

PHILIPPINE VISUAL ARTS

The Philippine visual arts encompass a range of forms developed by Filipinos in the Ethnic, Spanish, American, and contemporary traditions. In ethnic communities, pottery, weaving, carving, and metalcraft are made for ritual purposes or for everyday use. Spanish colonization introduced painting and sculpture whose subject matter was for the most part religious, although secular themes and forms emerged in the 19th century under the patronage of the new mestizo elite. The American period witnessed the conflict between conservatism and modernism, with the latter gaining ground in the end in painting and sculpture. After World War II artists explored a variety of Western and Eastern styles, media, and philosophies—some consciously going back to ethnic roots—to express themselves as individuals and as Filipinos.

The Ethnic Tradition

Pottery stands among one of the most ancient arts. The Manunggul Jar, excavated in Palawan circa 8th century BC, shows the high artistic level which the art attained in ancient times. This large burial jar has a cover showing two men rowing a boat, suggesting the belief among early Filipinos in an afterlife across a mythical body of water. Around its body is an incised design of curved lines and dots. Indeed, extant examples of early Philippine pottery display a wide variety of shapes and decorative techniques, including incision, stippling, applique, openwork, and impression by rope and mat. Designs are often geometric and include stylized nature motifs. In later years pottery would become more and more associated with objects for daily use, such as the *palayok* (clay pot) for cooking, and the *banga* and *tapayan* (clay pot) for storing liquids. In the Ilocos, the making of *burnay* pottery continues as a lively tradition.

Weaving also originated from the precolonial times and remains as a precious living tradition. The Cordillera groups of the north are well-known for the art of weaving. With a backstrap loom, they produce blankets and articles of clothing that fulfill a practical function and also play a part in religion and ritual. This tradition is also found in the adjacent Ilocos provinces which take pride in their sturdy *abel* (weave). In Mindanao, the Tboli of Cotabato weave abaca cloth, called *tnalak*, in a difficult tie-dye process. This cloth has a large repertoire of motifs, such as the *gmayaw* bird, whose rhythms create the feeling of flapping wings, the frog which signifies fertility, and the dancing man which calls for rain. These motifs attest to the Tboli's deep-seated sense of harmony between humans and nature.

Weaving techniques are also used in the exquisite mats with vivid colors and intricate geometric designs woven by the women of Sulu, particularly from the islands of Laminusa and Siasi. In the Visayas, Samar and Leyte are known for colorful mats with bird and flower designs. The large mats are meant for family

use and show the strength of family ties in this group.

Other woven art pieces are baskets, hats, and fans. The Cordilleras are rich in baskets for all purposes, e.g., for rice planting on the mountain terraces, hunting in the forests, and fishing in the streams. The *pasiking* or backpack, for instance, is both an example of good design and of sound structure: the bag supports the human frame. Aside from baskets and containers related to hunting and agricultural activities, there are also many bamboo fish traps with shapes and sizes to suit the different species of fish found in the rivers.

Many parts of the country have lively wood carving traditions. The Cordillera groups carve anito figures called *bulul*, which double as ancestral spirits and granary gods. Often found in pairs, these signify the value of fertility. Human and animal motifs are also carved into the posts of Cordillera houses and into household objects, like bowls, forks, and spoons.

In southern Philippines, the Maranao and Tausug of Mindanao are known for their *okir*, ornate curvilinear designs and motifs applied to wood carving. The principal *okir* designs are the *sarimanok*, the *naga*, and the *pako rabong*. The *sarimanok*, carved in wood, simply varnished or painted in many colors, or sometimes executed in brass, is the stylized design of a bird holding a fish in its beak and/or standing on a base in the shape of a fish. While its meaning derives from epics and myths, it also alludes to Lake Lanao's fertile waters. The *naga* has the form of an elaborate mythical serpent or dragon with a vigorous S-curve and numerous curvilinear motifs to suggest its scales. The *pako rabong* is a stylized growing fern with a broad base gracefully tapering upwards. The *sarimanok* and *naga* are found in the *panolong*, the extended floor beam, and the interior beams and posts of the large sultan's house called *torogan*.

The Tagbanua of Palawan carve wooden figures of various birds and animals. Again, this is linked to religion and ritual, for birds in Tagbanua mythology are the messengers that link the many levels of heaven. Animals, like the pig and the wild boar, are the sacrificial offerings in rituals. The wooden sculptures are blackened and incised with geometric designs that bring out the original light tone of the material.

Jewelry, another ancient art, began as amulets and charms to ward off evil spirits and to give supernatural powers to the wearer. Later, jewelry assumed a purely ornamental character. The Cordillera groups have an ancient amulet design called the *ling-ling-o*. Said to signify fertility, this is found in necklaces, rings, and earrings. The Tboli wear some of the most splendid body ornaments of brass chains and bells; strings and nets of multicolored beads; and fine chains of horsehair forming neckpieces, earrings and rings, bracelets and anklets. Related to religious belief and to social function, body ornaments are worn to please the gods, to signify the status of the wearer and enhance her charms. A belt, made of a row of brass bells that tinkle with every movement, calls attention to the presence of a

young marriageable girl. Often, jewelry is worn along with elaborate tattoos on and around the arms and legs. These permanent body designs use motifs expressive of the animist world view. To this day, *anting-anting* or talisman medals with their mystical symbols and figures in relief are worn by the local folk as amulets rather than as mere body ornaments.

