



Kanto

CREATIVE CORNERS / N° III, VOL II, MMXVII

Are
We
Home
Yet?

CULTURE
AND DIASPORA

ANGLES

The healing power of Design:
The story of *Ishinomaki Lab*

CANVAS

Jem Magbanua's meditative collages on
transience and temporality

QUILL

Scandinavia Dreaming
with *Angel Trinidad*

Where is home?

For a time it was Batam, Indonesia. I spent a good chunk of my childhood years there; the son of an OFW. It was a small yet bustling island—a stone's throw away from Singapore. There, my formative years were spent in the company of multicultural classmates and friends in an international school. It was an experience I'll forever cherish, one that will forever endear me to Indonesia which I'll always consider my second home. That I was from somewhere else and from another faith never became an issue or cause for bullying. In Indonesia, there is a strong culture of respect, one that has enabled the flourishing of various cultures and religions in peaceful harmony. Their tolerance and hospitality have also attracted fellow Filipinos to stay and make a living there. It was as if we never really left the Philippines. We celebrated our Filipino traditions, ate our Filipino viands and delicacies, invited locals to our gatherings. I was part of a diaspora, and thankful for having been surrounded by a supportive Filipino community, and an even more hospitable local environment.

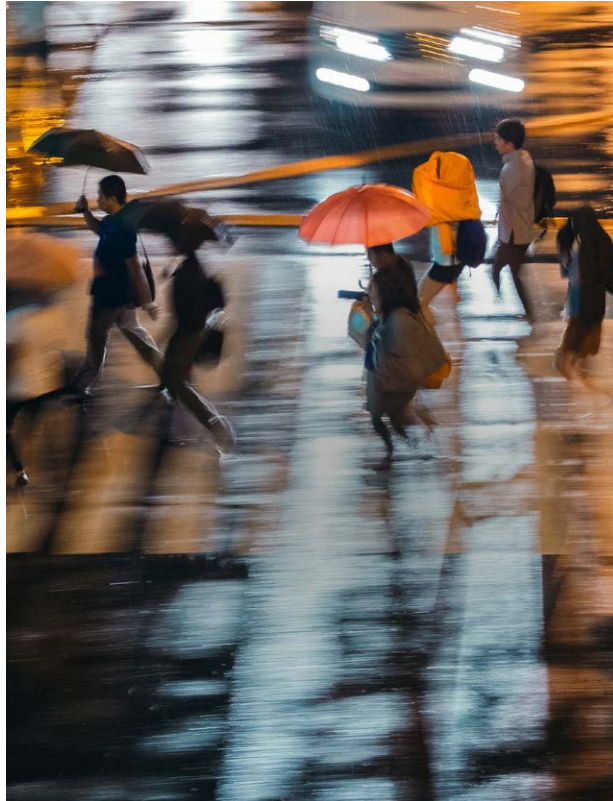
Fast forward 10 years after, I now find myself back in my homeland. Older, wiser maybe, but I couldn't help but hark back to my Indonesian experience. I had it better, so why couldn't the rest have? Those communities that had to leave their precious homeland in the name of safety and necessity? Those who fled because of a difference in beliefs, race, culture. Sure, we may all have our motivations why we leave and immigrate, but how we are received, and how we receive people who've also had to leave a place they love makes all the difference. Being different—be it in race, culture or orientation—should never be the basis of how one is judged, accepted and loved. Being part of a diaspora and being exposed to a culture vastly different in religion have taught me this. I'd like to think that we all know respect and understanding have always the answer, but it's easier said than done. Just turn on your screens and check the news.

This is the rationale behind our Culture and Diaspora special. In this issue, we feature a set of creatives who were at some point caught in a diaspora. The team liberally pushed our traditional understanding of this phenomenon; we're taking it beyond migration to issues of women empowerment, entrepreneurship and work mobility. We'd like to share these stories that address differences with respect and to show that the world isn't entirely a hopeless case. After all, tiny acts are where large ripples of change begin. It was truly a rewarding experience putting this issue together and I'd like to thank everyone again who've been part of what is now *Kanto's* largest issue to date. Enjoy! ●



Patrick

@patrick_kasingsing



On the cover: *Crossing in the rain*
Photographed by Jilson Tiu (@jilson.tiu)

Kanto

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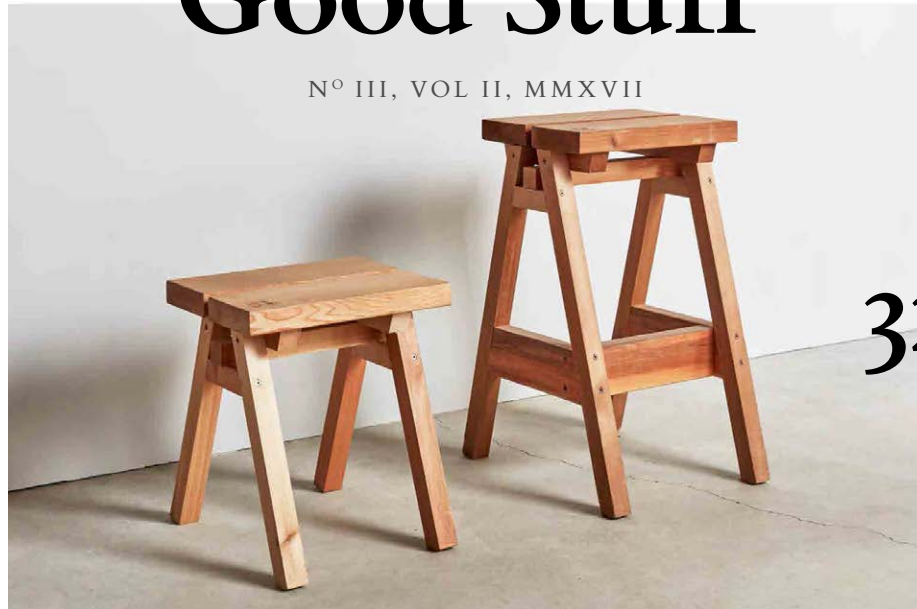
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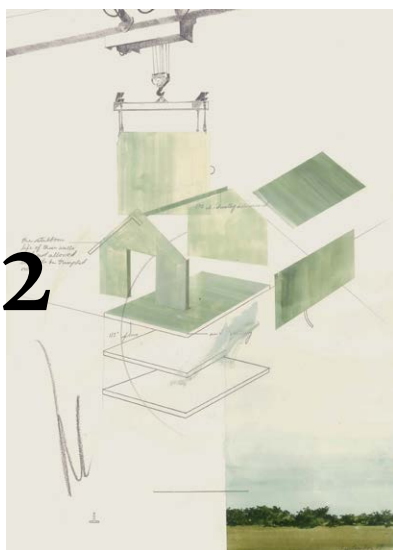
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TRANSITIONS

Pablo Dicasso

@pablocicasso is the irreverent and sardonic alter ego of a Filipino creative professional on Instagram. It is a no-holds-barred, tongue-in-cheek visual diary in the form of hastily-drawn digital sketches.



Awesome People

WHO MADE THIS JOURNAL POSSIBLE



Jem Magbanua is a full-time freelance visual artist and illustrator based in Manila. Grounded firmly in the practice of drawing, her work explores the nature of place, of human beings in place and of the structures—organic and artificial—that shape (human) nature. Jem’s work has been exhibited in Singapore, the United States, Japan and the Philippines. **Where is home?** Home, for now, is Manila.



Takahiro Chiba was born in the city of Ishinomaki, Miyagi, in 1972. After graduating from high school, he studied architecture with the goal of becoming a log home builder. He worked as a sushi chef for 20 years at his family’s restaurant until the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. Following the destruction of his restaurant by the tsunami, he met the architect **Keiji Ashizawa**, and together they established **Ishinomaki Laboratory**. Now, Chiba serves as its co-CEO and workshop leader, while continuing to help out in the family business from time to time. **Where is home?** Ishinomaki.



Kathleen Cayetano is a Canadian designer currently residing in New York City. She has worked for internationally-recognized architecture practices, which has enabled her to work on a range of projects and travel worldwide. Like many in her field, she wears mostly black. **Where is home?** Anywhere I can close my eyes and feel safe.



Angel Trinidad is an editor, writer and creative strategist based in Amsterdam. She is the founder of Keen on Walls, a website that features inspiring interiors, design and spaces. She is also the author of *Scandinavia Dreaming: Nordic Homes, Interiors and Design* and co-author of *Night Fever 5: Hospitality Design*, and have worked for clients such as Gestalten, FRAME Publishers, Victionary, Holland Herald KLM and Holland.com. She loves Sweden, IKEA, Van Gogh, cats, corgis, ballet and knitting. **Where is home?** Home is where your most authentic self – the truest version of you – can flourish.



Jilson Tiu is a freelance photojournalist. He is currently a photo correspondent for the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. He also contributes to various magazines and online platforms in the Philippines and abroad. His works have been featured on the official Instagram profile of the *National Geographic* Yourshot Community blog. Jilson's personal work revolves around environmental and social issues. He loves black coffee. Follow him on Instagram @jilson.tiu and his work at jilsontiu.com **Where is home?** Where my loved ones are.



Ionne Ocampo is a Sydney-based graphic designer and photographer drawn to anything packaged nicely and dogs (of which she has five). She works in marketing for an Australian beauty distributor, and her freelance efforts are devoted to Pink Hope, a health organisation geared towards early detection and prevention of breast cancer. **Where is home?** My body thinks it lives in Sydney, but my soul is pretty much everywhere else.



Robbie Bautista does user interface design and illustration for a living. A little socially awkward and always a late bloomer, he enjoys doing things by himself. He likes the idea of documenting everything in words and photographs. **Where is home?** Clichè as it sounds, but home is wherever your heart is.



BRAUN Studio is a renowned Bandung-based architecture and visualization studio headed by principal **Irman Prayitno**. Their works have graced the pages of local Indonesian design publications such as *Laras* and *Grya* magazines. The studio finds inspiration in the work and philosophy of legendary German industrial designer Dieter Rams. **Where is home?** Any place where I can sleep and be at peace.



Louis Faure is a Gawad Kalinga (GK) advocate and social entrepreneur focusing on agriculture. He visited the Philippines in August 2014 to complete a student internship for HEC Paris' Grande Ecole Program, Sustainability and Social Innovation. The stay was extended to cover a span of almost three years. He graduated this June and is training for a certificate for permaculture in order to further the growth of GK's Enchanted Farm. Find out what the farm is up to via [@gkenchantedfarm](https://www.instagram.com/gkenchantedfarm) and [@farmboylou](https://www.instagram.com/farmboylou) on Instagram.



Katz Lorenzana has been a tattoo artist for more than eight years and is extremely in love with what she does. She enjoys going to the gym, organizing everything in her neat little tattoo shop, and collecting and putting on make-up. Yes, she definitely loves make-up. **Where is home?** Home is where you can be naturally yourself and feel happy and relaxed.



Dialogo
You want the 'D'
'D' as in design, ano ka ba...
Diyalogo is a local sticker empire who thrives on having fun with puns. Their punny stickers, covering everything from fast food to your love life are fixtures in local bazaars and maker fairs. The fun folks behind this budding studio take their sticky calling seriously as they aim to become a full-fledged, independent design and merchandising studio in the near future.



Bryan Kong is an unpublished portrait and documentary/reportage photographer whose main goal to present his own view on the human condition. After doing a few workshops at ICP, he has decided on focusing on 2 very different styles of photography which is portraiture and candid scenes. **Where is home?** Home is comprised of people and what those people make out of the place they "live" in.

Awesome People

WHO MADE THIS JOURNAL POSSIBLE



Timothy Percival converses with architectural space. With a background in photography and video installation, he translates architectural language into multi-disciplinary works. He has recently completed a successful solo exhibition of paintings in London, and released an award-winning video shot on 8mm film. His painting has been shortlisted for this year's Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. **Where is home?** To be at home is to feel at ease and confident in what one is doing, and that can come from a place, a person, or even the simplest moment of personal enlightenment.



Jona Atienza considers herself a mixed-style multipotentialite. Currently, she works as an assistant manager for marketing and PR in an automotive company. When time allows it, she works on her side projects that allows her to pursue her passion for fashion. **Where is home?** Home is where you aspire to be.



Frances Alvarez enjoys telling stories through illustration, children's books, and graphic design. She's super grateful to be doing this for a living! Her work has found its way to different places like books and magazines, merchandise and packaging, and even office building walls. Some of Fran's personal inspirations include nature, local culture, and encounters with strangers. **Where is home?** Home is in the outskirts of Metro Manila, near the border of Pasig and Rizal.



Andrea Baytion is working really hard not to screw up this cooking gig. She frequents wine bars in dark alleys and almost always shares her food not because she wants to but because it's the polite thing to do. **Where is home?** Home is anywhere I feel like I'm in my element or in control—mostly in my room or in the kitchen.



Tin Advincula is a Creative Writing graduate from University of the Philippines Diliman. She is currently managing a team of remote workers from all over the Philippines, as well as a blog, an Instagram account and an online shop. She likes locally-made products, a good “coffee hunter” find, and sounding like a big shot in contributor pages. **Where is home?** Home is where I can work in my pajamas.



Dani Austria is a writer and editor but, no, she’s not a stickler for grammar. However, she does hate the Oxford comma, and she’s made it her mission to rid *Kanto* of “unnecessary, pretentious and confusing” punctuation marks. #TotesTeamAP. **Where is home?** Home is wherever I feel most free.



Kara Gonzales pretty much changes her write-up every time Patrick decides to let her be a part of *Kanto*. She changes it to how she feels she can best be described at the time. This issue, she just wants to state that fact and let people think what they want. **Where is home?** Home is where I feel most safe—with Sherlock and Panda (my dogs) of course.



Vida Cruz’s stories are published or forthcoming in *Lontar: The Journal of Southeast Asian Speculative Fiction*, *Philippine Speculative Fiction*, and *Expanded Horizons*. She attended the 2014 Clarion Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Workshop, and the 51st Silliman University Writers Workshop. **Where is home?** Home is wherever any of my great loves are (family, boyfriend, dogs, books).



Angel Yulo is the associate editor of an architecture and design magazine in the Philippines. She studied poetry, interned in an art conservation lab, and worked in a bookstore. **Where is home?** Home is the sugarcane fields of my dad’s childhood and the disco raves of my mom’s teenage years. It is the house I grew up and still live in. It is the queen size bed (or maybe the bookshelves) I’ve always shared with my sister. Home is a story I have not written yet.



Patricia Herbolario is a digital editor and writer for a local home and design magazine. She is fueled by Kewpie Japanese mayo and lives half her life in Uber and Grab rides. Engaged with a paperclip ring that she lost. **Where is home?** It’s Calgary or Singapore. It’s my grandfather’s white garlic adobo. It’s when I give my dog a belly rub. It’s those late nights spent in my university’s halls. I think home can be a place or a moment but if you’re lucky, home can be a person.



@pablocicasso is the irreverent and sardonic alter ego of a Filipino creative professional on Instagram. It is a no-holds barred, tongue-in-cheek visual diary in the form of hastily-drawn digital sketches.



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Angles

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN



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Indonesia's *Braun Studio* brings us behind the scenes of running an architectural visualization studio

ARCHITECTURE

A SYMMETRY

Architect *Kathleen Cayetano* on her nomadic career journey and all the architecture she's met along the way

PHOTOGRAPHY *Kathleen Cayetano*

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*



The SHE
TOKYO

MOUSE
EXCLUSIVE
2015.09.18

OMOTESANDO HARAJUKU
ET NEW
2015 AUTUMN

このビル
新たな新しい商業スペース
アキムジュー「オモテランド」

Tokyu Plaza Omotesando Harajuku
by Hiroshi Nakamura, Tokyo



Kathleen Cayetano, photographed by Katja Lam

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

My name is Kathleen and I'm a designer in New York, working mainly in architecture and graphic design.

What inspired you to take up architecture?

Architecture seemed like a good balance between art and math, both subjects I enjoyed and excelled in during high school. There wasn't anything more to it than that. I ended up majoring in both German Studies and Architecture in college but decided that a career in architecture might lead to more exciting adventures. It's proven to be right so far!

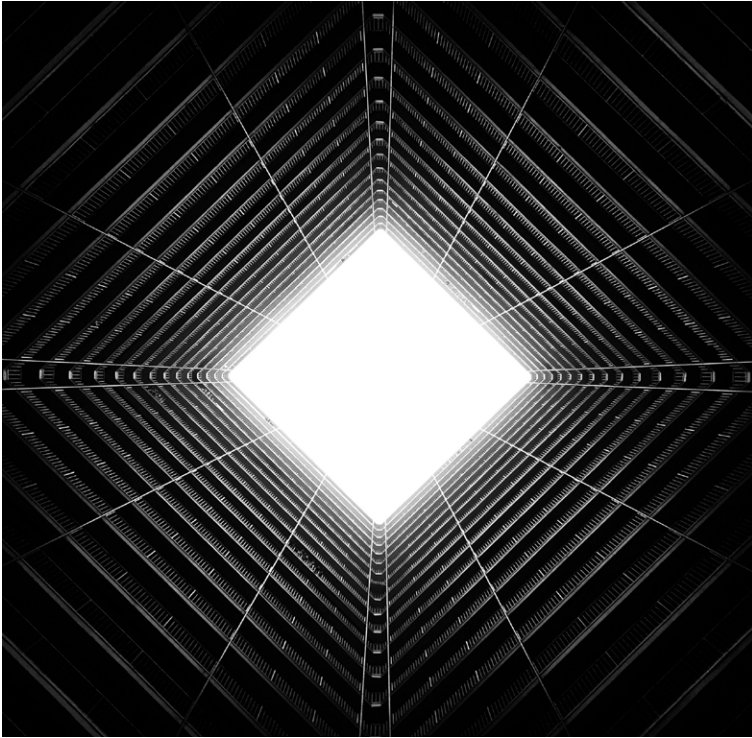
How did you fall in love with photography?

I never really took anything more than snapshots of friends and family until I moved to Hong Kong. A friend convinced me to join Instagram, and I started using it whenever I was bored at work. Soon after, more friends joined and it transformed into a social event for us. I used to post once or twice a day. Nowadays, I post whenever I get the chance.

You seem like a jetsetter of sorts, having worked in many different countries for various reputable firms. Can you tell us how the whole experience felt like? What motivated your moves?

My first internship was for Zvi Hecker's studio in Berlin, followed shortly by another stint at a smaller studio in Berlin. Six months after receiving my M.Arch., I worked at OMA for three and-a-half years in Hong Kong then decided to move to New York City. I worked for Hollwich Kushner (formerly HWKN) for a year and-a-half until recently when I decided to work at Woods Bagot.

I guess I have always felt a bit nomadic since I left home for college after high school. Moving to New York is probably the most selfish since I always dreamt about living here after college and never attempted to do so. Now I'm here, and it's been treating me well so far.



Above: Looking up a Hong Kong apartment

Opposite page: National Museum of African American History and Culture by David Adjaye, Washington D.C.

Working out of the country will almost always involve a lot of adjusting, especially when moving to a place whose culture is vastly different from where one came from. How do you do it? It wasn't difficult to adjust to most places since most colleagues were also expats. The culture shock happened outside the workplace, but it helped to explore the city with local colleagues who could show you a side of the city you wouldn't have experienced on your own or with other foreigners. Moving to New York nearly two years ago was probably the hardest to adjust to since I had been away for so long.

Culture and context play significant roles in design-driven fields such as architecture. Was this an issue for you when you worked in various international firms? How did you immerse yourself in them?

Since mostly everyone came from a different background from the projects we worked on, it was a welcome exchange of ideas and experiences. As with any project, it is important to thoroughly research the cultural, political and environmental context of the city, town or country your site is located in to better understand who you're designing for before diving deep into design.

What is your credo as a designer?

Do your due diligence, know how to play within set boundaries, and know when to test breaking them.





“Architecture can help cultivate global networks by providing inclusive zones of exchange and collaboration.”

Diaspora and migration are especially relevant issues. What can you say about the state of migration today? Given the chance, how would you help address some of the concerns and issues faced by today's immigrants via architecture?

The diaspora phenomenon is the result of modern globalization. Although there are many issues attached to immigrants ranging from problems with assimilation to the multitude of skilled individuals leaving their home country, diasporas are valuable for the future economic and social development of each nation and host country. Architecture can help cultivate global networks by providing inclusive zones of exchange and collaboration.

Is there anything hindering you from considering an architectural career back in the Philippines?

If the opportunity arises, I would happily work on a project in the Philippines. The potential exists to create exemplary works of architecture which is unfortunately currently lost in the *condo-fication* of larger cities. I hope to be part of defining a new vernacular for Philippine architecture.

What is your imaging device of choice? What tools do you use (if any) for post-production and editing of photos?

I only use my iPhone to shoot because of convenience. It's always on me or nearby. I've considered investing in a DSLR and many friends have tried repeatedly to persuade me into buying one, but I am too indecisive. For post, I use Lightroom or Instagram editing features or a combination of both.

What makes a good architectural photograph?

