

León Gallery
FINE ART & ANTIQUES

The Magnificent September Auction 2023

9 SEPTEMBER 2023 | 2:00 PM







LOT 118

*A Large and Important
Tinagtagu / Gal-Galawen /
House Guardian of the Kankanai (opposite page)*

LOT 113

Pair of Bu'lul, Lagawe Region (this page)



AUCTION

9 September 2023
Saturday, 2:00 PM

PREVIEW

Saturday to Friday
2 - 8 September 2023
9:00 AM - 7:00 PM

VENUE

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

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FRONT COVER
LOT 26

Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1914 - 2012)

Laughter

LOT 50

Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1988)

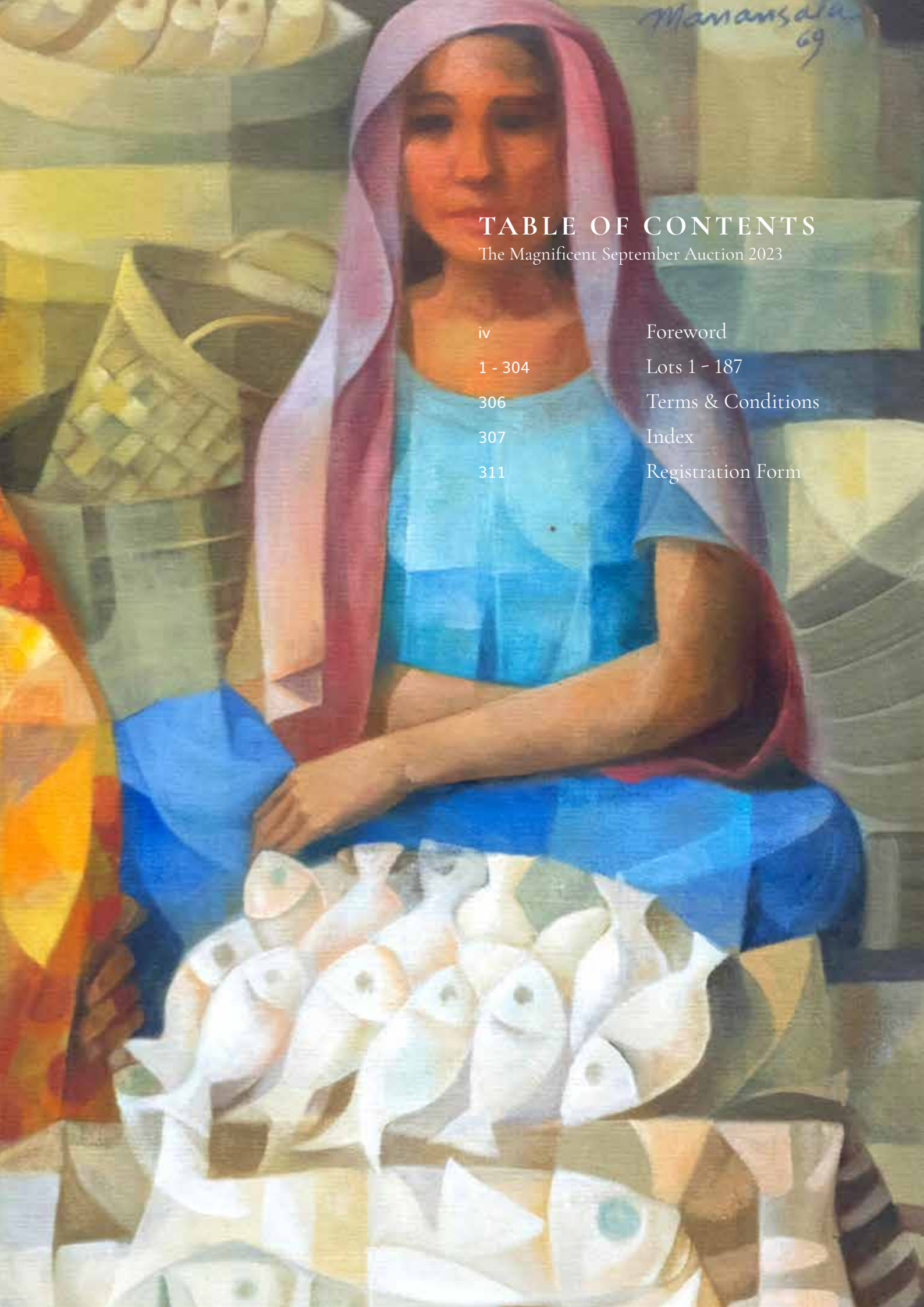
Fish Vendors

Mamansala
69

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LOT 62

Carlos V. Francisco (1912–1969)

Boy of Angono

Foreword

DEAR FRIENDS and CLIENTS,

This Magnificent September Auction is all about serendipity. Carlos “Botong” V. Francisco was just one of seven boys in the entire small town of Angono who would have the privilege of going to school. He would immortalize that band of brothers with his paintbrush, in cameos in painting after painting, and particularly in this one, *The Boy of Angono*.

The lovable tyke, sitting beside a fishing basket, happened to be in the collection of one of Manila’s most famous architects, the legendary Juan Marcos Arellano, designer of the Philippine Senate and the Metropolitan Theater. It intersects with a rare work of art by Arellano himself of the columned portico of his San Juan mansion.

The enigmatic collector Angel Lontok Cruz has also determined that this is the right moment to share some of his most extraordinary indigenous art. León Gallery is honored to sell his exquisite collection of important *bu’lul* and the grail of Philippine fabric.

Media titan Don Geny Lopez is represented by a stellar legacy of works from Hidalgo and Amorsolo, BenCab and Jerry Navarro. (There are two outstanding BenCabs to be found elsewhere in the auction, a striking *Larawan* of epic proportions and a stunning *Sabel*.)

The aristocratic Paz family brings to the auction the impeccable provenance of the boceto for the immortal work by Hidalgo, *El Desaliento*, whose finished work is in the collection of the National Museum of the Philippines. The work passed down to them in 1913 and marks an unbroken line of ownership over 110 years with a single clan.

Kit and Fenny Tatad, who were among the young turks of the 1960s, began their sumptuous collection with an H.R. Ocampo, titled *Dilemma* acquired from the son of the man who gave the Neo-Realists their name, Lorenzo J. Cruz.

Vicente Manansala’s *Fish Vendors* feeds the soul with an outpouring of fishes, that have both a spiritual and symbolic meaning of plenty. It was in the collection of famous Fifties film star Celia Flor who married into the Escaño-Corominas shipping fortune.

More works from the trove of tycoon Edilberto Bravo include a ravishing Malang Santos and a Federico Aguilar Alcuaz of a *View of Intramuros* from his Manila Hotel studio.

The men who defined ‘cool’ in San Francisco and New York — as well as Madrid and Manila are also represented. Fernando



Zóbel, who launched his catalogue raisonnée just last month, has several works in the sale that are properly documented in the highly coveted volume. To add, Leo Valledor, a defining figure of New York’s Soho, has an outstanding work, whose companion is in the collection of the SF MOMA.

There are not just one but two Anita Magsaysay-Ho’s : a portrait of a *Girl in a Maria Clara*, representing a winsome child resplendent in traditional Filipiniana — as well as a remarkable depiction titled *Laughter* of her favorite Filipinas in an infectious, light-hearted moment. The work was featured in the same 1957 PAG exhibition from which *Fruit Market* also came. The press reported that it was Magsaysay-Ho’s first foray in four years on its walls — and her first to feature oil.

A scarlet Jose Joya, titled *Red Talisman* is from the artist’s personal collection and perhaps the most exhibited of his career, is also one of the highlights.

Fernando Amorsolo once again celebrates Filipino life with a fascinating *Tinikling*, that features all his favorite symbols of prosperity from the rice harvest, ripe fruit, blossoming flowers, and lechon roasting on a slow spit. Again, serendipitously, another elusive painting from his elusive *Noli Me Tangere* series returns : after the *Elias and Salome* tribute to Rizal’s lost chapter, Amorsolo pays homage to his last, featuring Elias exhorting Basilio as Sisa lies beside him. Guillermo Tolentino reprises another Rizal work, the *Triumph of Science over Death* that also immortalizes Rizal’s own victory.

Ronald Ventura, Gus Albor, Juvenal Sanso, Cesar Legaspi and sculpture icons Ramon Orlina and Napoleon Abueva are all represented here, alongside cherished ivory and silver ecclesiastical works.

On behalf of Team León Gallery, I once again invite you to join us in another fascinating adventure in art. I promise you will never be disappointed in this happy pursuit — no matter which century begins your journey.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Ponce de Leon'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jaime L. Ponce de Leon
Director

LEÓN GALLERY

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Jaime L. Ponce de Leon

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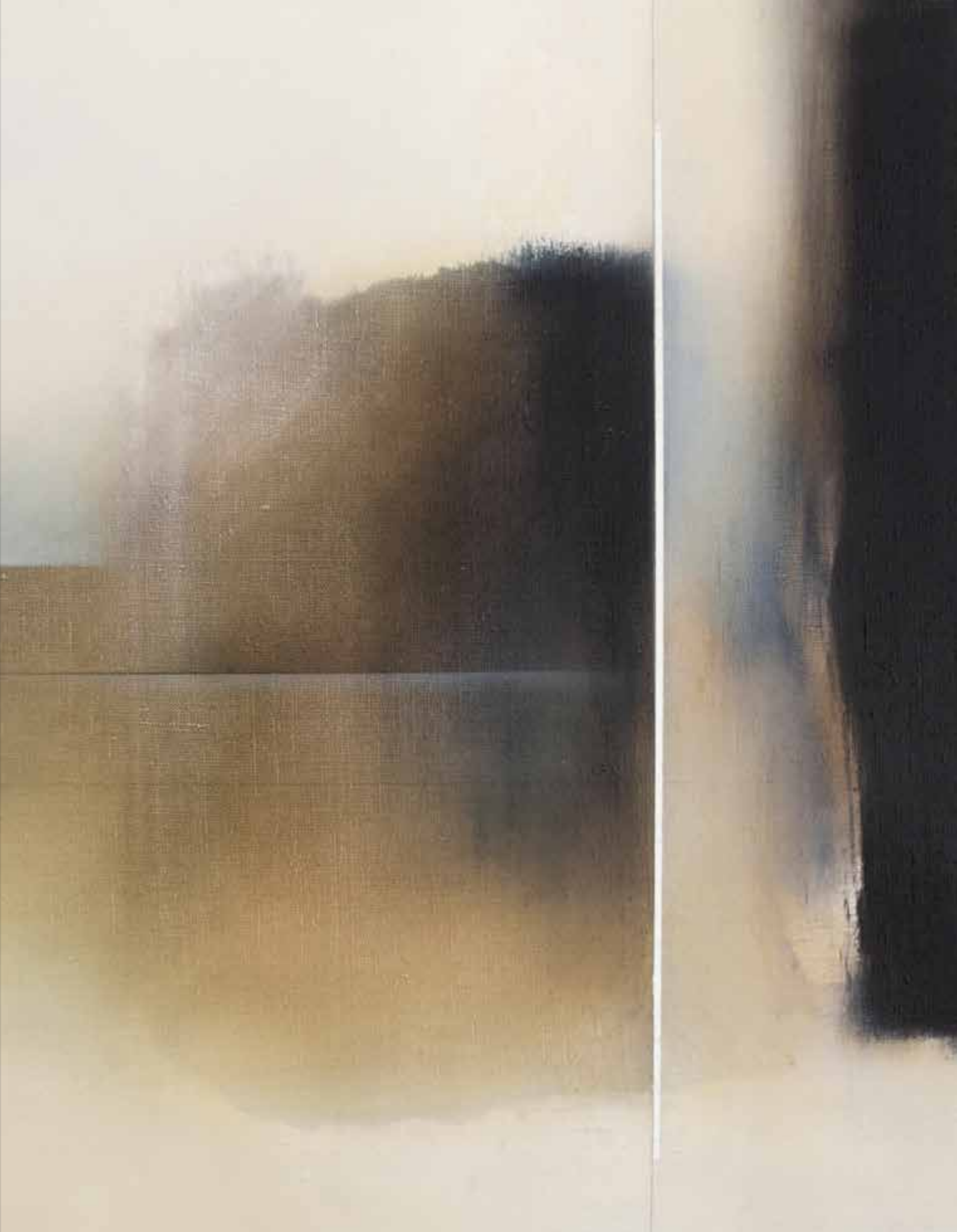
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Art collections – Catalogs. 3. Art industries and trade – Philippines – Catalogs. I. Title.

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LOT 94
Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)
Jucar XIX

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

a.) *Untitled*

signed and dated 1994 (upper left)
pen and ink on paper
8 1/2" x 11 1/2" (22 cm x 29 cm)

b.) *Mother and Child*

signed and dated 1997 (upper left)
pen and ink on paper
8 1/2" x 11 1/2" (22 cm x 29 cm)

P 220,000

Each piece is accompanied by a certificate signed by Mr. Andrew Ang confirming the authenticity of this lot

These two works in pen and ink by Ang Kiukok show a tender and warmhearted facet of the revered national artist and leading figure of Filipino figurative expressionism; they manifest the artist's hopeful search for genuine love within humanity amid a harrowing and agonizing world. In Alfredo Roces' book *Kiukok: Deconstructing Despair*, Ang reveals that his "*Mother and Child series* expresses human love. A part of me is not angry. The *Lovers* theme also shows human affection." The first piece shows a tight-knit family, an allusion to Ang's homage to traditional Filipino family values; mother and father in a warm embrace with their children clinging onto them as a sign of dependence and trust. The second depicts a mother and her infant in a tableau of maternal intimacy and nurturing. Showcasing



a glimpse into humanity's inherent devotion to benevolence and social cohesion, Ang encapsulates his confidence and faith in humanity's moral choices. (Adrian Maranan)

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

Boats in a Blue Harbor

signed (lower right)
ca. 1960
oil, gouache, and casein on paper
16 1/2" x 21 1/2" (42 cm x 55 cm)

P 220,000

Sailboats are a recurring motif in Oscar Zalameda's oeuvre. As a well-traveled artist possessing a bon vivant lifestyle, Zalameda's paintings of sailboats were likely inspired by the scenic and stunning coasts of the European continent. But the enchantment of a continent that was Europe would not suffice alone as a wellspring of creative inspiration for Zalameda. It was the vibrant gaiety of his native Lucban in the province of Quezon that served as the primary impetus for Zalameda's works, as evident in their kaleidoscopic fusion of colors. Zalameda's hometown conjures up images of merriment and delight, which had always pervaded his art and disposition, even during his expatriate phase.

The spirit of Lucban still permeates this particular piece depicting a bustling seascape in which the exuberance brought about by the flotilla of sailboats abounds. The soft color palette Zalameda



employs evokes the delicacy and romantic quality of Zalameda's art and the innate serenity that emanates from them, which bestows a universally appealing quality to his art. (Adrian Maranan)



3

Marcel Antonio (b. 1965)

Whispering Winds

ca. 2000

signed (lower left)

oil on canvas

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

P 260,000

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

Marcel Antonio's works situate themselves in the in-between of things—between mind and matter, reality and illusion. In contrast to the collective activity of folk subjects in the works of his parents Norma Belleza and Angelito Antonio, Marcel Antonio is driven towards introspections on the psyche, or reflections of an inner "folklore," if you will.

The figures in Antonio's works are curious, often bearing stone-like faces that wear eerily beguiling expressions, as in the pair rendered in this piece. There is an enchanting quality to the textured use of dreamy blues to paint shadows on the moon-bathed skin of lovers, a stark contrast to the stylized distortion of folk figures we see in Norma Belleza and Angelito Antonio's often

festively extroverted works. In Marcel Antonio's pieces, we instead see an introverted softness, dream-like and sensual—and always at the same time surreal as some things appear poetically out of place. If his works strike the viewer with a sense of something being just a little off or odd, then perhaps that is simply the work of Antonio's sleight of hand, momentarily jarring the viewer's reality with what is unreal.

Carl Jung writes of dreams as impartial and spontaneous products of the inner psyche, the unconscious slipping momentarily into one's consciousness. If this is so, then perhaps the illusory worlds Marcel Antonio conjures are just a little more than what they appear: the truth of reality itself, a proof of the living human spirit, just as it is. (*Pie Tiasas*)

Justin Nuyda (1944 - 2022)

Mindscape Search

signed and dated 2003 (lower right)

oil on arches paper

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

P 400,000

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

Among the pillars of Philippine Modern Art was the revered abstractionist Justin Nuyda, whose novel experimentations in light, color, and technique redefined what was possible within the medium of painting. His oeuvre exudes a cerebral quality to them, and the scenes he committed to his canvases are portals to how he perceived the world. Throughout his celebrated career, many have struggled to determine which discipline he was committed to and what sort of art he created.

He gained prominent recognition for his abstract paintings that depict breathtaking dream-like landscapes, as seen in this 2008 acrylic on paper piece. A sense of tranquility fills the canvas, considering that art critics have often described his art as poetic. He often draws inspiration from a variety of scenes, such as landscapes, and uses them as the foundation for his abstract paintings. Far from the merely impressionistic stance of the abstract and much too uncanny for the likes of realism, his style is said to be a pioneering venture that is incredibly distinct and unique.



Although Justin Nuyda passed away recently, his five-decade long celebrated career in the arts will forever remain in the minds and hearts of the art community. *(Isabella Romarate)*

Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1988)

Nude

signed and dated 1981 (upper right)

charcoal on paper

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

P 200,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

In art, nudes are seen as embodiments of classical beauty and ideal form. To depict the eloquence and beauty of a person's physique is a challenge for many artists, but Vicente Manansala was among the ones who demonstrated a profound understanding of human anatomy.

Manansala's nude works, whether in any medium he employed, show his dexterity and expertise in depicting the human body. When he was in his prime, a model would come to his house on Wednesdays to pose in the nude. Here, he captured the appealing features and even the flaws of the flesh with utmost realism, and, owing to the master's clever manipulation, lights and shadows interact harmoniously in this charcoal piece. *(Isabella Romarate)*





6

Benedicto Cabrera (b. 1942)

Dancing Couple

signed and dated 1995 (lower right)

pastel on paper

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

P 360,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

Bencab has covered almost all aspects of our shared Filipino-ness: from the harrowing image of Sabel as a scavenger and victim of social inequality, the colonial portraits evoked in the *Larawan Series* that remind us of our struggles in history and identity, the Filipino in exile, to the anxiety-filled and tormented images of a disaster-struck people, the Filipino as a Rock Star, the Filipino family, pictures of eroticism that confronts our conservative notions and tickles our liberated subconsciousness, and even portraits of the ordinary Filipino in both their everyday pursuits and even leisurely diversions and hedonistic pleasures.

Such is the case with the work at hand. Painted in 1995, at the same time when Bencab debuted his *Rock Sessions* featuring more than 50 pastel portraits of Filipino contemporary rock musicians, this piece depicts a man

and a woman (a couple, if you will, or maybe strangers at best) dancing the night away in what one may imagine as a nightclub or even a "discohan" in a barangay fiesta. One can hear the thumping reverberations of a music speaker and imagine the two dancing to the dance crazes of the early to mid-'90s: "Always," "The Sign," "It's A Beautiful Life," and "Macarena."

The 90s in the Philippines was a hedonistic, idiosyncratic, and avant-garde decade, with Malate as the very center of both club and queer cultures. The internet has just begun to connect the world with its speedy and reliable information highway, and MTV was at its peak. Pinoy rock bands emerged and thrived: Eraserheads, True Faith, Parokya ni Edgar, and Rivermaya, to name only a mainstream few.

In what many deem the greatest decade, the 1990s was optimism and genuine connectedness at its best. This particular piece captures that very moment.

In a piece that can be said to be a companion to Bencab's *Rock Sessions* paintings, the eminent artist fondly engages with the viewer and caresses their nostalgia and memory. For this reason, Bencab rings the bell that resonates with our collective Filipino-ness. (*Adrian Maranan*)



7

Orley Ypon (b. 1973)

Interregnum

signed and dated 2012 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

P 300,000

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

EXHIBITED

BenCab Museum, *Re:View 2012 (Gallery Indigo Year-End Group Show)*, December 2012 - February 17, 2013

Cebuano artist Orley Ypon is the first Filipino to be included in the list of "Living Masters" after winning awards in the prestigious 'Art Renewal Center' in New York from 2011 to 2013. The word "interregnum" means a transition period, which is depicted by shock, adjustment, and eventual rise, as depicted in this painting. Among local collectors, his works are called "*putik putik*."

In 2017, his works were shown at León Gallery International; the show was named *Spectacula*. It is befitting that his paintings are called "spectacular," for Ypon is a true *living master*.

Born in 1973 in Toledo, Cebu, Orley Ypon stands as a prominent contemporary Filipino artist renowned for his expertise in portraiture. His artistic journey finds its origins in his early years, where his penchant and skill for painting blossomed through rendering portraits of his loved ones. What distinguishes Ypon is his adept fusion of classical academic techniques and modern societal nuances, an achievement often commended by his peers.

In a departure from the traditional application of classical methods, Ypon's work diverges by presenting raw and unfiltered depictions of ordinary existence. Contrary to the typical idealistic and utopian interpretations of beauty derived from classical techniques, Ypon steers clear of this conventional approach. Instead, his artistic vision revolves around candid portrayals of reality. Through his pieces, Ypon aptly captures the unvarnished truth and elegance encapsulated within the human experience. (*Jed Daya*)

Winner Jumalon (b. 1983)

Past Aloof Stars

signed and dated 2020 (upper right)

oil on canvas

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

P 120,000

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

LITERATURE

Chuaunsu, Jewel, ed., *Brave New World: Art and the Pandemic*.

Mandaluyong City: South East Asian Heritage Publications, Inc., 2022.

Full-color photograph and painting description on page 77.

Through intricately detailed portraiture, contemporary Filipino artist Winner Jumalon delves into the depths of the viewers' subconscious. His themes encompass personal, cultural, and artistic identities, often drawing inspiration from the faces and locales around him. His compositions provoke contemplation, through the use of familiar and embodied images. Within his works, a concern for the human condition and spirituality is evident. This specific artwork exemplifies this characteristic, a quality that has been acknowledged by collectors and critics alike. Here we see a woman's face obscured by an underbrush. Despite this the work is still marked by emotive and narrative composition, the figure in the artwork piques viewers' curiosity about its underlying context.



Jumalon undeniably crafts portraits that captivate with their distinctive arrangements. Hailing from Zamboanga, this accomplished visual artist, a recipient of multiple awards, has been named a finalist in the Philip Morris Art Awards twice and secured the CCP Thirteen Artists Awards in 2009. (*Jed Daya*)

Angelito Antonio (b. 1939)

Mother and Child

signed and dated 1995 (lower right)

oil on board

29" x 28" (74 cm x 71 cm)

P 300,000

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

PROVENANCE

Art Gallery Philippines

Angelito Antonio was born into a family of farmers who live in Malolos, Bulacan. His art is mostly inspired by day-to-day life and the rich culture of the Filipinos. "Mang Lito," a nickname he is sometimes called, and his wife, Norma Belleza, share the same penchant for the folk genre. His subjects are often folk figures such as vendors, cockfighters, and musicians. For the lot at hand, he decided to depict a classic motif, the *Mother and Child*.

"Filipino in context, color, and flavor" is perhaps the description best fitted for the art of Antonio. Earlier in his career as a fine artist, his style leaned towards monochromatic colors of black and white. He later developed his artistic identity through the inclusion of stylized representation and color schemes into his works.



Always devoted to dynamic expression, Antonio is rightly regarded as one of the notable pillars of Philippine modern art. He crafted an aesthetic that has allowed him to maintain his practice for over 50 years, exhibiting both here and abroad. Antonio became a recipient of the Thirteen Artist Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1970. (*Isabella Romarate*)



10

Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Barung-Barong

signed and dated 1980 (lower right)

Tempera

20" x 20" (51 cm x 51 cm)

P 500,000

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

PROVENANCE

Museum of Philippine Art

A pillar of Filipino Modernism, Mauro Malang Santos helped cultivate and develop the thriving visual arts landscape of the Philippines with the aid of his unique artistic practice. He was known to explore diverse themes, and the lot at hand shows one that draws inspiration from urban and rural realities. Also, the influence of cubism is observed in the simplified, geometricizing treatment of the barong-barongs.

Malang was already inclined to the arts at a relatively young age. At the age of 10, his parents arranged for him to study under Teodoro Buenaventura, an established Filipino artist trained in the classical style. He eventually developed a style around illustrations and cartoons, revolutionizing the field within the Philippine setting. Then, after a decade of doing this, the artist moved towards a style that utilized elements of cubism and abstraction in order to create a visual language that was his own.

A year after the creation of this piece, in 1981, Malang was awarded the Patnubay ng Sining at Kalinangan from the City of Manila. (*Isabella Romarate*)



11

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Caring Mom II - 2014

signed and dated 2014

carved green glass

10 1/2" x 10" x 5 1/2" (27 cm x 26 cm x 14 cm)

P 700,000

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

A work from the prolific artist's vast oeuvre, this later work by master sculptor Ramon Orlina utilizes the soft curvature and smooth lines found in many works produced during his later period. The lot at hand, dated 2014, showcases the artist's distinct ability to convey a sense of fluidity and motion through the medium of glass. The abstract sculpture seems to fold over itself, containing multiple folds and layers of the iconic green glass that has become the artist's signature. Its asymmetrical, curved structure is shapeless yet balanced, with intricate lines guiding the eye to its lucent interior. Through Orlina's creative manipulation of light, the piece seems to emanate a glow of its own. (*Arman Lorenzo Burias*)

Ronald Ventura (b. 1973)

Into The Woods 2

signed and dated 2012 (center bottom)

Frottage, Ink, acrylic, cast paper, shaped handmade paper and kobo paper on linen canvas
96" x 78 1/2" x 6 1/2" (243 cm x 199.5 cm x 17 cm)

P 4,000,000

LITERATURE

Ventura, Ronald, Adele Tan, and Clarissa Chikiamco. *Ronald Ventura: Recyclables (Exhibition Catalog)*. Singapore: Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), 2012. Published to accompany the exhibition of the same name at the STPI from November 17 to December 15, 2012. Full-color photograph and painting description on page 40.

EXHIBITED

Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), *Ronald Ventura: Recyclables*, Singapore, November 17 - December 15, 2012

Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), *Paper Pushers: Methods & Materials (Group Show)*, Singapore, March 1 - April 5, 2014



Ronald Ventura. Image courtesy of Singapore Tyler Institute.

*"Did you ever stop to notice
This crying Earth, these weeping shores?"*

—MICHAEL JACKSON, "EARTH SONG," 1995

"We are constantly reminded of it. In the newspapers, on TV, on the Internet. "The world is collapsing around our ears," sings Michael Stipe in one of REM's songs from the album "Out of Time." The signs are all there. Global warming. Terrible floods. Strange weather. Some species following the way of the dodo and becoming zoological footnotes. Diminishing resources. The only thing missing would be signs in yellow ochre-and-black telling us that the end of the world is nigh.

Unless. We. Do. Something. About. It."

—EXCERPTS FROM RONALD VENTURA'S
"ART AND NATURE'S REVENGE," IN "RONALD
VENTURA: RECYCLABLES"

Into the Woods 2 is one of three works Ronald Ventura created for his 2012 show at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI). Just recently, *Into the Woods 3* was successfully auctioned by León Gallery in its 'The Spectacular Mid-Year Auction 2023.' Titled '*Recyclables*,' Ventura's show at the STPI elevates nature—its formidability, haunting fragility, and eventual unforgiving wrath—as the ultimate protagonist.

Into the Woods 2 and the other works in the exhibition showcase Ventura's versatility and experimentality. According to its website, STPI is "committed to promoting artistic experimentation in the mediums of print and paper and has become one of the most cutting-edge destinations for contemporary art in Asia." Since his association and work with the STPI, Ventura "has consciously created artworks that would resonate with the theme of conservation and how urgent it is to address environmental concerns," as he puts it in his artist's statement, "*Art and Nature's Revenge*," published in the '*Recyclables*' exhibition catalog. He sees the STPI as "where materials can be reused and recycled into even better, more ecologically-sound materials for making art."

In his *Into the Woods* works, Ventura mixes paper casts and frottages rubbed from his collection of



indigenous woodworks to form an enchanting image of a tree inhabited by flora and fauna cast from his diverse assemblage of wooden articles. The result is both a remembrance of nature's benevolence and a warning of its overpowering retaliation principally due to capitalist exploitation—that mercenary socio-economic order.

There is an indigenous-like character weaved in the work at hand. It resembles a sacred tree held in utmost reverence (and, at the same time, feared for its unforgiving wrath), in which people gather to venerate nature and its gifts and all the creatures that live within the circle of life. By using recycled paper as his base, Ventura weaves inspiration from indigenous practices, gaining knowledge from the very heart and soul of

one's motherland. The artist celebrates and promotes indigenous peoples' understanding of how human lives are inherently tied to the land and environment. These peoples have been practicing sustainability and have established harmony with nature, taking only what they need and thus, allowing the Earth's natural regenerative powers to occur undisturbed. Ventura espouses that creativity and sustainability are not mutually exclusive; both sustenance and cultural/creative expressions are tied to the environment's welfare.

Into the Woods 2 pushes us to return to our roots—to go back into the woods, in which paradise lost is regained and all creatures extol the virtues of the living world, existing in melodic concordance. (Adrian Maranan)



13

Bernardo Pacquing (b. 1967)

Monique I (Diptych)

signed (verso, first panel)

oil on canvas

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

24" x 96" (61 cm x 244 cm) overall

P 800,000

PROVENANCE

Museo Iloilo

EXHIBITED

Museo Iloilo, *Square One*, Iloilo City, 1995

In spite of the extensive and diverse history of abstract art, fresh and innovative interpretations of this medium still manage to captivate and transform its conventional essence. Bernardo Pacquing's approach to his artwork, technique, and medium showcases the potential for expressing Abstraction. While Abstraction is commonly associated with moral aspects like purity or simplicity, Pacquing's revolutionary interpretation of the genre proposes that the power of abstraction resides in a more expressive and symbolic portrayal. Therefore, unlike widely recognized abstract artworks, Pacquing's artistic style doesn't exclusively reject representation. Instead, he draws inspiration from the shapes and forms found in objects and nature. (*Jed Daya*)



Bernardo Pacquing © León Gallery Archives

Juvenal Sansó (b. 1929)*Bahia Azul Sin Viento*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1970s

oil on canvas

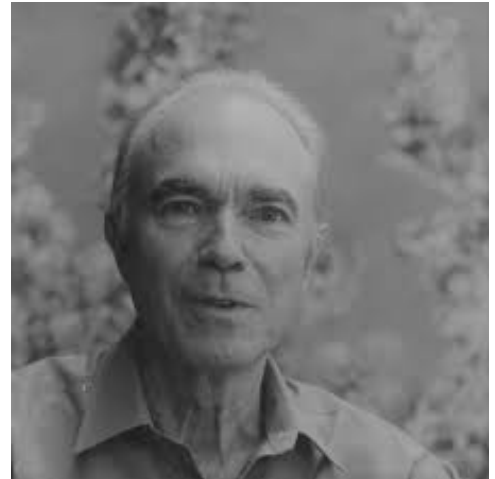
24" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

P 1,400,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila



Juvenal Sansó

Juvenal Sansó is always inspired by his environment, and the deep bond between the artist and nature is revealed in his paintings that depict surreal landscapes and seascapes. He spent his boyhood in Paco and had many beautiful memories of pleasant days swimming in the Pasig River and family outings to Montalban in Rizal. His close relationship with nature did not end there, because later in his career as an artist, he would then often visit the Brittany coast in France, and the sights that caught his eye would find their way as well onto his canvases.

As observed in the lot at hand, Sansó is the kind of artist who is able to mirror his sentiments into his oeuvres. His melancholic landscape paintings portray solitary

sceneries, without human presence at all. However, an existential change within the artist is reflected through the colors that seep into his compositions. According to the catalog titled *After the Deluge Comes the Dawn*, it first came as background hues of reds or blues for his barong-barong and baklad- inspired landscapes, and later it manifested into his sketches of Brittany, France.

The New York Herald Tribune wrote in an article, "Sansó shows attractively wishful landscapes and sea-coast scenes, some of the latter, painted in the Philippines and featuring cathedral-like constructions for trapping fish at low tide." (*Isabella Romarate*)

Ethereal Blue Bayou

Sanso's Mystic Harbor



Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Mag-Iina

signed and dated 2000 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

P 3,400,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

When Mauro Malang Santos was just ten years old, he began receiving informal painting lessons from the classical realist painter Teodoro Buenaventura. Although he left the UP College of Fine Arts after just one semester, he continued to deepen his love and devotion for art. His artistic style and methods were shaped by his visits to museums in Japan, the United States, and Europe.

He was part of the group of artists in his time who imbibed inspiration from folk art and whose works are distinguishable by geometric shapes, decorative forms, and festive colors. Some of his paintings are simplified figures of seated women, usually market vendors or mothers. Interestingly, Mauro Malang Santos used his mother's maiden name to sign his works; hence, he became commonly known as Malang.

The lot on hand features three mothers and three daughters; hence, the title is *Magiina*. He has done other works featuring a mother and child. To name a few, he made various oil on canvas works in 1980, 1986 and 1994. He also worked with a mother and two kids

in 1997. His numerous portrayals of a mother and child suggest that he understood that depicting motherhood evokes shared feelings of affection amongst Filipinos.

What makes *Magiina* stand out is Malang's idea of featuring four generations of female figures with their children. Moreover, the word English translation, "mothers with their children," does not encapsulate the same warm, profound feeling of the Filipino maternal bond when we hear the word *Magiina*. Indeed, Malang made warm-toned tints of pink, orange, and violet, etc, as the background for his three mothers and three children. These colors help evoke tenderness. A charming detail is how the three mothers have a little bun of hair on the top of their heads. The baby bundled in green fabric stands out against the white garments of her brown-haired kin — who may be the second set of mother and daughter. The black-haired woman in her pink and orange accented dress may be the eldest of them all; hence, she is the pinnacle of the triangle formed by the women. Overall, this lot exemplifies the whimsical side of Malang and his profound maternal appreciation. (*Raphaela Cordero*)

*Malang's Mother
And Her Fruits of Love*



Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

a.) *Abstract*

signed (lower right)
ca. 1953
oil on paper
8 1/4" x 11 1/4" (21 cm x 26 cm)

b.) *Sketchbooks, by Fernando Zóbel*

80 pages
published by Carmelo and Bauermann, 1954
7 1/2" x 4 3/4" (19cm x 12 cm)
Condition: Cover shows slight signs of wear at spine
but inside pages are pristine.

P 500,000

PROVENANCE

The book *Sketchbooks* is dedicated and signed by Fernando Zóbel thus: '*Para Sally – El librito este y ademas todo lo bueno que hay*' ('For Sally – This little book and all the good things it has in it')

The work at hand is among the last surviving pieces from Fernando Zobel's first foray into abstraction in 1953, as the artist would destroy many of his earliest abstract pieces.

1953 would mark several significant milestones in Zobel's life and career. He would be elected the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) President, founded by Purita Kalaw-Ledesma in 1948. 1953 would also represent his struggles between two spectrums of his art: figurative and abstraction.

At the Philippine Art Gallery in 1953, Zobel held his debut solo show, exhibiting Philippine and religious themes (with hints of social critique and commentaries relating to the milieu of post-war Manila) rendered in a figurative style reminiscent of Henri Matisse, who was a significant influence on Zobel in these early years. That very same year would also mark his first venture into abstraction.

The work at hand belongs to Zobel's seminal encounter and experimentation with abstraction, particularly with non-objective art, a style he included in his course, *Introduction to Contemporary Painting*, at the Ateneo Graduate School, in 1952. There, Zobel taught that "a painting need have no relation with the appearance of natural subjects. It can deal either with emotions (organic school: abstract expressionism) or with constructions (geometric school)."

In this piece, Zobel shows his distinct kind of vibrant and confident spontaneity that would gradually emerge in his future ventures into abstraction, beginning particularly in the Saetas. The vivid colors of Matisse can be seen. Blots of interchanging colors of dark blue, light blue, and black are rendered in a pointillist-like technique.



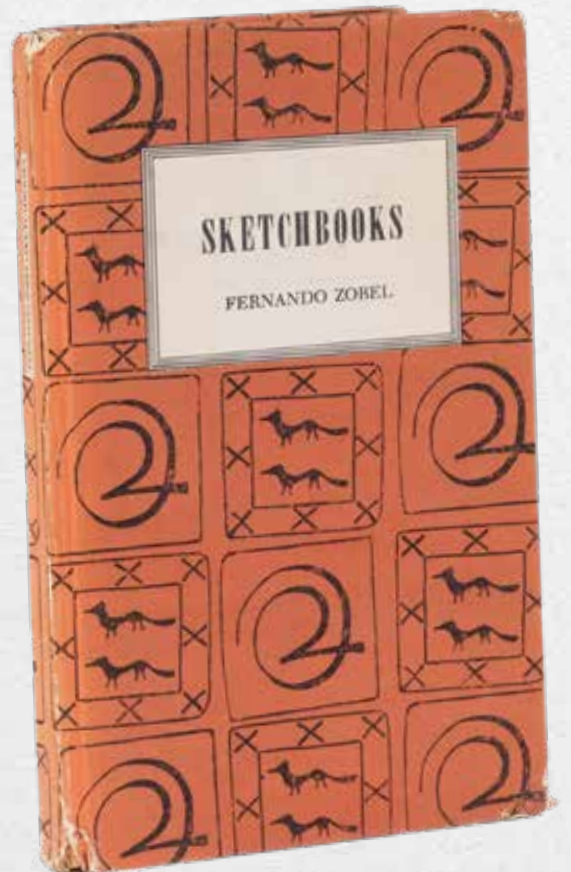
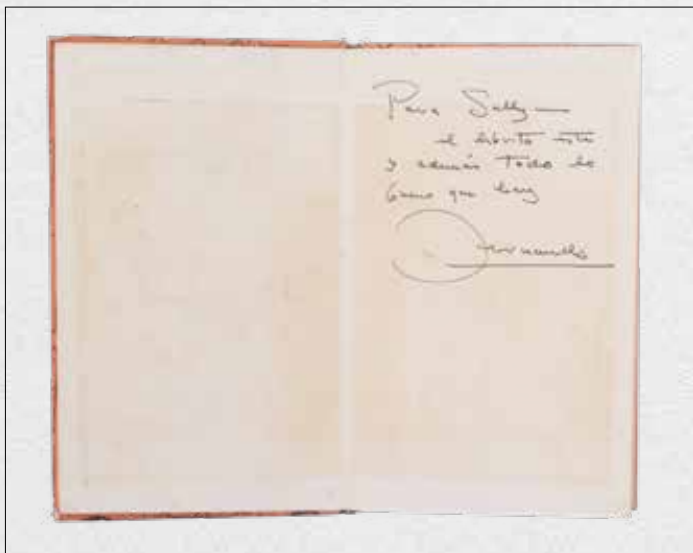
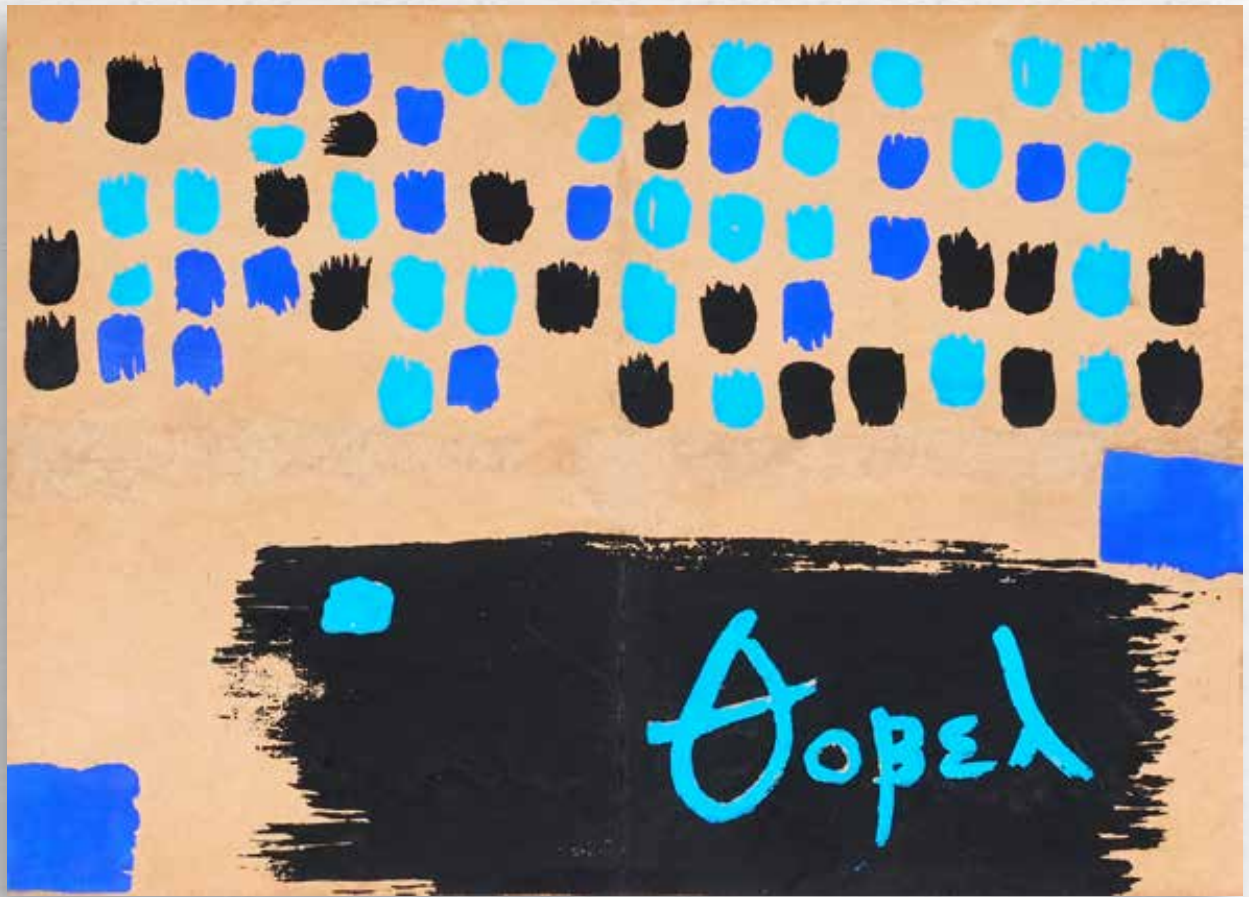
Plaza, Fernando Zóbel, 1953, oil on plywood, has the same intense blues and geometric shapes as the work at hand.

Zobel even participated in the Philippine Art Gallery's *First Non-Objective Art Exhibition* in 1953. His works *Plaza* and *Tenaza/Snappers* were deemed two of the most distinguished by the poet and art critic Aurelio Alvero, who went by the nom de plume "Magtanggol Asa." Alvero describes non-objective art in the exhibition catalog: "In this new trend, the artist does away with the depicting of the external of the object. He goes into the internal which to him is definitely more valuable. He fragmentizes his subject and finally reassembles the fragments into a composition that completely eliminates cognizable representation."

But Zobel's initial delve into abstraction would only last for a while, as he would destroy many of his earliest abstract paintings and return to his figurative Philippine themes, in keeping up with the Neo-Realist spirit of brashness in the face of reconstruction and rehabilitation of a post-war Philippines. It can be remembered that Zobel had formed profound friendships with the champions of Neo-Realism during this time: the PAG stars Arturo Luz, H.R. Ocampo, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, and Vicente Manansala.

Villalba Salvador notes that Zobel destroyed many of his initial abstract pieces "as he found such endeavors to be lacking in meaning and also somewhat incoherent." Thus, this particular piece is a rare, indispensable memento of Zobel's earliest excursion into what would eventually become his legacy in Philippine art.

This lot includes Zobel's *Sketchbooks*, published in 1954. Zobel conceived the book as something one can carry in the pocket and bring everywhere. "In a sense, these sketchbooks are a kind of diary," Zobel writes in his foreword. "Primarily, they contain quick impressions of things observed, but in many cases, there are studies, more or less elaborate, for future paintings." *Sketchbooks* includes Zobel's studies for *Carroza* (1953), his award-winning piece at the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual in October 1953. (*Adrian Maranan*)



Louie Cordero b. 1978)

White Emptiness of a Liberated Nothing
(*Anatomy of the Tropics*)

signed and dated 2015 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

72" x 72" (183 cm x 183 cm)

P 1,000,000

PROVENANCE

Mo Space

Louie Cordero is a Filipino artist noted for his unique and thought-provoking artworks. His art reflects a blend of various influences, ranging from pop culture to traditional Filipino imagery, and it explores themes such as social issues and the human condition.

In the *White Emptiness of a Liberated Nothing (Anatomy of the Tropics)*, the contemporary artist shows his distinctive approach to art-making that involves mixing elements of cartoonish and grotesque styles. At plain sight, it appears like a weird abstract rendition of a tropical island, but upon closer inspection, one will notice a pair of feet, a brain, breasts, and then more. This acrylic painting, as the title suggests, is indeed a depiction of the anatomy of the tropics, done in the Cordero flair

Furthermore, in relation to this piece, the artist biography of Louie Cordero on Widewalls provided an interesting insight as to what makes his art one of a kind. "The Philippines are a set of islands with many different dialects and traditions that were divided for a very long time between different imperial colonial forces - this

played a major role in the development of this country's artistic diversity," it writes, and "when observed from that perspective, Louie Cordero's art is a perfect example of how unique someone's work can be when developed in such an environment that supports diverse and varied creative vocabularies."

One of Cordero's notable series is the one titled "Head." There, he created sculptures of exaggerated and distorted human heads, it is said to challenge the traditional notions of beauty and provoke discussions about societal norms.

In addition to that series, Cordero has also explored other themes, such as political corruption, consumerism, and the impact of technology on society. Overall, his works are as well known to contain a dark and satirical humor, inviting viewers to contemplate deeper societal and personal issues.

A Manila-based artist, Cordero has been around the world, exhibiting his works in galleries and museums both here and abroad. (*Isabella Romarate*)



Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)*Visions of Inspiration*

signed and dated 2001

carved asahi glass

20" x 14" x 14"

(51 cm x 36 cm x 36 cm)

P 2,800,000Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist
confirming the authenticity of this lot

Orlina's abstract sculptures embody a captivating interplay of dynamic movement, achieved through a symphony of sharp bends and sleek edges that define a series of angles. These angles, rather than being rigid entities, represent the fluid lines that characterize his art.

Through artful manipulation of natural light, which filters through the colored glass and becomes ensnared within different facets and angles, Orlina orchestrates an ever-shifting visual experience. No fixed perspective exists for his sculptures; they evolve with each viewer's vantage point, inviting interpretations that transcend the artist's original intention.

Orlina's true accomplishment lies in liberating observers to perceive his creations through their own unique lens. The prismatic interplay of viewpoints conjures illusions that enrich the viewer's personal reading of the sculptures. Notably, the coexistence of strength and fragility further contributes to the timeless elegance inherent in Orlina's works. Most significantly, he injects the art form with an unprecedented sense of liquidity and motion, ushering in a fresh dimension to the established idiom. (*Jed Daya*)



Ramon Orlina © León Gallery Archives



THE TRIUMPH OF SCIENCE — AND RIZAL — OVER DEATH:

National Artist Guillermo Tolentino Inserts Rizal in Reinterpretation of the National Hero's Work

by PROF. MICHAEL CHARLESTON "XIAO" BRIONES CHUA
Filipino Public Historian

In a time when Filipinos are still building up their self-identity as a distinct nation from the Spaniards, amidst the perception by Westerners that Filipinos are not as good, many of the Ilustrados needed to project that they were renaissance men like Leonardo. In exhibiting their talents in art, literature, law and the sciences, they defended their people and edified the nation.

But Ilustrados were also such because they were also believers of the Enlightenment, developed by the European philosophers; That there is no logical basis for the divine right of kings and noblemen, that all men are created equal, and thus, all human beings are able to exemplify reason and scientific thought to solve their problems. In short, reason over superstition, and science over religion. José Rizal once said in the 32nd chapter of the *Noli me Tangere* that education is key, "The school is the book in which is written the future of the nations."

Rizal was an eye doctor, a man of science. But he was also a novelist, poet and a visual artist. Yet in many of his artistic works, he still wanted to teach people the liberal philosophy and the importance of education. In a diptych, a double work, he created two statues showing two realities.

The first one is *The Triumph of Death Over Life*, a naked woman representing life is being embraced by a full skeleton representing death.

The other one was the *Triumph of Science Over Death*, showing a naked woman holding a torch above a skull. The base of the statue shows a book, and on its spine the inscription SCIENTIA (This is unfortunately absent in many copies including the one fronting the UP College of Medicine, aka Lady Med). Historian Ambeth Ocampo clarifies that in Latin this word doesn't only mean "science" but "knowledge." This gives deeper meaning to the second statuette: All knowledge surpasses death, which is not just physical but can also pertain to poverty and enslavement.

For Rizal, to be ignorant and uneducated meant to die anyway. Paraphrasing Luis Camara Dery's summary of Rizal's letter to the Young Women of Malolos, if you want to kill a nation, you make the women stupid, you make the people uneducated.

It was said that Guillermo Tolentino mastered portraying José Rizal. He created monuments and busts in his likeness. When he does it in wax, it is as if you have seen the national



The Philippine National Hero Jose Rizal, the essential Renaissance Man.



Jose Rizal as doctor, curing his mother in this famous scene

hero alive. Tolentino also made copies of Rizal's sculptural works, like "A Mother's Revenge" which is now at the Museo ni José Rizal in Fort Santiago, and "Oyang Dapitana" which is displayed at the National Museum of Fine Arts Rizal Room. In this lot is a recently resurfaced Tolentino, "A Homage to Rizal's Triumph of Science over Death" gives a reinterpretation of the work in the Italian style which he had already mastered. Death is depicted not just as a skull but a full skeleton, like the grim reaper. Instead of a naked Scientia, she is wearing a toga and steps on death hand in hand with an overcoated Rizal holding a book.

She may have symbolized Rizal's aspiration for the nation as recorded in his letter to the Women of Malolos who wanted to establish a school so they can learn the Spanish language: "Now that you have responded to our first appeal in the interest of the welfare of the people; now that you have set an example to those who, like you, long to have their eyes opened and be delivered from servitude, new hopes are awakened in us and we now even dare to face adversity, because we have you for our allies and are confident of victory."

"No longer does the Filipino stand with her head bowed nor does she spend her time on her knees, because now she is quickened by hope in the future; no longer will the mother contribute to keeping her daughter in darkness and bring her up in contempt and moral annihilation. And no longer will the science of all sciences consist in blind submission to any unjust order, or in extreme complacency, nor will a courteous smile be deemed the only weapon against insult or humble tears the ineffable panacea for all tribulations." Knowledge is freedom, education brings us honor.

But more than a hundred years of education, we still aspire to fight ignorance. The people are educated. The question is what kind of education did they get?

This work by Tolentino reminds us that Rizal's quest for true enlightenment is still ongoing, he has to come down from heaven to spiritually join us and guide us through his writings.

04 May 2023, Little Baguio Terraces, City of San Juan

Guillermo Tolentino (1890 - 1976)*Homage to Rizal and His 'Triumph of Science over Death'*

signed and dated 1915

plaster

Height : 23" (58 cm)

P 500,000**GUILLERMO TOLENTINO:
Patriot and Grand Old Man of Filipino
Sculpture**

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

If Botong Francisco created a pantheon of heroic Filipinos, Guillermo Tolentino literally built the pantheon of monumental heroes. A patriot who felt each commission keenly — he would say that Andres Bonifacio and his Katipunan warriors would visit him in his dreams and guide his chisel — his sculptures evoke not only the immortality of these great men but stir the emotions they quicken.

Tolentino's first foray in hero-worship was the popular engraving Grupo de Filipinos Ilustres which featured Jose Rizal front and center. His heart, however, was in sculpture; an inclination that started as a child when he formed clay figures of dogs and horses.

The sculptor would make his way to New York where he secured a serendipitously arranged scholarship from the wealthy American Bernard Baruch. With funds scraped together in the United States, he then went on to book passage to Europe. Like Juan Luna, he determined to take up further studies in Rome and this he did for three more years. The Italian community in Manila eventually rallied around to support him.

He would return to Manila and receive many commissions for work, including from the influential architect Juan Marcos Arellano.

This tribute to Jose Rizal has a double meaning : on the first level, it references the National Hero's own rendering of The Triumph of Science over Death. Also known as Scientia, this work has become synonymous to the power of reason

In the original, a goddess-like figure holds aloft the light of knowledge, illuminating the world around her and vanquishing the death that comes with ignorance. She tramples a skull that sits helpless and hapless on top of a thick volume, a book with the title 'Scientia.'

However, because Tolentino has depicted Jose Rizal within the composition, he also tells us that Rizal himself is an immortal. In this homage, Rizal is dressed for a European winter and also carries a second cape on his arm, perhaps referring to his academic. He carries the book of learning in one hand (which may have the double meaning of the novel Noli that sparked a revolution). Rizal appears to be in happy contemplation of the future as Lady Knowledge lights his way. Through his life and works, as well as through his death and example, Rizal has also thus become victorious over death and will live forever in the nation's esteem.



ABOVE: Rizal's original clay figure, 'Triumph of Science over Death'. Photo from the Collection of Ambeth Ocampo. BOTTOM: A rendering of Rizal's work at UP Manila college of medicine.

The Genius of the Filipino Celebrated
A National Artist Honors
Our National Hero



Alfredo Esquillo (b.1972)*300-Year Old Slave*

signed and dated 2017 (lower left)

oil on ethylene-vinyl acetate

68" x 44" (173 cm x 112 cm)

P 600,000

As a cultivated social realist, Alfredo Esquillo has mastered the art of the contemporary allegory. It is a character that yields a profound weight and social layering to his works, lending each piece a deep historical consciousness always at work with a postcolonial retrospective.

In his 2013 *Afterall* journal article entitled "Social Realism: The Turns of a Term in the Philippines", art critic and historian Patrick Flores writes of social realism in the Philippines as bearing an allegorical impulse that—as it appropriates conventional images into the work—critically brings the historical past into the present. In the oeuvres of Esquillo, we see this same allegorical impulse as the artist often alludes to colonizing powers by referencing popular historical images and integrating them into his work to piece together something relevant and present. In other words, the works of Esquillo deconstruct the spectacle, only to reconstruct what becomes an image and critique of a postcolonial Philippines. If history is traditionally written by the victors, then it is the artist the likes of Esquillo who seek to redress it from below—that is, from the reality of the Filipino people.

The charm of the allegorical work is that it always presents an 'ever-slippery reality,' as Flores describes. In this Esquillo piece, truth teeters in between myth and reality as the '300-Year Old Slave' appears reminiscent of the absurd hero Sisyphus in Greek mythology.

Particularly curious here is the image of a Greek corinthian-style column carried by our new 'Sisyphus' in place of the boulder. Aside from the corinthian-style having been used in ancient Greek temples of old as well as in architecture of European antiquity, it is also recognizable in the governmental architecture of the US in buildings such as the Capitol and The Supreme Court. Notably, the usage of broken Greek columns is not an unfamiliar motif of Esquillo's oeuvre as we see in his 2016 triptych *The Colony* as well as in the installations of his 2022 solo exhibition *Bread and Circuses*. Over the recent years, it has become a significant imagery in Esquillo's works as he uses the Greek column to appropriate a piece of the empire and shed light on its inherently decrepit state that nonetheless continues to conquer postcolonies to this day.

In this Esquillo work, the body of the '300-Year Old Slave' has become eerily machine-like, the crushing weight of their burden seeming to have disfigured their anatomical form into something between mechanical and human. Is the machine-like slave conscious of their own wretched condition or is there no tragedy to glean from a machine that has simply accepted its fate? At the mercy of gods and empires, Esquillo's absurd hero here teeters in between myth and reality. By alluding to the tale of Sisyphus, it critically presents the wretched and seemingly eternal fate of a postcolonial people. (*Pie Tiasas*)

Esquillo's Absurd Hero
At the Mercy of Gods and Empires





21

Jose Joya (1931 - 1995)

Summer Frolic

signed and dated 1988 (lower right)

acrylic collage

22 3/4" x 30 1/2" (58 cm x 77 cm)

P 2,000,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Josefa Joya Baldovino confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

Joya's venture into the abstract was borne from the heightened movement of abstract expressionism in Western painting and the New York School in the 1950s, a scene characterized by spontaneity, experimentation, and the improvisational arts. Despite the vigor of such a movement eventually seeping into Joya's works by the 1960s, there is a curious quality of dynamic rumination in his abstract pieces. How exactly does a vibrant outburst of life elicit a sense of contemplation at the same time?

In Joya's acrylic collages, the artist takes a refreshingly experimental approach to the aesthetic origins of abstraction—that is the art of Chinese calligraphy founded on oneness with medium and nature. It is an art only rendered possible through a natural flow of energies between medium, spirit, body, and environment—and the same can be said of Joya's works. There is something artfully gestural in his manner of piecing together a harmonious tapestry of dynamic flows, composed through an overlay of texture and color that is not only clearly drawn from life despite the absence of figuration, but is also life-giving in itself. His is an art only rendered possible through a state of oneness that simply frolics in the moment. (*Pie Tiausas*)



22

Jigger Cruz (b. 1984)

Raindrops Machine

signed and dated 2007 (lower left)

oil on canvas

29" x 28 3/4" (74 cm x 73cm)

P 240,000

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art*,
Hong Kong, 12 June 2020, Lot 3050

Jigger Cruz created *Raindrops Machine* in 2007. Around that time, the artist was producing artworks that combined elements of abstraction, expressionism, and contemporary Filipino cultural references. His early oeuvre, painted in vibrant palettes and rendered with gestural brushstrokes, captured a sense of immediacy and unfiltered emotion, inviting viewers to engage with the instinctual and intuitive aspects of his art.

From the title and its composition, this oil painting can remind a viewer of David Medalla's *Bubble Machine*. The "Bubble Machine" is a sculpture that generates bubbles through a mechanical process, often involving a mixture of soap and water. It is a conceptual artwork, created in 1963, that is considered as one of the earliest examples of kinetic or interactive art. At its core, it can be seen as a symbol of transience, fragility, and the ephemeral nature of existence.

Like Medalla, Cruz as well is experimental in artistic approaches. He is innovative and always pushing the boundaries, incorporating elements of interactivity, performance, and conceptualism into his own artistic practice.

In 2007, Cruz graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Far Eastern University. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Juvenal Sans (b. 1929)

La Hora del Cariño

signed (middle right)

ca. 1973

oil on canvas

25 1/2" x 31 3/4" (65 cm x 91 cm)

P 1,400,000

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

PROVENANCE
The Luz Gallery

Juvenal Sansó's plant aesthetic is sound and delicate, realistic and romantic. His rich imagination is brimming with the wealth of flora that are not found on waysides or seashores but only in the lush imagination of a poet. Although he is renowned for his experimentation and explorations on various themes, he still often finds himself painting his peculiar plants. Though he is more noted for his depictions of flowers, the fine artist also colored on his canvases some coral reefs that appear like bouquets.

As a child who spent his boyhood in Paco, Sansó had many wonderful memories of pleasant days swimming in the Pasig River and family outings to Montalban in Rizal. From his early days in the Philippines to his frequent visits at the Brittany coast in France, he indeed was an artist close to nature. For that, his coral reefs and flowers, as with his other favorite subjects, are believed to be culled from his enchanted memory.

His oeuvres, such as the lot at hand, reveals his distinct approach to poetic surrealism. "Sansó is a contemplative poet," the French daily morning newspaper *Le Figaro* wrote. "His flowers, masses of rocks, the fishing traps... his tropical plants are all remembered so clearly that he can recreate them in his works." (*Isabella Romarate*)



© León Gallery Archives





24

Napoleon Abueva (1930 - 2018)

Modern 5-Seater Bench

signed and dated 1975

hardwood

23" x 129 1/2" x 34 1/2" (58 cm x 329 cm x 87 cm)

P 2,000,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Amihan Abueva confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

Noted for his contributions to not only Philippine art but the tenets of Filipino sculpture as well, Napoleon Abueva has undoubtedly influenced a whole generation of Filipino artists.

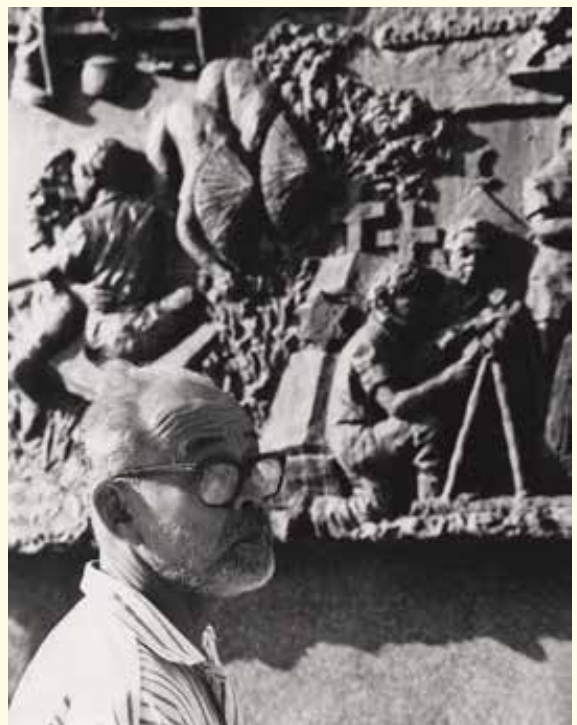
Abueva's sculptural style encompassed a wide range of subjects and themes, from social commentary to cultural heritage. He seamlessly blended traditional Filipino elements with modern techniques, creating a distinct visual language that resonated with audiences both locally and internationally.