Related to jewelry is metalwork in brass, bronze, gold, and silver done in the traditional *cire perdue* or lost-wax process which uses clay molds and liquefied metal. Native metalwork technology includes the use of the Malay forge with a blower. The Tboli make lively brass figurines which tell of their occupations, activities, work, and play.

Brass vessels of varying shapes and elaborate geometric and curvilinear designs are also produced by the Maranao for ceremonial purposes and as status symbols. Among these are the large *gadur* and the spouted liquid container or *kendi*—household objects often forming part of the wedding dowry. Again, these brass vessels combine practical function and aesthetic design. Also noteworthy is the variety of betel-nut boxes, many of them in metal, that attest to the widespread social custom of betel chewing often referred to in the epics and still extant among some Philippine groups.

Many traditions dating back to precolonial times survive to the present day despite centuries of colonization. Many have survived because of the resistance of tribal communities to colonial imposition. These traditions, which attest to the inexhaustible creativity of the people, have been a source for the creative expression of contemporary Filipino artists engaged in the search for a Filipino identity in art.

The Spanish Colonial Tradition

In the 16th century, Spanish colonizers aimed to replace indigenous culture with one in the image and likeness of Europe. Art became a handmaiden of religion, serving to propagate the Catholic faith and thus support the colonial order at the same time. Since the Church was the sole patron of the arts up to the 19th century, the practice of art came under the strict supervision of the friars who provided Western models for artists to copy. However, in time, what resulted was not a Western culture, but a colonial culture marked by a fusion of indigenous and Western elements.

Printing by means of the xylographic method, which uses woodblocks, is of Chinese origin but was one of the first art forms popularized by the West in the country. The first books impressed and printed in this method were *Doctrina christiana en lengua española y tagala* (Christian Doctrine in the Spanish and Tagalog Languages), the *Doctrina christiana en letra y lengua china* (The Christian Doctrine in the Chinese Script and Language), and the *Apologia por la*

verdadera religion (In Defense of the True Religion)—all of which were published by the Dominicans in 1593. Beginning from the 18th century, copper printing was widely used for illustrating books, such as novenas and the lives of saints. A number of Filipino engravers were recognized for their talent, among them Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, who proudly identified themselves as “*Indio tagalo*” when signing their works. The art of engraving was also put to use in cartography or map making, as in the map commissioned by Fr. Murillo Velarde in 1734, whose borders the artists ornamented with genre scenes, possibly the first secular images in colonial art.

The folk penchant for decoration with local motifs asserted itself in the various arts, including painting, sculpture, and architecture. The churches built all over the country exhibit the blend of Philippine folk and European classical or baroque. For instance, the relief stone carvings on the facade of the Miag-ao Church in Iloilo, such as the figure of San Cristobal carrying Christ under a coconut tree, combine a lively folk motif with curving balustrade motifs and ornate medallions of baroque. The same decorative spirit is found in the church retablos or altar pieces usually with niches for images, ornamented with gilded salomonic columns topped by broken pediments. The *relieves* (reliefs) of the saints and religious scenes and icons or paintings on wood have curlicues in floral motifs for their borders. The same is true for silver ornaments, for altars in the ornate plateresque style of the silversmiths, as well as for *carrozas* (floats) which carried the images of saints in procession.

East and West converged as well in santos or holy statues enshrined in church retablos or displayed on private altars. The formal santos for churches crafted under the strict supervision of ecclesiastical authorities followed European aesthetic canons. The statues carved in the classical style followed prescribed proportions for the figure and conveyed the values of restraint and measure, while those showing baroque influence had an emotional, expressionistic character. On the other hand, informal or folk santos drew from the indigenous sculpture styles typified by the angular and squat anitos with round, bulging eyes. Church supervision of religious art existed precisely to prevent the entry of unorthodox elements. Yet it is clear in representations, e.g., of the Holy Trinity depicted as human figures seated together in a row and not according to the prescribed imagery—that local artisans still managed to do things their way.

Throughout the centuries of religious art, folk creative imagination insisted on asserting itself. Around the many fiestas, a multitude of folk arts developed with exuberant forms and colors. Among these were the *parol* (Christmas lantern), the *palaspas* (Lenten palm), the *taka* (papier maché animals), the *tinapay ni San Nicolas* (San Nicolas biscuit), the wrappers for *pastillas* (candy made from carabao milk), and brightly colored native delicacies. These arts continue to the present especially in regional centers, such as Paete which produces wood carving and the *taka*—brightly colored papier maché figures usually depicting country maidens, chickens, carabaos, and horses with saddles and caparisons painted in

floral designs. In Angono, another lakeshore town, the harvest festival brings out papier mache giants and carabaos in a parade. In the Quezon towns of Lucban and Sariaya, the Maytime fiesta of San Isidro Labrador decks the houses in *kiping*, colorful leaf shapes made of rice flour formed into chandeliers and floral arrangements. The *kiping* covers all available space, together with the harvest of fruits and grain, handicrafts, and other products of the town. The art of lantern making has culminated at present in the huge Christmas lanterns of San Fernando, Pampanga, which are virtual kaleidoscopes of color and movement synchronized to music.