Understanding the way architecture interacts with the environment in one snap. Or a total abstraction of form and spatial constraints. ●

National Building Museum,
Washington D.C

Follow Kathleen's journeys on
instagram [@katetano](#)

ANGLES

MADE TO LAST

The world's first
DIY furniture label,
Ishinomaki Lab believes
in the potential of the
individual to help uplift
society, with some help
from good design

PORTFOLIO *Ishinomaki Lab*
INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*







Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hi! My name is Takahiro Chiba, and I am the workshop leader and one of two managing directors at Ishinomaki Laboratory.

What is Ishinomaki Lab, and how did it come to be?

Ishinomaki Laboratory is a furniture workshop that draws on the skills and spirit of DIY. Founded in 2011, the workshop was set up in the coastal area of Ishinomaki, Miyagi, which was devastated by the tsunami triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake. In the beginning, Ishinomaki Laboratory began as a community space where residents in the disaster area could freely access materials and tools—as provided by designers and volunteers led by Tokyo-based architect Keiji Ashizawa—in order to conduct their own repair work.

Above: The Ishinomaki Lab workshop.
Photography by Chang Kim

Opposite page, from top:
Workshop leader and managing partner, Takahiro Chiba; Ishinomaki Lab founder Keiji Ashizawa (second from right) and workshop participants take a breather in Kapitolyo, Pasig
Photography by Jar Concengco

What is the initiative's end goal? Would you say that you are still working for, or have exceeded what you set out to accomplish?

One central, overarching mission of ours is to spread the spirit of DIY and design throughout the world. Our experience running the laboratory revealed two major learnings: the importance of DIY as a necessary survival skill after a disaster, and of the potential and added value design brings in helping uplift and improve lives. In order to accomplish our goals however, we need to push forward and keep growing Ishinomaki Laboratory so that it becomes a more sustainable business.



Our workshops can be tailored to all skill and age levels as we believe anyone can benefit from learning basic skills of DIY and being exposed to learning how to make things by hand.

You started out as a sushi chef before the founding of the Lab. What fueled the desire to venture into furniture-making?

Since I was a child, I've always been interested in 'monozukuri', spending my free time making and assembling things with my hands. It just so happened that after the disaster there was a need as well as an opportunity to get into furniture-making. Over the years, I have arrived at a personal understanding of what design is, and it is an act of problem-solving that when combined with DIY can really have a profound impact in our lives.

How does the Lab foster knowledge of furniture creation? How can an interested student join in? Is prior knowledge of furniture-crafting a requirement?

We run regular DIY woodworking and furniture-making workshops in Ishinomaki and Tokyo and have had the opportunity to conduct them internationally in the Philippines, Taiwan, France and Singapore. Our workshops can be tailored to all skill and age levels as we believe anyone can benefit from learning basic skills of DIY and being exposed to learning how to make things by hand. Unlike the current trend of technology in fabrication, exemplified by the proliferation of 3D printers and laser cutters, we really champion the idea of low-tech as an accessible and realistic method for anyone to pick up.

Where do you plan to take Ishinomaki Lab in the future? Any future projects and initiatives that you can share with us?

Compared to other furniture makers, where we really differ is the fact that we can directly work with individuals and organizations by holding these workshops where participants can learn and experience DIY and furniture-making themselves—the same way we started off as well. These activities are never a one-way dissemination process, but a mutual exchange. We are continuously amazed by the quality of designs

Opposite page: Setup of public furniture piece by participants from Kapitolyo, Pasig at Ishinomaki Lab's Manila workshop; Workshop participants examining Ishinomaki Stool made with local *tanguile*. Photography on this spread by Jar Concengco
Below: The Ishinomaki Lab team with the participants of their DIY woodworking workshop in Escolta.

that are born from these workshops, as well as inspired by the work conducted by the people we meet. These unique experiences and visits fuel us in our daily work, which is why we would like to deepen our relationship with the Philippines and Southeast Asia as a whole.

The Lab grew out of compassion in the aftermath of a tragedy. What can you say is the effect of the Lab on the disaster-struck community? How did it contribute to the community's resurgence and healing process?

You can argue that Ishinomaki—similar to other areas that were hit by the disaster—is still in the process of ‘healing’ and ‘recovery’, depending on how you define those words. There were still people living in temporary housing even ten years after the Hanshin Earthquake that struck Kobe in 1995. Our role has shifted from solely disseminating DIY skills amongst the residents and renovating local stores, to becoming a furniture brand that can act as a symbol for the new post-disaster Ishinomaki and the region. Through our products, we hope we can slowly change the image of Ishinomaki to one that is creative, design-oriented and connected with the world.



ANGLES



One central, overarching mission of ours is to spread the spirit of DIY and design throughout the world.





Cultural barriers in the realm of design are blurring at a rapid pace. What quality about the designs of your furniture would you say is singularly Japanese?

Our products are simple, but not for simplicity's sake! Inspired from the challenge of maximizing the shortage of resources—materials and professional skills—stemming from the earthquake, our furniture is utilitarian, yet functional and attractive as a result of the design and fabrication process. The designs are not only rooted in meeting real human needs, but also have a unified aesthetic because they all share the same language of materiality and creation.

What is the Lab's design credo?

When we work with designers, we first tell them what kind of materials, tools, as well as production processes we possess. While we have slowly upgraded our skills and machines, the basic design philosophy has not changed—by only having constraints imposed in terms of materials, sizes and techniques can we truly arrive at something that is functional and simple in substance and not name only.

What would you say is the most important insight that you gained in starting this initiative?

What “the devil is in the details” really meant is what I have come to understand more since Ishinomaki Laboratory started. My eyes are now more drawn to places and details that are normally unseen or left hidden. For example, I will stop by any made object that catches my eye and then figure out the structure and how it is assembled.

Above: The Kobo St-Table used at the Alpha Beta Coffee Club in Jiyugaoka, Tokyo. Photography by Michael Holmes

Opposite page: Ishinomaki Benches in front of the Blue Bottle Coffee store in Nakameguro, Tokyo. Photography by Takumi Ota





'On Toyota' – a collaborative exhibition with British designer Michael Marriott and Ishinomaki Laboratory. Photography by Masaki Ogawa
Opposite page: The AA Low Stools at Tokyo stationery store "mt. lab."

The empowering aspect of learning DIY skills is undeniable. We hope that people take these skills and attitude to positively contribute to their lives, families and eventually communities.



The initiatives of the Lab, visiting and organizing furniture workshops in various cities like Manila, is admirable in its goal to spread knowledge, awareness and talent. What would you say are the positive effects to this open cultural exchange, especially in the face of widespread racism and cultural oppression in the world today? Our workshops in the Philippines would not have been possible without the Japan Foundation Manila, which has generously supported our activities and connected us with key players to collaborate with. One of the things that has consistently come up as we reflect on our experience after the disaster is that we believe in the universality of DIY, design and its possibilities, in changing individuals and communities. While our story may be unique, we see it as a potential model for disaster-prone regions, which is why we travelled to the island of Bohol in 2016 to conduct a series of workshops there, as well as areas undergoing urban and regional revitalization, such as Escolta and Kapitolyo. Each context has unique conditions that need to be dealt with, but the empowering aspect of learning DIY skills is undeniable. We hope that people take these skills and attitude to positively contribute to their lives, families and eventually communities. ●

Follow Ishinomaki Laboratory on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter @ishinomakilab or visit ishinomaki-lab.org for their furniture and work

ANGLES





ON FIVE

Irman Prayitno

We interview the young principal behind Bandung-based *Braun Studio* on the state of Indonesian architecture and how they deal with creative block

PORTFOLIO *Braun Studio*
INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*

Hi! Tell us a little something about your practice.

Hi! I'm Irwan Prayitno, the design lead of Braun Studio, a small, Bandung-based design studio with a focus on 3D visualization, architecture and interior design. Our scope of work ranges from designing private homes to large-scale urban design. For our architectural visualizations, we put an emphasis on play of light and material integrity presented in a clear and crisp visual style.

As a studio that's worked with a lot of Indonesian architects, how would you describe the state of modern Indonesian architecture now?

Indonesia is one of the most culturally-diverse countries in the world so this naturally poses a challenge for local architects to create a salient identity. However, I do think it's possible for Indonesian architects to gain recognition in the global stage. This is because our current environment gives us a lot of space and opportunities to grow, especially with the country's rapid growth and urbanization. I'd like to think that our local architects are also adaptive to change and can keep pace with global standards.

How do you usually get clients?

Our clients usually discover our work through social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram, where we regularly update our project portfolio. Our online presence also enables us to expand awareness of our work and brand, even beyond our client profiles. We also often hold studio visits.

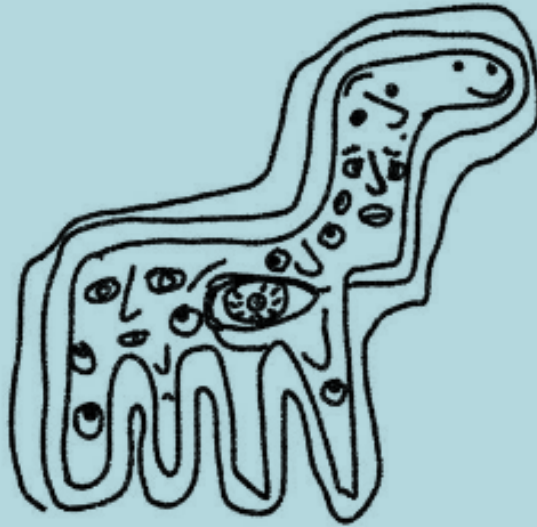
Would you say that your architectural renders have a certain aesthetic? How would you describe it and what inspired its look?

We practice a considered and balanced approach on our usage of entourage in our renders. These include placements of objects such as trees, people, cars and other relevant items within the scene. We ensure that the architecture is king of the show through thoughtful framing and composition, and by giving it prominence by situating it in low saturation scenes. We also play with shadow intensity and low-lighting to add visual drama to the render. We count MIR Visualization Studio as our biggest inspiration.

How does your studio ward off creative block?

I advise my staff to do regular site visits, make architectural pilgrimages, or to go travel. These out-of-office excursions keep them inspired and energized to help combat the onslaught of creative block. These activities also cultivate a deeper understanding of relevant issues in architecture and gives them a better appreciation of their craft. ●

Follow Braun Studio on Instagram [@braunstudio](#). View their portfolio at [braun-studio.com](#).



May you have the best nightmares
you horrible human you

Lens

PHOTOGRAPHY



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36 The Storyteller

Photojournalist *Jilson Tiu* documents the victories and struggles of a fast-changing nation with his lens

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The connections we make, beyond culture and place, captured in film by photographer *Bryan Kong*

LENS



T H E S T O R Y T E L L E R



People scurry along the wet streets to avoid the monstrous traffic caused by the heavy *habagat* (monsoon) in Makati City.

Photojournalist *Jilson Tiu* captures in vivid color the moments that define life in a nation in the throes of turbulent change

PHOTOGRAPHY *Jilson Tiu*
INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*



Jilson Tiu



Hello! Please introduce yourself.

My name is Jilson Tiu, and I'm a photojournalist based in the Philippines. Print and online are my main outlets for personal work, but I mostly earn a living through corporate and advertising shoots. Nature is a passion, with a lot of my work documenting the effects of climate change.

When did your interest in photography begin? What inspired it? My interest in photography [came from] my mother. My mom always took pictures of me [back] in Taiwan. When I was younger, I would take pictures of my siblings using an automatic Kodak camera—the one with dates when you print them—in our old house in Divisoria. Then in college, I joined the *Varsitarian* as a staff artist. There, I started taking pictures digitally and the editors liked it. [Another staff member of] the *Varsitarian* (Lester Babiera) used to lend me his digital 440D Canon, and I used to shoot with that. I was encouraged by my editor Paul Quiambao to shoot professionally. I started my professional career contributing photographs for *Inquirer* through my advisor Lito Zulueta, who's an editor for both the *Varsitarian* and *Inquirer*.

A community lives beside the Blumentritt train station. Children stand by to watch the sunset while sniffing industrial glue for their pleasure and to ease hunger.



Above: A day before the school year opens, a child washes her clothes by an old water pump in Tondo. It was sundown.

Opposite page: Children blow bubbles at a crime scene, as authorities investigate the killing of Enrico in his house. He was killed by masked gunmen searching for another man. He was shot in front of his children and mother.

What makes a good photojournalist?

When I was starting, I would take pictures of landscapes and my hometown Binondo, and discovered that I [feel] complete and accomplished when I capture life. Now, I photograph people in the most unadulterated way. No directions—[I capture] life as it happens. I look for raw stories accompanied with a burst of Manila's colors, from a father and daughter gathering plastic bottles at night to the walkway of the Miss Universe pageant. Every scene tells a story.

What insights have you gained as a photojournalist?

Photojournalists—we are documentarians, telling stories on a level that anyone can comprehend and appreciate. The right light, right moment and right place make a good photograph, but a good photojournalist always gives way for the story and not for himself/herself. *Hindi ikaw ang bida sa picture, palaging ang subject mo.* (You're not the star of your photograph; it's always your muse.)

Any memorable anecdotes or experiences while on a shoot?

What I love about being a documentarian is it opens me up to the varied worlds inhabited by the upper and lower spectrums of society. My most memorable shot was the sight of the city succumbing to firework residue after New Year celebrations. I hated fireworks and how it negatively affects nature and people.

The right light, right moment and right place make a good photograph, but a good photojournalist always gives way for the story and not for himself/herself.





Children go for a swim in Pasig River in the summer



Photojournalism is only 50% taking pictures. It's really how you see life and the world that moves around you.



"Balang" runs with his sister and brother to sell fried *lumpia* (spring roll) near a university. Made by their aunt, the *lumpia* they sell will provide their allowance for the next day.

The craziest *siguro* is covering EJK. I covered it for a week just to get a feel and perspective of what's happening to the Philippines. We were searching for the spot where the victim died. It was a rainy night, and there were puddles everywhere and darkness surrounded the alley. I didn't know what to feel when I suddenly realized I was standing on a puddle of blood.

In what ways did photojournalism change your views of Filipino society?

In full honesty, our society needs to grow more in terms of developing a more global perspective. People nowadays just don't care [that bad stuff happen, as long as] it doesn't happen to them. It's sad, but there is chance for growth. Our perspectives on art and culture also definitely needs improvement.

In this age of information overload, in what ways do you think the role of photojournalists in society has changed?

We [photojournalists] tell the truth—be it ugly or beautiful. That's why *ang daming pa rin takot sa mga photojournalists, kaya bawal pa rin ang DSLRs sa mga malls*. (That's why people are scared of us, that's why even mall staff are wary of the sight of our DSLRs.) They're afraid of [the] media ID. *Kasi*, we tell the truth as it is. Today, [the stuff you find on] Instagram and Facebook are edited and filtered content. You don't know the whole thing until you see the whole frame. There are journalism ethics that should be followed and most of it are given a blind eye nowadays.

Rapid technology development has enabled many members of society access to competent imaging devices and even major news sites are taking citizen journalism seriously now. As a photojournalist, what is your opinion on this?

Everyone can take pictures now. This is actually a good thing because people can understand [what a photographer/photojournalist does even] without knowing the technical process. They will get a glimpse of the world and see their perspectives broaden. Photography is a tool for everyone, and it's continually evolving. We have more ways and perspectives in telling a story, and now everyone can appreciate the work you put into a story or a project that you produce. Photojournalism is only 50% taking pictures. It's really how you see life and the world that moves around you.

What would your photography say about you as a person?

I appreciate all walks of life and understand a little bit of everything. ●

Follow Jilson on Instagram [@jilson.tiu](https://www.instagram.com/jilson.tiu) or view his work at jilsontiu.com

JILSON DAILY

7:30-8:30

I wake up, have breakfast and prepare coffee while watching YouTube. Take a bath, do some pull ups. Leave for a coverage/shoot.

8:30-10:00

On the way to the coverage, I take pictures of people in the streets and in my commute.

10:00-12:00

Photoshoot

12:00-13:00

Enroute to my next shoot. I usually skip lunch because I tend to have a heavy breakfast.

13:00-16:00

Photoshoot

16:00 -19:00

I get *merienda* and coffee on the way home. Before getting home, I usually roam around my area (Tondo) to take photos of the streets and daily life unfolding in my neighborhood.

19:00-21:00

Eat dinner and edit the pictures I took. Send what's due for tomorrow.

22:00-24:00

I drink tea while editing, and play Witcher 3 before going to sleep.



Farmer Enzo Pinga checks his organic crops early morning in his rented land in Laguna. His one goal? To contribute to the Earth's betterment.





LENS

Growing Roots

French business
graduate-turned-
Gawad Kalinga farmer
Louis Faure finds
family in a foreign land
and a familiarity with
a culture so different
from his own

PHOTOGRAPHY *Louis Faure*

INTERVIEW *Angel Yulo*



Louis Faure

In 2014, I met Louis in a bookstore during the launch of a book on Gawad Kalinga, a local foundation focused on poverty alleviation and nation-building. He was in the middle of a student internship as part of his studies on entrepreneurship. What was initially a six-month stay evolved into three years of shuttling the cobblestone streets of Paris and a chicken farm in Angat, Bulacan (north of Manila). He graduates this June and is returning to the farm free from academic obligations.

Diaspora used to carry a negative connotation because it meant displacement, being exiled, or losing your home. But today, it's as if it's sought out because people like to travel and work in different cities. Some even to move homes from time to time. Do we gain something or lose something from our present-day diaspora?

If you look at the forest, everything interacts. Life is made of connections. Closed worlds die. I work in agriculture so I compare it to mono-cropping which produces very weak harvests. So, we need this openness, connecting with people from other countries and cultures. Part of our diaspora today is building bridges.

History tells us the French go to other countries to extract resources. Being a western country with money and power—boom!—we can take what we want. It cultivated a very unbalanced relationship.

But if you re-balance the relationship and play the strengths of each country, you get the best of both worlds. It's going back to what makes us unique, excellent, and beautiful as individuals and as nations so we can interact in that level. This is when the diaspora brings a lot of wealth to the country and to the world.

Do you see any danger to it though? There are also instances when young people just want to be anywhere and everywhere that they lose a sense of locality, and in effect, identity.

I see what you mean. There is danger when people are not yet formed or have the maturity to understand that their home is founded on the love they have received, that someone somewhere in this planet cares for you. Once you acknowledge this love, you can be anywhere. It's not my butter, my baguette and my cheese that make my home. I could have been born somewhere else. But understanding what makes the core of me, allows me to travel and not lose it. When you are younger, you don't really know who you are. You don't know what you like, what you love, what you're good or bad at. So, when you travel, you just wander along. But if you have been and are with people who help you define who you are, being abroad helps you understand a greater version of yourself.

When you don't have a common language and unspoken codes, you revive this raw type of relationship. You connect to the core of someone much faster. Because in your own culture, it's so easy to categorize people and it influences the way you interact.

The purity of a relationship, I feel, is more easily achieved when people have no codes in common with you. You understand what makes that person who he or she is, and, in return, what makes me me under all the layers society imposes on us.

The purity of a relationship, I feel, is more easily achieved when people have no codes in common with you. You understand what makes that person who he or she is, and, in return, what makes me *me* under all the layers society imposes on us.

So, I guess you figured out who you were early on, which is why you had the confidence to leave home?

My parents' divorce was bloody so I left out of necessity. I had to re-discover who I really am. Because even among your siblings, you play this role. I was seen as the perfect, smart brother with no flaws, very cold-hearted. That isn't true! I studied in the city, looked for student exchange programs, and ended up in Japan and Singapore. College was a time to re-discover my ability to feel emotions, my ability to love, which I lost after the divorce.

So, you were in Singapore and in Japan transiently yet you decided to stay long-term in the Philippines. What drew you to stay?

Well, those cities were different phases of my life. Relationships have phases when you need a person or community because you have something to learn from another person, or they have something to learn from you. Sometimes it takes an hour, sometimes six months, sometimes two years. For Singapore and Tokyo, it felt like my learning experience there was done

and I had to go back to school. Now, I am going through multiple phases of learning here in the Philippines and my time is not over in this environment of relationships.

You've grown roots?

I grow roots in people, never in places.

Elections just happened in France. What (let's keep who confidential) did you vote for?

That we will be able to rebuild the link between people. For the longest time, the way that we resolved inequalities is through conflict, through revolution. It's employee versus employer, right versus left, state versus citizen, religious versus non-religious. There is no leader, no vision.

And you sense the opposite here?

For me, there is Gawad Kalinga (GK) acknowledging very harshly, without any bloodshed, the responsibility of everyone. This country has no reason to be poor with all its talents, land, education, everything. It's crazy how much you guys have! At the beginning of the book by Tito Tony (Meloto, founder of GK), he called out the hypocrisy of the church and the rich, and the colonial mentality of the poor. But in the end, we all have to work together. We work with people across the strata, from the layman to the most powerful, in order to make the vision a



reality. It's really amazing. The reason there are so many French today in GK is we want to learn from that and bring it to our country. Despite the difference of context, our root problem is the same: people not seeing the value in each other.

Let's talk about your photographs. All I know is your camera is from your grandfather. Have you been taking photos since you were a kid?

Actually, when I was eight, an organization that visited our school and taught us how to make our own cameras. It was just a can painted in black, and it had a pinhole. I started taking pictures with that and I loved it. And I think I was good at it because the guys were like: oh, that's so mad, so cool. But I lost all my pictures. I've been looking for them but I cannot find any.

Do you remember your favorite one?

