

THE AMERICAN COLONIAL AND CONTEMPORARY TRADITIONS IN PHILIPPINE VISUAL ARTS

Filipinos struggled for independence, first in the revolution against Spain, and later in the war against the United States. While they succeeded in ridding themselves of the first colonizers in 1898, the new colonizers would set their government in place in 1901.

The American colonial order defined its priorities as education and value formation, with both following the “American way of life.” It hastened to set up a public school system, and in the process transplanted images through the flooding of imported textbooks and publications, leaving little demand for native creativity in the graphic and publication arts. However, with the corporations emerged the need for advertising and for commercial design which eventually became integrated into the fine arts curriculum.

As with all historical conjunctures, a shift in art patronage again took place. As the new patrons, American officials, merchants, and tourists lorded it over the arts; the range of subjects for art expanded considerably. Landscapes, genre, and still life which had risen in the 19th century—were greatly favored by the American patrons who sought “exotic,” tropical scenes of their new colony. Portraits continued to be in vogue, mainly commissioned by public officials. The detailed miniaturist style gave way to academic portraiture that strove to capture physical likeness and endow it with the appearance of dignity and benevolent authority.

Academic Art

In painting, the century opened with the painter Fabian de la Rosa showing canvases full of measure and harmony. His landscapes of the Marikina valley and the outskirts of Manila were of a cool clarity and quiet atmosphere. It is he who first defined Philippine landscape in art, the first to be sensitive to space as a vital element interacting with the forms of the land, and the first to discover the different tones of green in forests and fields. His portraits combine ease and self-confidence in their pose and are essentially classical in their elegance. His genres capture the cultural ambience, as in his ***Kundiman***, a work depicting an intimate *ilustrado* (educated class) gathering of music aficionados.

The work of Fernando Amorsolo, whose reputation was achieved in the 1930s, differed in tone from that of De la Rosa. While the latter painted his landscapes in a clear midmorning light and maintained a tempered, objective quality in general, Amorsolo enhanced his rural scenes with the golden tones of harvest. With the incipient influence of impressionism, he revelled in warm tones that captured the vibrant tropical sunlight. He brought out this warmth in such subjects as work in the fields, the harvest of fruit carried by smiling girls, the ruddy complexion of women at their domestic chores, or a fire tree in full bloom. Creating the myth of

a rural paradise, he idealized peasant folk as stalwart youths and ever-smiling maidens bearing baskets overflowing like cornucopias of tropical abundance. The Amorsolo school, based in the University of the Philippines (UP) School of Fine Arts, functioned as the local Academy. It set the standards and dominated the art scene with its rural idylls.

Working in the same vein—while maintaining their distinct artistic personalities—were other members of the school, such as Irineo Miranda, Jorge Pineda, and Toribio Herrera. Miranda mastered the medium of watercolor in a field dominated by the academic oil-on-canvas. With the medium, he introduced a lighter and more personal approach. He codified rural imagery into its basic elements: the nipa hut shaded by a tree in a ricefield and a boy riding a carabao. Pineda focused on games as genre subjects. These were native games, such as the *sungka* and *siklot*, played indoors, by the window or by the door, to while away the long warm afternoons. Unlike Amorsolo who painted subjects in their prime, Pineda portrayed old men and women, as well as younger women with a more realistic eye. Another teacher-painter, Herrera, who was also a doctor of medicine, raised the standards in realistic figuration based on the study of anatomy.

Where Amorsolo remained the dominant figure in painting, Guillermo Tolentino was the dominant figure in sculpture. Having studied at the academy in Rome, he set the ground for classical sculpture in the country. But while his figures observed the classical norms, he made them recognizably Filipino. In his masterpiece the ***Bonifacio Monument***, various influences converge. Classicism is seen in the self-contained figure of Andres Bonifacio, but his restraint is not the detachment or aloofness of classical works, but one that radiates a tension and a great reserve of energy that commands the whirlwind. The figures of the *katipunero* (Katipunan members) and other folk surrounding the hero are of a more romantic vein in their emotionalism. At the same time, there is a realist's concern in observed detail. The underlying value, however, is that of Tolentino's nationalism which gives the monument its enduring spirit. Also belonging to the Tolentino school were Anastacio Caedo and his son Florante.

