colorful Bliss of Filipino Childhood*

by HANNAH VALIENTE

In 1998, Mauro Malang Santos reached a zenith in his artistic career. From October 24, 1997 to January 20, 1998, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila held a retrospective showcase for the contemporary artist, showing about a hundred of his works dating from 1955 to 1997. The wide variety of his aesthetic style covered the walls of the Met, showing how truly voracious and mutable his designs were – from figurative to abstractive works, from his vividly bright works and his more muted formal experiments, Malang's overflowing creativity could not be contained in an easily boxed style.

And yet, despite these varying styles, Malang returns time and time again to his favored topics. His renowned barong-barongs and urban sceneries abound in his oeuvre, with his figures, done in his signature style of big feet and big hands and wide limbs, as recognizable as a fingerprint.

"That's a bad habit of mine. *Hindi ko ma-sustain*," Malang says of his inconsistent art style and yet, it is this variety that launched Malang into critical acclaim, making sure he remains in the golden annals of Philippine art history.

*Little Girl* was created in the same year as his retrospective exhibition. In his distinctive wide-limbed fashion, he portrays two children hiding behind their mother who is sitting in a chair with two puppies lying on their feet as they wait for their family to play with them. Typically Malang, every square inch of the piece is covered, either in vibrant shades of colors or elements, with the most distinctive of which is an exact near replica of the painting itself drawn in a smaller fashion hanging in the background.

In this work, Malang shows off his impeccable understanding of colors as he washes the scene in various shades of reds and yellows and oranges. He is a true and passionate colorist, using in his works vibrant and colorful hues in a way that is cohesive rather than cluttered.

"There is no color he avoids, no hue or shades that he cannot orchestrate in his palette," Cid Reyes writes in Malang's monograph. Indeed, *Little Girl* is an indubitable proof of Malang's excellence and his ability to handle his unorthodox palette.

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**Mauro Malang Santos** (1928 - 2017)

*Little Girl*

signed and dated 1998 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

**P 7,000,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank West Gallery and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot









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**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)

*Nude*

signed and dated 1977 (upper right)

charcoal on paper

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

**P 400,000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired directly from the artist

National Artist Vicente Manansala left an indelible mark on the Philippine art scene with his diverse body of work, which includes oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings, as well as graphite and charcoal studies. His art spanned from realistic to abstract compositions, but at the core of his artistic philosophy was the mastery of drawing.

"Drawing is the most important weapon a painter must possess. Without it he is at a loss," he once said. So, he continuously practiced drawing, which resulted in a number of portraits and nude drawings.

Manansala's 1977 *Nude* is a striking demonstration of his unrivaled mastery of any style and medium. Like Amoroso's nude paintings, Manansala has a talent for preserving his subjects'—mostly women—dignity despite having their bodies on full display. Manansala's nude studies, as the name suggests, were studies of the human anatomy, an essentially good subject, aside from basic geometrical shapes, to practice light and shadow using charcoal and graphite. Moreover, this piece shows Manansala's dedication and commitment to his craft, for charcoal painting requires a substantial amount of time and patience. (*Jessica Magno*)





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**Augusto Albor** (b. 1948)

*Untitled*

acrylic on canvas

56 1/2" x 56 3/4" (144 cm x 144 cm)

**P 500,000**

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

Essentially abstract in composition, Augusto Albor's oeuvre is characterized by its minimalistic gray-dominated canvases with a combination of thick and thin impastos in random places, topped with a sheer layer of metallic paint. With only his ingenious use of colors and precise layering of paint, the artist not only creates depth

and texture in his works but also evokes a wide array of emotions that connect deeply with his viewers.

Embodying his enthusiastic yet restrained brushwork and profound understanding of color and space, this colossal masterpiece, a result of two canvas panels joined together, is undeniably an Albor piece. On the right side of the canvas, white is the predominant color layered with random and small strokes of black; the blend of colors results in a light gray color. The left side, on the other hand, is filled with black paint layered with arbitrary strokes of white and metallic silver and gold, making this side darker but also glossy. There is a noticeable khaki-colored vertical line in the middle of the canvas, encompassing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the canvas' height. Afar, this line looks like an impasto, but upon closer look, this was the material used to combine the two canvases. (*Jessica Magno*)



**Jerry Elizalde Navarro** (1924 - 1999)*Untitled (Bacchus)*

signed (verso)

oil on canvas

diameter: 120" (305 cm)

**P 2,200,000**

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

Choosing a signature style for National Artist Jerry Elizalde Navarro is irrelevant. A prolific artist, he shifts painting styles as easily as a second skin, trying his hand at minimalism, abstraction, cubism, portraiture, assemblage, and pointillism, to name a few. He is an artist who marches to the beat of his own drum, marking him as a pioneer for the modernism movement in the Philippines.

As such, this *Bacchus* piece is just another step in Navarro's quest for experimentation. This massive circular assemblage piece was specially commissioned to be installed on the ceiling of a popular dining establishment. Navarro puts the image of Bacchus at the center with an eight-pointed star. Around him are several images of festivities, each table overflowing with the dramatics of different kinds of wine and fruits as befits the god of religious ecstasy and theater.

The colors used pulsate with Navarro's Bali-rich colors, an antithesis to Caravaggio's more somber *Bacchus* piece. Navarro's Balinese inspirations are also quite evident with the presence of Buddhist elements in this piece, creating a cross-religious image and setting the eclectic tone with which Navarro's body of work is ultimately defined. *(Hannah Valiente)*









# Ambassador Pedro Conlu Hernaez

## *The Political Dynamo from Talisay*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



A political paragon from Negros, Pedro Conlu Hernaez was born in Talisay on December 12, 1899 to Rosendo Espinosa Hernaez and Teofila Echebrecho Conlu. According to the Cornejo Commonwealth Directory, he obtained his degrees from San Juan de Letran as well as from the Escuela de Derecho; he was admitted to the Philippine bar in 1921.

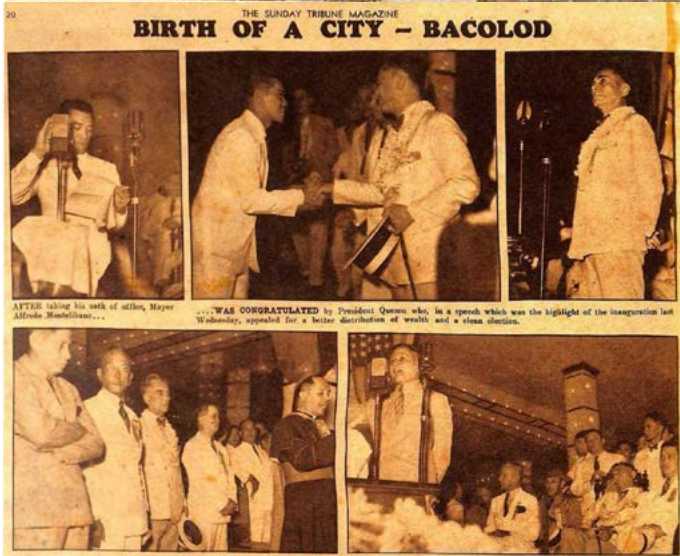
He would practice law in Manila briefly but would return to Negros to become immersed in sugar, becoming president of the Talisay-Silay Planter Association and would become an influential figure in this important Philippine industry.

In 1934, he would be elected delegate to the Constitutional Convention from the second district of Negros Occidental. In 1935, he would also be elected Assemblyman for the same district, winning re-election in 1938.

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 L. Quezon would sign it into law, Commonwealth Act No., 326 - An Act Creating the City of Bacolod.)

Hernaez would become chairman of several powerful committees during his stint in the National Assembly of the Commonwealth. Later he would also be elected senator, when the bi-cameral Congress was passed into law, serving from 1941 to 1947.

During the enforced hiatus of World War II, however, Hernaez would “serve mightily in the cause of the underground and helped scores of USAFFE prisoners of war without seeking any



ABOVE: Assemblyman Pedro Conlu Hernaez through the years. Sources: Presidential Museum and Library, Old Negros (Collection of Ramon Severino Conlu Jr.)

ABOVE: Provincial officials, from left second Msgr. Fortich, 4th - Sen Hernaez, 6th - Gov Gatuslao, 7th - Mayor Cordova. Collection CP Adorio.



recompense” for his efforts that would put him in great peril, as recounted in “Tableau”, The Encyclopedia of Distinguished Personalities published in 1958.

In 1945, he would return to the business of law-making with alacrity, sponsoring bills to relieve interest payments during the War years and an act to rehabilitate the insurance companies.

President Manuel Roxas would appoint him as member of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations and he would make worthy contributions to the political committees of the world body.

By the 1950s, he would have made his name as a “practical economist’ and would be appointed by Carlos P. Garcia as Secretary of Commerce and Industry.

He would 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.

Pedro Conlu Hernaez’ wife would be Encarnacion de la Rama, by whom he had 2 daughters, Celina and Cecilia. Cecilia would be a force in the sugar industry, like her father before her, founding the First Farmers Human Development Foundation to bring hope and strength to dislocated farmers, channeling critical foreign aid to them.

Cecilia would marry the mechanical engineer and industrial specialist, Miguel Magsaysay, who would become a founder of Magsaysay Lines.



ABOVE: Assemblyman Pedro Conlu Hernaez (right) with President Manuel L. Quezon as he signs into law the cityhood of Bacolod, 1938. Collection of Old Negros (Zyx Xypherz).  
 BOTTOM RIGHT: H.E. Hernaez as he presents his diplomatic credentials to Gen. Franco as Philippine Ambassador to Spain, 1960. Collection of Manila Nostalgia.