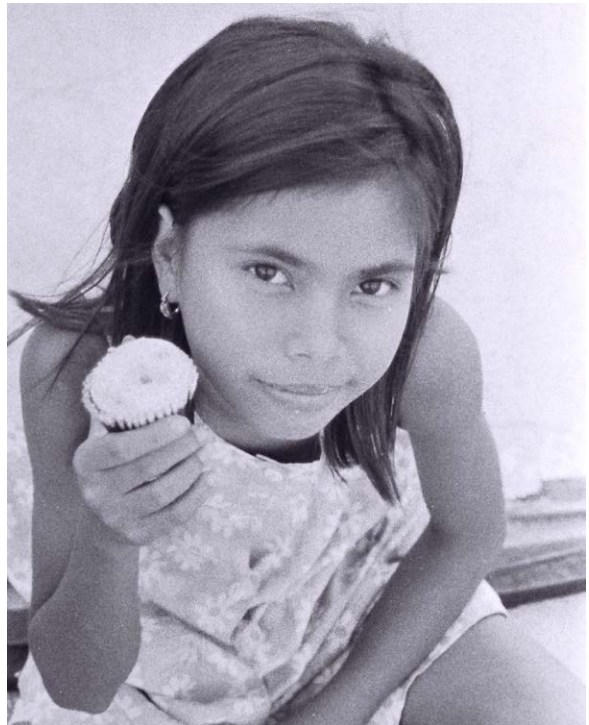
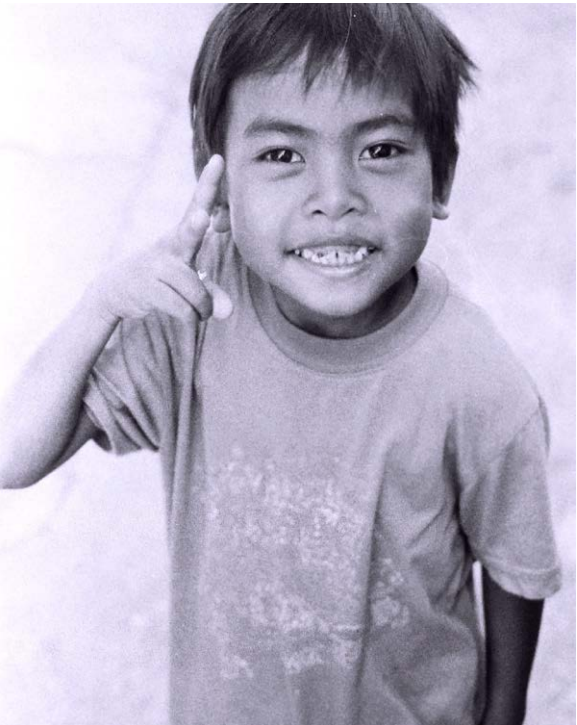
Yeah, I remember a lot of them. One was a self-portrait, I was lying down on the floor watching the camera. Another one was of a baby's foot. I also went to a judo competition and put the camera on the corner. In the picture, you can see a whirl of fights going on. All in a can, just a can. I tried to restart that in high school, developing the pictures in my bathroom, but I wasn't experienced enough so quality was not good. I took a few pictures of New York that I really liked, about two and that's it.

Before going to the Philippines, I needed a camera and my grandpa gave me his. It's a thirty-year-old analog. Photography isn't something I do professionally. It's just something I like, but I don't take images that don't have value to me.

If I needed to show my family what things look like, or to update them of my day, sure I'll take pictures and send it online. But that's not photography for me. Taking real pictures, I love it with film because with only a few, you can convey emotions. With a regular picture, you can only see what the person saw. But with a real photo, you can feel what the person felt.

Let's go through your photos now.

The thing with kids, as well as the elderly, they are the ones who are true. They are not trying to play a role. Everything that goes through their minds comes out and you are able to capture it in their portraits. I've always been fascinated by the trueness of people. Authenticity makes me want to spend time with a person. Someone authentic is an open door for love. Love only happens when the cores of two people connect. Real love cannot happen with filters. We tend to lose our authenticity when we are growing up so that's something I try to shed in order to get to my core. It's how I can be a gift for others, which is the point of life.





The thing with kids, they are the ones who are true. They are not trying to play a role. Everything that goes through their minds comes out and you are able to capture it in their portraits.

Left to right, top to bottom: Not-not, Daniel, Ryan, Nathaniel, Angelica, and Danika



So this is Not-Not. They call him that because he has a scar on his head. And this is Daniel. These two are always around and we have a game. Every time they say *pogi* (handsome) to me, I'll be very nice and just go on my way. But when they say *pangit* (ugly), I will pretend to be a monster and run after them.

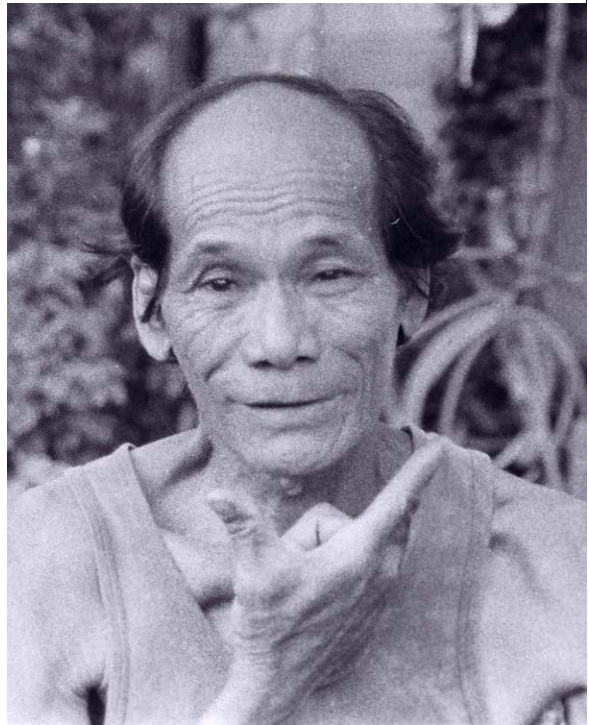
Ryan is the one who always wanted to go to the animal farm before. Now, it's no longer allowed so he stopped asking me. But before, he'd wait for me on the corner I would pass every day and we'd walk together. He would just play with the ducks while I work then I would bring him back after.

This is Nathaniel. He's very *makulit* (persistently playful). Just lots of energy. Well, Angelica is older now and much different.

That's part of life.

Yeah, it is. But there's a point when you have to shake off your masks to really connect with people. Now that she's aware that she's beautiful, she wants boys to like her and the other girls to be jealous.

It's the same thing with Danika. She's only around ten but she already wants to behave like a teenager. It's the way society is telling girls to be and to think. A lot of people think that this is the natural course of life and we just have to allow it. I don't believe that.





RJ **Opposite page, top to bottom:** Marvik, Reymark, Jayson, and Tito Edgar

People are transforming. It takes time. But the best way to do that is to be present rather than to interfere.

When I think about what I went through growing up and the culture that surrounded me: Boys are told they should compete to be the best, the strongest. Meanwhile, girls should be “perfect”—nice, refined and fragile. That’s why girls have to go much more and break through many barriers to achieve as high as the boys. It is also why many more abuses come from men, because they are told not to show their weaknesses. So, when they are on the verge of vulnerability or losing, they overreact and resort to violence. It’s a desire for control.

This is Marvik. His is a different story because of a difficult family. He doesn’t want to go to school but would beg for money instead. We’ve told him countless times that it is forbidden. So, what he’d do is take our visitors on a “farm tour” so they end up giving him money. He would then go get soda. When you are raised by parents who are thieves, you end up thinking that stealing is normal.

Is he doing better now? No.

Reymark has so much courage. He’s been away from the farm for a year already because his mom has a new husband who doesn’t really accept him and his brother, but he’s not angry or resentful about it.

So you know all these back stories, is there any way the superiors in the farm are intervening? Yeah. The people are transforming. It takes time. But the best way to do that is to be present rather than to interfere. You provide them with the environment to help themselves.

This guy, Jayson, has transformed. He used to be very shy, coming from an abusive family. Now he’s one of our students and has grown up so much. He’s now becoming one of the role models in the community. ●

Find out what the farm is up to via [@gkenchantedfarm](#) and [@farmboylou](#) on Instagram.



I've never posted this anywhere. I only just discovered it while collating material for this feature—a couple about to kiss bathed in light. Venice, 2014.



LENS

THE
Voyager

Sydney-based designer *Ionne Ocampo*
on taking career risks, moving out
and fearlessly exploring the world for
memorable stories

PHOTOGRAPHY *Ionne Ocampo*

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*



lonne Ocampo

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hi, I'm Ionne! I'm a graphic designer and photographer now living in Sydney, Australia. I'm part of the marketing team of an Australian beauty distributor, and recently I started freelancing for a breast cancer charity as well. In my free time I admit I lose plenty of sleep over curating my Instagram feed.

What started your interest in photography?

I wish I could say my story is profound but, on the contrary, it's super random and kind of embarrassing (but something I can now laugh at). I was 14 and Panic! at the Disco was all the rage back then. Their bassist was dating this photographer—she produced album art and her photos looked amazing to me at that time. I became a fan and eventually was inspired to pick up a camera myself.

Do you subscribe to a particular photography genre?

What about it appeals to you?

Given I only post travel photos these days, I'm naturally associated with it. But more than a travel photographer, I'd like people to see me as a storyteller. I spend a lot of time selecting and editing and such, but I spend an even larger amount of time thinking of captions and how to best share little parts of my travels with friends and followers.

You are now a Sydney-based graphic designer and photographer.

How was the whole experience of moving into another country?

How did you find the adjustment phase?

Terrifying! But it's absolutely necessary for growth. There are things I'm doing now that I wouldn't have been able to do if I stayed comfortable. I had a fashion magazine teenage dream job of sorts in Manila, and just like that I had to give it up and found myself working as a barista in a remote Western Australian town. I pushed real hard to be able to find a job in the city, and now here I am, working in fields close to my heart. Of course, some days are particularly lonely, like when I see snaps of family and friends back home growing up without me (damn you, Instagram Stories), but then I would think, I've been living comfortably for the past 20 years; surely I can afford to suck it up and be uncomfortable for a short while in exchange for a shot at chasing bigger dreams.

How different would you say is the creative industry in Australia as compared to the Philippines? What about living in Australia fosters a culture of creativity more than the Philippines? Or is it vice versa?

I wouldn't say one is more creative than the other, but I do think the value of design is regarded way higher here. Companies big and small alike see design as a necessity. *Hind uso dito ang friend rate!* ("Friend rate" is not a thing here!) In the Philippines, it can be very challenging to save up and survive as an individual freelancer, whereas here I feel creatives are well taken care of, enabling them to support their craft and live as not-so-starving artists.

Are you acquainted with other Filipinos living in Australia? What would you say are the biggest issues and concerns they face? How do they cope or address it?

We often discuss visas (not surprising!). I'm a step away from becoming a citizen, but I know of friends' struggles with student visas. They need to secure a full-time job related to their field in a dedicated state (say, there's an influx of creatives in Sydney, they would need to work in a different region where there's shortage), otherwise their visas will get revoked. It's extremely tough, but they power through by looking for internships and part-time jobs that'll hopefully bulk up their experience.

This little old lady sat in this same spot for three hours straight. Not sleeping or begging or anything, just unmoving and alone. I always wonder why people are where they are. Rome, 2016.





Plucked straight out of a Wes Anderson film. Heidelberg, 2016.

**I've been living comfortably for the past 20 years;
surely I can afford to suck it up and be uncomfortable for a
short while in exchange for a shot at chasing bigger dreams.**



I left my heart in Normandy, France. If you look closely you can still see remnants of German troop batteries scattered across the field. Bayeux, 2016.
Opposite page: We are but a speck of dust in the universe. The Schilthorn Swiss Alps, 2010.

Design is a realm where cultural barriers are rapidly blurring. What is your take on this? Would you say that this is a good or bad thing in this day and age?

I vaguely remember learning in Art History class that design/art is a form of protest one way or another—a sign of the times. Whatever we create is a reaction to occurrences at that particular point in time. It’s interesting—I see kitsch everywhere now. Loud and open and unapologetic. There are just no rules anymore! Such a telling reflection of the state of the world.

Would you still consider pursuing a creative career in the Philippines in the near future? Why or why not?

Probably not in the near future, but I definitely would love to come back. Our motherland is a mess (and at the moment increasingly chaotic), but it will always be home.

Any future/self-initiated projects you'd like to share?

Shoot more portraits! I get associated with travel a lot, but I’m actually more inclined towards portraiture. I like people-watching and am fascinated by how light touches the skin and how people respond differently. It’s all very raw and intimate.



Whatever we create is a reaction to occurrences at that particular point in time. It's interesting. There are just no rules anymore! Such a telling reflection of the state of the world.





Collecting sky fragments. Batanes, 2017.

Opposite page: Shot groggily at sunrise from the tinted window of a moving vehicle, this turned out to be my favourite out of over 800 photos. Batanes, 2017.

What valuable insight about life has photography revealed to you?

Back in April at the Coldplay concert I told myself I wouldn't film my favorite songs so I could concentrate on the actual show, but of course I ended up breaking that promise, and it got me thinking why we're so obsessed with trying to immortalize every moment. Recently a good friend passed away, and when I realised I had taken so many photographs of him, I shared them online to pay tribute. Instantly I connected with others who were also recollecting fragments of his love. Photography gives us something to return to. So this "millennial obsession" with documenting everything, I don't think it's all bad!

What is your imaging device of choice? What about it do you love?

I've had my Nikon D3s for almost 10 years now, and I'm emotionally attached to it. It weighs about three kilograms and gives me shoulder pains when I travel, but I refuse to resort to smartphone photography! It's too convenient and kills the thrill.

You do a lot of travel. Name a place you've been to that has left a significant impact on you.

I love quiet, tiny European towns like Assisi, Bologna, Lourdes and Heidelberg. But if I have to pick just one I'd definitely say Bayeux in Normandy, France. It marks the beginning of the end of Hitler's Third Reich, and just being there completely changed the way I see the world. I'd recommend it in a heartbeat, not just for the beautiful scenery but also for the stories, heart-warming and heartbreaking alike. ●

Follow Ionne Ocampo on Instagram [@wheretheheaven](https://www.instagram.com/wheretheheaven)



LENS

DOUBLE

TAKE

A celebration of diversity in
culture and place by pairs, photographed
in film by *Bryan Kong*



PRODUCTION *Angel Yulo*



A G R A







NEW YORK CITY





B A L I



EL NIDO







CALIFORNIA

**WHEN LIFE GIVES
YOU MELONS
MAKE MELONADE**

#Design #Typography #LifeLessons #Type
#Letters #Wew #Hashtags #Advice #Shit

Canvas

ART AND GRAPHIC DESIGN



82

82 Wabi Sabi

Artist *Jem Magbanua* explores concepts of transcience and co-existence through beautifully hand-drawn collages

96 Au Naturel

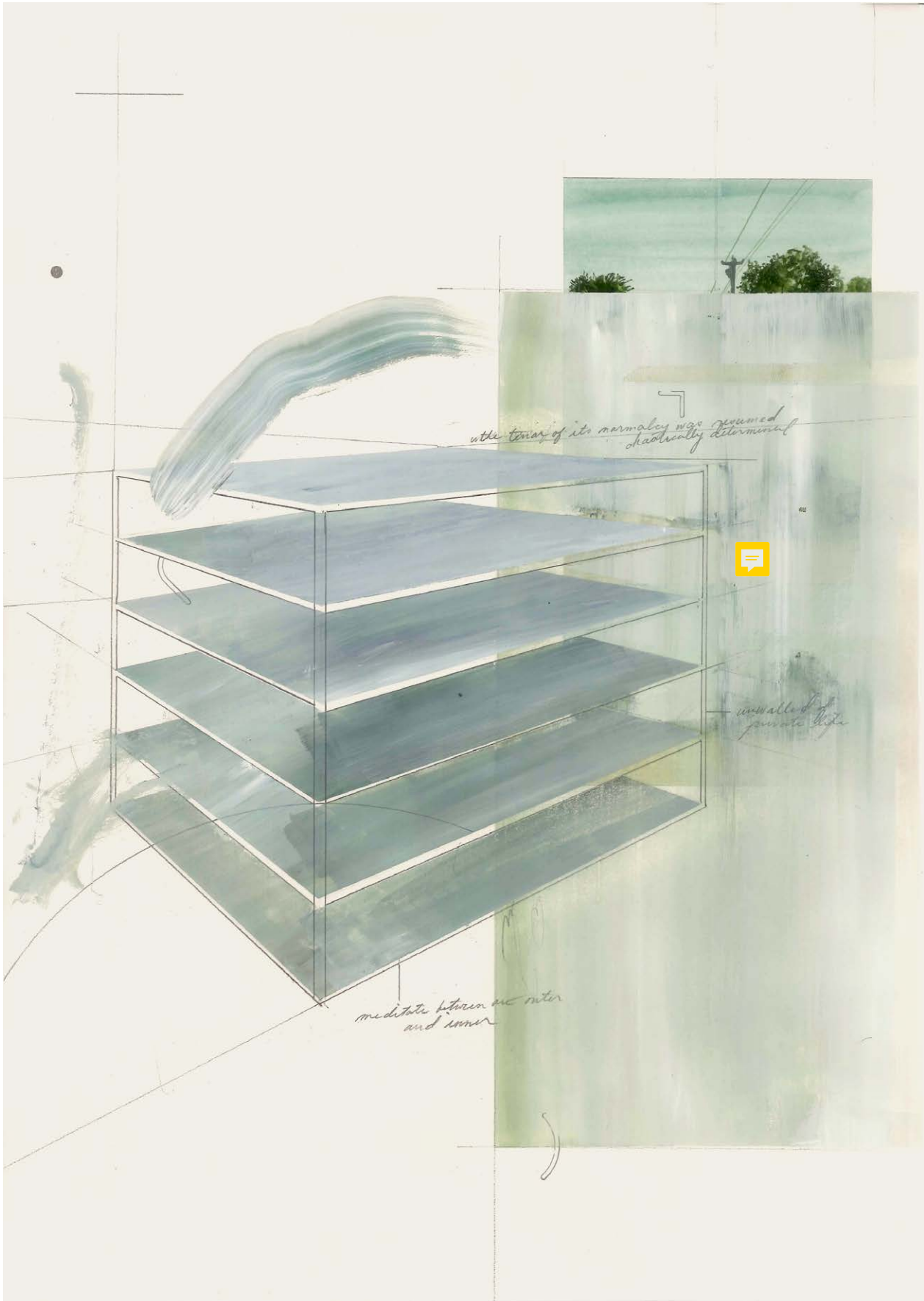
Illustrator *Frances Alvarez* takes her cues from nature for her body of work

106 Fitting In, Standing Out

Tattoo artist *Katz Lorenzana* on her love affair with ink

III Sticky Situation

1/2 of the duo behind pun-loving sticker factory *Diyalogo* speaks brand origins and the importance of dialogues



the tension of its normalcy was resumed
radically determined



unwalled of
private life

meditation between the outer
and inner

CANVAS

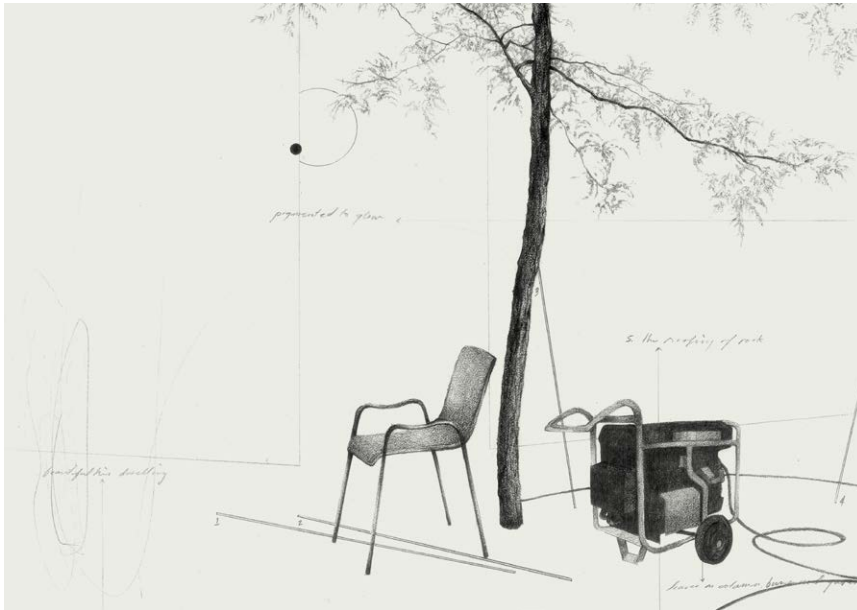
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Artist *Jem
Magbanua*
ruminates on
the concepts of
time and place
with illustrated
collages

PORTFOLIO *Jem Magbanua*
INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*



Jem Magbanua



Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hello! My name is Jem Magbanua, a visual artist and illustrator based in the outskirts of Metro Manila. My infatuation with the landscape gives me a constant itch to go on hikes or meander through the city. If I am not physically traveling through one hemisphere of the world, my mind wanders through the trails set in fiction and poetry books.