During the same period, a number of artists were also active as illustrators. Pineda and Jose V. Pereira were the principal editorial cartoons who showed their witty, trenchant side in political commentary. It was in the cartoons for such publications as ***The Independent*** and ***Lipang Kalabaw*** that the people's anticolonial sentiments found lively expression. Their works in the graphic arts, close to the pulse of economic and political life, were no less significant artistically than the paintings of an idealized countryside untouched by the shadow of the agrarian unrest of the 1930s.

Related to painting and sculpture were certain trends in the applied arts. The turn of the century saw the influence of art nouveau in the design of interiors, furniture, and domestic objects. In the Philippines, art nouveau mingled with the native penchant for the decorative and the baroque exuberance. It was based on the

curvilinear line prevalent in floral and plant motifs, but its design favored the asymmetrical and its curved line often became a dynamic whiplash turning into itself. The other design style was art deco which made its appearance in the 1930s. Here the organic motifs of art nouveau, celebrating natural forms, shifted to streamlined industrial motifs, glorifying the machine and the industrial age. Graceful lilies gave way to geometric rosebuds. Even the female silhouette changed: the romantic with flowing hair and gown of art nouveau was replaced by the chic, bob haired cosmopolitan.

Modernism: 1928-1992

The academic complacency of the Amorsolo school was jolted by the challenge of modernism announced by the exhibit of Victorio Edades at the Philippine Columbian Club in 1928 upon his arrival from studies in the United States. To the idealization of Amorsolo, Edades counterpoised the modernist value of expressiveness, making room for the terrible and the ugly, and expanded the subject matter of art into contemporary concerns. With his stress on formal design, the modern artist affirmed the concept of painting as a construct of his own invention. It was also Edades, as an enlightened pioneer, who raised the issue of national identity in art.

Around Edades' time, another artist also signalled the beginning of modernism. This was Juan Arellano who did landscapes in oil and in watercolor which strikingly showed the influence of fauvism in their use of strong and pure colors. Arellano, however, was known more as an architect than as a painter.

Edades' lessons in modernism did not fall on barren ground. He was soon able to ally with Carlos V. Francisco aka Botong Francisco and Galo B. Ocampo, and, together, they formed the pioneering triumvirate of modern art in the country. In time, they expanded into the Thirteen Moderns, with Diosdado Lorenzo, Vicente Manansala, Cesar Legaspi, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Hernando R. Ocampo aka H.R. Ocampo, Demetrio Diego, Arsenio Capili, Ricarte Purugganan, Bonifacio Cristobal, and Jose Pardo. With the new modernist idiom, a corresponding development was the shift from rural to urban subjects with the expansion of genre themes. However, these changes were interrupted by World War II and the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines in 1942.

While the war slowed down the movement for change in the arts, it was in the early postwar years that the first dynamic art institutions were founded, paving the way for a broad support system for the arts and the eventual triumph of modernism. These were the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP), founded by Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, and the Philippine Art Gallery (PAG) founded by Lydia Villanueva-Arguilla in 1951.

Five years after the granting of formal independence, the shadow of the war still lingered on the paintings of the 1950s. Doubtless, they were a mirror to the reality of a country in ruins. The debate between “proletarian art” and “art for art’s sake” in literature and criticism, which had earlier ensued in the United States following the depression and crash of Wall Street, was also echoed in the visual arts. In these parts, the deplorable social and economic conditions of the postwar years were in themselves a potent argument for social consciousness in art. The postwar works of H.R. Ocampo, Manansala, and Legaspi showed this trend. Appearing in them were images of oppressed workers, slum dwellers, and beggars. Galo B. Ocampo’s works dwelt on the ravages of war, both material and spiritual, with the bound Christ and the flagellant as his central symbols.

In 1955 the struggle between the conservatives and the modernists came to a head at the AAP annual painting competition. The conservatives withdrew their works in protest when the modernists won all the major awards. From then on, the latter would enjoy the support and recognition of the art public with the help of writers sympathetic to their cause. This event also marked the beginning of the Mabini painters, academy-trained conservatives who posted their alternative exhibits in their studios at the Luneta and Mabini district.

But even earlier in the 1950s, when the conservatives were a dominant force and the modernists were still busy laying the ground for their big entrance, the avant-garde had already announced its appearance. This was in the startling oeuvre of a precocious young man, David Cortez Medalla, poet-painter turned kinetic and performance artist. Among his notable works which cause a stir in the art circles was the ***Bubble Machine***, a piece of kinetic sculpture that emitted froth when activated. His other works showed affinities with art brut in its radical anticlassicism, its uninhibited figuration and aggressive textures.

