

Kanto

CREATIVE CORNERS N° 1, MMXX

Changemakers

THE ACTION ISSUE

ANGLES

Sparking design discourse with *Design Anthology* and crafting reusable spaces with *A Work of Substance*

PALATE

Good Food Community on turning dissatisfaction into action with community-shared agriculture

ITINERARY

Disconnecting from the flurry of city life with an eye on sustainable tourism with the folks of *Camp Isla*

The call for change has never rung louder

This issue marks Kanto's return from our longest hiatus yet. For us, it has been a full year of reflecting on the work thus far, reminding ourselves why and for whom we write, unlearning our biases, and finding our flow.

It sounds rosy compared to the world at large, whose collective 2019 (and counting) has been...in a word: exhausting. Even as I write this note, humanity is grasping at straws trying to curb an unfolding crisis. To call our present reality a "shit storm" is an understatement, and to forcibly be made conscious of our own unpreparedness for the worst is humbling (if not scary).

There is an urgency for change: in how we use the planet's resources, in how we treat those we perceive to be different from us, in how we view ourselves, in how we think and operate as a society—and there has been for years. But where it should come from and what it means are where we often miss the mark.

Whereas awareness was once the north star for many causes, today it's no longer enough. One could argue that there's too much of it and too little of what should come next. "Wokeness", a co-opted label that initially meant so much more, has ironically become a barrier rather than a launching pad for action. And we get it. As we become more aware of the world's many problems, we—as individuals—are bogged down by our comparative smallness to the tasks at hand. And even when we do find the conviction to do something, we are tempted to think that our efforts are probably inconsequential. Maybe it is, but...what if it isn't?

In the next pages, you will meet a number of Changemakers who have proven that a single decisive action can lead to a world of difference. They show us how in following through with our advocacies, challenging industry norms and making self-directed efforts, we may just be able to—as the cliché goes—build a better world (or bide more time for the one we're in). ●



Dani

[@awsmchos](#)



On the cover: Tarish Zamora (@tarishzamora),
photographed by Matthew Carpio

Kanto

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"Cartellino is an initiative to make art [accessible] for everyone."

“Have an open mind. Have crazy ideas, draw!”

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“You need to create work that you want to get, even if you haven’t done it before.”

Awesome People

WHO MADE THIS ISSUE POSSIBLE



Celine Murillo is a writer obsessed with the natural world, most particularly trees. She tries to make conscious choices every day to live sustainably – even if it means doing away with modern conveniences.

Her ultimate dream is to have a solar-powered, food-independent home within a forest she personally planted.

How can creativity be a force for change? Creative work not only raise awareness – it can also make people care. And when we truly care about something? We do everything to protect it.



How can creativity be a force for change? Whether you define creativity as a beautifully-designed material or a new way of thinking, there is room for our work—coupled with intention and discipline—to make ripples of change.

- Danielle Austria

Jay Asiddao is into fitness and philosophy, typically thinking about the five ways of proving the next set's existence between workouts.

How can creativity be a force for change? Being creative involves seeing the new not as a threat, but as a tool; a useful mindset in tackling problems.



How can creativity be a force for change? As a designer, I've always seen creativity not as some rare gift enjoyed by a few but an innate human ability to craft solutions. Be a force for good by nourishing and sharing this skill with others who can learn and benefit from it.

- Patrick Kasingsing



Vincent Ong is a freelance writer from Cebu City. His work has appeared on *Preview*, *Esquire Philippines*, *Town & Country Philippines* and *CNN Philippines Life*.



Charisse "Chin-Chin" Refuerzo is a multimedia artist and a walking pun-maCHINE with a quirky sense of humor. Jokes aside, she is an aspiring visual storyteller who enjoys capturing slices of life in her everyday commute. She believes the power of kindness and selflessness can achieve so much. **How can creativity be a force for change?**

Creativity is an endless process of thinking. It can be a tool to challenge humans in broadening their perspective in life.





ANGLES

Daring by Design

Interior designer turned editor-in-chief *Suzy Annetta* flouts naysayers with a bold design title crafted for the digital age

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Jeremy Smart*

Hello! Kindly introduce yourself.

Hello, I'm Suzy, editor-in-chief of *Design Anthology* magazine and co-founder of Fifth Black Media.

The design world is not lacking for publications and sites but you persevered with *Design Anthology*, now a six-year-old print title with a readership of 80,000 in 30 countries. How did it all start?

It's quite a long story, longer than the six years we've been around.

