

SOURCES AND INFLUENCES

The sources and influences of the visual arts in the Philippines may be classified according to the three principal cultural traditions found in the country; the indigenous tradition, which is evidenced by the arts of the natives in the long period before colonization, the arts of the non-hispanized ethnic communities today, and the lowland folk arts which fuse ethnic and colonial aspects; the Spanish tradition, which is seen in the religious paintings and prints, academic paintings, landscapes, portraits, *letras y figuras* (letters and figures), still-lives, and other art works done by unschooled and schooled Filipino artists during the Spanish period from 1565 to 1898; and the Euro-American tradition which came in via the Americanized educational system and media and which has been indigenized in the painting and sculptures done by Filipino artists from the 1930s to the present.

The Ethnic Tradition

Evidences of the ancient arts are the artifacts unearthed in archaeological excavations, which include earthenware, body ornaments and jewelry, and textile fragments. An important body of earthenware consists of burial jars. The ancient tradition of jar burial was diffused throughout the southern part of the Asian mainland, the Malay Archipelago, and the Southeast Asian region, including the Philippines. This practice was related to the tradition of “grave furniture” in which the dead were buried along with various articles of everyday use such as eating utensils and weapons, and in the case of the nobility, with servants and domestic animals. The Manunggul Jar with its lid bearing two rowers in a boat is related to the Southeast Asian belief that the dead ride “spirit boats” across a body of water to reach the other world. Likewise, the decorative techniques of our precolonial pottery, such as incising, impressing with cord or mat, piercing, and incorporating appliqued elements are found in the ancient pottery of the region.

Among the earliest artifacts were weaponry used not only for tribal warfare but also for hunting and food gathering. In the Metal Age, spears were produced as well as bladed weapons, some of them with handles embellished by geometric and curvilinear designs. These weapons were produced by means of the Malay forge in the *cire perdue* or lost wax process wherein clay molds held the molten metal which took shape as it cooled. The weapons of southern Philippines, particularly the wavy kris, is part of a long Southeast Asian tradition of Malay metalwork.

Precolonial body ornaments and jewelry, which functioned as charms and amulets to drive away spirits, also constitute an important collection of artifacts. Many of these were fashioned in gold from the mines of the Cordilleras in the north and Camarines in southern Luzon. The tradition of silver filigree is also part of our Southeast Asian heritage. Indigenous designs in jewelry began in early times and continued into the Spanish period.

Part of body ornamentation in the precolonial period was the body tattoo. The ancient art of tattooing was so prevalent that Spanish colonizers did not fail to notice, at one point calling the Visayas “Islas de los Pintados.” So elaborate were the designs covering entire bodies that they were mistaken for printed cloth from a distance. The *Boxer Codex*, which contained drawings of human types from different ethnic groups, shows men tattooed on the face and body with spiral designs and floral motifs. Up to the present, many old men and women of the Cordilleras bear the tattoo symbols of their group. The practice of tattooing was widely spread over the seafaring communities of Oceania and the South Pacific, including New Zealand where the chiefs sported elaborate facial and body marks.

The Philippines’ ethnic tradition of textiles also goes back to early times and shows its cultural affinity with the rest of Southeast Asia. Decorative weaving techniques, such as the supplementary weft found in much of Yakan weave, are shared with many countries of the region. Ikat is a decorative dyeing technique that is a regional tradition practiced among many Philippine groups, including the Tboli in their abaca *malak* weave and the Bagobo in their *dagmay*. In fact, the earliest example of ikat tie-dye in the region has been documented as having been found in an archaeological site in Banton Island off Romblon. Ethnic clothing also shows affinities with the rest of Southeast Asia. The Maranao cylindrical skirt called *malong*, the Bontoc rectangular skirt called *tapis* and the Ilongo checkered or striped skirt called *patadyong* are prevalent in the region and so are different kinds of headgear such as the *pis* and the *tubao*.

In precolonial times, a number of regional cultural traditions made their influence felt. These were the Southeast Asian Malay animist, the Indian Hindu Buddhist, the Chinese, and the Arabic-Islamic strains which left lasting traces on our culture. At the same time, there were more ancient cultural sources such as the Oceanic cultures of the Polynesian South Pacific. In time, these various strains did not remain separate but intermeshed.