TOP RIGHT: Cecilia Conlu Hernaez as painted by Anita Magsaysay-Ho, her sister-in-law. From Anita Magsaysay-Ho's *An Artist's Memoirs*. TOP LEFT: Cecilia Conlu Hernaez. MIDDLE RIGHT: Pedro Hernaez at the inauguration of Bacolod as a chartered city, 1939. Collection of Jocelle Batapa Sigue.



# Juan Luna as a Painter of the Common People

## *Luna's Social Realist Period of 1890 - 1893*

by ADRIAN MARANAN



*"Despite access to the head of the table, Luna would eventually find himself more concerned with those without a seat. If 1872 was formative in Rizal's nationalism, 1889 can be viewed as a decisive year for Luna. Towards the end of his life, Luna became more active as a politician for the fledgling Philippine government after Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed independence from Spain in 1898. But it was in the City of Lights, between splendor and struggle, that Luna's own nascent expression of nationalism was born."*

—MARINELLA ANDREA C. MINA, "OF SPLENDOR & STRUGGLE: THE FIN-DE-SIÈCLE AND THE WORLD OF JUAN LUNA," ESSAY PUBLISHED IN THE MONOGRAPH "SPLENDOR, JUAN LUNA: PAINTER AS HERO," 2023

### *At The Crossroads of International Fame And Nationalism*

At the height of his fame at the turn of the 1890s, Juan Luna decided to take a divergent path.

When his lyrical *Hymen, oh Hyménée!* won the bronze medal at the Paris Exposition of 1889 despite it being submitted as *hors concours*, it seemed that Luna had no other way but up, considering that he had just participated—and won at the world's biggest exposition in the world's magnificent art capital. He had also been accorded recognition for his artistic talents and was warmly received by the European monarchs of the time, including King Alfonso XII of Spain and King Umberto and his wife, Queen Margherita, of Italy.

However, this was also a time when the Propaganda Movement further strengthened with the establishment of *La Solidaridad*, peopled by Rizal, Del Pilar, Jaena, and the two Luna brothers, among others. It would publish its own newspaper of the same name, with the first issue coming out on February 15, 1899. The Propaganda Movement, although reformist in form, was revolutionary and radical in essence.

THIS PAGE TOP LEFT: Photograph of Juan Luna © Leon Gallery archives.  
NEXT PAGE (FIGURES 2.3, & 4): Other important works from Luna's social realist period, to which *La Majordoma* belongs. Study for *Les Ignores* (oil on wood, BPI Collection), whose finished work would result in Luna's acceptance into the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts. Boceto de *la Huelga* or Study of the Protest (Alfonso T. Ongpin Collection), and a photographic reproduction of Luna's now lost masterpiece *People et Rois* (Alfonso T. Ongpin Collection) © Alfonso T. Ongpin Collection; (FIGURES 5 & 6): *Les Ignores* (1890–91, oil on canvas, Biblioteca Museu Víctor Balaguer Collection, Spain). *Le Chiffonier / El Trapero* (1890, from the photo collection of Don Luis Araneta)

### *The Beginnings of Luna's Social Realist Period*

In a correspondence with Javier Gomez de la Serna dated May 26, 1889, Luna revealed that his painting was becoming more inclined to a kind of everyday realism rather than his tried and tested formula of romantic realism.

"[My] painting is [becoming] more realistic each day," Luna wrote. The end that has been sought has not yet been reached, but the tendency to an intangible reality, there is no doubt, and do not think it is a brutal and disgusting reality. No, a sublime reality in a new form." (English translation by Dr. Ambeth Ocampo, in his essay "*Juan Luna and the Pursuit of Greatness*," published in the book "*Splendor, Juan Luna: Painter as Hero*")

In 1890, Luna corresponded with Rizal about a "large" painting he was doing depicting a "modern and simple" subject. Titled *Monjas Francesas y su Rebaño* (French Nuns and their Flock), which showed an orphanage along a Parisian street, the piece would become a significant turning point in Luna's career, as it would manifest his sympathies and affinities with the ordinary people. He would begin to document everyday Parisian living, focusing on the proletarians and the greater population of the impoverished masses. As a Filipino *expatriado* in the French capital, Luna saw the oppressive conditions of the working class under industrial capitalism (i.e. the widening inequality as profits from production were favored over humane working conditions) as reflections of the injustices committed by the Spanish to his fellow Filipinos.



*Luna's participation in the Salon of 1890, a turning point in his career*

Luna would join the Salon of 1890, in which a new group, the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, held its first exhibition organized and led by Puvis de Chavannes. The Société rejected the overt orthodoxy of the older Société des Artistes Français.

Members of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts were influenced by the ideas of Gustave Courbet, the French painter who rejected Romanticism and led the Realism movement in the 1840s and held as its battle cry the depiction of reality as it is. Courbet was a supporter of the Paris Commune of 1871, in which he also participated. The Paris Commune was a short-lived revolutionary government led by the French working class that aimed to establish a socialist republic governed by proletarians and put an end to the hegemony of the repressive state.

The Salon of 1890, reported *The Art Amateur*, an American magazine "devoted to art in the household," had as its "great feature... the delineation of contemporary life—genre painting, as it is called." Continues the magazine, "But, if we sometimes find a sincere and personal effort to render the living reality, it is not so agreeable to notice that a majority of the artists chose by preference scenes of rags and misery, surgical operations, and "human documents" of a like nature."

Luna felt rapport with the socialist-influenced Société, writing to Rizal, "I belong to the dissident Salon." At this time, Luna fully assimilated himself into the French social realist movement. He submitted an entry in the 1890 Salon—held at the historic Champs-de-Mars, titled *Le Chiffonnier / El Trapero* (The Ragpicker), depicting an old man burdened by a rag basket on his shoulders. The following year, he submitted three works: *Les Ignorés*, *Héroes Anónimos*, and *Desherados* (Disinherited), which depicted a funeral procession. Of *Les Ignorés*, he wrote to Rizal: "To my painting of the funeral, I gave the title *Les Ignorés*, and as you must have noted, I now give attention to the humble and disinherited."

These three works earned him the respect of the Société and gave him honors, including exclusive membership in the group, which also accorded him the privilege of sitting in screening committees and in the jury for painting competitions. Luna said to Rizal that this milestone was "an appointment I did not expect." He was also granted the special privilege of submitting as many as ten paintings without undergoing the thorough jury process. Through his admission to the Société, Luna was not anymore an outsider; he became an exclusive member of a prime art circle in a city revered as the very center of artistic gravity.



(Fig 2)



(Fig 3)



(Fig 4)



(Fig 5)



(Fig 6)



## *La Majordoma, a social realist portrait of a French Proletarian*

It was in this milieu that Luna painted *La Majordoma*. The work at hand depicts an old majordome, the head servant of a French household. Luna endows the lady with dignified elegance through his smooth brushwork and muted shades of grey, a color traditionally associated with wisdom and richness. The work comes from a series of Luna paintings, in which he manifested his preference for depicting the affairs of the masses' everyday living and the unwanted consequences of the Industrial Revolution on workers' and people's rights, as opposed to the romantic grandiosity of portraying defining events and personalities in history and gaining inspiration from the literature and art of the Classical Era of Greek and Roman splendor. Like the narrative of the people's history or "history from below," Luna at this time deeply identified with an "art from below."

There exists a thematically similar work titled *Head of a Laborer*, also painted in 1890 and now in the collection of the Lopez Memorial Museum.



## *Luna's social realist period as a reflection of his Filipino Nationalist Ideals*

In this period of stylistic and thematic change for Luna, he found an affinity in reading socialist-themed literature, such as *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo and *Le Socialisme Contemporain*, an anthology edited by Emile de Laveleye and reproduced in its pages the writings of none other than the great Karl Marx and prominent Catholic socialists. In a letter to Rizal, Luna wrote that he had been searching for "a book stressing the miseries of contemporary society, a kind of *Divine Comedy*, with a Dante taking a walk through shops where one can hardly breathe, and where he would see men, children, and women in the most wretched state imaginable." Luna had also been thinking of a subject for a monumental painting that would encapsulate his newfound ideals. He asked Rizal, "What book would you advise me to read to inspire me? By someone who has written against this naked materialism and this infamous exploitation of the poor, the struggle of the rich with the wretched! I am looking for a subject worthy to be developed on a canvas of eight meters."

Luna would also share with Rizal about his visit to a French iron foundry, where he encountered the miserable conditions of the workers. He wrote, "I was there three or four minutes, and it seemed that I had swallowed sand and dust all my life. They penetrated my nose, mouth, and eyes...and to think that those wretches breathed coal and dust twelve hours of each day! I believe that they are infallibly condemned to death, and that it is a crime to abandon such people." The sight strengthened Luna's empathy for the proletarian class.

*\*Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of Luna's correspondence with Rizal are taken from the book "Juan Luna: The Filipino as Painter" by Santiago A. Pilar*



TOP RIGHT: A thematically similar work with *La Majordoma*, titled *Head of a Laborer* (ca. 1890, oil on wood © Lopez Memorial Museum Collection. BOTTOM RIGHT: Ramon Ramirez, Juan Luna, Jose Rizal, and Trinidad Pardo de Tavera in Luna's Paris studio, 1889. © Alfonso T. Ongpin Collection

Luna's social realist period would climax in the now-lost masterpiece *Peuple et Rois* (People and Kings), painted from 1891 to 1892 and portrayed the desecration of the French royal tombs in the Cathedral of St. Denis by the revolutionaries of the French Revolution of 1830 (the "Second French Revolution"). In a way, *Peuple et Rois* echoed the anti-friar sentiments of the *ilustrados*.