What fueled your passion for illustration? Where did it all start?

I have always been a keen observer of life around me. With all these thoughts swimming in my head, there was an urge to record them. And the most natural form of documenting came through the act of drawing. Drawing allows me to understand the world in depth. By depicting an object, place or memory on paper, it's as if I am also etching that particular thing in my memory. This is why drawing is so essential to me.

Your work often consists of calming compositions of plant life and objects, often architecture, executed with a mixture of paint and pencils and often with messages scrawled on the canvas.

What is the reason behind your subject choices and aesthetic?

I draw inspiration from my everyday surroundings—places I pass by on a regular basis or objects that occupy the space I live in. As for my materials of choice, I enjoy the immediacy of gouache and pencil.

i. Self-Portrait Studies

Previous spread: The Tenor
of Our Normalcy Was Resumed



I have always been a keen observer of life around me. With all these thoughts swimming in my head, there was an urge to record them.

These tools are mainly used to create plans or drafts so they possess these notions of temporariness and transition. They hold this potential to progress into something else. I regularly re-work old drawings, adding to the existing narrative as I continue to broaden my conceptual concerns. My aesthetic is of eastern influence where the subject matter is stripped down to its essence.

Would you say that you have a particular style of illustration and painting? Or are you open to exploring new ways to present ideas?

I remember back in art school, I had a lecturer who told me that my work has no place in the realm of Fine Arts because it was too “Illustration-y”. I used to wince every time people would associate “illustration” with my work but now I have learned to gladly accept it. Illustration is not my main interest, but it is somewhere in the mix of various other genres and sub-genres of art that I am inspired by. I am quite pleased with the visual language I have developed over the years and I am continually expanding my vocabulary.

ii. Self-Portrait Studies

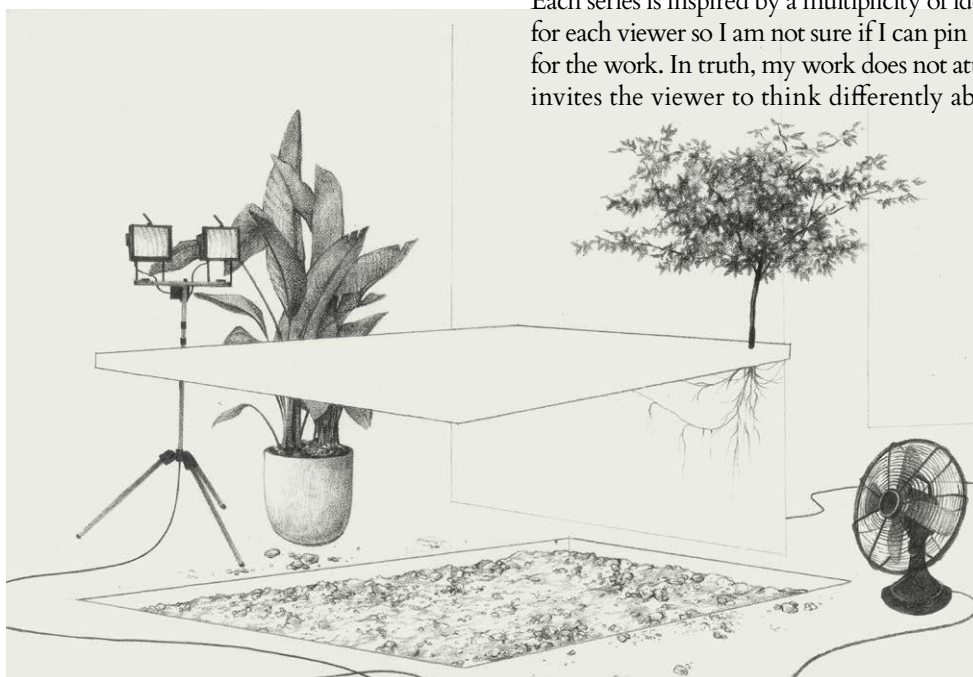
Opposite page: In-Between Places



In truth, my work does not attempt to offer an answer but invites the viewer to think differently about the world around them.

iii. Self-Portrait Studies

Opposite page: Unmappable Spaces



Art often had a reputation as sealed-off artifacts appreciated by a select few until the advent of social media helped broaden its viewership. What's your take on this, and what do you think are the positive and negative effects it can bring in terms of how people view and understand art?

Social media breaks demographic barriers in terms of allowing people from all walks of life to discover art. I think it's a great platform where people can share, learn and discuss about artists and art-making. However, do not rely solely on the internet to view artwork. Unless the work was created specifically for viewing in the digital realm, I encourage viewers to visit the artwork in its original context: whether it's in a gallery or a museum. Works that have been materially and tangibly produced carry a presence that can only be felt when confronted with the object itself.

Who are your artistic idols, and what about their work inspires you?

Oh, this is such a difficult one to answer. I revere a multitude of artists from a variety of backgrounds. Agnes Martin, for her ability to depict the intensity of a sunset just by using washes of color and mathematically precise grids. Andrew Wyeth, for his use of the exterior landscape to prompt interior reflection. Koichi Sato, for the multiple levels of meaning and expression in such simple compositions. Rae Armantrout, for her masterful ability to connect seemingly disparate words to resonate a particular energy in her poetry.

Your work often takes on the form of a collage of seemingly disparate objects, like construction cranes and trees; lamps and shrubbery. What would you say is the ultimate message your current body of work conveys?

Each series is inspired by a multiplicity of ideas that is received differently for each viewer so I am not sure if I can pin down one ultimate message for the work. In truth, my work does not attempt to offer an answer but invites the viewer to think differently about the world around them.

Overall, my drawings attempt to express a state of limbo I find to be evident in today's urbanized landscape. The city is populated with more places of transition (bus stops, airports, train stations) and more generic buildings that can generally be found in various metropolitan areas. Every series is an exploration of how to expand on this narrative.

You went on a month-long artist residency in Fukuoka, Japan. How was the experience like? Can you share artistic insights and observations that you gained from your stay there?

Japan's countryside is a beautiful, tranquil and lonely place. Spending a month there was both isolating and rejuvenating. That was probably the only place I was able to confront the kind of silence you swear you can almost hear yourself blink in.

As for artistic insights that I gained through the residency, I realized that I learned the most from the four other participants I shared the space with. Even with the advent of social media and the internet, the value of face-to-face communication and interaction with fellow artists from an array of cultural backgrounds cannot be underestimated.

Overall, my drawings attempt to express a state of limbo I find to be evident in today's urbanized landscape.

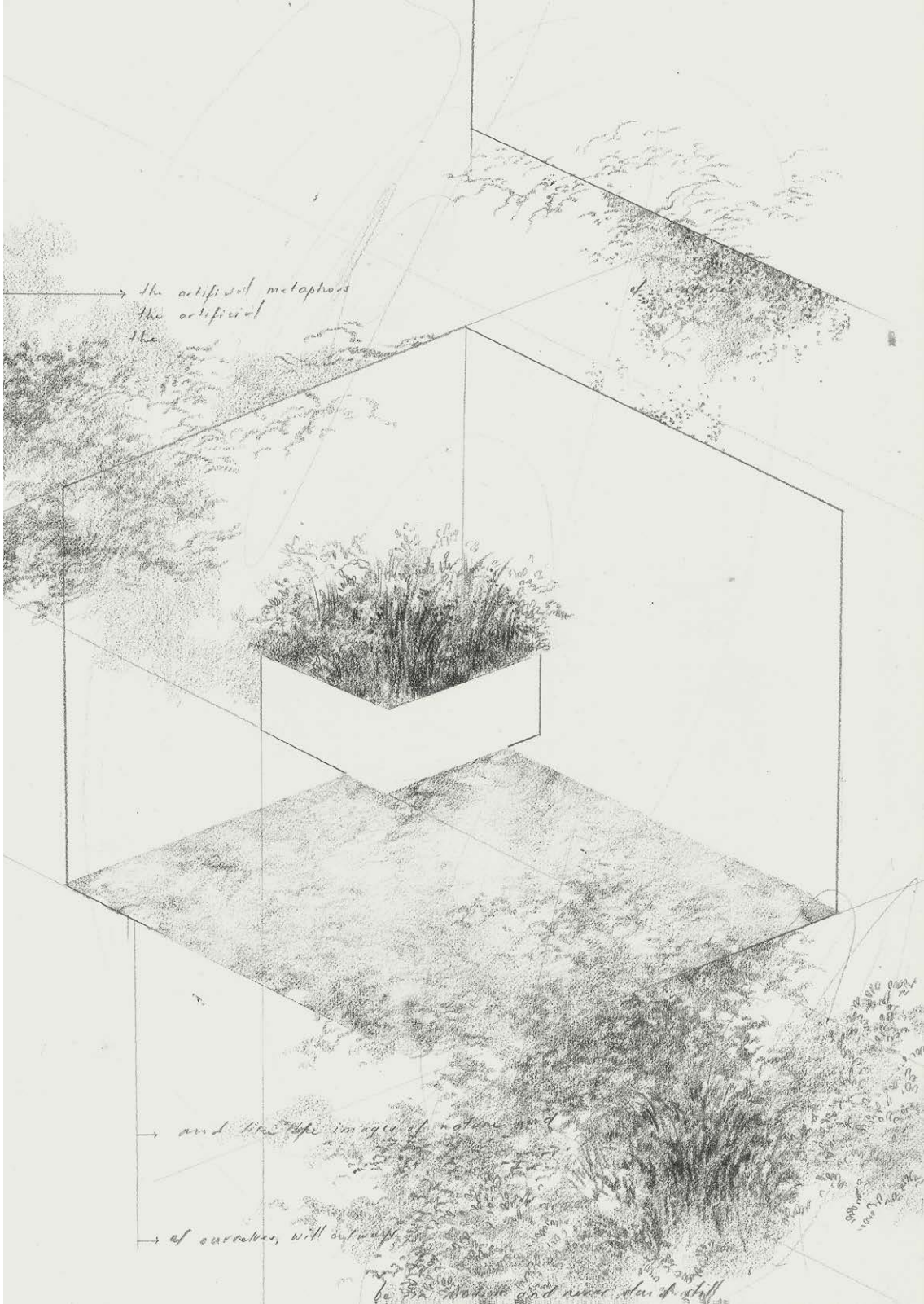
How do you decide what objects go into certain artworks? And how do you compose them? Where do you source your references? Walk us through your process.

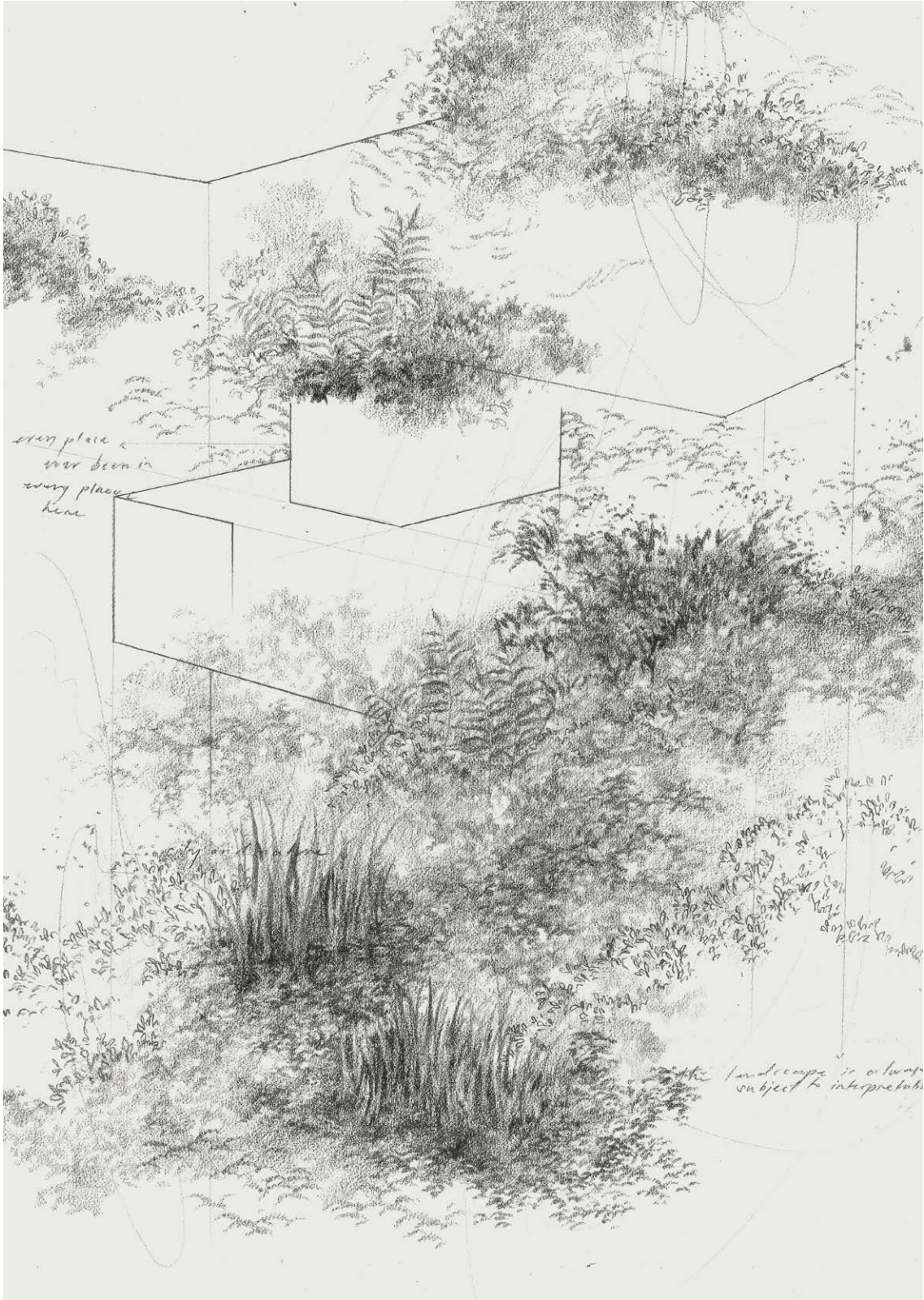
My reference material mainly consists of photographs I've taken from past travels or walks around the city. Usually I begin with certain items that trigger my imagination then I pull them into a dimension of my own making. I find it interesting to depict psychological states through the use of everyday objects. Take a chair or electric fan for example, symbols of privacy and comfort. Then we have a cement mixer, a symbol of non-permanence and displacement. When creating a drawing, I start out with one or two main objects in the composition. As the drawing slowly takes on a life of its own, I add in objects that fit the emerging narrative.

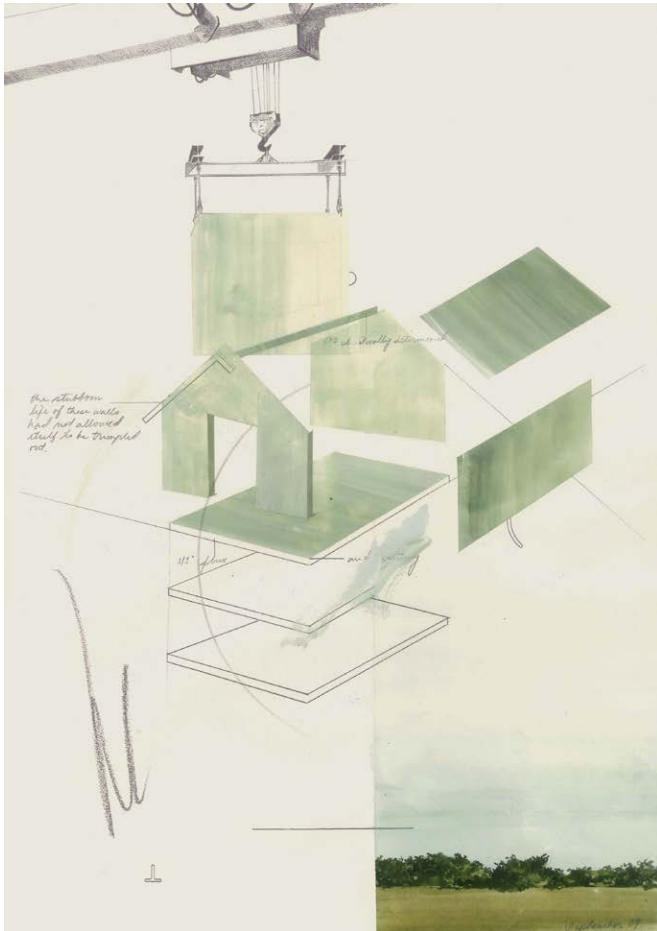
Just as how migration and diaspora bring traces of one's own culture and story into different places, so it is with art. Especially for the pieces you've had exhibited abroad, what stories of home do they tell foreign viewers?

During my formative years, I moved to Singapore together with my family. While in Singapore, throughout the six years that I resided there, I lived in five different homes. I felt as though I did not grow roots that ran deep enough to consider any of those spaces "home". Moreover, having lived a sheltered life in Manila before moving to Singapore gave me a rather simplistic experience of Metro Manila.

v. Garden, City, or Wilderness







The Stubborn Life of These Walls Had Not Allowed Itself to be Trampled Out
Opposite page: vi. Garden, City, or Wilderness

Hence, my idea of “home” is not a physical space but a mental space that I carry along with me. The Italian architect Ugo La Pietra once said, “To live is to be at home everywhere.”

What other artistic fields do you dabble into? You seem to have an interest in architecture, judging from the numerous architectural references in your work.

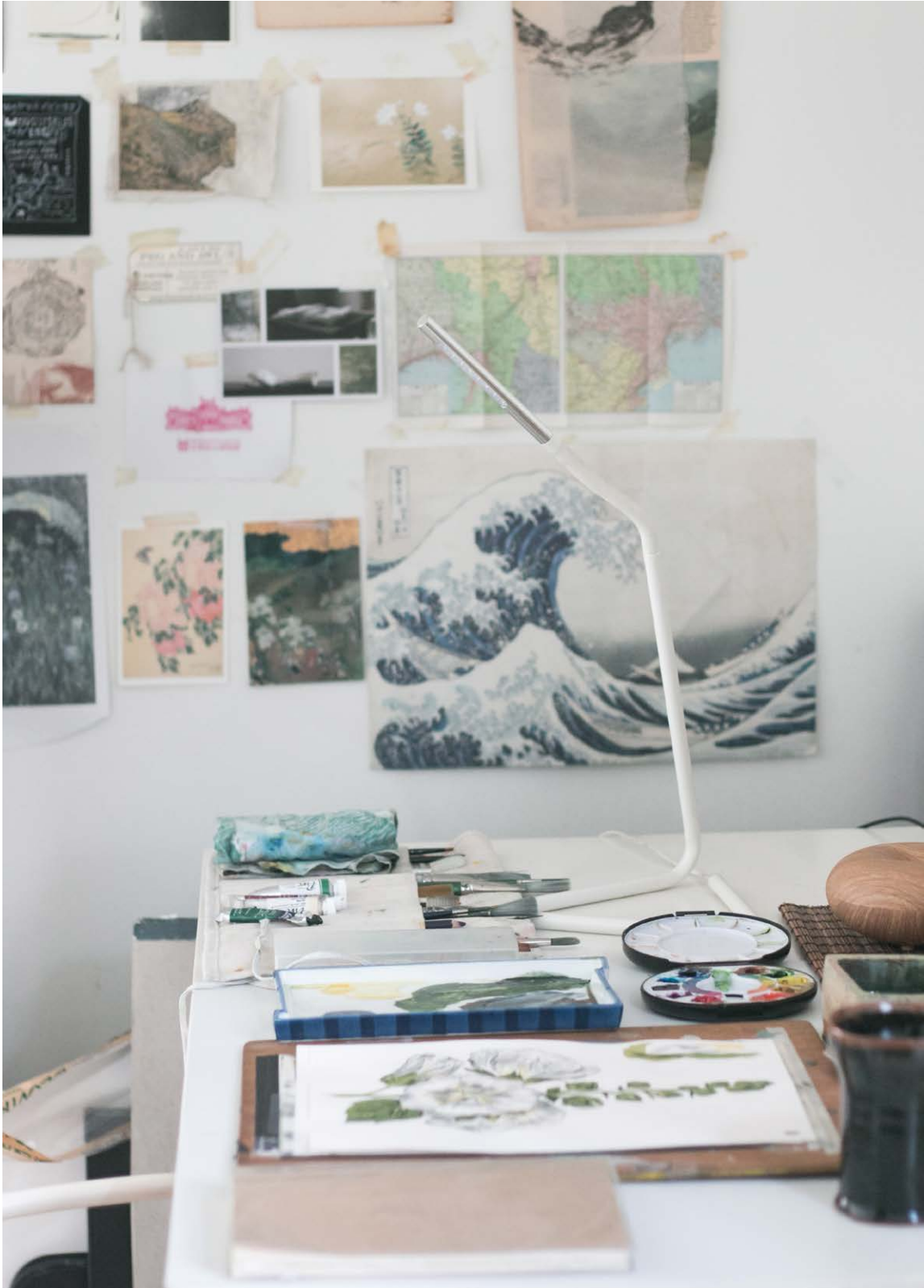
Yes, my work is definitely that of a pseudo-architect. Architecture, particularly buildings created for domestic purposes, as places of memory and self-discovery are subjects that strongly inform my work.