Wood carving in the Cordilleras features stylized human figures such as the male and female *bulul* and *tattagu*, and numerous animal figures of ritual and the hunt, including the dog, the pig, and the boar. Its subject and style show affinities with the arts of Oceania and Polynesia, as well as New Guinea and Celebes.

Indigenous wood carving in the Philippines is a local expression of the larger Southeast Asian Malay wood carving tradition. This is evident especially in the *okir* art of the Muslim Maranao and the Tausug of Mindanao and Sulu. The Maranao designs of the *sarimanok*, *naga*, and *pako rabong*— with their repertoire of motifs—are related to the designs and motifs of the region. The *sarimanok* which is a kingfisherlike bird, usually with a fish in its beak or base, belongs to the region’s rich bird imagery derived from epics, myths, and legends. It is akin to the Indonesian *garuda* and the Bornean hornbill which grace house facades and boat prows. In Asian mythologies, birds are symbols of the human spirit and the

transcendence of that spirit over matter, and symbols too of the liberation of the individual spirit as it merges with the universal soul.

The origins of the naga, the serpent design, is Indian Hindu-Buddhist, and the word itself is from Sanskrit. This is one of the traces of Indian influence in the country. In Agusan and other parts of Mindanao, figures of Hindu-Buddhist origin such as the Shivaite Golden Image and the clay medallion of Avalokitesvara Padmapani—a lotus-bearing Hindu female deity, have been excavated (J. Francisco). Furthermore, a number of Indian words have been assimilated into our native languages. Often, these words are spiritual concepts or have to do with spiritual activities, such as *diwa*, *diwata*, *budhi*, *guro*, and even *bathala*. Moreover, a Philippine version of the Ramayana has been found by Dr. Juan Francisco in the Lanao area of Mindanao and transcribed as *Maharadia Lawana*, Lawana being the local version of the original Ravana. In Tausug dance, there is an emphasis on hand gestures as in the Indian *mudras*, further enhanced by the use of the *janggalay* or silver fingernail extenders.

Early Chinese influence was seen in matters pertaining to trade and commerce. During the centuries of precolonial trade with China, large quantities of porcelain were brought into the country. These were highly valued and their shapes and designs soon influenced indigenous pottery. It was, however, with Spanish colonization that the Chinese influence on the arts became manifested. Chinese artisans were in great demand in the making of santos or holy images in wood and ivory. For xylography, the Chinese system of engraving was adopted for the first books printed in the country. Chinese artisans were also in demand in the building of churches and houses, particularly for their supply of building materials such as tiles for roofing and lime for bonding stone.

Preceding Spanish colonization by a century, Islam penetrated the islands from the Malay Archipelago. A Muslim sultanate was first established in Sulu, effectively introducing Islam as a way of life to a large area of the South. In art, Islamic manifestations were the mosques with their minarets and bulblike domes and their calligraphic inscriptions from the Koran. Brassware in the making of ritual vessels, such as the *kendi* and the *gadur* shows the influence of Middle Eastern forms and motifs. An example of three-dimensional Islamic sculpture is the *burak*, the half-woman and half-horse figure which Mohammad rode on his way to heaven. Arabic calligraphy embellished brass vessels, jewelry, and various articles.

The Spanish Colonial Influence

The Spanish colonizers in the 16th century sought to efface indigenous culture and to replace it with the image and likeness of the West. The native populations were relocated “under the bells” and their energies harnessed in the building of churches. For three centuries, the Church and State were the sole patrons of the

arts. Sculptors and painters fell under the supervision of the friars who provided them with European models for iconography and style. These artists were made to work on Christian saints and holy figures. To facilitate the work of conversion, the friars introduced the native artists to figurative art which gave the Christian icons three dimensional and more realistic human forms.

The first visual art form popularized in the country was printmaking, particularly xylography, which was the Chinese printing process using woodblocks. The first book printed in the Philippines, *Doctrina christiana en lengua española y tagala* (Christian Doctrine in the Spanish and Tagalog Languages), 1593, featured a xylographic engraving of Santo Domingo Engraving as an art developed in the 18th century with artists like Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay, Francisco Suarez and Lorenzo Atlas (previously identified as Laureano but with recent evidence seems to be Laurentius in Latin or Lorenzo in Spanish). A nascent Filipino identity emerged with their recognition as artists. They often affixed the epithets “Indio Tagalo,” “Indus Manil,” and “Indio Filipino” to their signatures. The engravers were kept busy making illustrations for prayer books and literature on the lives of saints, but they were also engaged in cartography, producing the map commissioned by the Jesuit Father Murillo Velarde in 1734, which featured a border of 17th-century genre scenes: a woman vendor, cockfighters, and promenaders, some of whom were priests and officials. These scenes were probably the first examples of secular genre.