His profound understanding of materials allowed him to experiment with various mediums, including wood, stone, metal, and even utilized used materials which was virtually unheard of during the time. Abueva's ability to transform seemingly ordinary materials into extraordinary works of art demonstrated his mastery and versatility as a



sculptor. Whether it was the graceful curves of a wooden figure or the imposing presence of a monumental metal sculpture, each piece bore his signature touch. Beyond materiality, Abueva managed to create pieces that were distinctly Filipino, effectively creating a visual language that no longer largely relied upon an ultimately Western approach.

Abueva's contributions to Philippine art extended beyond his own creations. He played a crucial role in fostering artistic talent and elevating the status of sculpture in the country. As a professor at the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, he mentored and inspired generations of Filipino sculptors, imparting his knowledge, skills, and artistic philosophy. Many of his students went on to become influential artists themselves, further expanding the legacy of Philippine modern sculpture. (*Jed Daya*)



Napoleon Abueva (1930 - 2018). © León Gallery Archives

Emmanuel Garibay (b. 1962)

Gunita

signed and dated 2010 (lower left)

oil on canvas

72" x 48" (182 cm x 122 cm)

P 1,200,000

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

EXHIBITED

Boston Gallery (in cooperation with Art Verite),
Habang Papalayo, Quezon City, July 10 - 22, 2010

*“And when my grave by all is no more remembered,
With neither cross nor stone to mark its place,
Let it be plowed by man, with spade let it be scattered
And my ashes ere to nothingness are restored,
Let them turn to dust to cover thy earthly space.*

*Then it doesn't matter that you should forget me:
Your atmosphere, your skies, your vales I'll sweep;
Vibrant and clear note to your ears I shall be:
Aroma, light, hues, murmur, song, moanings deep,
Constantly repeating the essence of the faith I keep.”*

– Excerpts from Dr. Jose Rizal's “Mi Ultimo Adios”
(My Last Farewell); English Translation

BY ENCARNACION ALZONA & ISIDRO ESCARE ABETO

Emmanuel Garibay created *Gunita* in 2010 in anticipation of the 150th anniversary of the birth of our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, who was born on June 19, 1861, hence the work's title, which translates to “remembrance.” A solemn commemoration. An enduring homage. A continuing struggle.

Gunita formed part of Garibay's 2010 show at the Boston Art Gallery titled “*Habang Papalayo*,” in which he tackled compelling themes surrounding our collective identity and shared history. Garibay makes us ponder: Do we, as a nation, continue to enshrine the value of self-determination handed to us by our valiant ancestors?

The work at hand brings to mind an iconic photograph of Rizal taken during the 1890s. It is ubiquitously found everywhere: in classrooms, museums, government offices, postcards, stamps, books, and even art. It signifies that Rizal is omnipresent; Rizal lives in the struggling farmers fighting for genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization, the exploited workers clamoring for livable wages and humane working conditions, the militant youth fighting for a nationalist, scientific, and mass-oriented education, the fisherfolks lobbying for a reformed fisheries program, the environmentalists calling for the protection and

sustainable development of the environment, and all Filipinos yearning to be emancipated from the exploitation and enslavement brought by the ills of successive regimes that continue to be subservient to its foreign oppressors.

Rizal exemplifies, and Garibay professes, our crucial role in arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the greater number of people to march for genuine sovereignty.

Rizal's contributions to the awakening of national consciousness in the late 19th-century Philippines that would culminate in the Philippine revolution against Spain and the nation's subsequent independence are unequivocal and irrefutable. His enduring legacy is immortalized through his writings, particularly the *Noli* and the *El Fili*—his art.

As we anticipate the 127th anniversary of Rizal's martyrdom on December 30, Garibay's *Gunita* is a fitting reminder not only of Rizal's legacy; he was a victim of state persecution. Thus, the power toward liberation from systemic oppression lies in our potent collective action. We might ask ourselves: How far have we come, and how far are we willing to pursue to safeguard this nation? (*Adrian Maranan*)

A Social Activist's Monumental Remembrance of Rizal





THE JOY OF WOMEN

Anita Magsaysay-Ho's 'Laughter'

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

There is a portrait of the young Anita Magsaysay in her studio at Cranbrook Academy of Art : Around her are works of art in various stages of progression, all of them depicting women. On an easel behind her is a painting of two women pounding rice — one already wears the signature scarf that would distinguish all her Filipina figures. Purita Kalaw Ledesma, founder of the Art Association of the Philippines would quote her as saying, “She believes that the Filipino face is top heavy, black hair, black brows, black eyes make the top color of the head heavy. For this reason, she generally paints her women to minimize the dark area of the head or she paints the pupils of the eyes as mere dots — and to give dramatic effect, she paints her figures as if a strong light were focused from beneath.”

Magsaysay-Ho started painting at eight, “sketching with crayons”. A report in the Sunday Times Magazine, after her sensational first-prize win at the Art Association of the Philippines’ influential annual competition, said that “the turning point of her life came when a group of Cossacks were guests at her grandfather’s home.” One of them, a captain named Michael, was a painter. And while he painted, he astonished her — and instantly she made up her mind to become an artist as well.

After the War, she would study at the Art Students League in New York where her teacher was Vaclav Vytlacil who was recognized in the ranks of Picasso and Braque. He was also known for being one of the founders of the American Abstract Artists group.

Vytlacil would always tell his students (who included Louise Bourgeois, Willem de Kooning, and Cy Twombly), “Paint what you want.” And when the young Anita produced a work showing Igorots going down a hill, it drew this comment.



Anita Magsaysay-Ho at Cranbrook Academy of Art © León Gallery Archives

“I don’t care how your people dress, paint their spirit.”

Anita would thus embark on a journey of a lifetime, painting gestures and emotions, captured in expressions and movements that have come to embody and capture the spirit of the Filipino Women for several generations of art-lovers.

American authoress Agnes Newton Keith would share the secret of the appeal of Magsaysay- Ho’s women : “Your market women are thin, sharp, witty, loquacious. They are both cunning and generous, both skeptics and believers. You are not sorry for them because you know you don’t have to be. If your gods were wealth and soft living, you’d paint pathos and weakness into those faces, instead, you put mysticism, strength, and love and joy of life.

“And I can see it in your paintings that you love the vitality and life of your people, that you understand their tenacity of enjoyment and their delight in all their senses,” she noted sagely.



Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1914 - 2012)

Laughter

signed and dated 1957 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 20" (61 cm x 51 cm)

P 22,000,000

PROVENANCE

Philippine Art Gallery

EXHIBITED

Philippine Art Gallery, November 30 - December 10, 1957

DOYENNE OF THE FILIPINO WOMAN:

Anita Magsaysay-Ho Presents the First Series of Oil Paintings After a Four-Year Hiatus

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

"Anita Magsaysay-Ho is one of the finest painters in our country today. Her talent lies in the portrayal, with great charm and Oriental delicacy, of the women of our country.

"Mrs. Magsaysay-Ho paints Filipino women going through their various occupations and pastimes : whether they are huddled singing in a choir, bent over the noonday meal, sampling the soup, or delicately sniffing at dried fish in the everyday market.

In the last months of 1957, Anita Magsaysay-Ho would return formally to exhibit at the Philippine Art Gallery after a four-year hiatus from its walls. It would also be a foray into oil painting after her egg tempera works from the early 1950s.

Magsaysay-Ho would hold the art scene in thrall through the years with one riveting market scene after another : winning notice for *Fish Vendors* at the next semi-annual AAP competition, followed shortly by another triumph for *Fruit Vendors*, tail-gating the highly respected Fernando Zobel the following year for top honors.

Laughter, the work at hand, captures a bevy of women in a light-hearted moment, the familiar faces wearing white scarves, wreathed in wide smiles. Two women in the foreground appear to be exchanging lively banter; two others join in the high spirits, while a third, make a faint attempt at restraining a fit of giggles.



LEFT: This Week, the Sunday Magazine of the Manila, reports on Anita's first exhibit in four years, 1957. RIGHT: The first rendition of 'Laughter', Anita Magsaysay-Ho, 1950. Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation



"Mrs. Magsaysay-Ho lives quietly with her family in an Ermita apartment. Because her works are so rare and always an event to look forward to, among the country's cognoscenti. This Week previews a Magsaysay-Ho exhibit, her first in four years, which will be held at the modernist Philippine Art Gallery..."

—THIS WEEK, SEPTEMBER 29, 1957.

The joyous artwork — alongside *Fruit Market* (auctioned in the León Gallery Asian Cultural Council Auction of this year — was exhibited in the last solo show of the year of the Philippine Art Gallery as detailed in the all-important tag, taking place from November 30th to December 10th, 1957. (The records show that the princely sum of P350 was paid for it, at the time, a small fortune.)

It would reprise a theme that first appeared in 1950, titled *Tawanan (Laughter)* of acrylic on board, presently in the collection of Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Library and Museum.

It would be part of another important milestone for Anita Magsaysay Ho: Her third solo exhibition at the PAG which happened to be at its new address on Arquiza corner M.H. del Pilar Streets in Malate.

Anita Magsaysay-Ho
Celebrates The Filipina Spirit



Onib Olmedo (1937 - 1996)*Father and Son*

signed and dated 1982 (lower right)

pastel on paper

29" x 21" (74 cm x 53 cm)

P 100,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

This pastel on paper piece reveals the artistic approach of Onib Olmedo that goes beyond external appearances to explore the human spirit. The distortion and exaggeration of their features intend to evoke emotions, complexities, and the mental states of the human condition. Olmedo's abiding interest in people and the world matured in the streets of Manila, particularly in Malate and Ermita. He developed a deep sympathy for the masses, it did not matter to him if they were old and blind street performers or destitute women hustling foreigners. Although the artist's oeuvres portray the inner torment experienced by mankind in modern times, his art has struck the hearts of many and his works remain to be popular among collectors.

In 1990, Olmedo mounted his first and only show at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. (*Isabella Romarate*)

**Benedicto Cabrera** (b. 1942)*Cockfight Enthusiast*

signed, titled and dated 2001 (lower right)

pastel on paper

23" x 21 1/2" (58 cm x 55 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Singapore

Benedicto "BenCab" Cabrera is a highly regarded Filipino artist known for his diverse artistic contributions. While he is renowned for his paintings, his pastel works also hold a significant place within his artistic repertoire. Through this medium, he is able to showcase his exceptional skill in capturing the nuances of light, shadow, and color. Pastels, with their rich pigments and soft textures, allowed him to create subtle and vibrant effects, particularly in his depictions of figures and everyday scenes

BenCab's pastel works, like his other artistic endeavors, reflect his deep connection to his Filipino heritage, as well as his ability to translate personal and societal narratives into visual form. (*Isabella Romarate*)





29

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Luscious Palms II

signed and dated 2011
carved blue green glass
12 1/2" x 13 3/4" x 11"
(32 cm x 35 cm x 28 cm)

P 1,600,000

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

There is always a riddle to the materiality of art that is especially apparent in three-dimensional pieces: Is the sculptural work that comes about simply a one-sided imposition of the artist's agency onto the material—a sheer matter of form being imposed on a passive medium? Or does the material itself possess an agency that works in confluence with that of the artist's?

The sculptures of Ramon Orlina come into form through a curious method of cold-working instead of employing

the use of heat to mold the glass in its liquid state. This means that the artist cannot so easily direct the flow of glass into a certain shape. Instead, as he physically carves onto the cullets with various tools and abrasive powders, he is driven to work with the solidity of the medium in its not-so-malleable state. The refusal of cold hard glass to be so easily moldable implies an agency that the artist is forced to work with, and the form that comes about can only ever be as harmonious as the artist's relationship with the medium.

In the works of Ramon Orlina, it is then no wonder that there is a natural fluidity to his pieces. There is an illusion of liquid light as the smooth surface of glass reflects with a jade green splendor and light melodiously passes through varying transparencies, resulting in a perfect harmony of form, space, and light. If the sculptor is able to evoke the liquidity of solid form, then such a thing must only be made possible by touching the heart of glass. (*Pie Tiasas*)



30

Florencio Concepcion (1933 - 2006)

Abstract

signed and dated 1975 (lower left)

oil on canvas

24" x 34" (61 cm x 218 cm)

P 600,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mr. Daniel Concepcion confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

From the lot at hand, one can feel a deep sense of serenity and an atmosphere that brings comfort to the psyche. In his column, art critic Cid Reyes wrote that "in our cacophonous midst, there are still artists who recognize the imperative of silence, from whose works we can seek and find solace." Florencio Concepcion was one of the artists he mentioned whose tranquil paintings are worthy of recognition.

The fine artist at first painted impressionistic scenes before delving into abstraction in the 1950s. And, this oil painting dated 1975 somewhat manifests his transition to abstraction from impressionism. He also used in this piece a calming spectrum of hues and the fine-tuned brushwork that have become his trademark, thus revealing a poetic portrayal of a subject or scenery.

For Concepcion, his works are a result of his sentiments and artistry, he even perceived them as processes rather than products. To truly appreciate a Concepcion piece, it is encouraged to see it in person and experience the mood it exudes. *(Isabella Romarate)*



31

Romeo Tabuena (1921 - 2015)

Fruit Vendor

signed and dated 1965 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

37 1/2" x 28 1/2" (95 cm x 72 cm)

P 400,000

PROVENANCE

Galeria San Miguel, Mexico

Private Collection, Spain

The art of Romeo Tabuena is admired for its combination of Filipino and Mexican cultural themes. Aside from countryside sceneries, his paintings are also inhabited by native plants, traditional houses, and folk figures. For the lot at hand, *Fruit Vendor*, this acrylic piece exhibits his creative and unique experimentation with cubist elements. His prismatic deconstruction and rendition of elements were able to fluently translate the reality of his subjects into the brilliant planar figures that have astounded his audiences time and again.

Tabuena had the opportunity to study abroad and showcase his talent, as well as garner acclaim and accolades. In 1955, he moved to San Miguel de Allende in Mexico, where he would paint for decades to come. Yet, despite residing far from his homeland, his art remained in touch with his Filipino roots. His fondness for the cultural idylls of the Philippines and Mexico has allowed him to devise a distinctive quality to his oeuvres. The works he produced while in Mexico exhibit colors from the entire spectrum and feature subjects such as villagers and street vendors. The cubist maestro's use of such close-to-home themes has evolved over the years, and despite the many advancements in his style, he has retained that unmistakable Tabuena flair. *(Isabella Romarate)*

Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

Bernard Childs Pintado Mi Retrato en su Estudio de París

signed (lower right and verso) dated 1967

oil on canvas

39 1/2" x 39 1/2" (100 cm x 100 cm)

P 10,000,000

PROVENANCE

Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester,
Rochester, New York

LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022. Listed as "nº 67-66" with full-color photograph and painting description on page 361.

EXHIBITED

Bertha Schaefer Gallery, *Fernando Zobel: Recent Paintings*,
New York, March 26 - April 13, 1968



TOP: Fernando Zóbel in Cuenca © León Gallery Archives.
BOTTOM: Photograph of Bernard Childs taken by Zóbel in Cuenca in August 1967 © Judith Childs.

This piece encapsulates the friendship between Fernando Zobel and Bernard Childs, the American painter, printmaker, and pioneer of engraving metal plates using industrial tools. Zobel's biographer, Angeles Villalba Salvador, writes, "Childs is the friend to influence him the most." While he had previously ventured into engraving beginning in his Harvard days, Zobel learned from Childs the "secrets and problems of inks, plates, papers, etc." Childs mentored Zobel in engraving, as evidenced by their frequent exchanges of letters. Zobel even visited Childs in October 1962 in his Paris studio, where the eminent engraver gave private sessions to him and companion artists Antonio Lorenzo and Gerardo Rueda.

In his personal notes in Madrid in 1962, Zobel writes of his admiration towards Childs. *"The time Bernard spends from inking the plate to finally passing it through the screw press is two and a half hours. He wastes no movements," Zobel recalls. "...There is nothing more pleasurable than watching somebody do something he knows how to do really well. When inking a plate, Bernard uses his head more than most of the painters that I know use theirs when they're painting a picture..."*

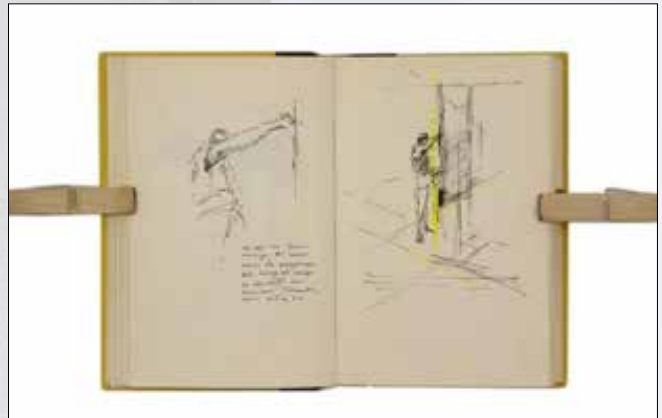
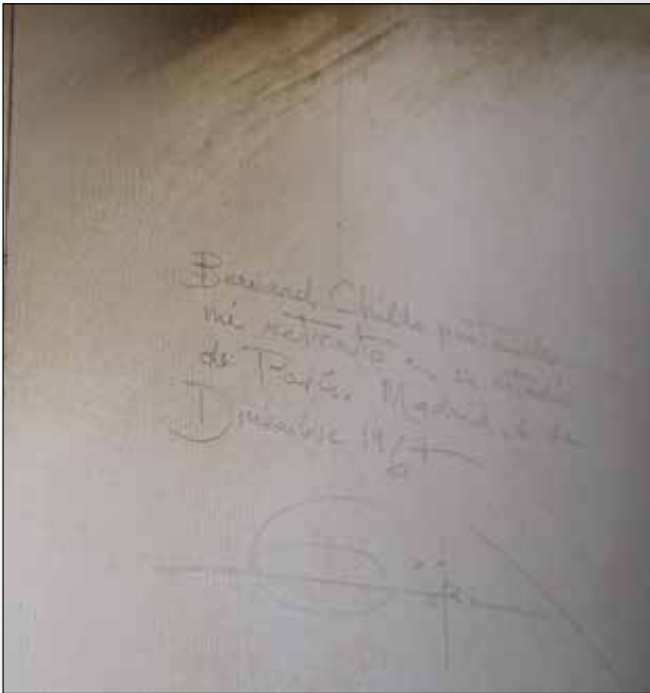
Zobel painted the work at hand during one of his visits to Childs and his family in Paris in 1967. Childs was simultaneously working on Zobel's portrait—a memory he immortalized on this canvas.

We see in this piece glimpses of Child working in his Parisian studio, interpreted through Zobel's own vision of lyrical abstraction that is Delphic yet meditative and shows his keen observation and understanding of art's diversity and the world around him. In Zobel's sketchbook, we can even see Zobel's creative process; how he rendered Child painting his portrait. We see in the spectral-like whites Child's bodily contours and him in the act of painting. The sharp lines forming a rectangle with the blots of dark browns and siennas represent Child's canvas mounted on an easel. The remaining lines and shades, ranging from ochre to grey, give us a peek into Child's studio.

"Bernard Childs pintado mi retrato" forms part of Zobel's *Dialogos*, his sublime conversations with art and the artists themselves. He described this series as follows: *"I think this series will last all my life until the day I depart this world. The idea behind Diálogos is to speak of art with art but with the brushes at the ready."* The *Dialogos* is Zobel's "own way of seeing."

A Painterly Dialogue: Zóbel and Childs





ABOVE: "Bernard Childs painting my portrait in his Paris Studio, Madrid, 6 December 1967". BELOW: Fernando Zobel's preliminary sketches of the painting (*Sketchbook No. 62, 1967*). © Fernando Zobel Archive, Library and Research Support Center, Juan March Foundation, Madrid.

Villalba Salvador writes that the years between 1963 and 1975 were the longest phase in Zobel's career, characterized by the artist's "return to color," with "the siennas, dark browns, ochres, and greys" appearing in Zobel's canvas. Previously, Zobel had ventured into his *Serie Negra*—monochromatic canvases characterized by black lines on a white background. The Dialogos was the first series borne from this revival. Zobel captures the colorful history of art by studying and contemplating various elements integral to an artist's process—light, movement, color, gesture, and intention, and "disarranges and rearranges so as to build in his own way," as Villalba Salvador puts it.

But this work at hand veers from Zobel's typical *Dialogos*, opting instead for a lighthearted, casual, and to some extent, warm and sentimental conversation (mainly due to its delicate and ethereal textures) with his friend, Childs. Unlike other works from his *Dialogos* series, in which he converses with the masters of yore and their masterpieces he saw at the various museums he visited, "*Bernard Childs pintado mi retrato*" is Zobel's dialogue with a fellow artist, who also happened to be one of his dearest friends. Memory became integral to Zobel's praxis beginning in 1963, with his lived experiences becoming the basis of his subjects. Thus, the work is a cherished experience immortalized on a canvas, a visit not to the museum but to the hallowed bastion of platonic intimacy. It can

also be Zobel's *dialogue* with himself, what he sees and thinks of himself while Childs paints his portrait, imbuing in this piece a multi-dimensional quality, a portrait within a portrait.

In many ways, Zobel and Childs mirrored each other. Both were interested and keenly aware of the sublime interplay between light and shadow and color, line, and space, producing works with a distinct kind of poetic clarity and lyricism and varying and rich textures. Both also delved into deliberate construction and logical spontaneity; Childs would repeatedly modify and alter his plates for months until satisfaction filled him, while Zobel would draw numerous preliminary sketches and drafts and write notes before working on his canvas. But both still gave free rein to their creative instincts. Zobel and Childs also weaved hints of figuration into their overtly abstract works. In one way or another, we can see Childs' influence on Zobel's return to color in his *Dialogos* since the former was known for using the unbridled movement and potency of colors to evoke recollections. Zobel then unleashed a refined lyricism that enshrined his memories of personal experiences in his altar of consciousness, wedding the spiritual and corporeal, in the same manner that Child put his stories of survival during the Second World War as the foundation of his art. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Faint handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, located in the bottom right corner of the page.



33

Orley Ypon (b. 1973)

Earth, Trees, and Sky

signed and dated 2016 (lower left)

oil on canvas

42" x 48" (107 cm x 122 cm)

P 500,000

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

Renowned as a master of the classical form, Orley Ypon possesses a unique ability to convey a profound sense of insight and nuance that is frequently associated with traditional art pieces. His mastery of classical techniques is evident throughout his oeuvre, where he skillfully employs the artistic principles of the past to create a captivating contemporary experience. However, what sets Ypon apart from conventional artists is his deliberate departure from the predictable. While his adherence to classical techniques might lead one to expect works that idealize beauty and depict utopian vistas, Ypon defies this assumption by embracing a contrasting approach.

In his artistic endeavors, Ypon chooses to present viewers with unvarnished glimpses of ordinary

existence. He unabashedly portrays raw, unfiltered scenes that capture the essence of everyday life. Though this particular piece may appear to be a landscape that predates Ypon's craft, a closer look at his subject matter and composition reveals a novel approach. Landscapes, especially those done by academic and genre scene painters, often featured idyllic depictions of their chosen subjects; whether it be a way to capture or express romanticized beauty or act as an allegory for the divine. But Ypon's landscape seemingly lacks this sort of idealized treatment. Instead we are faced with a very frank and very real scene. Even the subject matter, that of an incline featuring trees and rocks, lacks the romanticized elements of Ypon's predecessors. This departure from the usual idealized depictions challenges the viewer's perceptions, inviting them to see beauty in the authenticity of the mundane. Ypon's canvases become windows into moments that might otherwise go unnoticed—moments of vulnerability, simplicity, and honesty.

By juxtaposing the classical framework with the unadorned realities of life, Ypon introduces a new layer of meaning into his art. His compositions serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity, urging us to contemplate the beauty that resides within the simplicity of the human experience. (*Jed Daya*)

Emmanuel Garibay (b. 1962)

Hilik

signed and dated 2005 (lower left)
oil on canvas
30 1/2" x 24 1/2" (78 cm x 63 cm)

P 240,000

At a very young age, Emmanuel Garibay was already exposed to the masses' everyday realities, banalities, and vibrancies. Although born in Kidapawan, North Cotabato, Garibay spent the halcyon days of his childhood in Davao City. There, he profoundly immersed himself in the everyday activities, pursuits, and leisure of the common people. In his journey towards maturity, Garibay enrolled at the UP Los Baños, taking up Sociology. His studies introduced him to the various nuances of the human person and how society—its institutions and articulation of numerous cultural, political, social, and economic expressions—impacts the dynamics of human relationships and their place and role in society. This fortuitous venture would deeply influence his art in the years to come.

Garibay would not merely confine his learnings within the four corners of the classroom. "There were times when we skipped class and proceeded to Mendiola to rally...



The students whom I interacted with were using their art to epitomize the suffering and realism of the time," he says in an interview with Christiane L. de la Paz and published in the article "The Quintessential Artist-Storyteller: Emmanuel Garibay" in *Artes de las Filipinas*. (Adrian Maranan)

Emmanuel Garibay (b. 1962)

Garalgal

signed and dated 2006 (lower right)
oil on paper
26" x 36" (67 cm x 91 cm)

P 200,000

We see Garibay's familiarity and intimacy with the masses' undertakings and leisure in these two strikingly similar pieces depicting drunken men indulging in booze and tunes. They are ubiquitous scenes in the streets and alleys of both the urban and provincial domains. The works unmistakably capture one of the everyday realities of the ordinary Filipino: music drowns the struggling soul while liquor temporarily alleviates and washes suffering away.

Beyond drinking as a collective recreation, Garibay professes that it is in the ordinary people where the true Filipino collective soul can be found, bound by struggles and that shared yearning towards personal and societal betterment. We see leisure as a form of socio-political resistance, a necessary act to reinvigorate one's revolutionary spirit for tomorrow's struggles, and



the continued assertion of rights and influence on radical societal change.

With his unvarnished realism, Garibay exhibits his affinity and empathy for the underprivileged and shows that the masses possess an inherent kind of soul and humanity rooted in their earnest solidarity in all their pursuits and interests. (Adrian Maranan)

Betsy Westendorp (1927 - 2022)

1454

signed and dated 2017 (lower left)

oil on canvas

38 1/2" x 62 1/2" (98 cm x 159 cm)

P 1,700,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

The beauty and purity of flowers are perfectly captured in the canvases of Betsy Westendorp.

As observed in the lot at hand, the flowers are fresh and uncut, not placed in a decorative vase but flourishing in their natural setting. Westendorp often depicted her floral subjects in such a manner because she used to paint flowers en plein air. For instance, if not her first, one of her earliest orchid paintings was done during a visit to Centro de Jardinera Bourguignon, a flower shop in Madrid. She asked permission to paint the orchids inside the greenhouse and was fortunately permitted.

"At the beginning, I had to paint on location," Westendorp said in a conversation with art critic Cid Reyes. "It's like getting to know a person. With flowers, you have to know them also." She believed that in order to be acquainted with her floral subjects, she needed to be in their presence.

Among the petaled plants Westendorp has painted, the orchid is a particular favorite, to the point that it has become synonymous with her name. Even so, she still painted other flowers, such as milflowers, sunflowers, water lilies, and birds of paradise, to name a few. Her earliest floral subjects were roses and carnations, most were gifted to her. Then, her first milflower painting was done in the north of Spain during a summer vacation. For her paintings of hydrangeas, she bought flower pots so she could paint in front of them. In her garden, she also planted sunflowers and, again, painted them on her canvas.

"I find flowers fascinating. Flowers are for everybody," Westendorp once said. (*Isabella Romarate*)





A Rare Work from Garibay's *Salingpusa Days*

*“Sandy di nagmaliw ang dati kong araw
Nang munti pang bata sa piling ni nanay
Nais kong maulit ang awit ni inang mahal
Awit ng pag-ibig habang ako’y nasa duyan”*

– *Sa Ugoy ng Duyan (1948)*,
LEVI CELERIO AND LUCIO SAN PEDRO

According to Emmanuel Garibay, *Mag-Ina sa Duyan* forms part of his early works; he painted the piece at some time during the early to mid-1990s. During that time, Garibay was a member of the *Salingpusa* Group. The *Salingpusa* counted among its original members Garibay, Elmer Borlongan, Jose John Santos III, Mark Justiniani, Antonio Leano, and Ferdie Montemayor, now stars in the contemporary Philippine art scene. An artists' collective that emerged in the years leading to the People Power Revolution of 1986, the *Salingpusa* was committed to creating art that resonates with the current social, political, and economic conditions of the Filipino nation.

In the early 1990s, the *Salingpusa*, who had bonded in the name of art at *Hinulugang Taktak* in Antipolo and held weekend painting sessions, crossed paths with physician and art connoisseur Dr. Joven Cuanang, who invited them to the vast *Silangan Gardens* (now home to the *Pinto Art Museum*) of his weekend house in Antipolo for drawing sessions. Learning of their (financial) struggles as young artists, Dr. Cuanang then began organizing exhibitions of their works, known as the “*sampayan*,” in which the *Salingpusa* artists would hang their paintings on clotheslines

strung within the gardens for the physician's art-loving friends to choose from, helping the *Salingpusa* artists in gaining ground and forging their own paths.

In a correspondence with *Leon Gallery*, Garibay says that the work at hand formed part of one of Dr. Cuanang's shows at the *Silangan Gardens*. Although he could not remember the name of the show anymore, it could be one of those “*sampayan*” exhibitions in the 90s. It brings us back to Garibay's budding years as an artist and how those dawning skies gradually brought him to the forefront of the Philippine art scene through his powerful visual storytelling.

Mag-Ina sa Duyan is palpable proof of Garibay's compelling abilities as a storyteller, even in the early phase of his career, in which a single composition evokes myriad expressions and thoughts. Garibay depicts in the work at hand a heartwarming image of a mother and child relishing each other's sweet, endearing company, bonding over what seems to be an afternoon siesta (nap). The two are lying on a rattan *duyan* (cradle), a commonplace sight in a traditional Filipino home, especially in the provinces. The young boy sleeps in tranquility, with his relaxed body showing a child's

placidness and confidence in their mother's nurturing arms.

The mother sings a gentle lullaby for her child, evoking the beloved Filipino lullaby *Sa Ugoy ng Duyan* (1948), whose lyrics were written by Levi Celerio and music composed by Lucio San Pedro; both are National Artists for Music. The overall darkness of the composition's background stands in powerful contrast with the touching subject: a mother's soothing language of unwavering and nourishing love transcends all odds. It is our sanctuary, a safe refuge from the inhumanity of humanity.

In a work that sees the convergence of music and visual art, Garibay imbibes us with nostalgia and transports us into the halcyon days of our childhood, making us long for our mothers' warm embrace and her comforting lullaby that alleviated the physical pains of childhood play, brought us to a cozy sleep, and calmed our naïve tantrums and innocent meltdowns. That being so, *duyan* becomes an allegory for the blissful hours of yesteryear—*nais kong matulog sa dating duyan ko, Inay*.

This is the power of Garibay's art—the compelling ability to touch the collective Filipino soul with unvarnished sincerity (*Adrian Maranan*)



37

Emmanuel Garibay (b. 1962)

Mag-Ina Sa Duyan

signed (lower right)

ca. 1990s

oil on canvas

18 1/2" x 22" (47 cm x 56 cm)

P 180,000

PROVENANCE

Boston Gallery, Quezon City



The Salingpusa artists in the 1990s. Garibay is circled. © Pinto Art Museum

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

Voices

signed and dated 1998 (lower left)

acrylic on canvas

30" x 19" (76 cm x 48 cm)

P 1,800,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the Artist

"But people of the deepest understanding look within, distracted by nothing. Since a clear mind is the Buddha, they attain the understanding of a Buddha without using the mind."

-Bodhidharma, 5th/6th Century, Legendary Founder of Zen Buddhism

"Do not follow the idea of others but learn to listen to the voice within yourself."

- Dōgen, 13th Century Japanese Zen Master

In this lot titled *Voices*, blackness pervades the canvas; darkness seems to have engulfed the entirety of the composition. In traditional symbolism, black signifies despair and disorder.

But like a light at the end of the tunnel, patches of white appear and seemingly embark on an endeavor to escape the abyss of the shadows.

Lao Lianben, the Zen virtuoso, paints *Voices* as a likely self-portrait. We see him in his creative exercise of profoundly engaging in the transformative power of one's stillness—a kind of meditation that straddles between quietude and vitality.

The white patches signify the "voices," not the literal "voices" of others but the often-contradicting thoughts within Lao himself. Thus, the work exemplifies the artist's continuing pursuit of exploring the infinite possibilities and reinventions that imbibing the spirit of Zen in one's self can engender.

Through Lao's artistic praxis of cathartic and transformative meditation, made possible through his spiritual spontaneity in creating his sublime art, the artist ignites that ever-powerful flame of transcendent harmony

"Take time to listen deeply to these paintings.

Bestow them "that purest and rarest form of generosity"—attention.

Be drawn into a silence that speaks of compassion and joy.

"Lao Lianben continues to will only one thing—to render what is "invisible to the eyes." Like the empty bowl of a Buddhist monk, his paintings here, in their bare simplicity, offer an inexhaustible feast for thought."

- Dr. Leovino Ma. Garcia, in Black Water: A Monk's Dream (2015)

that recognizes, confronts, understands, and unites the often conflicting "voices" inside of him, be it in the form of corporal or spiritual needs or even the rigidity of logic and intellect and the unbridled gush of creativity.

In this regard, the white patches not only give us glimpses into Lao's psyche but provide us a mystical view into our inner selves; we have now integrated ourselves into the composition. It is not Lao's portrait anymore but our image. The blackness of the composition changes to become a symbol of that powerful capability inside of us to recognize the endless cycle of contradictions and transform them as paths towards strengthened enlightenment made possible by continuous meditation and introspection in everything we do. Thus, we are in an infinite cycle of birth and rebirth, a liberating way of thinking toward the renewal of the self.

In the still of darkness, we honor, not evade, that inner darkness we encounter in order to bring ourselves to light, the fullness and clarity of being and becoming amid a chaotic world filled with everyday vicissitudes. The work *Voices* becomes like a gospel that is empowering and reawakening. (*Adrian Maranan*)



Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

Lavanderas

signed and dated 1937 (lower left)

oil on canvas

9 1/2" x 13" (24 cm x 33 cm)

P 2,400,000

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

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by the original owner, 1937

Gifted from the above to the previous owner, 1937

Thence by descent to the present owners, 2019



Fernando Amorsolo © León Gallery Archives

By the 1930s, Fernando Amorsolo had already become the brightest name in Philippine art. His works are not bolstered by his mere eminence and stature alone but by their gentle and lovingly pleasant atmosphere that powerfully transports the viewer into an idyllic Philippines, which, by that decade, had undergone rapid modernization brought about by constant innovations in aspects of technology, architecture, and lifestyle (entertainment, consumption, etc.), as epitomized by Calle Escolta, then Manila's financial and commercial heart.

Amorsolo, who had been residing in Manila, earnestly longed for the idyllic charm of his childhood years in Daet, Camarines Norte. Amorsolo's penetrating nostalgia for his youth during his prime decades is especially evident in his continuous excursions into the countryside, painting en *plein air* and conversing harmoniously with the soothing spirit of the pastoral. Alfredo Roces writes in the book *Amorsolo*: "Through the thirties, Amorsolo remained highly imaginative and active, periodically going outdoors...Stimulated by the nostalgia around him for the changing country life, he painted rural life as genre rather than aspects of city life."

Amorsolo's sweet sentimentality is particularly encapsulated in his *lavandera* paintings. In the book *Amorsolo: Love and Passion*, Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo, the

maestro's daughter, says that her father's *lavanderas* were primarily painted in Laguna, Bulacan, and the more tranquil environs of the Pasig River. Peacefully washing clothes by the river may have been one of the serene sights he had witnessed as a young boy; perhaps, he had even experienced it, accompanying his mother, Bonifacia, to the streams and relishing that sweet escapade.

Beyond nostalgia, Amorsolo's technical flair is central to his *lavandera* works. As exhibited in this 1937 piece, the graceful swirling of the waters in the forefront is masterfully executed through delicate impastos. With his slick impressionistic strokes, sunlight is rendered accurately; its rays and patches are meticulously depicted throughout the canvas depending on the natural element limiting or permitting its penetration. For instance, the waters are almost devoid of substantial sunlight (except in the forefront) due to the towering bamboo curbing the sun's reflection. Meanwhile, the work's foreground possesses a luminous touch due to the absence of impediments; the sun's rays radiantly beam into the lady's posterior, and the water's smooth flow is glowingly evident.

Lavanderas is the classic Amorsolo, an embodiment of an artist with an enduring ode to the pastoral roots of his motherland and a profound grip on his natural surroundings, resulting in an impeccable masterpiece. *(Adrian Maranan)*

The Muses of the River of Fernando Amorsolo





40

Ronson Culibrina (b. 1991)

The Nipa Hut

signed and dated 2014 (lower right)

oil on canvas

38 1/4" x 50" (97 cm x 127 cm)

P 400,000

Drawing from the legacy of academic and genre scene painters such as National Artist Fernando Amorsolo's timeless brushwork, Filipino contemporary artist Ronson Culibrina ingeniously weaves a captivating narrative that melds cultural and artistic references, intriguing the observer through the comfort of familiarity. With a masterful touch, he superimposes classic imagery with a profusion of uniqueness, breathing life into his compositions using dynamic and captivating elements inspired by contemporary life and pop-culture phenomena. Culibrina's deliberate approach unfolds new avenues for introspection, discourse, and contemplation surrounding

cultural and sociological quandaries, rekindling the original essence that once adorned canvases during their initial unveiling

Ronson Culibrina embarked on his artistic journey by attaining a Fine Arts degree from the Technological University of the Philippines in Manila. Since 2008, he has contributed his works to collective exhibitions on both local and international stages, culminating in his back-to-back solo exhibitions in July 2016, gracing the Ayala Museum and Galerie Michael Janssen Berlin. This creative luminary stands adorned with accolades, including the prestigious Grand Prize at the 23rd Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company Painting Competition (2009), as well as the esteemed Juror's Choice at the Philippine National Oil Company Painting Competition (2010). (*Jed Daya*)



41

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

Manila Harbor

signed and dated 1977 (lower center)

oil on canvas

17 1/2" x 21 1/2" (44 cm x 55 cm)

P 600,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

In 1977, Aguilar Alcuaz's *Portraits of Manila* was exhibited at the Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA), showcasing oil paintings of Manila's cityscape. Among these were paintings of various Manila bay scenes depicting the busy shipyard and serene atmospheric seascapes—all rendered in a distinct gestural hand, marked by a fleeting sense of place and time through a spontaneous and dynamic brushwork typical of Alcuaz's works.

Although having learned landscape painting under the tutelage of Dr. Toribio Herrera at the UP School of Fine Arts in 1949, Alcuaz would go on to develop a particular sense of place in his landscape paintings that drastically differed from his mentor's Amorsolo-esque naturalism: His is an impressionistic gesture that views the landscape with fresh eyes all too accustomed to the bustling cosmopolitan views of city life. Vast stretches of the urban sprawl would feature more than landscapes in his oeuvre of works, and his knack for rendering a panoramic totality of place—not only through composition, but also through the contending elements of geometric and gestural—would be carried on to his future works of naturalist scenes. (*Pie Tiausas*)

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

Flower Vendors

signed (lower right)

ca. 1980

oil on canvas

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

P 1,200,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Makati City





Oscar Zalameda's *Flower Vendors* encapsulates a celebration of several things: nature's bountiful blessings, the laborers of the motherland, an homage to one's native soil, and a yearning for brighter prospects. We see in this piece native Filipinas dressed in the traditional *baro't saya* in a display of the harmonious oneness and social cohesion of the people in the countryside, joining hand in hand in their everyday toiling. Their faces are rendered blank, likely instilling in the viewers the significance of empathy and profound solidarity with the laborers of the nation—the movers of society and makers of history.

Like many of his works, *Flower Vendors* also serves as Zalameda's joyous ode to his native Lucban in Quezon Province. Dubbed the 'Rice Capital of Quezon,' Lucban is widely famous for its annual Pahiyas Festival, a week-long celebration in honor of San Isidro Labrador, the patron saint of farmers and agricultural workers. Houses are decorated with *kiping* or brightly colored rice wafers, making the Pahiyas one of the world's liveliest and most vibrant festivals. The Pahiyas is the Lucbanins' artistic way of thanksgiving for a prolific harvest since agriculture is their primary source of livelihood. Zalameda evokes the spirit of the Pahiyas in this work through his signature employment of flamboyant colors meant to bring out the inherent optimism of his oeuvre and his high-spirited personality.

Veering away from the distinct cubist language of his mentor Vicente Manansala, who often imbued his works with a harrowing and bold critique of existing social conditions, Zalameda sees the world as a bastion of hope and elation, a paradise that may be palpably manifested and experienced. As particularly seen in this work, the vendors sit composed and relaxed, signifying the pleasing fulfillment they find in their societal role, with the bright colors of the composition further indicating a prosperous panorama of the pastoral. This is not to say that Zalameda romanticizes the Philippine countryside. However, Zalameda's colorful rendition of the rural domain resoundingly speaks of visions of golden relief—that like the Pahiyas' display of social cohesion and solidarity, our yearnings for prosperity can be realized if we stand hand in hand with the ordinary people whose names we do not know and faces we do not recognize yet share with us a common goal toward genuine social emancipation. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)*Inner Light*

signed and dated 1995 (lower left and verso)

mixed media on paper

30" x 22 1/2" (76 cm x 57 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

The work of art aptly titled "Inner Light" is among the Lao Lianben pieces that evince Zen beliefs and practices. As with most of his works, the bright light illuminating the darkness could be seen as a manifestation of the spirit when one is in deep meditation. However, for the lot at hand, it is more reasonable to interpret "inner light" in terms of aesthetics than a spiritual experience.

In traditional Japanese aesthetics, *wabi-sabi* is a worldview centered on the acceptance and appreciation of the beauty that is "imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete."

Wabi-sabi is a composite of two interrelated aesthetic concepts: wabi and sabi. For the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, wabi means "subdued, austere beauty." In other words, wabi is a quality of austere and serene beauty expressing a mood of spiritual solitude recognized in Zen Buddhism.

Also from the article of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy about Japanese Aesthetics, an excerpt from "In Praise of Shadows" (1933) written by the novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō provides enlightenment about the manifestation of wabi in our surroundings, using as an example the alcove or tokonoma in the traditional Japanese teahouse:

"An empty space is marked off with plain wood and plain walls, so that the light drawn into it forms dim shadows within emptiness. There is nothing more. And yet, when we gaze into the darkness that gathers behind the crossbeam, around the flower vase, beneath the shelves,



though we know perfectly well it is mere shadow, we are overcome with the feeling that in this small corner of the atmosphere there reigns complete and utter silence; that here in the darkness immutable tranquility holds sway."

Lao depicts in this piece a structure that is illuminated at the center of the

canvas, much like in the "In Praise of Shadows" where the emptiness created by the alcove invites a play of light and shades. And, as an artist who devotes his art to expressing the essence of light, perhaps it can also be said that he wanted to impart in this painting that inner light will always prevail against the darkness. *(Isabella Romarate)*



44

Buen Calubayan (b. 1980)

*Lecture on Asking the Right Question With
Your Framers*

dated 2014

oil on canvas

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

P 700,000

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

Buen Calubayan's artistic endeavor is a masterful interlacing of history, politics, religion, and identity, yielding creations of profound personal resonance yet substantial cultural import. These works boldly challenge the age-old role that aesthetics have played in shaping society and history. In Calubayan's view, the present artistic landscape necessitates a transformative approach—one that embraces interdisciplinarity and intersectionality, aligning with the intrinsic pluralism now defining our global reality.

Within the piece at hand, Calubayan sets forth to dismantle conventional perceptions of art, particularly in the context of its presentation. This work transcends mere visual engagement, inviting the viewer into an experiential domain. This metamorphosis is achieved by skillfully fusing a customary tableau with a title that provocatively scrutinizes the established norms governing its exhibition. For Calubayan, this shift signals the call for art to mirror the multi-dimensional essence of existence. This aspiration mandates a harmonious fusion of diverse artistic methodologies, orchestrating a symphony of perspectives into a coherent whole.

Calubayan's figurative creation harmoniously melds conventional techniques with surrealist treatments, culminating in an amalgamation that exudes an ineffable essence. This essence, while intimately tied to memory, nostalgia, and history, transcends these individual components. Instead, it serves as a mirror reflecting the intricate tapestry of the contemporary human condition—a resounding echo of the complexities defining our modern world. (*Jed Daya*)

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)*Thinking of a View*

signed (verso) and dated 1983 (center and verso)
mixed media
35" x 48" (89 cm x 122 cm)

P 3,000,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner



Lao Lianben © León Gallery Archives

As a painter, Lao Lianben focuses more on attitude and essence rather than style. His art is rooted in personal struggles and profound confrontations with the vicissitudes and contradictions of a turbulent world. In a February 2023 interview with Lala Singian published in *Lifestyle Inquirer*, Lao revealed that the odds did not always favor him. As a child, he lived in a cramped house along Arlegui Street in Quiapo with his mother, grandmother, six siblings, and two helpers. "Things were in complete disarray as there was really no one in charge of the household," Lao says. "To escape the daily chaos, I would go up to the roof and keep to myself. That was the only space in the house where I could be free."

From the "grueling hot nights," as Lao puts it, and swarms of mosquitoes pestering what is supposed to be a peaceful sleep for him and his family, it was a depressing cul-de-sac. But that very moment of struggle and seemingly helpless conditions came an artistic awakening in Lao's inner soul—and the birth of the Zen spirit inside of him that continues to be a balm for a constantly distressing and disconcerting earthly existence.

Lao recalls in the same interview: "I have learned to put myself to sleep and not complain of discomfort by staring up intently at the mosquito net while I try to make out figures of animals (an elephant) or imagine that I'm looking up into the night sky of cloud formations. My imagination and musings made me forget about my body drenched in sweat and lulled me to sleep. Through this experience, I have not only learned to see with my eyes but also to think with them. Looking back, I must say that my art process is greatly informed by what I see, and my ideas are developed more visually."

Now that we have taken a glimpse into the artist's early struggles and history comes a better understanding of this absorbing piece titled *Thinking of a View*, a work from Lao's earlier artistic phases. *Thinking of a*

View comes from the same period when Lao won the prestigious Mobil Art Award in 1983. Prior to that, Lao had already relished the taste of success, having won in the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual an honorable mention in 1970 and second prize in 1977.

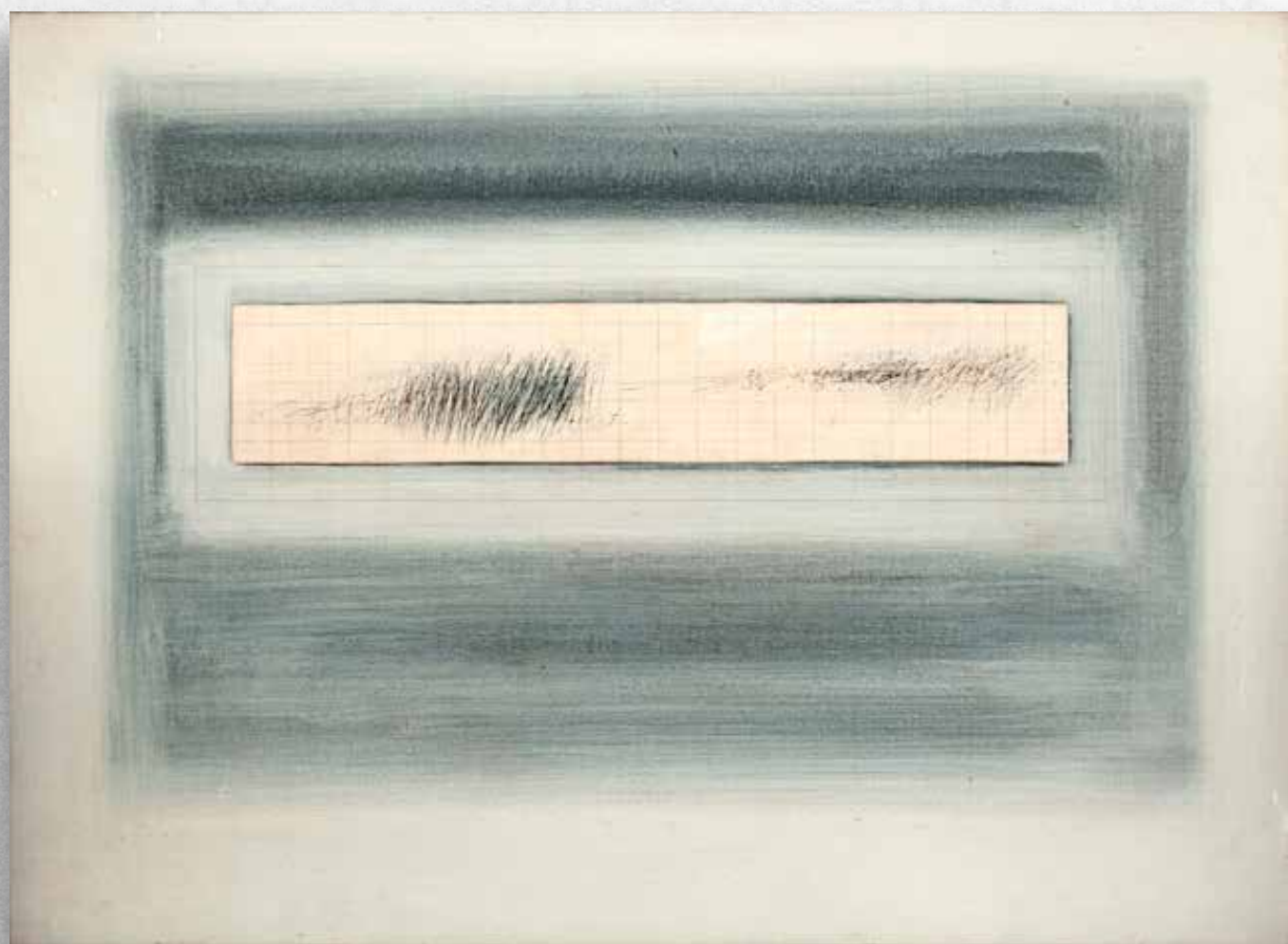
Perhaps the most intriguing part of this piece is the center, which is outlined with grids, evoking two areas of discipline: visual art and cartography. In maps, grids help determine the exact location of a particular place using latitude and longitude. In the visual arts, especially in drawing, grids are of utmost importance in rendering subjects accurately, stimulating spatial awareness, and ensuring accurate proportions.

The center, formed by Lao's cutting of this portion of the canvas, possesses an inherently instinctive atmosphere, as evidenced by Lao's scraping of the surface, leaving jarring scratches and forming crevices that expose the composition's wooden base.

With this interesting intertwining of cartography—the science of map making—and the freedom inherent in the visual arts, Lao highlights an inner landscape (a spiritual vista if one may deem it) of the psyche that is borne from observation, nourished by contemplation, and immortalized by an artist who genuinely lives his own art: an art that centers around the beauty of dynamic and sublime stillness.

By spontaneously scraping his composition, Lao empowers his subconscious to flow unbridled, revealing his penchant for the soothing solemnity of active musing; his spiritual mind is unraveled, and it invigorates the viewer to engage in the virtue of one's peace and quiet.

In a work that speaks to its viewer, it evokes in us Lao's early life: harnessing thinking through seeing, in which the invisible is made visible, the abstract becomes a palpable reality, and the imagined turns to actuality. Lao comfortably stimulates us to do the same. (*Adrian Maranan*)



Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)*Abstract Improvisation 1*

signed (lower right and verso)

dated 1986 (verso)

acrylic collage

53" x 47" (135 cm x 119 cm)

P 1,000,000

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

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist



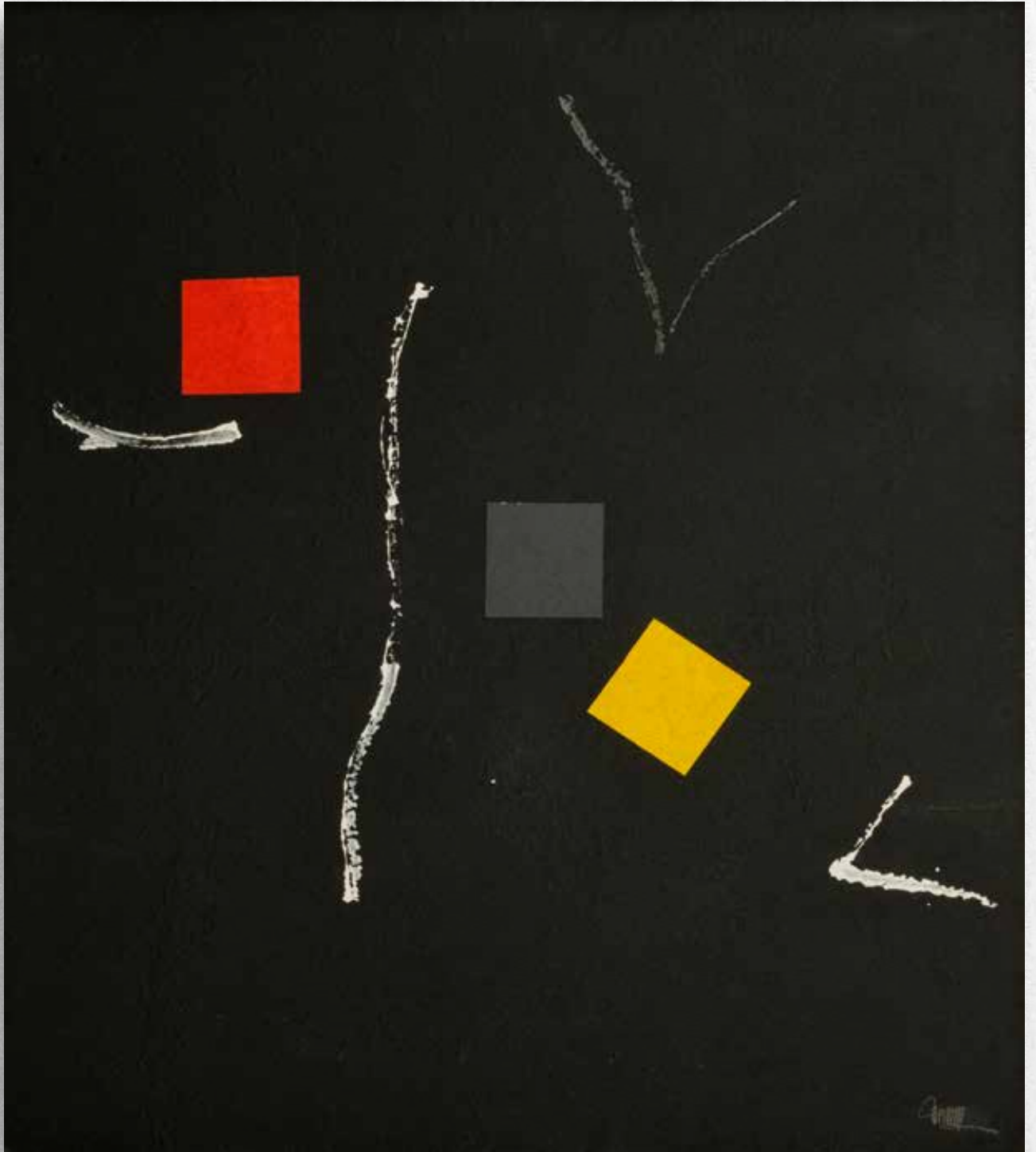
Arturo Luz. © Tatler Philippines.

An acclaimed pioneer of modernism in Philippine Art alongside contemporaries like Vicente Manansala, Cesar Legaspi, H.R. Ocampo, and Romeo Tabuena, Arturo Luz embodied the transformative spirit of neo-realism that emerged in the 1950s. At that time, artists sought to paint a new vision of reality as the aftermath of the war entailed a rebuilding of Manila's city space that brought along with it a changing socio-political landscape. This new vision, however, did not mean a total departure from reality, a retreat into fancy—nor a mere escape from the horrors of war. Instead, for the neo-realists, the abstractions of their making were intimations into nature and the social landscape that worlded them as subjects. Because such works were necessarily inflcted with an individuality that drew from the subconscious, the neo-realist was thus closer to reality than ever.

It is a character very much exemplified in the works of Arturo Luz whom art critic and historian Patrick Flores describes as having a "feeling for form." Owing to his educational background in design practice, Luz developed this natural instinct for forms and their interrelations in space which allowed him to make masterfully sound

abstract compositions throughout his artistic career: "I suppose that at the end of such training, you develop this instinct for design. It becomes second nature to you...You can sit down and analyze all inter-relations among the different shapes and colors if you wish. You can look at any object, any art, or building even, and analyze it purely in terms of design. But I don't do this. Everything to me has become instinctive..."

The oeuvres of Arturo Luz saw experimentations in various mediums from painting, sculpture, and printmaking to photography and collage. What significantly recurs throughout these various explorations in medium is the technique of improvisation that espoused the spirit of neo-realism and the ethos of design. To improvise means to make do in the moment—and cleverly so, at that. It is also what belies the heart of Luz's artistic practice: Making do with the scraps of form that the respective medium allows, alongside the sheer creative impulse of the subconscious in the present. Particularly evident in Luz's collage works, what often materializes on canvas is an artfully sound arbitrariness which art critic Raymundo Albano describes as an 'open-ended system of ordering' that presents ever-emerging possibilities. (*Pie Tiausas*)



Teodoro Buenaventura Sr. (1863 - 1950)

Street Scene

signed (lower right)
dated 1937
oil on wood
9 1/2" x 12 1/2" (24 cm x 32 cm)

P 200,000

LITERATURE

Araneta, Antonio S., ed., *1030 R. Hidalgo: Volume II, Legacy in Art*. Manila: Mara, Inc., 1986.
Full-color photograph and painting description on page 75.

Duldulao, Manuel D. *The Philippine Art Scene*. Manila: Maber Books, Inc., 1977.
Full color photograph on page 243; Catalogued in the caption on page 244.



Fernando Amorsolo (1892-1972), *Portrait of J. Antonio Araneta*. Lot 50, León Gallery Asian Cultural Council Auction, 2016.

Teodoro Buenaventura's *Street Scene* is among the few surviving works by one of the country's undisputed masters of genre painting; many of his major works unfortunately perished during World War II.

Street Scene hung prominently in the Main Reception Room of Don J. Antonio Araneta's magnificent Forbes Park abode, along with artworks by other revered artists, such as early works by Vicente Rivera y Mir, Amorsolo, Sanso, and even a pen and ink wash by the esteemed Italian master Caravaggio. Luna's *Sorprendidos* (ca. 1887) from his Venetian honeymoon with Paz Pardo de Tavera and Buenaventura's own *A Countryside Dawn* (1938) also graced the room's walls. Both were auctioned at León Gallery in 2021 and 2022, respectively. All these works had once greeted Don J. Antonio's distinguished guests, such as US President Richard Nixon.

Buenaventura first immersed himself in art in childhood, drawing pen and ink landscapes of his native Bulacan. He became fatherless at 14, so he convinced his mother to allow him to migrate to Manila for job opportunities. When he landed a job in the capital, Buenaventura continued his passion for the arts. This sustained pursuit eventually led him to be discovered by the mother of Ramon Salas, his employer, who sent him to the *Escuela Superior de Pintura, Escultura, y Grabado*, the same institution that honed Luna and Hidalgo.

Buenaventura would eventually become a prolific and well-decorated artist. He competed in the *Exposition Regional de Filipinas*, instituted by Governor-General Ramon Blanco as the first Exposition in the archipelago to promote trade and commerce. It was held in Manila from January 23 to July 19, 1895. Buenaventura would win a bronze medal for *Después del Baño* (After the Bath), one of the three oil paintings he entered in the competition. Buenaventura would also win a silver medal for his work *Ya Vienen* (They Are Coming) at an exhibition



Three decades of informed collecting have produced a varied multitude that fills up the walls of the spacious residence of Mr. and Mrs. J. Antonio Araneta but nevertheless leave it with closets and a bodega of unexhibited works. The Main Reception Room features the early paintings of Rivera y Mir, Pereira, Castañeda, and Buenaventura. The Buenaventura is encircled

sponsored by the *Asociacion Internacional de Artistas* in 1908, besting Fabian de la Rosa, who was, at the time, already a big name in Philippine art.

In 1899, Buenaventura opened his portrait shop in San Jose, Trozo, in present-day Santa Cruz, Manila. Numerous commissions for portraits and landscapes flocked to him for his excellence in classical realism. He would also establish in his home his own school, the *Academia de Dibujo*, which counted among its students Serafin Serna, Tomas Bernardo, and Mauro Malang Santos. The now revered Malang had his first serious art training under Buenaventura, his private tutor when he was only 11 years old.