I am also fascinated by landscape design, especially the aesthetic and conceptual principles that come into play in Japanese gardening. Poetry—reading poetry—is also a literary field I delved into a couple of years ago. I still remember stumbling upon my first book of Armantrout’s poetry in the library. Her ability to bring out an energy using dissonant words and phrases with no particular meaning or connection fascinated me.

Do you engage in other hobbies, activities or interests aside from painting?

I used to dance professionally and although I do not rigorously train in dance anymore, it is still very much a part of my life; whether it be through watching dance performances or twirling inside the comforts of my own room. A lot of my time is also devoted to reading. Over the years, I have amassed a collection of unread books due to my impulsive book-buying habits so that is something I seriously have to catch up on this year. In my spare time, I enjoy watching films or going for a stroll through the city with friends. ●

View the breadth of Jem’s artistic practice at cargocollective.com/jemmagbanua, or follow her on Instagram [@jemjunip](https://www.instagram.com/jemjunip).



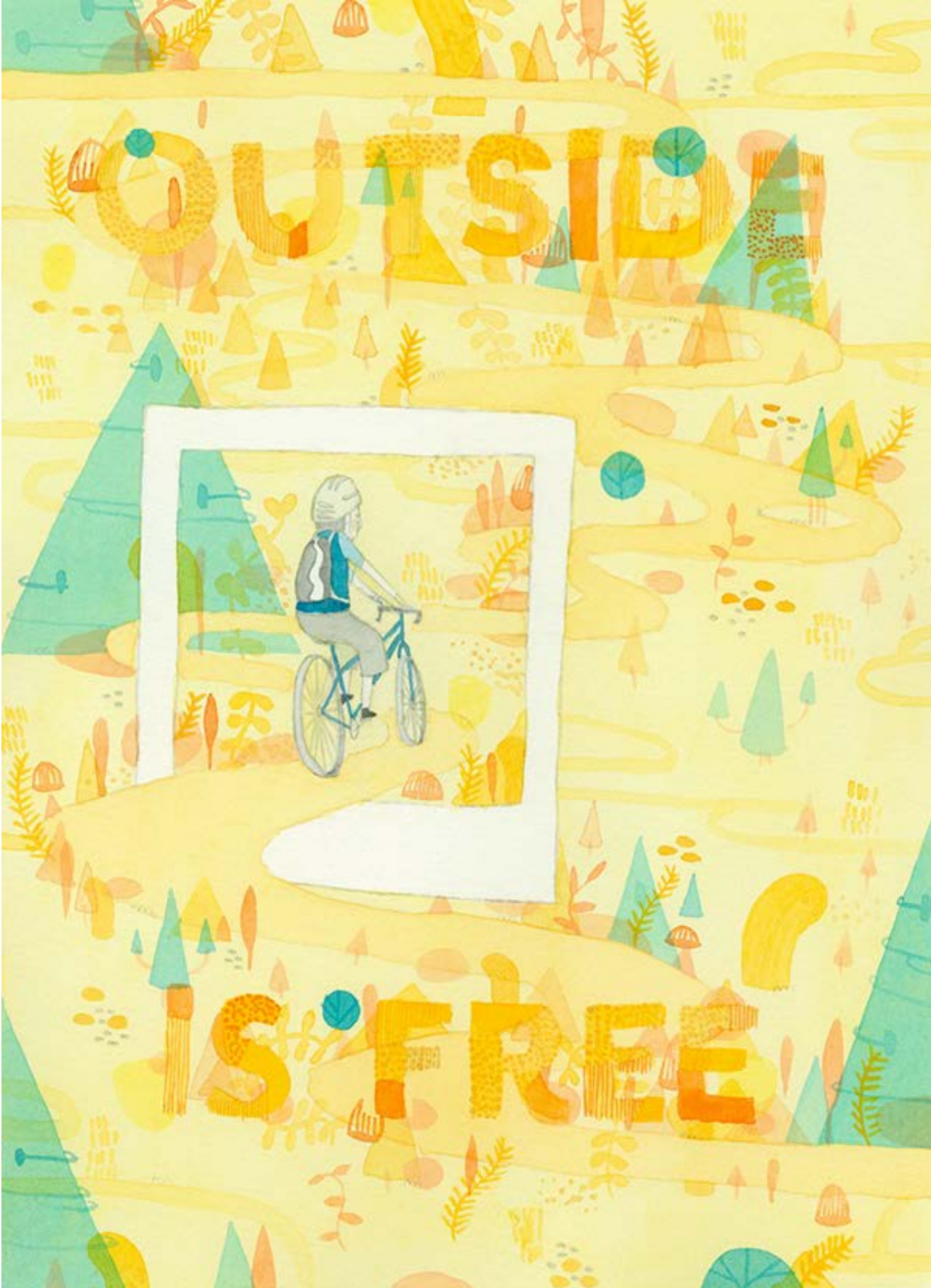


MY WORKSPACE

Jem Magbanua

On the left most side of the photograph is my wall filled with postcards, posters, letters and artworks by fellow artists amassed over the years. I love surroundings myself with things that inspire me. Every day reveals new aspects about them that I previously did not notice.

On my table sits a wooden essential oil diffuser. The scent of lavender never fails to calm me down in the midst of tight deadlines or difficult clients. I also have a couple of things collected from my past Japan trips like an Uemura Shoen print, a *sake* ceramic cup, a traditional matcha whisk and some chopsticks. Behind these objects are two framed Indian botanical illustrations that I acquired from my mom. My journals sit comfortably within my reach. They contain notes from books, films, interviews or personal insights about my own work. These journals are very important to me because they document the evolution of my conceptual concern over the past few years. Leaning on my journals is a letter from one of my most favorite people. I love having it within view whenever I work. My room is filled with letters from people, I truly cherish hand-written encouragements from friends. Next to my journals is a wooden box filled with dried flowers. Aside from letters, I love receiving plants whenever my friends travel. Around the desk are various ceramics: a sushi platter turned painting palette, a hand-made water container created by a friend and a Pettyjohn cup that I enjoy my morning coffee in. On the side of my table is a movable cart that contains my collection of rulers. I use them a lot with my drawings so I've accumulated a variety of lengths and shapes. ●



CANVAS



Au Naturel

From outdoor scenes to storybook illustrations, artist-designer *Frances Alvarez* looks to Nature for color and inspiration

PORTFOLIO *Frances Alvarez*
INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*



Frances Alvarez

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

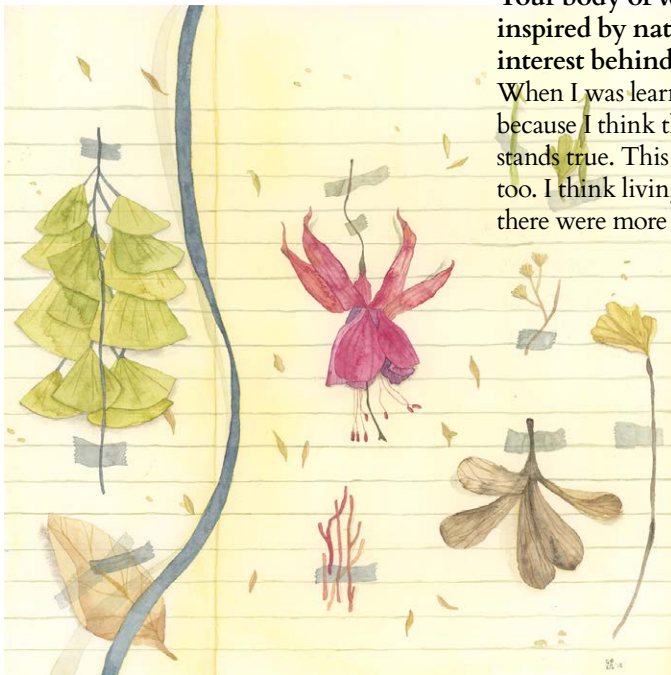
I'm Fran, and I've been working as an illustrator and graphic designer for the past seven years. I illustrate children's books on the side, and make pieces for art exhibits locally and abroad, too. I work full-time with Studio Dialogo, and I'm part of the children's illustration organization, Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan. Some of my friends and I form the craft group Speculars, too, and we join fairs and selling events together.

What fueled your passion for illustration? Where did it all start?

I think I was a late bloomer. I only really started to take drawing seriously in college, around 2006, 2007. I wasn't one of those people who were drawing since they were kids, and nobody in my family was really into art. Local venues that made art accessible in the city fueled my interest a lot. I distinctly remember going into the store Mich Dulce used to run along Shaw Boulevard called Store For All Seasons, and seeing Bru Sim's (of Electrolychee) paintings and illustrations on exhibit. I was so young and happy. I had never been exposed to work like that outside the internet.

Your body of work is a beautiful collection of illustrations mostly inspired by nature, deftly rendered in watercolor. What fueled the interest behind these subject choices and aesthetic?

When I was learning how to paint, I mostly chose plants to practice on because I think they're beautiful and enjoyable to draw. I think that still stands true. This has drawn me to educate myself more about conservation, too. I think living in the city makes me draw a lot of the things that I wish there were more of here: plants, flowers and animals.



Dear Diary, watercolor, Studio Dialogo
10th anniversary show, 2016
Previous spread, from right: *Outside Is Free*, watercolor, published by Elle Decor,
2013; *Souvenir*, watercolor, 2015



Watercolor is my favorite because it produces such a soft and quiet effect. It suitably captures the tone I want to set with my work.

You've had your share of children's storybook illustration projects. What about these commissions attract you and would you say that it's hard to illustrate children's storybooks?

I super loved books and reading growing up. I loved it so much that I would take books to bed after lights off at night and try to read in the dark, so I started to wear glasses by the time I was seven. The thought of illustrating books for the children now is exciting because I was (and still am!) a kid who loves to read. Personally, I think the challenges of drawing for picture books lie more on the actual production side of things, rather than the books being specifically for children. Making 14 artworks (standard for most local picture books) that are consistent and harmonious with each other is not a walk in the park. If anything, drawing for children in general is fun because children have uninhibited imagination and are more open to ideas than the rest of us.

You work for Studio Dialogo, a design studio, as well as a member of Ang INK (Ilustrador ng Kabataan), an organization of local illustrators for children. Was it a challenge working for a corporate studio while still managing to keep a personal style for Ang INK?

All of us at Studio Dialogo are illustrators, and most of us are part of Ang INK, so it's not that big of a challenge to balance both in terms of having a personal voice.

Stream, watercolor, 2014

Opposite page: *Taho*, watercolor, exhibited at 6 Degrees, Light Grey Art Lab 2013





Waiting, watercolor, Studio Dialogo
10th anniversary show, 2016

Opposite page: *Woodsong*,
watercolor, exhibited at GUTS,
Light Grey Art Lab 2015

Nobody ever really owns a style because of the collective way of thinking within a community that inevitably exists, so I think it's healthier to focus on making relevant, and well-crafted work instead of fussing over style so much.

I like the structure that working at Dialogo provides because the work is project and client-based. I have to learn to adapt and be flexible. As for Ang INK, I get to play and experiment with styles or materials that I don't usually work with. It's win-win.

Why the use of watercolor? What about this medium enables you tell your stories more effectively? What other artistic tools have you experimented with?

Watercolor is my favorite because it produces such a soft and quiet effect. I think it suitably captures the tone I want to set with my work. I also love drawing a lot of small details, and the lightness of the medium balances this somehow. Despite this, I still like playing around with different tools from time to time. I also draw on the computer, paint with acrylic, make ink prints, draw with markers, do embroidery and sometimes make paper collages, too. Working as a graphic designer has pushed me to learn to draw in different styles as well.

What is your opinion on the matter of having personal 'styles,' especially in the realm of illustration? Do you think this helps, or is this a hindrance to an artist's maturity?

Some illustrators thrive using a strong personal style, and working with that for most of their careers. Others work with a variety of styles, and enjoy the process of being able to illustrate each piece in a different way. Part of growth and maturity in being an illustrator is knowing what kind of work you like to do, and how you want to do it. This comes with time, experience, and working with others.

Style and originality have been such big matters of debate in art and illustration, but I think it's more about perspective and how much work you've been exposed to. The more you realize how many kinds of illustration work there are out there, and the more you see how many people have been doing and recreating styles through the past decades, the more you see that style is the least of your problems. Nobody ever really owns a style because of the collective way of thinking within a community that inevitably exists, so I think it's healthier to focus on making relevant, and well-crafted work instead of fussing over style so much.

While adept at both, your body of work seems to consist more of artworks rendered by hand. What is it that you love about artworks created by hand? In the digital age, would you argue that there is in fact a heightened appreciation of traditionally-rendered art?

The part I like most about using traditional materials is that the work is 50-50. I do my part of drawing, but there are also those parts of the process that I can't control: the way the paint seeps into the paper, how the colors blend, how the different textures combine. That's when the materials do their share of work. I think the combination of everything adds up to give value and charm to the final artwork.

This heightened appreciation for the hand-drawn maybe comes from recognizing how much harder the process is compared to working digitally. It takes more skill to draw a perfect circle in one try by hand than it does to make it on the computer.



Hating Kapatid, watercolor, published by Adarna House, 2013

I saw how illustration can be a meaningful contribution to saving the planet rather than it just being a hobby or a means to earn a living.

You were part of an internship program at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in New York. What project did you work on? What were some valuable insights and observations that you gained in your stay there?

I got into the Bartels Science Illustration Internship Program. The Lab's multimedia department was working with The Philippine Eagle Foundation in Davao on conservation education materials. My main project was illustrating a children's story book about the Philippine Eagle, the threats it faces, and the rehabilitation efforts that the foundation is pursuing. This book is for the teachers to bring to the different Eagle schools and communities in Davao that have no access to technology like computers and projectors.

I learned so much about conservation and I had a renewed sense of appreciation for local wildlife during my internship. I was able to talk and work with people from different fields, from biologists to filmmakers, and I got to learn from their respective expertise and points of view. I became more observant of my surroundings, too, and when I came home I know I was more inclined to educate myself about Philippine biodiversity. I saw how illustration can be a meaningful contribution to saving the planet rather than it just being a hobby or a means to earn a living.

This issue centers on diaspora and migration. As someone whose art has traveled abroad and has spread far and wide, what about your work would you say is quintessentially Filipino?

Being Filipino means being a huge mixture of other different cultures, and I guess that's one way I can describe my work as well. I can say that the colors I use are bright and saturated, giving reference to life in a tropical country. I can also say that my fondness for drawing many tiny details layered over each other reflects the horror vacui highly present in our culture. But in the end, I think it's not how my work looks like that sets it apart but what I choose to draw. Anyone from the globe can illustrate a jeepney in whatever style or depiction. I illustrate the jeepney by showing my experience of being in one every single day, so I draw the people I encounter during my commute. More than style or rendering, I think that the perspective that I put into my work is what makes my work Filipino.

How do you deal with creative block?

I clean my room, read a book without pictures, travel near or far, or look for people who do completely different things than me.

I do something completely unrelated to the task at hand so my mind can reset itself. Talking it out with friends help, too. When I feel pressured, I start overthinking and this stresses me out to the point that I get stuck and come up with uninspired work. However, it's not every day I can go look at some trees or fish just to relax. Most of the time I kind of just power through the limbo and push myself to work despite the struggle. The job needs to get done regardless of what I'm going through. ●

Fran makes commute drawings on Instagram [@ladiesinjeepneys](#), and write sometimes on [nobeeshoney.wordpress.com](#)





CANVAS



FITTING

Tattoo artist *Katz Lorenzana* shows

IN

us how creating a space for yourself

STANDING

is all about attitude and a willingness

OUT

to adapt and learn

INTERVIEW *Kara Gonzales*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Jay Contreras*

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

My name is Katrina Lorenzana, but you may call me Katz. I am a Filipino tattoo artist, and an oil and watercolor painter.

You graduated cum laude with a degree in Fine Arts from the University of the Philippines Diliman. How did you jump from being a visual artist to a tattoo artist?

The transition happened when I got to know a tattoo artist who invited me to work. He specifically told me, “The industry is always on the lookout for more female tattoo artists. And since you’re a watercolor artist, I think you can do it.” His encouragement meant a great deal.

The second thing that attracted me most to it is the fact that when I was in college, we would have exhibitions, and I would always [put] a price on my painting, and I was super excited to sell it. I have classmates that would put on NFS (“not for sale”), and I didn’t understand why they wouldn’t want to sell it. They would say “I love this artwork, I want to keep it for myself.” And I never felt that way about any of my artworks. The very fact that you’re creating an artwork, is because you want to speak. And if you’re keeping it to yourself, you’re not sharing your ideas. So if somebody bought it, I’d imagine they’d hang my work in their home. It would be shown, and that excites me. It’s not with me anymore, but I know it’s my artwork and it’s out there being seen and enjoyed.

It just seemed natural for me to work on a canvas that is always exposed. And for me, that is the human body. It is also permanent. They carry the 'artwork' around and people would see it and converse about it. That was the highlight for me.

Being a tattoo artist is not a common profession for women. How did the people around you react to your decision to venture into tattooing?

I’m very lucky to be surrounded by people who believed in me even if I did not. And I think that was essential to my growth. I was surrounded with people who would say, “Hey, you’re gonna go into that? That’s cool!” And it’s fun.

My parents were quite supportive. I did have elderly relatives who who felt differently about it. The ‘negative’ group, you have to respect their opinions, as this is what’s in line with their beliefs and values. You just have to let it bowl over you like a wave and roll with it.

How would you describe the local tattoo scene? How does being a female in a mostly male-dominated profession feel?

There is more acceptance. I feel like more people have a better appreciation of the craft and the patience involved in tattooing, of how important training is to create quality work, and the value of knowing the artist that you’re going to be involved with, and his/her body of work.

The tattoo industry is male dominated, yes. But I’m gonna make a bold statement and say that compared to other careers where you can really feel the discrimination against females, the women in this industry are accepted very well by the people.

There’s a common belief that females have a lighter touch, which does not hurt the image of female tattoo artists at all! And according to a tattoo artist friend and former mentor, Jovin de Dios, who now works in Denmark, a lot of people are actually seeking out female tattoo artists. Guys find it interesting, while a lot of women are more comfortable with female artists. So if you think about it in that sense, there are a lot of opportunities out there for aspiring female tattoo artists.

What do you think are the benefits to being female in the tattoo industry?

Benefits... I feel that female artists have a larger clientele since more women are comfortable with artists of the same sex touching their body. Essentially, most of your clients are strangers, and you are being asked to permanently mark their bodies. You may have to touch them in places that may be sensitive to them, or hidden from public view. For women clients who feel uncomfortable with a man touching them, this is a big perk.



It used to be thing I hated most about being a tattoo artist. It was meeting people.

What stigmas exist towards tattoo artists? In your experience, how do most people view female tattoo artists?

Initially, a person who wants to get tattooed would expect a tattoo artist to be “tatuan” – with a body covered all over with tattoos. But in reality, a tattoo artist with a body of tattoos will most likely be carrying artwork that he did not apply himself. So he is carrying other tattoo artists' work on himself/herself.

So, that's one stigma that I can think of, of how people perceive tattoo artists should look. They will say, “Are you really a tattoo artist? Why can't I see any of your tattoos?” It's weird, because a surgeon can be a surgeon without being able to operate on himself. I think [what the tattoo industry needs to do] is to educate not only the tattoo artist but also the people who are interested in getting inked.

As for female artists, preconceived notions do exist. A certain “look” pervades when one is made to think of how female tattoo artists look. But with the number of female tattooists I've met in the Philippines, they aren't necessarily in line with it. But there is a preconceived image: They'd have tunnel (earrings), or have crazy hair colors, and wear clothes that are on the skimpy side to show off their tattoos.

Describe the process of tattooing. Does being female help the way you perform these processes?

I think the difference of being male or female, in this instance, is not that apparent. It's more of the person that will conduct the experience with the client. You have to make sure that when you talk to the client, you are truly interested in translating what he or she wants, to translate his or her idea and not just to do what you want to do. You have to be open.

It's hard to say things like, “women are more sensitive so they will be more in touch” because that's boxing in gender.

The process of tattooing is such that you have to make the client comfortable enough for the procedure, serving as their guide on what it entails to get inked; this involves letting them know what certain colors can do for the design they have in mind, as well as make suggestions regarding placement. The challenge really is to get them to voice out what they want to say and that you, as both artist and guide, have to be ready to

receive it, so that when you present how it can be done, you can inform them of its limitations as well. Gender doesn't really play a part here. It's actually quite personal.

Who are your biggest influences?

The one who influenced me most into pursuing tattooing would be Don Barranda. He was actually an engineer who sells tattoo equipment on the side. He had this thing called Pinoy Body Arts. I got to know him really well, and he was really invested in making sure that any ordinary tattoo artist is educated well about the industry. He put up conferences tied in with DOH about the craft and issues tied with it. He's a great influencer because I understood how important educating yourself about the craft was in general—not only hygiene-wise but in continuously knowing that you have to keep growing and adjusting, that there's new stuff coming out, better things to catch up to, and that's exciting. You always have to be open to change. Unfortunately, Don passed away in a bus accident on his way to Kalinga to get what would have been his first tattoo from Whang Od.

Art-wise, my biggest influencers would be my dad, and my tito. I also greatly admire the works of Dyuntats Depasupil and portrait tattoo extraordinaire Nikko Hurtado.

