

SELECTED MUSEUM AND GALLERY SHOWS JANUARY—DECEMBER 2014

Bato Balani

Rodel Tapaya

January 21–May 15, 2014

Ateneo Art Gallery, Quezon City

Rodel Tapaya's paintings and animated video installation draw on tropes and figures from Philippine mythology and folk tales. Elusive and alluring, each character and object of his canvas, like the *agimat*, contains its own narrative. Here we find the Ifugao sky god Wigan, *aswang*, Maria Makiling, the chicken army of Bikol folk tales, and various characters from Lumad lore: forest spirits and animals and their human hunters crossing boundaries between reality and dreams. The trials and triumphs of these figures resonate with ours in present-day Philippines. The works possess childlike wonder and imagination, but they also remind us of the insignificance of human beings in the metaphysical and cosmic realms.

Complicated

Ea Torreado, Mike Adrao, and Leslie de Chavez

February 21–August 2, 2014

Lopez Memorial Museum, Pasig City

Complicated showcased a video installation of a performance by Ea Torreado, highly detailed ink drawings by Mike Adrao, and paintings and mixed media works by Leslie de Chavez. These works explore the Philippines's complex cultural and political history. Displayed alongside and against selected masterpieces from the Lopez Museum collection, they offer alternative perspectives: de Chavez's *Not All That Glitters Is Gold*, for one, comments on Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo's *Per Pacem et Libertatem*, a work which seemed to celebrate the American conquest of the Philippines and which was displayed at the now infamous St. Louis Exposition in 1904. The show was curated by Ethel Villafranca and Ricky Francisco.

Brave New Worlds: Utopia in Dystopia

April 26–June 2, 2014

Manila Metropolitan Museum, Manila

Connoisseurs and enthusiasts alike saw the group show of twenty-four Filipino and European artists, curated by Manuel Ocampo. *Brave New Worlds*, the title referring to a novel by Aldous Huxley, draws parallels between Filipino and foreign urbanities and explores the outlines and inner workings of a world, or worlds, on the verge of collapse. The works in this show cover a variety of media, from paintings to mixed media works, sculpture, and installations.

Illuminating: Rod. Paras-Perez

Rod. Paras-Perez

June 18–August 20, 2014

Ateneo Art Gallery, Quezon City

A retrospective of his artworks from the seventies, it sheds light on the brilliant mind and interesting life of a prominent writer and scholar. An eminent art historian, critic, and poet, Rod. Paras-Perez was also a prolific artist whose works included wood block prints, sculptures, and mixed-media. These works bear witness to Paras-Perez's inclination for the Classics and belie a Philippine nativist tendency. Included in the exhibition are the prints he produced for a publication of Francisco Balagtas's *Florante at Laura*. The show was curated by Florina Capistrano-Baker.

#Destroy 3000 Years of Culture

July 26–September 6, 2014

Post Gallery, Cubao Expo, Quezon City

Curated by Jeona Zoleta, *#Destroy* can be considered a landmark show in exhibiting GIF art. GIFs are picture formats that have video-like qualities but are not videos; they are rather spastic, repetitive moving pictures. *#Destroy* showcased the GIF art of Cian Dayrit, Veronica Pee, Marija Vicente, Lou Lim, Gino Javier, Patrick Cruz, and many others. The GIFs came in a variety of media—from photo prints to projections, portable DVD viewers, old TVs, and tarpaulin prints; from munggo seedlings and tissue paper cores to skulls whose eye sockets were fitted with cellphone screens. Given that the internet is their most popular platform, showcasing GIFs at

a gallery contests and blurs our notions and definition of art and gallery space. The show marks another development in the branching off of genres and mediums in the landscape of Philippine contemporary art.

Endless Hours at Sea

Martha Atienza

July 30–September 30, 2014

Ateneo Art Gallery, Quezon City

Described as extended cinema, Martha Atienza's *Endless Hours at Sea* was a video and sound installation that evoked the feeling of being inside a ship's hull. It brought the visitors close to life at sea and its interminable hours that, though seemingly wasted, become opportunities for one to think thoughts of journeys and origins. Voyages and the seas are deeply rooted in Martha Atienza's personal history, since she belongs to a family of seafarers and grew up in a sea-side town. The darkness enveloping visitors and the sound of the ocean beating at a ship's hull might be considered frightening and startling, but they also recalled one's being lulled and rocked to sleep. Perhaps the experience even allowed visitors to imagine what it might be like to be in the womb, the first space a body occupies.

What Does It All Matter, as Long as the Wounds Fit the Arrows?

August 30–October 26, 2014

Bulwagang Juan Luna, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Pasay City

Over seventy artists gathered in a tribute to Roberto Chabet (1937–2013), among them Felix Bacolor, Yason Banal, Jonathan Olazo, and Cris Villanueva. Chabet is hailed as the “Father of Philippine Conceptual Art.” The show was curated by artists Nilo Ilarde and Ringo Bunoan.

Art and the Order of Nature in Indigenous Philippine Textiles

October 24, 2014, ongoing

Ayala Museum, Makati City

Providing a cultural counterpoint through ethnography, Ayala Museum exhibits 111 textiles from various indigenous groups in the Philippines. These were donated by Mercedes Zobel.

Another Other

Eric Zamuco

November 12, 2014–January 31, 2015

Ateneo Art Gallery, Quezon City

Mapping a family's journey across the United States, the exhibition of photographs, videos, and sculpture also serves as a sort of personal diary and rumination on the Filipino experience in foreign lands. Drawing on historical events, Eric Zamuco takes ordinary objects, such as soap and dog treats, and turns them into artworks that are (sometimes humorous) responses to events that otherwise cast a heavy shadow over our sense of self.

A Child's Memory

Anton del Castillo

November 12, 2014–May 31, 2015

Ateneo Art Gallery, Quezon City

Four giant pieces of metal jackstones appeal to nostalgia and transform space (in this case, the grounds behind the Social Sciences Building of Ateneo de Manila University). Conjuring a sense of wonder among those who behold it, the site installation is also del Castillo's commentary on the vanishing of children's outdoor games, which are being replaced by cold, virtual simulations.

Zeny May Dy Recidoro
Writer
zmdrecidoro@gmail.com