Buenaventura was a founding teacher of the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts, serving for almost three decades, from 1909 to 1935. (*Adrian Maranan*)

THE DON J. ANTONIO ARANETA
BUENAVENTURA

A Treasured Master



Victor Oteyza (1913 - 1979)

Abstract

signed and dated 1953 (lower left)
oil on masonite board
24" x 14" (61 cm x 36 cm)

P 700,000

The Neo-Realists at the Philippine Art Gallery



(Standing, L-R) José T. Joya, Cenon Rivera, Manuel A. Rodríguez Sr., Arturo Luz, Victor Oteyza (encircled in red), Fernando Zóbel. (Seated, L-R) Cesar Legaspi, Nena Saguil and H.R. Ocampo.



At the end of 1953, the now-legendary Philippine Art Gallery held a landmark exhibition titled "First Non-Objective Art Exhibition in Tagala." Among those who participated was Victor Oteyza, an original member of the Neo-Realists that emerged in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second World War.

Art critic and poet Magtanggol Asa (nom de plume of Aurelio Alvero) noted that as early as 1947, Hernando Ocampo and Oteyza, leading pioneers and champions of the Neo-Realist style, were already experimenting with non-objectivism, making them forerunners of the said style in the Philippine art scene.

As particularly seen in this work, which comes from the same period as that seminal show on Philippine non-objective painting, Oteyza exhibits his linear spontaneity and geometric acuity rendered with his keen eye in weaving and interspersing balance across the planar surface. The art critic Emmanuel Torres writes in the book *Art Philippines* that Oteyza's "art is predominantly linear and detached; lines do not have referential or associational meanings." Oteyza graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the University of the Philippines, hence his profound understanding of the relationships between linear elements and the composition's pictorial space. Oteyza's linear and geometric spontaneity, which can be perceived as a dynamic sense of movement, heightens the work's graphic quality, seemingly evoking the elegant stained-glass windows of the classic churches and cathedrals.

Victor Oteyza was the son of Mauricio Oteyza, a Filipino concert violinist in the US, and Dolores Sta. Maria. He is a cousin of National Artist for Film Eric de Guia, more popularly known as 'Kidlat Tahimik.' (Adrian Maranan)



49

Romulo Olazo (1934 - 2015)

Diaphanous Anthuriums #77

signed and dated 2011 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

P 2,600,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

LITERATURE

Reyes, Cid. *Romulo Olazo*. Mandaluyong City: Paseo Gallery, 2013. Full-color photograph on page 248 and painting description on page 249.

From Claude Monet to Vincent van Gogh to Georgia O'Keeffe, a lot of the finest painters were enamored with flowers, depicting them in unique variations with ardor and gusto. Whether as still lifes or as decorative elements in domestic interiors, flowers bloom in the often brilliantly painted canvases of those figurative artists. As well, artists in our country are not immune to the seduction of flowers, this includes the abstractionist maestro Romulo Olazo.

Diaphanous Anthuriums #77, done in oil on canvas, is a piece that reminds him of the day when he, having arrived from a painting session with the Saturday Group of Artists, brought to his wife an armful of anthuriums. The romantic event paved the way for a new theme in the art of Olazo. His anthurium paintings were executed at first as a realistic still life and then later rendered with his signature Diaphanous approach, flattened but still retaining its distinctly recognizable heart shape, a shape that evokes the universal emotion of love. For Olazo, the anthurium was a flower that moved his heart. (*Isabella Romarate*)

THE MOVIE STAR AND MANANSALA

Celia Flor and the 'Fish Vendors'

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

The beautiful Trinidad “Trining” Teodoro would graduate from the University of Sto. Tomas in 1948 and, according to family lore, would become an actress that very same year. She had meant to become a school teacher at Far Eastern University but, as luck would have it, the legendary movie producer (and talent scout), Doña Sisang de Leon, discovered her. Doña Sisang was also the all-powerful owner of LVN Studios and was first cousin to Trining’s grandmother. It was she who convinced the reluctant co-ed to try her luck on the silver screen and— and take the name “Celia Flor.”

Trining, now more famously known as Celia, would go on to star in more than 27 movies in just five years, all of them with the box-office stature of leading lady.

In the 1950s, she would meet and marry society scion Jose “Peping” Escaño Corominas, heir to the Cebuano shipping fortune. She would give up acting to raise a family.

In 1965, the Cebuano press would report, “The Escaño Shipping Lines of the Hijos de Escaño had just celebrated its 100th year in operation. It also had the newest ship in the Philippine inter-island service with air-conditioned cabins and dining rooms, equipped with the most modern conveniences and safety devices.



ABOVE: Celia Flor from her family's photo archives.
BELOW: Celia Flor would star in 27 movies in just five years.



Their ships at that time were named the MV Fernando Escaño, after its patriarch, (which had trips from Cebu to Manila), the MV Fatima, the MV Agustina, the MV Rajah Suliman, the MV Tacloban, and the MV Kulambogan.

The Escaño Shipping Lines was part of the vast business of the Hijos de Escaño Inc. It was founded by Don Fernando Villareal Escaño. One son of Don Fernando by the name of Mamerto, would become a surgeon and would save the life of the influential Don Vicente Yap Sotto after he had collapsed in his printing office. “Merto” would also become a talented entrepreneur and would go on to found the Visayan Electric Company or VECO.

Trinidad was a bosom buddy of Mrs. Lucy Cruz, a friendship that dated to the 1950s, when they were both spritely young matrons in Manila. It was also through Lucy, an avid supporter of Vicente Manansala, that Trining would make the acquaintance and strike a friendship with the artist. (At one time, like all the society ladies worth their salt, she had posed for a fetching portrait for Mang Enteng.) She would also befriend as well as another familiar of the Cruzes, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, who likewise would limn an oil portrait of the graceful matron.

She would eventually settle in London, where she would later renew her friendship with Mrs. Cruz, when her husband J.V. was appointed the Philippines’ envoy to the United Kingdom.



ABOVE: Vicente Manansala in the 1950s. © León Gallery Archives.
BELOW: Celia with her family and that of Amb. JV Cruz.



Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1988)

Fish Vendors

signed and dated 1969 (upper right)

oil on canvas

30 1/2" x 34 1/2" (77 cm x 88 cm)

P 16,000,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the Artist, and thence by direct descent to its present owners.



Celia Flor and her family in their London home with Manansala's *Fish Vendors* on the wall.

FISHES THAT FEED THE SOUL

Lasting Symbols of the Spirit — and Plenty and Prosperity

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

By 1969 — the year 'Fish Vendors' was painted — Vicente Manansala was flush with success. He was not only the recipient of an armful of awards, (including the Republic Cultural Heritage Award in 1963), his one-man shows would attract thousands of guests on opening night. His latest show — the entire one, consisting of 40 paintings — would be snapped up in a matter of minutes by adoring collectors according to newspaper reports.

He was undoubtedly one of the immortals among the "Thirteen Moderns" of his once and future mentor, Victorio Edades.

In the company of the arch-Neo Realist Hernando R. Ocampo, he would next become part of the most significant art movement of the country; and originate his own highly recognizable style that would be dubbed by art critics as 'Transparent Cubism.'

Manansala had several sides to his art : The first being the abstracts produced under the aegis of the legendary Philippine Art Gallery.

The second was his turns at a Filipino cubism, influenced by his interest in stained glass techniques and butterfly collection.

Both of these facets were used to depict the Filipino condition, from life in the slums to queuing for rice rations to the narratives of candle vendors and vegetable hawkers;

while all the while, speaking its truth in all its beauty.

The beautiful film star Celia Flor (né Trinidad Teodoro who would later become Mrs. Jose "Peping" Escaño Corominas) would meet Vicente Manansala in 1970. It was thanks to an introduction made by her bosom friend and Manansala aficionado Lucy Cruz, wife of the political pundit, later Philippine ambassador to the Hague and the United Kingdom.

Unsurprisingly Manansala would ask her to pose in the nude for a portrait, a flattering invitation to which she obliged. She would then acquire other works from him, including a view of Holland Park and this remarkable work called "Fish Vendors."

In the work at hand, two women are surrounded by the bounty of the sea — dozens of baskets literally filled to the gills of fish of all shapes and sizes. There are a record number of them, 35 to be exact, with three blue, speckled crab for good measure.

The fish would be a coded symbol of Christianity and its devout followers evading Roman persecution. It would become spiritual shorthand for the peace and serenity in the centuries to come.

In Asia, the fish is both symbolic of 'plenty' and the prosperity it would bring. For both Celia Flor, who relished it everyday in her London home, and the maestro Mang Enteng, that was certainly most true.

The Celia Flor - Co ominas
Manansala





51 PROPERTY FROM THE CELIA FLOR COLLECTION

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

Abstract

signed and dated 1967 (lower left)
watercolor on paper
13 1/2" x 26 1/4" (34 cm x 67 cm)

P 500,000

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

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Much like his musically-oriented father Atty. Mariano A. Aguilar, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz was a virtuoso of his own right. While he had initially followed in his father's footsteps by studying law at the Ateneo De Manila, Alcuaz would eventually diverge from the pursuit of a legal profession and instead carve his own path as an artist—a fate perhaps already written in the stars by the young Federico's festering inclination towards the visual arts in his teen years and the afición for music in the Alcuaz household.

It was the combination of these two *afición*—music and the visual arts—that molded the virtuoso that is Federico Aguilar. Although renowned for his work in figurative and genre paintings, the abstract pieces in his oeuvre are just as well something to write home about. While the rhythm in his figurative works are often to be found in the gestural character of his brushwork, rhythm in



Celia Flor by Federico Alcuaz © León Gallery Archives

Alcuaz's more abstract pieces lies in the visual patterns and meanderings of the piece, thus imbuing it with an intrinsic musicality.

Such a character is particularly apparent in this 1967 piece, just a year before Alcuaz embarked on making his equally musical abstract tapestries. It is also undoubtedly the result of a well-traveled artistic career of what printmaker and art critic Rod Paras-Perez calls 'concert-painting,' alluding to the artist's travels akin to concert performance tours throughout which Alcuaz would make small abstract symphonic pieces in watercolor. (*Pie Tiausas*)



52 PROPERTY FROM THE CELIA FLOR COLLECTION

Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1988)

London Park

signed and dated 1971 (lower right)

watercolor on paper

17" x 23" (43 cm x 58 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Vicente Manansala created landscape paintings with refined composure and restraint, as seen in this untitled piece done in 1971. He achieved this through his outstanding use of watercolor, his favorite medium. For him, the beauty of it is that it demands the artist to control it, it would be difficult if the artist allowed it to control them. Manansala excelled in manipulating the medium, which he had been using since childhood, even if many people found the unpredictability of watercolor problematic. He masterfully used the clear surface of the paper as a foil to the layers of color he applied to it, creating a diffused effect due to the greater amount of water used and allowing the colors to blend into each other more subtly.

In the 1970, a year prior to the creation of this piece, Manansala was awarded the Patnubay ng Sining and received a grant from Germany to study in Zurich. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Florencio Concepcion (1933 - 2006)

Abstract

signed and dated 1968 (lower right)
mixed media
39 1/2" x 47 1/4" (100 cm x 120 cm)

P 1,000,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila



University of the East Dean of Fine Arts Florencio Concepcion and other college staff

A great mentor who honed the creative talents of Augusto Albor and Lao Lianben, Concepcion hailed from Tondo, Manila, and earned his bachelor's degree in fine arts from the University of the Philippines in 1953. While in college, Concepcion had already started a professional art career, being an illustrator for comic magazines like *Action*, *Halakhak*, *Pilipino*, and *Bulaklak*.

Concepcion would expand his creative horizons and pursue higher art studies after graduating from UP. He traveled to Rome, where he enrolled at the *Regge Accademia di Belle Arti* and became a scholar under the auspices of the Italian government. Concepcion would graduate in 1964, earning his Master of Fine Arts.

Prior to Concepcion's arrival in Italy, the dominant art style was the *Arte Informale*, which paralleled that of Abstract Expressionism in the United States. *Arte Informale*, a term coined in 1950 by the French art critic Michel Tapié, is characterized by intimations into the inherent expressiveness of gestural abstraction rather than the rigidity of traditional abstraction. The movement explored the endless possibilities of abstraction by weaving spontaneity and often using non-traditional mediums and materials. This resulted in avant-garde works that are semiotic in form, thus engendering a profound dialogue between material and subject.

From the *Arte Informale* rose the *Arte Povera* movement (Italian for "poor art"), which had its prime years from 1967 to 1972. The *Arte Povera* traces its roots to Alberto Burri, Piero Manzoni, and Lucio Fontana, who all reacted against consumerism in a post-war world. *Arte Povera* is characterized by the use of everyday and/or naturally occurring materials, such as rags, soil, twigs, and leaves. While *Arte Informale* attacked traditional abstraction, *Arte Povera* significantly took it a step further, not only using unorthodox materials but more so protesting the commercialization of and consumerism in art (epitomized by the commercialized contemporary galleries) amid a major socio-political and socio-economic upheaval in Italy, which coincided with the global radicalization of the late 60s and 70s.

During this time, Italy suffered from economic instability brought by the dominant political party of that time, the conservative Christian Democrats. In the decades prior, Italy had undergone an "economic miracle" after the devastation brought about by World War II. But that "economic miracle," borne from post-war capitalist exploitation and further richening of industrial tycoons, resulted in inhumane working conditions for the laborers. The protests first happened in the universities, with students protesting job insecurities and instability for fresh graduates, and then spilled over to the factories and industrial centers. Italy was in a scramble as it experienced high inflation rates. Yet, capitalists provided low wages while laborers worked for longer hours. These protests gave birth to the "Hot Autumn" of 1969-70.

It was in this militant milieu that *Arte Povera* was born. Its foremost artists included Michelangelo Pistoletto, who made the quintessential work of art of *Arte Povera*, the *Venus of the Rags* (1967), Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, and Piero Gilardi.

Florencio B. Concepcion, who had been residing in Italy, became exposed to the radicalism of this era and made pieces imbued with the political spirit of the *Arte Povera*. Although we can see the traditional oil on canvas in this untitled 1968 work, Concepcion applies what is likely parchment paper or wax paper, which are commonly used in baking, cooking, and food storage, and places it on various parts of the canvas, resulting in wrinkled portions of the composition. By producing a work that conforms both to Concepcion's socio-political sensibilities and artistic expressiveness, the artist professes that art can be accessible to all and can be made by all, and is not confined within the walls of commercialized galleries.

In a world that has become increasingly commercialized and consumerist due to capitalist avarice, *Arte Povera* reinvigorated and gave a new life and message to art—the "*aesthetics of the ordinary*." After all, art is part and parcel of our shared humanity; it is both a catalyst and a means of objection and protest against a world order that is ever-changing (for the worse). (*Adrian Maranan*)





54

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

Untitled

signed and dated 1995 (lower left)
acrylic, watercolor, and ink on board
29 1/4" x 21 1/4" (74 cm x 54 cm)

P 1,000,000

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

In viewing a Lao Lianben masterpiece, Leovino Ma. Garcia notes, "Take time to listen deeply to these paintings, bestow them "that purest and rarest form of generosity" - attention. Be drawn into a silence that speaks of compassion and joy." The artist, with his magisterial hand, creates an orchestration of blacks, whites, and greys. His works represent the beauty of abstraction combining the principle of minimal application of simplicity, a philosophical endeavor through colors of zero faciality. This masterpiece emits a feeling of zen, a tranquility that comes with minimalist works but with such intentional stillness, there is a denoting message in their absence, a striking occurrence that is illuminated and strong.

Marcel Antonio (b. 1965)*The Citrus Tree*

signed (lower right)

dated 2002

alkyd and acrylic on canvas

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

P 200,000

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

Most of the time, when observing a Marcel Antonio painting, one would find themselves immersed in contemplation, meticulously searching the canvas for details that could answer the simple question: what is happening?

The *Citrus Tree* is among the artist's oeuvres that can make a viewer scratch their head or stroke their chin. A lot is going on in the piece at hand, a woman is unclothed, she is in the middle of something that has to do with cards, a cat stares at her, and, if not for the title, we might fail to notice that there is a citrus tree outside the window.

Unlike the muse in the nude, the playing cards, and her feline friend, the citrus tree does not seem to demand much attention. However, for it to be the main subject of the painting, there must be something that the artist hopes for its audience to unravel.

For this, an old tale comes to mind. In the Bible, there was a tree whose fruits bear the knowledge of good and evil. God forbade Adam and Eve to consume the fruits of that tree, but Eve was deceived by the devil to take a bite, inviting Adam to do as well. The two gained knowledge, but lost their innocence. As punishment, they were exiled from Eden.

The tree and the fruit were never identified in the biblical story, but other than the apple being its most popular depiction in art, some also believe it was a citrus tree. Then, could this be the reason why the woman is staring at it? Is the female figure in this painting Eve?



Has she acquired the knowledge to be able to play cards? Is the cat there to emphasize the contrast between animals and humans? And, if this is all true, how did the faint presence of a citrus tree affect her?

Antonio is a painter as well as a storyteller, as deemed by his artworks' audience, even though he admits to not always lending his paintings a story to tell. "In hindsight, yes, maybe," he said in an article from Artes de las Filipinas. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

Estudio

signed (lower right and verso) dated 1967

oil on canvas

15" x 19" (38 cm x 48 cm)

P 4,000,000

LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022. Listed as "nº 67-22-B" with full-color photograph on page 345 and painting description on page 344.

EXHIBITED

Bertha Schaefer Gallery, *Fernando Zobel: Recent Paintings*, New York, March 26 - April 13, 1968



Moguls and artists at the Luz Gallery, 1967, at an opening for a Fernando Zóbel show. Note the similar work in the background. (L-R) Lee Aguinaldo and his wife with Don Enrique Zóbel © León Gallery Archives

The monochromatic works of Fernando Zobel that dominated the early to mid 60s are often seen as the most recognizable aspects of his artistic career. But one can argue that his gradual shift and introduction of color was just as pivotal. Fast forward to the emergence of the 1968 period, Zobel's artistic endeavors ventured beyond the superficial exploration of visual elements. During this era, his focus extended beyond the mere appearance of objects, delving into the intricate interplay between art and culture. This marked a pivotal juncture in his career, where he grappled with the societal nuances that underlie artistic expression. His artistic transition mirrored the prevailing artistic trends of the late 60s, characterized by geometric and hard-edged forms that echoed the intensity of the era's artistic zeitgeist.

Zobel's exploration of memory and nostalgia became a defining thread in his artistic tapestry. He recognized the power of selective memory, where certain visual phenomena stand out as the primary anchors of remembrance. By integrating this notion into his artistic

philosophy, he reimagined his subjects through a filter of recollection, inviting viewers to engage with his works on a deeply personal and evocative level.

The pivotal transition in Zobel's practice, marked by his foray into exploring memory, was more than a shift in technique—it was a transformative moment for abstract art itself. The conventional disinterestedness that often characterizes abstraction yielded to a fresh and introspective exploration of sentiment and personal history. Zobel's deliberate departure from established norms opened up a new realm of possibilities, where the canvas became a vehicle for introspection and reverie.

Notably, Zobel's journey also led him to revisit the realm of color experimentation. Departing from the monochromatic palette of his earlier *Serie Negra*, he reintroduced a vivid spectrum of siennas, dark browns, ochres, and grays. This chromatic shift breathed new life into his work, infusing it with a sense of dynamism and vibrancy that complemented his evolving artistic philosophy. (*Jed Daya*)



Lee Aguinaldo (1933 - 2007)*All Blue*

signed and dated June 21, 1992 (verso);

dedicated 'For Ding' (verso)

acrylic on marine plywood

29" x 19" (74 cm x 48 cm)

P 1,200,000

PROVENANCE

A gift from the artist to the present owner

As per Lee Aguinaldo, color possesses a radiant presence that, when blended in planar compositions, would engage its perceiver in an objective and analytical state. The color field sensibility of the visual artist allows him to paint surfaces that are ethereal — revealing at the edges, under layers of the same color, a rich density and hue that seems to allow the painting to glow from within. His luminous canvas is deceptively direct, yet it provides an extraordinary impact on the viewer. There is no attempt to create more than the bare essentials of picture space; the geometric quality of the frame, with its right angles, makes for order, hence, conscious rationality.

For Aguinaldo, an elaborate spatial framework or excessive use of color, decoration, or narrative could detract from the picture's power. As evident in this particular piece, *All Blue*, the approach lets the audience to freely and fully engage with pure form, pure color, and pure arrangement because they are less diverted by incidental interests. (*Isabella Romarate*)



© León Gallery Archives



Jose Joya (1931 - 1995)*Save the Earth*

signed and dated 1993 (verso)

acrylic

23" x 15" (58 cm x 38 cm)

P 1,400,000Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist
confirming the authenticity of this lot**PROVENANCE**

Acquired directly from the artist

LITERATUREArcellana, Francisco. *Joya*. Manila: Dick Baldovino Enterprises, 1996.Full-color photograph. Listed as "Save the Earth, April 19, 1993"
in Joya's Catalogue of Works compiled by Ruben D.F. Defeo.

Jose Joya © León Gallery Archives

When Jose Joya finished painting the work at hand on April 19, 1993, annual celebrations around the world for Earth Day 1993 were only beginning to commence. Founded in 1970, Earth Day, according to its official website, "is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world, marked by more than a billion people every year as a day of action to change human behavior and create global, national and local policy changes." Grounded in its mission "to diversify, educate, and activate" the global environmental movement, Earth Day became an international event in 1990, with the first observance in the Philippines commencing on April 22, 1990.

The reds in this piece symbolize the living world as the lifeblood of all the creatures that depend on nature's blessings to survive. The blues represent the waters,

the vital element that sustains life on Earth. One can notice how Joya applies the slashes and blobs of paint instantaneously. It is as if he represents all of us, rapidly racing against the clock, crying out to everyone, and exclaiming the gravity of the Earth's situation and the urgency of collective action and putting an end to a mercenary and exploitative system to *save the Earth*, before we all woefully cling at the end of the rope, pleading before nature's unforgiving wrath.

Joya's compelling abstract expressionism stresses our collective responsibility in nurturing, cultivating, and conserving the world we live in.

A work with a similar theme titled *The Ozone* (1992) was recently auctioned by León Gallery last June 2023. (*Adrian Maranan*)



Leo Valledor: High Priest of New York Cool

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Leo Valledor was a key figure in the New York art scene—by way of California.

In *Reimagining Space*: The Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York, Linda Dalrymple Henderson would write, “To understand the history of a gallery as unprecedented as Park Place, one must look first at California, where the majority of its members attended art school and met each other.

Valledor was a key piece in the puzzle. As a founding member of the Park Place group, he brought with him his formative experiences in the melting-pot “ghettoes” of San Francisco’s Fillmore, where he would be imprinted with an atmosphere of art, painting, poetry, and music. This was further reinforced by the communal nature not just of the influential Six Gallery but also of his Filipino background.

Park Place would become an address from which alliances and creativity would flow and was thoroughly well-connected to an age brimming with possibilities in the civil rights movement and the space race. Martin Luther King would give his “I Have A Dream” speech in the 1963 March on Washington; a man would be on the moon by 1969.

The Park Place shows attracted attention almost as soon as the space opened. Its exhibitions featured paintings and sculpture together, revolutionizing the way that new, avant-garde artists could present their art in marked contrast to the more conservative Madison Avenue galleries. Its cavernous

spaces invited the creation of large works and interactions with sculpture, music, and the spoken word.

Park Place became a significant part of the New York art scene until the late 1960s, putting a face on the city’s art scene for young artists and leading the move to Soho as a center for happenings that would in turn become the lightning rod for a whole new scene. It made art blisteringly cool. Paula Cooper, who would go on to establish her own gallery, was its second director.

Valledor would eventually return to his native California where he would continue to produce his avant-garde art.

Five of Leo Valledor’s works are in the permanent collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). In 2019, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York acquired two paintings by Leo for its permanent collection: *Odelight* and *Serena*, both from the year 1964, both acrylic on canvas and each measuring 35 15/16 × 109 1/2 inches. They were a generous gift from his fellow Park Place founder, the sculptor Mark di Suvero.

Leo Valledor is regarded as a pioneer of the Minimalism movement that would dominate the landscape throughout the 1970s.



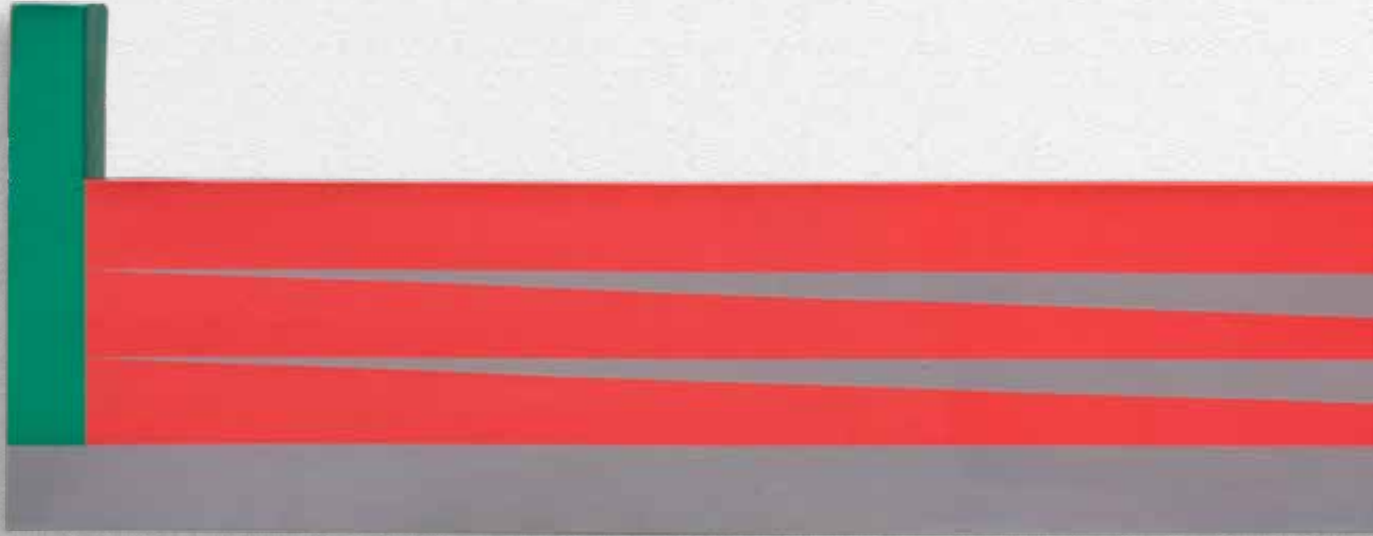
ABOVE: Verso shot of “Poleka”. BESIDE: Leo Valledor with his work, *Coltrane*. OPPOSITE PAGE: Leo Valledor (1936 - 1989), in his studio, New York, New York, November 12, 1965.



California and All That Jazz:

Leo Valledor

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



59

Leo Valledor (1936 - 1989)

Poleka (Slowly)

signed and dated 1965 (verso)

acrylic on canvas

24" x 96" (61 cm x 244 cm)

P 2,000,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, New York City

To understand Leo Valledor's significance in the American art world is to view him in the context of the modernist mid-century, dominated by arguably the world's most famous painter at the time, Jackson Pollock.

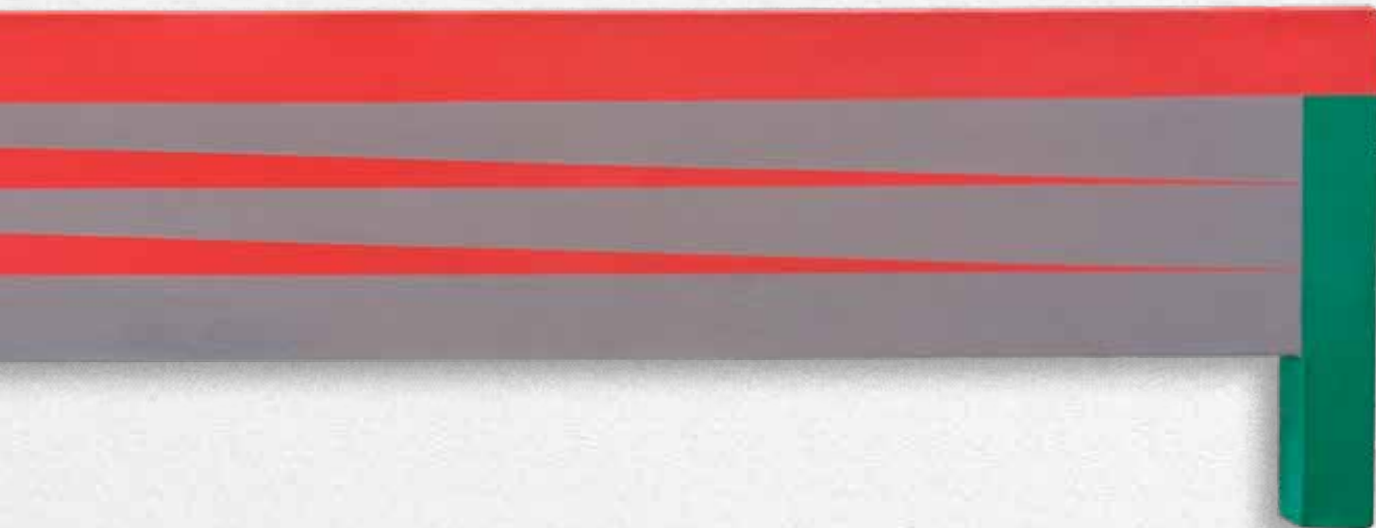
Valledor was at the opposite end of a spectrum dominated by Pollock, the man of the New York School whose gestural abstract expressionism would knock Picasso and the Paris School on its ear.

Where Pollock was all raw emotion and intense spontaneity, Valledor was cool, intellectual and deliberate.

Pollock embodied the romance of the rugged American West and its cowboys, would routinely be photographed in denims, a cigarette dangling like James Dean from the side of his mouth.

Valledor, while a native of California, had parents who had been migrants from the Ilocano north; a father who was a fruit-picker who followed the crops leaving him and his mother who ran card games, to fend for themselves. He was a Filipino-American through and through, although he took the shape of a long-haired mod.

He was influenced by the black man's music, jazz and would name his works after, for example the saxophonist John Coltrane, or musical terms. For *Poleka*, the Greek-Macedonian word for "slowly", the pace of the piece is both jagged and angular. Both ends have the signature sharp edges of his shaped canvases. A similar work belongs to the collection of the SFMOMA, fitting for the melting-pot city that also deeply influenced Valledor and his works. (Lisa Guerrero Nakpil)



ABOVE: Leo, *For M*, 1966.
20 x 120 in. (50.8 x 304.8 cm)
© San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)





60

Romeo Tabuena (1921 - 2015)

Madonna

signed and dated 1963 (upper right)

egg tempera on board

30" x 24 1/2" (76 cm x 62 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE

Galleria San Miguel, Mexico

In this 1963 painting from Romeo Tabuena's "Mexican Period," the celebrated artist imbibes a poignant interpretation of the popular Christian theme, Madonna and Child. Growing up in a predominantly Catholic country and moving in the mid-1950s to San Miguel de Allende in Mexico, where Catholicism is the dominant faith, it is no wonder that Tabuena found inspiration in the image of the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus. Tabuena conveys a humanizing aspect to the sacred by powerfully depicting and signifying the masses' toiling through his

expressionist whim. Aside from his colorful and prismatic paintings characteristic of his "Mexican Period," Tabuena also delved into expressionism with his darkly toned works, suggesting his affinity for the common folk's struggles. In this particular work, Tabuena depicts the mother and child as somber figures, with their blank eyes symbolizing a void of nothingness and their blank facial expressions strained and worn out by the seemingly endless cycle of subjugation and injustice.

Tabuena, who lived in two countries with agonizing histories of colonial and systemic oppression, draws inspiration from the Black Madonna. This venerated religious icon has become a symbol of unity and struggle of black, indigenous, and other people of color against their historical and systemic oppression. By interweaving the sacred and the profane, Tabuena cultivates and advances the messianic role of the masses in their emancipation from historical oppression. (*Adrian Maranan*)



61

Jerry Elizalde Navarro (1924 - 1999)

The Other Side of Bali

signed and dated 1995 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

P 1,000,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Jerry Elizalde Navarro shared that it was in Indonesia, on the vibrant island of Bali, where he imbibed the most inspiration for his works. He perceived how the artists of Bali utilized the playful colors of the tropics and the idyllic communal life of an island. Aside from portraying dancers, rituals, and landscapes, Navarro was also stimulated to paint abstract works exploding with naturally occurring colors is essential in Balinese culture. One of the distinct and powerful characteristics of Navarro's paintings is the use of bright, dynamic hues.

When Navarro first laid eyes on Bali, he described the way the colors boggled his eyes, "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, no mixtures..." His statement from Cid Reyes's book on Navarro is reminiscent of his painting *The Other Side of Bali*, filled with bright tints of blues, red, and yellows. (Raphaela Cordero)

Carlos V. Francisco (1912–1969)

Boy of Angono

signed (lower right)

ca. 1933 - 1939

oil on canvas

30" x 23" (76 cm x 58 cm)

P 5,000,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by Juan Arellano

Oscar Arellano

Ma. Margarita Arellano Ramos, thence by descent

THE BOY OF ANGONO

Botong Francisco, Painter of the Filipino Home Town

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Before the ascension of Carlos "Botong" V. Francisco as the maker and molder of the heroic, noble Filipino, he was first the chronicler of the Filipino home town and its many lovable characters.

ANGONO

He was always, first and foremost, after all the most poetic inhabitant of that idealized world. Rafael Ma. Guerrero in his companion citation for Francisco's National Artist Award, the second to be given in the country, describes his origins in Angono, which lay "some 40 kilometers east of Manila, nestled between the northern tip of Laguna de Bay and the rolling foothills of Rizal. By any standards, Angono is a small town, its population of 4,000, meager in 1973, a once sleeping fishing village that today bears telltale signs of Greater Manila's encroaching urban explosion."

Botong captured "the limpid rhythm of life in this coastal town", to be discovered over and over by succeeding generations "dreaming of forgotten folkways and simpler pleasures... for Botong himself once lived in Angono, fished in its waters and camped out on its hills. Mirrored in his works is a kindred nostalgia for a vanished grace, the untutored ease of a people raised on the bounty of the land and the sea; for such is the legacy of the painter who, like them, was himself a dreamer of the native dream."



ABOVE: Carlos "Botong" Francisco posing with daughter Carmela and grandchildren © vintana.ph

BOTONG

The citation continues, "Among the townsfolk of Angono, he was simply known as "Botong", a monicker he acquired early in life after an equally dark-skinned Cainta character noted in the provincial grapevine of the Rizal towns by that appellation. Botong's full name, however, was Carlos Villaluz Francisco and later in life, whenever art patrons and friends from Manila would inquire after him as such, they would be met with stares by the Angono residents. Moreover to his town mates he was known better for his prowess at basketball — a game he enjoyed playing as often as he could — than for his skill with his paintbrush.

"As the old adage goes, you can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy, Botong's life is impossible to relate apart from the milieu of his hometown; for Angono was as much a part and parcel of the man as his memory is now an enshrined segment of the town lore," wrote Guerrero.

"His father was an ex-seminarian, a degree holder of humanities who, for some private reason, decided to settle in this idyllic fishing village to work her on the

THE JUAN ARELLANO
BOTONG FRANCISCO
A Portrait of a Favorite Angono Tyke



manufacture of local wine, eventually marrying a young Angono woman. Botong was five when his father died, an eventuality which strained the family's circumstances. Still, Botong was given a proper education; an anachronism in pre-war Angono for their boys learned to fish at the side of their fathers and lived from the rich yield of the lake.

"Even as a child, he was wont to draw and in time this inclination led Botong to enrol, upon his graduation from Rizal High School, at the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts where he was a student from 1930 to 1935. This period of studies marked his first protracted absence from his beloved Angono."

THE BOY OF ANGONO

Significantly, in his youth, Botong was among just seven boys from his hometown who went to school. And there are traces of these boys in Botong's paintings of the period : sleeping siestas on tall trees, joining in the town's colorful proceedings, its fiestas, and pilgrimages. The boys appear in cameos, catching their 40-winks in rough-hewn buckets, borne along the various parades, at other times, pretend-playing with the town band, its "Banda Uno" put together by Angono's other favorite son, musician Lucio San Pedro and Botong's cousin. They provide playful counterpoint to the lyrical renditions of the grownups at work and at play and are to be found in the earliest of Botong's works, "Siesta" (1933) and "Pastoral (1933); and also "Pista sa Nayon" (1947) "Pilgrimage to Antipolo" (1959) and "Banda Angono" (1959). Botong's world of Angono is actually seen (and appreciated) through the eyes of these innocent lads.

Salvador Juban, his long-time protégé and artist assistant, would often further recall, Botong always painted from life and the things he knew.

The work at hand, *The Boy of Angono*, depicts a youngster wearing the wide-brimmed straw hat depicted in all of Botong's lively scenes. Here the boy sits, eyes slightly downcast, carrying a long stick (patpat) and sitting beside an loosely woven fish basket to net the lake's *dalag* (fish) which could be easily trapped in the straw mouth.





AN INTERSECTION WITH JUAN ARELLANO

Botong Francisco's artistic trajectory would intersect with Victorio Edades who would mastermind the creation of a series of important murals for the established architect Juan Nakpil. All three played various parts at the University of Sto. Tomas; Edades was in fact, head of the College of Architecture and Fine Arts. Nakpil and Francisco were professors in various capacities.

In 1936, Botong with Edades and Galo Ocampo, would create the first of his career-defining murals, the powerful vision titled "Rising Philippines", commissioned by Arch. Nakpil for the Capitol film palace owned by the Rufino family.

Arellano and Nakpil both belonged to the same elite architectural and artistic circle and would become patrons of the Botong Francisco, who was himself rising in both capacity and stature.

ABOVE: Juan Marcos Arellano with his wife Natividad Ocampo. TOP RIGHT: Architect Juan Marcos Arellano. Photo from the Arellano Family Collection. MIDDLE RIGHT: The library of the Arellano San Juan home. Photo from the Arellano Family Collection. BOTTOM RIGHT: Architect Juan Marcos Arellano's San Juan home. Photo from the Juan Marcos Arellano Family Collection.

Marcel Antonio (b. 1965)

Echo

signed (lower right and verso)

dated 2001

alkyd on canvas

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

P 200,000

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

Tableaux of humanity responding to various stimuli, whether from external or internal forces, have always played the protagonist in the grand theater that is Marcel Antonio's canvas. There always exists a Rembrandt-ian spectacle of different genres—ranging from drama, melodrama, farce, erotica, and comedy, among others—that underscores the significance of emotional depth within the subject and, thus, stimulates the viewer's inherent ability to harness their unbridled flow of impressions, perception, and understanding.

Antonio injects method acting into his subjects, imbuing them with a sheer eccentricity that makes a single work stand out from the rest. In this piece titled *Echo*, Antonio depicts an apprehensive woman; her eyes bear that piercing gaze that seemingly breaks the fourth wall separating the viewer from the subject. A ghostly figure of a woman clad in her nightwear and uncannily resembling



the central figure suddenly pops out at the window, resulting in the latter's uneasiness. In a work that seems to blur the line between fantasy and reality, Antonio spurs conversations surrounding specters of the past coming back to haunt or even burden the (perceived) reality of the present. A profusion of diverse conflicts can be discerned through this painting, many of which are reminiscent of Erik Erikson's "Theory of Psychosocial Development": identity and confusion, intimacy and isolation, dependence and independence, regrets and accomplishments, stagnation and progress, and so on. Therefore, we see a dream-like portal into the past, where we can go frantic and agitated or rectify, reforge, and renew. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Jigger Cruz (b. 1984)

Ftygivgd

signed and dated 2016 (lower left)

oil on canvas

12 1/4" x 18 1/4" (30 cm x 46 cm)

P 500,000

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

Jigger Cruz's ascent to recognition emanates from his distinctive approach to materials, resulting in captivating and sensory-rich artistic creations. This innovative method involves an elaborate process of overpainting, wherein he deftly employs an array of techniques such as impasto, cutting, burning, and spray painting. These techniques synergize harmoniously, albeit their initial impression of chaos. Upon closer examination, an intricate tapestry emerges, representing a harmonized entity that has undergone a profound metamorphosis through the means of destruction and alteration, thereby bestowing the artwork with an entirely new layer of significance.



In essence, Cruz's oeuvre breathes new vitality as it sheds its former skin, metamorphosis of sorts. This seemingly paradoxical treatment imparts a sense of novelty, yet at its core, Cruz grapples with themes that transcend eras and stand the test of time. Through his artistic exploration, he delves into venerable and timeless concepts, thereby bridging the gap between the contemporary and the perennial. (*Jed Daya*)



65

Onib Olmedo (1937 - 1996)

Aling Metring

signed and dated 1979 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

P 400,000

Accompanied by a certificate signed by Ms. Bettina Rodriguez-Olmedo confirming the authenticity of this lot

Onib Olmedo's artistic vision ventures into the realm of human experience, a realm that transcends conventional boundaries and delves into the ineffable. With a deft hand, Olmedo orchestrates a transformation of the human form, casting it into an abstract realm that defies the confines of our reality. Through this distortion, he unearths the profound truths that course through the veins of human existence, laying bare the intricate tapestry of trials, dreams, and questions that define our journey.

Olmedo's approach to art is a deliberate dance with the enigmatic facets of the human psyche. His creations are not mere compositions; they emerge as portals to the depths of our collective consciousness. Employing the figurative expressionist technique, he masterfully disrupts the conventional contours of the human figure. In this distortion, he finds a voice to encapsulate the visceral struggles that underpin human existence. The figures he conjures, obtuse and ethereal, embody the

very essence of challenges faced and dreams tormented. Within the intense glare of their gaze, a magnetic tension resides—a tension that draws us into the narrative of their existence. These figures, seemingly aloof, become vessels through which we explore the labyrinthine corridors of the human soul. Through their veiled wounds, Olmedo beckons us to confront the complexities of our own experiences, bridging the gap between the canvas and the realm of introspection.

Yet, amid the labyrinth of struggles, a resolute spirit emerges from the shadows. The very same figures that stand marked by life's harsh realities, rise defiantly to face the battles that life presents. Their unwavering determination is a beacon of hope that navigates the treacherous waters of despair. Olmedo paints a tableau of resilience, reminding us that within the depths of torment, the human spirit remains unbroken, undeterred by the forces that seek to confine it. (*Jed Daya*)

Ronald Ventura (b. 1973)

Point of Know Return - Light Box 3

signed and dated 2011-2012 (lower left)

lithography and oil base paint on acrylic sheet, assembled with coloured acrylic sheet, LED light and aluminum case

D: 26 3/4" W: 2 3/4" (D: 68 cm W: 7 cm)

P 1,000,000

PROVENANCE

Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI)

LITERATURE

Ventura, Ronald, Adele Tan, and Clarissa Chikiamco. *Ronald Ventura: Recyclables (Exhibition Catalog)*. Singapore: Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), 2012. Published to accompany the exhibition of the same name at the STPI in from November 17 to December 15, 2012. Full-color photograph and painting description on page 26.

Paparoni, Demetrio and Ronald Ventura. *Ronald Ventura: Works 1998 - 2017*. Milan: Skira editore S.p.A., 2018. Full-color illustration and painting description on page 321.

EXHIBITED

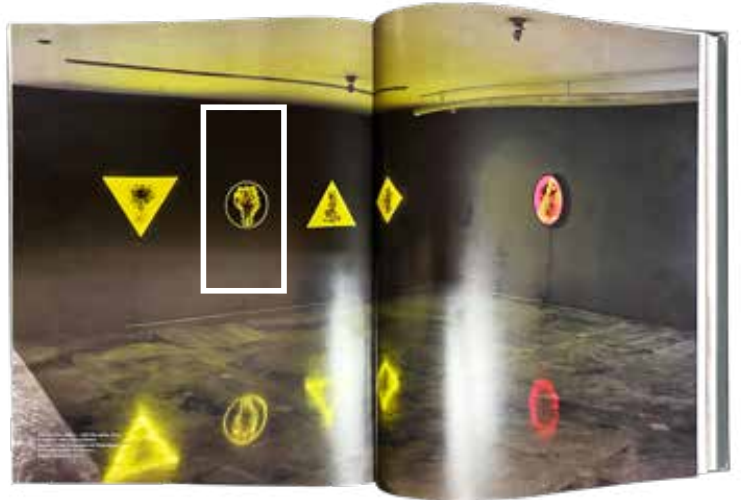
Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), *Ronald Ventura: Recyclables*, Singapore, November 17 - December 15, 2012

Metropolitan Museum of Manila, *Shadow Forest: Encounters and Explorations*, Manila, January 30 - March 14, 2017

For his 2012 solo exhibit titled *Recyclables*, Ronald Ventura produces an impressive and diverse selection of works that not only showcases his practice, but his ability to remain novel and cutting-edge despite working with a relatively unfamiliar medium. The exhibit was mounted at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute and featured access to new and experimental media that allowed Ventura to push the boundaries of his craft. Ventura himself notes that "To try new things, to figure out new ways, to do art in a manner that has never crossed my mind, and to end up with something surprisingly fresh and undeniably new in this artistic wonderland at the heart of the Lion City."

The result is a groundbreaking exhibit that tackles not only climate change and the arguably ongoing ecological collapse, but man's complex relationship with nature and its conceptual underpinnings. In terms of his practice, Dr. Adele Tan notes *Recyclables'* importance within Ventura's canon by noting that: "Here the style that so cleaves to Ventura's reputation is momentarily put aside (although vestiges of his impeccable skill with drawing remain discernibly present) in favor of a presentation of something less tangible, like the forces sentiment and culture, religious or spiritual imagination, and the antinomies of life itself." She adds that "The tension raised here is instead that of the primordial opposition of Man and Nature, and also the circumspection of what is human nature and its fate, which he had already begun with his *Zoomanities* series..."

The collection itself can be divided according to medium and style. This particular work at hand belongs to a selection of



Point of Know Return - Light Box Series, 2012. Installation view of the exhibition *Shadow Forest: Encounters and Explorations* at the Metropolitan Art Museum, Manila, 2017. From Ronald Ventura: *Works 1998-2017* by Demetrio Paparoni, published by Skira editore S.p.A.

pieces titled *Point of Know Return*. The works from this part of the exhibit features lithographs on aluminum lightboxes. The works themselves evoke images of road and caution signs due to their yellow and black motifs as well as their recognizable shapes. But instead of warning us against something external to us, the all-too-familiar images of man-made disasters and hazards.

More than a decade after the show, can we say Ventura's show, and the others like it, have successfully raised awareness regarding our current situation? That depends. But the vagueness of our circumstance may actually lead us down an intriguing, if not righteous, path. Both the enormity and complexity of our current state has led us not only to work on, talking about, and thinking about it in different but also contradictory ways. The philosopher Timothy Morton describes the phenomenon as a hyperobject. Morton himself notes that: "A hyperobject is a name I invented for something that is so vastly distributed in time and space, relative to the observer, that we might not think it's even an object at all. It's good to have a word for things that are now only too thinkable, if not totally visible—global warming, radiation, the biosphere... Words enable you to think." Thus, perhaps our efforts

When connected to the understanding of our current ecological predicament as a hyperobject, we can see Ventura's *Recyclables* as groundbreaking. Although it does not predate the term, it predates Morton's own aesthetic analysis by more than half a decade. *Recyclables* not only present contradictions, but understand that this state is its natural tendency. Instead of finding a singular path through uniformity, it accepts diversity as the first step in truly analyzing our problem. Plurality here is not tantamount to confusion. Instead it is a call to rethink how to approach the future by looking at how we view the present. (*Jed Daya*)

Encounters and Explorations with Ronald Ventura



Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

Nude in a Chair

signed and dated 1982 (middle left)
oil on canvas
28" x 22" (71 cm x 56 cm)

P 340,000

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

Traditional painting of the human figure, with its roots in the classical model, is not a thing of the part for artists like Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, who see in the figure a dynamic that applies to all eras. His nude pieces have a touch of European sensibility, owing to the artist's sojourn in Spain for a significant period in his life.

Leonidas Benesa wrote in 1975: "As a...painter, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz is unique: he does not do studies of his subjects or require them to undergo several sittings before he applies the finishing touches and affixes the attesting signature. In fact, the rule for him is to finish (the work) in one sitting, which rarely goes beyond an hour, usually with Brahms playing softly in the background."



As observed in the lot at hand, Alcuaz depicted his muse in a natural and relaxed pose, seated beside a window, with a facial expression that is solemn, as if she is in a state of deep reflection. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Mark Justiniani (b. 1966)

Babaylan

signed and dated 2003 (lower left)
oil on canvas
18" x 18" (46 cm x 46 cm)

P 200,000

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

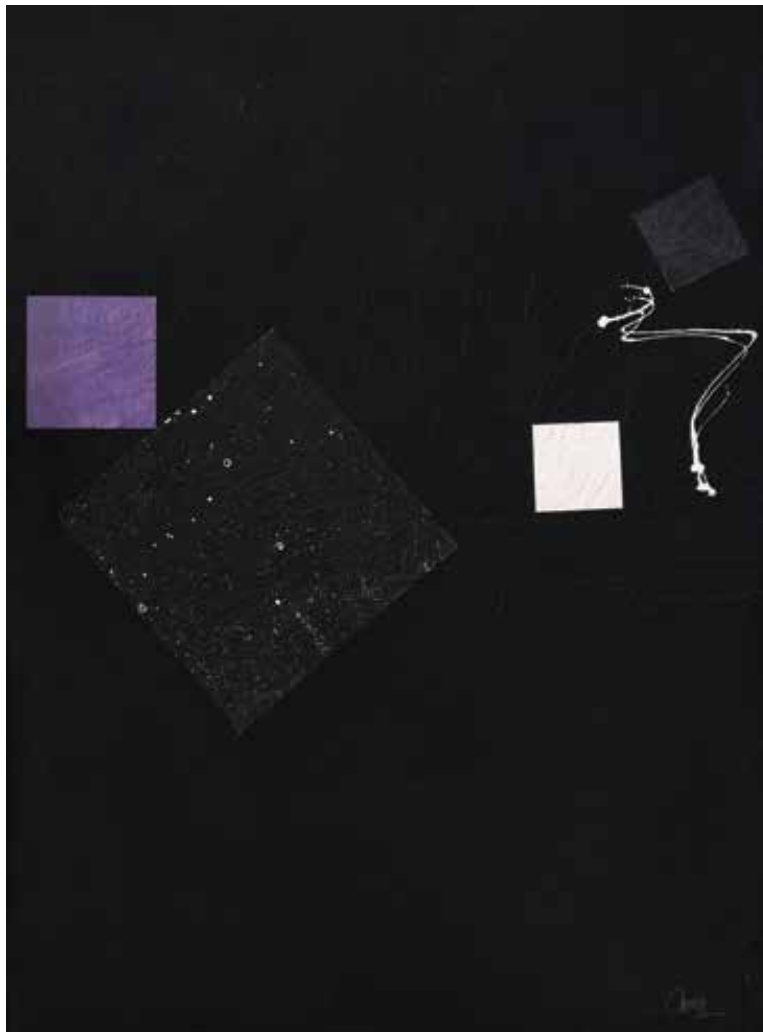
Mark Justiniani pays homage to the historical legacy of the pre-colonial *babaylan*. There were various nomenclatures for these shamans: *babaylan* in the *Visayas*, *catalonan* for the Tagalogs, *baylan* in pre-colonial Caraga region, *baliyan* (female shamans), or *asog* (a male cross-dresser) for the Bicolanos, and *bayok* for the Zambals, among others. These shamans were held in high regard and respect due to their supernatural ability to communicate with and appease the gods and spirits of the land. Generally, the *babaylan* and other equally related positions were either female or male, the latter transcending contemporary notions surrounding sexual orientations and gender identities. But what remains clear is the reverence held for these people, which translates to the significantly high degree of gender egalitarianism in Philippine pre-colonial societies.

In particular, Justiniani depicts in this piece the regenerative powers of the *babaylan*. Foremost historian on Philippine pre-colonial societies, William Henry Scott, writes in his landmark



work, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society*: "The *babaylan's* healing prowess was described in dramatic terms: *agaw*, to carry off by force, was to snatch a pain from the sufferer; *tawag*, to call someone out, was to summon the spirit that had kidnapped the soul; and *baud*, to rescue, was to free the invalid from the grip of the afflicting spirit."

Thus, the *babaylan*, the healer of the land and the supreme mediator between the sacred and the profane. (*Adrian Maranan*)



69

Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)

Maja

signed (lower right)

acrylic collage

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

P 1,400,000

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

PROVENANCE
The Luz Gallery

Arturo Luz was best known for his abstract works that are most of the time minimalistic and monochromatic. His art is straightforward, incorporating the notion of sublime austerity in form and expression. Furthermore, a detail that contributed to making his abstraction stand out was his predilection for featuring subjects that have geometric-planar shapes, as observed in this piece titled *Maja*.

The lot at hand done in acrylic could be a part of his collage series. His interpretation of the art form shows his firm hand in subtle aesthetics. He used the negative space in his canvas to emphasize the intensity of disengaged yet coordinated and interconnected figures. Also, his keen attention to detail through the impeccable linework is present in this piece.

Luz started to explore the art form of the collage in the late 1960s, when he abandoned figurative art. In a book written by Cid Reyes, he shared: "Through the twenty years or so that I have been painting, it has always been at the back of mind to work in a completely non-figurative, non-objective style..." Luz added, "collage was the bridge I used to shift to total abstraction." (*Isabella Romarate*)

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)*White Matter*

signed and dated 1997 (lower left)
acrylic, modeling, pastel, pencil on canvas
36" x 24" (91 cm x 61 cm)

P 2,600,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Manila's Society Swan Meets Leading Artist

Carmencita "Menchu" Katigbak met Lao Lianben at dinner a long time. He once went to her house to see the setting where his mural would be. The country's foremost artist and A-listers/socialite struck up an acquaintance and the low-profile artist just did this drawing for her. Born to the prominent Batangas clan, Menchu didn't have a long-running corporate affiliation, yet she's a kin, a friend, an acquaintance to the country's power society, from Presidents, industry/business/finance leaders here and abroad, to socialites and elite society. Her dining room and living room, through the decades, have been a veritable epicenter of the Manila Establishment, given the quality and quantity of *Who's Who* she has hosted. She's lived in London, Paris, and now spends a good time of the year in Singapore.

—BY THELMA SIOSON, THEDIARIST.PH

In human anatomy, the white matter regions of the central nervous system refer to those parts of the brain responsible for efficient brain signaling. According to MedlinePlus, the online health information service of the US National Library of Medicine, "white matter is found in the deeper tissues of the brain (subcortical). It contains nerve fibers (axons), which are extensions of nerve cells (neurons). Many of these nerve fibers are surrounded by a type of sheath or covering called myelin. Myelin gives the white matter its colors. It also protects the nerve fibers from injury. It improves the speed and transmission of electrical nerve signals along extensions of the nerve cells called axons." In short, the brain's white matter are "channels of communication" that ensure the quick yet proper transmittal and reception of information between different areas of the brain.

In this work, Lao depicts the white matter as a waterfall-like structure. The artist derives inspiration from the scientific definition of white matter and reimagines and reinvents them in his soothing language of Zen. Lao's unbridled pencil strokes, which evoke the nerve fibers, emanate from the acrylic modeling resembling the white matter. Here, the artist presents how a dynamic mind powerfully engages in profound



In 2015, in the residence of the US Ambassador in Paris, Menchu (middle) with Washington Sycip (second from the right), Federico and Monina Lopez © Katigbak Photo Archives



With husband Toting (center), Manolo and Maritess Lopez in Paris during the Cory Aquino state visit © Katigbak Photo Archives

meditation. Akin to the white matter and the nerve fibers that enable our neurons to send and receive electrical and chemical signals for proper coordination of bodily functions, Lao presents how meditation inherently runs throughout our inner selves, ensuring a keen awareness and perception of the imperfections and contradictions of the mortal world. Lao shows how our decisions and determinations are borne from active introspection, the consummate realization of the balance and contrasts of all things, whether material or abstract, spiritual or corporal.

Like a waterfall both gently and powerfully cascading down from a mountain, Lao manifests the unbridled flow of intrinsic calm borne from the meditation of the spirit; a meditation that is quiet in form yet dynamic in practice.

The brain's white matter and meditation both function in the same way: continuously establishing a sense of harmony and clarity. As the legendary founder of Zen Buddhism, Bodhidharma once said: *"Not thinking about anything is Zen. Once you know this, walking, sitting, or lying down, everything you do is Zen."* (Adrian Maranan)



Jose Joya (1931 - 1995)*Summer Retreat*

signed and dated 1992 (lower right & verso)

acrylic and collage

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

P 2,000,000Accompanied by a certificate signed by the artist
confirming the authenticity of this lot**PROVENANCE**

Acquired directly from the artist

LITERATUREArcellana, Francisco. *Joya*. Manila: Dick Baldovino Enterprises, 1996.

Full-color photograph. Listed as "Summer Retreat, May 16, 1992"

in Joya's Catalogue of Works compiled by Ruben D.F. Defeo.



Jose Joya © León Gallery Archives

Two decades before *Summer Retreat* was created, in the '70s, Jose Joya entered his experimental phase. He worked in a variety of media and forms and explored the limits of acrylic and collage, resulting in oeuvres that revealed multilayered space penetrated with vibrant hues and sometimes neutral tones. The spectrum of colors on his canvas is believed to draw inspiration from tropical landscapes. For the lot at hand, one can observe the fine artist's interesting departure from his usual brilliant palette. As expected from Joya, in the absence of coloristic concerns, his interest resided in textural detail. His gestural strokes create a motion implied in the amorphous forms, and the paint seems to be applied intuitively and spontaneously. His use of complex swathes of collage effects and overlapping strokes shows us how he perceived the world with a creative vision that gives importance to controlled freedom.

The piece is dated 1992, it is the same year when he created one of his renowned abstractions titled *Spirit of Season*. And, in 1991, only a year prior, he became a recipient of the *Gawad CCP Para sa Sining*, the highest award granted by the Cultural Center of the Philippines. (*Isabella Romarate*)





72

Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)

a.) Juggler No. 1

signed (lower right) dated 1999
acrylic on canvas
54" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

b.) Juggler No. 2

signed (lower right) dated 1999
acrylic on canvas
54" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

c.) Cyclist

signed (lower right) dated 1999
acrylic on canvas
54" x 36" (61 cm x 91 cm)

P 4,600,000

Each piece is accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Mrs. Luisa Luz-Lansigan confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

The circus performers form an iconic ensemble within the oeuvre of Arturo Luz, and such is the case with the lots at hand – *Juggler No. 1*, *Juggler No. 2*, and *Cyclist*.

Luz, who was born in 1926, had a penchant for depicting the festive despite his austere brand of art. For that reason, one might wonder if he encountered the Manila Carnival as a child. The event was like New Year's Eve with all the gaiety and laughter, delighting the Filipino people with parades and pageants. A variety of shows were held, from circus and vaudevilles to slapstick comedies and grand theatrical performances. The annual carnival festival did not last long, though, taking place only from the early 1900s to the late 1930s.

Apart from that, it is said that his interest could have in fact started back in the 1950s. In 1952, the artist



witnessed a sight that struck him as truly Filipino. He was amazed that four men could ride a single bicycle! That scene made its way into his renowned work titled *Bagong Taon*, a depiction of three people riding a bicycle and celebrating the New Year.

From his *Bagong Taon* in 1952, Luz continued his artistic journey on exuberant themes throughout the 1950s until the late 1960s when the artist abandoned the vestiges of figuration and explored abstraction. Then, decades later, he embarked on his *Celebration*, *Carnival Forms*, and *Forms of Amusement* in the 1990s.

As observed in these Luz paintings, his minimalistic approach is evident through the monochromatic palette and the void of intricate details. The human figures at the center of each canvas are reduced to basic shapes and rendered with improper body proportions to emphasize

their linear strength. Here, Luz wanted to exhibit his linear coherence, logical abstraction, and mastery of geometric forms.

Luz dedicated the last two decades of his artistic career to recreating his most celebrated themes that are applauded to this day, and one of those was his *Carnival Series*. Albeit modest in form, that particular series has a certain charm that remains alluring to art collectors and connoisseurs. Two years prior to the creation of these acrylic pieces, Luz was conferred the National Artists Award in 1997. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Marcel Antonio (b. 1965)*Orpheus and Eurydice*

signed (lower left and verso)

acrylic on canvas

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

P 300,000

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



© León Gallery Archives

Marcel Antonio's *Orpheus and Eurydice* is a visual retelling of the enduring Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, two lovers whose romantic intimacy and warm tenderness were cut short by a tragic demise.

Orpheus was said to be the son of the muse Calliope and Apollo, the god of poetry, music, dance, the sun, healing, and prophecy, among others. He was endowed with the superhuman gift of music that humans and even gods and beasts are enraptured by his mesmerizing melodies and spellbinding singing. Apollo, the originator of string music, gave him his first lyre, the instrument attributed to the god.