Although European in form and subject, Luna espoused and imparted in *La Majordoma* a sense of dignity to his fellow natives in the Philippine motherland, which had been deemed morally, culturally, socially, and ethnically inferior to their peninsular counterparts. In these European images of the working class, and with an art further strengthened by his recognition in the European expositions, Luna hoped to endow his fellow countrymen with the utmost sense of national pride, especially within their historically crucial milieu of the Filipinos' endeavor in the formation of a shared national identity that is crucial for the struggle for eventual independence.





**134** PROPERTY FROM THE AMBASSADOR PEDRO CONLU HERNAEZ COLLECTION

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

*La Majordoma*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1890

oil on canvas

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

**P 1,800,000**

PROVENANCE

Acquired by Amb. Hernaez in the 1960s, Madrid, Spain



# Shamans and Serpents

## *Tapaya's Powerful Visions*

by HANNAH VALIENTE

The large-scale works of Rodel Tapaya are often covered in amalgamations of folk narratives and vivid storytelling. Leaving no square inch of canvas unused, he explores topics of folktales and historical research, creating an interesting tableau of characters that intersect from different periods and times.

With his 2020 *A Sky Without Stars, A Sea Without Sand*, Tapaya plays around with pre-colonial religion as a feathered man (a sort of man-bird hybrid) holds open the mouth of a giant snake reminiscent of a *bakunawa*. Around them, it seems the world is out of order, with visions of floods and fires interweaving the figures. Several elements are also worth mentioning – a decapitation head lies near the feathered man with wings sprouting from its head; the end of the *bakunawa*'s tail morphs into an amorphous hand gripping the concrete below; a man, face obscured by a shining line, sits idly near the *bakunawa*.

The works of Rodel Tapaya invite introspection and discussion. Its dense narrative compositions are enriched by Indigenous folklore and postcolonial analysis, creating a body of work that would excite the most curious of viewers to figure out the message hidden in its depths. (Hannah Valiente)



Installation views in He Xiangning Art Museum,

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**Rodel Tapaya** (b. 1980)

*A Sky Without Stars, A Sea Without Sand*

signed and dated 2020 (lower left)

oil on canvas

76" x 68" (193 cm x 173 cm)

**P 2,800,000**

EXHIBITED

He Xiangning Art Museum, *HEAVENLY BODIES IN THE SOUTH A Joint Exhibition for Qin Qi and Rodel Tapaya*, Shenzhen, China, 6 June to 5 July 2020









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**Romulo Olazo** (1934 - 2015)

*a.) Untitled #26*

signed and dated 1983 (lower left)

mixed media on canvas

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

*b.) Untitled #27*

signed and dated 1983 (lower left)

mixed media on canvas

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

**P 2,400,000**

Each piece is accompanied by a certificate issued by Paseo Gallery  
confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE  
The Luz Gallery





To say that an artist is — might have become trite these days, but Romulo Olazo proved time and time again to be multifaceted. With his works ranging in all sorts of forms and genres – from abstract to figurative, from landscape to nudes to portraits, to his lauded Diaphanous and Permutation series – his works have found themselves in the golden annals of Philippine art history, right at the forefront of the second generation of the modernist movement.

These works from 1983, hailing from his Untitled series, echo his iconic Diaphanous series, though more opaque

and bolder in their strokes. It is a continuation of the experimentations he employed in the previous series, taking the questions he posed in Diaphanous to a higher dimension and evoking polarizing responses.

"The Untitled works are Olazo's cathartic records of that wrestling convulsion. Some regarded the Untitled works as a betrayal of the Diaphanous. Others viewed them as a resuscitation of a flagging theme," Cid Reyes writes in Olazo's monograph. "Still, to some, Olazo was perceived as an artist in transition." (*Hannah Valiente*)



**Ramon Orlina** (b. 1944)*Modern Eve-2017*

signed and dated 2017

carved clear optical glass

19 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 7 1/2" (49 cm x 21 cm x 19 cm)

**P 2,000,000**Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist  
confirming the authenticity of this lot

Ramon Orlina's work with glass was a magnificent and groundbreaking ordeal. Eschewing the hot glass-blowing technique, he uses a coldcutting method for his pieces, painstakingly chipping away at a block of glass with accurate precision and steady hands, a method that earned him the well-deserved moniker "Father of Philippine Glass Sculpture."

In this 2017 work *Modern Eve-2017*, Orlina returns to a favored subject: the human anatomy. In a style that resembles his earlier, more jagged works, the woman's body takes shape – here lies her small waist, her breasts, her torso. By using clear optical glass (as opposed to his usual colored glasses), the viewer is free to stare straight through her, the light passing through the sculpture's torso creating a vivid and varying image in every possible angle.

"A master of the curvilinear form, Orlina can articulate the female form by the mere virtue of a series of sleek undulating lines, with all the eroticism sublimated within the energy and fluidity of the line," Cid Reyes writes in a 2016 article, one year before *Modern Eve-2017* is created. "The female breast Orlina exhorts is no mere object of voyeuristic prurience," adds art critic Eric Torres. Indeed, Orlina's *Modern Eve-2017* is a hymn for every woman, celebrating not just their bodies but their characters, the praise made physical through every painstaking curve and the sensuous yet sensitive attunement to her form. (Hannah Valiente)



Ramon Orlina © León Gallery Archives







**Michael Cacnio** (b. 1969)*Mother and Child*

signed and dated 2000

brass

without base: H: 26 1/2" (67 cm) L: 7 1/2" (18 cm) W: 8 1/2" (22 cm)

with base: H: 29 1/4" (24 cm) L: 7 1/2" (19 cm) W: 8 1/2" (22 cm)

**P 500,000**Leon Gallery wishes to thank Mrs. Tess Cacnio  
for confirming the authenticity of this lot

*M*other and Child is another masterpiece by the award-winning, world-renowned Filipino sculptor Michael Cacnio. A woman clad in traditional Filipino clothing while holding her child dearly, this 2000 work is a poignant portrayal of parental love, a recurring theme of a Cacnio piece. Once again, this exquisite and intricately crafted brass work proves Cacnio's unparalleled talent and artistic prowess.

Michael Cacnio's exceptional sculptures, inspired by his healthy and vibrant upbringing in Malabon, depict universal themes of parental affection, street vendors, and the innocence and joy of childhood, evoking a sense of familiarity and nostalgia. More than their aesthetic appeal, his works are a thoughtful exploration of these shared human experiences, providing a profound understanding of humanity and Filipino heritage. With his dexterous hands, Cacnio triumphantly made Philippine culture come alive through his sculptures, thus engraving his name in the Philippine art scene.

*"My sculptures emphasize the emotions attached to the daily activities and lives of normal people living in real communities. People can relate and these remind them of a similar character or happening in their own lives,"* Michael Cacnio shared in an interview with the Philippine Star in September 2011.

Cacnio's artistic journey is a testament to his innate talent and unwavering passion for the arts. Graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, he started as a painter, following in the footsteps of his father, another acclaimed Filipino artist, Angel Cacnio. However, the young Cacnio later found his true passion in brass sculpting. His awe-inspiring masterpieces have garnered numerous awards and recognitions, including The Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines in the Arts/Sculpture category in 2006. Additionally, his works have been exhibited in various art spaces, museums, and galleries, and he holds the distinction of being the first Filipino artist to have a solo exhibit at the European Commission's headquarters in Berlaymont, Brussels, Belgium. (*Jessica Magno*)







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**Augusto Albor** (b. 1948)

*"Expanse" in 5.8 / 05*

signed and dated 2005 (lower left and verso)

acrylic on canvas

53" x 48" (135 cm x 122 cm)

**P 500,000**

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

**PROVENANCE**

The Space at Art informal

In the same vein as Fernando Amorsolo's sunlit fields and Malang's vibrant canvas, abstractionist Augusto Albor has perfected the usage of the color gray. "No other Filipino artist has laid such proprietorial domain over one particular color," writes Cid Reyes. "Albor and his abiding preference for the color gray are synonymous."

This preferential use of gray is evident in his 2005 *"Expanse" in 5.8 / 05*. Except for the smudges of black, the canvas (predominantly the background) is of overlapping layers of black and white, giving off a hazy version of gray. His subtle color register is on full display – aside from touches of burnt brown, the piece is almost entirely white and black. However, this does not limit Albor's creativity, instead elevating it in its refinement and removing any unnecessary elements.

"[To] achieve that level of Zen-like level of minimalism in one's work, a maximalist work ethos is required," artist and critic Igan D'Bayan writes in his Artmageddon column. "The entire process... is a long and exploratory trip. Call it a distillation: a process of sifting out, covering up and washing away what is unnecessary, distracting, and superfluous." (*Hannah Valiente*)



# Alfonso Ossorio & Jackson Pollock

## *Fellow Abstract Expressionist Masters*

Alfonso Ossorio and Jackson Pollock met in 1949, and since then it has been impossible to understand the artistic trajectory of one of the greatest mid to late twentieth-century artists, not to mention one of the most highly prized in our current market, without considering Ossorio.