I came to Hong Kong in 2005 with a company I'd previously worked for a few years in Tokyo. The role wasn't as fulfilling creatively as I'd hoped so I started writing a design blog in my spare time. The blog readership grew over the years, which is always a surprise to me as it was meant to be something just for me. This was before Pinterest, so who knows what would have happened if I got hooked on that instead! But that whole idea of sharing content likely started then.

I had been working as an interior designer until I co-founded the magazine. I had been frustrated with the lack of good design magazines in the region, online or in print. It was a conversation with two friends at an event where they suggested that I start something new. I scoffed at the idea and thought (rightfully so) that it was a crazy idea. But it got me thinking, and I guess that's when the seed was planted. I started to do a bit of research and realized maybe it wasn't such a crazy idea, especially if we published digitally. We started planning in late 2013 and published our first issue in April 2014. The rest, as they say, is history.

It was not entirely difficult. There was a lot of paperwork to get through in setting up the company and registering a new publication in Hong Kong. When the timing is right, things fall into place and generally, that's how I felt in those early days. It was just myself for the first year until our first employee joined us, and then we steadily grew to where we are now.

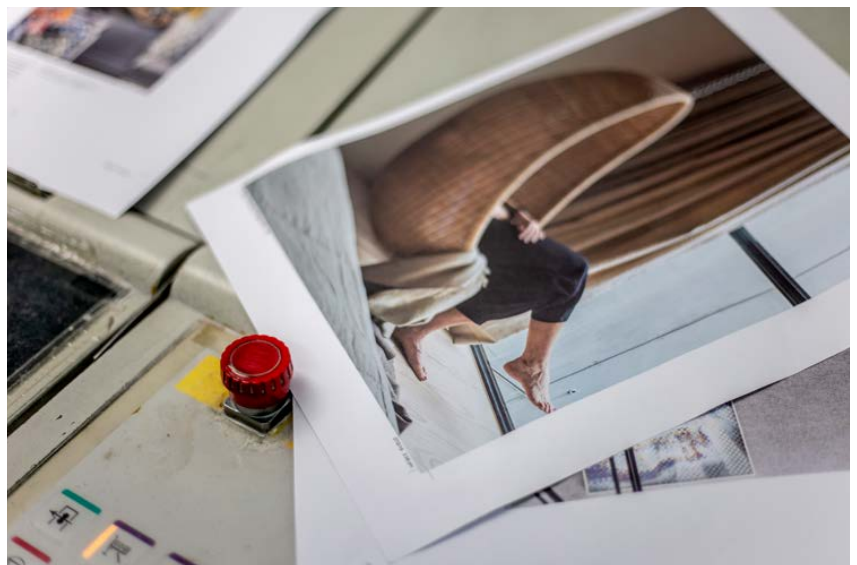
Suzy Annetta, editor in chief of *Design Anthology* and co-founder of Fifth Black Media





“I had been frustrated with the lack of good design magazines in the region, online or in print.”

SUZY ANNETTA





This spread: *Design Anthology* has been around for six years, a rare feat for a title born in the digital age, let alone one published in print. Suzy Annetta on the beginnings of the magazine: "I started to do a bit of research and realized maybe it wasn't such a crazy idea, especially if we published digitally. We started planning in late 2013 and published our first issue in April 2014. The rest, as they say, is history." The title has since spawned dedicated Australia and UK editions among other print products.

“The topics we cover in the magazine were curated really to appeal to my reading habits.”

SUZY ANNETTA

I was warned by a number of people in the industry that starting something new in media was not advisable, but the more I spoke to designers and the rest of the design community and after some advice from a PR friend in the know, we finally bit the bullet and decided we had to print.

Can you tell us a little bit about the scope of *Design Anthology*? What informed the decision to cover these topics?

The topics we cover in the magazine were curated really to appeal to my reading habits. I was looking for something that was not low-brow but also not high-brow or too academic. I am interested in topics as broad as urban planning and the issues that come with city living, along with architecture to interior design, art and product design. Essentially its design and urban culture from the macro to micro. I always get asked about the travel section as most people don't see the connection, but designers and architects travel frequently. It's one of the best ways to be inspired and to think outside of the everyday. Adding that section (including design-related hotels and destinations) was a no brainer for me.

What are the needs and issues the magazine was created to address? Like with regards to Asian representation in the field of design, was *Design Anthology* created to champion more Asian designers?