From the 1950s to 1969 Francisco, one of the pioneering modernists, worked on paintings and murals inspired by the indigenous aesthetics of line, form, and color. Turning away from linear perspectives, he asserted an overall pictorial design, covering the entire field with dynamic figures and motifs. His mural of the ***Philippine Struggles Through History*** for the Manila City Hall is the magnificent culmination of his art. His genre portraying daily life among Angono folk were not studio paintings composed according to formula but were evidence of the immersion of the artist in his community. He also depicted scenes and characters from folklore, such as Mariang Makiling.

With the development of modernism, identifiable art trends gained ground from the 1960s to the present. A number of these trends were stylistic, drawing their origins from Europe or the United States; some were thematic—ranging from the historical and social to the political; and others were based on the use of particular mediums. In most cases, foreign influences underwent changes shaped by the Filipino’s own historical experience, their temperament as a people, and their own cultural and artistic traditions.

Neorealism, one of the earliest modernist trends, was influenced by the cubism of the School of Paris. It was not, however, the cubism of the analytic phase which fragmented the figure into sharp facets in an austere monochromatic field but of the cubism of the later synthetic phase which showed broader planes and restored color harmonies and ornamental design and texture. It was a style better suited to the indigenous penchant for colorful forms, for ornamentation, and for the flat composition of elements covering the entire pictorial field.

Moreover, Vicente Manansala, Cesar Legaspi, and Romeo Tabuena contributed the quality of transparency to the cubist idiom. Again, consciously or unconsciously, they were working from within Philippine aesthetics, transparency being a traditional Filipino aesthetic value, as seen in *capiz* windows, costumes in *piña* and *jusi*, the Christmas *parol* (lantern), the Pahiyas *kiping* (leaf-shaped rice wafers), and the colorful *pastillas* (carabao milk confections) wrappers.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the maturation of Legaspi's neorealist style in paintings of the *Chiaroscuro* series. Inspired by the theme of mineral and organic form interplay, the paintings showed hard unyielding rock with vulnerable embryolike figures in its crevices. This was followed by works of epic sweep; Promethean figures caught up in the human destiny; universal types symbolizing striving, struggle, and survival amid the forces of destruction—like a phoenix rising triumphant from the ashes. He brought the neorealist style into the 1980s with his Jeepney series that realized the full potential of transparent cubism, in an orchestration of the many symbols, logos, and images that make up urban jeepney culture.

Tabuena was an unusual artist in that he worked almost simultaneously in contrasting styles. The first showed the influence of Chinese watercolor paintings in its attenuated, almost calligraphic figures and in its misty tonalities evoking mountain landscapes. The other works in oil, such as *Childbirth*, were in a darker, expressionistic vein that conveyed the terrors of the folk at the unseen world of supernatural beings.

Manansala's work is often said to exemplify the indigenization of cubism; for he did not remain within its original formulation but instead used it as a structuring rather than a fragmenting device with effects of transparency. Born into the Philippine social and cultural environment, Manansala showed a reluctance to do stylistic violence to the human figure and instead merely brought out the body's basic geometric structure. His subjects were drawn from the urban folk—such as vendors and cock fighters—subjects taken up by later genre artists, like Ang Kiukok, Mauro Malang Santos aka Malang, Angelito Antonio, and Manuel Baldemor who later moved from the influence of Manansala to develop their own styles.

Among the later artists, neorealist influence is seen in the works of Malang whose

“cubism” is modified by rich overlapping layers of color and texture. Modifications along fauvist tendencies are evident in the works of such genre artists as Antonio Austria, Norma Belleza, and Angelito Antonio who were associated at one time with Manansala as colleagues or students at the University of Santo Tomas.

Abstraction in the Philippines had its major prototypes. The first kind, exemplified by the work of H.R. Ocampo, was a homegrown product. It developed out of his earlier figurative works which increasingly became stylized towards abstract design. These abstracts were at first highly textured and at times suggestive of ethnic weaves. Later, they consisted of simpler, interlocking shapes with figurative allusions and of monochromatic schemes or varying colors and tones.