Wood carving as folk art is also practiced in the Laguna towns of Paete and Pakil, as well as in Betis, Pampanga. Paete wood-carvers have perfected the art of carving santos from native hardwoods. After the initial coating of glue and *gesso* (plaster of paris) to create a nonporous ground, the *encarnador* (finisher) gives the image a rosy lifelike hue or an ivory finish. A neighboring town, Pakil, is known for its fans and toothpick trees of exquisite wood filigree, while the Betis wood-carvers of Pampanga apply their skills to furniture.

In the Visayas, another center of folk art related to church fiestas is Kalibo in Aklan where the Santo Niño is honored with the *ati-atihan* in January. The participants don the most spectacular costumes and headdresses in a combination of feathers, beads, and boar's teeth as in primitive art, while their bodies are blackened with soot. In the towns of Marinduque, the Moriones festival dramatizes the story of Longinus and is characterized by wooden masks in strong colors to resemble Roman centurions with their towering headdresses.

With the opening of the country to international trade in the mid-19th century, economic change came with cash-crop agriculture. Foreign merchant houses established themselves in Manila and stimulated the cash economy. The new situation enriched the merchants, moneylenders, and the landlords—mostly Chinese mestizos or half-breeds—who converted their lands from their traditional produce to the new export crops, like sugar, coffee, abaca, hemp, and copra. The quota system was introduced, thereby applying greater pressure on the peasant farmers. The surplus from the cash crops which accrued to the landlords soon gave rise to the *ilustrado*, which literally means “enlightened” or educated class, whose members became the new patrons of the arts. It was the ilustrados who gained access to higher education in local universities and, with the opening of the Suez Canal, in foreign shores. Their contact with European culture developed new tastes geared to Western aesthetics and created a class of connoisseurs for Western art forms.

The cash-crop agriculture of the mid-19th century led to a boom in the building of the *bahay na bato*, the mansion of stone and wood which combined indigenous features with classical and baroque elements. For their handsomely furnished interiors, the ilustrados commissioned portraits celebrating their social ascendancy. Artists, such as Juan Arceo, Simon Flores, Antonio Malantico, Justiniano

Asuncion, and Severino Flavier Pablo, were in great demand to do ilustrado portraits. They worked in a style, called *miniaturismo*, derived from the miniaturist's art which pays meticulous attention to the embroidery and textures of costumes, to fashion accessories and jewelry, and to domestic furnishings. These images reflect a dynamic stage in the development of the Filipino identity.

Along with portraiture, the first genre paintings appeared. Extant examples include Simon Flores' *Primeras letras* (First Letters), which brought out the primary role of mothers in child education, and *Alimentando pollos* (Feeding Chickens) which showed a mother and her child feeding chickens. Also reflective of the spirit of the mid-19th century were the *letras y figuras* (letters and figures) commissioned by the new entrepreneurs. Done by masters like Jose Lozano, the letters of the patron's name were formed by small genre figures set against scenes of Intramuros, the Pasig environs, and Manila Bay with the many ships carrying foreign flags painted in painstaking detail.

In the same period which saw the secularization of painting, Damian Domingo opened his Tondo studio as the first art school, the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura. He was well known for his watercolor albums of *tipos del pais*, inhabitants of the archipelago representing the entire range of the social hierarchy dressed in the typical costumes of their occupation and social class. These paintings, done in the artist's personal style of figuration, answered the demand of foreign visitors for local color. After Domingo's death, the school was reopened under the supervision of the Junta de Comercio which brought over Spanish art professors from the peninsula. It was through them that the European classical tradition was introduced into the country. Furthermore, the school imported oil paintings and sculptures from Europe to serve as models for local students.

Among the pupils of the second Academia was Lorenzo Guerrero who later became a teaching assistant. Guerrero furthered landscape and genre painting in the country with such works now known as *The Water Carrier* and *Bride Before a Mirror*. Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo had brief stints at the Academia. Luna did portraits of his mother and brother Manuel in a character study, *El violinista* (The Violinist). Hidalgo produced tranquil landscapes and delicate portraits. The two artists later chose to pursue their art in Europe.

The Madrid exposition of 1884 was a significant event for Filipino expatriate artists and for the Filipino Reformists in Spain. Luna won a gold medal for his large-scale academic painting *Spoliarium*, while Hidalgo garnered a silver medal for *Las Virgenes Cristianas expuestas al populacho* (Christian Virgins Exposed to the Populace). At the banquet honoring Luna and Hidalgo, Jose Rizal extolled the two artists for proving that Filipinos could hold their own in the world of art, thus winning one more point in the Reformists' campaign for political equality. The subject of Luna's *Spoliarium* can be interpreted as an allegory of imperial Rome corresponding to imperial Spain, with the image of the Romans dragging the dead gladiators symbolizing the colonial oppression of indigenous populations. The

spoliarium was the basement hall of the Roman Colosseum where the dead and dying gladiators were dragged after the bloody games and despoiled of their last worldly effects. The other work, Hidalgo's *Virgenes*, showed a group of captive Christian maidens persecuted and offered as slaves to leering men. Both paintings conformed to the requirements of the European Academy: they were of large dimensions; they derived their subject matter from classical antiquity; i.e., imperial Rome; they brought out the drama of the moment; and their styles were characterized by modelling of forms and chiaroscuro. However, as Luna himself wrote, he belonged to the dissident salon with his bolder and more spontaneous style, while Hidalgo maintained a conservative and restrained approach to art. Another famous painting of Luna is *El pacto de sangre* (The Blood Compact), depicting the treaty of friendship between Sikatuna and Legazpi.