It was on one occasion of humans and beasts that Orpheus was struck by the enchanting beauty of the nymph Eurydice, who had also been ravished by the demigod's voice. It was love at its most instantaneous and immaculate, and the two would eventually marry. Hymen, the god of marriage, blessed their union. However, he warned them of a looming adversity that would bear an unrelenting agony doomed to transcend beyond the afterlife.

Hymen's prophecy would eventually come to fruition, as Eurydice would succumb to death due to a snakebite. There have been several versions of this story. One version tells of Eurydice wandering the forest with her fellow nymphs, while the other narrates of the shepherd-god Aristaeus' insatiable lust over Eurydice and how he chased her, eventually leading to the woman's death after accidentally stepping on a nest of poisonous snakes.

Eurydice's death struck Orpheus with an unforgiving grief. Accompanied by his lyre, Orpheus' songs of lamentation became haunting cries; everything in the world—living or not, mortals and gods—was stirred by his sorrow.

Orpheus then decided to go into the underworld. His dangerous descent into the realm of the dead was aided by his charming music and the guidance and protection of Apollo and the other gods. He encountered the souls of the dead and managed to enter the gates of the underworld, guarded by the vicious three-headed dog Cerberus. Orpheus presented himself to Hades and his wife, Persephone.

As he poignantly played his lyre and sang out his profound sorrow, Orpheus desperately pleaded for his wife to be brought back to the world of the living. Overwhelmed with condolence and compassion, Hades agreed, but under one condition: Orpheus must walk ahead of Eurydice as they pass through the dreadful domain of the dead and must not in any way attempt to look back at his wife until she had entirely left the underworld.

Orpheus then began to embark on what he deemed a smooth-sailing task. Throughout their journey, Orpheus was imbued with a sense of calm; he did not dare to look back at Eurydice. But as soon as the light of hope emanating from the land of the living eventually dawned upon them, a blazing excitement pervaded Orpheus. He turned around to fervently embrace his beloved Eurydice, not realizing she was still in the ghastly abyss of the nether regions. In the blink of an eye, Eurydice was condemned to eternity in the feral domain of the unforgiving Hades. (Adrian Maranan)



Jose Joya (1931 - 1995)

The Twelfth Night

signed and dated 1992 (lower right & verso)

acrylic & collage

40" x 26 1/4" (102 cm x 67 cm)

P 4,000,000

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

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

LITERATURE

Arcellana, Francisco. *Joya*. Manila: Dick Baldovino Enterprises, 1996. Full-color photograph. Listed as "The Twelfth Night, January 6, 1992" in Joya's Catalogue of Works compiled by Ruben D.F. Defeo.

Jose Joya imparts a reverent message in *The Twelfth Night*. As with his oeuvres that depict fiestas and festivals, the lot at hand was named with the intent to allude to the Epiphany of the Lord. The Christian feast day commemorates the events from the birth of Christ Child and the visit of the Magi, Jesus' baptism administered by John the Baptist, to the miracle at the wedding in Cana. In the Philippines, it is known as "Three Kings' Day" and Pasko ng Matatanda or "Feast of the Elderly." The feast day marks the end of the country's Christmas season. However, the artist portrayed in this painting not the feast day in particular but the night prior to it – the eve of Epiphany, also called the Twelfth Night.

In some churches, the celebration mostly centers on the visitation of the Magi. The Magi are believed to represent the non-Jewish peoples of the world, and thus it is also observed as Christ's corporeal manifestation to the Gentiles. Epiphany, from the word epiphainen, means "manifestation." As such, this Joya abstraction, in a way, solemnly invites its audience to remember the time that Christ has made Himself known to the world.

The traditional date for the Epiphany of the Lord is the 6th of January, and the aptly titled acrylic & collage piece is as well dated on the same day in 1992. (*Isabella Romarate*)



The young Jose Joya © León Gallery Archives



Betsy Westendorp (1927 - 2022)

Portrait of Isabel with Ian

signed and dated 2007 (lower right)

oil on canvas

38" x 50 1/2" (97 cm x 128 cm)

P 1,400,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

LITERATURE

Reyes, Cid and Elena Flórez. *Betsy Westendorp (Volume I)*.

Manila: De La Salle University Publishing House, 2017.

Full-color photograph on page 29.

Betsy Westendorp's *Portrait of Isabel with Ian* is a riveting portrait of the human spirit's resilience amid grief and loss. It depicts Isabel, Westendorp's eldest daughter, and her son Ian in his younger years. Isabel holds her son in a loving embrace; Ian's face radiates such a charming spirit and an innocent smile that only a child can flaunt in sheer virtue.

At first glance, one immediately notices the subject of unconditional maternal love. However, Westendorp painted this piece due to the tragic death of Ian in 2006 at the young age of 26 due to sepsis meningococcal. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this condition is caused by bacteria entering and multiplying in the bloodstream, damaging the walls of the blood vessels and causing bleeding into the skin and organs. Westendorp was shattered by the sudden passing of her only grandson, and to cope with the unforgiving pain of losing a loved one, she painted several versions of the work at hand, all endowed with an equally poignant and moving character.

A postscript to this story would be the death of Isabel ten years after Ian's passing. She died in Madrid due to heart failure; she never recovered from the relentless gush of agonizing pain brought by the death of her only son. In medical terms, this is called "takotsubo cardiomyopathy." Westendorp could not attend her daughter's burial, and so she channeled her immense grief into a massive "atmosferografia" titled "Passages," which symbolized Isabel's "passage" into the afterlife. The work is now in the collection of the Instituto Cervantes de Manila.

A monumental mural depicting Westendorp's favorite floral subjects serves as the dramatic background of this piece. In the mural's lower center portion are delicate



Westendorp with her husband, Antonio Brias, and three children (left to right), Carmen, Isabel and Sylvia, in Manila © Courtesy of the Betsy Westendorp Family

lotus flowers, symbolizing resilience—the power to overcome all adversities—and eventual rebirth. Flowers are Westendorp's favorite subjects, and so they weep in lasting lament with the artist, guiding her towards a regained strength of character. This is the compelling power of art to nourish humanity's despondent soul.

Westendorp's flowers, with their inherent melancholic beauty, are in eternal bloom, and so is her grandson, who unceasingly endured in the cosmic seas of her heart and memory.

Westendorp once described Ian as "the love of her life." With the artist's passing in November of last year, we only hope for their tender reunion, together with Isabel, free from all the pains of humanity and the never-ending tribulations of mortality. (*Adrian Maranan*)



THE LEGACY OF DON GENY LOPEZ



Don Eugenio Lopez Jr., or Don Geny in his boardroom.

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.

He would also expand the Lopez Museum’s capabilities in education, curatorial, and conservation. He would also steer the acquisition of works by the Philippines’ National Artists.

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.”

Established on the 13th of February 1960, the Lopez Museum and Library (then the Lopez Memorial Museum) was initially intended to memorialize the memory of Don Benito and Doña Presentacion. The statesman Claro M. Recto quickly hailed it, however, as “a university without professors” as its purpose grew greater.

How could it not be? The Lopez Museum today notes, “Foremost historian Renato Constantino was the Lopez Museum’s first curator, from 1960 to 1972. It would be under his watch that the museum acquired Juan Luna’s *España y Filipinas*, a seminal work much cited for capturing the image of a country patronizingly led up the rungs of evolutionary colonial tutelage. Such acquisitions complemented the Philippine rare books and antiquarian map collection amassed by Eñing, who in consultation with renowned collector and connoisseur Alfonso Ongpin, further acquired other seminal and technically astute works by Luna, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, and Fernando Amorsolo. A second key acquisition phase inclined toward Philippine Modernism, vetted under the supervision of art historian, Rod Paras-Perez.”

Don Geny Lopez would pass away in June 1999 in San Francisco. He was 71. (*Lisa Guerrero Nakpil*)



TIS THE SEASON OF POLITICAL COPULATION NEHA KAPUR NAVATI 859

THE LOPEZ LEGACY COLLECTION : A MICROCOSM OF GREAT PHILIPPINE ART

19th-Century Masterpiece by *Hidalgo*
Moonlit Seascape

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

*“Hidalgo is all light, color, harmony, feeling,
limpidness like the Philippines in her calm moonlit nights,
in her serene days with her horizons inviting contemplation...”*

—DR. JOSE P. RIZAL'S TOAST AT THE DINNER
IN HONOR OF THE PRIZEWINNING ARTISTS
JUAN LUNA AND FELIX RESURRECCION HIDALGO
ON 25 JUNE 1884 AT THE “CAFE INGLES.”

*“Refinement.
The one characteristic of the paintings
of Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo y Padilla.”*

—AUGUSTO M.R. GONZALEZ III,
SOCIAL RACONTEUR AND CHRONICLER.

Gonzalez would describe the artist's grand family background thus, “Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo y Padilla was born in 1855 to the rich, propertied Padilla family of Binondo, Manila, originally from 1700s Lingayen, Pangasinan. For starters, he was painted as early as the age of four in 1859 [or age of six in 1859 if born in 1853; historians have varied dates] with his maternal grandfather Narciso Padilla by the Tondo maestro Antonio Malantic.

“Narciso Padilla was a rich lawyer and merchant with several businesses and many commercial real estate properties in Manila and its surrounding “arrabales” or districts. Narciso's daughter, Barbara “Baritay” Padilla de Resurreccion Hidalgo, Felix's mother, inherited many valuable properties from him, among them several big warehouses in the Divisoria entrepot in Tondo which lined the Pasig river. The affluent Padilla family had [and still has] a long history distinguished by high professional achievement, wealth, conservatism, and prudence.

“The Padilla descendants recall that, with characteristic frugality, their forebears had transferred the “bahay na bato” ancestral house in Lingayen, Pangasinan beam by beam and brick by brick to Calle General Solano in posh San Miguel district, Manila in the late 1800s. Frugality notwithstanding, the transfer of whole houses “in toto” was not an unusual practice during the Spanish colonial era.”

At the age of 25, Resurreccion Hidalgo would win a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid and would begin a stellar career. Its first peak would be the silver medal bestowed on his masterpiece “*Las Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho* or (The Christian Virgins Exposed to the Populace)” at the Madrid Expo of 1884.

He would create moving views of the lyrical coast of Normandy. An avid early adopter of the camera, he used photographs to capture his models as well as land and seascapes, the better to perfect his romantic depictions.



ABOVE: Noche de Luna, oil on wood, 13.67 x 18.42 cm, signed, lower right, Collection: Eugenio Lopez Foundation from the book *Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo & the generation of 1872*

In this petite jewel at hand, the mood of the rising moon as it casts a magical light on the water can be felt almost as it quivers through the clouds. It is easy to see why it would cast a spell over a sophisticated collector such as Don Geny Lopez whose family's collection began with many Hidalgos. The Lopez Museum to this day counts among its important holdings several major Resurreccion Hidalgos, including the prize-winning *La Barca de Aqueronte*.



76 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" M. LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

Félix Resurrección Hidalgo (1855 - 1913)

Seascape

signed (lower right)

ca. 1895

oil on wood

5 1/2" x 9 1/2" (14 cm x 24 cm)

P 600,000

THE LOPEZ LEGACY COLLECTION : A MICROCOSM OF GREAT PHILIPPINE ART

Amorsolo : The Filipino Story-Teller

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

Fernando Amorsolo stands tall among the titans of Philippine art. With his paintbrush, he created a magical world of the Filipino countryside : of maidens bathing and washing their laundry in sparkling brooks, of farmers and their wives planting the fields and reaping their just harvests and rewards.

Rarer works told the story of fisherfolk putting out to sea or coming home with their catch; as well as boatmen espied as they ferried passengers on their way to lively town fiestas and picnics.

Fernando Amorsolo was a prodigy and he had the good fortune for having as his mentor, his uncle Fabian de la Rosa, the last of the great 19th-century masters.

At age 16, he had already bested the leading lights of Filipino painting at the time at a contest — Teodoro Buenaventura, Jorge Pineda, Ramon Peralta, Vicente Rivera y Mir who were all twice and even up to thrice his age. He would later be formally schooled by them as part of the first graduating class of the University of the Philippines' newly-established School of Fine Arts.

It's well-known now that he was next sent to Spain by the Zobel de Ayalas to study.

And he would return brimming with all kinds of ideas — to tell the Filipino story for all the ages; for above all, he was a master story-teller.

In this snapshot of Filipino river life, he paints a family outing : A woman shields herself with a parasol as she daintily disembarks from a boat, a 'banca' or river canoe. A behatted-man helps her gallantly to the river bank. The outlines of other women wearing wide-brimmed hats and their children may clearly be seen. A boatman paddles with his oar towards the shore. It is a story of the splendor of simplicity in everyday life.



The original 'A Ferry to a Barrio Fiesta'



TOP RIGHT: Pista sa Nayon, 1947, oil on canvas by Fernando Amorsolo. BOTTOM RIGHT: The young Fernando Amorsolo.



77 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" M. LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

A Ferry to a Barrio Fiesta

signed (lower left)

ca. 1947

watercolor on paper

4 3/4" x 8 1/4" (12 cm x 21 cm)

P 200,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, USA

THE LOPEZ LEGACY COLLECTION : A MICROCOSM OF GREAT PHILIPPINE ART

An Architect's Home The Art of Living

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



TOP: Jones Bridge, Post Office Building, Manila ca. 1936-1939 © John Tewell. MIDDLE AND BOTTOM: The house of Juan Marcos y de Guzman Arellano, built c. 1933 and styled in the Mission Revival, was one of the pioneer houses built in the new suburbia of San Juan © Archivo 1984 Gallery.

Juan Marcos Arellano was one of the most influential architects of the American Commonwealth, creating a series of buildings that would define that golden age: From the Philippine Senate (which now houses the National Museum), the Manila Post Office, Rizal Memorial Coliseum, Jones Bridge, and the jewel in the crown of all of them, the art-deco palace still known today as the Metropolitan Theater.

He was, after all, one of the first pensionados, sent by the American regime to absorb the new-fangled ways of the United States. He trained and worked as an architect in New York.

Arellano's home was in San Juan, a prosperous suburb then as now of Old Manila, favored by American millionaires and Filipino 'de buena familia' as well as its artists and writers. His mansion rose behind elaborate wrought-iron gates as grand as those of Versailles and sat on top of one of San Juan's hills with a commanding view of the capital city below.

In this painting, we catch a glimpse of its grandeur : a peristyle — or courtyard surrounded by columns looks out on a hillside view covered by a thick grove of fruit trees. The plump white clouds of a bright summer sky can be seen through the leaves.

The columns are particularly interesting: they are 'Solomonic' columns of biblical fame, suggesting not just the Temple of Solomon but also its beginnings as the Ark of the Covenant. (Tourists to Saint Peter's Basilica will recognize the helical shapes that suggest climbing vines.)

A pair of ceramic elephants perch at the top of the front steps in elegant but friendly greeting to guests. These were favorite decorative touches of 19th-century homes and are a highly personal memento of the private home of a celebrated architect who had perfected the art of living.

View of the San Juan Courtyard is an important touchstone representing those golden days of the 1920s and 30s of Manila art and architecture.



78 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" M. LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

Juan M. Arellano (1888 - 1960)

View of San Juan Courtyard

signed (lower left)

ca. 1940

oil on wood

17 1/2" x 12 1/2" (44 cm x 32 cm)

P 160,000

THE LOPEZ LEGACY COLLECTION : A MICROCOSM OF GREAT PHILIPPINE ART

Politically Charged Painting by *Navarro*

An Important Touchstone to 1997 Political Crossroads

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

In this rare work with a political theme, J. Elizalde Navarro must have found the prospect of 'Charter Change' — which the Filipino's acerbic wit would dub 'the Cha-Cha' — irresistible to depict. (It is also easy to imagine how equally irresistible it was to Don Geny Lopez, a seasoned power-player in all its fronts.)

It was 1997 and the Philippines was at another crossroads. On the one hand was the highly effective successor to President Corazon Aquino, Gen. Fidel V. Ramos; on the other, was movie star Joseph "Erap" Ejercito Estrada. It was a year buffeted by the Asian Financial Crisis but that paled in comparison to the prospect of the impending 1998 Presidential elections. The solution, purportedly crafted by Ramos' all-powerful security adviser Jose Almonte, was a change to the constitutional provision limiting the presidential term to just six years.

In the mix was the People's Initiative for Reform, Modernization and Action (PIRMA), which sought a parliamentary system of government and the amendment of the 1987 Constitution. Cardinal Jaime Sin threw his influence behind the signature campaign which was eventually rebuffed by the Philippine Supreme Court.

Navarro's inimitable style — an overwhelmingly bright palette, his dynamic flourishes and unmistakable energy — is particularly suited to the temper and the temperature of this diatribe. Six faces covered in masks as elaborate as his Balinese dancers, flail about in a mob of legs, arms, even high-heeled shoes. There is a sense of confusion, elation, as well as mad passion and it is plain that it is not love but power that is the measure of the lusty emotion.

As a young man and a graduate of the University of Sto. Tomas' College of Fine Arts, he would begin his career in the Philippine Art Gallery, mentored by its many greats among the Neo-Realists. He would be named National Artist for the Visual Arts in 1999, reflecting several decades of a wide and rich artistic practice in painting and sculpture.



UPPER RIGHT: Student protests over the 1997 Cha-Cha. (Ateneo Guidon archives).
BOTTOM RIGHT: National Artist J. Elizalde Navarro



79 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" M. LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

Jerry Elizalde Navarro (1924 - 1999)

Tis the Season of Political Copulation

signed, titled, and dated 8.5.97 (lower right and verso)

oil on canvas

54" x 45 1/2" (137 cm x 116 cm)

P 2,000,000

THE LOPEZ LEGACY COLLECTION : A MICROCOSM OF GREAT PHILIPPINE ART

Ragamuffin or Romantic Figure?

BenCab Paints the Filipino Woman

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL



ABOVE: National Artist BenCab with his seminal *Sabel*.

Part ragamuffin, part mad woman, part symbol of the Filipino female, Benedicto "BenCab" began painting his enigmatic depiction of 'Sabel' in the 1970s. She embodied the desperation of the Manila streets. Cabrera would slyly use her wretched but strangely beguiling form — in the same way that he employed sepia colonial photographs for his 'Larawan' series— to create dexterous, coded portraits of a wicked present.

BenCab would begin his career as a young illustrator for *Lidayway* and the *Sunday Times Magazine*, both Roces publications, and would thread his way successfully through the heady mix of 1960s Manila of poets, artists, and journalists that inhabited Ermita and Malate. He would re-locate like David Medalla to London with his English wife and attract a bohemian set of clients that included musicians and theater actresses such as the renowned Glenda Jackson.

The Lopez family were kingpins of that Manila period and their collection of art, housed in the first Lopez Museum in Manila, was guided by influential intellectuals such as the historian Renato V. Constantino and the art critic Rod Paras-Perez. It would no doubt shape the tastes of Don Geny Lopez who sought to expand the collection during his regime.

'Wandering Woman' is emblematic not just of BenCab's ruminations on sexual politics but also his inexorable rise in the Philippine art scene. The femme in this portrait is no longer dour and monochromatic but colored with the sophistication (not unlike Cabrera himself) of foreign lands. She is now dressed in rich corals, a checkered jacket, and a green bonnet, but as the title suggests, remains footloose and fancy free on the streets of strange cities, hiding her smile with a hand that masks her true identity



80 PROPERTY FROM THE DON EUGENIO "GENY" M. LOPEZ JR. COLLECTION

Benedicto Cabrera (b. 1942)

Wandering Woman

signed and dated 1994 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

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

P 1,600,000

Manuel A. Rodriguez Sr. (1912 - 2017)*Mother and Child*

signed and dated 1967 (lower left)

oil on canvas

44 1/2" x 24 1/2" (113 cm x 61 cm)

P 1,600,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila



Manuel Rodriguez, Sr.
© Lopez Museum Gallery Archives.

Although Manuel Rodriguez, Sr. is now widely acclaimed as the "Father of Philippine Printmaking" and had been honored with a plethora of awards and showered with numerous acclaims, both in his motherland and abroad, throughout his lifetime, there exists a tragic side note to his prolific life and career—one that strikes through the core of the collective Filipino soul.

In this monumental yet moving masterpiece, Rodriguez Sr. paints a ubiquitous subject: the mother and child. Although one may surmise the inherent tenderness that the subject of a mother carrying her child in her arms generally exudes, this was not the case for Rodriguez; his *'mother and child'* is an image of unfortunate loss and intense longing for the protective embrace and enamoring and solicitous care of a mother.

The significance of Rodriguez's *Mother and Child* can be seen within the context of the artist's mournful recollection as a young boy. An excerpt from the essay *'Struggles and Triumphs of Manuel Rodriguez, Sr.'* written by Eva Florentino, a longtime family friend of the Rodriguezes, writes: "Manuel remembers seeing his mother [named *Antonia Temario*] for the first time when he was brought to her funeral. He and his sister had been separated from her to prevent them from getting infected with tuberculosis. He was three, and his sister was one year old when their mother died. In a ritual for the dead, a relative swung them, one at a time, over their mother's bier. This experience is etched in his memory."

There exists an atmosphere of bereavement in this work due to its solemnity both in aspects of its technicality and unspoken declaration of human sentiments. The mother possesses a somber facial expression and pitiful eyes that exude a penetrating gaze—a likely allusion to the tragic desolation that Rodriguez's mother had to endure to safeguard her children from the afflictions of a deadly disease. The child's face is rendered blank, signifying the inescapable void and the insatiable longing of Rodriguez, who was left motherless at a very tender and vulnerable age.

One can see Rodriguez's early experimentation into his trademark technique he would eventually coin as "color vibrations" (he would formally introduce this technique in his 1993 exhibition titled *'Through the Eye of the Needle'* at the Breskin, Pearl, and Rodriguez Gallery in Soho, New York), making this piece evidence of his foray into his unique style and dedication to forge a distinct path in the art scene as early as the 1960s.

Color vibrations of jarring and muted hues radiate delicate visual lyricism and a balance between the sheer honesty and straightforwardness of the subject and the complex emotions it can stimulate. But perhaps the emotional gravitas of this piece lies in its pronouncement of the enduring loss of a son over his mother; he did not have the chance to experience the immaculateness of a mother's unconditional love. One can imagine the gush of poignancy that Rodriguez felt as he immortalized on his canvas a memory he had never experienced. (*Adrian Maranan*)



Le Pho (1907 - 2001)*Composition*

signed (lower right)

oil on canvas

39" x 25 1/4" (99 cm x 64 cm)

P 3,800,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Wally Findlay Galleries confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Wally Findlay Galleries, USA



Art dealer Wally Findlay Jr. left and artist Le-pho © Wally Findlay Galleries.

Le Pho, a twentieth-century artist, is the tenth child in a family of twenty of Emperor Le Hoan, born in 1907. He was cultured, well-educated, and trained in brush painting. At eighteen, he was part of the first class of students who attended the French-sponsored Ecole Superieure des Beaux-Arts in Hanoi, directed by Victor Tardieu—a classmate of Matisse and Moreau—between 1925 and 1930. Well-traveled, he promoted his work at galleries worldwide. Le Pho settled in France until his death in 2001.

Le Pho's art went through three distinct periods. The strong shifts in subject, medium, and style between them are seen to be a testament to his versatility as an artist.

His first period started in Hanoi and stayed until his early years in Paris. Le Pho created landscapes that reminisce his youth in Vietnam, each painting steeped with nostalgia and the historical magnificence of the country. His works in this period were perhaps a homage to the homeland which Le Pho left behind.

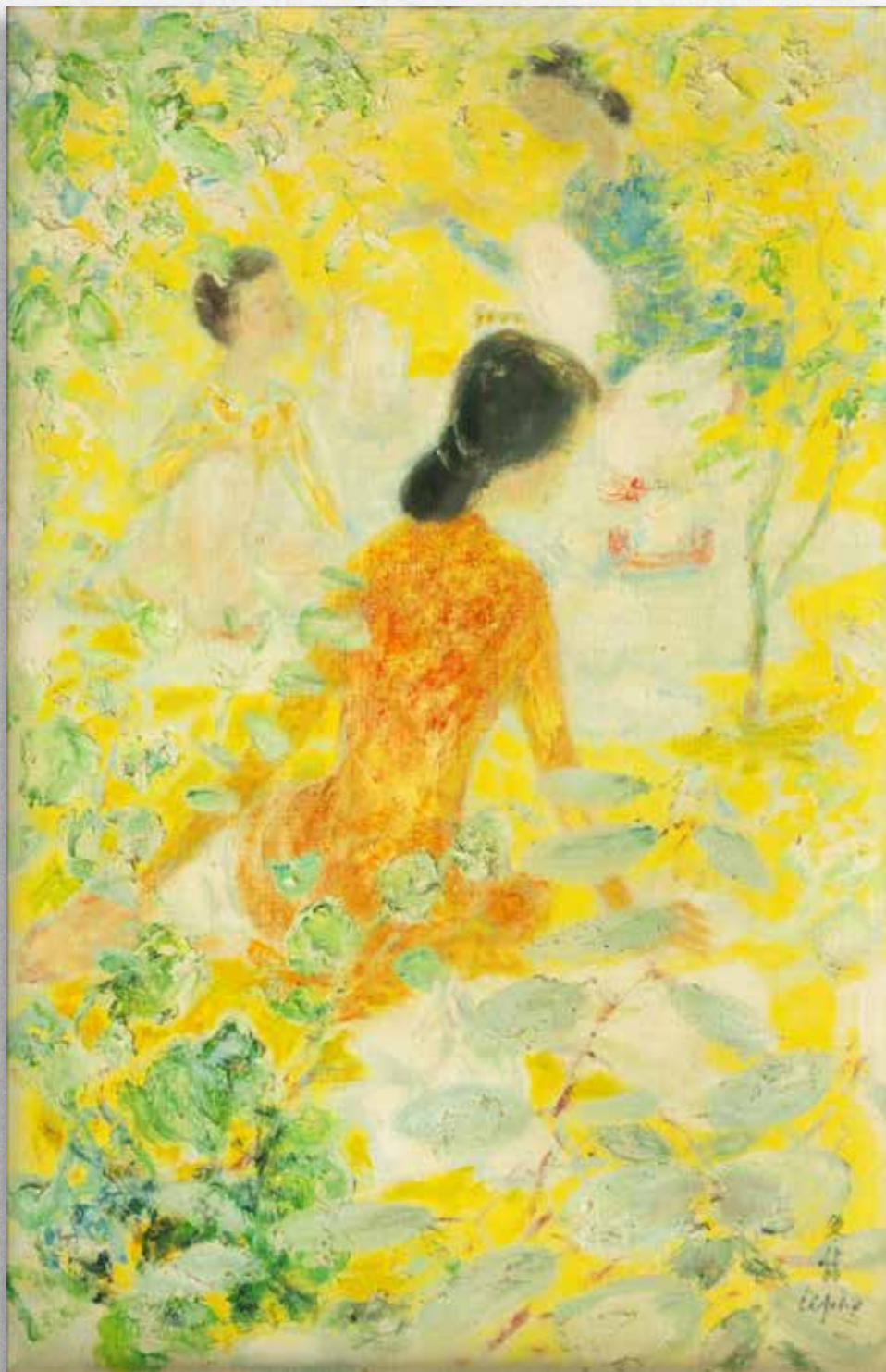
Then, his Romanet Period came to light when he met a gallery owner who became his major promoter. The period was named after the French man, and it would last until the 1960s.

After some time, Le Pho signed a contract with the American gallerist Wally Findlay who introduced his works to the American market. This would mark the beginning of his final artistic period, also known as Findlay Period. His canvases, mostly painted in oil, were inhabited by Vietnamese women with elongated figures surrounded by lush landscapes.

Le Pho pursued his Findlay Period with enthusiasm as he painted with a bright palette, depicting his usual muses and floral still life. As observed in this oil piece, his subjects are set in a vibrant background of predominant yellow, and the ambiance brings out a level of appeal and delight to the viewers. (*Isabella Romarate*)

A Golden Garden of Memory

by Vietnam's Amorsolo





83

Romeo Tabuena (1921- 2015)

Villagers

signed and dated 1968 (lower left)

acrylic on board

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

P 400,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, USA

Romeo Tabuena moved to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico in 1955, and there he would paint for decades to come. Although he had the opportunity to study abroad and showcase his talent, as well as garner acclaim and accolades, the artist lived a humble and simple life in the foreign land. His wife, Nina, a Swiss woman who also studied art, learned about Tabuena, her future husband, through a magazine.

His works in Mexico exhibit colors from the entire spectrum and often feature cultural themes. In this 1968 acrylic painting, Tabuena was able to imbue a

certain lyrical and literary beauty into the simple folk life. Although the watercolor landscapes are his most sought-after works, the lot at hand evokes the same artistry that the Filipino artist is celebrated for.

Three years prior to the creation of this untitled piece, in 1965, Tabuena attended the eighth Biennial in Sao Paulo, Brazil, as the official representative of the Philippines. (*Isabella Romarate*)



84 PROPERTY FROM THE MARIA VICTORIA RUFINO COLLECTION

Jose Joya (1931 - 1995)

Cylone

signed and dated 1990 (lower right and verso)

oil on collage

13" x 10" (33 cm x 25 cm)

P 700,000

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

The lot at hand, *Cylone*, is a Jose Joya oil on collage piece dated December 8, 1990. Here, the artist reinterprets the traditional format of landscape painting, recreating an abstract pictorial realm teeming with vibrant colors accumulating in generous layers of impasto strokes.

A notable name in abstract expressionism, it has been said that it was he who "spearheaded the birth, growth, and flowering of abstract expressionism" in the Philippines. He was also deemed as the creator of compositions that were described as "vigorous compositions of heavy impastos,

bold brushstrokes, controlled dips, and diagonal swipes." His works clearly show his mastery of gestural painting, where the paint is applied intuitively and spontaneously.

In 1991, Jose Joya received the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining, the highest award granted by the Cultural Center of the Philippines. For his efforts in developing Filipino abstract art, he was awarded the title of National Artist in 2003, eight years after his death in 1995. A retrospective of his work was held in 2011 at the National Museum. (*Isabella Romarate*)

REMINISCENCES OF KIT TATAD

by Francisco "Kit" V. Tatad
 Marcos' Youngest Cabinet Minister

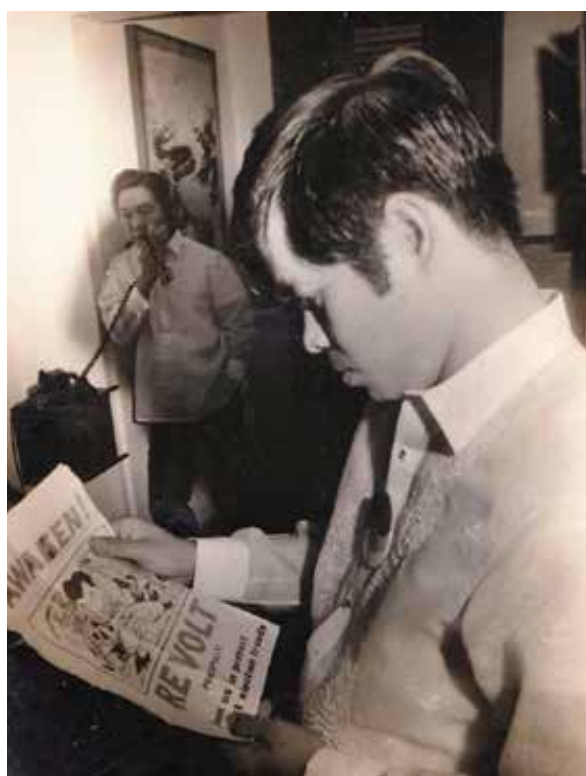
Photographic mind

Marcos hated reading speeches, and did not mind relying on his "photographic memory". But he did not mind others making light of it. Once in conversation, I told him that in my youth I used to have such a terrifying memory also—I could repeat whole pages of text verbatim after reading it once. "What happened?" he asked. "I lost it when I began to think, sir," I said naughtily. "You're mad," he said, with a big laugh. He was serious about everything, but he was not beyond self-depreciation.

People of all shades are wont to say Marcos had the best Cabinet of all the Presidents. At 29, I became the youngest member of that Cabinet, and 10 years later, the only member to resign, six years before the EDSA revolt. How did Marcos do it? People are obviously looking for a secret formula which perhaps the incumbent President could use.

I think the answer is simple enough. Marcos had a clear vision of the presidency and its place in the order of things. He had no intellectual insecurities; he was sure of himself and was not afraid that any of his appointees could be as smart as, even smarter, than he was. Most of them were highly academically pedigreed, but some others, like Blas Ople, Adrian Cristobal and myself, were not. Academic pedigree did not intimidate Marcos, neither did the lack of it.

And one did not have to be from the Ilocos region or the UP College of Law or his university frat to be invited to the Cabinet. In my case, I was an obscure diplomatic reporter and columnist of the Manila Daily Bulletin, and had only one face-to-face meeting with the President a few months before he offered me my job. His Ilocano assistants thought the idea of bringing me on board was absurd—the President did not know me, and I did not know the President. I thought they were absolutely right.



ABOVE: The young Francisco "Kit" V. Tatad with Marcos in the background on the phone. BELOW: Kit with the media.

An absurd appointment

But it looked like my one meeting with the President had left an impression he could not discard. In that meeting, we discussed his decision to establish the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and Ninoy Aquino's questions about it. Marcos said if I needed to clarify anything, all I had to do was call him—at which point he told Gen. Hans Menzi, his aide the camp, and also my newspaper publisher, to give me his telephone number.

"With all due respect, sir, I don't believe this is done," I said.

"What do you mean it's not done?" he asked.

"I don't believe any reporter should be calling you on the phone, sir," I said.

"Well, in that case, I would be the one calling you," he said.

"Again, with all due respect, that too is not done, sir," I said.

"The President should not be calling any reporter on the phone."

"What then should we do?"

"Well, sir, your Press Secretary clarifies things for you. But if you want to have greater rapport with the press, perhaps you could hold more press conferences, and we could ask you more questions."

On July 14, 1969, I was offered my job, and on August 16 I was sworn into office. "I will depend upon you," Marcos said, and for the next 10 years I spoke for the President, wrote speeches and ran the government's information program. I resigned in 1980 for political reasons, but whenever Marcos needed my opinion, he reached out and I obliged.

Thus, after he announced his decision to hold a snap election, he asked to see me to tell him what I thought of it. I said, "it looks like a first step to your stepping down." He vehemently disagreed. He conceded my point when I saw him for the last time in Hawaii on my way home from a speaking engagement in Washington, D.C. after the disastrous 1987 senatorial elections.



TOP AND MIDDLE: Francisco "Kit" V. Tatad with two Philippine presidents, both surnamed Marcos. BOTTOM: Kit at his Malacañan media office



THE 'YOUNG TURKS' OF ARTS AND LETTERS

The Kit and Fenny Tatad *H.R. Ocampo*

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

At the turn of the century, the 'Young Turks' would become the equivalent of the Filipino ilustrado, representing a movement that would oppose the Ottoman empire and do so in exile in Paris.

In mid-century Manila and the following hurly-burly of the Sixties and Seventies, it would also be used as the term for the impatient young men who would seek to challenge the establishment.

If the 1950s found its Ground Zero at the Philippine Art Gallery and Ermita and Malate, the subsequent decades would also such places as 'Arfel Homes' along Visayas Avenue in Quezon City. A development pioneered by Arturo Felix Tiongco, it was composed of 16 homes that attracted both the newly-wed and the up-and-coming professionals who would later be the country's movers and shakers.

At 'Arfel' lived not only Francisco "Kit" and Fernandita "Fenny" Tatad (Kit would be destined to be Ferdinand Marcos' youngest cabinet minister and first Press Secretary, later the Ministry of Public Information), but also Dick Gordon (then the youngest delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention, later Olongapo mayor and then Philippine senator), teen stars Vilma Santos (successively, mayor, governor and congresswoman of Batangas) and Edgar Mortiz (who would re-invent himself into an influential tv director). Also living in "back to back homes", recalls Mrs. Fely Tatad, was Larry Cruz who would also play an important role in Palace communications. Fely herself, was a writer for the Economic Monitor and later the tv behemoth, ABS-CBN.

Recalls, Kit Tatad, "For the next ten years we ran the Press Office together without any major booboos or blunders. We became fast friends and started wearing the same brand of watches and ties, and going to the same bespoke tailor for our suits and our barongs, which meant Il Signore, which was also his own. We also moved into the same tiny subdivision called Arfel which put us next door to the two most popular teenage craze of that time, Vilma Santos and Edgar Mortiz who shared a common backyard, and the future Mayor of Olongapo and later



The young Kit Tatad (rightmost) in a chat with newsmen Art Borjal and Doroy Valencia

Senator Richard Gordon. Although we were both very young, and the reporters were the most senior in their respective organizations, we won their deep professional respect simply by having Larry beat the daylights out of them at the poker table.

"When martial law came, I became Secretary of the newly created Department of Public Information in addition to being Press Secretary, and Larry became in addition to his old job the Director of the Bureau of National and Foreign Information (BNFI). It was here where he first unleashed his creativity as an information manager."

Lorenzo "Larry" J. Cruz, was none other than the son of E. Aguilar Cruz, journalist, artist and the man who conjured up the name "Neo-Realists" for the abstractionist elite led by his closest friend Hernando R. Ocampo and whose home was the legendary Philippine Art Gallery.

Fely would recall that their home and Larry's would be used interchangeably for artists' gatherings as well as painting sessions, making alive the promise of the Filipino 'Young Turks' in arts and letters. The artists would include not only H.R. Ocampo and Cesar Legaspi but also Jose Joya and Malang Santos, whose wife had put up a gallery of her own.



Hernando R. Ocampo (1911 - 1978)

Dilemma

signed and dated 1958 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 32" (61 cm x 81 cm)

P 8,000,000

PROVENANCE

Gloria Villaraza-Guzman

Lorenzo "Larry" J. Cruz

Acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Hufana, Alejandrino G., ed. Pamana 13 June 1974: *A Cultural Quarterly Published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Cultural Center of the Philippines*. Manila. 1974. Listed as "*Dilemma*"

(oil, 23-1/4 x 34 ", 1958) on page 18 as no. '185' under the artist's list of paintings and owned by Gloria Villaraza-Guzman.

The work at hand, *Dilemma*, falls squarely into the characteristic motifs of the period, the mask and the shield. It is a sinuous allegory of temptation — the twin-headed snakes with a scorpion tale that have already captured three manlike shapes; other men struggle to flee and take refuge in a mountain of reflective, mirrored vanity or arrogant flight. The 'highly organic composition in fluid, organic forms and scintillating colors' was achieved, notes art critic Rod Paras-Perez of HR's inimitable style, "through the use of broken color strokes, juxtaposed very much like the Impressionists."

Always, as in this work with fascinating combinations of shade and hue, H.R. Ocampo would triumph "in no longer attaining a semblance of reality nor the capture of atmospheric effects... but to intensify colors and make them vibrate with feelings."

In this regard, *Dilemma* captures the brave spirit of a new Filipino generation.



HR Ocampo. © León Gallery Archives



An Allegory of Temptation

From the First Neo-Realist





86

Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1988)

Sugpo (Shrimp)

signed and dated 1967 (upper right)

oil on canvas

13 1/2" x 30" (34 cm x 76 cm)

P 2,200,000

Vicente Manansala is a master of color manipulation, using translucent colors for its power and evocative appeal. His oeuvre is widely celebrated for his dexterity in amplifying the beauty of each rendered subject matter and theme. As he utilized his signature transparent cubist style, he stayed close to figuration and produced renditions in basic geometric shapes through different mediums. Through his technical approach to watercolor painting in particular, folk images and everyday objects are also masterfully depicted in its domestic context. The overall coherence in this painting is achieved by his distinct sensibilities of perception and color and ability to provide structure and texture.



Vicente Manansala. © León Gallery Archives



87

Macario Vitalis (1898 - 1990)

Abstract

signed (lower right)
oil on canvas
28" x 36" (71 cm x 91 cm)

P 700,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi and Mr. Claude Tayag confirming the authenticity of this lot

A chameleon-like career is said to have been the kind that Macario Vitalis had in the whole duration of him being an artist. He had the capacity and inclination to explore various styles and themes and then return to any of them at any time. His artistic career was rich and complex, but still too little is known beyond the 70 years that were devoted to painting and drawing.

Vitalis became interested in abstraction after the Second World War, under the influence of Jacques Villon. From 1946 to 1947, he produced several abstract compositions



Macario Vitalis © León Gallery Archives

in a cubist style and colored them with a vibrant palette. Towards the end of his life, in 1985, he embarked on a series in search of the cosmos, calling it "GALAXIES." A year later, in August of 1986, a retrospective exhibition for Vitalis was held in Manila; more than a hundred paintings were presented.

True, little has been written about the work of Vitalis. His works, although signed, are either undated or, according to his website, many of them were not "able to be dated with certainty." Fortunately, one of the most important Filipino art critics, Alice Guillermo, wrote introductory texts to each catalog published on the occasion of the artist's exhibitions in the Philippines. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Jose Joya (1931 - 1995)

Red Talisman

signed and dated 1975 (lower right)

oil

22 1/2" x 22 1/2" (57 cm x 57 cm)

P 3,000,000

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

PROVENANCE

Artist's collection

LITERATURE

Arcellana, Francisco. *Joya*. Manila: Dick Baldovino Enterprises, 1996. Full-color photograph. Listed as "Red Talisman, 1975" in Joya's *Catalogue of Works* compiled by Ruben D.F. Defeo.

Remembering Joya: 1931 - 1995 (Exhibition Catalog).

Manila: National Museum of the Philippines, 2016.

Published on the occasion of the exhibition of the same name at the National Museum of Fine Arts in 2016. Full-color photograph and painting description

EXHIBITED

Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA), *Jose Joya: A 30-Year Retrospective*, Manila, June 3 - August 13, 1981

Center Culturel d' Auderghem, *Jose Joya*, Presented by the Embassy of the Philippines and the Philippine Mission to the European Economic Community in connection with the Philippine Independence Day Celebration, Brussels, Belgium, June 18 - 22, 1984

The First Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival at the National Art Gallery, *Jose Joya*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 27 - September 1, 1985

National Museum of Fine Arts (Filipino Masters' Hall), *Abstractionism: An Asian View Point*, Manila, March 1 - April 30, 1989

National Museum of Fine Arts, *Remembering Joya: 1931 - 1995*, Manila, June 8 - August 7, 2016



Jose Joya © León Gallery Archives

JOYA'S BELOVED *RED TALISMAN*

His Most Exhibited Work

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

By all accounts, Jose Joya was born under a lucky star; certainly, it was one that augured a stellar career in the arts. He was not only a prodigy but, while still only in college, also made his way into the most elite group of artists in the country, those that called the Philippine Art Gallery their home. He would thus be on first-name basis with its resident Neo-Realists; and was the youngest bona fide painter to be part of the PAG.

It guaranteed him continuous press coverage and the attention slowly but surely built him both credibility and an enthusiastic following of collectors.

He would thus begin that inexorable trajectory into the pantheon of Philippine modern art. It would be, for example, Fernando Zóbel who would arrange a scholarship for him to study in Spain in 1954, beginning Joya's appreciation of a world view. He would win first prize in 1958 in the Art Association Philippines' annual competition, the bellwether of Filipino art.

In 1964, Joya would be the first Philippine representative to the 32nd Venice Biennale.

He also would be the first Filipino recipient of the John D. Rockefeller III Fund Grant, the precursor to the Asian Cultural Council Foundation. Joya would steep himself in the American art world in 1967 through 1969. In New York, he would even meet Andy Warhol who he wrote to friends was interested in coming to Manila. Joya would also travel to Europe, where in Spain he would write enthusiastically about his patron Zóbel's Cuenca museum.

The work at hand, *Red Talisman*, from Joya's personal collection, is also his most exhibited, besting even the record of the legendary *Space Transfiguration*. It would be featured in his retrospectives and travel the world in prestigious exhibitions.

Its meditatively perfect circle would refer to Joya's voyage into the metaphysical world, referencing the sacred mandala and the symbolisms of the planets. *Red Talisman* is a rare rendering, however, since Joya would prefer muted or earth tones for this spiritually-grounded series. Here it is composed around strong scarlets, suggesting a more intense, if rawer sensibility, with the same exuberance that always defined Joya.





89

Ben Maramag (b. 1945)

A Comment on Something

signed and dated 1973 (lower left)

oil on masonite board

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

P 180,000

As observed in *A Comment on Something*, a Ben Maramag oeuvre dated 1973, the composition is almost classic in its minimalism. The minimalist composition of this work helped to highlight the shifts in gradient tones, resulting in a calm and relaxed atmosphere.

Amid the flourishing of non-objective art in the 1970s, Maramag was in pursuit of a unique artistic signature, experimenting with various methods until he found it through the use of a spray gun. This utilitarian tool,

commonly associated with industrial purposes, became his primary medium to manipulate color gradients and create a luminous effect.

The art of Maramag was shaped when pure abstraction was gaining prominence within the local art scene. He was part of the experimental generation of artists that veered away from the neo-realist and expressionist works. Like Fernando Zobel de Ayala, who explored in his art the complexities of depth using subtle tonal shifts, Maramag probed similar problems on his canvases that are usually square-shaped with evenly laid out colors.

Maramag was part of the first set of Thirteen Artist Awardees in 1970. The Thirteen Artist Awards was created by the Cultural Center of the Philippines under the directorship of Roberto Chabet. (*Isabella Romarate*)



90

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

Black Garden VI

signed and dated 1981 (lower left)

oil on paper

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

P 600,000

PROVENANCE

Galleria Duemila, Inc.

A sense of calm and wonderment is often felt at the sight of a Zen garden. The stylized landscape is unlike regular gardens, it is abundant with stones and rocks, finely raked in straight lines, wavy lines, or concentric circles, and although the aesthetic presence of flowers is rarely found, it is beautified by stacked stones, perhaps a shrub or a clump of moss, and sometimes water features. Albeit minimalistic in appearance, it exudes a profound and powerful ambience. This is because in Zen art, space is important, it is understood as a reflection of how the mind should be when in meditation.

The art-related tenets of Zen are exhibited in Lao Lianben's *Black Garden VI*. His depiction of a garden is in line with its principles of landscape gardening, particularly the simplicity of the design. As an artist whose art is associated with Zen, it can be observed that he rendered this piece done in oil on paper in a meditative state. His brushstrokes are evocative of the raked gravel or sand in Zen gardens, owing to his masterful skill in calligraphy. In Hitsuzendō or the "Zen way of the brush," the brush writes a statement about the calligrapher at a moment in time, one chance to create with the brush. The stroke needed not to be perfect and proportioned as long as it was created with the purpose of becoming one with the characters. For that reason, it is also likely that Lao applied in this piece the ideals of *wabi-sabi*, a concept in Zen art and design that finds beauty in imperfection and impermanence.

A reminder to rekindle or maintain our relationship with nature is perhaps the intention of Lao for the lot at hand, inviting us to ponder upon the philosophical aspect of a garden and to see it as more than a view to be admired. *(Isabella Romarate)*

Romulo Olazo (1934 - 2015)*Untitled #85*

signed and dated 1985 (lower center)

mixed media

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

P 4,000,000Accompanied by a certificate issued by Finale Art File
confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

Finale Art File, Makati City

Romulo Olazo started working on his *Untitled Series* in the early 1980s, debuting them in 1983 in a solo show titled "*New Works*" at The Luz Gallery. Patricia Tria Olazo, the artist's wife, notes on the artist's personal chronology 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."

From the success—both local honors and international exposure—that the *Diaphanous Series* had brought Olazo, it was evident in the *Untitled* works that Olazo wanted to take his artistry up another level, likely to prevent creative stagnation and locking himself up within the confines of comfort. Just as the work at hand, *Untitled #85*, exemplifies, Olazo preserves the irregularity of forms of the *Diaphanous* but strips it off with its inherent luminescence and delicate ethereality, opting instead for solidity and the use of bolder, varicolored pigments to highlight opacity thus, imbuing them with enigmatic flair. Swathes of colors seemingly engage in jarring dialogue with form, veering from the harmonious dancing of the two elements and enhanced by the airy and almost mystical quality of light in the *Diaphanous*.

Reyes writes in the same book: "Clearly the *Untitled* works, by their sheer appellation, constituted Olazo's experimental stage."

It can also be said that Olazo's *Untitled* works foreshadow a transition to another acclaimed series—the *Permutation Series*. As the *Untitled* works were born from the withdrawal of significant elements, so was the *Permutation*, retaining only the most fundamental—lines and, thus, leaving hollowed spaces. (*Adrian Maranan*)





Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Coalesce

signed and dated 1997 (lower right)

carved glass

12" x 13" x 7" (30 cm x 33 cm x 18 cm)

P 2,000,000

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

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "coalesce" as "to bring together, merge; to combine (parts or elements) to form one whole." Ramon Orlina, the glass virtuoso, brings out the magnificent delicacy of glass as a medium to expound on the definition of the term visually and creatively. In this piece aptly titled *Coalesce*, Orlina seamlessly bonds two separate pieces of carved glass into one visual display of sculptural magnificence. The sculptures are supported by a wooden base that serves as both their foundation and a "bridge" that "connects" them. The point of confluence where the two sculptures meet engenders a compelling optical illusion, resulting in a piece that elicits further artistic survey and brings out the creative exploration of thoughts in every viewer.

Armed with a bachelor's degree in architecture, which he obtained from the University of Santo Tomas in 1965, Orlina's ingenuity weds integrity of form and balance. When viewed at a certain angle and distance, especially at the point of confluence, the sculptures seemingly form a mountain with sharp edges and a steepness so sheer that one can imagine an experienced hiker climbing with the aid of ropes and other mechanical devices. The work then becomes a microcosm of a breathtaking vista. (*Adrian Maranan*)



Ramon Orlina © alike



Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Red Moon

signed and dated 2001 (lower right)

oil on canvas

34" x 34" (86 cm x 86 cm)

P 4,000,000

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

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Under the mentorship of cartoonist Liborio Gatbonton, Mauro Malang Santos honed his skills and ignited an enduring fascination with the realm of cartoon illustration. This pivotal experience planted the seeds of creativity within him and paved the way for his remarkable artistic evolution. These seeds would eventually bear fruit as Malang would leave the world of cartoons in an attempt to pave the way towards a unique practice. After a decade of prolific work in the realm of cartoons and illustrations, he embarked on a daring exploration of new artistic horizons. Guided by a desire for innovation and self-expression, he embraced elements of cubism and abstraction. Influenced by the likes of Picasso, Matisse, Manansala, and Ang Kiukok, Malang's later style became a tour de force that reshaped artistic conventions. This very style, exemplified by the particular piece in question, radiates a sense of generosity in its vivid imagery, expansive color palettes, and evocative representation of cultural identity.

One could also argue that Malang's experience in cartoons afforded him an eccentric sense of creativity to fuel his practice. This can be seen in his inventive way of approaching and expressing the various elements in his craft. This particular piece titled *Blood Moon* features a lunar eclipse emanating down on a town. Traditionally, most cultures view the appearance of a lunar eclipse as a bad omen. Who could blame them? Prior to our knowledge of how eclipses worked (or even the heliocentric model), the fact that the moon would turn into the shade akin to blood would undoubtedly be seen as ominous. Yet Malang's work seemingly treats the phenomenon in a neutral and frank way. The eclipse is not seen as inherently ominous or beautiful but something natural: an approach that is decidedly more nuanced and complex. (*Jed Daya*)



Mauro Malang Santos © León Gallery Archives



Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

Júcar XIX

signed (lower left and verso) dated 1972

oil on canvas

23 3/4" x 23 3/4" (60 cm x 60 cm)

P 5,000,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Spain

LITERATURE

De la Torre, Alfonso and Rafael Pérez-Madero. *Fernando Zóbel: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings (1946 - 1984)*. Madrid: Fundación Azcona, 2022. Listed as "n° 72-54" with full-color photograph and painting description on page 467.

Cuenca was part and parcel of Fernando Zobel's creative praxis. His first encounter with the city happened in 1963, underlaid by his idea to establish a museum that would house his collection of paintings in his Madrid abode. After a failed search for a conducive place in Toledo, Zobel fortuitously found Cuenca. On October 4, 1963, Zobel wrote to his American friend, Paul Haldeman:

"My big project is a Museum of Spanish Abstract Art in the city of Cuenca—two and a half hours from Madrid. In the renowned "Hanging Houses," which the kind-hearted, forward-looking local corporation has let me rent for thirty years at something like 1.50 dollars per annum. How nice for everybody! I have a feeling it is going to turn into one of the loveliest small museums in the world. As I will be owner, director, curator, acquisitions committee, patron, board of trustees and dictator, I rather think I shall have a lovely time."

In July 1963, Zobel established his residence at Cuenca. The city would inspire myriad landscape paintings that manifest Zobel's enigmatic yet sublime lyrical abstraction. "Once he has decided to set up the Museum of Abstract Art in Cuenca, his trips to this city are constant; for years, it will be on the road and in the city that he will find most of his themes for landscapes... Little by little, the city and its surrounding area take possession of the painter, and Cuenca fills his notebooks, his pictures, and also his writing," his biographer Angeles Villalba Salvador succinctly notes.

Zobel's brainchild, the *Museo de Arte Abstracto Español* in Cuenca, would be formally established on June 30, 1966. Pervaded with much jubilation, Zobel would elevate Cuenca as the beautiful muse of many of his paintings. Two of these series now form part of Zobel's most coveted and highly imaginative and lyrical works: "*El Júcar*," or The River Júcar, and "*La Vista*," inspired by the view from the window in his Cuenca studio.

In particular focus in this essay is the *El Júcar* series, to which the work at hand, titled *Júcar XIX*, belongs. The *El Júcar* was born from the 1971 works *El lago* (lake) and *El estanque* (pond), which were based on his notes on the lake located at Winchester College in Oxford, where he attended a lunch for the members of the Oriental Ceramic Society. Zobel would start working on the *El Júcar* in 1971 after carefully deliberating on a large-scale series of works looking into the river ecosystem. Zobel chose the Júcar River, which flows through the towns of Cuenca, Alcala del Júcar, Cofrentes, Alzira, Sueca, and Cullera. As such, Cuenca's essence and landscapes took center stage.

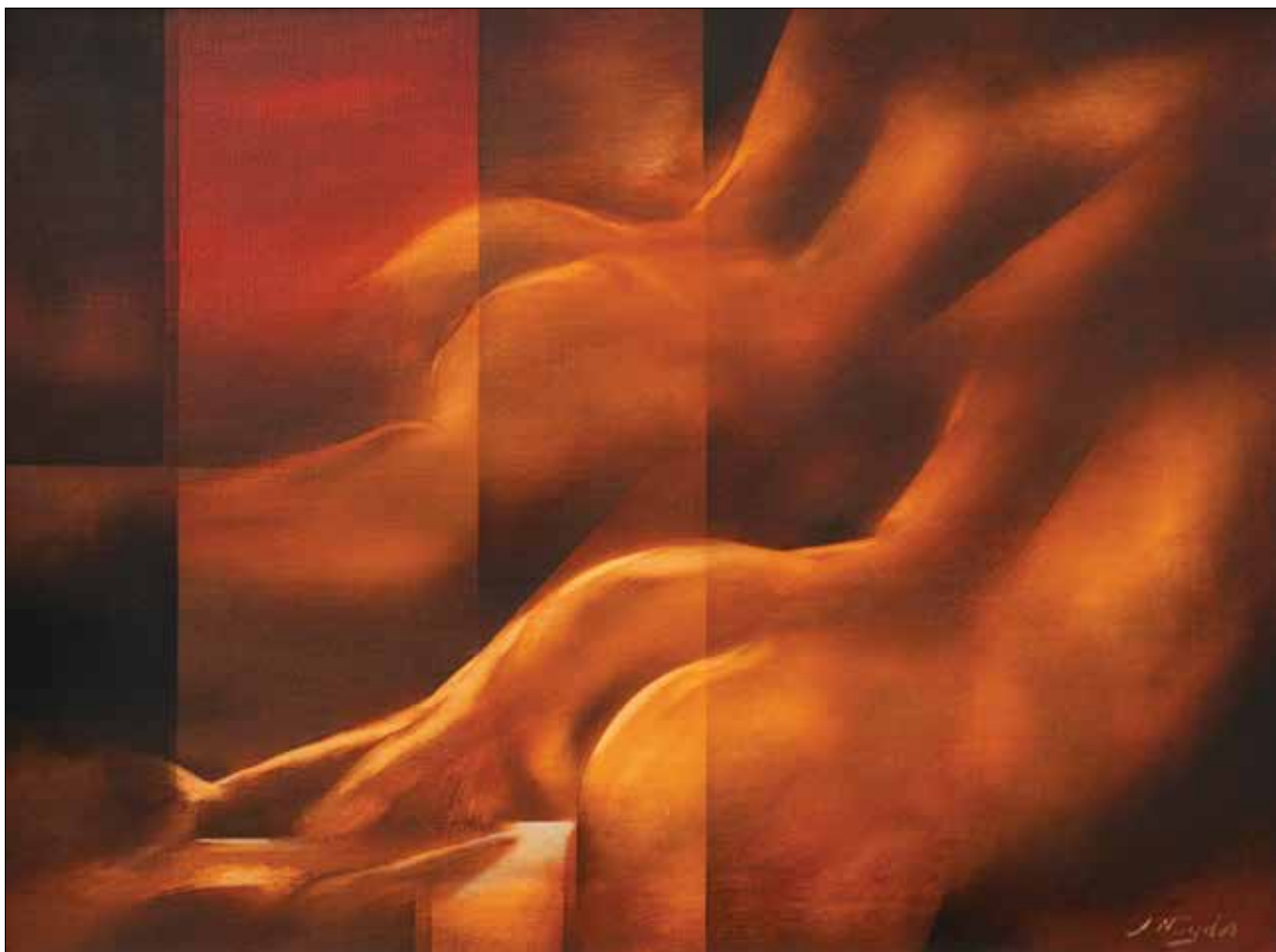
Zobel's enthrallment at the sinuous paths of the Júcar and his marvel at the sight of his beloved Cuenca is evoked in the ethereal quality of *Júcar XIX*. We see in the range of colors, from the siennas to dark browns and even the greys, the ebb and flow of the waters of the Júcar. In an interview in *El País* on March 3, 1982, Zobel shared glimpses of how the varying "colors" of the Júcar are reflected in his paintings of the river. "I have often worked with issues of color, but always in the abstract," Zobel says:

"Actually, the starting point is the extremely unusual Júcar River as it flows through Cuenca, where it displays an array of colors the likes of which I have not seen elsewhere."

One of the windows on the other side of Zobel's apartment-cum-studio in Cuenca overlooked the mouth of the Júcar. The Júcar passes through the heart of Cuenca, and so the river was enshrined in perpetuity in Zobel's psyche. Once again, Zobel gives prominence to the importance of one's memory and recollections, reveling in the power of lived experiences in rendering works that palpably provide a window into his consciousness and subconsciousness and the power of profound introspection, resulting in pieces that wallow in poetic elegance. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Zóbel's River of Mystery and Memory





95

Justin Nuyda (1944 - 2022)

Untitled

signed (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 32" (61 cm x 81 cm)

P 800,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ms. Ayni Nuyda
confirming the authenticity of this lot

Justin Nuyda, perceives abstraction as a realm bound solely by the horizons of one's creative mind. This perspective eloquently characterizes Nuyda's unmistakably unique and intricately layered artistic approach. In this piece which can be seen as his own interpretation of the nude, Nuyda doubles down on the idea that abstraction is not an exercise in going beyond reality. Instead the artist anchors the abstract

in the apparent; the ethereal in the real. Through his creations, he consistently captivates spectators by weaving an enchanting tapestry of allure and an almost ethereal quality. Within the realm of Nuyda's artistic vision, these surrealist compositions take their nascent form, and it's through his skilled brushwork that they materialize, embodying a refined elegance that is distinctly his own. (*Jed Daya*)



96

Macario Vitalis (1898 - 1990)

Bridge in Puteaux

signed and dated 1941 (lowerleft)

oil on board

21" x 28 3/4" (53 cm x 73 cm)

P 300,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi and Mr. Claude Tayag confirming the authenticity of this lot

Having settled in France where he studied at the Academie de Montmartre in 1926, Macario Vitalis is most known for his paintings of pre-war Parisian life rendered in his distinct post-impressionist style. If the French impressionists were concerned with accurately depicting the transient qualities of light, the post-impressionists the likes of Vitalis, on the other hand, deviated from such accuracy through an expressive distortion of forms and deliberate use of unnatural light and color.

The lot at hand is a curious piece bearing traces of an impressionist style that seems a precursor to the full-blown post-impressionism that would manifest more blatantly in the later works of the artist. It renders a scenery in Puteaux, a Paris suburb where Vitalis had set up a studio while helping out at his friend and fellow artist Camile Renault's theater-restaurant, the very place where he would also meet Pablo Picasso. Painted in 1941, it is among Vitalis's earlier works painted just before the German occupation, capturing in spontaneously quaint strokes the fleeting light of pre-war Paris. (*Pie Tiausas*)



97

Tam Austria (b. 1943)

Harvest Scene

signed and dated 1992 (upper left)

oil on canvas

28" x 40" (71 cm x 102 cm)

P 300,000

Tam Austria's artwork showcases a distinctly Filipino ensemble of characters that form the essence of his uncomplicated, rural paradise. Frequently centered around familial and traditional themes such as the Mother and Child motifs, depictions of the mythica or quasi-religious, or ordinary individuals immersed in labor, Austria's creations encapsulate the unpretentious Filipino way of life. In doing so, he highlights the allure of rural existence, which has now become a distant recollection in today's modern society.