Another kind of abstraction can be found in the works of Constancio Bernardo who studied fine arts at Yale University. Studying under Josef Albers, he reflected the dominant influence of his mentor in the series *Homage to Albers* which clearly took off from Albers’ *Homage to the Square*. This type of abstraction, aside from its geometrism, was concerned with the exploration of the relativity of color perception. In a later artist, Allan Cosio, the influence of geometric abstraction would be transformed into op art with its rigorous geometrism.

A third kind of abstraction, that of Jose Joya, was derived from another source. A scholar at the Cranbrook Institute in Michigan, he was exposed to abstract expressionism which was then in its heyday in the postwar New York school. Joya introduced gestural or action painting in a number of large canvases in the 1960s but later shifted to compositions of rounded overlapping shapes in harmonious hues, allusive of forms of the natural environment. Artists who use similar approaches to abstraction are Angelito David and Raul Isidro. Other influences, mainly Asian, have entered Isidro’s work, such as mandala concepts and Chinese calligraphic painting. This Asian influence would become increasingly important in contemporary Philippine abstraction, as in the works of Lao Lianben and Augusto Albor. A minimalist, Lao Lianben places value on space in his black and/or white paintings of Zen inspiration. Albor shows a mathematical orientation combined with reflecting materials with a play on black and white.

Another senior abstractionist, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, combined the gestural verve of abstract expressionism with a surreal flavor. For his part, Fernando Zobel was a major abstractionist who remained a highly individual artist. From his earliest folk inspirations, he shifted to Western cosmopolitan idioms, at first gestural with tonal play, and then moved towards the precisionist in geometric forms with underlying classical aesthetics. The influence of abstract expressionism was also evident in the gestural tendency of a number of younger artists, such as Nestor Vinluan, Edwin Wilwayco, Roy Veneracion, Norberto Carating,

Phyllis Zaballero, and Benjie Cabangis.

Arturo Luz first began with rhythmic figures suggesting movement, a dry wit reminiscent of Paul Klee. He moved to tonal still life of objects which were more abstract than concrete material forms. His later abstraction of burlap in varying tones carried a Zen austerity also found in his spare calligraphic works. Some of these concepts he realized in his sculptures, some of them in monolithic stone and others in planar metal structures.

Younger abstract artists derived from these major streams, although the types did at times overlap. Among some artists, the search for a homegrown abstraction following H.R. Ocampo led to the exploration of indigenous motifs found in the traditional arts of weaving, wood carving, and basketry. Abstractionists making use of ethnic motifs on a two-dimensional format were Alfredo Liongoren, Bert Manta, and Ivi Avellana-Cosio, along with an experimental use of materials.

The theme of the abstract landscape has been taken up by Justiniano Nuyda aka Tiny Nuyda, in which sky shapes interact with geometric elements, and by Glenn Bautista, in his extraterrestrial explorations combined with religious symbols.

Phillip Victor's minimalist white works with vivid accents are inspired by the extensive fishponds of his Hagonoy setting. Highly original works in the same vein have been done by Danilo Garcia whose works bring out the play of shadows and transparencies and whose cosmic landscapes are collaged at times with elements of driftwood.

The experimentation with medium, which was a concern originally associated with abstract art and which Joya introduced, was carried further by Marciano Galang aka Mars Galang in his compositions with sanded textures and burlap collages showing affinities to art brut. The spirit of experimentation was enlivened by artists Roberto Chabet, Lee Aguinaldo, and Romulo Olazo. Chabet's contribution lay in initiating and maintaining an experimental and conceptual approach to art, with an emphasis on the semiotic potential of materials. Aguinaldo worked along cosmopolitan lines showing varied influences, including Asian minimalist aesthetics. Abstract art was given a boost by Olazo who created an art of subtlety in works with large and diaphanous overlapping planes.

In sculpture, the modernist challenge was posed by Napoleon Abueva, a former student of Tolentino. Except for a few conservative sculptors, Abueva was alone in the field for about a decade. An important side of his modernism was his zest for working with a wide variety of materials: woods, such as narra, molave, kamagong, ipil, and bamboo; stones, such as adobe, marble, coral, and alabaster; metals, such as bronze, iron, brass, and stainless steel. Moreover, he started the trend in combining different materials, such as wood with metal and stone, and in using different techniques appropriate to the materials used. Abueva acknowledged the influence of Constantin Brancusi in his earlier works; he did

numerous sculptures geometrizing the figure or reducing it to its basic shape, simplified, and generalized. In many of his works, particularly in his furniture-sculptures, he combined function and design. Many of his works have been done in a witty and playful vein, even as his religious side has been expressed in such works as *Stations of the Cross*.