Aside from their large academic paintings, Luna and Hidalgo did many smaller and more intimate works, some portraits, genres, and landscapes. A number of Luna's works showed the spontaneity and spur-of-the-moment quality of oil sketches such as *El borracho* (The Drunkard) or *Una franchuta* (A French Woman), while most of Hidalgo's works were tranquil, intimate pieces or nature paintings filled with romantic reverie. Exceptions to these were two political paintings by Hidalgo, *El asesinato* (The Assassination) and *Per pacem et libertatem* (Through Peace and Liberty). The first work, said to have been commissioned by a mason, draws its subject from the 1719 assassination of Governor General Fernando Bustamante y Bustillo by a group of disgruntled friars and their cohorts. This historical event was the bloody climax of the growing hostility between the Church and the State, both protective of their interests. The second work, done at the turn of the century, advocated the ilustrado position of capitulation to American colonial rule in its image of a woman representing *Madre Filipinas* (Mother Philippines), offering an olive branch to a Joan of Arc-like figure with the Stars and Stripes.

The American Colonial and Contemporary Traditions

The gains of the Philippine Revolution of 1896 were thwarted by the Americans who crushed native resistance in the Philippine-American War, forcibly occupied the country, and established a colonial government. Their colonial strategy lay primarily in the domain of ideology and culture. This was implemented through the public school system and educational programs.

In the visual arts there was a demand for illustrations and cartoons for the American-controlled textbooks and publications of the period. To answer the needs of the new corporations, commercial art and advertising design were integrated into the fine arts curriculum.

As the new art patrons, the Americans favored idyllic landscapes and genres. Fabian de la Rosa painted both of these with a coolly realistic eye, but it was the

younger artist Fernando Amorsolo, with his tropical genre and ever-smiling *dalagang bukid* or country maiden who institutionalized the image of the Filipina within a tropical idyll where youth reigned supreme and nature was infinitely bountiful; his famous backlighting cast golden tones on the natural scenery and created a warm emotional atmosphere. There were other fine artists who were less prolific, such as Jorge Pineda, Irineo Miranda, Dominador Castañeda, and Fernando's brother Pablo. They contributed to the development of genre painting, especially Pineda with his series of native indoor games which capture the intimate, leisurely spirit of the domestic life of the period. Like Amorsolo, they were painters as well as illustrators for such publications as *The Independent*, *Philippines Free Press*, and *Lipang Kalabaw*. It is of note that many illustrations of the period satirized the colonial system. In sculpture, the dominant personality was Guillermo Tolentino who received classical training in Rome. He did notable works, such as *Oblation* and *Venus*, as well as busts and life-size figures of public figures, including that of presidents Manuel Quezon and Sergio Osmeña. But he is best known for his masterpiece, the Bonifacio Monument, popularly known as *Monumento*, which expresses nationalist fervor in the struggle against colonial rule. Bonifacio, at the center of the storm, is surrounded by episodes or stages of the revolution against Spain—from the Gomburza execution to the formation of the Katipunan and the outbreak of the revolution. Completed in 1933, the monument still stands in Caloocan, Metro Manila. Following Tolentino was his student, Anastacio Caedo, who in turn passed on the tradition to his son. Another sculptor of the American period was Ramon Martinez who did the single-figure prototype for a sculpture of Bonifacio originally installed in Balintawak.

The dominance of Amorsolo was challenged by Victorio Edades who introduced modernism in his 1928 Philippine Columbian exhibit, upon his arrival from the United States. His advocacy of modern art triggered a lively debate between conservatives and modernists, each camp staunchly upholding its aesthetic values. Edades, whose influence lay primarily in his role as educator, stressed that the subject of art should go beyond the beautiful and harmonious to include the ugly and the frightening. He also asserted the importance of design and formal elements underlying modernism. Moreover, he had the vision to realize the need for developing the Filipino identity in art.

While the main protagonists in painting were Amorsolo and Edades, in sculpture they were Tolentino and his pupil Napoleon Abueva. The latter championed modernist values in sculpture while striving for a Filipino idiom. Abueva has worked with a wide variety of materials and techniques. His personal preference is wood, mainly narra and molave, carved directly. He has also worked with adobe and alabaster, various types of metal—brass, bronze, and aluminum—as well as in concrete. His style is marked by playfulness and charming wit, his works often integrated sculptural and functional aspects. Sculptors showing the influence of Abueva are Renato Rocha and Ros Arcilla.

