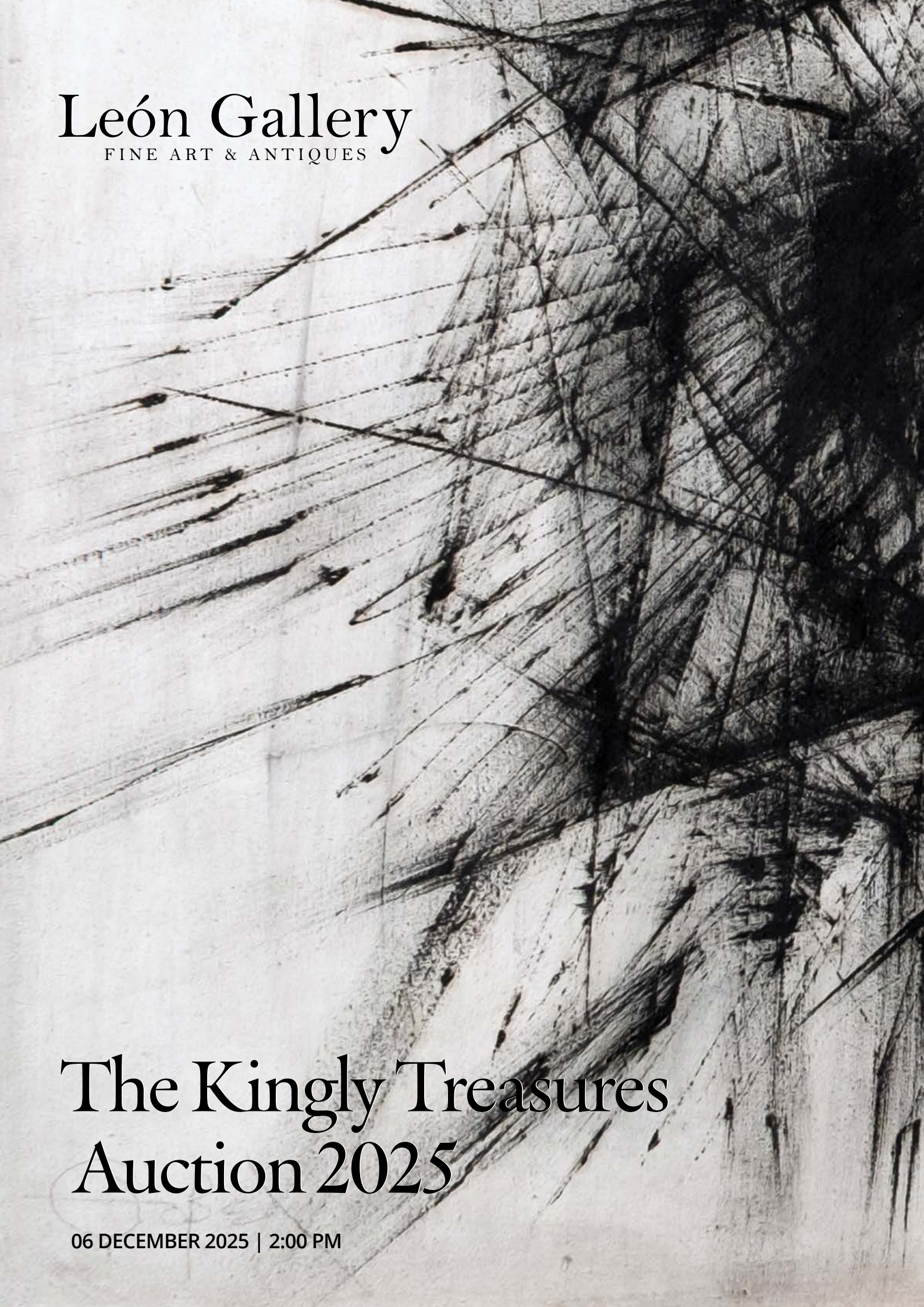
León Gallery
FINE ART & ANTIQUES



The Kingly Treasures Auction 2025

06 DECEMBER 2025 | 2:00 PM



Auction

06 December 2025
Saturday, 2:00 PM

Preview

Saturday to Friday
29 November - 05 December 2025
9:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Venue

G/F Eurovilla 1, Rufino corner Legazpi Streets, Legazpi Village, Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Contact

www.leon-gallery.com
info@leon-gallery.com
+632 8856-27-81

Lot 109
Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)
The Offering

León Gallery
FINE ART & ANTIQUES

09 Foreword

10 - 299 Lots 1 - 160

301 Index

302 Terms & Conditions

303 Registration Form

Lot 91
Cedrick Dela Paz (b.1995)
Middle Class

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FINE ART & ANTIQUES

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Lot 24
Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)
Barong-Barong



Lot 64
Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)
Mealtime

León Gallery
FINE ART & ANTIQUES



Foreword

DEAR FRIENDS and CLIENTS,

As we formally close this year filled with great passion for all things Filipino, let me first extend my sincerest gratitude to all of you who, for the past 15 years, have been our constant companions in exalting the genius and triumph of the Filipino artist. Here in **The Kingly Treasures Auction 2025**, we manifest our continued commitment to championing the ingenuity of our spirit, a fitting year-end celebration on this significant milestone for all of us.

In this auction, we proudly present masterpieces from our esteemed modernists that marked a pivotal moment in their creative journey, an artistic coming of age of all sorts.

Fernando Zóbel showcases his dynamic charm through his watershed 1960 masterpiece, ***Tarraco***, a highly important work from his final Philippine show, held at The Luz Gallery in early 1961. This painting, from his coveted *Serie Negra*, marked the end of an era for Zóbel, representing his fond farewells to his birthplace as he would permanently settle in Spain that same year, where he would further experience a creative renaissance.

Hernando R. Ocampo's *Kalaanan* is a symbolic homage to his beloved Caloocan and an encapsulation of his transition from a full-time advertising professional to finally pursuing his painting career freely. It comes from the collection of former senator Nikki Coseteng, whom H.R. once affectionately called "one of my favorite human beings." There are also five rare, oil-on-wood paintings by Ocampo that he poignantly created during his unfortunate incarceration at Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa in 1945, due to false collaboration accusations.

We are also thrilled to present that, finally, rare and highly significant first editions of **Dr. Jose Rizal's Noli Me Tangere** and **El Filibusterismo** are united together for the very first time in auction history. The coming together of these two novels, which profoundly contributed to our cause for independence, coincides with the eve of the 130th anniversary of Rizal's martyrdom at Bagumbayan, a timely opportunity to pay tribute to a father of our nation.

Two other essential Rizaliana artifacts include an extremely rare poetry book that Rizal dedicated to **Leonor Rivera**, the only surviving memento of their romantic affair and fate as star-crossed lovers, and Rizal's favorite photograph, which he intended as the frontispiece of his *El Filibusterismo.*

The President Manuel L. Quezon Private Reserve Collection is another highlight of this sale, in concurrence with a resurgence of interest in the life, career, and legacy of the Commonwealth's first president through the film Quezon. This selection includes President Quezon's original 1924 passport, bearing his signature and that of Governor-General Leonard Wood, his political rival, as well as a letter addressed to his wife, Doña Aurora Quezon, in which the President speaks out on his own behalf regarding various controversies.

There are also heirlooms from the Puyat Family collection, highlighted by **Senator Gil J. Puyat's Patek Philippe 3671/1,** which bears a personal dedication from **President Ferdinand E. Marcos and First Lady Imelda R. Marcos** engraved on the back, revealing a unique yet mysterious relationship between the then-newly elected President and the influential Senate President.

On behalf of Team León Gallery, I invite you to join us as we ring down the curtain for this fruitful year. We look forward to seeing all of you in 2026 for another exciting adventure in exploring and rediscovering our vibrant culture and rich heritage.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all of you!

Yours sincerely,

Jaime L. Ponce de León
Director
LEÓN GALLERY

1

Jose Joya (1931 - 1995)

Mother and Child
signed and dated 1989 (lower right)
pastel on paper
19 3/4" x 12 3/4" (50 cm x 32 cm)

P 380,000

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



Demonstrating his versatility and sensitivity to figurative composition and emotional realism, National Artist Josa Joya's Mother and Child perfectly captures the tender and humanizing feeling of maternal love, as well as the intimate bond between a nurturing mother and an innocent child.

Made around 1987, Joya depicts a seated woman holding her child in her arms, which were given life through soft shading, delicate lines, and warm earth tones. Establishing warmth, humility, and intimacy between the two subjects. This masterpiece bridges the emotional expressiveness of traditional subjects with the refined compositional control of a national Artist, making it an art piece worth having. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

2

Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Cross-Legged Woman
signed and dated 5-V-02 (lower right)
gouache
19" x 13" (48 cm x 33 cm)

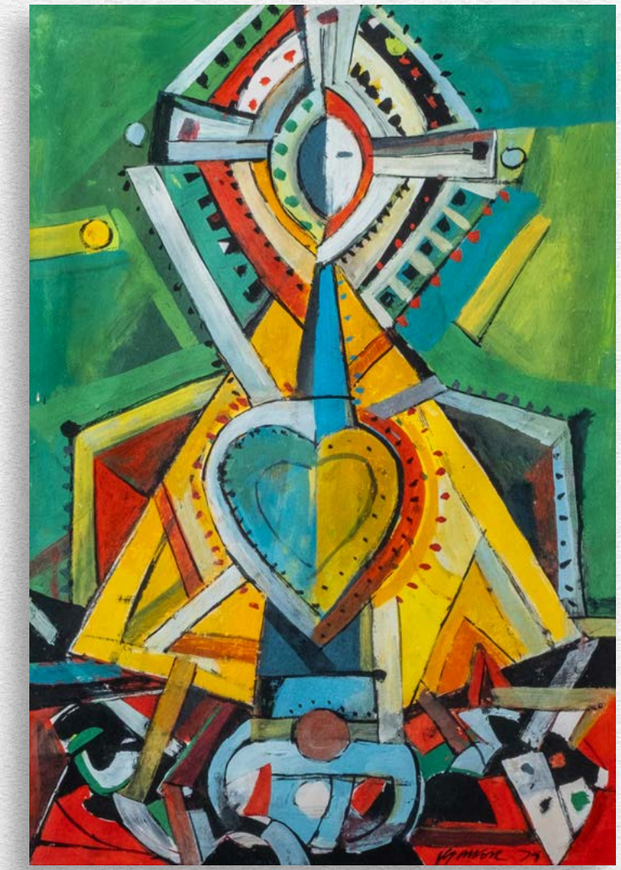
P 400,000

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



Mauro Malang Santos' *Cross-Legged Woman* offers an insight into the artist's ongoing celebration of everyday Filipino subjects through his masterful art form. Elevating the image of women, vendors, and domestic life, Malang transforms the image of a domestic woman into an emblematic figure: intimate and humble yet monumental through form and color.

Portraying a stylized woman sitting cross-legged while holding a round basket with fruits inside it. The way the figure is built from flattened geometric shapes and planes—almost cubist-like—evolves the fragmented woman into an iconic and dignified figure that represents and pays homage to the beauty of domestic and humble everyday life. One that Malang seems to respect and celebrate through his magnificent oeuvre. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



3

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

Rosary Queen
signed and dated 1979 (lower right)
tempera
17 1/2" x 11 3/4" (44 cm x 30 cm)

P 500,000

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

Intimately aware of the zeitgeist of his times, it is no surprise that artist Ang Kiukok gravitated towards the sacred and the divine. From the mangled Christ on the cross to the Pieta, these kinds of subject matters are not new in his oeuvre, as befits an artist of such caliber.

Rosary Queen follows the same religious imagery that has long been central in his portfolio. For many devout Catholics, the Virgin Mary is central in their prayers, a mediator between believers and God. Her role as an intercessor is even more prominent in one of the most well-known prayers in the Catholic Church, the Rosary.

Ang's *Rosary Queen* brings a Filipino twist to Mother Mary. Under his masterful modernist hands, he transforms Mary into his standard Cubist vernacular, using lush greens and vivid reds in his deconstruction of her eternal image. In her edges, Ang's Mary steps away from her usual holy portrayal and into her flesh-and-blood counterpart. With her heart obvious and dramatized, the harshness of Ang's works gave way to the humanization of such a looming figure, making Mary less mythical and just as human. *(Hannah Valiente)*

4

Nena Saguil (1914 - 1994)

a.) Sans Titre I
signed and dated 1962 (lower right)
watercolor on paper
12 1/4" x 9 3/4" (31 cm x 25 cm)

b) Sans Titre II
signed and dated 1961 (lower right)
mixed media on paper
10 1/2" x 8" (27 cm x 20 cm)

c.) Sans Titre III
signed and dated 1961 (lower right)
mixed media on paper
6 3/4" x 12 3/4" (17 cm x 32 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, USA

Nena Saguil's works have long been celebrated for their quiet ability to draw viewers into something larger than themselves—into the infinite, the cosmic, the spiritual. These paintings from 1962 belong to a period of profound evolution for the artist, created more than a decade after she left the Philippines for Paris in search of freedom and form. By this time, Saguil had refined her unique abstract language into something deeply personal: a visual cosmology that bridged the microscopic and the celestial. Working often in solitude, she mapped unseen worlds—cells, galaxies, energies—onto paper and canvas, revealing a universe that existed as much within as beyond.

These particular works, executed in watercolor and ink, embody the maturity of her Paris years. The delicate marks, concentric rhythms, and layered pigments suggest both the micro and the macro—life's invisible pulse rendered through gesture and intuition. Their surfaces shimmer between density and diffusion, their restrained palettes enlivened by quiet bursts of color that seem to hover, breathe, and dissolve. There is a contemplative stillness to these compositions, a spiritual rhythm that reflects Saguil's lifelong pursuit of serenity amid solitude. Her abstraction is never cold or detached; it is devotional, a form of meditation that transforms silence into vision. By 1962, Saguil had already distanced herself from the figurative conventions of Philippine modernism and embraced a mode of painting rooted in both Surrealist automatism and the transcendental abstraction of postwar Paris. Their muted tones and measured bursts of color evoke a sense of breath, of stillness made visible. Each composition feels like a meditation, a quiet invocation of order within chaos, serenity within motion. *(Jed Daya)*



ABOVE: Nena Saguil at Rue de Ciseaux, Paris in 1961, © *Nena Saguil: Landscapes and Incapes From the Material World to Spiritual* by Emmanuel Torres, 2003

Traveling the Universe With Nena Saguil









5

Norma Belleza (b. 1939)

Market Scene
signed and dated 1983 (lower right)
oil on canvas
40" x 36" (102 cm x 91 cm)

P 220,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection. Manila



ABOVE: Angelito Antonio and Norma Belleza © León Gallery Archives

Capturing the liveliness of Filipino rural life, Norma Belleza's colorful piece pays homage to the lively environment of the Filipino rural market and fiesta scenes. With her works often exploring Filipino people and their identity, this piece highlights the mood of the scene by using vibrant colors, full of densely compacted items and figures within the canvas, to create a crowded yet harmonious environment that mirrors the theme of the composition.

Made in 1983, it respects the echoing and bustling rhythm of local life by depicting figures sitting as some buy or sell their goods. Fruits, foods, toys, and even handmade crafts are present, with colorful bandanas decorating the roofs of the establishments. The color palette, the figures (such as the religious figure of the Virgin Mary), completely capture details that blend faith and daily life as a reflection of Filipino culture.

Reflecting Belleza's celebration of Filipino folk life and maternal energy, her piece serves as a diorama of Filipino society. A place where labor, trade, culture, and religion culminate to create something familiar and nostalgic—an identity that was built through shared work and tradition. Something truly Filipino. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



6

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

Woman with Flowers
signed (lower left)
oil on canvas
30" x 36" (76 cm x 91 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE
León Gallery, *The Kingly Treasures Auction 2022,* Makati City, 03 December 2022, Lot 77

An acclaimed Modernist, Oscar Zalameda's works capture the hearts of his audiences through his brilliant jewel-toned depictions of rustic Filipino motifs. Among his best works is the beauty of the Filipino women, as illustrated in the work above.

In typical Zalameda style, the woman depicted is faceless; yet, the peace and wistfulness on her face is undeniable. She fixes her gaze on the far distance, her long, straight black hair flowing in the wind. She holds a bouquet of pink and white flowers close to her heart. Often, Zalameda dresses his subjects in traditional dress in various shades of white. However, here, the woman dons a lush, modern-looking purple dress that cinches around her waist and sleeves that balloon down her arms before clasping around her wrists. The result is a dreamy portrayal of a woman looking into her future, determined despite the adversities she might encounter.

Zalameda's high society connections and hedonistic lifestyle make themselves evident through his vibrant, almost jewel-like, color schemes. A favorite of former First Lady Imelda Marcos, Zalameda managed to combine the outrageous glamor of high society with the austerity of rural life, creating a world that merges the best of both worlds. *(Hannah Valiente)*

7

Alfredo Esquillo (b.1972)

Silencer
signed and dated 2018 (lower right)
oil on canvas
24 1/2" x 24 1/2" (62 cm x 62 cm)

P 140,000

PROVENANCE
Silverlens



Known early in his career for his meticulous depictions of social struggles and urban life, Esquillo has since expanded his visual language to probe the inner terrains of human consciousness. His paintings often exist in the space between the tangible and the symbolic—anchored in cultural identity yet open to global interpretation.

In Silencer, a figure dressed in period attire sits calmly, her head replaced by intertwining ribbons of cream and shadow. The scene feels both intimate and uncanny, evoking the tension between silence and expression, control and freedom. The ribbons—soft yet constricting—suggest thoughts or voices looped endlessly within, reflecting on the quiet violence of suppression. Through this surreal construction, Esquillo examines the weight of societal restraint and the unseen forces that govern behavior and identity. Visually, the sepia palette and meticulous rendering recall the aesthetics of antique portraiture, yet the composition subverts tradition through its dreamlike abstraction. The interplay of realism and fantasy transforms Silencer into a meditation on the invisible systems—religious, political, and psychological—that shape how people are seen and silenced. Esquillo's work, in this sense, bridges the personal and the collective, the local and the universal, using surreal imagery to articulate truths that words often cannot. *(Jed Daya)*

8

Lydia Velasco (b. 1942)

Nude III - Dilaw na Bandana
signed and dated 2014 (lower left)
oil on canvas
48" x 30" (122 cm x 76 cm)

P 180,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Galerie Artes and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila



Passionate, Powerful, Unified. Lydia Velasco's central focus on the female form and empowerment, as well as the dynamics of social connection, has led to the creation of such a magnificent piece from 2012. A monochromatic piece in general, this painting, entitled *Nude III Dilaw na Bandana*, represents a balance between passion and struggle, warmth and darkness, and individuality and unity.

The eye-catching flowing ribbon conveys movement and passion to what seems a heavy tone of the painting, capturing the complex emotional layers of human relationships—the way how love, power, and resilience are inseparable forces that bind people together. Through her bold illustration of anatomy, and her symbolic use of colors, Lydia Velasco's had successfully shaped the nude form into a visual metaphor for human strength, human passion, and the spirit that binds people together. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

9

Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

White Vase
signed and dated 7.XII.81 (lower right)
gouache on paper
15" x 15" (38 cm x 38 cm)

P 200,000

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



Bathed in the celebration of light, growth, and creativity, this beautiful piece by Mauro "Malang" Santos reflected the signature modernist approach that the artist is known for—blending abstraction and figuration through a vibrant harmony of color, texture, and emotion. Reflecting his transition from figurative realism to abstraction, this magnificent piece displays a vague figure of yellow flowers on a vase. Here, the artist uses the explosive and bright color of yellow to give warmth to the painting, creating a tone of joy and life to the painting itself. This is then balanced by the cool blue background, suggesting calmness and introspection..

The composition thrives on gestural motion and controlled chaos through the use of colors, as it materializes the artist's view of art as both a form of discipline and expression. It creates a visual symphony of colors that transforms a supposedly simple image into an emotive, spiritual experience as Malang's abstraction amplifies the vitality of his subjects. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

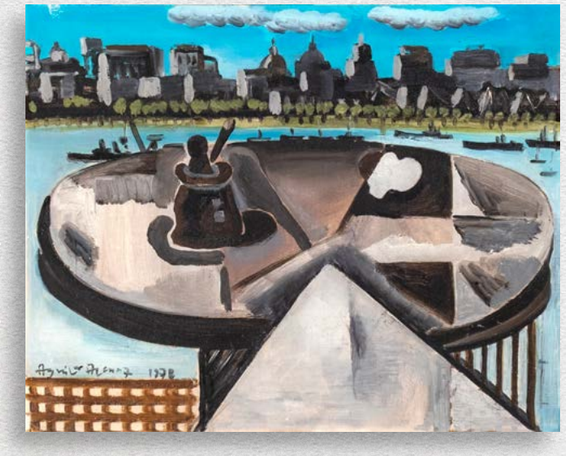
10

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

Untitled (Landscape/Still Life)
signed and dated 1978 (lower left)
oil on canvas
12 1/2" x 16" (32 cm x 41 cm)

P 140,000

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



Federico Aguilar Alcuaz's landscapes wield that particular brand of eccentricity that the rest of his oeuvre would eventually be imbued with. Adept in both abstraction and figuration, this particular landscape piece was just a few years after what was dubbed his "Barcelona years," a period of his life where he founded a group of artists rebelling against the conservatism of the time. This piece, with its vivid colors and heavy-handed borders, is a testament to his formative European years, a continuation of his deconstruction and reconstruction of familiar sights. *(Hannah Valiente)*

11

Solomon Saprid (1917 - 2003)

Lady Godiva
signed and dated 1985
bronze
H: 24" (61 cm)
L: 11" (28 cm)
W: 18" (46 cm)

P 700,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

Exploring the timeless embodiment of selfless sacrifice, the legend of Lady Godiva was reinterpreted by Solomon Saprid through welded brass. Abstract yet recognizable, this masterpiece of a sculpture delivers the same raw and expressive energy that the original legends have carried throughout time.

Created around 1985, this piece depicts a woman figure bowing as if she's embarrassed while riding a horse. Made of welded brass, it produces sharp, angular, jagged lines that convey fragility and strength that accurately fit the subject figure it supposedly represents.

For context, the legend of Lady Godiva refers to a noblewoman who rode on horseback fully naked through Coventry to protest oppressive taxes that her husband had implemented. The old tale had become an inspiring story about defiance and moral strength—a woman challenging injustice through vulnerability. Risking her own dignity as a sacrifice for the good of the many.

Going back to the piece, Saprid had perfectly captured that same resilience and timelessness through the metallic sheen of the sculpture. The angular and fragmented appearance of the piece reflects the delicate yet powerful nature that Lady Godiva is said to possess.

Unlike many beautiful and artistic representations and renditions of the Lady in the grand field of visual arts, what makes Saprid's masterpiece truly interesting is the way he brought the subject to life.

By creating a fragmented, raw figure rather than a delicate, beautiful physicality of a naked highborn woman riding a horse, The artist had literally *stripped down* the lady of its sensuality down to her naked spirituality. Thereby exposing a figure fueled by inner strength and moral conviction, it further redefines it as a symbol of resistance rather than mere beauty.

Through welding rough metals, Solomon Saprid reflected the harsh realities of standing up against power. Transforming a medieval legend into a timeless statement of resistance and integrity. *(Mark John Castañeda)*





ABOVE: A portrait of Solomon Saprid **BELOW:** A Painting of Lady Godiva by John Collier, © Historic UK, 2015

Saprid's Rare Foray In Western Mythology



The Pioneering Avellana Art Gallery



ABOVE: The Gallery and its famous founder (below)

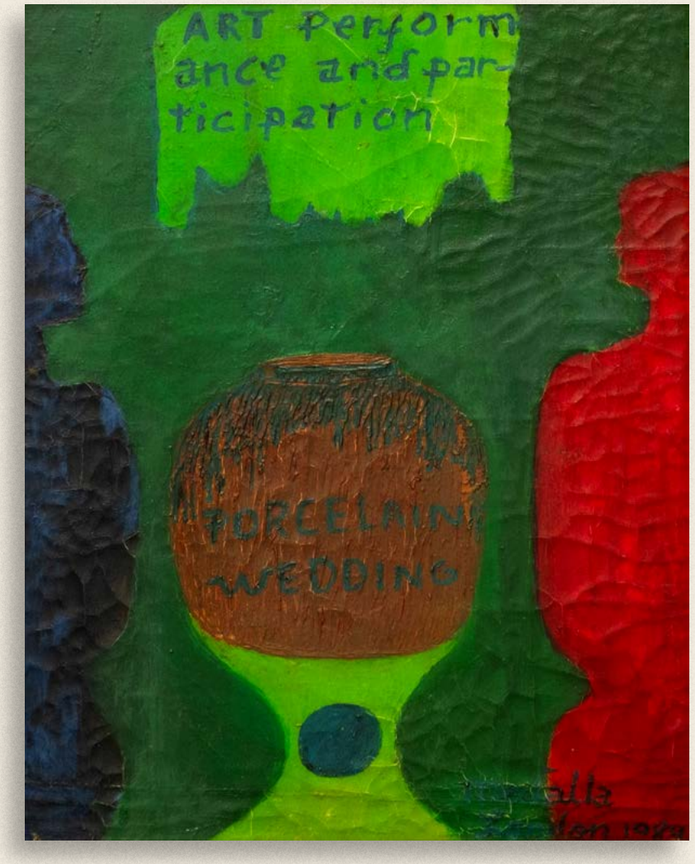


For Albert Evangelista Avellana, creativity was life and, indeed, his was a life well-lived. He wore many hats in the world of art and culture — as a gallerist, a stylist, a designer, and an event organizer, among others. He bonded with different communities of creatives — visual artists, architects, designers, and stage performers. He collaborated with individuals, organizations, and institutions to promote Filipino creativity in varied forms and modes.

In 1997, Albert founded Avellana Art Gallery (AA). Its physical space moved in different places within the Pasay area until it found its present haven in F.B. Harrison — an oasis in the middle of the city. Regardless of venue, Albert developed an art program that encouraged artists of different generations to pursue their own artistic voices. Today, AA still continues under the management of the Avellana family.

Albert benefited from the guidance and friendship of artists such as Fernando Sena (his first art teacher), Florencio B. Concepcion, and Ting Ping Lay. He knew the value of mentorship and extended this same support and encouragement to young artists in the last three decades of his life. Albert was an enabler in the best possible way. He gave fine art graduates their first break, many of them now established artists in their own right.

Simultaneously, he also worked with veteran artists and introduced them to a new generation of art patrons. Ivi Avellana-Cosio, Albert's first cousin, and her late husband, Allan Cosio, held regular exhibitions with AA. Albert also assisted artists organize institutional projects with museums, among them Jose Pardo, F.B. Concepcion, Ting Ping Lay, and Pandy Aviado. The selection of works from Albert's personal collection bring to light the friendships he nurtured and careers he helped cultivate. *(MVTH)*



12 PROPERTY FROM THE ALBERT E. AVELLANA COLLECTION

David Medalla (1942 - 2020)

Porcelain Wedding
Inscribed Top: "Art Performance and Participation",
Below "Porcelain Wedding"
Dated 1989, London (lower right)
oil on canvas
13 1/2" x 10 1/2" (34 cm x 27 cm)

P 140,000

"Porcelain Wedding" is perhaps one of two of David Medalla's most important performance works. (The other being "Stitch in Time".)

First performed in 1974, "Porcelain Wedding" delved into the themes of marriage and burial. Reputedly drawing in the audience to undress and allow themselves to be smeared in mud and to be painted on, it was notoriously difficult to re-stage but nevertheless quickly passed into legend. Medalla's belief that all beauty should be ephemeral deliberately made no record of it.

It was also part of a larger discourse Medalla had during what he called his "Marxist period" where he was looking at "historical conditions more and more, horrified by the gap between poverty and wealth" that he had seen in India. Medalla would theorize that while societies create technologies and these in turn give birth to societies, "artists did not think in those terms — but in terms of form and beauty and composition."

The original "Part-Art" piece was, according to Medalla, was "based on things like the beginning of industrialization or the beginning of poetry."

This oil is doubtly rare as a visual totem of that event.

Medalla, born in Singalong, Manila, epitomized the avant-garde artist of the 60s and 70s. He traveled the world, impressing even the most elite artists. "I was pleasantly surprised that people like Tinguely, Takis and Yves Klein, who were superstars in Paris in the sixties, actually took me seriously," he said in one interview. Medalla's works are in the Tate collection in London. *(Lisa Guerrero Nakpil)*



13 PROPERTY FROM THE ALBERT E. AVELLANA COLLECTION

Ivi Avellana-Cosio (b. 1942)

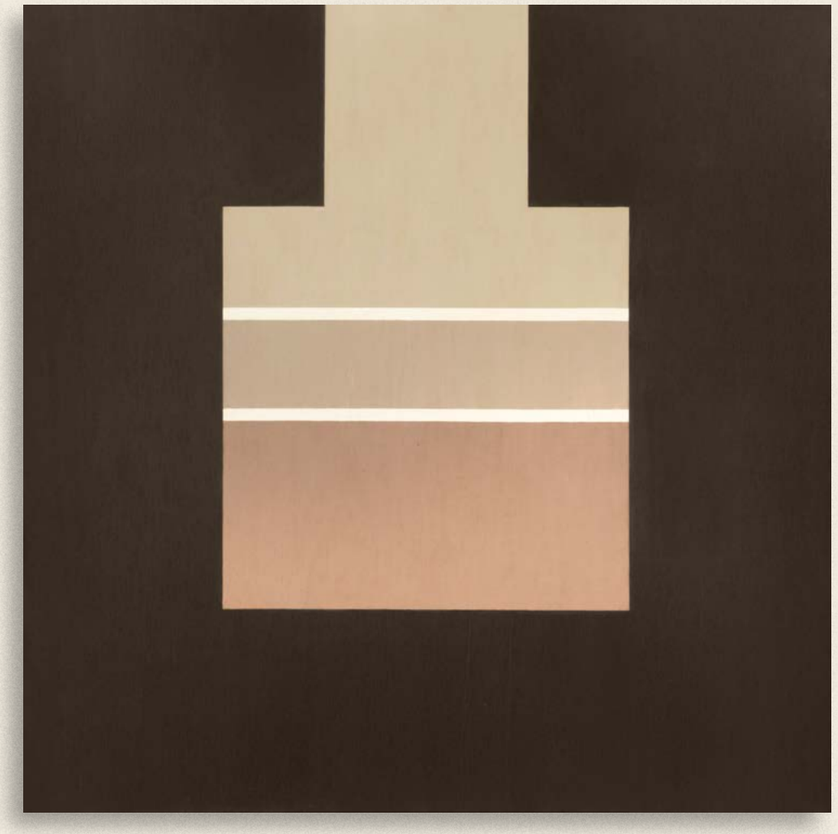
Sarabande
signed and dated 1978 (verso)
lacquer on wood
48" x 48" (122 cm x 122 cm)

P 200,000

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

The daughter of National Artists Lamberto Avellana and Daisy Hontiveros-Avellana, Ivi Avellana-Cosio grew up in an environment steeped in creativity and performance, an influence that later shaped her disciplined yet lyrical visual vocabulary. A multi-faceted artist—painter, performer, photographer, and writer—Avellana-Cosio has mounted more than three dozen solo exhibitions and participated in over two hundred fifty group shows in the Philippines and abroad. Her practice, marked by precision and restraint, has earned her critical recognition and inclusion in international listings, such as *The International Who's Who of Women* (1992) and Top 100 Artists (2017).

The present work exemplifies Avellana-Cosio's refined command of hard-edged abstraction, a style she helped pioneer among Filipina artists. Executed in muted tonal bands of beige, umber, and ochre, the composition achieves a quiet architectural order through calibrated relationships of line, plane, and proportion. Its surface, devoid of overt gesture, reveals a meditative rhythm of construction—each



14 PROPERTY FROM THE ALBERT E. AVELLANA COLLECTION

Ivi Avellana-Cosio (b. 1942)

Three-Part Intervention
signed and dated 1978 (verso)
lacquer on wood
48" x 48" (122 cm x 122 cm)

P 200,000

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

form carefully balanced against another to evoke structure, silence, and light. The painting's geometric rigor does not deny emotion; rather, it channels feeling through discipline, suggesting both monumentality and serenity. In this formal restraint, Avellana-Cosio extends the modernist dialogue initiated by artists such as Arturo Luz, Fernando Zóbel, and Lee Aguinaldo, yet her sensibility remains distinct—rooted in introspection and a subtle poetics of space. (Jed Daya)

The Introspective Jose Joya

Musings on the Zodiac, Oriental Cultures, and Indigenous Identity

by ADRIAN MARANAN

"Travel has often given fresh impetus to their art at certain crucial points in their careers, saving them from artistic stagnation, as in the cases of Vicente Manansala, Ang Kiukok, Jose Joya, Federico Aguilar, N. Veloso Abueva, and Roberto Chabet." "New York at this moment seems to be where our artists are gravitating. Joya is there on an American grant, on the verge of putting up his first Manhattan show."

—ART CRITIC ERIC TORRES, " WHY ARTISTS MUST TRAVEL," IN HIS COLUMN " WAY OF SEEING," PUBLISHED IN THE MANILA TIMES, 14 MAY 1968

"Paradoxically, it was in New York where Joya succeeded in exorcising himself of the abstract expressionist daemon. Thus, had his development come full circle. Returning to the place after ten years, Joya violently changed his aesthetic directions from the radiating style of his Venice [Biennale] works to a containment of forces, to a rigid geometrizing, a psychometry in terms of circles and other similar mandala-like configurations."

—ART CRITIC LEONIDAS V. BENESA, IN HIS ESSAY " THE DRAWINGS OF JOYA," PUBLISHED IN THE MONOGRAPH JOYA: DRAWINGS (1973)

The Two Joyas of the 1960s

In 1964, Jose Joya's name became immortalized as he represented the Philippines in its landmark debut at the Venice Biennale. In Venice, Joya unleashed the climax of his abstract expressionist style, exemplified by the monumental work Hills of Nikko, now displayed in the National Museum of the Philippines.

But in the late 1960s, Joya's art showed a radical evolution, a reincarnation of all sorts. In 1967, Joya received the John D. Rockefeller III scholarship grant (now the Asian Cultural Council) to study and paint in New York. One can remember it was in New York where Joya wallowed in the abstract expressionist spirit during his first American sojourn (1956-57) under a Smith-Mundt-Fulbright study grant. Ten years later, Joya would shed off the abstract expressionist visual language in favor of geometric expressionism, producing works dominated by circles and grids that evoke the seriality of Pop Art, the dominant art style in America in the late '60s. A December 3, 1970 article published in *The Manila Chronicle*



LEFT: Jose Joya in the late 1960s © Facebook, National Artist for Visual Arts 2003 Jose T. Joya.

writes, "While in New York, Joya abandoned his now familiar abstract expressionist style in favor of a monochromatic, incised, and linear vocabulary inspired by prehistoric graffiti found in Philippine iron-age pottery."

Joya's second New York sojourn became a contradictory and full-circle experience. to the fast and furious world of poets, journalists and most, importantly, artists.

Joya's *Pisces*: Exemplar of the Artist's Creative Evolution

This 1968 work titled *Pisces* was among the works Joya produced during his artistry-changing second "New York Period." Here, the symbol of Pisces is incised in the center and enclosed in an inverted triangle. It is surrounded by several other incisions, with some referencing the different signs of the zodiac in relation to Pisces: Aries and Taurus (compatible signs) and Sagittarius and Aquarius (low compatibility). *Pisces* forms part of Joya's series of works, which he made in 1968, centering on the twelve zodiac signs. Informally called the "Mandala Series," Joya derives inspiration from the Oriental concept of the mandala (Sanskrit for "sacred circle"), symbolizing the universe and one's meditative journey towards harmony and fullness. In Oriental religions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, the mandala is essentially an instrument for meditation; meditating in front of a mandala means "entering" the vast expanse of the cosmos, in which the mind becomes enlightened, spirituality is nourished, and truths and contradictions are revealed and realized.

More than the blockbuster popularity of Pop Art in New York, Joya's exploration of serial art harks back more to the artist's inward knowledge of its Oriental origins, as exemplified by the handscroll paintings of ancient China and the Tang Dynasty masterpiece *Noble Ladies in Tang Dynasty*.

In Joya's work, which evokes the Hindu yantra, the arbitrarily placed incisions surrounding the center come off as allusions to worldly chaos. As one traverses through all the turmoil and disruption, one eventually arrives at the center, where Pisces—the two fish—resides and comes to a full realization of one's place and purpose, letting the self revel in a dynamic and transformative kind of peace. Since every human falls under a specific zodiac sign, Joya serializing the astrological symbols into one oeuvre signifies an ideal of the harmonious unity of all humanity.

The Manunggul Jar and Joya: Wedding the Oriental and the Native

On another important note, Joya's venture into geometric expressionism came as a result of an inner reawakening of his native sensibility, which was due in part to homesickness and the resurgence of Filipino nationalism during the tumultuous '60s. Although immersed in American soil, Joya also found himself studying Philippine history. "At this time, the study of Philippine history engaged me," says Joya in art critic Leonidas Benesa's *Joya: Drawings*. "Digging into rare sources, I came across materials that gave light facets to Philippine history." By this time, Filipino historians Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino had been propagating a nationalist historiography aimed at decolonizing Philippine history.

The Joya of the late 1960s successfully cast away his Western-influenced abstract expressionism in favor of a profound expression of a Filipino identity in his art. A *Manila Bulletin* review of Joya's new geometric works exhibited in his homecoming show at the Luz Gallery in late 1970 writes, "Joya's new pieces bear a marked departure from his familiar abstract expressionist style, often repeated in series....Joya... was preoccupied with primitive symbolic graffiti recalling ancient Filipino drawings found in burial pottery....[It is] a new enthusiasm to explore the pre-Hispanic Philippine visual symbols."



ABOVE: Libra and Aries (oil on canvas, 1968, 23" x 23" each), two other works that form part of Joya's "Mandala Series" centering on the twelve zodiac signs. **MIDDLE AND BELOW:** Two other similar works, Rain Cycle, Man's Life Cycle and Virgo painted in 1968, also showing Joya's sustained pursuit of the Oriental mandala and Filipino indigenous art forms © Leon Gallery Archives.

15

José Joya (1931 - 1995)

Pisces
signed and dated 1968 (lower right)
oil on canvas
23" x 23" (58 cm x 58 cm)

P 1,000,000

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

The review references "burial pottery," likely the Manunggul Jar, excavated in 1964 in Lipuun Point, Palawan, in the Manunggul Cave that forms part of the archaeologically rich Tabon Cave Complex. The Manunggul Jar, hailed as a magnum opus of Philippine pre-colonial civilization, represents the soul's entry into the afterlife and underscores the importance of water in our ancestors' notions of life and death.

The archaeological significance of the jar intrigued the homesick, New York-based Joya. As a result, Joya began incorporating and referencing the jar's curvilinear designs into his works, particularly in Virgo. "[Joya] adumbrated [the design of the Manunggul Jar] into a series of paintings," writes in the cover notes December 1971 issue of *The Philippines Quarterly*. The magazine recounts that Joya was "so struck by the originality of the design of these ancient relics."

Combined with the subject embodying the mysticism of the anting-anting (amulet) and the fact that seriality is ubiquitous in Philippine indigenous art (e.g., weaving, embroidery, ornamentation), Joya had now arrived at a creative idiom that is not only entirely his own but more so reflects the collective identity and indigenous pride of his people.

Unlike his abstract expressionist works that possess a "central core" from which the composition is anchored, or in the words of the artist, "the seat of energy," Joya's mandalas derive their energy from the entirety of the composition, possessing a logical balance of all elements. It is an artistic expression representative of a people whose shared identity and culture are rooted in a constant struggle towards exploring, redefining, and reclaiming our nationhood through the lens of meditating on our indigenous past.





ABOVE: The Manunggul Jar, excavated in 1964 in Palawan, served as a primary inspiration for Joya's progression from abstract expressionism to geometric expressionism in the late 1960s © National Museum of the Philippines. **BELOW:** Joya's Manunggul Vessel, featured on the cover of The Philippines Quarterly (December 1971) and showing similarities with Virgo

The Star-Crossed Mandala of National Artist Jose Joya



16

Bernardo Pacquing (b. 1967)

Tomato #4
signed (verso)
dated 2020
assemblage on canvas
60" x 48" (152 cm x 122 cm)

P 1,200,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Silverlens confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Silverlens

LITERATURE
Halili, Gregory. *Searching Sanctuary*. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same title at Silverlens in February to March 2020. Makati City: Silverlens, 2020. Full-color illustration and artwork description on page 34.

EXHIBITED
Silverlens, *Searching Sanctuary (Group Exhibition)*, Makati City, 22 February - 21 March 2020

Reflecting his long-standing interest in texture, materiality, and the expressive possibilities of surface, Bernardo Pacquing's mixed media masterpiece *Tomato #4* delivers his experimental approach to abstraction and materiality, transforming ordinary and discarded materials into expressive compositions.

The piece consists of dried organic forms placed into a plain white canvas, creating decayed spots that provide its natural, dark, earthy tones. What's eye-catching about this piece is the yellow-orange patch spread as dried splotch stains on the canvas, as if it were deliberately placed before the brown plotches. The way the brown organic stains seem to drip and spread around the canvas, complemented by the orange-yellow stains, mimics the reality of decomposition.

Referring to the subject that the piece was named after, tomatoes are most commonly associated with symbols of life, growth, and nourishment. The complete opposite of decay that Pacquing's masterpiece seems to highlight in his canvas, yet perfectly capturing the fragility of organic life and the beauty found in imperfection and decay. Pacquing's abstract piece perfectly highlights how organic life inevitably decays, yet at the same time, can be immortalized through visual art—the splashes, stains, and residue becoming the metaphors for the effect of time and the persistence of material memory. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: *Tomato #4* in the exhibition *Searching Sanctuary* mounted at Silverlens Makati. © Silverlens



17

Pacita Abad (1946 - 2004)

Inside, Outside, Top, and Bottom
ca. 2000
oil, plastic beads and glass plus stitched on canvas
39" x 39" (100 cm x 100 cm)

P 1,400,000

León Gallery wishes to thank Pacita Abad Art Estate for confirming the authenticity of this lot

EXHIBITED
Finale Art File and SM Art Center, *Pacita Abad: The Sky is the Limit*, Manila, 13 - 26 March 2001

Defined by her pioneering trapunto paintings that blend vibrant colors, textile traditions, and unique materials such as beads, mirrors, and buttons, Pacita Abad's magnificent piece *Inside, Outside, Top and Bottom* explores the navigation of different spaces to address themes of equality, diversity, and unity.

Created by Abad around 2000, the featured artwork includes a multitude of concentric circles, repeated across the surface, each with a unique pattern of colors and patterns, incorporating items such as plastic beads, and glass sewn on canvas as each circle drawing the observer's eyes from one figure to another, repeating as it radiate, spiral and overlaps in a seemingly infinite space, suggesting both unity and multiplicity as it embodies diversity and interconnectedness—a signature characteristic of Abad's abstract works. The color patterns, on the other hand, exhibit the piece's celebratory and alive aura, creating a pulsating visual rhythm that echoes both folk textile patterns and cosmic imagery.

In a nutshell, Pacita Abad's abstract masterpiece *Inside, Outside, Top, and Bottom* perfectly captures her artistic philosophy— bridging difference, celebrating diversity, and dissolving boundaries between cultures, materials, and hierarchies. Through beautiful and lively colors, detailed texture, and impeccable form, her abstraction becomes an affirmation of joy, movement, and coexistence. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: Pacita Abad © pacitaabad.com

A Jeweled and Stitched Masterpiece by Pacita Abad



18

Manuel Ocampo (b. 1965)

Petrope
signed (lower left)
dated 1990
oil and collage on wood
96" x 48" (244 cm x 122 cm)

P 700,000

PROVENANCE
Fred Hoffman Gallery
Private collection, Europe

Known for his juxtaposition of secular, historical, and religious imagery to evoke sociopolitical criticism, Manuel Ocampo's *Petrope* displays the artist's subject matter in an iconoclastic and provocative nature, blending sacred Baroque religious iconography with secular and political narrative.

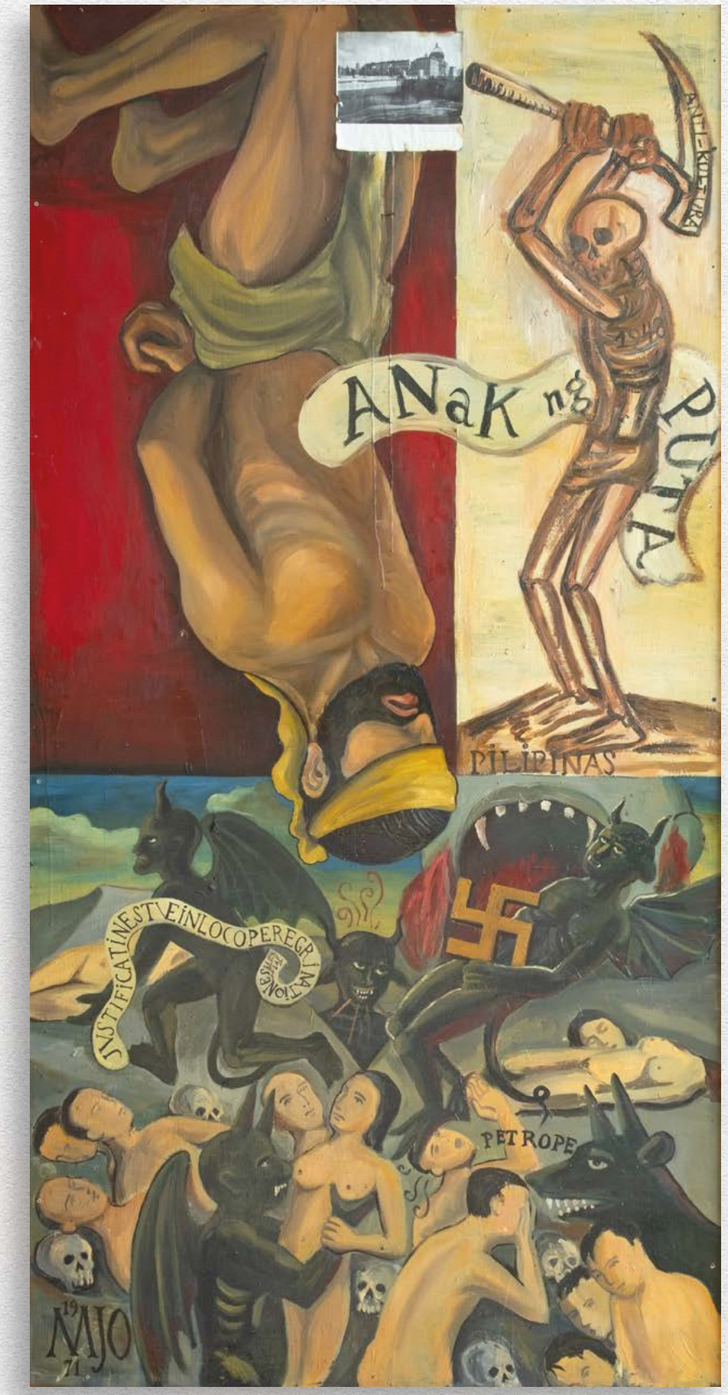
The piece contains several intriguing and extremely provoking images, notably a thin, blindfolded man bound by the wrists on a crimson red carpet, a skeleton wielding a pickaxe with the inscription Anti-Kultura (Anticulture), and a ribbon text reading '*Anak ng Puta*' (Son of a Whore). The bottom half features a hellish dystopia with black demonic creatures spread around the area, harassing humans. One even carries an offensive image of a swastika, as decapitated bodies, skulls, and naked bodies are spread around the scene. Completely framing the scenario as chaotic, helpless, and dystopian—A literal hell on earth.

What's interesting about this piece is the title itself. *Petrope*, the word seems to be rooted in two parts: "Petro" and "Rope."—a literal "strangulation" of oil interest or the metaphorical enslavement to extractive industries in the country. With that in mind, it could be interpreted that the art is a political commentary on the exploitation of the Philippines concerning natural resources, as well as its enslavement to extractive industries. Ocampo effectively employs provocative and baroque iconography to convey his criticism and social commentary on the exploitation of the Philippines through his art, as well as to those viewing the pieces. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: Manuel Ocampo © MM Yu https://www.artnews.com/art-news/market/manuel-ocampo-and-lani-maestro-will-represent-the-philippines-at-the-2017-venice-biennale-7133/

Politics & Blasphemy
From the Original Enfant Terrible
Manuel Ocampo



19

Juvenal Sansó (1929 - 2025)

Shade from the Afternoon Sun
signed and dated 1949 (lower right)
oil on canvas
12 1/2″ x 16″ (32 cm x 41 cm)

P 200,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

1948 finds Juvenal Sansó on the cusp of a major change in his artistic career. At nineteen years old, he enrolled at the UP School of Fine Arts as a special student, marking the first time he would undertake formal training in the arts. Before this, he had only studied under Alejandro Celis' tutelage, an artist peddling his religious paintings to the Sansó family and one of the first few graduates of UP School of Fine Arts.

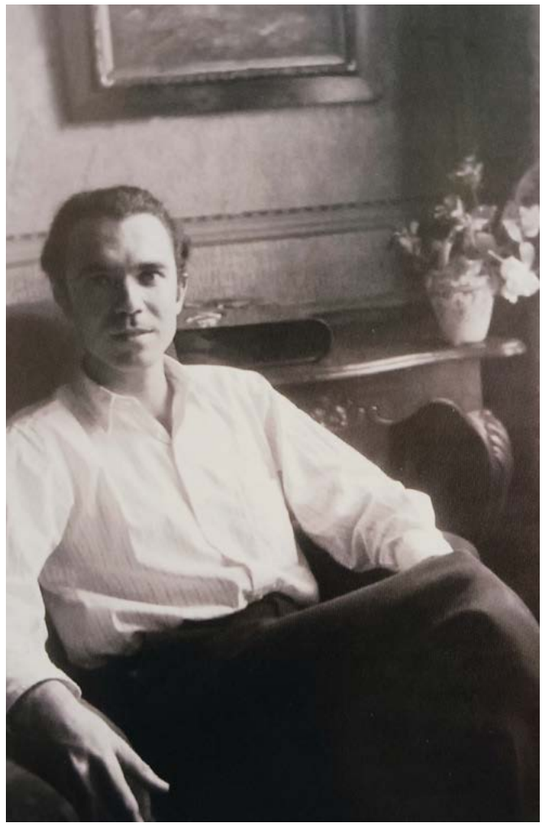
Born in Spain as a Catalan and raised in the Philippines, Sansó's life is tethered between two opposing choices: Fair-skinned in a predominantly dark country, his attraction for the arts also separated him from his family.

In Alfredo Roces' *Sansó*, he wrote: "His family expected him to outgrow or tire of his dabbling with drawing, become more serious, and help in the family business." Eventually, he managed to persuade his family to excuse him from reporting full-time at their family show to formally study.

Sansó's bout at UP saw a multitude of talented teachers to gain knowledge from. Dominador Castañeda taught pastels and oil, while Irineo Miranda taught about the dexterity of watercolor and the beauty of the bravura style.

However, there is no greater influence for him than Fernando Amorsolo, who was the director of the art department at the time. Though not his professor at the time, Amorsolo was one of Sanso's greatest influences. He wanted to paint like the maestro.

This *Landscape* was created at the height of Sanso's UP school days. In vivid greens and sunny yellows, Amorsolo's sway in this piece is evident in Sanso's handling of his light and shadows. It echoes a countryside untouched by the war that has ravaged every corner of the country, a reprieve from a place that is trying to build itself from the ground up again.



ABOVE: Juvenal Sanso in his studio © Fundacion Sanso Archives

Three years after this landscape's creation, Sanso would find himself at yet another crossroads in his career, aboard a steamer for Europe in his pursuit of a career in the arts. *(Hannah Valiente)*



Don Vicente “Tiking” Hofileña Lopez, Jr.

The Hacendero Collector

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



Don Vicente “Tiking” H. Lopez, Jr. was the epitome of the gentleman farmer. On his estate in Vallehermoso (or beautiful valley), Negros Oriental, he first planted sugar, then diversified into prawns, bangus, mangoes, cashews, longkom (a variety of Thai lanzones), white Gmelina wood, black pepper, and even cacao.

His gracious plantation house, which he called Il Paradiso, featured four huge themed and art-filled rooms with other structures on the grounds, including a lovely chapel and cozy lanai.

He adored his farm, the produce of which made it possible for him to collect. And collect he did. Don Tiking was passionate about both art and antiques, filling rooms and hallways in his homes with celadon and blue and white porcelain from the various Chinese dynasties.

Prized even more was his collection of modern art. He would invite the famous ‘Saturday Group’ of artists — which included the likes of H.R. Ocampo — to his penthouse at the family-owned Elena Apartments in Ermita. (The building was named after his mother, the elegant Doña Elena Hofileña Lopez. Tiking was thus cousin two times over to the Eugenio Lopezes.)

Don Tiking was famous for his fabulous buffets, featuring roast beef, lamb, duck, turkey, Russian Salad and Caesar Salad. Ilonggo dishes were not to be missed including a sauceless adobo, chicken binakol, chorizo de Negros, pansit molo, kadyos and apan-apan (kangkong.) There would be Filipino-Spanish courses of relleno, chuletas, lengua, mechado, morcon, paella, lentejas and cocido with all the trimmings.

Gathered at his table would be Vicente Manansala, Hernando R. Ocampo, Sym Mendoza, Alfredo Roces, and Tiny Nuyda, to name a few. There were also musical soirees featuring the Elena String Ensemble which included members of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra with Don Tiking on his 17th-century cello. Jose Joya was a particularly avid fan of these evenings. Don Tiking would also invite this circle to enjoy the delights of the Vallehermoso country air.













This Page: (Clockwise) Don Tiking with visiting Indonesian dignitaries; Entertaining family and foreign guests at his home in San Juan; As a eucharistic minister he became a fisher of souls, as well as an avid fisherman of the lakeshore variety; the sumptuous buffet at his home, showing the Manansala ‘*Madonna No. 2*’, and playing with the Elena String Ensemble at a musical soiree in the Elena Apartments. **Opposite Page:** Don Vicente “Tiking” H. Lopez, Jr. examining some of the gems in his collection.

Don Tiking Lopez was born on February 10, 1919, and had his early schooling in the city of Manila at the Ermita Public School (1932) for his primary grades; the Jose Rizal College (1936), for his secondary years; and the Ateneo de Manila for a Bachelor of Arts (1936-38). He then took up Law (1938-40) at the latter. He would complete this course at Silliman University, graduating with an LLB in 1941.

Called to active military duty at the outbreak of World War II, he served the Armed Forces of the Philippines until he resigned with the rank of major in 1946.

He then went into private business and operated the Hacienda Doña Elena Lopez Enterprises Company, Inc., and VICMAR Agro-Industrial, which he headed as president. He guided community-based enterprises such as the San Carlos Planters Cooperative, the Southern Lines Shipping Co., and the Negros Navigation Co. Inc. either as president or a member of the board of directors.

As an entrepreneur, he engaged in the planting of non-traditional crops in Negros. As a hobbyist, he cultivated bonsai and prize-winning orchids, which bear witness to his continued interest in maintaining his roots to the soil. He would attend international orchid shows not just as a buyer but as a judge. One Thai variety of orchid is even named after him. He added other hobbies, including being a skilled golfer and fisherman.

He was deeply involved in the cursillo movement (1967 to 1979) of the country, rising to be president of the Cursillo Foundation of the Philippines, propagating the spiritual and civic dimension of the movement through lectures and seminars in various parts of the country, including among soldiers sent to the Vietnam War. He later became a Eucharistic minister, serving especially in the Nuestra Senora de Guia parish in Ermita. From being a farmer and fisherman, his final role was as God’s fisher of men (and women).

Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)

Untitled
dedicated and signed "To my good friend, Tiking Lopez
with best wishes", July 1971
possibly done in the 1950's
oil on wood
23" x 36" (58 cm x 91 cm)

P 1,400,000

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

PROVENANCE
A gift from the artist to Don Tiking Lopez



ABOVE: Verso, detail of the dedication, signature (encircled in yellow) and date.



ABOVE: Georgia O'Keeffe, Horizontal Horse's or Mule's Skull with Feather, 1936, oil on canvas. © Milwaukee Art Museum.



ABOVE: Arturo Luz. © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives



ABOVE: Georgia O'Keefe with a cow skull, photographed at her home in Abiquiú, New Mexico, by Philippe Halsman, 1948. © Philippe Halsman/Magnum Photos

This cow skull painting by Arturo Luz, although dedicated to Don Tiking Lopez in 1971, was credibly painted by the artist during the 1950s. The work at hand showcases a style highly evocative of Luz's early explorations of vendors, carnival figures, musicians, and still lifes rendered starkly yet possessing quite an array of colors and relatively robust figures, unlike his later depictions of the same subjects in the 1990s and beyond. This painting may have been created in the early 1950s, as seen in the deep and earthy colors evocative of the Mexican painter Rufino Tamayo, who was one of Luz's primary influences at the time. This characteristic can also be seen in the 1952 painting titled Man with Mandolin (Paulino and Hetty Que Collection), Two Women Singing (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Collection), and Candle Vendors (Esperanza Fricke Collection). Luz may have also been inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe's skull paintings, encountering them during his art studies in the US in the late 1940s. O'Keeffe was a collector of bones found in the desert of New Mexico and was inspired by their haunting beauty and their powerful symbolisms connecting life and death—the circle of life.

Furthermore, Luz abandoned figurative painting beginning in 1969, exploring a pure, non-objective visual language that was initially manifested through collages but soon turned into other art forms, including sculpture and burlap. Luz had felt that the subject matter was no longer important, and Roberto Chabet had influenced him to pursue collage, which for Luz was logically the first step to abandon figuration. Luz would again delve into figuration beginning in the early 1990s, resurrecting his earlier subjects but now in a more precise, rigid, and cold form of geometric abstraction.

Regarding the inscription at the back, Luz may have culled this work from his personal collection and then gifted this painting to Don Tiking Lopez, who was named 1971's "Art Patron of the Year" in recognition of his support for the young artists of the time, including Justin Nuyda, Ibarra de la Rosa, Angelito Antonio, Sofronio Y. Mendoza, and Antonio Austria. Luz may have seen the potent symbolism of the skull as a representation of human mortality and the profound wisdom and guidance that one acquires through age, much like Don Tiking's legacy of patronage that will live on through the artists he bestowed with his generosity.
(Adrian Maranan)

The Don Vicente "Tiking" Lopez *Arturo Luz*
Inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe's Legendary Skull Paintings of the 1930s



Romeo Tabuena (1921 - 2015)

Untitled
signed and dated 1956 (lower left)
oil on masonite board
25 1/2" x 37 1/2" (65 cm x 95 cm)

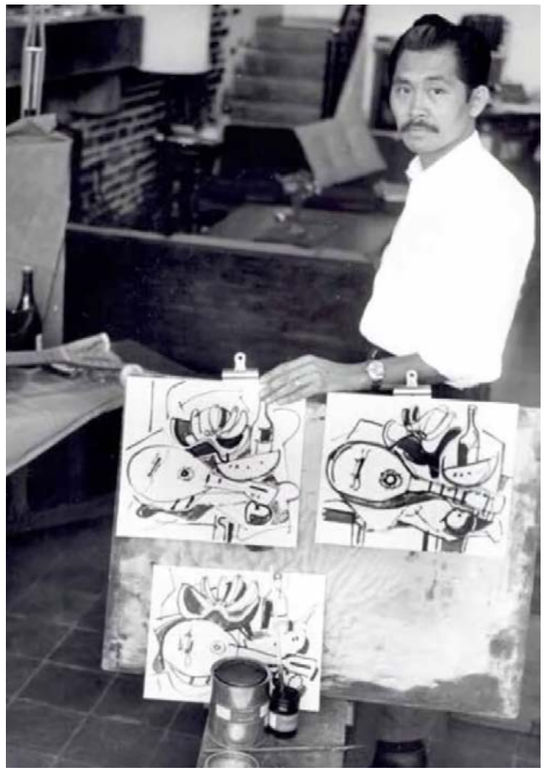
P 400,000

Despite moving and settling into San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, in 1955, Romeo Tabuena remained heavily tethered to the culture and aesthetic of his home country, the Philippines. Never losing his Filipino passport, he participated in exhibitions and art projects, including a ten-year retrospective at the Philippine Art Gallery in 1959 and a solo exhibition sponsored by the Philippine government at Mexico City in 1962, among others.

Prior to his move to Mexico, his art took on a more fluid, transparent style that washes the canvas in a darker, browner hue, similar to the layered cubism of Manansala's works. After his move, however, he developed a colorful, opaque style that is docked with bright jewel tones.

This particular work, created just a year after his move to San Miguel de Allende, shows the transition between his two iconic art styles. Still leaning a bit closer to his Filipino art style, the expressionist brush strokes and the darker palette point to his later Filipino phase and his growing Allende style.

His oeuvre is best portrayed as the perfect meeting point between the Filipino and the Mexican cultures. Said Bibsy M. Carballo: "[Tabuena is] a gentle soul who appreciated ... the many similarities between Mexico and the Philippines." Indeed, his works transcend geographical boundaries, marrying the culture of his hometown and the country he chose to live in to create culturally and visually vibrant pieces. *(Hannah Valiente)*



ABOVE: Romeo Tabuena © Philippine Art Gallery

Quietude In San Miguel de Allende



Antonio Austria (1936 - 2023)

Halamanan
signed and dated 1965 (lower left and verso)
oil on wood
32" x 36" (81 cm x 91 cm)

P 300,000

LITERATURE
Duldulao, Manuel D. *Contemporary Philippine Art*. Quezon City: Vera-Reyes, Inc., 1972. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 254.

Portraying Nature as a living, breathing presence, Antonio Austria's painting entitled *Halamanan* attempts to create an abstract masterpiece that not only captures Nature's beautiful presence inside a canvas but also serves as a meditation on the relationship between man and Nature.

The illustration features an abstract image of crowding and interlocking leaves that fills the entire canvas. Thick black lines were carefully drawn above the greenery, creating a barely distinguishable figure emerging from the abstraction—a subtle hint of human presence entangling with Nature itself. Further insisting on the piece's insistence on revealing the relationship between Nature and man, as the imagery may symbolize unity with the environment, or even the way human presence is often absorbed and redefined within natural cycles.

Austria had managed to create a masterpiece that conveys a feeling of immersion towards the image. The gentle illustration and color palette create a dreamlike atmosphere for its viewers. Through the artist's impressive brushwork and rich, organic color palette, it captures the mystery and vitality of Nature as well as the intimate connection between humanity and Nature. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: Antonio Austria © CCP Visual Arts Archive and Library

The Oasis Of Antonio Austria



Don Enrique Zóbel de Ayala
The Patriarch of a Visionary Clan

by GEORGINA PADILLA ZÓBEL



SEATED: Angelita Olgado de Zóbel, Enrique ("Enzo") Zóbel (on the floor), Mercedes Zóbel de McMicking, the patriarch Don Enrique Zóbel de Ayala, his wife Doña Fermina Montojo de Zóbel de Ayala, Carmen Pfitz de Zóbel de Ayala, her daughter Maria Victoria de Zóbel de Ayala (who later married Juan Antonio Vallejo-Nágera).
STANDING: Col. Jacobo Zóbel, Gloria Zóbel de Ayala (who later married Ricardo Padilla Satrústegui), Col. Joseph R. McMicking, Consuelo Zóbel de Ayala (who later married Gen. James D. Alger), Alfonso Zóbel de Ayala, Matilde Zóbel de Ayala (who later married Col. Luis Albarracín), and the painter Fernando Zóbel.

This charming pen-and-ink illustration by National Artist Fernando Amorsolo shows his patron, Enrique Zóbel de Ayala, as one of the most notable prewar businessmen. Amorsolo humorously portrays him rushing with a Ayala y Cía attaché case and a portfolio filled with shares from the many companies he founded or invested in. Enrique was the son of Jacobo Zóbel y Zangróniz and Trinidad de Ayala y Roxas, and the grandson of Antonio and Margarita Roxas de Ayala. Later in life, to honor both his paternal and maternal roots, Enrique legally changed his surname from "Zóbel y Ayala" to "de Ayala," recognizing both heritages.

Born in 1877, Enrique studied at Colegio de San Juan de Letrán during his early years. He later moved to Spain to complete his bachelor of arts at the Real Colegio de Alfonso XII. Pursuing further education, he studied engineering in Paris at Lycée Saint-Louis and Collège Sainte-Barbe, followed by specialized mining studies at the École Supérieure des Mines. Shortly after completing his education, he began to make his mark around the turn of the 20th century. Driven by a strong entrepreneurial spirit inherited from both sides of his family, he dreamed of producing the first porcelain tiles in the Philippines after a study tour in Japan. Along with his brother Fernando and brother-in-law Eduardo Soriano, he established La Porcelánica and obtained clay from the hills of Guadalupe, near the family hacienda in Makati.

Writing about his father's first solo business venture, painter Fernando Zóbel noted that "the luxury products of the kiln found no ready customers in a public perfectly satisfied with the equally gaudy and cheaper Japanese imports... customers were few and far between, and the operation showed consistent losses." Thus, the business did not prosper due to the limited or inconsistent quality and the growing availability of budget Japanese tiles. This early setback taught the young entrepreneur the importance of understanding the market thoroughly before starting a business enterprise.

Young Enrique married Consuelo Roxas y Ayala in 1901. The couple was blessed with three children: Jacobo (who married Angelita Olgado), Alfonso (who married Carmen Pfitz), and Mercedes (who married Col. Joseph R. McMicking). Sadly, Consuelo passed away in 1908 at the age of 30 during a severe cholera outbreak in the city.

Three years after his wife's death, Don Enrique met and married Doña Fermina Montojo y Torróntegui. They had four children together: Doña Consuelo (who married Gen. James Dyce Alger), Matilde (who married Col. Luis Albarracín Segura), The Painter Fernanzo Zóbel (1924–1984), and Gloria (who married Don Ricardo Padilla y Satrústegui).

Don Enrique, known for his lean build yet strong resolve, was committed to securing a stable life for his large family. He started several businesses, focusing on insurance. In 1910, Insular Life Assurance Co. was founded by Filipino investors to compete with foreign insurers, making it the first Filipino-owned life insurance firm. This was succeeded in 1917 by the founding of Philippine Guarantee Co.

Filipinas Compañía de Seguros was co-founded in 1913 by Don Enrique and his brother-in-law Don Antonio Melián y Pavia, Conde de Peracamps to compete with foreign-owned fire insurance firms known for slow claims. Melián, a native of Las Palmas in the Canary Islands, gained insurance expertise in Argentina and Peru. He also created El Hogar Filipino in 1910, a mutual homebuilding society inspired by Latin American models, which pooled savings to offer long-term home loans. Arriving in Manila in 1907, Melián married Doña Margarita Zóbel y de Ayala, Don Enrique's sister.

Capital surplus from World War I's expanding demand for Philippine exports like sugar, copra, hemp, and alcohol allowed Don Enrique to diversify his investments. These included shares in the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, Filipinas Compañía de Seguros, and the Compañía Marítima de Filipinas. He also invested in real estate. In 1929, his three children—Mercedes, Alfonso, and Jacobo—entered Hacienda San Pedro de Makati as assets to Ayala y Cía. Initially used as pasture land, parts of that property adjoining Manila were sold, marking the start of Ayala's real estate ventures in the 1930s and representing its first step in diversification. Eventually, the hacienda grew to become the family's most visionary venture after World War II.

Another significant business that the family invested in was San Miguel Brewery. Founded by Enrique Ma. Barretto in 1890, the brewery soon came under the control of Pedro Roxas. His daughter, Margarita Roxas y de Ayala, married Spanish engineer Eduardo Soriano. Their son, Andrés Soriano rose quickly through its ranks. He joined the family corporation in 1918 as an accountant in 1918, became acting manager in 1919, was promoted to co-general manager in 1923, and was elected president seven years later. During his leadership, San Miguel grew to be the Philippines' largest manufacturer and industrial conglomerate.

Don Enrique and his nephew D. Andrés were closely connected in business, politics, and society. Despite an age gap of over twenty years, both supported many organizations and civic groups. They became equally prominent, especially as honorary consuls of Spain through the monarchist, Republican, and Franco eras. In the late 1930s, Don Enrique stepped back to let his energetic nephew take the spotlight. The nephew was a true product of three cultures, adept at managing his diverse Philippine business interests, government roles, and US military service as an army officer, a trusted aide to Gen. Douglas MacArthur, and the Secretary of Finance for the Commonwealth government-in-exile during WWII.

By his later years, Don Enrique was recognized for numerous accomplishments. He served as a stockholder and executive director of Ayala y Compañía, and was on the boards of Philippine Guaranty Co., Central Milling Co., while also functioning as treasurer of El Hogar Filipino. He held several senior management roles, including president of Filipina Compañía de Seguros in 1913; vice-president of Insular Life Assurance (1937–1940); treasurer of Metropolitan Theater Co. (1929–1931); president of Filipinas Life Assurance (1937–1938); president and general manager of Ayala Securities (1937–1941); director of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (1938–1941); and president of the Cámara de Comercio Española de Filipinas (1936–1937). Additionally, he was involved in other Ayala-related businesses such as Central Azucarera de Don Pedro, Brias-Roxas Inc., San Esteban Fisheries, Melián Building Co., Santa Cecilia Mining Co., San Miguel Brewery, and Hacienda de Nasugbu.

Don Enrique was well known not only in industrial and commercial circles but also in Manila's high society, especially for his support of arts and culture. He enjoyed painting in his leisure time, and his Ermita residence became famous as the salón de artistas and the venue for cultural tertulias. As a connoisseur of the arts, Don Enrique sponsored young artist Fernando Amorsolo with a scholarship to Spain, unaware that Amorsolo would later be named National Artist for Painting in 1972. As a gesture of gratitude, Amorsolo personally mentored Don Enrique's son, Fernando, in painting, and Fernando eventually gained worldwide recognition as a distinguished artist.

Don Enrique's lifelong passion was to preserve the spiritual connections between the Philippines and Spain by promoting Spanish language and culture. The Premio Zóbel symbolizes this commitment: he expressed his wish that the Spanish culture and language continue to thrive within the Philippines. He was one of the founders of the Academia Filipina, established in 1924, a correspondent for the Real Academia Española in Spain.

In December 1941, World War II engulfed the Philippines, causing widespread destruction. The intense bombardment damaged many of Don Enrique's insurance businesses, with properties either destroyed or confiscated, and rendered the Philippine peso worthless. These hardships severely affected Don Enrique's health, and he died at his Ermita home from bronchial pneumonia on 17 February 1943, due to a lack of adequate medical care. It is said that on his deathbed, he feared that all his and his family's hard efforts had been for naught. He did not realize that his son-in-law, Captain Joe McMicking, along with Pres. Sergio Osmeña, Gen. Carlos P. Romulo, and Gen. Basilio Valdés, would return triumphantly with Gen. Douglas MacArthur at Red Beach, Palo, Leyte, on 20 October 1944, to retake the country, and that the Ayala house would emerge once again from the ashes of the global war's destruction.

Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)
Portrait of Enrique Zóbel de Ayala
signed (lower left)
ca.1920s
pen and ink on paper
15" x 10 1/2" (38 cm x 27 cm)

P 400,000









ABOVE: Fernando Amorsolo © León Gallery Archives **MIDDLE:** Portraits of Don Enrique Zóbel de Ayala and his second wife, Doña Fermina Montojo y Torrontegui by Amorsolo **BELOW:** A colorized "El Hogar Filipino Building" © Romeo del Carmen

At age 16, Amorsolo would begin that inexorable climb that would make him the most famous artist of his time. He would win the first of his accolades, a contest organized by the an influential organization called the Asociacion Internacional de Artistas de Manila, for an exposition for the fine arts in 1908.

The following year, he would enter the School of Fine Arts of the University of the Philippines, where his uncle was also a professor. Amorsolo would be among the first six graduates to complete the then-five year course. Upon graduating, he would do well enough in a competitive examination to be recruited as a teacher in Elementary Drawing.

He would work at the publishing firm of Cacho Hermanos where Jorge Pineda reigned supreme as the remarkable illustrator of the Renacimiento.

It was at Cacho Hermanos where Amorsolo would first cut his teeth, under the watchful eye of Pineda, who he would eventually eclipse in commercial success.

In this engraving, probably intended as one of the Renacimiento's profile pieces or cover art, Don Enrique Zóbel de Ayala is shown, natty in a business suit, walking jauntily along carrying briefcases overflowing with corporate papers naming the burgeoning Zóbel holdings. These included Filipinas Compañia de Seguros, the country's first Filipino fire-insurance company, which was co-founded by him alongside his brother Fernando and his brother-in-law Don Antonio Melian, Conde de Perecamps. There is also Hogar Filipino, also founded with the Count, San Miguel Brewery, and of course, Ayala y Compañia.

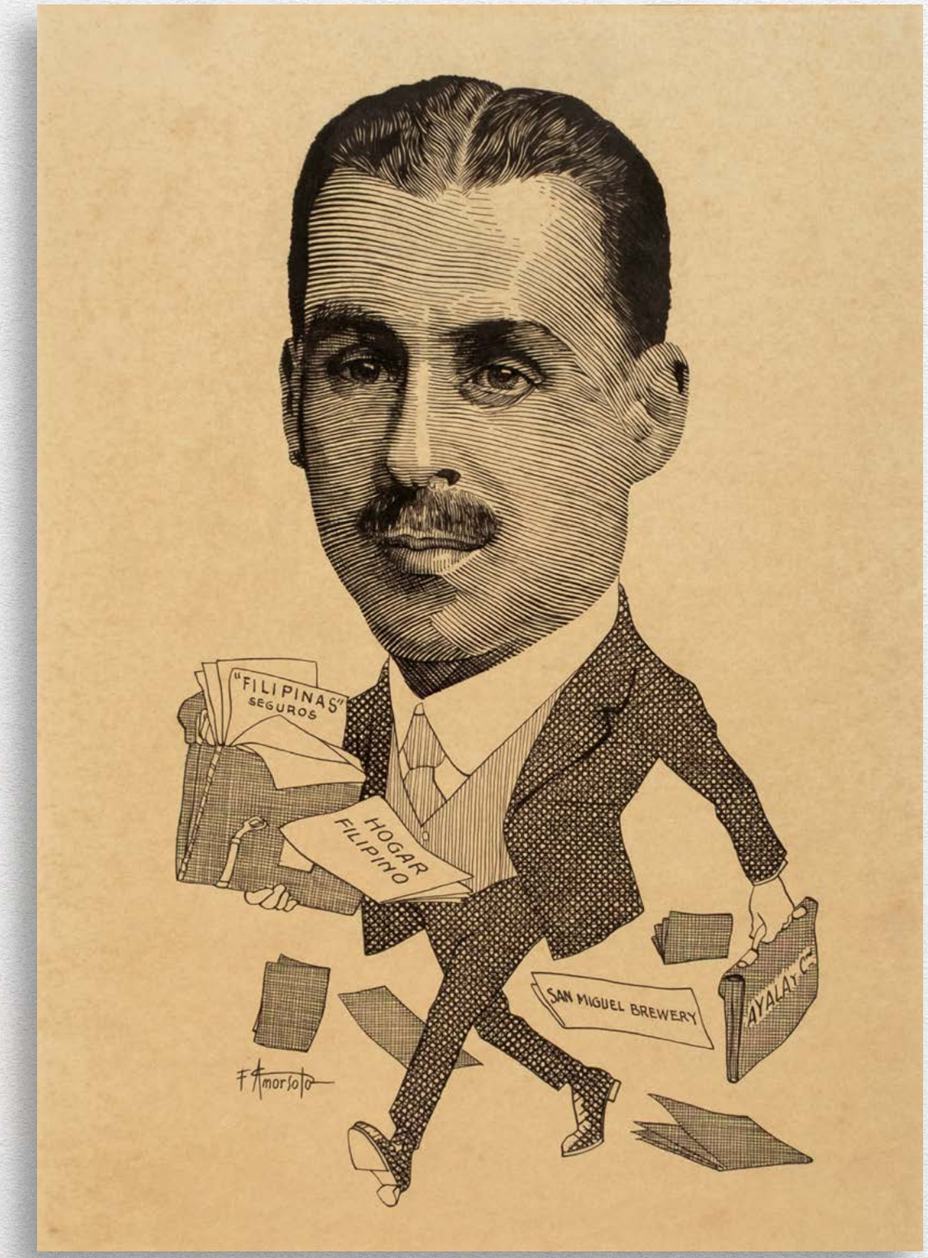
It would be through works such as this that he would attract the attention of the industrialist Don Enrique whose concerns among others also included the distillery Ginebra San Miguel. He would commission Amorsolo to design the label of the avenging archangel slaying the devil-serpent that is still used to this day.