What is your favorite part of being a tattoo artist?

It used to be thing I hated most about being a tattoo artist. It was meeting people.

I hated it because it meant conversation with strangers, and I actually felt more vulnerable than they do. But later on, I stopped being concerned about myself. It's nice to hear people's stories, and living vicariously through those stories. They'd be doctors or chefs, or a call center agent, a flight attendant, and they'd tell you a myriad of stories. Meeting different people and hearing their stories, from an emergency room experience, to a simply humorous one—I love it! I love meeting people now. It's like living different lives. ●

Katz is part of an all-female tattoo artist group called “Sting” who will be having a four-part art exhibition soon. Watch out for details in her website katzlorenzana.com or follow her on Instagram [@katzlorenzana](https://www.instagram.com/katzlorenzana).

CANVAS

Sticky



1/2 of the duo
behind pun-loving
sticker factory
Diyalogo talks
brand origins and
the importance of
making dialogues

Situation

PORTFOLIO Diyalogo
WORDS Patricia Herbolario
and Patrick Kasingsing



A Dialogue Over Noodles

I was sipping on a hot bowl of Vietnamese rice noodles and across me was Ambo Bongalonta, ½ of design and comedy studio Diyalogo. If you haven't seen their stickers yet, you must be on the sad side of the Internet. Their stickers play on local comedy and Pinoy puns; think of Filipino inside jokes foreigners won't be able to get. Even Ambo admits that explaining the stickers and what they mean to AFAMs (A Foreigner Assigned in Manila, also known as “expats”) simply doesn't get the same outrageous laugh from us Pinoys the instant we see the stickers. Matching the comedy, the stickers are cleverly designed. In college, I could remember several classmates with Diyalogo's *hugot* sticker, and after a visit to ArtMart in BGC, I too became a proud owner of it. Little did I know that two years later, I would also become good friends with a co-founder.

“We really wanted to uplift Filipino comedy—that's the main idea [for Diyalogo],” Ambo shares. A couple of years back, Filipino comedy was brash and cocky. “We wanted to make a change. We wanted it to be funny but smarter,” he adds.

As for the moniker, *Diyalogo* is one of Leonardo Da Vinci's books, alongside *Diorama* and *Discoursi*. “Always have a positive name for you.” This, Ambo shares, is the secret to having a brand that lasts. “If you have a brand name that has a negative connotation, it will eventually kill itself. Dialogue never stops. Even if we stop conversing, someone else will continue conversing. It's continuous and consistent.”



Ambo Bongalonta

Diyalogo's products is available in several stores around the metro, from Craft Central to select Moonleaf branches. Their stickers are sold in themed *paks* (pun intended, go figure). Each pack contains 10 punny stickers, with themes ranging from love, food, travel and everything else that interests Millennials. The brand is a regular in magazines and online articles. They recently had a collaboration with (my personal favorite beer in the world) Hoegaarden.

But like any other business, Diyalogo hadn't always been this huge. When they started, they weren't even selling stickers.

Punyeta and Putragis: The makings of a pun factory

Diyalogo started out as a t-shirt business. The two founders wanted people to wear the pun. They had two designs to send to the printers but, they wanted to know which one would sell better.

There were two designs: one shirt was to be emblazoned with "Punyeta" and the other "Putragis".

"We wanted to relive the old profanities," Ambo shares. "*Yung mga bagong mura* (today's expletives), they're funny but let's step back and give props to the old profanities, *yung mga sinasabi ng mga lola natin* (the ones our grandparents use before)."

To stand out, the partners gave the two words a design twist. "*Diba ang tigas ng 'putragis' na word?* (Doesn't the word 'putragis' sound hard-edged?)" Ambo points out. "So what we did was use, soft, flowing typography to render the word. We wanted it to be ironic." Meanwhile, the "Punyeta" design is a play on the word piñata. The similarity in sound and the unfortunate 'situation' faced by a piñata was too irresistible for the studio. "We imagine that 'Punyeta' would probably be what a piñata would scream, if it were alive, as it faces the terrible prospect of being smashed into smithereens, emptied of its innards of candy."

“Dialogue never stops. Even if we stop conversing, someone else will continue conversing. It’s continuous and consistent.”







“We wanted to relive the old profanities. The new expletives, they’re funny but let’s step back and give props to the old profanities, *yung mga sinasabi ng lola natin.*”

Then, they sold them everywhere—*anywhere* they can. It turns out that the duo need not have worried about which shirt would sell. “Both sold out every single time and we made a ton of money out of it [that we decided] we won’t make shirts; we’ll make stickers,” he shares. They finally stumbled on their winning formula. The wit and the visual puns was what really sold the product more than the medium it was in. It was this ‘smart’ dialogue with its buyers that endeared the Dyalogo brand to its fans. The studio made more stickers and the people who bought the two original designs were thrilled to know that there was more pun to be had (pun intended).

Ambo and his partner do everything, from designing the stickers to delivering the sticker packs to their consignment stores. They even research on the etymology of some of the Filipino profanities to be able to translate it right and well to people who ask. Their jobs as young entrepreneurs obviously take a lot of energy, effort and time. So when it all gets to be too much, Ambo literally hops on the next bus going anywhere and gets away from it all for a breather.



Wonderlost

The young entrepreneur explains that he often heads to the beach when he is stressed out. No particular destination in mind, no itinerary, no inviting other friends with him. It’s just him and the next bus out of Metro Manila, wherever that might go. Think of it as Russian Roulette but with traveling and minus the violence and losing your life part. “What’s important to me is that I have enough cash to go around. Ticket, food, and lodging,” he says.



Travelling, for Ambo was about letting yourself get lost and letting yourself find whatever it is you find in that destination.

Ambo recalls that one time he hopped on a bus headed to Tuguegarao City, a nine-hour-drive from Metro Manila, without even knowing where it was. He only started Googling about it when the bus was moving.

He told me stories about his adventures, from Pampanga, to Baler, to Batangas. He gets to know the locals, try their street food, and of course, get new jokes and Dyalogo material out of each trip. Travelling, for Ambo wasn't about researching online and collating destinations into an itinerary. It was about letting yourself get lost and letting yourself find whatever it is you find in that destination. It wasn't planned, it was just travelling as organically as possible. And by getting 'lost', you get to find new things, new experiences, and yes, new dialogues.

And the vacation becomes a work-cation, but the context of travel makes all the difference. Because this wasn't solely motivated about getting market research done or mining local expletives but by a sincere desire to form dialogues with a place. The ideas and inspiration come after. For Ambo, travel is dialogue. ●

Join in the pun by following Dyalogo on Facebook and on Instagram [@dialogo.ph](#)

Quill

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Angel knitting on a couch previously owned by Prince, in the Pedersen residence in Iceland. Photographed by Mark Bouwman.



QUILL

NORDIC FEVER

Editor and creative strategist
Angel Trinidad on her love affair
with Scandinavian design and
making it big in Europe with a
flair for storytelling

IMAGES *Courtesy of Angel Trinidad*

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*



Angel Trinidad, photographed by Caecilia Rasch



Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hi! I'm Angel. I was born in Manila, and now based in Amsterdam. I'm a writer and editor, with a focus on design, lifestyle, interiors and travel.

Have you always had an appreciation for design in general? When did this fascination begin? What particular design fields are you interested in?

I guess it has always been there as an interest, and something that developed naturally out of curiosity. I have a keen eye for good design, trends and aesthetics. I'm particularly interested in furniture and interiors, product design and Scandinavian design!

You are now an Amsterdam-based editor, writer and creative strategist. Tell us briefly how you ended up where you are now?

I moved to Europe when I was 23; it was my biggest dream to live in Europe, particularly in Sweden. I applied for several scholarships and won one from the European Commission which allowed me to study a Master in European Culture, and live in Germany, Spain and Sweden. Later on, I met my Dutch boyfriend in Stockholm and moved to Holland to be with him.

Alma by Tham & Videgård. Alma is a recently opened members club for creatives in Stockholm, Sweden. Deep, moody greens and blues are balanced with simple forms and warm wood. Image courtesy of Alma (thisisalma.com)

Tell us about your experience as a Filipino creative in Europe. Was it a difficult journey? What were some notable experiences that made a mark on you throughout your stay?

It truly was a long and difficult journey, but you learn a lot about yourself and other people, while still enjoying and living your dream life. There are ups and downs, just like how it would be in any other part of the world. But of course, you are different and out of your comfort zone, and it's precisely this that makes you stand out from the rest and makes you interesting. I've learned to embrace this and use this more as an asset, than an obstacle.

Oh, there are plenty of memorable experiences! In general, just by being and living here, day-to-day life is pretty incredible already. Being surrounded by beautiful nature, the canals and canal houses from the 17th century and being able to bike everywhere. I often catch myself thinking while biking along the canals; I can't believe I live here. It's just so beautiful, and I know this isn't the norm. I hope I never lose that sense of awe, no matter how long I live here.

As a creative, I have met a lot of incredible people, and found myself in unexpected and extraordinary situations and places. Living in Stockholm as a student, I was able to get to know my music idols personally – the Shout Out Louds, The Radio Dept. etc. That was really amazing!

A couple of years ago, I was able to stay at an island in the Stockholm archipelago for a whole week to develop some ideas and new projects. It's called the Ideas Island, an initiative by author and professional speaker Fredrik Haren; he rents it out for free to creatives to help them in developing their ideas. It was the perfect summer.

Pedersen Residence by Halfdan Pedersen in Flateyri, Iceland. A house built of 100% reclaimed materials, with each corner telling a story of lives lived before. Everything in the house—the walls, floors, furniture, even the toilets and sinks—is personally sourced and reclaimed by the designer from all over Iceland. It took him ten years to complete. Photographed by Mikael Axelsson. **Opposite page:** Klaus Haapaniemi textile, with styling by Flora and Laura. Finnish designer Klaus Haapaniemi's work is inspired by Finnish folklore, fairy tales and tradition. Image courtesy of Flora and Laura.





Home of Daniel Heckscher in Stockholm by Note Design Studio. The stunning and vibrant home of interior architect Daniel Heckscher is filled with playful details and vivid colors while retaining a Nordic elegance. Photographed by Tekla Severin for Sight Unseen



My love for Sweden started with Swedish indie music, and from then on branched out to the other alluring aspects of the region—particularly Scandinavian design and interiors.

Just this March, I attended DesignMarch in Reykjavik. It was my first time to go to Iceland too; it's been a dream to go there for a long time! It was amazing discovering new designs from the region, as well as enjoying the unique, raw nature there. I also went to the Westfjords. It's honestly the most beautiful place I've seen in my life. Majestic mountains all around, covered in snow, surrounded by lakes. I stayed in a small town called Flateyri, in the most beautiful house in Iceland. Designer Halfdan Pedersen built this house entirely from scratch, with salvaged materials from all over Iceland. Everything in it is recycled and reclaimed, including the furniture and floors, and walls. Every item tells a story (the long white sofa was owned once by Prince!). It was surreal being there, as I featured the house also on *Scandinavia Dreaming*. Halfdan placed a copy of the book on the coffee table, and when I saw it, it felt like coming full circle.

It's interesting to note your interest in Scandinavian design in particular. What about it appealed to you?

I have been fascinated with Scandinavian culture and design since I was a teenager in Manila. My love for Sweden started with Swedish indie music, and from then on branched out to the other alluring aspects of the region, particularly Scandinavian design and interiors. I have also lived in Stockholm as a student, and my love for it and the Nordic region, hasn't really left me, even as I moved different countries.

I truly believe that there is something "special and specific" about Scandinavian interiors – a sense of feeling that is hard to describe. Something that you have to experience yourself to be able to understand. But I guess people who love it are kind of drawn to the promise of being transported to a utopian kind of place. It reminds us of a place of dramatic landscapes, mighty mountains, deep forests and peaceful archipelagos. In other words: it is design that makes us dream.



Kustaa Saksi's Universal Egg. This Finnish illustrator and artist designed a mini collection of jacquard weavings called Reveille, which was inspired by awakenings, mornings and spring. Photographed by Jussi Puikkonen for www.hugoandmarie.com



Why do you think the Scandinavian aesthetic and design philosophy resonate with a lot of creatives around the world? Would you say that this cultural 'migration' and 'exchange' of styles, approach and ideas in the design world a generally good development in terms of broadening our perspectives and appreciation of myriad cultures?

In terms of aesthetics, Scandinavian design is extremely likeable. It brings about a mix of calm, peacefulness and tranquility, as well as an unmistakable sense of Nordic cool. Classy and elegant yet accessible and democratic. Scandinavian interiors and design is easy to love: wide, open spaces that invite a lot of light, the use of warm, natural materials, and simple, timeless forms that will easily fit in any home.

Of course, I believe that any “exchange of styles, approach and ideas” is healthy and only adds to a more vibrant and lively design culture. In the case of Scandinavian design, it piques people’s curiosities and opens up new worlds for them. It’s the same with Swedish indie music for example. When people become interested, they naturally want to find out more about where this piece of design/music came from, and thus getting to know a different culture better. I’m the classic case of this subtle (yet powerful) soft power of Scandinavia. From what started as a love for Swedish music and design, I am now the unofficial ambassador of Scandinavian culture.

You helmed the creation and editing of *Scandinavia Dreaming*, by the reputable German publisher Gestalten. How did you land this project and could you briefly recount how the whole experience was like?

I was travelling in Berlin and approached Gestalten’s creative director, just to introduce myself and see if they would be interested in working together. They called me a few months later and asked me to spearhead the research and writing of a book about Scandinavian interiors. My dream project! It was great working on the book, and discovering the most inspiring designs and interiors from the region. I loved the writing part, of course, it’s almost like an exercise in dreaming – imagining that I am in those houses, living within those immaculate spaces, right by the sea or the fjords.



Refraction #2 by Snedker Studio.

This rainbow-hued parquet flooring—from the Marbelous Wood series of Copenhagen-based Snedker Studio—is inspired by the refraction of light through a prism. Image from www.snedkerstudio.dk.



I believe that any “exchange of styles, approach and ideas” is healthy and only adds to a more vibrant and lively design culture.



What is the biggest insight you've gained from this project?

It was very inspiring to work on the book, as our goal was to present unique Scandinavian design and interiors that go beyond the mainstream. There's so much more to Nordic design than just pale colors and white walls. We went beyond that and showed the more daring, innovative sides of Scandinavian design: moody atmospheres, vivid colors, without compromising that distinct Nordic elegance. Working on the book inspired me to create Keen On Walls (www.keenonwalls.com) – a website for sparkling interiors, design and spaces. A place where I can continue to showcase inspiring design from around the world.

Have you ever considered returning to the Philippines and pursuing a career there?

Who knows what will happen in the future!

What piece of advice would you give young writers who aspire to make it to the global stage?

Don't give up your dreams! Persist, no matter how hard, or how far away your goal might seem. Do one thing each day that leads you closer to your goal – no matter how small it is. For example, do research on a company you want to work for, or a city you want to live in. Any step, just as long as you do something. Dream and think about it every day, and surround yourself with things that remind you of it. This will keep it alive and vivid in your mind. Surround yourself with people who support you and believe in you; they will help keep you inspired.



This spread: Vipp Shelter by Vipp.

This sleek prefab structure is an all-inclusive cabin designed by Vipp that can be ordered and delivered anywhere in the world. Image from www.vipp.com.



I'm becoming a bit tired of the internet and Instagram, and find myself becoming more drawn to "offline" hobbies and activities.

Where do you plan to take your writing in the future? Do you already have a five year or ten-year plan mapped out?

Not really. I take things as they come. I also don't limit myself as a "writer." I am also a content strategist, I also do things with PR and communications. I think it's important to be well-rounded and to continue to challenge one's self.

Any hobbies or other interests that you indulge in?

I go to a lot of gigs. I'm quite lucky Amsterdam is a hub, and lots of bands and musicians come and play here.

Lately I've been interested in classical ballet. I'm in love with how music, movement and romanticism all come together. I've taken some classes myself but it's really difficult to keep up!

I've also begun knitting. I find it very meditative and creative at the same time. I'm becoming a bit tired of the internet and Instagram, and find myself becoming more drawn to "offline" hobbies and activities. I love how knitting calms the mind. On a recent trip to Iceland, I brought home *skeins* of Icelandic wool to knit.

Name us a book that changed your life.

Ahh, too many! I read a lot of fiction, but it's hard to pinpoint one book that "changed my life". I guess they influenced me in one way or another, but more importantly I think they gave me new worlds to dream about. My favorite books are *The Folk Keeper* by Franny Billingsley, *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt, *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* by Jeanette Winterson, *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara, Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*, C.S. Lewis' *Narnia* books, Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea* series, and so much more!

Let us in on your dream gig. Have you landed it yet?

My biggest dream is to work with IKEA. If anybody from IKEA is reading this, please call me! ●

Oddsson Ho(s)tel by Döðlur. Oddsson Ho(s)tel, located in a historic 1940s warehouse in Reykjavík, Iceland, is a quirky combination of industrial, Memphis and Nordic designs. Designed by Döðlur, the hotel combines industrial elements with cult-design classics. Photographed by Ari Magg.

Follow Angel on Instagram [@icehotel](#) and [@keenonwalls](#), and view her portfolio at www.angeltrinidad.me and her design blog www.keenonwalls.com.



The Coffee Hunter

Out-of-office professional and blogger
Tin Advincula is on a mission to scour the Metro
for the best café-offices around

IMAGES *Tin Advincula*

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

I'm Tin Advincula, editorial manager from 9AM to 6PM, blogger onwards, #cofficehunter 24/7.

What inspired your love for writing? When did you start your first blog? What was it about?

When I was a freshman in college, our Philo professor asked us to write a paper. I forgot what his specifications were but I remember writing about my family. I'm not the sad, emo type; I prefer to deal with life with solutions. But it was in this paper that I acknowledged my problems and purged my emotions. He commended my writing and told me to pursue my newfound craft.

I don't write my emotions in my blog, though. It's all hidden in my journal. Oddly enough my first blog was the typical #OOTD blog. It was the thing back then, and I didn't know there were other types that existed. If I could return to time I'd definitely change that.

You started the #cofficehunter where you document and pass your verdict on the best out-of-office workspaces around the Metro. What

inspired the brand? How often do you update it?

I pursued my #cofficehunter branding on Instagram late last year when I realized that I had a slew of café photos, since I was a remote worker and was always looking for cafes with sockets, good Wi-Fi, and a quiet crowd. Then it dawned on me that no one's providing this info online. Sure, you have these food apps and articles but that's so much work. Instagram's where everyone's hanging out and was a great a platform for photos (and later on, copy) so I hosted all my mini reviews there. The #cofficehunter branding of the blog followed, but it's geared toward the young, working generation. I try to update it on a weekly basis.

What is your day job? Would you say that your blog and current day job is a perfect match?

I'm an editorial manager for an American marketing company. I oversee content of 15+ blogs and manage 30 remote workers (mostly writers, graphic designers and social media managers) all over the Philippines. It's a perfect match because they're both under the wide umbrella of online content, and I'm pretty stoked to apply what I learn from both sides.

If you don't take control of your time, the thin line between work and life blurs until you can't separate the two.

Co-working spaces and, yes, even cafés are hitting it off well as mobile offices and meeting spots with today's crop of young talents. What is your take on the rising number of out-of-office professionals?

Everything's developing because we're continuously innovating. It's about time we embrace this unconventional work setup. Actually, a few big companies are already open to have their employees work remotely on certain days. I think it's awesome.

What are the pros and cons of working offsite?

Not going to an office five days a week saves you a lot of time and energy. Those are two things the traditional 9-to-5 can't give you. There's a roster of things you can do with extra time—start an online business, meet your Tinder date, learn a new hobby, run three miles, watch a movie with your kids, sleep. The list goes on. Work-life balance is more attainable.

One con is that it's very tech-dependent. Most tools used are online. Google apps are a godsend because they're free, but other tools aren't. You have to invest if you plan on going remote in the long run. The other con is that we don't get the usual benefits. We have to get that on our own and it can be a pain to do the research and groundwork, but I'm seeing progress as more and more online services that offer medical, dental and similar benefits are on the rise.

What for you constitutes a good coffice?

The standard traits are that it should be hidden and uncrowded, with lots of sockets, decent Wi-Fi connection and good coffee. But honestly, it depends on my preference for that day. Sometimes I prefer the usual Starbucks because background noise in the café pumps me up. There are other instances I look for cafés that play good music. Bottom line is that it should be somewhere you can get solid work done.

How do you think this practice of working offsite builds better working professionals?

Working from anywhere forces you to be disciplined.

At first, it seems like you have all the time in the world but as the deadline chimes in, you rush your work to finish everything. Time is more precious than money. If you don't take control of your time, the thin line between work and life blurs until you can't separate the two. All remote workers know this and I commend all of them, especially those that finish after eight hours on the dot.

Any funny or memorable anecdotes to share concerning your hunt for coffice places?

Aside from the roster of funny judgmental looks I get from the staff whenever I ask where the socket is, there was one time I had to attend a meeting (via Google Hangouts), but the café was too noisy. I went to the parking area to avoid the noise and placed my laptop on top of our car's trunk. People came and went, and the scene was just so random—a woman presenting her report to a laptop in the parking lot in the middle of the night.