The support system for modern art was laid down with the founding of the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) and its annual painting competition which welcomed both modernist and conservative works. Similarly, the Philippine Art Gallery (PAG) provided a venue for the exhibits of fledgling modernists. Central to these projects were two women: Purita Kalaw-Ledesma who founded the AAP, and Lydia Villanueva-Arguilla who opened the pioneering PAG in Ermita in 1948.

After the World War II and the granting of independence, writers and artists posed the question of national identity. In fact, their search for national identity came right alongside their first impetus at modernism.

Artists dealt with the challenge of identity in the aspects of subject matter, content, and form. Along with this issue was the literary debate between “proletarian art” and “art for art’s sake,” which was also reflected in the visual arts.

During this period modern painting grew with the triumvirate formed by Victorio C. Edades, Carlos V. Francisco aka Botong Francisco, and Galo B. Ocampo. They were followed by the Thirteen Moderns and the neorealists in the 1950s.

Angono-based Francisco strove to develop a modern Filipino idiom based on folk aesthetics. He drew his figures with a supple curvilinear line, with only a slight modeling of form. His patterns and colors created a decorative quality, the entire space covered with figures and motifs. He drew most of his subjects from the life of his lakeshore town, and he gave to genre painting a particularity of observation which highlights the customs, traditions, and material culture of fisherfolk and farmers. On the other hand, assiduous research gave his art a rich historical dimension. His murals on the history of Manila for the Manila City Hall represent a high point in his art and the art of the country.

Galo B. Ocampo was first known for his *Flagellants* series which fused the figures of penitence and Lent with images of the war. A key painting of the period is ***Ecce Homo*** (Behold, the Man) which portrays a bound Christ in the midst of devastation wrought by bombs. Years later he did a series on the Tabon Cave in Palawan, where the fossil of the Philippine Adam was found. These paintings abound with Adam and Eve in a pristine universe of caves and seashells.

Vicente Manansala expanded the subject matter of art from the rural idylls of the Amorsolo school to the postwar urban realities of jeepneys recycled from the war, candle and amulet vendors in Quiapo which was the hub of economic struggle, and the patchwork barong-barong or shanties that appeared with displacement and poverty. With the evolution of his own style of transparent cubism, an indigenization of the original Paris style, cubism contributed significantly to the development of a Philippine genre in the modernist idiom. It is often observed that, unlike Paris cubism which fragmented the human form, the cubism of Manansala and his followers did not cut up the human figure as much as it

reorganized it in facets of transparent planes.

Hernando R. Ocampo aka H.R. Ocampo started with a period of proletarian art, showing the starving poor and the stark social contrasts in the urban setting. An important painting in this vein, ***Crucifixion***, shows Christ on the cross flanked by two thieves against a background of factories spewing noxious orange fumes. Subsequently, he moved away from social themes and sought to develop a Filipino abstract idiom from traditional designs recalling indigenous weaves. Later, he became widely known for an abstract style of interlocking colored planes forming motifs or stylized figures.

Anita Magsaysay-Ho has done numerous paintings of women in bandanas (head scarf) interacting in work rhythms. Among her well-known works are her series on ***Chickens*** which have a lively, playful air. As a student in New York in the 1950s, she was first influenced by American artistic developments, but her work increasingly became oriental in style and feeling as she shifted from expressionist boldness to exquisite refinement.

Another early modernist, Romeo Tabuena, was known for his delicate watercolors of the rural scene. In these, his subjects consisted mainly of fields with carabaos and nipa huts in an early morning haze, as though from dew rising, in a style combining fine linearity with tonal effects. He also worked in an intense, vigorous style in dark tones and harsh, bold strokes diametrically different from the first, and in which he depicted sun-shriveled peasants and workers.

Cesar Legaspi's work shows a number of periods in the development of the modernist idiom. In the postwar years, he tended towards proletarian art and produced, among others, ***The Beggars***, which showed two wretched figures huddled among the ruins in monochrome brown and cubist fragmentation. He continued with strongly structured and textured tonal works in brown monochrome, their imagery drawn from stone quarries and tribal figure carvings. Later, after experimental works in sculptured surfaces, he explored rhythmic figures in richly orchestrated tones and colors. The culmination of his style is found in his dynamic Jeepney series, with its suggestions of street graffiti.

A branch of modernism is abstraction, among the first proponents of which were Jose Joya and Constancio Bernardo. In the 1950s Cranbrook scholars Joya and Charito Bitanga were strongly influenced by New York abstract expressionism in the spontaneity and verve of their abstracts. Later, Joya's paintings became more reflective, showing more clearly defined forms, a style carried over into his rice paper collages. Bernardo, another US scholar, worked in the geometric abstraction of the International Style. Fernando Zobel began with folk subjects, such as the ***carroza*** (procession carriage), and proceeded to linear abstraction, then to tonal works with geometric elements. Arturo Luz is another leading abstractionist, although his early linear series and following tonal works were derived from rhythmic figures. Federico Aguilar Alcuaz began with dark and intense convoluted

forms and later worked in variations of synthetic cubism. Nena Saguil, one of the early modernists, has done abstract landscapes based on circular forms. Lee Aguinaldo, working in geometric forms and in mixed media, belongs to the same generation. From abstract paintings, Roberto Chabet has done witty collages and works emphasizing the conceptual aspect. In sculpture, Luz and Eduardo Castrillo have done large-scale outdoor sculptures. Working on a smaller scale in the abstract is sculptor-architect Honrado Fernandez.