In 1919, Zóbel de Ayala would bankroll his education in Spain in the vey same academy, the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, where all the Filipino greats had gone from Luna and Resurreccion Hidalgo. Scholar Ramon N. Villegas once noted that Amorsolo's test results were so excellent that he was invited to join the academy not as a student but as an instructor.

Amorsolo would say in later years that — thanks to Don Enrique's patronage — it was in Madrid that his art became what it was always destined to become, basking in the dramatic draughtsmanship of Diego Velasquez and the impressionistic light of Joaquin Sorolla (1863 - 1923).

The Prodigy Amorsolo Captures Don Enrique Zóbel de Ayala

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Barong-Barong
signed and dated 1968 (upper right)
oil on canvas
19 1/4" x 31" (49 cm x 79 cm)

P 1,800,000

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

A year after Mauro Malang Santos's second one-man show at the Luz Gallery, his 1968 Barung-Barong is an amalgamation of the artist's then-blossoming art career. During his early years, his works were characterized by his illustrator background, with their thick black outlines and a cutout, almost printlike, quality.

His illustrious career as a comic artist was established decades before his painting took off, with his creation of *Kosme, the Cop, Retired*, the country's first English-language daily comic strip. However, it was in his 1967 Luz Gallery show that prompted him to start doing serious painting.

In an interview with Cid Reyes published in his monograph *Malang: Paintings and Drawings*, he stated his process for painting his *barung-barong* pieces. Then working around Intramuros, Malang used to take photographs of *barung-barongs*.

"But I never really copied the photographs literally," he pointed out. "All I do is copy the forms. I ad-lib a great deal."

In this 1968 *Barung-barong,* Malang's print-like quality is evident, especially in the house's wooden and iron sheet panels. His vibrant color scheme and strong sense of composition take center stage, combining elements of cubism, figuration, and abstraction in his portrayal of these shanties.

His love for portraying *barung-barong* is well-documented. In the same interview, he said, "I don't believe in doing different subjects just for the sake of changing subjects. I think that you have to master one image, one form [...] Me, I never get tired of my *barungbarong*."



ABOVE: Mauro Malang-Santos in his studio © León Gallery Archives

One thing noted about Malang's *barungbarong* is its relative festivity. As opposed to the depressing, dilapidated houses that relay of the country's poverty, his pieces tell of the brighter, sunnier Philippines. Perhaps it's his color sense, where his vivid, rich hues come to life through his intuitive vision. An 'ad-lib,' as he is fond of saying.

The best of Malang, from this era to the next, is perhaps best put into words by Maria Luisa Reyes Llamado in a Manila Bulletin article about his 1967 exhibition, where she said:

"Malang's works appeal to all. He has captured the Filipino soul,' she continues. "His viewers will always find an identification of themselves in his landscapes and day-to-day living [...] The local scene must be faithfully depicted, and no one has done it more delightfully, more faithfully than Malang." *(Hannah Valiente)*

The Kingly Poor Man's Home Malang Finds a Palace





25

Orley Ypon (b. 1973)

Untitled
signed and dated 2016 (lower left)
oil on canvas
36" x 48" (91 cm x 122 cm)

P 300,000

Known for his social realism and expressive figuration, Orley Ypon creates another piece of beautiful art that explores the themes of struggle, unity, and endurance. Made in 2016, this masterpiece aligns with his vision of expressing social realism and the resilience of ordinary people.

Dark, Gritty, and Primal, the illustration depicts three nude male figures seemingly exhausted in the moment of physical strain or labor. With the light focusing on the tired bodies instead of the environment, the setting became ambiguous, possibly a dark and desolate environment, which further contributes to the intense atmosphere of the piece.

The way the human figures kept themselves up implies collective efforts. Completely symbolizing humanity's shared burden or perseverance in the face of hardships. The nakedness of their hands completely strips those men of all individuality and status, and the strained, tired posture of their bodies conveys humility and a sense of survival. Digging deeper, Ypon's painting is a powerful study of human endurance—a poetic allegory about effort, unity, and the timeless struggle for survival. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



26

Prudencio Lamarroza (b.1946)

Landscape Series '90
signed (lower right)
dated 1990
oil on canvas
34" x 36" (86 cm x 91 cm)

P 280,000

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

The works of Prudencio Lamarroza are unabashedly nostalgic in their presentation of a vivid and vibrant world. Growing up in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, he is not a stranger to the lush green trees and the beautiful rocks lining the shores of the Chico and Amburayan Rivers. As a result, his landscape works, particularly his riverbed pieces, echo that childhood surrealistic flair where everything is made of otherworldly colors, toeing the line between fantasy and reality.

This 1990 *Landscape Series* shows Lamarroza's precise vision. As Manuel D. Duldunao wrote in his monograph *Prudencio Lamarroza: His Life and Art:* "Lamarroza's work moved from nature's clutter toward simplicity and order. As artistic elements, they acquired a formidable power of structure, eventually engulfing the figure, as a jungle obliterates a shrine."

Indeed, Lamarroza's landscapes are both a work of beauty by nature and a profession of the artist's exacting talent. His proportions and framing reveal the surrealist world – it looks like our world seen through a looking glass. The sand is pink, the sea yellow, and the rocks an amalgamation of colors of unusual nature.

"If there is an absolute originality in Lamarroza, it lies in his gift of pure color, for which no amount of reproduction prepares you," Duldunao writes.

Indeed, Lamarroza's worlds are evocative in their bejeweled tones. Aglow with a supernatural light, this landscape's dissonances are not distractions but its emphasis on the surrealistic elements. A master manipulator of composition, Lamarroza's overflowing canvas is precise in its element, a work that is covered to the brim but never crowded, in proof of the artist's immense talent. *(Hannah Valiente)*

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

Bugan and Aliguyon
signed (lower left)
ca. late 1930s-1940s
oil on canvas
25" x 19" (64 cm x 48 cm)

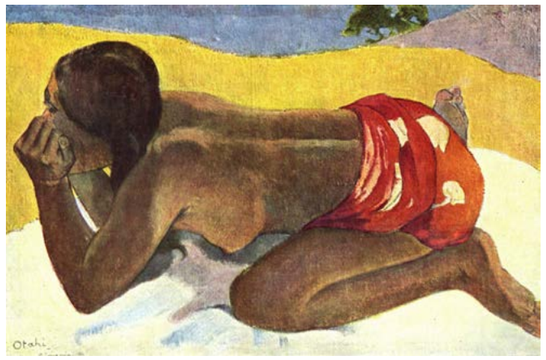
P 7,000,000

PROVENANCE
Presented by the Artist to the Mr. Emilio de la Paz, (Congressman of Rizal from 1934 - 1938, re-elected in 1938 and 1949); from thence to Mr. Emilio de la Paz, Jr., 1951 - 1999; from thence Private Collection, 1999 - 2001;

Sotheby's, *Southeast Asian Paintings*, Singapore, 30 September 2001, Lot 66

León Gallery, *The Kingly Treasures Auction 2017*, Makati City, 02 December 2017, Lot 52





ABOVE: Carlos 'Botong' V. Francisco "Bayanihan", c. 1950 **BELOW:** Paul Gauguin "Alone", 1893

For Carlos 'Botong' V. Francisco, the ultimate use of art was to build a Philippine iconography — of noble, heroic figures from the country's pre-Spanish past, because Botong believed that these were the true Filipinos, unsullied by the colonial masters and uncontaminated by their foreign traditions. He thus became best known for such works as the "Filipino Struggles in History" mural in the Manila City Hall, his last major commission.

He sought material for these powerful, symbolic figures from the tribes of the South, such as the Maranao; and from the tribes the North, such as the Ifugao of the Mountain Provinces. Neither of these groups had been successfully conquered by the Spanish and much later the Americans, and it is believed that Botong took pride in this fact.

Francisco worked both as a lay-out artist in the Herald as well as the Manila Tribune, while also teaching at the University of Santo Tomas before the War. In 1948, he won the first prize for the work "Kaingin" at the annual Art Association of the Philippines exhibit at the National Museum. It was at this time that he 'was officially acknowledged by the art establishment as one of the country's foremost artists.'

Botong was an avid collector of Filipino ethnography, spears and shields as well as various headgear; and he used them in his paintings to create his renowned historically accurate details. He coveted these artifacts so much that Juban recalls that he would trade paintings for the rarities brought by his great friend Alejandro Roces. ("Wawa, Angono" is also said to have been painted as a gift to the bearer of rare Mindanao objects.)

In a review of his work, titled "Carlos V. Francisco: The Grace of Untutored Ease", Rafael Ma. Guerrero says, "(his) meticulous attention to detail was not without its own authoritative acumen, for Botong was steeped in the customs and folklore of the Philippines. Long before collecting antiques became fashionable, one of Botong's consuming interests was to travel about the towns of Rizal and Laguna valley, poking like a curious child among the old churches."

His first paintings of the Ifugao, however, were more romantic — capturing the courtship rituals in various paintings of the "Nose Flute"; depicting the rhythms of ordinary life instead of the idealism of the larger-than-life.

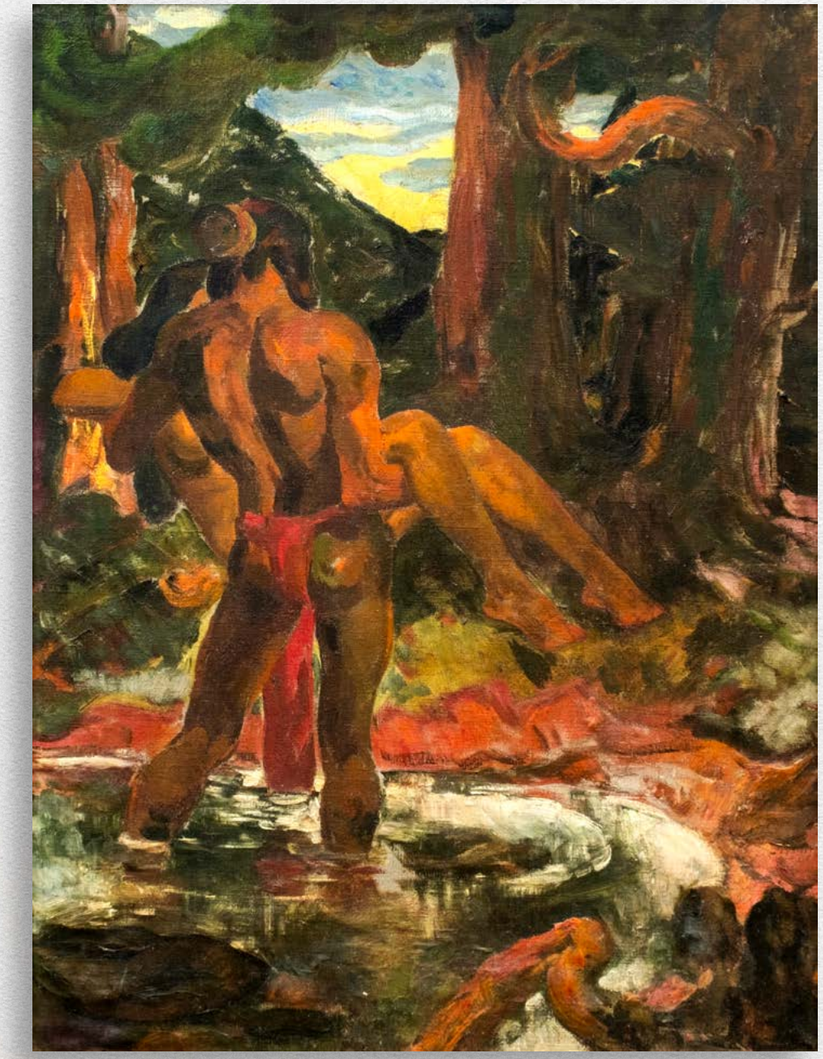
In "Bugan and Aliguyon", a Filipino brave strides masterfully across a stream, wading through its almost knee-high waters, while carrying his beloved, lifting her above the stream to prevent her gracefully curvaceous limbs from becoming wet. It is the noble Aliguyon who sweeps the princess Bugan into his arms. It's a gesture straight out of Walter Raleigh as he swept his cape on the mud to prevent Queen Elizabeth's shoes from becoming dirty — almost reminiscent of one carrying one's bride across the grassy threshold.

Aliguyon carries her to a sacred tree where he swears his undying love. This warrior's adventures comprise the Hudhud ni Aliguyon, an epic tale of the Ifugao.

Princess Bugan & the Noble Aliguyon

Botong Francisco's Northern Love Story

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



Guerrero further notes 'in Manila's sophisticated art circles, his works were frequently likened to that of Gauguin and the Mexican muralist Diego de Rivera, whose influences he unashamedly acknowledged.'

This Gauguin period was primarily in the late 1940s to early 1950s, as demonstrated by such works as an early "Bayanihan" dated from 1950. It is with this basis that "The Ifugao and His Bride" can be approximately dated. Whether painting monumental murals or these more intimate works, Carlos "Botong' V. Francisco is truly a master artist of the Filipino soul.

He was named the country's National Artist for the Visual Arts in 1973.

28

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

Òm
signed and dated 1977 (center)
oil on wood
48" x 48" (122 cm x 122 cm)

P 2,000,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

A widely recognized spiritual symbol in Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, the emblem of Òm can be deceptively simple in its appearance, yet it holds a profound meaning in its strokes. Its written form is among the most important symbols in the Hindu religion, and as a spoken syllable, it often represents a sacred sound, an invocation, or the start of a mantra.

Through its enunciation, one can follow the universe's cycle of life. Pronounced "a-u-m" following the older Vedic Sanskrit diphthong, each of the syllables presents different elements of the universe. The "A" signifies the beginning of creation, the "U" its continuation and preservation, and the "M" the ending or destruction that paves its way towards a new beginning.

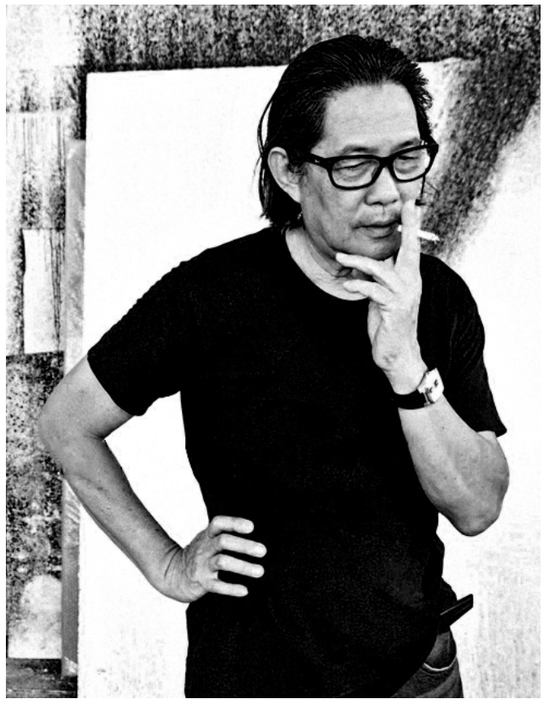
Together, they mirror the natural cycle of life; from birth to death, day to night, and the changing of the seasons.

This kind of cyclical pattern is just what artist Lao Lianben seeks in his canvases. With works often washed over with a sense of calm, Lao also often draws inspiration from Zen Buddhism, a practice that he proclaimed to be intrigued by.

"Zen Buddhism principles, practices, and mysticism have always fascinated me, [...] the image of Buddha is enigmatic – impregnable – quiet in form," Lao says in an email interview with Lifestyle INQ. "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 1977 Òm finds its place comfortably amongst his minimalist works. With the canvas a near pitch black, the large circle, almost dominating the canvas, seems almost indiscernible. It reminds one of an *ensō* that he has used in some of his paintings, a symbol in Zen Buddhism representing enlightenment, emptiness, and the state of no-mind drawn in one swift brush stroke.

However, it seems likely that it represents the cycle of life illustrated by Òm. It is the unchanging, impermanent, and infinite aspects of nature and of the universe; as one begins, another ends. Òm, in its entirety, is a complete story by itself; from creation to destruction, wakefulness and sleep, the phrase encapsulates it all.



ABOVE: Lao Lianben. © Shaira Luna

"What is remarkable about Lao Lianben is his ability to create works that function simultaneously on several levels: aesthetic, philosophical, spiritual, critical," Hervé Lancelin wrote in his art critique 'Lao Lianben and the Poetics of Obscurity.' "He merges techniques to create an immediacy that directly evokes personal imagination, rather than an analytical reference to a particular style."

Indeed, his Òm portrays that classic Lao masterpiece that stuck with his patrons throughout the years. Even with such a deceptively blank canvas, the blackness in Lao's pieces was never just decorative. They speak of the darkness where one hides their fears, a visual metaphor to impending spiritual illumination; in the case of Òm, it is also the moment of silence between the beginning and the end, a reprieve before another cycle takes its place in the universe. *(Hannah Valiente)*

The Breath of Calmness
Lao Lianben Exhales



Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

Espacio de Espera II
signed (lower right and verso) and inscribed "Para Eulecia y Lalo" (verso)
dated 1971
oil on canvas
14 3/4" x 18" (37.5 cm x 45.56 cm)

P 1,800,000

PROVENANCE
A wedding gift from the artist to the parents of the present owner, Ines Vallejo
Private collection, Madrid

LITERATURE
DE LA TORRE, Alfonso (Director). In collaboration with Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel. Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946-1984)-Catálogo Razonado de Pinturas de Fernando Zóbel (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid-Manila: Fundación Azcona, Fundación Juan March, Ayala Foundation and Fernando Zóbel Heirs, 2023. Nº cat. 71-2, p. 431.

My mother, Divina Ulecia Anta, worked at a gallery in Madrid in the late 1960s and early 1970s, called Egam, where Fernando Zóbel exhibited twice (in 1970 and 1975). The connection between them was not limited to the gallery; my mother, who already knew Gerardo Rueda, was part (along with my father) of a group of friends that also included Gustavo Torner and Carmen Laffón. After leaving the gallery, my mother set up a business of antique frames (one of Rueda's great interests) called MARCOSA.

My parents got married in January 1971, and Zóbel gave them this work, Espacio de espera II, dated in 1971. Zóbel and my mother chose the frame together, which is a 19th-century Spanish silver-gilt molding. My parents attended the inauguration of the extension of the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español in Cuenca in November 1978.

—INES VALLEJO

Created around the time he started painting his *El Júcar* series, Fernando Zóbel's Espacio De Espera focuses more on the suspension, reflection, and temporal pause in the art of painting, which is the complete opposite of the flowing and kinetic gesture of early El Júcar pieces.

Literally translated as *'Space of Waiting'*, the piece is composed of a dominating monochromatic field of softly off-white. The central square area occupies the majority of the canvas, while dark shades on both sides serve as margins, effectively trapping light on the canvas.

Unlike his *El Júcar* series, where he explores the temporal flow of a river, capturing the movements of the flowing Júcar River, *Espacio De Espera* emphasizes the opposite of movement—the construction of an experiential space of suspended motion, where the tension of silence is palpable. Inviting the viewer to meditate on the quiet piece with heightened sensitivity. For Zóbel, "waiting" is not a passive act. Instead, it is a temporal and perceptual condition—a moment in time where sight slows down and becomes attentive.

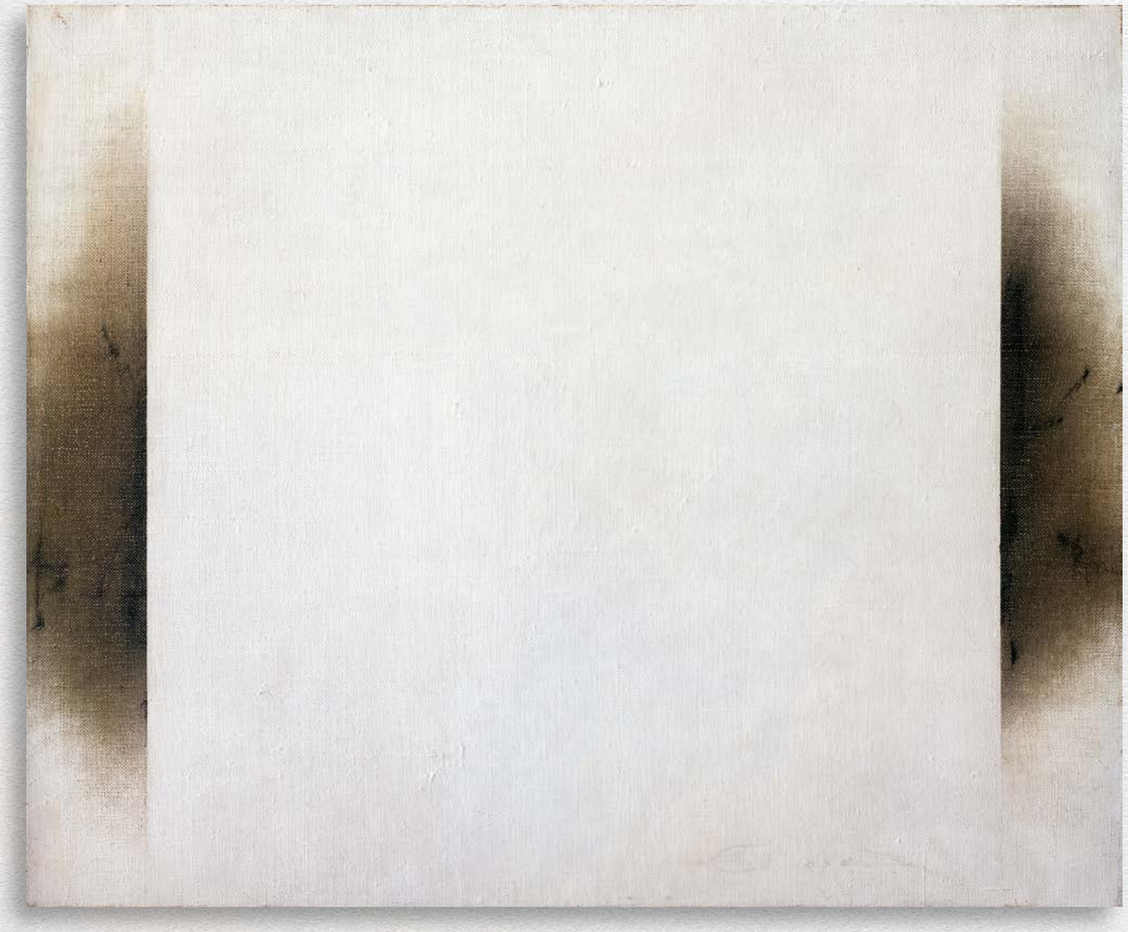
Overall, Fernando Zóbel's 1971 piece *Espacio de Espera II* could be considered a study of suspended motion—a restrained choreography of strokes floating in a soft atmospheric white void. By stripping the composition to its essentials, the artist managed to create a contemplative space—a visual representation of an interval of time, completely encased in a canvas. It stands as a prime example of Zóbel's abstractions, where gesture perception and poetic stillness converge in a single visual masterpiece. *(Mark John Castañeda)*





ABOVE: The parents of the current owner set up a framing business called MARCOSA. Zobel made this drawing with an inscription saying, "MARCOSA: Give us your thing and we will return it to you beautiful" **BELOW:** The owner's parents and Zobel (both encircled) photographed at the inauguration of the extension of the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español in Cuenca in November 1978

The Waiting Room
Zóbel Explores Spaces In Between



Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

Nude
signed, dated February 1960 and
inscribed "Al Amigo Dr. J.L. Abad" (lower right)
oil on canvas
11 1/2" x 15 3/4" (29 cm x 40 cm)

P 1,000,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

A key figure in Philippine art history, Fernando Amorsolo graced the country with his resplendent masterpieces for as long as he could hold a paintbrush. To date, one can easily spot an Amorsolo piece in government and private offices, museums and galleries, as well as in school and university buildings. His works have also been reprinted and reproduced in several books, postcards, tourism pamphlets, and postage stamps.

While he was renowned for his sunlit, bucolic landscapes, sometimes populated by archetypal Filipino folk activities, Amorsolo also created a vast array of works in various media. His versatility is evident in the thousands of paintings and drawings he produced throughout his illustrious career, using a range of media including oil, acrylic, pastel, charcoal, and graphite. The maestro also made expert use of canvases, boards, and papers as his base, allowing him to capture the essence of his subjects in different ways. However, what remains a constant is his light, infusing his works with serene tranquility, regardless of the subject matter.

Besides his brilliant landscapes and genre scenes, Fernando Amorsolo also shed his effervescent light on his dalagas and nude paintings, as seen in this 1960 piece. Embodying his romantic style, *Nude* is a conspicuous demonstration of the maestro's great finesse in the art field. His fine brushwork and profound colorism skillfully delineated a female figure, capturing every dip and curve of her body. Despite featuring a naked body, this portrayal was not to gratify or entice the spectator. Amorsolo's women, from Cid Reyes' description, "still conveys an innate modesty and decency, propriety and grace."

While the public display of the female body–even a tiny slip of skin–was seen as an act of indecency during Amorsolo's time, he managed to keep his figures' dignity intact. Rather



ABOVE: Detail of dedication

than eroticism, Amorsolo's nude compositions provide an in-depth and aesthetic appreciation of the female body. This theme of the maestro's works also exudes a 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,' Reyes notes on Amorsolo's nude paintings.

Amorsolo's long years of artmaking, spanning various subjects and mediums, culminated in his renowned style and lighting; his works provided inspiration to succeeding generations of artists. 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 left, ranging from sketches and studies to portraits and his famed sunlit, bucolic landscapes. Amorsolo's illustrious career has earned him several awards and recognitions, including the distinction of being the first National Artist of the Philippines. *(Jessica Magno)*

Private Moments of Beauty
By the Maestro Amorsolo





31

Augusto Albor (b. 1948)

Elements in Time - Z
signed and dated 1997 (lower left)
acrylic on canvas
48" x 48" (122 cm x 122 cm)

P 400,000

PROVENANCE
León Gallery, *The Magnificent September Auction 2014*, Makati City, 13 September 2014, Lot 7

LITERATURE
Cid Reyes, *Immaterial: The Art of Augusto Albor*, Art Informal Workshop, Manila, 2010, p.89

To portray the concept of eternal and ineffable time seems to be a daunting task, a complex artistic endeavor that is as staggering as the very notion of stopping time, and yet Augusto Albor's 1997 *Elements in Time-Z* did just that.

An artist who thrives in the minimalist realm, Albor's canvases may seem almost bland, but it is only a facade to keep those unwilling to delve deep into his works from understanding his paintings. Despite – or perhaps because of – the absence of distinguishable objects, Albor's works thrum with profound emotional impact. His *Elements in Time-Z* is, in its essence, a reflection of the vastness of the universe and the inevitability of the passage of time through his usage of the various shades of grays in varying textures.

Albor's abstractions revolve around silence and solemnity, a tethering balance on reality and the metaphysical. In *Elements in Time-Z*, his minimalistic approach elevates the daunting prospect of understanding time. Through his restrained color palette, Albor's *Elements in Time-Z* is emblematic of the artist's profound understanding and reverence for that which is bigger than us. *(Hannah Valiente)*



32

Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Kambal
signed and dated 28.I.87 (lower right)
gouache
13 1/2" x 11" (34 cm x 28 cm)

P 260,000

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

PROVENANCE
Finale Art File

León Gallery, *The Magnificent September Auction 2017*, Makati City, 29 September 2017, Lot 68

Connecting both abstraction and Filipino folk motifs in a single image, Mauro "Malang" Santos's 1987 piece, Two Women, offers a glimpse of his modernist style, celebrating his preferred theme: the Celebration of Filipino women, specifically from rural or market settings. Using their symbols to represent strength, simplicity, and tradition.

Executed in gouache, this masterpiece depicts two standing female figures, illustrated in a stylized, flattened form with strong outlines and segmented blocks of color. Each figure carries what seems to be a basket of fruit or goods on its head, implying that the women are vendors, bathed in a warm yellow background and contrasted against overlapping hues of green, blue, and white, creating a beautiful harmony as the cool tones dominate the figures. In contrast, the golden-yellow ground gives the figure a warm, glowing presence.

The result is a visual language that celebrates Filipino womanhood, resilience, companionship, and cultural continuity. Malang uses abstracted figures of women to create a universal image that represents such virtues, transforming their individuality into a holistic archetype that represents Filipinos as a whole. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

33

Jaime de Guzman (1942 - 2025)

15th Station of the Cross
signed and dated 1969 (lower right)
oil on canvas
55" x 98 3/4" (140 cm x 251 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, USA

LITERATURE
Yuson, Krip. *Revelations: A Jaime de Guzman Retrospective*. Published on the occassion of the exhibition of the same title at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on 4 March to 10 May 2015. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 2015. Black-and-white illustration on page 31.

"One significant contribution of Jaime de Guzman in modern Philippine art is his introduction of the distortion of the human figure as a projection of the harsh and pained contemporary reality. He burst into the art scene with his apocalyptic paintings exposing body, innards, and spirit done in feverish strokes and emotive colors. [....] He was a true expressionist— his exaggeration and distortion of form channeled the anxieties of modern man..."

—REVELATIONS: A JAIME DE GUZMAN RETROSPECTIVE. 2015.

De Guzman's Protest Art Treading Between Religion and Reality



A testament to the artist's magnificent yet haunting, psychologically charged works in Postwar Philippine Art, Jaime De Guzman demonstrates the country's sociopolitical turmoil of the late 1960s. Through his reimpression of the religious narrative of the Stations of the Cross, he juxtaposes what is supposed to be a glorious resurrection with a dystopic and anguished representation.

Rooted to the 15th station of the cross, later added in modern liturgy to symbolize redemption and hope beyond death, De Guzman twists the supposed celebratory station into a dark and painful imagery by presenting a composition dominated by elongated and distorted human tones. Executed with deliberate precision, his central figure—a "resurrecting" figure—rises with its arms outstretched, echoing the crucifix form of Christ. Each side produces a figure with a morbid appearance that mirrors the central figure's painful composition, while the background forms a dystopian environment with turbulent skies and fragmented architecture. Highlighting the destruction and chaos that breeds such torment and a disarray for humanity.

Reimagining his profound psychological allegory through the lens of the sacred religious theme, De Guzman had managed to create a masterpiece that existentially reflects on the theme of suffering, faith, the human condition, and redemption. It visualizes the people's attempt to rise after immense suffering as the world screams of universal emotions like despair, loss, and a need for salvation. These emotions are caused by the disillusionment of the post-war Philippines, where ideals of redemption are overshadowed by oppression and social decay. A work of true conviction, this masterpiece cements Jaime De Guzman's place within the canon of Philippine contemporary art. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



34

Romulo Galicano (b. 1945)

Sunset
signed and dated 1970 (lower left)
oil on canvas
20" x 30" (51 cm x 76 cm)

P 280,000

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

Romulo Galicano formed part of the renowned Dimasalang art group in the mid-1960s. During this period, he would frequent an art studio on Dimasalang St. in Sampaloc, Manila to meet with other artists. Together, they would traverse the streets of Manila and the outskirts of town to observe and practice painting in plein air. This method, first introduced to him by his uncle and mentor, Martino Abellana, allowed him to observe his subjects directly and paint scenes in their natural light.

Painted in 1970, *Sunset* was one of Galicano's illustrations during his Dimasalang period. It features a tranquil lake, with a group of people aboard a boat, contentedly lounging and chatting amongst themselves as they bask in the last rays of the sun before it disappears completely on the horizon. In contrast to the generally dark scenery, the artist painted the sky in bright yellow and orange, with a hint of blue, casting a faint light across the entire image. Undeniably, Galicano's masterful strokes and dazzling palette breathe life into the scenes he portrays.

Aside from being an early Romulo Galicano work, the work at hand was also one of the few paintings he signed with "Gali." This moniker was what Emilio 'Abe' Aguilar Cruz (co-founder of the Dimasalang group) suggested he use for his paintings at that time, in preparation for his professional career as a painter. It was so limited in number that even the artist himself had only a single piece in his trove marked as "Gali." Furthermore, beyond their aesthetic appeal, the rarity of these pieces made them among the artist's most coveted works, establishing them as a unique and exclusive part of his artistic journey. *(Jessica Magno)*



35

Daniel dela Cruz (b. 1966)

When Deeds Speak
signed and dated 2013
brass, stainless steel, copper, and nickel
sculpture
H: 20" (53 cm)
L: 11 3/4" (30 cm)
W: 15 3/4" (40 cm)

overall
H: 25" (64 cm)
L: 14" (36 cm)
W: 48" (122 cm)

P 200,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Pinto Art Museum and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

Daniel dela Cruz has already exhibited an inclination to the arts in his early childhood by playing and creating figures with molding clay. However, Dela Cruz buried this interest deep within himself as he took a degree in Philosophy to fulfill his parents' wishes. But soon after graduating from college, he made a bold decision to pursue his passion for the arts.

In light of his 40th birthday in 2007, dela Cruz inaugurated his first solo show, titled *Kandungan*. This momentous event marked his debut in the art scene, the first of the many exhibitions dedicated to his sublime artistry. This particular piece, *When Deeds Speak*, features two women caught in a perilous situation. One of them was dangling in the air while her comrade held her hand to prevent her from falling, all the while balancing her weight in a thin cord that served as a bridge connecting the cliffs they were likely crossing.

This 2013 sculpture, crafted from a blend of different metals—brass, stainless steel, copper, and nickel—demonstrates Daniel dela Cruz's ingenuity and exceptional craftsmanship in every bend, mold, and carve he makes to his materials. His figures' faces were left intentionally blank, alluding to the notion that humanity and kindness stem from one's heart and soul, rather than their physical appearance. *(Jessica Magno)*

Jigger Cruz (b. 1984)

Disjointed (Diptych)
signed and dated 2015 (lower right)
oil and spray paint on canvas and wood
67 3/4" x 111" (172 cm x 282 cm)

P 4,000,000

EXHIBITED
ARNDT Fine Art Berlin, Jigger Cruz: Subtraction Paradise, Berlin, Germany, 4 June - 29 August 2015



ABOVE: *Disjointed (Diptych)*, as featured in Jigger Cruz's exhibition Subtraction Paradise, mounted at ARNDT Berlin in 2015. © ARNDT Fine Art

Jigger Cruz's signature practice—layering paint through acts of overpainting, cutting, burning, and defacement—reflects both rebellion and renewal. What may at first appear as chaos slowly reveals an underlying order, an aesthetic coherence built from destruction. Through thick impasto and sculptural texture, Cruz transforms the surface into a battlefield of gesture and intent, one that dismantles the traditional reverence for the painted image.

In art historical terms, Cruz's process can be read through Rosalind Krauss's concept of the "post-medium condition," in which the purity of painting gives way to an expanded field of material and conceptual play. His canvases refuse to be flat—they exist as hybrid objects, occupying a space between painting and sculpture, image and matter. By obscuring and overwhelming the original image beneath layers of color and texture, Cruz stages a confrontation between creation and erasure. The result is a body of work that interrogates not only what painting can depict, but what it is. Ultimately, Cruz's art speaks to the tension between tradition and transgression—a visual dialogue between control and chaos, beauty and ruin. His pieces, alive with tactile energy, remind us that destruction, too, can be a form of creation.

A graduate of Far Eastern University, Cruz's path to painting was anything but conventional. It wasn't until 2011—after meeting acclaimed artist Manuel Ocampo, under whom he apprenticed—that he decided to take up painting full-time. Since then, he has exhibited at respected spaces such as Tala Gallery, Blanc Art Space, and Ayala Museum, and his works have been shown internationally in Singapore, Switzerland, and New York. Cruz also took part in the seminal *WASAK! Filipino Art Today* exhibition organized by ARNDT, a groundbreaking showcase that brought the energy of Philippine contemporary art to the global stage. (Jed Daya)

Jigger Cruz Balances Chaos and Calm



37

Leo Valledor (1936 - 1989)

Alone Together
signed, titled and dated 1973 (verso)
acrylic on canvas
36" x 108" (91 cm x 274 cm) each

P 2,200,000

PROVENANCE
MODERNISM Gallery, San Francisco, California

Leo Valledor's 1973 *Alone Together,* much in agreement with his title, is a visual exploration of solitude and loneliness. An orphan by the age of twelve in San Francisco, he was essentially raised by his *titos*, that is, the immigrant men looking for work with his recently deceased mother. Being lonesome, in spite of the makeshift family he's had, is something he's familiar with.

Alone Together is an installation of two rectangular canvases, both in different solid colors, one with rounded corners and the other with sharp edges. The usage of these canvases emphasizes what John Yau states: "One may say that the difference between Valledor (and many of the Park Place artists) and those aligned with Judd and Minimalism is that the former group was interested in how we see and the *latter was focused on what we see.*"

Indeed, *Alone Together,* more than anything, is a manifestation of Valledor's grasp on geometry. As he succinctly says in an interview with David Bourdan (from Archives of American Art Journal, Vol. 51, 1-2, Spring 2012): "[His works use] geometric elements but I don't see it as geometric art. I don't see it in terms of mathematics, in terms of anything but a visual thing." *(Hannah Valiente)*



ABOVE: The artwork shown to scale





LEFT AND RIGHT: Leo Valledor, Verso

Leo Valledor
Master of the Shaped Canvas



Rafael Arenas, Barcelona

Carte de Visite (CDV)
2 1/2" x 3 1/2" (6 cm x 9 cm)

P 120,000

A rare and highly significant artifact of Rizal's Parisian life, this is a period photograph capturing the Filipino ilustrados in their social milieu in late 19th-century Europe.

A Rare Photograph of Rizal's Parisian life

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

The image is a classic carte-de-visite (CDV), and mounted on thin card. This style was common for exchangeable portraits in the 1880s and 1890s. The photograph's warm sepia tones indicate its age and original photographic method. The lightweight cardboard mount, now slightly worn and discolored as expected for a fragile historical item, surrounds the photo.

The scene depicts an intimate yet formally arranged group portrait believed to have been taken in Paris around 1889, during Rizal's visit to the Universal Exposition. He was drawn to the welcoming home of the Pardo de Taveras, where his close friend Juan Luna lived. On 21 September 1889, Rizal wrote to his family, describing his social life there: "We Filipinos gather four times a week and we sing the kundiman, enjoy sotanghon, adobo, etc. On Wednesdays at Doña Tula, Thursdays at Félix Resurrección Hidalgo's, Fridays at Madame Boustead's, Saturdays at Luna's, and Sundays at Doña Juliana's."

This photo was likely taken at the residence of the renowned Filipino painter Juan Luna and his family. The setting features elaborate Victorian décor, including heavy, patterned tapestries and ornate furniture, reflecting the affluent, artistic, and intellectual environment of the ilustrado expatriates.

The subjects are arranged in a carefully curated family tableau. Dr. Baldomero Roxas is prominently seated on a fringed armchair, with ilustrados Gregorio Aguilera and Lauro Dimayuga standing beside him. On the floor at the front center is the national hero Dr. José Rizal, captured in a rare, relaxed moment alongside the renowned painter Juan Luna. On the sofa, Paz Pardo de Tavera, Juan Luna's wife, sits with her eldest son, Andrés, along with an unidentified woman.

The backmark of this photo identifies the studio as that of the Barcelona-based Rafael Arenas, himself a well-known royal photographer and a member of the French Photographic Society. His studio often produced exchangeable carte-de-visite photographs suitable for commercial reproduction and mailing. This compelling photograph captures the close social and intellectual circle of Filipino reformists in Paris, including artists, writers, and thinkers who played a key role in shaping early Filipino consciousness while living in exile. This rare image documents the influential ilustrados—through their art, writing, and advocacy—and is a significant addition to collections focused on Philippine ilustrado history, Juan Luna, or José Rizal.



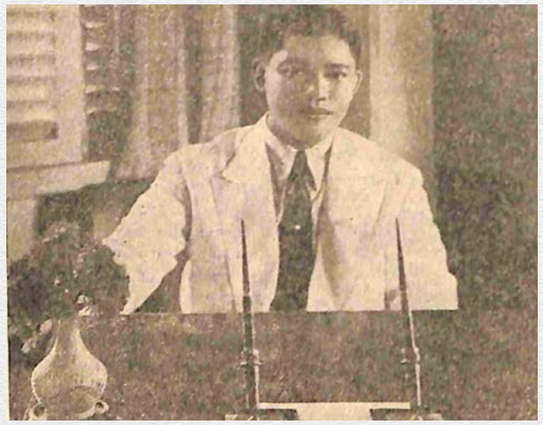
ABOVE: Verso of the photograph

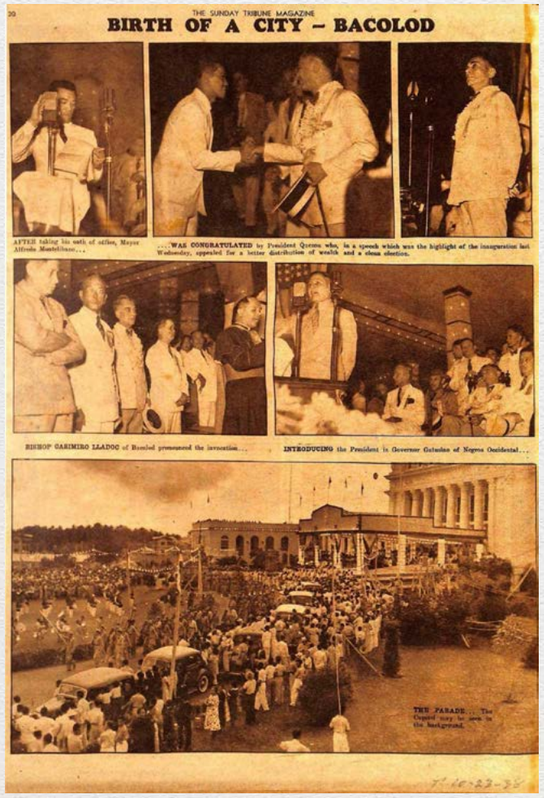


STANDING: Ilustrados Gregorio Aguilera and Lauro Dimayuga. **SEATED LEFT TO RIGHT:** Dr. Baldomero Roxas, Dr. José Rizal and Juan Luna; On the sofa, Paz Pardo de Tavera with eldest son, Andrés.

Don Pedro Conlu Hernaez
Philippine Ambassador to Spain, 1960 - 1962
The Political Dynamo from Talisay

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL





ABOVE: Assemblyman Pedro Conlu Hernaez through the years. Sources: Presidential Musem and Library, Old Negros (Collection of Ramon Severino Conlu Jr.)

A political paragon from Negros, Pedro Conlu Hernaez was born in Talisay on December 12, 1899 to Rosendo Espinosa Hernaez and Teofila Echecrecho 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 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: Provincial officials, from left second Msgr. Fortich, 4th - Sen Hernaez, 6th - Gov Gatuslao, 7th - Mayor Cordova. Collection CP Adorio. **BELOW:** 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).



TOP: H.E. Hernaez as he presents his diplomatic credentials to Gen. Franco as Philippine Ambassador to Spain, 1960. Collection of Manila Nostalgia. **MIDDLE:** Pedro Hernaez at the inauguration of Bacolod as a chartered city, 1939. Collection of Jocelle Batapa Sigue. **BELOW LEFT:** Cecilia Conlu Hernaez as painted by Anita Magsaysay-Ho, her sister-in-law. From Anita Magsaysay-Ho's An Artist's Memoirs. **BELOW RIGHT:** Cecilia Conlu Hernaez.

Juan Luna y Novicio (1857 - 1899)

La Infancia de la Naturaleza (The Childhood of Nature)
signed (lower right)
titled (upper left) "LA INFANCIA D. LA NAT. IZA"
oil on canvas
48" x 37 1/2" (122 cm x 95 cm)

P 4,000,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired in Spain in the 1960's



Among the considerable gems of Juan Luna paintings amassed by Ambassador Pedro Conlu Hernaez — the country's envoy to Spain from 1960 to 1962 — was the justly famous "La Belleza ya la Esclava Ciega (The Beauty and the Blind Slave)" after a Pompeiian legend. Dating from 1887, it was reproduced as an engraving in the Ilustracion Artistica de Barcelona in March of the same year.

Hernaez also scooped up a countryside scene painted by Luna in Bilbao where he sought refuge from the stresses of the year 1892 as well as a series of happier paintings of his wife Paz picking flowers in the Bois de Boulougne and captured in slumber in its woods, recently discovered to be titled "Tentacion", as confirmed by the photographic archives of Don Alfonso Ongpin.

"La Infancia" is of a far darker beauty as these works and cleaves closer to the raw emotion of the "Spoliarium".

In "La Infancia", an archangel is caught in the light of a rising sun — its rays outlined in a bold impasto — emerging from the chaos of creation. Its wings stiff and head covered in a warrior's helmet, this divine creature kneels in front of a child who appears to be bathed in blood, streaked in crimson and with such strokes that have become distinctive to Juan Luna. He kneels in homage but with his arms outstretched in protection, ready to take the youngster in his arms.

It features a far looser style of painting but still has the same dramatic academic themes as his greatest masterpieces.

"La Infancia" closes the chapter on the storied collection of the political lion Amb. Conlu Hernaez who became an unwitting culture-bearer of his generation with his various important discoveries of Juan Luna works.

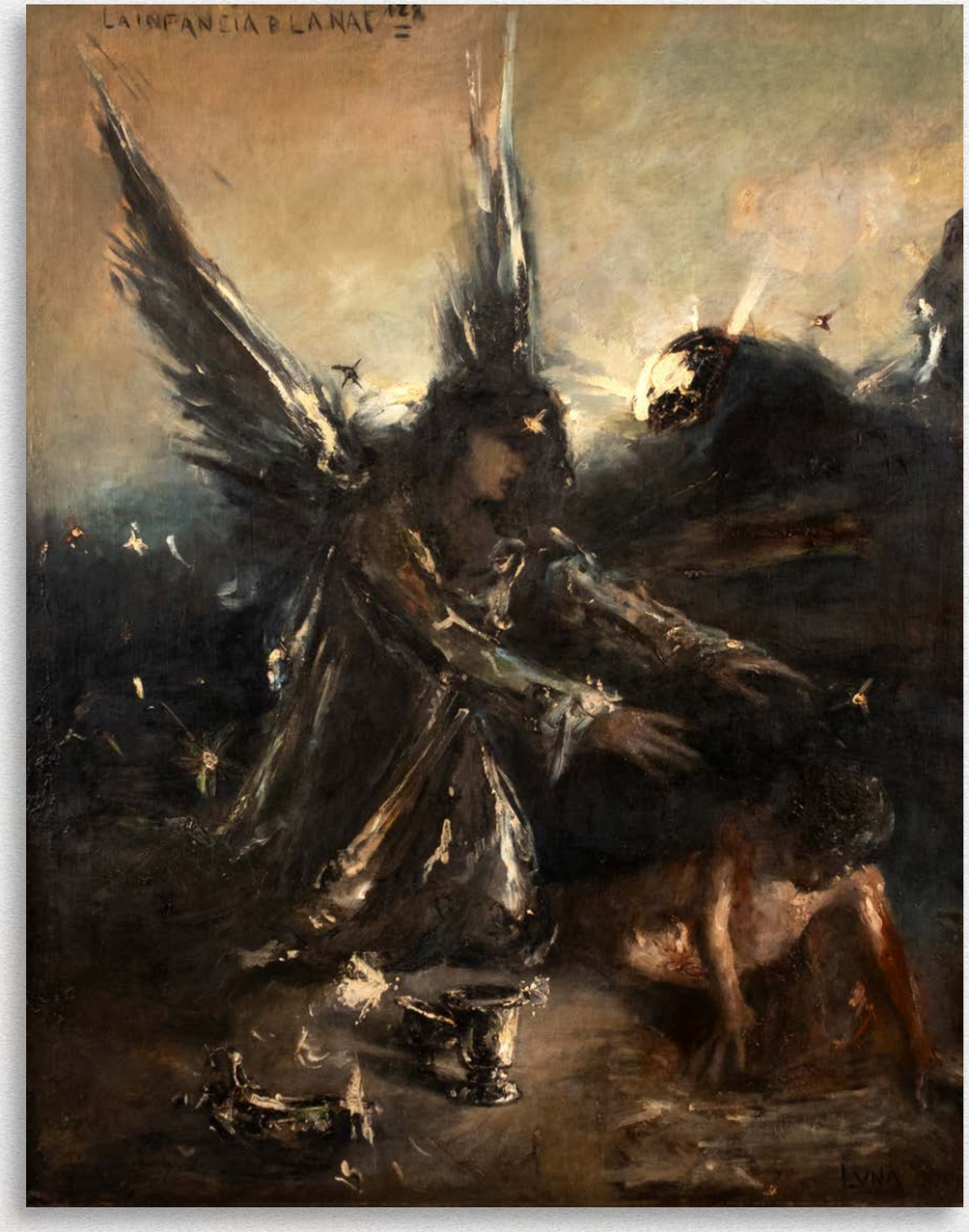




THE LUNA CONLU-HERNAEZ TREASURES
ABOVE: La Belleza Feliz y La Esclava Ciega (The Happy Beauty and The Blind Slave) engraving from La Ilustracion Artistica of Barcelona, 14 March 1887 **MIDDLE:** Landscape in Bilbao, signed, ca. 1893 **BELOW:** Juan Luna and His Wife Paz, Newly discovered to be titled Tentacion, from the Alfonso Ongpin Archives.

The Last Juan Luna Treasure
From the Amb. Conlu Hernaez Trove

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



40

Juvenal Sansó (1929 - 2025)

That Nightly Hour
signed (lower right)
ca. 1965
acrylic on canvas
19" x 39" (48 cm x 99 cm)

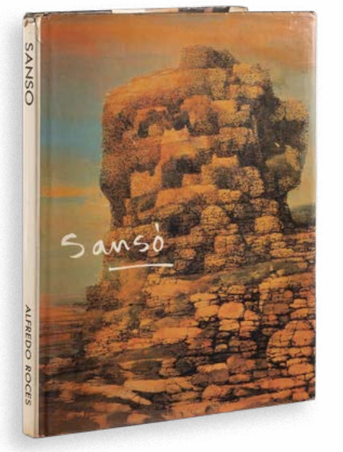
P 1,000,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

LITERATURE
Roces, Alfredo. *Sansó*. Manila: Luis Ma. Araneta, Filcapital Development Corporation, and General Bank and Trust Company, 1976. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 18 and listed on page 206 as "216. That Nightly Hour" in the artist's catalogue of works.

The Book forms part of this lot.



ABOVE: Sansó by Alfredo Roces, accompanies this lot



ABOVE: *That Nightly Hour* is featured in the 1976 book Sanso by Alfredo Roces, one of the most comprehensive and authoritative monographs on the artist to date

"I cannot listen to any other voice than my own."

"My paintings are like my fingerprints!"

— Juvenal Sansó, Interview with Cid Reyes, March 1973, Published in 'Conversations on Philippine Art'

Juvenal Sansó's oeuvre has undergone various changes and developments. All of his experiences, both good and bad, his studies, and his exposure to different art styles in the Philippines and abroad contributed to Sansó's growth as an artist. However, his gradual ascent to the art scene is a product of his unwavering dedication and exceptional talent. Even amid the prevailing styles and techniques of his time, he single-mindedly worked towards his own figurative approach. There is not a single artist Sansó wished to imitate, even in his earlier days. In an interview with Cid Reyes, Sansó even questioned the need to use a parallel and imitate other artists' voices when he has his own.

Each of Sansó's canvases is unique in its own way. Despite the recurring themes and elements, one is never a copy of the other. "I like the nervous feeling when you're creating a painting from nothing but your imagination and instinct," he told Reyes. Still, Sansó's ability to shroud his subjects in mystery remains a constant aspect of his art. His flora, landscape, and seascape themes, while often exuding a sense of solitude and tranquility, are distorted into a surrealistic portrayal of the physical world.

Calm yet haunting, *That Nightly Hour* is a striking example of how Sansó's works serve as a gateway to an otherworldly realm. It exemplifies his ability to evoke a sense of peace and mystery through his skilled brushwork and use of color. In this 1965 piece, the artist portrays a night scene by the coast. The sun has set, the stars are slowly painting the dimming sky, while the moon casts a soft glow that illuminates the whole scenery. Despite the scene's stillness, the artist's blue-dominated palette and dark shadows exude an eerie atmosphere, as if a looming presence hidden in obscurity waits for the perfect moment to strike.

Cleveland Museum curator Louise S. Richards also noted the ominous feeling brought by Sansó's works. Describing what a tour in the artist's 1964 Cleveland Museum exhibition feels like, Richards said: "[It] shows the world as a limbo hovering between day and night where living creatures do not exist but inanimate objects become prime actors." She further discussed the characteristics of his landscapes by saying, "...shadowy rocks and bushes have a watchful presence neither evil nor beneficent but alien to our everyday experience of stone and wood."

Juvenal Sansó's unique approach to his artmaking enabled him to develop a style distinctly his own, resulting in a trove of beguiling masterpieces that contributed to his significance in the art world. His visual narratives draw out a combination of beauty and unsettling uneasiness that invariably captivate viewers' emotions and attention, proving his place in the Philippine art scene. *(Jessica Magno)*

The Solitude Of Sansó



41

Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

Meditación en Blanco
signed and dated 1966 (lower left)
oil on canvas
24" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

P 7,000,000

PROVENANCE
León Gallery, *The Spectacular Mid-Year Auction 2023*, Makati City, 17 June 2023, Lot 104

LITERATURE
DE LA TORRE, Alfonso (Director). In collaboration with Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel. Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946-1984)-Catálogo Razonado de Pinturas de Fernando Zóbel (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid-Manila: Fundación Azcona, Fundación Juan March, Ayala Foundation and Fernando Zóbel Heirs, 2023. Nº cat. 66-15, p. 328.



ABOVE: Fernando Zóbel in his Madrid studio, with paintings for the Sala Neblí exhibition in 1961. © fernandoZóbel.es

Fernando Zóbel's 1960s and 1970s are characterized by his return to color. His previous decade was dominated by his *Serie Negre* or his succinct black paintings, focusing primarily on swift brushstrokes akin to Oriental calligraphy. A substantial hit to the general public, his subsequent return color, meanwhile, was a tentative one, marked by touches of hues and saturation.

Coincidentally or not, this return to color concurred with a major event in Zóbel's life: his Cuenca years. In 1963, he had scouted Cuenca as a possible location for his collection. With the help of the then-mayor, Rodrigo Lozana de la Fuente, Zóbel eventually transformed Casas Colgadas into his very own museum.

By 30 June 1966, Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, Spain's first museum in the democratic era, opened its doors. The museum's role is best described as Alfonso de la Torre wrote in the introduction of *Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946-1984)*. "By the summer of '64, the place was full of painters, absolutely overflowing, almost literally copying Zóbel, and thus, a museum and an artist's community was created."

By 1966, Zóbel's ties to Cuenca had strengthened significantly. De la Torre elaborated on this again, stating, "[The] paintings created there display a deeply sensitive content; they are distinct from the rest of his output, bearers of images in which he probes the numerous sensations prompted by his exciting encounter with that city like no other in the world."

It was during this monumental period that *Meditación en Blanco* was created. Literally translating to "Blank Meditation," this piece is the perfect example of Zóbel's mastery of proportion and scale, a fluidity that bridged histories and influences.

The years between the 1950s and the 1960s were marked by Zóbel's continued wanderlust — he arrived in Madrid in 1959 with a solo exhibition at the Galería Biosca, a gallery that espoused pictorial modernity; mounted another exhibition in 1961 at Manila, where his works had been radically stripped down and fully abstract; and moved back to Spain in Cuenca by 1963 to set up the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español.

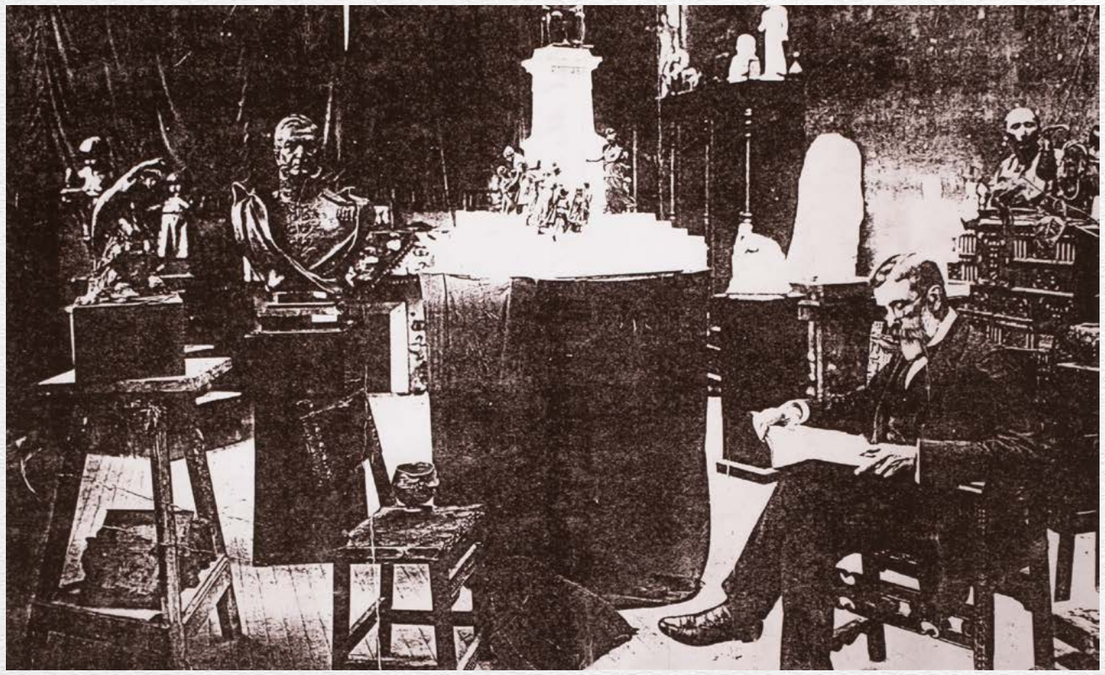
That amalgamation of inspiration, still close enough by the years to not fully disappear from the subconscious, manifests in *Meditación en Blanco*. Critic Manuel Sánchez Camargo praised Zóbel's exhibit in his 1959 Zóbel, stating: "Zóbel's work is, above all, intelligent work. This is so because of the care taken in measuring the shapes, the effects of the colour, and the nice appearance of the piece. There is no carelessness in Zobel's canvases; indeed, a profound understanding of composition influences how they were created."

Meditación en Blanco, six years after his first solo exhibition in Spain, echoes the multiple inspirations he encountered. It is a catalog of his jet-set life, his inspirations spanning decades and continents as he, like many great artists, internalizes this melting pot of inspirations, turning them into a piece of work that is undeniably and unequivocally Zóbel's. *(Hannah Valiente)*



Felix Pardo de Tavera
Doctor and Aesthete

by ISIDRA P. REYES



ABOVE: Felix at his studio among his sculptures, 1910-1915 © Triumph and Tragedy: The Life and Works of Félix Pardo de Tavera

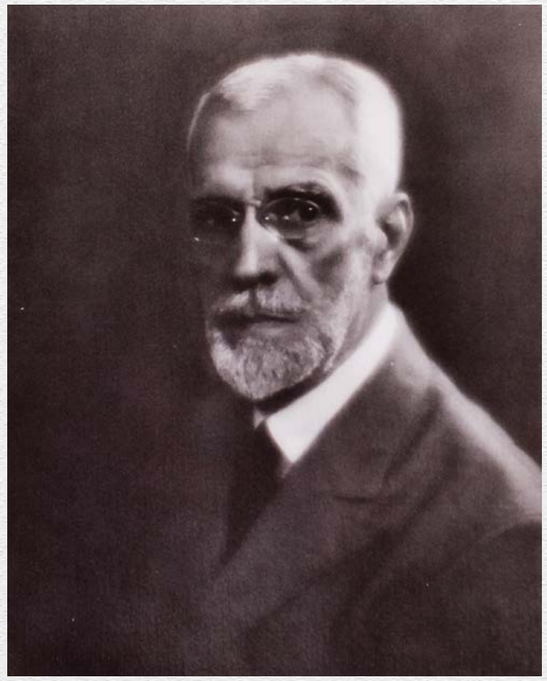
Felix Pardo de Tavera was the least known of the illustrious Pardo de Taveras. His brother, Dr. Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, was a renowned physician, scholar, writer, and politician, while Dr. Mita Pardo de Tavera, daughter of Trinidad's granddaughter, was a prominent pulmonologist,writer, socio-civic leader, community health worker, and government official. He was also the brother-in-law of the great painter, Juan Luna, husband of his sister, the tragic Paz Pardo de Tavera.

Felix Victor Francisco Domingo Pardo de Tavera y Gorricho was born in Manila on 28 July 1859 to Don Felix Pardo de Tavera and the former Juliana Gorricho. Don Felix, Sr. was a lawyer and politician whose Pardo ancestors originated from Tavira, Portugal and counted among their ancestors, Juan Pardo de Tavera, who carried the title, Marquis de Magahon, and Juan Pardo de Tavera, VI, the Archbishop of Toledo and the Grand Inquisitor of Spain during the reign of King Carlos I.

In 1825, Don Felix, Sr.'s father, Julian Pardo de Tavera sailed to Manila after his marriage to Juana Maria Gomez and settled in Intramuros, Manila where the couple lived in a house built by Juliana's parents, Don Jose Damaso Gorricho and his wife, the Ciriaca , at 51 Cabildo Street where they raised their three children, Felix, Joaquin, and Carmen. Don Jose was a quartermaster of the Spanish army who married Dona Ciriaca Santos of Imus, Cavite. Her marriage to a Spanish army man paved the way for the enterprising Ciriaca to supply *zacate* or grass as horse feed for the Spanish cavalry. As a *zacatera*, Dona Ciriaca built a fortune which she used to expand her family's landholdings from Cavite to Intramuros to Escolta. But the family's fortune lay not only in these landholdings. Don Jose was also into banking and manufacturing and was credited with initiating some of the Philippines' industries.

At the age of five, Felix lost his father when the 33 year-old Felix, Sr., then a prominent lawyer, perished during the massive 1863 earthquake while hearing the Corpus Christi mass with his wife at the Manila Cathedral. Felix *hijo*'s uncle, Joaquin, then a rising lawyer, stepped in as surrogate father to his brother's young family and raised them as his own.

Felix *hijo* had his early lessons in art at the *Academia de Dibujo y Pintura* (later renamed as the *Escuela Superior de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado* before it was renamed and headed by Rafael Enriquez as the *Escuela de Bellas* Artes and absorbed by the University of the Philippines as the U.P.



ABOVE: Felix Pardo de Tavera © Triumph and Tragedy: The Life and Works of Félix Pardo de Tavera

School of Fine Arts), which was conveniently located at the ground floor of their home. Felix was under the tutelage of the painter, Felipe Baldomero G. Roxas, stepbrother of the first European-trained Filipino architect, Felix Roxas.
Another tragedy befell the Pardo de Tavera family when an order for the arrest of the family's *padre de familia*, Don Joaquin, was announced on 15 February 1872. The mutiny of a group of soldiers in Cavite provided then Spanish Governor General Rafael Izquierdo with a pretext to move against the liberals. Since Don Joaquin took the lead in demanding reforms, his stance was taken as rebelliousness and he and several of his colleagues were charged with "complicity in the crime of proclaiming the establishment of a new republic." Three priests, Frs. Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora, were sentenced to die by *garrote* and were executed in Bagumbayan, Manila on 17 February 1872.

Don Joaquin was sentenced to four years imprisonment and was exiled, accompanied by his wife, Dona Gertrudis, leaving on board the *Flores de Maria* to the Mariana Islands on April, 1872.

On 13 January 1875, almost three years after their exile, news arrived that the Filipino *deportados* had been pardoned and Don Joaquin's fellow *reformador*, Don Maximo Paterno, chartered the merchant steamer, *Legazpi*, to take them to Hong Kong enroute to Europe. Don Joaquin and Dona Gertrudis, chose to reside in Paris and soon after, sent for their eldest nephew, Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, and later Dona Juliana, Felix and Paz to live with them in Paris. Don Joaquin's decision to send for his brother's family was perhaps to shield them from the scorn and cruelties that may be inflicted on them by spiteful *peninsulares*. And Paris was then the center of liberal thoughts, education, culture, and the arts where the intellectual and artistic Pardo de Taveras had the freedom to express themselves and gather together with their like-minded countrymen.

Dona Juliana's homes in Avenue Wagram and Villa Dupont in Paris became salons for young intellectuals, artists, and writers. Famed for her delectable Filipino cuisine, Dona Juliana opened her doors to a group of young, idealistic *ilustrados* from the Philippines, most of whom were friends of her sons, Trinidad and Felix. Among them were intellectuals such as Jose Rizal, Graciano Lopez Jaena, Pedro Paterno, Maximino Paterno, Baldomero Roxas, Jose Albert, and Antonio Luna, and artists such as Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo and Juan Luna, On 8 December 1886, Paz, the only sister of Trinidad' and Felix, married their artist friend, Juan Luna, who soon after set up his studio at Dona Juliana's home at Villa Dupont in Paris.

Having completed his medical studies at the *Universite de Paris* and constantly surrounded by the artistic works of his brother-in-law, Juan Luna, Felix grew inclined to give in to his artistic bent. While practicing medicine and unable to take up full-time art studies at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris, Felix enrolled at the Academie Julian and received training from two of France's most-esteemed Academic painters, Tony Robert-Fleury and William-Adolphe Bouguereau.

Perhaps, early on, Felix realized that he could never equal the works of his brother-in-law, Juan Luna, who at the time was already gaining much acclaim for his works, most notable of which was *Spoliarium*, which had won for him a gold medal at the *Exposicion Nacional de Bellas Artes* in Madrid in 1884.

Felix concentrated instead on sculpture, training with the French master sculptor, Auguste Rodin, and in 1892, obtained a scholarship which allowed him to pursue further art studies in Madrid under Mariano Benlliure, one of Spain's most esteemed sculptors and a good friend of his brother-in-law, Juan Luna, from their student days at the *Real Academia de Espana* in Rome. Mariano, together with his brothers, Juan Antonio and Jose, were among the frequent visitors at Villa Dupont where they savored Dona Juliana's Filipino

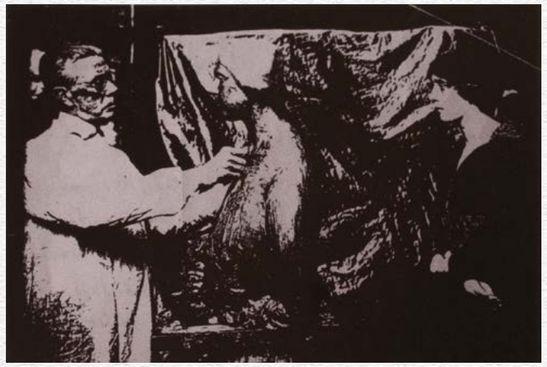
Felix Pardo de Tavera (1859 - 1932)

Cascando Nueces (Cracking Nuts)
ca.1890
bronze and granite
H: 6 1/4" (16 cm)
L: 4 1/4" (11 cm)
W: 6 1/4" (16 cm)

P 160,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

LITERATURE
Cariño, Jose Maria A. *Triumph and Tragedy: The Life and Works of Félix Pardo de Tavera.* Pasay City: Foreign Service Institute, 2022. Colored photographs and title on pages 160-161.



ABOVE: Felix working on a sculpture wit model Maria Elena Verasoro de Cadre © Triumph and Tragedy: The Life and Works of Félix Pardo de Tavera

cuisine while at the same time forging friendships with the Pardo de Tavera brothers and their *ilustrado* friends.

Under the tutelage of Mariano Benlliure, Felix's style was said to have adopted "the characteristics of spontaneity and naturalism, as seen in Mariano's body of works. Mariano's sculptures display detailed naturalism coupled with impressionistic tinges," as described in Jose Ma. Carino's book, *Triumph and Tragedy* (1922).

The detailed naturalism and spontaneity described above are most evident in his small sculptures which were rendered in marble then cast in bronze and then later in brass done posthumously. To meet the demand for his small sculptures, Felix set up a foundry at the family's seaside home at Berck-sur-Mer in Northern France. Felix's most popular small bronze sculptures were *Antropofago, The Gamin, El Viejo Marinero, and C'est Mi!*

Felix's most charming works are his sculptures of children which capture their innocence, their impishness, and their mirth.

As mentioned in Ruby Paredes' essay, "The Pardo de Taveras of Manila," published in Alfred McCoy's *An Anarchy of Families,* "In 1886, in Madrid, Felix won silver medals for his works, *A Man, A Girl, and Juan Salcedo*. A description of the artistic entries to the Paris Exposition in 1889 noted that "the young Filipino D. Felix Pardo de Tavera (had created) a handsome work of art (referring to *C'est Mi)* of an exquisite taste revealing in the author a sculptural talent bordering on genius."

On 19 October 1889, Felix Pardo de Tavera married a French-Argentine woman named Inocencia Agustina Manigot y Dessein in Paris, France and set up a separate household.

After the Luna tragedy, the trial , and acquittal, Felix picked up the pieces of his life and relocated to Buenos Aires, Argentina where he resumed his medical practice as a pediatrician and was appointed as the director of the French hospital in Argentina. He also set up another foundry in Adrogue, Buenos Aires and gained even more renown as a sculptor, receiving commissions for monuments, art exhibits, and busts of prominent personalities.

Felix also did a bust of his good friend, Jose Rizal, which he kept but that fell and was unfortunately shattered. Unknown to many Felix joined the competition for the design of the Rizal monument held from 1905-1907 which was initially won by the Italian sculptor, Carlos Nicoli of Carrara, Italy, for his scaled plaster model entitled, *Al Martir de Bagumbayan*. However, he failed to show up at the designated time to sign the contract. The contract was then awarded to the second placer, the Swiss sculptor, Richard Kissling for his *Motto Stella* (Guiding Star). Felix's design, which was deemed too elaborate and expensive, was rendered by Paete carver, Luis Ac-ac, and can be seen in Carino's book, *Triumph & Tragedy*.

Felix and his family had a good life in Buenos Aires. As Felix advanced in years, he moved to the seaside resort town of Biarritz. He passed away in Paris, France on 12 November 1932. He was laid to rest at the family mausoleum at Pere-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, France.

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Paredes, Ruby R. "The Ilustrado Legacy: The Pardo de Taveras of Manila," An *Anarchy of Families, State and Family in the Philippines*. Edited by Alfred W. McCoy. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994.

Trota Jose, Regalado. "Felipe Roxas: The Fine Art of Living Well," *1030 R. Hidalgo, Legacy in Art*. Edited by Antonio S. Araneta. Metro Manila: MARA, Inc., 1986.

The Innocent Delights of Felix Pardo de Tavera's Boy Hero



Public Turmoil and Private Sorrows

H.R. Ocampo's Rare Wartime Works Painted in Bilibid Prison

by ADRIAN MARANAN

H.R. Ocampo as a Social Realist Writer

The formation of the avant-garde writers group, known as the Veronicans, in the early 1930s would become a significant turning point in Hernando Ocampo's career. His association with the group, which he co-founded and consisted of thirteen modernist writers, including Francisco Arcellana, Angel G. de Jesus, Estrella Alfon, and N.V.M. Gonzales, resulted in people-centered short stories, such as 1938's "Bakya" and 1937's "Rice and Bullets," solidifying his status as a leading social realist writer. Both stories reference the plight of the Filipino peasant under American colonialism: the Philippines becoming import-dependent and export-oriented: rice production, the staple food, was intentionally downsized to up the "cash crops" (tobacco, hemp for the cordage and shipping industries, coconut for the soap and margarine industries, and sugar for the food and beverages industries); building factories and refineries to stimulate their production and thus, satisfying the American economy and its global market interests and further enriching the local landowners, while resulting in heightened inequality for the peasant due to low wages; colonial policies that tied the Philippines as a seller of cheap raw materials while higher prices for imported manufactured goods are imposed, leaving the country in the clutches of the industrialized west led by America and stunting the Philippines' industrial growth for a self-supporting nation.

Ocampo's stories were published at a time when the Filipino peasant movement had been consolidating its strength, primarily through the Sakdalista Movement and the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, which both aimed for complete independence and the dismantling of the landlord-tenant relations, in which the latter was subjected to high land rent and cheap labor. As a writer, journalist, and a worker himself (At a tender age, Ocampo had to work odd jobs to support the family, from being a bootblack, a newsboy, to buying and then reselling tranvia tickets, and being a cashier at the Maypajo cabaret in Caloocan) Ocampo stood in solidarity with these people. What was most striking is that, as articulated by culture critic Jonathan Beller in his 2006 book *Acquiring Eyes*, Ocampo was allegedly a member of the socialist army Hukbalahap, as said by some painters affiliated with the movement, although this is "doubted by or unknown to some of his descendants."

A collaborator by day, an intelligence spy at large

When the war broke out, Ocampo navigated the difficult terrain of "collaborating" with the enemy, all the while upholding his nationalist principles. On the one hand, he was a censor, chief scriptwriter, and assistant director of stage plays at the Capitol, Lyric, and Avenue theaters. But in reality, he was an intelligence spy planted by Col. Yay Panlilio of the Markings Guerrillas on *Hodobu*, the Japanese Army's propaganda corps, together with fellow writers Salvador P. Lopez (his colleague at the C, where Ocampo worked just before the war), Manuel Arguilla (his first mentor in creative writing at the Valenzuela School of Journalism in the early '30s), Narciso Reyes, and Montano Nazario. On one occasion that Angel de Jesus recalled in his book on Ocampo, the artist saved Panlilio's life by informing her of her impending arrest by the Kempeitai due to a script written by Panlilio for the sole legal radio station at the time, PIM *(Putang Ina ang Makinig)*, that was "really a code revealing locations of Japanese gun emplacements."



ABOVE: Ocampo working on an early oil painting in his home studio in 1949, four years after his release from prison. © *H.R. Ocampo: The Artist as Filipino by Angel G. de Jesus*

Ocampo stopped painting during the war, propelled by the urgency to support two families. One was his legal family—his first wife, Irene (whom he married in 1931), and their children, Dante, Beatriz, and Norma. The other was borne out of infidelity, when Ocampo was Executive Secretary of the National Paper Mills, Inc. in 1935. He had an illicit affair with a fellow writer known only as "Rosa," and their liaison bore a daughter named Lorena. Having two families to feed and parents and siblings to support, Ocampo navigated through financial difficulties, all the while consumed by emotional guilt.

It was also during the war that Ocampo had become aware, as de Jesus wrote, "that the Philippines was merely a pawn in a fight between giants (the US and Japan). It was a subject often discussed by them in meetings far from the prying eyes of the Japanese and their spies."

These clandestine meetings would be suppressed in August 1944 with the arrest of Arguilla, with whom the Japanese discovered guerrilla propaganda material in his locked drawer in the *Hodobu* office. Ocampo would become implicated and imprisoned overnight at Fort Santiago. Sadly, Arguilla was executed while Ocampo, freed. But this was a harbinger of more torturous events to come.

Ocampo's imprisonment at the Bilibid

Although he managed to slip away from the prying eyes of the Japanese without ever betraying his comrades in the guerrilla movement, Ocampo was imprisoned at the Bilibid—accused by someone he thought was a friend—in the days immediately preceding the Liberation of Manila. This unfortunate moment in Ocampo's life was summed up by de Jesus.