In sculpture, Abueva was joined by an increasing number of modernists. J. Elizalde Navarro did primitive-surreal masks in hardwood and, together with Edgar Doctor, was one of the firsts to do assemblages with found objects. Lamberto Hechanova combined metal, plastics, and found objects while playing on their varying mediumistic qualities. Virginia Ty-Navarro executed pieces in brass, wood, and jade in various approaches. Abdulmari Imao was inspired by indigenous *okir* designs, particularly the *sarimanok* which he did in two- and three-dimensional variations. In his work, he constructed an iconography of Philippine Islamic symbols and also did highly original Islamic sculptures on the name of Allah and in the different Arabic calligraphic styles.

Modern art in the Philippines reached its halcyon years in the 1960s with the emergence of dynamic artistic personalities who explored all aspects of art to enrich the resources of the visual language. In only a little over a decade, modern art in the Philippines matured and unfolded its potential in a dazzling variety of expressions. It is likewise to be noted that the 1960s were years of social and political unrest which found expression in dynamic art. For one, the period saw a rise in a nationalist consciousness that began reassessing the relationship of the Philippines and the United States. At the same time, there arose the democratizing movement toward popular expression and sensitivity to the interests of the masses.

At the heels of the first generation of pioneers eagerly followed a younger breed, that is even more audacious and impatient of conventions. Ang Kiukok, Jaime de Guzman, Onib Olmedo, and Danilo Dalena painted in expressionist styles of high visual impact, while Benedicto Cabrera aka Bencab, printmaker and painter, worked in an original idiom which combined realism with experimental devices for enlarging the semantic potential of the work. Ang Kiukok crystallized in vivid, cubistic images the terror and angst of the times. De Guzman painted powerful historical and expressionist murals and later sought the mystery and spiritual power of indigenous religions. Olmedo drew from the nightmarish figures of the lower depths. Dalena, who had been acclaimed for his political cartoons, did paintings of large bustling crowds of people in quest of luck and miracles.

In the 1970s Eduardo Castrillo's many-sided artistic personality was expressed in sculptured body jewelry, in large outdoor abstracts of welded metal, in mobiles, in modular pieces of chrome and plexiglass, and in metal-relief works on copper. He has done monumental religious sculptures and historical work on the heroes of the Philippine Revolution. Solomon Saprid first won attention with his works on native mythological creatures, such as the *tikbalang*, a half-human and half-beast figure. He has also

done striking mother-and-child sculptures. Anticlassical, his figures carry a dynamic expressionistic quality. His technique of welding strips of metal with a blowtorch produces a jagged effect along the seams, like ridges of scar tissue. Saprid has transformed this unevenness into advantage: his rugged metal captures light in a restless way that suggests movement.

Sculptor-architect Ramon Orlina developed the medium of glass in freestanding works or as elements of architectural design. While his works have been generally abstract, some have figurative suggestions of mother-and-child or of lovers in embrace. Glass has also been the medium of Impy Pilapil, but instead of carving blocks of glass, she has worked with large, shaped pieces etched with rhythmic motifs allusive of natural phenomena and often made to contrast with natural rocks.

Surrealism, which probes into the nonconscious world of dreams and dark impulses of human beings, floats messages of a personal or social nature through images and symbols which, when juxtaposed, jar the viewer into new insights or questions. Foremost surrealists in the country are Galo B. Ocampo and Juvenal Sanso, while younger surrealists include Ramon Gaston, Francisco Viri, and Prudencio Lamarroza.

The social realists resumed the postwar trend in “proletarian art” and expanded earlier nationalist themes. Working in varying styles and constructing an iconography of symbols, they dealt on such protest themes as agrarian problems, foreign economic domination, export labor, exploitation of women and children, and ecological damage, while they expressed their aspirations for genuine freedom. Furthermore, they have worked in a variety of popular forms, such as comics, editorial cartoons, illustrations, posters, and portable murals for rallies to be able to reach a larger number of viewers. Art of sociopolitical signification, as in the work of first generation social realists Pablo Baens Santos aka Adi Baens Santos, Edgar Fernandez, Orlando Castillo, Antipas Delotavo, Jose Tence Ruiz, and Renato Habulan, remains an important trend among younger artists, like Charlie Co, Peewee Roldan, and Nunelucio Alvarado of Negros Occidental, and Aster Tecson of Cordillera. Sociopolitical themes are also expressed in the sculptures of Jerusalino Araos and Rey Paz Contreras.