Ossorio supported Pollock economically, emotionally, and in various personal ways. He welcomed Pollock frequently to his celebrated house The Creeks, which housed a magnificent art collection and his studio that he had acquired in August 1951 at Pollock's behest. Moreover, Ossorio contributed, at least in part, to the development of Pollock's artistic practice. Of course, the reverse also is true, and we find evidence of Pollock's influence in Ossorio's work. Yet, particularly in the latter years of Pollock's career, Ossorio, the artist, would play a role in Pollock's creative practices, as he turned once more toward some form of figurative representation.

Among the sources that provide evidence for the connections between these two artists is the voluminous biography by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (Clarkson N. Potter, New York, 1989; Pulitzer Prize, 1991). It allows us to appreciate their attachment to each other and confirms some things we already knew; namely, that Alfonso Ossorio not only financed Pollock's artistic and personal projects but also became a close personal friend.

The Pollocks spent periods of time as Ossorio's guests in his home (in the winter of 1950, for example, when Ossorio traveled to the Philippines). We know as well that on November 27, 1950, the eve of opening day at the Betty Parsons Gallery, Ossorio helped Pollock to present canvases onto supporting frames and hang paintings on the walls. At this event, too, he purchased the magnificent painting "Number 1" for \$1,500. In addition, Ossorio penned an essay titled "Mon ami, Jackson Pollock" (Jackson Pollock, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, 1951, reprinted in French, "Mon ami Jackson Pollock," exhibit catalogue, Studio Paul Facchetti, Paris, March 7 – 31, 1952); he arranged for Pollock to exhibit in Paris in 1952; he even offered him a \$200 monthly stipend to help him meet his needs. (A reproduction of the letter appears here; the original resides in the Smithsonian Institution.)

Jackson Pollock died as a result of an automobile accident at 10:15 p.m. on August 11, 1956. He had been driving with two female friends en route to the home of his dear friend and patron Alfonso Ossorio.

Several recent events have finally accorded Alfonso Ossorio, an artist with deep Filipino roots, his rightful place among the world's giants of artistic expressionism. His work was featured in the exhibit "Angels, Demons, and Savages. Pollock, Ossorio, Dubuffer" (Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., February 9 – May 12, 2013), and it appeared alongside Pollock's work in the Whitney Museum of New York ("America is hard to see," inaugural exhibit of the new Whitney Museum of American Art, May 1 – September 27, 2015). In 2016, Leon Gallery (Makati City, Philippines) celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of Ossorio's birth with two exhibits devoted to his paintings.

Alfonso Ossorio, born in Manila on August 2, 1916, has earned a unique and fundamental place in the history of art.

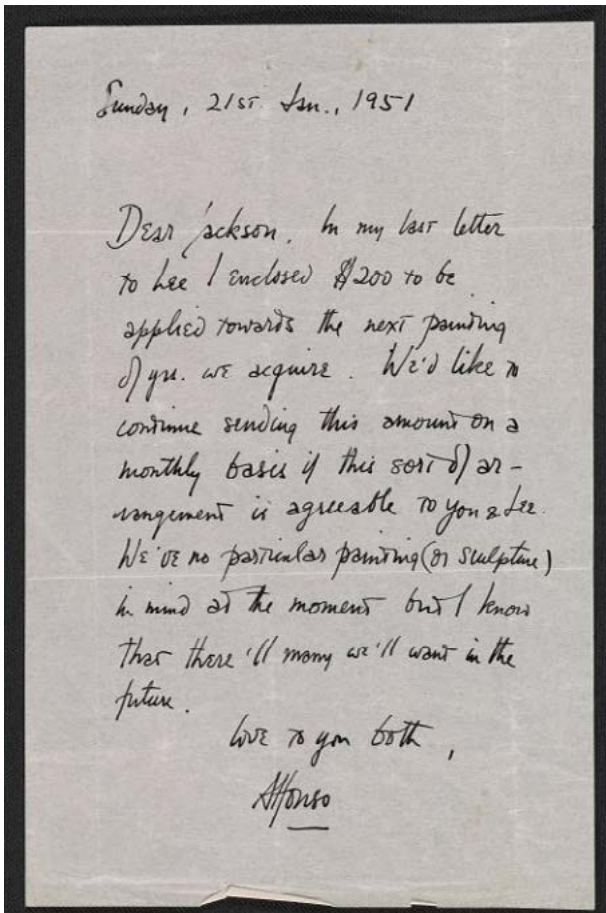


ABOVE: Alfonso Ossorio (front left), Ted Dragon (far left), Jackson Pollock (front right), Joseph Glasco (far right) and friends at Ossorio's East Hampton estate at The Creeks in the summer of 1952. © Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center





ABOVE: Alfonso Ossorio at his estate in East Hampton. Date unknown © <https://www.villagepreservation.org/2023/08/30/alfonso-ossorio/>



Letter of Ossorio where he offers to Jackson Pollock \$200 monthly



The Creeks: Ossorio's magnificent estate in East Hampton



Jackson Pollock's car after the car crash when he was driving to Ossorio's house.



# Ossorio and Pollock (and Dubuffet) Intertwine

## *Ossorio's Rare Large-Scale Mixed-Media Panel*

by ADRIAN MARANAN

*"It would be futile and wrong to deny the importance of purely formal relations in a work of art: to do so would be to repudiate the essential element in any man-made object—the imposition of form upon matter. But behind an artist's predilections, behind his preference to express himself in a particular manner, lies not only his personal genius, but the thought-scheme, the sense of values, that permeates his age."*

—ALFONSO OSSORIO, IN HIS INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO HIS UNDERGRADUATE THESIS  
"SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES ON THE VISUAL IMAGE OF CHRIST"

From 1956 to 1959, Alfonso Ossorio painted only five of these panels in oil and mixed media, each one a gift to family or friends. One has recently been auctioned at Leon Gallery in September 2024 for a record-breaking price. Another, titled *Post-Pentecost* (1958), is in the collection of The Whitney. The other two, *Ascension (Vertical; Cross-Section Horizontal)* (painted in 1956-57) and *Number 14. 58* (painted in 1958) were featured in the 2016 exhibition by Leon Gallery titled *Afflictions of Glory*, held to commemorate his birth centennial and marked the first-ever exhibit of Ossorio's works in the Philippines. The work presently offered in this sale is the last one that still remains in a private collection.

The five paintings would, in fact, collectively become a point of transition for Ossorio towards his famed *Congregations*. Forrest Selvig's authoritative interview with Ossorio in New York on November 19, 1968 details this juncture. Selvig asked, "You moved out of oil painting into collage first, didn't you?" Ossorio answered the following.

"Yes. It happened very naturally in terms of my work. Right after doing the church [referring to the Victorias Chapel mural] and the series of rather complex wax and watercolors, I had a sort of hard-edge period in oil. There was a period of paintings of contrasting texture with areas in an impasto white lead and oil—white lead with the pigment in it. Then slowly, objects started to get embedded into the impasto until I had to make a choice whether I would give up doing this or use a medium that was more suitable. I chose the natural thing, which was plastic."



ABOVE: *Guest and Host* (1954), a precursor to Ossorio's large-scale mixed media panels. Reproduced in B.H. Friedman's monograph *Alfonso Ossorio*.





ABOVE: Ossorio's other four large-scale mixed media panels, gifted to family and friends. Untitled (1957) and Ascension (Vertical); Cross-Section (Horizontal) (1956-57), both auctioned at Leon Gallery in 2024 and 2018, respectively. The former recently broke the world record for the most expensive Ossorio sold. Post-Pentecost (1958), in the collection of the Whitney. Number 14.58 (1958), featured in Leon Gallery's 2016 exhibition Alfonso Ossorio: Afflictions of Glory, the first-ever exhibit of Ossorio's works in the Philippines.

Pollock's influence is highly discernible in each of these five works, that is, "energy and motion made visible," as he put it. In the work at hand representative of the five rare panels, Ossorio and Pollock obviously share the same baroque sensibilities. But while Pollock settled on the literal part of "action painting," Ossorio went for the tactile, the three-dimensional effect akin to a relief sculpture, further imbuing the works with a sense of *horror vacui*. The result is an experimental phase in Ossorio's art manifesting a spirit within: inanimate in form, restless in energy, and tangible in quality, to feel as if one is engaging in the spirit of harmony.

B.H. Friedman, writing in Ossorio's most comprehensive monograph, remarks that Ossorio's "impulse toward three-dimensionality in paint intensified through the Fifties. While other prominent artists working in the New York/East Hampton area were fighting to "hold the picture plane"—a catchphrase at the time—Ossorio tested ways to destroy it."

Friedman continues, "In the spring of 1956, Ossorio had an exhibition at Parsons of work from the years 1954 to 1956. In some ways, the show was confusing and transitional. The earliest paintings in it, such as *Guest and Host*, were laid out diagrammatically in the tradition of hard-edged constructivism. Then, within various panels, Ossorio piled paint in twisting rope-like mounds of harsh brilliant color, which went beyond impasto and came closer to sculptural relief...."

From his friendship with another influential avant-garde artist, Jean Dubuffet, Ossorio learned the endless possibilities of unorthodox materials. Ossorio also learned from Dubuffet the manner of combining heavy oil paint with these unconventional stuff to provide such sheer physicality to a work.



In the March 5, 1954 issue of the *Weekly Women's Magazine*, an article titled "The Art of Alfonso Ossorio" graced the headlining pages of the publication in celebration of the 7th Annual Art Exhibition of the influential Association of the Philippines held in February earlier that year. In the lengthy article, one statement stood out from the rest.

"Alfonso Ossorio has long been an enigma, and an interesting enigma at that, to art lovers in the Philippines," so wrote the article.