"The Liberation of Manila caught Nanding, Irene, and their family in Maypajo...None of them was injured or killed during the fighting. Ironically, instead of being liberated, Nanding, in February 1945, was detained in Muntinlupa for eight and a half months by the American Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC)."

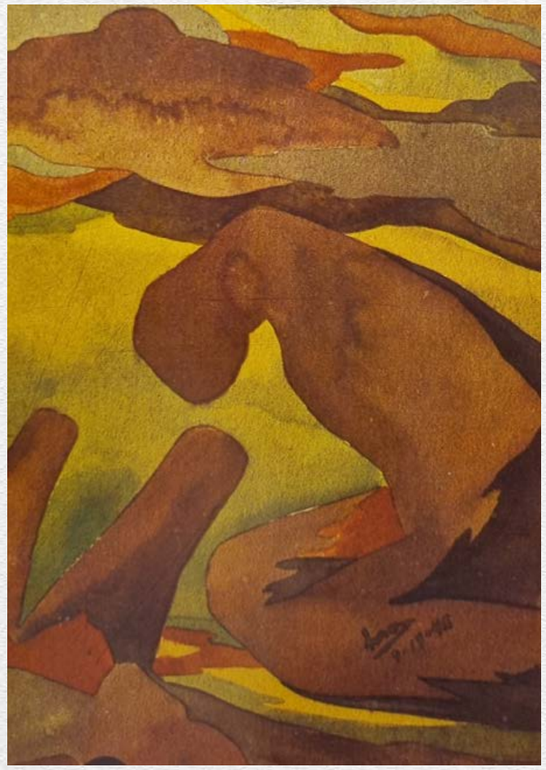
De Jesus continued: "The basis for his arrest was two affidavits. During the Occupation, he had innocently asked a friend where a common friend could be located. It happened that the one he sought was illustrating for *Freedom*, an underground paper. On Liberation, the ["friend" to whom he asked] filed an affidavit charging him with being a spy for the Japanese. The other affidavit was submitted by a movie actress' boyfriend, who was jealous of Nanding because he had seen him kissing his lady love, a habit Nanding has of greeting women friends."

Ocampo was incarcerated and put under Prisoner Brigade Number 4, together with Victorio Edades, who was also arrested for collaboration charges, particularly for being an artist for the Japanese propaganda machine KALIBAPI, and fellow nationalist writer Aurelio Alvero, who would be indicted for treason for his role in organizing the Makapili. Ocampo sketched the Bilibid life, producing drawings of alleged collaborators constantly on surveillance and only wearing battered clothing; the barbed wire separating them from the "liberated" world of their families and friends; and the solitary loneliness only tempered by playing dama, Alvero giving lectures, smoking cigarettes won from playing blackjack, poignant evening prayers, and, for Ocampo, painting.

While still in prison on 13 May 1945, Ocampo learnt of the death of his wife, Irene. Drowned in overwhelming depression, Ocampo sketched a self-portrait, depicting himself in agonizing pain, helplessly clinging to the iron bars for the precious time and life lost to war. Ocampo also sketched phantom-like figures narrating his mournful return to Maypajo to attend his wife's funeral under a temporary pass given by the army. These sketches are now in the Paulino and Hetty Que collection.



ABOVE: The dapper Ocampo in his prime. © *H.R. Ocampo: The Artist as Filipino by Angel G. de Jesus*



ABOVE: A watercolor by Ocampo he painted in prison, showing his crude experimentation with color harmony. © *H.R. Ocampo: The Artist as Filipino by Angel G. de Jesus*

Ocampo's rare, wartime oil paintings emerge

With so much to endure in prison, Ocampo turned to painting for temporary solace and cathartic release. These



ABOVE: Ocampo's drawings during his incarceration at the Bilibid in Muntinlupa from February 1945 to October 1945. These sketches now form part of the regal Paulino and Hetty Que collection. © *The Real HR Ocampo (From the Paulino Que Collection)*

five petite paintings are rare oil works Ocampo produced during his incarceration, as many of the works he made during this time consisted of drawings and watercolors that show his ongoing experimentation with colors that time. Ocampo's prison works in oil were painted on canvas strips torn from military cots. However, these five works are an exception as these were painted on wood panels likely salvaged from the debris. Each painting is inscribed at the back with its respective titles, a practice that Ocampo maintained until his very last works.

Ocampo's best friend, Cesar Legaspi, wrote of his compadre's Bilibid ordeal in his eager introduction to Ocampo's 1991 CCP book. "It was shocking to hear that at Liberation, he had been arrested and was imprisoned at Muntinglupa. But he was not in any way defeated by the experience because he now experimented while in prison. Mostly in colors. Some of the experiments he worked out in his head, others on paper, and some on narrow canvas strips.

"The results of all this experimentation became immediately obvious upon his release. Whereas his colors before were crude, lurid, acrid, they were now well-integrated, rich, vibrant, alive, and harmonious," Legaspi concluded.

These five works at hand were acquired from the inmate Ocampo by Pvt. Arnold I. Margulis, who would bring these paintings back home to San Diego after the war, causing "a minor critical art furor," according to de Jesus. One can see in these paintings Ocampo's raw experimentation in synthesizing colors; however, they appear jarring, cartoonish, and vividly harsh and saturated, almost eliminating the emotional sensitivity that is salvaged by his surrealistic, contextually evocative rendition of faceless figures. But for Ocampo, intent ultimately triumphs over form, and the agitating emotions of both the personal and the social eventually surface.

These surrealistic works fall squarely at the tail end of Ocampo's "Proletarian Period" (1934-1945), the second stage of Ocampo's artistic evolution, in which he painted pictures of poverty-stricken humanity. Two of the paintings—*The Plower* and *Pounding Rice at Twilight* focus on the plight of the peasants and can be seen as images inspired by Ocampo's "Rice and Bullets," which narrates the story of Tura (representing the hungry peasants), a family man who was killed by the constabulary in a peasants' protest against Chinese merchants hoarding rice in their warehouses, a manifestation of capitalized agriculture in which peasants labor not for the sustenance of the community but only for a few.

Madonna of the Slums captures urban scenarios predominant in Ocampo's stories and is particularly evocative of "Bakya," in which a nursing mother (Aling Sebya) and her other little children live in shabby conditions, all the while waiting for the head of the family (Tonyo) working in a factory under the throes of a major societal crisis and frustrating contradictions—whether to join the labor strike but risk losing his job and his capacity to provide for his family's immediate everyday needs or harshly swallow the stubborn truth of his circumstances. In the story, the father is killed by the police in a workers' strike, only for his wife to discover his grim death through his bloodied bakya (wooden sandals). Ocampo's work predates Manansala's iconic 1950 painting, showing the stagnant parallelism between pre-war and post-war life.

Historically, these paintings depict the Philippine agrarian situation during the American colonial period: the colonial regime's prioritization of the export crops (which further encouraged landlordism) over the staple crop, i.e. rice, that, in perennial periods of shortages due to increasing population, the latter was to be cheaply imported, further affecting local production. Farmers, the majority of whom are sharecroppers or tenants who lack capital and could not pay fixed land rents, were even burdened by sharing their harvest with their landlords on a 50-50 basis. These tenants were further exploited by the landlord's usurious rates of interest (50% to 100%) from the palay and farming equipment rented. Whenever the farmers borrowed extra money, they had to repay it in additional cavans of palay, damningly drowning them in debt while benefiting the landlord who would sell these at much higher prices just before the next harvest season.

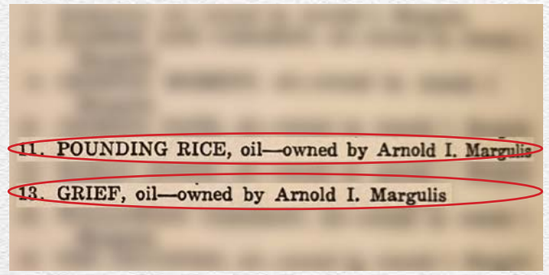
During the Great Depression in the Philippines in the 1930s, prices of export crops dropped as American markets crashed and demand decreased, spilling over to soaring rates of urban unemployment and wage cuts as businesses failed. This prompted many in the cities to migrate to the countryside and therefore, increasing the number of agricultural laborers in an already neglected rice sector (rice production stagnated and was kept backward, scientifically and technologically) while local demand for the staple food further increased. Rice was hoarded and sold at exorbitant prices by capitalists and Chinese merchants, creating a widespread rice crisis in 1935 that had initially been spurred by the colonial regime's historical neglect of the rice sector and the monopolization of rice stocks by landlords and merchants. The crisis climaxed in sweeping raids of granaries and labor strikes in both the cities and the countryside, manifesting the frailty of a country whose fate is made inextricably tied to the interests of its colonial master.

As seen especially on *The Plower*, the overall crimson color palette evokes the climax of "Rice and Bullets," when Tura was shot by the police while carrying a sackful of rice he obtained after the hungry protestors forcefully entered the warehouse. Crimson becomes a metaphor for blood offered in and for struggle, the long and winding path towards self-determination and inclusive progress. The faceless figures in all five paintings depict a Filipino humanity stripped of its dignity, an allegory for the masses exhausted by capitalist exploitation and worn out by imperialist rivalries in their bloody fight to bleed dry the natural and human wealth of the nation.

For Ocampo believed, as de Jesus recounted, that "in the future, the Philippines should try to depend on herself alone and not on other countries, whose motives were not always altruistic." The two other paintings, *Grief* (depicting possibly a wife or a mother mourning the death of a fallen soldier)



ABOVE: The small oil paintings in this auction would serve as inspirations for Ocampo for his future paintings in the post-war era. Some of them served as the covers of the highly popular *This Week Magazine*, the Sunday magazine of the *Manila Chronicle*, where Ocampo served as its Editor from 1947 to 1949. © Lopez Museum and Library Archives (for the scanned covers of This Week) and *The Real HR Ocampo (From the Paulino Que Collection)* (for the 1950 painting, Mother and Child)


11. POUNDING RICE, oil—owned by Arnold I. Margulis
13. GRIEF, oil—owned by Arnold I. Margulis

ABOVE: Ocampo's paintings acquired by Sgt. Arnold I. Margulis of the US Army, as it appears in the comprehensive list of Ocampo's works published in *Pamana, 13 June 1974: A Cultural Quarterly Published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines.*

and *Forced Labor* (depicting the starving physique of a worker subjected to abusive labor by the Kempeitai), portray the searing conditions of life under Japanese Imperialism.

Ocampo was released by the People's Court in October 1945, leaving his criminal record clean as he was not charged with any collaboration crimes. Nonetheless, the pain and trauma surrounding his incarceration left an almost indelible impact on him, with his paintings of the bleeding proletarian as resounding expressions and moving montages of private sorrows framed against and spiritually connected to the larger societal context. Ocampo wrote a poignant poem two months after his release, encapsulating the torment of an imperialist war: "He fled naked and in great fright. / For quietly, ever so quietly tall, / A new day was cadaverously born."

Ocampo produced some of the country's earliest social realist paintings, decades before the term was even used in formal Philippine art studies. Being an artist who realized the contradictions of the imperialist tug-of-war between two nations, Ocampo's proletarian works consistently ring true even in our contemporary times. As a writer, Ocampo shared in the belief of Salvador Lopez, that the word "is the most potent instrument known to man," a principle he carried over to his socially conscious paintings.

Hernando R. Ocampo (1911 - 1978)

a.) The Plower
signed and dated 1945 (lower left)
titled in ink (verso)
oil on wood
12 1/4" x 9 1/2" (31 cm x 24 cm)

b.) Pounding Rice at Twilight
signed and dated 1945 (lower right)
titled in ink (verso)
oil on wood
12" x 9 1/2" (30 cm x 24 cm)

c.) Madonna of the Slums
signed and dated 1945 (lower right)
titled in ink (verso)
oil on wood
12" x 9 1/2" (30 cm x 24 cm)

d.) Forced Labor
signed and dated 1945 (lower left)
titled in ink (verso)
oil on wood
12" x 9 1/2" (30 cm x 24 cm)

e.) Grief
signed and dated 1945 (lower left)
titled in pencil (verso)
oil on wood
13 1/2" x 11" (34 cm x 28 cm)

P 4,000,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist by Arnold I. Margulis, a World War II private of the US Army, during Ocampo's incarceration at the Bilibid in Muntinlupa in 1945

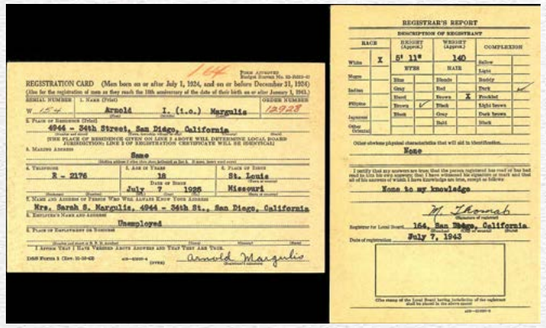
LITERATURE
Hufana, Alejandrino G., ed. *Pamana 13 June 1974: A Cultural Quarterly Published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines*. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1974. Listed on page 14 as "11. POUNDING RICE" under the artist's list of paintings.

Hufana, Alejandrino G., ed. *Pamana 13 June 1974: A Cultural Quarterly Published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines*. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1974. Listed on page 14 as "13. GRIEF" under the artist's list of paintings.

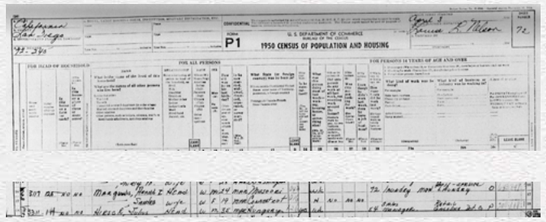
Arnold Margulis was born on July 7, 1925, in St. Louis, Missouri, to Jewish parents Saul and Sarah Margulis, both Missouri natives. The family had settled in San Diego, California by the time Arnold turned 5, as evidenced by a record from the 1930 US Census. Margulis had already completed four years of high school and was in his first year as an architecture student when he enlisted in the US Army on his 18th birthday, July 7, 1943. Like other enlisted soldiers, Margulis was to serve for the duration of World War II, plus an additional six

"I think of my paintings as my autobiography."

— H.R. OCAMPO, INTERVIEW WITH CID REYES, MAY 1972, PUBLISHED IN 'CONVERSATIONS ON PHILIPPINE ART'


REGISTRATION CARD (Men born on or after July 1, 1924, and on or before December 31, 1924)
Arnold I. (I.o.) Margulis
4044 - 34th Street, San Diego, California
Mrs. Sarah S. Margulis, 4044 - 34th St., San Diego, California
Unemployed

REGISTRAR'S REPORT
DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT
None to my knowledge
July 7, 1943


P1
1950 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

ABOVE: The enlistment card of Pvt. Arnold Margulis, showing his basic information and military registration date on July 7, 1943. © Arnold I. Margulis, familysearch.org
MIDDLE AND BOTTOM: The names of Arnold Margulis and his wife, Sarah, as listed in the US Census of 1950. The census records Margulis as a laundry man who runs his own self-service laundry business. © Arnold I. Margulis, familysearch.org

months, subject to the discretion of the US President or a law passed by Congress. Margulis would be assigned to the Philippines, and not much is known of his war exploits until the Liberation of Manila in 1945.

H.R. Ocampo and Margulis' lives would intersect at Bilibid, where the former was incarcerated due to false accusations of being a collaborator, and the latter, possibly as a wounded patient in the Bilibid infirmary or as a military staff member in charge of overseeing the inmates' daily activities. Margulis would then acquire 18 of Ocampo's oil works, painted on stripped army cots and some on wooden panels—these five paintings at hand included—and bring them home to San Diego. Margulis then returned to peaceful, civilian life and established his own self-service laundry business with his wife, Sarah Calechman, whom he had married just before his enlistment. The two would divorce in January 1973, and Margulis remarried in August 1977 to fellow Californian, Angela Clifford.

Margulis died on July 13, 2001, at the age of 76. *(Adrian Maranan)*



a.) The Plower



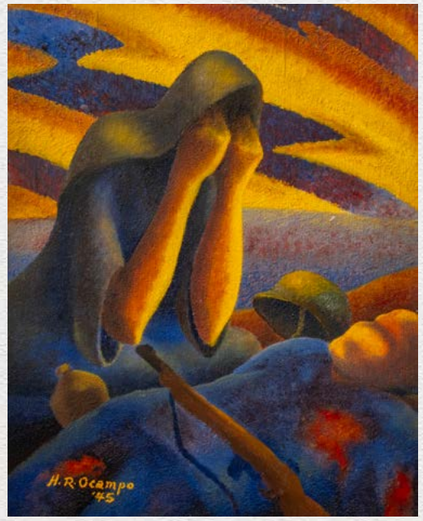
b.) Pounding Rice at Twilight



c.) Madonna of the Slums



d.) Forced Labor



e.) Grief

44

Félix Martínez y Lorenzo (1859 - c. 1916)

Barrio Scene
signed
ca. 1888
oil on mother-of-pearl
8" x 7 1/2" (20 cm x 19 cm)

P 700,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Spain

Felix Martinez y Lorenzo belonged to the brilliant generation that included Juan Luna, Felix Resurrección Hidalgo, and José Rizal—artists and intellectuals whose talents shaped the cultural consciousness of the late Spanish colonial period. A painter of dependable, quietly luminous skill, Martinez would come to be celebrated as a master of the paisaje, capturing the Philippine countryside with a sensitivity that was both affectionate and keenly observant. His works reveal a deep familiarity with the rhythms of everyday life, as if he painted not merely what he saw, but what he understood of his homeland.

His early distinction as one of the chosen illustrators for Fr. Manuel Blanco's monumental La Flora de Filipinas placed him in extraordinary company. That select circle included Agustín Sáez, head of the Manila academy; the young but prodigious Hidalgo; and beloved maestro Lorenzo Guerrero. Within that project, Martinez honed the delicacy and precision that would mark his later landscapes—an approach that blended scientific clarity with artistic tenderness.

Martinez moved fluidly within the Manila–Madrid art world. He taught at the Escuela de Artes y Oficios de Manila, participated in major exhibitions both in Spain and the Philippines, and moved through intellectual circles that connected colonial Manila to the booming cultural centers of Europe. Born into a prosperous Sta. Cruz family, he is believed to have studied at the famed Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid, a training that sharpened his draftsmanship and broadened his artistic horizons. Today, his works reside in national institutions, bearing witness to his significance within Philippine art history.

Through constant sketching and reportage, he developed a remarkable fluency: he could capture a fleeting moment with vitality, or render an entire townscape with affection and precision. *Barrio Scene* reflects this mastery. Painted on a capiz shell—already a uniquely Filipino canvas—it captures a pastoral vignette that feels both intimate and idyllic. A fisherman stands by the water's edge, casting his line; behind him rise clusters of native huts, lush plantings, and towering bamboo. The landscape unfolds with the soft glow of late afternoon light, the air thick with the quiet industry of rural life. Martinez's brush seems to linger lovingly over these details, preserving not merely a scene, but a way of life—unhurried, deeply rooted, and in harmony with the land. The delicate curvature and iridescence of the shell add a natural luminosity to the painting, giving the image a gentle radiance that transforms the modest subject into something almost jewel-like. It is a work that carries both charm and historical weight: a window into the late 19th-century countryside, and a testament to the artist's gift for elevating everyday Filipino scenes into enduring art. *(Jed Daya)*

Painted Pearl of the Orient
By Classical Master Martinez



The Fisherfolk's Tale of Prosperity by Zalameda



45

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

A Good Catch
signed (lower right)
oil on canvas
60" x 144" (152 cm x 366 cm)

P 4,000,000

PROVENANCE
Mr. Randy Young
León Gallery, *The Kingly Treasures Auction 2014*, Makati City, 29 December 2014, Lot 83

Paying homage to the Filipino rural community life and collective labor, Oscar Zalameda's magnificent art piece *The Good Catch* beautifully captures the theme of community cooperation and gratitude. Zalameda once again utilizes his mastery of fragmented shapes, vibrant colors, and rhythmic composition to tell a story of collaboration, livelihood, and joy.

Featuring a group of local fishermen and fish vendors working hand in hand to haul their bountiful catch from the sea, the left captures a scene where men pull a fishing net filled to the brim with fish, while the right consists of women carrying baskets of fresh fish on their hands or heads.

Faceless and geometric, Zalameda had perfectly caught the movements of the figures. Through the artist's overlapping forms and repeated angular strokes combined with the dominant green and blue palettes that mimic the sea and nature, the painting suggests motion and teamwork, as if the community's rhythm sang in harmony with the sea itself.

By providing a glimpse at the moment of shared success through a bountiful harvest from the sea, Zalameda's masterpiece perfectly celebrates the harmony between man and nature. Through his distinct art style, the painting became a visual ode to rural life and the resilience of the Filipino fisherfolk—the beauty of community and their shared purpose. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

46

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

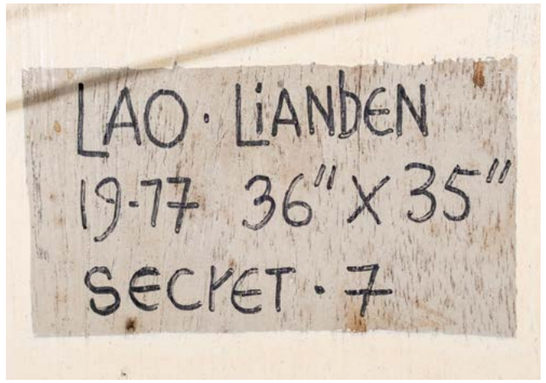
Secret 7
signed and dated 1977 (lower left)
oil on wood
36" x 35" (91 cm x 89 cm)

P 1,800,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

"Although there is no conscious effort on the part of Lao to create a particular series out of certain words, he does find himself repeating some on occasion as he finds new interpretations or physical manifestations for various words and meanings [...] There is actually so much more to Lao's artwork than meets the eye, that a complete understanding of the painting's concept almost necessitates a knowledge of the title."

—MIGUEL RAMOS, THE SUBSTANCE OF LAO LIANBEN, PHILSTAR GLOBAL, 2 FEBRUARY 2009



ABOVE: Secret 7 (verso)

The works of Lao Lianben carry within them a sense of secrecy that he reveals only to the most dedicated. Minimalist to the bone, his works are stark and sincere, the subtlest brushstrokes indicating a scar, a soot, or a reference — an indicator of the artist's immense talent.

Like many of his works, *Secret 7* takes after his self-proclaimed fascination with Zen Buddhism. Though not a practitioner himself, he is nevertheless inspired by the mysticism and principles it holds.

"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," he said in his 2023 interview with Lifestyle INQ.

One of the most recurring elements in Lao's canvases is an ensō. A circle drawn in one or two uninhibited brushstrokes, the *ensō* symbolizes absolute enlightenment. In the biography of the Indian philosopher and Mahayana Buddhist monk Nagarjuna, the symbol could be recognized as the true form of buddhanature: "Neither large nor small, neither wide nor narrow, neither good nor bad, neither transient nor eternal."

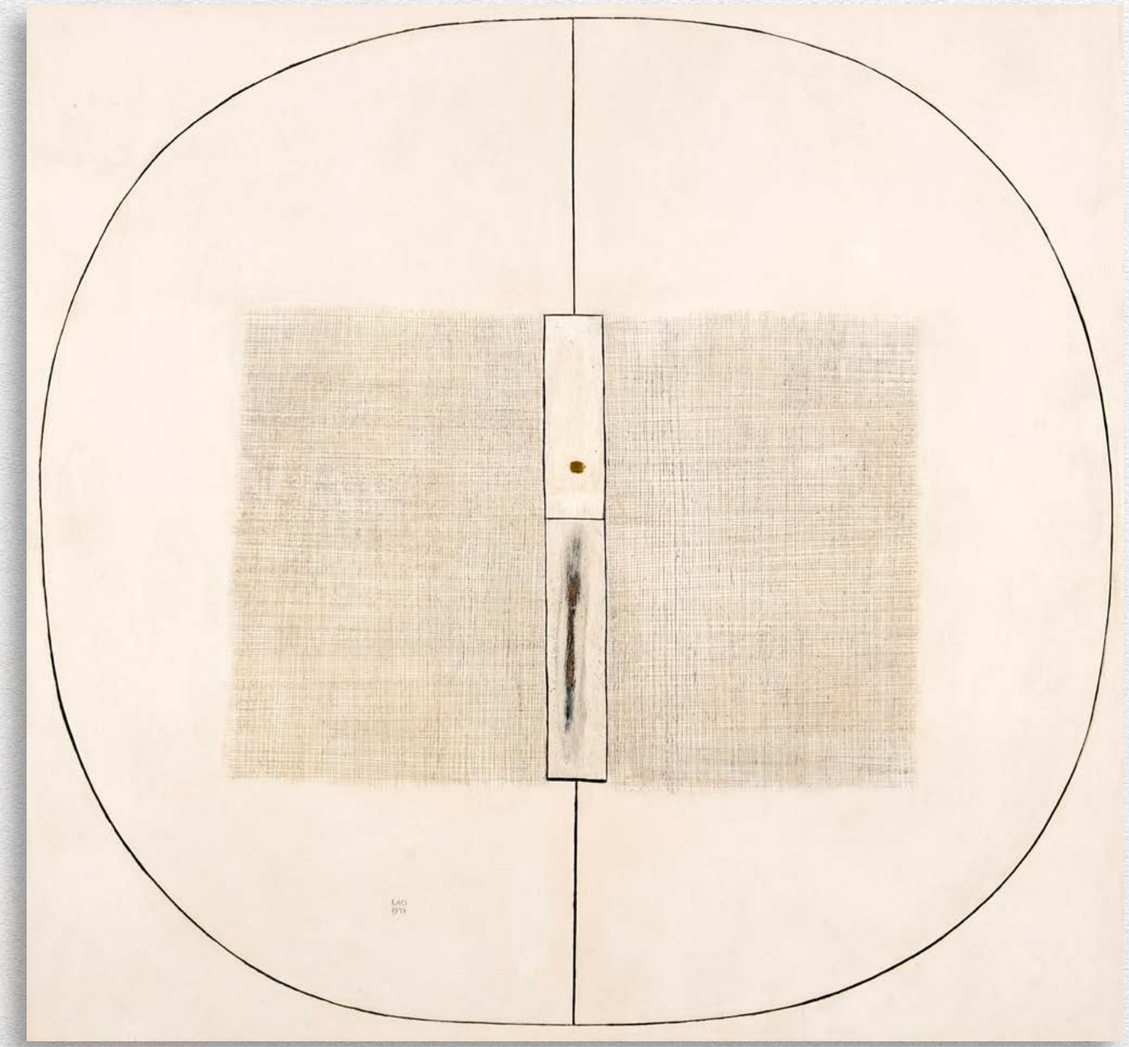
As such, this 1977 *Secret 7* could be among his earliest *ensō* works. Though there could be a possible deniability as to whether this piece is an ensō, the symbol's meanings could coincide with what this painting could be. The cyclical nature of life – whether it be from birth to death, from summer to winter, present to absence, emptiness to prosperity – is echoed in this piece, both in the unbroken stroke of the circle and the almost symmetrical elements placed at the center of the canvas.

"What is remarkable about Lao Lianben is his ability to create works that function simultaneously on several levels: aesthetic, philosophical, spiritual, critical," Hervé Lancelin wrote in his art critique 'Lao Lianben and the Poetics of Obscurity.' "He merges techniques to create an immediacy that directly evokes personal imagination, rather than an analytical reference to a particular style."

Indeed, *Secret 7* teaches its viewers to look "not with one's eyes but rather with one's whole being," as French contemporary philosopher Jean-Louis Chrétien once said. They must draw in to look at it, to willingly listen to the silence.

"To truly appreciate Lao's silence then, one has to be blessed with the patience to pay attention for a long time and the perseverance to listen for even a longer time," *Passion and Compassion: The Lao Lianben Collection of Dr. Leovino Ma. Garcia's* exhibition catalog writes. "Only then, perhaps, can one finally hear the paintings (as in Rilke's Archaic Torso of Apollo) imploring you: 'You must change your life!'" *(Hannah Valiente)*

Lao Lianben
Unlocks Serenity





47

Angelito Antonio (1939 - 2025)

Builders
signed and dated 1984 (lower right)
oil on canvas
33" x 26" (84 cm x 66 cm)

P 300,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

Angelito Antonio's piece continues to celebrate the resilience and industriousness of ordinary Filipinos. With his works often exploring Filipino identity and labor, this piece highlights the dignity of manual work and the term *'bayanihan'*. Using the illustration as a metaphor for nation-building through coordination and unity.

Created around 1984, the painting features several carpenters engaged in manual labor as they continue to construct or repair. Using wood as scaffolding and leverage to reach higher places. The illustration, together with the warm, earthy tones, visually highlights the intensity of labor and the effort that it demands, complementing the Antonio theme. Serving as a tribute to the dignity and resilience of Filipino workers, Angelito Antonio's piece further embodies the collaborative struggle and effort of *Bayanihan*—using Filipino workers as the central figures for the nation's growth. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



48

Macario Vitalis (1898 - 1990)

Nativity Scene
signed and dated 1959 (lower right)
oil on canvas
25 1/2" x 32" (65 cm x 81 cm)

P 700,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Paris

Macario Vitalis' 1959 artwork, entitled *Nativity Scene,* transforms a universally recognized Christian theme through modernist abstraction. Fusing Cubism and Expressionism to his craft, the result is a magnificent art piece that reinterprets traditional themes with a distinct hint of personal and cultural sensibility.

Painted through the color palettes of warm ochres, deep maroons, soft blues, and muted greens, the composition features a significant scene from Christianity, namely the holy birth of Jesus Christ. At the center left is Mary cradling the infant while surrounded by figures of adoration—possibly the shepherds or wise men.

The yellow-orange hue on the background further hint a sense of divine illumination through the fragmented holy scene, making it more sacred despite the fragmented image. The interplay of light and form captures the mystery of divine incarnation more than the literal event.

Such painting further exemplifies Vitalis' mastery of expressive abstraction. By transforming a sacred story into a visual meditation on light, form, and faith, he thereby bridges the gap between modernism and tradition. Its fragmented beauty and vivid color harmonies reflect the timeless wonder of the birth of Christ—suggesting that the divine can be felt beyond abstraction, color, and composition rather than an iconographic precision. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

49

Guillermo Tolentino (1890 - 1976)

Bronze Horse
signed and dated 1935 (lower right)
bronze
with base
H: 21" (53 cm)
L: 6 3/4" (17 cm)
W: 20" (51 cm)

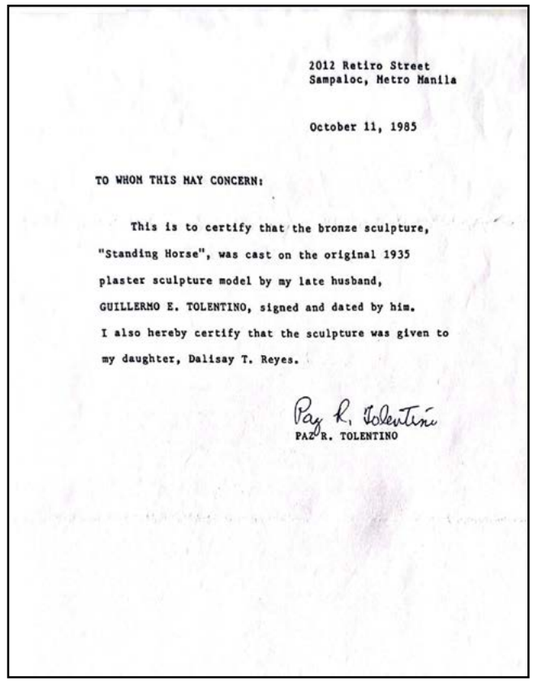
without base
H: 18" (46 cm)
L: 5 1/2" (14 cm)
W: 20" (51 cm)

P 500,000

PROVENANCE
Estate of the artist

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1985 with an absolute deed of sale signed by Dalisay Tolentino Reyes

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Paz R. Tolentino, artist's wife, dated 1985, confirming the authenticity of the piece



2012 Retiro Street
Sampaloc, Metro Manila

October 11, 1985

TO WHOM THIS MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that the bronze sculpture, "Standing Horse", was cast on the original 1935 plaster sculpture model by my late husband, GUILLERMO E. TOLENTINO, signed and dated by him. I also hereby certify that the sculpture was given to my daughter, Dalisay T. Reyes.

Paz R. Tolentino
PAZ R. TOLENTINO

An artist whose practice made him one of the most notable figures of the Philippine Art Scene, becoming a National Artist for Sculpture, Guillermo Tolentino continues to showcase his mastery of his craft through his sculptural pieces.

Made with anatomical precision, this artwork demonstrates his mastery of anatomical form and symbolic depth, blending classical technique with Filipino sensibilities, much like his popular monument masterpieces.

Sculpted around a decade after the Second World War, this piece took the perfect form of a naturalistic, anatomically correct horse. The position of how the front leg was lifted and the head bowed downward evokes humility and serenity.

Such traits completely balance and complement the primary allegorical meaning of horses: the human virtues of nobility, endurance, strength, freedom, and loyalty. Completely embodying Tolentino's sensitivity to motion and stillness—bridging the classical idealism and emotional realism into one single masterpiece.

It provides the strong theme of Filipino Strength tempered by humility, contemplation, and grace, given form by the hand that mastered the craft with strength, dedication, sophistication, and precision. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: Certificate of Authenticity signed by Tolentino's wife Paz R. Tolentino
BELOW: Guillermo Tolentino, at his back, is the ongoing sculpture of UP Oblation.
© University Archives Division UP Diliman Library

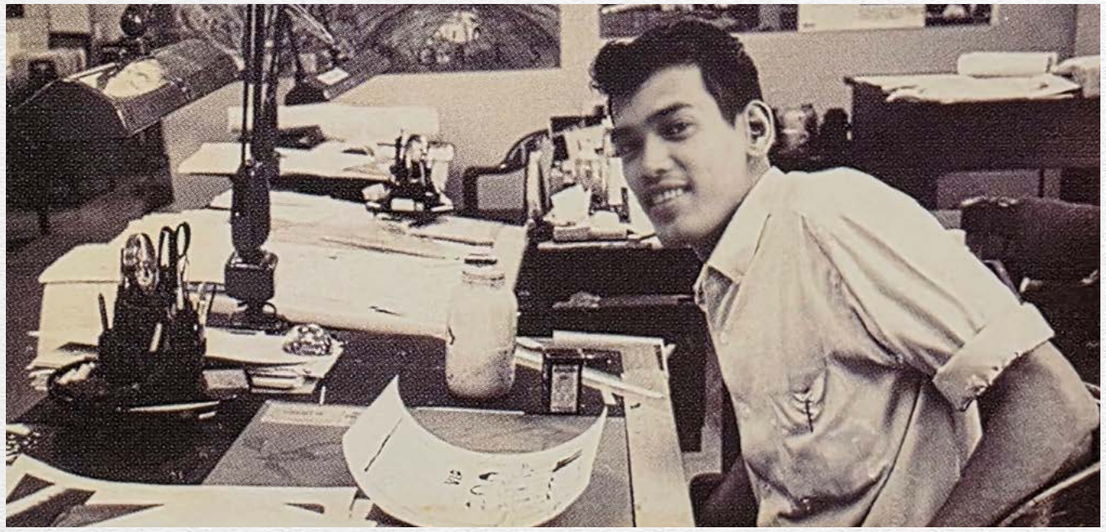
The National Artist Tolentino's Noble Steed



A Seminal Bencab Masterpiece

Marking the Birth of a Legendary Moniker

by ADRIAN MARANAN



ABOVE: A young Bencab in his USIS workdesk, ca. 1965. © *Bencab* by Krip Yuson and Cid Reyes

By the mid-1960s, Benedicto Cabrera had been providing sustenance for himself by working as an illustrator for various publications and institutions. Bencab's decision to join the workforce came after he dropped out of the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts months before he could earn his Fine Arts degree with a major in Illustration.

In 1963, Bencab quit college and landed a job at the revamped and modernized Liwayway Magazine, becoming an illustrator along with Ang Kiukok and Alfredo Roces. Bencab quit after three months and then became a layout artist for the United States Information Service (USIS) at the invitation of his brother Salvador "Bading" Cabrera, one of the key Mabini artists of the 50s and the 60s. Fortunately, Bading had a friend named Bes Nievera resigning from his position, which Bencab soon filled. Bencab's stint at the USIS was his first full-time job.

Bencab's time at the USIS would soon prove to be fortuitous. At that point in his life, he met Virgilio "Pandy" Aviado and Marciano "Mars" Galang, with whom he would forge an enduring friendship, strengthened by the arts. (Aviado and Galang would also be Bencab's companions in a three-man exhibition at the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Gallery at the UNESCO Building along Herran (now Pedro Gil) Street held from August 30 to September 14, 1965.)

Aviado and Galang were instrumental in Bencab's transition from illustration to painting. The trio would often go, as author Krip Yuson puts it in the book BENCAB, "on on-the-spot sketching and painting excursions around Manila, mostly by the seawall off Luneta, rendering boats and ships on paper and canvas, or at the Binondo district with its network of esteros or canals, to document the shantytowns that flanked both banks."

Bencab also travelled to the towns situated along the shores of Manila Bay, most notably the town of Sasmuan in Pampanga. His parents, Isabel Reyes and Democrito Cabrera, hailed from Sasmuan, a coastal town consisting of networks of interconnected patches of wetland surrounded by fishponds and crisscrossed by rivers and streams that are directly connected to Manila Bay, with the Rio Grande de Pampanga traversing along the municipality's southeastern portion. Particularly, the Sasmuan Pampanga Coastal Wetlands, located downstream of the Pasac-Guagua Watershed that drains into Manila Bay, were designated a "Ramsar site"—an internationally and critically important wetland site—in February 2021 by the "Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat."

For centuries, the Sasmuan townsfolk have been sustained by the bounties of their waters, and they are proudly the sole municipality in Pampanga wholly dependent, economically and socially, on fishing and aquaculture. Sasmuan is a wetland dotted by mangroves and teeming with a diversity of aquatic species: tilapia, bangus, sugpo, talangka, palos, balanak, alupihang dagat, blue swimming crabs, lobsters, oysters, and mussels, to name only a few. In present times, food processing, such as crab paste production, has become a source of income for many families.







LEFT AND RIGHT: Similar paintings by Bencab from the mid-1960s depicting the fishing villages of Sasmuan, Pampanga. (1) *Fishing Village*, 1965, acrylic on canvas. © Painting reproduced in the book *Bencab: Filipino Artist;* (2) *Fishing Village in Sasmuan*, 1966, acrylic on canvas, Paul McCartney Collection, London. © Painting reproduced in the book Bencab. **BELOW:** Aerial view of a fishing community in Barangay Mabuanbuan, Sasmuan, Pampanga. © https://news.iwlearn.net/the-women-of-sasmuan-sustaining-life-along-the-river

One of his earliest works of art, Bencab's *Fishing Village in Sasmuan*, was inspired by one of his visits to his hometown during the mid-1960s. Bencab's occasional travels to Sasmuan are evidenced by several paintings depicting the same subject: fishing villages brimming with stilt houses and fishponds that support and ensure the livelihood of the people.

This particular painting marks one of the very first instances in which Bencab signed his works in his now iconic signature "Bencab." In his official chronology, the artist adopted the moniker "Bencab" in 1964 "to avoid confusion with other painters named Cabrera," most notably his older brother, Bading. By this time, Bencab had also been acquainted with Manila's top literary bluebloods and cultural stalwarts, including art critic Leonidas Benesa, who inspired Bencab to join the AAP. In 1964, Bencab, together with his "Kuya Bading" and friends Edgar Soller and Bal Magallona, established Sining Gallery on Mabini Street, affiliating Bencab with the Mabini Art Movement.

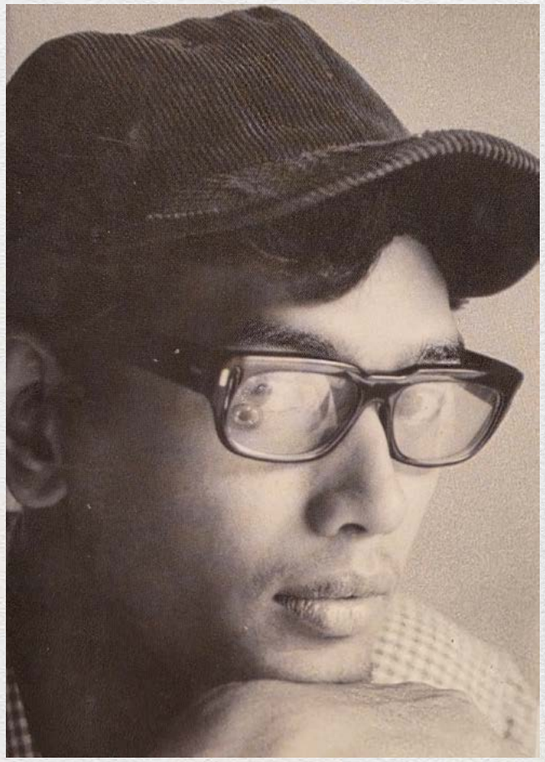
Fishing Village in Sasmuan not only offers glimpses into Bencab's artistic beginnings but also an homage to his hometown and an act of elevating the common folk and the often-neglected members of society, who would always find themselves the protagonists of Bencab's works. It should be noted that the same year he painted this work, Bencab started observing and sketching the scavenger "Sabel" from his window in his Bambang home.

As a boy whose heritage and ancestors are rooted in a community of proud and zealous fisherfolk and who grew up in the lower middle-class district of Santa Cruz, Manila, *Fishing Village in Sasmuan* is a testament to Bencab being both an "Anak Sasmuan" (Son of Sasmuan) and "A Son of the People."

Benedicto Cabrera (b.1942)
Fishing Village in Sasmuan
signed and dated 1964 (lower left)
oil on canvas
24" x 36 1/2" (61 cm x 93 cm)

P 1,700,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired in the 1960s from an A. Mabini Street gallery in Ermita, Manila



ABOVE: The young Bencab photographed by Romy Vitug. © Reproduced in the book *Bencab: Filipino Artist*

One of the First Paintings Signed with the Iconic "BENCAB"

by ADRIAN MARANAN





51

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

La Familia
signed and dated 1999
carved glass
H: 12 1/4" (31 cm)
W: 11 3/4" (30 cm)
L: 7 3/4" (20 cm)

P 700,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, USA

Glass sculptures, regardless of their size, are a sight to behold. However, behind these refined and elegant art pieces is a meticulous and tedious process that demands dedication and effort. Made from a material that is both hard and brittle, creating glass sculptures requires patience and attentive handling.

Ramon Orlina, with his architectural background, boundless creativity, and diligent attitude towards his craft, has carved out a niche in Philippine art with his premier glass sculptures. *La Familia*, created in 1999, is a testament to Orlina's proficiency and disciplined craftsmanship. Peculiarly, despite the absence of actual figures, you can make out the form of a child cradled between his parents' sweet embrace in this particular piece. It embodies the Filipinos' close familial relationships and evokes memories of our childhood years, the feeling of immense protection and contentment in the comfort of our family and homes. *(Jessica Magno)*



52

Jigger Cruz (b. 1984)

Untitled
signed and dated 2014 (lower center)
oil on canvas
30" x 24" (76 cm x 61 cm)

P 800,000

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Manila

On the surface, the works of Jigger Cruz are characterized primarily by the thick squiggles of paint thrown almost haphazardly across the canvas. In crisscrossed stripes of paint, some smeared and others squeezed straight from the tube, they draw the eye and create a trail that one feels compelled to follow.

However, that is not the only narrative happening within his canvases. Almost entirely covered by an abstract paint streak is another painting, often taking after the classical style of painting, with the basic compositional elements hidden underneath intuitive strokes.

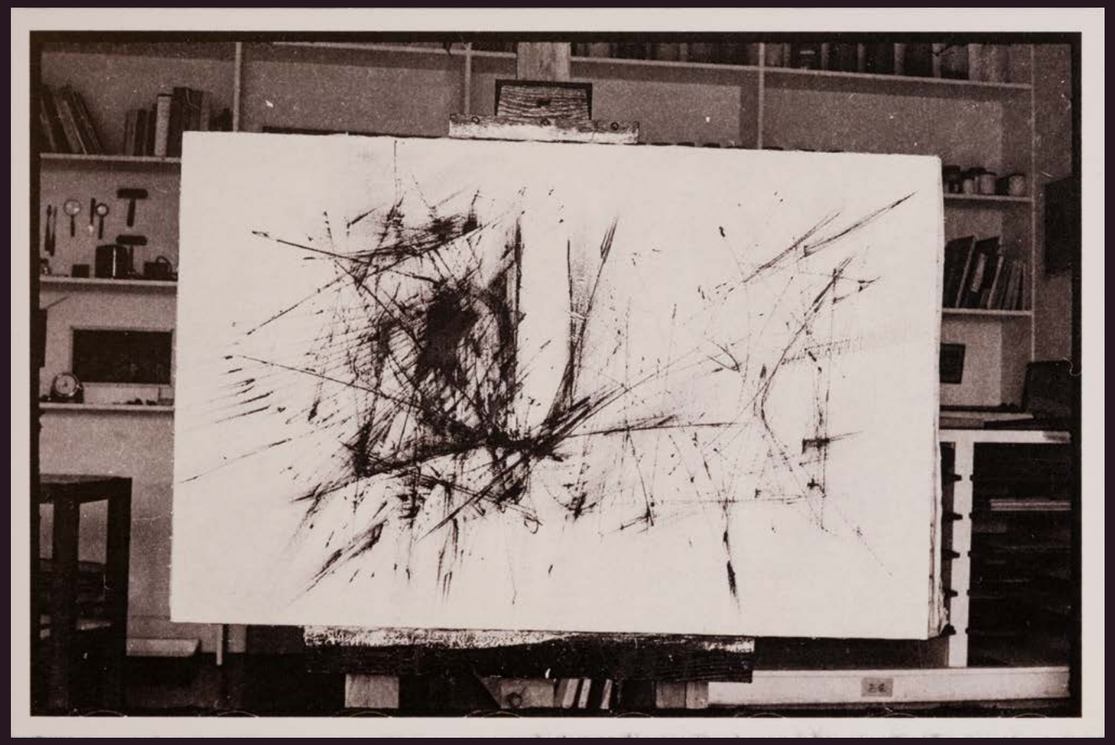
This particular work is quintessential Cruz. With its thick paint layers, the painting beneath it was almost incomprehensible, with only the soft, blurred-out colors barely visible. Still, the desecration is less destructive and more informative. What is the *above* and the *below*, and why should one be hailed more than the other?

"Cruz's mark making is therefore not random and gratuitous, but rather a challenge to its painting's neutrality, a questioning of its assumed innocence," Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay writes in *Mark from the Periphery*. Put simply, the works of Cruz elevate the voices of those from the margins, whose work is often dismissed as "true" art. It is a continuing and active question in the art world: what it considers true art and what it does not. *(Hannah Valiente)*

From Manila to Madrid

An Important Work from Zóbel's Final Philippine Exhibition

by ADRIAN MARANAN



ABOVE: *Tarraco* photographed in Fernando Zóbel's Manila studio, ca. December 1960. © León Gallery Archives



Zobel Exhibition Previewed

A PREVIEW of the Fernando Zobel one-man exhibition was held at the Luz Gallery last Friday. The affair also served as a bienvenida for a distinguished visiting American artist, Bernard Childs, who is presently on a tour of Asia. Photo shows (from left) Lee Aguinaldo, Zobel, Bernard Childs, and Robert Ebersole of the cultural section of the U.S. Embassy.



ABOVE: Zóbel with Lee Aguinaldo and Bernard Childs, his American artist-friend, at the preview of his Luz Gallery show. © Fernando Zóbel. Álbumes de prensa (1955-1957), Archivo Fernando Zóbel, Biblioteca y Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación, Fundación Juan March. **BELOW:** Fernando Zóbel at the opening of his Luz Gallery show, 14 January 1961, his last exhibition in the Philippines. © León Gallery Archives

Tarraco, a pivotal milestone in Zóbel's career

Presented in this lot is a pivotal masterpiece by Fernando Zóbel that captures a significant turning point in his life and career. Titled *Tarraco*, it is among the works showcased in Zóbel's final exhibition in the Philippines before settling in Spain for good. Held at the then-newly opened Luz Gallery, many visitors were shocked upon seeing Zóbel's stark black-and-white paintings. The Luz Gallery show was the first time that Zóbel mounted on a large scale in Manila his Serie Negra, that elusive series, painted within three years (1959 – 1962), with many now residing in museums, many others still in private collections. Zóbel had inaugurated his "black paintings" in 1959 at Madrid's Galería Biosca, his first solo exhibition in Spain, which earned critical praise from both Spanish artists and critics alike for his refined, orderly, and sensitive abstraction and powerful forms, contributing to Zóbel's decision to settle permanently in the country.

Visitors, especially members of the press, were left with more questions than answers as to why the artist known for his vibrant figurations and the pulsating quality of his spirited Saetas had suddenly abandoned the world of color. Even more puzzling was getting the answers from Zóbel himself, who, as reported by Nati Valentin, cultural writer for the Manila Times, "good-naturedly throws up his hands when asked what his new canvases mean."

The February 10, 1961, issue of the Weekly Women's Magazine noted the mixed reactions that Zóbel's exhibit drew from its visitors. The article wrote, "Startling in its originality and stark elegance, the Luz Gallery...one-man show of [Zóbel's] paintings...drew varied reactions from visitors."

Despite the confusion among its visitors, the exhibition was nonetheless a remarkable success; it was Zóbel's most successful show up to that point.

Newspapers noted its near sold-out feat, with half of the exhibit snapped up by Manila's who's who in just its first week, among them Arch. Ariston Nakpil, Leandro Locsin, Carlos Arguelles, Aurelio Montinola, Jr., and Col. Andres Soriano. The preview of the exhibition was also attended by noted personalities, including Lee Aguinaldo, Robert Ebersole of the US Embassy's cultural section, Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, and Oscar Lopez. Bernard Childs, the American painter and printmaker, a pioneer in engraving metal plates using industrial tools and Zóbel's dear friend, also visited the exhibition, attracting media attention.

The exhibit had become the talk of Manila's art circle by the time it concluded its run, with *The Manila Times* writing, "People are talking about...the Zóbel exhibit at the Luz Gallery, which came to a close yesterday and remarking on how wonderfully knowledgeable Fernando Zóbel is with modern painting and on how persuasive are his interpretations with the growing breed of art lovers in this city." The show's curator, Eric Torres, Ateneo Art Gallery's founding director, lauded Zóbel's transition to black and white, writing in *The Sunday Times Magazine* that "With this style, he achieved a measure of international recognition last June when three of his paintings were included in an important show of contemporary Spanish art at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City, and in another similar show earlier in 1959, at the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro."

The inspiration behind the painting

Tarraco is the old name of the modern-day city of Tarragona in Catalonia, Spain. The ancient Roman city of Tarraco, the oldest Roman settlement on the Iberian Peninsula, was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000 as an exemplar of Roman urban planning.

Zóbel finished the painting on December 17, 1960. Juan Manuel Bonet noted in his essay "Fernando Zóbel: Revisited" that from 1960 to 1962, Zóbel titled his works inspired by the towns and localities of Spain. Thus, the title alludes to Zóbel's longing for Spanish soil at a time when he was suffering from the climactic throes of a full-blown identity crisis: whether to continue living the business life he had inherited or pursue painting as his





ABOVE: *Athos*, a 1960 oil painting by Gerardo Rueda, whose monochromatic, painterly works that veered away from the political sentiments of the El Paso Group served as a major influence on Zóbel's transition to black-and-white. © Fundacion Juan March **BELOW:** Zóbel's first studio in Madrid, which he shared with Geraro Rueda. © Fernando Zóbel Archive

lifeblood. He had spiraled into depression, burdened by corporate responsibilities, teaching at the Ateneo, and having very little time to paint.

In the same month as this work, Zóbel would resolve this existential dilemma by deciding to live permanently in Spain, drawing the curtain on his life as an Ayala business heir.

Zóbel, the restless artist

Zóbel was a soul both joyful and restless: insatiable in learning, tireless in discovering and gathering influences. Having lived in a war-torn country with derelict state support in the cultural arena, Zóbel found the Philippines underwhelming for his intellectual and creative growth. In 1955, when he went to Madrid on a three-month European tour, Zóbel encountered Spanish abstraction, primarily through Gerardo Rueda, who would become his friend, with whom he would share an apartment they would fill with paintings by their artist friends.

Also in 1955, Zóbel serendipitously discovered the modest bookstore-cum-gallery of Fernando Fe in Puerta del Sol in Madrid, where the young Spanish abstractionists—Antonio Saura, Rafael Canogar, Guillermo Delgado, Luis Feito, Antonio Lorenzo, Antoni Tàpies, Eduardo Chilida,



ABOVE: Zóbel and Manolo Millares in 1963 at Zóbel's exhibition of drawings at Madrid's Fortuny Gallery. © Fernando Zóbel Archive

and Rueda himself, would congregate (It was Spain's own avant-garde space, much like the Philippine Art Gallery). There, the group held a small show, whose poster that read "Exhibition on Spanish Abstraction" attracted Zóbel. Going up the gallery, Zóbel instantly became enamored with their works, acknowledging "the extraordinary level of quality in this generation that was more or less my own.." He purchased one of Delgado's paintings and praised his work as "uncompromisingly abstract...a process completely under control," establishing affinity with the young painter as Zóbel also practiced sketching numerous times before arriving at the final painting, as evidenced by his numerous extant sketchbooks.

Upon returning to Manila before the year ended, Zóbel would constantly keep in touch with his newfound friends. He would completely abandon figuration and experiment further with abstraction, identifying himself with this generation of avant-garde Spanish abstractionists.

Zóbel's sojourn in Madrid proved so impactful that by October 1958, he had set up his first apartment in the city at 98 Calle Velázquez. It doubled as a studio he shared with Rueda, describing it as "a point of departure."

Spanish abstraction under the Franco dictatorship

The Spanish *informalistas* utilized the style as a protest against Francisco Franco's regime, particularly on the stagnation of the country's culture. In the decades prior, the Franco dictatorship's cultural policy centered on Spanish nationalism influenced by national Catholicism, militarism, and conservatism. It did not tolerate any excursions outside the accepted "Spanish tradition."

In the post-war years, the Franco regime used the avant-garde to present a "liberal" face to the international



ABOVE: Samples of the works of El Paso, which influenced Zóbel's transition to black and white. Clockwise, from top to bottom. Antonio Saura, *Crucifixión*, 1959–63, oil on canvas, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao; Manolo Millares, *Cuadro 84*, 1959, oil on burlap, Galeria Mayoral, Barcelona; Manuel Rivera, *Metamorfosis (Presencia)*, 1960, metallic web, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Missouri; Luis Feito, *No. 175*, 1960, oil with sand and pebbles on canvas, Guggenheim Museum, New York; Rafael Canogar, *Jaque*, 1959, oil on canvas, Mayor Gallery, London

arena. Crippled and isolated after supporting the Axis during the war, Franco sought aid, as well as US recognition of his rule, to ensure his continued stay in power. The US then eyed Spain's strategic Mediterranean position to complete its consolidation of Western Europe, thereby encircling its communist rival, the Soviet Union. Spain would then join the prestigious São Paolo and Venice Biennales, sending young *informalistas*, such as Antoni Tàpies, to show an image of *aperturismo* or openness. But beyond this projection, the *informalistas* were neglected in their own country. Spain did not extend support and infrastructure to foster these artists in their motherland, as the national situation was still overall conservative, something Zóbel would address with the establishment of the future Cuenca Museum of Spanish Abstract Art.

El Paso, vanguards of Spanish informalism and freedom

The group El Paso (The Step) rose to prominence as vanguards of Spanish abstraction. Its founding members—Manolo Millares, Antonio Saura, Manuel Rivera, Rafael Canogar, Luis Feito, Juana Frances, and Manuel Chirino—all sojourned (and some studied) in Paris in the years preceding their formation in 1957, becoming influenced by art informel, which had become the artistic lingua franca of the post-war world, conveying the era's psychological turmoil and social uncertainty and destruction.

By forming El Paso, Millares and his colleagues openly expressed their opposition to Franco's dictatorship. Their manifesto detailed their move "towards a revolutionary practice (in which our dramatic tradition and our direct expression are present) that responds historically to a universal activity...to find the expression of a 'new reality'... towards an anti-academy, in which the spectator and the artist become aware of their social and spiritual responsibility."

The *El Paso* artists were bound by a monochromatic presentation, echoing the classical, dramatic tenebrism and sobriety of Diego Velázquez, as well as the haunting force of Goya's "Black Paintings." Furthermore, these artists looked to Joan Miro's unwavering commitment to experimentation and his stand against artistic conventions, and to the poignancy of Picasso's anti-war painting *Guernica*, connecting the continuing repression of the Franco regime with that of its violent beginnings in the bombing of Guernica in 1937 by Hitler's troops in support of Franco.

Together, the overall "roughness" and restrained quality of the El Paso's works—Canogar and Saura's violent action painting; Feito's monochromatic oil impastos and the tension achieved by mixing sand and gravel; the "free and anguished protest" of Millares' gashed burlaps stained with black, white, and red; the distraught rigidity of Rivera's wire mesh—reflected the bleak and repressive landscape of a nation subsumed under a bloody civil war and the contradictions they faced from their continuing protest against the regime and the dictatorship's propagandistic use of their avant-gardeness for its gains.

Zóbel befriends the El Paso

Zóbel came into the orbit of El Paso, and befriended its members Saura, Feito, Chirino, and Millares, buying and collecting their paintings. In 1959, Zóbel joined the El Paso and other Spanish abstractionists in the show *Negro y Blanco. Exposición homenaje a Chillida, Oteiza, Miró-Artigas, Tàpies y Palazuelo*, a tribute to the Spanish artists who were recognized in the international biennales and competitions. It was Zóbel's first show with his friends and became a pivotal moment in his life, as this was the exact moment when he identified himself with the Spanish generation of painters, a compelling reason to leave his Philippine era behind.

'I'm one of the gang. Accepted as such by the others who are, on the whole, my friends. I rejoin them at the moment of discovery, when we begin to attract attention,' Zóbel enthusiastically wrote when he

Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)
Tarraco
signed (lower left and verso), dated 1960, and inscribed "Tarraco / #369 / Dec 17/60" (verso)
dated 1960
oil on canvas
32" x 48" (81 cm x 122 cm)

P 18,000,000

PROVENANCE
Luz Gallery

LITERATURE
Torres, Emmanuel. "Calligraphy, space, black & white." *The Sunday Times Magazine*. January 29, 1961. Black-and-white illustration on page 14.

DE LA TORRE, Alfonso (Director). In collaboration with Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel. Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946-1984)-Catálogo Razonado de Pinturas de Fernando Zóbel (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid-Manila: Fundación Azcona, Fundación Juan March, Ayala Foundation and Fernando Zóbel Heirs, 2023. N° cat. 60-24, p. 200.

EXHIBITED
The Luz Gallery, *Fernando Zóbel: Exhibition of Paintings*, Manila, 14 - 31 January 1961

returned to Manila.

Zóbel's restrained palette in his *Serie Negra* was majorly influenced by his friendship with the El Paso artists. However, Zóbel's *Serie Negra* veered from the group's political commentaries by focusing on gestural meditation, akin to Oriental calligraphy, and was much closer to Rueda's painterly and lyrical abstraction.

Serie Negra, symbolizing Zóbel's own freedom

Zóbel succinctly described his black paintings as:

"Painting of light and line, of movement. Pictures of a swift, improvised execution, like Chinese and Japanese painting. Improvisation permitted by...infinite...drawings. Line; trajectory. Imprint of movement. Painting without any fuss, without anguish, without any melodramatics."

By the time the *Serie Negra* was coming to fruition, Zóbel had realized that color was beginning to serve merely aesthetic purposes. His introduction to the monochromatic works of El Paso made him discover the infinite expressionism inherent in black and white. For Zóbel, fond references to the Spanish landscape are seen in some works of the *Serie Negra*, made possible through the seemingly swift movement of black lines. In this case, Zóbel's *Tarraco* sees him "departing" from his hectic Manila corporate life and into the solemn, meditative search for personal freedom and expression, which he found in Spain.

Zóbel's identification with the Spanish abstractionists of his generation was the final key to his freedom, and the *Serie Negra* became the ultimate symbol of this newfound joy. As Canogar once said, "In our Spanish culture, black is a symbol


Fernando Zobel's Newest Abstractions:

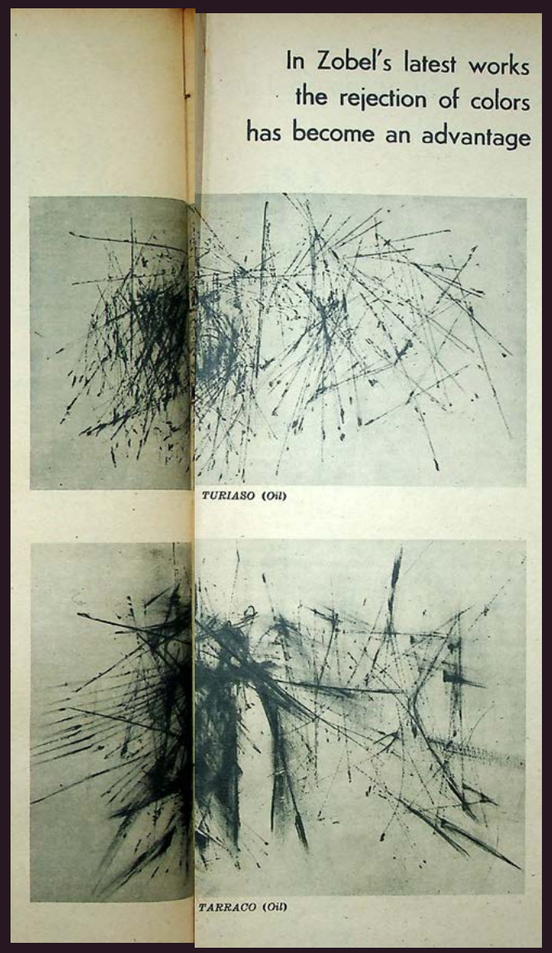
CALLIGRAPHY, SPACE, BLACK & WHITE by Emmanuel Torres

IT is nothing short of phenomenal when a painter, long noted for painting bright, exuberant colors and equally bright, exuberant forms, decides to restrict himself to working with the barest of possible means: black and white. The black is calligraphy or abstract line-work; the white is the stark white of the canvas. Nothing could be more economical and, unless the artist has good reason for being so, more frightfully difficult. In the case of Fernando Zobel de Ayala, one of the most traditional painters in the country today, this decision to be limited in one's expressive means was not born of caprice, a desire to be iconoclastic, or temporary extravagance; it is new style is the logical result of years of hard work at the drawing board and the easel and born of inner necessity.

Exhibited last week in the immaculate new Luz Gallery on Herran Street, Ermita, were the latest works — all in black and white — showing Zobel's bold new style. With this style he achieved a measure of international recognition last June when three of his paintings were included in an important show of contemporary Spanish art at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City and in another similar show earlier, in 1959, at the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro. Also on exhibit at the Luz Gallery were several of Zobel's pen-and-ink drawing and sketches that are handsome complement — and the most eloquent explanation there is — to the paintings.

Gallery goers accustomed to the uninhibited colored ex-

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE


In Zobel's latest works the rejection of colors has become an advantage

TURIASO (Oil)

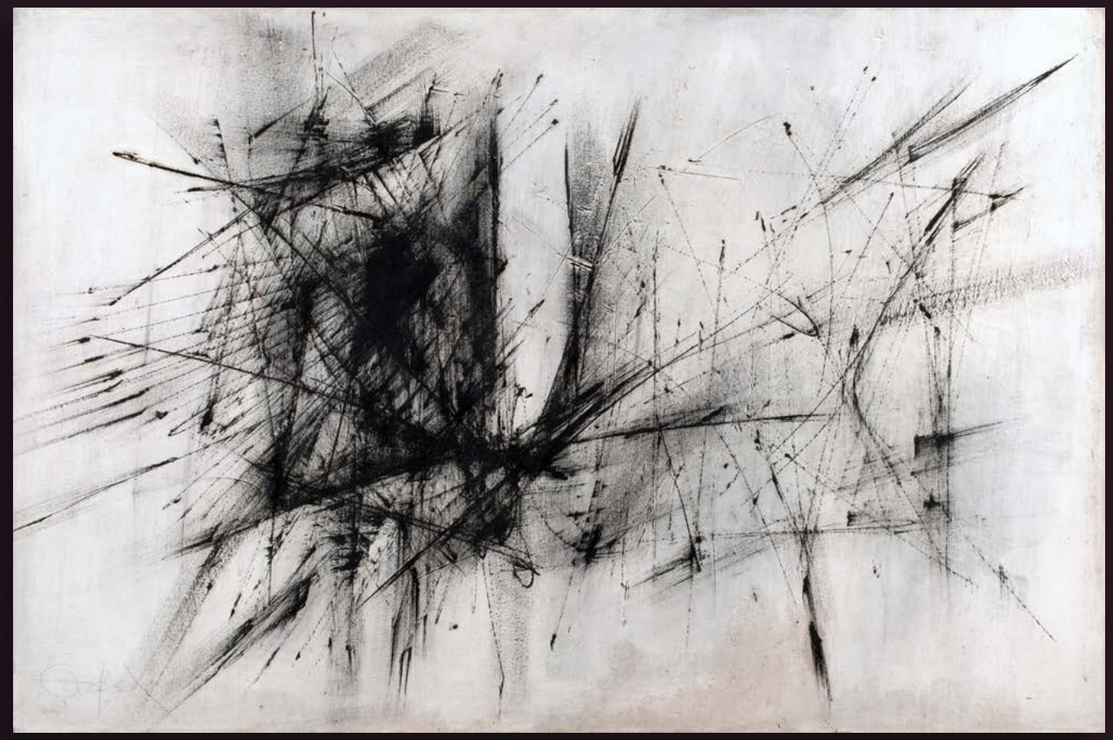
TARRACO (Oil)

ABOVE: Zóbel's *Tarraco* as featured in the 29 January 1961 issue of *The Sunday Times Magazine*. The painting was among the works exhibited in Zóbel's farewell show in Manila before he settled in Spain for good. *Tarraco*, and the other paintings featured in the magazine, is accompanied by an essay written by Emmanuel "Eric" Torres, the founding curator of the Ateneo Art Gallery, whose core collection is composed of Zóbel's personal trove of art.

of mourning and death, connoting transcendental transit to another dimension, unknown and mysteriously always present on man's horizon." What ultimately binds El Paso and Zóbel is a unifying picture of the human spirit yearning to break free from all constraints. For Zóbel, the transition to monochrome meant the end of a former life and the metamorphosis of an existence unbound, one that pursued the creative expressions of the soul.

Embodying Zóbel's Fond Farewell to his Homeland

by ADRIAN MARANAN



The connection with Oriental roots

As seen in *Tarraco*, a heavy concentration of black paint is seen on the left side, likely representing the hilly city of Tarragona and its dynamic confluence of ancient Roman structures (the old terraces the Romans built to adapt to the terrain), medieval Catholic complexes, and modern-day urban planning all overlooking an expanse of white evoking the Mediterranean Sea.

This time, Zóbel's draftsmanship becomes the core, accentuated by the solid, rhythmical blacks applied through a syringe on a field of whites, reflecting the immensity of a landscape through the delicate tension between line and space. The absence of colors allows form and space to shine through, with Zóbel's gestural draftsmanship spiritually drawing the viewer into the setting he evokes, making a certain natural quality (the movement of a bustling cityscape where the ancient meets the cosmopolitan) discernible beyond the plastic forms. Zóbel observed and studied the Spanish landscape, producing countless drawings of its everyday energies and the rhythms of quaint Spanish urban living, meditating on them like an Oriental calligrapher, before translating them onto the canvas. This affirms that for Zóbel, "order is essential," emphasizing the need for composition and method. This practice aligned with the Oriental principle of black and white—the yin and yang—the dual-centric perspective on harmony, centered on the balance between unrestrained introspection and outward expression, and the need for disciplined practice to achieve a liberating expression. With this, Nature is esteemed, highlighting our oneness with it, a mark of poetic Oriental elegance.

Zóbel's interest in Oriental art was further fueled by the archaeological discovery of Chinese porcelains at the family's Calatagan estate in Batangas, prompting him to study Chinese painting and calligraphy under Professor Chen Bing Sun, often referred to as the "Father of Chinese Brush Painting in the Philippines.

54

Joven Mansit (b.1984)

Class Picture, 1914 (1st Year Class C)
dated 2007
mixed media
42" x 62" (107 cm x 157 cm)

P 600,000

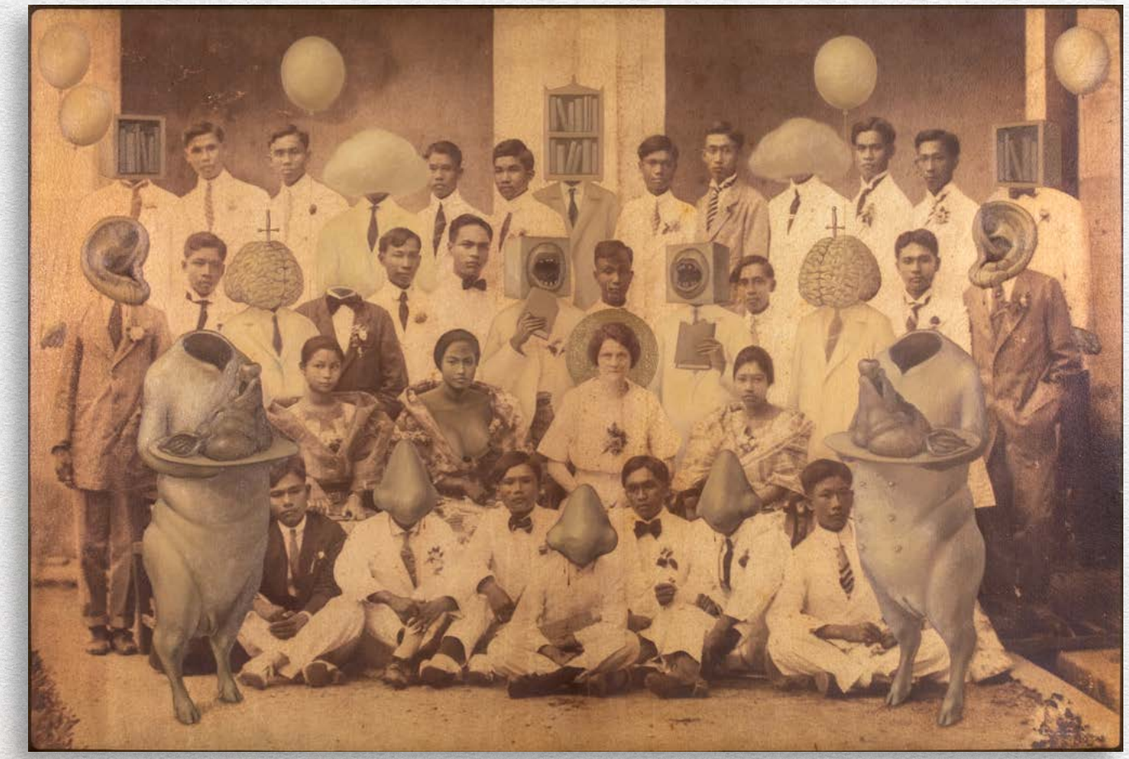
An artist known for transforming archival images into a surreal commentary about identity, colonial legacy, and the construction of social order, Joven Mansit's masterpiece provides an accurate demonstration of his work of art by providing a piece that haunts its observers regarding collective memory and erasure, critiquing colonial education and the creation of identity shaped by such institutions.

Made in 2007, the piece portrays an early 20th-century Philippine class picture. Still, some figures in the illustration have been replaced by surreal imagery, offering a richer context for the holistic interpretation of the artwork. Based on the date of the "photograph" and the instructor in the center of the piece, who is a foreigner (who also has a halo, similarly to how saints and religious iconographies imply that the individual is a "saint" or a pious person tasked with guiding the students into the right path), it can be deduced that the photo was taken during America's occupation of the Philippine archipelago— a period of Americanization of the Philippine Education.

When observing students, some of the heads were replaced by images of Brains and Books, which relate to intellectual conformity and mechanical learning. Some students instead have ears, noses, and mouths which represent sensory control, while some have clouds which might imply absentmindedness and idealism detached from reality. The two headless hybrid bodies represent the effect of those who succumb to the system— a loss of humanity and their identity under the institution they are currently in. Each of these symbols further advances the narrative of the artwork by illustrating how the local elite were taught Western values, language, and ideals of modernity, and questioning what kind of identity Western education had truly produced. How Western institutions contribute to shaping Filipino Consciousness—producing "hybrid" subjects rather than citizens. Mansit's masterpiece perfectly visualizes the absurdity of blind assimilation and the fragmentation of postcolonial Filipino Identity. (*Mark John Castañeda*)



ABOVE: Joven Mansit © Nakkancontemporaryarts.wordpress.com



The Art of Collecting: Nikki Coseteng

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Anna Dominique Marquez-Lim Coseteng, popularly known as "Nikki" in both the political and art landscapes, was one of the first of her generation of idiosyncratic collectors, a child of that special time of place that was the Philippines after the mid-century.

From her father, the industrialist Emerson Coseteng, Nikki inherited both an acute business acumen and an affection for sports. Emerson Coseteng had founded an industrial empire that spanned Honda car and motorcycle-manufacturing, alongside his brother Edison, the pioneering enterprise Mariwasa Manufacturing Incorporated in 1966. It was at the forefront of a wave of Philippine factories established in that period, when Filipino can-do was a cherished economic value. Mariwasa was the first ceramic tile enterprise in the country and would soon partner with Japanese behemoth Noritake to produce high-quality table porcelain. The conglomerate would later include Honda motorcycles.

Emerson would become less than a decade later a founding father of the Philippine Basketball Association and the Mariwasa-Noritake Porcelain Makers would be one of the league's first teams and would in fact, play (opposite Concepcion-Carrier) in its inaugural game in 1975.

In both cases, Nikki served as Assistant to the President for Mariwasa Manufacturing, as well as Team Manager (later Owner) of the Mariwasa ball team.

From her mother, on the other hand, Nikki was heir to a deep family interest in culture and the arts. Her mother Alice Marquez-Lim was a renowned columnist for the Manila Chronicle and author of two important volumes on Philippine Modern Art and equally significantly, on Philippine Art Criticism. As chair of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines, Alice Marquez-Lim helmed various projects, including writing and production of the landmark work "Spanish Churches of the Philippines."

Both sides of the family would have a current of political traditions. Emerson's father, in fact, was a mayor of Xiamen City in China. Her maternal grandfather was Espiridion Guanco of Pototan, Ilo-ilo, lawyer, newspaper publisher, congressman and Senate president pro tempore for Manuel L. Quezon. Guanco had married a suffragette, Nicetas Siguenza. In Nikki, those twin strands would blossom into her election in her own right as first, Congresswoman, representing the 3rd district of Quezon City in 1987 and then as a Senator of the Philippine Republic in 1992. Coseteng would also consistently champion women's rights and family issues through her years of public service. Today, she is an educator, heading Diliman Educational Corporation, which runs the Diliman Prep Schools and the Diliman College, since 2006.





ABOVE: NIkki Coseteng **BELOW:** Print of "Children Playing" dedicated "For Nikki - One of my favorite human beings, Nanding, May 23, 1977"



ABOVE: NIkki Coseteng in her gallery



ABOVE: NIkki Coseteng with Ang Kiukok to her left and other friends

It was through her mother Alice that Nikki was introduced to the hurly-burly of Philippine art, as early as in her teens. She recalls, "My best friend was my mother and she would take me everywhere with her." That world was peopled by Nene Cortes, a well-known antiques dealer and various famous artists, such as Vicente 'Mang Enteng' Manansala — as well as H.R. Ocampo.