Paintings invariably had religious subjects since they were, for the most part, commissioned to decorate altars and interiors of churches. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many religious paintings or icons were done on wood panels with a coating of gesso in the same way santos and *relieves* (reliefs) were made. Centers of religious art were Manila and Bohol. In the latter, local artists trained by Jesuits developed a distinctive style. Each friar order propagated the devotion of its patron saints through holy images.

Most religious art, whether for public or private devotions, came in the form of santos in wood and ivory. As in painting and engraving, the models for the santos iconography and style came from Europe. European influence was evident particularly in classical and baroque sculpture and in church architecture. The classical canons of art prescribed proportion, balance, and harmony in figurative representation marked by serenity and restraint. Classical santos observed the conventional proportion of seven and a half to eight heads, regular and symmetrical form, and serene expression. Baroque santos carved in wood and ivory were marked by dynamic, asymmetrical form and emotionalism in expression, with a predominance of spirals and curved lines to suggest movement, as in the highly expressive and polychrome figures of the Spanish sculptors Pedro de Mena and Alonso Cano. But aside from these, there were folk santos whose forms and expressions showed more affinity to indigenous sculptural forms, especially the fearsome apotropaic or demon-repelling figures of the Cordilleras. The rococo style heightened the decorative tendency in church ornaments: silver

ramilletes (floral wreaths) for altars and *carrozas* or floats that showed the skill of the silversmith's hand.

With the secularization of art in the late 18th century, and the opening of the country to world trade in the mid-19th century, the Church ceded its control on the arts to the emergent merchant class which was drawing its new-found power from its participation in the international market of cash crops. The secularization of art paved the way for the first art schools, mostly in artists' ateliers. One such school was the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura founded by Damian Domingo in Tondo in the first quarter of the 19th century. Domingo became known for his costume albums of the different inhabitants of the country, albums which became the prototype for the costume documentation of artists like Justiniano Asuncion. These spurred interest in the *tipos del pais*, painted vignettes of the different types of inhabitants in the colony exploited for their local color.

After the death of Domingo, the Academia was taken over by the Junta de Comercio which brought over to the country Spanish art professors Lorenzo Rocha and Agustin Saez. Through them, the influence of the European Academy made itself felt in the art scene. The Spanish professors introduced classical norms in representation and the academic conventions of rendering and modelling while accommodating their subjects to the local environment. Lorenzo Guerrero, who opened his own private art school, was an assistant in the Academia. Some of its well-known students were Juan Luna who had a brief stint there before pursuing his studies in Europe upon Guerrero's advice and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo who painted somber landscapes before he travelled to Europe.

In Madrid, the expatriate artists Luna and Hidalgo produced masterpieces that showed the tutelage of the European Academy and were approved as entries in academic expositions. They followed contest prescriptions to deal with large-scale works in oil on canvas, their subjects drawn from Greek or Roman antiquity or mythology, following a basically classical style with room for baroque and romantic strains. In 1884, Luna's ***Spoliarium*** won the first gold medal in the Madrid Exposition which also saw Hidalgo garnering a silver medal for his ***Las virgenes cristianas expuestas al populacho*** (Christian Virgins Exposed to the Populace). Inspired by Desobry's novel on Roman times, Luna's ***Spoliarium*** had as subject the cruel gladiatorial combats in which Christians and captives from the colonies were pitted with one another or with animals for sport in the arena of the Colosseum. The spoliarium itself was the basement of the Roman Colosseum to which the dying and dead gladiators were dragged after the combat, there to be despoiled and stripped of their last worldly effects by human vultures before their bodies were claimed by loved ones. In Hidalgo's ***Virgenes cristianas***, Christian women were sold as slaves in the market place where they were scrutinized by leering men.