Related to social realism is the historical theme mingled with folk imagery which has found striking interpretations in the works of painter-printmakers Brenda Fajardo and Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi. Concerned with feminist issues, Fajardo has explored the role of women through history. Woman’s self-definition has been a lasting concern of Paris-based Gelvezon-Tequi who has conveyed this theme in prints. Cultural identity and women’s situations have animated the prints and collages of Imelda Cajipe-Endaya, who has also explored the use of many indigenous materials.

Magic realism, another realist style, gained popularity in the 1970s with the local

discovery of American artist Andrew Wyeth. Beyond the traditional linear perspective realism, this style focused on familiar objects in their minute detail and in their distinct qualities of texture and color. It turned a fresh eye on everyday objects in fields and domestic interiors and provided these humble objects with dignity and worth. Nestor Leynes began the trend with his ***Bigas*** series in which a woman's wrinkled hands are shown picking out stones from a native *bilao* filled with rice. The shadows of the *bilao* and the measuring can are sharply etched on the floorboards, while the rice grains are meticulously painted one by one. Efren Lopez did a series of mother-and-child paintings with the texture of beddings and frayed mats approaching *trompe l'oeil* illusionism. But the Filipino artist has contributed a new element to magic realism. While Wyeth often showed a gradually rising ground to the horizon line or painted his subjects at eye level or from a distance, Leynes and Lopez introduced the visual angle from above, often looking straight down at the subject, seemingly implying a dominant eye and consciousness.

Genre painting will always be a mainstay in Philippine contemporary art. Traditional artistic communities thrive in a number of towns of the Rizal and Laguna provinces around Laguna de Bay. At present, the leading regional genre painters are Jose Blanco, Salvador Juban, and Nemesio Miranda Jr. aka Nemiranda of Angono, as well as Tam Austria of Tanay. Their paintings dwell on folk legends and traditions, and the daily activities of fisherfolk and farmers, thus bringing to the fore the different sectors of Philippine society—the traditional and the modern, the rural and the urban. The other tradition in genre, which is folk urban, continues from the postwar paintings of Manansala, and is furthered in their own styles by artists like Mario Parial, Angelito Antonio, Norma Belleza, and Tam Austria. Recently, a new direction in genre has been opened by Aro Soriano in his vivid paintings inspired by folk songs and riddles, as well as in his terra-cotta sculptures made in the course of his immersion in rural communities.

In the last decade growing interest in the artistic expression of the culture communities, along with pressing environmental issues, have been factors in the use of indigenous materials. This trend first appeared with the discovery of the virtues of bamboo, as in Francisco Verano's sculptures, of indigenous weave, as in the early fabric works of Manuel Rodriguez Jr. aka Boy Rodriguez; and of handmade paper, as in the work of the painters-printmakers Parial, Fajardo, and Bautista. It has resulted in a keener sensitivity to the semiotic potential of the new mediums. Some of the most exciting art, both two- and three-dimensional, have been done in mixed media, including bamboo poles, woven rattan panels, carved hardwoods, coconut bark and husk, burlap, shells, forest vines, driftwood, and seeds. With artistic insight, these materials have been fashioned into splendid tapestries and sculpture-installations.

Foremost among artists working with indigenous materials are Junyee, Santiago Bose, Roberto Villanueva, Cajipe-Endaya, Paz Abad Santos, Roberto Feleo, and Edson

Armenta. Abad Santos, one of the growing number of women artists, has fashioned large-scale tapestries of burlap richly encrusted with barks and husks evoking the original splendor of the rainforests. She contrasts natural tones with dyed passages to create striking effects. Junyee brings out the full potential of organic materials in sculptures-in-the-round or in installations which are comments on space and ecology. Bose, one of the foremost experimenters, uses materials which he sometimes invents, and creates native altars in thatch and bamboo with millenarist symbols of revolution. Armenta has built structures derived from forest traps to bring to awareness the predatory forces on human and animal life. Villanueva has done large installations using bamboo walls to evoke holy grounds inhabited by the anitos (spirits in the environment), as well as *bulul* (carved anito)-topped totem poles and spirit boats commemorating the dead. Feleo, on the other hand, has put together a wide variety of materials drawn from familiar cultural artifacts and has revived an indigenous cosmology that is, at the same time, highly sensitive to interventions from outside forces.