By the 60s and early 70s, H.R. Ocampo was a name to reckon with — and had become a close friend of Alice, who shared the same journalistic circles. Her mother would take her on her various visits to H.R.'s house in Maypajo, Caloocan. She remembers 'Mang Nanding' as a gentleman of medium built, very well-spoken (who preferred English) and had a blindingly bright smile. His entire house, befitting a writer, was "entirely populated by books — shelves of them!", Nikki says. She would come around from the days when she was in high school all the way to the advent of Martial Law. "He first gave me some drawings," she notes. In her eyes, he was a sort of kind uncle who always served use ice cream.

Nikki by that time had become a unique cross-cultural product of both Manila and English boarding schools, and the combined educations of Notre Dame College in California and the University of the Philippines. She had also become a street activist, recalling being hosed and gassed during various political demonstrations during the First Quarter Storm.

She had decided to open a gallery of her own, Galerie Dominique, which specialized in the Philippine moderns — and she, alongside her mother, were in the thick of the Manila art scene. "The idea for the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) was actually born in our living room," she recalls, "and it my mother who introduced Lindy Locsin (later to be the architect of the CCP) to Mrs. Marcos." The Marcoses and the Cosetengs had been close — it was Mrs. Marcos who cut the ribbon at the opening of the Mariwasa plant — but they would soon have a falling out over the declaration of Martial Law. H.R. would create his most famous work "Genesis" as the basis for the glorious tapestry in the main theater of the CCP.

H.R., Nikki reminisces, would pad around his house simply dressed in a white polo (on hot days, it would be his undershirt) and leather sandals. Canvases with numbers carefully painted into their sections would be stretched on various easels. H.R. was a charmer and could be easily coaxed to paint in a particular shade to expand Nikki's collection or to put in her gallery. Nikki says that she was drawn to the works of both H.R. and And Kiukok since she was "not really fond of representational art." She found H.R., in particular, more soothing, less jarring and "confrontational" in his works. The paintings were very much in keeping with H.R.'s personality, she says, "H.R. was an all-around and genuinely nice guy. That kind of man has gone the way of the dinosaur," she smiles.

The other important location for interaction with the Manila masters was the vaunted Saturday Group of Artists who would meet weekly at the famous café, Taza de Oro on Roxas Boulevard. Members were art critics Leo Benesa and Rod Paras-Perez, artists And Kiukok, Cesar Legaspi, Onib Olmedo, Romulo Olazo to name a few. H. R. Ocampo was leader of the pack.

It is among these august gentlemen, playful characters, and intellectual maestros that Nikki Coseteng would receive her best education, collecting art and learning the art of collecting.

The Artistic Emancipation of Hernando R. Ocampo

From Full-time Adman to Consummate Pursuer of Creative Passions

by ADRIAN MARANAN

Kalaanan, symbolizing the middle-aged Ocampo's embrace of full-time painting

Hernando R. Ocampo's *Kalaanan* represents a pivotal transformation in his storied life and professional career. Painted in the year Ocampo retired from advertising work and devoted himself to full-time painting, *Kalaanan* encapsulates an artist finally lifting the lifelong burden of bureaucratic trade to support his large family, as his art had not been able to sustain the everyday needs of his extended household for the longest time.

Ocampo had been working in the media industry since the pre-war era, starting as an Associate Editor for the Herald Mid-Week Magazine from 1938 to 1941. During the war, he would become Chief Scriptwriter and Assistant Director of the Associated Artists, the producer of stage shows at the famed Lyric, Capitol, and Avenue Theaters in Manila. In the post-war period, Ocampo would go from strength to strength in the industry, reaching the pinnacle of his professional career as a formidable media man when he became Senior Vice President of Philippine Promotions, Inc. (PhilProm), the pioneering Filipino ad agency established by Pete Teodoro in 1945. Ocampo was entrusted with this position due to his solid four-year experience (1954-1958) as Director of the state-owned National Media Production Center, the precursor to the People's Television Network and the Presidential Broadcast Service.

However, by 1968, Ocampo felt that his retirement plans had finally come to fruition. "I thought it would be wise to retire while my eyesight is still in good shape," Ocampo playfully yet seriously said to Eric Torres in a May 3, 1968 interview with *The Manila Times*.

Ocampo felt that his years of corporate work had already spared him and his family from financial hardship, having saved enough money to finally focus on painting and get those hardened brushes and dusty canvases to do their painterly symphonies again.

Torres noted in the same interview article, "Ocampo used to say that he would quit a profitable career in mass media as soon as he had stashed enough savings in the bank to go broke for art's sake without fear of impoverishing his family for the next several years. Last month, he thought he had banked enough to give himself that freedom from economic problems, which serious artists dream about, but only less than a handful in this country are able to realize." Torres further noted, "The timing of Ocampo's retirement could not have been better... Whereas in the early '50s it was difficult to sell an Ocampo at P300, today Ocampos are being bought by collectors at a faster rate and at higher prices (from P1,500 to P5,000)."





ABOVE: Ocampo in the late 1960s. © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives
BELOW: H.R. Ocampo and Nikki Coseteng at the opening of the latter's Galerie Dominique in 1978. Also pictured are Maritess Pineda and Dr. Jaime C. Laya. © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives

It should be noted that before his retirement, Ocampo would only paint on Sundays. Ocampo's retirement coincided with his 57th birthday. With 50 being a golden year and 7 a lucky number, Ocampo's decision to devote himself to full-time painting could not be more providential, as this would also mark the beginning of what is inarguably his most iconic artistic era, the Visual Melody Period of pure, lyrical paintings combining the lush tropicality of colors with the intimacy of chamber music.



ABOVE: Promotional material for the Legaspi - Luz - Ocampo exhibit. © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives

Speaking in an interview in 1961, Ocampo "resolved to devote more time to painting again." Turning 50 that year, the Art Association of the Philippines honored him with a retrospective.

One of the featured works in Ocampo's comeback exhibition

Kalaanan became one of those paintings Ocampo created during this period of creative revitalization. The work would be exhibited at a landmark Luz Gallery show in late 1968, joining forces with fellow modernist friends Cesar Legaspi and Arturo Luz. Titled *Legaspi, Luz, Ocampo*, it was the latter's first exhibition of new, major works since 1961.

Ocampo's latest paintings were well-received by critics, with Alfredo Roces writing that the return to full-time painting resulted in "exhilarating" works, "alive with glowing colors and newfound energy." Remarkably, several of Ocampo's paintings in the exhibition were based on Caloocan's various districts, serving as homage to his hometown.

Ocampo's inspiration for the work

A well-documented work appearing in both of Ocampo's official list of paintings and his most authoritative monograph to date, written by a fellow writer and friend, Angel G. de Jesus, *Kalaanan* refers to the old name of what is now Caloocan's Grace Park, which is divided into western and eastern districts, with the former bordering the city's *población*. Notably, the new Caloocan City Hall, completed in 2017, is located in Grace Park East. 10th Avenue, also in Grace Park East, is frequented for its heavy concentration of motorcycle dealers and shops selling motorcycle parts and accessories, most notably Tres Hermanas Motors, which has been in existence since 1978.

According to local traditions, Kalaanan is the name given to this Caloocan district since it was a land granted (from the Tagalog root word *laan* meaning allocate) to anyone who wished to settle in this area. The Caloocan Historical Data Papers of the National Library of the Philippines tells of the legendary origins of Kalaanan.

"The word "CALAANAN" literally means a wild tract of wild land. This barrio originated during the Spanish period." The papers would then tell of the legendary King Kalaan, who was the bravest of the kings of old Caloocan and "waged wars against other kings to expand his domain."





ABOVE: Ocampo with the people of Maypajo in Caloocan, ca. 1978. Ocampo lived in Caloocan all his life, with the city serving as the primary inspiration for many of his short stories and later, his paintings. © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives
BELOW: (From left to right) Arturo Luz, Cesar Legaspi, First Lady Imelda Marcos, and H.R. Ocampo photographed at the opening of the three artists' joint exhibition at the Luz Gallery, which also served as Ocampo's comeback exhibition after 7 years. © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives

The paper continues, "King Kalaan was also kind and generous. When he grew old, his territory became a little town called CALAANAN. Since then, Filipinos and Spaniards alike called the place Calaanan, the word derived from the name of the King and the word meaning territorial wideness."

Historically, during the American colonial period, Calaanan's name was changed to Grace Park (mainly due to the lobbying of Don Toribio Teodoro of *Ang Tibay* fame) in honor of Grace Roosevelt, the sole daughter of then-American Governor-General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., the eldest son of US president Teddy Roosevelt. Grace was said to be "very much attracted to the approximity [sic] of the place to Malacañan and the cool breeze beaming from the vast grassy plateau of Caloocan."

Kalaanan, now Grace Park, would undergo rapid development, spurred by the 1935 inauguration of the Grace Park Airfield, Manila's first civilian airport. It was designed in the New York City-inspired grid urban plan that was intended for real estate and industrial developments. Grace Park's 5th Avenue became a hub of the footwear

Hernando R. Ocampo (1911 - 1978)

Kalaanan
signed and dated 1968 (lower right)
oil on canvas
30" x 40" (76 cm x 102 cm)

P 12,000,000

LITERATURE
De Jesus, Angel G. *H.R. Ocampo: The Artist as Filipino*. Manila: Heritage Publishing, 1979. Black-and-white illustration and painting description on page 150.

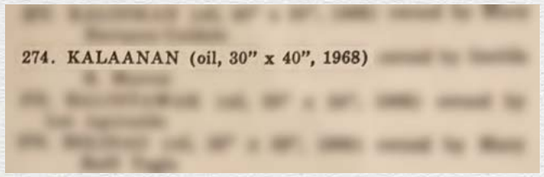
Villegas, Ramon N. and Lisa Guerrero Nakpil. *Trove: The Coseteng Collection, The Life and Art of H.R. Ocampo*. Published to accompany the exhibition of the same title at León Gallery on 21 January 2017. Makati City: León Gallery, 2017. Full-color spread on pages 72 - 73 and painting description on pages 70, 72.

Hufana, Alejandrino G., ed. *Pamana 13 June 1974: A Cultural Quarterly Published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines*. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1974. Listed on page 19 as "274. KALAANAN" under the artist's list of paintings.

Tiongson, Nicanor G., ed. *Artista ng Bayan 1991*. Cultural Center of the Philippines. Manila. 1991. Listed on page 37 as "274. Kalaanan" under HR Ocampo's "List of Paintings (Partial)".

EXHIBITED
The Luz Gallery, *Legaspi - Luz - Ocampo (Three-man Exhibit)*, Makati, 7 – 19 November 1968

León Gallery, *Trove: The Coseteng Collection*, The Life and Art of H.R. Ocampo, Makati City, 21 January 2017


274. KALAANAN (oil, 30" x 40", 1968)

ABOVE: *Kalaanan*, as it appears in the comprehensive list of Ocampo's works published in *Pamana, 13 June 1974: A Cultural Quarterly Published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines.*



ABOVE: Nikki Coseteng with H.R Ocampo

industry, led by the famed and internationally exported Ang Tibay leather shoes and slippers, and its iconic Art Deco-style factory, which was once Asia's premier shoe factory. Its founder, influential industrialist Don Toribio Teodoro, was also born in Grace Park and would acquire the iconic Manila Grand Opera House during the war. Other shoe factories on 5th Avenue included Jacinto Rubber Shoes and El Porvenir (Elpo) Rubber Shoes, owned by Don Tomas Geronimo, who pioneered rubber shoe manufacturing in the country.

Grace Park remains a major commercial center of Caloocan.

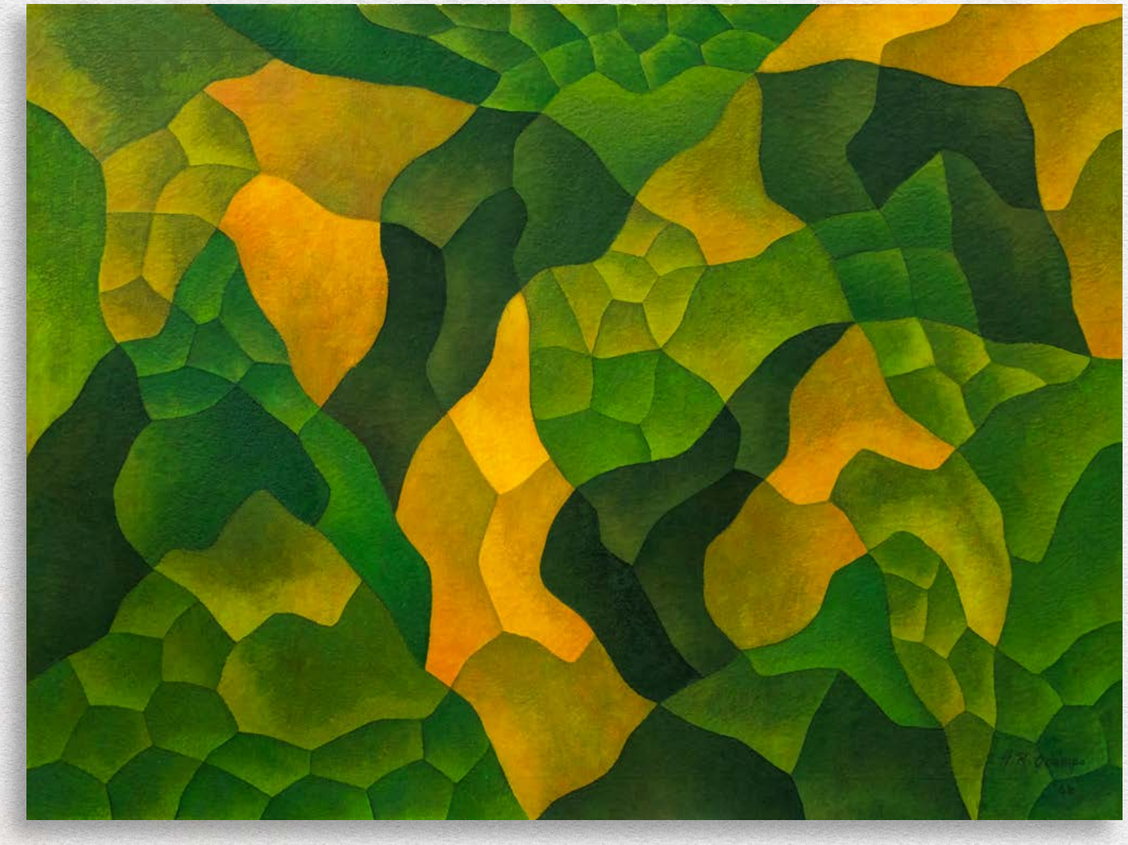
Representing a return to form

The scintillating greens of *Kalaanan* capture the district's prime position as an economic lifeblood of Ocampo's beloved Caloocan. Contrasted with the somber and often disorienting palette of Ocampo's preceding Mutants Period, which spoke to the era's nuclear anxieties, his colors now seem "singing": luscious, warm, and sensual, resonating with the artist's newfound freedom.

Kalaanan represents an emancipated Ocampo. Borrowing from the barrio legend of how Kalaanan got its name, the work resonates with Ocampo exalting his cherished Caloocan, dedicating an entire body of work symbolizing his elated return to painting, his own *cherie amour*. Caloocan was where Ocampo first experienced the searing realities of life, early on putting a heavy burden upon his juvenile shoulders as he went on the streets polishing the shoes of the nearby Maypajo and Lerma cabarets' local and foreign customers, and later on working in the former as a cashier, regularly encountering

The Nikki Coseteng *H.R. Ocampo*
Featured in Ocampo's Comeback Exhibition After 7 Years

by ADRIAN MARANAN



rowdy American soldiers and sailors being beaten up by the local gangsters. When he started to become a writer before the war struck, Ocampo wrote two short stories dedicated to Maypajo and its people—"The Legend of Maypajo" and "Street Scene in Maypajo"—his own locality in Caloocan and the district southwest of Grace Park.

The city would become the silent witness to all his vocational frustrations, familial struggles, his profound empathy for the working class manifested in his stories and early paintings, the regrets brought by the abandonment of dreams to study abroad just to prioritize his family's immediate everyday needs (Ocampo was the original grantee of the 1950 French government scholarship that ultimately went to his friend, Manansala), and the little triumphs as he forged his dreams of pursuing his soul's creative passion into a fully realized truth. Once the target of vile criticisms for his compellingly original and daring blend of form and color, Ocampo is now celebrated for his oeuvre, which harmonizes with and is attuned to the agitating desires of a people towards the reclamation of agency, identity, and autonomy in a discordant, post-colonial society.

Romulo Olazo (1934 - 2015)

a.) Nude I
signed and dated 7.29.76 (lower right)
charcoal on paper
17 1/2" x 23 1/2" (44 cm x 60 cm)

b.) Nude II
signed and dated 7.24.76 (lower right)
charcoal on paper
17 1/2" x 23 1/2" (44 cm x 60 cm)

c.) Nude III
signed and dated 8.19.76 (lower left)
charcoal on paper
23 1/2" x 17 1/2" (60 cm x 44 cm)

d.) Nude IV
signed and dated 7.29.76 (lower left)
charcoal on paper
23 1/2" x 17 1/2" (60 cm x 44 cm)

P 400,000



ABOVE: Olazo (right) with Cesar Legaspi (left) in a Saturday Group of Artists session.
© Photo reproduced in the book *Romulo Olazo* by Cid Reyes

Born in 1934 in Batangas, Romulo Olazo ventured into the city to attend college. In Manila, he worked as a typist in a law office to support himself while studying Fine Arts at the University of Santo Tomas, where he trained under Victorio Edades and Diosdado Lorenzo.

In the mid-1950s, Olazo worked as an illustrator for Oriental Komiks and Tagalog Klasiks of Ace Publications. During this period, he also had a stint in the advertising industry, designing outdoor advertising outfits for Modern Advertising, Montserrat Advertising, and Acme Neon Lights. His outstanding work in this field prompted Felix Bunag to recruit Olazo to join the Philippine Advertising Counselors (PAC). During his time at the PAC, Olazo was introduced to printmaking. Since then, he delved into the art of printmaking, familiarizing himself with various printmaking techniques and entering competitions.

Throughout his career, he held numerous solo and group exhibitions locally and internationally. He also received a multitude of awards and recognitions, especially for his esteemed *Diaphanous* series, a collection of airy, translucent compositions in small and monumental canvases that embody the Japanese philosophic concept of "mono no aware"—beauty in transience. Seemingly simple, these works are the result of a painstaking process and a profound understanding of color and spatial relationships. His fine strokes and ingenious layering of oil paint create patterns of relative transparency and density, showcasing Olazo's immense control and patience.

Olazo's refined strokes and tenacity towards his artmaking also apply to his other works. Drawn with charcoal, this lot of four nude drawings exemplifies the artist's artistic bravura and versatility in creating awe-inspiring masterpieces across a wide range of styles and mediums. These drawings offer a glimpse into the female form, infused with the artistic flair of an acclaimed artist.

Romulo Olazo's mastery of charcoal and the human anatomy captured every dip, line, and curve of his model, despite the different motions and positions. These studies served as the artist's practice for controlling his strokes and tonal values. And despite featuring an unclothed woman, his depiction is devoid of eroticism. Instead, they promote appreciation for the female body.

Aside from his acclaimed gossamer paintings and nude drawings, Olazo's ingenuity and skilled craftsmanship have also produced a multitude of works in different forms and genres, ranging from landscape and still-life paintings to portrait drawings and inked illustrations, which vary from figurative to abstract works. In 1972, a few years before the making of these pieces, the Cultural Center of the Philippines honored Romulo Olazo's artistic prowess in the prestigious Thirteen Artists Awards. *(Jessica Magno)*

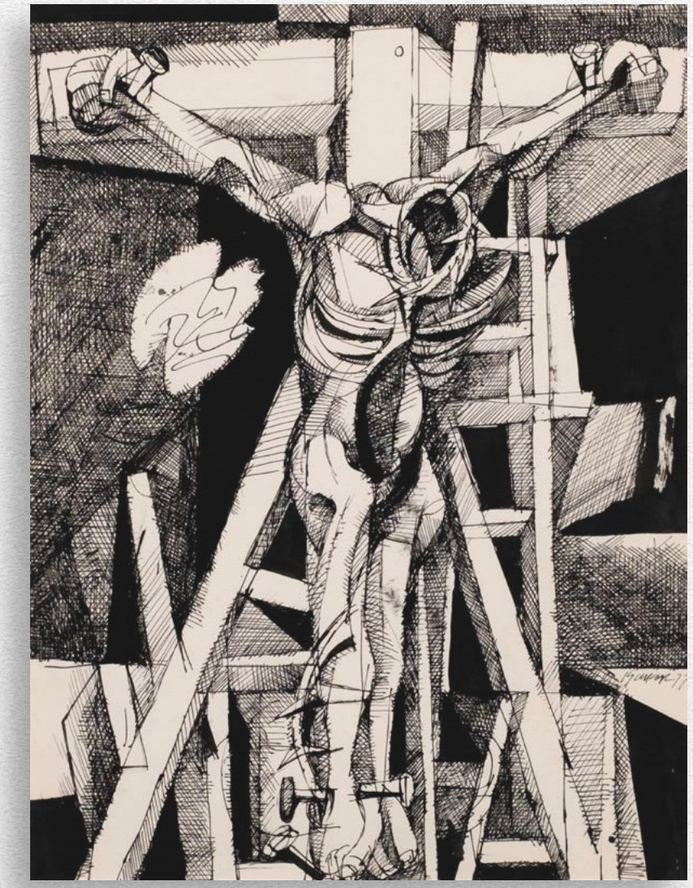
Olazo Explores
Beauty in Repose











57 PROPERTY FROM THE NIKKI COSETENG COLLECTION

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

Crucifixion
signed and dated 1977 (lower right)
pen and ink on paper
12" x 9" (30 cm x 23 cm)

P 240,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Andrew Ang confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

A baptized Catholic himself, Ang Kiukok's crucifixion works tether past reverent veneration and into anguished suffering. His works are far from the grandiose Filipino religious traditions and elaborate works of art; instead, they are visceral in their humanization of Christ for His suffering at the cross.

This particular crucifixion work, created in 1977, was a pen and ink rendition of the scene, and it is unapologetic in its grotesqueness. As is with Kiukok's crucifixion works, the body is almost always rendered to its barest essence; though it is more figurative in comparison to his usual scenes, Christ's body is considerably bony and tattered, rib poking through the hole on His side.

An artist drawn to the macabre, it is no surprise that he finds himself returning over and over again to the crucifixion. Whether it be Christ on the cross or His mother by His side, Kiukok's figures are as much a testament of faith as it is of suffering.

"It was a man that was made to bear the cross and endure the crucifixion," Rene E. Guatlo wrote in Stations of the Cross about Kiukok's Christ figures. "Ang the artist paints the most vivid and painful set of pictures to drive home this point." *(Hannah Valiente)*



58 PROPERTY FROM THE NIKKI COSETENG COLLECTION

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

Rosary Queen
signed and dated 1975 (lower right)
tempera
12" x 9" (30 cm x 23 cm)

P 380,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Andrew Ang confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

Despite the image being deeply rooted in Catholicism, Ang Kikuok's masterpiece reinterprets such iconography through a lens of modern abstraction and Filipino spirituality. Interpreted through fractured planes and sharp lines, the piece can be read as an embodiment of faith amid struggle.

Painted around 1975, the piece depicts a stylized cubist composition of the Virgin Mary decorated in a bright color palette, giving the work an intense emotional energy that gives the piece life and reverence, while the angular and sharp geometric figures provide the tension and strength of the figure portrayed inside the canvas.

The halo and the flower provide the spiritual motif of divine light and purity that is well-suited to the religious subject figure. Through and through, this *Rosary Queen* piece serves as a dynamic and powerful presence—radiant, protective, and resilient. (*Mark John Castañeda*)

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)
Barong-barong by the Estero
signed and dated 1952 (lower left)
watercolor on paper
9" x 11 1/2" (23 cm x 29 cm)

P 240,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Andrew Ang confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

LITERATURE
Bunag Gatbonton, Esperanza. *Kiukok: The Artist and His Works*. Makati: Paulino O. Que, 1991. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 210.

Revealing his keen awareness of and exploration of social conditions after World War II, this early masterpiece by the artist Ang Kiukok offers social commentary on poverty through ironic imagery—embodying the human poverty and inequality of the post-war Philippines.

Made in 1952, this painting depicts a cluster of makeshift shanties along a canal. The irony of the piece then comes in the form of a juxtaposed backdrop behind the shanties, where an urban structure labeled "peace hotel" creates disparity between the miserable condition of the settlement and the "life-saving" slogan.

Delving further into the artist's intended irony, the way the artwork seems to draw the eye to the "peaceful" slogan. At the same time, the ramshackle dwellings scream in the periphery and provide a subtle social commentary on disparity, as the meaning of the word 'piece' seems ironic when set against the precarious illustration of the impoverished home. This painting, therefore, reveals the artist's awareness of urban struggles—a theme that would evolve into his later oeuvre, resulting in more emotional, expressionist depictions of suffering and human sacrifice. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: Ang Kiukok © *Kiukok The Artist and His Works*, 1991

View of a Binondo Estero
An Early Ang Kiukok





60 PROPERTY FROM THE NIKKI COSETENG COLLECTION

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

Fish
signed and dated 1979 (lower right)
tempera
9" x 12" (23 cm x 30 cm)

P 380,000

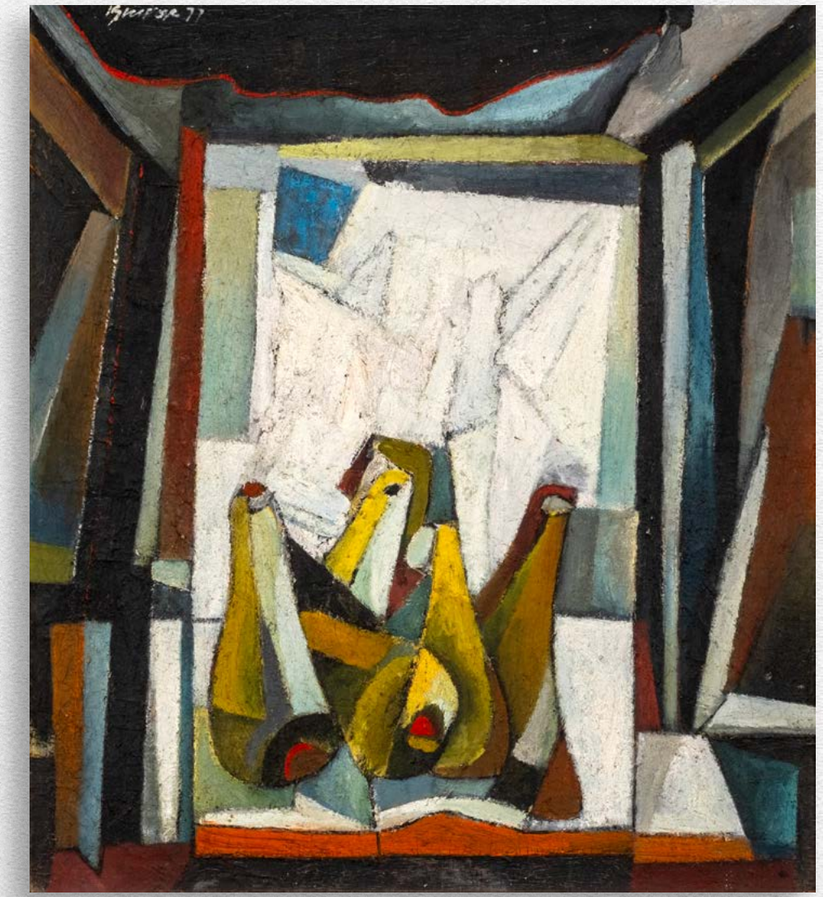
Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Andrew Ang confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

Showcasing the artist's unique art style that fuses expressionism with symbolic and spiritual undertones, this 1979 masterpiece from Ang Kiukok, entitled *Fish*, portrays a generic depiction of a large fish illustrated into strong geometric shapes and given life through vivid colors. Yet, some details in the artwork hint that the figure is more than it seems.

Analysing the symbolism present in the piece, the image of a fish can primarily be associated with two possible meanings: the first possible interpretation relates to Christianity, in which the Fish symbolizes faith and spiritual sustenance, while the second interpretation goes around the context of Filipino culture, where it evokes the theme of struggle, livelihood, or survival.

What's eye-catching about the piece is the "bars" that are supposed to be the bones of the Fish, which hints at confinement or captivity, creating tension between the sacred interpretation and the existential interpretation of the subject matter, transforming the image of a fish into a realistic metaphor for life itself—a being of grace and necessity rendered in a harsh environment it was forced to grown from. Creating a balance between grace and cruelty, as well as life and mortality. (*Mark John Castañeda*)



61 PROPERTY FROM THE NIKKI COSETENG COLLECTION

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

Still Life
signed and dated 1977 (upper left)
oil on wood
17 1/2" x 15 1/2" (44 cm x 39 cm)

P 1,200,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Andrew Ang confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

Executed in 1977, Ang Kiukok's *Still Life* ranks among his technical studies on perspective and color. Here, he takes the age-old idea of still-life and proceeds to turn it on its head, creating works that are as recognizable as they are fresh, a culmination of his Modernist sensibilities.

This particular work deconstructs the familiar sight of a still-life and transforms it into an abstract lens. This cluster of almost unidentifiable fruits is placed in front of a window, reduced to their most basic geometrical shapes, and arranged with a distinct spatial awareness. As such, Ang makes these common sights into novel ideas. That, combined with his unorthodox color schemes and irreverent fragmentations, exemplifies the artist's ingenious transformation of the conventional art scene, rendering his works absolute for the decades to come. *(Hannah Valiente)*

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

Window
signed and dated 1978 (upper left)
oil on wood
24" x 17 1/2" (61 cm x 44 cm)

P 1,700,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Andrew Ang confirming the authenticity of this lot

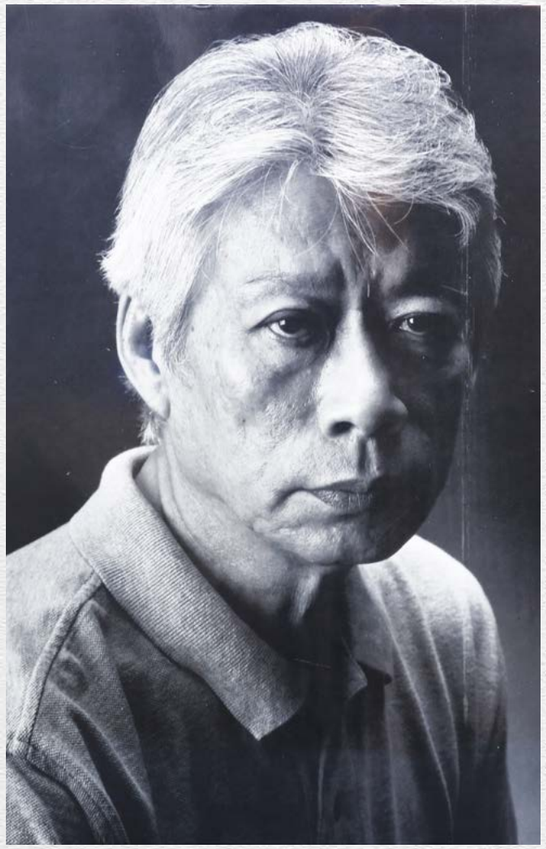
PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

Transforming a simple architectural motif into a profound metaphor for confinement and the search for light, this 1978 masterpiece by the artist Ang Kiukok showcased his mastery of his craft as he attempted to explore and confront the inner states of fear, tension, and transition. Reflecting the usual bold, emotionally charged composition of his later works.

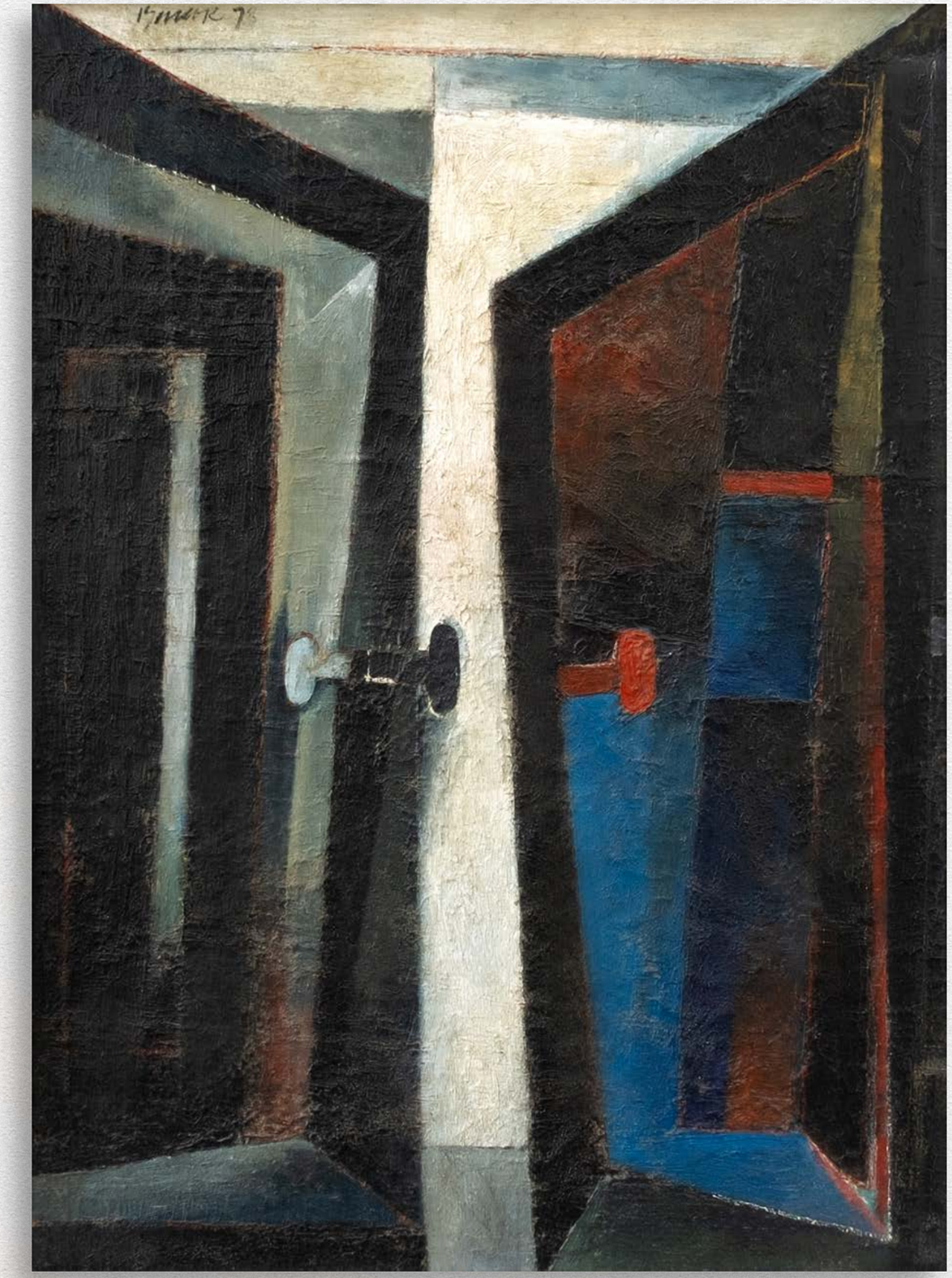
Consisting of an image depicted through a geometric, almost cubist arrangement of intersecting planes and angular forms, it displays what appears to be a tight and confined parallel doorway or passageway, rendered with a strong contrast of light and dark tones for each one, leading to separate, narrow hallways that complement the tones for each door. This evokes a sense of isolation and psychological entrapment for the observers. Such tension between "inside and outside", "freedom and containment" already fits the recurring motifs of Kiukok's oeuvre.

Ang Kiukok's artwork entitled *Window* is a perfect example of the artist's attempt to morph a simple architectural motif into a metaphor for the human condition, where light, shadow, and structure collide to create an image that expresses the tension between hope and entrapment, clarity and darkness, as well as faith and doubt.

For context, by 1978, Kiukok had already made his transition from creating artworks that explore social realism to making masterpieces that are symbolic and tackle existential themes. Although his earlier works display the suffering of humanity through distorted figures. His works, like the Window internalize that struggle—turning it into a study of space, emotion, and spiritual yearning. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: Ang Kiukok in the 70s



Matrimonial Ah Tay Bed by the Ah Tay Workshop

Binondo, Manila
1875 - 1900
golden narra wood (stained dark)
H: 100" (254 cm)
L: 70" (178 cm)
W: 92 1/2" (235 cm)

P 2,000,000

PROVENANCE
The Don Bernardo O. Dagala family, Navotas, Rizal. The Dagalas were a political family from Navotas town in Rizal. Don Bernardo O. Dagala became President of the Municipality of Malabon from 1903–05, succeeding Canuto Celestino who was a signatory to General Emilio Aguinaldo's Declaration of Independence on 12 June 1898 in Kawit, Cavite.

Dagala was credited for the final separation of Navotas from Malabon during the American regime by virtue of Proclamation 142 in 1906. According to family lore, Dagala was much respected by fellow Navoteños and even his Chief of Police Vicente Santos would courteously open office and residential entrances and car doors for him. Don Bernardo O Dagala and his wife had daughters but no sons, so from his direct line, the surname Dagala died out, but not his descendants.

León Gallery, *The Kingly Treasures Auction 2021*, Makati City, 04 December 2021, Lot 141



ABOVE: Don Bernardo O. Dagala © wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a0/Bernardo_Dagala.jpg

This matrimonial bed was created by the Chinese cabinetmaker Ah Tay of Binondo, Manila, famous for his fashionable, beautiful, and well–constructed furniture in hybrid European–Chinese–Filipino styles from 1850 to 1925. The ogee–shaped headboard features a shield–shaped cartouche surmounted by a conch shell, from which C–scrolls emanate gracefully, which then terminate inwardly and outwardly in foliar forms. The headboard, usually chamfered on both vertical backsides, is wedged between the two rear testers as well as the squash–shaped terminals of the bed frame for firm support (hence the diminutive: "Kalabasa" bed). The four testers are carved as elongated C–scrolls containing fruits, rosettes, and leaves; they are deliberately placed at inward–facing right angles to the bed. The four long sides of the canopy have arched central sections usually embellished with shells, leaves, and grapes; at the corners are four stylized pineapples which are supported by the testers. The canopy is topped with eight Sinitic finials exactly like that on the headboard. The bed frame is topped by squash halves (where the four testers are installed) on round legs with moldings that terminate in Flemish bun feet. The bed frame itself is composed of two horizontal panels, one on top of the other, connected by thick C–scrolls, rosettes and Chinese motifs on all four sides.

The formidable Filipiniana scholar Ramon N Villegas described the Ah Tay bed thus: "The dominant motif in the Ah Tay bed is the C–scroll. The rails supporting the bed frame, the endboards, the tester supports, and the tester are formed with baroque–influenced fretwork leaf scrolls. The bed pillars have upper and lower parts. The lower part stands on spherical feet, with mouldings on the leg until the point where it supports the bedframe, and is capped by a foliate hemisphere. The upper part or tester supports are made from long flat boards shaped and pierced with a design of nose–to–nose pincer–like scrolls positioned at an angle in the four corners of the bed. Visually, the bed pillars terminate in the pointed, bud–like ellipsoids that hold the rails of the tester together. The pointed ornamentation in the headboard suggests a faintly gothic air."

Two general characteristics of the Ah Tay bed, whether matrimonial or single, are visual levity and verticality. It looks deceptively light, even if it is not (the bed itself is heavy when carried; even the individual parts like the canopy, headboard, and testers have considerable weight). It has an overall verticality; it looks tall, and some models are taller than the others. Another characteristic is that upon closer inspection, the parts are created out of large cuts of mature "golden narra" wood (in rare cases red–purple "tindalo" wood; such specimens do exist) no longer available today, at least legally (2021). The mature, dense "golden narra" wood itself was carefully chosen by the senior woodworkers, resulting in a dazzling luster when properly sanded and finished, comparable to palace furniture produced for the Bourbons of France and the Romanovs of Russia. The legs and the frames of the bed are single pieces of "golden narra" wood; the four long sides of the canopy are single pieces, sometimes but not always including the shells, leaves, and grapes that embellish the arched central sections; the headboard, however large, is a single piece of wood save for the ogee top which is an augmentation; the testers are all single pieces of "golden narra" wood. The thickness of the wooden parts is also remarkable, as they were made at a time when conservation of forest resources was not a consideration unlike now. Such discreet qualities make it virtually impossible to craft an accurate reproduction of a genuine Ah Tay bed these days (what is meant emphatically is a genuine production from the Ah Tay workshop in Binondo during the late 1800s, with all its trademark qualities, not a mediocre provincial reproduction, of which many can be easily had), oftentimes the effort is herculean, the cost prohibitive, and the result mediocre that it is better to just acquire a genuine antique specimen, the high price notwithstanding.

The noteworthy matrimonial Ah Tay beds still in existence are those of Maximino Molo Agustin Paterno y Yamson and Teodora Devera Ignacio y Pineda, Mariano Zamora and Martina Molo Agustin Paterno y Yamson, Benito Legarda y Tuason and Teresa de la Paz y de los Santos viuda de Severo Tuason; they are either with descendants or top antique collectors. They came from grand bahay–na–bato along elegant Calle San Sebastian (currently R Hidalgo street) in barrio San Sebastian. The most exceptional matrimonial Ah Tay bed known is the Tuason–Areopagita from a large riverside villa in Santa Ana, Manila, now in the Paulino and Hetty Que Collection. It possesses every feature of an Ah Tay bed, albeit upgraded, reinterpreted, and taken to the next level. It is impressively "Ah Tay on steroids." Of course, Ah Tay produced beds in styles other than his own, but those will not be discussed for now.

The Ah Tay Bed Of The Father Of Navotas

Don Bernardo O. Dagala

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III



The Hizon de Pampanga Clan Spanning the Ocampo and Villanueva

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III





RIGHT: Singian - Hizon Family **LEFT:** Elvira Benria & Ricardo Hizon Ocampo

One of Old Pampanga's most famous landed clans is the Hizon which originated from Tambobong, Morong (now Malabon city, Rizal). The ur– ancestors were the couple Don Tomas Hizon and Dona Marcelina Santiago who lived during the 1700s/eighteenth century. Their two industrious sons, Vicente and Felipe, married two affluent, mestiza de Sangley David y Liwanag sisters, Paula and Ana, from Masicu/Mexico town, Pampanga and established the Hizon y David clan which rose to hacendero wealth and prominence in 1840s Pampanga. (On the other hand, the two Hizon y Santiago daughters, Constancia and Miguela, married two Tiangco men, Jose Beltran and Leoncio.)

Paula and Ana were the daughters of Don Juan David y Custodio and Dona Rosa Liwanag, one of the richest mestizo de Sangley couples in Masicu/Mexico town at that time.

Vicente Hizon y Santiago married Paula David y Liwanag and settled in adjacent San Fernando town. Felipe Hizon y Santiago married Ana David y Liwanag and settled in her hometown of Masicu/Mexico.

Don Vicente and Dona Paula had six children: Alejandra Andrea (de Lorenzo), Saturnino, Anacleto, Atanacio, Graciana (de de Leon), and Merced (de Lorenzo).

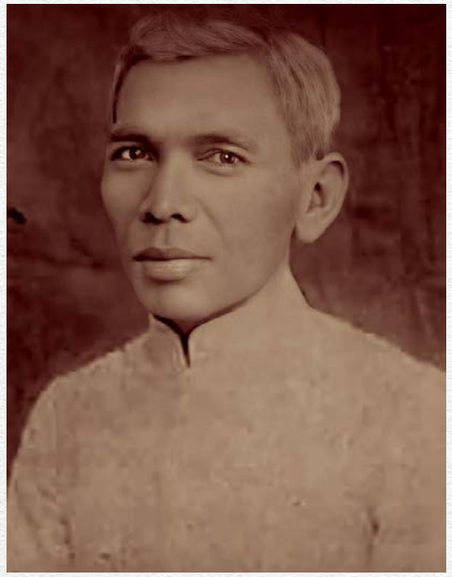
Don Felipe and Dona Ana had eight children: Alejandra (de Ocampo), Luisa (de Panlilio), Guillerma (de Mercado), Anastacia (de Liwanag), Juana (de Ocampo), Ceferina (de de Leon), Pedro, and Crispin.

Legendary Filipiniana scholar and social historian Manuel Imperial Tinio Jr ("Sonny") was able to interview several, old Hizon descendants and visit the 1820s–40s Hizon–David ancestral house in barrio Pariancillo, Masicu/Mexico town during the early 1960s. Tinio described it as a classical early 1800s house, thatch– roofed, "parang tren" like a train, long with a wide façade, a wooden kitchen and a stone azotea at the back, a big stone "camarin" granary/storehouse at the rear, and an elegant wooden staircase inside which led to the commodious "sala" living room in front. It was furnished with beautiful classical, Filipino furniture. The spacious "comedor" dining room was elegantly furnished with a long, segmented "cabecera" dining table featuring elegant Hepplewhite legs, two long matching sideboards, and a pair of neoclassical "vajillera" cabinets, not Victorian. What impressed Tinio the most was when his Hizon hosts showed him a pair of 80% solid silver pineapple–shaped "paliteras"/"palilleras" toothpick holders, and explained that the Hizons used to have twelve of them (!!!) displayed on the dining table during the fiestas until the early 1900s when they were partitioned among descendants and carted off to family houses elsewhere in Pampanga and Manila. To the top art and antiques collectors from the postwar to the present (Luis Ma Araneta, Paulino Que, Stanley Chan, Jose Yao Campos Jr, Richard Barnes Lopez, Atty Jose Mari Trenas), antique silver paliteras/palilleras of local manufacture are extremely rare and singular representative examples of Filipino "principalia" and "ilustrado" material culture. To the proud Tinio, the possession of twelve silver pineapple paliteras/palilleras absolutely signified that the Hizons of barrio Pariancillo, Mexico, Pampanga were a truly affluent family. The early 1820s–40s, thatch–roofed Hizon–David "bahay–na–bato" once stood to the right of the 1927 Manuel Sandico y Lazatin–Pilar Hizon y Sison residence which is currently known as the events venue "Bale Mi."

Don Anacleto Hizon y David of San Fernando married Dona Victorina Singian de Miranda of the same town. In 1870, he built a palatial, Manila–style residence (like those Hispano–Filipino palaces along Calle San Sebastian towards Malacanang) immediately to the right of the old, early 1800s Hizon–Santiago ancestral house transferred piece–by–piece by his parents Don Vicente Hizon y Santiago and Dona Paula David y Liwanag from Tambobong, Morong (now Malabon city, Rizal). To show the scale of Hizon wealth, when Don Anacleto and Dona Victorina passed away, each of their 8 children received 400 hectares of productive rice and sugar farmlands --- Francisco, Florentino, Luisa (de Singian), Leoncia (de Ocampo), Maria, Ramon, Felisa (de Dison), and Victoria (de Rodriguez).



ABOVE: 1928 Ricardo Hizon Ocampo & Huerta Elvira Bernia



ABOVE: Basilio Ocampo

Two Hizon branches from Masicu/Mexico, Pampanga were those of first cousins Don Vicente Panlilio y Hizon, who transferred to San Fernando and then to Manila (the real estate–rich Panlilios), and those of Don Vicente Hizon y Panlilio, who became the affluent Hizons of Davao city (ancestor of famous basketball player Vince Hizon).

Famous Hizon grandchildren were Don Jose de Leon y Hizon ("Don Pitong," PASUDECO Pampanga Sugar Development Company majority owner and the first Capampangan multimillionaire), Don Jose de Leon y Joven ("Don Peping," Don Pitong's "unico hijo" only son), Dona Leoncia Hizon y Singian (Sra de Dr Basilio de Ocampo y de Miranda), Dona Felisa Hizon y Singian (Sra de Luis Dison y Lazatin), Dona Victoria Hizon y Singian (Sra de Godofredo Rodriguez y Yabut), Dona Aurea Ocampo y Hizon (Sra de Jose Escaler y Sioco), Arch Fernando Ocampo y Hizon, Dona Purita Ocampo y Hizon (Sra de Francisco Gamboa), Dona Rosario Hizon y Tizon (Sra de Olimpio Guanzon y Pineda I), Don Luis Hizon y Tizon (pioneering journalist), Dona Inocencia Hizon y Flores (Sra de Carlos Ramos, Eduardo Zamora, founder of "Hizon's" Bakeshop/"Za's Café"), Dona Amanda Teopaco y Hizon (Sra de Jose Abad Santos I), Dona Consolacion Lazatin y Lorenzo–Hizon (Sra de Alejandro Panlilio y Filarezal), et al.

Famous Hizon descendants were Maria Luisa Lichauco de Leon (Mrs Ernesto Ocampo Escaler), Juan Lichauco de Leon, Regina Lichauco de Leon (Mrs Venicio Ledesma Jalandoni), Jorge Jose Leoncio Lichauco de Leon, Ernesto Ocampo Escaler, Jose Ocampo Escaler, Bishop Federico Ocampo Escaler DD, Alicia Ocampo Escaler (Mrs Telesforo Gana), Elisa Ocampo Escaler (Mrs Clemente Puno II), Luis Dayrit Panlilio, Arch Pablo Dayrit Panlilio, Gerry Hizon Rodriguez, Vicente Dizon Hizon, Eloisa Paras Hizon (Mrs Domingo Mallari Gomez), Guia Hizon Dison (Mrs Benjamin Bautista), Amanda Teopaco Abad Santos (Mrs Antonio Paterno Madrigal), Victoria Teopaco Abad–Santos (Mrs Jose Paterno Madrigal), Dr Mayorico Hizon Sandico, Jane Lazatin–Lorenzo Garcia (Mrs Mayorico Hizon Sandico), Raymundo Ocampo Feliciano ("Mundy," married to Zita Bartolome Fernandez, principal Marcos Blue Lady), Atty Jose Lazatin Panlilio ("Peping," married to Atty Fe Lugue Sarmiento [–Panlilio], the International Jeweller), Bernardo Baul Hizon (real estate developer), et al.

Famous Hizon descendants are Michael de Leon Escaler, Ernest de Leon Escaler, Therese de Leon Escaler, Mary Madrigal de Leon (Mrs Macario Rufino), Joe Vincent Madrigal de Leon, Maria Susana Abad–Santos Madrigal ("Chuchu"), Maria Rosa Abad–Santos Madrigal ("Tana"), Maria Ana Consuelo Abad–Santos Madrigal ("Jamby"), Rosemarie Gonzalez de Leon (Mrs Emmanuel Herbosa), Rosemarie Gonzalez Rodriguez (Mrs Juan Soriano Lopez), Amalia Sandico Hizon (Mrs Renato Gueco Mercado, founder of Red Ribbon/Amici/Cara Mia), Edgardo Hizon Gomez aka Dom Martin Gomez OSB (formerly couturier Gang Gomez), interior designer Jose Luis Ocampo Villanueva aka Tito Villanueva, Chef Jay Gamboa (Milky Way/El Cirkulo/Azuthai/Tsukiji), restaurateur Malu Gamboa (Milky Way/El Cirkulo/Azuthai/Tsukiji), couturiere Ditta Rosario Sandico–Ong, art collector and benefactor Patrick Sandico Eugenio, Caroline Sandico Eugenio (Mrs Dars Padilla, hotel owners), Carlos Martinez Hizon (real estate developer), Lilian Lorenzo–Mercado Lising (Mrs Franklin Borromeo, Capampangan culinary icon), Jorge Alba Hizon (businessman, popular social figure), et al.

A quiet Hizon fortune is that of Hizon Laboratories, founded by Primo K Hizon, the family of famous international journalist Rico Hizon.

A progressive Hizon fortune is that of Amalia Sandico Hizon and Renato Gueco Mercado, founders of Red Ribbon/Amici/Cara Mia.

Another progressive Hizon fortune is that of Angelo D Hizon II and Leticia Olalia of the "Pampanga's Best" food empire.

Many Hizon descendants were and are considered Capampangans of the first rank on account of their wealth and social prominence.

This "Mother and Child" oil on canvas painting by Fernando Cueto Amorsolo y Cueto is from the collection of interior designer Jose Luis Ocampo Villanueva (Tito Villanueva).

Jose Luis Ocampo Villanueva aka Tito Villanueva is the son of Antonio Villanueva and interior designer Elvira Benria Ocampo ("Nena"). Elvira was the daughter of Ricardo Hizon Ocampo and Elvira Benria.

Elvira Benria Ocampo–Villanueva ("Nena") was a famous Filipina interior designer active from the 1960s–90s. She was educated at the UCM Universidad Complutense de Madrid and at the NYSID New York School of Interior Design. She was active with the PIID Philippine Institute of Interior Designers and served as its onetime president. Nena worked in both contract and residential interior design. She designed private and government offices, clubs, and restaurants; she designed the residences of big business families like the Garcia, Tambunting, Jacinto, Sison, Parsons, et al in Forbes Park, Dasmarinas Village, and other enclaves. Nena was fortunate in that her professional career spanned the 1970s–80s --- the international golden age of interior design and decoration. Big names like Lorenzo Mongiardino, Henri Samuel, Angelo Donghia, Valerian Rybar & Jean–Francois Daigre, David Hicks, Colefax & Fowler, Billy Baldwin, Parish–Hadley, Mark Hampton, Mario Buatta, Michael Taylor, The Memphis Group, Andree Putman, Anouska Hempel, et al ruled the interior design and decoration world, and Nena inevitably took inspiration from their works.

Nena Ocampo–Villanueva was a niece of National Artist for Architecture (2018) Arch Fernando Hizon Ocampo and a first cousin of architect and interior designer/decorator Fernando Luciano Ocampo Jr ("Pandot"/"Fernandito"). Her Ocampo–Hizon aunts Aurea O Escaler, Rosario H Ocampo, Pilar O Feliciano, Victoria H Ocampo, and Purita O Gamboa were all renowned for gourmet kitchens and extremely tidy homes ("Capampangan Clean": a tradition of impossibly pristine living requiring numerous staff by old hacendero "de buenas familias"). Born to establishment families with elegant traditions, Nena parlayed the art of living well to a flourishing design and decoration business.

Pandot Ocampo (who worked in a contemporary patrician style) and his peers and close friends Joaquin Imperial (personified high elegance), Edgar Ramirez (epitomized European opulence), Edong Lazatin (embodied California chic), Willy Fernandez (practiced contemporary masculine style), Ronnie Laing (a master of florals and gardens), Ched Reyes Berenguer–Topacio (advocated comfortable modernism), Sonia Villena Santiago–Olivares (embodiment of eclectic French chic) were the leading interior designers/decorators to 1950s–70s Manila. They blazed the trails that younger interior designers and decorators like Nena Ocampo–Villanueva followed.



ABOVE: Leoncia Singian

Ricardo Hizon Ocampo was a son of Don Dr Basilio de Ocampo y de Miranda and Dona Leoncia Hizon y Singian of San Fernando, Pampanga. He was a brother of Aurea Hizon Ocampo–Escaler, National Artist for Architecture (2018) Fernando Hizon Ocampo, Rosario Hizon Ocampo, Pilar Hizon Ocampo–Feliciano, Victoria Hizon Ocampo, Sister Avelina Hizon Ocampo, Purita Hizon Ocampo–Gamboa, and Maria Nieves Hizon Ocampo.

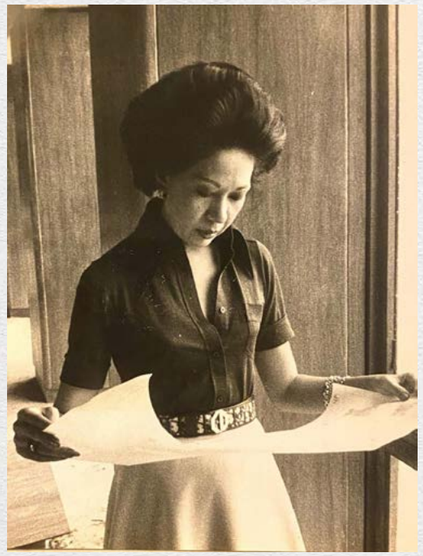
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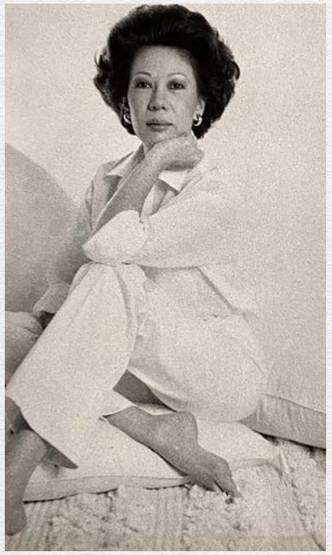
Gerry Hizon Rodriguez
Jose Hizon Rodriguez
Ernesto Ocampo Escaler
Jose Ocampo Escaler
Maria Luisa Lichauco de Leon
Jorge Jose Leoncio Lichauco de Leon
Luis Dayrit Panlilio
Arch Pablo Dayrit Panlilio
Macario Diosdado Arnedo Gonzalez (Brother Andrew Benjamin Gonzalez FSC)
Jovencio Babut Aguas Hizon, "Deng Hizon Ning Malabon–Rizal Atpo Ning Pampanga" (The First Hizon Genealogy), Volume I & II, 1987.











ABOVE: Nena Ocampo Villanueva through the years.

Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

Mealtime
signed and dated 1942 (lower left)
oil on canvas
11" x 9 1/4" (28 cm x 23 cm)

P 2,000,000

LITERATURE
Roces, Alfredo. *Amorsolo*. Makati: Filipinas Foundation Inc., 1975. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 84.

"Amorsolo acknowledged the uniqueness of the Philippine setting, as embodied by the heightened illumination of the tropical sun. He focused on the bright sunlight and how it brought out the brighter hues of the color spectrum. Through such choices, his paintings took on a distinctly vibrant feel while darker tones took on a subservient role."

—EDWIN MARTINEZ, IN "MAESTRO FERNANDO C. AMORSOLO: RECOLLECTIONS OF THE AMORSOLO FAMILY," 2009.



ABOVE: Fernando Amorsolo circa 1950s. © International Conference on Language, Education, Humanities and Innovation, The Masterpieces of Fernando Amorsolo: Socio-Cultural, Page 58.

At the heart of Fernando Amorsolo's oeuvre lies his brilliant colorism and deep adoration for his home country, each composition a reflection of Philippine culture, heritage, and history. However, contrary to his sun-infused canvases, Fernando Amorsolo's life and career have also seen the darkest of days.

The rise of modernism was one of the greatest threats to his career. With many artists shifting to abstraction and abandoning the Amorsolo school of art, collectors' tastes also changed, and thus, his market came to a gradual decline. Subsequently, many people criticized and made harsh remarks about him and his work.

Like many others, the advent of the Second World War proved to be a trying time for the maestro. With the ongoing war, artists could no longer roam around as freely as before to practice on-the-spot painting, much less sell their works, as almost everyone was confined to the safety of their homes. Moreover, the maestro also had health difficulties due to his diabetes. The death of his first wife, Salud, in 1931 also bore a hole in his life.

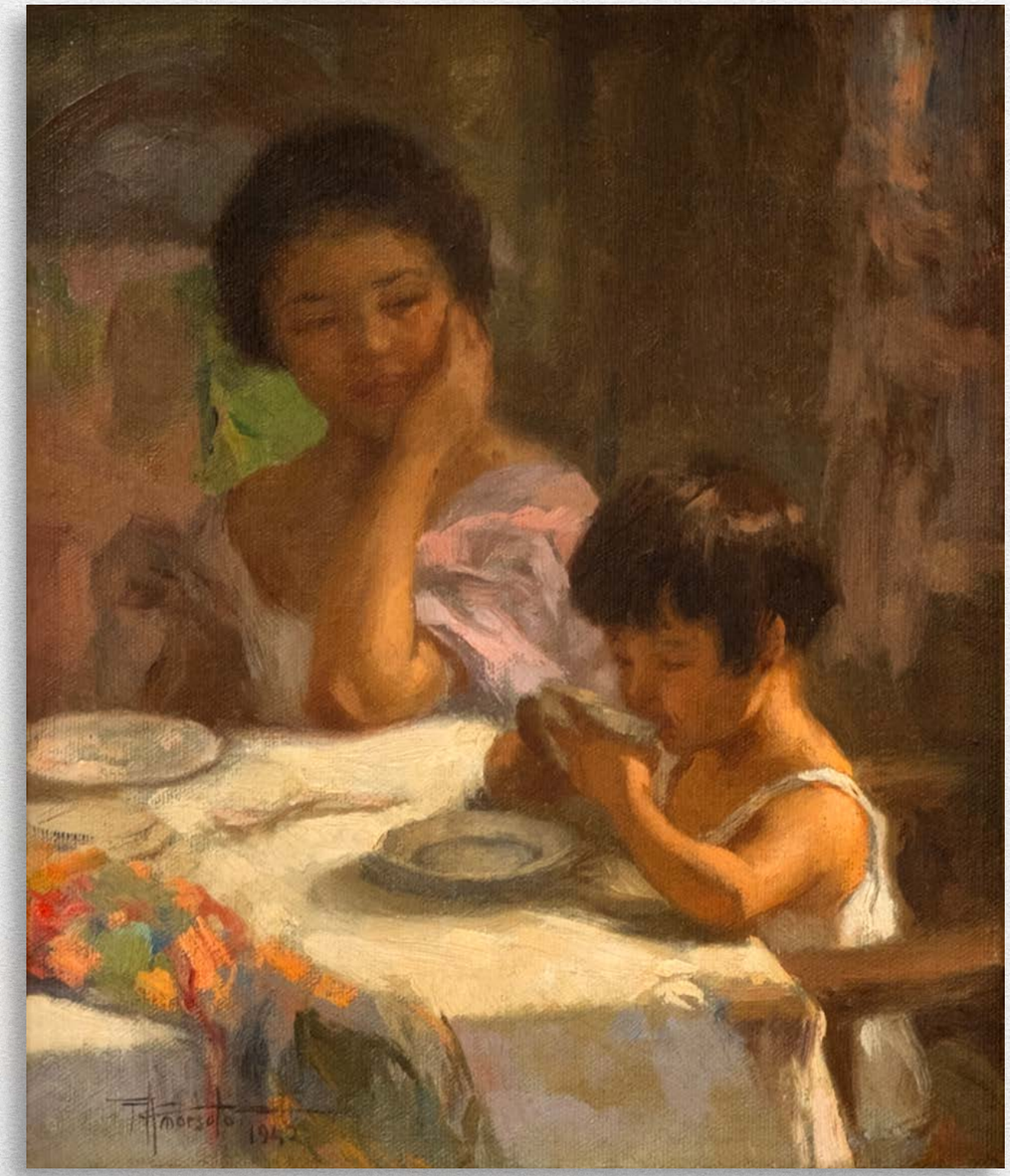
But just like the sun that the storm has darkened, Amorsolo nevertheless bounces back every time. Regardless of the chaos around him, as well as what his critics say, he persisted in his art making and stayed true to his 'light' and palette.

Amorsolo worked diligently to support his growing family. Especially after he remarried Maria del Carmen and had eight more children. Even during the war, he continued to paint relentlessly, documenting the harrowing events unfolding before him through sketches and paintings. These efforts show not only his passion for his craft, but also what kind of a person and a father he was—one who will set aside his personal feelings for the betterment of his family.

Mealtime, painted in 1942, is a testament to Amorsolo's perennial skills and undying love for his family. With his wife and daughter as his models, his skilled and delicate brushstrokes delineated the close familial affection of the Filipinos, as seen in the mother's tender gaze towards her child enjoying her mealtime. The Amorsolo light, though it illuminates the scene, is not the source of the warmth enveloping the piece. Instead, it emanates from the affectionate scene unfolding before us.

"His art reaches out; it does not intimidate, confound or alienate," May Lyn L. Cruz, curator for the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, writes about the maestro. His works consistently highlight the rich Philippine culture and tradition, sparking a sense of warmth and nostalgia among viewers. Fernando Amorsolo's illustrious career has earned him numerous awards and recognitions, including the title of the National Artist of the Philippines. Consequently, his works have been the centerpiece of multiple art spaces, including exhibitions, museums, galleries, and private collections. *(Jessica Magno)*

An Oasis of Peace In Amorsolo's Wartime Years



65

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

Untitled
signed (lower left)
oil on canvas
37 1/2" x 41" (95 cm x 104 cm)

P 600,000

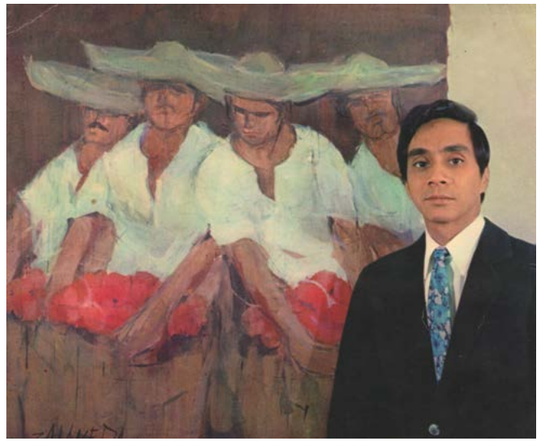
PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

Oscar Zalameda's artistic lexicon is characterized by polychromatic cubist abstraction and a fidelity to folk motifs. However, his creative journey began with his watercolor paintings, which reflected his high-spirited childhood and the picturesque nature of his hometown, Lucban, Quezon.

Zalameda obtained his degree in Fine Arts from the University of Santo Tomas, where he was greatly influenced by his mentor, Vicente Manansala. This influence, particularly in the use of color and form, led him to explore cubism, a style he has since made his own. Later on, he ventured into the foreign lands of the United States and Europe to further his art studies.

His travels abroad, mainly spent at sea, exposed him to a diverse range of cultures and traditions, as well as to different art styles and media. He also became acquainted with people belonging to high society, connections that allowed him to indulge in his love for the water. These magnificent views and fateful encounters significantly shaped his art, creating a unique blend of his personal experiences and artistic expression.

An abstract piece with crystal-like aesthetics, this untitled piece is a testament to Zalameda's unparalleled artistry and mastery of his craft. Each element—line, shape, and color—are cleverly placed, a product of the artist's knowledge and artistic vision. His blue-dominated palette is evocative of the theme this particular piece portrays—life at sea. Zalameda's use of blue also signifies the twilight hours, when the sun has set and the moon is just around the corner. Fishermen just came back ashore after a day at sea, tidying their bountiful catch with the help of their families. His profound understanding of colors enabled him to wield different tones and values, with blue as his base color, all the while skillfully filling in his intersecting planes to illustrate his subjects.



ABOVE: Oscar Zalameda © León Gallery Archives

Zalameda is an internationally acclaimed Filipino artist whose works have garnered numerous awards and recognition. His works have been displayed in major galleries and museums worldwide, including a prestigious one-man exhibit at the Palacio Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico in 1965. A year later, in 1966, he was honored with a personal exhibition at the Malacañang Palace by then-First Lady Imelda Marcos.

There is no denying Zalameda's distinctive and versatile artistry. His impressive ability to grasp and excel across different styles and mediums is highly evident in his paintings, leaving the audience in awe at his range of talents. Despite the evident Western influences, his art remains deeply rooted in his Filipino heritage. Like his vibrant hues, Oscar Zalameda is undoubtedly a gem in Philippine art; his masterpieces present the viewers with the bright colors and facets of the world while flaunting his beloved homeland to the international art scene. *(Jessica Magno)*

Zalameda's Women Vendors in Blue Rain







ABOVE: Onib Olmedo wearing Boycott. © Olmedo Family Archives

66

Onib Olmedo (1937-1996)

Boycott (Painting on T-Shirt)
signed and dated 1985 (lower right)
textile paint on cotton shirt
26" x 32" (66 cm x 81 cm)

P 200,000

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

PROVENANCE
From the family of Onib Olmedo

LITERATURE
Rodriguez-Olmedo, Bettina. Onib & Me. Makati City: Leon Gallery Fine Art and Antiques, 2024. Full-color illustration and artwork description on page 62.

Created during the charged political atmosphere preceding the 1986 People Power Revolution, this rare work exemplifies Onib Olmedo's fearless engagement with the social realities of his time. Painted directly on a t-shirt—an unconventional yet deeply symbolic canvas—it captures the urgency and defiance that permeated the boycott rallies of 1985, when Filipinos resisted the regime's snap elections. In this piece, Olmedo transformed a common garment into a statement of conscience. The work bridges art and activism, merging the raw immediacy of street protest with the introspective power that defines his visual language. More than a wearable artwork, it stands as a historic relic of creative resistance—an embodiment of the artist's belief that art must confront truth, even in the face of oppression.

Worn and created at the height of the 1985 boycott rallies, this piece embodies the spirit of protest that would culminate in the 1986 People Power Revolution—a powerful reminder of how art and activism intertwined in Onib Olmedo's life and legacy.



67

Florencio B. Concepcion (1933 - 2006)

Untitled
signed and dated 1988 (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

This untitled piece from 1988 bears witness to Florencio Concepcion's ability to evoke a wide array of emotions through his brilliant colorism and delicate brushwork. Instead of using direct objects, his smeared-like, almost wispy brushstrokes and admirable colorwork fill his canvases with vibrant hues that resonate with the viewer, offering a poetic delineation of a subject or scenery. In this piece, he places bright hues at the center, adds black at the top and white below, then carefully blends them with light strokes, careful not to brush off the vibrant ones. This process created a somewhat nightly scenery, wherein the mist slowly engulfs everything.

Concepcion's abstraction is a juxtaposition in itself. Despite the burst of colour, they fall on the quieter and more subdued end of Abstract Expressionism. His vibrant hues induce strong emotions in the spectators, revealing their innermost thoughts and feelings. Even so, they possess calming qualities, incorporated from the artist's previous practice of Impressionism, that inexplicably soothe one's emotional turmoil. *(Jessica Magno)*

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

Bottles
signed and dated 1995 (upper left)
oil on canvas
24" x 48" (61 cm x 122 cm)

P 6,000,000

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

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

"The still life is the Philippine Modernist's leitmotif. Even the barung-barong, mother and child, pieta, and the circle as sun/moon, which recur in their paintings were treated almost as still life: a tight arrangement of color and form. Of the Modernists, Kiukok has worked the still life to the fullest. Starting from linear forms in austere grey and brown on a textured surface, over decades Ang Kiukok took his series on "crates" to more complex and bright-colored cubistic grouping of table tops containing a potted plant, or some fruits, or bottles. The lines and planes perform a dance of spatial illusion."

—ALFREDO ROCES, KIUKOK: DECONSTRUCTING DESPAIR, PUBLISHED 2000



ABOVE: Ang Kiukok with the artwork at hand

Ang Kiukok's still life pieces, in their entirety, encapsulate the personal triumphs and tribulations that colored his life. A first-generation, Philippines-born Chinese, Ang is smack dab in the middle of two Chinese identities – the *huaqiao* and the *Tsinoys*. His father and grandfather, two generations of *huaqiao* or overseas Chinese, both grappled with what it meant to be miles away from one's motherland. Ang's children, on the other hand, are the quintessential *Tsinoys*; they are more comfortable with Tagalog than Hokkien, more accustomed to the Philippines' peculiarities and culture. In between is Ang's generation, with unsteady feet on unfamiliar soil.

Even within that community, there are divisions – more than a Filipino-Chinese conflict, the huaqiao community is also alight with political division and generational gap, creating both tension and traditions that cling still. When Ang chose to pursue his art as a career, for example, the Chinese community first perceived this as a slight, a rejection of his filial duty as a firstborn son. Though this pressure eventually let up as the years went by, that expectation weighed heavy within Ang, his paintings creating a world that is as visceral as it is familiar.

In this 1995 still life entitled *Bottles*, Ang's rough, grainy brush strokes create a sense of urgency in an otherwise unoccupied canvas. Though cubism remains fundamental for Ang's works, the playful manipulation of depth and space remains very much his, with this lot's exaggeration just enough to place the scene a smidge fantastical.

"The essence of modern painting is fidelity to the two-dimensional quality of the pictorial surface," writes Ramon E.S. Lerma in his Philstar Lifestyle article 'Beyond anguish: Ang Kiukok (1931-2005)'. "Foreground and background meld, while line, form, color, and texture take precedence over figurative exactitude. Ang Kiukok best expressed this idiom in his still lifes, where the shapes of fruits and bottles become visual notes masterfully orchestrated into harmonious conceits."

Indeed, bottles form the focal point of this particular still life, bright-colored cubistic groupings on table tops in a masterful interplay of color, line, and shape. As Alfredo Roces put it in his book 'Kiukok: Deconstructing Despair': "While striving for a harmony of forms and colors, Kiukok provokes challenges from the work before him, avoiding the predictable and formulaic. A well-partitioned symmetrical arrangement is quickly broken into smaller, misaligned, or disproportional forms to create tension and thus break up the much too easily accompanied balance. Colors not generally friendly to one another are juxtaposed to war with each other and then are resolved by black or soft and neutral gray and brown planes in the surrounding neighborhood." *(Hannah Valiente)*

Glass, Comets and Moons
Ang Kiukok Paints a New Still Life



69

Augusto Albor (b. 1948)

Temple - M 19/16
signed and dated 2016 (lower right and verso)
acrylic on canvas
84" x 84" (213 cm x 213 cm)

P 1,300,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

Augusto Albor creates his abstracts with layers upon layers, via overlays and underlays, pouring color over color. His works are reflections on the metaphysical, depicting tension and calmness in one composition such as his 2016 work Temple - M 19/16. Critic Cid Reyes noted that Albor "regards his paintings as emanations of his conviction and concepts."

Albor relies on an innate sense of color to craft his minimalist canvases, creating a delicate interplay of color and surface geometry. His artistic practice has evolved into a refined visual system, allowing for an infinite array of vibrant hues set against neutral backgrounds. Initially gaining public recognition for paintings characterized by spontaneous sweeps of blacks and grays, Albor skillfully integrates surface and depth, showcasing virtuoso painterly brushwork guided by the precision of grids. This technique transforms the canvas into a field of high-keyed blacks, enriched in specific areas with delicate accents of blues and reds.

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

In this work, Albor faces the abyssal void of meaninglessness in order to formulate new meaning beyond conventional and traditional forms of language and communication.