And indeed, enigma he was.

Ossorio once said in a later interview that his art is "an obvious case of admiring and doing differently." And so, by combining Pollock's restless energy and Dubuffet's savage impastos, Ossorio would arrive at a unique visual language that shows a radical kind of figuration manifested through an assemblage of materials. In a way, this is also a return to one's roots for Ossorio, bringing together his belief in God, his Catholic upbringing, and the baroque aesthetics of the religion he grew up with. In one way or another, this may also evoke for Ossorio a point of resolution between his faith and his queerness. As Ossorio said to Felvig, "God is the sustaining force in the world," God is present and seen in all the things he beautifully created.

In another facet, Ossorio's newfound unity in form may have also been influenced to a degree by his social milieu, in which solidarity resounds amid a revolutionizing world of intensifying battles for the rights of colored and queer peoples, to which he truly belonged.

Ossorio's all-encompassing practice would soon climax in his *Congregations*, making the work at hand one of the precursors and a glimpse into the artist's genre-blending vision and innovation, his invaluable legacy to the international language of abstraction.



ABOVE: Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist); 1950: oil, enamel, and aluminum on canvas: overall: 87 x 118 in., National Gallery of Art, Washington. Bought by Alfonso Ossorio in 1950 in \$1,500 paid in installments and sold by Ossorio to the National Gallery for around \$2,000,000 in 1976. It was the only work in the exhibit that Pollock got to sell. 32 works were presented at the show.

## 140 PROPERTY FROM THE OSSORIO FAMILY COLLECTION

### Alfonso Ossorio (1916 - 1990)

#### *Untitled*

signed, dated and inscribed "28.7.58" (verso)

mixed media on wood panel

96" x 24" (244 cm x 61 cm)

**P 10,000,000**

#### LITERATURE

Rejante - Manahan, Liliane and Cid Reyes. *Alfonso Ossorio: Grazing Light*.

Makati City: Leon Gallery, 2017. Published to accompany the exhibition

"Alfonso Ossorio: Grazing Light" at Leon Gallery. Full-color spread on pages 44 to 45 and painting description on page 44.

Ottmann, Klaus and Liliane Rejante-Manahan, *Alfonso Ossorio: A Survey (1940 - 1989)*. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same title at the Ayala Museum in 2018. Makati City: Ayala Foundation, 2018. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 70.

#### EXHIBITED

Ayala Museum, *Alfonso Ossorio: A Survey (1940 - 1989)*, Makati City, 26 February - 17 June 2018

Leon Gallery, *Alfonso Ossorio: Grazing Light*, Corinthian Plaza, Makati City, 21 April - 12 May 2017



*The Last to Be Found  
In a Private Collection*





## A Rococo Mesa Altar

2nd half of the 18th Century (1750 – 1800)

Balayong Wood ("Afzelia rhomboidea")

H: 34 1/2" (88 cm)

L: 25 3/4" (65 cm)

W: 49 1/4" (125 cm)

**P 300,000**

### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Bohol

This massive mesa altar of "balayong" hardwood was found in the sacristy of an old church in Bohol island six decades ago. It has a thick "binandeja" framed top over a casing with two drawers. The drawer fronts have shallow relief carvings of native "catmon" flowers (*Dillenia philippinensis*) and rococo cartouches with trellised centers. There are thick flanges with shallow relief carvings of vines and rococo cartouches that further support the overhanging top. The two sides of the casing are single horizontal panels of balayong. The back of the casing is a single horizontal panel still of balayong. There is a thick molding under the drawers, similar to the top. Under the molding are aprons on the front and sides, also with shallow relief carvings of vines and rococo cartouches, like the drawer fronts and flanges. The casing is supported by four cabriole legs topped by ingeniously reductionist, stylized "dinemonyo" grotesque masques and terminating in stylized part-trifid, part-ball-and-claw feet with trellised balls on ogee plinths, all connected by stretchers in traditional Chinese style. Overall, it is an interesting piece because of its naïve, hybrid baroque-rococo ornamentation by an aspirational provincial mindset, obviously guided by a European psyche.

Filipino artisans and carvers in general neglected to understand that the Rococo style from eighteenth century France (1720–1760) was principally one of levity, of lightness. Of all things, it was not heavy or ponderous design; that was the domain of the baroque and Victorian styles. Of all

the Filipino attempts at Rococo, one of the most successful are the altars at the Tanay church in Rizal; lightness and grace succeeded there. Another rococo success are the altars of Argao church in southeastern Cebu.

The island of Bohol has magnificent intact churches mostly built by the Jesuits (SJ Societas Iesu/Society of Jesus) before they were expelled by SM El Rey Carlos III from Spain and all its territories in 1767–68. The churches were taken over by the Augustinian Recollects (OAR Ordo Augustinianorum Recollectorum/Order of Augustinian Recollects) and the Franciscans (OFM Ordo Fratrum Minorum/Order of Friars Minor). The Jesuits returned in 1859. The churches of Baclayon (of coral stone, one of the oldest and largest; magnificent baroque altars; structure partially reconstructed); Loboc (large, airy, and pleasant; neoclassical altars; structure totally reconstructed); Dauis (elegant and feminine aura; structure partially reconstructed); Loay (interesting main altar with an antique wrought iron trellis semi-dome; structure partially reconstructed); Loon (of coral stone, one of the oldest and largest; structure totally reconstructed); Albuquerque/Albur (beautiful new altars/beautiful new wall and ceiling murals; everything tasteful); Maribojoc (beautiful Neo-Gothic altars; structure totally reconstructed); Cortes (of coral stone); Dimiao (recent altars, baroque ones deaccessioned in the 1970s); Calape (Neo-Gothic); Tagbilaran (recently overdone but functional); and others are all beautiful despite



the ravages of time and the ensuing reconstructions. Baclayon, Loboc, Loon, and Maribojoc churches have been declared National Cultural Treasures by the National Museum of the Philippines. (*Augusto Marcelino Reyes Gonzalez III*)







# A Serene Landscape

## *From Amorsolo's landmark year of his Paris Exposition participation*

by ADRIAN MARANAN

The Amorsolo landscape is a world filled with the immaculate serenity of the artist's pastoral motherland—made much more special when painted during the height of the artist's creative powers in the 1920s and the 1930s, his own Golden Age.

*Bamboo Bridge Over A River*, painted in 1931, is a memento from the artist's period of high success exemplified by his landmark participation at the 1931 Paris Exposition, in which he exhibited his three large panels, each representing Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. It was only the Philippines' second participation in a Parisian exposition in a city once honored as the global art capital. The French newspaper *Le Petit Journal* reported that the monumental paintings of Amorsolo and his uncle Fabian de la Rosa, who also participated in the exposition, "have managed to render with as much simplicity as talent."

Amorsolo and De la Rosa became heirs to the international prestige that Luna and Hidalgo had earlier reached at the 1889 Exposition Universelle, also in Paris.

Riding high on this well-deserved triumph, Amorsolo went on to create paintings of peace and quiet evocative of man living in harmony with nature. This opened an endless stream of consciousness for both his benevolent disposition in life and the promising milieu of his period, marked by a nation's hopeful transition to sovereignty that would materialize with the inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935, or four years after this work. After all, painting was both Amorsolo's source of sustenance for his family and his creative catharsis amid an ecstatic atmosphere.

Amorsolo was known for his sketching and on-the-spot painting sessions in the nearby countryside environs of Manila. One can have an idea about the locale from which Amorsolo based this scene. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo recounted in the family memoirs that her father would frequent Marilao, Santa Maria, and Bocaue in Bulacan, sketching the idyllic streams and vast fields of the rural towns. She further mentioned that her father also "had his own *banca* then and used to go boating along the rivers in Quezon City, San Juan, and Pasig."

*Bamboo Bridge Over A River* captures Amorsolo's confident dexterity and optimism at the height of his "Golden Period." Amorsolo's fine brushstrokes mirror the serenity exuded by the scenery. The work is a testament to Amorsolo prospering in both his profession and his profound sense of fulfillment in his personal expressions of the simple joys of countryside living amid the changing times. (*Adrian Maranan*)

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**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