The trend in indigenous materials has also considerably enriched installation art in the country. Most installation artists—such as Bose, Villanueva, Genara Banzon, and Alan Rivera—have used organic materials from the environment, especially since these materials in themselves are evocative of natural and cultural signification. Likewise, a number of installation artists have explored the resources of photography and architectural concept as in Sid Gomez Hildawa's works, or instant theater, and sculpture-as-structure, as in the works of Cesare Syjuco, Jean Marie Syjuco and Alwin Reamillo who make highly original structures that often use light and sound components and convey sly or playful signification. Installation art, which breaks down the distinction between two- and three-dimensional forms, has also elaborated on the concepts of space, time, and process.

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Another kind of abstraction can be found in the works of Constancio Bernardo who studied fine arts at Yale University. Studying under Josef Albers, he reflected the dominant influence of his mentor in the series *Homage to Albers* which clearly took off from Albers' *Homage to the Square*. This type of abstraction, aside from its geometrism, was concerned with the exploration of the relativity of color perception. In a later artist, Allan Cosio, the influence of geometric abstraction would be transformed into op art with its rigorous geometrism.

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elements of driftwood.

The experimentation with medium, which was a concern originally associated with abstract art and which Joya introduced, was carried further by Marciano Galang aka Mars Galang in his compositions with sanded textures and burlap collages showing affinities to art brut. The spirit of experimentation was enlivened by artists Roberto Chabet, Lee Aguinaldo, and Romulo Olazo. Chabet's contribution lay in initiating and maintaining an experimental and conceptual approach to art, with an emphasis on the semiotic potential of materials. Aguinaldo worked along cosmopolitan lines showing varied influences, including Asian minimalist aesthetics. Abstract art was given a boost by Olazo who created an art of subtlety in works with large and diaphanous overlapping planes.

In sculpture, the modernist challenge was posed by Napoleon Abueva, a former student of Tolentino. Except for a few conservative sculptors, Abueva was alone in the field for about a decade. An important side of his modernism was his zest for working with a wide variety of materials: woods, such as narra, molave, kamagong, ipil, and bamboo; stones, such as adobe, marble, coral, and alabaster; metals, such as bronze, iron, brass, and stainless steel. Moreover, he started the trend in combining different materials, such as wood with metal and stone, and in using different techniques appropriate to the materials used. Abueva acknowledged the influence of Constantin Brancusi in his earlier works; he did numerous sculptures geometrizing the figure or reducing it to its basic shape, simplified, and generalized. In many of his works, particularly in his furniture-sculptures, he combined function and design. Many of his works have been done in a witty and playful vein, even as his religious side has been expressed in such works as *Stations of the Cross*.

In sculpture, Abueva was joined by an increasing number of modernists. J. Elizalde Navarro did primitive-surreal masks in hardwood and, together with Edgar Doctor, was one of the firsts to do assemblages with found objects. Lamberto Hechanova combined metal, plastics, and found objects while playing on their varying mediumistic qualities. Virginia Ty-Navarro executed pieces in brass, wood, and jade in various approaches. Abdulmari Imao was inspired by indigenous *okir* designs, particularly the *sarimanok* which he did in two- and three-dimensional variations. In his work, he constructed an iconography of Philippine Islamic symbols and also did highly original Islamic sculptures on the name of Allah and in the different Arabic calligraphic styles.

Modern art in the Philippines reached its halcyon years in the 1960s with the emergence of dynamic artistic personalities who explored all aspects of art to enrich the resources of the visual language. In only a little over a decade, modern art in the Philippines matured and unfolded its potential in a dazzling variety of expressions. It is likewise to be noted that the 1960s were years of social and political unrest which found expression in dynamic art. For one, the period saw a rise in a nationalist consciousness that began reassessing the relationship of the

Philippines and the United States. At the same time, there arose the democratizing movement toward popular expression and sensitivity to the interests of the masses.