While the earliest portraits were those of bishops, other Church officials, and founders of religious orders, in the mid-19th century there emerged a vogue for

secular portraiture. These portraits were of men and women of the elite celebrating the economic prosperity of the merchant *ilustrado* or “enlightened” class. Outstanding examples were the works of Juan Arceo, Severino Flavier Pablo, Justiniano Asuncion, Simon Flores y de la Rosa, and Antonio Malantic. These homegrown artists worked in the miniaturist style, so called because it was concerned with recording minutely and meticulously the features of costume, the elaborateness of embroidery, the fineness and transparency of the bodice, the textures of cloth and jewelry. As to the sources of the miniaturist style, the direct influence could have been the miniature portraits from the limner’s art in vogue in Europe since the Renaissance. This fashion was introduced in the Philippines where at one time the most valued gift became the miniature portrait of the loved one or of the Virgin or a saint enclosed in a gold locket. A number of portraitists, like Domingo and De la Rosa, also did miniature paintings. The influence could have come directly from Spain alongside the numerous art objects in the period of international trade or from Mexico, where paintings of saints carried incidental still life rendered in painstaking detail. A more indirect but nonetheless important source were the Dutch and Flemish strains in Spanish art since Spain in its imperial heyday extended as far as the Netherlands. Philip II himself was an avid collector of Flemish art. The Flemish strain, for instance, can be seen in the paintings of Diego Velasquez and in the still lifes of Fray Juan Sanchez Cotan. It is a lively realist strain with a keen appreciation for material detail and texture. The populist aspect of Velasquez’s and Murillo’s works, however, did not reach the country, although it is found in a few works of Hidalgo, such as Los mendigos (The Beggars) which shows two wandering beggar-children.

European-trained Luna and Hidalgo also painted portraits, but unlike the homegrown painters they were not concerned with capturing minute detail. Influenced by late 19th century impressionism (the first impressionist exhibit was in 1874), they were interested instead in the general aspect of the figure and in the psychological values of portraiture. This can be seen, for instance, in the two artists’ Chula paintings and in Luna’s La Bulaqueña (The Lass from Bulacan), as well as portraits of family members he painted on his last visit to the Philippines.

A special form of the miniaturist style was the *letras y figuras* of which Jose Lozano was the principal exponent. In this form done in watercolor on brown Manila paper, the letters of the patron’s name were painted as genre figures detailing occupations of the period, and were thus valuable as artistic records of the late 19th century. Although the letters were only a few inches high, the details of costume, accessories, and other material features of the setting were painted in remarkable detail. The figures were, moreover, often supplemented with scenes of Manila Bay with its foreign merchant boats anchored at bay, and of the Pasig River and Intramuros, as in Lozano’s Francisco Garcia Ortiz. In Balvino Mauricio, the principal feature is a mansion and its lavishly furnished interiors. The British *Punch* magazine of the Victorian Period featured similar illustrations in which letters, especially those beginning a text, were embellished with figures of all kinds—humans, animals, and plants. In the British mode most letters were

clearly drawn and the figures served as embellishments, but in the *letras y figuras* it was the figures themselves which formed the letters, a more clever and skillful accomplishment. A more remote yet indubitable influence lay in the illuminated manuscripts of the Medieval period. The embellishment of initial letters became an art form in itself, sometimes with one letter alone occupying an entire page of illumination, painted in tempera, gilded, and decorated with figures and scenes of all kinds. These influences encouraged local interest in beautiful writing or calligraphy which was considered a mark of culture, especially at a time when letter writing in beautiful hand done by scribes was an important profession in itself.

The Euro-American Influence

In the American colonial occupation and the later Commonwealth period, new styles such as art nouveau and art deco were introduced into the country. As total decorative styles, the inspiration of art nouveau was organic, while that of art deco was geometric and technological.

Art nouveau, a style in the visual and applied arts, flourished in Europe from 1890 to 1910. Its center was the Arts and Crafts Movement founded by the British artist William Morris. He believed that the common man was as worthy a client for the designer and architect as the rich man, and that real art should be made for and by the people. He also encouraged the cooperation of painters, architects, sculptors, and designers, and preached the superiority of handcrafted objects over the mechanized products of industry.