Another intriguing aspect of Austria's practice is his aesthetic within the context of Filipino Modernism. Relatively speaking, a glance at the artists and artistic styles that developed during the 20th Century, one may notice a trend towards hard-edged, planar, and even geometric styles. Whether the work was one of Abstract Expressionism or done by a member of the Neo-Realists, it's hard not to notice their thematic disposition. Austria's work can thus be seen as a relative breath of fresh air. His works seemingly contain softer-edges and a predominant use of pastels. All of which lead to a lighter, more hopeful, and more emancipatory feeling and attitude. (*Jed Daya*)



98

Charlie Co (b. 1960)

Lords of War

signed and dated 2006 (lower right)

oil on canvas

72" x 48" (183 cm x 122 cm)

P 280,000

EXHIBITED

Osage Gallery, *Possession*, Hong Kong, June 1 - July 15, 2007

Charlie Co's *Lords of War* is a dark image of destruction and distress amid the unforgiving wrath brought by war and violence, not just any kind of violence, but imperialist violence. Co expounds on this work: "A man in an armored suit stands on a landscape of devastation. His left foot steps on a skull as if he has triumphantly won a war, killing his enemies. The crow, an iconic symbol that has been a recurring image [in my paintings] since the 1990s, symbolizes death or harbingers of death. He holds a burning sword meaning there is always a constant threat. Falling human figures are power seekers falling from their ambitions and greed."

Wars and the strengthening of the military are part and parcel of imperialist nations' survival. The two world wars resulted from these nations' struggle and scramble to assert dominion over the world. In particular, the United States, the most powerful imperialist, wage wars, invade countries, and intervene in civil conflicts not just to take control of the local economy but to maintain high profits for its military-industrial complex. In 2022, the US military-industrial complex amassed a profit from arms exports of \$205.6 billion, a combined value from private corporations tied to the lucrative industry and sales arranged by the US government. They further achieved this as they took advantage of the Russia-Ukraine War, an inter-imperialist war between the US-led NATO forces and Russia. In 2021, according to data provided by the veritable think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SPRI), the US accounted for 51% of the total arms sales, a sheer 33% from the runner-up, China.

In the Philippines, the US has installed pro-American regimes since the post-war era to ensure the protection of its vested interests in our economy. It is up to the Filipino people to arouse, organize, and mobilize the greater number of the oppressed and relentlessly confront the hegemony of imperialism and its local agents. The same goes for peoples of numerous oppressed nations. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Vicente Manansala (1910 - 1988)

Nude

signed and dated 1980 (upper left)
charcoal on paper
25 3/4" x 18 1/2" (65 cm x 47 cm)

P 200,000

The discipline to which the artist of the lot at hand subjected himself was draftsmanship. Vicente Manansala, throughout his entire artistic career, has consistently exhorted on the importance of teaching drawing, more than teaching art.

According to the modernist master, "You can't teach art. You can only teach drawing."

Other than his excellent draftsmanship, Manansala was also known for his transparent Cubism, the evocative layering of planar surfaces to evoke an image. He was able to extend this stylistic treatment to his charcoal works as well, which is exemplified by this untitled charcoal on paper piece dated 1980. However, cubism's tendency to bisect forms did not extend to his depiction of the female form. Instead, he shows his deft skill in depicting the human body, rendering with utmost realism. (*Isabella Romarate*)



100

Joy Mallari (b. 1966)

Civil Eyes

signed and dated 2002 (verso)
oil on canvas
16" x 12" (41 cm x 30 cm)

P 140,000

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

Joy Mallari's distinctive figurative expressionist style is frequently associated with the artistic inclinations shared by the Salimpusa and Sanggawa artist collectives. However, what truly sets her apart is her narrative methodology, which delves into the intricate interplay between literature and art. This unique approach enriches her creations with a remarkable depth. The artwork in question transcends Mallari's customary techniques, as it gracefully embraces the dimension of history. In doing so, it not only serves as a testament to her versatility but also underscores her capacity to seamlessly merge artistic forms, lending her work an even more profound resonance. (*Jed Daya*)





101

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Optic Union VI

signed and dated 2000

carved glass

12" x 10 1/2" x 9" (31 cm x 27 cm x 23 cm)

P 800,000

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

Ramon Orlina's mastery over the medium of glass is undisputed; the prolific nature of his output over the last few decades has earned him a reputation for being one of the country's most renowned contemporary artists.

This glass sculpture dated 2000 bears the trademarks found in many of Orlina's earlier works; a relentlessly angular structure, crystalline, staunch yet seemingly

carved out of light. Within its tantalizing depths, one can clearly observe the artist's mastery in how the reflection and refraction of light draws the eye to the sculpture's glistening hues. The complexity of the work at hand is a visual marvel, utilizing sharp edges to seemingly warp the air surrounding it and inviting the viewer into the bends and folds of Orlina's signature green glass. (*Arman Lorenzo Burias*)

AMORSOLO PAINTS THE NOLI'S FINAL CHAPTER: Rizal's Exhortation to the Youth as Elias Speaks to Basilio

by PROF. MICHAEL CHARLESTON "XIAO" BRIONES CHUA
Filipino Public Historian

"I die without seeing the dawn break on my country.... You who are about to see it, greet her... do not forget those who have fallen during the night."

—ELIAS TO BASILIO,
NOLI ME TANGERE, RIZAL

The nation was birthed because of the words and works of our founding fathers and mothers that gave us a sense of belongingness to each other in one national sentiment. Thus, art, whether in the form of visuals or words has the power to unite us.

José Rizal's novel that helped shape our nation, *Noli me Tangere*, is seen to still have that power to bring us together. After a divisive election in 2022, I believe that the GMA teleserye *Maria Clara at Ibarra*, a fantasy portal series based on the novel, brought us back to talking to each other about our common country regardless of our political affiliation. That is the power of Rizal.

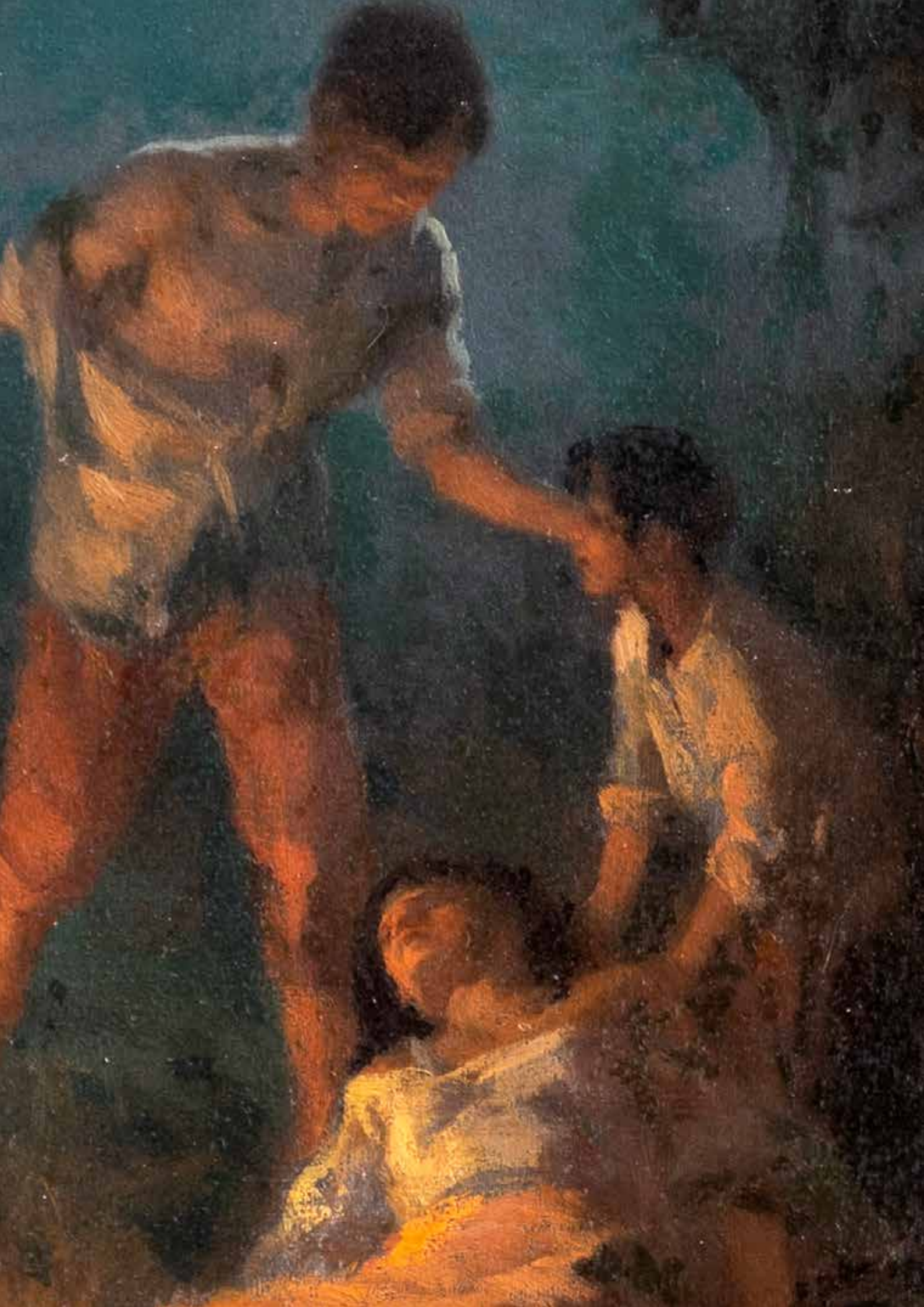
Fernando Amorsolo, as National Artist for the Visual Arts, not only painted idealized scenes which edified the daily life of Filipinos, but painted portraits and also scenes that recorded Philippine History, such as the *Burning of Manila*. As such, they have become visual aids that portray an important moment in the story of our country.

But rare is an Amorsolo that portrays the National Hero Dr. José Rizal or anything related to him. They were in demand before the war but were believed to have been destroyed, if ever there were. But some have recently surfaced to the public view. A private collector in 2016 loaned to the

National Museum of the Philippines a large Amorsolo portrait showing Rizal holding an open book, with his sculpture of *The Triumph of Science Over Death* to his right and his portrait sketch of his sister Saturnina behind him to his left. Then, earlier this year, Amorsolo's 1934 painting *Elias and Salome* was auctioned at León Gallery. It was based on Rizal's missing chapter from the *Noli Me Tangere*.

The work in this lot depicts the dramatic scene from the final chapter of the Noli, titled "Christmas Eve," before the epilogue. Elias has been shot in the river while he was with Crisostomo Ibarra. Ibarra would escape and would later emerge in Rizal's sequel, *El Filibusterismo*, as Simoun to avenge what had happened to them, all along everyone taking him for dead.

Elias has proceeded to the grave site of the Ibarras at the foot of the balete tree — where he has also buried Ibarra's treasure. There, he finds Basilio, whose brother Crispin had disappeared, murdered by the sacristan mayor. Basilio is now mourning his dead mother, Sisa, who has always been regarded as the symbol of the suffering *Inang Bayan* (Mother Country.) He is also being chased by the authorities. Basilio has just lost everything.



Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

Sisa

signed and dated 1934 (lower right)

oil on canvas board

19 1/4" x 13" (49 cm x 33 cm)

P 3,000,000

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

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Now a dying man, Elias tells Basilio to burn his mother's remains along with his and entrusts him with the treasure. Before expiring, Elias speaks to Basilio some of the most famous lines from the novel. This is the scene captured by Amorsolo's painting. In essence this was José Rizal's exhortation to the Filipino Youth, "I die without seeing the dawn break on my country... You who are about to see it, greet her... do not forget those who have fallen during the night."

Elias raises his eyes to heaven in a prayer and slowly falls to the ground.

According to José Alejandrino, who was with Rizal while he was publishing the novel in Belgium, Rizal regretted killing Elias. He did not think he would be able to write a sequel and talk of a revolution. Rizal told him, "Otherwise I would have preserved the life of Elias, who was a noble character, patriotic, self-denying and disinterested – necessary qualities in a man who leads a revolution – whereas Crisostomo Ibarra was an egotist who only decided to provoke the rebellion when he was hurt in his interests... with men like him, success cannot be expected in their undertakings."

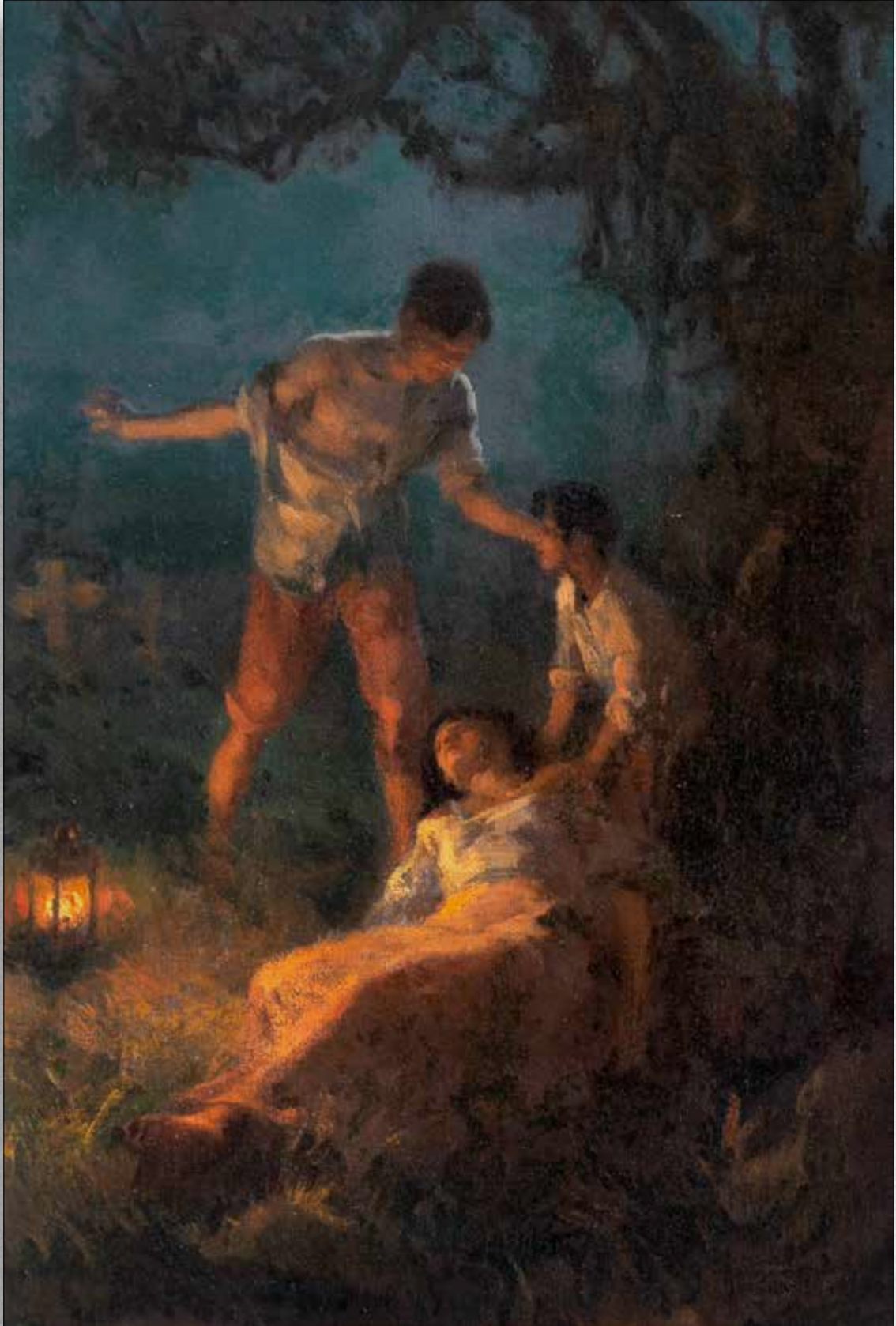
Basilio, carried on to the second novel *El Filibusterismo* to become a student and a reformer. Historian José Victor Torres argues that the real "filibustero" Rizal was referring to was not Simoun, but the Filipino Youth, exemplified by Basilio, who would be waging a revolution not to destroy, but to change the country.

The painting is important not just because it was a National Artist's take on the National Hero's work, but because it depicts two of the most important characters in Philippine Literary History with the symbol of the motherland. The scene is both tragic but also hopeful.



TOP: "Elias and Salome" by Amorsolo, also from the same year, depicts the lost chapter of Rizal's pivotal novel, the Noli, (seen below).

Amorsolo Paints Rizal's Message to the Youth



Cesar Legaspi (1917 - 1994)*Dancing Nude (sic)*

signed and dated 1974 (lower right)

oil on canvas

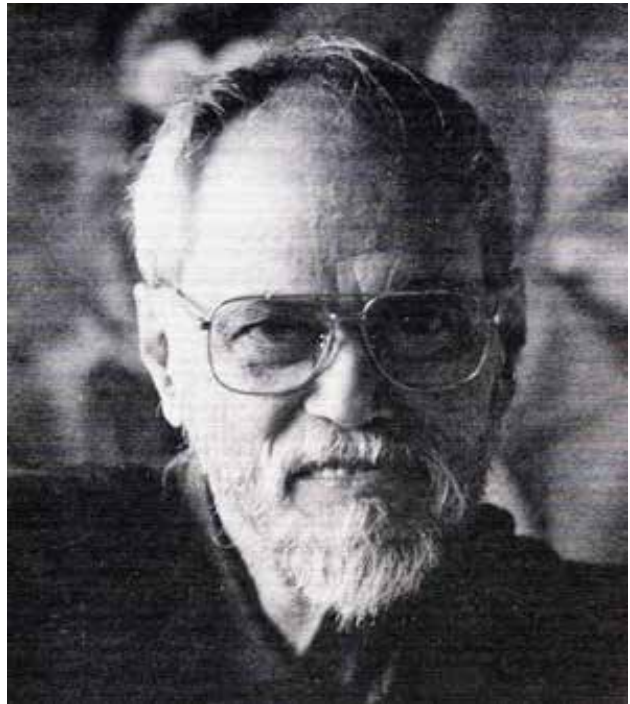
28" x 22" (71 cm x 56 cm)

P 1,200,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection

EXHIBITED

Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA), *Five Directions*, Manila, October 31 - December 22, 1980

Cesar Legaspi. © Tatler Asia

Cesar Legaspi's *Dancing Nude* was among the works showcased in the seminal "*Five Directions*" exhibition held at the Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA) from October 31 to December 22, 1980. Spearheaded by its founding director Arturo Luz, the MOPA's "*Five Directions*" was a groundbreaking show as it "put together in one exhibition certain stylistic tendencies moving along similar lines," writes the exhibit's curator and eminent art critic Rod. Paras-Perez. The show assembled the best and brightest in the Philippine art scene of the post-war period: the Neo-Realists, the Non-Objectives, the "Lakeshore" Artists, The Macro-Visionaries/Magic Realists/Hyper Realists, and the CCP Group.

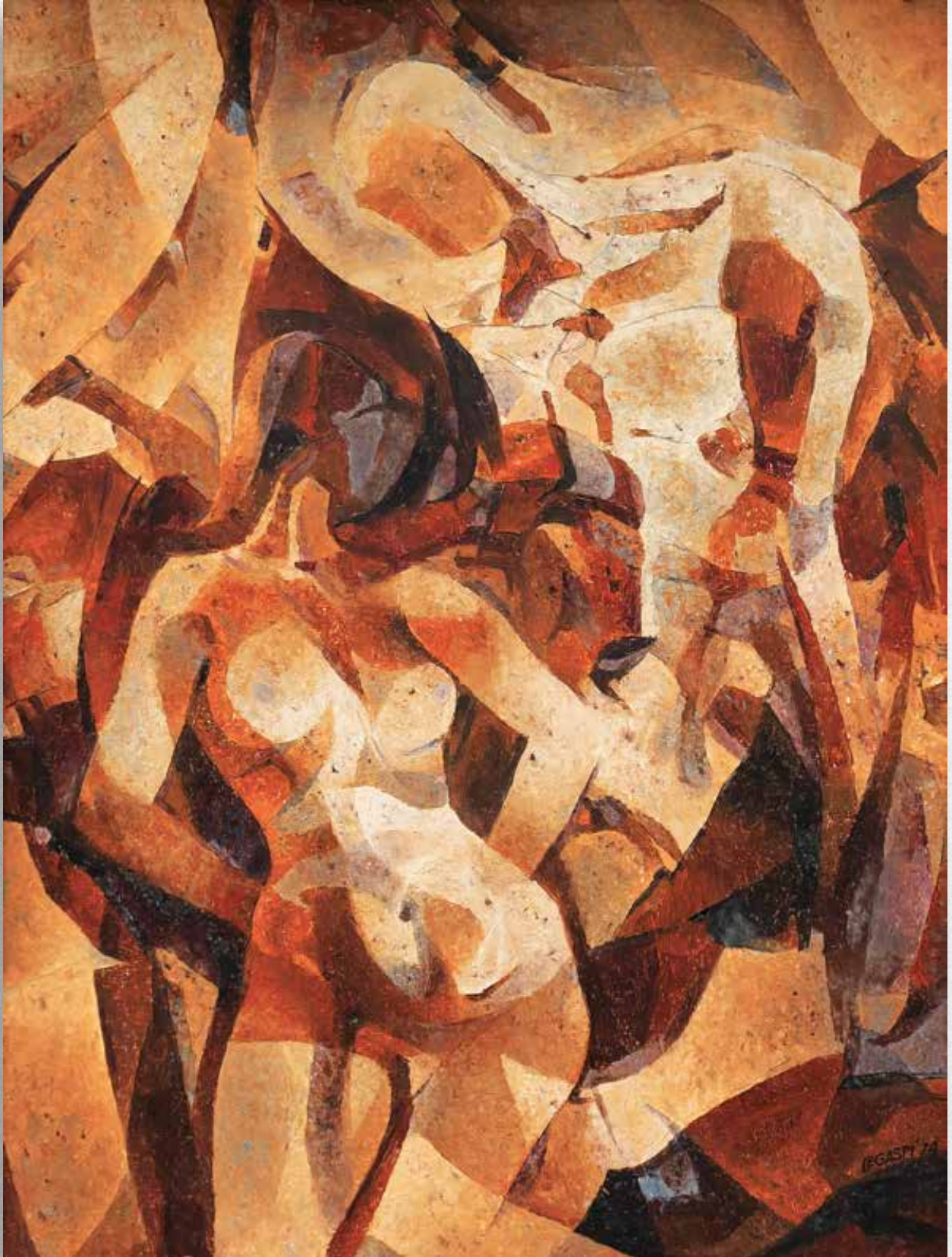
Returning to Legaspi's *Dancing Nude*, the work is emblematic of the artist's creative praxis during the 1970s, in which "he referred to objective reality as only as an undertone to his powerful abstract images," as critic Alicia Coseteng writes in the book *Art Philippines*. By the 1960s, Legaspi had started to veer towards abstraction, and the 1970s would mark the consummate realization of this style. Legaspi depicts two nude figures, a man and a woman. He weaves Expressionism with his trademark Cubist language, underscoring the

intensity of colors and irregularity yet solidity of forms.

The Neo-Realist spirit of painting renewed perspectives on the often harsh reality is ever-present in this work. Both figures seemingly merge with the space around them, dancing their way to form one coherent whole. Legaspi's radical fragmentation results in the overlapping of different elements in the composition, giving birth to an enigmatic harmonious oneness. Although depicting nudes, eroticism is not expressed but what is likely the struggling Filipino collective spirit in the immediate period of post-war rehabilitation, all the more so in the period of dictatorial rule in the 1970s—when this work was painted—in which people from all walks of life confronted in solidarity the contradicting elements of resilience, hope, and anguish brought by the darkness of the socio-economic and socio-political landscape of the time.

Coseteng writes in the same monograph: "Legaspi's leitmotif is a concern for the disinherited, struggling to exist in a harsh world. The social content of his mural reflects the influence of the protest movements of the postwar period." (*Adrian Maranan*)

Cesar Legaspi and the Festival of Romance



Michael Cacnio (b. 1969)*I Want More*

signed and dated 2008

brass and wood

artwork: 31 1/4" x 5 1/2" x 5 3/4" (79 cm x 14 cm x 15 cm)

with base: 40" x 7 1/2" x 6 3/4" (102 cm x 19 cm x 17 cm)

P 500,000

Renowned contemporary sculptor Michael Cacnio is best known for his slice-of-life works in brass. With a fondness for the subject of the Filipino folk, his artistic practice seems a whimsically tactile takeoff from the rural folk of his father Angel Cacnio's paintings. While his father drew inspiration from the collectivity of rural living by portraying fisherfolk, farmers, cockfights, and town festivities in his paintings that combine a classic Amorsolo-esque naturalism with an illustrative flair, Michael Cacnio singles out peripheral subjects that often camouflage themselves into the background of everyday life. Vendors, children at play, imagery of folk livelihood and the domestic are singled out to capture a more personal experience of the everyday in his work. These quotidian subjects, all too easily forgotten in passing, are far from monumental. And yet, in the works of Michael Cacnio, they become solidified in brass as little monuments evoking the nostalgia of Filipino childhood.

Perhaps that is exactly the charm of Cacnio's body of work—the childlike eyes through which he sees the everyday. There is always a playful exaggeration to his treatment of subjects that is ever present in the piece at hand.

Here, however, the artist selects a more daring choice of subject—one that brings out a stronger social realist voice than is typically seen in a Cacnio sculpture. In place of the common folk, we see in this piece a stout man donning a large top hat. Seated on a comically tall chair, the man carries three gold bars and holds out a palm to the heavens, as if waiting for a blessing to come from above. Cacnio's most favored subject, however, is not totally absent here. The caricature Cacnio makes of the greedy man recalls the whimsical humor of the folk that is epitomized by characters of the fool archetype (or the *pusong*) such as *Juan Tamad* and *Juan Pusong* in Filipino folktales. Similar to the stories of *Juan Pusong* where the titular character Juan mockingly outwits authority, *I Want More* possesses a subversive humor that can only come from the playful mind of the commoner with a humble stature, thus rendering the folk ever present despite their sculptural absence. (*Pie Tiausas*)





105

Marcel Antonio (b. 1965)

The Censors

signed and dated 2014 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

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

P 300,000

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

EXHIBITED

ManilART 2014, *Endangered Visions (Group Exhibition)*, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, October 15 - 19, 2014

Making its debut at the ManilArt fair in 2014, the lot at hand is a work by Marcel Antonio shown at the international group exhibition entitled 'Endangered Visions' curated by Cabanatuan-based artist Gromyko Semper. In his exhibition notes, Semper describes the group show as such: "Endangered Visions aims to invigorate art with the unique, the rare, and the original: exploring the innermost exotic, mystical and magical recesses of the mind... seeks

to counterbalance an art world driven by a rapacious market with something more contemplative, subtle and challenging."

In this work called *The Censors*, Marcel Antonio presents a dreamlike eccentricity typical of his paintings, but curiously composes the scene with a rigid austerity. Gone are the soft whimsical blues and lethargically blissful faces, now replaced by dark austere muted hues as well as starker and grim-looking expressions. With all elements arranged in a labyrinthine composition, Antonio maintains the eccentric character of his works, but instead of typically reveling in its bizarre other-ness, the image arrests its own eccentricity—or in other words, it 'endangers' it. The visual effect is thus a sense of trapped indulgence within the odd labyrinth of the artist's own making.

Antonio's paintings are usually situated in a space of fantastic in-between, and the same is true for this work. In *The Censors*, however, Antonio depicts such a space as endangered, seemingly caught in between figures of indulgence and authority as the bizarre struggles to come to its fullest. (*Pie Tiausas*)

Marc Aran Reyes (b. 1996)*Displacement I*

signed and dated 2009 (lower right)

oil on canvas

75" x 48" (191 cm x 122 cm)

P 2,400,000

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

LITERATURE

Reyes, Marc Aran. *Between the Shadow and the Soul*.

San Juan City: Art Underground, 2021. Full-color photograph on page 112 and painting description on page 113.

EXHIBITED

Art Central Hong Kong, placed. (*Art Underground Manila*), Central Harbourfront, Hong Kong, March 27 - 31, 2019

Marc Aran Reyes. © Photo from Art Central Hong Kong 2019.

The empty spaces that largely occupy the works of Marc Aran Reyes are hauntingly dream-like. As he provides a sound visual contrast to such emptiness with a hyperrealist style, Reyes is able to create a balance that draws the viewer towards a meditative state. The compositional isolation he employs thus turns into something more than visual: Isolation in Reyes' works is felt, as the sentimental space lyrically reaches out to the one who views the work. While Reyes maintains that the meticulously detailed character of his pieces are personally intended as expressions of his own perceived reality instead of mere representation, said reality—as it is presented to the viewer—becomes the audience's own as the canvas turns into a space for introspection.

The work at hand is a piece exhibited at the Art Central Hong Kong in a 2019 solo show entitled *Placed*. As is typically seen in Reyes' works, we see here several contrasts at play: detail and emptiness, light and dark, weight and lightness. The composition easily draws the eye to the render of a stone pile deliberately

disproportionate to the other elements in the piece. While its arrangement conveys a sense of Zen lightness, the hyperrealistic detail and disproportionate size conveys weight and materiality. The ghostlike figure that lies on its back is a curious image as well with its gossamer lightness that seems to succumb to the solidity of all other objects in the composition. With such contrasts at play in the work, Reyes' captures all too accurately the weight and lightness that comes with the feeling of alienation, or the existential sense of being-out-of-place. On one hand, this feeling of displacement frees one from the burdensome materiality of the world, but on the other, it also comes with the unbearable weight of nothingness.

The works of Marc Aran Reyes often have this penchant for problematizing existence. And yet, Reyes shies away from giving answers or solutions—if they even exist at all. Instead, he opts for capturing feeling, and in this case, what he expresses is simply relatable: to feel like nothing is both heavy and light. (*Pie Tiausas*)



Benedicto Cabrera (b. 1942)

Sabel

signed and dated 2005 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

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

P 10,000,000

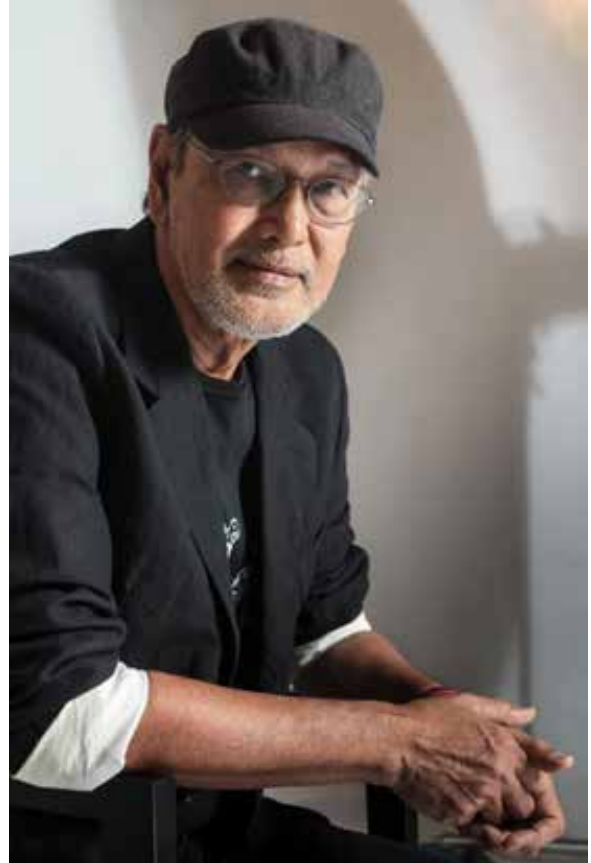
PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist

Over the span of decades, the esteemed National Artist Benedicto "BenCab" Cabrera has brought forth numerous ethereal representations of Sabel. These depictions are a far cry from the initial impression the artist had upon encountering her during his youth, glimpsing her through a window. Sabel's transformation from those early days is remarkable—originally spotted by the artist in the alleyways of Bambang, clad in plastic coverings and scavenging amidst garbage receptacles. From these humble beginnings, BenCab harnessed Sabel's presence as a wellspring of creative impetus.

His artistic explorations of Sabel's essence transcended surface appearances, delving into her inner fortitude. BenCab's approach differed strikingly from the prevalent "male gaze" typical of hypermasculine portrayals of women by other artists. Instead, he opted for a veneration of Sabel, spotlighting her resilience from a reverent standpoint. Through his distinctive perspective, he unveiled the depth and strength that radiated from her being.

But even depictions of the icon herself would change and shift within the mind of BenCab himself. Here we see the common visual cue and elements associated with Sabel, yet their form has seemingly departed from BenCab's initial renderings. What first began as a relatively more intimate and even social affair has blossomed into an inquiry into form and technique. Such a reading coincides with another major series for BenCab, his *Larawan series*. The aforementioned series of work coincides with an artistic practice that puts a work's technique and form at the forefront. (*Jed Daya*)



Benedicto Cabrera. © León Gallery Archives

*A Sabel to Reckon With
e BenCab Muse Comes Into Her Own*



Elaine Navas (b. 1964)*Untitled*

signed and dated 2018 (lower left)

oil on canvas

48" x 72" (122 cm x 183 cm)

P 400,000Accompanied by a certificate issued by West Gallery
and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

West Gallery, Quezon City

*“But heavenly Clouds, great divinities to idle men; who supply us
with thought and argument, and intelligence and humbug,
and circumlocution, an ability to hoax, and comprehension”*

— ARISTOPHANES, THE CLOUDS

How does one appreciate nature? Given how it exists in the world, is there a proper way to understand it? Is art an acceptable avenue or medium when it comes to appreciating nature? Numerous genres from Realism to Impressionism have had a long history of depicting and sharing the beauty of nature. But the development of technology, especially within the context of photography, videography, animation, etc... has painting become obsolete? Perhaps our now multifaceted understanding of nature should not be seen as a replacement for realism, but as a jumping off point for a brand new kind of philosophy. One that goes beyond seeing realism as a mere commodity, document, or artifact; but something closer to art's more inherently transcendental claims. Such bold claims must first rest upon certain distinctions.

Within this context, what then separates a photo of a collection of clouds. What separates this 2018 oil on canvas painting by Elaine Navas from a similar photo taken by a common smartphone? One could argue that perhaps it was the intention. Whereas while a photo is relatively instantaneous, a painting is one which may imply a prolonged sense of dedication or intent behind its creation. Such a position seemingly takes inspiration from the aesthetics developed by Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy even

argues that “What is precious to us in an author's work is the labor of his soul and not the architectural structure in which he packs his thoughts and feelings.”

Another argument would be that, in a world so focused on delivering and even finding ways of delivering and capturing things in the most detailed and cutting-edge way, Navas' realism can be seen as delivering reality not as it is seen, but how it remembered, how it is felt, how it is experienced by us the viewer. The philosopher Nick Zangwill, in response to the notion that true aesthetic appreciation always requires factual or scientific knowledge, notes that such an epistemic condition may ruin or harm our appreciation of a thing. He cites clouds as an example. Wherein he notes that “the beauty of clouds is the beauty of things that look solid in a fluffy bouncy way.” The introduction of the true physical makeup during an act of appreciation in the sense that Zangwill puts it may harm or diminish the aesthetic experience of them. Thus in some cases, context, especially one distanced from aesthetics, may not be helpful to an experience. In Navas' case, its imperfections, in its failure to accurately depict the world, we are able to view not clouds as they actually are, but through an aspect of aesthetic experience and beauty. The work's unreality shows us more than meets the eye. (*Jed Daya*)





109

Bernardo Pacquing (b. 1967)

What I Said

signed and dated 2003 (verso)

oil on canvas

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

P 1,200,000

PROVENANCE

León Gallery, *The Asian Cultural Council Auction 2022*, Makati City,
5 March 2022, Lot 105.

Bernardo Pacquing's language of abstraction is a gradual process of labyrinthine gestures. The abstraction strips the block shapes of context and meaning until what remains are the detailed surface textures of the canvas. The viewer is then approached by a large-scale object where its own connected physical characteristics are its own - vital and independent. Pacquing's abstract works were influenced by the midcentury practice of obscuring the line between art and existence. His language of abstraction is a systematic and cautious process of perplexing forms. Impelled by the often-dismissed facets of urban life, Pacquing paints large-scale abstract compositions that reimagine the unremarkable corners of the urban landscape, employing oil paint over an uneven surface. The piece combines the essence of Zen aesthetics and minimalism. The delicate application of colors evokes a subdued sense of strength and firmness. Paying homage to the art of Fernando Zóbel, Robert Rauschenberg, and Kurt Schwitters, Pacquing presents an exemplary work of abstraction that unveils the evocative flair of the style. (Jed Daya)



110

Lee Aguinaldo (1933 - 2007)

Green Circulation No.24

signed and dated 1975 (verso)

acrylic (aqua-tec)

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

P 1,600,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by Miguel Romulo

Lee Aguinaldo's paintings exhibit a distinct quality in terms of color perception and the tactile nature of paint. Color, for Aguinaldo, becomes a tangible presence that stands on its own. Through meticulous arrangement on the canvas, it invites the viewer into an objective and analytical exploration. Emphasizing the removal of brushwork and any trace of human touch, Aguinaldo aims for a uniform and flat surface of pigment, preserving the picture's integrity. The deliberate geometric framing, defined by right angles, establishes an orderly and consciously rational composition.

For Aguinaldo, excessiveness in spatial embellishment, color abundance, or narrative overtures could undermine the artwork's potency. The square format, favored by him for landscape paintings, is not coincidental or for convenience. Instead, it imparts a sense of logic and purity, enveloping the subject in a sphere of rationality. His Green Circulation series draws from the influence of his earlier Linear works. The piece titled Green Circulation exemplifies the series' primary objective: to investigate the inherent interplay between the color green and its diverse shades and levels of luminosity within the context of color field painting.

At the heart of this artwork, various shades of blue morph into gradients of green. These are complemented by spaces in vivid emerald green. By presenting contrasting variations of the same color, with the center unfolding as a spectrum and the flanking sides as a solid mass, Aguinaldo brings forth the essence of visual experience. This effectively underscores the notion that singular elements often attain full appreciation when juxtaposed with their counterparts. (*Jed Daya*)

Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)*Modula*

steel

H: 15 3/4" x L: 4" x W: 4" (40 cm x 8 cm x 8 cm)

P 200,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

While most known for his abstractions on canvas, Arturo Luz's transition into sculpting began with his "Objects" painting series in which ceramic wares arranged on cube-like tables were rendered in the abstract with three dimensional qualities. As Art critic and historian Raymundo Albano writes, it was from this transitional stage that Luz realized the sculptural potential of his abstract forms.

Through a three-dimensional translation of lines in space, Luz introduced a physicality that brought new possibilities of experiencing his abstract forms. The added variety of angles from which one is able to view the sculptures allowed for what Albano calls "poetic luminescences" that brought a new life and luster to his lines. Situated in a three-dimensional space, the sculptural abstractions of Luz lead the viewer to ponder upon the interaction of space and form in their sheer geometric poetry. (*Pie Tiausas*)





112

Alfonso Ossorio (1916 - 1990)

Assemblage

signed and dated 1967

mixed media

H: 4" x L: 1" x L: 5" (10 cm x 2.5 cm x 13 cm)

P 400,000

PROVENANCE

A gift from the artist to the aunt of the present owner

Transitioning into the 1950s, Ossorio underwent a shift from his Surrealist inclinations to an approach aligned with Abstract Expressionism. This phase saw him experimenting with various paint mediums, such as oil and enamel, to achieve his desired visual effects. Ossorio's compositions during this period bore vigorous, assertive brushstrokes, distinguishing them from Pollock's more spontaneous creations. Notably, Ossorio's work retained an underlying thread

of cohesion amid its chaotic demeanor, a harmonious familiarity amidst the abstract. In contrast to Pollock's dynamic, immediate pieces, Ossorio's abstractions embodied a calculated and nuanced disposition.

A striking embodiment of Ossorio's artistic evolution is evident in his 1967 creation. This piece signifies his departure from pure Abstract Expressionism to his later style, referred to by the artist as "Congregations." This later approach incorporated assemblages of diverse objects within the artworks, striving to portray the intricate world's uniqueness and complexity. The watercolor work under scrutiny amalgamates elements from both of Ossorio's artistic periods. Its powerful, audacious brushwork pays homage to his earlier Abstract Expressionist influences, while the assortment of diverse elements mirrors the object-oriented essence of his "Congregations. Across his varied styles, Ossorio's intricate and multifaceted piece reveals a deep-seated artistic philosophy that embraces complexity and nuance. (*Jed Daya*)



Village of Cambulo in the Mid-70s © Photo by John Chua

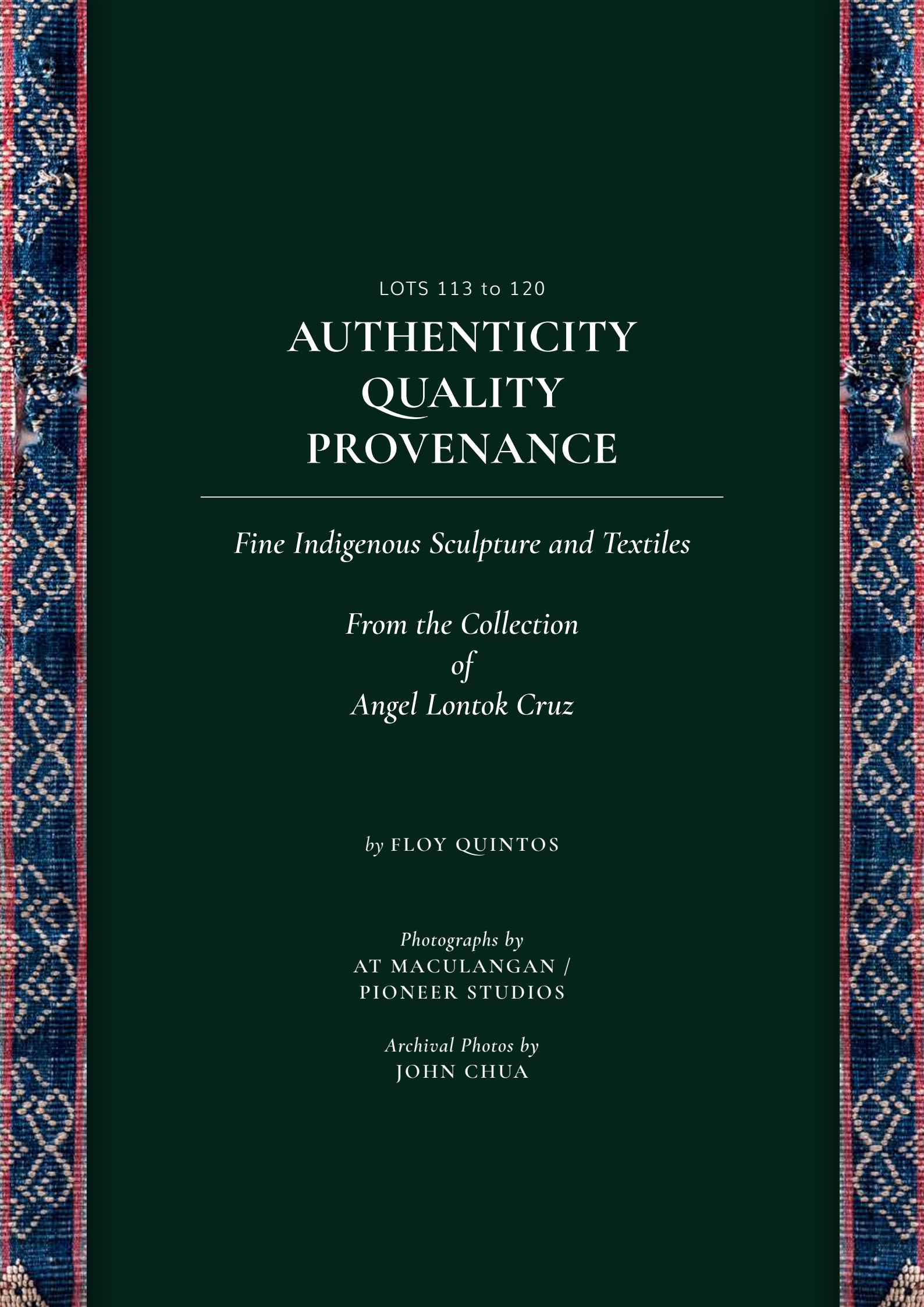


On the Importance of Indigenous Art

*L*ikas na aking nakahiligan ang sining ng Ifugao at kabundukang Cordillera dahil tila naging pagtutuklas ito sa akin ng isang dating mundo, isang orihinal na halimbawang kapamayanang atin, na may sariling wika, sariling ekonomiya at mga pinagkakabuhayan, katarungan at pagbabatas, paniniwala, pagsasamba at mga ritwal, may kanyang sining pati arkitektura. Naipapaalala ng kanyang mga lumang bagay ang panahon nuon na tayong mga taga rito ay di pa nasasakop ng ibang lahi, di pa nagpapaka-kastila o amerikano. Samaktwid sa akin, kanyang naipapaalala kung papaano tayo nuon at kung sino tayo talaga.

*W*hat has always lured me to the art and objects of the Ifugao and the Cordilleras, besides some natural affinity, is a sense of rediscovering remnants of an original authentic native world, a developed civilization with its own language, social and political hierarchy, a mountain economy, its own system of justice with communal laws and rules, its own religion and rituals, and with a distinct art and even architecture. The objects tell of a time when we were still our original selves, not Hispanized nor Westernized. They remind us in a way of who, as a people, we once were and truly are.”

—ANGEL LONTOK CRUZ
COLLECTOR AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR



LOTS 113 to 120

AUTHENTICITY
QUALITY
PROVENANCE

Fine Indigenous Sculpture and Textiles

*From the Collection
of
Angel Lontok Cruz*

by FLOY QUINTOS

Photographs by
AT MACULANGAN /
PIONEER STUDIOS

Archival Photos by
JOHN CHUA



Detail of A Large And Important Tinagtagu /
Gal-Galawen / House Guardian Kankanai Lot 118
© At maculangan / Pioneer Studios

THIS SELECTION OF Indigenous art from the Philippine Cordilleras is a first for León Gallery. The objects gathered here embody the three qualities by which the arts of the world's indigenous peoples are judged by international connoisseurs and dealers in Paris, Brussels, San Francisco, the centers of the international trade in Tribal art (a term now eschewed by the more politically correct who would rather refer to these objects as Indigenous Art, *Arts Premiere* or Arts of the Indigenous Peoples.)

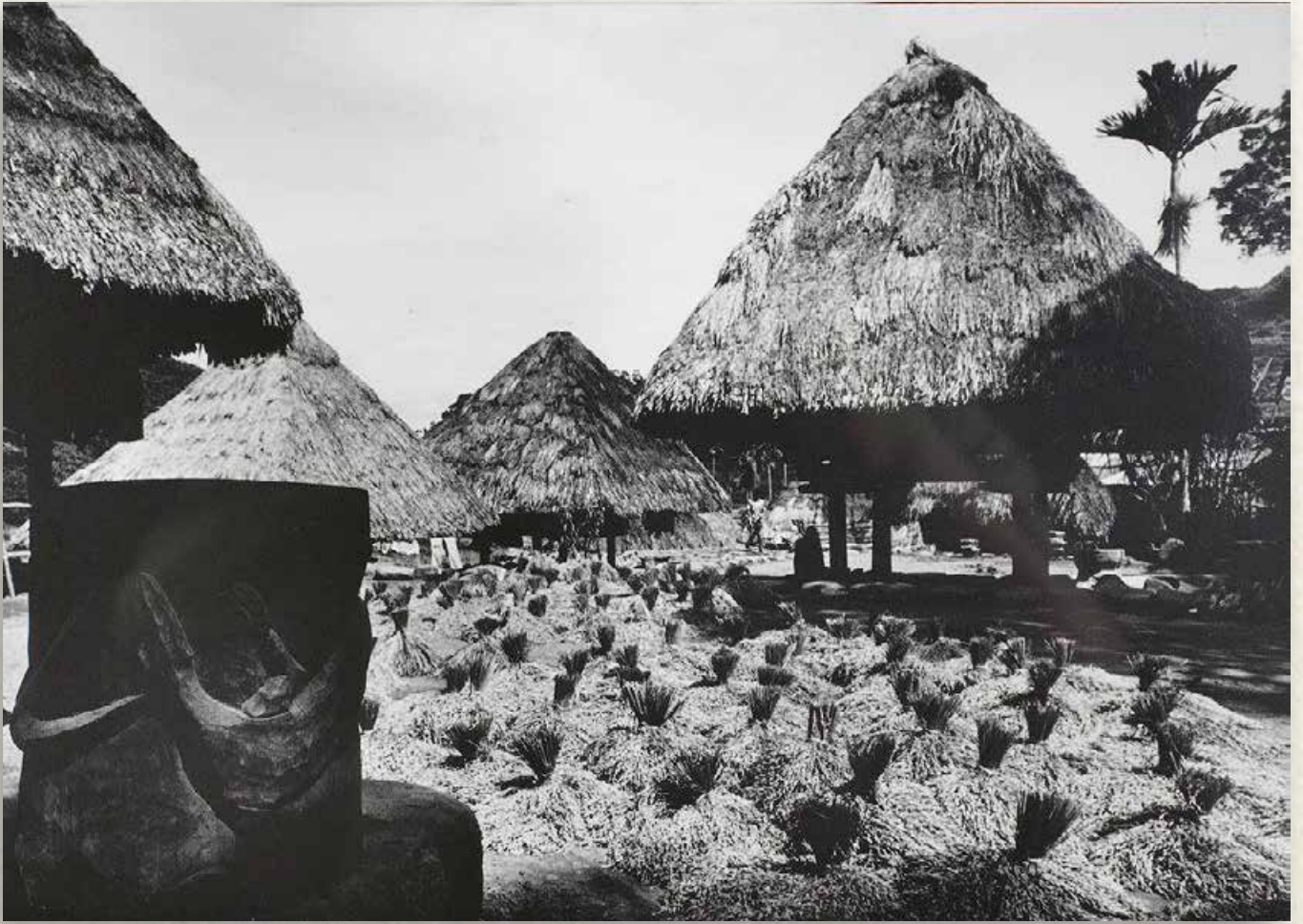
The pieces selected here are from a private collection that was kept in Amsterdam for more than thirty years. These objects were just recently repatriated to the Philippines. As ethnographic objects, each one represents the highest cultural and spiritual ideals of the peoples who created and used them. As objects of 'Art' (a Western concept we impose on these objects), they conform to the aesthetic ideals, not only of their specific cultures, but of the shared visual language of the world's indigenous peoples. It is through these twin lenses of Ethnography and Aesthetics that we will view this selection.

In judging objects from indigenous peoples, **Authenticity** is determined by the object's purpose, usage and age. Here, the history of a people's colonization and subjugation come into play in determining the artistic integrity of an object (which is ironic considering that Western dealers and collectors use the often-brutal history of a people's colonization as a benchmark for an object's desirability.)

Objects made before contact with Western colonizers qualify as Archaic or Early, and are the most desirable. Those that were made during contact period but reflect traditional usage and aesthetics are 'Ritually- or Traditionally Used'. Objects made during the period of Colonial Contact and reflecting the inevitable artistic changes brought about by colonization, are termed 'Late or Decadent'. Copies and souvenirs made for sale are 'Made for Market' or 'Made for the Trade'. Objects made to deceive are, simply and always, Fakes.

Quality is determined by the condition, material and aesthetic appeal of an object. Condition, of course refers to the physical state of the object. All authentic objects are made to fulfill a specific purpose, be it functional or ritualistic. They do not exist as "art pieces" to decorate the homes of the indigenous. Regular usage in a natural environment and exposure to the elements will often result in wear and tear that add to the surface appearance of the object. These are integral to the object's history.

In ritual objects especially, like the *Bu'lul*, libations of the blood of sacrificial animals, rice wine, and exposure to the dust and soot of native homes and granaries result in thick ritual encrustation. The thicker and more solid the encrustation, the older the object is supposed to be. This encrustation is very different from the polished sheen that functional objects like spoons and bowls have. This is what the international dealers refer to as '*patine telephonique*' --or telephone patina, a reference to the shiny bakelite surfaces of old telephones.



top: Village of Poitan. In the foreground is a handcarved rice mortar © Photo John Chua.
BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT: Angel Lontök Cruz on various treks in the Ifugao region.



top: Ifugaos on the warpath along the edge of the rice terraces © Photo by John Chua.

bottom: Upon his return to the Philippines from studies in Europe, Angel traveled through Bontoc and Ifugao to learn more about the cultures.

In both functional and ritual objects, quality is often judged by the use of hardwood. In traditional Ifugao culture, the Narra tree (*Pterocarpus indicus*) is not only valued for the durability, density and weight of its wood, but for the dark red sap which resembles blood and the powerful life force. The majority of truly old objects are carved from red narra, once plentiful and sacred in the forests and jungles of Ifugao. Later objects are carved from yellow or white narra and other softer woods that evince the eventual depletion of the forests in the province.

An object's quality is also determined by its aesthetic appeal. The formal attributes of balance, symmetry and proportion do apply but these are molded by the traditional aesthetics of a community. Picasso and Matisse were attracted to African objects because of the dynamism and originality of conception, the ritual magic that gave context and meaning to African sculpture. Above all, these artists recognized that African sculpture offered them freedom from the stifling conventions of Western formal and academic art.

Today, more exposure to the traditional arts of Indonesia, Polynesia, South East Asia and other indigenous cultures have resulted in the creation of formal canons by which the quality of pieces is determined. The same applies to old pieces from the Cordillera, where premiums are put on pieces that display the reductive abstraction, minimalism and robust, forceful carving that have come to make up the power of their art.

Lastly, there is the tricky attribute of **Provenance**, an attribute that is often considered as important as the object itself. Ironically, an object may have both authenticity and quality but it is the provenance that burnishes it, validating and justifying its value through the list of collectors who once owned and cherished it. A Baule *maternite* figure once owned by Helena Rubenstein or Andre Breton in 1930s Paris is an *objet d'art* with provenance. A similar, authentic object found *in situ* is, well, an ethnographic specimen.

The magnificent Bulul figure recently sold at a record-breaking price had a short but impressive provenance. Its ownership could be traced to William Gambuk Beyer (son of Henry Otley Beyer, father of Philippine anthropology, and his Ifugao wife, Lingayu Gambuk), then to the prestigious French collector-dealer Alain Schoffel. In 1989, French collectors Beatrice and Patrick Caput acquired it from Schoffel.

With the proliferation of fakes and reproductions, provenance also helps to determine the age of an object, the time it first appeared in the Art market, the legitimacy of its acquisition.

In the Philippines, the names of Ramon Tapales, and the late David Baradas are revered as the earliest serious collectors of Cordillera art. Both began active collecting in the early 1970s, an era when the popular collecting trends favored trade items like Chinese or Annamese porcelain, or Colonial ecclesiastical and decorative arts such as Santos, altar silver, jewelry, furniture. Philippine Indigenous art was much less popular then.

Early collectors like Tapales and Baradas worked through a network of specialized dealers and runners from Baguio, Ifugao and Bontoc. The late Baradas, who was a respected anthropologist, pioneered the documentation and study of objects as reflections of the cultures that had produced them. In the case of Tapales, many of the objects he once owned are now published museum pieces that have been exhibited at the Musée d'Quai Branly in Paris.

But there is a third name to complete the triumvirate of collectors who early on, saw the beauty and power of Cordillera art. It is a credit to Angel Lontok Cruz's taste and collecting tenacity that León Gallery is able to offer objects that more than surpass the benchmarks of **Authenticity, Quality and Provenance.**

OF THE TRIUMVIRATE of early collectors of the art of the Cordillera peoples, Angel Lontok Cruz is perhaps the least known. But his collection is the one that has remained most intact up to recent times.

Only last year did Manila's collecting circles hear of him once again, when his *Hagabi*, the Ifugao prestige bench, was auctioned at the León Gallery. A piece remarkable for its size, age and beauty, the bench was once described by no less than William Beyer as 'the king' of the archaic prestige benches still in use in Ifugao. It was sold at the hammer price of Php 21,608,000 in September of last year.

Cruz was initially reluctant to publish his name as the provenance of the *Hagabi*. A quiet man, he carries himself with the reserve of a gentleman of the old school. One notices at once a genteel discretion, laced with the folksy charm and dignity of a provinciano, which he proudly says he is.



LEFT: Ifugao do a war dance along the rice terraces. © Photos by John Chua.
TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT: Cruz would later be active in the community concerns of Hagonoy, Bulacan.



Detail of a Large and Important Tinagtagu /
Gal-Galawen / House Guardian Kankanai, Lot 118
© At Maculangan / Pioneer Studios

The scion of the wealthy Cruz and Lontok clans of Bulacan, he graduated with a degree in Political Science from Haverford College in Pennsylvania, USA and Architectural Engineering from the Hogere Technische School te Amsterdam in the Netherlands. While studying in Europe, he saw his first pieces of Ifugao art in the gallery of Rob Kok. Visits to the Leiden Museum and the Musee de l'Homme in Paris were eye-openers for the young Angel. He became enamored of the severity and power of Cordillera art.

Back in the Philippines, the young Angel began to collect actively. He travelled through the Cordilleras, in Bontoc and Ifugao specifically, to get a first hand feel of the environment and people who had produced what he recognized and called “the real art of the Filipinos”. Amazed by the rugged beauty of the land and the creativity of the people, he became all the more interested in learning about the different object types. His collection soon grew in range from the all-important *bu'lul* figures, to architectural elements that adorned the native homes, to smaller pieces like spoons, bowls and other functional objects.

He became familiar with the small network of specialized dealers in Baguio and Manila, and became friends with Ramon Tapales, who sold him many fine pieces, including the spectacular Beyer *Hagabi*. “At that time, there were very few Filipinos who were interested in Cordillera art. There was more camaraderie than competition between the likes of Ramon Tapales and myself.”

Both Cruz and Tapales readily acknowledge that, in the 70s and 80s, the real competition came from the foreign dealer-collectors who, like them, were beginning to discover the beauty of Cordillera art. At that time, African art was already a long-established collecting field. The same could be said of the art of Melanesia and the South Pacific.

Indonesia and the Philippines were becoming the new fields of discovery for the likes of Alain Schoffel, Thierry David and Richard Lair of France, Thomas Murray, Joel Greene and Gerry Solomon of the US, Hirofumi Kobayashi and Toro Morita of Japan, all internationally-renowned dealer-collectors who would regularly visit the Philippines (some even relocating here temporarily to

establish their own supply chains). A great number of objects were exported from the Philippines to Europe and the US, with even Ramon Tapales and Dave Baradas eventually parting with their best pieces to foreign collectors. It can be said rightly that only the Angel Lontok Cruz collection remained intact through the 90s and the millennium.

The reason? Cruz had quietly transferred the collection to Amsterdam. “The mid 80s were tumultuous times in the country. I decided to return to the Netherlands, bringing my personal belongings including the collection there. Both for safekeeping and for financial support should the need arise.” Due to its sheer size, only the *Hagabi* remained in the family home in Hagonoy.

Over the years, Cruz would periodically visit the collection when he had time off from an increasingly busy schedule. With the advent of the new millennium, there were more pressing priorities that needed his attention. From the years 2007 to 2022, he served his town in various capacities and remains fully committed to finding ways to address his community’s concerns; most recently, as the moving force behind the *Alyansa ng mga Baybaying Bayan ng Bulacan at Pampanga*. “Our advocacy is for long term solutions to the recurring flooding along the coastal towns like Hagonoy and others along Manila Bay.” The recent flooding in these towns only strengthens Cruz’s commitment, even as a private citizen.

Now in his early 70s, Cruz’s decision to let go of the objects he so lovingly collected and safeguarded comes at a time when many local and foreign collectors are looking at the indigenous arts of the Philippines. Recent auctions at León, attest to the desirability of top quality Ifugao pieces. The interest is spurred by more publications and exhibitions of Philippine indigenous material. More and more, collectors, scholars, designers, artists are looking at the traditional arts as sources of knowledge, discovery, inspiration and yes, the pleasure of ownership.

Angel Lontok Cruz discovered that pleasure early on. The quality of his pieces attests to that period when only very few Filipinos dared to follow their passion for the indigenous. Indeed, this selection speaks of a quality that now hardly exists *in situ* and may be found in only a few private collections.

Understanding the Ifugao *Bu'lul*



Bu'lul, the anthropomorphic sculpture of the Ifugao, have become an iconic symbol of Philippine culture. Sadly, also the most blatantly commercialized. Contemporary Filipino artists and designers have appropriated the *bu'lul*, transforming objects once sacred and ritualized into the common and mundane. Today, many Filipinos are familiar with the *bu'lul* in its transformed state, as fashionable plastic “toys” in acid colors, as ubiquitous motifs in “ethnic” inspired art work, as logos on T-shirts and apparel. In the local and international antiques markets, fakes and copies proliferate.