ABOVE: Agusto "Gus" Albor © Tatler Asia

With the presence of an overarching use of whites and grays, the work shows how irreconcilable differences, despite the fact that each side has been made impure by the other, are merely two sides of the same coin. This painting prompts a more conceptual version of duality without the mystical obfuscation. What the work achieves is a bold and illuminating statement on how fundamental separateness of light and dark is not an objective truth, but an obfuscation of a truly transcendental reality. *(Jed Daya)*

Convictions and Concepts
Albor's Transcendental Abstraction









70

Juvenal Sansó (1929 - 2025)

a.) Rockbound Shore
signed (lower right)
ca.1980s
acrylic on paper
15 1/4" x 11 1/4" (39 cm x 29 cm)

b.) Tidal Rocks
signed (lower right and verso)
ca.1980s
acrylic on paper
15 1/4" x 11 1/4" (39 cm x 29 cm)

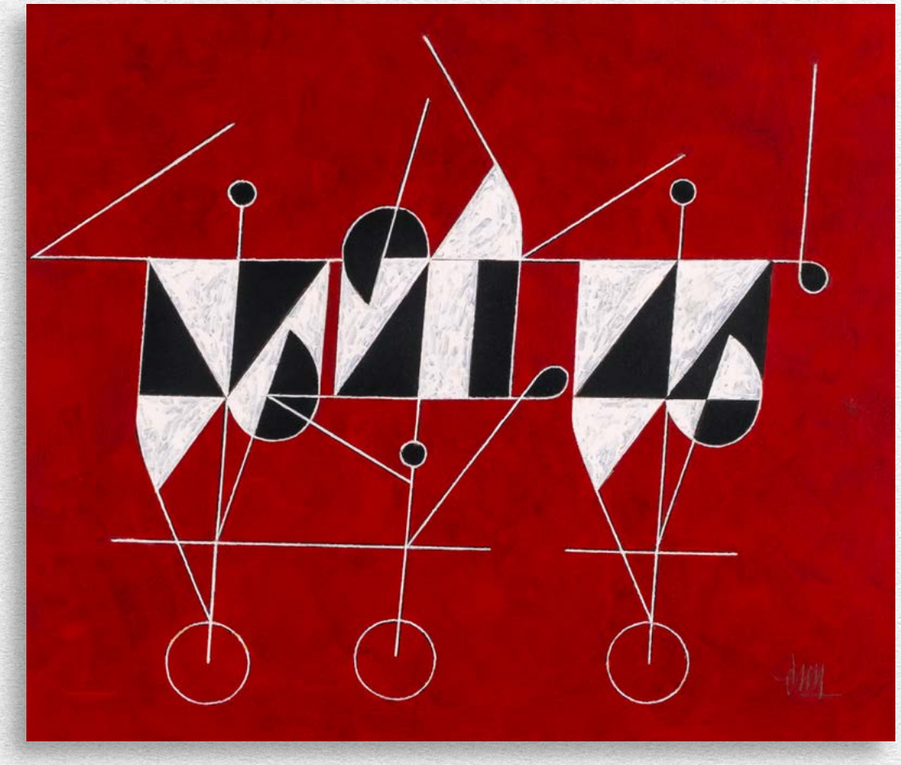
c.) By the Cliffs
signed (lower right and verso)
ca.1980s
acrylic on paper
15 1/4" x 11 1/4" (39 cm x 29 cm)

P 360,000

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

In this three-piece lot, Juvenal Sanso presents three distinct perspectives of a serene coastal landscape, with his revered rock formations taking center stage. His blue and green-dominated palette signifies the transition from a cool afternoon to the gradually approaching nighttime. There was also a palpable sense of warmth emanating from the scenes he portrayed, brought by the conspicuous streaks of yellow and orange—the last bits of sunlight.

In contrast to his generally hazy seascapes, Sanso's masterful brushwork and use of colors provide a detailed depiction of the stones and mossy outcrops in these works. At the same time, the sky and water appear as a smooth blend of colours. Furthermore, he aptly used black and white to add shadows and highlights, successfully enlivening his images and captivating the audience with his unique portrayals. *(Jessica Magno)*



71

Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)

Trio Cycling
signed (lower right)
dated 2012
acrylic on canvas
22" x 26" (56 cm x 66 cm)

P 300,000

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

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

Arturo Luz's artistic journey took a significant turn following his Asian sojourn. This experience, rich with new influences and cultural insights, became a catalyst for the revival of his artistic fervor. Combining his unyielding skills, past knowledge, and new experiences, he dedicated the remaining years of his life to art making.

Trio Cycling was painted in 2012, at the artist's old age of 86. Still, it bears Luz's penchant for minimalism and finesse. With just lines and circles strategically stitched together, Luz portrayed three cyclists performing their stunt expertly and gracefully, exuding a sense of energy and movement. They were especially highlighted by the National Artist's genius colorism, which involved painting his figures in black and white and placing them against a brilliant red background. Despite his inclination to minimalism, Luz is a master of creating linear figures to complement bare spaces, adding a dynamic demeanor to his works. *(Jessica Magno)*

Romulo Galicano (b. 1945)

Harana
signed and dated 2003 (lower right and verso)
oil on canvas
48" x 65" (122 cm x 165 cm)

P 5,000,000

"Harana" or Serenade in English is a beautiful masterpiece commissioned by the owner in 2002 and completed in 2003 by the celebrated Cebuano Artist, Romulo Galicano. In "Harana", one sees a young man strumming his guitar to express his admiration for the young lady who is the central figure in this composition.

As a footnote, Galicano cleverly composed the quiet yet well outlined and well thought out positioning of the three protagonists. The models for the protagonists are members of Galicano's own family. The young swain is Galicano's painter son, Jonathan. The central figure of the lady he is serenading who is fanning herself with a Spanish "abanico" and dressed in a beautifully executed Filipiniana attire designed by renowned couturier Patis Tesoro is Galicano's daughter in-law. A third personality, discreetly peering through the curtains and observing attentively at what is happening between the young couple at the left of the central figure is presumably the lass' mother.

Galicano's "Harana" departs from the usual depiction of a serenade which usually takes place in the courtyard where a group of young men serenade a young woman who is usually looking down from her "pasamano de ventana" . This particular interpretation is more intimate and private ensuing within the interiors of a well appointed bourgeois home. Galicano's treatment of this lovely setting is enviable as it exudes an ambiance prevalently nostalgic and pleasant to the visual senses. He created an atmosphere where light and shadow harmoniously play and is lifted by his textured brushstrokes.

The play of light is masterfully complemented by the careful choice of colors that gives a hint of the tasteful aesthetic preponderance of the artist. The artist's philosophy of



ABOVE: Romulo Galicano © Art Fair Philippines

abstraction manifests itself in the thin vertical line that populates most of his compositions.

Galicano is a well read artist and he applies learned concepts throughout his work. He is a very passionate painter inspired and influenced by academic artists such as Juan Luna, Mariano Fortuny, Joaquin Sorolla and the American, John Singer Sargent.

Galicano remains a towering and significant influence on Philippine art., representing the potential of tradition with innovation. His works are not just artistic masterpieces of painterly quality but also a reflection of Filipino identity, history and resilience.

Galicano Serenades Love, Family and Heritage



73

Max Balatbat (b. 1978)

Home
signed and dated 2021 (lower right)
mixed media
60 1/4" x 95" (153 cm x 241 cm)

P 700,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

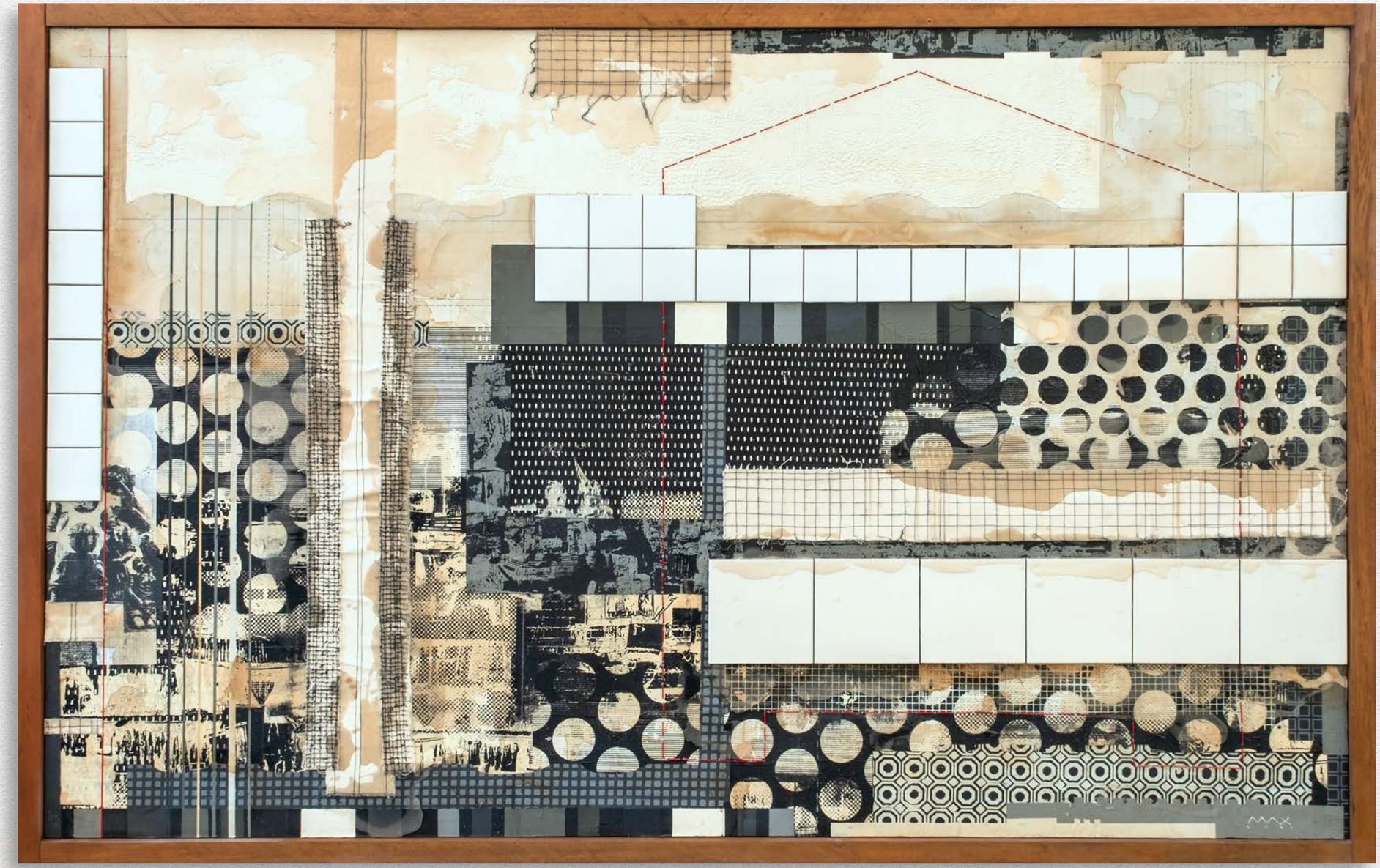


ABOVE: Max Balatbat © DF Art Agency

Making a masterpiece that fuses architectural abstraction and urban materiality, Max Balatbat's *Home* became the quintessential example of his magnificent abstractions, using different materials to reflect the idea of home.

Made of grids made of tiles, and layered papers with different designs, cracking paint, dried splattered resin, and woven threads that look like metal grilles for construction, it vaguely resembles a blueprint or schematics of a house, as red threads were woven around the canvas to make a general shape of the house.

The repetitive pattern of layered materials contributes to the visual rhythm that represents the language of building—the masterpiece being stripped of its sensuality to represent the idea that homes are pieced together, much like the patchwork realities of Urban Filipino housing. Balatbat represents the resilience and ingenuity of Filipino families who have built their homes from limited or reclaimed materials—reflecting a magnificent abstract that represents resourcefulness amid scarcity. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

Barrio Fiesta
signed and dated 1949 (lower right)
oil on canvas
24" x 30" (61 cm x 76 cm)

P 8,000,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

LITERATURE
Amorsolo-Lazo, Sylvia, Jane Allinson, Carlomar Archangel Daoana, and Cid Reyes. *Amorsolo: Love and Passion (Volume II: Landscapes and Other Works)*. Quezon City: Fernando C. Amorsolo Art Foundation, Inc., 2018. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 232.

While his radiant sunlight proves to be a strong point of Fernando Amorsolo's landscapes, his ingenious employment of shadows is also commendable. Amorsolo's adroit command of light and shadow resulted from his short travels across the country. Witnessing the grandiosity of the Philippine landscape with his own eyes enabled him to capture its colors and tonal intensity in his canvases precisely. Additionally, his immersion with the townsfolk allowed him to give an accurate portrayal of their everyday lives and activities in his paintings.

In *Barrio Fiesta*, painted in 1949, Amorsolo's vivid hues bring to life the local folks' celebration of a local feast. The painting depicts an ongoing procession, with two women carrying flowers and offerings leading the trail to the nearby chapel and a marching band following suit. Outside the parish, more people are gathered.

Processions are a common sight in Filipino festivals, a symbol of the community's faith and unity. Accordingly, the bustling activities throughout the town come to a pause as the procession passes them by—both in respect and reverie.

On one side of the road, Amorsolo placed a makeshift market brimming with fruits and vegetables. Meanwhile, the opposing side is lined with trees and nipa huts. A blooming fire tree stands out, its vibrant orange hue intensifying the warmth and liveliness of this painting.

The light from his concocted sun graced his creations, saturating their colors. It adds brilliance to the verdant greens and heartwarming scenery he portrays, enveloping them with warmth and nostalgia that resonates with the viewers. Amorsolo's palette, characterized by bright and lyrical attributes, is a testament to his skill as a master colorist and a marvel that leaves the audience in awe.



ABOVE: The older Amorsolo © Wikipedia.org

A cultural phenomenon in his lifetime, Fernando Amorsolo possessed a unique ability to transform any blank canvas into a vibrant image of his beloved country and compatriots. His genre and historical paintings not only offer appealing landscapes and portraits but also elicit a great sense of belonging to the Filipino nation. *(Jessica Magno)*

The Eternal Filipino Summer Captured by Amorsolo



Pope Leo XIII, St. Thomas Aquinas and the University of Sto. Tomas
A Saintly Ivory Trifecta

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



ABOVE: The facade of the University of Santo Tomas. Photo by Paul Quiambao.

This exquisite ivory statue of the greatest medieval theologian St. Thomas Aquinas (or Sto. Tomas de Aquino) is at the center of an extraordinary crossroads — a trifecta of the revered saint, the beloved Pope Leo XIII, protector of the poor and the patron of higher learning, and the Philippines' — and Asia's — oldest university, the Universidad de Sto. Tomas.

St. Thomas Aquinas is the most well-known member of the Dominican order, more formally known as the Province of the Most Holy Rosary of the Philippines.

The saint is depicted in the habit of the Dominican friars (Order of the Preachers), holding a feathered quill in his right hand and a scroll in his left, symbolic of his various monumental works, including the Summa Theologiae. A radiant sun on his chest represents the illumination of philosophical thought who reputedly shone in both virtue and doctrine.

Trodden by the saint's foot is a disheveled figure, possibly the Arabian philosopher Averroes who Aquinas cited and corrected, demonstrating the triumph of his superior theological reasoning.

The first medallion reads "A Su Santidad Leon XIII en su Jubileo Sacerdotal (To His Holiness Leo XIII on his Sacerdotal Jubilee."



ABOVE: A 1952 depiction of Pope Leo XIII, part of Antonio Garcia Llamas' four-panel History of UST mural, currently on display at the University of Santo Tomas Main Building Lobby. Photo by Paul Quiambao.

The medallion on the right reads "Ratio Ad Humanum Fastigium Thomae Pennis Evecta, Jam Pere Nequit Sublimus Assurgere Aetern Patr." This is a quote from Pope Leo XIII's encyclical Aeterna Patris, extolling the virtues of St. Thomas Aquinas. He wrote "Human reasoning borne on the wings of Thomas Aquinas could scarcely rise higher."

The medallion on the left reads "S. Thomam Patronum Declaramus Scholarum Catholicarum Cum Hoc. Sit" and which refers to Pope Leo XIII's landmark proclamation of St. Thomas as the patron of all Catholic schools.

The final medallion reads "Provincia del Smo. Rosario de Filipinas" (Province of the Most Holy Province of the Philippines.)

The other protagonist was Pope Leo XIII (1810 - 1903) was an exceptional pope renowned for his keen intellect and his admiration for St. Thomas Aquinas. He was also the author of Rerum Novarum(1891), which addressed the condition of the working classes. He strongly advocated a return to the philosophical and theological teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, promoting them as the standard for Catholic education through his encyclical Aeterni Patris (1879).

The National Historical Commission of the Philippines noted that the Dominicans were the fourth group of religious orders after the Augustinians, Franciscans and Jesuits that arrived in the Philippines, doing so in 1587.

"One of them was Fr. Miguel de Benavides who was appointed as the third Archbishop of Manila in 1603. Fr. Benavides most important legacy was his founding of UST, an institution of higher learning, initially intended to be a "seminary-college" to prepare young men for the priesthood. In his last will, Fr. Benavides donated his personal library and 1,500 pesos which was a huge amount of money at that time, to finance the establishment of the college.

Interestingly, the original name of UST was "the Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Santisimo Rosario which was established in Intramuros with Fr. Domingo Gonzalez, O.P. appointed as rector. It was unfortunate that Benavides died on July 26, 1605 without even seeing the fruit of his work. In 1619, Pope Paul V granted the offering of degrees in Philosophy and Theology to all Dominican colleges in the world. Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Rosario was renamed Colegio de Santo Tomas, in memory of the



ABOVE: Detail of the St. Thomas Aquinas ivory

foremost Dominican Theologian and its patron-saint, St. Thomas Aquinas, in 1625.

"Pope Innocent X elevated the college to a university in 1645, making it the oldest existing University in Asia.

"On September 17, 1902, Pope Leo XIII made the University of Santo Tomas a "Pontifical University", and by 1947, Pope Pius XII bestowed upon it the title of "The Catholic University of the Philippines". The University of Santo Tomas is the second university in the world after the Gregorian University in Vatican to be granted the formal title of Pontifical University."

75

Espiridion Arevalo (1816 - c.1890s)

St. Thomas Aquinas (Sto. Tomas de Aquino)
Presented to Pope Leo XIII by the Dominican Province of the Philippines, founders of the University of Sto. Tomas
Surrounded by four commemorative medallions
Signed (under the saint's seat) "Espir Arev"
(Espiridion Arevalo, sculptor from Sta Cruz, Manila)
Ivory
c. April 1888, on the occasion of the Pope's sacerdotal jubilee
without base
H: 8 3/4" (22 cm)
L: 4 3/4" (12 cm)
W: 5 1/2" (14 cm)

with base
H: 11" (28 cm)
L: 5 1/2" (14 cm)
W: 6 1/2" (17 cm)

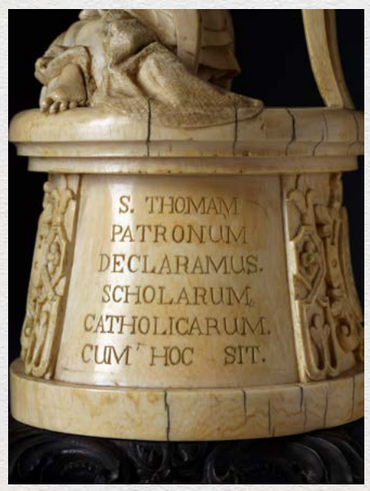
P 1,000,000

PROVENANCE
House of Braganza, the noble house whose descendant ruled Portugal from1853 to 1910, possibly a gift of the Pope to a member of the royal family





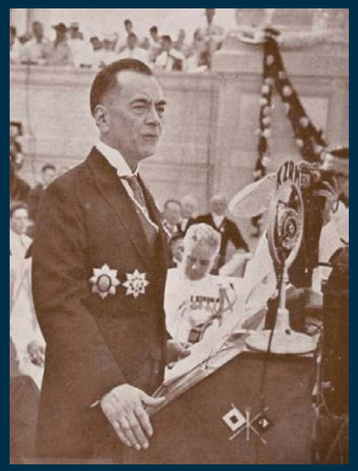








The President Manuel L. Quezon Private Reserve Collection







ABOVE: Archival photos collection of Manuel L. Quezon III, Movie Poster and Logo from TBA Studios



ABOVE: President Manuel L. Quezon at his desk

QUEZON

The Many Sides of the Man

"No cleverer politician ever mounted a rostrum than the first President of the Philippine Commonwealth."

—TIME MAGAZINE, NOV. 25, 1935

"Most Mestizos (of mixed blood) are constitutionally gifted with political "it." But in the past 30 years Manuel Quezon has given his countrymen an exhibition of straddling, transference and political gymnastics which, if performed on horseback, would make him the wonder of the equestrian world.

"Manuel Quezon was a law student at Santo Tomas University in Manila (oldest under the U. S. flag) when handsome young Emilio Aguinaldo, tired of the evasion of U. S. officials who, he thought, should recognize him as President of the Philippine Provisional Republic, started a revolt to run the none too numerous U. S. expeditionary force out of the Islands.

Manuel Quezon went into the bush for a while as a major on Aguinaldo's staff. It took two years, many tons of rifle ammunition and the caginess of General Frederick Funston to capture and subdue Emilio Aguinaldo in 1901. As early as 1903, his ex-aide, Quezon, was working hand-in-glove with the conquering Yanquis as prosecutor for Tabayas and Mindoro Provinces. He has been drawing a government paycheck ever since.

"Successively a provincial governor and Territorial Assemblyman, in 1909 Manuel Quezon made his first trip to Washington as Resident Commissioner. He had no vote in Congress, but he had a voice. That voice soon reached William Atkinson Jones of Warsaw, Va. Representative Jones had been to Manila with the first great Congressional junket in 1905, led by Secretary of War Taft. About the only tangible result of that trip was the betrothal of Representative Nicholas Longworth and Alice Roosevelt. But eight years later, the Democrats took over in Washington and Mr. Jones became Chairman of the House Insular Affairs Committee. With Manuel Quezon at his elbow. Chairman Jones wrote the act which gave the Islands a bicameral Legislature, a Cabinet of six, of which five had to be Filipinos, and promised to set them free at the earliest possible moment. That moment had to wait until the Democrats ruled Washington again.

"In the intervening 19 years Manuel Quezon spent most of his time rocking his political weight back and forth between two positions: whether to demand independence at once or take it when the U. S. was ready to give it. He electioneered alternately on this pair of platforms,depending on the mood of the voters. That Manuel Quezon always picked the right side is testified by the fact that he was the one and only President of the Philippine Senate.

"During these busy political years, Manuel Quezon gained a wife, four children, a valuable political ally in the person of Sergio Osmena (now Vice President of the Commonwealth), the Grand Mastery of the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippine Islands, the presidency of the Nationalista Consolidado Party which runs the Philippines almost as Tammany used to run New York City, the presidency of Manila Railroad Co. and Manila Hotel, a trusteeship in the University of the Philippines and a membership in the Wack Wack Golf Club. He has also earned the esteem of thousands of Nationalist Filipinos who address him respectfully as "Don Manuel" and hail him as the Father of His Country.



ABOVE: Campaign arch which inspired the movie logo, collection of Manuel L. Quezon III

"Don Manuel once expressed his own Nationalist philosophy (1921) as follows: "We [Filipinos] are like, let us say, a young married couple starting out in life. A mother-in-law is helping run their establishment. She may be a perfectly admirable woman, kind, generous, affectionate, wise and the best cook on earth, but the young household does not want her. . . . A block down the street, or across the river, the household thinks of her with profound affection and regard . . . but it does not want her forever stirring the pot and dominating the bill of fare." *(Time Magazine, Nov. 25, 1935)*

TIME Magazine: Featuring Manuel L. Quezon on the Cover

Vol. XXVI, No. 22 (November 25, 1935)
11 1/4" x 8 1/4" (29 cm x 21 cm)

P 30,000

"No cleverer politician ever mounted a rostrum than the first President of the Philippine Commonwealth."

—TIME MAGAZINE, NOV. 25, 1935

TIME Magazine's decision to feature Manuel L. Quezon on its cover signaled global recognition of the Philippines' move toward self-governance. The timing of the publication heightened feelings of national pride and optimism, as Filipinos celebrated the tangible beginning of autonomy after decades of colonial rule. The cover became a symbol of the country's hopes and the international focus on its emerging democracy.

A Week of Firsts

The release of this magazine happened precisely at the same time as the official transfer of power and the key moments of the new government.

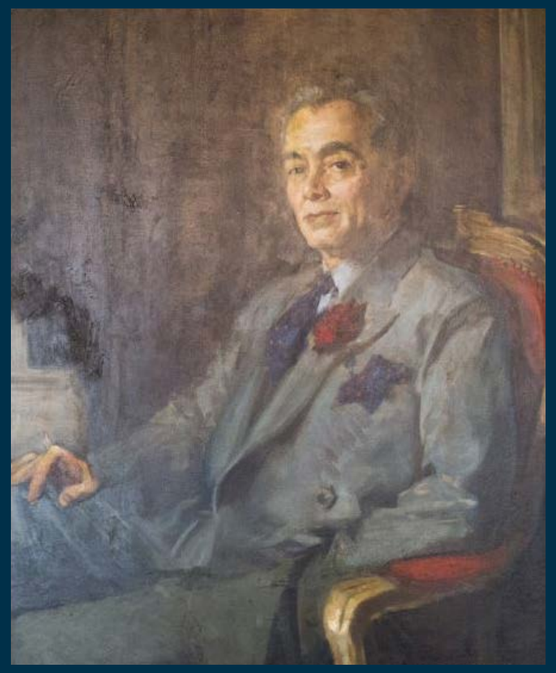
In quick succession, Manuel L. Quezon was overwhelmingly elected as the first President of the Philippine Commonwealth, with Sergio Osmeña as Vice President, in September 1935 — and inaugurated on November 15, 1935.

The cover story, titled "Fireworks & Fear," provided the world with its first major report on the new government, describing the ceremonies and the political climate surrounding this historic event.

In fact, the magazine saw print on November 25, 1935, coincided with Quezon's delivery of the First State of the Nation Address—making it a contemporary record of several significant historical events.

The magazine's cover photo of Quezon is instantly recognizable and a treasured piece of Philippine memorabilia.

Quezon would like the cover art so much that he commissioned the artist, Leon Gordon, to paint his official portrait to hang in Malacañan palace — where it still hangs today.



ABOVE: The Leon Gordon Portrait of President Manuel Luis Quezon that hangs in Malacañang

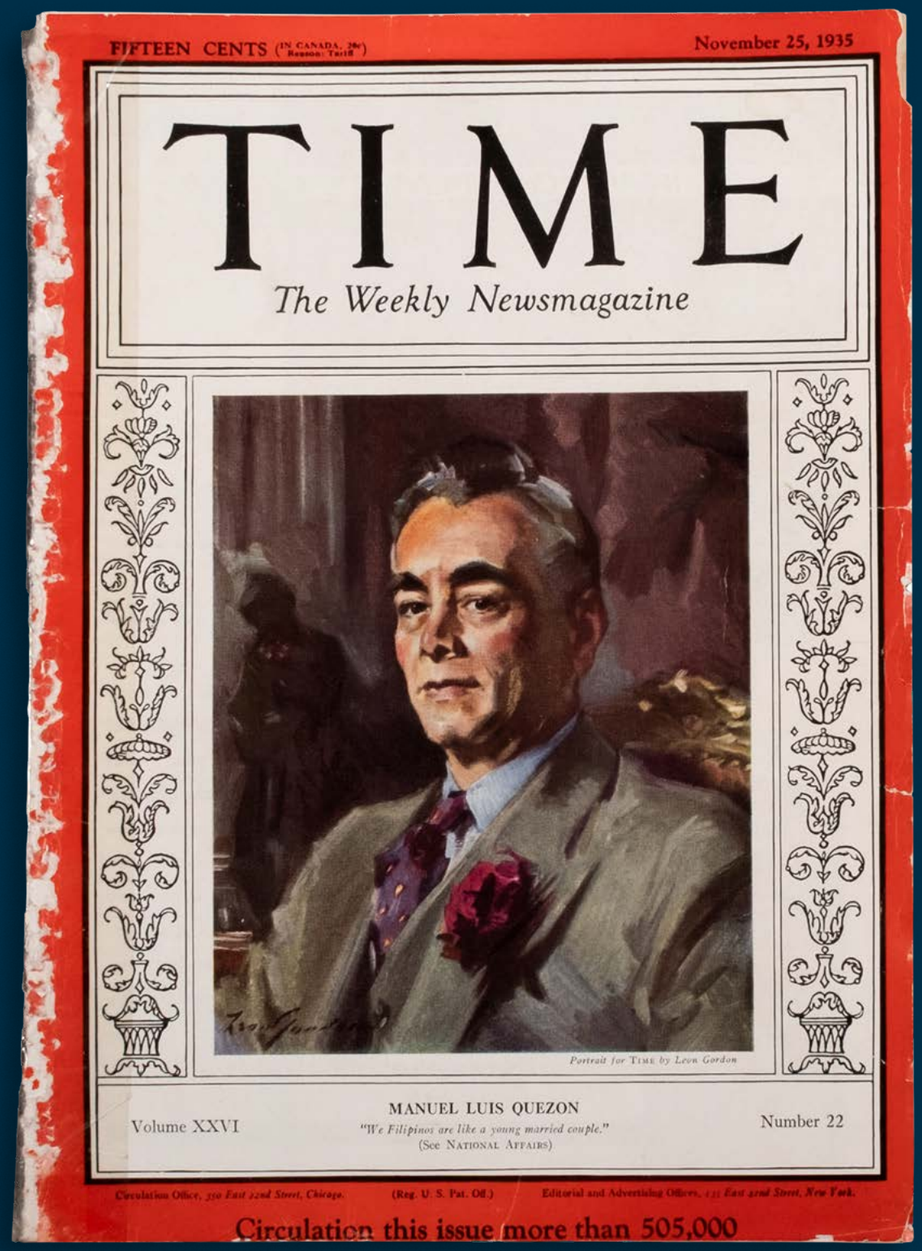
The accompanying feature article described Quezon as a highly skilled and strategic politician who had long supported independence and skillfully navigated the political landscape to become president. The article highlighted both the excitement of the inauguration ("Fireworks") and the anxieties ("Fear") about the economic and security challenges of moving away from full U.S. protection.

Ironic Quotation: The quote attributed to Quezon and printed beneath his image reads: "We Filipinos are like a young married couple."

Rarity and Collectibility

Original copies of this TIME Magazine cover are highly sought after by collectors of Philippine and American colonial history, as well as political memorabilia. They represent a tangible artifact from the moment the Philippines officially began its ten-year countdown to complete independence.

The Dawn of the Quezon Era

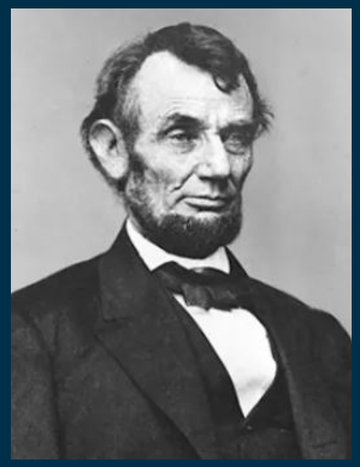


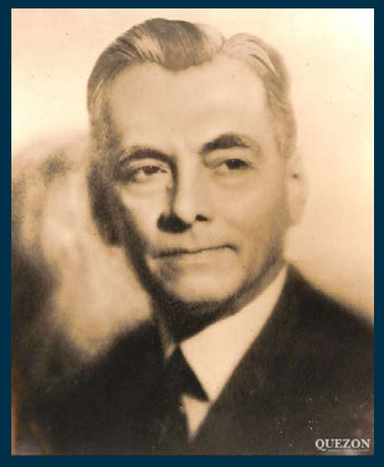
"Laughing Quezon" Gold Cross Medal

Commissioned by the Philippine Government
ca.1948
Gold Cross Medal, Bearing Quezon's Profile
gilt-brass with a brass base finish coated in a gold-colored wash or plating; with Quezon's profile in the center of an enamelled medallion surrounded by a gold cross and 12 rays.
Reverse: Engraved words, "For Gallantry in Action"
Attached to the original blue grosgrain ribbon issued in 1948 with three white stripes; with original red box

A.M. Dondero, Washington DC
1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (4 cm x 4 cm)
weight: 22 grams

P 40,000







ABOVE: The Gold Cross Medal was intended to look like Manuel L. Quezon, the Philippines' wartime president but ended up looking like the American presidents Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The objections of the Philippine government forced the discontinuation of the medal.

Flaws create unexpected value. One of the most famous examples of this is the 1918 Five-centavo mule. The pairing of the obverse and reverse was wrong and the coin was quickly discontinued. Very few examples thus exist today, which has driven up the auction prices of the coin.

Another would be the 1937-ad 3 legged Buffalo Nickel on which one of the legs of the buffalo was accidentally polished away. This resulted in very high value among collectors.

The 1906s 1-peso coin was also hurriedly pulled out by the United States when silver prices, when the price of silver went through the roof." The 1906s coin is now as a result the rarest Philippine coin now among the series. Its most recent sale of which was a world record at 9M, bought by a Filipino.

This auction offers a rare opportunity to acquire a highly notable and rare medal variant: the Philippine Gold Cross Medal, also known as the "Laughing Quezon." This particular medal has a unique and controversial place in Philippine military heraldry history because it was never officially issued or adopted by the Philippine government due to its design flaws and poor craftsmanship.

Following World War II, the Philippine Heraldry Committee, led by Secretary Gilbert Perez, sought to create enough Philippine Gold Cross Medals to honor deserving war veterans. Similar to the U.S. Army's Silver Star, the medal was intended to be a prestigious and honorable award. With Manila's post-war manufacturing capabilities severely damaged, the committee hired A.M. Dondero, a medal maker based in Washington, D.C., to produce a sample.

The outcome, however, was a failure. The obverse of the medal shows a confusing mix of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. In a strongly worded letter dated August 12, 1948, Secretary Perez officially warned against using this version to award more medals. Perez called the craftsmanship "atrocious" and said the medal "would discredit the Philippine Government and people." His main criticism was of the depiction of the late President Manuel L. Quezon on the medal's obverse, which he described as a "laughing profile" and a "travesty of medallic art." This

The "Laughing Quezon" Gold Cross Medal:

When A Flawed History Brings Rarity and Value



letter, now held by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, confirmed the rejection of the medal.

After Perez's condemnation, the A.M. Dondero "Laughing Quezon" variant of the Gold Cross Medal was never officially approved or mass-produced. A few of these medals may have been issued in the United States at the time, and some were acquired by notable individuals, including General Carlos P. Romulo, who is known to have owned one for his personal collection, now displayed at the Carlos P. Romulo Museum. (Romulo was living in America at the time which explains his possession of one rare specimen.)
However, the medal was never made available for distribution in the Philippines, where the locally produced El Oro variant was considered artistically and qualitatively superior.

It never reached the Philippines as it was halted from being distributed here... only sold in the U.S., as the Carlos P. Romulo museum has one, because C.P.R. was living in the U.S. when the medal was made.

The rarity of this medal is closely tied to its troubled history. Like the 1906-S U.S.-Philippine Peso coin, its distribution was halted before it could be widely circulated. Only a small number were ever produced by the manufacturer, making it a rare example of a medal that, despite being documented in official records, mostly remains unissued, unofficial, and highly sought after.

Despite its simple design and the controversies surrounding it, this Laughing Quezon Gold Cross Medal tells a unique story of resilience and ambition in post-war Philippine society. Collectors and historians value this medal not just for its rarity but also for the insight it provides into the challenges of nation-building and the significance of military honors in shaping collective memory—especially since it is now as rare as hen's teeth.

78

Manuel L. Quezon

Official Passport
Issued by the Insular Government of the Philippines
Dated: April 25, 1924
Photograph of Manuel L. Quezon,
with his signature and that of Governor-General Leonard Wood
verso travel stamps of Quezon's trips
17 1/2" x 12" (44 cm x 30 cm)

P 80,000

CONDITION
Good to Very Good Antique Condition. Shows expected wear, folds, and stamps typical of a functional travel document from 1924. All original stamps, signatures, and photographs remain intact and clearly visible.

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

A highly significant piece of Philippine political memorabilia: the original 1924 passport of Manuel L. Quezon, documenting his pre-Commonwealth travels and bearing the distinctive signatures of both the future President and his political rival, Governor-General Leonard Wood.

This document provides a rare and personal insight into the crucial period of the Philippine struggle for independence from the United States. Released twelve years before his election as the first President of the Philippine Commonwealth, this document emphasizes Quezon as a key figure in the emerging government.

Key Features and Significance

The passport contained all the key details, such as the date it was issued, April 5, 1924. It bore the official seal of the government and the well-known Philippine Insular Seal of the Philippines, a precursor to the eventually famous commonwealth seal that would come 11 years later. It included two original signatures of the former Commonwealth President: one over his photograph and another on the main body of the passport. It also provided a clear picture of the future President: 5 feet 7 inches tall; broad forehead; dark brown eyes; straight nose; medium mouth; round chin; black hair; light complexion; oval face. Giving us a glimpse of the man's physical traits who will eventually transform a nation. But perhaps the most historically significant feature is the passport's authorization: The passport is officially signed by Governor-General Leonard Wood, a firm Republican and one of Quezon's most notable political opponents during the period of "Filipinization." Wood's signature, in his role as the highest American official, highlights the complex political relationship between Filipino leaders and the U.S. colonial administration at the time. Their clash—that started with the 1923 Cabinet Crisis—was a crucial struggle over Filipino autonomy versus American colonial control. Wood's signature, given in his official capacity, clearly underscores the era's complex political duality, in which Filipino leaders





ABOVE: Behind-the-scenes photos of Iain Glen as Governor-General Leonard Wood and Jericho Rosales as President Quezon from **QUEZON (2025)** © TBA Studios

fiercely opposed their American counterparts even as they operated within the colonial administrative framework.

Documented International Travel

The passport includes consular stamps and endorsements documenting Quezon's official travels as a Philippine representative. These trips were crucial to his role as a Filipino official, strengthening international relations and supporting the political campaign that eventually led to the creation of the Commonwealth in 1935.

This document belongs to the era of the Independence Missions, when Quezon passionately and tirelessly negotiated with Washington, D.C., for self-rule, culminating in the passage of the Tydings–McDuffie Act. It is a perfect example of ephemera that reveals the human side of a man who would become the "Father of the Philippine Republic." It captures him in a moment of travel and relentless advocacy, demonstrating the personal effort and global engagement needed to transform the Philippines from a colony into a self-governing nation.

Significance and Condition

This passport represents a significant piece of academic and political history. It highlights important moments in Philippine history—the fight for independence, the early days of the Commonwealth, Manuel L. Quezon's leadership, and the intense political tensions with Governor-General Wood.

The Passport of a Nation-Builder
Manuel L. Quezon



ENCIRCLED LEFT: Signature of Pres Manuel L. Quezon **ENCIRCLED RIGHT:** Signature of Gov-Gen. Leonard Wood

79

Rare Philippine Commonwealth Seal Inauguration Banner

featuring the Seal of the Commonwealth of the Philippines
ca.1935
high-quality woven fabric with hand stitching
40" x 34 1/2" (102 cm x 88 cm)

P 50,000

Up for auction is a unique and historically important banner showcasing the Commonwealth Seal of the Philippines. This artifact serves as a tangible connection to a key period in Philippine-American relations and the country's path toward independence.

Historical Context

The banner's central imagery — the Commonwealth Seal — signifies an important milestone in the development of Philippine sovereignty, marking the shift from the Insular Government era (1901–1935).

The previous seal prominently featured an American bald eagle perched above a shield. The shield displayed the arms of Manila—a sea-lion with a sword over waves and a castle—as an inescutcheon, with the words "Philippine Islands" in a banner at the bottom of the shield; the eagle clearly symbolizing American sovereignty over the islands. While the Commonwealth seal on the banner adopted the Insular Government's arms, it introduced a strong symbolic change. The American eagle was replaced by a chief (the top part of the shield) bearing three five-pointed stars on a white or silver background, directly referencing the Philippine flag's design and symbolism. The original arms of Manila remained as an inescutcheon, although its colors were slightly modified for official heraldic use.

Potential Provenance & Significance

The banner's unusual size suggests it may have been specifically commissioned for a major ceremonial event. It is hypothesized that this banner was intended for display during the inauguration of Manuel L. Quezon as the first President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines on November 15, 1935. Its existence today offers invaluable insight into the visual and political landscape of that monumental occasion.

This banner is not merely a decorative item; it is a vital primary source for any serious collection focused on Philippine Commonwealth history, American colonialism in the Far East, heraldry, and the life of President Quezon. It captures a moment of defined self-governance under American tutelage—a critical juncture in global decolonization.







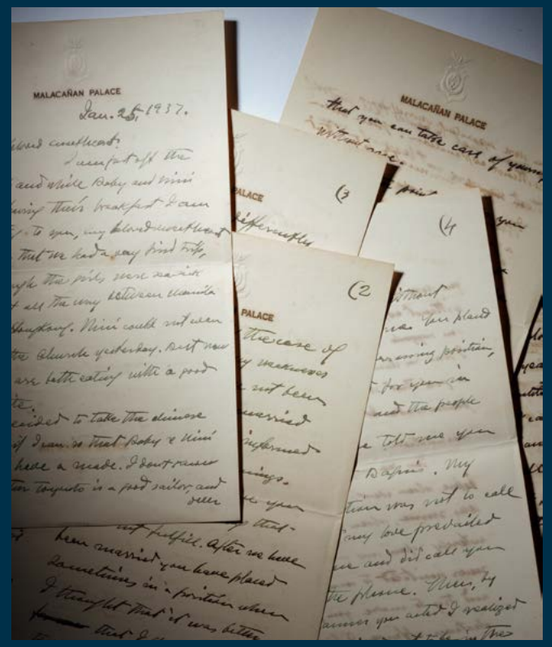
TOP: Commonwealth Inauguration, November 15, 1935 **MIDDLE:** Manuel L. Quezon delivering Inaugural Speech **Bottom:** November 15, 1935. Legislative Building. Vice President John Nance Garner; High Commissioner Frank Murphy; Secretary of War George Dern; President Manuel L. Quezon. © Photos from the Quezon Family Collection

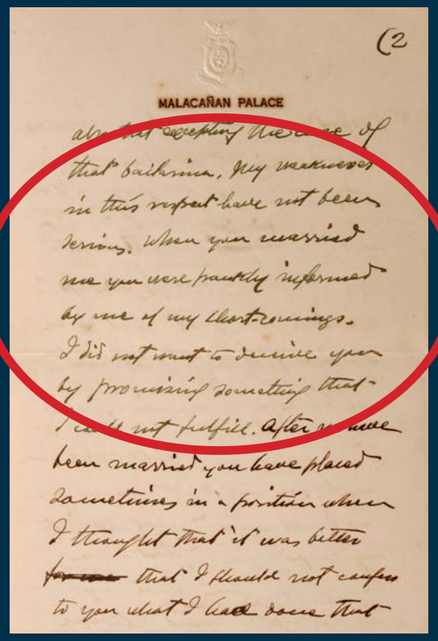
Historic Philippine Commonwealth Presidential Banner



The Private Confessions of President Quezon

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL





80

Manuel L. Quezon
Letter to Doña Aurora Quezon

Dated January 25, 1937
Handwrittten, signed "Dad"
Consisting of Six pages of cream vellum paper embossed with the Seal of the Commonwealth Republic and the words "Malacañan Palace" below it.
Written on both sides of each paper.
including President Quezon's Calling Card, A Photograph with his family, and a newspaper clipping of the same series of the photograph
letters:
i. 9" x 5 3/8" (23 cm x 14 cm)
ii. 9" x 5 3/8" (23 cm x 14 cm)
iii. 9" x 5 3/8" (23 cm x 14 cm)
iv. 9" x 5 3/8" (23 cm x 14 cm)
v. 9" x 5 3/8" (23 cm x 14 cm)
vi. 9" x 5 3/8" (23 cm x 14 cm)

photographs:
i. 8 1/2" x 6 1/2" (22 cm x 17 cm)
ii. 5" x 4 1/4" (13 cm x 11 cm)
business card:
1 3/4" x 3 1/4" (5 cm x 8 cm)

P 50,000

CONDITION
Excellent Condition

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Manila




Quezon used to take his family with him in his travels around the Philippines and abroad. Here, in the 1930's, he is shown with Doña Aurora and their children aboard a ship waving to friends on the dock.

A newly discovered letter written by President Manuel L. Quezon to his wife Doña Aurora pulls back the curtain on their marriage — and has the president speak out on his own behalf on the various charges of illicit affairs made against him.

"Please don't doubt me," Quezon pleads. "My love has never changed from the first day I have realized that I was in love with you. I have my weakness as you know, but dear it's all superficial ...

"And you know also that accepting the case of that bailerina (taxi dancer). My weakness in this respect have (sic) not been serious."

Quezon would argue that he was completely honest with her, from the beginning of their marriage.

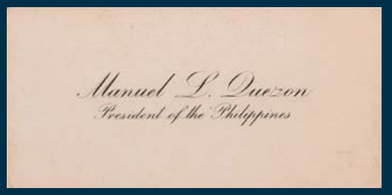
He said, "When you married me, you were frankly informed by me of my shortcomings. I did not want to deceive you by promising something that I could not fulfill."

The president wrote on, "You have placed (me) sometimes in a position where I thought that it was better that I should not confess to you what I had done that might hurt your feelings."

The letter details that Doña Aurora had decamped to Baguio without letting him know — causing him embarassment in front of the Palace staff — and despite how this may have hurt him, he chose to forgive her.

On the charge that Doña made that he had an "illicit relation with a girl that was a government pensionada," Quezon merely answered, "I resented the insinuation."

He added sharply, "During this last year of my presidency I have grown tremendously. My sense of values has been sharper.. I cannot forget, even in my most private affairs and family relations that certain consideration is due to my office."



Excerpts

"I have my weakness as you know, but dear it's all superficial and you know also that excepting the case of that bailerina (taxi dancer). My weakness in this respect have not been serious."

"When you married me, you were frankly informed by me of my short -comings. I did not want to deceive you by promising something that I could not fulfill. After we have been married you have placed (me) sometimes in a position where l thought that it was better that I should not confess to you what I had done that might hurt your feelings."

" Then when you insinuated later that l was in illicit relation with a girl that was a government pensionada, I resented the insinuation."

Make no mistake, 1937 was an eventful year for President Quezon and lest it not be said that he did nothing but chase skirts and appease his wife, it was also a wholly productive time for him and the Commonwealth.

Just two weeks earlier, Quezon signed into law the creation of the Institute of the National Language to develop a national language for the Philippines — and to base it on Tagalog.

In the same year, he also guided the Philippines into giving the women the right to vote; saw the establishment of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, and welcomed Jews fleeing the Nazi invasion of Europe.

While the letter reveals a controversial side of Quezon, it also shows his caring and generous side in an atmosphere that he describes as so stressful, that "if I had not been strong perhaps I would have had a nervous breakdown again."

~~Edgardo Debas~~ (Moulins, France, 23 May 1845 – Madrid, 28 December 1891)
Half-length cabinet card photograph
1890
Reproduced by the Napoleon Studio, Madrid
5 3/4" x 4" (14 cm x 10 cm)

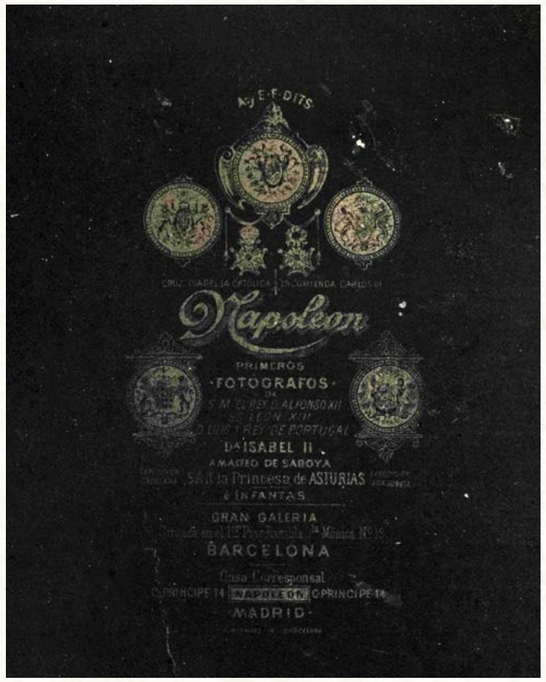
P 120,000

A historically significant Rizaliana relic, this cabinet card photograph features the Philippines' National Hero José Rizal and was originally taken by renowned French-Spanish photographer Edgardo Debas.

According to Wenceslao E. Retana, the first biographer of the national hero, this full-size cabinet card photo was taken after Rizal arrived in Madrid in 1890. It was during this period that he received the heartbreaking news of his family's eviction from Calamba and the wedding of his beloved Leonor Rivera. In a state of depression, Rizal challenged Antonio Luna to a duel over Nellie Boustead. Additionally, outraged by a slanderous report about Calamba, he also challenged his archenemy Retana to a duel, who, aware of the situation, quickly issued a retraction in a newspaper.

The photograph, often attributed to the studio's output during the period of operation by its founder, Edgardo Debas, served as Rizal's personal favorite and was meant to be the frontispiece for his novel, El Filibusterismo.

The portrait shows Rizal in a formal, half-length studio shot, looking straight at the camera with a calm and thoughtful expression typical of late Victorian portraiture. His serious and direct gaze reflects the formal style of the late 19th century, conveying a sense of intellectual seriousness and determination.



ABOVE: The backmark features Napoleón Studio.

Rizal wears a dark, high-collared double-breasted overcoat, symbolizing the fashion of a distinguished gentleman of his time. The portrait features soft, deliberate studio lighting—likely from a large window or skylight—that gently illuminates his face and highlights his neatly parted, swept-back hair. This hairstyle, slightly parted on one side, became a notable feature during his European years. Rizal is positioned against a uniformly bright background, with subtle yet distinct shadows on the coat's folds, emphasizing him as the main focus. The high-contrast backdrop enhances his face and jacket, while the minimalist, formal setting is typical of professional European portrait studios, including that of Debas.

The photograph with its smooth glossy finish, exhibits the characteristic warm sepia tones resulting from the gold-toning process. It is mounted onto its original thick cardboard support. Its size made it ideal for public display on Victorian cabinets and mantelpieces. Such cards typically bore the elaborate embossed or printed mark of the studio on the bottom margin and reverse, a tradition of photographic establishments of the late 19th century.

This cabinet card of Rizal was originally taken by the well-known Debas studio in Madrid around 1890. The backmark features the Napoleón Studio, a prestigious photography studio in Spain that used its significant influence and royal connections—such as with King Alfonso XII—to distribute popular portraits like this iconic image of Rizal across Europe and the Philippines.

This exceptional photograph is a profound piece of cultural history, capturing Rizal at the peak of his intellectual and subversive influence.

Rizal's Favorite Portrait
A Historic Photograph Intended as the Fili Frontispiece



The Rare Poetry Book Dedicated by Jose Rizal to Leonor Rivera

The Only Surviving Love Token

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL





LEFT: Leonor Rivera **RIGHT:** Jose Rizal

This precious book is the only remaining tribute Rizal dedicated to his love, Leonor Rivera, whose tragic fate he envisioned in the iconic character of María Clara in his groundbreaking novel, *Noli me tangere*.

Most likely acquired by Rizal during his student days in Madrid, the *Álbum poético: Colección de composiciones inéditas de los más notables escritores de España* (Poetry Album: Collection of unpublished compositions by Spain's most notable writers, illustrated with magnificent engravings) is a beautifully produced anthology of poetry typical of late 19th-century Spain's elegant gift books. Published by Ramón Molinas, it was given to subscribers of the modest yet liberal illustrated magazine *La Ilustración Ibérica*. This volume features previously unpublished poems by esteemed Spanish writers such as Gaspar Núñez de Arce, Ramón de Campoamor, and Salvador Rueda. Remarkably, it also includes works by emerging women poets like Rosario de Acuña, Sofía Casanova, and Mercedes de Velilla. The *Álbum poético* aimed to blend high-quality visuals with accessible literary and cultural content for a burgeoning middle-class audience.



ABOVE: Album poético, Barcelona, 1884, an anthology of new Romanticist poems by renowned Spanish writers, which was published as a gift book for the subscribers of the illustrated magazine, La Ilustración Ibérica.



ABOVE: Jose Rizal's handwritten dedication, "a Leonor Rivera Recuerdo" (to Leonor Rivera, a remembrance)

The *Álbum* mirrors young Rizal's poetic preferences during Spain's Restoration era, characterized by Romanticist poetry's emphasis on expressive sentiment, moral contemplation, and natural beauty. The poems cover familiar themes—love, faith, work, seasons, family, and the passage of time. Landscapes, dawns, and sunsets are painted with tender lyricism, and everyday virtues like labor and devotion are celebrated with straightforwardness and warmth.

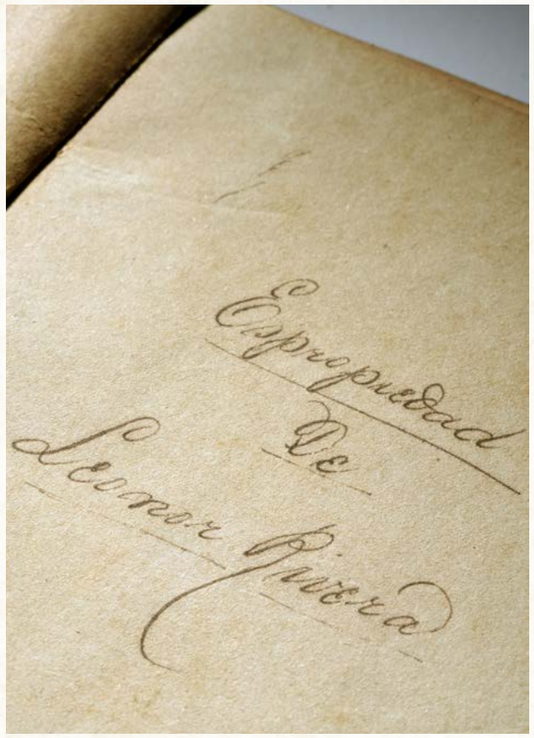
The collection unites renowned poets and skilled magazine writers of the time, embodying an era that cherished poetry as both art and decoration. Featuring magnificent engravings, a large format, and elegant verse, the *Álbum poético* was created to be both read and admired, serving as a symbol of refined taste and cultural sophistication—qualities Rizal aimed to impress his young, native sweetheart with.

When Rizal bought this illustrated poetry book in Spain and sent it to Leonor in the Philippines, he intended it as more than just a simple gesture. It served as a physical symbol of their undying love. Through this book, Rizal was literally sharing his European experiences with Leonor, giving her a glimpse into the culture and intellectual environment he was immersed in, despite the thousands of miles between them.

The book affirms that Leonor Rivera, widely recognized as Rizal's fiancée and muse, was a well-educated and cultivated woman who valued the Spanish Romantic poetry that Rizal enjoyed. The *Album poético* fostered a private, intellectual connection between them, with her frequently consulting its well-thumbed pages for comfort and strength that helped maintain their relationship through years of separation.

This romantic gift was exchanged before Rizal dedicated himself to writing his revolutionary novels, *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo*. This poetry album serves as a relic of their idealized relationship just prior to his turn to political activism—a journey that tragically ended his relationship





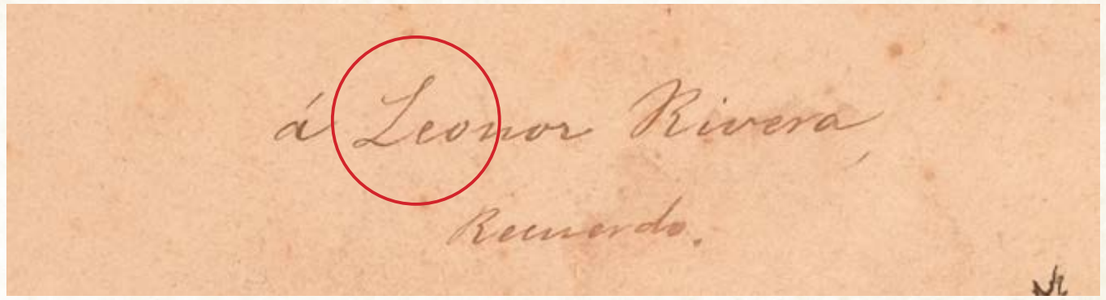
LEFT: The young Jose Rizal in 1887 **RIGHT:** Rivera's handwritten inscription, "Es propriedad de Leonor Rivera" (Property of Leonor Rivera)

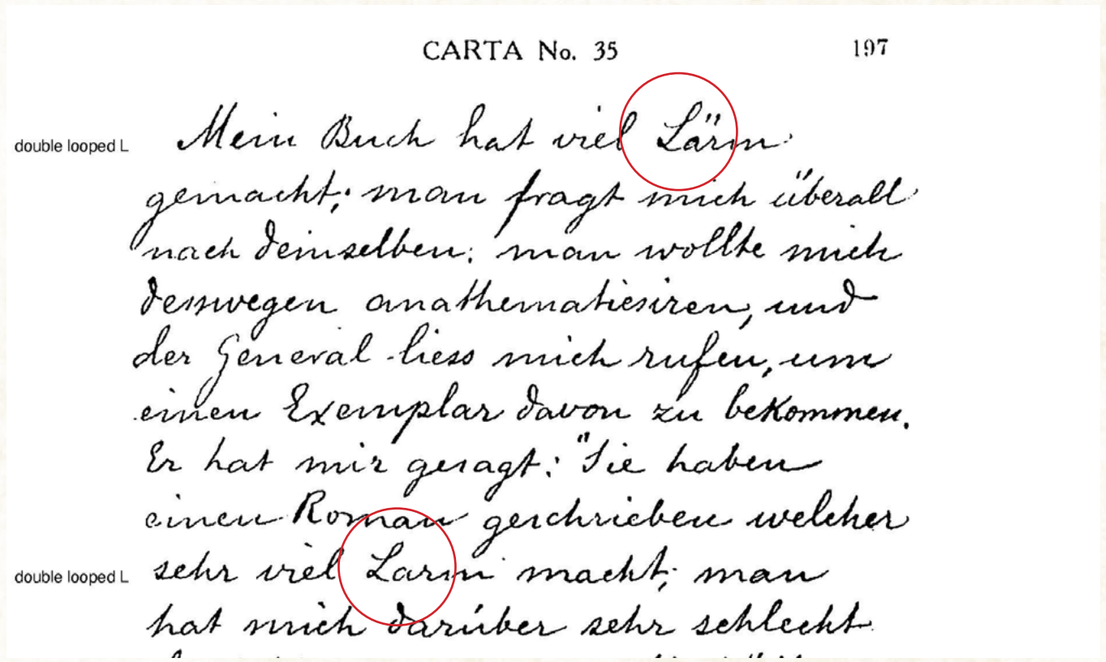
with Leonor, prompted her to marry the Englishman Charles Kipping, and ultimately contributed to her early death, as well as his own martyrdom.

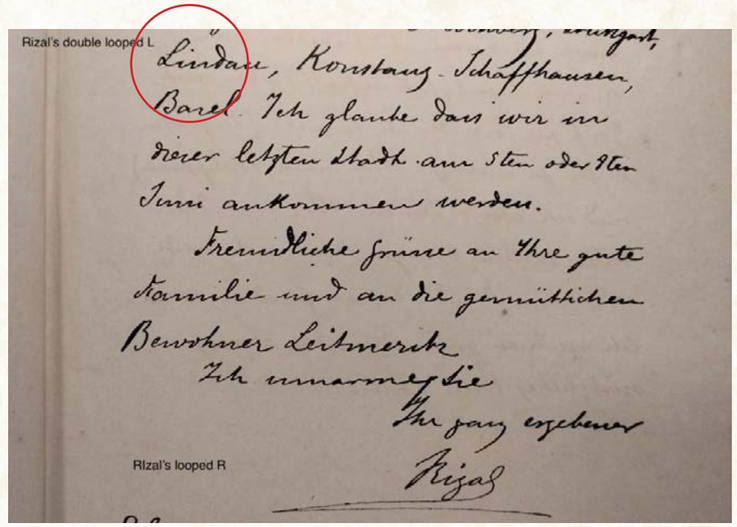
Rizal's handwritten dedication (on the frontispiece featuring two lovebirds), "Á Leonor Rivera, Recuerdo" (To Leonor Rivera, A Remembrance), functioned as a poetic vow, signifying to Leonor that, regardless of his travels, his heart stayed with her. The idyllic image of two birds cooing represented their love, even though they were separated by a great distance. It served as a memory of their bond that Rizal wanted Leonor to keep in mind and cherish until his return.

Handwriting specimens of Jose Rizal show the identical "L" he used in his many letters, the same as the one dedicated to Leonor.

Her inscription on the inside front cover, "Es propiedad de Leonor Rivera" (This is the property of Leonor Rivera), is one of the rare surviving examples of her handwriting, which includes her letters to Rizal dated 2 January 1881 and 28 December 1881. In the first, Leonor mentioned their use of code names, with hers being Taimis, to keep their love secret. In the second, she criticized him for writing to her father instead of to her directly, saying, "You are like a newly opened rose, very flushed and fragrant at the beginning, but which afterwards slowly begins to wither." Unfortunately, Leonor destroyed all of Rizal's letters to her just before her wedding. It is said she was allowed to keep their ashes, sewn into the hem of her wedding gown, and partially stored in a souvenir box covered with the monogrammed letters J + L (José and Leonor). This *Album poético* is more than just a rare 19th-century book. It stands as a powerful, tangible testament to the most profound and tragic love story in Philippine history—the love between Dr. José Rizal and his immortal muse, Leonor, echoing through the ages with this haunting memento.







ABOVE: Here is a sample of Rizal's handwriting in a letter to Blumentritt dated 29 May 1887. On fourth line is his distinctive double looped capital L ("Lindau"). At the bottom is Rizal's signature with his distinctive looped capital R

Gaspar Núñez de Arce, Ramón de Campoamor, Salvador Rueda, et al

Poetry Album: Collection of unpublished compositions by Spain's most notable writers, illustrated with magnificent engravings
Álbum poético: Colección de composiciones inéditas de los más notables escritores de España, ilustradas con magníficos grabados
Barcelona, Establecimiento Editorial Ramón Molinas, 1884
199 pages; 27 cm.
Inscribed by Leonor Rivera on the inside cover, "Es propriedad de Leonor Rivera" (Property of Leonor Rivera)
Dedicated by Rizal on the frontispiece featuring two lovebirds, "Á Leonor Rivera, Recuerdo (To Leonor Rivera, A Remembrance)

P 500,000

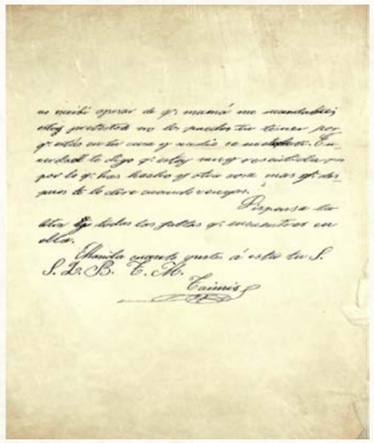
PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Manila

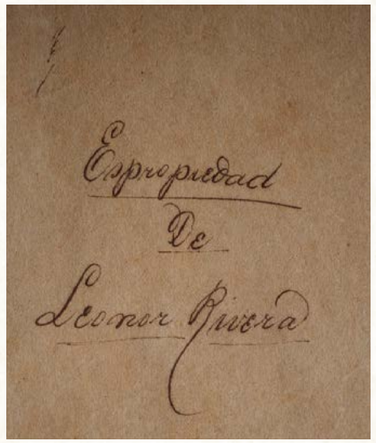
LITERATURE
Featured on p. 49, Asuncion López Bantug, *Lolo José: An Intimate and Illustrated Portrait of José Rizal*, second edition (Quezon City: Vibal Foundation and Intramuros Administration, 2008)



ABOVE: Portrait of Leonor Rivera



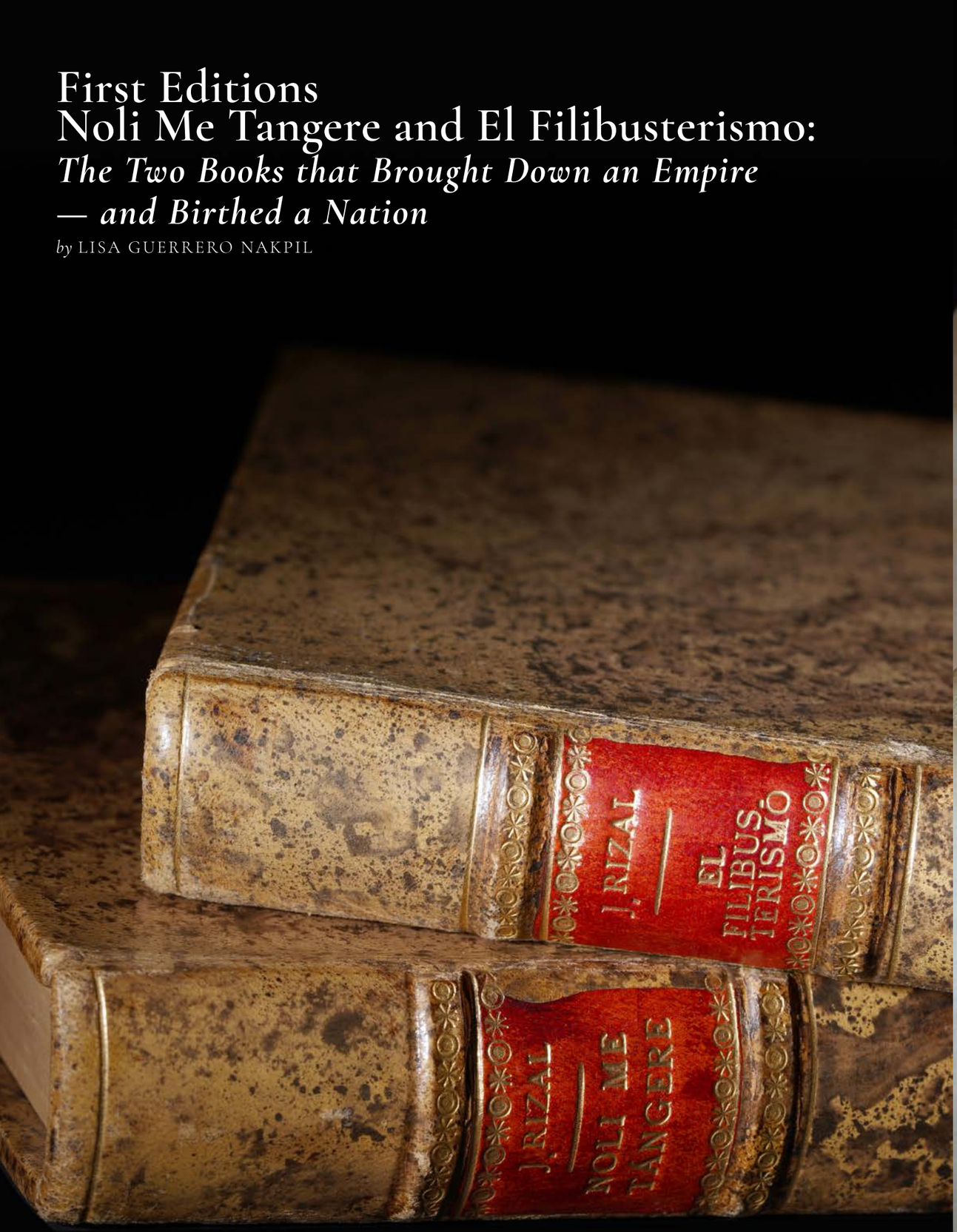


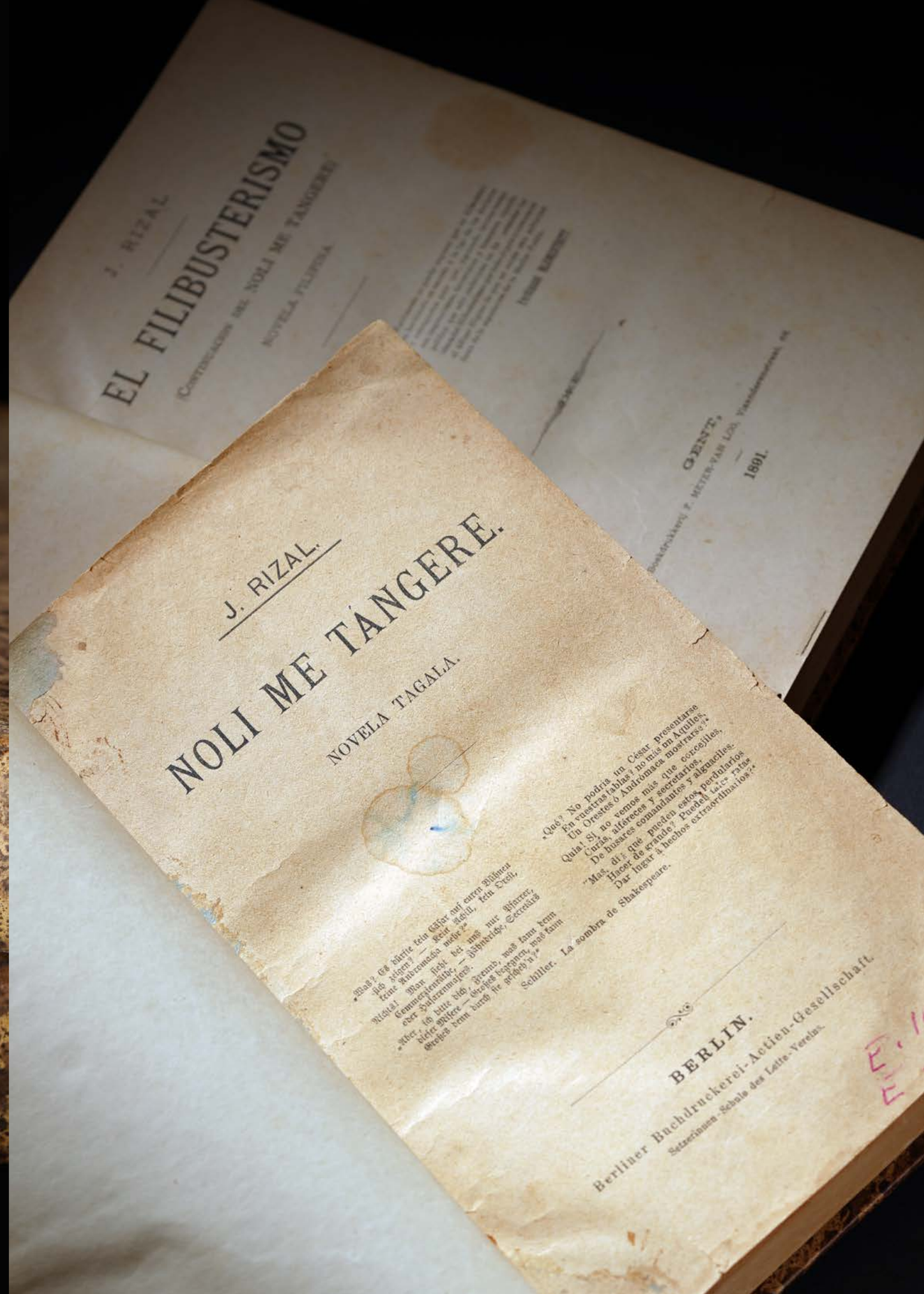


LEFT: Reproduction of page 49, Asuncion López Bantug, Lolo José: An Intimate and Illustrated Portrait of José Rizal, second edition (Quezon City: Vibal Foundation and Intramuros Administration, 2008). **MIDDLE:** One of the two extant letters of Leonor Rivera to Rizal, this one dated 28 December 1881, in which she reprimands the young suitor: "no escribí a pesar de que mamá me mandaba; estos pretextos no los puedes tú tener, porque estás en tu casa y nadie se mete de tí. En verdad, te digo que estoy muy resentida por lo que has hecho y otras cosas más que después te diré cuando vengas. Dispensa la letra y todas las faltas que encuentres en ella. Manda cuanto gustes a ésta Su Servidora, Leonor, [que] Besa Tu Mano.— Taimis. (I didn't write even though Mom told me to; you can't use those excuses, because you're at home and no one is bothering you. Truthfully, I'm very upset about what you've done and other things that I'll tell you about when you come. Please excuse my handwriting and any mistakes you find in it. Send as much as you like to your true servant, Leonor, who kisses your hand.) **RIGHT:** Signature of Leonor Rivera on the frontispiece of the poetry book.

First Editions
Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo:
The Two Books that Brought Down an Empire — and Birthed a Nation

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL





No two books are more beloved, remembered, and honored due to their sheer importance by the Filipino nation —the very same nation that was birthed by this extraordinary pair of works — than these two novels produced by the Philippines' National Hero Jose Rizal.

Each book has a stunning history of its own, reflecting not only the development of Rizal's political eloquence but also the chain of events that the books would set off that would ultimately end in his martyrdom on the Luneta in that dark December in 1896, 129 years ago.

The Noli Me Tangere was first published in Berlin, Germany by the German women of the pioneering trade school called the Lette Verein (or Lette Society) in March 1877. It saw the light of day thanks to the generosity of Rizal's fellow ilustrado, Dr. Maximo Viola, who lent Jose Rizal the P300 needed to print the book.

Anecdotal information has said that the print run was for 2,000 copies. The archives of Lette Verein, decimated during the various wars, no longer have the records that would have confirmed this. Amid the subsequent vagaries of war and revolution, the number that survived and are now in private collections or public institutions is estimated to be in the low double digits, many of which remain in fragile condition.



ABOVE: Portrait of Jose Rizal. Collection of National Archives of the Philippines



Rizal distributed the first few copies to his compatriots and friends in Europe. The rest of the books can be assumed to have made their way to Manila via Madrid, Hongkong and Yokohama, all three being the hotbeds of Filipino resistance and political discontent.

Soon after the publication of the Noli, Rizal would venture back to the Philippines, hoping to repair his mother's failing eyesight. He would arrive in August 1887 and stay for just six short months, eventually persuaded by his family to quit the Philippines in the aftermath for the uproar the Noli caused.

Even in the months immediately after its publication, the Noli was a scarce commodity. Rizal himself observed that the Noli was difficult to be found during his stay in Manila. In a letter dated 5 September 1887, he informed Blumentritt that his book had caused a significant stir. People were asking about it everywhere, and some even wanted to condemn him. Governor-General Terrero summoned him to request a copy of the book, saying, "You wrote a novel that caused such turmoil. It's been reported to contain offensive content and subversive ideas. I want to read it." Rizal replied, "I plan to send copies to Your Excellency and the Archbishop of Manila once I receive them from Europe. I only have one, which I lent to a friend. If permitted, I will find another." The general insisted, "Not only do I permit it, but I demand it."

The next day, Rizal tried to retrieve a copy from the Jesuits, who refused to part with it, so he brought a stained copy to the general. The general welcomed him cordially and asked if he was returning home. Rizal noted that people accused him of being a German spy, a Bismarck agent, a Protestant, a freemason, a sorcerer, and morally compromised, which made him prefer staying at home in Calamba. Aware that Rizal's life was at risk from formidable enemies like the friars, the governor took the unusual measure of assigning him a personal bodyguard.

Although Governor-General Terrero was not disturbed after reading the novel, Manila Archbishop Pedro Payo convened a committee from the University of Santo Tomás, which transmitted its condemnation of the book as "heretical, impious, and scandalous to the religious orders, and anti-patriotic, subversive of public order, injurious to the government of Spain and its function in the Philippine Islands in the political order." Dissatisfied with this report, Terrero sent the book to the Permanent Commission of Censorship, a committee of laypeople and priests. Once again, the book was condemned as subversive, and it was strongly recommended that its importation and distribution be absolutely prohibited.

The fame of the book and the turmoil it left in its wake led Rizal's mother to fear that he would be poisoned and she forbade him from eating anywhere else but at home. He would eventually leave the country in February 1888, taking up eventual residence in London.

By April 1889, La Solidaridad, the Filipino propaganda periodical in Madrid, expressed concern over the numerous police searches, arrests, and persecutions across the country related to the Noli. These actions were largely driven by government accusations and Fr. José Rodríguez's anti-Rizal pamphlets.

The heated debate over the Noli caused its scarcity and price to surge dramatically, escalating from five pesetas (roughly a peso) to more than fifty pesos per copy, reaching an all-time high. On June 8th, 1888, Rizal would report to Pastor Ullmer that his "enemies burned copies of my book, while my friends were willing to pay any price for them, bidding up the price to as much as 50 dollars or 200 marks." He bemoaned the fact that he alone did not profit from the book.

Possessing the Noli was nevertheless so risky that Laureano Viado, a friend of Rizal, was arrested and imprisoned when a few copies were found in his house.

From London, Rizal would next write Ullmer of the "monsters" he had encountered in Manila, the same horrible creatures of the deep that the hero of Friedrich Schiller's dramatic poem "The Diver" would encounter in the quest to retrieve a golden cup from the bottom of the ocean. Rizal would write prophetically that despite all the obstacles, he would chance writing another book.

That book would be the powerful follow-up titled "El Filibusterismo" which would be even more provocative than the Noli, by presenting a more powerful character in the shape of the jeweler Simoun who had more explicit plans for his revenge against the colonial empire.