Art nouveau was characterized by long curvilinear lines which were vitally sensitive and tendril-like, in forms organically asymmetrical, metamorphosing into women's hair, lines, plant stems, waves, and animal forms. This artistic style also manifested a penchant for the precious and the "exotic." Thus, among its principal symbols were the peacock and the tiger lily. The influence of Japanese art, much in vogue in Europe at the time, was evident in art nouveau designs and drawings which earned simplicity, two-dimensionality, concern for clarity, and love of space. Architecture was characterized by asymmetrical compositions akin to sculpture and made use of stained glass and intricate ironwork. The style was applied to jewelry, vases, lamps, leather book jackets, and furniture. In the Philippines at the turn of the century, art nouveau was used primarily in carving furniture and picture frames. Moreover, a local variation was created when art nouveau merged with the Isabelo Tampinco decorative style which used indigenous plant motifs like the pineapple and the anahaw.

Art deco, on the other hand, was a style which became popular in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. It was largely the creation of fashion designers who strove to define modern chic. Its origin is traced to 1909 when Diaghilev brought the Ballet Russe to Paris in the heyday of haute couture king Paul Poiret. This mixture led to an explosion of color and boldness in all areas of design. Art deco borrowed freely from cubism, futurism, fauvism, Egyptian art, African art, and pre-Columbian American art.

Both art deco and the earlier art nouveau were total styles which sought an integral unity of design in all the arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, interior design, and the applied arts. But while art nouveau rejected industrialization, art deco welcomed it and encouraged an aesthetics of geometry and machine in the unity of art and industry.

Art deco showed a number of influences, such as that of pre-Columbian art, particularly the stepped design of Aztec temples or ziggurats, and of Egyptian art from the 1923 discovery of Tutankhamen's sumptuously furnished tomb. In organic motifs, it shifted from whiplash tendrils to geometric rosebuds. Because of its fascination with industrial technology, it glorified speed in such motifs as the streamlined racing car, leaping gazelles, ziggurats, lightning, sunbursts, and fountains. It exemplified industrial design in airplanes, automobiles, and ocean liners. At the same time, it popularized posters and advertising art. Philippine furniture before World War II showed a fusion of art deco and art nouveau motifs. In architecture, our most striking example of art deco in both structure and ornamentation is the Metropolitan Theater at Liwasang Bonifacio.

Art nouveau fused with the indigenous decorative tendency, as well as with baroque and rococo influences, and was indigenized with local plant and floral motifs. The influence of both styles was seen primarily in architecture, interior design and such applied arts as women's fashion, furniture, and picture frames.

Modernism was brought into the country via the historic 1928 exhibit of Victorio Edades at the Philippine Columbian Club. He had just arrived from art studies in the United States of America where he was able to view the travelling Armory Show featuring artists of the School of Paris. Challenging the dominance of the Amorsolo school trained at the UP School of Fine Arts, Edades campaigned for modern art which opened possibilities in form and expression. Through him Filipino artists came to know the work and concepts of impressionists Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Auguste Pierre Renoir and the postimpressionists Paul Cezanne, Paul Gauguin, George Braque, and Pablo Picasso, and abstractionists Paul Klee and Piet Mondrian. The influence of cubism, fauvism, expressionism, and surrealism soon became visible in the work of new artists who formed groups such as the Thirteen Moderns and the neorealists. The influence of Cezanne can be seen in Edades' *The Artist and His Model* which went beyond traditional single-point perspective to multiple points of view. His other works showed the influence of Gauguin.

The artists who heeded Edades' campaign for modern art formed a number of groups: the triumvirate which included Edades, Carlos V. Francisco aka Botong Francisco, and Galo B. Ocampo, the Thirteen Moderns, and the neorealists. For neorealists Vicente Manansala, Cesar Legaspi, Hernando R. Ocampo aka H.R. Ocampo, and Romeo Tabuena, the predominant influence was cubism. This was deepened by Manansala's stint in Paris where he came under the tutelage of

Fernand Leger and Legaspi's stint at the Academie Julien also in Paris. The result was a transparent cubism which brought out the interplay of tones and hues and which eschewed the arbitrary fragmentation of the figure in Paris school of cubism. For his part, H.R. Ocampo developed an abstract art which drew lessons from the baroque, Picasso's synthetic phase of cubism; and from local sources of inspiration, like indigenous design. In the 1950s, Tabuena drew from Asian sources in his atmospheric paintings of rural scenes with their delicately drawn figures, and later developed a more robust expressionist style in dark tonalities. Increasingly, he moved towards a prismatic cubism with light and bright hues. While discovering their individual styles, the early modernists were also concerned with indigenizing the modernist idioms in their quest for national identity in art.