Abstraction has always had a number of followers among younger artists. Lao Lianben works in the minimalist vein with sculptural elements. Augusto Albor has also been minimalist and geometric. Justiniano Nuyda aka Tiny Nuyda has done abstract mystical landscapes combining hard-edge and tonal qualities. Glenn Bautista has produced difficult and highly experimental work in painting, graphics and sculpture. Allan Cosio has geometric works in painting and sculpture, while Ivi Avellana-Cosio has shifted from color fields to ethnic themes using indigenous motifs or materials. Paz Abad Santos' large-scale works are a high point in the use of local materials, such as burlap and coconut shell. Impy Pilapil, a printmaker, produces hard-edge abstractions and spare, color landscapes, aside from glass paintings and glass sculptures. Other abstractionists of note are Nestor Vinluan and Phyllis Zaballero, both of whose works occasionally allude to landscapes and figures, and in the case of the latter have elements and colors of a symbolic and emotional connotation. With them are Roy Veneracion, who alternates between textured abstractions and highly original figurative paintings of political meaning, and Benjie Cabangis, Raul Isidro, Lito Carating, and Edwin Wilwayco with their planar compositions. Danilo Garcia does fine abstract landscapes.

With modernism in place, the dynamic 1960s saw the flourishing of different styles and trends, many of which reflected a society confronting the economic and political issues of the Marcos period. It was a period marked by political awareness and a strong nationalist temper. Student organizations spearheaded protest actions; mass mobilizations fired urban centers.

Highly expressionist works conveyed the anxieties and tensions of the period. Imagery had shifted from the beautiful and harmonious to the powerful and aggressive. Works that reflected a society in ferment were produced by Ang Kiukok in his angst-ridden figures and Danny Dalena in his *Jai Alai* series. While the subjects of Ang Kiukok draw from Philippine poverty and oppression, he has used universal symbols, such as stockpiled weapons, dogfights, man on fire, and the crucifixion, and has dwelt not on the concrete particularities of time and place but on the theme of the "human condition." Dalena, on the other hand, has used the swarming masses of the Jai Alai betting hall as an allegory for desperate humanity seeking hope in a game of chance. Like Ang Kiukok, Dalena uses distortion for strong impact.

Onib Olmedo is another powerful expressionist with his explorations of the night side of human beings that brings out monstrous or strangely beautiful

apparitions. With them, the penchant to idealize and beautify became a thing of the past. In printmaking, Rodolfo Paras Perez 's woodcuts of the 1960s have a haunting expressionist quality. In sculpture, J. Elizalde Navarro 's masks and tribal forms capture the intensity of aboriginal art. Also in the expressionist vein are Solomon Saprid, with his ***Tikbalang*** series; Virginia Ty-Navarro, with her birds in flight; Edgar Doctor, with his machine assemblages; and Conrado Mercado, with his imprisoned forms and open-cage constructions. Castrillo, who works both in the abstract and in the figurative, has outstanding expressionist relief sculpture with sociopolitical meaning. The sculptures of Jerry Araos and Rey Paz Contreras, both of whom work with discarded wood, have a powerful expressionist impact.

Surrealist works showed an interest in probing a person's inner self for the dark impulses that are said to be the hidden motivations of behaviour. At the same time, surrealism is used to render in symbolic form the themes and messages—whether political, social, or personal—that are suppressed in public. A senior artist working in a surrealist vein is Juvenal Sanso whose land-and-water landscapes have a nocturnal glow. Among the younger group of surrealists are Lina Llaguno-Ciani, Ramon Gaston, and Glory Crumb-Rogers whose striking works combine elements from different cultural contexts and reverse familiar situations. Francisco Viri has also done surrealist work of a highly intellectual bent. Prudencio Lamarrosa's series on the ***AmburayanQueen*** combines surrealism and pop elements: his landscapes subvert the real with the magical, and keeps an eye on ecology as an underlying concern. Religious imagery combines with pop in the color prints of Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi to create a surrealist atmosphere rife with social and political meanings. In her works, protest has a foreboding quality in the figures of the Apocalypse that is one of the options of the pinball game.

At the same time, the folk genre remains a trend among regional artists inspired by the example of Francisco. Strong regional centers of art are the lakeshore towns of Angono, Tanay, and Paete in Luzon, Cebu, and Bacolod in the Visayas; and Davao City in Mindanao. In Angono, the lively genre tradition is assured by a number of artists headed by Jose Blanco and his family. Blanco's work is the epitome of the realist genre as the numerous figures that inhabit his large paintings are the real people of his town. Other important Angono artists are Salvador Juban, Nemesio Miranda Jr. aka Nemiranda, Vicente Reyes, and a large younger group. The Tanay artists are led by Tam Austria, who is known for his mother-and-child themes interpreted within the context of folk culture and his ***Maria Makiling*** series. In Paete, the Baldemors are the leading figures. Manuel Baldemor draws his inspiration from the colors and forms and folk religious fervor of his town. Angelo and Fred Baldemor translate the town's native mythologies into sculpture. In printmaking, Manuel Rodriguez Sr. popularized genre subjects in his many prints of a folk quality.