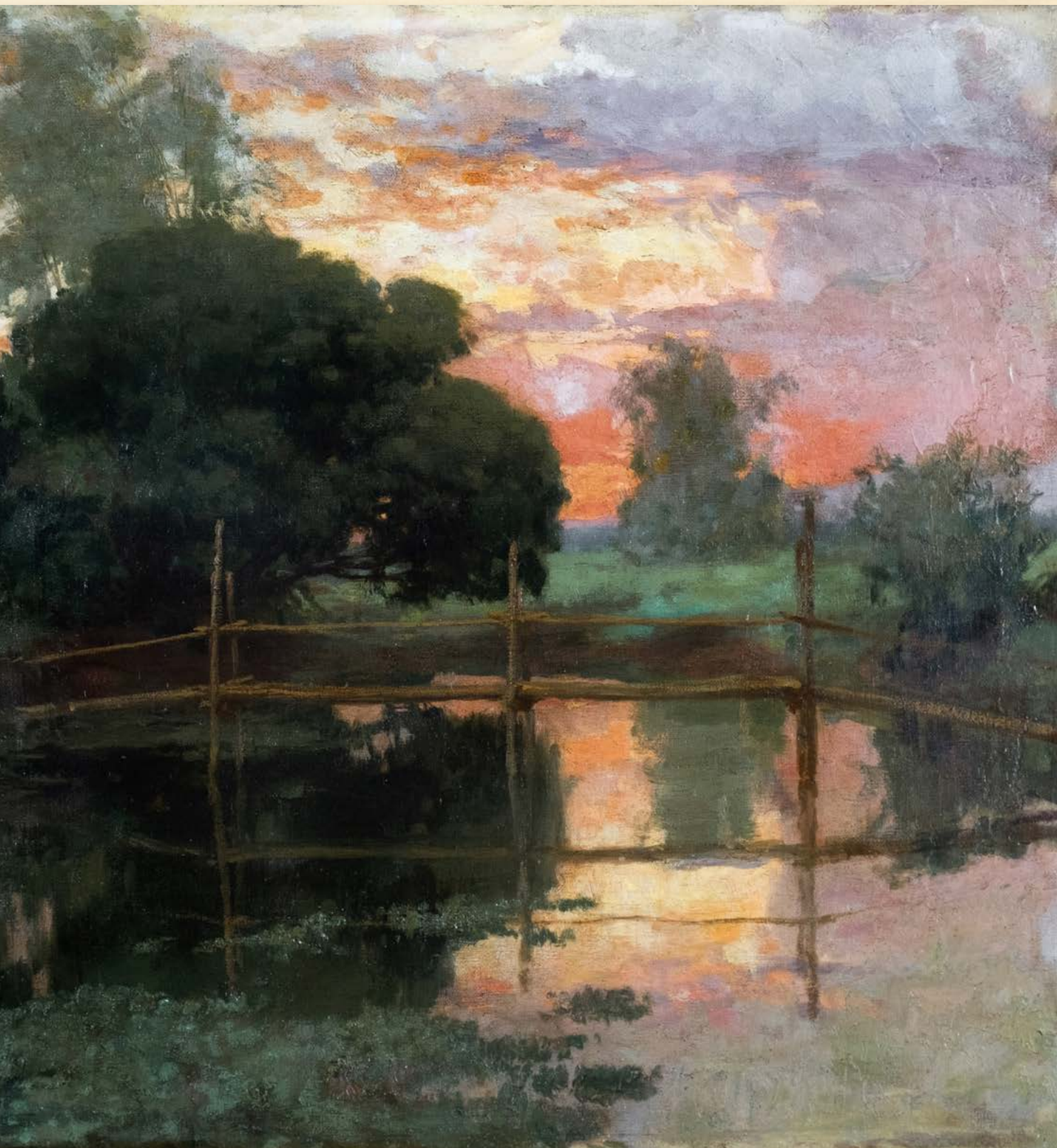
*Bamboo Bridge over a River*  
signed and dated 1931 (lower left)  
oil on canvas  
20 1/2" x 24 3/4" (52 cm x 63 cm)

**P 4,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo confirming the authenticity of this lot









## 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 800,000**

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: The actual Pagoda festival © <https://pintakasi1521.blogspot.com/>

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.



ABOVE: Manuel Rodriguez Sr.

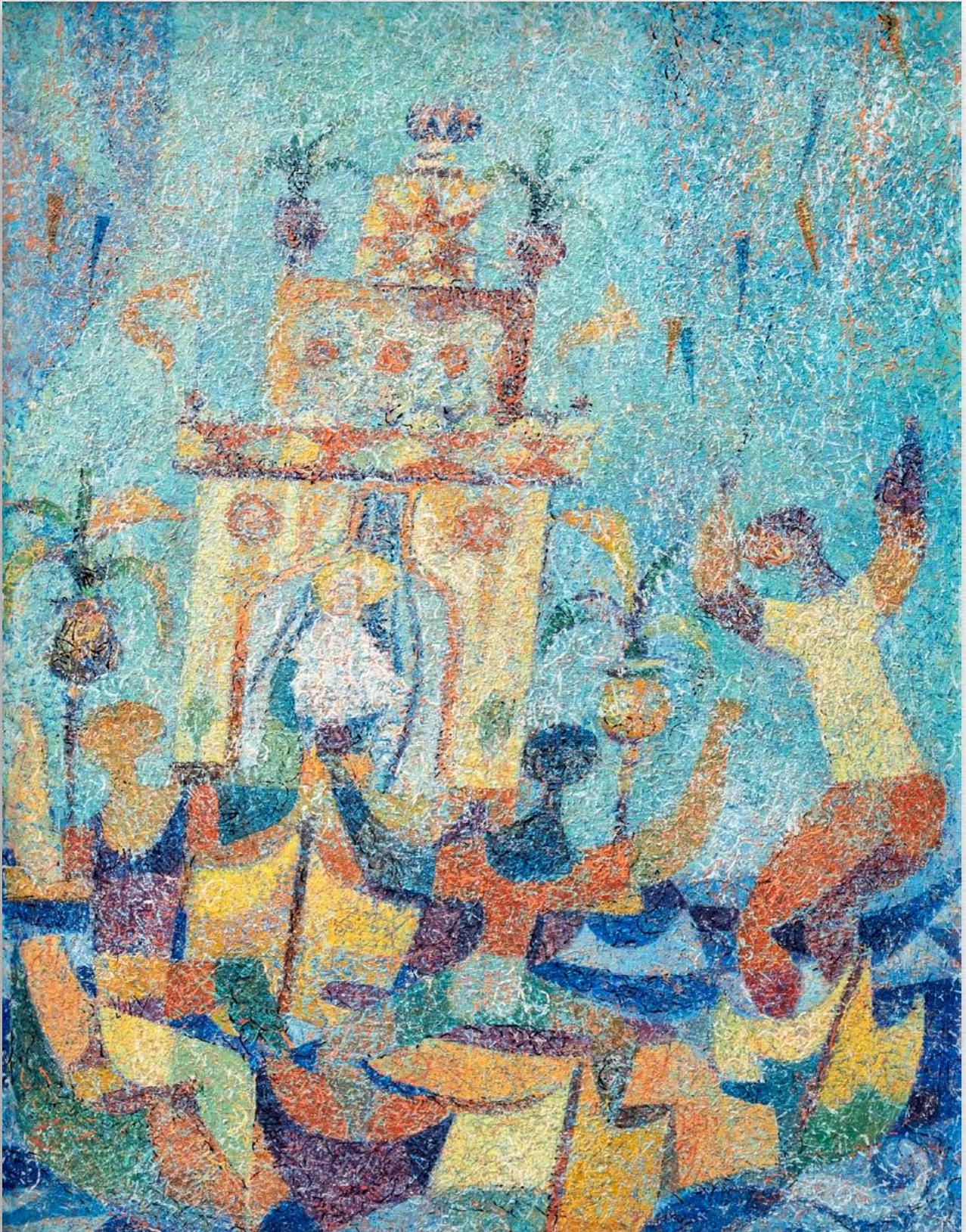
Other iconic pagoda festivals in the country include the one in Cardona, Rizal, celebrated every October 4 in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, and the "Pagoda-Caracol" in Malabon every December 8, coinciding with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

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*





# Movement into Painting

## Zobel's Gestos

by HANNAH VALIENTE

In the 1970s, Fernando Zobel reached perhaps what would be a zenith of his career. This prolific decade saw the abstractionist reach heights greater than he had previously done, with the series *El Júcar* and *La Vista* setting the tone his 1970s would pose.

However, perhaps the greatest of his 1970s series is his *Serie Blanca*. The artist's most lyrical and most enigmatic work of fiction, it is what art critic Emmanuel Torres describes as Zobel's "progression from the material to the spiritual."

"After twelve years spent studying color, in the final pictures of *La Vista*, Zobel's painting becomes predominantly white," adds his biographer Angeles Villalba Salvador. "He thus commences the series, *Serie Blanca*, which he will continue until 1978."

*Serie Blanca* would be the pinnacle of Zobel's abstraction, his works pushing the common color of white to its limits and then well beyond it. It is a series of works that Villalba Salvador describes as "characterized by infinitely degraded whites, which distribute spaces and volumes and seem to lose themselves on the edges of the canvas."

"With *Serie Blanca*, the thematic aspect is broadened: light, volume, form, gesture, anatomies, still lifes, and, of course, themes from the history of art," Villalba Salvador continues.

It is then with this eminent series that another body of work came out. A series within a series, *Gestos* – meaning gesture in Spanish – shed *Serie Blanca's* interest in the figure, transferring it to the various ways in which the human body rearranges itself.

"It is no longer a question of its movement, as in the previous stage, but of rest between two movements and, in particular, the gestures made by children," Villalba Salvador writes.

As such, *Gestos XXIX – Climbing* follows the movement of climbing, the sole black gesture at the middle reminiscent of the cracks and outcrops one might need to step on to climb to the top. *Gestos* – as a series and as an individual work – is an outstanding example of Zobel's unique brand of minimalism, an abstractionist reduction that has been his signature and is recognizable as uniquely Zobel's for the decades to come. He traversed into pure non-objectivism, his gestural lines dissolving into ambiguity that is both intricate and sublime. (Hannah Valiente)

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**Fernando Zóbel** (1924 - 1984)

*Gestos XXIX - Climbing*

signed (lower left and verso),

dated 1979 and inscribed "GESTOS XXIX 79-10" (verso)

oil on canvas

24" x 16" (61 cm x 41 cm)

**P 4,000,000**

LITERATURE

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

Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022. Listed as "nº 79-10" with painting description on page 588.