In sculpture, Napoleon Abueva, the pioneering modernist was influenced by Constantin Brancusi in his simple essential shapes. A tendency toward geometrics was likewise seen in his work and in the works of followers like Renato Rocha. The influence of Henry Moore—the artist who brought out the relationship of figure and space with his convex and concave surfaces, apertures, and holes—was also seen in the works of Ros Arcilla and other artists. Assemblage, junk sculpture, and the use of found objects pioneered by Picasso had their counterparts in the works of Lamberto Hechanova, Edgar Doctor, and J. Elizalde Navarro.

The School of Paris was the first wave of modernist influence in the Philippines in the 1930s through the postwar years of the 1950s. While Paris was the international art center before, the postwar period saw the shift of dominant artistic influence from Paris to New York. The American scene saw the rise of strong figurative regionalists like Thomas Benton, Grant Wood, and John Stewart Curry, and social realists like Ben Shahn and Philip Evergood. Later, the abstract expressionists of the New York School became a strong force.

Impressionism was a style primarily concerned with capturing the effects of light on objects. The term was derived from the first impressionist exhibit in 1874 with Monet's *Impression: Sunrise*. The impressionists sought to capture the fleeting and elusive aspects of a subject and the effects of light and atmosphere on it at a particular place and time. In portraits and human figures, the effect was casual and candid rather than formal or posed. A painterly style, impressionism gave the spontaneous impression of the subject by means of brushstrokes of pure color applied side by side in fresh and vibrant color relationships. The subject was built up not by the delineation of line but by masses of color and tone.

Most active in the 1970s, a number of artists constituting the Dimasalang group, including Emilio Aguilar Cruz, Sofronio Y. Mendoza aka SYM, Romulo Galicano, and Ibarra de la Rosa, asserted figurative values in art in open-air landscapes done in a basically impressionist style. They turned to earlier influences, such as Fabian de la Rosa and even Juan Luna, although the Cebuanos among them, tutored by the Cebuano maestro Martino Abellana, had a definite impressionist

inclination. Macario Vitalis was an impressionist-cubist-pointillist based in France since the postwar years who was influenced by the artistic currents of Paris. He did portraits, landscapes, and genre of his native country on his many visits. Ibarra de la Rosa and his group of young painters exemplify how the impressionist approach is used locally.

Fauvism, on the other hand, made use of bright, vivid colors applied in a loose and painterly manner, often straight from the tube and without mixing. The use of color was autonomous, without reference to the local color of objects in reality. The style aimed to evoke strong and direct responses to color, as in the works of Andre Derain and Henri Matisse.

This tendency is felt in the works of Antonio Austria and Norma Belleza since the 1970s, which also manifest qualities of naivete. Among the younger practitioners but in more abstract vein is Francesca Enriquez in the late 1980s.

Expressionism was a style in painting and sculpture which began in the 1880s and which strove for the direct rendering of emotion. The artist was no longer restricted by classical conventions nor by the tenet of fidelity to nature but felt free to express his personal emotions and subjective experiences through artistic form. Following this, figurative expressionism involved distortion in representation, as in the exaggeration, elongation or attenuation of features. While it had a strong sense of design, it followed emotional impulse, mood, and feeling. The style strove to capture subjective reality, such as states of mind, inner moods, and intense feelings generally of anxiety, pathos, and suffering.

Figurative expressionism as a style appeared in times of social crises. In Germany, it appeared in the period of emerging fascist forces, marked by heightened militarization and moral decay. In the Philippines it appeared in the mid-1960s marked by increasing foreign domination on local economic and political life, intensifying bureaucratic corruption, and a militarization aimed at protecting ruling interests.

In the 1970s, with the trend in sociopolitical art, expressionist influences came to the fore, as in the work of Jaime de Guzman, Onib Olmedo, Ang Kiukok, and Danilo Dalena. They used the expressionist device of distorting the figure to achieve emotional expressiveness in the fervid sociopolitical atmosphere of the time. Ang Kiukok has been known for his jagged bony figures in burning rage or in deep despair. Olmedo was identified with his haunting and expressive faces of victims of society. Dalena made the Jai-Alai a symbol of human factors and of chance and accident in the creative process.

Abstract expressionism of the New York School, the main proponents of which were Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline and Willem de Kooning, became synonymous with “action painting” or “gestural painting.” These artists believed that the act of painting itself was as significant as the final product. Since they painted in

sweeping strokes, they preferred to work in large scale, with the canvas like an arena for the release of kinetic energy.