The Fili, in many ways, started as even rarer than the Noli, with a smaller print run than the first book, with its printing done piecemeal in installments. Rizal was in such dire straits that he had to pawn his jewelry to finance the first part of the run. Due to financial difficulties, he reduced the number of chapters and sought additional funding from José María Basa in Hong Kong and the bookseller and photographer Manuel Arias y Rodríguez, who had previously sold Rizal's Sucesos in Manila.

When this funding ran out, Rizal would be forced to stop the printing at F. Meyer-Van Loo's press in Ghent. In August 1891, he informed Basa, "I am now on page 112. Since no funds are coming in and I am in debt to everyone, I am broke and will suspend publication, leaving the work incomplete."

Despairing, Rizal wrote to Basa, "...if the money which I expect does not arrive by the next mail, I will give up the book and all, and I will embark to live and work for myself [...] At times I feel like burning my manuscript."

When all hope seemed to have disappeared, as with the Noli, it was another more prosperous compatriot and fellow ilustrado, Valentin Ventura, who would finance the Fili. Ventura had gotten wind of Rizal's difficulties in Paris and came to the rescue.

After months of interruptions, Rizal finished the novel on 18 September 1891. He sent two copies to Hong Kong—one for Basa and one for Sixto López — in gratitude for their generosity. He also shipped the original manuscript, which is now in the National Library of the Philippines, along with an autographed printed copy to Ventura. Rizal intended

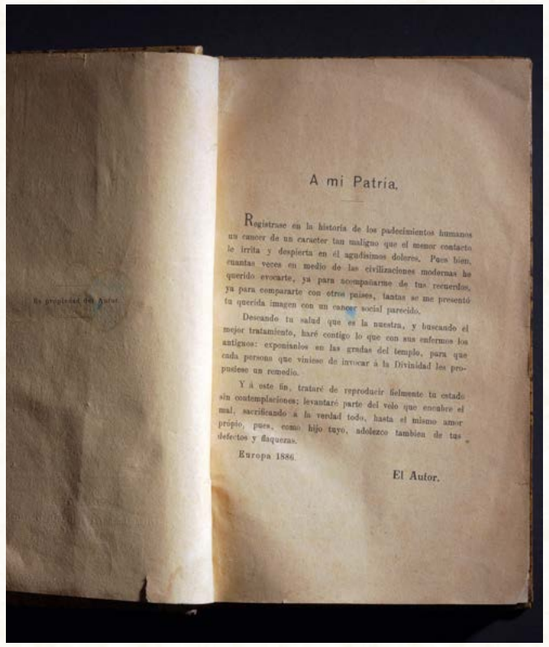
the Fili to be read by Filipinos, so he placed most of the copies in wooden crates and shipped them to Hong Kong, a well-known center of Filipino dissidents. However, these were unfortunately lost or destroyed. It is believed that only a few genuine first-edition copies of El Filibusterismo still exist, making it far rarer than Noli Me Tangere.

Instead of depicting a single, unified heroic character, Rizal's Noli presents a variety of voices and perspectives. Ibarra hopes for legal change, Elías believes in revolutionary action, and Filosofo Tasio thinks both are futile. By the end of the story, none of these hopes are fully realized: Elías dies (sacrificing himself to save Ibarra), Ibarra goes into exile (where he transforms into Simoun), and FIlosofo Tasio dies and leaves behind unread manuscripts. These open-ended endings suggest that Rizal was exploring more than just political change—he was examining the challenges of hope, revolution, and the struggle to find oneself. This makes Noli Me Tangere not just a protest story but a deeply thought-out reflection on Filipino identity and nationalism.

Rizal's first novel presents intricate ideas and conflicts, illustrating different perspectives through its characters. This turns Noli Me Tangere into more than just a political statement; it becomes a platform for debate, ethical dilemmas, and self-reflection. By highlighting these diverse voices, we gain insight into not only the fictional architecture of Rizal's art but also his internal struggles as an intellectual seeking a path to justice and national dignity.

In contrast, El Filibusterismo is a darker, more philosophical counterpart to Noli Me Tangere. While the earlier novel exuded reformist optimism, the Fili is characterized by intellectual austerity and political disillusionment. The work feels more like a political treatise than a traditional novel—a blunt, almost anarchic critique of Filipino colonial society. It's clear that the second novel is stronger in ideas than in narrative structure, with its main character, Simoun, functioning less as a realistic individual and more as a symbolic tool for ideological argumentation.

Rizal's fractured self emerges clearly through this multiplicity. The novel's unresolved tensions—Simoun's failure, Basilio's hesitation, Fr. Florentino's passive religious convictions—point not to a clear endorsement of any one path but to Rizal's different and conflicting ideas across the political spectrum. These characters form what we might call Rizal's composite self: a rainbow of convictions and doubts shaped by his own traumatic experience of injustice and his tentative hopes for the formation of a national consciousness. Rather than a repudiation of revolution or a celebration of reform, El Filibusterismo becomes a literary space where competing visions of the Filipino future are placed in dialogue. In this dialogic framework, Rizal critiques not only colonial power but also the shortcomings of the revolutionaries and reformists alike.



A mi Patria.

Registrase en la historia de los padecimientos humanos un cancer de un caracter tan maligno que el menor contacto le irrita y despierta en el agudisimos dolores. Pues bien, cuantas veces en medio de las civilizaciones modernas he querido evocarte, ya para acompañarme de tus recuerdos, ya para compararte con otros paises, tantas se me presentó tu querida imagen con un cancer social parecido.

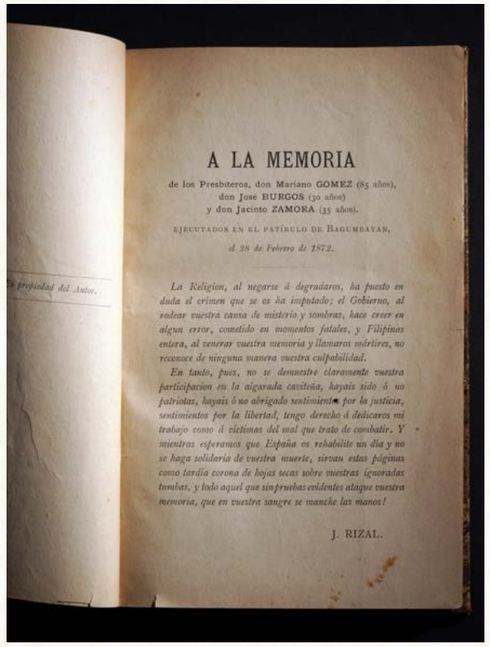
Deseando tu salud que es la nuestra, y buscando el mejor tratamiento, haré contigo lo que con sus enfermos los antiguos: exponiendos en las gradas del templo, para que cada persona que viniese de invocar á la Divinidad les propusiese un remedio.

Y á este fin, trataré de reproducir fielmente tu estado sin contemplaciones; levantaré parte del velo que encubre el mal, sacrificando á la verdad todo, hasta el mismo amor propio, pues, como hijo tuyo, adolezco tambien de tus defectos y flaquezas.

Europa 1886.

El Autor.

ABOVE: Rizal's dedication page for the Noli Me Tangere.



A LA MEMORIA

de los Presbiteros, don Mariano GOMEZ (85 años),
don José BURGOS (30 años)
y don Jacinto ZAMORA (35 años).

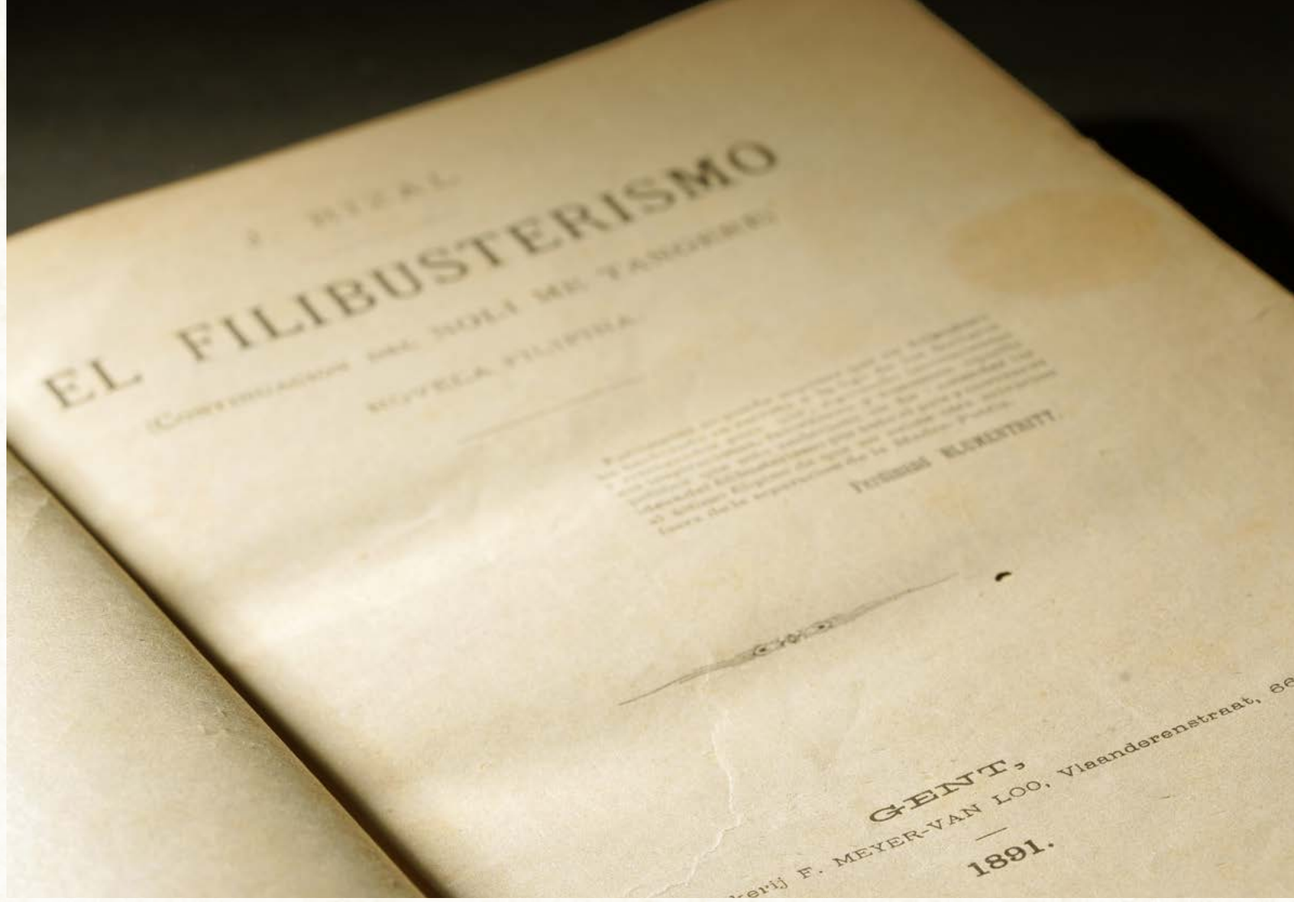
EJECUTADOS EN EL PATÍBULO DE BAGUMBAYAN,
el 28 de Febrero de 1872.

La Religion, al negarse á degradaros, ha puesto en duda el crimen que se os ha imputado; el Gobierno, al rodear vuestra causa de misterio y sombras, hace creer en algun error, cometido en momentos fatales, y Filipinas entera, al venerar vuestra memoria y llamaros mártires, no reconoce de ninguna manera vuestra culpabilidad.

En tanto, pues, no se demuestre claramente vuestra participacion en la alzarada cantada, hayais sido ó no patriotas, hayais ó no abrigado sentimientos por la justicia, sentimientos por la libertad, tengo derecho á dedicaros mi trabajo como á víctimas del mal que trato de combatir. Y mientras esperamos que España os rehabilite un dia y no se haga solidaria de vuestra muerte, tiran estas páginas como tardia corona de hojas secas sobre vuestras ignoradas tumbas, y todo aquel que sin pruebas evidentes ataque vuestra memoria, que en vuestra sangre se manche las manos!

J. RIZAL.

ABOVE: Rizal's dedication page for the El Filibusterismo



EL FILIBUSTERISMO

GENT,

1891.

Amidst the hubbub of diverse voices and characters, both novels depict the dramatization and fragmentation of political agency, as well as the moral dilemmas faced by a colonized intellectual. Rizal's art lies precisely in his refusal to neatly resolve these contradictions. By allowing each ideological voice to be heard, he creates not a straightforward guide to reform or revolution, but two novels that explore existential and national inquiry and challenge. This polyphony is not a flaw but the core of both works, reflecting the uncertainty, anguish, and ethical integrity that characterized Rizal's quest for justice in a very troubled colonial world.

As stated by Fr. John Schumacher, SJ, when viewed together, along with his third book (the annotation of Antonio de Morga's Sucesos de Filipinas), the Noli and the Fili "form a unity, a carefully calibrated effort to point the way to the future independence of the Philippines."

It could be said that the Fili expressed Rizal's own political maturation, having steeped himself amidst the intelligentsia of Germany — who had afforded him a glimpse of the "brotherhood of man and the equality of the races" — as well as the liberal atmosphere of France and England.

His political fate was sealed, however, with the dedication to the martyred priests of GomBurZa defiantly set on the title page of the El Filibusterismo.

The two books together would thus capture the imagination of a new generation of Filipinos intent on seeking freedom from the Spanish yoke — Andres Bonifacio, Emilio Jacinto, as well as Emilio Aguinaldo — lighting the fire that would unleash Asia's first democratic revolution (and thus, its very first republic.)

Despite its slightly lesser fame, the El Filibusterismo is considered equally important and rare as the Noli Me Tangere; and rarer still is its appearance for the first time in auction history in tandem in a single lot.

This exceptional offering presents a rare opportunity to acquire both of these highly significant first editions: the Noli, which illustrates the contemporary and tumultuous dilemma of a colonial society, and the Fili, which points to the future of a liberated nation.

José Rizal (1861 - 1896)

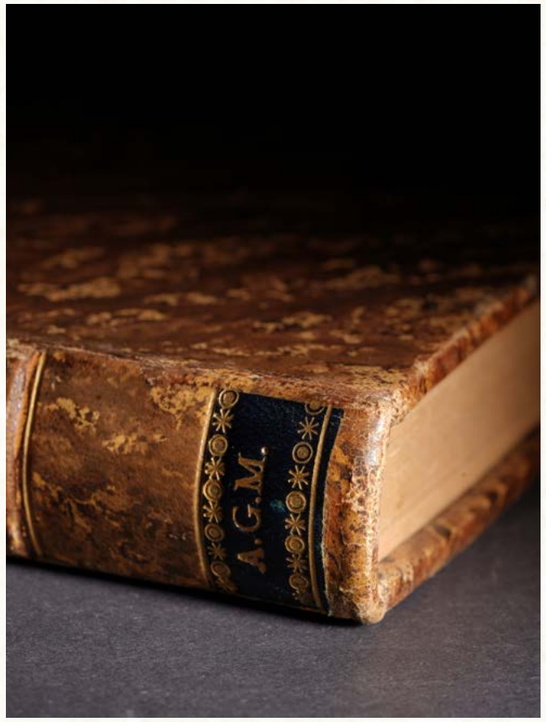
a.) Noli Me Tangere
First Edition, Berlin 1887
Berliner Buchdruckerei-Actien-Gesselschaft
Setzerinnen-Schule des Lette Vereins
H: 9" (23 cm)
W: 5 3/4" (15 cm)
thickness: 1 1/4" (3 cm)

b.) El Filibusterismo
First Edition, Ghent, 1891
Boekdrukkerij F. Meyer-Van Loo,
Viaanderenstraat, 66
H: 9" (23 cm)
W: 6" (15 cm)
thickness: 1" (3 cm)

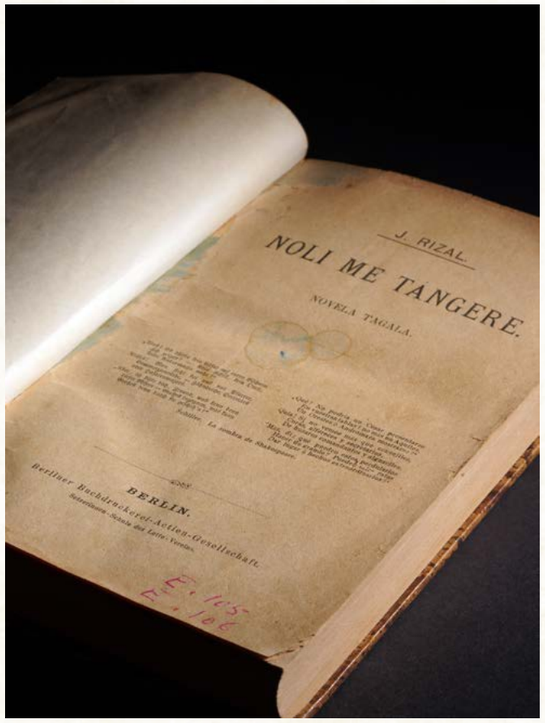
Both bound in hand-painted speckled Moroccan leather with six raised bands, stamped and ornamented, along the spine. Title and author gilt-stamped on red band. With marbled end papers. The initials "AGM" are engraved at the bottom of each spine.

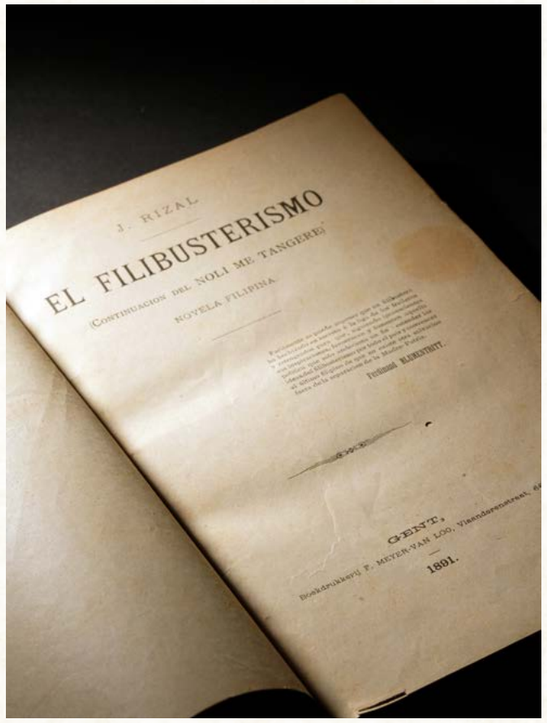
P 6,000,000

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Madrid, Spain.



ABOVE: Gilt engraved initials of the original owner





LEFT AND RIGHT: Title pages of the two historic books. Note: the Noli is described as a Novela Tagala and the Fili as a Novela Filipina

United Together for the First Time in Auction History

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



The Michael Zinman Collection

Philippine Abstract Art in the 1960s-70s from the Luz Gallery

by ADRIAN MARANAN



ABOVE: The young Arturo Luz in the late 1950s © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives



ABOVE: Michael Zinman © C-SPAN.org

When the storied Philippine Art Gallery began to decline in the late 1950s and eventually demised during the mid to late 1960s due to internal problems, including missed financial obligations and the general absence of its founder and manager, Lyd Arguilla, due to international engagements, the Luz Gallery stood as the ground zero of Filipino modern art. Inheriting the legacy of the PAG, the Luz Gallery was founded on December 3, 1960, by Arturo Luz on the ground floor of the Ramona Apartments, located at the corner of Dakota (now Adriatico) and Herran (now Pedro Gil) Streets, directly facing the entrance to Assumption College. The gallery's first location once belonged to Arturo's brother, the architect Alfredo, who needed to move out for a bigger office space.

"As my brother was about to leave the place, I grabbed it. It seemed ideal at the time. In the sixties, that was a quiet district...It was a quiet residential neighborhood," Luz said in an interview published in Cid Reyes' monograph on him.

With the crumbling of the PAG, which was the only bastion of modernism in the country (the other galleries in Ermita were of the Mabini artists followers of the Amorsolo school) Luz had already had in mind the idea of running his own gallery to support not only his personal finances but also, for the modernists to have a shared space in which their art could only continue to move forward and in a concerted manner in relation to the ever-changing global art community.

The Luz Gallery would professionalize and institutionalize the art gallery in the Philippines, becoming an arbiter of taste in art collecting. Moreover, artists wanting to exhibit at the gallery must meet a strict standard of quality, which assesses their ability to incorporate creative influences and produce solid works that highly speak of their mastery, refinement, and technique.

"Galleries have to be dictatorial in matters of taste and quality," Luz said in the Reyes monograph.

Alejandro Roces once described Luz's brainchild in his Roses and Thorns column in The Manila Times as a "handsome, air-conditioned gallery," much like its dapper founder. By the time it celebrated its first anniversary, the Luz Gallery had become a pioneer, with The Manila Times art and culture writer and Luz's then-fiancée Nati Valentin writing, "When the Luz Gallery opened exactly a year ago today, it set out with the purpose of being a "professional gallery."

Among the "firsts" in its record are the showing of prints of Philippine colonial religious imagery, the discovery of [Manuel] Rodriguez and [Roberto] Chabet, and now this exhibit of the art of the American Indians before Columbus discovered America." The Luz Gallery had also exhibited works by renowned contemporary British printmakers, including Stanley William Hayter, Keith Armour, Anthony Gross, and Adrian Heath.



ABOVE: Roberto Chabet © CCP Archives

The following lots were all exhibited at the Luz Gallery from the 1960s to the 1970s, coinciding with the boom of art trends that followed the global dominance of abstract expressionism in the 1950s. Notably, the Luz Gallery also made accessible to the Philippine art-loving public the works of contemporary international painters, exhibiting their works on the gallery walls and thereby profoundly filling the gaps in art education and appreciation in the country.

Ranging from conceptual art, op-art, printmaking, collage, relief works that wed painting and sculpture, hard-edge painting, and geometric abstraction, these works in this sale inherit the legacy of the Philippine non-objectivists, led by its pioneers Hernando R. Ocampo and Victor Oteyza who notably shook the already agitating Philippine art scene in the landmark "First Exhibition of Non-Objective Art in Tagala" in 1953.

By presenting these works, the Luz Gallery effectively became the intermediary between the visual languages of the global art scene and the thriving avant-garde movements in the Philippines.

These works were acquired by Michael Zinman, dubbed the greatest Americana collector of all time. According to the Library Company of Philadelphia, the oldest library company in the US, Zinman's collection of Americana, which was acquired by the Company in 2000, "is the largest collection of early American imprints— books, pamphlets, and broadsides printed in the colonies and states before 1801— formed by a private individual since days of the pioneering Americana collectors of the 19th century."

Aside from his pursuits in archiving and collecting essential documents and ephemera related to his country's history, Zinman was an art collector, as evidenced by his several visits to the Luz Gallery, where he acquired a sizable collection of Philippine abstract art, several of which are now highlights of this sale.









ABOVE IN ORDER: Rodolfo "Rudy" Samonte © National Museum of the Philippines; A photo of Conrado Mercado painting © Conrado Camacho Mercado; Lamberto Hechanova Jr. in his Studio, 1960s © hechanovanyc.com; Raul Isidro © Nami Art Gallery.

84

Roberto Chabet (1937-2013)

Noah
signed and dated 1965 (lower right)
watercolor on paper
12" x 9" (30 cm x 23 cm)

P 120,000



Providing a clear glimpse into his earlier conceptions regarding his approach to art, Roberto Chabet's 1965 early masterpiece entitled *Noah* features a minimalist yet symbolic art piece that tackles the biblical narrative of its namesake by abstracting it into geometric forms, distilling it into its existential and metaphysical essence rather than a literal depiction.

The composition paints a large rectangular form given life through muted earth and sea tones to mimic the color of a massive block or a vessel. On top of the rectangular figure is a massive celestial body (possibly the moon) floating above the form beneath that possibly guides the vessel. Within the main shape is a smaller square with a red dot that stands out and insistently captures the eyes of the observers.

If the biblical story of Noah is applied, it can be concluded that the large rectangular form is the Ark itself, with the celestial body (possibly representing a divine presence or guardian) guiding the vessel as it gives light, while the red dot are the precious life and souls that were securely preserved inside the Ark. With that in mind, Chabet has managed to completely strip the representational forms and instead focus only on the symbol, structure, and idea and use them as a form of visual storytelling—a unique approach that will become the primary hallmark for his later masterpieces. (*Mark John Castañeda*)

85

Rodolfo Samonte (b. 1941)

Rectangular No. 17
signed and dated 1974 (lower right)
serigraph 17/20
25 1/4" x 17" (64 cm x 43 cm)

P 30,000



Rodolfo Samonte's journey into serigraphy began with the guidance of Cenon Rivera, one of his university professors. Samonte's interest in printmaking was further nurtured during his frequent visits to the Philippine Association of Printmakers (PAP) studio workshop at the Philippine Women's University, as well as his time working in several printing and advertising companies. Since then, he dedicated his time to studying and honing his printmaking skills. With his eye-catching, prismatic, geometric forms, Samonte eventually made his presence known in the art scene. His career reached its peak in 1974, the same year he created the work at hand, *Rectangular No. 17*. From afar, the piece appears to be painted with a harmonious blend of colors before lines are added to form the shapes. But upon closer inspection, one could see that the rectangles were individually colored—proving the artist's mastery of his craft and attention to detail. This work is just one of Rodolfo Samonte's phenomenal serigraphs. Still, it is a striking representation of his talents and skills that earned him the distinction of being one of the pioneering figures of serigraphy in the Philippines. (*Jessica Magno*)



86

Rodolfo Samonte (b. 1941)

Paperwork I
signed and dated 1977 (lower right)
cast paper relief
24 1/4" x 18" (62 cm x 46 cm)

P 30,000

PROVENANCE
The Luz Gallery
Cultural Center of the Philippines Museum

EXHIBITED
The Luz Gallery, *Rodolfo Samonte: Homecoming Exhibition (Featuring works in serigraph and cast paper relief)*, Makati, 29 May - 28 June 1977

Rodolfo Samonte is a prominent Filipino artist and printmaker of local and international acclaim. While he is best known for his serigraphs or silkscreen prints, Samonte also explored various media and techniques in his artmaking. His oeuvre, regardless of materials used, is marked by its reductive, minimal appearance and a restrained palette. *Paper Work 1* is one of Samonte's cast paper reliefs, a testament to his ingenuity and unwavering dedication to his craft. Despite its seemingly plain and straightforward white, textured finish, this work underwent a painstaking process. This process involves creating paper pulp from torn papers soaked in water, then using a mold to shape the pulp or layering saturated paper strips over a relief form. After molding and shaping to the artist's desired form, he will allow it to dry for several days to weeks before sanding or painting to finish it off.

With a wide range of works, from paintings to woodcuts and prints, Rodolfo Samonte is undoubtedly a well-respected figure in the Philippine art scene. The combination of his proficiency in printmaking and his sensibility towards abstraction established him as one of the most accomplished geometric abstractionists in that field. Throughout his career, he participated in several solo and group exhibitions and received numerous awards and recognitions. The work at hand was created in 1977, three years after Samonte, a lone printmaker among a pool of Filipino painters, represented the Philippines in the ASEAN traveling art exhibition shown in Southeast Asian capitals in 1974. (*Jessica Magno*)



87

Raul Isidro (b. 1943)

Cultural Revolution
signed and dated 1982 (lower right)
acrylic on canvas
36" x 36" (91 cm x 91 cm)

P 200,000

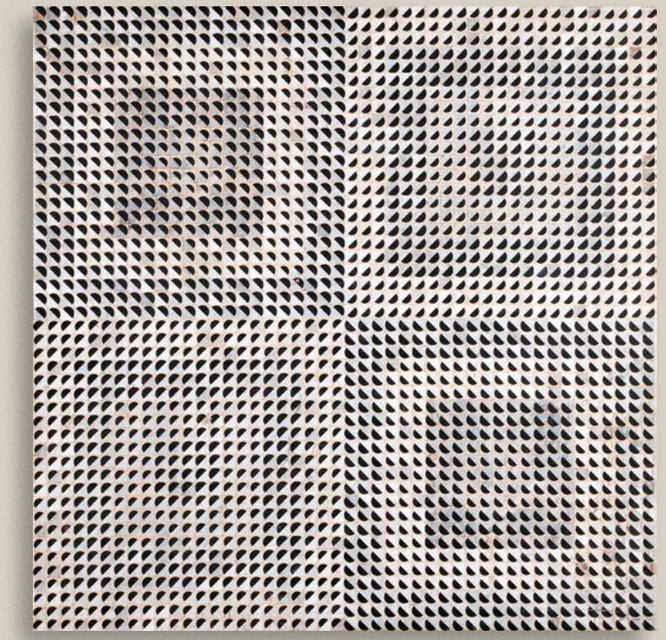
PROVENANCE
The Luz Gallery

EXHIBITED
The Luz Gallery, *Raul Isidro: 21st One-Man Show*, Makati, 26 June - 23 July 1982

Showcasing his ongoing dialogue between nature, spirit, and culture, Raul Isidro's *Cultural Revolution* demonstrates the transformation and renewal within Filipino Identity through his own visual language.

Made in 1982, this piece reinterprets the country's constant search for identity by featuring dynamic, overlapping geometric forms shaded in warm color tones of ochre, red orange, and white, set against a muted gray background—the figures moving and colliding to the center point of the canvas, creating a tone of both tension and harmony that reflects the clash and combination of cultural forces as the history of the nation continues to move forward.

Capturing the energy of transformation, Raul Isidro's *Cultural Revolution* highlights the constant evolution of culture by using warm, vibrant colors and rhythmic geometric structures to mirror how local culture constantly confronts external influences, further redefining itself over time. This piece perfectly reflects the transformation and renewal of Filipino culture and how Filipinos define it. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



88

Alan Yongde

Black and White ZZ - 66
signed and dated 1966 (lower right)
collage on canvas
46" x 46" (117 cm x 117 cm)

P 30,000

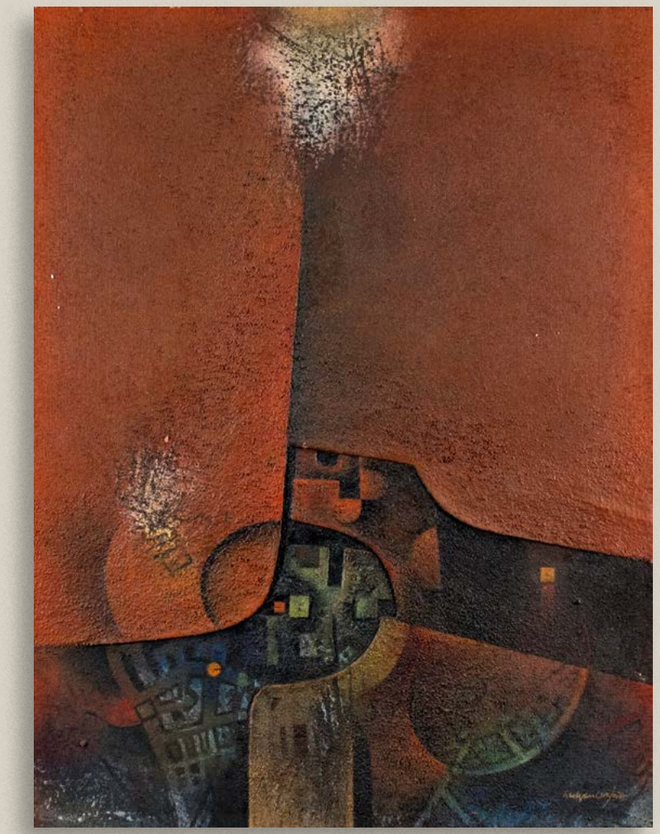
PROVENANCE
The Luz Gallery

Very little information has been written about Chinese artist Alan Yongde. Yongde was born and raised in China, and was the son of a well-off Chinese businessman. Veteran writer and journalist Julie Yap-Daza once wrote about Yongde in her column on the November 12, 1965, issue of *The Daily Mirror*. She wrote, "A self-made man who has been in the Philippines the past four years, having been brought up in China and then Hong Kong, Yongder [sic] cuts a mysterious figure. He talks little, and what few words he cares to drop, either in halting English, or in the most colloquial Chinese, or in poor Tagalog, are rarities."

By 1965, as Yap-Daza reported, Yongde had been living in the Philippines for four years, with his 100-peso allowance given by his father every month, of which the majority he allocated for his painting. Yongde was a nomad, having no permanent address to call home, and survived gritty Manila by asking friends for lodging.

Yap-Daza's article detailed the exhibition of Yongde's works at the Luz Gallery, together with two other young artists, Luis Romero and the well-known Marciano Galanghard. Yap-Daza further described Yongde's personality in her article, "Of the three, Yongder [sic] shows the most promise. He is also a young man—in his early 20s—who has an exciting, dynamic personality and "a certain elegance" that is stunning, to say the least."
Yongde was discovered by Arturo Luz himself. As Yap-Daza recounted, Yongde visited the Luz Gallery one day, which by then had become the ground zero of modern art in the Philippines. He then "plunked down a hundred or more of his works. Luz was impressed, not only by his strong personality, but also by the strength that showed through his collection of 'wild, wild, wild drawings,' lyrical abstractions, and painstakingly made op art arrangements." So struck was Luz that he praised Yongde as a rookie artist that "is sure to go places, far and wide."

Yongde was most known for his op art works, which had been exhibited at the Luz Gallery several times. These works, each one painstakingly done in 24 hours, are a hypnotizing blend of *trompe l'oeil* whimsy and geometric fancy. Yongde's presentations at the Luz Gallery coincided with the international craze for op art, starting with the 1965 exhibition of its major exponents Victor Vasarely, Josef Albers, and Carlos Cruz-Diez at New York's Museum of Modern Art, which spurred an international trend for op art styles in fashion, interior design, print and TV ads, and even pop culture, exemplified by the album covers of The Beatles' "Revolver," The Rolling Stones' "Their Satanic Majesties Request," and Pink Floyd's "Atom Heart Mother." *(Adrian Maranan)*



89

Lamberto R. Hechanova Jr.

Metroscape No. 6
signed and dated 1967 (lower right)
acrylic - oil
32" x 24" (81 cm x 61 cm)

P 40,000

PROVENANCE
The Luz Gallery

EXHIBITED
The Luz Gallery, *Lamberto Hechanova, Jr.: 3rd One-Man Show*, Makati, November 1967

After Lamberto Hechanova's fruitful stint in advertising and marketing, where he worked as a designer, layout artist, and art director for several agencies, he made a bold decision to leave the field to pursue his own artistic endeavors.

The year 1966 marked yet another milestone in Hechanova's career and ascent to the art scene. He won first place for his "*Last Supper*," an assemblage made from found objects such as tin cans and nails, in the 7th Annual Religious Art Competition. He also bagged the first and second place for *Perspectus #7* and *Algae*, respectively, at the Art Association of the Philippines' Annual Art Competition. But for Hechanova, the most precious and remarkable award he received this year was the opportunity to stage a one-man show at the Northern Motors Showroom. This monumental event opened up numerous grants for studies and opportunities for his art to gain recognition.

Metroscape No. 6, dated 1967, was included in Hechanova's 3rd solo exhibition, held at the Luz Gallery. This piece offers a bird's-eye view of the metro. Amid the tall buildings, the artist was still able to capture the hustle and bustle of the city below. The lights from the buildings and streets are on, casting a soft glow throughout the busy nighttime scene. The following year, his sculpture, *Allegory in Aluminum*, won first place in the First National Sculpture Competition, which granted him the opportunity to represent the Philippines in the VI Paris Biennale in 1969. *(Jessica Magno)*



90

Conrado Mercado (1945 - 2010)

White Digits /4
signed and dated 1976 (verso)
oil on wood
24" x 32" (61 cm x 81 cm)

P 30,000

Conrado Mercado, a renowned Filipino painter and sculptor, was born in the town of Bustos, in Bulacan. This town was known for its historic stone houses, made to protect families from the roaming *tulisanes*, and that withstood the test of time. His formative years in this culture and architecture-rich community had a profound influence on his artistic style. Later, he ventured into the city of Manila, where he earned a degree in Fine Arts from the esteemed University of Santo Tomas, known for producing many distinguished artists and personalities in various fields.

Mercado's illustrious career has yielded a diverse collection of works, ranging from paintings and drawings to relief and freestanding sculptures. He has also created a few functional objects, such as furniture. Still, he was most known for his abstract compositions, heavily influenced by the rich architectural culture of his community in Bustos—structures that are an amalgamation of confinement and connectivity. Conrado Mercado demonstrated exceptional skill and remarkable versatility through his multifarious creations made from aluminum, brass, wood, and concrete. *(Jessica Magno)*

91

Cedrick Dela Paz (b.1995)

Middle Class
signed and dated 2025 (lower right)
acrylic on canvas
60" x 96" (152 cm x 243 cm)

P 300,000

Cedrick Dela Paz's recent social commentary masterpiece, entitled *Working Class*, captures the dehumanizing cycle of Filipino modern labor and the exploitative effects caused by capitalism. Full of struggle, monotony, and dismal conditions, the Filipino working class is continuously trapped in a perpetual cycle of labor and control. Dela Paz's piece presents a visual and moral indictment of such an exploitative system.

With the painting divided into multiple panels representing several scenes found in a factory or corporate building, each layer mirrors several realities of working life, representing workers engaged in repetitive and exhausting conditions.

The first panel at the top showcases workers on a desk job while others eat at their plates without a table, all hunched around a tight space—All workers looking bleak and hopeless. Cameras with literal eyes stalking them across the panels like a hawk, ready to report anyone who faltered from their duties.

The second panel shows workers on an assembly line packing boxes in a mechanical repetition, all synchronized like robots while on the other side of the wall is a dark tight room showing three people on their hands and feet while gas pumps where embedded on their backs like they were being "recharged"—a literal metaphor of workers being treated like oiled machines rather than humans.

The third panel shows a scene where the company hires new people, with the one at the closest with a nametag "Juan" looking directly at the observers while holding a paper stamped as *'ENDO' (shortened term for End of Contract),* implying the dismal status of short-term employment where workers are dismissed before becoming regular workers. While an employee leans their head in front of a poster slogan entitled *'Work! Work! Work!'* seemingly giving up on the company's abysmal work conditions.



ABOVE: Cedrick Dela Paz © DF Art Agency

What's eye-catching about this art piece is that all human figures have a hunchback posture. Visibly showing the heavy exhaustion and resignation of the workers to the system that continues to exploit them like cogs in a machine. The similarity of their appearances (with possible difference being their nametags) completely strips the workers of their identity and individuality. The figures of cameras having literal eyes represent the strict order happening inside the system, depicting a suffocating environment of constant monitoring. Highlighting how employers maintain control over laborers both physically and mentally.

Through this masterpiece, Dela Paz perfectly captures the plight of countless Filipino workers stuck in unstable jobs that deprive them of security and dignity. *Working Class* serves as a direct mirror to the realities of economic inequality where ambition and humanity are crushed under the struggling weight of survival. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

a.) Tranquil
signed and dated 2018
carved mediterranean crystal
H: 7 1/2" (19 cm)
W: 6" (15 cm)
L: 4 1/2" (12 cm)

b.) Compelling
signed and dated 2018
carved mediterranean crystal
H: 8 1/2" (22 cm)
W: 6" (16 cm)
L: 4" (10 cm)

c.) Magnificence in Blue II - 2011
signed and dated 2011
carved azure blue crystal
H: 11 1/2" (29 cm)
W: 7 1/2" (20 cm)
L: 5" (13 cm)

d.) Indomitable
signed and dated 2018
carved mediterranean crystal
H: 8" (21 cm)
W: 6" (16 cm)
L: 4 1/2" (12 cm)

e.) Radiant
signed and dated 2018
carved mediterranean crystal
H: 7 1/2" (19 cm)
W: 6" (16 cm)
L: 4" (10 cm)

P 3,000,000

Each piece is accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot



ABOVE: Ramon Orlina with his series of carved and painted clear optical glass © Rupert Jacinto

There is something almost magical about the works of Ramon Orlina. A master of glass sculpture, an Orlina piece must be viewed from all angles to truly appreciate, with sunlight a central tenet to be considered.

"With glass, I am not only making sculptures in-the-round but sculpture inside the round," he says in this book, *Visions of Glass*. "[Then] when I am actually cutting the glass, I must play with the light. See the effects inside and react to whatever is discovered along the way. The creative process is unpredictable and spontaneous."

This lot of Orlina sculptures, created in the span between 2011 and 2018, contains five pieces done in vivid blue. Entitled *Tranquil, Compelling, Magnificence in Blue II – 2011, Indomitable,* and *Radiant*, these pieces portray the best of Orlina. The sharp edges of the sculptures are perfectly shaped to catch the stray sunlight, illuminating the piece almost from within.

A true master of glass, Orlina's works inspire reverence. This lot is a veritable testament of the artist's skill, a talent that maestros of other mediums acknowledge — As National Artist for Sculpture Napoleon V. Abueva said: "I can do anything in sculpture with whatever material...except one — glass! For that, you have to go to Ramon Orlina. *(Hannah Valiente)*

A Sumptuous Lot Of Five Exquisite Orlinas





93

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

Flower Vendors
signed (lower left)
oil on canvas
30" x 36" (76 cm x 91 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Roma

Oscar Zalameda's magnificent abstract piece, entitled "Flower Vendors" offers another glimpse into the artist's famous approach to illustrating faceless and simplified figures that portray cultural sensibilities that are uniquely Filipino. The peaceful image of faceless women, shaded in the harmonious tones of pink, peach, and mauve, celebrates the grace and resilience of Filipino women through Zalameda's mastery of his craft.

Using a soft palette of earthly pinks, corals, and oranges, the warm hues evoke the tropical light of the Philippines in a distinctly local context. Zalameda's feminine figures radiate a quiet intimacy and connection as he delivers it in such a way that the two are deeply engaged in a gentle conversation of a shared moment of rest. At the same time, the abundant flowers surround the woman like a cradle, aligning the flowers' representation with women's fertility, prosperity, and natural beauty.

The lack of facial features also enhances the viewing experience for the audience, allowing them to perceive the intimate art piece as figures of grace, beauty, and simplicity in a universal manner. This will enable Zalameda to deliver a painting that celebrates themes of companionship, livelihood, and feminine grace that are uniquely Filipino. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



94

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

Laundry Women
signed (lower right)
oil on canvas
30" x 36" (76 cm x 91 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Roma

Illustrating the nobility of rural life and the Filipino spirit, Oscar Zalameda's *Laundry Women* delivers a quiet camaraderie while reflecting the quiet dignity of everyday labor and the strength of rural Filipino women.

Through his iconic, faceless, and geometric abstractions, this masterpiece became a poetic tribute to the Filipino spirit. Completely transforming what seems to be a daily task into an image of strength and serenity.

The art piece gave an image of two women washing clothes by the water, set against a backdrop of hanging laundry—a generic scene of quiet labor and companionship, elevated to a subject of beauty and grace.

The way the human figures had gentle postures and seemingly facing each other as if they were talking while wearing traditional clothes, suggests humbleness and companionship. While the faceless and simplified forms universalize their experience into a shared cultural identity rooted in simplicity, community, and resilience.

Oscar Zalameda had successfully synthesized his geometric abstraction to tackle Filipino cultural themes relating to Rural Filipino life. His *laundry women* became a poetic tribute to our spirit and identity as a whole—Calm, humble, reflective, and harmonious. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

95

Bernardo Pacquing (b. 1967)

What I have learned from my Paintings #1
signed and dated 2024 (verso)
assemblage on canvas
101 1/2" x 72" (256 cm x 183 cm)

P 4,000,000

PROVENANCE
Silverlens

EXHIBITED
Silverlens, Causal Loops, Makati City, 11 June - 13 July 2024



ABOVE: Bernardo Pacquing with the artwork at hand © Silverlens

In spite of the extensive and diverse history of abstract art, fresh and innovative interpretations of the medium continue to expand its possibilities. Bernardo Pacquing, one of the foremost figures in contemporary Philippine abstraction, brings a deeply tactile and intuitive dimension to this practice. His command of material—whether through dense layers of paint, textured surfaces, or gestural marks—reveals abstraction as an ongoing conversation between matter and movement.

While abstraction has often been associated with ideals of purity and detachment, Pacquing's approach suggests a more grounded, sensory understanding of form. His works operate within what theorists describe as the "phenomenology of perception"—where surface, texture, and color invite a bodily rather than purely optical experience. The eye reads his canvases not only as visual fields but as sites of encounter, where energy, weight, and memory are inscribed through gesture.

In this way, Pacquing's abstraction becomes a language of transformation. By translating traces of the material world—industrial remnants, natural erosion, the patina of lived space—into formal expression, he reimagines the abstract as something simultaneously expressive and referential. The result is an art that reaffirms the vitality of touch and process, reminding us that abstraction, at its core, is not absence but presence: the record of being and making. *(Jed Daya)*

The Interior Conversations Of Bernard Pacquing

Doña Eugenia Guidote-Puyat
The Musical Matriarch

by ISIDRA P. REYES



ABOVE: Doña Eugenia with the Senator and their happy family

Eugenia Genoveva "Gening" Cecilio Guidote was born in Manila on 3 January 1907 to Dr, Valentin de Leon Guidote of Sampaloc, Manila (1873-1931) and Vicenta Velarde Cecilio of Quiapo, Manila and San Isidro, Nueva Ecija. Gening was the second of seven children and the eldest daughter. Among her siblings were Mauricio (1905), Raymunda (1909-1968), Josefina Protacia (1918), Pacita, Caridad Inés (1921-1988), and José Felix (1924-).

The Guidotes were a wealthy family steeped in music and culture. Their father, Dr. Valentin Guidote, studied medicine at the U.S.T. College of Medicine and served as a government doctor with Juan and Antonio Luna's brother, Joaquin Luna, in the sub-province of Bontoc where Joaquin served as governor (1916, 1920-1925). Like Joaquin, Valentin was a veteran of the Philippine Revolution with the rank of captain.

A "niño bonito," he appeared to be "more interested in hunting and other Belle Époque diversions than building up a clientele," as written by Félice Prudente Sta. Maria in her book, Fountain of Gold, The Club Filipino Story. He practiced medicine for charity. Their mother, Vicenta, on the other hand, came from a politically prominent family from Quiapo, Manila and San Isidro, Nueva Ecija. She was the sister of Nueva Ecija Governor Aurelio Velarde Cecilio (1922-1925, 1936-1940) who would occasionally invite Vicenta, her children, and Manila friends to camping trips to scenic Camp Labi, Bongabon, Nueva Ecija during the summer months.

The Guidote home in 9 Calle Alix (now Legarda St.) was in the arrabal of Sampaloc, Manila. It was where Dr. Valentin Guidote grew up with his parents, Don Eugenio Guidote and Doña Concepcion Leocadia de Léon, and two sisters, Rosario and Pacita. As described by Felice P. Sta. Maria in The Golden Fountain:

"The Guidote house stood in the middle of a triangular islet stretching close to two hectares...Like any mansion of note at the time, it had many windows–eight sets of sliding capiz-filled wooden frames running the long frontage (with) ventanillas below...Carriages entered through a massive central doorway...A wide grand staircase ushered guests to the second story...Gemlike green and yellow cathedral panes separating the stairwell from the remaining rooms







ABOVE LEFT: First Lady Imelda Marcos presenting the award for Knight Grand Cross of Rizal to Senator Puyat as Doña Eugenia looks on, 1977 **BELOW LEFT:** Senator and Mrs. Gil J. Puyat with the youngest daughter Eugenia, 1968 **RIGHT:** Senator and Mrs. Gil J. Puyat

merrily greeted visitors. At the head of the steps was a large reception room or caida, with several gilt-framed oil canvases; Rosario Guidote, who later married the son of José Ma. Basa, the Hong Kong exile and Noli Me Tangere financier, studied with Fabian de la Rosa and added portraits and landscapes to the collection. Cantonese pedestals, Venetian mirrors and graceful wooden and marble-topped furniture added a genteel mood to the conversation area. ..wide wooden arches with ornamental trompe-l'oeil undersides spanned the receiving section and framed the large double doorways leading to boudoirs furnished with four-poster (beds) and heavily carved lavadors outfitted with pitchers and matching basins, some of British porcelain, others of finer Bohemian glass. On the sunset side were the dining room and kitchen jutting out toward San Anton."

The house was later leased to Club Filipino and became the site of its inauguration on 6 November 1898. The Guidote family moved to 9 Gastambide Street, also in Sampaloc, Manila. It was at the Gastambide home where Eugenia and her siblings grew up. The old Guidote Mansion was later torn down to build accessorias which Valentin later converted into a cinema named Cine Moderno in 1917.

By 1931, Eugenia had already graduated from the UP College of Business Administration in 1929 and had become a Certified Public Accountant while his brother, Mauricio had already completed his Engineering studies at the UP College of Engineering and would become a film director. Their sister Raymunda "Munding," a coloratura soprano and later a movie star, who had already completed a music course at the UP, was in the midst of her four-year training as an opera singer in Milan, Italy and would only return to Manila on 24 December 1933. Upon her return, Raymunda would participate in recitals at the Metropolitan Theater and in tertulias in the grand home of their aunt and madrina, Doña Rosario "Charing" Guidote vda. de Basa at Calle Lepanto, designed by Architect Andrés Luna de San Pedro, which had a beautiful grand piano in its sala. Like her sister, Raymunda, Eugenia "Gening" was a trained opera singer, a soprano. She would often appear in the society pages of The Tribune in the 1930s, attending and participating in musical soirées, recitals, and social gatherings together with her sisters, Raymunda, Anita, and Catalina, their music mentor, Professor Victorino Carrion, and the Manila Musical Guild.

Gening married her college sweetheart, Gil Juco Puyat, on 10 February 1935 after seven years of courtship, and balanced the roles of career woman as a CPA and mother to their seven children.

According to her grandchild, Gening loved to entertain guests at their D. Tuason home. He said: "Lola Gening did play the piano but was better at singing. I recall several parties and reunions where she would sing for us accompanied by Dra. Myrna Ascutia-Lopez, the long-time musical director of the Manila Metropolitan Theater's Met Chorus on (Lola Gening's) Steinway piano. (Dra. Myrna) would always have a group of her protegés with her, including her daughter, the renowned soprano, Camille Lopez Molina."

Steinway & Sons

Steinway Model 'M' Medium Grand Piano
ca.1957
Serial Number: 1185 M
Color: Dark Walnut
with upholstered stool

piano size:
H: 67 1/2" (172 cm)
L: 61" (155 cm)
W: 57 1/4" (145 cm)

piano bench:
H: 18 3/4" (48 cm)
L: 34 1/2" (88 cm)
W: 15" (38 cm)

P 400,000



ABOVE: Cast iron plate showing the model and serial number of the Steinway Model 'M' Medium Grand Piano

The piano at hand is a Steinway Model 'M' Medium Grand Piano. It bears the serial or model number 1185M and was most probably a custom order from Steinway & Sons New York.

According to family sources, this Steinway piano was imported from the U.S. and bought by Senator Gil J. Puyat as a gift for his musically-inclined wife, Eugenia Genoveva "Gening" Guidote Puyat. It most probably dates back to the early 1950s at the time the Puyat family moved to their new home at 60 D. Tuason corner Dapitan Sts., Santa Mesa Heights, Quezon City.

It was shortly after Sen. Puyat began his long career in the Senate, spanning most of the years of the Third Republic from 1951-1973. Santa Mesa Heights, developed by Gregorio Araneta, Inc. was called "mansion site," having been the home of a number of prominent society figures and politicians.

Among the Ilustrados and upper-class families in 19th and 20th century Philippines, "no Filipino man or woman was considered educated without proficiency in at least one musical instrument–and the piano with pedals was a popular choice," wrote Felice P. Sta. Maria in her book, Halupi. All over the Philippines piano-fever caught many families. According to the CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, 2nd edition, pianos from Europe were being imported starting the Spanish colonial period. Among the firms engaged in piano importation were Rafael and Luis Echegoyen's La Lira Music Store, A. Romanach & Co., Pio Trinidad & Co., Felipe Yupangco, José Oliver Succ. Co., Lyric Music House, Jacinto, and La Estrella del Norte, sole distributor of Steinway pianos in the Philippines.

Perhaps it was their common love for music which brought Gening closer to First Lady Imelda Marcos, who was a former senator's wife herself. Fresh from Tacloban, Imelda got a music scholarship from Philippine Women's University with the help of voice teacher, Adoracion Reyes, who was introduced to Imelda by her cousin, Loreto Ramos. Imelda's other cousin, Congressman Danieling Romualdez, with whom Imelda stayed at his house at 48 Dapitan Street, Santa Mesa Heights, Quezon City, got Imelda a job at P.E. Domingo Music Store in Escolta. As a receptionist-salesgirl, recounted Beatriz Romualdez in her book, Imelda and the Clans, she would do piano demonstrations for customers and would occasionally sing some of the music pieces on sale. Imelda was quite effective in her job and logged up a lot of sales until her disgruntled father found out and promptly got her a job at the Central Bank.

At the time Imelda became First Lady she was a far cry from the piano salesgirl she was when she first arrived in Manila. She was a Patroness of the Arts and had young piano protegés like Cecile Licad and Rowena Arrieta under her wing. She may have once sung a tune or two while attending socials at Gil and Gening's 60 D. Tuason home, accompanied by music flowing from this very Steinway & Sons New York grand piano. As a token of their friendship, Ferdinand & Imelda Marcos gifted Gening a Patek Philippe lady's watch which matched the First Couple's gift to Senator Gil J. Puyat on the occasion of his 60th birthday. And while President Marcos may have reneged on his promise to Senator Gil J. Puyat to give way and allow him to run for President in the 1973 presidential elections by declaring Martial Law, none of the companies under the Puyat group of companies was touched.

Gening passed away on 21 November 1988 at age 81 and her remains interred beside her husband in the Puyat Family Mausoleum in Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina. Inscribed on her tomb was her family's tribute to Gening: "Most of all a mother."

The Eugenia Guidote-Puyat Steinway Grand Piano

by ISIDRA P. REYES



Senator Gil J. Puyat
The Last Senate President of the Third Republic of the Philippines

by ISIDRA P. REYES





Senate President Gil Puyat exchanging [illegible]

Senator Gil J. Puyat's sixtieth birthday, celebrated on 1 September 1967, was a happy and grand occasion. At age sixty, he was at the apex of his political career. He was elected Senate President on 26 January 1967, replacing the brilliant Senator Arturo Tolentino, and was President of the Nacionalista Party (1964-1970), replacing Senator Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez, Sr. (1953-1964). He was president of the incumbent Nacionalista Party and was elected Senator, serving from 1951 until its abolition on 17 January 1973, a few months after the imposition of Martial Law.

Among the precious gifts given to him on his 60th birthday was a Patek Philippe, engraved with the inscription from the ultimate power couple, President Ferdinand E. Marcos and First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos.

The watch was stylish and state-of-the-art at the time. Unlike his father, Don Gonzalo, who espoused the virtues of moderation and simplicity in dressing, Senator Gil J. Puyat was always in his sartorial best and appreciated the finer things in life. Sen. Gil Puyat's grandson remembers his Lolo Gil's closet which had "lots of tailored suits from New York (and) London, French cuffed (shirts), (and) leather brogues" which he would raid in his high school years. The watch would have gone well with his tailored suits or the custom-made embroidered barongs he favored wearing.

Born in Quiapo, Manila on 1 September 1907 to self-made industrialist, economic nationalist, and philanthropist Gonzalo Puyat and Nicasia Cueva Juco of Barrio San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga, Gil Juco Puyat traced back his paternal lineage to a Chinese settler expatriated from Manila by the Spanish government as a result of the "anti-Chinese" mass expulsions and massacres that occurred in the city in 1603 by disgruntled Filipinos who felt their livelihoods undermined.

As written in an article published in The Tribune, dated 20 September 1940, even in his childhood days, the young Gil Puyat already showed a keen interest in business. Gil and his siblings were trained early by their father who would inculcate in his children the values of hard work, thrift, and honesty. As recounted in Sarge Lacuesta's article, "Gil J. Puyat: His Father's Son," The Philippine Star, 7 October 2007, Gil was only in fourth grade when his father placed him in charge of the pool hall's day-to-day operations.

While in college, he distinguished himself as a scholar of note. In 1930, he began teaching Economics at UP and was named Assistant Professor in 1935. On 22 March 1941, The Tribune announced that Gil J. Puyat was slated for appointment as dean of the UP College of Business Administration. Puyat's appointment was a precedent as he was then the youngest Filipino to be appointed dean at the University of the Philippines It was said that President Manuel L. Quezon was so impressed by the young Gil J. Puyat's business acumen in managing the Puyat family business that he appointed him dean at only 33 years of age.

On 10 February 1935, in Quiapo Church, Manila , Gil married his campus sweetheart, Eugenia Genoveva "Gening" Cecilio Guidote (3 January 1907-21 November 1988), after seven years of courtship. A breakfast reception followed at the Manila Hotel. Eugenia was a fellow graduate of the UP College of Business Administration, a Certified Public Accountant, and one of the pioneer officers of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA). .

As written in Araceli Doronila's article, "The Puyat Family" published in The Manila Chronicle Special Issue on The Life and Career of Don Gonzalo Puyat, dated 31 May 1967: "Sen. Gil J. Puyat, Don Gonzalo's eldest living son is an economist and vice president and general manager of Gonzalo Puyat & Sons. He worked closely with his father since childhood and bears on his shoulders the heaviest responsibility of the family business."

The story of the House of Puyat is a rags-to-riches story that is the stuff of legend. Gonzalo Puyat started making bowling alleys made of Philippine woods which grew to become the Gonzalo Puyat & Sons' most important line.

However, it was Gonzalo Puyat & Sons' well-crafted furniture made of Philippine hardwoods and rattan which earned for the company lasting renown. After WWII, Gonzalo Puyat & Sons, later known as the House of Puyat, branched out to steel production and a galvanizing plant (manufacturers of APO G.I. sheets and IPI steel pipes and piles) with the establishment of Puyat Steel and International Pipe Industries Corp.; bowling alley construction under AMF-Puyat; logging with two timber concessions under the Puyat Timber Division and Surigao Development Corp.; real estate; banking with the establishment of Manila Banking Corp.; flour milling under Philippine Flour Mills; and insurance, memorial plans, and parks under the Loyola Group of Companies.

First elected to the Senate in 1951 until its closure in January 1973 during the Martial Law Era, Sen. Gil Puyat pushed to enact legislation to protect and support local industries. From 1952-1955, he was consistently chosen among the The Outstanding Senators.

With all his accomplishments, his consistent topping of senatorial elections, and his vision of an industrialized and economically self-sufficient Philippines, it did not take long for Sen. Gil J. Puyat to set his sights on the presidency, his confidence no doubt bolstered when he topped the 1957 senatorial elections with 2,189,909 or 42.87% of the votes. After an unsuccessful bid to challenge Carlos P. Garcia's nomination as NP presidential bet for the presidency in the 1957 elections and another unsuccessful bid for the vice presidency as running mate of Carlos P. Garcia in the 1961 presidential elections where he placed third to Emmanuel Pelaez and Sergio Osmeña, Jr., Sen. Puyat set his sights on the 1965 presidential elections. In 1965, the NPs initially had three presidential contenders: Senators Fernando H. Lopez, Arturo Tolentino, and Gil J. Puyat, but ultimately, the final contenders were two recent converts from the LP, Emmanuel Pelaez and Ferdinand E. Marcos. With the financial backing of Eñing Lopez, with Nanding Lopez as his running mate, and the beauteous Imelda as his secret weapon, Ferdinand E. Marcos clinched the presidency in the 1965 elections.

Sen. Gil J. Puyat's last position as a government official was as Senate President from 26 January 1967 until its closure during the Martial Law Era on 17 January 1973. After his long career as a senator, Gil J. Puyat refocused his energies to the family businesses as president and chairman of the board of Manila Banking Corp. and chairman of the Loyola Group of Companies, among others.





March 11, 1967. Mrs. Gil Puyat and other Senate wives entertain the First Lady at tea





The Patek Philippe Dedicated by Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos

The Patek Philippe 3671/1

Gondolo collection
Case Material: 18-karat White Gold (Au 750)
Case Design: Square
Case Dimensions: 26 mm x 26 mm (width excluding crown by height)
Total Weight: 77.6 grams (approximate total weight of head and integrated bracelet, in 18k white gold)
Caliber 177 manual-winding movement
Dial Finish: Textured Dial
Hands: Baton-style
Bracelet: Mesh Design

Inscribed with the Message: "To Gil, with our esteem, Ferdinand and Imelda 9-1-67"
(From President Ferdinand Marcos and First Lady Imelda Marcos September 1, 1967)

P 400,000





ABOVE: The Patek Philippe 3671/1 in its original presentation box. **BELOW**: Engraved inscription from President Ferdinand E. Marcos and First Lady Imelda R. Marcos.

This is a rare opportunity to acquire a timepiece of significant historical and political importance. This distinguished piece not only exemplifies the height of Swiss horology but also acts as a tangible artifact from a crucial era in Philippine political history, connecting two of the country's most influential figures.

The presentation occurred two years into Ferdinand Marcos's first term as President of the Philippines and just seven months after Senator Gil J. Puyat assumed office as President of the Senate (Jan. 26, 1967). This notable event highlights the unique yet mysterious relationship between the newly elected President and the influential Senate President.

Contextual Significance

The year 1967 took place during President Marcos's first term, a period often characterized by ambitious efforts at nation-building and economic development. Marcos's administration prioritized an aggressive infrastructure program, including major public works, roads, and bridges, along with a strong focus on economic growth and good governance. The exchange of such an extravagant, highly personal gift between the Executive and Legislative leaders highlights an important political relationship, likely emphasizing cooperation or influence being negotiated, under the guise of a birthday gift between the two branches of government during a time of national growth.

Amid this environment of political ambition and shifting loyalties, giving a luxurious Patek Philippe watch carried multiple meanings. It could have been both a sign of personal respect and a strategic move, aimed at strengthening alliances or subtly signaling expectations for legislative support of executive initiatives. The careful timing of the gift, coinciding with key moments in both leaders' careers, further highlights the deliberate nature of such exchanges. This watch is therefore a silent, tangible witness to the brief stability of 1967, before the tumultuous events that redefined the Philippine Republic, and the true motives behind this presentation remain a historical mystery, adding to the timepiece's intrigue.

Saprid & The Supernatural
The Tikbalang Trickster



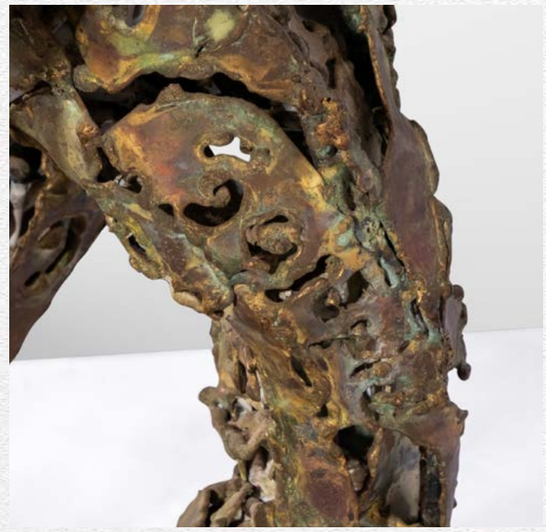
98

Solomon Saprid (1917 - 2003)
Tikbalang
signed
ca.1970s
bronze
H: 23 1/2" (60 cm)
L: 10 1/2" (27 cm)
W: 11 1/2" (29 cm)

P 800,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, USA



ABOVE: Detail of the Tikbalang

In Philippine mythology, Tikbalangs are nocturnal creatures that are often found lurking in dark forests. These half-man and half-horse creatures were said to have incredible speed and a mischievous nature, which is likely to cause trouble for those who cross their path and lead travelers astray. There are many other tales and beliefs surrounding these mythical beings, but all lead to them being portrayed as treacherous and malevolent.

Solomon Saprid, however, strips off his tikbalang's fearsome qualities. Instead, he exaggerates its long equine head, maned neck, and gangly limbs, resulting in an appearance that makes it seem like a playful, comical creature. The lot at hand is an example of this. Hands on its knees, head slightly turned to the side, and a hunched back while in a sitting position, there was a palpable sense of dejection that could be felt from this Tikbalang. Did it fail to deceive and cause people trouble? Was it sad to be waiting in vain for its next victims? Nevertheless, it was as if the artist was telling his viewers that these creatures were allowed to feel emotions, too.

Made with brass, the artist's preferred medium, Saprid's dedication to his craft is evident in every hammer, forge, bend, and twist of his materials. This piece also showcases his knowledge of the human body, owing to his continued drawing practices, which have enabled him to master every curve and detail.

Aside from his depictions of mythological creatures, what makes Saprid's sculptures belong to a supernatural realm are their craggy and airy qualities. His metal sculptures are made from metal scraps welded together using a blowtorch, a process that produces a jagged effect along the seams where the edges join. There were also spaces in between, allowing air to pass through. This trait, according to Alice Guillermo, was a vital part of Saprid's figurative style. "For space not only surrounds the figure but weaves in and out of it through the spatial intervals, nets, and apertures," Guillermo reiterated. Thus, despite being solid and heavy, his sculptures bear a certain fluidity.

In addition to his impressive metalwork and excellent interpretation of his subjects, Saprid has a penchant for making his figures look frozen in time. Describing the esteemed sculptor's works, art critic Alfredo Roces once wrote about the kinetic quality imbued in Saprid's works, "[it has] a sense of arrested action. The effect is one towards which the artist strives. He refers to it as 'frozen motion.'"

Throughout his sculpting career, Saprid has shown remarkable versatility, experimenting with a range of materials, including wood, adobe, and metal. His preference for using metal, especially brass, allows him to bend, shape, stretch, and transform it into expressive figures, demonstrating his adaptability and artistic range.

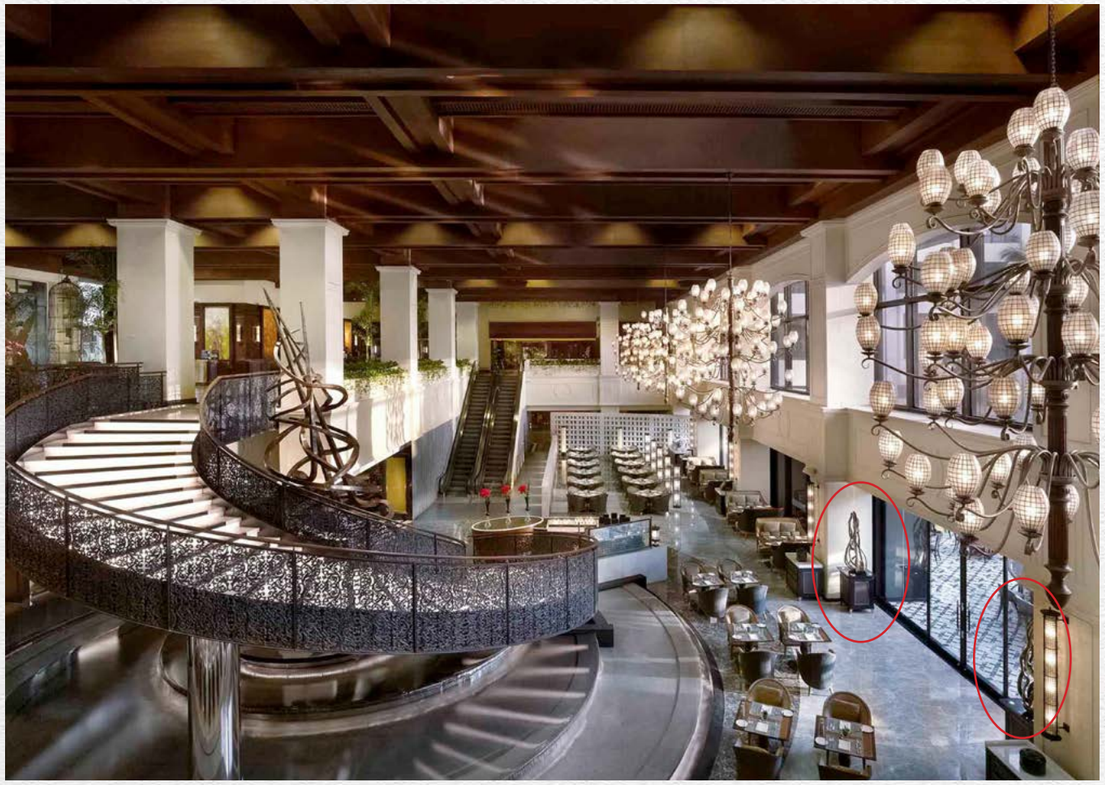
But before Saprid's venerable sculptures came to light, he was first an artist who drew and painted. He has a collection of artworks created using a myriad of styles and media. Their themes and subject matter, however, were the same as his sculptures: mother and child, religious, historical, and sundry images of ordinary folks. Saprid also created numerous nude drawings and studies, which served as his practice for illustrating the human form —a skill that later materialized in his sculptures.

While his works are easy to recognize and understand, the familiarity of them all also has its risks and expectations. 'Did I capture the essence of the subject being portrayed?' was one of the questions attached to Saprid's sculptures. Still, these themes stemmed from his firsthand experiences and meticulous research, translated into exquisite works of art that offer a genuine portrayal of our culture and traditions.

It may be that Saprid's *Sad Christ* and his entry to the Art Association of the Philippines' 1967 art competition marked the beginning of his enduring artistic career. But it was his diligent attitude and unbending dedication that cemented his name as one of the pillars of modern art in the country. *(Jessica Magno)*

The Grand Dame of Philippine Hotels: The Philippine Plaza

by ISIDRA P. REYES



ABOVE: The hotel's majestic staircase and its imposing lobby dotted with Castrillo sculptures. His "Melodic Growth" and "Harmonious Growth" (see encircled) flanked the grand entrance

As reported in The New York Times, 29 September 1976: "The glittering showplace of the Philippines — the 700-room (Philippine) Plaza Hotel–staged its gala opening last night (28 September 1976), but there were no bellboys, no room clerks, and no guests. The celebration saw more than 2,000 guests sampling smoked salmon and ham en croute on tables groaning under hors d'oeuvres while workers still hammered away on scaffolding on floors high above... The (Philippine) Plaza Hotel, an integral part of the sprawling Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) where later this week more than 3,000 of the world's leading bankers and financiers will converge for the annual meetings of the IMF and WB, was to have been her crown jewel."

The Philippine Plaza Hotel was the largest of fourteen new hotels constructed in 1976 for the five-day IMF-World Bank Annual Meeting. As described in Nicholas Polites' monograph, The Architecture of Leandro V. Locsin:

"The Philippine Plaza reaches out toward the sea on the shore of the recently reclaimed land that cuts dramatically into Manila Bay. The hotel is so oriented as to give each of its 700 rooms a singular view of the bay or Metro Manila itself, and of the graceful curve of Roxas Boulevard...

Given its tropical setting on the shore of Manila Bay, the Plaza was conceived as a high-quality, modern informal resort hotel with an atmosphere suggesting the Filipino propensity for celebration. The huge lobby, with its play of space and its earthy autumn colors, serves as a showcase for lush foliage of Philippine plants and such works of art as the giant sculpture and giant tapestry by Arturo Luz. An indoor waterfall adds to the play of light and provides an exhilarating sound of life and movement. Outside the lobby, a free-form swimming pool meanders through the lush gardens around a kiosk and under arched bridges. While thoroughly contemporary and cosmopolitan in idiom, the lobby captures the traditional Philippine town plaza: a promenade, an arboretum, a setting for monuments, and a place of festivity."



ABOVE: Castrillo sculptures add elegance to the private suites.

It was rumored that Imelda Marcos actually owned the Philippine Plaza, though her ownership was hidden. Among the First Lady's favored guests was the internationally renowned American pianist, Van Cliburn. According to Carmen Navarro Pedrosa in her book, The Rise and Fall of Imelda Marcos, Imelda first met Van Cliburn at the clinic of a famous American doctor who specialized in the care and treatment of hands. As recalled in The Times Journal, 8 December 1972, and by Raymond Bonner, in his book Waltzing with a Dictator, when Mrs. Marcos was attacked at Nayong Pilipino by an assassin named Carlito Dimailig with a foot-long bolo on 7 December 1972, she sustained injuries in her right arm and hand. President Nixon had called Mrs. Marcos with his personal sympathy and had dispatched to Manila a hand surgery specialist from Stanford University named Dr. Robert Arthur Chase, who was also the hand doctor of Van Cliburn. It must have been in one of her follow-up check-ups in Dr.Chase's clinic where the two met.

After that first encounter, the two became inseparable, as recalled by her "dissident" niece Beatriz Romualdez Francia in her book, Imelda and the Clans. As recounted by Carmen Navarro Pedrosa in The Rise and Fall of Imelda Marcos, Van Cliburn first invited Imelda to the Metropolitan Opera where he was said to have picked the ostrich feathers which fell from her cape. When told by Imelda to just leave them there, Van Cliburn allegedly replied: "Madame, those feathers are precious. Anything that touches your body is beautiful." She thought the world of Van Cliburn and had hour-long conversations with the pianist on sweet nothings, as would a love-struck teenager.

When Imelda returned to the Philippines on a chartered jet on 4 November 1991, she chose to be billeted at the Philippine Plaza Hotel in a US$ 2,000 suite and rented sixty rooms for her 235-strong entourage. On 2 July 2009, Imelda celebrated her 80th birthday at the Philippine Plaza Hotel. Perhaps she was there to reminisce better times, listening to piano concertos on that Steinway Grand Piano with her bosom friend, Van Cliburn nimbly running his hands on its ivory keyboard, playing her favorite Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff pieces in that spectacular hotel lobby where the sun set in all its magnificent glory.

Eduardo Castrillo (1942 - 2016)

Whirlwind
signed and dated 2011
brass
without base:
H: 55 1/2" (141 cm)
L: 10" (25 cm)
W: 13" (33 cm)

with base:
H: 91" (231 cm)
L: 15 1/2" (39 cm)
W: 23 1/2" (60 cm)

P 400,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist



A son of a master jeweler and a Zarzuela artist, Eduardo Castrillo inherited his parents' artistic flair. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated his versatility by working in a wide variety of mediums: bronze, brass, stainless steel, chrome, plexiglass, glass, and scrap metal. He also used hammerouts, reliefs, assemblages, and bronze casting to create his dignified abstract masterworks, showcasing his ability to adapt and innovate in his art.

Big and Brassy. That is how Alfredo Roces described Eduardo Castrillo's sculptures. Although he worked with different materials, brass remained his preferred medium. His sculptures, almost everywhere in Metro Manila, have become an integral part of the urban landscape, adorning parks, museums, office buildings, hotel premises, and school compounds. While enduring the painstakingly long traffic in EDSA, look outside and you might see one of Castrillo's colossal works of art, too.

Ed Castrillo's brassworks boast immaculate craftsmanship. In comparison to other metals, brass is considerably more challenging to wield due to the zinc it contains. While it is softer than bronze, excessive heat can cause the zinc to fume out, and too much force can cause it to crack. Nevertheless, these succeeding lots: *Whirlwind* (2011), *The Pile* (2011), *Resilient Bamboo* (2007), *High Note* (2007), *Melodic Growth* (2012), and *Harmonious Growth* (2012) showcase Castrillo's unbending skills and authority in the field of brass sculpting, being able to create gigantic pieces in the most intricate designs and patterns.

Eduardo Castrillo (1942 - 2016)

The Pile
signed and dated 2011
brass
without base:
H: 55 1/2" (141 cm)
L: 11" (28 cm)
W: 13" (33 cm)

with base:
H: 91" (231 cm)
L: 15 1/2" (39 cm)
W: 23 1/2" (60 cm)

P 400,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist



Certainly, Castrillo's sublime and monumental sculptures and brass reliefs are a sight to behold, decorating the Philippine soil with his top-notch artistry and precision. He created several monuments in honor of our valiant heroes, historical events, and notable Filipino figures whose contributions and significance are immeasurable. Thus, many of his works served as landmarks for several historical sites across the country.