**Affandi** (1907 – 1990)*Withered Sunflowers*

signed and dated 1978 (lower right)

oil on canvas

48" x 78" (120 cm x 200 cm)

**P 5,000,000**

Accompanied by a certificate signed by Kartika Affandi confirming the authenticity of this lot



**W***ithered Sunflowers* is a remarkable example of Affandi's unique expressionist style, showcasing his characteristic method of painting directly from the tube. Known as one of Indonesia's most prolific maestros, Affandi was a self-taught artist who left an indelible mark on the art world. With many of his works housed in museums and private collections globally, he remains one of the most celebrated figures in Indonesian modern art.

prestigious international exhibitions, including the Venice and Sao Paulo Biennales. Notably, his work was recently featured at the 2024 Venice Biennale, further emphasizing its continuing relevance. Among his many honors, he received the Peace Award from the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in 1977 and Indonesia's prestigious Bintang Jasa Utama, an honor given by the president for extraordinary service to the nation, in 1978.

Created in 1978, *Withered Sunflowers* reflects Affandi's fascination with the sun and sunflowers, a recurring motif in his work. Much like Van Gogh, one of his artistic idols, Affandi captured the flowers in their natural environment rather than in a vase. His dynamic portrayal of sunflowers, always seeking the sun, breathes life into the composition. The painting is dominated by deep greens, with the sunflowers themselves depicted in bold black and orange hues. Affandi's signature gestural strokes guide the viewer's gaze across the canvas, from the vibrant sun at the upper right—rendered in shades of blue and streaks of yellow-white—to the field of sunflowers, dynamically arranged in a diagonal sweep from right to left.



This painting stands out not only for its rich color palette and emotive energy but also for its impressive size, measuring two meters, which is rare for Affandi's works. Accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from the Affandi Museum, signed by his daughter Kartika Affandi, who oversees the estate, *Withered Sunflowers* is an extraordinary and rare masterpiece from one of Indonesia's greatest artists



A Vibrantly Poignant Piece from the  
Indonesian Amorsolo





**Rodel Tapaya** (b. 1980)*Kabayong Gigil*

signed and dated 2007 (lower left and verso)

acrylic on canvas

14" x 12" (36 cm x 30 cm)

**P 200,000**PROVENANCE  
West Gallery

Tapaya's practice spans a variety of media, including large-scale acrylic canvases, under-glass painting, traditional crafts, dioramas, and intricate drawings. Each piece becomes a tableau of his reflections on time and place, influenced by extensive research into pre-colonial history and local folklore. The use of folk elements and labyrinthine patterns throughout his work forms a visual language that simultaneously preserves and reinterprets Filipino myths. His characters often appear as archetypes, shaped by recorded folktales and recent historical scholarship.

The piece features a stylized horse, rendered with simplified shapes and muted earth tones, giving it a timeless, almost mythical quality. The horse's body is constructed through overlapping forms, with slender legs that drip into the



foreground, a technique that emphasizes both elegance and a surreal distortion. The grid lines subtly incorporated into the background suggest a sense of confinement or structure, perhaps symbolizing the boundaries of tradition or history. (*Jed Daya*)

**Mark Justiniani** (b. 1966)*Aruy-Aruy*

signed and dated 1992 (lower left)

oil on canvas

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

**P 500,000**PROVENANCE  
Hiraya GalleryLeón Gallery, *The Kingly Treasures Auction 2017*,  
Makati City, 2 December 2017, Lot 66

Mark Justiniani's *Aruy-Aruy* echoes the prevalent social realism that emerged in the late 1970s. In his signature distorted style, Justiniani depicts a downtrodden everyman, eyes downcast as he walks away from – or perhaps was turned away by – a couple sitting at a table. The man, dressed in a suit and tie, has his arm around the visibly uncomfortable woman as he continuously talks, unaware or uninterested in the woman's obvious discomfort. In one genius scene, Justiniani manages to portray the disparity



between two groups – between the social classes and the genders, blending these two issues and creating a banal yet hard-hitting piece. (*Hannah Valiente*)





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**Luis Lorenzana** (b.1979)

*a) Untitled (Girl with Flower)*

signed (lower right)  
graphite and watercolor on paper  
14" x 11" (36 cm x 28 cm)

*b) Untitled (Clown)*

signed (bottom) dated 2012 (verso)  
graphite and watercolor on paper  
14" x 11" (36 cm x 28 cm)

**P 200,000**

PROVENANCE

Silverlens Gallery (Girl with Flower)  
Secret Fresh (Clown)

León Gallery, *The Magnificent September Auction 2017*,  
Makati City, 9 September 2017, Lot 81

A self-taught artist, Luis Lorenzana's public service background helped mold a distinctly political series of works. His sharp, almost cartoonish art style creates a surrealist image with their cherub cheeks, wide eyes, and lush bodies, creating an interesting contrast between the soft, dream-like visage and the serious topic at hand. Even his graphite works, like the lots at hand, contain that surrealist beauty of his paintings, with one piece portraying a child and an eerie creature handing her a flower and another an absurdist rendition of a clown. With his fresh perspective, Lorenzana's pieces, whether sketches or full-blown paintings, create a novel aesthetic that draws local and international collectors with its witty social commentary and relationship with popular culture. *(Hannah Valiente)*





149

## Romeo Tabuena (1921 - 2015)

### *Carabao*

signed and dated 1966 (lower left)  
acrylic on board  
16 1/2" x 22 1/2" (42 cm x 57 cm)

**P 380,000**

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, USA

Despite moving to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico for more than a decade by then, Romeo Tabuena's Filipino roots and style are still evident in his 1966 *Carabao*. Recalling his style prior to his move to Mexico (which turned into prismatic, jewel-toned works that show his Cubistic inspirations), *Carabao* boasts of a darker palette, the figures on his canvas looser and more fluid than his harshly separated Cubistic pieces. These

three dark-skinned figures meander through the fields, with the man steering *three carabaos* into the pasture for feeding. It is near-monochromatic with only the bright yellow and red of the figure's dress breaking the sepia overtone of the piece, a glimpse of Tabuena's proletarian leanings, both from the Philippines and Mexico.

*Carabao* displays the artist's penchant for fragmentation, deconstruction, and reconstruction, as befits a Neo-Realist who found himself aligned with the likes of Legaspi, Manansala, and many others. Despite his physical distance from his homeland, Tabuena continues to pay homage to it, displaying his profound and ingrained connection to his fellow countrymen who share a common strain of struggles and trials even from across the seas. (Hannah Valiente)





150

**Angelito Antonio** (b. 1939)

*Sabong*

signed and dated 1985 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

**P 400,000**

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

The 20th-century Philippine art scene witnessed a significant shift in art style. The idyllic pastoral scenes that once dominated the artists' canvases were gradually changed to fragmented and abstract compositions. Nevertheless, despite this shift in style, many of the subjects of these works remained the same: the Philippines and the Filipinos. One of the awardees of the inaugural Thirteen

Artist Awards by the CCP in 1970, Angelito Antonio was among the most influential artists who embraced Modernism; his canvases always boast of his compelling love and affection for the Philippines.

Painted in 1985, this masterpiece captures a scene before a cockfight, a recurring theme in Antonio's work. Two native folks, possibly preparing for a match, are depicted, one smoking tobacco while holding and conditioning his rooster. Inherently Filipino, this oil on canvas work is a vivid portrayal of the allure of provincial life and culture, sabong or cockfighting being one of the infamous leisurely activities in the countryside. A canvas filled with geometric planes and bright, kaleidoscopic hues contrasted by black outlines and shadows, *Sabong* is undoubtedly crafted by Antonio's expert hands, perfectly demonstrating his exceptional artistry, befitting the country's last pillars of Modernism. *(Jessica Magno)*





151

## Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

### *Seated Figure*

signed and dated 1985 (upper left)

tempera

18" x 12" (46 cm x 30 cm)

**P 700,000**

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Finale Art File confirming the authenticity of this lot

#### PROVENANCE

León Gallery, The Kingly Treasures Auction 2019, Makati City, 30 November 2019, Lot 3.

The painting illustrates the intriguing look between caricature, with its distorting propensity, and a cubist-expressionist response to social realist art. Ang Kiukok's painting career can be summed up as a dichotomy of a struggle for human expressiveness and constant perfection

of cubistic pictorialism. The human condition at its most pathetic or angriest predicament has always inspired this artist. Suffering and torture were images familiar to him as he witnessed these in his boyhood during the Second World War.

Ang's first trip to the United States in 1965 also proved to be a profound experience for him. He saw at close quarters the materialism of a highly industrialized society that turns human beings into machines or robots—a society that dehumanizes. Images of such cruelties continue to haunt him in the political and criminal violence reported daily by the mass media. The restricted color range of the work reflects the elegant austerity of Ang's aesthetic sensibility. The painter's colors not only strengthen the architectonic quality of his forms but also intensify his visual statements. It is this eruption of brutality from within civilized circumstances that enabled Ang Kiukok to extract from the scene such a convincing symbol of anguish.





152

**Brian Uhing** (b. 1975)

*The Truth About Every Great Adventure*

signed (lower left)

mixed media

9" x 15" (23 cm x 38 cm)

**P 500,000**

Brian Uhing's *The Truth About Every Great Adventure* embodies the whimsical yet classical aspect of Uhing's art. Honed in the traditional art style yet bearing contemporary wit and humor, he depicts a wild boar and a child walking through the woods, their proportions skewed as the two of them tower over the trees they were trekking through. The piece takes on an almost storybook-like quality, with its style emanating magic that is different from Uhing's usual surrealism, though no less fantastical than the rest of his oeuvre. As the little girl trudges on her adventure, unafraid and at ease, the viewer can't help but root for her, excited to accompany her to the resolution of her quest. *(Hannah Valiente)*



# A Shared Love for Music and Art

## *Don Tiking Lopez and Federico Alcuaz*

In another life, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz might have continued down this path as throughout the years, he had been offered scholarships for his cello playing. In this universe, however, this sense of music is conveyed in his abstractions which contain rhythmic crescendos and calming pianissimos that bring its viewers into the highs and lows of a good musical piece.