The digital age has made communication and self-expression easier and available to a larger audience through the form of websites, blogs and social media. What is your take on this?

The digital platform is so powerful and everyone should handle their share of it responsibly. Fake, offensive, and plagiarized content are on the rise. You shouldn't be a contributor of these types in any way. Another is that it should contribute something. Sure, you can take a photo of your outfit, or your selfie or your awesome flatlay, but aside from aesthetic what else can I get from it? What's my takeaway? Last is that you should create as much as you consume. That's the best thing this age has given us. You automatically have a voice. Don't just loiter about the space; do something. ●

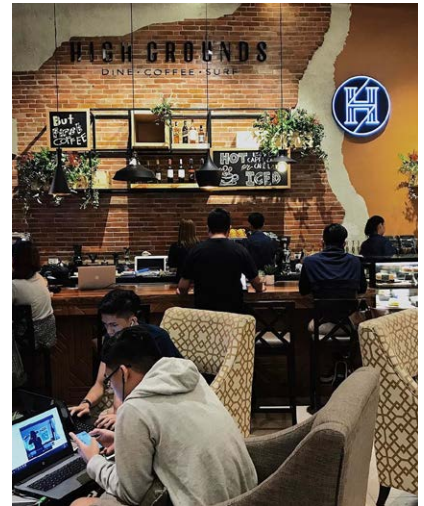
If you like working in cafés too, follow [@cofficehunter](#) on Instagram for reviews on the best (and sometimes, worst) coffices in the Metro. For yuppie-focused articles, go to [tinadivincula.com!](#)

PICK FIVE

Tin's Coffee Picks

Monte Café

Going all the way to Antipolo to go coffee hunting has its ups and downs (literally & figuratively), but when you find a coffee like Monte Café you'll realize that it's worth the extra mile. Think of it as your little "workation." Plus, you'll enjoy the isolation from the city. Less distractions = more work done.



High Grounds Café

Here's a #coffeehunter find for both gamers and remote workers! It's pretty huge; the size and the number of people are overwhelming. It's like an institution! But what I love most is that they serve great food (try their salmon and pork belly!) and coffee. It's perfect for those loooong hours in front of your laptop.



Single Origin

Single Origin's BGC branch is open until 1AM, but their coffee had me buzzed up to 3AM. Which isn't exactly a good thing, but it was what I needed for that night to finish work. (We all have those days.) This gets an A+ for night owl

Negative Space

Negative Space Café is a must-visit #coffeehunter find if you're in the Maginhawa area. They serve delicious Japanese coffee and mind-fuel food, plus, their space is artsy AF. You'll find a somewhat co-working/studying vibe with their table arrangement and it will get you right in the zone. And oh, when I visited, the owners' pet Akita said hi!



Jiro Coffee Studio

Jiro Coffee Studio is a café full of surprises, right from their Cocospresso up to their Pregnant Sandwich. Despite having no Wi-Fi and a shortage of sockets, the simplistic look of the place makes it easier for me to focus on my writing.



QUILL

AN
EPITAPH
FOR
SEVEN
YEARS
IN
EXILE

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Timothy Percival

Much time had been wondered away on cooking eggs. Their shells would blemish in the chill as it carried on into the spring. The flames were cast iron, and the air between the heat and where the glass panes had been secured by each year's coat of paint, would set this existence apart. They'd watch beetles and kestrels and speculate as to how nature had thought best to anchor the horizon. They'd seen all the animals too small for their skin and enclaves wooden like fountains of bark with arcs like branches like the permanence of seasons or the lost respect for bronze or sculpture. Everything rested here with the freedom of a tangled story.





Shot on Redscale 110 film at Camber Sands on the south coast of England, New Year 2017.



Follow Timothy on Instagram [@percivalstudio](https://www.instagram.com/percivalstudio), and head to [timothypercival.com](https://www.timothypercival.com) to explore his projects and shop his work.



Untitled.

Compass

TRAVEL



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Avid traveler *Robbie Bautista* recounts his autumn experiences in the Far East

156 Lost in Siem Reap

Artist *Kara Gonzales* ditches the usual itineraries and gets up close and personal with Siem Reap, Cambodia

166 Korea Less Traveled

Writer *Danielle Austria* falls for the quiet charms of South Korea's Busan and Daegu



TOFUKUJI

At the temple grounds of Tofukuji, the bright orange leaves of trees in autumn scatter like flames at the mercy of the wind.

LENS



ASIA

FALLING FOR AUTUMN

A tour of the Far East in autumn time
with *Robbie Bautista*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY *Robbie Bautista*



SEORAKSAN

Even better than tourist favorite Nami Island, the Seoraksan National Park site is home to several ancient temples and castles amidst a natural backdrop.

T

The Philippine's tropical climate is both a gift and a curse to us all. We rejoice once the summer sun calls us out to our beloved islands' coasts, then suddenly thirst for a downpour once it gets a little too hot and humid for comfort. When the monsoons hit, people are peeved by wet socks and even worse traffic that we start longing for a pocketful of sunshine.

But that is the reality of our motherland's mood swings. For seasons beyond wet and dry, we have to venture out of the country to experience the biting cold of winter, the blooming colors of spring and the fiery foliage of autumn. For a dose of the latter, there's no better region to explore in our continent than the Far East.

The underrated Taiwan may not be the most ideal place for fall, but the sweater weather and chill atmosphere makes up for the lack of maturing leaves. The capital boasts plenty of green spaces and creative parks to fill your free time. But for those who want to discover why the Portuguese called Taiwan "Ilha Formosa", a journey around the island might be better.

An hour by high speed rail can take you to the province of Taichung, where various themed museums, flower farms and the controversial Rainbow Village might challenge your grid goals. Head further down and you'll see the famed Sun Moon Lake, or take a bus north of Taipei to the town of teahouses in Jiufen.





SEORAKSAN

Sokcho's main tourist draw comes from those who wish to hike the numerous courses within the Seoraksan National Park, one of South Korea's candidates for a UNESCO World Heritage title.



In South Korea, there is a place two hours away from Seoul that is a much better alternative to Nami Island. Known as the gateway to Seoraksan National Park and for its close proximity to the North Korean border (and Pokèmons, too!), Sokcho is a simple fishing town that offers affordable king crab and hot street food to complement the cool sea breeze that fills the air.

Hike down the numerous trails found in Seoraksan and race with *ahjummas* as they climb to the top of Ulsanbawi. At the peak, a blanket of reds and browns cover the land below. The view is worth all the effort.

But true fans of fall foliage may agree: nothing beats exploring Kansai in November.

In Osaka, ginkgo trees light up the dull streets of the city with a shower of tiny yellow leaves that eventually drown out the gray pavement. And a train to Kyoto will bring you to well-manicured temple gardens that have been maintained for hundreds of years, each bearing distinct qualities from one another. There is no shortage of autumn's warm tints anywhere you go, but a long walk from Gion District's Yasaka Shrine and Maruyama Park to the elevated temple ground of Kiyomizudera would be a great start.

Autumn is not for everyone, what with its dying leaves and overcast skies. But if you take a moment and let the warmth of fall seep through all those layers of clothing, you'll get why some people believe it is "the year's last, loveliest smile". ●

U L S A N B A W I

Hiking with the *ahjummas*, the trail to the peak of Ulsanbawi's rock formations can take a couple of hours. The path is well-established and generally safe, but it does get a bit uncomfortable for acrophobes at the last few stair steps. For those who persist, the reward is a breathtaking view of a valley floor blanketed with orange and green trees.



O S A K A

The golden leaves of the numerous ginkgo trees near the Osaka Castle grounds brighten up the day of park-goers.

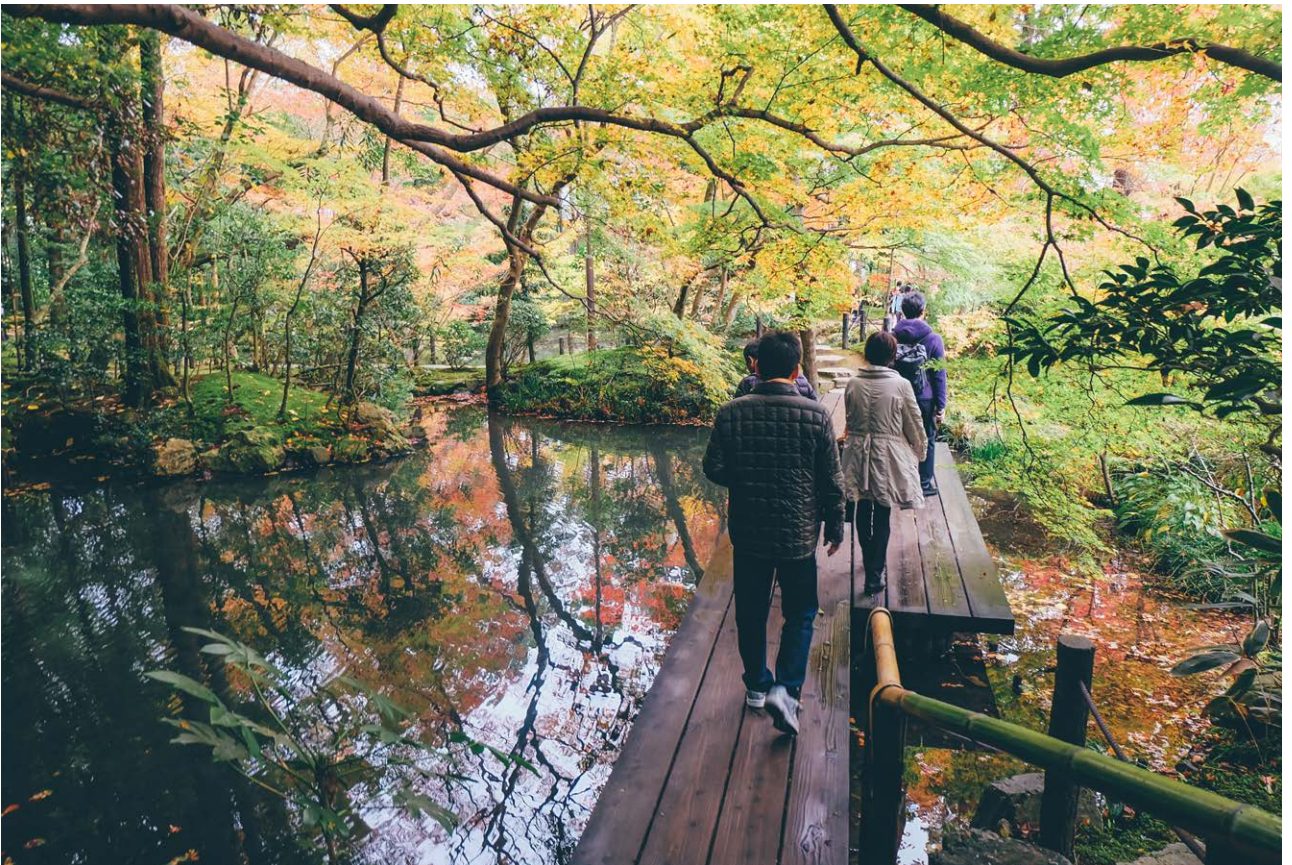


NANZENJI

In Kyoto, Nanzenji Temple is just one of the perfect spots to get lost in at the height of Kansai's autumn season, especially if one is lucky enough to walk into the garden centered around a pond.

K Y O T O

Many garden parks in Japan have a curated quality about them. They almost seem too perfect; it's as if the twist of each branch, the curl of each leaf, and the concentric ripples of water whenever it is disturbed have all been carefully rehearsed and orchestrated.



Robbie writes about his explorations at robxbautista.com/horizons and posts what he sees on his Instagram [@robxbautista](https://www.instagram.com/robxbautista).

COMPASS

Lost in Siem Reap

Kara Gonzales explores
Cambodia's historic temple city
ignoring the usual itineraries



THE MONK

My heart skipped a beat upon seeing a Buddhist monk within the walls of the greatest Buddhist structure in the world. He had just given me a blessing along with a red string bracelet when I asked if I could take a photo. The signature orange robes were a striking contrast to the temple's cold grey walls, and his serene expression would always make me wonder about what secrets of the world he knows, or what it feels like to be bald and wearing those comfortable looking robes.



When I travel, I intentionally get lost.

Finding yourself in the middle of unfamiliar territory, not knowing where you are, where to go or what to do can be exciting and terrifying at the same time. But as with all things in life, it's all a matter of perspective.

The most recent place I found myself lost in were the intoxicatingly colorful streets of Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Siem Reap is best known for its temple complexes, most notably Angkor Wat—the largest religious monument in the world. Built in the early 12th Century, it was originally a temple for the Hindu god Vishnu, before it became a Buddhist temple in the latter part of the century.

But I didn't go there for the temples.

WHAT LOCALS DO

With the smoldering heat and the intense humidity in Siem Reap, locals can be found hanging out and resting under the ample shade provided by the trees. Buddhists visit Angkor Wat throughout the year. This local family had just come from the main structure of Angkor Wat, and is waiting for the rest of their party to exit before crossing the moat to the other side.



KHMER GIRL

This beautiful girl and the other two women with her didn't speak any English, but were all laughter and smiles when we found ourselves crammed into the same dead end in one of the many twists and turns inside Angkor

Wat. I raised my camera and smiled at her, and she instantly posed for me. I wish the other two had joined – they were all wearing the same bamboo hat that most locals had on.



THE MARKETS

A plethora of sights and smells are everywhere in Siem Reap. The Old Market area has everything from clothes, jewelry, and little souvenirs to fresh fruit, vegetables, meats and dried food items seen here. All bunched up together with barely any space in between them, it was interesting to observe (and occasionally buy), with all the smiling locals greeting you and offering you their goods as you walk by.

STREETS OF SIEM REAP

Motorcycle-driven modes of transportation called *tuktuks* line the streets everywhere in Siem Reap. If they aren't for transport, they're food stalls that offer anything and everything from simple meals to fresh fruit shakes, rolled ice cream treats or even insects on a stick. Some even had fish spas on them! The overabundance of drivers offering \$2 *tuktuk* rides was amusing at first, but when you realize how many people are depending on the *tuktuks* for their daily source of income, it becomes an entirely different story altogether.





PLEASANT SURPRISES

I had no idea that there was even a Khmer New Year until our tuktuk driver told me what all the preparations in the streets was all about. Everyone was busy buying and/or selling decorations, preparing for three-day long festivities, to celebrate the end of the harvesting season and before the rainy season starts. It was a pleasant surprise to be roaming around the city, then suddenly finding yourself in the middle of a colorful, festive little street or alleyway.



Khmer Ceramics
Fine Arts Centre
- Where Craftsmanship meets Fine Arts

Khmer Ceramics
Fine Arts Centre
- Where Craftsmanship meets Fine Arts

KHMER CERAMICS

One of the older, more traditional shops in Siem Reap that I had to hunt for was this Kher ceramic shop. My sister had once gone to Siem Reap and wanted me to see this beautiful gem of a shop that combined the old and the new, giving it its own rustic charm and appeal. The ceramics they sold were also stunning, and the craftsmanship put into every piece was just as exquisite.



K R A M A

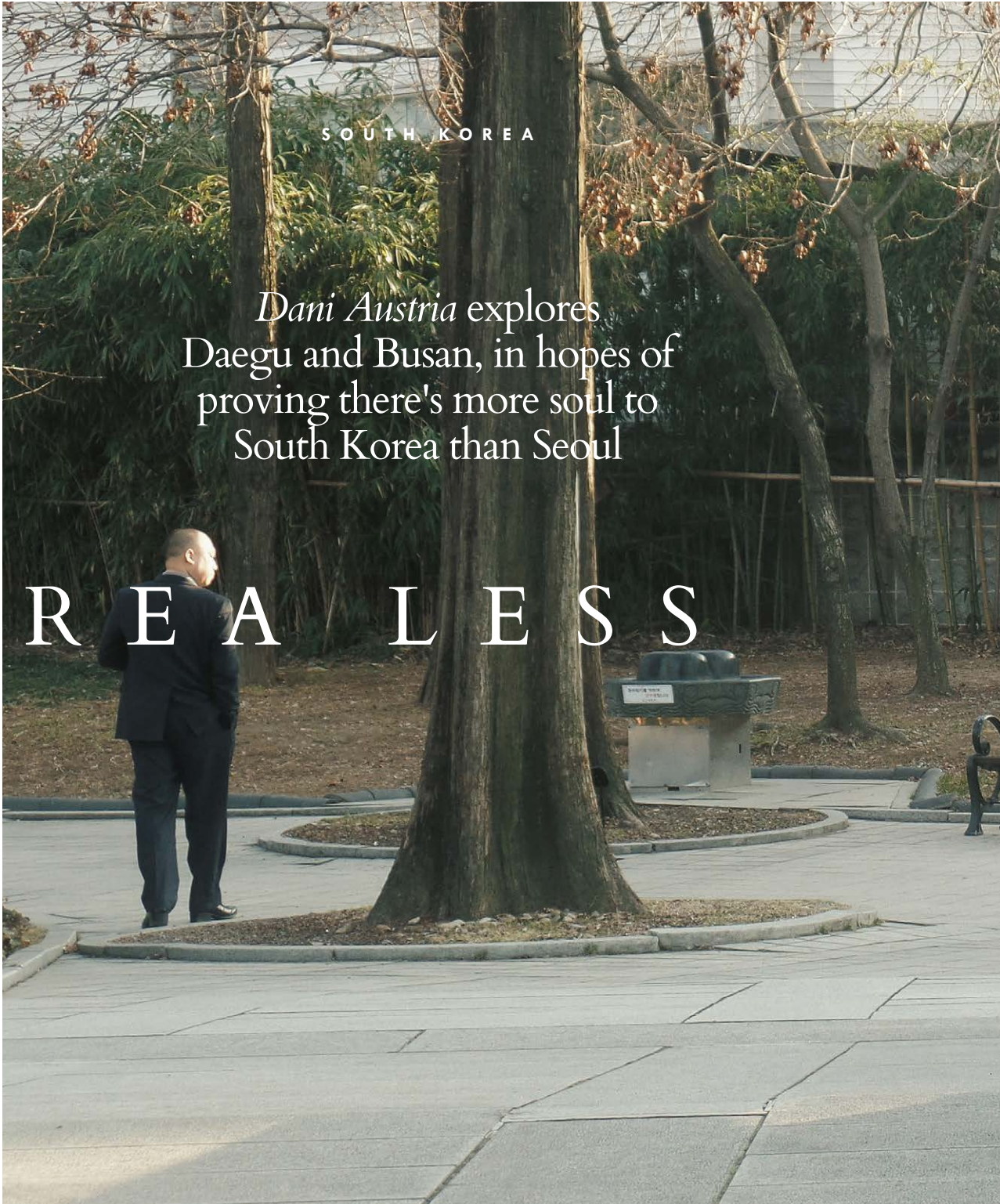
This traditional Cambodian piece of fabric/garment called *krama* can be seen everywhere in Siem Reap. Locals wear them as bandanas, scarfs, to cover their faces while on their motorbikes, and even just as accessories or decoration. The thin woven material is very breathable, and the variety of colors is endless. They look so good and so natural to the Khmer people – the *kramas* add so much to their character and look as a people, as well as to the line of street stalls that sell them.

ZONED IN

I saw an elderly woman weaving the traditional Khmer scarf as I was roaming around the Night Market one evening. It was a pretty big shop selling *krama*, as well as other linens like tablecloths and blankets made of the same material. The woman was so focused on what she was doing, her hands and feet precise in their movements that I don't think she even noticed everyone else who was watching her or taking her photos.



Kara Gonzales is an advocate of Mental Health Awareness and believes that opening ourselves to understanding mental health is all it takes to end the stigma. Follow her on instagram [@kara.gonzales](https://www.instagram.com/kara.gonzales) where she tries to keep things interesting with her works and occasional (dry/weird/if you can even call it) humor.



SOUTH KOREA

Dani Austria explores
Daegu and Busan, in hopes of
proving there's more soul to
South Korea than Seoul

K O R E A L E S S



TRAVELED

GYEONGSANG GAMYEONG PARK

Rich in history and spaces for respite, Gyeongsang Gamyeong Park is loved by locals. People come here to take a break from their daily activities, savoring the fresh air provided by the park's generous patches of greenery.

At the heart of it is a *hanok* (a traditional Korean house) that once served as the headquarters of Joseon Dynasty governors.

DAEGU



83 TOWER

Also known as Daegu Tower or Woobang Tower, it is the city's marker; the counterpart of Namsan Seoul Tower and Busan Tower. Possibly the most touristy spot in Daegu, it houses cafés and restaurants, and an observatory deck for spectacular landscapes (at day and night) and various photo ops for couples. For the K-Drama crazy, 83 Tower is inside E-World, where scenes from the phenomenal *Weightlifting Fairy Kim Bok Joo* was filmed.

DALSEONG PARK

Even during winter, when some trees are balding and the dry grass lawns are anything but inviting, Dalseong Park remains beautiful. Here, there are plenty of ways to spend a slow afternoon. On ground, there's a grassy plaza spacious enough for picnicking and sauntering, while higher up the walls, there's a beginner's hike that offers a commanding perspective of the district. For people-watchers, you can spot little children running around and feeding Korean magpies, and elderlies engrossed in a game of *janggi* (derived from the Chinese board game *go*).