Abstract expressionist paintings often did not show a central focus or center of interest but treated the entire surface evenly. The spontaneous gestural lines, executed not so much with the brush as with sticks and twigs, conveyed energy rather than defined forms, and created dense textured layers of strands and flecks of pure color. Paint was also made to drip freely upon a canvas textured with sand, broken glass, and other substances.

The influence of abstract expressionism was reflected from the 1950s to the 1960s, primarily in the works of Jose Joya who studied art in Cranbrook, USA. Joya foregrounded the quality of spontaneity in the creative process, the use of collage, and the creation of textural effects such as the incorporation of sand into pigment. This influence would likewise reflect in the work of younger artists like Mars Galang.

At the same time, avant-garde art made its appearance in the works of David Cortez Medalla. He did a number of paintings, highly informal “portraits” influenced by *art brut*, a term coined by the French artist Jean Dubuffet to describe the spontaneous images of ordinary people which form the raw material of art.

Surrealism was a movement in art which showed the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis and which drew its subjects from dreams and the nonrational levels of the mind. Among the European surrealists active in the 1920s and 1930s were Salvador Dali, Max Ernst, Joan Miro, Yves Tanguy, Rene Magritte, and Paul Delvaux. Surrealism sought to explore the unconscious to unravel a world of fantastic images.

The surrealists invented what they believed were techniques of dredging the depths of the unconscious to reveal its contents. Among the methods practiced were automatism or automatic writing in which all controls by the conscious mind were released. In automatic drawing, the artist lets himself go on doodling without any apparent objective. It is from surrealist automatism that abstract expressionism would derive its basic technique.

Two kinds of surrealism developed: surrealism based on automatic writing and veristic surrealism. The first kind was exemplified by the paintings of Miro and Klee with their spontaneous and fantastic figures; the second was to be seen in the “dream paintings” of Dali, Magritte, and Delvaux which employed realistic techniques for contents not of the real world. Surrealist art in fact has affinities with children’s art and the art of the insane.

Abstract expressionism or gestural/action painting, a derivative of the “automatic writing” of surrealism, became the order of the day. Abstract expressionism is a

style of abstract art which became dominant immediately after World War II and was associated with the New York School. The immigration of European artists and intellectuals to the United States in the wake of the war stimulated the growth of art theory. They propagated the idea that art was a world in itself with its own language of form and color, and stressed the importance of understanding the medium. They also introduced a definite surrealist strain which placed importance on the role of nonrational desperation in search of the elusive stroke of luck.

There is a constant surrealist trend in Philippine art. Juvenal Sanso, has surrealist undertones in his landscapes with their mysterious nocturnal mood. A number of Filipino artists use the basic method of juxtaposing diverse elements to enrich the content of their work. An artist who has worked in this style is Prudencio Lamarrosa in whose ***Amburayan Queen*** and ***Ecology*** series realistically textured stones and rocks glow with a magical life. His unique surrealism is a combination of highly realistic landscapes with abstract passages. Santiago Bose has used folk symbols from the ancient Cordillera traditions with mystical and cabalistic undertones. Another outstanding realist now based in Europe is Ramon Gaston who works in a meticulous but visionary style that brings together symbols from various sources and juxtaposes elements from different temporal dimensions and levels of experience. Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi, Brenda Fajardo, Roderick Daroy, and Mario de Rivera combine medieval European imagery with disjunct contemporary images.

Surrealism was also given a boost in the highly original and technically excellent paintings, lithographs, and constructions of Glenn Bautista. Bautista has derived inspiration from the diverse religious faiths and philosophies of Asia and the West. Much of the surreal quality of his work comes from a unique lighting which emanates from within the form and is internal where most works have the light source coming from the environment outside the subject.

Surrealism has also been used within the context of political meanings, as in the works of Jose Tence Ruiz. His jeepney assemblages are lively thought-provoking constructions made of diverse objects from popular culture. His box constructions consist of the material ingredients of the folk tradition of cockfighting and reflect the daily struggles of the masses. Like Ruiz, Arnel Agawin also makes use of assemblages, but of natural elements such as twigs and dried leaves and collages of handmade paper and newspaper clippings, to convey his ecological and social concerns. A younger surrealist with sociopolitical undertones is Arnel Mirasol who also does highly original editorial cartoons. Like Ruiz and Agawin, Mirasol fuses surrealism and social themes.