But put any of these above-mentioned renditions next to an authentic piece and the difference becomes very clear. Works of contemporary art will suddenly look trivial and dated. Logos will lose their impact. The contrived visual bravura of a fake or copy becomes all too obvious. The power and gravitas of an authentic piece is immediately manifest.

The main difference lies in the purpose and process of creating a *bu'lul*. Though often called “gods”, they are not a deity worshipped in the way we would imagine. Rather the wooden images are receptacles for the *bu'lul* spirit invoked to attend and witness rituals. Although most simplistically referred to as guardians of the rice, they also fulfill other functions, as mediators in healing rituals, as witnesses in the ceremonies of social ascension. In order to propitiate the *bu'lul* spirit that is called to inhabit them and gain their favor, offerings of rice wine, meat and the blood of sacrificial animals are offered, the last liberally doused or smeared. This mutual exchange of protection/witness/ attendance in return for food is detailed in the myth of Humidhid, the first carver of *bu'lul*.

The very process of their carving was governed by ritual every step of the way. First, a family had to have the rice fields that necessitated the ownership of *bu'lul*, as well as the resources that were necessary to fulfill the rituals that came with the carving of a pair. The choosing of the right Narra tree and its felling already required the sacrifice of pigs and chickens. The carving of the image was done, not in the village, but in the forest, away from prying eyes. The carvers were shamans who knew the necessary chants. They abstained from sex and from eating certain foods while they worked. All the while, they had to be supplied continuously with rice wine and betel chew.

Thus, the finished carving was the result of an altered state of consciousness from all the stimulants ingested and from the ritualistic atmosphere surrounding the carvers. This is a very different process from simply making a carving for sale or creating a contemporary artwork referencing these forms. Ritual, myth, chant, self-deprivation, stimulation from alcohol and betel-chewing shaped the mindset of the carver to produce a sculpture that was “charged” with power.

Minimalism and abstraction are common terms associated with the powerful form of these sculpture. Marian Roces dissected the plastic elements that made up this power in her essay “Bu'lul Form and Spirit: the Early Tradition”, published in the “Philippines: An Archipelago of Exchange” catalogue of the Musee d'Quai Branly, Paris.

She writes;

“The early tradition sculptors abstained from decorative flourishes...the eyes, noses, mouths, fingers, ears, hair and other body parts are sparsely scored, in marked contrast with other sculptural traditions (for example, African, Melanesian) where these are theatrically articulated.”

“Whether sculpted to stand or sit atop ...the plinth evoking the rice mortar...the early tradition bu'lul exhibit a stocky still mass. The compact form communicates stability... The faces of the early tradition bu'lul do not convey 'personality'. No individual appears to be represented ...The faces are concentrated essence, and, as a couple, the partner sculptures emanate the principles of conjoint and reciprocal male and female energies.”

“The old bu'lul are akin to pre-colonial sculptural conventions elsewhere in the Philippines: with the likha figures from Tagalog region archeological sites, the figures from the lids of burial urns from archeological sites at the Kulaman plateau...The striking aesthetic similarities suggest that the early tradition belongs to a pre-colonial sculptural protocol that was widespread, although unevenly present, in the archipelago.”

The pieces selected by Angel Lontok Cruz all qualify as early examples that exemplify dignity, strength and presence of the Ifugao bu'lul. No contemporary art or craft, no modern interpretation of the bu'lul, no matter how charming or witty, can hold its own against the quiet but potent presence of an authentic piece.



Pair of *Bu'lul*, Lagawe Region

ca. early 19th century
narra hardwood with encrustation

Female - Height : 18 3/4" (47.7 cm); Width at shoulder : 15 1/4" (13.5 cm);

Base (h x w x d) : 2 1/2" (6.5 cm) x 5" (13 cm) x 6" (15 cm);

Male - Height : 18 3/4" (48 cm); Width at shoulder: 4 3/4" (12 cm);

Base (h x w x d) : 2 1/2" (6.5 cm) x 5" (12.5 cm) x 5 3/4" (14.5 cm)

P 500,000

PROVENANCE

Jean Louis Levi / Likha Antiques



This pair comes closest to establishing a classical/canonical style from the Lagawe region of Ifugao. The flat faces with only the simplest of indentions, the strong flat backs, the cylindrical legs and arms interconnecting to define a strong, compact seated figure. There is a light encrustation of soot all over the figures, except in places where the dark red grain of the narra wood is exposed. The encrustation is thickest at the top of the heads of both figures, the crust nearly obscuring the wooden pegs that once held strands of hair in place.

In the absence of carved genitalia, we can determine which is the male through the open space between the buttocks, where the loincloth would have passed. This pair would have been dressed, the male in miniature loincloth, the female in wrap skirt, their heads covered with human hair appropriate and indicative of their sex. When in ritual use during the rice harvest, stalks of rice, heavy with grain would have been, inserted into the pierced ears. But all these have fallen away over time, leaving only the sophisticated purity of the sculpture.



Pair of *Bu'lul*

ca. early 19th century
narra wood with heavy encrustation
Central Ifugao, Banaue

Male: Height : 21 1/2" (54.5 cm); Width at shoulder: 5 1/2" (14 cm);
Base (h x w x d) : 5" (13 cm) x 6" (15 cm) x 6 3/4" (17 cm);
Female: Height : 20 1/2" (52 cm); Width at shoulder: 5 3/4" (14.5 cm);
Base (h x w x d) : 5 1/4" (13.2 cm) x 6" (15 cm) X 6" (15 cm)

P 500,000

Cruz recalls that this pair was owned by a family from Lagawe. The style though is closer to the more detailed and defined rendition of the faces of *Bul'ul* from Central Ifugao. The female of the pair is distinguished by the circular demarcation around the head, a reference to the traditional inverted bowl-shaped haircut of the Ifugao man. The male is larger than the female. The significance of this disparity in size is unknown today. But it does exist in some very old pairs, where the male is noticeably larger than the female. Seated males accompanied by standing females are another archaic convention that exists.

The encrustation is particularly thick and solid on both these pieces. Cruz, unlike most collectors, was concerned about keeping his pieces in a pristine condition, refusing the tendency (shared by many contemporary Filipino collectors) to dust and clean their pieces. This fastidiousness sometimes results in a serious loss of encrustation or the alteration of surface patina. Cruz's discipline allows us to see the layers of crust as well as the accumulation of dust that evince the age and ritual use of the pair.







A Seated *Bu'lul*

Mid-19th century

narra hardwood with a natural patina

Lagawe or Kiangon

Height (from base to top of head) : 23 1/4" (59 cm)

Width at shoulder : 5 1/2" (14 cm)

Base (h x w x b): 4 3/4" (12 cm) x 7 3/4" (19.5 cm) x 7 1/2" (19 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE

Ramon Tapales, Manila

Private collection, USA

LITERATURE

Ramon Tapales. *Provenance: Ramon Tapales.*

Collections and Recollections.

Privately published monograph. 2014

This large piece was once owned by Ramon Tapales. In his memoir, published in 2014, he described it from memory, although it had left his collection for more than forty years.

"It was huge and heavy and highly stylized. You could see where the adze and bolo had hacked away at the wood. The legs also flared slightly, like the legs of a 'sakang' table. The patina was a natural reddish wood tone with not much encrustation." Many pieces with this kind of a natural patina and crude but powerful carving style are often found in the Kiangon region.

Coupled with the piece's strong presence is a very interesting story. An American collector had seen the piece in Tapales' Quezon city home and offered to buy it. Tapales was too attached and said no. The collector then asked to borrow the piece overnight for study. Tapales acquiesced, but when he tried to get it back after a few days, he found out that the American had absconded with the piece and flown back to the States. Tapales sought the help of lawyer friend in the States and the guilty party ended up paying Five thousand dollars for the piece.

A few years later, the piece was offered to Cruz. It remains one of his favorite pieces.





Seated *Bu'lul*

Mid-19th century

narra hardwood with encrustation

Lagawe

Height (bottom of base to top of head) : 27 3/4" (70.5 cm)

Width at shoulder : 6" (15.5 cm)

Base (h x w x d) : 5" (12.5 cm) x 7 3/4" (20 cm) x 1 3/4" (4.5 cm)

P 475,000

PROVENANCE

Jean Louis Levi / Likha Antiques

Like the previous offering, this piece is remarkable for the forceful dynamism of the carving. There is no attempt at surface polish or refinement. Except for the bulging eyes and the ears, there is no attempt to delineate or detail body parts. The sculptor seemed more concerned with suggesting rather than delineating, the essence of the deity.

A piece by the same hand, albeit smaller, was once in the collection of the late *Bu'lul* scholar, Joaquin Palencia, and is now in the collection of Roberto Gopiao.



Maternity Figure

ca. early 19th century
narra wood with a patina from rice wine libation, animal teeth inlay
Central Ifugao, Banaue

Height (bottom of base to top of head) : 25" (63.5 cm)

Width at shoulder : 9 1/2" (24 cm)

Base (h x w x d) : 4 3/4" x 9 3/4" x 9" (12 cm x 25 cm x 23 cm)

P 750,000

Ifugao maternity figures are rare, but not unknown. A much published (and much copied) pair attributed to Taguiling, with the standing female carrying a baby, was in the collection of Thomas Murray. Other *Bu'lul* maternity figures are also known, but the theme of motherhood is more commonly found in spoons and some other household objects. It may be said that the maternity figure is a more recent configuration, probably encouraged by the demands of the early tourist trade.



This seated figure is much more spontaneous and organic than other more polished and well-composed maternity figures. The dark patina, almost glossy in some places, is from constant libation from rice wine, instead of sacrificial blood. The sculptor has chosen to depict the mother seated rather than standing, which makes the placement of her arms and the way she carries her baby more logical and naturalistic than in the standing maternity figures. Coiled brass wire leglets, an accessory used by Ifugao males exclusively, may have been a fanciful later addition. The entire figure sits on a mortar-shaped base with thin, even grooves. These mortar-shaped bases are found in the majority of *Bu'lul* figures, reinforcing their connection with the growth, harvest, preparation and storage of rice.

The original Ifugao owners reckoned its age at seven generations.

As one generation is counted, by Western standards, at 25 years, this piece could have been carved in the late 18th century.





A Large and Important *Tinagtagu / Gal-Galawen /* House Guardian of the Kankanai

Mid to late 19th century
hardwood with glossy patina in places,
incised tattoos, cowrie shell inlay

Height from bottom of base to top of head : 34" (94 cm)
Width at shoulder : 10" (26 cm)
Base (h x w x d) : 8" x 13 1/4" x 10 3/4" (20.5 cm x 34 cm x 27.5 cm)

P 850,000

PROVENANCE
Henry Ngayawan Beyer

The Tinagtagu or Gal-galawen is an anthropomorphic sculpture found among the Kankanai. It is said that such figures are commissioned when a couple builds their first home. The sculpture is placed inside the house, where it serves as a guardian, and much less reverentially, a companion for children who are allowed to handle it. It is commonly believed that the glossy patina of many tinagtagu comes from this familial handling. In his book, *ILI*, photographer Tommy Hafalla has documented the presence of these images in the homes of his Kankanai subjects.

This large and important piece shows all the characteristics of Kankanai sculpture. The torso, arms and legs are rounded and fleshy, the face is detailed and made more animated by cowrie shell inlay for eyes.

The most distinctive feature are the tattoo marks etched onto the arms. The honeycomb designs are consistent with the tattoos worn by successful Kankanai warriors who had proven their valor as headhunters. The designs extend from the wrist, and continue on the upper arms.

These motifs are also shared with the neighboring Kalinga.

While many Tinagtagu may represent a generic house guardian, this particular piece brings to his guardianship, the fierce reputation of a warrior who had earned the right to wear a full sleeve of tattoos.



*The Collector has presented a possible dating,
ca. mid to late 19th-century.*





Bowl with Double Tinagtagu figures / Kinahu Kankanai

Mid to late 19th century
hardwood with glossy, smooth patina

Outer diameter: 7 1/2" (19 cm)
Height (bottom to rim) : 5" (12.5 cm)
Height of figures : 6 3/4" (17 cm)

P 185,000

PROVENANCE

Daisy Gomez, Baguio
Ramon Tapales, Manila

LITERATURE

Ramon Tapales. *Provenance: Ramon Tapales. Collections and Recollections.* Privately published monograph. 2014



Bowls for use in meals or in rituals are among the most beautiful and well-executed of all Cordillera artifacts, with each culture having its own unique form. Among the Ifugao, there is notched 'star' bowl used during meals, with a special variant called the *Pama'ha-an*, used exclusively for rituals. Among the Kankanai, the *Kinahu* is an oval or round bowl decorated with stylized animal heads (most commonly, of the ahu or dog from where the bowl gets its name).

Single anthropomorphic figures wrapping their arms and legs around a bowl are known. But this rare singular

example features two *tinagtagu* figures straddling the outer rim of the bowl, with their huge paddle shaped hands and feet, their heads peering above the bowl's rim and serving as convenient handles. This piece shows eloquently how early carvers could incorporate anthropomorphic details into everyday objects, making these integral and functional. The piece was owned by Ramon Tapales, and was one of the earliest pieces he purchased in the early 1970s. It was formerly in the collection of Daisy Gomez, one of the pioneering dealers based in Baguio city.

THE GRAIL OF INDIGENOUS TEXTILES

From the Collection of Angel Lontok Cruz

"These two pieces are of singular importance. Because of the questions they pose, and the possibilities of further study and scholarship that they open, these textiles are clearly treasures of national importance.."

*— Marian Pastor Roces,
Independent Curator, Museologist,
Author of "Sinaunang Habi"*

by FLOY QUINTOS

Photographs by:
AT MACULANGAN /
PIONEER STUDIOS



Two Tapestries from Miag-ao, Iloilo

Handspun Cotton, Organic Dye (Indigo, and Possibly *Morinda Citrifolia*)

Possibly Late 19th century

These enigmatic textiles pose many questions about the nature of trade in the Philippines in earlier times. Not only the inter-island trade of material goods, but the exchanges of culture and technology, of optics and motifs, of ideas and their re-interpretations when transported to different settings.

First, a little bit about the history of these pieces. They were found by the dealer-collector Rolando Go in Iloilo city sometime in the mid 1980s. Go, who passed away in 2018, was one of the top dealers in Indigenous art. He was based in Baguio, and counted among his many clients, Ramon Tapales, Dave Barradas, Angel Lontok Cruz, Joaquin Palencia, Ramon Villegas as well as many of the visiting French and American dealers.

His outstanding collection of Cordillera textiles was purchased by Senator Nikki Coseteng in the late 1980s. Many of Go's signal pieces were published in the book, "Sinaunang Habî", written by Marian Pastor-Roces and published by Nikki Coseteng.

On a personal note, Mr. Go was a dear friend who mentored and guided me when, as a young man, I developed an interest in the art of the Cordilleras. I remember how he showed me these two textiles after he had purchased them and how he excitedly (he was always passionate about objects) told me about their discovery.

Oh, he was ever the adventurer, travelling to many places in the Philippines to "discover" (his favorite word) objects and learn about their stories. In Iloilo, he was browsing in the shop of Lourdes Dellota (another legend in the field of Philippine antique dealing), when he spotted the first textile. It was then being used as mantle on a table loaded with santos. He asked to see it and was immediately struck by the similarity to Itneg/Tinguian textiles. He was told by Dellota that it wasn't from Abra in Luzon, but from Miag-ao in Iloilo. Because of the condition, Roland bought it for a song. I remember him telling me that in his excitement, he hired a jeepney to bring him to Miag-ao. There, he walked around the town, blanket in hand, asking random locals what they knew about it. His Eureka moment came when he espied,

hanging on a clothesline, a near perfect example which he bought on the spot.

He was told that these textiles used to be very plentiful, and were produced in Miag-ao (to this day, still a premiere weaving center for *hablon*). They were not blankets, but tapestries that would be hung from the window sills during fiestas and special occasions. However, he was unable to find anymore.

He treasured these two pieces above all else, and did not include them in the Coseteng sale. Instead, after some time, he sold them to Angel Lontok Cruz, who brought them to Amsterdam.

Scholar, curator, author and museologist, Dr. Anlyn Salvador-Amores, identifies the two techniques used in weaving these. The supplementary weft technique was used to weave most of the piece. The rarer and harder to execute lower panel employed the single warped face technique, producing an embossed effect similar to the raised Trapunto technique.

The supplementary weft portion is decorated with a motif very similar to (but more crudely rendered than) the eight-point star motifs common in Itneg *pinilian* blankets. It is in the lower, single warped face portion where the more intriguing motifs are found.

Both borders show a female figure in a farthingale skirt, her arms upraised. She is crowned with some kind of a three-point diadem. In both textiles, this female figure is the central motif. While there are slight variations in the treatment (the marks of individual weavers?), the configuration remains the same.

The design repertoire in both panels also include:

- *An unidentified animal with a paw upraised, possibly a reference to the symbol of the Lion Rampant from the Spanish seal.
- *An abstracted reference to the Hapsburg double-headed eagle, also the emblem of the Augustinian order, of whom the Hapsburgs were patrons.



- *A smaller quadruped animal (dog?)
- *A frieze of upright and inverted triangles.

It is worth noting that all the motifs found in the Miag-ao examples also exist in the Itneg textile repertoire. A recently discovered Itneg blanket in a private collection shows these designs covering the entire field of the textile.

Besides the execution of the motifs, another difference is in the construction. Itneg textiles created using the narrow backstrap loom, were constructed using three panels, handstitched together. The Miag-ao examples, given the wider looms introduced by the Spanish, are made up of only two panels. Still, the visual similarities, as well as their different points of origin evince a textile/ technique/ motif tradition once shared by both the animist Itneg as well as the Christian Ilonggo. That is clear. But who influenced whom?

Collector Emil Marañon points out that both Ilocos/ Abra and Iloilo were, in Spanish times, placed under the Augustinian order. It was common practice then to periodically rotate priests from one province to another, bringing items of local manufacture from their previous postings, for exchange or as examples of crafts worth developing in their new posts. This could be a plausible source of the shared conventions.

Marian Rocas, to whom Roland also showed these textiles to, has this to say about the Miag-ao textiles:

"The blankets do not lend themselves to diffusionist conjecture. Both specimens exhibit adequate distinctiveness to merit appraisal and exploration on their own qualities. They are best understood within the

framework of the site of original acquisition: Panay island, where, historically, textile traditions have thrived. The look and feel of today's known traditions (piña, for example with supplementary weft floats, and the plaid, plain-woven cotton *patadyong* material called *hablon*) need not preclude other totally different forms from the past.

The supplementary weft yarn as well as the foundation matrix of these pieces are of hand-spun cotton. The blue is from indigo; the red, most likely another organic colorant (pending scientific verification, *Morinda citrifolia*, *bangkoro*). The repetitive patterns composed within the grid do resemble the Itneg / Ilokano aesthetic—however, these Miag-ao pieces were executed to have wider spaces within the motifs, and not as a result of lesser skill.

The remarkable female figure do not resemble any iconographic tradition in the Philippines, except with a truly rare Bagobo weft ikat specimen which has been in the American Museum of National History since 1910. It also bears mentioning that there is semblance with female figures from Indonesia's Nusa Tenggara Timur (notably Sumba) and Sumatra. The resemblance cannot be interpreted as diffusion.

These are therefore extremely rare weaving which deserves the concentrated attention of scholars.

Given the renewed public interest in indigenous textiles and their manufacture, these two pieces are of singular importance. Because of the questions they pose, and the possibilities of further study and scholarship that they open, these textiles are clearly treasures of national importance.



120

Two Tapestries from Miag-ao, Iloilo

Possibly late 19th century

handspun cotton, organic dye.

Supplementary weft, single warped face

Two-Panel Tinguian-style Miag-ao Tapestry I with Dancing Figures and Animal Motifs

Length: 80" (204 cm)

Left panel width: 26 3/4" (68 cm)

Right panel width: 27 1/2" (70 cm)

Total Width: 53 1/4" (138 cm)

Two-Panel Tinguian-style Miag-ao Tapestry II with Dancing Figures and Animal Motifs

Length: 63" (160.5 cm)

Left panel width: 24 1/2" (62 cm)

Right panel width: 22 3/4" (58 cm)

Total Width: 47" (120 cm)

Condition report: *Some damage due to age.*

P 500,000

PROVENANCE

Lourdes Dellota, Iloilo

Roland Go, Baguio



*Two-Panel Tinguian-style Miag-ao Tapestry I
with Dancing Figures and Animal Motifs*



*Two-Panel Tinguian-style Miag-ao Tapestry II
with Dancing Figures and Animal Motifs*



"These are therefore extremely rare weaving which deserves the concentrated attention of scholars."

*— Marian Pastor Roces,
Independent Curator, Museologist,
Author of "Sinaunang Habi"*



121

Cory Aquino (1933 - 2009)

Roses of Friendship

signed and dated 2005 (lower right and verso)

acrylic on canvas

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

P 200,000

PROVENANCE

A gift from the artist



The late president Corazon Aquino

Corazon "Cory" Aquino remains a household name among the Filipinos for a lot of reasons. For one, she was notable as the first female president of the Philippines. Her impact on politics and influence on people were undeniable. However, what may come as a surprise to many is that she was also a prolific painter later in life.

Her artworks are bright and colorful, often featuring flowers and female figures, usually done in oil or acrylic on canvas. A devout Catholic, painting, next to prayer,

was her favored mode of keeping her mind active and her sense of humanity intact. According to Aquino's website, "although she has participated in a joint exhibit with friends and has sold some of her works to raise funds for her advocacies, she does not profess to be a professional painter."

Roses of Friendship is a signed acrylic painting by the late former president of the country, dated 2005. (Isabella Romarate)



122

Charlie Co (b. 1960)

The Invasion

signed and dated 2006 (lower left)
oil on canvas
50" x 83" (127 cm x 212 cm)

P 450,000

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

EXHIBITED
Osage Gallery, *Possession*, Hong Kong, June 1 - July 15, 2007

Charlie Co's *The Invasion* forms part of the artist's 2007 exhibition at the Osage Gallery in Hong Kong titled "*Possession*." Rendered in his surrealist-expressionist-social realist visual language, Co tackled in the show disturbing themes of war and bloodshed. Thus, the exhibition's title condemns the "modern-day demons," i.e., imperialist forces, possessing and further reinforcing an oppressive and exploitative contemporary world order. Through this series of works, Co places his confidence and trust in the greater number of the oppressed masses in hopes that we may "exorcise" this harrowing world through our collective struggle.

The Invasion talks about the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Furthermore, it expounds on the wider picture of the

United States and its monopoly capitalists' insatiable lust and unquenchable thirst for the Middle East's oil resources to strengthen its stronghold on the global economy and virtually all aspects of living since oil is of paramount importance to humanity's sustenance and livelihood: industries, machinery, manufacturing, and the like. The US had intervened in revolutions and wars across the Middle East, crushing anti-US and anti-imperialist revolutionaries and leaderships, and has since waged wars and invaded nations to maintain their chokehold and monopoly on this precious compound. Wars also feed profit for the US military-industrial complex.

In a correspondence with León Gallery, Co delves deeper into this work and gives his valuable insights. "Being a chronicler of current events through my artwork, this is my interpretation of the situation when the US-led allied coalition attacked Iraq," the artist says. Set on a stage, a soldier with a US flag patch on his arm leads a war against Iraq. He is atop a *carroza*, exuding overconfidence that he, along with his allies, will take control over the oil resources of the Arabian state, using the supposed threat of mass destruction by Iraq. A crow on the left screams death, while a skull on the right represents the businessmen taking advantage of this war. Toy soldiers on the right side of the stage floor charge toward the Middle Eastern scimitar swords on the left."

Co concludes: "While doing this, the news was dominated by CNN, seemingly a one-sided information; hence this was how I reacted at that time." (*Adrian Maranan*)



123

Augusto Albor (b. 1948)

In The Midst of Time

signed and dated 2016 (lower left)

acrylic on canvas

60" x 60" (152 cm x 152 cm)

P 600,000

Augusto Albor is a visual artist notable for his contributions to the local art scene. His art bridges the gap between traditional and contemporary approaches, challenging conventional boundaries and pushing the limits of artistic expression. His works are rich in abstract and symbolic elements that will invite viewers to contemplate profound meanings, as observed here, *In The Midst of Time*.

To portray the concept of time in paintings can be a complex artistic endeavor, as time is an abstract and

intangible concept. For the lot at hand, Albor made use of symbolic elements to represent time and its transitory nature. The canvas is divided in two: one side is inscribed with texts and the other half is almost smooth in its appearance, suggesting a sign of weathering. The line in the middle holds a strategic position to emphasize transformation. Perhaps, the acrylic piece is pertaining to our planet's progression, or, in a more sentimental tone, it alludes to the passage of time or fading memories.

In 2016, Albor held three exhibitions: *Cycles 001* at the University of the Philippines, Visayas, *Here Distorted* at the 1335MABINI, Manila, and *The Ocean After Nature* at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, California. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Cesar Legaspi (1917 - 1994)

Justin Nuyda (1944 - 2022)

Alfredo Roces (b. 1932)

The Garden

signed and dated 1975 (lower right)

oil on canvas

32" x 23 1/2" (81 cm x 60 cm)

P 1,000,000

Though we often speak of art history in terms of individuals, their techniques, and their masterpieces, once in a blue moon we come across a piece that not only brings together masters and their craft, but acts as a synthesis that allows us to see the fruition of an artistic movement. The work at hand is an oil on canvas collaborative piece that brings together notable Modernists that helped define Filipino art in the 20th Century.

In the pursuit of the groundbreaking ideals and aspirations that defined the 20th century, Cesar Legaspi, one of the Thirteen Moderns, played a pivotal role in reshaping the local artistic landscape. Notably, he adapted the fundamental principles of cubism to harmonize with the unique language of Filipino art. This innovative approach not only pays tribute to Cubism's storied roots but also establishes a distinct technique that unquestionably paved the way for numerous local artists, collectors, and enthusiasts.

In Justin Nuyda's realm of artistry, the allure and dream-like quality of his works have consistently captivated audiences. With a distinct and refined grace, Nuyda's brush breathes life into his surreal creations, which are born from his visionary perspective. While abstraction was not a new concept in his era, Nuyda left an indelible mark by shifting the primary entry point of perception in abstraction from sensation to cognition.



Lastly, although he is mostly known for his contributions to Philippine art history and theory, Alfredo Roces is also considered a talented visual artist. In between chronicling the achievements of several National Artists in his writing assignments, Roces wields his artistic brush with finesse. He honed his skills by studying Fine Arts at the Arts Students League of New York and the University of Notre Dame. Over the years, his art has undergone a steady evolution, transitioning from abstract to figurative expressions across various

mediums. In recognition of his talents, he earned the title of Artist of the Year from the Art Association of the Philippines in 1975.

In the work at hand, one can see that although all three artists have developed and well-known styles, when placed together, they reveal to us a visual language unique to the overarching philosophy of art that dominated their area. The result is a coherent microcosm of Filipino modernism. (*Jed Daya*)

Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

Manila Cathedral in Ruins

signed, inscribed 'Manila Cathedral'
and dated April 18, 1945 (lower left)

oil on canvas

12 1/2" x 15 1/2" (32 cm x 39 cm)

P 1,800,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by National Museum
confirming the authenticity of this lot

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila



War-torn Manila Cathedral, February 1945, as seen from the camera lens of *Life* magazine photographer, Carl Mydans. Image courtesy of John Tewell.

Beyond charming images of the pastoral, Fernando Amorsolo went through a phase in his prolific career in which he painted harrowing scenes of rampage and bloodshed borne from the violence of the Second World War.

Although the war temporarily halted the full-fledged artistic pursuits of Amorsolo, he still painted pictures of prosperity and idyllic vistas of the countryside in accordance with the Japanese propaganda enshrined in its concept of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, which forced countries under its belt of influence to kowtow to Japanese imperialism. This Amorsolo had forcibly done to survive amid a full-blown socio-economic distress.

A footnote in this bitter phase of Amorsolo's career is a story of a man profoundly conscious of the anxiety and distress of his fellow Filipinos. Alfredo Roces writes in his book on the artist: "Amorsolo painted his pictures of the war with no interest in pleasing his customers. He did many oils right on the spot as the emotion moved him. He must have reacted to the need to record the chaos around him." Amorsolo's daughter, Sylvia, also notes that "in the face of fear and hunger during World War II, he kept himself drawing and painting the day-to-day events... He kept himself busy drawing and painting the atrocities of war, like a newspaper informing everyone of the sad and cruel events inflicted on our people and places."

Amorsolo depicts in this poignant piece the war-torn ruins of the seventh incarnation of the Manila Cathedral, which existed from 1879 to 1945. Now formally known as the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, the Manila Cathedral is the seat of the Archdiocese of Manila and the "Mother of all Churches, Cathedrals, and

Basilicas in the Philippines." First established in 1571 as the parish "Church of Manila" and formally declared as a cathedral in 1581, the Manila Cathedral had undergone six iterations before 1879, with the first structure gutted by fire in 1583 and the succeeding ones razed to the ground by earthquakes.

The seventh incarnation of the Manila Cathedral, the Romanesque-Byzantine masterpiece of Architect Don Vicente Serrano y Salaverri, was among the casualties of the bloody battle for the liberation of Manila. Hundreds of civilians were captured, held hostage, and helplessly massacred by Japanese forces inside the Cathedral. Merciless artillery shelling from the Americans to quash the remaining Japanese troops left the monumental church in helpless ruins. Moreover, Intramuros, the mighty domain of the Manila Cathedral, was virtually wiped out during the battle, with only the San Agustin Church surviving the rampage.

Amorsolo finished painting this work on April 18, 1945; more than a month had passed since Manila was liberated. *Manila Cathedral* is a harrowing image of destruction that even the Divine, in his powerful abode, could not prevent through His omnipotent hands. It is a poignant reminder of a broader tragedy—the destruction of Manila, the Pearl of the Orient. Not only were cultural treasures indispensable to our fascinating past lost and vanished into the sands of time but also our strong sense of community and integration into the city. It is something that sadly continues to exist today: the continued neglect of history and heritage and the lamentable loss of our connectedness and belongingness to the city, which has already become dull, intolerable, and unlivable due to the heinous neglect of sustainable and people-centric urban planning. (*Adrian Maranan*)

The Cathedral in Ruins
But Manila's Faith Stands Strong



Benedicto Cabrera (b. 1942)*Larawan Series*

signed and dated 2005 (lower right)

etching and aquatint 1/1

51" x 64 1/2" (130 cm x 164 cm)

P 2,000,000

PROVENANCE

Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI)



Benedicto Cabrera. © León Gallery Archives

The evolution of the Larawan series unfolds over three distinct phases, each marking a significant chapter in the illustrious artistic journey of BenCab. The initial installment, aptly named Larawan, took shape during the artist's residency in London. This iteration intricately weaves together portraits of BenCab's fellow artists who had either permanently relocated abroad or were transient visitors. A captivating mosaic of individuals emerges, capturing the essence of those who had departed the Philippine shores.

Larawan II emerged as a response to BenCab's encounter with the works of R.B. Kitaj. This encounter infused his creative spirit with Kitaj's memetic visual language, sparking a transformation in his own artistic expression. Larawan II embraces a more streamlined approach, manifesting as a composition both simplified and elevated in its finesse. Within its minimalistic graphical framework, BenCab's affinity for graphical devices takes center stage, illustrating his fascination with subtlety and reductionism.

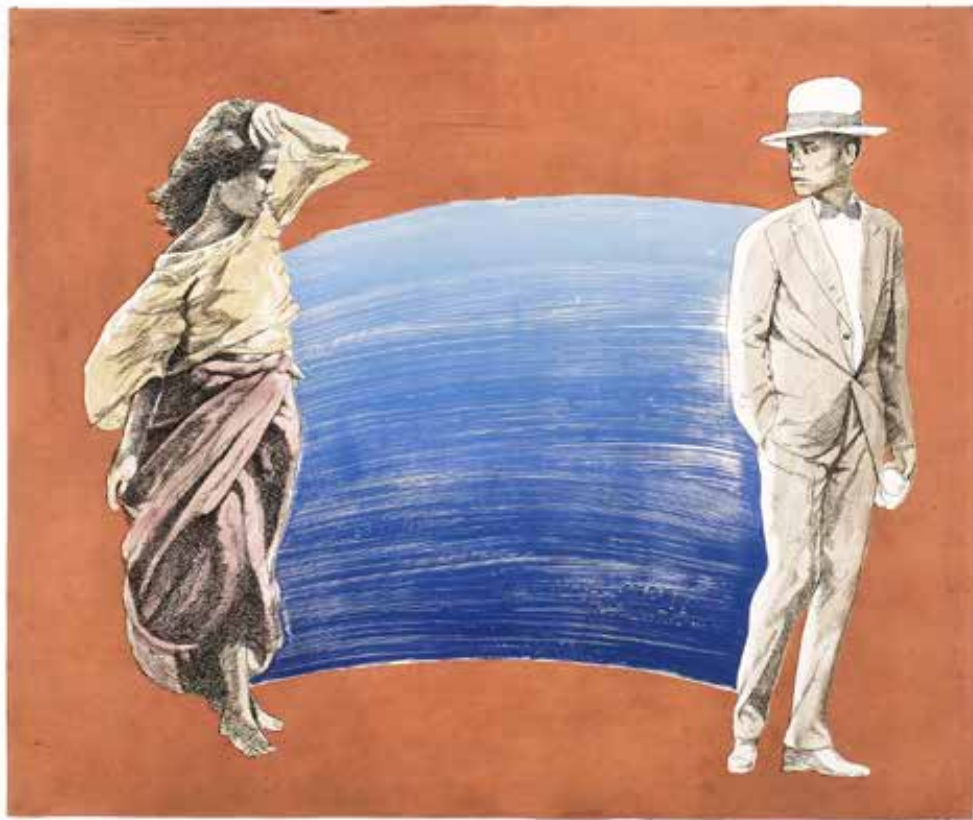
The final phase, Larawan III, represents a revolutionary period in BenCab's artistic evolution. During this juncture, traditional and pre-colonial Filipino concepts

are intertwined with the social, political, and economic dimensions of their time. Works imbued with these concepts carry the weight of these multifaceted implications. However, Larawan III emerges as a declaration of emancipation. Here, BenCab extricates himself from the delicate act of balancing these intricate threads, resolutely establishing the artist's primary role as an arbiter of aesthetic confrontation.

Despite the distinctions between the three different conceptions of his Larawan series, one aspect seemingly pervades the artistic canon of BenCab; the color brown. This prevalent yet mysterious shade has seemingly cast its shadow not only on the Larawan series, but most of Cabrera's works. From the many iterations of Sabel down to his more recent outings, the color brown remains ever present in its many forms. Though not as distinct as the duality of black and white, nor as eye catching as the other choices on the color wheel, the appeal of the color brown is pervasive as it is elusive. It is the color of the earth, of the flora that spring forth, of the age that creeps on every thing whose life is due to return to the earth itself. For art critic Cid Reyes: "Brown is the color of Bencab's art." It goes beyond mere artistic choice, and reflects the reality of our Filipino identity. (*Jed Daya*)

BenCab's Larawan Series

e Muse and Her Man





127

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

Table with "One Stones"

signed (lower left);

signed, titled, and dated 2011 (verso)

acrylic on canvas

20" x 30" (51 cm x 76 cm)

P 2,000,000

The lot at hand, a Lao Lianben acrylic piece titled *Table With "One Stones,"* evokes a sense of the present moment, particularly one's state during meditation.

In Zen, meditative focus refers to the practice of directing one's attention to a specific point of focus during meditation. The aim is to develop a heightened state of awareness, approaching these experiences with an open mind and without expectations.

Lao's painting can be viewed as what one sees when doing meditative focus. To achieve this, one must direct their attention to the stone and engage all senses in the experience. A sense of connection or closeness with the stone will ensue as one maintains focus. Then, one will be transported into a state of reflection and contemplation. As observed in the canvas, a stone sits alone on the table, although there seems to be more as the title indicates. Well, it can be assumed that Lao was seeing beyond what was visible, inviting the viewer to also look deep into the piece.

To impart Zen's essence, teachings, and the experience of enlightenment, its depictions in paintings are enriched with metaphorical significance. For this one, stones could be a symbol of stillness, stability, or the natural world. Similar to a stone that is solid and still, Zen beliefs and practices value being present and immersed in each moment. *(Isabella Romarate)*



128

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Stepping Up

signed and dated 2009

carved green glass

12 1/2" x 12" x 6"

(32 cm x 30 cm x 16 cm)

P 800,000

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

Pioneering glass sculpture in Philippine art, Ramon Orlina has continually proven himself meticulously adept at working with light and space. The artist's fascination with glass as a three-dimensional medium, after all, necessarily draws from his practice in architecture—a field of study that seems to hover elusively between art and scientific design. More than the establishment of structure, architecture also considers light and space, both of which become foregrounded in Orlina's craft.

As light filters through the jaggedly carved glass of Orlina's pieces, a meditative play on light, shadow, and transparencies is evoked to soften the hard edges of form, thus letting the viewer witness a fluid interaction that transcends the sculpture's own solidity. The result is a mystical experience of light—a feeling of 'lightness', or a sense of enlightenment from the sheer glass corporeality of the sculptural form. (*Pie Tiausas*)

Andres Barrioquinto (b. 1975)*Handsome Devil (Self-Portrait)*

signed and dated 2011 (lower right)

oil on canvas

50" x 40" (127 cm x 102 cm)

P 1,600,000

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

EXHIBITED

West Gallery, *Shadow Dancer*, Quezon City,
November 11 - December 3, 2011

Filipino artist Andres Barrioquinto is undoubtedly no stranger to the art of portraiture. From his earlier and more figurative earlier works to his more recent hyperrealistic outings, Barrioquinto manages to successfully mold and utilize the human face as a site of expression. But what makes this piece both rare and unique is that it is among the few self-portraits produced by Barrioquinto. One might think that either the practice of self-portraiture is either something similar to other kinds of portraiture, or that it is an act of vanity among other things. But one can view the practice as something that springs forth or fosters self-awareness. Throughout the process, the artist is put into a position of self-reflection as they are caught within the web of producing a work that must choose whether it should represent how they see themselves or how the world sees them. Such is implied in this work wherein Barrioquinto creates a work that also brings in his fascination with Japanese and other eastern aesthetics.

Barrioquinto notes that "I take some ideas from my past shows that I modify to create something new. That's why if you look through my old and new paintings, you'll find some concepts that I've done before. However, there are some instances wherein I decide to create something new which I haven't done before, leading me to generate a wide array of styles throughout my artistic career." (*Jed Daya*)



Andres Barrioquinto



Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)*Dalagang Bukid "Girl with Mangoes"*

signed and dated 1945 (lower right)

oil on canvas

16" x 12 1/2" (41 cm x 32 cm)

P 5,000,000

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

PROVENANCE

Originally acquired from the artist in 1945 by Lieutenant Colonel James Jackson who was working under General MacArthur. Passed through descent to his stepson, the present owner.

Art in the Philippines prior to World War II was going through a dynamic interplay between traditional, colonial, and emerging modernist influences. The artists explored the matters of identity, representation, and cultural heritage, resulting in a diverse and evolving artistic landscape that laid the foundation for subsequent developments in the local art.

Unfortunately, the aftermath of the war left a profound impact on Philippine art that no one could have ever predicted.

The Second World War brought widespread destruction to the Philippines, and among those was the disruption in the trajectory of Philippine art. Apart from the ruin and loss of some studios and artworks, it also affected the artistic community's ability to create, exhibit, and promote their works. On the other side of the coin, though, this period marked a transition as artists reconsidered their styles, themes, and influences in the context of the post-war Philippines.

The wartime experiences, including stories of survival, struggle, and patriotism, became significant themes in Philippine art. Artists began to reflect on the impact of the war on the nation's identity and collective memory, but there were also others who turned their attention

to regional cultures and indigenous traditions, seeking to celebrate the Filipino identity, culture, and heritage.

In the lot at hand, dated 1945, it is evident that the artist decided to depict the latter in his *Dalagang Bukid "Girl with Mangoes."*

Fernando Amorsolo, a prominent Filipino painter, purposefully portrayed women with mangoes in his paintings to evoke a sense of nostalgia, cultural identity, and an idyllic impression of the Philippines.

Amorsolo's choice of subject matter was influenced by his desire to capture the essence of Filipino life and culture. The imagery of women with mangoes not only displayed the beauty of the Filipino women but also celebrated the simple pleasures of rural living, where the harvest of mangoes was a source of joy and sustenance. Furthermore, mangoes are a significant fruit in Philippine culture, symbolizing abundance, tropical landscapes, and a connection to the country's agricultural heritage.

Indeed, the National Artist's oeuvre carries an underlying message of nationalistic pride and a longing for a simpler past. (*Isabella Romarate*)



Juvenal Sansó (b. 1929)*Caresse of Spring*

signed (lower right)

ca. 1970s

acrylic on canvas

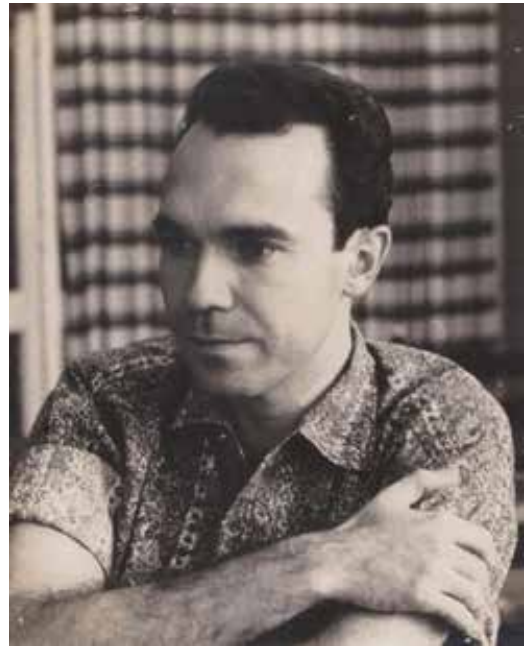
25" x 36" (64 cm x 91 cm)

P 1,400,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila



Juvenal Sansó © Manila Times

Owing to his predilection for peculiar-looking plants, the works of Juvenal Sansó overflow with a variety of flowers that can only be found in the lush imagination of a poet. His floral aesthetic is at once romantic and delicate. Furthermore, his unique flowers, as with his other favorite subjects, are said to be executed and culled from his enchanted memory.

A contemplative artist, Sansó is noted for his paintings that have been related to poetic surrealism. As written in the French daily morning newspaper *Le Figaro*, "Sansó is a contemplative poet; his landscapes that seem

fantastic are authentic, seen in the Far-East... his flowers, masses of rocks, the fishing traps... his tropical plants are all remembered so clearly that he can recreate them in his works... in this silent world no human figure seems to penetrate."

Sansó received several acclaims from all over the world, but one of the awards he treasures the most is the Presidential Medal of Merit, it is the most prestigious award given by the Philippine government to an artist for his contribution to visual arts in the country. (*Isabella Romarate*)



Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)*Graceful Eve*

signed and dated 2011

carved green glass

13 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 6 1/2" (35 cm x 22 cm x 17 cm)

P 1,200,000

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

Big solid pieces of glass are used to create the sculptures of Ramon Orlina. To form the blocks into sculptures of ethereal beauty, the glass is painstakingly hand-cut and ground until the figure he envisions is gradually revealed.

The lot on hand resembles that of a woman's body based on the round, pointed breasts and a slim waist that flares into hips. The elegant contours of *Nude* must have been a great challenge for Orlina to shape and smoothen using his improvised and handmade tools.

Orlina has done other sculptures showcasing torsos and hips. For instance, there was *Torso* in 1997 made of Asahi glass, and *Ecstasy II* in 2009 made of amber crystal. What makes *Nude* different from these pieces is that it features a graceful neck and shoulders. This piece also seems to be standing straight and her spine unarched, as opposed to another Orlina female figure in this auction.

The ingenuity of Orlina's portrayal of the female figure has been praised by art critic Eric Torres. He points out that "The female breast Orlina exhorts is no mere object of voyeuristic prurience. [It is] a hymn to every woman generously endowed by nature. It is also a salute to the curve and the sphere as with an eye to perfection of form and finish. Orlina goes beyond the sensuous in the metaphysical." This description is aptly applicable to the lot in hand, *Nude*. (*Raphaela Cordero*)



Elmer Borlongan (b. 1967)*Untitled*

signed and dated 2001 (lower left)
pastel on paper
15" x 11 1/2" (38 cm x 29 cm)

P 180,000

Elmer Borlongan presents the current situation of the Filipino worker in this piece. We can see a man donned in his office attire. He is seated and clearly showing signs of emotional distress and agitation; his spirits are low, his mind is wretched, and he is in a very demoralizing situation. In a portrait of the Filipino as an exploited worker, Borlongan shows the movers and makers of society as suffering from socio-economic distress and precariousness brought by unjust and inhumane labor conditions: low wages that cannot keep up with the rapidly rising cost of living, the absence of a livable national minimum wage, fascist attacks to silence workers who are only forwarding and amplifying their immediate and long-term concerns and interests, and the further estrangement of the workers not only from their labor but also from others and their own selves—their passions and their harmonious relationships with others. Ours is a labor that merely and hardly fulfills our basic needs to survive yet satiate the lavishness and caprices of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, labor is not livable, productive, and fulfilling; it is dehumanizing. (*Adrian Maranan*)

**Juan Luna** (1875-1899)*Three Studies*

signed (lower right)
pencil on paper
6" x 10 1/2" (15 cm x 27 cm)

P 500,000

PROVENANCE

León Gallery, *The Spectacular Mid Year Auction*,
Makati City, 21 June 2014, Lot 77

LITERATURE

Puruganan, Ricarte M. *Folk Art: The Thread to National Art*. Manila:
Lucila A. Salazar and Heritage Publishing, 1983. Illustrated on page
115.

Aside from his large, academic paintings, Juan Luna did many small, more intimate works, including portraits. A number of Luna's works show spontaneity and an elusive, 'spur of the moment' quality. Ramon Villegas once wrote that: "These quick sketches and close-in reviews of his world were done to satisfy only his own standards, to see if what he saw in



his mind was as pleasing as what his brush could paint, and what his eyes could see." The same can be said about these pencil on paper sketches. Luna's growing reputation as an artist led to a *pensionado* (pension) scholarship at 600 pesos annually through the Ayuntamiento of Manila. He famously won the first Gold Medal in the 1884 Madrid Art Exhibition for '*The Spoliarium*.'

A VERY AMORSOLO THEME

BY THE MODERNIST MASTER MAGSAYSAY-HO

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

In the 1930s, Anita Magsaysay-Ho would sharpen her skills at the avant-garde Cranbrook Academy in Michigan, the same college that would later influence the art of Jose Joya and Napoleon Abueva. She also studied at the New York Students' League under Kenneth Hayes Miller, Will Barnet and Robert Ward Johnson.

But before she would make her name as the only female member of the vaunted Thirteen Moderns, she had a sterling foundation in classical, academic art.

Ramon N. Villegas would note that Anita would begin painting from the age of nine — and went on to study at the School of Fine Arts of the University of the Philippines, under the tutelage of Filipino master painters Fabian de la Rosa, and his nephews Fernando and Pablo Amoroso, as well as Ireneo Miranda and Vicente Rivera y Mir. Furthermore, she studied at Manila's School of Design, under Victorio Edades and Enrique Ruiz.

It was in New York City where she also met Robert Ho from Hong Kong. They married and moved to China, where Ho's shipping company, Magsaysay Inc., began. The couple eventually had five children and they moved frequently because of Ho's work. They lived in Brazil, Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. Wherever she lived, Anita had a studio where she could paint.

Although she was eventually identified as one of the Thirteen Moderns, in the early 1940s, the influence of her teacher Fernando Amoroso was still clearly visible, both in terms of subject and technique. Later, her work evolved toward modernism.

In the work at hand, *Girl in a Maria Clara*, Magsaysay-Ho depicts a doll-like tot dressed in a traditional 'Maria Clara' ensemble: A lace *panuelo* (*fichu*) is draped over the traditional *camisa* (shirt) with the billowing sleeves of a turn-of-the-century styled *traje de mestiza*, accented with blue appliqué rendered in an Impressionist manner. A matching azure skirt completes the costume; as do a complete suite of child-sized jewelry: a pearl-studded comb, a *tamborin* of pierced gold beads, and *creolla* hoop earrings. The lovely, wide-eyed child holds a painted *abanico* (fan) for additional flourish.

The portrait is an Amoroso subject, but treated so differently. The brushstrokes are strong, the colors are deftly applied. The technique is intensely alive, but the charm of Filipina beauty shines through.

Magsaysay-Ho was to the manor born: her father Ambrosio Magsaysay, an engineer, was uncle to the future Philippine president Ramon. She was descended from Luis Rafael Yangco whose fleet of ships earned him the title of "King of Manila Bay" and she would summer in the home of his refined son,

Teodoro who would later be the Philippines' Resident Commissioner in the United States. She was therefore no stranger to the upper crust and would be asked to create portraits not only of Manila's society women but also their pampered children.



ABOVE: Various portraits of pampered children, Alfredo Roces, *In Praise of Women*, Crucible Workshop, p. 53, 60 and 78 respectively. LEFT: Anita Magsaysay Ho's *Beggar Girl*, 1944. From the Paulino and Hetty Que Collection.

A Portrait of Fond Memory



135

Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1914 - 2012)

Girl in a Maria Clara

signed and dated 1944 (lower left)

oil on masonite board

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

P 4,000,000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by Lt. Col. John Brownwell, an officer on Gen. Douglas MacArthur's logistics staff after the Second World War. It has remained hanging in the family home in the United States since then.

Charlie Co (b. 1960)

The War God and the Grave Diggers (Diptych)

signed and dated 2007 (lower right)

oil on canvas

84 1/2" x 84 1/2" (215 cm x 215 cm)

P 600,000

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

EXHIBITED

Osage Gallery, *Possession*, Hong Kong, June 1 - July 15, 2007

The diptych *The War God and the Grave Diggers* is the largest work by Charlie Co to enter the Philippine art market. When Co created the piece during his artist's residency in Beijing in 2007, China had become one of the world's largest economies and would eventually overtake Japan in 2010 to become the second largest economy.

But this supposed advancement was borne from China's regress from its socialist victories and reforms under the leadership of Mao Zedong into that of capitalist orientation and eventual imperialist attitude starting with Deng Xiaoping's regime in the late 1970s that eventually posed a great deal of political and economic instability within the countries under its sphere of influence.

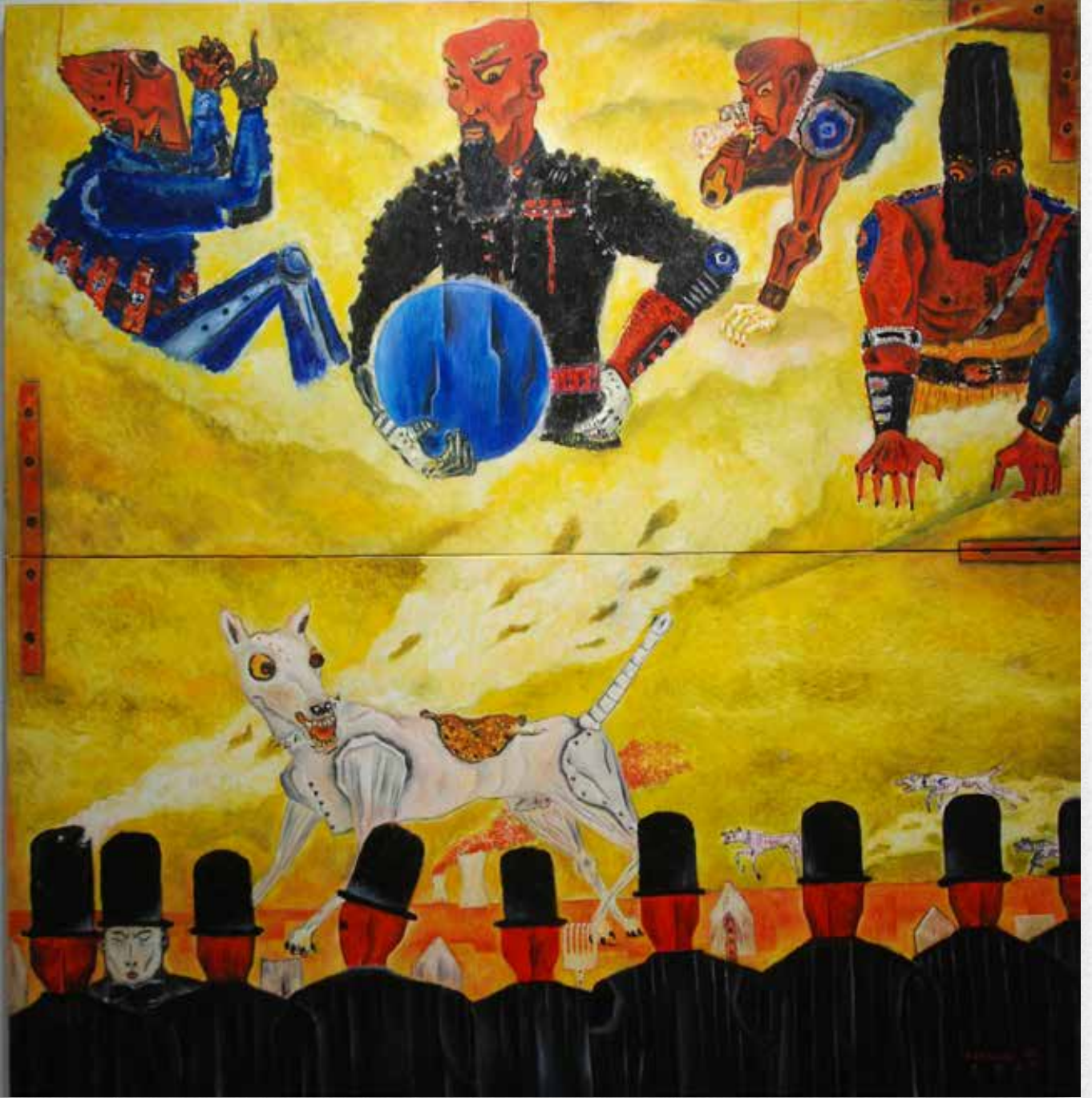
Co depicts China's imperialist stance in this intriguing work. "Four gods with Chinese features are dominantly watching from above. Each one of them is holding their own special weapon," Co shares with León Gallery. "The one on the left has one hand clenched and the other has his finger pointed upwards as if saying, "Just you wait, Armageddon will come in its own time," as his eyes look up even if his head faces downward. Another god on the right has a black hood on his head. He is an executioner waiting for the command and unleashing the war dogs. The god behind him has a sword, waiting to strike anytime.

"The most powerful of them all is holding a globe, not the normal globe; it is blackened and divided by lines.

He is waiting for the perfect time to start the war. The men in the foreground are the gravediggers, holding their shovels, spades, and forks. They are waiting for the command of their leader, the only person among them who is facing the viewer, his eyes closed intently, waiting for the command from above to give them the signal to start digging graves of those who will perish in the war. In the background are smokestacks with human figures coming out of nuclear power plants, the very reason for this conflict.

"Looking back now, it could be my own imagination at that time of how powerful China could be in taking over the world and its desire to take back Taiwan," Co concludes.

At present, China is driven by the continued growth of its monopolies and foreign direct investments, as exemplified by its "Belt and Road Initiative" and debt-trap diplomacy, pushing poor and developing nations into subjugation by forging unequal loan agreements to supposedly fund infrastructure and other "developments," but, in reality, excessively favors Chinese corporate interests to ensure its imperialist domination in the near future. Take the Philippines as a harrowing example; a continuing narrative of both warning and the people's unceasing struggle to liberate themselves from the oppressive yoke of semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism. (*Adrian Maranan*)





137

Norberto Carating (b. 1948)

Anilao Series (Five Artworks)

signed and dated 1993 (bottom)

acrylic on lawanit board

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

P 200,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

"Either art is a continuation... of natural tendencies of natural events; or art is a peculiar addition to nature springing from something dwelling exclusively in the breast of man, whatever name be given to the latter."

—JOHN DEWEY,
NATURE AND EXPERIENCE, 1925

Nature is perhaps our oldest subject of aesthetic interest. Aside from the human body, nature is often used as the standard and measurement for beauty. From metaphors and myths, beauty was rarely talked about outside of the context of nature itself. Paradises were lands described with "milk and honey", utopias were no stranger to "lush rolling hills." Even the more complex nuances of beauty such as the case of the phrase wine-dark sea, an Homeric epithet, reels in the complexity of our aesthetic relationship with nature through only a few simple words. Such is also the case in the visual arts. Where the earliest works and pieces often featured landscapes, animals, or other naturally occurring things. That isn't to say that a strict



adherence to the purely natural is the only standard of beauty or of aesthetics. Instead what this shows us is that it is going to be a hard thing to shake off, and that such an approach should grow with us and not dictate our relationship and understanding of art and aesthetics in general.

Thus, it is no surprise that in today's modern age, amongst a plethora of objects and phenomenon, Filipino artist Norberto Carating has chosen the site of Anilao, a popular diving town in Batangas as the muse for one of his iconic abstract series. Our fascination with the environment may also be rooted in something other than appearances. Though the artist is known for his more

abstract practice, he was also very much interested in transforming landscapes into pieces that utilize a unique blend of abstraction and impressionism.

The philosopher John Dewey in his seminal work *'Art as Experience'* partly operates under a sort of renewed understanding of the natural and the what we experience. For Dewey, the fact that we find beauty in the environment is not because it is a stand in for things that are spiritual or divine. Instead, the fact that we can draw upon aesthetic value from something so commonplace showcases us that inspiration truly exists all around us. What matters is trying to understand and appreciate our relationship with it. (*Jed Daya*)

Arturo Luz (1926 - 2021)*Juggler and Cyclist*

signed (lower right)

acrylic on handmade paper

57 1/2" x 40" (146 cm x 102 cm)

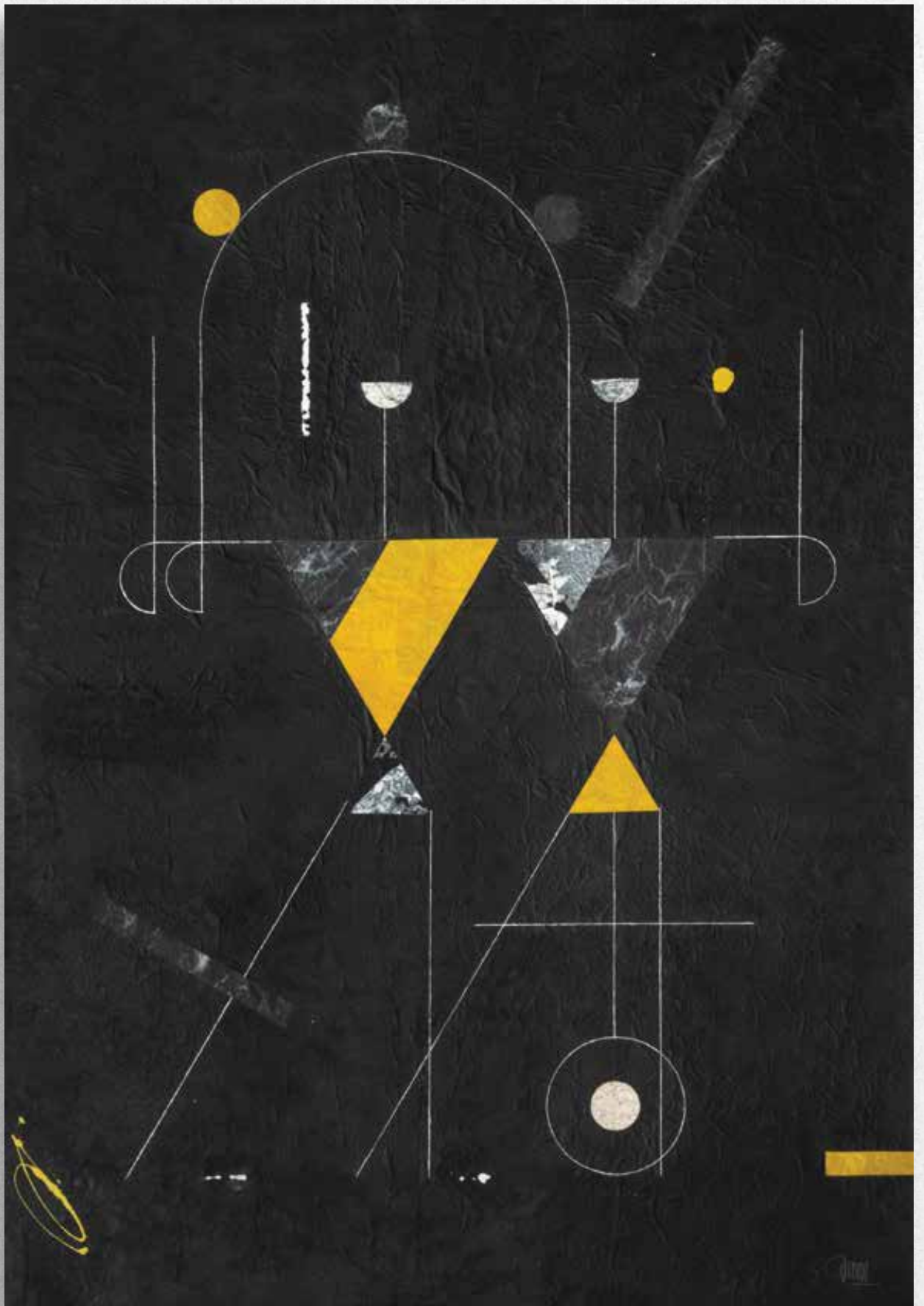
P 1,600,000Accompanied by a certificate issued by Mrs. Luisa Luz-Lansigan
confirming the authenticity of this lot

© León Gallery Archives

A significant portion of Arturo Luz's artistic practice centered around circus performers like acrobats, musicians, and cyclists. This combination of subjects indicates the artistic path and aesthetic disposition that Luz pursued during the 1960s and 1970s. This artistic direction involved a focus on abstract geometric paintings. All of Luz's elegant pieces showcase his instantly recognizable and succinct utilization of lines to craft precise, balanced geometric scenes. He adopted the formal and spatial techniques of Cubism as a framework to rein in the increasing levels of fantasy and irrationality that began infiltrating his imagery in the early 1960s. Gradually simplifying his technique, he developed an approach that primarily featured pure geometric shapes and their interactions, placed against understated backgrounds. The artwork is meticulously organized to accentuate straight lines and

circular forms. Vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines are evident in the figures' forms.