A number of artists have been concerned with capturing the vanishing scenes of a

society in transition. Thus there are paintings of old houses, buildings or landmarks with a nostalgic air in a context of social change. Most notable in this genre are Lino Severino's sensitive tonal paintings of turn-of-the-century houses in a state of neglect and disrepair. In monochrome, they invite the viewer to dwell on the passing of things, to contemplate the details of structure and ornament of an era that gave way to new forms. Elmer Gernale has been more illustrative in approach. Rodolfo Ragodon has concentrated mainly on churches. Lauro Memije has combined painting and relieflike effects for his old churches and houses. One fine artist in pen-and-ink is Antonio Doctor Garcia who, in his best work, goes beyond illustration to artistic vision.

Nature painting has often been in the impressionist style. Macario Vitalis, a Filipino expatriate in France, produced early work showing the cubist influence of the School of Paris but later tended more naturally towards an impressionist-pointillist style. Many impressionist artists have been identified with the Dimasalang group, with writer-artist Emilio Aguilar Cruz providing guidance and inspiration. Among its leading members are Cebuano artists Romulo Galicano and the Mendoza brothers—Sofronio aka SYM, Godofredo, and Teofilo. In general, Cebuano artists, such as Gamaliel Subang and Mardonio Cempron, were brought up in the impressionist tradition of nature painting under the influence of maestro Martino Abellana. Ibarra de la Rosa's ***Makiling*** landscapes are a high point in nature painting. A number of nature painters work outside the impressionist school. Manuel Rodriguez Jr. aka Boy Rodriguez has been experimental in his approach, using fabric and dyes as medium and introducing the theme of expatriate nostalgia for the Philippine landscape. Francisco Verano has done paintings incorporating sand for textural effect. Nature paintings of a different style and character are done by Danilo Santiago in the context of nationalist themes and in a cubist style marked with split images and symbols. Jonahmar Salvosa has also done paintings on the ecological theme with different techniques. Leon Pacunayen is a master in watercolor landscapes.

There has also been a trend in magic realism or “macrovision” in which the objects of everyday life are viewed with a fresh eye and dwelt upon in all their formal qualities and connotations of meaning. Nestor Leynes paints rice grains on a *bilao* or bamboo tray. The paintings of Stevesantos may focus on a solitary tin pail set in a field of grass, showing the influence of the American artist Andrew Wyeth, or they may show the doorway of a ramshackle house with a dog basking in the sun. Later, Stevesantos would dwell on features of the urban landscape, such as billboards and theater marquees. Efren Lopez paints unusual high-angle images of a mother breastfeeding her child on an old frayed mat. Araceli Dans, with her meticulous still lifes of *calado* (open work)-embroidered tablecloths, native baskets, and flowers, can also be counted in this category.

Some artists draw their inspiration from folk art and the fresh, naive art of children. Thus their figures are drawn with directness and spontaneity, their colors festive, and their space entirely covered with decorative forms. To this

group belong Mauro Malang Santos aka Malang, a cartoonist turned painter who has depicted local folk in fiestas in a style that draws out the folk quality of Manansala's transparent cubism, and Antonio Austria in whose works a sophisticated sense of color and design underlies an apparently naive style. Angelito Antonio can be grouped under this trend, although his work shows Manansala influence combined with an expressionist aspect. Mario Parial also draws inspiration from folk themes in a lush tropical setting of vigorous, spiky vegetation. Norma Belleza typifies this tendency in her simplified figuration, rich folk colors, and variety of detail. To an extent, Zny Laygo also works in this style, dealing with folk themes in an original way. More in the realist vein is Angel Cacnio, with his cockfights that bring out folk psychology. Claude Tayag, often a landscapist, does charming watercolors of Paete papier mache horses and folk masks in original compositions strong in design. A new direction has been taken by Lazaro Soriano aka Aro Soriano who does vivid and unusual paintings inspired by folk songs and riddles, as well as terra-cotta sculptures with folk inspiration.

Some paintings derive their content from the life and concerns of the cultural communities which have preserved their traditions. Ethnic designs and motifs have been incorporated by some artists into contemporary art, as in Abdulmari Imao's variations on the sarimanok in painting and sculpture, and Bert Manta's okir and mat series. Also significant here are the works of Fil de la Cruz in mezzotint, pastel, or watercolor. With field research, he has come up with some of the most authentic and artistic representations of the Subanon and other Mindanao groups. Santiago Bose's Cordillera paintings are original in their use of ethnic motifs with the underlying theme of identity crisis. Roberto Feleo has explored the theme of the *Pintado*, which literally means "painted one," a 17th-century Spanish-coined term applied to tattooed inhabitants of the Visayas, as well as the nuclear issue. His experimental works have been done in layers of wood and glass approaching three-dimensional form. Paras-Perez, Raul Isidro, Alfredo Liongoren, and Paz Abad Santos have also dealt with ethnic themes and imagery although in more abstract approaches. The historical trend is also visible in the work of artists who have looked to the past in the hope of illuminating the present. Historical allusions have also been used to create reverberations between the past and the present and to couch contemporary political meanings in the imagery of the past. Benedicto Cabrera aka Bencab began this trend with his imagery taken from old 19th-century photographs in which he perceives different aspects of the Filipino identity, urban and rural, Christian, Muslim, and animist. In his series ironically titled *Bandit and Gentleman*, he juxtaposes 19th-century ilustrado and rebel, at the same time showing awareness of differing points of view: that of the colonial and colonized native, or that of the dominant and dominated social classes. The historical theme often draws from the 19th-century Reform Movement and the Revolution, as in some works of Jaime de Guzman, particularly his *Liliw* mural which is inspired by the heroic ideals of the time.