At the same time, the geometric abstraction of Mondrian and the chromatic abstraction of Josef Albers found an adherent in Constancio Bernardo whose work showed the influence of Albers' ***Homage to the Square*** series. Geometric abstraction with op-art effects was later pursued by Lee Aguinaldo, Mars Galang, Ben Maramag, Rodolfo Gan, Lillian Hwang, Impy Pilapil, and Allan Cosio.

Abstract art drew influences from traditional Asian aesthetic philosophies, mainly Zen with its minimalism, although these did not come directly from the countries of their sources—Japan, China, and India—but via the United States where artists like Mark Tobey with his calligraphic “white writing” and Ad Reinhardt with his minimalist works avowed oriental influences. In the Philippines, these orientaling trends found expression in the work of Lao Lianben and Augusto.

Magic realism, as in the work of Nestor Leynes, Ely Gajo, Ger Viterbo, Efren Lopez, Araceli Dans, Agustin Goy, and Stevesantos drew its inspiration from American artist Andrew Wyeth’s images of rural and small-town America. This style is also often referred to as macro vision or hyper-realism.

Traditions of the western avant-garde was felt in the 1970s, with the exhibition of David Medalla’s kinetic sculpture ***Bubble Machine***. Medalla also introduced performance as medium for visual artists. Conceptual art had strong proponents in Ray Albano and Roberto Chabet.

Later a loose group of artists working around these two leading experimentalists combined conceptual art—installations, photographic collages, constructions—with performance art. These influences were enhanced by travels to the United States and Europe which encouraged a cosmopolitan outlook and by dominant American publications, such as ***Art Forum*** and ***Art News***.

In the late 1980s Chabet’s encouragement of painting as appropriation resulted in the proliferation of large-scale works based on blowing up of details from Western magazine clippings and art reproductions, as one by Pardo de Leon, Stella Rojas, and Popo San Pascual.

Appropriation of this kind was actually antedated by the 1972 exhibit of ***Larawan*** by Benedicto Cabrera aka Bencab, who enlarged, cropped, and rearranged compositions based on 19th-century Philippine photographs, with outstanding draughtsmanship. This stirred a sentiment of nationalism and nostalgia as Benjamin Cabrera dealt with the issue of Filipino identity.

The 1980s saw more experimental use of material with the effort to expand artistic resources. This trend had, in fact, begun earlier in the United States and explored innovative Europe. The abstract expressionists explored techniques and instruments in applying paint on two-dimensional surfaces.

The American artist Robert Rauschenberg contributed to this new way with materials used in his large assemblages and combines. His was a rejection of the traditional painting process. Louise Nevelson developed the new form of “box art,” Christo made a mark, though temporary, on the environment by large works often involving *empaquetage* or enveloping objects, including buildings, with plastic wrap. These influences found their way into the country and were translated in lively mixed media productions, among the most important of which

have been the works of Santiago Bose and Roberto Feleo. Bose has been a most consistent experimentalist, combining two-dimensional with three-dimensional forms. Feleo's *Pintado* series and box works, bring out the potential of a large variety of materials and establishes a well-defined academic framework which is nationalist, if not nativistic.

A particularly significant trend is the use of indigenous materials which began with the use of local plants in handmade paper for printmaking and painting. In the mid 1970s this expanded to the extensive use of natural discards as in Junyee's and Genara Banzon's installations, although Francisco Verano was the first to use bamboo in sculpture as early as 1971. In the 1980s Roberto Villanueva found inspiration in the indigenous art of the Cordilleras and in the ritualistic role of the shaman turned artist. Bose has also used bamboo effectively in his installation *Pasyon at Rebolusyon* (Passion and Revolution). In the painting collages of Imelda Cajipe-Endaya, sawali panels form the background of painted images of figures witnessing contemporary events. Her works are further embellished with collaged elements, like denim cloths and crocheted curtains to evoke a familiar social environment. The use of indigenous materials has had the salutary effect of making the artists come to terms with the immediate natural and social environment. At the same time, this naturally led to their adoption of the Filipino themes of nationalism and sociopolitical consciousness. Many young artists have inventively worked in assemblages, box art, and installations, some in the pure spirit of play and others in the more serious temper of reckoning with the issues of the times. • A.G. Guillermo

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