Absolutely. I mentioned my blog earlier. That was a good experience but when we started the magazine, we realized it would have an entirely different audience. We realized that there really was no other title focusing entirely on design in this region. Many of the design magazines I had seen in Asia were spending as many pages delving into projects in Australia, Europe, USA. It seemed the right time to launch something that could become a regional platform.

The other reason was that we could see the design community in Europe was just that—a community. That despite language differences they had the benefit of

geographical proximity. Asia is larger and more spread out and often separated by bodies of water. So the other outcome of creating *Design Anthology* would be to foster a sense of community across the region and to encourage dialogue. We noticed that the arts, architecture and design groups weren't really talking, despite their shared interests.

In the beginning, though it was a bit of a struggle, we didn't know anyone and it took a while to dig out the creative people to showcase. At first, we were worried that maybe not much was happening but, if anything, we've realized there is so much going on, and so much of it great, that we simply can't keep up. I think one of the greatest compliments we receive about the magazine is when readers say they didn't realize it was an "Asian" magazine or didn't notice the connection. To me that says the quality of work we publish from the region is as good as what is being published by designers elsewhere in the world. Our hunch paid off.



What made Hong Kong the ideal place to start *Design Anthology*? Why wouldn't it have worked anywhere else?

Hong Kong worked for me because it was just me at the start, for a good year. It's a small, dynamic, fast-paced city with people who are open to meeting each other, connecting and collaborating. In the first year, I was not just editor-in-chief— I also sold advertisements into the first issue (if not more), did all our accounts, dealt with the legal set up. The size, pace and work culture meant I could get a lot done in a day. I'm not sure anywhere else would have compared.

What would you say makes *Design Anthology*'s perspective and coverage of design distinctive? We've seen a slew of publications with the same sparse design aesthetic and niche content e.g. *Kinfolk*, *Cereal*, etc., and you have clearly found its market. What compels its readers to buy and turn its pages?

For us, it's about people. It's about spending time to get to know them and their work. I have met a number of the people we've featured, as well as our writers and

“We have never, and will never, rewrite a press release. We like to take the time to meet new people and uncover emerging talent. We've never been just about publishing stories about "big" names that sell magazines or are good clickbait.”

SUZY ANNETTA

photographers. Many of whom trained as designers or architects before changing their profession. I like to think this comes through in the stories and images we publish. I'd rather be known for that than any kind of visual aesthetic, to be honest.

We have never, and will never, rewrite a press release. We like to take the time to meet new people and uncover emerging talent. We've never been just about publishing stories about "big" names that sell magazines or are good clickbait. I'd like to think that we have more integrity and are more democratic. If their work speaks for itself, then we are interested. I think that sense of discovery is definitely one reason why people continue to buy and read the magazine.

What informed the minimalist branding and design for the magazine and how does this emphasize/ highlight its contents?

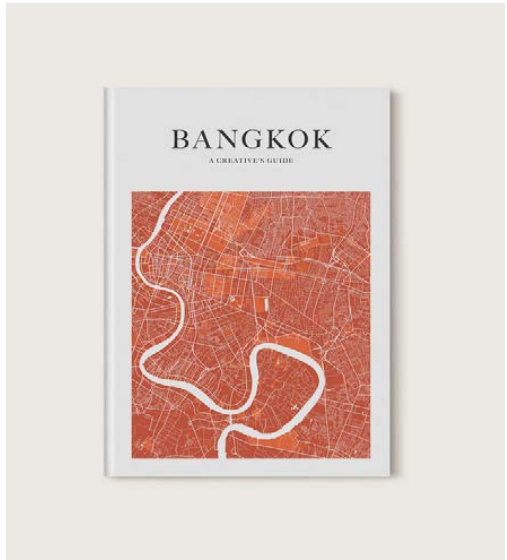
Having grown up an avid magazine reader, I wanted to create a design magazine that catered to my taste. Rather than it be about a certain aesthetic, it was about creating something that was clean and uncluttered where the images could really take center stage. I was tired of design magazines that showed tiny images, images that didn't relate to each other except on the page and cheap-looking glossy paper. So it was a bit of a selfish endeavor, but I had a hunch that I wasn't the only one feeling this way.

What convinced you that the magazine can better serve its mandate in the form of print? Years on from the first issue, would you say this is still the best medium for *Design Anthology*?

One of the early pieces of advice that I received, which I mentioned earlier, was that no one would take us seriously if we were just online. And I agreed with that. To be honest, I have noticed across the world that our readership especially (designers and architects) still buy books and magazines. People will say print is dead, and they'll tell you that people in Asia don't read print, or that Millennials don't buy books and magazines. It's simply not true. So while I still think it's the best medium for *Design Anthology*, it's not the only medium for us.