At the heels of the first generation of pioneers eagerly followed a younger breed, that is even more audacious and impatient of conventions. Ang Kiukok, Jaime de Guzman, Onib Olmedo, and Danilo Dalena painted in expressionist styles of high visual impact, while Benedicto Cabrera aka Bencab, printmaker and painter, worked in an original idiom which combined realism with experimental devices for enlarging the semantic potential of the work. Ang Kiukok crystallized in vivid, cubistic images the terror and angst of the times. De Guzman painted powerful historical and expressionist murals and later sought the mystery and spiritual power of indigenous religions. Olmedo drew from the nightmarish figures of the lower depths. Dalena, who had been acclaimed for his political cartoons, did paintings of large bustling crowds of people in quest of luck and miracles.

In the 1970s Eduardo Castrillo's many-sided artistic personality was expressed in sculptured body jewelry, in large outdoor abstracts of welded metal, in mobiles, in modular pieces of chrome and plexiglass, and in metal-relief works on copper. He has done monumental religious sculptures and historical work on the heroes of the Philippine Revolution.

Cartoons and komiks (comics) have been the most popular visual art forms in the country since the turn of the century. Beginning as satirical comments in newspapers during the late Spanish period, cartoons developed into editorial comments and major illustrations in *Lipang Kalabaw*, *Telembang*, *The Independent*, *The Philippines Free Press*, and other publications during the American period, in the hands of artists like Jose V. Pereira, Jorge Pineda, and Esmeraldo Z. Izon. Since 1946 major dailies and weeklies have carried social and political cartoons by Demetrio Diego, Malang, Liborio Gatbonton aka Gat, Rod Dayao, Edgar Soller, Corky Trinidad, Hugo Yonzon Jr., Danilo Dalena, Tence Ruiz, Neil Doloricon, and Arnel Mirasol.

Comic strips that made fun of foibles of the Filipino and reflected the concerns of their times include the pioneering *Kenkoy* and selected characters by Tony Velasquez, *Buhay Pilipino* (Filipino Life) by Mars Ravelo, *Kalabog en Bosyo* (Kalabog and Bosyo), and *Asyong Aksaya* (Wasteful Asyo) by Larry Alcala, *Tisoy* (mestizo swain) and *Ikabod Bubwit* by Nonoy Marcelo.

Visual artists who did romanticized drawings for fantasy or "historical" serials include: Francisco V. Coching who wrote and illustrated *El indio* (The Native), *Gat Sibasib*, and *Satur*, Elpidio Torres also drew Dyesebel and *Diyosa*; Nestor Redondo who was responsible for Darna and *Diwani*; Federico C. Javinal who did *El Vibora* (The Viper) and *Zuma*; Mar T. Santana who illustrated *Astrobal* and *Bakekang*; and Steve Gan who drew *Ang Panday* (The Blacksmith) and *Mekanizmo* (Mechanism).

Artists who have done more realistic illustrations of ordinary types and everyday situations are: Redondo who was responsible for *Gilda* and *Batang Bangkusay* (Bangkusay Born); Danny Velasquez who did *DI-13* and *Kidlat* (Lightning); Fred Carrillo who visualized *MN* and *Apat na Agimat* (Four Talismans); and Joey Celerio who illustrated *Kung Mahawi Man ang Ulap* (If the Clouds Ever Part) and *Dapat Ka Bang Mahalin?* (Do You Deserve to Be Loved?).

Photography is another visual-art medium which has reached a high level of development today. The camera has documented historical events in the past century, from the inauguration of the Malolos Republic in 1899 to the EDSA Revolt in 1986. It has recorded the likeness or captured the character of various personalities—from the lowly *indios* of the 19th century to the Ifugao chiefs of the 1930s to National Artist Botong Francisco. Photography has become indispensable to advertising and publishing, but has also become a means of artistic expression for and by itself. Honesto Vitug, Dick Baldovino, Ed Santiago, Ben Laxina, Emil Davocol, Joseph R. Fortin, John Chua, Neal Oshima, and Jaime Zobel de Ayala are some of the better-known photographers of the last five decades.

The American influence in Philippine art stimulated a dazzling array of different forms, styles, and expressions. As in the previous colonial period, indigenization was the central process and phenomenon. The inexhaustible inventiveness of the Filipino artist allowed him to filter influences through his own culture, historical conditions, and temperament to create a new and original artistic fabric—Filipino foremost and primarily, but with the cosmopolitan strains that link it with the larger world. • A.G. Guillermo

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