It was with this musical sensitivity that Alcuaz approached this 1967 abstraction. His ability to shift seamlessly from figurative to abstraction rendered him capable of creating truly unique abstract pieces that merge the muddy waters between these two thoughts. With a fervor that could only belong to an artist, his abstract symphonic pieces are grounded in the fundamental art principles and yet refreshing in their novel composition, a study of contrast that this virtuoso himself embodies in his everyday life.

This work's dark earthy palette echoes the tough forest ground, the tail end of autumn leaving dark leaves along their roots, evoking a nostalgic image as though a physical manifestation of closing a chapter in one's life.

Alcuaz's mystifying poetic lyricism establishes itself in this work. Through his usage of colors and composition, he is able to evoke an emotional intensity that transcends figuration and abstraction. Urged forward by an innate melodious spirit, Alcuaz's spontaneity opens the gates for emotional scrutiny, a sense that emphasizes the musical and the metaphysical just as much as the physical world. (*Hannah Valiente*)

**153** PROPERTY FROM THE DON VICENTE "TIKING" H. LOPEZ, JR. COLLECTION

**Federico Aguilar Alcuaz** (1932 - 2011)

*Untitled*

signed and dated 1964 (upper right)

mixed media on board

18 1/2" x 25" (47 cm x 64 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

León Gallery wishes to thank Christian M. Aguilar  
for confirming the authenticity of this lot









# An Idyllic Family Day

## *Amorsolo Paints the Blessings of a Harmonious Kinship*

by JESSICA MAGNO

A key figure in Philippine art history, Fernando Amorsolo continuously graced the country with his masterpieces for as long as he could hold a paintbrush. Even after his death, his influence and undying legacy in the art scene continue to inspire and instill a deep sense of national pride, imbued in the large body of artworks he had left, ranging from sketches and studies to portraits, and his famed sunlit bucolic landscapes. His subjects and ingenious use of colors profoundly influence viewers' emotions, evoking a sense of warmth and nostalgia.

Aside from the majestic landscape, this untitled oil painting also presents a peaceful and diligent countryside life, with a hint of a close familial bond. In view is a group of countryfolks going on about their morning chores and activities in the rice fields with several kids in tow, their proximity to one another suggesting that they're a family or in a tightly-knit community. A nipa hut is visible from the right, shaded by large trees, with piles of hay in front and chickens littered around. At the back is a stretch of farming fields backgrounded by the outlines of nearby mountain ranges, all against a clear blue sky with billowy clouds.

Perfectly capturing the rich culture and tradition of the Philippine countryside, this masterpiece was crafted by the maestro's expert hands in his late 60s, a testament to Amorsolo's perennial artistic prowess, deserving of the first-ever National Artist of the Philippines.



154

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Sunday Morning Going To Town*

signed and dated 1960 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 34" (61 cm x 86 cm)

**P 8,000,000**

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist







## 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 700,000**

#### 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



ABOVE: Fachada da 10ª Bienal

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*.

"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.

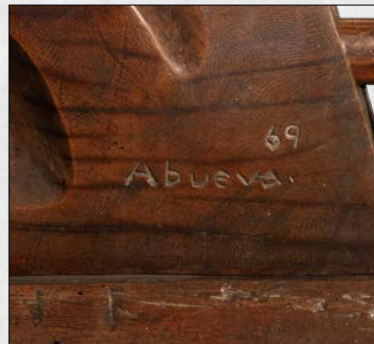
"It is actually an oversized male and female chastity belt, with two actually functioning padlocks, a magazine rack, and a stand for a tall drink. The male or female figure lies in the hard wooden board and is clasped shut into it by a hollowed block, thus prohibiting any other "endeavor" except drinking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







156

**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 300,000**



**Marc Aran Reyes** (b. 1996)*Black Hole*

oil on canvas

84" x 180" (213 cm x 457 cm)

**P 2,000,000**

## LITERATURE

Reyes, Marc Aran. *Between the Shadow and the Soul*. San Juan City: Art Underground, 2021. Full-color spread on pages 162 to 163 and painting description on page 162.

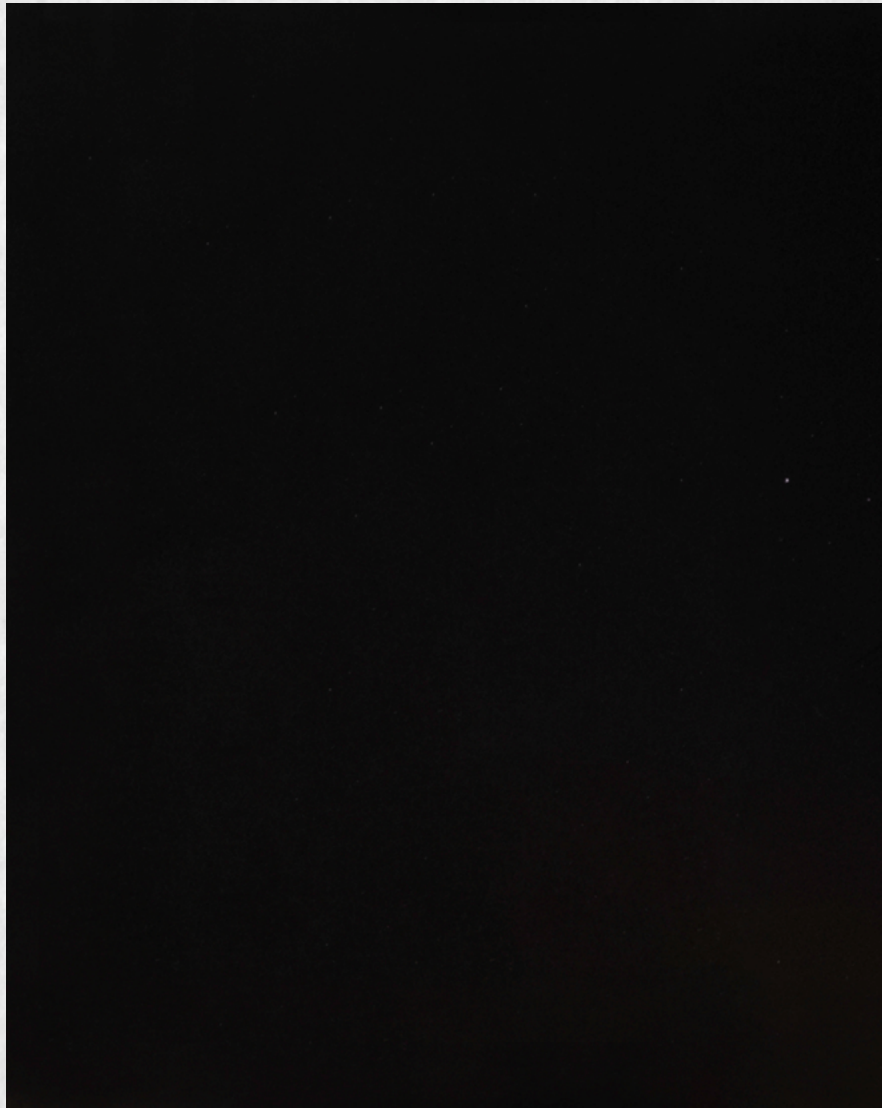
## EXHIBITED

León Gallery, *Sad Emitting Pancakes*, Makati City, 18 - 28 February 2020

**M**arc Aran Reyes utilizes space, shadows, and light to emphasize the vastness and emptiness of his canvas. Expertly wielding space to paradoxically portray a claustrophobic environment, the sheer nothingness with which Reyes is comfortable exploiting pushes the vast emptiness many are uncomfortable contending with.

With *Black Hole*, Reyes uses the oppressive black instead of the mind-boggling vastness of white. As such, it emphasizes the crushing nothingness that is space. Amid this black hole is a girl, looking down at a reflection of herself directly beneath her, as though she was floating above a body of water, untethered in this claustrophobic environment.

A graduate of the Far Eastern University, Reyes, quickly swept the local art scene with his fascinating pieces, expertly put into words by the title of his monograph – his works hover between the shadow and the soul, encapsulating that elusive magic within that place. (*Hannah Valiente*)











OT 120

**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)

*Market Scene*





Francesco Vanni 1945





LOT 42

**Vicente Manansala** (1910 - 1988)

*Neo-Realist Pangguinge*









LOT 53

**Betsy Westendorp** (1927 - 2022)

*Painting #850-95*

*B. Westendorp*



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LOT 68

**José Rizal** 1861 - 1896)

*Josephine Sleeping*



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LOT 140

Alfonso Ossorio (1916 - 1990)

*Untitled*



# Now Accepting Consignments

León Gallery  
FINE ART & ANTIQUES

The Asian Cultural Council Auction  
February 2025



**Fernando Amorsolo** (1892 - 1972)  
*Sabungero*  
signed and dated 1935 (lower right)  
oil on canvas

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BACK COVER

LOT 24

**Ang Kiukok** (1931 - 2005)

*Fisherman*

LOT 47

**Emmanuel Garibay** (b. 1962)

*Emmaus*







Miller 92



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