By employing a rich and textured backdrop, Luz unites the color element to underscore the straight lines within his composition. His simple geometric constructs are given life through the aforementioned contrast; an example of the uncomplicated yet elegant interplay of Luz's canon. The figures' heads, lacking distinct features and appearing like pins, are distilled into their fundamental geometric elements. Luz simplifies his subjects into substantial, uncomplicated masses, as these shapes evoke timeless values. As a result, even though the color palette is limited in this piece, the formal attributes are enhanced by the precisely structured geometric lines and meticulous modeling, aspects that further mirror Luz's pragmatic ideals. (*Jed Daya*)





139

Joven Mansit (b. 1948)

a.) Learning To Fly 1

dated 2007

oil on canvas

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

b.) Learning To Fly 3

2007

oil on canvas

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

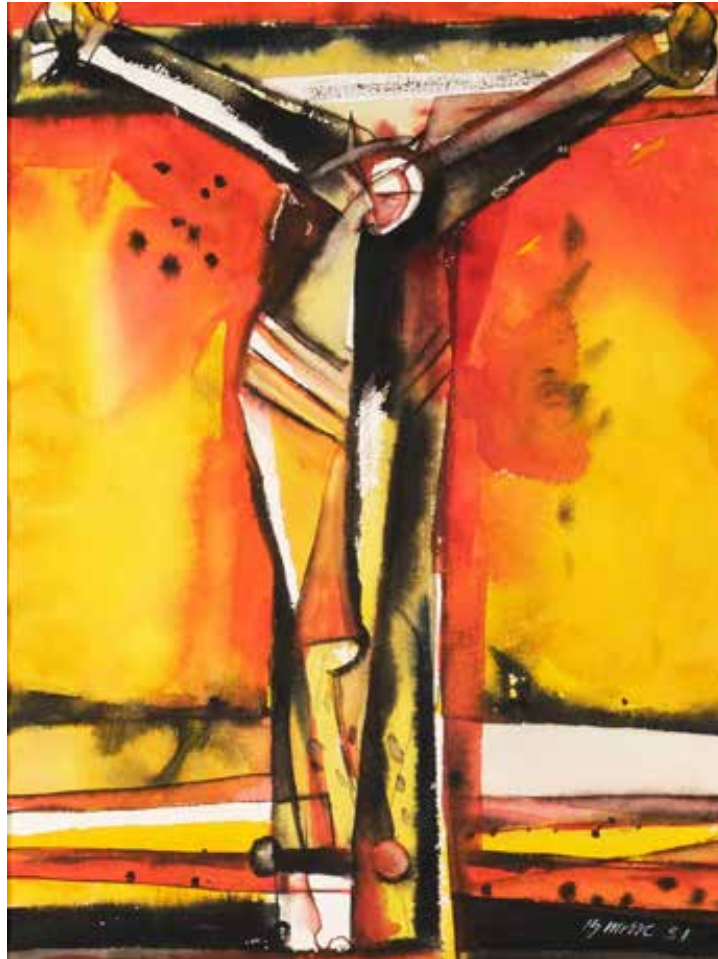
P 200,000

Each piece is accompanied by a certificate issued by The big & small art co. Gallery and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

Joven Mansit's unique artistic practice posits him masterful weaver of memory, seamlessly intertwining the past with the present through his thought-provoking creations. As he consistently brings to life the imagery of turn-of-the-century Filipiniana photographs, Mansit's work takes on the role of a visual historian, reconstructing narratives that transcend mere representation. His chosen subject matter serves as a gateway into a profound exploration of the intricate interplay between culture, identity, and historical memory.

Employing a deliberate palette of sepia tones, Mansit's canvases evoke an evanescent nostalgia, reminiscent of aged photographs held dear in familial albums. These hues, imbued with the patina of time, act as a bridge between eras, inviting viewers to journey through the corridors of history. It's not merely the visual appearance that captivates, but the underlying intention — a meticulous attempt to grapple with the multifaceted dimensions of representation.

Yet, beyond surface appearances, his works harbor subtle marks of disintegration, symbolic of the inevitable passage of time. This acknowledgment of decay and aging imparts an added layer of authenticity to his pieces, echoing the transitory nature of existence itself. Mansit's strokes of genius, however, do not cease at mimicry; rather, they boldly stride into the realm of inquiry. (Jed Daya)



140 PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF A DISTINGUISHED DOCTOR

Ang Kiukok (1931 - 2005)

Crucifixion

signed and dated 1981 (lower right)

watercolor on paper

19" x 14" (48 cm x 36 cm)

P 500,000

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

A student of the watercolor maestro Vicente Manansala, Ang Kiukok dabbled in watercolors of postwar subjects such as the *barungbarong* and jeepneys, as well as growing urban spaces in the early period of his artistic practice from the 1950s-1960s. Even during such early beginnings, Kiukok had already shown a penchant for a style of geometric figuration that would come together more wholly throughout his career. Manansala, who possessed a mastery of the cubist style, had made a profound impact on Kiukok as his teacher, after all. Despite this, Kiukok would not simply live under the name of his maestro. In contrast to the idyllic folk subjects of Manansala's transparent cubism, Kiukok would dwell on the sacred and profane in a style of geometric figuration that evoked a grating sense of space.

The crucifix is among Kiukok's most favored subjects alongside other religious images such as the Pieta, the suffering Christ, the Last Supper, votive candles, and churches. Often, he strips his subjects down into bonelike figurations that are both sharp and stark. And yet, what the artist paints is far from irreverent. Instead, they simply illustrate a disturbing picture of emaciation that captures viscerally the feeling of excruciating despair.

Riddled with religious angst, Kiukok's crucifixes in particular seem to foreground Christ as human—the God made flesh—whose passion is borne from such worldly suffering. It is a suffering that emaciates—yet supposedly emancipates the believer at the same time. But in the excruciating moment of great pain and suffering, how is one to still believe in the saving act of passion and sacrifice? Kiukok's recurrent fixation on the sacred seems to supply an answer: that there is only suffering because belief remains. (*Pie Tiausas*)

Manuel A. Rodriguez Sr. (1912 - 2017)*Fish Vendors*

signed (right)

dated 1954

wax

25" x 20 1/2" (64 cm x 52 cm)

P 100,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection

EXHIBITED

Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual,
Manila, 1954

Manuel A. Rodriguez Sr., also known by his nickname Mang Maning, was born in Cebu, Philippines. He grew up in a humble family, his father was a goldsmith and engraver who created ornaments for churches, designed liturgical vestments, and crafted jewelry. The young Manuel would soon leave for Manila to study Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines. When the debate between the conservatives and the modernists was at its height, he sided with the modernists. Although he trained in the academic tradition, he preferred to deal with abstract human forms and experiment with textural values, as observed in this early work, *Fish Vendors*.

The wax piece at hand, dated 1954, was exhibited at the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual, Manila.

Rodriguez Sr. explored various subjects and themes in his artworks, drawing inspiration from daily life, bucolic landscapes, and Filipino culture. His canvases are inhabited by farmers, fishermen, vendors, and other

individuals in their natural settings, the kind of setting that showcases the natural beauty of the Philippines. Sometimes, his works also touched on religious and spiritual themes that are deeply ingrained in Filipino culture, evoking a sense of unity and community.

Rodriguez Sr. had a multidisciplinary approach to art, as his artistic endeavor also delved into printmaking. Often referred to as the "Father of Philippine Printmaking," he was instrumental in promoting printmaking as a legitimate and respected art form in the country. In addition to that, he was also a teacher and mentor to many aspiring artists. He shared his expertise and knowledge with younger generations, contributing to the growth and development of Philippine art.

The legacy of Rodriguez Sr. lives on through his oeuvre, his influence on Philippine printmaking, and his contributions to the broader art community. In 2007, he became a recipient of the Presidential Merit Award for his contribution to the visual arts. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Mid-Century Experimentations From a Master



EDILBERTO B. BRAVO

Distinguished Collector, Business Leader And a Friend to Artists

The popular phrase “man of many hats” is a mere understatement compared to the discerning and sophisticated man that is Edilberto B. Bravo. A most respectable businessman, Bravo is the co-founder and current Chairman and CEO of U-BIX Corporation, the Philippines’ largest and leading office systems services provider and one of the country’s pioneers in laser printing and plain paper copying technology. He is an alumnus of the University of the Philippines College of Law but found his professional footing in business, having an initial solid background as a former Citibank executive. Bravo has also ventured into leisure real-estate development, owning several hotels and resorts, including The Bravo Hotel and Bravo Golf Hotel Resort and Spa in Dumaguete, Munting Paraiso Resort in Dauin, Negros Oriental, and Blue Wave in Siquijor.

Bravo weaves his legal erudition and business flair into his art collecting, making him a leading virtuoso in his field of passion. Bert, as he is fondly called, had his fortuitous encounter with art and antiques in 1966, a time of exciting archaeological discoveries in the country. He was immediately drawn into the thrill of it all, and he eventually became friends with Sonny Launte, from whom he learned the art of collecting Oriental ceramics. The two would establish an art gallery-cum-antique shop called “Sarimanok” at Adriatico corner Pedro Gil in Ermita, Manila.

“The business gave me the opportunity to observe the latest trends in modern painting,” Bravo says in the book *Hidden Treasures, Simple Pleasures*. “Beside us was the shop of Arturo Luz [The Luz Gallery], where I saw painters and collectors like Fernando Zobel. I met Vicente Manansala and then a very young Ang Kiukok at Arturo’s gallery.”

Bravo’s experience managing his own gallery enkindled in him the passion for collecting art, which had already expanded to include *santos* and other religious objects. His collection is an all-encompassing one, with interesting pieces from the classic *maestros*, the modernists, and the contemporary stars.

For him, art has become the ultimate foundation of everything he ventures into; art has been exalted into a kind of hallowed devotion that feeds the senses and nourishes the soul.

He has these words of wisdom for young and burgeoning collectors. “One needs to have a good understanding of the



TOP LEFT: Edilberto B. Bravo. TOP RIGHT: Edilberto and his wife, Fel. BOTTOM: (from left to right) Edilberto B. Bravo, Jaime C. Laya, Mariano C. Lao © *Hidden Treasures, Simple Pleasures*

principles of art appreciation and the shifting tastes and preference of art collectors...The lesson is to master the universal rule of art appreciation because that gives one the confidence to choose which pieces to buy. I now find myself less interested in who the artist is and more in how a piece impacts on my senses because of its color, texture, and subject.”

Bravo has formed deep friendships with artists and collectors alike. With his equally distinguished collector-friends, Jaime C. Laya and Mariano C. Lao, Bravo co-authored a landmark book in Philippine art collecting titled *“Hidden Treasures, Simple Pleasures.”* (Adrian Maranan)

Mr. Bravo’s Interview Excerpts taken from Jose Dalisay Jr.’s Essay “Edilberto B. Bravo: Connoisseur” Published in “Hidden Treasures, Simple Pleasures”



Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

View of Intramuros

signed and dated 1977 (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 60" (61 cm x 152 cm)

P 2,000,000

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



After Federico Aguilar Alcuaz's prolific "Barcelona" period starting in 1955, he returned to his native Manila in 1964 with much acclaim and reverence from his motherland. He had just embarked on his "Golden Period," producing the avant-garde Barcelona Paintings. Alcuaz had also gained international exposure, exhibiting in the leading galleries of Spain, Portugal, and the global art capital of Paris.

In April 1964, Alcuaz was conferred by the French Government its prestigious *Decoration of Arts, Letters, and Sciences* Award. He would return to Manila by September of that year, holding exhibitions at The Luz Gallery and a Ten-Year Retrospective at the National Library. The following years

would bestow Alcuaz with further recognitions: The *Republic Cultural Heritage Award* (June 1965), a solo exhibition at the Malacañang (May 1966), and the *Araw ng Maynila Award* (1966).

Alcuaz had now emerged as a distinguished *maestro* in his own right.

But Alcuaz would not stay in Manila in perpetuity, for he would not abandon his thriving international career. Yet, he needed a place to stay whenever he was in his native city: a place where he could witness the melting pot that was Manila's colorful culture and heritage, which would be an inspiration for his landscapes in the years to come.



In 1969, Alcuaz established residence at the then-newly built Manila Hilton Hotel (now the Waterfront Manila Pavilion Hotel and Casino) along United Nations Avenue in Ermita. Whenever he was in the city, the five-star hotel would remain his residence for four decades until his death in 2011.

Alcuaz's wife, Ute, shares in the sidenotes of Rod. Paras-Perez's book on the artist titled *Parallel Texts*: "Living without his wife and sons, he felt it was easier and more comfortable in a hotel, where he could come and go as he wanted. He was constantly traveling, hardly staying a long time without interruption in one place. As he was always present at his exhibitions, he had to travel extensively in Europe, USA, and Asia."

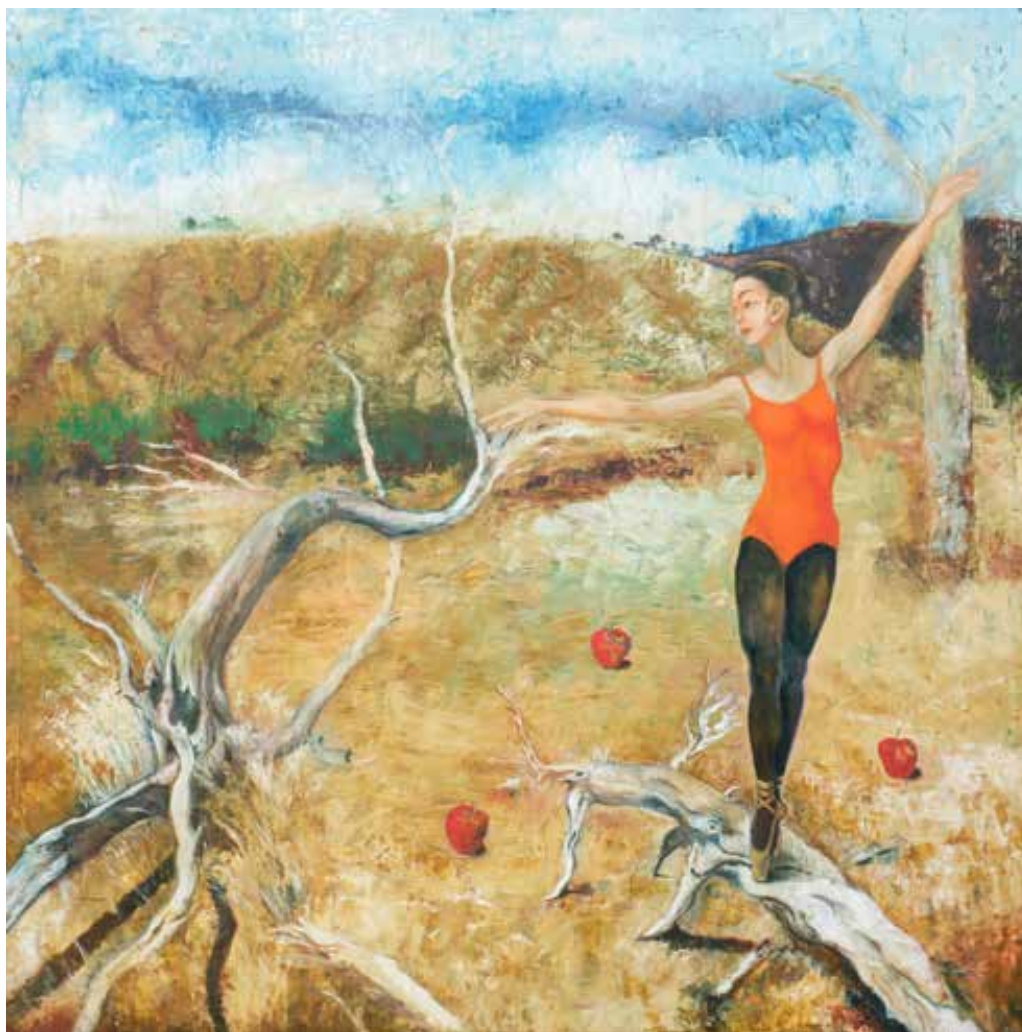
Alcuaz's hotel suite overlooked the site of his old studio on the former campus grounds of the Ateneo along Padre Faura St. It can be remembered that the Jesuit priest Fr. Thomas Cannon gave Alcuaz his first proper art studio within the university premises.

It was at the Manila Hilton, then the Philippines' tallest building, that Alcuaz painted a series of scenic cityscapes in homage to his beloved Manila. But like a singer embarking on a world tour, Alcuaz would hop from one hotel to another in search of an alternative sweeping and dramatic view of a city where the old and the new clash in epic grandeur.

The work at hand was painted from Alcuaz's suite at the historic Manila Hotel, the Philippines' oldest premiere hotel, built in 1909 and opened in 1912. The Manila Hotel possesses a vantage point offering an unobstructed view of the captivating juxtaposition of Manila's old and new world charms. This piece shows an impressionist bird's eye view of Intramuros and Ermita, in which antiquity weds beautifully with modernity. To the left is Intramuros, with the Manila Cathedral's imposing dome and belfry rising above the historic walls of Old Manila. The *Baluarte de San Diego*, which had not yet been excavated until 1979, and the Legazpi-Urdaneta Monument face the Bonifacio Drive.

Modern Ermita and its landmarks feature prominently in the rest of the canvas. Vestiges of the proposed national government center envisioned by Daniel Burnham mightily stand: the Neoclassical edifices of the Manila City Hall, the Old Legislative Building, and the Old Finance Building (the latter two are now the site of the National Museums of Fine Arts and Anthropology, respectively). The lush greenery of Rizal Park emerges on the right. The Manila Hilton, Alcuaz's residence and the tallest structure in this composition, epitomizes Manila's continuing embrace of modernity—for better or for worse.

In a bustling panoramic view juxtaposing the old and new Manila, Alcuaz shows his profound appreciation of his city's history and cultural identity. His high-powered gestural brushstrokes nourish the spirit of ethereality yet, at the same time, yield to a pulsating rhythm of being in the present. Akin to a riveting musician, Alcuaz's panoramic landscape of Manila offers an inherent visual lyricism that sings the praises of distinguished and storied urbanity. (*Adrian Maranan*)



143 PROPERTY FROM THE EDILBERTO B. BRAVO COLLECTION

Kitty Taniguchi (b. 1952)

The Ballet Dancer

signed and dated 2007 (lower left)

oil on canvas

71" x 71" (180 cm x 180 cm)

P 700,000

LITERATURE

Bravo, Edilberto B., Mariano C. Lao, and Jaime C. Laya.

Hidden Treasures, Simple Pleasures. Makati City: Bookhaven, Inc., 2009. Full-color photograph and painting description on page 155.

In 1985, Cristina "Kitty" Taniguchi accomplished her academic journey with a master's degree in English and American Literature from Silliman University. Since then, her artistic journey has been marked by a fervent dedication to painting. Within her works, one can discern a profound utilization of symbols and imagery that evokes an unfolding and ethereal quality. The elements she employs find themselves arranged in a seemingly

disconnected yet harmonious manner. While these compositions may not adhere to the traditional pictorial unity observed in conventional scenes, specifically when viewed within the context of academic and genre painting, they succeed in transmitting a surreal depiction of what is perhaps a glimpse of the human subconscious.

This 2007 piece titled *Ballet Dancer* was originally set to be acquired by none other than the Tate Modern in London. But Bravo convinced her to allow him to acquire it. Bravo notes that "I quickly persuaded her to give it to me instead. Most big name artists in Manila no longer have the time and energy to paint works of this size—a full eight feet by eight feet." (*Jed Daya*)

Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

Untitled

signed (lower right)

ca. 1978

print

14 1/2" x 20 1/4" (37 cm x 51 cm)

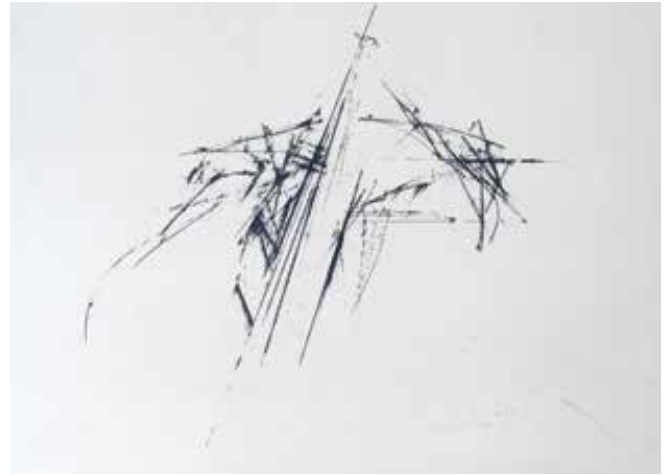
P 200,000

LITERATURE

Roces, Alfredo. *Fernando Zobel*. Manila: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1990. Full-color photograph and painting description on page 141.

In "Sketchbooks" by Fernando Zobel, fellow artist Arturo Luz notes: "In a one-man show some time ago, Zobel exhibited what appeared to be paintings but were listed as paintings and drawings. For Zobel, painting and drawing are at once alike and different. A drawing can be large, colored, and finished. A painting may be small, colorless and simple".

When Spanish and European critics mention specific Oriental or Filipino aspects within Zobel's art, they are referring to elements associated with the artist's early fascination with the Chinese language and brushwork. Through this lens, Zobel upheld the belief in the intrinsic



beauty of a painting. The artwork he presents for contemplation emerges from an inner journey. The intention is to extract the individual experiences of these artists and filter them through his personal sensitivity. Through his work, a significant aspect of his character comes to light — his desire to strike a balance between a strongly rational inclination towards moderation on one side and a visually assertive instinct on the other. (*Jed Daya*)

Fernando Zóbel (1924 - 1984)

Untitled

signed (lower right)

ca. 1960s

serigraph on paper

12 1/4" x 11 3/4" (31 cm x 30 cm)

P 200,000

LITERATURE

Paras-Perez, Rod. *Fernando Zobel*. Manila: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1990. Full-color photograph and painting description on page 121.

Fernando Zóbel was a prominent Filipino-Spanish artist known for his notable contributions to modern art — among those was his works in serigraphy, also known as silk screen printing. His serigraphs exhibit a sense of movement and each one captures a moment of dynamic transformation. He used layering and overlapping of colors to create depth and texture in his prints, and his use of exciting and contrasting hues resulted in serigraphs that are visually engaging and thought-provoking.

Zóbel's serigraph works have been exhibited both here and abroad, and his contributions to the medium have left an indelible mark on the art world. (*Isabella Romarate*)



Jose Joya (1931 - 1995)

Bulls and Bears

signed and dated 1989 (lower right)

acrylic collage

29 1/2" x 43 1/2" (75 cm x 110 cm)

P 4,000,000

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

Characterized by art critic Leonidas Benesa as the "exponent of pure painting", Jose Joya has become an influential name in Philippine abstraction for his mastery of non-figurative expression. Although his first forays into the art scene as a student at the UP College of Fine Arts would gain him recognition for his realist and still life works which granted him awards such as the prestigious Shell Art Competition Prize, Joya's artistic journey would find his subject matter straying from the outer object and instead gradually drawing inwards within the artist himself, resulting in spontaneous gestures of pure feeling and imagination on canvas.

During his studies in New York from 1956 to 1957, Joya's artistic direction would be steered towards abstraction. At that time, abstract expressionism had reached its peak in Western painting with the likes of Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, and Mark Rothko utilizing unconventional techniques and styles of making non-figurative art that gave emphasis to the expressive qualities of paint. Having taken to heart such artistic philosophy, Joya's works eventually found less figurative subjects in favor of 'landscapes of feeling and mind'. However, this did not mean that Joya completely ceased to render figures and still lifes for the rest of his artistic career. Joya's documentary-like travelogues, after all, often featured figurative subjects drawn with pencil and ink in gestural lines. Philosophically, such a gestural manner would also manifest in his works of abstraction as the growing spontaneity of his technique tended to capture energies in their utmost dynamism rather than merely rendering form.

It was in the 1970s that Joya would embark on a series of acrylic collages which took his abstract expressionism towards a more experimental direction. By combining acrylic and rice paper, Joya takes off from Western abstraction and the calligraphic gestural to bring his work back ever closer to the subject matter he had become accustomed to initially: nature and the landscape. Despite the heightened experimental approach, one cannot help but appreciate the overlapping organic intensities that bloom across the composition of Joya's acrylic collages. His abstractions curiously bear no real definable resemblance to any observable object in nature, but perhaps such is only what makes Joya's expressionism all the more special. It is an expressionism that abstracts not just from nature, but from a heart that is at one with it. (*Pie Tiausas*)





Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)

Banana Series

signed and dated 1978 (lower right)
gouache on paper
40" x 60" (102 cm x 152 cm)

P 4,000,000

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

LITERATURE

Bravo, Edilberto B., Mariano C. Lao, and Jaime C. Laya. *Hidden Treasures, Simple Pleasures*. Makati City: Bookhaven, Inc., 2009. Full-color photograph and painting description on page 149.

Mauro Malang Santos' *Banana Series* counts among the largest works by the artist to enter the Philippine art market. But beyond this impressive feat lies a kind of technical brilliance that Malang's paintings of plants and trees cheerfully exemplify.

Malang's plants and trees sprouted on his canvas in the mid-1970s as a natural progression and elevation from the themes that had populated his art in the years prior. Previously, Malang had only relegated these lush vegetations in the background to support the integrity of the focal subject; they serve as enhancements for the landscapes of bustling *barrios* and busy towns, portraits of women vendors, and rows of ordinary houses, but are now the protagonists and "movers" of the composition. "Malang's obsessive urge to work in 'series' is probably dictated by the need for a visual fulcrum on which to anchor his ideas. In the *Plants and Trees* paintings, he has found an image worthy of his rich imaginings," writes in the catalog of his 1981 exhibition at the Museum of Philippine Art.

This 1978 piece titled *Banana Series* captures Malang's invigorating pursuit to reanimate his creative play on figure-ground relationships and their playful interaction within the space of the composition. As Edilberto B. Bravo puts it in the book *Hidden Treasures, Simple Pleasures*, "urban shanties in signature Malang

style become the background for this glorious rendering of a banana tree."

The banana tree (an herbaceous flowering plant if one considers scientific accuracy)—with its gigantic, lush leaves rendered in Malang's trademark angular shapes and its luxuriant fruits and flowers signifying its sound growth and the fertility of the soil—serves as the most crucial element in the composition. While the background is permeated with a homogenous blue sky and crammed with monochromatic *barong-barongs*, the banana tree is highly distinguishable from the rest of the canvas due to its graphic depiction, effectively drawing the line between subject and background and veering the viewer's focus into the tree's radiant and varying colors. Thus, Malang's intention to elevate his plants and trees into the protagonist of his works during the mid to late 1970s is made evident.

Furthermore, by situating a lofty and fruitful banana tree in the middle of the slums, Malang injects into a rather depressing subject an inherent optimism that immensely speaks of his gleeful disposition in life. "I guess I just happen to be one of the more fortunate ones," Malang said to Cid Reyes when interviewed in June 1985. "Siguro [dahil] masasaya ang kulay ko [Maybe because my colors speak of joy]. (Adrian Maranan)



ABOVE: Mauro Malang Santos. Image courtesy of The Philippine Star



St. Anthony of San Antonio De Padua y Niño Jesus

Late 18th-Century to Early 19th-Century (1775 – 1825)

Ivory

Binondo, Manila

H: 10 1/2" x L: 3" x W: 3"

(27 cm x 8 cm x 8 cm)

P 100,000

PROVENANCE

Distinguished Collector

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This 250 year-old ivory statuette of San Antonio de Padua OFM depicts him holding up the naked and playful *Niño* Jesus to his face in veneration. His hair and that of the *Niño* Jesus are well-articulated in the eighteenth century tradition. His hands and the body of the *Niño* Jesus are also expertly carved. The Franciscan cincture is on his waist. His Franciscan habit falls in soft folds to his feet. The traditional iconography of San Antonio de Padua includes the Franciscan habit, tonsure, the *Niño* Jesus, lily, book, and a mule. This statuette adheres to a certain school of Filipino eighteenth century, solid ivory santos with Chinese-Filipino facial features, expertly articulated hands and feet, and soft, fluid, cascading robes, some of which have rococo gilt decoration by hand. The best examples of this exquisite genre are found in the San Agustin Museum, the Ayala Museum, and the Paulino & Hetty Que Collection.

The Portuguese Augustinian turned Franciscan San Antonio de Padua OFM has been a popular saint in the Roman Catholic Church for the last 800 years and remains so today. He is frequently invoked by devotees as the "*Saint of Miracles*" and the "Finder of Lost Items." Fernao was his baptismal name and he was born to the rich couple Vicente Martins and Teresa Pais Taveira in Lisboa, Portugal on 15 August 1195.

Fernao entered the Augustinian monastery at 15 years old; two years later, he requested to be sent to the monastery in faraway Coimbra, 211 kilometers northeast of Lisboa, so he could concentrate on Augustinian theology.

He had an epiphany when he witnessed the solemn return of the remains of the first five Franciscan martyrs from Morocco and he fervently desired to become a Franciscan missionary and a martyr for the Faith. He was finally permitted to leave the Augustinian order, took his vows as a Franciscan, and took Antonio as his religious name, after San Antonio Abad (Saint Anthony the Abbot or Saint Anthony of Egypt), patriarch of the hermits. Antonio went to Morocco to evangelize the Saracens, but fell very ill and had to return. The ship was diverted by storms and winds to Sicilia. Antonio convalesced at the monastery in Messina, where he finally met *Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone*, OFM known as Francesco d' Assisi. Antonio requested to go with a provincial superior to Northern Italy so he could be further instructed in Franciscan life. There, he finally found the secluded and contemplative life in a hermitage to which he initially aspired.

Antonio's great talent as an effective preacher was discovered at a gathering for the ordination of Franciscans and Dominicans in 1222 when he was 27 years old. Thereafter, his preferred life of prayer and penance at the hermitage was exchanged for a public one as a preacher. Hearing of favorable responses to his sermons, his profound knowledge of Holy Scripture, and ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Francesco d' Assisi OFM requested him to teach their fellow Franciscans, a singular honor bestowed by the Founder on him alone.

Unlike other zealous preachers who dwelt on Sin and its frightful consequences in the afterlife, Antonio's unprecedented success in evangelization lay in his positive presentation of the Roman Catholic faith: a sincere return to goodness and simplicity and a welcoming reconciliation with a loving Father. He did this specially in cities where heresy was strongest in northern Italy and southern France, making around 400 trips. Antonio became a "rock star" preacher, attracting huge crowds of up to 30,000 in piazzas and open fields. Bodyguards were hired perforce to prevent people with scissors from snipping at his habit for relics.

The rigors of his ministry left him exhausted and death became imminent. Antonio blessed Padua from Arcella as Francesco had blessed Assisi from a distance. As he lay dying, he exclaimed: "I see my Lord!" Antonio passed away at the age of 35 on 13 June 1231 in Arcella near Padua, Italy. He was canonized on 30 May 1232 by Pope Gregory IX.

Simple and humble Antonio evangelized with great love and indomitable courage. He became one of the great preachers and theologians of his day although his fellow friars initially had the impression that he was unintelligent and uneducated. Like his contemporaries the Italian Francesco d' Assisi OFM and the Spanish Domingo de Guzman OP (founders of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, respectively), Antonio was a man of great penance and apostolic zeal. More than anything else, he was a saint of the people. His success in drawing and returning adherents to the Roman Catholic faith was as valuable as his constant pleas for peace and justice.

Supernatural occurrences attributed to San Antonio de Padua included San Antonio's Bread, The Sermon to the Fishes, The Finder of Lost Items, The Guardian of the Mail, The Nine Consecutive Tuesdays, The Lilies, and San Antonio with the playful Niño Jesus.

The most famous shrine of San Antonio de Padua in prewar Filipinas was in the Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles (Franciscanos) in Intramuros but it was destroyed during World War II and never rebuilt. The more popular present-day parishes dedicated to the popular saint are in the postwar Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati city; the prewar VOT Venerable Orden Tercera (Franciscan Third Order) church on Bustillos street, Sampaloc, Manila; and the National Shrine of San Antonio de Padua at the 1800s parish church in Pila, Laguna.

The art of ivory carving began in Western Europe as early as the Paleolithic Era or Old Stone Age (2,500,000 – 10000 BC). It flourished in Indus Valley Civilization India (3300 BC), ancient Egypt (3100 BC), Shang dynasty China (1600–1046 BC), and 1600s Japan. Ivory carving in Spanish *Las Islas Filipinas* (1571–1898) began with the Sangley / Chinese migrant craftsmen who were interned with the rest of the Chinese migrant population in the Parian "*extra muros*" outside Intramuros, which the Spanish established for control of a foreign group which could easily challenge their military and political power, far more than the native *indios*. After a few relocations within the vicinity, the Parian ghetto settlement was finally moved across the Rio Pasig by Gobernador– General Luis Perez Dasmaringas y Paez de Sotomayor in 1594 to hilly Minondoc, which became present-day Binondo. Even at that time, Minondoc was already a longtime, bustling entrepot of Chinese trade which had long–preceded the arrival of the Spanish in 1571.

The first well–documented religious ivory carving in Filipinas was the famous and still–extant "*Nuestra Senora del Santisimo Rosario*" or "*La Naval de Manila*" of the Orden de Predicadores/ Dominican order crafted between 1587–93. The 4 feet/121.92 cm statue was a gift of Gobernador– General Luis Perez Dasmaringas y Paez de Sotomayor (tenure: 1593–96) to the Dominicanos in memory of his assassinated father Gobernador– General Gomez Perez Dasmaringas y Ribadeneira (tenure: 1590). (Actually both Dasmaringas padre y hijo were assassinated by los Sangleyes: Dasmaringas padre by Sangley rowers in Tingloy, Batangas in 1590 and Dasmaringas hijo beheaded by Sangley rebels in Manila in 1603). It was carved under the supervision of Capitan Hernando de los Rios Coronel, whose main task was to prevent the faces of the Virgen Maria and the Niño Jesus from manifesting Chinese features. He was unable to wholly prevent it as the Virgen Maria took on a Guanyin–like oval countenance with almond eyes and rosebud lips and the *Niño* Jesus became a plump Chinese baby. Nevertheless, the resulting face and hands of the Virgen Maria and the entire body of the *Niño* Jesus were beautiful and exquisite and have endured the vicissitudes of centuries.



Santo Niño

molave

18th century (1700–1800)

Cebu island

H: 48" x L: 16" x W: 13"

(122 cm x 41 cm x 33 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE

Distinguished Collector

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This unusual, almost eccentric, but extremely charming depiction of the *Santo Niño* shows the *Niño* Jesus as an adolescent of 12–13 years old. The crown is interesting because it is the same type of archaic "*corona imperial*" worn by the *Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje* / Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage / Our Lady of Antipolo in the famous series of (six? eight?) 18th century commemorative hardwood "*relieves*" which used to hang in the Antipolo church from the 1700s to World War II; the surviving "*relieves*" are in the San Agustin Museum, the AERA Museum at the Villa Escudero, and the Paulino & Hetty Que Collection. The unusual but "*kingly*" costume of the *Santo Niño* includes a yellow tunic with a red neckpiece or shawl, and a red sash on his waist with lace cuffs on his sleeves. He holds a globe in his left hand and his right hand seems to be holding something (which isn't there anymore). An unusual touch to the image are two triumphant winged angels waving floral bouquets at his feet (which made some observers think that the image is a *Nuestra Señora de Salvacion* with the two souls flanking her).

There was a long period during the seventeenth to the 18th century in *Las Islas Filipinas* that the *Niño* Jesus in his various iterations — *El Niño Dormido*, *Santo Niño*, *Santo Niño de Cebu*, *Santo Niño de Praga*, *Santo Niño de la Pasion*, *Santo Niño Salvador del Mundo*, *Santo Niño El Capitan General*, *Santo Niño de Atocha* — was actually depicted with the anatomy of an adult male, not of a child, harking back to ancient Christian tradition manifesting his omnipotency as "*Christos Pantokrator*" (Greek Orthodox Church). Much of the antique religious statuary of Cebu and Bohol islands was as interesting as this, both classical and folk sculpture.

The old churches of Cebu — Basilica Minore de Santo *Niño*, Dumanjug, Argao, Dalaguete, Boljoon, Carcar — and those of Cebu-influenced Bohol island — Baclayon, Loboc, Loay, Maribojoc, Dauis — are among the most beautiful in the archipelago. Not only are they architecturally interesting, even distinguished, and their ecclesiastical/church holdings intact, but their picturesque locations whether inland or seaside

considerably add to their immense allure. The religious statuary in these churches are usually classical Filipino nineteenth or eighteenth century at first impression, but they possess an inscrutable folksy Cebuano or Bolanon quality which enhance their appeal and which distinguish them from other religious statuary elsewhere.

Of course, there are exceptional old churches everywhere in the islands, among them: San Pablo Apostol church (San Agustin church) in Intramuros; San Pedro Alcantara church in Pakil, Laguna; Santiago Apostol church in Paete, Laguna; San Gregorio Magno church in Majayjay, Laguna; San Miguel Arcangel cathedral in Tayabas, Quezon; San Francisco de Asis church in Sariaya, Quezon; *Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria* church in Silang, Cavite; *Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion* church in Maragondon, Cavite; San Guillermo de Aquitania church in Bacolor, Pampanga (before the 1990 lahar inundation); Santiago Apostol church in Betis, Pampanga; San Agustin de Hipona church in Lubao, Pampanga; San Pedro Apostol y San Pablo Apostol church in Calasiao, Pangasinan; Santa Lucia de Siracusa church in Santa Lucia, Ilocos Sur; San Guillermo de Aquitania, Ermitano church in Magsingal, Ilocos Sur; Basilica Minore de San Nicolas Tolentino in Sinit, Ilocos Sur; San Nicolas de Tolentino church in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte.

Many of the famous old churches in Luzon and the Visayas do not make it to the list because they have lost their original "*retablos*" / altars or have been extensively renovated ("*wreckovated*") beyond recognition: Manila Cathedral in Intramuros; San Juan Bautista church in Quiapo, Manila; Santo Niño church in Tondo, Manila; San Andres Apostol church in *La Huerta*, Paranaque city; Jaro Metropolitan Cathedral in Jaro, Iloilo; Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral in Cebu city; et al.

However, the sheer concentration of beautiful old churches with their intact holdings and picturesque locations (Instagrammable) are in Cebu and Bohol islands (despite the disastrous 2011 earthquake).





150

Kapiya (Church Bench)

last quarter of the 18th century (1773–1783)

narra for the seat and the backrest

molave for the posts

balayong for the armrests, senepas and the stretchers

Tanay, Morong (present-day Rizal province)

H: 42" x L: 139 1/2" x W: 23"

(107 cm x 354 cm x 58 cm)

P 400,000

PROVENANCE

Distinguished Collector; San Ildefonso de Toledo parish church, Tanay, Morong (present-day Rizal province)

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This austere late eighteenth century, neoclassical "kapiya" or church bench is made of mature, beautifully-figured golden narra and red narra wood (two distinctly colored woods from the opposite ends of one mature *Pterocarpus indicus* tree trunk). Its back is one framed piece of wood ("binandeja") surmounted by four turned, stylized pineapple finials. The seat is also one framed piece of wood supported

by eight plain legs and flanked on both ends with thick undulating armrests terminating in scrolls; unlike rococo period "kapiyas," the armrests are not supported by cutwork and piercework flanges. The seat is supported by an apron with stylized Chinese cloud and shell motifs. Plain stretchers run the length of the piece on both front and back. The four pairs of feet are mounted on trestles for added durability. The whole piece is a Chinese-Filipino mortise-and-tenon construction, with no nails. This particular "kapiya" can be traced to the magnificent 1773 San Ildefonso de Toledo church in Tanay, Rizal. It was most likely crafted during the completion of the church in 1783.

"Kapiyas" or church benches were never plentiful during the Spanish colonial period (1571–1898) simply because



the congregation inside the church was expected to stand and kneel during the services; sometimes, "*banig*" or colorful woven mats were spread out on the wooden floors for the comfort of the attendees. "*Kapiyas*" were exclusively for the privileged use of the Spanish and Filipino clergy and also of the town's "*principalia*" or rich, landed families who were inevitably Spanish or Chinese mestizos. A church usually had four "*kapiyas*" at the most, not more.

The 1773 San Ildefonso de Toledo church in Tanay, Morong–Rizal is a jewel of Filipino rococo and one of the most beautiful of Philippine churches. The dazzling main altar "*retablo*" is a high point of Filipino rococo. The side altars are rococo and some are neoclassical, all four are memorable. The fourteen carved Stations

of the Cross are a triumph of Filipino folk art. The Tanay church is a compelling must-see for all Filipino art lovers and heritage advocates. Although the treasure-filled church and convent was inevitably a victim of ignorant and greedy parish priests and conniving councils and certain antique pieces were sold off arbitrarily postwar, whatever remains is still a great wonder to behold.

In terms of older baroque and rococo designs, the most spectacular "*kapiyas*" church benches in Filipinas are the eight magnificently carved church benches of the *Basilica Minore de Santo Niño* in Cebu city as well as the six equally splendid church benches of the Iglesia de San Miguel Arcangel in Argao town, southern Cebu. Both sets of ornate church benches are from the eighteenth century or even earlier.



151

Emmanuel Garibay (b.1962)

Tatay ni Tisay

signed and dated 2015 (lower left)

oil on wood

32 1/4" x 29" (82 cm x 74 cm)

P 500,000

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

PROVENANCE

León Gallery, *The Asian Cultural Council Auction 2016*, Makati City, 20 February 2016, Lot 191

Emmanuel Garibay, the powerful visual storyteller, draws inspiration from an enduring story in Jose Rizal's 'Noli Me Tangere' in *Tatay ni Tisay*: the controversial story between Maria Clara and Padre Damaso. In Rizal's novel, Maria Clara is the illegitimate daughter of the story's main antagonist, the Franciscan Padre Damaso, who coerced Doña Pía Alba, Maria's mother, to have sexual relations with him to give the infertile Kapitan Tiago, her husband,

a child. In the English translation of the *Noli* by Charles Derbyshire, Maria Clara is described as having eyes large, black, long-lashed, merry and smiling when she was playing but sad, deep, and pensive in moments of repose."

Derbyshire continues, "Aunt Isabel ascribed her half-European features to the longings of Doña Pía, whom she remembered to have seen many times weeping before the image of St. Anthony."

There is an intriguing figure of a parrot in this piece, signifying how Padre Damaso "parrots" the word of God but, in reality, was an embodiment of a corrupted soul, a deceptive image of religion. Maria, who holds a white rose signifying her purity, is being offered by Padre Damaso an apple, likely alluding to the forbidden fruit from the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" in the Genesis story. It symbolizes how the truth that Maria Clara had known all her life would be shattered by the inherent wickedness of her birth father, Damaso. (*Adrian Maranan*)



152

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (1932 - 2011)

Abstract

signed and dated 1971 (upper right)

oil on canvas

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

P 600,000

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

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz believed that the brilliance of an artwork had nothing to do with its being either abstract or figurative. Art, as a language, is able to indicate vague or concrete images in the same manner that musical compositions could as well do. Apparently, his musical afición was indeed vital, but so was his thorough grounding on the fundamental principles of art.

The virtuosity of Alcuaz as a painter is present in his ability to swiftly shift from figurative painting to

abstract. In the book *Parallel Texts: Federico Aguilar Alcuaz* written by Rod Paras-Perez, the artist's works are "characterized by brisk vivacity, as though the artist were anxious to animate the work before whatever pact he had made with the supernatural expired, before the essence of his being succumbed to the inevitable."

In the '70s, Alcuaz held numerous exhibits both here and abroad, from Austria to Barcelona, Germany, and the Netherlands too. He would also travel between Manila, Madrid, and New York, although he thought of his travels as lost time, much preferring to spend it with his paintings. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Elmer Borlongan (b. 1967)

Devotion

signed and dated 2000 (upper right)
pastel on paper
12" x 9" (30 cm x 23 cm)

P 100,000

PROVENANCE

The Drawing Room, Makati City

We may recall in Elmer Borlongan's *Devotion* those images of Folk Catholicism populating the vicinity of the Quiapo Church in Manila: the mystical fortune tellers or *manghuhula*, the vendors offering various potions and remedies, such as *gayuma* (love potion) and *pamparegla*. In this work, Borlongan depicts a veiled woman holding a lighted votive candle shaped into the form of a human body. For Quiapo vendors and mystics, candles represent different yearnings and prayers depending on the color that would be chosen and offered. Borlongan decided to depict in this work a red candle, symbolizing a blessing for good luck or *swerte* for one's family. The woman's penetrating and haunting gaze gives off an aura of desperation, perhaps a yearning for economic alleviation. As Borlongan is widely known for his depiction of Filipino humanity in their rawest and unvarnished reality, the artist paints a picture representing a people profoundly



and painfully longing for a genuine socio-economic relief, an indication of a failed social order in which the people surrender their hopes and dreams into an uncertain supernatural force. They have lost trust in a system that does not fairly operate for the greater good of the underprivileged. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Elmer Borlongan (b. 1967)

Kalinangan

signed and dated 2001 (lower right)
pastel on paper
8" x 11 1/2" (20 cm x 29 cm)

P 100,000

Elmer Borlongan's *Kalinangan* depicts the contradiction inherent in cultivating one's potential and knowledge. The work's title comes from the Tagalog root word *linang*, which means cultivation. In many ways, the piece is related to Jose Rizal's sculpture, *The Triumph of Science over Death*. It also bears a poignant resemblance to the enduring parable of the moth and the flame, in which a young moth, eager to achieve enlightenment by flying into the flame, was harrowingly consumed by fire and fell into its demise. But in Borlongan's work, we are reminded of the fruitful outcomes that cultivating one's wisdom and knowledge can brilliantly engender. Yet, we are also cautioned to use that knowledge and understanding for the greater good of the oppressed and the underprivileged rather than investing them in the oppressors and, thus, partaking in the brutal subjugation of one's own kind. (*Adrian Maranan*)





155

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Golf Series

signed and dated 1993

carved asahi glass

13" x 11 1/2" x 8 1/2" (36 cm x 30 cm x 19 cm)

P 1,600,000

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

Ramon Orlina, a prolific sculptor who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Santo Tomas, has also been known to design trophies for several long-running golf classics. Fashioned from his signature green Asahi glass, this sculpture dated 1993 was awarded to a winner of an architect's golf classic.

Orlina utilizes spheres and straight lines to craft a sculpture containing elements of geometric and

minimal—a piece that seemingly contains multiple dimensions; asymmetrical, shifting form when viewed from different angles. The artist imparts a sense of futurism in the work, a study in abstraction still conforming to an architect's sense of space. Spheres sit within spheres within the glass, as planes reflect and refract light through the multitude of shapes at different angles. (*Arman Lorenzo Burias*)

Pam Yan Santos (b. 1974)

Untitled

mixed media

H: 60" x L: 21" x W: 28" (152 cm x 53 cm x 71 cm)

P 120,000

PROVENANCE

Art Informal, Makati City

EXHIBITED

Artinformal, *Makes Sense*, Mandaluyong City,

November 27 - December 16, 2009

A SEAT AT THE TABLE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

How much of the self is one allowed to put in one's art? The universality of themes has always been a goal in which artist's strive to achieve. It is the act of creating something universally resonant while maintaining one's own unique artistic vision. The works of artist Pam Yan Santos can be seen as a balancing act between these two perceived extremes. Her practice presents itself as deeply personal without being trite, and appearing universal without having to shed any sort of personality or flair. Though Santos has experimented with a number of subjects throughout her career, it is undoubtedly the deeply personal that speaks to us in broader terms.

2009 was arguably a pivotal year for Santos and her practice. Thematically speaking, Santos produced a number of works that centered around her own life, specifically the life she shares with her husband, Jose John Santos III, and their son. This can be seen in pieces such as her mixed media piece *Making a living room: Color inside the line*, which presents a map-like collage that implies a theme of exploration or even discovery. This would prove to be a recurring concept throughout Santos' artistic career. But another work from the same year (one that might prove to be more connected to the work on offer) is her installation titled *Please Handle With Care Version 2*. The found-object work, which currently resides at the Pinto Museum, features a recreation of a living room. Its multiple parts are seemingly either wrapped with or made out of paper that is reminiscent of packing or even caution tape. But a closer inspection reveals that these are in fact her son's activity sheets from their sessions that seek to teach him the correlation between different actions and different objects. According to Pinto Museum's notes on the work: "By wrapping furniture, plants and even cupboard items, the artist lends us the perceptual tools to see the world according to her son's reality, even as she tries to render his private understanding of space to our commonplace regard for it."

Here, Santos effectively creates works that posit an ethics of care that understands the act as nuanced as it is natural. To care for everything in the same way, despite it sounding ideal, is arguably to act careless. Though we may have standards, we must also understand that uniformity may do more harm than good when done without context. Santos expresses through the piece one of the greatest desires a parent could want for their children; the ability to care. To be ensured that the bluntness and harshness of the world does not chip away at their capacity for kindness and understanding. But the work arguably invites another reading. Throughout the installation, we see polite yet directed instructions. Though to care is to guide, perhaps it is not its only directive. Operating only through a strict prescriptive ethics of care may also risk being careless. To reminisce the nostalgia for childlike wonder is just as painful for the child that outgrew it as it is to the parent that no longer needs to care for the child.

This then brings us to the work at hand. But to fully understand the work, it might be best to take a look at the context of the exhibit it belonged to. Santos' solo exhibit *Make Sense* ran from November 27 to December 16 2009. The collection of works, although very much inline with the style and practice of Santos, were in contrast with *Please Handle With Care Version 2*. The paintings featured phrases and quotes from her son placed on top of Santos' collage-like paintings. The stark difference being that the phrases themselves are somehow rendered in an inquisitive and curious light. As if though the artist herself has been infected by her own son's unique take on the world. Aside from the paintings and other mixed media works, by the gallery's foyer was an installation composed of seven different chairs. An installation similar to the aforementioned work. But instead of a living room wrapped in tape and paper, we see the seven chairs, each with a designated papier mache balloon, arranged into a circle facing outwards. Santos then invited guests to play a round of musical chairs, with the winner bagging one of the balloons. The style, treatment, and even function of the chairs can be seen as emancipatory or unconstrained. No rules dictate or order the care given to these chairs. Instead it is in the very act of using them, playing with them, connecting with them that we are able to care for them. For Santos, the chairs represent individuality and uniqueness. Specifically in terms of acceptance of one's own being.

This duality between *Please Handle With Care Version 2* and *More Sense* can be seen as both a journey and process through self-realization. For Santos it is the coming to term with the distinct character of her son. But, when viewed in the broader sense, it is a reminder that parenthood or guardianship is not and will never be a one way street. Our own sense of self and being implies that children have just as much to teach their parents as their parents have to teach their children. (Jed Daya)





157

Charlie Co (b. 1960)

Skull

signed and dated 2003 (upper left)

oil on canvas

60" x 60" (152 cm x 152 cm)

P 450,000

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

EXHIBITED

Osage Gallery, *Possession*, Hong Kong, June 1 - July 15, 2007

In this work titled *Skull*, Charlie Co continues his compelling narratives on the harrowing effects of imperialist war and violence on the ordinary people, the masses themselves. The artist says of this piece: "The horses coming out of the skulls represent conflict, a war between two idealisms. A third skull behind these images is screaming; it is frustrated over the never-ending war."

Through this thought-provoking piece, Co arouses in us the collective spirit of resistance and struggle to put an end to the brutal domination of imperialism. The artist fosters the idea that our future is now dependent on our willingness to be aroused, organized, and mobilized amid fascist attacks borne from imperialist hegemony. We must unite with the oppressed peoples, led by the workers and the peasants, in that radical struggle to upend the triangle of oppression and build a just society that is grounded in genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization.

Borrowing from Karl Marx's famous resonating words, we have nothing to lose but our chains. (*Adrian Maranan*)



158

Olivia d'Aboville (b. 1986)

Duality

dated 2017

digital print on handwoven polyester abaca textile

59" x 49" (150 cm x 124 cm)

P 240,000

The art of Olivia d'Aboville presents a unique touch because it adapts her expertise in tapestry and textile structures. Her artistic explorations delve into the sculptural dimensions of the fabric, and, as observed in the medium of the lot at hand, she excels at creating artful manipulations with the abaca grown and woven by Filipino artisans.

In the article titled "Olivia d'Aboville on Transforming Waste Into Wonder," the French-Filipino artist shared how she ended up choosing textiles and found objects

over the more traditional medium. "I painted when I was very young," she said, "it wasn't that good, it was okay." Then, when she went to study in France, her artistic method evolved into something that involved folding, stitching, and putting things together. "I think I like the process, and I like that it takes a lot of time. I like repetition," she noted.

d'Aboville has exhibited in museums and galleries in Paris, Hong Kong, New York, and Manila. "Everything, Everywhere, Everyone" is one of her most recent exhibits, it was held at the Art Fair Philippines in 2019. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Ronald Ventura (b. 1973)*Naked 1*

signed and dated 2001 (lower left)

oil on wood

31" x 10" (79 cm x 25 cm)

P 1,000,000

PROVENANCE

NOW Gallery + Auctions

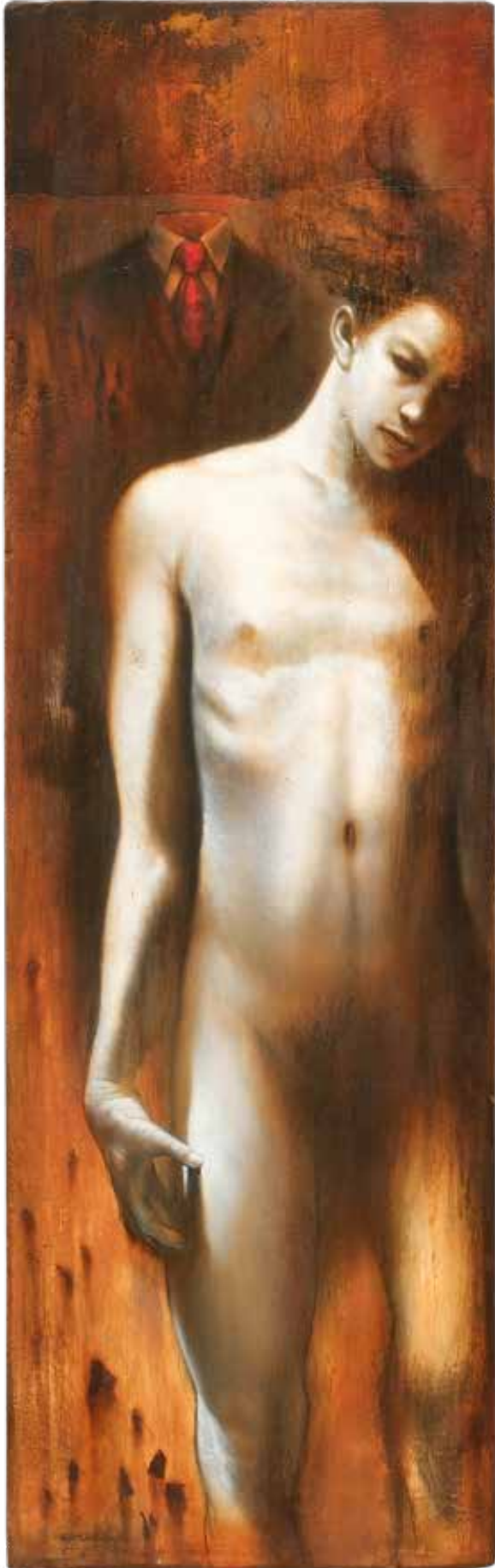
A man reveals his rawest self in the work at hand, *Naked 1*. He stands in a posture that openly exposes his bare body, but the look on his face shows that he is conflicted about this vulnerable state. Looming behind him is his formal attire, it appears like an apparition. Perhaps, it is a memory from his past or a reminder of the moment he abandoned the mundane connotations of a suit and tie.

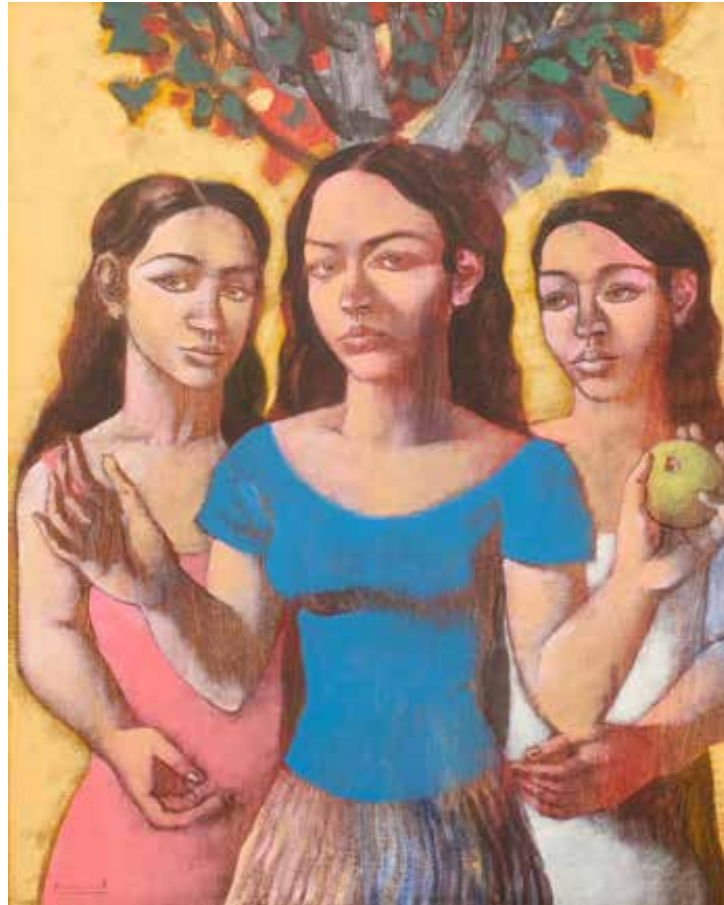
In art, "nude" and "naked" are not the same. Although both terms refer to the absence of clothing, they have a distinction in meaning and depiction: "nude" is portrayed in a manner that captures an artful essence, whereas "naked" is simply being vulnerable while unclothed. Indeed, it is the latter that is being depicted in this aptly titled piece.

The contemporary Filipino artist of this oil painting, Ronald Ventura, is renowned for his oeuvre that tends to revolve around the human form and utilizes a broad range of imagery that draws inspiration from historical events, religious themes, mythologies, and science fiction.

His compositions show a complex layering of images and styles. "I will paint and update a painting until I am satisfied. It's like a film director who is shooting a scene—at certain points, he will feel like he needs more extras or more light," he said in an interview. "This is the closest analogy to my painting process that I can think of."

Ventura became a recipient of the Artist of the Year prize from Art Manila in 2001, the year this piece is dated. Then in 2005, he received the Ateneo Art Award for his Human Study series. (*Isabella Romarate*)





160

Marcel Antonio (b. 1965)

To The Fairest

signed (lower left)
acrylic on canvas
30" x 24" (76 cm x 61 cm)

P 250,000

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

Marcel Antonio, an accomplished Filipino contemporary painter, has gained recognition from critics for his narrative and pseudo-narrative figurative artwork rendered in oil and acrylic mediums. Widely acknowledged for his significant contributions to the country's art scene, Antonio's masterpieces have garnered both local and international acclaim, often selling out during exhibitions. His prominence is further affirmed by his displays in esteemed art galleries across Manila and in global cities such as Berlin, Australia, and Singapore.

In this particular piece Antonio references the Judgement of Paris; a pivotal part of Homer's Iliad. The tale begins with a wedding feast on Mount Olympus, the home of the gods. Eris, the goddess of discord, was not invited to the celebration, which angered her. In retaliation, she threw

a golden apple into the midst of the festivities. This apple was inscribed with the words "For the Fairest," which immediately sparked a rivalry among the goddesses, each claiming the title of the fairest.