The year 1971 marked a significant milestone in Eduardo Castrillo's career. At 29, he received the Republic Cultural Heritage Award, which was the nation's top art honor at the time. That same year, he was also a recipient of the Araw ng Maynila Centennial Award, the Jaycees' Ten Outstanding Young Men Award, and the Outstanding Makati Resident Award. And most importantly, it was also in 1971 that he represented the Philippines in the Paris Biennial, the first of many international stages he would step into. *(Jessica Magno)*

101 PROPERTY FROM THE PHILIPPINE PLAZA HOLDINGS INC.

Eduardo Castrillo (1942 - 2016)

Resilient Bamboo
signed and dated 2007
brass
without base:
H: 79 1/2" (202 cm)
L: 19" (48 cm)
W: 12" (30 cm)

with base:
H: 103" (262 cm)
L: 23 1/2" (60 cm)
W: 23 1/2" (60 cm)

P 500,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist



102 PROPERTY FROM THE PHILIPPINE PLAZA HOLDINGS INC.

Eduardo Castrillo (1942 - 2016)

High Note
signed and dated 2007
brass
without base:
H: 80 1/2" (204 cm)
L: 11" (28 cm)
W: 16" (41 cm)

with base:
H: 104" (264 cm)
L: 23 1/2" (60 cm)
W: 23 1/2" (60 cm)

P 500,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist



Eduardo Castrillo (1942 - 2016)

Melodic Growth
signed and dated 2012
brass
without base:
H: 58" (147 cm)
L: 15 1/2" (39 cm)
W: 12" (30 cm)

with base:
H: 93 1/2" (237 cm)
L: 27 1/2" (70 cm)
W: 27 1/2" (70 cm)

P 500,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist



Eduardo Castrillo (1942 - 2016)

Harmonious Growth
signed and dated 2012
brass
without base:
H: 58" (147 cm)
L: 19" (48 cm)
W: 22" (56 cm)

with base:
H: 93 1/2" (237 cm)
L: 27 1/2" (70 cm)
W: 27 1/2" (70 cm)

P 500,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist



Lee Aguinaldo (1933 - 2007)

Green Circulation No. 22
signed and dated 1973 (verso)
acrylic (aqua-tec)
36" x 36" (91 cm x 91 cm)

P 2,800,000

PROVENANCE
The Luz Gallery



ABOVE: Lee Aguinaldo © Tatler Asia

The cusp of the 1970s brought great change to Lee Aguinaldo. Throughout his life, his duty as the first son meant his role was to take over the family business, a fact his father, Daniel R. Aguinaldo, drilled into him. Despite his early affinity and natural talent for the arts (according to his mother, Helen, Aguinaldo had started drawing at the age of two), Daniel made sure to stamp out any inclination of the young child's interest in the arts, recounting an early memory where his father "started to tear all the drawings on the floor and [break] every pencil and crayon on the floor."

Despite many such attempts to dissuade his son, including sending him to military training to straighten out and extinguish any illusions he had, Aguinaldo pursued this path incessantly. By the end of the 1960s, he had decided to resign from his father's company, eschewing the comfort his privileged class endured.

Still, despite the considerable strain this move put on his finances, it is undeniable that this is when his career took the path he would be hailed for. Between 1970 and 1985, Aguinaldo was among the artists who consistently participated in the newly opened Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), appearing almost every year in different exhibitions. It was here that his method and conceptual and experimental works thrived, catapulting him to local and international acclaim.

It was in this decade that Aguinaldo created his arguably most famous series: the *Circulation* series. An even more distilled version of his already minimalist body of works, *Circulation* emphasized Aguinaldo's technique of using repetitive and almost identical strokes to create an incredibly in-depth composition.

"Both in the choice of color and form, these artworks have been hammered into a frame-like square bookended by two wide vertical bands, which have been offset by two planes of colors at their vertical ends joining up in the optical center in gradated fields of hyper-modulated color," writes Cid Reyes in the book "The Life and Art of Lee Aguinaldo."

The lot in hand, the 1973 *Green Circulation No. 22*, was created in the same year the series started. Like many of his *Circulation* works, Aguinaldo's bravura technique in this piece exhibits the artist's skillful brushwork, so attuned to even the barest of light and hues that it successfully hints at hidden depths.

As its name suggests, Green Circulation is Aguinaldo's exploration of the color green and its different hues and saturations through a color field painting. In these paintings, he explored all the different possibilities of abstraction and minimalism, creating a work that is both endlessly complex and deceptively simple.

Green Circulation No. 22 injects a different hue within its canvas. Though the two broad vertical bands on either side of the canvas are still there, the signature square frame at the center is reduced into a smaller rectangle piece, now boasting a vivid shade of blue instead of a lighter shade of green. However, despite that, Aguinaldo's control and technique are still evident.

"Though more modest in size compared to [his other] works, the *Circulation* paintings seem expansive, but gem-like, less constricted, inducing a retinal spark in the viewer," Reyes writes.

Predating the use of technology vis-à-vis gradient creation, the *Circulation* series puts at the center stage Aguinaldo's magnificent brushwork, declaring the artist as a tour de force in color modulation. *(Hannah Valiente)*

The Minimalist Expanses of Lee Aguinaldo



106

Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1914 - 2012)

Still Life
signed and dated 1951 (lower right)
oil on wood
7" x 10 1/2" (18 cm x 27 cm)

P 2,600,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

Much in the tradition of her fellow Thirteen Moderns, Anita Magsaysay-Ho also ventured into depicting still-life. She is the only woman included in that famed circle, and she brings about a quiet femininity to her works. Leading a traditional family life, Anita managed to juggle both the demands of being a mother, a wife, and an artist, creating pieces that put into the center stage the women who could have been neglected in the canvases of her male contemporaries.

Even in her still-life works, Anita's propensity for the quiet, feminine life is evident. This 1951 *Still Life* was created four years after her marriage to Robert Ho, whom she met in New York City. Almost half a decade into family life, Anita's still life echoes that peaceful contentment she has known throughout her life.

Portraying a vase brimming with flowers placed atop a dark wood table. It is still characteristic of that 1950s Anita's dark palette, almost muted in its immediate and uncomplicated response to nature, highlighting one of the artist's most famous quotes: "I know very well the strength, hard work, and quiet dignity of Philippine women, for I am one of them." *(Jessica Magno)*



ABOVE: Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1949) ©Artes De Las Filipina

Anita Magsaysay-Ho
Meditations on Ikebana





107

Charlie Co (b. 1960)

Horseman with Trumpet
signed and dated 2006 (lower left)
oil on canvas
48" x 48" (122 cm x 122 cm)

P 300,000

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

Dark, Powerful, Haunting. This monochromatic surrealist masterpiece by Charlie Co provides another example of his commentary on the cycles of conflict of domination through visual language. Through distorted anatomy, limited color palette, and dreamlike intensity, the Artist has perfectly created a powerful allegory of human destructiveness and delusion.

Made around 2000, Charlie Co had perfectly transformed a quintessential image of a heroic horseman into an omen of fear and folly. The image features a rider dressed like a warrior, blowing what appears to be a trumpet, while mounting a horse. The monochromatic tone creates an unsettling and haunting atmosphere, complemented by the horse and rider which could represent power and conquest as it blows its own horn or trumpet, seemingly announcing the figure's arrival and the destruction it brings.

Digging deeper, Charlie Co's masterpiece might be a commentary regarding the cycle of conflict throughout society, caused by dictatorship, war, colonialization, or global militarization. By re-creating a grim, almost mythical scene of a harbinger through visual language, the Artist invites reflection on how power corrupts and dehumanizes. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



108

Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Carroza
signed and dated 14-II-84 (lower right)
tempera on board
28" x 22 1/2" (71 cm x 57 cm)

P 1,600,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

A celebration of Filipino spirituality interpreted through a contemporary visual artistic lens, Mauro Malang Santos' Carroza merges religious imagery with abstract modernism to elevate the traditional image of faith into a modern icon—a universal symbol of light and vitality.

The composition includes a fragmented illustration of a saint. Possibly The Virgin Mary carrying a smaller figure of a *Santo Ñino* (holy child). The overall presence of geometric shapes, together with the vibrant and vivid colors of ochres, reds, yellows, and whites, impies the tone of celebration—The image itself emerging from an explosion of angular kaleidoscopic patterns and color. Which fits the joyous and colorful celebrations of local Fiestas, where the title *Carroza* situates the scene within such context.

In short, Malang efficiently elevates the religious procession into a dynamic composition of color and form—basically fusing faith and modernism, creating a piece that turns Filipino religious identity into a vibrant geometry. Merging modern art principles with the warm spirituality of Filipino Life. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

A FAMILY TRADITION OF PATRONAGE OF THE ARTS

A staunch nationalist, Don Geny's father also believed that "by preserving and promoting the Filipino heritage, his countrymen would eventually develop a sense of national pride that would enable the country to develop a unified spirit, ultimately resulting in ensuring a strengthening of a collective national soul in the succeeding generations."

Don Geny Lopez would pass away in June 1999 in San Francisco. He was 71. *(Lisa Guerrero Nakpil)*

The Legacy of Don Eugenio *"Geny"* Lopez Jr.

The Legacy of Don Geny Lopez (1928 - 1999)

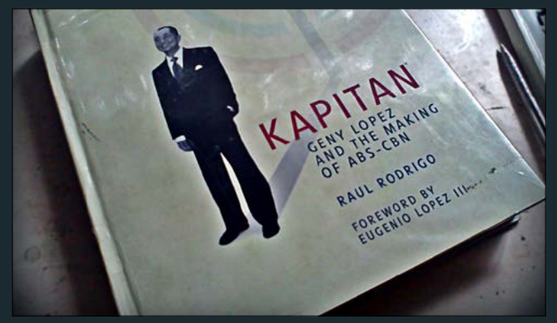
Don Eugenio "Geny" Lopez was born into a rarefied and highly sophisticated milieu, presided over by his father, the titan Eugenio "Eñing" Lopez, Sr., on November 4, 1928.

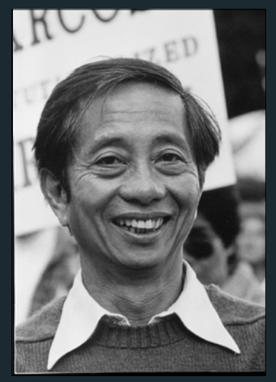
An over-active boy, he would eventually be sent to the Virginia Military Institute where he graduated in 1950. He went on to Harvard Business School and returned to helm what would become the country's largest if not most influential media conglomerate, ABS-CBN.

It was in the great tradition of his grandfather Benito Lopez who founded El Tiempo, the first daily newspaper in Iloilo. (Lopez, a nationalist, was also vice mayor of Iloilo City.)

But it would be Don Geny who would take the path of multi-media innovation, introducing microwave and satellite technology as well as introducing color television programming in the country.

By 1993, Geny would focus on Benpres Holdings, the mother company of the Lopez holdings in media, banking and power. He would next venture into telecommunications, infrastructure, property development and other utilities.









THIS PAGE AND PREVIOUS: Don Geny Lopez, the media titan remembered in print, by his family, and acclaimed by the industry at his conglomerate's anniversary.

Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

The Offering
signed and dated 1965 (lower right)
oil on canvas
25" x 33" (64 cm x 84 cm)

P 4,000,000

There can be no denying Fernando Amorsolo's influence on Philippine art. So heavily intertwined was he with the aesthetic of pre-war Philippines, it is no surprise that it's his works that come to mind when thinking of Philippine visual art, the Amorsolo sunlight that arguably is the singular, most iconic trait born out of centuries-worth of talents.

In contrast to his bombastic artistic dexterity, Amorsolo himself shies away from the spotlight, so meek and mild-mannered that it is almost hard to believe that it was he who led an artistic movement so well-received that it became the standard for his contemporaries and the next generations to hold themselves to, either in accordance with or in rebellion against.

By the 1950s, the Amorsolo School had weathered the constant pushback of Philippine modernism. As the country has been tempered by the war, the classical realism of the Amorsolo School no longer became appealing. It is dated, the new decade said, given the current climate.



ABOVE: Fernando Amorsolo receiving his honorary doctorate at Far Eastern University, 1960, © Amorsolo by Alfredo Roces, 1975

However, Amorsolo persevered. Except for his darker war era paintings, he remained true to his pastoral Philippines vision, capturing rural views under his famed Amorsolo sunlight. His usual muses – the *dalagas*, the vendors, the landscapes – found themselves back onto his canvases, gracing the world once again with their beauty.

However, that does not mean a bullheaded stride back into the past with no introspection for the present. Amorsolo's light is a distinct and conscious decision amidst years of harrowing experiences, an image that recalls not naïveté but nostalgia born through his decision to resume his business. Less common of his Golden Period subjects are his historical native scenes – amongst his mango tree paintings and the *lavanderas* frolicking at the rivers stand his depictions of pre-colonial Philippines, often through the lens of women. One woman he frequently painted was the legendary Princess Urduja, the ruler and warrior of the dynastic Kingdom of Tawalisi in Pangasinan.

In the same pre-colonial vein, this 1965 work, *The Offering*, follows Amorsolo's multiple versions of a semi-nude Filipina making an offering to pagan deities. Offerings to the *anitos* and *diwatas* can range from simple offerings of incense to elaborate food offerings, for all sorts of prayers, like for protection, for prosperity, and for harvest.

This Amorsolo piece shows a sort of offering dome at one's house. Depicting three figures, the focus is on the central woman in the foreground, neck bowed and shoulders down as she holds a wooden cross. The figures behind her are in different levels of reverence, with one in a similar stance as her and the other with his forehead pressed to the wooden floor.

Indeed, Amorsolo's historical pieces are best described by Jane Allinson. In Chapter VI, Amorsolo and the American Experience, of the book *Maestro Fernando C. Amorsolo: Recollection of the Amorsolo Family*, she said: "Here the artist subtly bathes the composition in the glow of an unseen fire. Warm, highly keyed colors lend excitement to the picture; yet the focal point rests on the reverent look in the woman's face. The pagan offering is presented with grace and respect." *(Hannah Valiente)*

The Rare Charm Of Amorsolo's Historical Works



The Don Eugenio "Geny" Lopez Jr. Santo Collection

by EMIL MARAÑON III



Every serious collector of Philippine fine art eventually finds its way to colonial ecclesiastical art. Those with bolder palate would even go a step further and explore Philippine indigenous art like *bululs* in the manner of "*haute*" Parisian and Belgian art collectors. Some of the most distinguished collectors from Luis Ma. Araneta, Alfonso Ongpin, Paulino Que, and Ambeth Ocampo—all acknowledged by their respective generations for their good taste, connoisseurship and collecting foresight—all went beyond "fine art" and passionately collected antiquities. Having antiquities in one's collection would not only exemplify range and good taste, but intellect and sophistication. It takes elevated understanding to see that beyond their aesthetic merit that has endured fads and collecting trends, their true value lies in the deep history that they carry.

Thus, in the 1960's to the 1980's, at the height of the collecting frenzy, one is not properly rich without excavated Chinese vases or plates, or beautiful santos in one's sala to accompany a fine art collection. I am still enthralled by the stories of rich madams showing up in parties dripping in excavated 12th to the 13th century gold jewelries or in *Hispano-Filipino* crosses and tambourines.

The storied Lopez family of Iloilo which is known for business, politics, and media is no exception. One of its most celebrated sons is Don Eugenio "*Geny*" Lopez Jr. (1928-1999). While he is more publicly known as the pillar of media giant ABS-CBN, he is a renaissance man of great taste who quietly collected very fine things from paintings to antiquities. Like his contemporaries, he too chased and collected the best of things, and surrounded himself with finest objects that are available in the market during his time.

In this auction, Leon Gallery proudly presents three remarkable santos from the Don Eugenio "Geny" Lopez Jr. collection which are not only exceptional in quality, but carry the best provenance. Objects which he once coveted and chased.

All three specimens are colonial depictions of the Virgin Mary. The devotion to the Virgin Mary is specially popular in the Philippines since the introduction of Catholicism in the 16th century. Jesuit theologian Fr. Catalino Arevalo once noted that: "*[t]o understand Filipino Catholics, one must understand their love for Mary.*" As they say, the Philippines is a "*pueblo amante de Maria*" which means "*a people in love with Mary.*"

This deep devotion is apparent with the fact that that since the 16th century, artisans all over colonial Philippines had carved the Virgin Mary in various forms and reiterations that if one would encounter an old santo in the market, it will more likely be that of a Virgin Mary. However, both the "*itch*" and the aspiration in santo collecting is to find the best specimens among the plentitudes. In this regard, Don Eugenio "*Geny*" Lopez was successful in finding these three.

Theotokos

18th Century
molave
H: 32 1/2" (83 cm)
L: 8" (20 cm)
W: 14 1/2" (37 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE
Laguna



The tallest of the three is a "*Theotokos*" where Mary is depicted holding the Child Jesus, with her right hand touching his left feet. This piece is stylistically associated with Lumban, Laguna where multiple specimens of the same hand were collected. A similar piece remains in situ until now which affirms the attribution. Lumban is an important settlement even before the arrival of the Spaniards as proven by the famous *Laguna Copperplate* which was found in the area. Known as the earliest written document in the Philippines, it proves the area's importance and its dynamic engagement with the different polities around the region. Its economic, political and religious importance continued during the Spanish colonial period, which in turn could have attracted the best carvers and artisans in the area. However, unlike most Lumban-types that range between 20 to 25 inches in height, this piece is astonishingly large at 32 inches. This suggest that it could have been a devotional piece belonging to a community chapel or an affluent household that afforded to commission such an important piece.

This specimen was carved in one-piece and has a base adorned with three cherubs in front. It has all the hallmarks of 18th century pieces: the stout proportion; the iconic "*suksok*"; the moon-face; and, the "*sinotanghon*" hair. It originally must have the bulging eyes or "*luwang mata*" which is stereotypical of the period, but they must have been later replaced with glass eyes when they became fashionable during the 19th century. Unlike the other Lumban specimens, its carving and proportion are still folksy and primitive, and it still lacks the refinement and formality often seen in later Lumban specimens. This suggests that it was carved earlier compared to the others, therefore, proving its great age.

In terms of iconography, in this specimen, the Niño carries a book, instead of the usual globe or a dove. According to Anna Jameson (*Legends of the Madonna, 1895*), "*[i]n the hand of the Infant Christ, the book is the Gospel in a general sense, or it is the Book of Wisdom.*"

Inmaculada Concepción

Late 18th Century - early 19th Century
molave and ivory
H: 22 1/2" (57 cm)
L: 8" (20 cm)
W: 9 1/2" (24 cm)

P 200,000

PROVENANCE
Bohol



The second specimen is a folk image of the *Inmaculada Concepción* which can stylistically be attributed to the Bohol school of carving. It must be recalled that the Jesuits introduced the devotion to the *Inmaculada Concepción* in Bohol upon their arrival in the island in 1595.

The piece can be conservatively dated to the late 18th to the early 19th century. Its open cape—contradistinguished from the "*Hebrea*" type associated with the Dauis workshops in Panglao Island and the "*bell*" or the "*Candelaria*" type from the interior towns of Bohol—suggests that this could be a folk replica of the cult image of the *Inmaculada Concepción de Baclayon* in the retablo mayor of the Baclayon Church (1737).

The head and the hands of this specimen are made of ivory, but interestingly carved with charming primitiveness for which Bohol santos are known for. The santo is 22 inches which is bigger than the usual Bohol table-top santos that range between 12-14 inches. Also, the base uniquely has five cherubs—instead of the usual three—which is much desired by collectors. Overall, it has a very serene vibe, primitive yet certainly sophisticated.

Inmaculada Concepción

18th Century
molave and ivory
H: 25 1/2" (65 cm)
L: 10" (25 cm)
W: 10 1/2" (27 cm)

P 200,000

PROVENANCE
Cebu/Bohol



The third specimen and perhaps the most attractive is this exceptionally large bell-shaped *Inmaculada Concepción* which can be attributed to the Cebu-Bohol carving area. It also has an ivory head and hands carved in the 18th century style, attached to a body dressed in a bulbous European court dress with a bodice. Some collectors would also call this type "*buntis*" alluding to a pregnant Mary supposedly carrying Jesus on her womb. Regardless, the piece is striking and imposing in person due to its height of almost 26 inches, which is again unusually large for a Visayan bell-shaped virgin. Another outstanding feature of this piece is its vibrant and well-preserved original *encarna* or paint, untouched and uncleaned. The skirt is also adorned with a relief of flowers and foliage that run from the central panel to the hem of the skirt, which are not often seen.

Bell-shaped virgins are often the most desired not only because of their compelling form, but for their heft and bulk. Thus, since the early days of collecting they are sought after and are often sold at a premium.

All of these rare and exceptional specimens represent Don Geny Lopez' good taste and exacting standards. He acquired them during the days of plenty and at the golden age of collecting. And certainly, even at that time, these were the very best specimens that the most discerning and moneyed collectors would compete for. Arguably, these santos are some of the best specimens ever sold at auction in recent years that santo enthusiast and art collectors should not miss.



113

Joy Mallari (b. 1966)

Mag-aaral
signed and dated 2008 (lower right)
oil on canvas
60" x 30" (152 cm x 76 cm)

P 550,000

PROVENANCE
Finale Art File

Deeply symbolic and psychologically charged, Joy Mallari's paintings continue her ongoing dialogue with identity, power, and self-realization. Through subtle imagery, the piece explores themes about identity and hierarchy as well as the tension between imposed roles and personal growth.

Presenting a surreal, doll-like depiction of a female figure in muted grays and blues, while reading a book that is directly centered in the painting, which hints at its significance as a symbolism for knowledge or learning. The outer shell that supposedly encases the female figure, like a matryoshka doll, is an image of an old man in a blue suit—hinting at layers of identity or generational influence that come from the man to the lady.

If the pieces was put two on two together, it could mean that the piece represents a commentary on identity formation—how identity is shaped by structures of authority— as well as the conflict between conformity as the younger generation (represented by the young lady) began to *enlighten* herself of knowledge, making it a form of resistance to the traditional power and authority. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



114

Abi Dionisio (b. 1987)

Sew Us Together
signed and dated 2018 (lower right)
oil on canvas with hand embroidery on hoop
48" x 36" (122 cm x 91 cm)

P 300,000

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

PROVENANCE
Finale Art FIle

In *Sew Us Together*, Dionisio's technical precision and sensitivity converge in a quietly powerful tableau. A piece of striped fabric, painted with near-photographic realism, cradles a circular embroidery hoop that bears a stitched human figure—tactile, intimate, and hauntingly still. The work meditates on memory, repair, and the fragility of human connection. Dionisio uses the act of sewing as metaphor: a gesture of care and reconciliation, but also one of containment and preservation. *Sew Us Together* can be read through the lens of materiality and embodiment—where the textile becomes an extension of the body, carrying both its tenderness and trauma. The contrast between painted illusion and real texture blurs boundaries between representation and reality, echoing feminist discourses that reclaim domestic labor and craft as acts of resilience and self-authorship. Dionisio's work, in this light, transcends mere depiction—it becomes a reflection on how we mend ourselves and each other, thread by thread.

Dionisio recalls being captivated at a young age by the classical mastery of Juan Luna, William-Adolphe Bouguereau, and Sir Edward John Poynter—artists whose command of the human form left a lasting impression on her. National Artist BenCab also influenced her craft, guiding her toward a deeper understanding of emotion and gesture in figuration. "Through the human form, I am able to express emotions, age, gender, body language, and facial expressions," she shares. "It helps me compose and create stories." *(Jed Daya)*

115

Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1981)

Prisoner
signed and dated 1977 (upper left)
black water color on paper
36" x 27 1/2" (91 cm x 70 cm)

P 800,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

LITERATURE
Nazareno, Isabel. *Discovering Manansala*. Manila: Friends of Manansala Foundation, 2005. Illustrated on page 42.

Resonating with the political climate of repression and control during Martial Law, Vicente Manansala's *Prisoner* reflects a universal symbol of human suffering and oppression. The fracturing cubist art technique mirrors the inner turmoil and loss of freedom experienced by the prisoner in the painting.

Made around the year 1977, the composition is dominated by oppressive vertical and horizontal bars to represent the cold and harsh iron bars of a cell. Through the bars is a malnourished figure with his arms tied behind his back. Illustrated in faceted, angular planes, the man's form is broken and distorted, clearly representing the suffering and the helplessness that Manansala wanted to portray.

Overall, *Prisoner* is a powerful commentary on the loss of freedom, dehumanization, and resilience, reflecting the social conditions of the time when the painting was created. Manansala employs transparent cubism to convey the agonizing feeling of confinement to the viewers—given form through his intellectual precision and emotional depth, essentially transforming personal and political statements into a unified visual language. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: Vicente Manansala © Manansala by Rod. Paras-Perez.



116

Nona Garcia (b. 1978)

Untitled
ca.2003-04
oil on canvas
72" x 48" (183 cm x 122 cm)

P 1,000,000

In this work, Garcia turns her gaze toward a solitary sink affixed to a time-worn wall. At first glance, the subject seems almost ascetic in its simplicity. Yet the longer one looks, the more the painting reveals a world of textures and shadows—a soft, mottled patina across the wall, the bruised halo of moisture around the basin, the darkened pipe descending like a quiet signature. Garcia elevates this modest corner, granting it a presence that feels both tender and monumental. It is a portrait without a face, a narrative without a figure, yet heavy with the residue of unseen lives.

There is an emotional clarity here: the stillness of a room long emptied, the hush of a space that once held small routines—hands washed, mornings begun, evenings ended. Garcia captures not the drama of action but the poetry of what remains after. The sink becomes a stand-in for the human, a vessel that has served and been left behind, imbued with a fragile nobility. In this sense, the painting acts as a mirror for the viewer's own interiority. Its quietness invites contemplation, even humility.

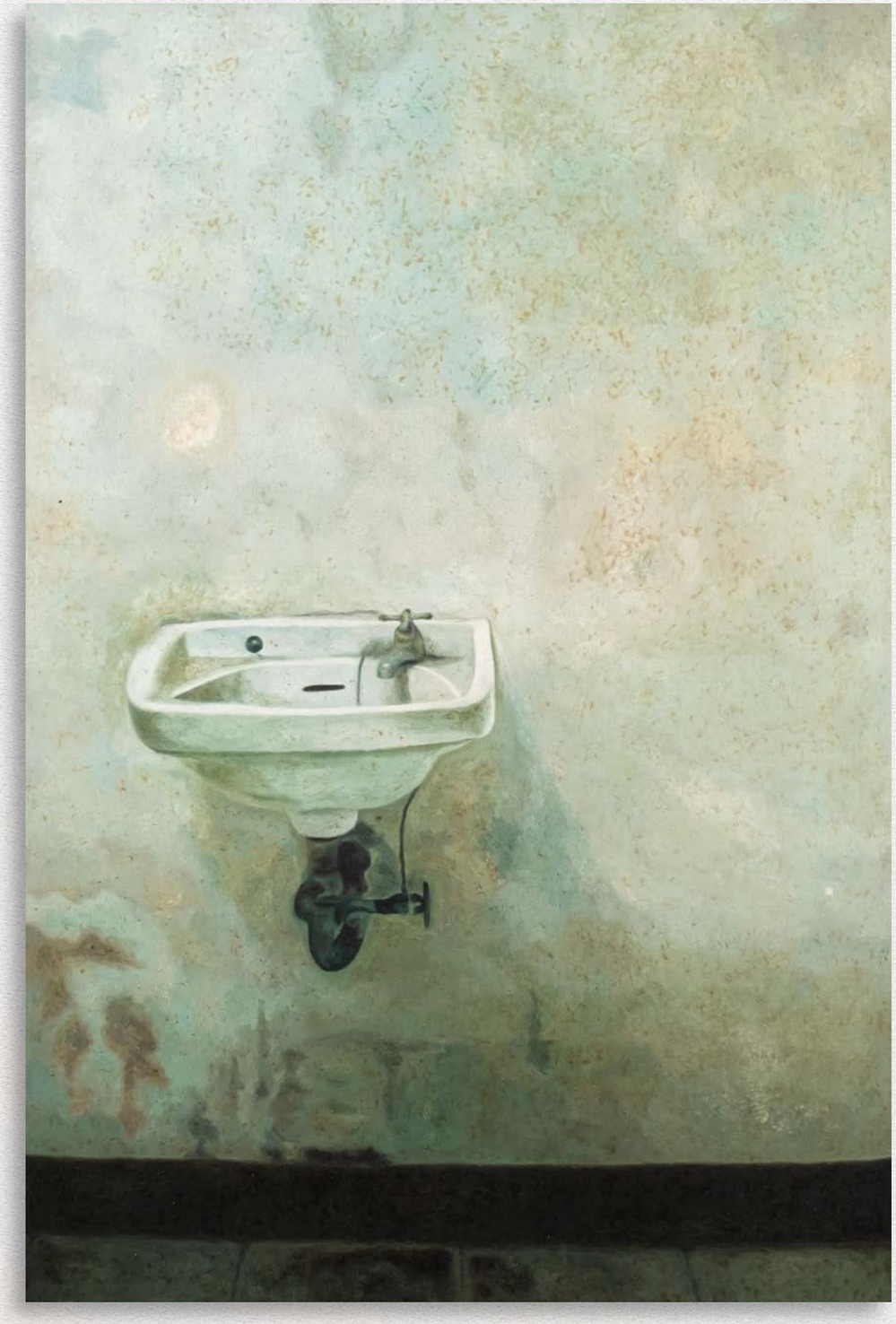
Though undeniably a painting, the piece behaves like a photograph—its composition cropped with deliberate restraint, its details captured with a near-forensic attention to surface. It recalls the conceptual coolness of photographic documentation, yet its painterly handling introduces warmth and breath into the scene. The piece resonates with *Gaston Bachelard's* phenomenology of intimate spaces: his belief that simple corners, walls, and vessels are reservoirs of memory, places where our daydreams and histories quietly reside. Through this lens, the sink becomes not merely an object but a site of reverie, a container for forgotten rituals.



ABOVE: Nona Garcia © Rem Zamora

Garcia's gift lies in her ability to guide the viewer into these zones of quiet intensity. Her works often appear serene, even minimal, yet they carry an undercurrent of emotional and conceptual depth. Whether working with X-ray images, meticulously rendered interiors, or installations that play with perception, she pursues a profound engagement with the act of seeing—one grounded in patience, honesty, and a reverence for the unspoken.

Here, she brings that sensibility to bear on something small and unassuming. And in doing so, she reminds us that art does not always need grandeur to move us. Sometimes, the most resonant truths are found in silence—on a chipped wall, in a single sink, in the haunting beauty of a space that waits simply to be seen. (Jed Daya)



117

Arturo Sanchez (b. 1980)

Contemplation
dated 2011
oil on canvas, collage on sand blasted mirror
54 1/4" x 72" (138 cm x 183 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE
Christie's, *Asian Contemporary Art (Day Sale)*, Hong Kong, 27 November 2011, Lot 1485



ABOVE: Arturo Sanchez © Art Cube Gallery

"From the 2009 show, my works evolved abruptly. I did a collage with cut-out canvas, collage in convex mirror, collage in shattered mirror, and then, recently, collage and acrylic in clear cast resin. I think this is the product of a continuous search for possibilities [in regard] to medium or experimenting within the medium itself."

—ARTURO SANCHEZ, MANILA BULLETIN ARTICLE ENTITLED "ARTURO SANCHEZ IS AN ARCHITECT OF VISUAL NARRATIVES," PUBLISHED JULY 19, 2021

A graduate of architecture, the works of multimedia artist Arturo Sanchez combine the spontaneity of his usage of a multitude of artistic forms and the precision and design skills he had cultivated during his college years.

An innovator, Sanchez dabbles in a multitude of art forms, making use of different source materials in a style he calls "collages." These collages eventually became his signature medium, the foundation of his practice that set him apart from the rest.

From his 2009 show, Sanchez's works evolved rapidly. His impartial usage of multiple media in one canvas — ranging from cut-out canvases, mirrors, and resin-encased collages, among others — creates a story laid down by multiple layered visual cues.

His 2011 *Contemplation* encapsulates the best of early Sanchez works. A layered piece playing on negative spaces, color inversions, and mirrored images, this work shows two mirrored images of the same woman. Rendered in reversed black-and-white, Sanchez depicts the same woman duplicated beside each other, one hand raised tentatively to the skies and their eyes locked in a faraway gaze. Their billowing skirts occupy the lower half of the canvas, providing solace for the bird transfixed on a piece of branch.

The bird and the branch, in quintessential Sanchez, were both made from sand-blasted mirror. When used as a literary device, the mirror becomes an invitation for further introspection. One must stop on their tracks and look into one's reflection, to be imbued by the human condition and their never-ending quest for answers that have confounded philosophers for as long as humanity has lived.

The bird that has settled on the woman's skirt seems to be a crow. A prominent figure in various bodies of myths, the crows have a plethora of meanings — often said to be a symbol of bad luck, crows could also be seen as companions of the gods. However, this particular piece seems to echo another meaning of the black bird: that of the eternal sleep.

As is the case with Sanchez, this can be gleaned through the images painted on the mirror backing. He has collaged images depicting the three stages of life behind the mirrors depicting the branch and the bird. To create this effect, he peeled away the painted backing of the mirror before inserting his cutouts and sealing them with lacquer. The effect is haunting: a looking glass trapping worlds within itself.

Through his enumeration of "budding, blooming, and deterioration," Sanchez's Contemplation is a haunting piece of media that encapsulates within itself a living world. From the purported beginning to its putative conclusion, Contemplation carries not the devastation of the end but the introspection for the future, a continuing of the cycle. *(Hannah Valiente)*



Cesar Legaspi (1917 - 1994)

Three Torsos
signed and dated 1976 (lower right)
oil on wood
32" x 24" (81 cm x 61 cm)

P 1,800,000

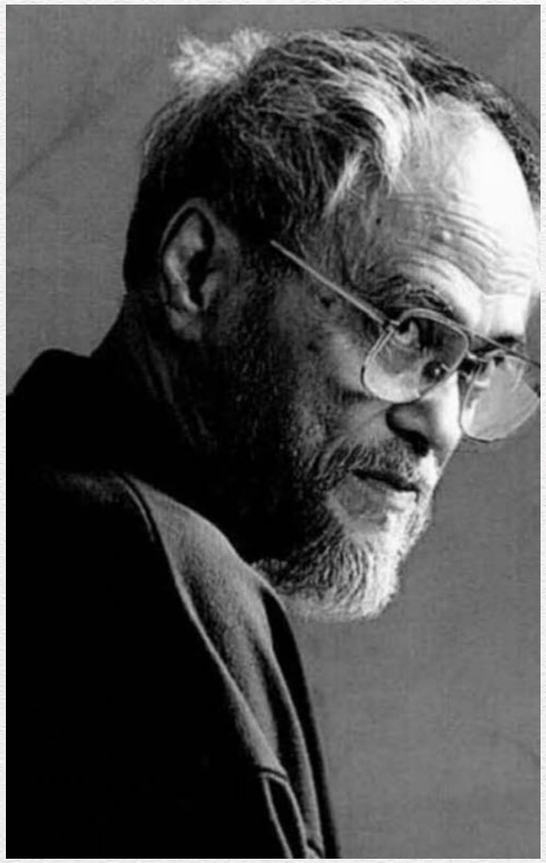
PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

Cesar Legaspi's masterpiece exhibits the artist's mature skill in visual art. Through rhythmic geometric abstraction blended with social commentary, Legaspi had explored the themes of labor, collective movement, oppression, and human resilience, as it mirrors the human conditions of Filipino workers during the time the piece was painted.

Painted in a way that radiates intense energy, the abstracted composition suggests multiple geometric human figures posing in numerous dynamic poses or engaging in physical interactions. Hinting collective movement, labor, and human resilience. It was rendered with a fiery color palette dominated by earthy hues, which intensifies the tone of the painting—creating a molten hot and pressured atmosphere that develops a symbolic impression of human struggle within an unforgiving environment.

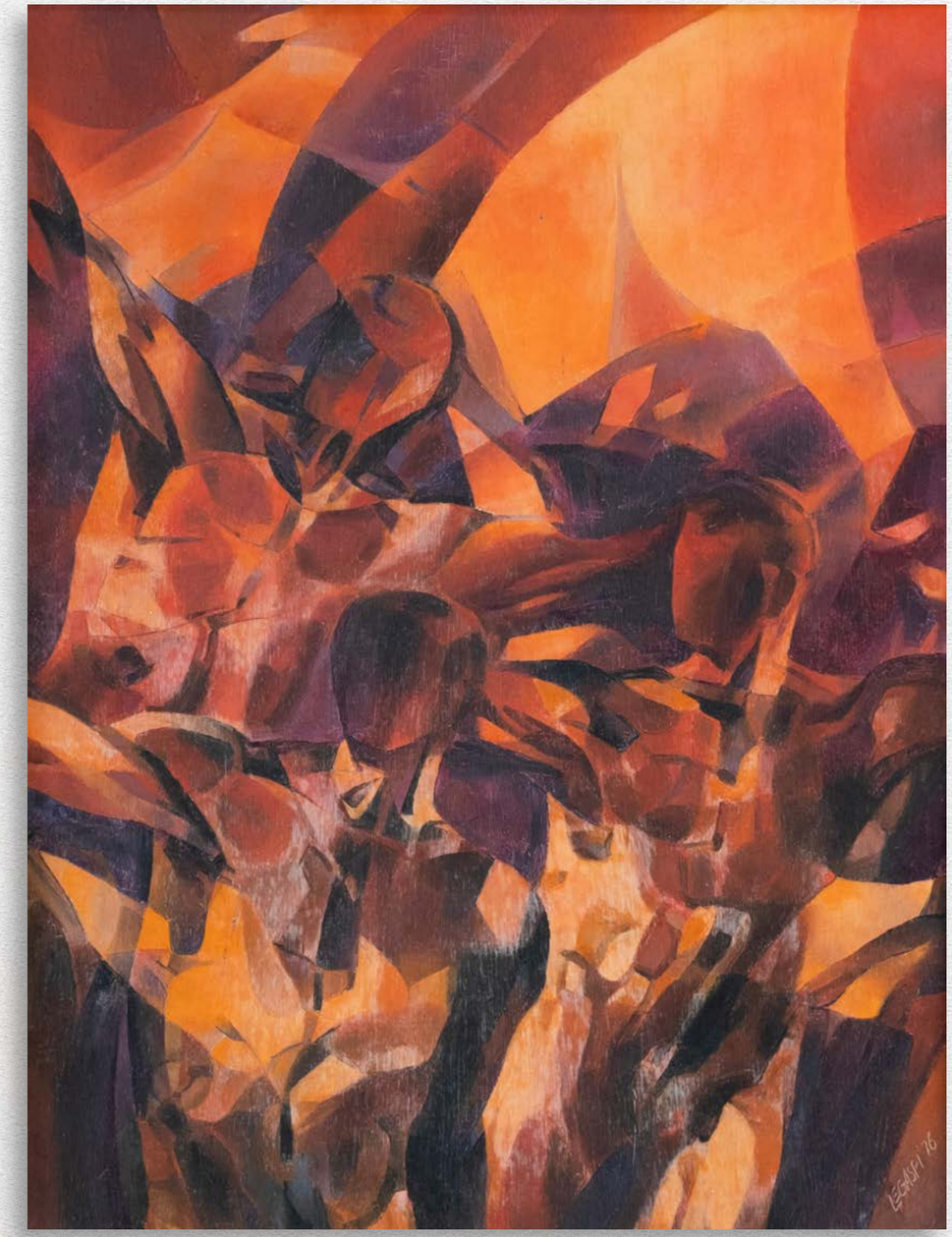
The geometric illustration, on the other hand, that dissolves into adjacent forms gives the impression that the faceless individual began to blur into a collective rhythm, unifying the figures into a singular symbolism for the working class—laborers, factory workers, and the mechanically burned—all subjected to both physical and societal pressures.

Legaspi's painting serves as a powerful example of his mastery of his craft. He perfectly captured the fragmented geometric human forms locked in a collective struggle to represent a visceral meditation about labor, resilience, and the pressures of modern life—reflecting the social conditions that the artist has observed and delivering it through a uniquely Filipino modernist lens that is both beautiful and timeless. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



ABOVE: Cesar Legaspi

The Willow World Of Cesar Legaspi



119

Anton Mallari (b. 1981)

Untitled
signed and dated 2019 (lower right)
oil on canvas
24" x 18" (61 cm x 46 cm)

P 200,000



A Baguio City-based artist, Anton Mallari's works are often centered around surrealist portraits of women, particularly those that shine light on the complexity of the female identity. In this particular work, Mallari's woman stares at the viewer in a pose reminiscent of The Girl With A Pearl Earring. This callback only emphasizes the strangeness of this young girl. As she wears an outfit similar to a jester, one can see the makeup running down her face, with white foundation and garish face paint melting to reveal the smooth skin underneath. The bonnet on her head is unraveling, revealing a branch of flowers for hair.

Mallari's works are often described as a "juxtaposition of breathing flesh and outlines of flora," reflecting his usage of flowers in tandem with personal emotions. He utilizes that same essence in this piece, creating a piece that is dreamlike in its mystery. Like Gabrielle Gonzales wrote in a 2022 Cartellino article about Mallari, "When dusk settles, ambiguity sets in with it." Indeed, Mallari's works are a dramatic study between light and dark, creating a world that tethers perfectly between the sureness of the day and the obscurity of the night. *(Hannah Valiente)*

120

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

Untitled
signed (lower right)
ca.1960
watercolor on paper
16" x 18" (41 cm x 46 cm)

P 200,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist



Born in Lucban, Oscar Zalameda's artistic journey began with his idyllic watercolor paintings, reminiscent of his buoyant childhood and the bounteous landscape and culture of Quezon province. However, his creative evolution, shaped by numerous art expeditions and experiences, led him to his signature gem-toned cubistic style.

This untitled piece was among Zalameda's early endeavors with abstraction. His profound understanding of color and space enabled him to play with strokes of color, haphazardly yet carefully, thrown into the blank canvas, creating an abstract and hazy image evocative of his lavish life in Europe. His vibrant blue and red hues are laced with grays, enveloping the scene with mist and shadows that symbolize either an impending storm or the approaching night. *(Jessica Magno)*



121

Nicole Coson (b. 1992)

Untitled
dated 2022
oil on linen
63" x 39" (160 cm x 99 cm)

P 1,700,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Shulamit Nazarlan confirming the authenticity of this lot

Continuing her meditative exploration of surface, repetition, and material memory, Nicole Coson's painting presents a minimalist, nearly monochromatic field of light beige and off-white tones that gives the impression of woven fabric or blinds.

Parts of the horizontal fabric exhibit more dynamic diagonal interruptions that completely break the visual uniformity, evoking an interplay between order and imperfection that reflects how imprints of our memory work: some are vividly remembered, while others have warped, bent, and, at some point, been forgotten.

The ghostlike quality of the image, together with the imprinting process of making the piece (which uses fabric pressed into a painted or inked surface), further aligns with Coson's ongoing interest in imprints as clear metaphors for memory, displacement, and identity— one that the London-based Filipino Artist continues to experience. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

The Introspections of the Young Alfonso Ossorio

Musings and Struggles on Identity, Religion, and Self-Acceptance

by ADRIAN MARANAN

Orchid and Egg formed part of Alfonso Ossorio's second solo exhibition that he mounted at the Wakefield Gallery in New York City in early 1943. Wakefield Gallery was then managed by Betty Parsons, who founded it in 1940 in the basement of Wakefield Bookshop, located at 64 East 55th Street. Parsons would become Ossorio's first gallerist, and she would later become an influential matriarch of the American abstract expressionist movement by promoting the works of the then-unknown Ossorio, Pollock, and Rothko, among others, who all had their first shows under Parsons.

The March 1, 1943 issue of *The Art Digest*, one of the leading American art magazines of the 20th century, praised Ossorio's works in the exhibition, writing:

"Alfonso Ossorio, Spaniard from the Philippines with a Harvard training, now exhibiting at the Wakefield Galleries until Mar. 9, has a surprising coincidence of qualities which makes his show an interesting affair. He retains a Dürer quality in his draughtsmanship, while wandering off into strange imaginal realms—a combination of the old and the newest of the new."

The review continues, "Anatomical and cadaverous detail clothed in glowing and jeweled color gives way in most cases to extremely well-drawn portraits, still retaining an introspective quality carried over from the surrealistic preludes."

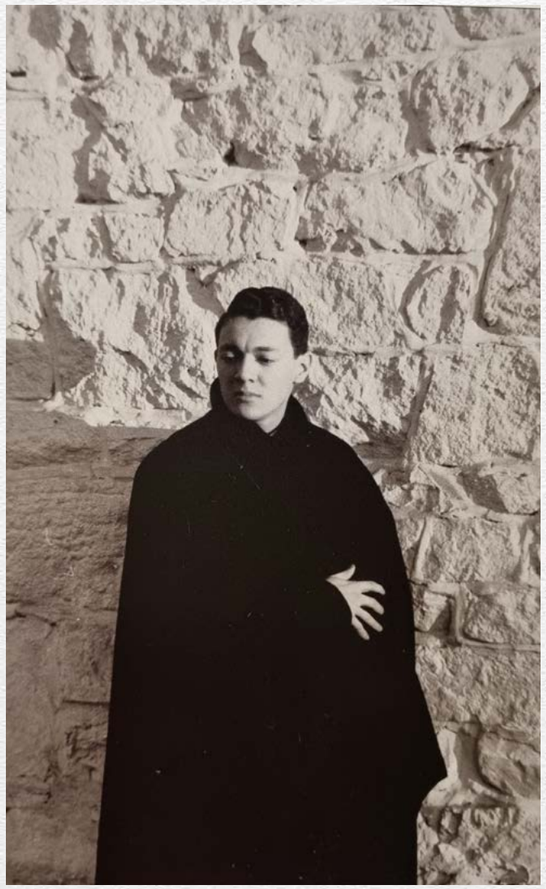
Ossorio's introspection in his early works

The review particularly highlighted the "introspective quality" of Ossorio's works, and it is not surprising that he carried over elements of his personal life into his works. By the time Ossorio painted *Orchid and Egg*, Ossorio had undergone a pivotal event in his life: his marriage and divorce to a Spanish-Irish woman by the name of Bridget Hubrecht.

Ossorio's marriage to Hubrecht was a complicated one. A divorcee, Hubrecht was a refugee who arrived in the US after World War II had struck Europe. Ossorio met Hubrecht in the spring of 1940, and the two immediately eloped to New Mexico that summer..

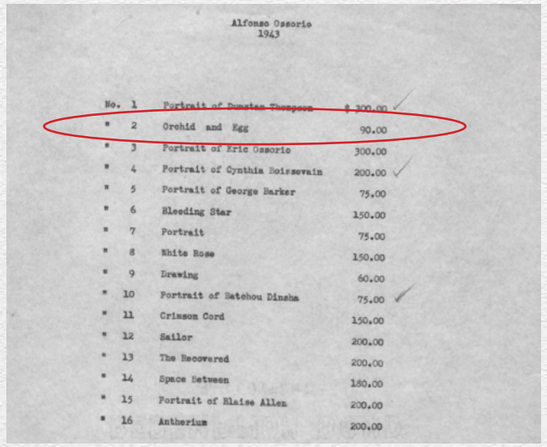
Torn between marriage and his own sexuality

Ossorio and Hubrecht married in early 1941, but their marriage would soon prove to be a short-lived one as



ABOVE: The young Alfonso Ossorio, ca. 1934 - 1938. © Paul Cadmus

they would divorce just over a year later. Some critics, specifically Klaus Ottmann in his essay *This is the Glory: Alfonso Ossorio's Artistic Treatment*, point out that Ossorio's marriage to a divorcee was "against the will of his family." Some others particularly lean on the belief that Ossorio merely married Hubrecht just to conceal his homosexuality, as he was forced by his father, Don Miguel. This rings particularly true for a *de Buena familia*, whose traditions and values are deeply rooted in conservative societal norms influenced and propagated by Catholicism. As either thing can be true at the same time, what remained clear was that Ossorio was in the throes of a struggle: whether to desperately fit in to justify the expectations of both his family and society, or to uncompromisingly



Alfonso Ossorio
1943

No.	1	Portrait of Dunstan Thompson	$ 300.00
"	2	Orchid and Egg	90.00
"	3	Portrait of Eric Ossorio	300.00
"	4	Portrait of Cynthia Boissevain	200.00
"	5	Portrait of George Barker	75.00
"	6	Bleeding Star	150.00
"	7	Portrait	75.00
"	8	White Rose	150.00
"	9	Drawing	60.00
"	10	Portrait of Batchou Dinsha	75.00
"	11	Crimson Cord	150.00
"	12	Sailor	200.00
"	13	The Recovered	200.00
"	14	Space Between	180.00
"	15	Portrait of Blaise Allen	200.00
"	16	Antherium	200.00

ABOVE: *Orchid and Egg*, as it appears in the official list of artworks exhibited at Ossorio's second solo exhibition held at the Wakefield Gallery in New York. © Smithsonian Archives of American Art - Betty Parsons Gallery records and personal papers, 1916-1991, bulk 1946-1983

embrace his sexuality as an integral part of the totality of his being.

Eric Ossorio, son of Alfonso's brother Frederic, said in his recollections of the Ossorio brothers published in the catalog of the Leon Gallery exhibition "Alfonso Ossorio: Grazing Light":
"As unfair as it may seem today, in those days, I don't believe it was expected of a father to be present as a loving figure; Don Miguel was working. He was from a military family, and that was just the way it was."

Ossorio's sexual orientation saw him in conflict with his familial upbringing, so much so that when he returned to the Philippines in the early 1950s to work on the mural of the St. Joseph the Worker Church in his hometown in Victorias, he was confronted with his memories of his overbearing father, his struggle with religion and sexuality, and the painful childhood recollection of his mother, Doña Pacita, leaving him and his two brothers at an England boarding school at tender ages.

Orchid and Egg as representative of Ossorio's psyche

In this train of thought, *Orchid and Egg* can be viewed as an amalgamation of Ossorio's internal conflicts of his being. As orchids are considered "contradictory" for their elegance and refinement, values traditionally associated with femininity, their name was literally coined from the Greek "orchis," meaning testicles, inspired by the flower's underground tubers.

Set against a backdrop of an enigmatic desert, Ossorio particularly depicts in this piece the *Paphiopedilum*, also known as the Venus slipper orchid, native to Southeast Asia, several territories in the Pacific Islands, including New Guinea, the Indian subcontinent, and the southern part of China. It is named after the coastal city of Paphos in Cyprus, where the ancient Greeks believed Aphrodite (the god of love, lust, passion, fertility, and beauty) set foot after she emerged and was born from the sea as a ravishing woman.

Paphiopedilum is often associated with the love story of Aphrodite and the handsome mortal Adonis. One myth tells of the story of the goddess hunting with her lover when a powerful storm struck, forcing them to take refuge inside a cave, where they passionately made love. After the storm, the two left, and in a bit of a hurry, Aphrodite left one of her slippers. A human soon found the slipper, and when he was about to pick it up, it transformed into an enchanting orchid with slipper-shaped petals.

The work is seen as a symbol of Ossorio and Hubrecht's elopement into New Mexico, which would soon brew into a turbulent marriage. This is evident in Ossorio's choice of setting and the legend behind the orchid that the artist portrayed in this work. The backdrop is brimming with enigmatic images of white and red raindrops, evocative of seminal fluids and blood droplets —a likely allusion to the couple's tumultuous relationship, in which intimacy and indifference, passion and aggravation, all collide.

A personal renaissance

It must also be mentioned that almost a year before Ossorio painted this watercolor, he had been engaged in a road accident, being hit by a taxi on Madison Avenue near Wakefield that left him with a severely broken leg. This occurred as he was waiting for his enlistment status for the war (the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor) in an unfortunate blackout in the city.

In what seems like a renaissance of all sorts, Ossorio depicts the orchid as emerging from inside the eggshell, evoking the story of Aphrodite's birth that parallels Ossorio's recovery and willful rise from the frailty and vulnerability of it all: an escape from a marriage that he was just forced into, a deep-seated childhood trauma, an unfortunate accident,

Alfonso Ossorio (1916 - 1990)

Orchid and Egg
signed, dated 1942, and inscribed
"29 - XII - 42 / NYC" (lower left)
watercolor on paper
18 1/4" x 11" (46 cm x 28 cm)

P 1,200,000

EXHIBITED
Wakefield Gallery, *Paintings and Drawings by Alfonso Ossorio (Second One-Man Exhibition)*, New York, 23 February - 9 March 1943

and family pressures, an unfortunate accident. Personal tensions are woven, resulting in a work that reveals Ossorio defying religious expectations and resisting the macho-centered gender norms of his time. Ossorio also likely used the imagery of the orchid to associate it with himself, with its biomorphic form and outstretched arms as personifying his own character: a man can be elegant and delicate yet bold enough to be all that he can be, to pursue what his soul truly craves and yearns for.

Orchid and Egg sees Ossorio coming to terms with the contradictions his sexuality had brought upon, accepting it as an integral part of his totality. Just a few years later, in 1948, Ossorio would meet ballet dancer Edward "Ted" Dragon while vacationing in the Berkshires in Massachusetts. The two would cohabitate the following year, forming a romantic relationship and committed partnership that lasted until Ossorio's demise in 1990.

Ossorio's early view on his sexual orientation can be seen through glimpses in his introductory note to his senior thesis, "Spiritual Influences on the Visual Image of Christ," in which he wrote:
"Under what form He is thought of in the visual imagination of artists, under what material shape He is shown to His worshippers, is, to my mind, dictated mainly by the religious thought of a period: stylistic variations are governed by intellectual changes...."

It can be inferred that early on, Ossorio had already viewed his sexuality through the lens of a relatively progressive notion, despite being hammered by familial and societal


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KRAUSHAAR GALLERIES
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If we are honest in our efforts to put down profound relationships, the song is there. That is what sings irrespective of the correctness of the proportions to given objects of nature.
—LOUIS H. PORTER, Jr., *New York City.*

Too Effective

SIR: Hold! Enough, Boswell! Your magazine is too damned effective and too many people read it. Our Flint Artists' show listed in your "Where To Show" column is limited to Flint residents only. It was my fault not to make that clear in the announcement. I have paid, and dearly, for that mistake by answering applications for entry blanks from every section of the country and from Canada, and apologizing for the error. Kindly correct announcement.
—RICHARD B. FREEMAN, *Director, Flint Institute of Arts.*

Jazz and Stuart Davis

SIR: I think the comparison between Stuart Davis and Jazz is excellent, and perhaps you should give Jazz more serious consideration. Concerning your cover, why express modern ideology in an 18th century "topper"? Please change it.
—NORA ROSE, *Buffalo.*
Ed. The deed is done.

Opposed by Boris

SIR: The only reason I am not writing a beef about "Americana 1943" is that your Maude Riley (bless her little heart) did such a fine job bludgeoning the Museum of Modern Art. And high time that the Museum's policies started coming out into the light of day.
—BORIS WOLF, *Brooklyn.*

Helen Boswell, Business Manager. Edna Marsh, Circulation Manager. Morris Huddon, Editor.
Entered as second class matter Oct. 31, 1930, at the post office in New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Subscription, United States, $3.00 per year; Canada, $3.50; Foreign.
$3.50; single copies, 25 cents. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or photographs. Printed in the U. S. A. Trade marks and copyrights [illegible]. Publication Office, 116 East 59th St., New York. Editorial and Advertising Office, 116 East 59th St., New York. Telephone [illegible]. Volume XVII, No. 11, March 1, 1943.

The Art Digest
4

ABOVE: An advertisement for Ossorio's Wakefield exhibition published in The Art Digest (later Arts Magazine), one of the most prominent American art magazines of the 20th century. © Internet Archive

expectations. Like Christ's image, beliefs on and prejudices against sexuality beyond the binary are shaped by the larger context of one's milieu. For Ossorio, what was important was that his sexuality mattered to him more than it mattered to others and their biased notions, especially considering the context of his times.

"AAO's homosexuality was less of a concern to him than some people like to emphasize," wrote Eric. "I believe that for him, homosexuality was a choice or preference, not some deep, dark conflict that he had to reconcile. Sure, he knew it was contrary to the Church's doctrines...but he also knew that the Church's doctrines were human-made, and therefore, by definition, flawed."

From his Second Solo N.Y.C. Show



123

Takashi Murakami (b.1962)

Forest of DOB
1995
vinyl chloride and helium
H: 110" (280 cm)
W: 98" (250 cm)
D: 98" (250 cm)

P 12,000,000

PROVENANCE
SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo
Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York
Clyde and Karen Beswick, Los Angeles
Christie's March 2012
Private Collector

One of the most influential figures in contemporary art, Takashi Murakami has reshaped the global imagination of Japanese visual culture. Trained in Nihonga, the traditional Japanese style of painting, Murakami developed a distinct aesthetic language that fuses fine art and mass media, blurring the boundaries between high and low culture. His work draws from anime, manga, and consumerism, while remaining deeply reflective of postwar Japan's shifting identity and the global rise of pop capitalism.

In Forest of DOB, Murakami introduces his iconic character, Mr. DOB—a manic, multieyed creature whose name nods to a nonsensical Japanese slang phrase, "dobozite dobozite," meaning "why, why?" The artwork, an immense inflatable sculpture, looms between adorable and monstrous, embodying both the seduction and excess of pop culture. Its garish grin and cartoon eyes mirror a world oversaturated by images, where joy and anxiety coexist in dazzling technicolor.

Murakami's concept of *Superflat* comes alive here—a theory describing Japan's postwar aesthetic as one where distinctions between art, commerce, and subculture collapse into a single glossy plane. The inflated, almost suffocating surface of Forest of DOB literalizes this idea, turning cuteness or kawaii into critique. Beneath its playful façade lies a sharp commentary on consumer desire and cultural identity in the global era. *(Jed Daya)*



ABOVE: Takashi Murakami © The Telegraph



124

Paul McCarthy (b.1945)

White Snow, Balloon Dog
signed
2013
sealed PVC polyvinyl chloride plastic
and inflation pump
edition of 40
H: 62" (158 cm)
L: 33" (84 cm)
D: 82" (208 cm)

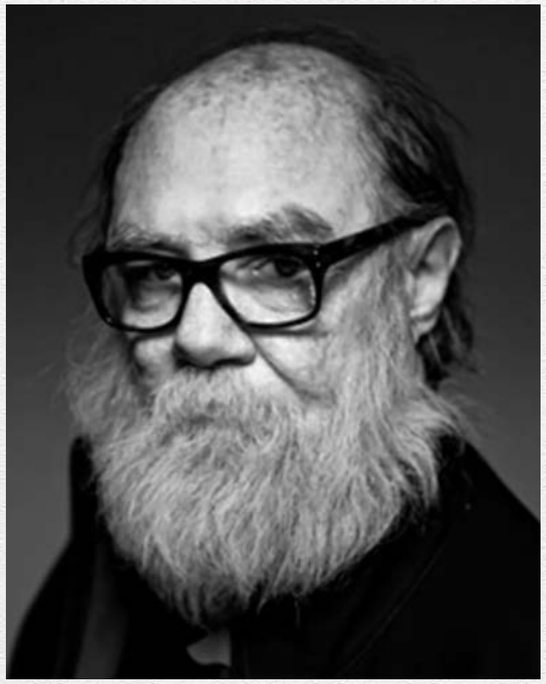
P 1,200,000

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

PROVENANCE
Phillips New York, *New Now*, New York City,
20 September 2016, Lot 106
Hauser & Wirth, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner

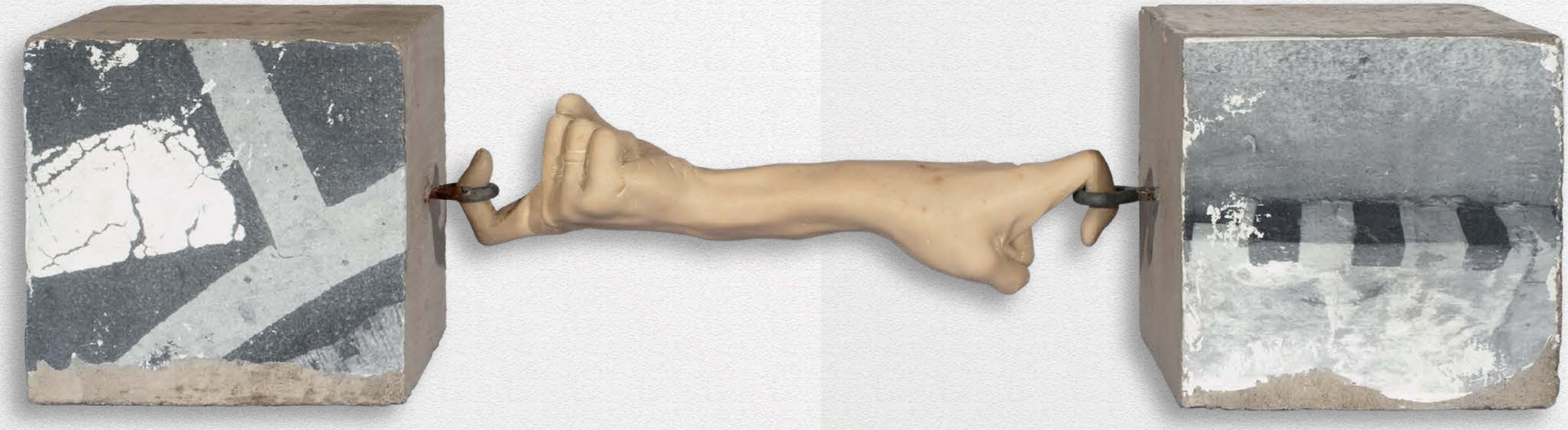
Paul McCarthy is one of the most provocative figures in Western contemporary art, known for dismantling the polished surfaces of Western popular culture and revealing the grotesque, often unsettling truths that lie beneath. Working across performance, sculpture, and film, McCarthy reconfigures the familiar—children's stories, consumer symbols, and domestic rituals—into uncanny spectacles that expose the fractures of modern identity. *White Snow, Balloon Dog* belongs to this continuum of critical play. The sculpture, with its inflated, fleshy volumes rendered in a muted rose tone, presents an object that is at once humorous and deeply disquieting. Its rounded forms and glossy surface recall the innocence of childhood toys, yet its distorted anatomy and corporeal color transform that familiarity into something charged and visceral. The result is an object that appears both humorous and corporeal—hovering between abstraction and figuration, the mechanical and the organic. This duality speaks to McCarthy's long-standing interest in transformation: the process by which images, icons, and cultural symbols lose their innocence through repetition and distortion.

McCarthy represents an abject turn in contemporary art—where artists use parody, deformation, and excess to question the sanitized surfaces of consumer aesthetics. Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject, that which unsettles the boundary between self and other, also offers a useful framework for understanding McCarthy's project. In White Snow, Balloon Dog, the artist transforms a benign, celebratory form into one that feels bodily and unstable, confronting viewers with the fragility of their own sense of the real. Through this quiet tension between innocence and unease, McCarthy achieves a work that is both a parody of spectacle and a meditation on its power. *(Jed Daya)*



ABOVE: Paul McCarthy © Solo Contemporary





125

Jose John Santos III (b. 1970)

Dumb bells "Series of 12"
2017
cement, polyresin, and gesso transfers
H: 8 1/4" (21.5 cm)
L: 8 1/4" (21.5 cm)
W: 33 1/4" (85 cm)

P 200,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by The Visual Arts Helping Hands Foundation, Inc. confirming the authenticity of this lot

Jose John Santos III's *Dumb bells 'Series of 12'* shines a light on the artist's heightened awareness of everyday objects and the never-ending meanings one can imbue into them. Though his works are often cryptic in their real meaning, the surrealist trip one takes to uncover it is half the reason for understanding his works.

In a mind boggling sculpture piece, Santos uses only two blocks of concrete and a resin-molded conjoined hand, and yet it creates a compelling narrative. These items, in and of themselves, do not present a story; when taken as a whole, however, they form a coherent narrative.

Perhaps the strongest source of information regarding this extraordinary work is the resin sculpture balanced perfectly between the two cement blocks. Easily noticeable is the usual anatomy of the hands; connected at the wrists, the hands face opposite directions. Though both of them are formed in a loose fist with their pointer fingers looped on the tiny metal protruding from the sides of the concrete blocks, they face different directions, with one of the hands looping its fingers from the bottom and the other from the top.

Like many of Santos's works, this work contains both a multitude and an absence of any explicit meaning. The Drawing Room's biography of Santos states that: "Whether it's about telling stories through his figurative paintings and drawings or tracing histories through his still life compositions in collage, painting, assemblage, and installation works, their messages are oftentimes elusive and impenetrable, opening up possibilities for interpretation."

Indeed, *Dumb bells* is crafted in such a way that any interpretation is just as valid as the last. Perhaps the strain visible on the hands as they grip onto their baggage is a metaphor for one's refusal to dispose of their unnecessary burden – or it could equally be perseverance during hard times.

"Santos is known for presenting works that contradict the order of reality under a convincing veneer of naturalism," online media platform Meer writes in its 25 November 2014 article 'José Santos III: 2hide'. "Assemblage of objects, photography, digital intervention, deconstruction of the printed image, collage, and painting are amongst the avenues through which Santos has fleshed out expanded possibilities in image-making in recent years, picking up on a thread of interest in the eloquence of inanimate objects from early in the artist's career." *(Hannah Valiente)*

126

Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Plants
signed and dated 3.VIII.88 (lower right)
gouache on paper
12" x 8 3/4" (30 cm x 22 cm)

P 180,000

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



Despite being primarily known as a painter of genre scenes, his iconic depictions of Manila's vendors and townsfolk bathed in the warmth of tropical light, Malang would, on occasion, flex his creative muscle in the quieter, more contemplative realm of still life painting. This untitled composition reveals the artist's remarkable versatility and the assuredness of his hand. Here, he reimagines the still life not as a simple depiction of flora, but as an arena for formal experimentation. The leaves and flowers appear less as literal foliage and more as rhythmic expressions of motion and energy. The composition exudes a dynamic sense of balance; its angular geometry and overlapping shapes create a push and pull between structure and spontaneity. Through bold brushwork and a cubistic arrangement, Malang infuses the static motif of the vase with pulsating vitality. The result is a painting that seems to breathe, as though the artist sought not to capture the appearance of nature, but its inner pulse. Beyond the piece, one might also read the work through the lens of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception: the painting does not simply represent objects, but embodies the act of seeing itself, translating the vitality of observation into form. In this synthesis of intuition and design, Malang transforms the familiar genre of still life into an expressive meditation on perception, rhythm, and the modern condition of painting itself. (Jed Daya)

127

Justin Nuyda (1944 - 2022)

Mindscapes: Banak Series 9
signed and dated 2002 (lower left)
oil on paper
13 1/2" x 19 1/2" (34 cm x 50 cm)

P 160,000

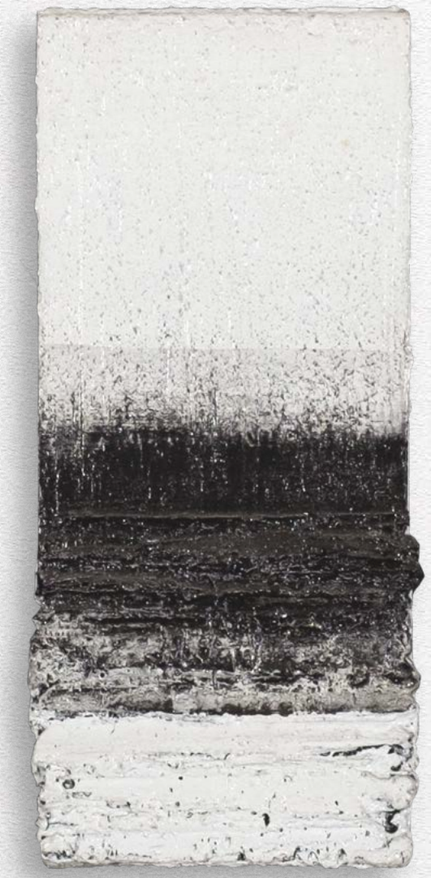
PROVENANCE
Galleria Duemila, Inc



A "picture of the sights," as his website calls it, Justin Nuyda's Mindscape series translates one's deeply private inner world into a majestic, surrealistic landscape that looks as familiar as it is novel.

His 2002 *Mindscapes: Banak Series 9* depicts a vast stretch of a yellow desert field, with the scorching wind picking up grains of sand that blow up in circular motions. In a noticeable divergence from his usual vividly colored landscapes, this particular work boasts of only one hue: a golden yellow supported only by shades of tawny white or darker brown. Still, it is as vividly emotional as any of his other colored pieces, as narratively driven as any of his works.

"This is why I entitle my artworks, 'Search Mindscape,'" Nuyda 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)*



128 PROPERTY FROM THE LEOVINO MA. GARCIA COLLECTION

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

View
signed (left and verso) dated 2009
oil on canvas
11" x 5" (28 cm x 13 cm)

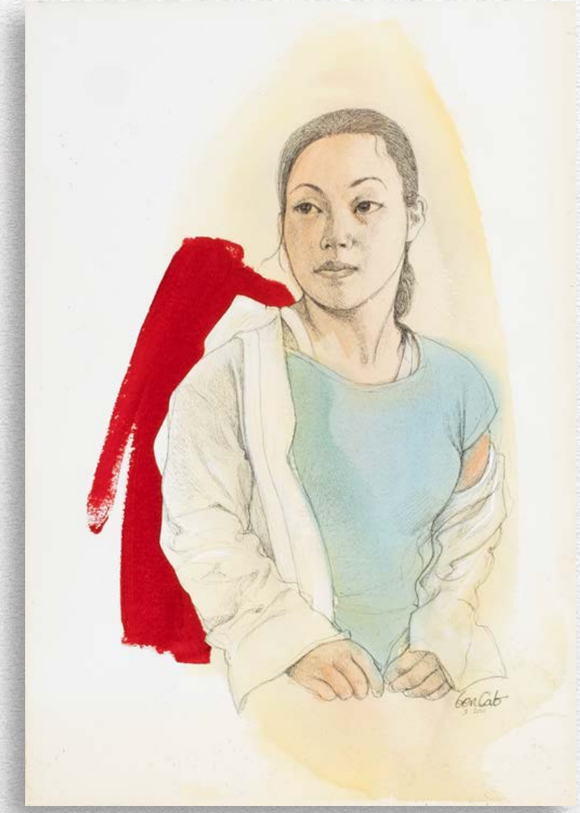
P 600,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

Serving as a powerful example of his minimalist yet deeply spiritual abstractions, Lao Lianben's 2009 masterpiece *View* exemplifies his meditative approach to painting, where his pieces' texture, tone, and space replace the usual representational imagery. It highlights a division between two drastically opposite shades, dissolving softly into one another and stripping their essence to evoke a contemplative mood—mirroring the artist's Zen-inspired philosophy of seeing beyond the physical.

The masterpiece displays an abstraction that has a predominantly white hue, highlighting emptiness, purity, and illumination. However, as the gaze descends downwards, the pure white palette slowly transitions to gray and later charcoal black before attempting to go back to the original hue, the texture becomes denser and rougher as the white hue returns.

Digging deeper, the restrained color palette, shifting texture, and minimalist form promote stillness and introspection. The contrasting relationship between light and dark hints at the duality and harmony of opposites, echoing the "Yin-Yang" like Zen concepts of balance and transcendence and therefore, embodying Lao's pursuit of art as a spiritual discipline where viewing becomes an act of meditation. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



129

Benedicto Cabrera (b. 1942)

Young Farmgirl
signed and dated 2011 (lower right)
acrylic and ink on paper
22" x 15" (56 cm x 38 cm)

P 280,000

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

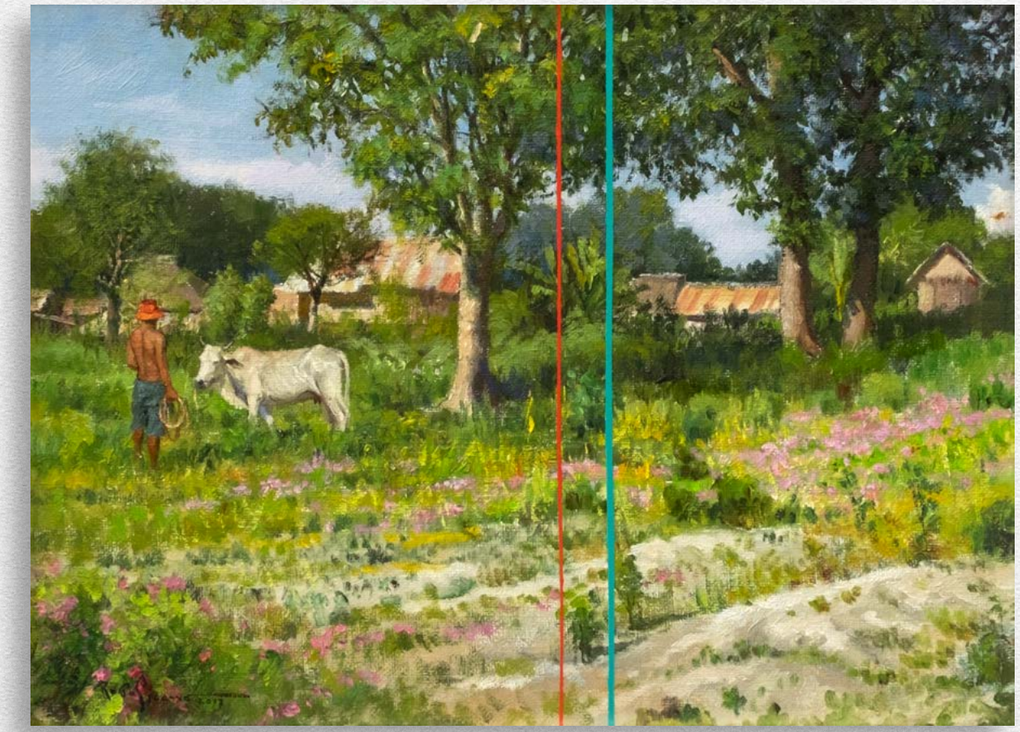
LITERATURE
BenCab: Life Drawings. Published to accompany the exhibition of the same title at Bluewater Gallery in 2011. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 7.

EXHIBITED
Bluewater Gallery, *BenCab: Life Drawings*, Cebu, 1 May - 12 June 2011

An artist exceptionally attuned to the human condition and the Filipino spirit, Bencab's *Young Farmgirl*, even in its simplicity, is a testament to the artist's innate understanding of his fellow countrymen. This work was first created and exhibited in 2011 alongside several other sketches that portray the simple Filipino life, a manifestation of the artist's deeply seated Filipino values. *(Hannah Valiente)*



ABOVE: The cover of the catalog for Bencab's exhibition, "Life Drawings," at Bluewater Gallery in Cebu in mid-2011. The work on offer this auction, "Young Farmgirl," was among the works in the exhibition.