This page: The *Design Anthology* brand has grown to include coveted tomes such as *Design in Asia: The New Wave*, an upcoming survey of 100 of Asia's brightest design talents, and a travel guide to one of Asia's most visited cities and certified design mecca with *Bangkok: A Creatives Guide*.



What has running *Design Anthology* revealed to you about design that proved elusive when you worked as an interior designer? How has this shaped the way you think and do design?

That's a really good question. Sadly, I don't really do any design work these days, I simply don't have the time. Maybe my days as a designer shaped how I think about the magazine. It informs the type of photography we commission, the images we chose and the way we layout a feature on paper. We are always trying to show the designer's work at its best but also allow the reader an experience akin to seeing the space in 3D, or as close as we can in a 2D format. It's an emotional journey, not a factually documented space that we're interested in. It's all about lighting, angles, close-ups, details, etc.

What are some of the exciting developments we can look forward to in DA?

First of all, we launched a new edition for the Australian/New Zealand market in late 2019. You can look forward to seeing that on newsstands in select places in the future. We will launch a book on young Asian designers in early 2020, the first of what we hope will be many in the coming years. We also hope to continue with the D/A Awards that we launched in 2019 with a follow-up event, hopefully in 2021. In the meantime, we will be forging more of a digital presence for the brand, in a way that makes sense for us, which likely means more video and perhaps podcasts. Stay tuned. ●

Below: *Design Anthology's* UK edition, published by Astrid Media
Bottom: Cover sheet at the printers, proofed and awaiting signature before heading off to bookshelves and excited readers



Keep abreast on the best of Asian design (and beyond) at designanthologymag.com.



ANGLES

Box Office

Multidisciplinary design studio *A Work of Substance* goes for less waste, more impact with a showroom made out of repurposed shipping containers

WORDS *Patrick Kasingsing*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Dennis Lo*

Shipping container upcycling is hardly new; a cursory search online will reveal the myriad permutations designers have embarked in the quest to reduce, reuse and recycle this ubiquitous industrial commodity (with varying degrees of success).

What makes Goodman Westlink's shipping container showroom different from the rest is that it was meant to be ephemeral from the start; the 30-man team behind Hong Kong-based studio A Work of Substance designed the facility to be easily constructible and to not leave a trace once disassembled. It is, in respect, the anti-showroom in that it goes against the excesses and wasted space that often characterize this spatial typology, while still serving its function to showcase the brand's real estate expertise. It is doing more with less resources. "The containers are multifaceted and celebrates sustainable architecture," the folks at Substance, headed by itinerant Frenchman Maxime Daustresme, explains.

Nestled in a tropical nest in far-flung Tuen Mun, Hong Kong, the showroom was created out of four shipping container blocks arranged in an inverted T, which allows for potential expansion in the second floor should the office requires it.