SEOMUN MARKET

Get your fill of *kal-guksu* (knife-cut noodles), *sujebi* (hand-torn noodles), *bibimbap* (mixed rice), and some bargain-shopping at the historical Seomun Market, which dates back to the Joseon Dynasty. At the time of my visit, Seomun—also Daegu’s biggest traditional market—was still recovering from a massive, two-day fire that swept over its stalls in November. One could still find soot-covered traces of the blaze, but the energy of the people and its robust local culture are unmarred.

ANILSA TEMPLE

The road to the top of Apsan is paved with steep crawls and quite a few temples. One of the latter is Anilsa Temple; to get there, hikers must follow the trail from the Anjiranggol entrance. You'll know you're quite close to Anilsa when you see a concrete uphill road that seems to defy gravity and is actually quite harder to walk on than the natural slopes.





DAEGU APSAN PARK

To reach Apsan Observatory, you can either ride a cable car or hike along one of the mountain's many trails. I aimed for the easy way up but failed to find where it starts, so I ended up treading Apsan's steep and slippery trails in city clothes, on a winter afternoon. My rewards—for the impromptu workout session, and the embarrassment of not being properly dressed and fit for a “leisurely walk”, as it was for *ahjummas* and *ahjussis*—were fresh air (Nature's Best™) and an overlooking view of the Daegu basin. This is how you leave a city.

BUSAN

BUSAN TOWER

Standing as a symbol for South Korea's City of Tomorrow is the 120-meter Busan Tower.

Its observatory offers a panoramic picture of the city's sky and coastlines, and on a clear day, they say you can even catch a glimpse of Japan. There's also something special about looking *at* the tower than from it; atop Lotte Mall's top deck, as Yongdusan's dragon head peak swallows up the last rays of sunlight.





PORT OF BUSAN

Busan has big dreams for its Port. In 2010, a new Port began catering to internationally-operated, mega ships, while the (old) North Port continues to serve Asian trade. The Port of Busan was built at the mouth of Nakdong River, which runs through Busan and Daegu, and opens to the Sea of Japan.



GAMCHEON CULTURE VILLAGE

Sorry, Busan, it's neither Santorini nor Machu Picchu—not even close. Besides, why should Gamcheon Culture Village be Korea's version of something else when it has its own story tell? Formerly a hilltop slum, the Gamcheon of today was founded on the Taegukdo teaching of giving way for others to prosper. More than just novelty, the village's layered landscape was designed in such a way that no house block another's view.

HAEUNDAE BEACH

One can't talk about Busan without talking about Haeundae. Arguably the city's most popular district, it is home to an eponymous beach that gets packed with vacationers and their multi-colored parasols in the summer. In the winter, the stretch is relatively freer (no parasols, only crowds) for gallivanting. What doesn't change over the seasons? The mesmerizing way the sun reflects on the beach's bright blue waters and golden sands, as it slides down between Busan's coastal mountains and cityscape.





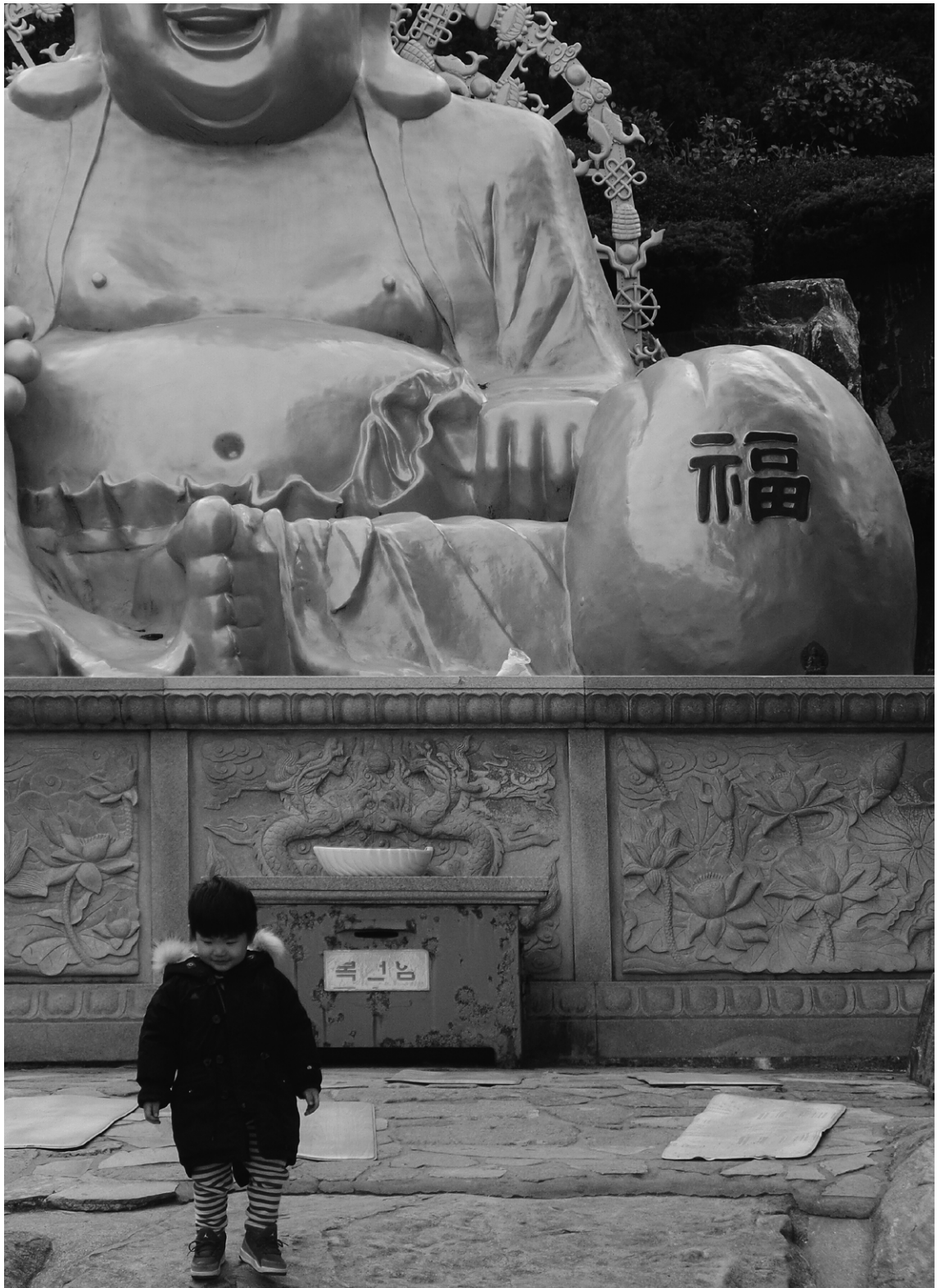
GWANGAN BRIDGE

At night, the crowd from Haeundae moves to Gwangalli Beach (some 20 minutes away), bringing over food, fireworks and friends as they watch the Gwangang Bridge light up in red and purple hues. Connecting Namcheon-dong and Centum City, it is the city's largest bridge over water and the second longest bridge in South Korea.



HAEDO YONGGUNGSA TEMPLE

A heavenly mirage atop a rocky coast, this 600-year old Buddhist temple is a sight to behold (That is, if you could look past the selfie-stick toting crowds). Among Korean temples, it is unique in that it is by the sea, while most are snug in the mountains. Haedong Yonggungsa is also a good spot to watch the sunrise—a New Year’s tradition among locals who come to pray for their families.



Read more about Dani's 10-day, solo sojourn in South Korea on daniaustria.com/blog. Follow [@awsmchos](https://www.instagram.com/awsmchos) on Instagram.



Dig your own.

Palate

FOOD



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Chef's Choice

Commissary chef
Andrea Baytion
on moving in,
and falling in love
with the culinary
heaven that is
Hong Kong

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*
IMAGES *Andrea Baytion*

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

My name's Andrea Baytion. I like ramming myself face-first into challenges which is how I ended up moving to Hong Kong. Clearly, I love to eat and because I'm unsettled by the knowledge of not being able to try all the good food there is to try, I spend my free time trying and exploring what I can.

What sparked your interest in the culinary arts? Have you always been interested in gastronomy?

It's all my parents' fault. My gastronomic awakening stemmed from their love for travel. Every time they came home, they had a variety of food with them that I would consume with utter curiosity. When it comes to cooking, ever since I was a kid, I've always craved the satisfaction of preparing my own meals, as well as the ultimate pleasure of eating and enjoying it with friends and family.

You are a commissary chef working in Hong Kong, one of Asia's most-visited culinary destinations. How is it working in such a vibrant culinary atmosphere?

I have multitudes of emotions concerning life in Hong Kong, but all of them culminate in how it never ceases to be an exciting place to be in. Admittedly, my tastes have changed so much both in the way I eat and the way I work simply because the transience of the Hong Kong food scene has molded its patrons into a very tough crowd to please, and I've had amazing (and patient) mentors.

When did you first move in into Hong Kong? What were some of the challenges and realizations you faced making a living in a foreign land? And how did this help you adapt?

I moved to Hong Kong in July 2013, just a few months after graduating, and never looked back. The biggest challenge I had to overcome was shedding that veil of entitlement I had when I started working. I had to quickly learn to be independent, ride the wave of Hong Kong's fast-paced lifestyle and continuously remind myself that people here are not rude. It's just how they are, nothing personal, so deal with it.



Left: Tartare, The Continental

Below: Buttered lobster, The Continental

Opposite page:

Right: Beef brisket noodles, Kau Kee

Inset: Smoked salmon and caviar, The Continental

Below right: Scallop crudo with bee pollen and grapefruit, Bread & Beast

Tell us about the Filipino community there. What insights did you gain as part of a community of locals abroad?

It's a relief that there are so many Filipinos here. Whenever I crave for that familiar flavor, it's good to know that there are several places I can run to that are open until the wee hours of the night. It feels special to be part of the Filipino community in Hong Kong because we're this group of people with a different culture and set of values that outsiders get curious about.

I learned to be more open-minded and empathetic. We never truly understand the difficulty of being a Filipino working away from everyone and everything they hold dear until we see it. We all have to endure some degree of discrimination, but then there are others who endure abuse by employers, or even worse, get screwed over by their own families for more money.

Tell us about the Hong Kong culinary scene. Any emerging trends to take note of?

Hong Kong's culinary scene is dynamic due to the influence of the many foreigners that live here. There are some restaurants that serve fusion cuisine, some combinations we never even thought could work or exist. There are also some that don't even serve amazing food but are nice places to drink and chill. It never gets boring. If a restaurant isn't up to par, you definitely will not see it for long.

Admittedly, I tend to deviate from following trends but something I'm curious about are restaurants that are hidden up in flats or buildings (like the



infamous Chungking Mansion) that seem kind of sketchy but actually serve delicious, inexpensive and authentic food. I found that most of those serve Nepalese, Indian or African cuisine.

What do you love or hate about Hong Kong cuisine?

I honestly have nothing I hate, as of now, about Hong Kong cuisine. I'm a complete whore for it. One thing, though, is that there are some places that depend too much on MSG, which is never healthy, and restaurants seldom provide napkins. It's a social responsibility to have your own packet of tissues.

If a traveler could only try one Hong Kong dish, what would you recommend?

Hands down, beef brisket noodles. Personally, that's my go-to because I have little consideration for my cholesterol. It's composed of noodles and a hearty broth topped with thick slices of melt-in-your-mouth beef brisket that's been boiling in a pot, alongside different beef innards that are equally sinful and flavorful.

What would comprise your ideal "last meal"?

My ideal last meal would start with a charcuterie board of different Spanish cold cuts and burrata drizzled with really good olive oil, sea salt and freshly ground pepper, followed by callos over rice prepared by my dad, and for dessert, lemon tart prepared by myself. I've always imagined this as a casual late-night pig-out standing at the kitchen counter with my family and best friends. We'll be drinking wine and ice-cold water.

Cooking is your passion, but do you have other hobbies that you indulge in on your free time?

A regular day off is usually me going to my favorite cafe or bar with a book or article, or going around Hong Kong to try restaurants and meet people. I enjoy biking too when the weather is more forgiving. Since I'm also attempting to turn my Instagram into a properly curated food blog, I'm studying how to use my camera to achieve the aesthetic I want to convey. ●

Unfortunately, Andrea's online activities are sporadic. If you don't mind it, then tune in to her Instagram [@ms.enplace](https://www.instagram.com/ms.enplace) for inspired moments of gluttony.





RUMINATIONS

Citizenship: Fast Food

When a red bee is just as nationalistic as José Rizal

WORDS Patricia Herbolario

IMAGE Diyalogo

W

When I was in college we had an exchange student from Spain. She was a lovely girl, smart to boot. One time in class, our professor, Dr. Jerry Kliatcho, asked: “Give me a brand you hate.” Responses from the class ranged from a forever-delayed airline, a low-quality mall, a badly-serviced bank, a slow telco, basically the worse of the worse. Brands that we have a love-hate relationship with. We use their services, sure, most of times, out of necessity, but various factors, which range from service inefficiency to looking 'masa' deter us from loving it.

Our exchange student from Spain raised her hand and confidently exclaimed: “Jollibee”. Milliseconds after mentioning the beloved Filipino brand, the entire class, mostly made up of Filipino marketing students, started throwing the shade back at her.

“You don’t have friends anymore, Christina!” joked one of my classmates.

“No one’s going to have lunch with you anymore,” jokes another.

Even our professor raised an eyebrow at the response. “Why do you hate it?” he asks.

While I could no longer remember what Christina said word-per-word, I could remember that she said it had something to do with the smell of Jollibee. To which, ironically, is one of the brand’s main selling points. Any Filipino studying marketing will know Mining Ordones’ signature line “Langhap Sarap”. An observation the famed

and late copywriter made for Jollibee years ago is still relevant to the brand today. For our foreign exchange student however, it wasn’t a selling point.

It was then did I wonder, Jollibee is just a fast food chain. They serve food like any other chain, but why then was it that we, a majority of Filipinos, would defend Jollibee to our deathbeds? It’s not like the red bee and his crew freed us from colonization. But why then, when we think of being Filipino, we somehow think of Jollibee and ChickenJoy? The same goes for other brands, Mcdonald’s and a quarter pounder with an upsize is so American, and Tim Hortons, a hockey player who started a coffee shop is now household brand beloved by Canadians and coffee fans everywhere. Why was it that these brands, despite just being food chains, represent a nation? Were these corporations just baking on nationalistic pride to sell more McNuggets and Timbits?

Let’s approach this logically and subjectively

Logically, and if we are talking about marketing principles here, relating one’s brand to nationalistic pride is basically emotional marketing. How does a Kopitiam remind one of Singapore or how does Cafe de Coral take you back to Hong Kong? Branding and Brand Experience. These brands are designed to remind you of being Filipino, Canadian, Singaporean, and so on through your contact points in and out of the store. Their marketing materials are targeted to do the same.

The debate of relating a food brand to one's nationalism as a good thing or a bad thing is an open open-ended question.

Their products? Halo-Halo Sundae? Hainanese Chicken? Maple Iced Coffee? All of these brands embrace their respective and serve their local cuisines on their menu, it's pretty hard to miss the nationalism there.

While memes are not (yet) accepted as a basis for building one's case, allow me to do so just this once. The Twitter-verse reacted to this year's Miss Universe Best in National Costume. After all, Ms. Malaysia did have her own backdrop with her dress that weighed around five kilos, points for her. What shocked me however is that one suer said that next year, the Philippine candidate fighting for the crown should wear a Jollibee costume. A beautiful lady in a red bee costume is far from the *maria clara* gowns with the Imelda Marcos hair-do, but who can argue? Putting our candidate in that costume just might win over Filipinos around the world, and hopefully the panel of judges would get the inside joke. We have related this brand too much to the point that we could consider the kiddie-party costume a national attire. And mind you, Jollibee also has worn a *barong Tagalog* during formal occasions.

Another thing to consider is that these stores have somehow turned into tourist attractions. I could remember so well posing in front of a Tim Hortons in the middle of Calgary when I went for my first #TimmyRun. Hawker centers in Singapore? If you've been, chances are you took a photo that you ate there. As tourists, we consider these places and the food they serve as a way to connect with the local culture. It helps us become less foreign and more familiar with their customs. If you're a local, it's a way to reconnect with your nationality.

Even when I head out to other countries in Asia or Northern America, the sight of that red bee reminds me of Manila. It might be the fact that the cashiers are Filipino too, the people who eat in are Filipino, or the strong aroma of

ChickenJoy, whatever it is, it is more of a "home base" than the Embassy of the Philippines in that country.

Localizing one's brand from one nationality to another is also something we see nowadays. With KFC's First Filipino Colonel campaign taking everyone's newsfeed by storm, localization is also something to consider in this conversation of nationalistic branding. Everyone knows that the colonel is a Caucasian man in a white suit but in this recent campaign, the Caucasian man is localized by Ronaldo Valdez, a local Filipino actor. But let's allot that topic for a different issue.

Every time I come home from a long trip abroad, I instinctively look for the closest Jollibee to get my ChickenJoy fix with a side of a sundae. Not my grandmother's cooking, not lechon, not kare-kare. I was looking ChickenJoy with a sundae, with their very oily fries sometimes. Why? I'm not quite sure but it warms me up and reminds me that I'm home once I do.

I wouldn't say that these big corporations are capitalizing solely on emotionally relating their brands to their respective nationalities, but they are using it somehow to make you fall in love and connect with their brands. Does it make you consume their products more? I can't be quite sure because there's no numbers to prove it. Is it a bad thing that they're using nationalism in their brand agenda? Not necessarily because these brands have stuck with each country in a special way. The debate of relating a food brand to one's nationalism as a good thing or a bad thing is an open open-ended question. But one thing is for sure, you get slightly offended and get on the defensive side when someone tells you Jollibee smells pungent. ●

For more foodi-cisms and flatlay goals, follow Patricia on Instagram [@littlemisssteapat](https://www.instagram.com/littlemisssteapat)



I don't know what I'm doing/ but something
tells me I should

Expensive print on canvas (2018)
PHP130,000.00



MY REGULAR

Umigo Okonomiyaki at Dohtonbori

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY *Vida Cruz*

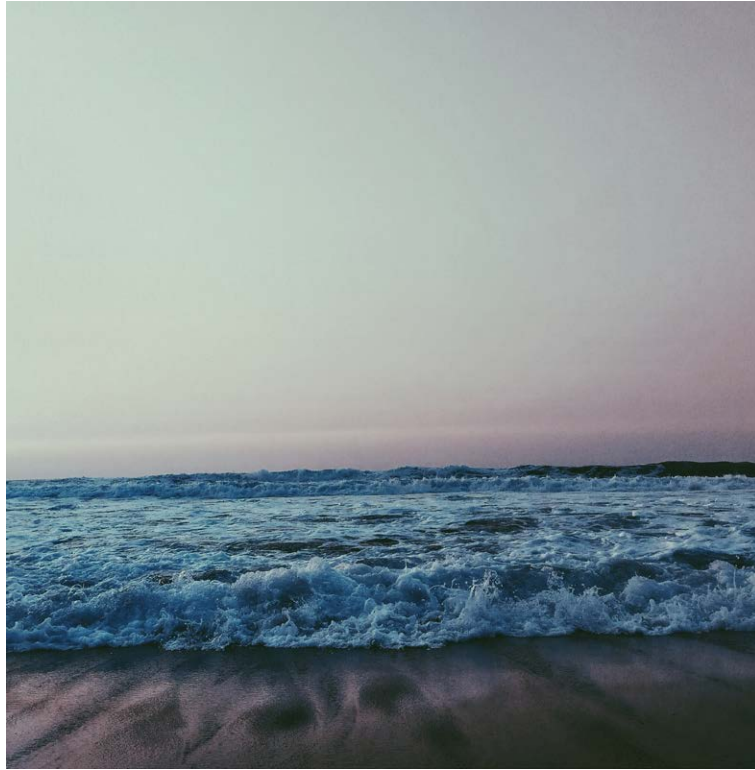
Dohtonbori's *umigo okonomiyaki* is the answer to the question of “what are some other Japanese food aside from sushi, katsudon and sukiyaki?” Imagine a savory, salty pancake with five types of seafood (shrimp, squid, octopus, scallop, *mentaiko*) grilled to perfection before your very eyes, and then brushed with okonomiyaki sauce, showered in Japanese mayo and sprinkled with seaweed bits. The waitress assisting in the preparations will then ask you how many slices you'd like—I recommend six so that you can sit a while longer savoring the perfect blend of the above flavors with the egg and cabbage. If you come to Dohtonbori with a date or a group, make sure you eat these solo, as the pancakes are good for only one person.

HOW MUCH P360

WHERE Dohtonbori, Second Floor, UP Town Center, Katipunan Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City



Self-portrait with my eyes closed.



LOCATION *La Union* DATE *March 2016*

Parting Shot

A VISUAL ENDNOTE

By Jona Atienza

That one billionth of a second before the waves crash on the shore.
A pause. An unusual stillness of a matter that moves infinitely.

I am probably talking about life.
Or simply describing my favorite photograph of the ocean.

Follow Jona on Instagram [@jonaloren](#).
Watch out for [@nancyandmartha](#) and [@neverthecoolkidph](#).