130

Romulo Galicano (b. 1945)

Pastoral Scene along the Shore of Cordova, Cebu
signed and dated 2013 (lower left and verso)
oil on canvas
12" x 16" (30 cm x 41 cm)

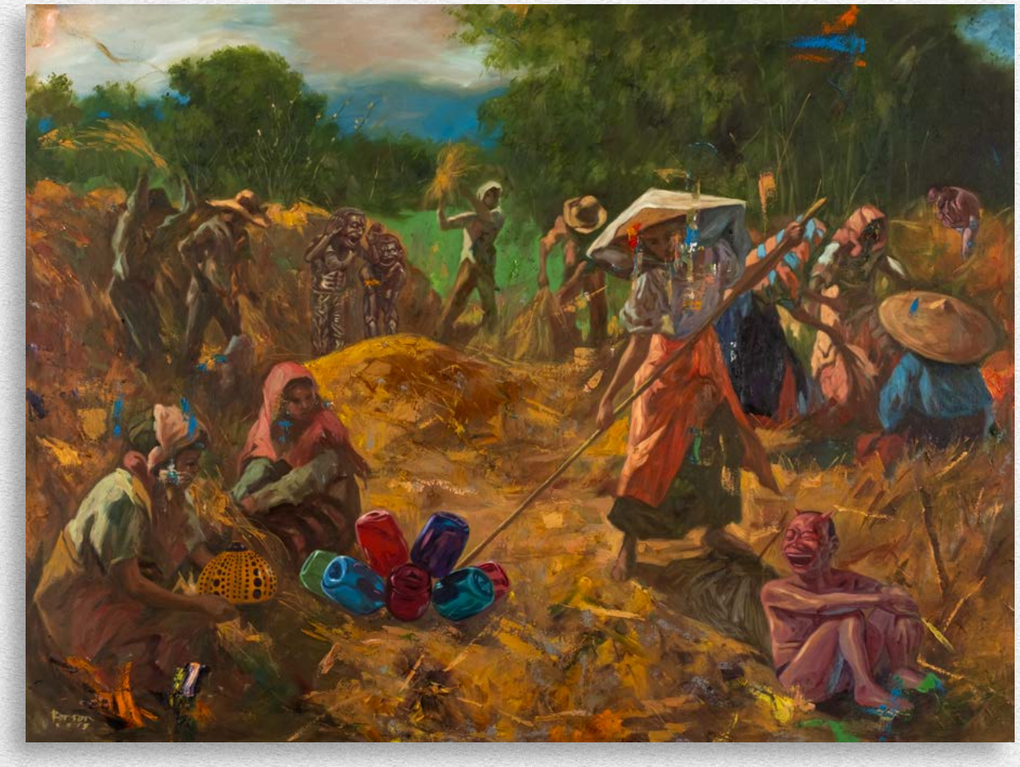
P 260,000

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

Romulo Galicano's works boast of remarkable versatility, reflecting his growth and development as an artist. Over the course of his career, his canvases have featured a diverse range of subjects, including landscapes, seascapes, still lifes, portraits, and nude studies, which range from highly detailed pieces to rough sketches. Still, he is most known for his realist and impressionist-style landscapes. Galicano also created pieces that merge classical techniques with modern themes, inspiring young artists to be dauntless in finding their own artistic voices.

Even after decades, Galicano remains steadfast in his artmaking. His 2013 oil on canvas work, Pastoral Scene Along the Shore of Cordova, Cebu, is a testament to his unwavering dedication. It offers a glimpse of the picturesque town of Cordova, approximately 48 kilometers from the artist's hometown in Carcar. With his masterful strokes and palette, Galicano captures the town's lush greens and blossoming gardens, a different view from its nearby shore. At the centre of the image, a large tree provides shade for a man and his cow, shielding them from the sun's heat.

Galicano's colorism, drawn from the dazzling colors of nature, is one of the most admirable aspects of his art. His use of color enhances the visual appeal of his paintings and sets their emotional tone, often evoking a sense of nostalgia and reflection in the viewers. *(Jessica Magno)*



131

Ronson Culibrina (b. 1991)

Untitled
signed and dated 2013 (lower left)
oil on canvas
36" x 48" (91 cm x 122 cm)

P 200,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist

Known for his appropriation paintings that combine elements of famous art pieces with contemporary pop culture references and socio-political commentary, Ronson Culibrina's painting highlights this exact artistic style as it recontextualizes Fernando Amorsolo's 1939 piece, *Rice Harvest*, combined with surreal edits of different items and distortions, basically turning the classic piece into a commentary that highlights tension between nostalgic rural romanticism and modern disruption.

Using bright, contemporary color interventions that break Amorsolo's idealist realism, Culibrina created a masterpiece that highlights the tension between tradition and modernity. The way Amorsolo's rural scene was used to represent the country's agricultural roots and the hardworking nature of its citizens, and then disrupted by the presence of out-of-place modern items such as industrialized jars, represented the intrusion of consumerism, globalization, and imported culture into local life. The laughing devil sitting on the ground reflects the temptation, corruption, and the mocking spirit of colonial history, which continues to laugh at the persistence of exploitation and inequality in a modernized world. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



132

Jorge Pineda (1879 - 1946)

Barrio Lass
signed and dated 1941 (lower right)
pastel on paper
22" x 16" (56 cm x 41 cm)

P 340,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Jose Pineda confirming the authenticity of this lot

Jorge Pineda's masterpieces reflect his training at the *Academia de Dibujo y Pintura* and under the tutelage of the esteemed Teodoro Buenaventura. He was one of the early genre artists who presented country life as realistically as possible, and offered a genuine portrayal of his figures' dispositions and physical attributes.

Despite the similarity in style and subject matter, what differentiates Pineda's works from his contemporaries is his warmer, sanguine tone. This optimism, along with his skills in anatomical rendering, is powerfully manifested in this untitled pastel on paper work.

This piece depicts a maiden dressed in traditional clothing, holding her skirt up to prevent getting wet as she cautiously crosses the river. The artist's palette suggests that the sun is at its peak, with light falling on the figure's complete profile. However, the water and the lush greenery around her seem to neutralize the heat and manage to bring wisps of cold air—evident in her sweet smile and the folded parasol umbrella.

Jorge Pineda created the work at hand in 1941, a few years before his unfortunate demise. Nonetheless, it was a striking testament to his perennial skills and unwavering dedication. *(Jessica Magno)*



133

Guerrero Habulan (b. 1980)

How How D Carabao
signed and dated 2015 (lower left)
oil and acrylic on canvas
76" x 96" (193 cm x 243 cm)

P 400,000

Guerrero Habulan's *How How D Carabao* showcases the artist's style of merging hyperrealism with surrealist elements. Painted in 2015, this masterpiece uses exaggerated and dreamlike figures as well as theatrical composition to create a satirical yet poignant commentary on Filipino Identity in the age of globalization.

Along the surface, the composition illustrates an image of two central figures sitting on a carabao—a Filipino symbol primarily associated with rural life and hard labor. One of the distinctive symbologies found in the piece is the depiction of a foreign man and a local Filipino woman. The way the latter is wearing a "doll face" suggests the loss of individuality, as if the person has been wearing synthetic faces, essentially trying to become mannequins that fit into a society they try to belong to. The foreign man, on the other hand, who's carrying a miniature house, seems to represent dreams of stability, family, and ownership found in the palms of the foreign land.

Upon delving deeper into the piece, Guerrero Habulan has done a magnificent job of revealing the issue of Filipino identity and the tensions between traditions and modernity, labor and leisure, and authenticity and imitation. The whole canvas mirrors an image of a society riding its own carabao—definitely moving forward but unfathomably burdened by the weight of colonial influences and the lure of modern temptations. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



134

Ferdie Montemayor (b. 1965)

Eros
signed and dated 2016 (verso)
acrylic on canvas
36" x 96 1/2" (91 cm x 245 cm)

P 300,000



ABOVE: Ferdie Montemayor © Artesan Gallery & Studio

Illustrating the elegant and swirling power of love, Ferdie Montemayor's monochromatic masterpiece entitled *Eros* visualizes the enchanting power of love and the way it moves and connects people.

Named after the Greek god who embodies passion and love, Montemayor's magnificent painting further explores the movement of human passion, intimacy, and vitality through a monochromatic visual language.

This art piece illustrates several figures caught in a circular dance or embrace through looping strokes to highlight intense movement and physicality, Montemayor had perfectly captured the energy, passion, and chaos of physical and spiritual connections. An uncontrollable nature of love—raw, consuming yet intimately connecting.

For context, Ferdie Montemayor is known for his interest in movement, human form, and social energies. His 2015 masterpiece channels this theme into a visceral abstraction, where emotion takes physical and visual shape. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

Fernando Zóbel and Gerardo Rueda Forging a Friendship and Championing Modernism in Francoist Spain

Zóbel's Collaborator And Ardent Supporter of His Brainchild, The Iconic Cuenca Museum of Spanish Abstract Art

by ADRIAN MARANAN



ABOVE: (From left to right) Gerardo Rueda, Vicente Vela, César Manrique, Fernando Zóbel and Eusebio Sempere in a group show at the Neblí Gallery in 1962. © Fernando Zóbel Archive



ABOVE: Zóbel and fellow artists and friends at the opening of the Cuenca Museum of Spanish Abstract Art on June 30, 1966. © Fernando Zóbel Archive

Fernando Zóbel first met Gerardo Rueda in mid-1955, during a three-month European sojourn. This European encounter would prove providential for Zóbel, as it was the exact moment when he discovered avant-garde Spanish painting, which would also be the primary influence on his transition from vibrant figurations to lyrical abstractions encapsulating order, composition, and method.

Rueda, born in Madrid in 1926, initially pursued a career in law before shifting to painting. He was initially drawn to Cubism, but later delved into monochromatic, lyrical abstraction in the late 1950s onwards to the 1960s, which would eventually influence Zóbel's practice, particularly in his *Serie Negra* of 1959 to 1962. Rueda would count among Spain's young avant-garde artists, who, willfully or inadvertently, consciously or subconsciously, defied the conservatism of the dictator Francisco Franco's regime on what kind of art is and should only be legitimized and promoted.

Rueda was among the artists who participated in the 1955 exhibition of young Spanish abstractionists at Madrid's Galería Fernando Fe, which also doubled as a bookstore and became a haven for these *informalistas*. It was in this exhibition that Zóbel discovered, in his own written words, the "vitality" and "extraordinary level of quality in this generation [of Spanish abstractionists] that was more or less my own."

On June 19, 1955, Zóbel visited Rueda's studio, in which he shared this beautiful experience in his diary. "Gerardo's studio is no longer a secret hideout," Zóbel writes. "It was full of people drinking wine and eating omelettes…I agreed to swap paintings with Gerardo. In many ways, our heads operate in the same manner."

Zóbel and Rueda would become close acquaintances and the two would constantly exchange letters upon the former's return to Manila. From Rueda, Zóbel would learn more about Spanish abstraction and the general European art scene, particularly that of Paris. Alfonso de la Torre, director and co-author of Zóbel's catalogue raisonné, wrote "…[Rueda], this modern, sensitive artist from Madrid with French roots, with whom [Zóbel] would share [an apartment studio] for a few years on his frequent visits to Madrid between 1955 and 1958, put him in contact with the art scene in the Spanish capital and also gave him the chance to receive information about the gallery scene in Madrid and current art affairs in France, as a regular flaneur of 1950s Paris."

Zóbel, during this time, was in the throes of contradiction—whether to pursue painting full-time or live the double life of being a prominent heir to his family business and an artist, albeit with less and less time for the latter.

Zóbel returned to Madrid in October 1958 and decided to set up his residence in the capital. He set up his apartment-cum-studio at No. 98, Calle Velasquez, sharing the place with his friend Rueda. For Zóbel, this decision marked for him "a point of departure," intensifying his desire to abandon his old life behind. Zóbel and Rueda's shared space became a microcosm of art and history, decorating their space with paintings of fellow artist-friends and various ephemera and antiques.

At the end of 1960, a deeply anxious and depressed Zóbel decided to abandon his life in the Philippines, materializing his plan to settle in Madrid permanently in the early months of 1961. The emancipated Zóbel in Spain would join Rueda in several exhibitions, including '*Cinco pintores: Sempere, Rueda, Manrique, Vela y Zóbel*' at Galería Nebli and the landmark exhibition '*Modern Spanish Painting*,' mounted at London's iconic Tate Gallery, both in 1962.

The two would also travel Europe together, visiting museums, galleries, and basking in the relative freedom of the European air. Rueda accompanied Zóbel in the latter's historic participation in the 1962 Venice Biennale, where the latter would cross paths with painter-sculptor Gustavo Torner. It would become the first time that Zóbel, Rueda, and Torner would intersect all at once, bringing together the future vanguards of the struggle towards the promotion and institutionalization of Spanish art through a permanent, Spain-based museum.

Zóbel and Rueda's friendship would profoundly manifest towards the mid-1960s, when the idea of creating a museum of Spanish abstract art struck the former. Moving to a new Madrid address at No. 12, Calle Fortuny, Zóbel stumbled upon the concept of having a museum to permanently house his growing collection of Spanish abstract art from his generation. Rueda was particularly excited about this project, as there was no Spanish institution, whether private or public, that was formally committed to promoting and displaying Spanish contemporary art.

During this time, Spain was still under Franco's dictatorship, which had ruled the country since the late 1930s after the victory of the *Bando nacional* (Francoist faction) against the Republican forces of the democratic Second Spanish Republic. Although beginning in the 1950s, the regime had been promoting abstract art to an international audience through its participation in major biennales, the overall situation in the country was still conservative; the dictatorship had merely utilized the global dominance of abstract art to project a face of liberalism and openness, mainly to attract aid from the United States to save the crumbling government and further legitimize the dictatorship. Francoist Spain remained strongly anti-modernist and ultra-nationalist, suppressing regional identities (Castilian, Basque, etc.) and promoting the fundamentalist National Catholicism.

Zóbel had Madrid as the first logical location in mind, sharing this with Rueda and Torner in their conversations. He eventually discarded this idea as it would be costly. The next option was Toledo, which was chosen because of its proximity to the capital. The three would make several trips to the city, ultimately failing to find a site large enough to house Zóbel's collection.

Zóbel became more zealous than ever in finding a fitting location for his creative brainchild, even writing in his diary of his unfailing spirits, "It is taking us a lot of work to find the house, but I am sure that when I see it, I will recognize it.."

In 1963, Torner, upon hearing of the future museum in a dinner organized by Zóbel, invited him to tour his hometown of Cuenca for a day. Serendipitously, Rodrigo Lozano, Cuenca's then-mayor, suggested through Torner the idea of housing Zóbel's expansive art collection in one of the structures at Casas Colgadas (Hanging Houses). Upon seeing the magnificent houses perched on cliffs that blend natural beauty with gravity-defying architecture, Zóbel was instantly enamored and decisively chose the location for his future museum, highly likely realizing the site's striking symbolism as both an overall encapsulation of the mountainous Spanish terrain and as a towering symbol of the struggles and triumphs of Spanish abstraction.

In July of the same year, Zóbel would reside in Cuenca. Rueda would follow Zóbel and establish his own studio in Cuenca the next year, deeply inspired by his friend, who succeeded in encouraging fellow Spanish artists of his generation to take up residence in the city and transform it into the cultural and artistic hub of the country, much like the major art capitals of Paris, New York, Venice, and São Paolo. Also setting their studios in Cuenca were Millares, Manuel Hernandez Mompo, Amadeo Gabino, in addition to Saura and Torner, who had been living in the city for a long time already.

Zóbel joined forces and formed a trio with Rueda and Torner, both of whom would be "responsible for adapting the museum's spaces and installing the paintings," as Villalba Salvador put it. Zóbel was the primary director and leader of the acquisition and promotion of works for the museum. Rueda was specifically tasked with the lighting and framing of the artworks. At the same time, Torner oversaw the architectural aspect of the museum, ensuring the authentic medieval look of the hanging houses, with assistance from Cuenca's city architects, Francisco Leon Meler and Fernando Borja. The three would also make occasional trips to the studios of various artists, buying artworks for the museum.

Zóbel would inaugurate the Museum of Spanish Abstract Art on June 30, 1966, with Rueda, Torner, the former *El Paso* artists, Mayor Lozano, and other Spanish abstractionists in attendance, witnessing the birth of an institution that defied the official cultural attitudes of the conservative regime. Being Spain's first-ever museum dedicated to the cause of abstract art and its first art space run by artists and for the benefit of artists, this watershed moment in Spanish art history not only revitalized the dying face of Cuenca but also, effectively engraved the names of Zóbel, Rueda, and Torner on the global art map as stalwarts of Spanish abstract art and its fight towards acceptance and advancement in a country whose culture had long been stagnating.

Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

Iris II - Boceto
signed (lower right) and inscribed "Iris II" (verso)
dated 1980
oil, pastel, and pencil on canvas
31 1/2" x 24" (80 cm x 60 cm)

P 4,000,000

PROVENANCE
Acquired directly from the artist by Gerardo Rueda
Christie's, *Asian 20th Century Art (Day Sale)*, Hong Kong, 31 May 2015, Lot 450

LITERATURE
DE LA TORRE, Alfonso (Director). In collaboration with Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel. Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946-1984)-Catálogo Razonado de Pinturas de Fernando Zóbel (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid-Manila: Fundación Azcona, Fundación Juan March, Ayala Foundation and Fernando Zóbel Heirs, 2023. Nº cat. 80-59, p. 612.



ABOVE: Iris II, verso © León Gallery Archives

Dividing his time between Manila and Madrid, Zóbel soon became a vital figure in postwar abstraction. Alongside artists such as Gerardo Rueda, he sought to redefine painting not as expressionistic turmoil but as an act of reflection and balance. His collaboration with Rueda, in particular, was both personal and philosophical—a meeting of minds that culminated in the founding of the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español in Cuenca. Conceived together, the museum embodied their shared belief in the spiritual and intellectual rigor of abstraction, offering a sanctuary for artists devoted to the poetic potential of form and light.

Created during the 1980s, *Iris II* belongs to Zóbel's final and most distilled period. By this time, he had moved away from the dynamic brushwork and dense tonalities of his earlier *Serie Negra* and *Saetas* series. In their place emerged a quieter, more deliberate exploration of space and gesture. *Iris II* exemplifies this evolution—its faint washes of ivory and sepia form a contemplative ground upon which dark, tapering strokes drift like traces of movement or breath. These weightless lines, drawn with a subtle tension, seem to hover between emergence and disappearance, evoking the impermanence of thought or memory.

The work reveals what can be seen as Zóbel's profound dialogue with Rueda's own minimalist sensibility. Rueda's practice, characterized by its architectural precision and sensitivity to material, reinforced Zóbel's growing interest in restraint and order. Their shared aesthetic sought to capture the essence of form stripped of excess—to find beauty in quiet equilibrium. In Iris II, this is expressed through the delicate balance between gesture and void, density and air, presence and erasure.

In his final years, Zóbel's art became an act of contemplation. Works like Iris II no longer speak in the assertive language of modernism's grand narratives, but rather in whispers—in the spaces between light and shadow, sound and silence. Here, Zóbel memorializes the enduring gravity of stillness, transforming the act of drawing into a meditation on time itself. As art historian Rod. Paras-Perez once noted, Zóbel's mature works "are not about what the eye sees, but what the mind continues to perceive long after seeing." Iris II stands as a testament to that vision: a painting that invites the viewer not to look harder, but to listen more quietly.

Zóbel continues to occupy a singular place in both Philippine and Spanish modernism. Born in Manila to a family deeply engaged in culture and intellect, Zóbel's education at Harvard University and later at the Rhode Island School of Design exposed him to the Western avant-garde at its height. It was there that he first encountered the works of Mark Rothko, whose meditative chromatic abstractions profoundly shaped Zóbel's lifelong search for a visual language rooted in silence, rhythm, and introspection. *(Jed Daya)*

The Gerardo Rueda *Zóbel*
A Symbolic Thread between Two Masters





136

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

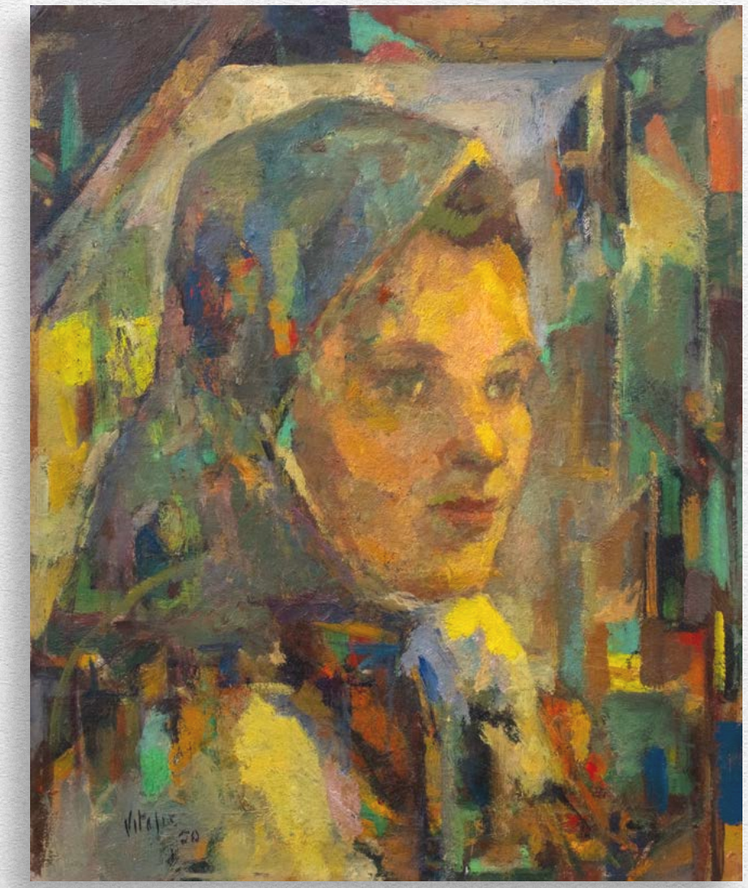
Interlude
signed and dated 2008
carved blue green glass
H: 12 1/2" (32 cm)
W: 11" (28.5 cm)
L: 9 1/4" (24 cm)

P 1,000,000

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

Elegant, Fluid, Luminous, and Powerful; these words essentially describe Ramon Orlina's work of art, which has earned him recognition as a pioneer in contemporary glass sculpture in the Philippines. His masterful sculpting technique in glass sculptures exemplifies his signature style—fusing architectural precision with organic fluidity, creating smoothly biomorphic sculptures that are both highly sophisticated and uniquely elegant.

Carved and polished from clear emerald-colored glass blocks, Orlina utilizes the transparency and internal reflections of the glass to create a dynamic interplay of light, color, and shadow. The surface was shaped into twisting planes that flow into one another effortlessly—creating a uniquely magnificent sculpture that has no strict symmetry yet feels balanced. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



137

Macario Vitalis (1898 - 1990)

Portrait of a Lady
signed and dated 1950 (lower left)
oil on wood panel
16" x 13" (41 cm x 33 cm)

P 300,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, France

Demonstrating his Post-Impressionist and Cubist influences he acquired from his European studies, Macario Vitalis' masterpiece showcases his ability to merge figurative representation with modernist abstraction. This creates a deeply expressive art piece that connects classical portraiture and avant-garde color experimentation.

Featuring a female figure wearing a headscarf, brought to life through a complex blend of colors and geometric forms, Vitalis managed to integrate the sitter's features with the surrounding abstract background, creating a fusion of face and space—transforming the subject to be both real and dream-like. Macario Vitalis' beautifully deep masterpiece creates a fragmented yet harmonious piece that mirrors both the inner and outer complexity of the sitter. Basically, transforming a traditional painting into a study of structure, color, and emotion. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

138

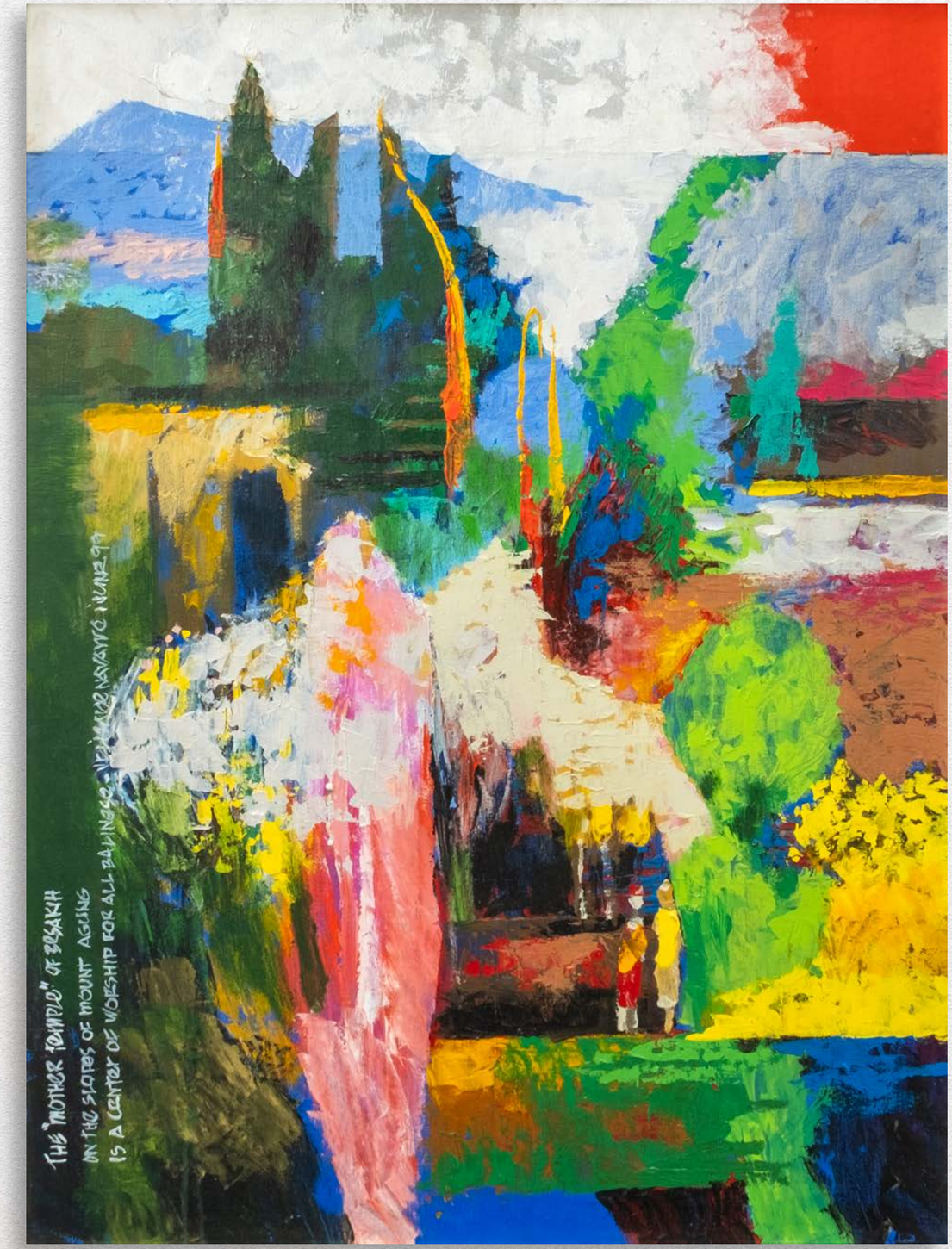
Jerry Elizalde Navarro (1924 - 1999)

The "Mother Temple" of Besakih
signed and dated 1999 (left)
oil on canvas
40" x 30" (102 cm x 76 cm)

P 1,200,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by National Museum of the Philippines confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila



"Colors—the way colors are used, is eye-boggling. I am used to seeing colors in a well-ordered way. In Bali, color attains order in a disordered way; as if thrown haphazardly but with order when seen from a distance—mysterious—a predominance of primary colors, mixtures. This throws out all the color laws from art schools."

—JERRY ELIZALDE NAVARRO FROM THE BOOK J. ELIZALDE NAVARRO BY CID REYES, 2008.

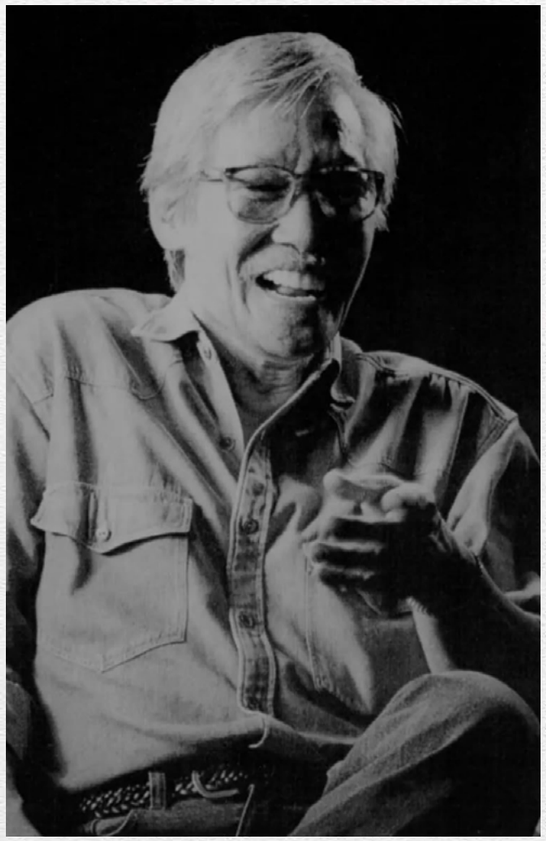
Presenting his dynamic abstract representation of Bali's most sacred temple, Jerry Elizalde Navarro's *Mother Temple of Besakih* perfectly captures the spiritual energy and the environmental majesty of the site through his explosive mastery of color and texture. Blending abstraction and cultural symbolism that transform a simple landscape into a vibrant, emotional experience.

Made in 1999, this abstracted landscape of Pura Besakih presents what is intended to be a distant view of a temple, with the eyes leading to the shadowed silhouette of the temple (Meru Pagodas), elevated in the distance to suggest ascension and reverence for the spiritual site.

The bundle of pink and white forms rises and blooms smoothly, like a bouquet of flowers, possibly hinting at the abstracted figure as an offering. Providing the masterpiece with an atmosphere of ritual and celebration, which suits the subject matter, as the temple often serves as the venue for festivals and worship related to Balinese Hinduism.

At the bottom left of the canvas, the phrase *'This 'Mother Temple' of Besakih on the slopes of Mount Agung is a center of worship for all Balinese'* further cements what the piece represents. Navarro's abstraction emphasizes spiritual transcendence and the unity of nature, humanity, and divinity—all core ideas important to Hinduism.

This makes his own masterpiece, not just a representation of a place, but an emotional landscape of faith and unity.



ABOVE: Jerry Elizalde Navarro © Fundacion Sanso

Further celebrating the shared spiritual heritage of the Balinese. It shapes the Besakih temple into a living symbol of interconnectedness where human devotion, natural beauty, and divine presence culminate through the artist's explosive visual language—transcending visual boundaries into a contemplative and spiritual experience. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

139

Jigger Cruz (b. 1984)

Blares of the Opposite
signed and dated 2013 (lower left)
oil and spray paint on canvas and wooden frame
65″ x 80 1/2″ (165 cm x 204 cm)

P 4,000,000

PROVENANCE
Sothebys, *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Paintings*, Hongkong, April 6, 2013, Lot 232

León Gallery, *The Kingly Treasures Auction 2015*, Makati City, 05 December 2015, Lot 194

LITERATURE
Arndt, Mathias, ed. Wasak! Filipino Art Today. Berlin: DISTANZ Verlag GmbH, 2016. Full-color illustration and paintign description on page 54.

Ito, Lisa and Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay. Jigger Cruz. Berlin: DISTANZ Verlag GmbH, 2015. Full-color illustration on page 20.

EXHIBITED
ARNDT Fine Art, Wasak! Filipino Art Today (Group Exhibition Zean Cabangis, Annie Cabigting, Marina Cruz, Kawayan de Guia, Nona Garcia, Manuel Ocampo, Ronald Ventura, Jose John Santos III, etc.), Berlin, Germany, 5 December 2015 - 30 January 2016



The works of Jigger Cruz are an exercise in understanding two paintings existing simultaneously on the same canvas. Equal parts sacrilegious dissection and faithful reconstruction, Cruz is unrepentant yet purposeful in his usage of vandalism and controlled destruction.

The surfaces of his works deceptively look like they were only thick squiggly lines of paint of varying textures; however, look closely at the background and you will find that it is not the case. The background is a classical type of painting following the basic compositional style of Western art. Sometimes, it is a painting Cruz painted himself, but sometimes, like this one, it is a recreation of an already existing masterpiece.

Blades of the Opposite features Joos Van Cleve's "The Death of the Virgin." In this scene, the central figure is the Virgin Mary lying in bed, draped in white amidst an overwhelmingly red and yellow room. *Blades of the Opposite* takes not just paint but also graffiti spray on his replica of the painting. Streaks of orange, blue, and green cover almost the entire canvas, leaving only Mary clearly visible.

"As Cruz paints over existing surfaces charged with meaning, he leaves room for interpretation, for doubt, for the very equivocacy of the paint that lies splattered on the studio floor," Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay writes in the book JIGGER CRUZ. "One cannot say if Cruz's intervention is about destruction or reverence, aggression or ennui. The artist seems alternatively furious with, and bored by, the cultural baggage with which he is forced to contend. *(Hannah Valiente)*



140

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

Untitled (Landscape/Still Life)
signed and dated 1974 (lower right)
oil on canvas
20" x 24" (51 cm x 61 cm)

P 400,000

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

Embodying his mature abstract-expressionist phase, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz's 1974 masterpiece provides a glimpse into the artist' impressive art style, where his brushwork and color palette reveal a tension between the image landscape and the emotion the piece exhibits.

Dominated by dark grays, earth green, and greens, Alcuaz managed to paint a semi-abstract landscape scene where outlines of what seem to be trees, foliage, or structures were painted in sweeping circular motions to create a feeling of movement and turbulence—hinting at wind, bad weather, or emotional unrest.

Analysing further, the painting's dark tonality and heavy texture give it a brooding atmosphere, which fits with what seems to be an unresting landscape scene. The interplay of light and dark captures nature's dynamism, with serenity and chaos clashing simultaneously—creating a poetic abstraction about the natural world. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



141

Romeo Tabuena (1921 - 2015)

Planting Rice
signed and dated 1977 (upper right)
acrylic on masonite board
25" x 28 3/4" (64 cm x 73 cm)

P 280,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

An artist whose practice bridges Filipino Identity into cohesive visual languages, Romeo Tabuena's piece beautifully demonstrates his signature art style that celebrates the harmony and endurance of rural life, presenting tomes of interconnectedness between humans, nature, and labor.

Executed with deliberate precision, this 1977 masterpiece illustrates a rural scene featuring farmers planting rice in a field. In the distant view, carabaos can be seen in the farther view of the image. Further establishing the agricultural setting of the painting. Fragmented yet unified in depicting the image of the piece, the artist's muted palette provides a soft, dreamlike atmosphere, resulting in a simple and harmonious mood.

In this magnificent artwork, Tabuena perfectly captures the Filipino's resilience and the dignity of rural labor. The multiple bending motions of the farmers, along with the fragmentation caused by the cubist geometry, give the painting a sense of discipline and cooperation, which are valued traits among agrarian communities. Each fragment represents individual efforts, flawlessly pieced together to create an image of the collective whole—a visual metaphor for communal strength. A work of quiet tribute to the timeless relationship between people, land, and labor in the country, Romeo Tabuena's painting has become a hallmark of Philippine contemporary artworks that celebrate unity and rural life. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

142

Hernando R. Ocampo (1911 - 1978)

Liturgy
signed and dated 1977 (lower right)
oil on paper
14 1/2" x 10 1/2" (37 cm x 27 cm)

P 400,000



Providing another example of his biomorphic abstractions, Hernando Ocampo's 1977 piece entitled *Liturgy* translates the sacred act through abstract visual language. Through interlocking biomorphic forms that flow into each other like a living tapestry, the shapes represent unity and the collective spiritual act of communion.

The interplay of greens reflects life, renewal, and nature—culminating in a portrayal of energy, harmony, and emotion in a spiritual experience. The repetition and rhythm of forms resemble a cadence of a religious chant or prayer. Each contributes a part in a larger, harmonious ritual. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

143

Juvenal Sansó (1929 - 2025)

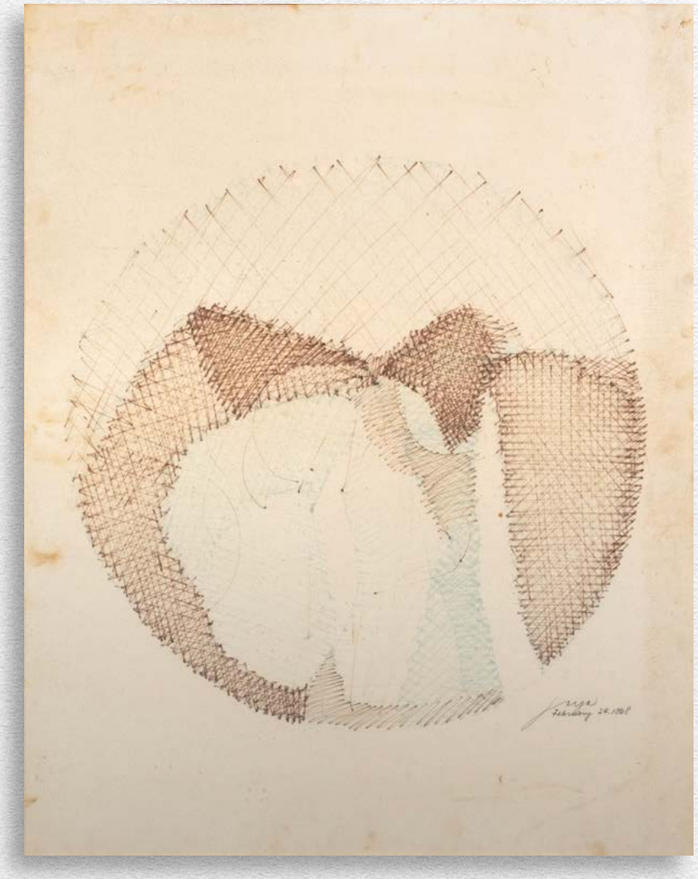
With Incandescent Fervor
signed (lower right and verso)
ca.2000s
acrylic on paper
12" x 17 1/2" (30 cm x 44 cm)

P 300,000

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



Touching on the topic of the beauty and resilience of nature, Juvenal Sanso's featured piece mirrors his post-war reflections, representing the coexistence of life and decay. With an image of a coral-like form rendered in textured black and gray tones seemingly reaching to the luminous orange light of the sun (symbolizing hope and rebirth), Sanso's masterpiece perfectly delivered the feeling of struggle and persistence through colors and brushstrokes. The way the textured masses were illustrated in an upward motion reflects the artist's own struggles with dealing with post-war experiences, which became a recurring theme in his later works. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



144

José Joya (1931 - 1995)

Abstract Drawing, New York City
signed and dated Feb 24, 1968 (lower right)
marking ink
33" x 26" (84 cm x 66 cm)

P 400,000

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

EXHIBITED
The Luz Gallery, Drawings from New York by Jose Joya, Makati, 27 October - 5 November 1968

In the mid-1960s, Jose Joya's art underwent a significant transformation. Still abstract in composition, his once large-scale canvases filled with bold sweeps of brush and color morphed into inked fine lines and basic shapes in a restrained palette. This shift in his style, from loud and dynamic to quiet and still, introduced a new form of expression that was more subdued and introspective, which piqued the interest of art enthusiasts.

This pursuit of simplicity became the catalyst for Joya's 1967 exhibition at the Luz Gallery. Here, he unveiled a collection of pen-and-ink abstract drawings, a novel facet of his oeuvre. These drawings demonstrate the artist's ability to yield different tonal intensities by layering his strokes and scribbles, as well as the ingenious placement and spacing of his lines. Joya's 1968 *Abstract Drawing* showcases his growing penchant for minimalism, a trend that would remain in his works in the years to come. *(Jessica Magno)*

Marking Malang's Artistic Coming of Age

From his Blockbuster 2nd Solo Show at the Luz Gallery

by HANNAH VALIENTE



ABOVE: Malang (second from right) with First Lady Imelda Marcos, then-Palawan representative Ramon Mitra, Jr., and his wife, Cecilia Aldeguer Blanco. © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives

Mauro Malang Santos's 1967 *Mother and Child* is an amalgamation of his then-blossoming art career. Though he only spent a semester at the UP College of Fine Arts before dropping out, his passion and talent are indisputable, as he immediately went into the publishing industry as a cartoonist, balancing both his day job and his competitions.

From the 1950s to the early 1960s, Malang's works have a certain cartoonist appeal to them, with thick, noticeable black outlines and an almost cutout-like quality. Although it did give way to his eventual style, an echo of that narrative humor is still retained in his works, including this lot in hand.

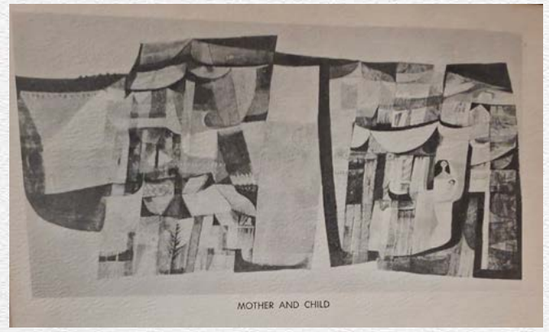
However, it was in 1967, the same year that this *Mother and Child* was created, that Malang first considered going into painting seriously. Though he was already an established cartoonist, it was only during his 1967 second one-man show (during which this painting was exhibited) and its commercial success that the path towards painting seemed plausible.

So wildly successful was this exhibition that a *Manila Bulletin* article by Maria Luisa Reyes Llamado called this exhibition sold-out the very opening night.

"Malang's works appeal to all. He has captured the Filipino soul,' she continues. "His viewers will always find an identification of themselves in his landscapes and day-to-day living [...] The local scene must be faithfully depicted, and no one has done it more delightfully, more faithfully than Malang."

Echoing this sentiment, this *Mother and Child* seems to focus less on the titular pair and more on the dilapidated shanties they live in. In a work that seems more like a tapestry or a collage, this *Mother and Child* were nestled at the bottom right corner of the rectangular, landscape canvas; the majority of the canvas, meanwhile, is a maze-like depiction of the city slums and the stacked wooden houses tittering precariously over each other. In fact, the work warrants a second look to notice the titular characters.



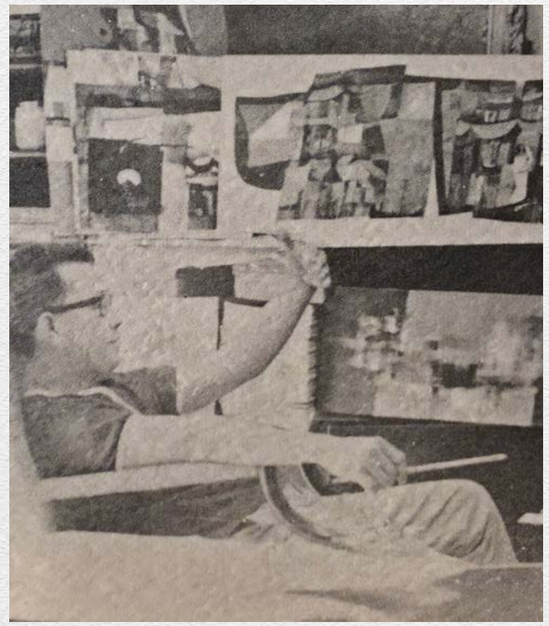


ABOVE: Malang's *Mother and Child*, as featured in the *Manila Chronicle Magazine*'s "Gems of the East" section showcasing the beauty of Asian art. © Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation Archives **BELOW:** *Mother and Child*, as featured in the exhibition catalog for Malang's second solo show held at the Luz Gallery. © *The Art of Malang: Commentaries by Alfredo Roces and Eric Torres*

However, that seems quintessential Malang. A Filipino artist through and through, Malang's local pieces also imbue Filipino values within their canvases. In *Mother and Child*, the vastness with which the pair is nestled creates the ambiance of a tightly knit community, something that is abundant in the country. Whether it be in the province or the cities, it is impossible to ignore the bustling life that those integrated in a community live.

Those who live in the congested areas in the city even feel the physical aspect of that community, like in Mother and Child, the houses are stacked in towering, almost precariously looking buildings, one on top of the other. It is almost impossible not to feel a part of the community with everyone sharing the same, meager space.

Slum dwelling and squatting had been noted as early as the post-war 1940s, where, according to a 1968 Special Committee Report, about 93 percent of these people are migrants from rural areas. Up to this day, these areas continue to sprawl and persist, a place many call 'home.' Still, despite the continued risk living in the slums brings, Malang brings a sort of safety to his depiction of the Mother and Child. Rather than loom over the pair, the myriad of houses seems to envelop the duo into its arms, a protection from whatever may await them once they leave its premises.



ABOVE: Malang in his studio. In the background is *Mother and Child*. © *The Art of Malang: Commentaries by Alfredo Roces and Eric Torres*

Just like many of his works, the central figures of his paintings do not exist within a vacuum — they operate within the environs of their own community, a well-oiled machine. Amidst the busy city, Malang emphasizes the woman, her paramount role in societal development palpable even from a distance.



145

Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Mother and Child
signed and dated 1967 (lower right)
acrylic on canvas
17 1/4" x 35 3/4" (44 cm x 91 cm)

P 1,800,000

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

PROVENANCE
The Luz Gallery
Private collection, Manila

LITERATURE
Roces, Alfredo, Mauro Malang Santos, and Eric Torres. *The Art of Malang: Commentaries by Alfredo Roces and Eric Torres*. Makati: Luz Gallery, 1967. Published on the occasion of Malang's exhibition, 45-Piece One-Man Exhibit, at The Luz Gallery from November 21 to December 5, 1967. Black-and-white photograph on page 14.

"Gems of the East." *The Manila Chronicle Magazine* (Manila, Philippines), December 1967. Full-color illustration.

EXHIBITED
The Luz Gallery, *Mauro Malang Santos: 2nd One-Man Show*, Makati, 21 November - 6 December 1967

"Actually, I'm a late starter. I started doing serious painting only in 1967, when I had a one-man show at the Luz Gallery. My first one-man show was at the Philippine Art Gallery, but those were semi-cartoons. For me, that show served as a transition between cartooning and serious painting."

—MAURO MALANG SANTOS, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH CID REYES, TRANSCRIBED IN HIS MONOGRAPH "MALANG: PAINTING AND DRAWINGS."



146

Nena Saguil (1914 - 1994)

Sans Titre (Série Cosmos)
signed and dated 1969 (lower left)
watercolor on paper
18 1/2" x 24 1/4" (47 cm x 62 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

Providing a glimpse of her iconic pointillist technique, Nena Saguil's 1969 painting demonstrates her interest in metaphysical and unseen energies that make up life, creating a masterpiece that often draws on themes of the universe, biology, spirituality, interconnectedness and the exploration of the inner world, capturing Saguil's vision of the universe as an organic pulsating never-ending network of life, reflecting inner feeling and imagination.

Made around the time when she was living in Paris, where she experimented with modernist abstraction while blending it with deep Filipino spiritual sensibilities, the composition was built of small circular patterns that mimic a rhythmic, almost cellular form, ranging from light beige to deep violet hues. Creating a transcendent image that evokes stars, planets, and energy centers, floating around waves of translucent color that blend smoothly from earthy browns to cool blue hues, thereby hinting at a journey between physical matter and spirit.

Delving deeper, this beautiful artwork can be read as a visual representation of continuity and a meditation on creation and interconnectedness. Each colorful circle seems to find its proper place, representing life forces—all aligned to create a pulsating network where matter and spirit coexist in an endless cycle of harmony.

In context, by 1969, Nena Saguil had already fully transitioned from her early figurative works to abstract cosmologies. This masterpiece paralleled the international movement towards abstraction and her exploration of inner worlds. Her use of circular organic forms made her stand out as one of the first Filipino artists who explored pure abstraction through cosmic and spiritual imagery—cementing her place as one of the most significant figures of Philippine Art. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



147

Romulo Olazo (1934 - 2015)

Untitled # 178
signed and dated 1987 (lower right)
acrylic on paper
22" x 38" (53 cm x 97 cm)

P 500,000

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

Romulo Olazo first began his Untitled Series in the early 1980s, debuting it in his 1983 solo show "New Works" at the Luz Gallery. On his website, quoting Cid Reyes's monograph *Romulo Olazo,* the Untitled Series was described as: "Bold, broad swathes of pure black pigment, sliding upon the surface and space, and colliding in a salvo of angular intersection [...] In these works, colors play a secondary role: a chromatic chorus to the black aria."

This *Untitled #187,* created a few years after the New Works exhibit, echoes that operatic aria of colors this series conveys. With his previous series, Diaphanous, gaining awards from both local and international stages, his Untitled series is likely a result of both his wish to take his artistry to the next level and prevent creative stagnation as a result of a continued patronage of the subject matter.

Indeed, *Untitled #187* preserves Diaphanous's irregular and irreverent brush strokes but strips them of their usual gossamer shine, leaving the works more opaque than Diaphanous. In the same book, Reyes eloquently describes the beauty of the Untitled Series the best, stating that: "Clearly, the Untitled works, by their sheer appellation, constituted Olazo's experimental stage. The Diaphanous, after all, had already been cast as the artist's classic image [...] He decided to take it to a new dimension, a higher ether. 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. Still, to some, Olazo was perceived as an artist in transition." *(Hannah Valiente)*

148

Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Woman
signed and dated 1997 and inscribed
singapore (lower right)
watercolor on paper
10" x 7 1/4" (25 cm x 18 cm)



P 180,000

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

This untitled 1997 piece bears witness to Malang's profound artistry and his deep understanding of his forms. Displaying his Filipino sensibilities, he depicted a young woman dressed in a traditional Filipiniana, her honey-brown complexion radiating amidst the colors around her. She was fashioned in an undeniable Malang style—long neck, thick limbs, and taut expression, rendered in a colorful palette. Her posture exudes a poised, ladylike aura. Even so, Malang's portrayal and use of polychromatic hues contrasted her meek demeanor and brought out the rather gleeful nature of the Filipinos. *(Jessica Magno)*

149

José Joya (1931 - 1995)

Untitled
dated 1976
ceramic plate
D: 13" (33 cm)



P 400,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Josefa Joya Baldovino confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

Embodying the maestro's masterful integration of abstraction and organic rhythm, Jose Joya translates his exploration of gestural abstraction into a ceramic medium, creating a masterpiece that showcases how he extends the language of Abstract Expressionism beyond three-dimensional forms—solidifying his status as a National Artist for the Visual Arts.

A simple ceramic painted in dominating colors of earthly ochres, dark browns, deep blues, and creamy whites—all flowing and blending dynamically to mimic the impression of controlled chaos. The piece can be seen as Joya's reflection on his fascination with organic energy, such as movements made by natural phenomena like cosmic explosions, flowing lava, or tidal swirls—their movements and transformations balance between chaos and harmony, converted beyond three-dimensional and utilitarian art forms. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



150

Joy Mallari (b. 1966)

Cradle
signed and dated 2012 (upper right)
oil on canvas
48" x 36" (122 cm x 91 cm)

P 400,000

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

PROVENANCE
Tin-aw Art Gallery

Exploring the delicate themes of childhood, protection, memory, and identity, Joy Mallari's Cradle beautifully balances tenderness and reflection to deliver a piece of art that touches the viewer's inner child and prompts them to consider how memories cradle individuals in either a gentle or confining way.

Painted around 2012, this symbolic piece depicts a young girl in a fetal position, sleeping within a transparent bubble as she floats among the clouds. Circular forms surround the central figure, containing silhouettes of children in various poses. Reflecting phases of childhood such as playing, dancing, or standing. The way a bubble is used to symbolize a womb or cradle implies the safety and nurturing nature of childhood—its sacredness provides an enclosed space of innocence, surrounded by countless memories. Protected, Fragile, and Suspended between imagination and reality.

Mallari's masterpiece creatively visualizes the delicate boundaries between memory and dream through the use of colors and brushstrokes. Through its floating orbs and sleeping child, Her Cradle nurtures the innocence, protection, and the fragments of identity that shape every individual—a quiet meditation on the universal experience of growing up and nostalgia. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

151

Rodel Tapaya (b. 1980)
Untitled
signed and dated 2021 (lower left)
oil on canvas
72" x 96" (182 cm x 243 cm)

P 3,600,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila

Folklore and Fantasy
Tapaya Expresses the Filipino Psyche



Rodel Tapaya's paintings unfold as vast visual narratives—where local folklore, precolonial memory, and present-day realities converge in a rich interplay of form and meaning. This particular work captures Tapaya's unmistakable style: densely layered and brimming with mythic figures and surreal landscapes that invite both contemplation and curiosity. Vivid hues animate a crowded tableau of human and animal forms set within an otherworldly terrain, where patterns reminiscent of traditional weaving and vernacular ornamentation seem to pulse with symbolic energy. Through this, Tapaya constructs not just a scene but an entire cosmology—one in which the mythical and the mundane exist side by side, blurring the boundaries between dream and document.



ABOVE: Rodel Tapaya © The Artling

Tapaya's painterly approach is both narrative and philosophical. Folk stories, once orally passed from generation to generation, are visually transcribed into his sprawling compositions—transformed into allegories that address the complexities of identity, power, and cultural memory. Yet Tapaya's aim is not mere preservation. By reinterpreting traditional motifs through a contemporary lens, he invites viewers to witness how myth itself evolves, absorbing fragments of modern life: industrial structures, political figures, and images of the everyday subtly intrude into these imagined realms, suggesting how the Filipino experience is continuously rewritten by time and change.

This dynamic negotiation between past and present resonates deeply with Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity, particularly what he calls the "third space of enunciation." As Bhabha writes, "It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated." Tapaya's work embodies this "third space," where local mythologies and colonial residues coalesce into new cultural forms. The result is an aesthetic of hybridity—fluid, layered, and open-ended—mirroring the postcolonial condition of the Filipino self: perpetually in motion, yet anchored in history.

By situating folklore within contemporary visual discourse, Tapaya revitalizes it as a living archive of national consciousness. His paintings reveal that tradition, far from being static, is a vital language through which the Filipino continues to make sense of modern existence. In Tapaya's hands, myth becomes not an escape from reality but a mirror to it—reflecting a nation's ongoing effort to reconcile its past with its ever-shifting present. *(Jed Daya)*

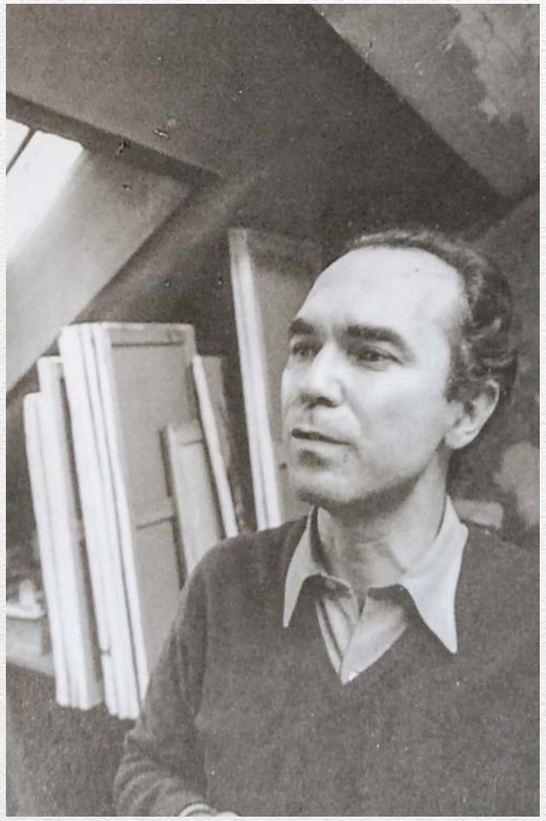
152

Juvenal Sansó (1929 - 2025)

Flourish of Spring
signed (lower right)
ca.2000s
acrylic on canvas
46" x 66 1/2" (117 cm x 169 cm)

P 4,000,000

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



ABOVE: Juvenal Sanso in his studio © Fundacion Sanso Archives



After a series of travel and study grants abroad and the fateful encounters and friendships he made along the way, Juvenal Sanso would find himself settling down in Brittany, France. While the awe-inspiring views from Brittany soothe his mind, he conveys his emotions through painting.

Under the encouragement and guidance of his mentor-turned-friend, Edouard Georg, Sansó began to paint the resplendent landscapes and flora of the places he visited, as seen in this circa 2000s painting. Whether it's the lush plant life of Brittany or a cluster of flora in the Philippines, Sanso's art captures the sheer beauty of nature in his verdant greens and calm blues. Still, his sceneries always possess a hint of mystery.

In *Flourish of Springs,* Sanso once again takes the viewers to an otherworldly realm. Amidst the blooming garden by the bay rests a mysterious tree—or a gigantic vase—brimming with flowers and greens. A tree or a vase, it nonetheless adds a supernatural twist to this landscape. Sanso used a dry-on-dry technique on the plants, creating harsh edges that give his plants texture and a sense of motion, as if each leaf dances through the wind. On the other hand, he skillfully employed a wet-on-wet technique on the background, allowing the sky to appear as a smooth blend of colors that blends seamlessly with the water, creating a distorted reflection of the terrain.

What sets Juvenal Sansó apart from his contemporaries is not the use of special tools or complex techniques, but his unique play with light and color. His masterful strokes and strategic use of color effectively stir a profound emotional response, drawing the viewers into the scene.

As Rod Paras-Perez puts it, "Sanso's palette is as austere but rich in its modulation: the key color, either blue or orange. Moreover, his handling of lines—of calligraphic gestures—is of such density and intensity, so pervasively part of the visual structure that it could be generated only by sustained passion." *(Jessica Magno)*



153 PROPERTY FROM THE CHRISTINE THORAILLER COLLECTION

Macario Vitalis (1898 - 1990)

Bayanihan (Ballet de Femmes des Philippines)
signed and dated 1965 (lower right and verso)
oil on canvas
11 3/4" x 29 1/2" (30 cm x 75 cm)

P 400,000

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

LITERATURE
Macario Vitalis: Un Peintre Philippin en France (Catalogue d'Exposition). Puteaux: Maison Lorilleux and the Philippine Embassy in France, 2022. Published on the occasion of the exhibition of the same title at Maison Lorilleux in April to June 2022. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 41.

EXHIBITED
Maisson Lorilleux, *Macario Vitalis: Un Peintre Philippin en France, Puteaux* (In partnership with the Philippine Embassy in France), April 10 - June 5, 2022

France is deeply embedded in the artist Macario Vitalis's artistic consciousness. Finding himself in France in 1925 after a few years of art studies in the United States, it seems as though the agreeable nature of the City of Love meshed well with Vitalis's pursuit of art. He settled first in Montmartre, then in Puteaux, where he got his arguably biggest source of inspiration when he met Camille Renault. The owner of Big Boy restaurant at 92 Hauts-de-Seine, the place is also known for its importance to the Cubist group of Puteaux. Also called "the Golden Section," the Puteaux group often meets at Big Boy, and it was there that Vitalis fell into place with the group.

This particular work shows Vitalis taking inspiration from one of the Puteaux group members. Jacques Villon is best known for his colorful, geometric aesthetic that does not veer away from recognition. Even his most non-representational work is derived in some way from real life, offering a fresh view on a familiar image.

This work echoes that sentiment. In a color scheme reminiscent of Villon, Vitalis portrays a group of six women in yellow dresses, his iconic cubistic style taking center stage. His cubism fragments his subjects, but, ever a romantic, they are still as recognizable. Truly a work that is reminiscent of the lively Parisian art scene of the time, this work shows not only Vitalis's French artistic inclination but also the country's lifelong effect on his art *(Hannah Valiente)*



154

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

Untitled (Landscape/Still Life)
signed (upper right)
ca. 1970s
oil on canvas
18" x 24" (46 cm x 61 cm)

P 400,000

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

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Spain

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz remains one of the country's most celebrated modernists—an artist whose gift lay in effortlessly moving between figuration and abstraction, order and spontaneity. Trained in both Manila and Madrid, Alcuaz brought together the rigor of European modernism with a distinctly Filipino sense of lyricism and warmth.

As Rod Paras-Perez once observed in Parallel Texts: Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, "Just as he shifts with ease from figurative to abstract painting, Alcuaz can, with equal fluidity, move from geometric, well-defined forms to gestural, free-form brushwork." This seamless movement defines much of his work. Even when the subject is not immediately apparent, the spirit of place or figure seems to hum beneath the surface.

In this painting, Alcuaz builds a composition alive with gesture and rhythm. Broad strokes of sienna, umber, and coral meet in quiet harmony, while softer tones ground the movement with calm. The result is a delicate balance between control and intuition—a visual music that feels both constructed and spontaneous. While his works were often linked to the influences of Picasso and Matisse, Alcuaz made them entirely his own. His abstraction was not a borrowing, but a translation—an expression of feeling and atmosphere shaped by his Filipino roots and poetic sensibility. *(Jed Daya)*



155

Jayson Cortez (b. 1986)

Untitled
signed and dated 2016 (lower right)
oil on canvas
48 1/2" x 72 3/4" (123 cm x 185 cm)

P 300,000

Merging realism with symbolic elements to create a haunting yet beautiful representation of the human condition, Jayson Cortez's masterpiece highlights his thematic exploration to the themes of human vulnerability by balancing realism and metaphysical imagery through his art concepts.

Painted around 2016, when his oeuvre had begun to emphasize emotion, texture, and symbolism, the illustration portrays a surrealistic image of a young man with his arms stretched away from his body. His figure was smeared with streaks of dark red, mimicking arcs of bloody strikes throughout the canvas. The figure was also wearing a t-shirt with a graphic print of a ribcage, while roses and vines wrapped around their arms.

At first glance, it can be easily concluded that the painting is packed with symbolism and thematic representation. The wrapping of thorn roses around the limbs of the figure symbolizes the duality between beauty and suffering (as further evident in the aggressive strokes of color red on the canvas)—highlighting the representation of human experience as a constant clash between emotional vulnerability.

The Ribcage supports this interpretation even further, as it implies raw transparency by *shedding* its own mortal shell to reveal the figure's inner self. The pose of the figure also evokes crucifixion symbolism, which connects to the themes of martyrdom, endurance, and redemption. The body becomes a vessel for psychological and spiritual revelation, suggesting that truth and authenticity can only be revealed through *openness* and suffering.

If such clues were stitched together to create a cohesive interpretation, Jayson Cortez's piece could be regarded as an artistic meditation on pain as Purification and human vulnerability. By creating an image that visually represents the human spirit caught between pain and enlightenment, the artist has made a magnificent kind of masterpiece that embodies his own philosophy—Art is not only a mirror of form but a revelation of one's soul. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



156

Benji Reyes (b. 1958)

A Pair of Bar Stools
kamagong and balayong
each size
H: 41 1/2" (105 cm)
L: 19" (48 cm)
W: 18" (46 cm)

P 200,000

Celebrated for his craftsmanship in wood sculpting to create furnitures, Benjie Reyes highlights his creativity and skills in his craft by making two tall wooden chairs with elegantly curved lines—employing his ergonomic and architectural principles in his works.

The combination of the flowing curves along the supporting legs of the chair makes it both functional and artistically expressive. The way it flows from the seat suggests a dialogue between human comfort and natural form—mirroring a philosophy of harmony between nature, function, and art. An embodiment of how design can coexist with ecology. By sculpting, Reyes' sculpted chairs could be viewed not only as utilitarian objects but also as functional sculptures that celebrate the heritage of Filipino woodcraft.

For context, Reyes is one of the Philippines' leading figures in contemporary furniture art. Expressing both elegance and restraint, his work blurs the line between sculpture and furniture. Creating pieces that are hand-built with an artisanal sensibility that resists mass production. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

157

Romulo Olazo (1934 - 2015)

Untitled # 208
signed and dated 1988 (lower left)
acrylic on canvas
24" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

P 1,400,000

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Manila



ABOVE: Romulo Olazo © romuloolazo.com

Romulo Olazo's *Untitled Series* emerged in the early 1980s, marking a significant evolution in his artistic trajectory. Debuting in his 1983 solo exhibition *New Works* at The Luz Gallery, these pieces represented a turning point after the acclaim of his Diaphanous Series. As noted by Patricia Tria Olazo in Cid Reyes' monograph on the artist, "Olazo's paintings take an opaque quality with the use of mixed media, acrylic, and oil on canvas"—a statement that captures the artist's departure from the ethereal luminosity of his earlier works toward a more material and tactile visual language.

In *Untitled #208*, this shift is rendered with remarkable control and emotional depth. The work eschews the diaphanous transparency that once defined Olazo's painterly signature, replacing it with opacity, density, and an almost architectural balance of form. Earthy pigments anchor the composition, while gestural sweeps of line and texture cut through the surface with both spontaneity and deliberation. There is an implicit rhythm in the interplay of shape and void, as if the artist is orchestrating a dialogue between concealment and revelation. Here, abstraction becomes not an escape from form, but a confrontation with it—asserting volume, depth, and substance without forsaking the lyrical grace that characterizes Olazo's hand. *(Jed Daya)*





158

Mark Justiniani (b. 1966)

Untitled
signed and dated 2002 (lower left)
oil on canvas
18" x 14" (46 cm x 36 cm)

P 200,000

Presenting a powerful fractured image of human emotion, Mark Justiniani's piece captures many of the artistic characteristics that define his practice during the early 2000s. Tackling the themes of fragmented identity, as well as technology and human experience. Featuring a television-like distortion image, it shows a close-up image of a human face in mid-scream—mouth open wide, teeth exposed, and eyes closed—as if the person is undergoing pain or anguish. It was then filtered into three vertical color bands (blue, green, and pink), which mimicked the television-like distortion, as if the scream was being transmitted through a glitching screen. The face of the figure also shifts dramatically in complement to the color band, intensifying the tone of alienation and the pain caused by psychological fragmentation.

Delving deeper into the artist's piece, the division of colored faces may symbolize the fracturing of human identity in the modern world—split between multiple realities, roles, or emotional states, and the psychological vulnerability that it brings towards those who succumb to it. The way the color filters were intentionally designed by Justiniani to be like those found on television implies how media technology can distort or mediate human experience based on how it is shown through its intended audiences. The figure's scream, which is once a primal act of expression, was filtered through different artificial bands—essentially transforming into artificial emotions fragmented and numbed by the modern technological condition. *(Mark John Castañeda)*



159

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Changing Hues
signed and dated 2023
carved apple green glass
H: 12" (30 cm)
W: 8" (20 cm)
L: 5 1/2" (14 cm)

P 700,000

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

Ramon Orlina is intimately aware of the way light reflects off many of his glass masterpieces. With his magnificent three-dimensional works, his oeuvre can be viewed from multiple angles —a privilege few works of art can pull off.

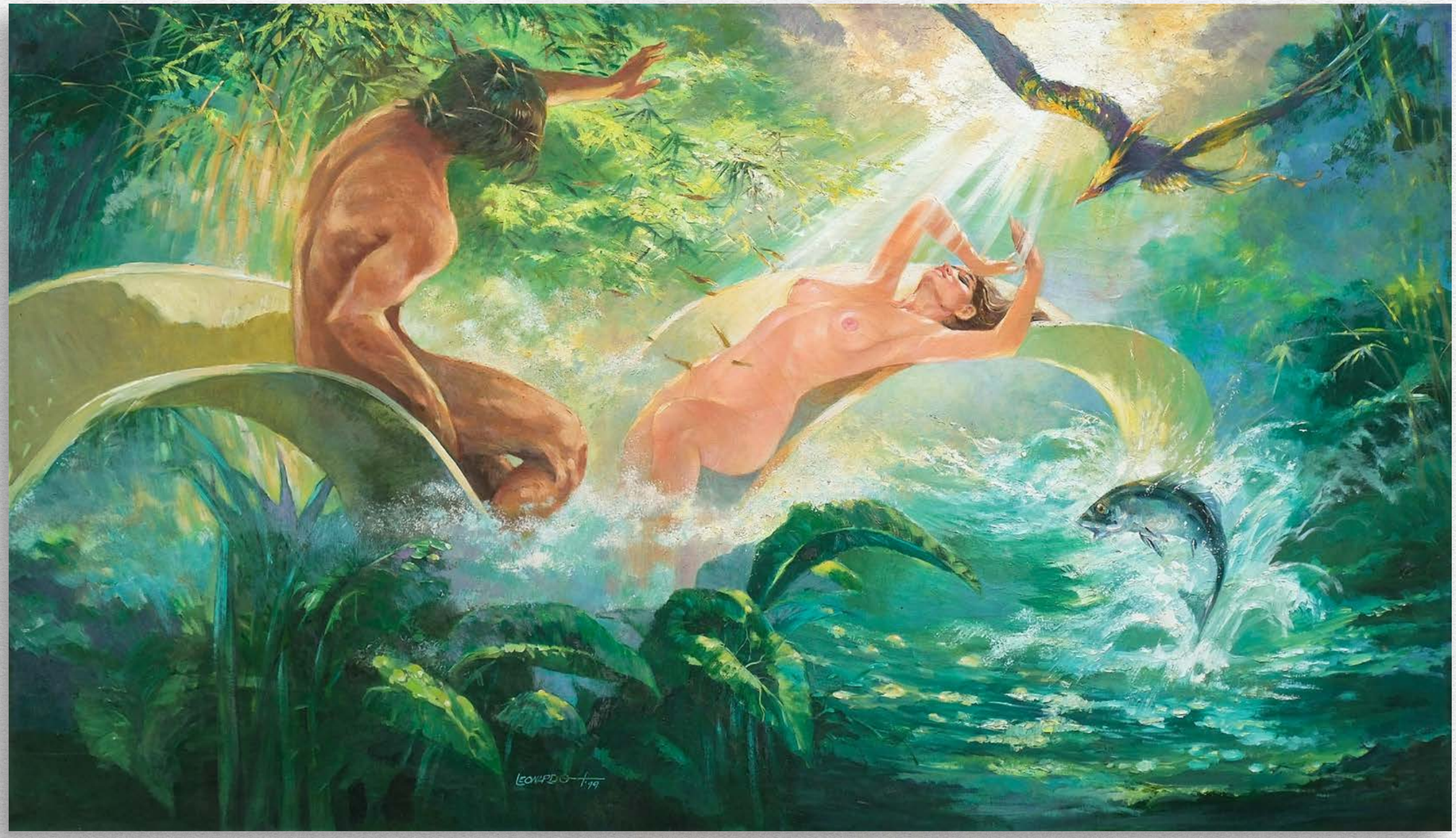
His 2023 *Changing Hues* echoes the beautiful interplay between the carved apple green glass and the sunlight. Professor and art critic Alice Guillermo perfectly describes glass's adaptability as a medium, writes Cid Reyes in Orlina's monograph: "The uniqueness of glass as a sculptural material lies in its interplay with light, as, according to its particular form, it reflects, absorbs, and refracts, the points catching light in tiny bursts or sending out linear trajectories."

Indeed, Orlina's glass sculptures balance the artist's architectural precision and artistic vision, an exacting standard met with instinct and curiosity. Following whatever the glass dictates him to do, *Changing Hues* plays with the imprecise nature of sunlight streaming through the semi-transparent sculpture, a creative process that is as spontaneous as it is meticulous. *(Hannah Valiente)*

Leonardo Cruz (1932 - 2012)

Si Malakas at Si Maganda
signed and dated 1999 (lower left)
oil on canvas
48″ x 84″ (122 cm x 213 cm)

P 300,000



The mythical story of *Si Malakas at Si Maganda* (The Strong and Beautiful) is one of the most important figures in the creation stories of Philippine folklore, despite having multiple renditions and depictions throughout the archipelago. With the most accepted version being the Creation God Bathala ordering the creation of a bamboo stalk that grew and split open to release the first ancestors of all humanity, Leonardo Tayao Cruz's piece showcases a magnificent scene that captures the exact brilliance and beauty of one of the Philippines' most essential folklores.

Created in 1999, Cruz's oeuvre captures the exact moment when the bamboo splits, giving birth to a well-built man named *Malakas*, or '*Strong*,' *due to his muscular physique*, and a slender, graceful woman named *Maganda*, or '*beautiful*,' referring to her beauty. The piece also captures a bird commonly recognized as *Amihan*, who was ordered by the creation god Bathala to create a bamboo stalk after he brought sunlight to dispel the darkness.

The world inside the canvas celebrates the birth of life through incredible illustration. The lush color palette of nature gives the piece a raw and magnificent life, fitting the creation myth the artist is trying to depict. Leonardo Tayao Cruz's *Si Malakas at SI Maganda* highlights the beauty of myths and folklore that are uniquely ours—a story that reflects Filipino's identity, culture, and heritage transferred from traditional storytelling to canvases and brushstrokes. *(Mark John Castañeda)*

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INDEX

Paintings and Sculptures

A

Abad, Pacita 30-31
Aguinaldo, Lee 220-221
Albor, Augusto 60, 144-145
Alcuaz, Federico Aguilar 17, 274, 291
Amorsolo, Fernando 46-47, 58-59, 136-137, 152-153, 228-229
Ang Kiukok 11, 122,123, 124-125, 126, 127, 128-129, 142-143
Antonio, Angelito 96
Austria, Antonio 42-43

B

Balatbat, Max 150-151
Belleza, Norma 14

C

Cabrera, Benedicto 102-103, 258
Castrillo, Eduardo 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219
Chabet, Roberto 188
Co, Charlie 224
Concepcion, Florencio B. 141
Cortez, Jayson 292
Cosio, Ivi Avellana 22, 23
Coson, Nicole 245
Cruz, Jigger 66-67, 105, 272-273
Cruz, Leonardo 298
Culibrina, Ronson 260

D

de Guzman, Jaime 62-63
dela Cruz, Daniel 65
Dela Paz, Cedrick 194-195
Dionisio, Abi 235

E

Esquillo, Alfredo 16

F

Francisco, Carlos "Botong" V. 52-53

G

Galicano, Romulo 64, 148-149, 259
Garcia, Nona 238-239

H

Habulan, Guerrero 262
Hechanova Jr., Lamberto R. 192

I

Isidro, Raul 190

J

Joya, José 10, 26-27, 48-49, 277, 284
Justiniani, Mark 296

L

Lamarroza, Prudencio 51
Legaspi, Cesar 242-243
Lianben, Lao 54-55, 94-95, 257
Luna y Novicio, Juan 74-75
Luz, Arturo 38-39, 147

M

Magsaysay-Ho, Anita 222-223
Mallari, Anton 244
Mallari, Joy 234, 285
Manansala, Vicente 236-237
Mansit, Joven 112-113
Martínez y Lorenzo, Félix 90-91
McCarthy, Paul 252-253
Medalla, David 21
Mercado, Conrado 193
Montemayor, Ferdie 263

N

Navarro, Jerry Elizalde 270-271
Nuyda, Justin 256

O

Ocampo, Hernando R. 88-89, 118-119, 276
Ocampo, Manuel 32-33
Olazo, Romulo 120-121, 283, 294
Olmedo, Onib 140
Orlina, Ramon 104, 196-197, 268, 297
Ossorio, Alfonso 248-249

P

Pacquing, Bernardo 28-29, 200-201
Pardo de Tavera, Felix 82-83
Pineda, Jorge 261

R

Reyes, Benji 293

S

Saguil, Nena 12-13, 282
Samonte, Rodolfo 188,189
Sanchez, Arturo 240-241
Sansó, Juvenal 34-35, 76-77, 146, 276, 288-289
Santos III, Jose John 254-255
Santos, Mauro Malang 10, 17, 61, 225, 256, 280-281, 284
Saprid, Solomon 18-19, 210-211

T

Tabuena, Romeo 40-41, 275
Takashi Murakami 250-251
Tapaya, Rodel 286-287
Tolentino, Guillermo 98-99

V

Valledor, Leo 68-69
Velasco, Lydia 16
Vitalis, Macario 97, 269, 290

Y

Yongde, Alan 191
Ypon, Orley 50

Z

Zalameda, Oscar 15, 92-93, 138-139, 198, 199, 244
Zóbel, Fernando 56-57, 78-79, 110-111, 266-267

Antiques and Ephemera

"Laughing Quezon" Gold Cross Medal 162-163
Edgardo Debas 170-171
Gaspar Núñez de Arce, et al 176-177
Inmaculada Concepción 232, 233
José Rizal 184-185
Manuel L. Quezon 164-165
Manuel L. Quezon Letter to Doña Aurora Quezon 168-169
Matrimonial Ah Tay Bed by the Ah Tay Workshop 130-131
Rafael Arenas, Barcelona 70-71
Rare Philippine Commonwealth Seal Inauguration Banner 166-167
St. Thomas Aquinas 156-157
Steinway & Sons 204-205
The Patek Philippe 3671/1 208-209
Theotokos 231
TIME Magazine: Featuring Manuel L. Quezon on the Cover 160-161

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Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)
Still Life

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Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)
Ruins
signed and dated 1945 (lower right)
oil on canvas
13" x 17" (33 cm x 43 cm)

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Lot 151
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Untitled


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