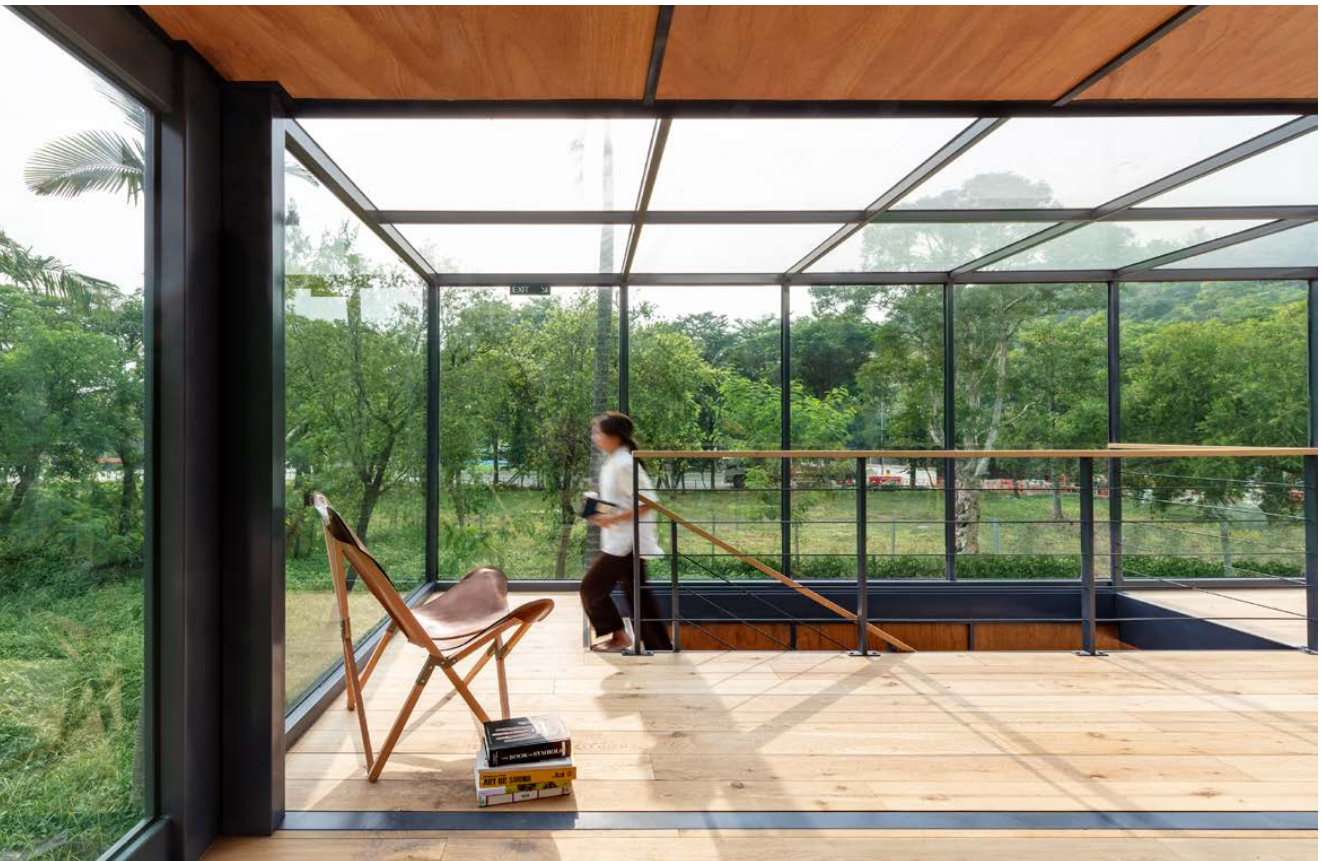




The showroom packs six different spaces; except for its size, the interiors give almost no indication of the structural components' past life as a shipping container. Lined with warm timber panels and copious glazing to make the best of the verdant views all around, the suite exudes warmth and an openness that is surprising for a showroom, enhanced with the inclusion of furniture pieces with mid-century modern silhouettes.

A Work of Substance prides itself in utilizing design to rejuvenate old and unused spaces, drawing out sustainable, contemporary programs to prolong its lifespan; take the studio's eye-catching interior and branding work for *The Fleming at Wan Chai*. With the Goodman Westlink marketing suite, the practice takes their tried-and-tested recipe up a notch, crafting a new spatial program for the shipping container, reducing the showroom's impact on the environment, without sacrificing style and substance. ●

Except for its size, the interiors give almost no indication of the structural components' past life as a shipping container.