Unable to settle the dispute themselves, Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite turned to a mortal named Paris, the prince of Troy, to judge who was the most beautiful. In return for his judgment, each goddess promised him a reward. Hera offered him power and rulership, Athena offered him wisdom and skill in warfare, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, offered him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world.

Paris chose Aphrodite as the winner, swayed by her promise of the love of Helen, who was considered the most beautiful mortal woman. The catch was that Helen was already married to King Menelaus of Sparta. Paris' abduction of Helen to Troy set off a chain of events that eventually led to the Trojan War, a legendary conflict between the city of Troy and the Greek forces. This piece titled the fairest echoes Homer's intention as a symbolic tale highlighting the power struggles, jealousies, and consequences that arise from vanity and the pursuit of beauty. (*Jed Daya*)



161

Joven Mansit (b. 1948)

Filipino Ladies in Sunday Dress

dated 2007

mixed media on canvas

37" x 36" (94 cm x 91 cm)

P 300,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by The big & small art co.
Gallery and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

In all its absurdity, there is something haunting about the works of Joven Mansit. While the colonial images of the Filipino we find in his works are familiar, they strike the viewer less with a sense of nostalgia and more with an eerie familiarity. Even as he deploys a graphically absurd manipulation of pictures referenced from late 19th century and early 20th century photographs, the result is a sense of humor subdued by the ghostly and traditional render in oil of a faded historical past—now distorted and grotesque. And yet, for all the graphic distortion employed in Mansit's paintings, they nonetheless bear truths which, eerily, seem to ring truer than the original turn-of-the-century pictures he references.

In this mixed media work, Mansit references a turn-of-the-century photograph of the same name: *Filipino Ladies in*

Sunday Dress. While the original photograph captures two Filipinas garbed modestly in period clothing, Mansit's contemporary take is an undressing of truth. He redresses one of the women in a revealing *baro't saya* and turns the image into that of a temptress who seduces comically with a sliced papaya as the forbidden fruit of temptation. The truth is thus bared: that such images akin to the modest Maria Clara ideal are not as innocent as they are purported to be. Instead, they merely constitute part of a grander picture of colonial and patriarchal myth-making that paints the Maria Clara ideal of a Filipino lady—that is, a woman who is perfectly respectable exactly because of their allegedly modest and submissive character.

The criticality of Mansit's paintings can be attributed to the allegorical play of images at work. The original photographs he references are allegories in themselves, deliberately underhanded in their intentions, in how they paint the Filipino natives in the grand scheme of history and things. Through Mansit's contemporary technique, he adds another layer of allegory by referencing and then re-presenting this 'historically canon' image of the Filipina. By using an image from the colonial spectacle against itself, Mansit puts forward a new picture that is both disturbingly off and familiar—or rather, more accurately, it disturbs because the artist puts forward a critical truth that disturbs a colonial one. (*Pie Tiausas*)

Napoleon Abueva (1930 - 2018)*Pandanggo sa Ilaw (Fandango of Light)*

ca. 1960

cement

H: 72" x L: 15" x W: 23"

(182 cm x 38 cm x 58 cm)

P 700,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Amihan Abueva confirming the authenticity of this lot



A lady dancing the *Pandanggo sa Ilaw*.

The "*Pandanggo sa Ilaw*" (lit. Fandango of Lights) is a traditional Filipino dance from Lubang Island in the province of Occidental Mindoro. The dance involves the deliberate yet graceful balancing of oil lamps (*tinghóy* in the Tagalog lexicon) or small candles in glasses while elegantly dancing to the tune of a 1930s musical composition by Antonino Ramirez Buenaventura, a native of Baliuag, Bulacan and a National Artist for Music.

Native stories tell that the "*Pandanggo sa Ilaw*" was said to have originated as a ritual dance for prosperity in fishing, the primary source of livelihood for the people of Lubang Island. At dawn, the fishermen would be journeying to the shore guided by the women holding candles as they embark on another journey of toiling in the seas. Some stories tell of the dance being performed as a homage to the fluttering of fireflies at night. Whatever its origins, the "*Pandanggo sa Ilaw*" has become a cultural trademark and treasure not only of the two Mindoro provinces—Occidental and Oriental—but of the entire nation as well.

Napoleon Abueva, the "Father of Modern Philippine Sculpture" and National Artist for Sculpture, depicts in the work at hand the "*Pandanggo sa Ilaw*," employing the elegant solidity of cement, thus, evoking the sophistication and refinement the dance inherently possesses. One can easily imagine the woman delicately dancing to the accompaniment of the exuberant music composed by Buenaventura, making this classic piece an intersection of two national artists—a dialogue between Abueva and Buenaventura. (*Adrian Maranan*)



Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

Tinikling Feast

signed and dated 1961 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

P 10,000,000

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

PROVENANCE

From the Collection of Edilberto "Ed" V Pozon.

(3 June 1943 - 25 December 2018)

Fernando Amorsolo was born on practically the last day of May in 1892. It would be entirely fitting that the man who celebrated an eternal summer in his works would be born in that sunlit month. His family would move from Paco, Manila to Daet, Camarines Norte by Christmas of that year and would stay there until his father's passing 11 years later. Almost certainly, Amorsolo's love for the great Philippine outdoors first took root in those pastoral years, a few towns away from the majestic Mayon Volcano, which would grace many of his paintings, amid the rice fields and fruit trees of Bicol.

His mother, Bonifacia Cueto, would return to the capital after two years, exhausted from the struggles of having to raise six boys single-handedly. They would take refuge with the now-prosperous Fabian de la Rosa. (Bonifacia supposedly would send her cousin the young Fernando's drawings to convince him to take him on.)

Fabian would indeed take both of his nephews — chiefly Fernando and his brother Pablo — under his wing, making them first his manchadors, and then his able apprentices. (Fernando would thus formally begin under De la Rosa's tutelage at just 13.) It was from him that the Amorsolo siblings would learn the storied tradition of being journeymen and the superb techniques that would only sharpen the brother's talents.

While De la Rosa's paintings would embody the 20th-century Filipino identity, in all a brand-new country, idealized under the new colonial masters. There would still be something of the Old World about them, expressed in Italianate overcast skies and dark forests.

It would be, however, Fernando Amorsolo who would make his own paintings of a sun-dappled paradise famous across the country.

In the work at hand, *Tinikling Feast*, the maestro has pulled out all the stops to create a joyous Filipino fiesta like no other, putting together a rare and record number symbols of prosperity and bounty: There is the welcome dance of the *tinikling*, but there is also a *lechon*, roasting on a slow spit beside a waiting rice bowl; a boat on the riverbank is groaning with bananas and vegetables; there are baskets of ripe mangos, too; a strong carabao, harvest stacks of rice; musicians and a throng of happy guests, including many of Amorsolo's best



Ed Pozon, Allied Group HK, 1990



Ed Pozon, Pucés de St-Ouen, Paris 2010

loved characters, women with parasols, farmers and their wives, as well as musicians and dancers.

This work was a personal favorite of its collector, as it symbolized the welcoming spirit of plenty of a Filipino community; Edilberto "Ed" V. Pozon, would hang it in his personal study. Mr. Pozon was an international banker with Wells Fargo (1967-1969) in San Francisco, California; Citibank (1969-1986) in the cosmopolitan cities of New York, Jakarta, Singapore, and HongKong. Afterwards, he was with the Allied Group, HongKong (1986-1991), and founded Broadland Properties in Arizona, USA (1992 - 2008.)

Mr. Pozon was a dynamic, engaging, beloved father and grandfather; a supportive, compassionate spouse. He was also a silent, anonymous patron to Catholic orphanages and many more charities. He was a passionate collector of Chinese and Filipino antiques and art. His Amorsolo collection began when he lived and worked in HongKong in the 80's.

A Banker's Trove

The Edilberto "Ed" . Pozon *Amorsolo*





164

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Peaceful on Mother's Chest

signed and dated 2022

carved green glass

15" x 11" x 8" (38 cm x 28 cm x 21 cm)

P 1,400,000

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

The mother and child theme is arguably Philippine art's heart and soul; it is its lifeblood, the nourishing essence that has inspired generations of Filipino artists, cutting across both mediums and styles. For Ramon Orlina, a mother's resonating declaration of her unbounded and unconditional love for her child evokes such a powerful message that it has become one of his most beloved subjects. Such fondness has also birthed a series of works revolving around maternal connection, such as the *Ning-Ning Series*.

In the work at hand, the mother and child are depicted in a firm yet tender embrace, a symbol of unwavering protection. They seemingly coalesce into one form, signifying the transcendental nature of a mother's consummate love and the everlasting essence of maternal connection that started in the womb, nourished in healthy parenting, and strengthened by life's contradictions and vicissitudes. By depicting a subject that is eternally imbued in the collective psyche of the Filipinos, Orlina compellingly transforms the ambiguity of abstraction and intimately touches on our perception of values relating to familial love, be it in the personal level or the echelons of the socio-cultural sphere.

By the same token, *Mother and Child* is a loving ode to every mother—and every person capable of manifesting the potent language of unconditional love.
(Adrian Maranan)



165

Angelito Antonio (b. 1939)

Mag-Anak

signed and dated 1974 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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

P 600,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, USA

With art that holds high regard for the cultural aspects of the Philippines, Angelito Antonio is drawn to depict the day-to-day life of the native folks. The people that inhabit his canvases are often workers and vendors, but in this oil painting, it is a family in their home.

Antonio belongs to a household that appreciates and practices art, being married to a fellow acclaimed artist,

Norma Belleza, and blessed with a son, Marcel Antonio, who also followed the steps of his artistic parents. He and his wife share a predilection for the folk genre, but Antonio renders it in his iconic Cubist aesthetic, as observed in the lot at hand. He also has a characteristic palette that is present in this piece, particularly his acid yellow and his black that juxtaposed with strong primary or muted tertiary colors. He is said to be inspired by the likes of Pablo Picasso, and his art at first showed the influence of Vicente Manansala. Nevertheless, he was able to find his own artistic expression that remains Filipino in color, flavor, and context.

Few years before the creation of this 1974 piece, Antonio received the Thirteen Artist Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1970. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Justin Nuyda (1944 - 2022)*Mindscape Search Series*

signed and dated 2016 (lower left)

oil on canvas

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

P 2,600,000

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

PROVENANCE

Galerie Joaquin, Inc.

A pillar of modern Philippine art is the revered abstractionist Justin Nuyda whose novel experimentations in light, color, and technique redefined what was possible within the medium of painting. His works, drawing inspiration from the physical beauty of the natural world, are populated with brilliantly curated arrays of colors that seem to glow under the luminosity of an inviting and unnerving radiance.

Yet, simple was how he described his practice. He starts with the priming of the canvas and then painting waif-like strokes that are robust and delicate at the same time, evoking a solid slate and the fluidity of butterfly wings floating over horizons. He was spontaneous as an artist, composing as he painted, only concluding an artwork once the paintbrush was lifted from the canvas.

As per an Esquire article, his love for art was not limited to creating with brushes and paints, it extended to the art of collecting butterflies. "For my art, I get some colors from butterflies. Do you know that butterflies have unusual color combinations? You usually won't do those combinations. It's a mistake," he said, "but when you see them in butterflies, *ang ganda*. The color composition, saturation, gradation—*ang ganda*."

One can assume that a long history of butterfly-catching adventures means that he had decades worth of stories, with each butterfly in his collection holding a special memory. Indeed he was a one of a kind artist, and as Esquire wrote, "it takes a special sort of eye to see the beauty in these fascinating creatures." (*Isabella Romarate*)





167

Oscar Zalameda (1930 - 2010)

Flower Vendors

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

P 700,000

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Manila

One of the renowned and ingenious Filipino cubists from the sixties, Oscar Zalameda was awarded the Chevalier des Artes et Lettres medallion by the French government and the Presidential Medal of Merit in 2006. After fulfilling his Fine Arts bachelor's degree from the University of Santo Tomas, he pursued further studies at the Art League of California, Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux-Arts, and the Sorbonne. Despite being an expatriate, Zalameda's usual painting subjects are Filipino folk themes — vendors, fishermen, churches, fiestas, and other barrio scenes.

Similar to this lot, Zalameda has numerous paintings depicting women with flowers. As seen from this specific piece and other works such as *Flower Vendor* circa 2000, *Tres Marias*, and *Flower Girl* 1980, Zalameda ingeniously used intersecting and overlapping gem-toned color planes to create abstract relationships and harmonious colors. Flower vendors or women donning traditional clothing surrounded by flowers are one of the most well-sought oeuvres of Zalameda and they sell over a million. (*Raphaela Cordero*)

Félix Resurrección Hidalgo (1855 - 1913)*Boceto, El Desaliento (Study, Hopelessness)*

c. 1888

charcoal on paper

9 1/4" x 14 3/4" (23 cm x 36 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE

Inherited from the Artist by his mother, Doña Maria Barbara Padilla y Flores; and from thence to her daughter Pilar Hidalgo, married to Don Maximo Paz; and from thence by direct descent.

LITERATURE

The final work, *El Desaliento*, dated 1888, is in the collection of the National Museum of the Philippines. This work is featured in Alfredo Roces, *Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo & The Generation of 1872*, Published by the Eugenio Lopez Foundation, Inc., 1995, Full Color Illustration and description as *El Desaliento*, page 233.

PENSIVE STUDY FOR AN IMMORTAL WORK**Resurreccion Hidalgo's Boceto for *El Desaliento***

by LISA GUERRERO NAKPIL

When Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo painted the achingly beautiful *El Desaliento (or Hopelessness)* in 1888, he was at the peak of his artistry, and had just received successive accolades from the Madrid Expositions of 1884 and 1887.

It was thus both interestingly and ironically titled; for biographer E. Arsenio Manuel would describe this period "as the most productive in the artistic career of Resurrección Hidalgo." He explains further, "In 1884, his large canvas *Las Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho* was presented for exhibition in the *Exposicion General de Bellas Artes* in honor of the Spanish King Alfonso XII in Madrid. Although by this time he must have realized the effect of light upon his colors, the result was still a classic piece. This was awarded a silver medal. It was in the same exhibition that the *Spoliarium* of Juan Luna (q.v.) was shown and awarded first prize and a gold medal. To commemorate the event, the Filipino colony in that city tendered a fraternal banquet and rousing welcome to the two honored artists at Café Ingles on June 25th. Rizal, who was one of the celebrants, was in a position to give the merits of *Las Virgenes* and interpret its significance."

Rizal's words still ring true today for the same artistic feelings to be found in *El Desaliento*: "In the painting of Hidalgo throbs the purest of sentiment, an idealized expression of melancholy, of beauty and weakness ... and that is because Hidalgo was born under the brilliant azure of that sky, with the lullaby of the breezes of her seas, amidst the placidness of her lakes, the poetry of her valleys and the majestic harmony of her mountain ranges... Hidalgo is all light, color, harmony, feeling, limpidness like the Philippines in her calm moonlit nights, in her serene days with her horizons inviting contemplation..."

In the *Exposicion General de las Islas Filipinas* held in Madrid in 1887, Resurrección Hidalgo presented two paintings: *La Barca de Aqueronte* and *La Laguna Estigia*.

"The first canvas, which has attracted world-wide attention ever since, catches a dreadful scene of Canto III in Dante's "Infierno"



The final work, *El Desaliento*, 1888, by Resurreccion Hidalgo. Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines.

where Charon is conducting the condemned to the sinister boat," wrote Arsenio Manuel.

He continued his praise with, "*Charon the demon with eyes of coal; Beckoning, garners them together there; Beats with his oar each backward-hanging soul.* This piece merited a gold medal. Together with a portrait of Madame Boustead, it was again shown in 1889 in the Exposition Universelle of Paris."

Arsenio Manuel notes that *La Barca de Aqueronte* "was shown at the behest of friends and admirers, for Resurrección Hidalgo was congenitally shy and modest." This insight to his character reveals the fragile, gentle emotional state that would have created *El Desaliento*.

In the finely wrought *boceto* (study), two details are absent from the final work : A crescent moon hangs delicately low in the sky — showing Resurreccion Hidalgo's original intent to create a background of a brooding night sky. (In the completed oil painting, it is a cloudy, pale daylit one.) There is also the distant figure of a man, moving away. It is not clear if his head is turned towards the nymph seated on the hillside, or if he has turned away. The swift charcoal strokes add more intense emotion to the work : the enchanting woman sits with her face cupped in her hand, overcome in deep thought, despite the wooded splendor around her.

Augusto "Toto" M.R. Gonzalez III has noted that "Felix Resurrección Hidalgo would die unexpectedly in 1913, leaving a fortune in real estate, shares of stocks, and paintings without legitimate descendants nor recognized natural heirs; his mother Doña Maria Barbara Padilla y Flores, would inherit it all. The next year, however, she passed, leaving the Hidalgo-Padilla fortune to her heirs. The bulk of the paintings then went to the "sobrinos" of Felix, namely Don Felipe Hidalgo, son of Jose; Don Eduardo Hidalgo Paz and Doña Rosario Paz de Perez, children of his sister Pilar who was married to Don Maximo Paz.

The work has been in one family's continuous possession will finally cede for 110 years, or from 1913 to 2023.

A Solitary Nymph in Hidalgo's Moonlight

From the Hidalgo-Paz Trove





169

Kawayan de Guia (b. 1979)

House of Exhausted Lovers

signed and dated 2018 (lower left)

mixed media

45" x 57 1/2" (114 cm x 146 cm)

P 500,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by The Drawing Room Contemporary Art Gallery and signed by the artist confirming the authenticity of this lot

PROVENANCE

The Drawing Room, Makati City

At first glance, the works of Kawayan de Guia are a hodge-podge of conflicting objects and elements. But art is rarely completely understood only through a mere glance. While great art goes beyond the consumption of a message and opens up the path towards inquiry. Such is the effect of the undoubtedly maximalist works of de Guia. His collection of mixed media works seemingly reflect an aspect of reality; one that showcases its inherently convoluted and even chaotic underpinnings. More specifically his works are a reflection of the nuances of contemporary Filipino culture. As a society at the center of multiple cultures, histories and influences, a cohesive singular interpretation of Filipino culture and identity would not suffice. Even one that sees the concept as layered would be disingenuous. Instead one can see culture as a web of objects and phenomena. Here, contrasts do not clash but intersect, acting as an ecology of things that treat and even accept objects no longer just as extensions of human beings but effective entities in-themselves.

One could argue that de Guia's practice utilizes the theories of philosopher Jane Bennett. Bennett argues that non-human entities also have a sense of agency, but this agency does not arise from consciousness but from their capacity to affect and be affected by other entities. This is what she calls affective ecology," which refers to the emotional and sensory responses that emerge from our interactions with the world. For example, encountering a vibrant sunset or feeling a sense of awe in nature. These affective experiences demonstrate that our emotions are not solely products of human consciousness but also arise from our engagement with the environment. affective ecology," which refers to the emotional and sensory responses that emerge from our interactions with the world. For example, encountering a vibrant sunset or feeling a sense of awe in nature.

These affective experiences demonstrate that our emotions are not solely products of human consciousness but also arise from our engagement with the environment. In the same vein, de Guia's collage of works and undoubtedly maximalist practice showcases how meaning and interpretation does not also stem from merely human interaction, but also the interaction between the various elements within. The interplay between the objects creates context, tension, and inevitably, meaning. Here, the nuances of love, its loss, its strain, is expressed through the nuanced interconnectedness of objects. One can even argue that this effect could not have been achieved without de Guia's mixed media and even sculptural approach. Given the fact that knowing that such objects have been taken out of their original showcases a level of agency that, although aided by human hands, continue to chart a path of their own. (*Jed Daya*)

An Ivory San Jose

18th-Century

Ivory, silver and hardwood

H:14 1/2" x L:5" x W:3 1/2" (37 cm x 13 cm x 9 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Manila

León Gallery, *The Spectacular Mid Year Auction* Makati City,
11 June 2016, Lot 86

by MARTIN I. TINIO, JR.

This ivory San Jose shows the saint standing on a base of clouds and holding a silver staff with a lily, the symbol of purity. The base and body of the statue are carved from a single piece of ivory, but its head and hands were carved separately and inserted into the neck and arms. The face of the santo is beautifully executed, and is shown looking slightly downward. St. Joseph's beard and hair are very finely carved, with the latter ending in curls at the back of the statue. The back of the head, however, is of wood. The statue has an integral base carved to resemble Chinese clouds and attests to the origin of the carver. The figure wears a collared and belted tunic that falls in straight pleats to the ground.

In typical Philippine pose, the front of the right foot is shown peeping from the hem of the tunic. San Jose wears a cloak with its bottom left corner tucked in his belt at the middle of his waist and drawn in graceful folds and curves across his right shoulder and over his right arm. The cloak and the collar, the sleeves and hem of the tunic were originally edged with a strip of gold dust. The former was further decorated with a wider inner border of diamond-shaped lozenges alternating with circles with a dot at the center. The tunic's collar, sleeves and hem were embellished with gilded scrollwork, but only vestiges of these gilded decorations remain.



Ivory Crucifix

Ivory, silver-gilt decorations, kamagong hardwood
second half of the nineteenth century

Binondo, Manila

Crucifix: 22" x 12 1/2" (56 cm x 32 cm)

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

P 300,000

PROVENANCE

An old southern family

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This splendid Crucifix from the renowned 40 year-collection of a distinguished executive has a "*Cristo Expirante*" corpus of solid ivory, a crisply executed, repoussed and chased "*tapis*" loincloth of silvergilt with catmon flower motifs, rays ("*rayos*") and terminals ("*cantoneras*") of similar, crisp, repoussed and chased silver-gilt, and a cross of kamagong hardwood. Its overall high quality attests that it was certainly crafted in Binondo or Santa Cruz, Manila. As for provenance, it most probably came from an old and landed "*de buena familia*" from the late 1800s.

These magnificent crucifixes were usually carved by expert Chinese and Filipino sculptors and assembled in their "*talleres*" workshops in Binondo and Santa Cruz districts in Manila. Traditionally, they were usually either of the "*Cristo expirante*" (Dying Christ) or "*Cristo moribundo*" (Dead Christ) types. They were embellished with expertly repoussed, chased, and engraved silvergilt accessories symbolizing the Passion and Death of Jesucristo (The red sun, INRI, tres potencias, la corona de espinas, the loincloth, the rays of divinity, the skull of Golgotha, etc) sometimes in solid gold as in Manila, Vigan, and Laguna by expert silversmiths and goldsmiths like the Zamoras of Calle San Sebastian, the Paternos of Calle San Roque, and the Nakpils of Calle Barbosa (never in silverplated brass which was for regular crucifixes). The crosses were usually of fine woods like kamagong and narra, the polychromed "*Calvario*" bases crafted likewise. The creators of these splendors were usually members of the "*Gremio de Escultores*" based in the arrabal de Santa Cruz which included such stellar names as Leoncio Asuncion y Molo, Romualdo Teodoro de Jesus, Isabelo Tampinco, Manuel Flores, Crispulo Hocson, Graciano Nepomuceno, et al. Rich clients would commission/order them or would purchase assembled tableaux on the spot and bring them back to their casas senoriales in their hometowns. Stellar examples of the genre can

be found at the San Agustin Museum, the University of Santo Tomas Museum, the Ayala Museum, and the Paulino & Hetty Que Collection.

This was generally the type of crucifix — ivory corpus, hardwood cross, silver-gilt/solid silver mounts, "*Calvario*" base — owned by the DBFs "*de buenas familias*" of Las Islas Filipinas, in Manila, Cebu, Iloilo and the bigger towns throughout the archipelago — the "*comerciantes*" merchants and the "*hacenderos*" landowners who were usually Spanish or Chinese mestizos. In the great houses of the Tuason, Rocha, Ynchausti, Roxas, de Ayala, Zobel, Pardo de Tavera, de Gorricho, de Yriarte, Paterno, Zamora, Limjap, Chuidian, Velasco, Bautista–Lintingco in Manila; the Florentino, Syquia, Quema, Donato, Singson, Crisologo in Vigan, Ilocos Sur; the Sison in Lingayen, Pangasinan; the Hizon, Henson, Lazatin, Panlilio, Singian, Arnedo, Escaler, Gonzalez in Pampanga; the Bautista, Rustia, Ponce, Fores, Viola, Buencamino, Sempio, de Leon in Bulacan; the Gana, Yatco, Yaptinchay, Mercado, Almeda, Potenciano, Baylon, Zavalla, Tiongco, Arambulo, Lavadia, Francia, Rivera, Fule, Marasigan, in Laguna; the Avila, Gandionco, Veloso in Cebu; the Villanueva, Lopez, Ledesma, Jalandoni, Melliza in Molo and Jaro, Iloilo; Montilla, Lacson, Arroyo, Claparols, Lizares, Alunan, de la Rama, Gaston in Negros Occidental; the Teves, Arnaiz, Diaz, Diago, Montenegro in Negros Oriental — these luxurious and expensive crucifixes were installed at the center of grand home altars flanked by equally expensive santos in virinas, relicarios (reliquaries), sacras (prayer cards), European enameled glass and silver vases, silver candlesticks, and hung with silver sanctuary lamps, bell lanterns, crystal hanging lamps, and crystal chandeliers, just like the big churches. It was the grandeur and opulence of Old Roman Catholicism, before the (sometimes misinterpreted) reforms of Vatican II in 1963.



A Pair of Silver Candleholders

2nd quarter of the 19th Century (1825–50)

mexican solid silver 80%

Binondo, Manila

H: 23 1/2" L: 8 1/2" W: 8 1/2"

(60cm x 22 cm x 22 cm)

P 600,000

PROVENANCE

Distinguished Collector, Binondo, Manila

by AUGUSTO MARCELINO REYES GONZALEZ III

This pair of silver candleholders in the neoclassical style (1760–1830 in France, 1830–1900 in Filipinas) is mostly adorned with delicate but lavish "ysot" decoration (prickwork) as well as some repoussage and chasework. The baluster form, tripod base, and "ysot" decoration are carryovers from the parallel baroque (1600–1700 in France, 1700–1760 in Filipinas) and rococo periods (1720–60 in France, 1760–1830 in Filipinas) in Las Islas Filipinas. For some reason, the repoussage and chasework of flowers, leaves, and C-scrolls generally enter the design lexicon of Filipino silverwork only with the nineteenth century. The candleholder itself is set in a cup atop a baluster supported by a tripod base. The cup and baluster are lavishly decorated with "ysot" work of festooned garlands of flowers and leaves which, nonetheless, result in an understated, discreet effect. The tripod base is also embellished with lavish "ysot" work with the addition of repoussage and chasework flowers, leaves, and C-scrolls along the margins. The prodigal use of "ysot" decoration on this pair of candleholders is unconventional as it is usually used sparingly because of the difficult technique involved.

Luxuriously understated "ysot" decoration is a difficult prickwork technique wherein the silversmith hammers at the silver sheet continuously with a "burin" sharp pick to a quick pulsating rhythm, one wrong prick can ruin the whole design; it is a technique that can only be achieved in the present day by laser technology. The unusually extensive "ysot" decoration on the pair of candleholders is complemented by some repoussage and chasework of flowers, leaves, and C-scrolls set at the tripod bases.

Sets of twelve similar neoclassical silver candlesticks were plainly visible in the old Augustinian churches of Bulacan and Pampanga prewar and even up to the Vatican II reforms of 1963 — Bulacan: Marilao, Meycauayan, Santa Maria, Bigaa/Balagtas, Bulacan, Malolos, Hagonoy, Plaridel, Baliuag, San Rafael, San

Miguel de Mayumo; Pampanga: Apalit, Macabebe, San Fernando, Bacolor, Guagua, Lubao, Mexico, Arayat, Candaba, Angeles. More ecclesiastical/church silver was found in the Augustinian churches of the Ilocos, the Franciscan churches of Laguna, and the Augustinian churches of Batangas.

The foremost recent exponents of antique Filipino ecclesiastical/church and domestic silver were the Filipiniana scholars and collectors Martin Imperial Tinio Jr ("Sonny" +2017) and Ramon Nazareth Villegas ("Boy" +2016). For starters, there was no silver in Filipinas, as there were no silver mines. All the silver in the islands was imported; all of the silver coins melted down came from Mexico and South America. During the heady 1960s, antique agents and dealers were delivering mostly antique church silver by bulk weekly, sometimes daily, to Martin Tinio and his business partner Rene Dizon in Santa Ana, Manila. The European-educated Tinio recognized the quality of eighteenth century Filipino silver to be equal if not superior to European work of the same era. He and Rene Dizon accumulated what they could. During the 1970s–80s, antique agents and dealers were delivering mostly antique domestic silver by bulk weekly, sometimes daily, to Ramon Villegas in San Lorenzo village, Makati. The scholarly Villegas appreciated the eccentric conception but fine workmanship of Filipino domestic silver but more importantly, the nationalist in him completely understood the underpinnings and implications of Filipino domestic silver as luxury and excess in the context of nineteenth century national history and he made serious efforts to restore and conserve the many unusual and important pieces that passed through him. Ramon Villegas accumulated what he could, and it was a lot. The sheer prestige of collecting among the very rich, the current upscale associations of collecting antique Filipino ecclesiastical/church and domestic silver are largely due to the decades-long scholarly efforts at collective appreciation of Ramon Villegas and Martin Tinio.

Silver Splendor

A Pair of Elegant Candlesticks



Marcel Antonio (b. 1965)*The Nine Muses*

signed (lower right)

ca. 2000

acrylic on canvas

48" x 96" (122 cm x 244 cm)

P 800,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

The works of Marcel Antonio are windows to the inner world of the Self, often indulged in tranquil images of revelry. It is a curious quality of Antonio's paintings how—despite all passion and feeling becoming subdued by a combination of hazy palettes and statuesque figures, one cannot deny the sense of desire that slips into the surface of the canvas. Each painting is rendered an act of indulgence, albeit not of the passionate, fiery kind. Instead, Marcel Antonio's visual indulgence is dreamlike and deeply psychological, the unconscious slipping momentarily into the conscious.

In *Man and His Symbols*, Carl Jung writes of the anima as the "personification of all feminine psychological tendencies" that includes all feeling, intuition, and impulse. As an archetype, the anima is often visualized as a woman who serves as one's guide towards a deeper and higher plane of spirituality. Thus, encounters with woman figures such as the priestess, the witch, or bewitching sirens and lorelei—whether in dreams or not—is indicative of the state of one's feelings, desires, and emotional relations. Usually taking the form of a fantastical or supernatural being, the anima is essentially "of *an-other* world" and is thus associated with an inherent creativity that seems to come naturally from a distant elsewhere.

In this work by Marcel Antonio, we find such an encounter in the serene scene of revelry he depicts. The linear composition is reminiscent of a choir on stage, as if a performance intended to lure the audience into its dreamlike world, not unlike how sirens enchant sailors in tales of the folk. While the painting may be taken as a projection of the artist's inner world onto the canvas, it becomes a spiritual encounter with anima for the viewer as well. As it lures the audience with its performance, it



conveys a message of the Self—reminding the viewer to get in touch with one's feminine creative impulses. The nymph-like maidens are thus not to be taken as mere muses to admire for the viewer. Instead, they are the culmination of the creative spirit itself, and one becomes stagnant by leaving dormant the inner femininity that lies within the psyche.

With Antonio's knack for painting mythologies of the Self, such is perhaps a wisdom that the artist himself knows best: that art is an indulgence drawing from a deep and endless well of creative feminine spirit. (*Pie Tiausas*)



Juanito Torres (b.1978)*La Solidaridad*

signed and dated 2013 (lower right)

oil on canvas

68" x 92" (173 cm x 234 cm)

P 500,000

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

PROVENANCE

Galerie Joaquin, Inc.

RIZAL'S TOAST AT CAFE INGLES IN HONOR OF LUNA AND HIDALGO

The works of acclaimed Filipino artist Juanito Torres are rarely without spectacle. His stylized tableaus, which blend together images of history, pop culture, and other objects of mythos, often take on an ironic and satirical tone. The inherent humor of his works stem from the jarring effect that comes from his use of characters or personas that, more often than not, hail from different places, eras, or even worlds. But Torres' humor is anything but blunt. Instead, its banter cuts deep, revealing a critical eye that directs the viewer to the nuances of the situation.

In Juanito Torres' work, the characters come to life: Marcelo H. del Pilar, known as "Plaridel," stands on the left; Mariano Ponce, also known as "Tikbalang," occupies a space; Jose Maria Panganiban, referred to as "Jomapa," finds his presence; Graciano Lopez Jaena captures a spot; Felix Ressurreccion Hidalgo's essence is painted; Dr. Jose Rizal, known as "Laong Laan," is depicted; Juan Luna's figure is present; and Antonio Luna, "Taga-ilog," holds a place. Torres intentionally elevates Marcelo H. del Pilar and Dr. Jose P. Rizal, positioning them prominently in the foreground, given their pivotal roles in The Propaganda Movement. The artwork underscores the significance of the newspaper *'La Solidaridad.'* Marcelo H. del Pilar, succeeding Graciano Lopez Jaena, assumed the role of *La Solidaridad's* editor. Recognized as the father of Philippine journalism, he lends his name to the College of Mass Communication at the University of the Philippines, also known as Plaridel Hall. (*Jed Daya*)



Hotel Ingles © lifeisacelebration.com







175

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)

Balisong

signed and dated 2020
carved electric blue crystal
13" x 12" x 3" (33 cm x 30 cm x 8 cm)

P 1,200,000

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

Ramon Orlina's glass oeuvres have evolved through the decades. He started with prismatic angles and then developed organic forms, experimented with textures and added some with holes, and until now, the innovative artist still finds himself incorporating various materials into his craft.

The lot at hand dated 2020 is among the recent Orlina pieces that exhibit his classic geometrical design. His abstract sculptures are designed with angles that create sharp edges and slender bends, denoting movement and fluid lines. Thus, the renowned sculptor's works are never static masses, owing to his creative manipulation of the diverse quality of light entering and retaining at various angles. Furthermore, his studies with light extend to exploring new colors are also observed in this carved Mediterranean blue glass, which has a shade that is darker and deeper than his iconic liquid green.

For Orlina, glass has the most potential in expressing his visual imagery. "Glass is indeed an endlessly intriguing material," he said. "This gives me a greater challenge to explore its possibilities." (*Isabella Romarate*)



176

Romeo Tabuena (1921- 2015)

Country Scene

signed and dated 1967 (lower left)

oil on masonite board

29 1/2" x 22" (73 cm x 56 cm)

P 300,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Spain

Romeo Tabuena shared that he has been greatly influenced by Cubism and the horizonless Chinese vertical paintings. *Country Scene* — with its calligraphic brushstrokes and atmospheric visual quality — shows traces of those influences. The vegetation, huts, and water are delicately depicted; hence, the viewer gets to delight in the dynamism of these gossamer figures with the rural folk: the man on a carabao, the woman washing clothes at the riverbank, and a woman resting a tray on her head. These elements are compressed, yet are not crowded or jumbled. Instead, the barely defined figures evoke calmness and subtle dreamlike quality that is a distinguishable characteristic of most of Tabuena's works. *Country Scene* is another piece exemplifying Tabuena's ingenuity in rendering local and rural images that reveal the richness and simple beauties of Filipino culture. (Raphaella Cordero)



177

Angelito Antonio (b. 1939)

Untitled

signed and dated 1975 (lower right)

oil on board

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

P 800,000

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

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Manila

Angelito "Mang Lito" Antonio studied Fine Arts at the University of Santo Tomas; thus, he learned from and was influenced by Vicente Manansala and Galo Ocampo. With more than fifty years of works that celebrate Filipino identity and demonstrate his skill of dynamic expression, Antonio has been considered one of the pillars of Filipino modernism. His personal style of figuration and abstraction of the human body is distinguishable because of his distinctive angular color delineation. As seen from this lot, the yellow, white, blue, and black colors Antonio used, leads the viewers' eyes to discern the figures of two women and possibly a crucifix in the upper left of the canvas. (Raphaela Cordero)



Angelito Antonio © León Gallery Archives



178

Romulo Olazo (1934 - 2015)

Diaphanous Anthuriums #51

signed and dated 1997 (lower left and verso)

oil on canvas

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

P 2,200,000

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

LITERATURE

Reyes, Cid. *Romulo Olazo*. Mandaluyong City: Paseo Gallery, 2013. Full-color photograph and painting description on page 244.

Romulo Olazo's artistic inclination had an impulse toward pristine compositions. He brought together the dynamism of his diaphanous forms into a singular entity that can be imagined as waves of colors prancing in the mind, and such is observed in *Diaphanous Anthuriums #51* dated 1997.

The *Diaphanous* series, a composition that continued throughout his artistic career, is a unique body of abstract paintings that "are veritable visions of light." His interest in capturing the luminescent quality of various bodies of water was the inspiration behind this style, and its forms have been likened to dragonfly wings, sheets of gossamer veil or gauze, and even a symphony.

Abstraction was his tool in permeating the bright hues of color as a symphonic spectacle that captivates the eye. Olazo first rose to prominence as a printmaker who made striking innovations in this field, and this fed into the development of his series. This work, created through the medium of silkscreens, is painted with a not too imposing palette to draw the attention to the fleeting and animated movements of the anthuriums, his favorite flower. (*Isabella Romarate*)

Affandi (1907 - 1990)*Menyongsong Hari Yang Cerah (Sunny Day)*

signed and dated 1983 (lower right)

oil on canvas

40" x 55" (102 cm x 140)

P 4,000,000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Indonesia



Affandi (far right) at an exhibition in Paris, 1953 © Ministry of Information of Indonesia

Affandi's *Menyongsong Hari Yang Cerah (Sunny Day)* is symbolic of the Indonesian modernist virtuoso's undying homage to the radiant charm of their matahari (lit. "eye of the day"), the Indonesians' term of endearment for their sun. By the time Affandi finished painting this work, he had already garnered an outstanding amount of local honors and international exposure, including being one of Indonesia's representatives to the Venice (1954), São Paulo (1952, 1956), and Sydney (1973) Biennales. In 1974, Affandi was bestowed an honorary doctorate from the National University of Singapore, one of the world's leading institutions for higher education. Affandi received the "*Bintang Jasa Utama*" in 1978 from the Indonesian government for his artistic contributions to the Indonesian Revolution.

Menyongsong Hari Yang Cerah (Sunny Day) (trans. "Welcoming A Bright Day") exhibits Affandi's expressionist flair. The revered artist first ventured into expressionism in the late 1940s and would never abandon it for his photographic realism in the early stages of his career, giving more importance to emotional mastery rather than technical prowess.

The sun, a recurring icon in Affandi's art, possesses an all-encompassing power and radiance, symbolizing its significance as the giver and sustainer of life. The lush flora seemingly rises in adoration and homage to the sun, welcoming the arrival of a new day and the restoration and renewal of one's sense of hope and strength. It is a likely allusion to the Indonesian national motto, "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*," which means "Unity in Diversity," symbolizing Indonesia's identity as an ethnically diverse nation. The swirling strokes, which manifest Affandi's unbridled gush of emotions, expressive resonance, and solid creative impulses, epitomize his avant-garde practice of squeezing paint onto his thumb and then spreading it throughout the canvas.

In the TIME magazine issue dated January 12, 1953, Affandi's painting technique is described as follows: "Affandi never learned to use a palette, dislikes brushes. Instead, he squeezes paint onto his thumb, then smears it around the canvas. He will often spend a week studying a subject, but the actual painting seldom takes longer than 90 furious minutes. 'After about an hour,' he says, 'I usually feel my emotions declining. It's better to stop then. The painting is finished.'"

The vibrant intensity of Affandi's colors engenders myriad expressions that show the artist's emotional sensibilities. He possesses a creative eye so well adjusted to a kind of naturalism that underscores essence rather than the rigorousness in minute details. Thus, Affandi's work not only provides authenticity of character but transcends the boundaries of the physical and exalted right into the spiritual.

Affandi was a self-taught artist, learning from reading copies of *Studio*, a London-based art magazine, and seeing reproductions of paintings by numerous European masters, such as Francisco Goya, Edvard Munch, Pieter Breughel, and Sandro Botticelli. Affandi would become the foremost champion of Indonesian modernism, together with Sindudarsono Sudjojono, the "Father of Indonesian Modern Art." They led Indonesia's transition from the conservative style of the *Mooi Indie* (Beautiful Indies) to the modern art of the Impressionist/Expressionist-influenced painters who revolutionized Indonesia's art landscape by producing works depicting the people's realities under a then-newly independent nation. Affandi also participated in the Indonesian National Revolution against the Dutch colonists, creating posters that awakened the sense of nationalism in his fellow countrymen. (*Adrian Maranan*)

Indonesian Summer

By The Master Affan



Justin Nuyda (1944 - 2022)*Mindscape Search*

signed and dated 2003 (lower right)

oil on arches paper

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

P 500,000

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

Justin Nuyda was renowned for his abstract art that depicted surreal landscapes. His oeuvres are populated with a brilliantly curated array of colors that seem to glow under the luminosity of an inviting and unnerving radiance. His inspirations, decorated in his combination of intense brushstrokes and striking palette, were drawn from the material beauty of the physical world.

A serene meditation and introspection are imbued in every Nuyda piece, a quality attributed to his artistic approach. Yet, simple was how he described his practice. He starts by priming the canvas with as much as seven coatings, followed by painting it with waif-like strokes that are robust and delicate at the same time, evoking a solid slate and the fluidity of butterfly wings floating over horizons. Afterward, ethereal geometric forms were subtly incorporated into his abstract compositions. He



was spontaneous as an artist, composing as he painted, only concluding an artwork once the paintbrush was lifted from the canvas.

His ability to capture the enigmatic nature of scenery is very well encapsulated in this 2003 oil painting. Indeed, the alluring landscapes that Nuyda committed to his canvases were windows to how he saw the world. Although one can argue that his works of art evoke impressionistic and gestural visual cues that are undoubtedly hallmarks of an age-old artistic movement, a closer look will reveal that his works seem to occupy an unusual and otherworldly divide between the abstract and sensuous and the representational and realistic. *(Isabella Romarate)*

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)*Mother's Love Aglow*

signed and dated 2011

carved amber crystal

14" x 5" x 7 3/4" (36 cm x 13 cm x 20 cm)

P 1,000,000

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

Ramon Orlina aims to impart a message that is affectionate and heartfelt in *Mother's Love Aglow*. The bond between a parent and child is very much valued in Filipino culture, and the lot at hand shows that Orlina cherishes such notions as well, it is his artistic representation of a tender familial bond.

Imbued with an architect's sense of space and proportion, Orlina's creations were observed to refract light to and from the space around them. Here, the artist once again laid his artistic glass impressions clearly through his representations of the facets of light. One might also notice that it is not in the color of Orlina's iconic liquid green, it exhibits his explorations on new colors for his glass oeuvre.



In 2012, a year after this glass piece was made, Orlina was bestowed the Gold Medal of Merit Award by the Philippine Institute of Architects in recognition of his outstanding works in the field of Architecture and Visual Arts. *(Isabella Romarate)*

Nona Garcia (b. 1978)*Hands of Faith*

dated 2014

xray, aluminum lightbox
overall size: 46" x 20" x 24"
(117 cm x 51 cm x 61 cm)**P 220,000**PROVENANCE
Gallery Indigo

Nona Garcia, a multi-awarded Filipina artist, has produced a lot of traditional works in the form of large-scale photorealistic landscapes and surrealist figurative paintings. However, her claim to fame is undoubtedly her novel experiments with x-ray and light.

In this aluminum lightbox piece titled *Hands of Faith*, the artist revealed her explorations on religious symbolisms with the use of the x-ray, the medium noted to be one of her defining and celebrated artistic trajectories. Her employment of unconventional technology when it comes to image-making allows her to explore new ways of seeing and understanding. In fact, the lot at hand embodies the core tenets of Garcia's artistic philosophy. As observed here, the hands, which were implied to be used for faith such as prayers and genuflections, appear to be not from a human but a mannequin or a robot. The title is explicitly revelatory, guiding the viewer to understand the piece in an investigative manner, similar to how one would read an actual x-ray film.

For her first international exhibit, Garcia presented a number of x-ray-based works that featured popular religious icons and figures. In doing so, she was able to deconstruct long-held beliefs and ideologies, especially those witnessed and dealt with firsthand. (*Isabella Romarate*)





183

Manuel A. Rodriguez Sr. (1912 - 2017)

Market Day

signed and dated 2002 (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

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

P 500,000

LITERATURE

Cajipe Endaya, Imelda, ed. *Manuel Rodriguez, Sr.: Into the Threshold*.

New York: Lenore RS Lim Foundation for the Arts and Manuel

Rodriguez, Sr., 2009. Full-color photograph and painting

description on page 107.

Market Day immortalizes Manuel A. Rodriguez Sr.'s hope and healing amidst the physical ruins and moral devastation of war. Rodriguez, his wife Naty, and their first-born Manuel "Boy" Jr. had been living in Intramuros when the Japanese invaded Manila in December 1941. Rodriguez wanted to transfer his family to his native Cebu but changed his mind after the last boat to the province tragically sunk in the heavily mined waters of Manila Bay. Rodriguez and his family then decided to settle temporarily and wait for the cessation of the war in the humble town of Pasacao in Camarines Sur, his wife's homeland.

Pasacao would not be spared from the atrociousness of the Japanese forces. According to Pasacao's historical data papers from the National Library of the Philippines, the soldiers established their headquarters in the *población* and killed those they suspected as spies or guerilla members. Occasionally, they would steal some of

the people's properties, including household belongings, crops, and livestock. Houses, especially those that the owners abandoned were burned to the ground.

The current owner, a friend of the late artist, vividly reminisces: He [Rodriguez] loved this place so much that he vividly remembered it as if it was yesterday. When World War II broke out, this town was completely burned to the ground by the Japanese forces. He told me that he felt so sad to see everything gone.

"That's why when he created this painting for me, it took him five months to finish because he was constantly being "called" to make it better. Each time he thought it was finished, he told me that he couldn't allow himself to stop; Mang Maning felt like if he stopped short of perfection, he wouldn't give this piece commemorating that town and its people justice."

The bursting of colors and their harmonious dancing with the artist's brush strokes create a throbbing effect, which Rodriguez coined "color vibrations." "He believes that colors bring positive and healing properties and energy to the person observing his painting," says the owner. "That's why Mang Maning told me that there's not a single brushstroke of black in this piece, *Market Day*, because black is not a healing color, according to him. He believes in color vibrations so much that he meditates in front of his personal piece each morning when he wakes up. I guess it worked for him because he was 100+ before he passed away." (*Adrian Maranan*)



184

Andres Barrioquinto (b. 1975)

Screaming From The Sky 1

Signed and dated 2015 lower right
oil on canvas
D: 24" (61 cm)

P 300,000

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

PROVENANCE
Blanc Gallery

From a young age, Barrioquinto showed a keen interest in the arts and started experimenting with various methods. While pursuing art at the University of the Philippines, he sharpened his abilities and created a style that combines traditional and contemporary elements. For instance, Barrioquinto has built a loyal fanbase because of his oeuvre of hyper-realistic women's portraits embellished with and surrounded by flora and fauna. Works such as *The Fleeting Moment* (2014), *Swing* (2016), and *Loneliness Remembers What Happiness Forgets* (2019) show how he portrays his women subjects in a surrealistic manner.

As seen from these works and *Screaming from the sky 1*, Barrioquinto has a personal Pop style that integrates elements from the iconography of Baroque with Japanese woodcuts.

Moreover, what adds to the interest to this lot is that the circular painting is in stark contrast with its deep, black square frame. An article called, "The Bad, the Dark, and the Ugly: The Beauty of Andres Barrioquinto's Work" mentioned that Barrioquinto has taken to personally choosing and even "hewing the frames that hold his own portraits."

Because of the lot's black frame, the eyes of the viewers are more drawn to the elements present in the painting. The touches of gray and white in the snow-capped mountains also complement the spiked, stone-looking object. The Japanese women stand out the most because of their colorful kimonos and their black hair that coheres with the frame.

Overall, *Screaming from the sky* is intriguing given its different aspects and figures. It surely invites the viewers to describe, interpret, and evaluate for themselves the narrative Barrioquinto weaved. (*Raphaela Cordero*)

Bree Johnson (1991 - 2021)*Hiding My Own Scent*

date 2015

oil on canvas / mixed media

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

sculptural frame: H: 65" L: 18" W: 42"
(165 cm x 46 cm x 107 cm)**P 120,000**

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

"I do find animals beautiful, but with a tinge of rabidness, which isn't a bad thing. They need this to survive, and so do we."

- BREE JONSON

Though mortality is often conflated by an awareness of it, the concept can be expressed in different ways. From the instinct to survive, reproduce, form packs or groups; all of which can be derived from natural animal behavior without the need for projections.

But with mortality also comes a sense of vulnerability. Jeremy Bentham notes that "The question is not, Can they reason?, nor Can they talk? But, Can they suffer?" It is hard to deny that human beings are not the only ones capable of suffering. Though others might not exhibit the more existential aspects of it, should suffering be judged in degrees before it is deemed wrong? And with this suffering comes a state of vulnerability. But are the two essentially the same, or is there a distinction that could give us important insight. Bree Jonson's Untitled piece gives us a rare glimpse into anthropomorphism used specifically to delve into vulnerability. Arguably, vulnerability is distinct from suffering in that it is both an acceptance of the former both in its arrival and inevitably. Here we see what appears to be a mammal seeking refuge within a tree. But it is not fully safe, for half of its body is still exposed to external forces, whether predator or other elements. This is heightened by the fact that Jonson has also chosen to emphasize



particularly vulnerable aspects of the animal's body. Though danger is nowhere near present in the work, there is undoubtedly a looming sense of dread within it. This is supplemented by the sculptural framing provided by the artist themselves that depicts roots creeping up the painting, alluding to the passage of time. Here, vulnerability is seen as a limbo; one in which added time is no more a blessing than the presence of a predator.

One can argue that this exercise in the awareness of mortality may also risk the fact that we may return back to square one. Even so, an acceptance of mortality existing within other beings can ultimately lead to a more understanding treatment of them. If that is not a step in the right direction, perhaps there truly is a need to rethink if we should be trudging through any path at all. (*Jed Daya*)



186

Macario Vitalis (1898 - 1990)

Seascape

signed (lower right)

oil on canvas

24" x 32" (61 cm x 81 cm)

P 400,000

Accompanied by a certificate issued by Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi and Claude Tayag confirming the authenticity of this lot

Macario Vitalis bought a cottage in Brittany, which is the dream of many a painter in France.

In fact, Brittany has the artist's favorite hideaway in France: It is near the sea; the sky is beautiful; and the sunlight is very congenial to realist, impressionist or other "ist" painters who swear by nature. Juna Luna, by the way, an Ilocano also, went along with French painters to Brittany. In a way, settling in Brittany in Northern France, in Plestin-les-Greves, must have felt like looking back to his roots and rediscovering home from one who bears a profound Rousseau-istic feeling for nature.

It was from the 1960s that Breton seascapes came to predominate his work. As the impressionists felt an endless fascination with the myriad effects of light on water, so was he enamored with the view of the sea. For him, the sea is the primary element, the inexhaustible source of inspiration.

In this seascape, the bright warm tones of the red lighthouse and yellow streaked clouds provide a touch of warmth and contrast to this depiction of the cool Brittany coastline. Yet to capture the splendor of sky, water and land, painting is not to create an illusionistic perspective but it is the creative invention, no less, of pictorial space. In the seascapes and landscapes, the artist gives equal value to all parts of the canvas; there is not a section that does not actively enter into and take part in the overall pictorial design.

Ramon Orlina (b. 1944)*Desirable Eve*

signed and dated 2022

carved Mediterranean glass

13 3/4" x 13" x 7" (35 cm x 33 cm x 19 cm)

P 3,000,000

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



Ramon Orlina © León Gallery Archives

Ramon Orlina is world-renowned for his exquisite glass sculptures. He marked a pivotal influence in the introduction and proliferation of glass as an art form in the Philippines. His works tend to be intriguing as they deal with various subjects, ranging from abstract interpretations to realistic representations of human forms.

For *Desirable Eve*, a carved Mediterranean glass piece, Orlina presents a splendid artistic touch in this depiction of a female torso.

Decades ago, in the '80s, when the artist explored the fluid forms for his sculptures, fragments of human anatomy emerged within his creations. The female breast, in particular, was idealized when his second daughter was born in 1989. As a homage to breastfeeding, Orlina's wife was the inspiration behind his tabletop sculptures of beautiful breasts. As observed in this recent work of his, dated 2022, Orlina renders the female bust with delicate and graceful lines without being erotic.

The female form, a symbol of beauty, grace, and fertility, along with its delicate features and curves, offers a visually captivating subject matter that allows Orlina to showcase his mastery of glass as a medium.

Orlina's glass sculptures are celebrated for their intricate details and the interplay of light and transparency. He takes advantage of how light passes through and interacts with the fragile and transparent medium. This creates a mesmerizing effect, as the sculptures seem to change in appearance depending on the lighting conditions.

Indeed, Orlina's dedication to pushing the boundaries of glass as an artistic medium has had a significant impact on the contemporary art scene in the Philippines. His sculptures have been featured in numerous exhibitions and art shows, both local and international. His contributions to the world of glass art have earned him recognition and accolades for his innovation and mastery of the medium. (*Isabella Romarate*)





LOT 135

Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1914 - 2012)

Girl in a Maria Clara

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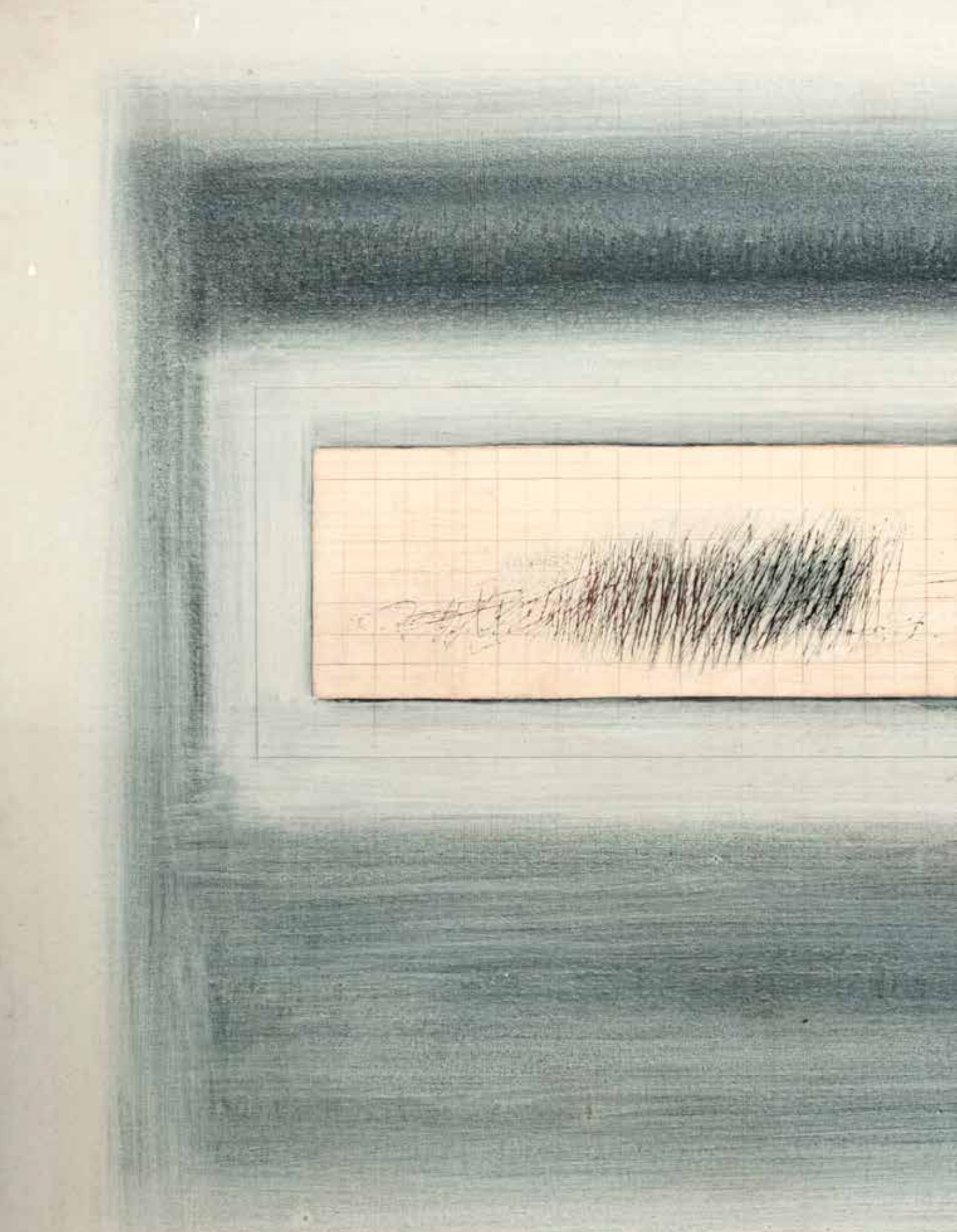
Two Tapestries from 211-214
Miag-ao, Iloilo



LOT 130

Fernando Amorsolo (1892 - 1972)

Dalagang Bukid "Girl with Mangoes"



LOT 45

Lao Lianben (b. 1948)

Thinking of a View



León Gallery
FINE ART & ANTIQUES

FERNANDO AMORSOLO (1892 - 1972)

Harvest

signed and dated 1951 (lower right)

oil on canvas

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



Now Accepting Consignments

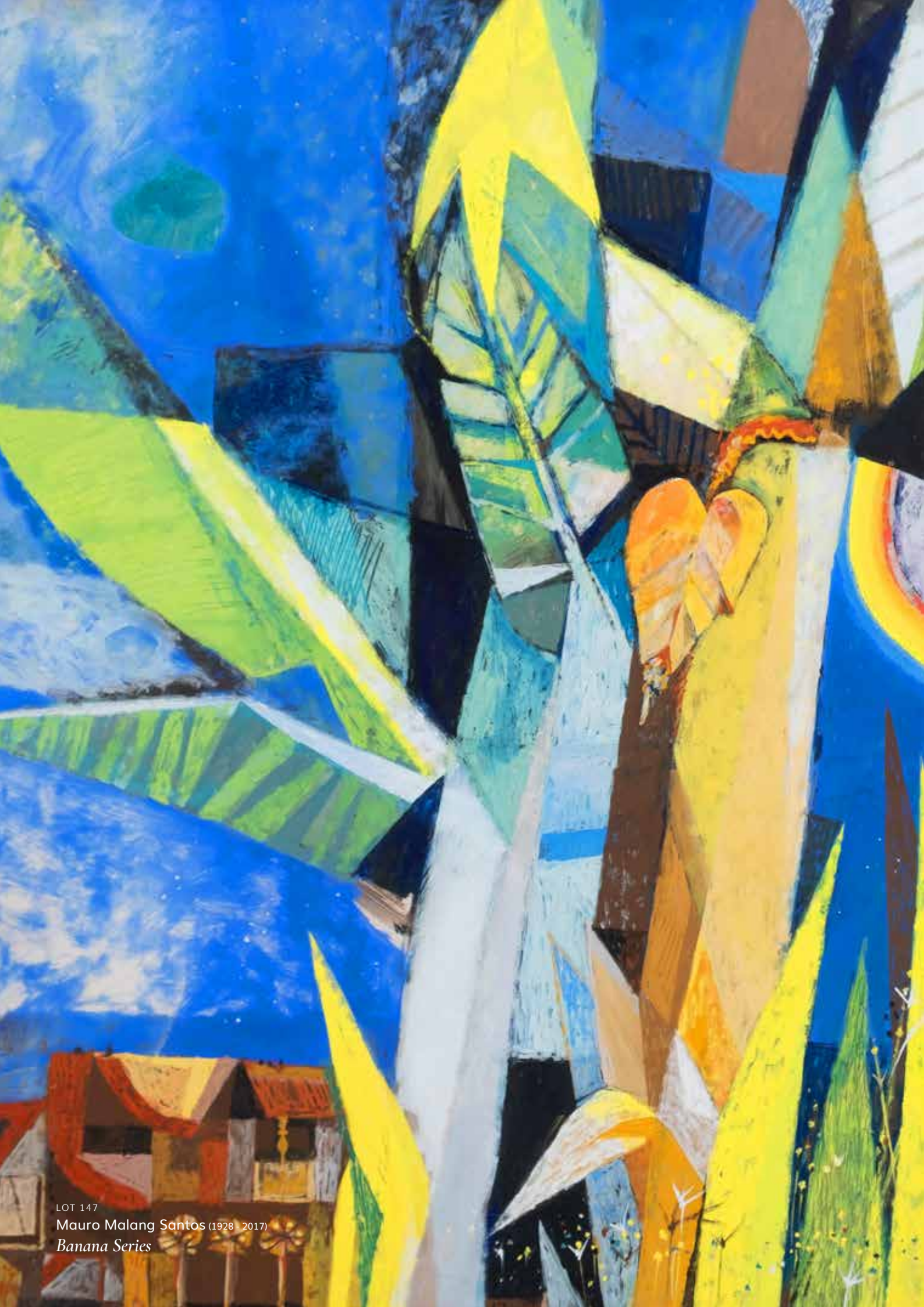
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LOT 147
Mauro Malang Santos (1928 - 2017)
Banana Series



BACK COVER

LOT 85

Hernando R. Ocampo (1911 - 1978)

Dilemma