With the declaration of Martial Law on 21 September 1972, social realism took

the lead in protest art. Banding together as a group dealing with sociopolitical themes, the social realists work in a variety of styles and media to expose foreign-dominated and exploitative structures and express the people's aspiration for a just, free, and sovereign society. Within these general concerns, there are particular themes, such as the struggle of the cultural communities, land reform, workers' rights, women's liberation, and freedom from foreign economic control. While there have been earlier groups of political artists, the Kaisahan social realists refined and developed the aesthetics of the school. The major social realists of the original group are Pablo Baens Santos, Edgar Fernandez, Antipas Delotavo, Orlando Castillo, Renato Habulan, Al Manrique, Neil Doloricon, Papo de Asis, and Jose Tence Ruiz. They have been joined by younger artists, such as Federico Sievert, Artemio Barriga, Elmer Borlongan, and Lito Mondejar. Outstanding political artists from the regions are Nunelucio Alvarado, Norberto Roldan, and Charlie Co from Bacolod; Ruben de Vera and Rafael Cruz from Davao; and Aster Tecson from the Cordilleras. Because of their immediate experience with grassroots struggle they have been able to articulate their themes with vivid and highly specific images in drawings, paintings, and sculptures.

Feminism has been felt in the works of women artists. Imelda Cajipe-Endaya has been most successful in the use of indigenous materials, like sawali and fabric collages, to convey feminist and anti-US intervention themes in a vivid folk imagery. In her posters, illustrations, and paintings, Anna Fer has imaginatively articulated ethnic and political themes. The *Tarot series* of Brenda Fajardo brings out women's anticolonial struggle in indigenized tarot images with folk and realist themes. Julie Lluch's eloquent feminism lies in her terra-cotta portraits of women raging against their traditional stereotyped roles. SandraTorrijos' feminism explores the metaphysical.

Exploring new sculptural forms, Tence Ruiz's jeepney assemblages on jeepney culture, Rey Paz Contreras' *Torture and Death* in the Paco railroad station, and Gabriel Barredo's surrealist celebrations of the bizarre convey their various themes with artistic uniqueness.

Increasing sociopolitical consciousness has also brought out the need for the democratization of art through the use of indigenous materials, and the transformation of indigenous forms with contemporary content. At the same time, the visual arts have interacted with other arts, such as music and theater. From David Medalla's kinetic and performance art and Raymundo Albano's and Roberto Chabet's conceptual approaches of the 1970s rooted in Western avantgarde are evolving multimedia works conveying nationalistic and indigenous themes. Artists—like Roberto Villanueva, Jean Marie Syjuco, and Alan Rivera—have also worked in dynamic forms combining theater, visual arts, and music.

Photography has developed as a form of artistic expression in the last century. Journalists have used the camera to record major events and personalities, in Honesto Vitug's coverage of presidential activities from Quezon to Aquino, John

Chua's documentation of the EDSA Revolt, and Albert Garcia's photographs of the Pinatubo eruption. Advertisements have used pictures as well to sell products and institutions. But the more significant development in photography is its use as a form of artistic expression—as in Eduardo Masferre's Cordillera photographs, Dick Baldovino's portraits of Botong Francisco, Ed Santiago's insights into the jeepney, Jaime Zobel de Ayala's interpretation of dancers and dance movements, and Joseph Fortin's documentations of the various ethnic groups.

For the last century *komiks* (comics) and cartoons have reigned as the most popular visual-art forms. Cartoons with social and political comments have been in use since the end of the 19th century in newspapers and magazines. Jorge Pineda, Jose V. Pereira, Esmeraldo Z. Izon, Liborio Gatbonton aka Gat, Mauro Malang Santos aka Malang, Edgar Soller, Corky Trinidad, Danilo Dalena, and Jose Tence Ruiz are some of the more notable cartoonists.

Inspired by American comic cartoons, Filipino komiks started in the 1930s. Komiks characters created to entertain with laughter and make social commentary are Tony Velasquez's *Kenkoy*, Larry Alcala's *Mang Ambo* (Old Man Ambo), Mars Ravelo's *Buhay Pilipino* (Filipino Life), and Nonoy Marcelo's *Tisoy*. Melodrama with realistic illustrations are seen in Nestor Redondo's *Gilda* and Fred Carrillo's *Apat na Agimat* (Four Talismans). Fantasy or "historial" komiks, with romantic and idealized drawings are exemplified by Francisco V. Coching's *El Indio* (The Native), Elpidio Torres' *Dyesebel*, Federico C. Javinal's *El Vibora* (The Viper), and Steve Gan's *Ang Panday* (The Smith). • A.C. Guillermo

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