ANGLES



CREDITS

Designer
A Work Of Substance

Area 192 square meters

Location
Tuen Mun, Hong Kong

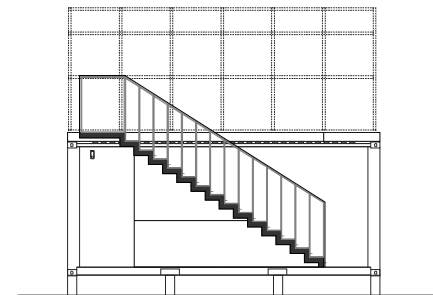
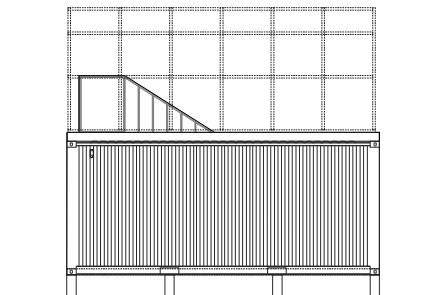
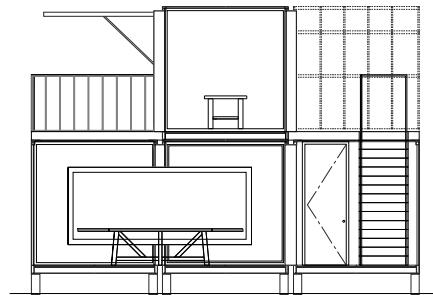
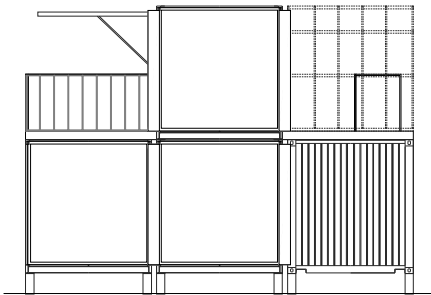
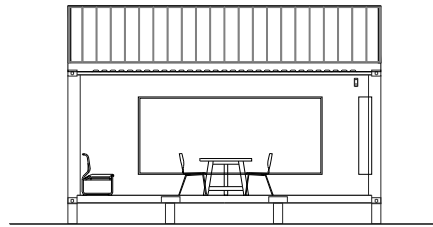
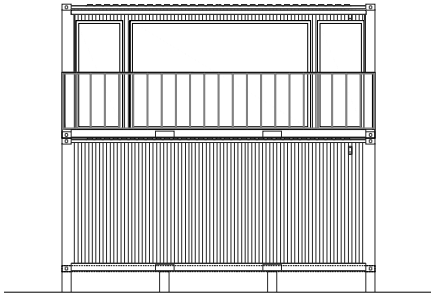
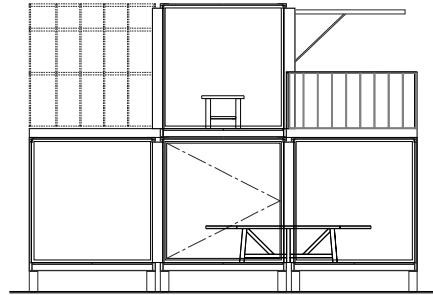
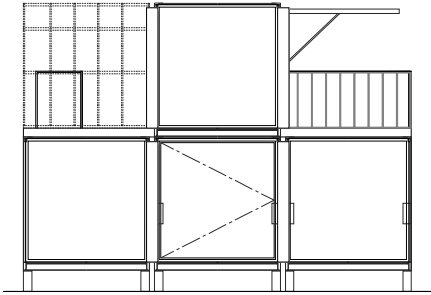
Completion Date 2019

Scope of Work
Architecture, Interior,
Products

All Substance, no filler at
aworkofsubstance.com

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

INTERIOR ELEVATIONS





LENS

Life's A Beach

Photographer *Tarish Zamora*
finds renewed zeal in her craft,
ditching the rigors of the daily grind
for a life near the surf, sand and sea

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Tarish Zamora*





Hi, Tarish! How have you been?

Hi there! I've been really good, busy going around the Philippines chasing waves.

You seem to have adopted a more relaxed pace in life, spending a lot of time near the beach. What sparked this change?

This change was mostly influenced by my addiction to surfing, I got so into it. And to be able to practice and be good at this sport, you need water time, and you really have to be near the beach.

While we have seen previews of your fascination with personalities through your coffee shop portrait series, we see a newfound poignancy in your portraits of surfers and the community around our local surf and beach towns. What attracted them to you as a subject?

Their point of view in life. It's so refreshing because they make everything seem so simple. They're so chill and so friendly. These surfers that I take photos of now are also the people I spend time in the water with.

Your photography can be described as bathed in mood and rich color, but compared to your previous work, your new series of images are

now brimming with form and force and textures. From sea surf to the sand on the sunburnt skins of surfers, there seems to be more spontaneity now. Was this new direction a product of natural progression in adopting this new lifestyle or something you actively pursued?

This was a natural progression.



I honestly don't think too much whenever I shoot at the beach. Being near the ocean makes me relax, let go, and let everything flow. And that's when I realized that that's when my creativity for myself works best.

What is the message you want to communicate with your images now?

I want to show people how simple life actually is, and how simple it can be. That happiness doesn't have to be represented by material things. It's the mindset that you have and how you choose to look at life.

From your frequent beach incursions, what insights have you gleaned about man's interaction with nature? How has this affected your own relationship with it?

I've learned that people who are based near the beach really start caring more for the environment because it's where they live now. They're more aware of what's happening to nature and are more active in protecting it. I started using less plastic too to protect the environment. It's our way of giving back to nature because it gives us this happiness and stoked feeling whenever we enjoy the waves. It's honestly the least we can do for everything it gives us.

You have now taken surfing seriously. What about the sport appealed to you? How does photography fuel this passion?

I actually got into this sport because I wanted to try surf photography. Surfing is such an extreme sport. To be able to catch the crucial and important moves, and to know where to position myself in the water, I needed to learn the sport as well.

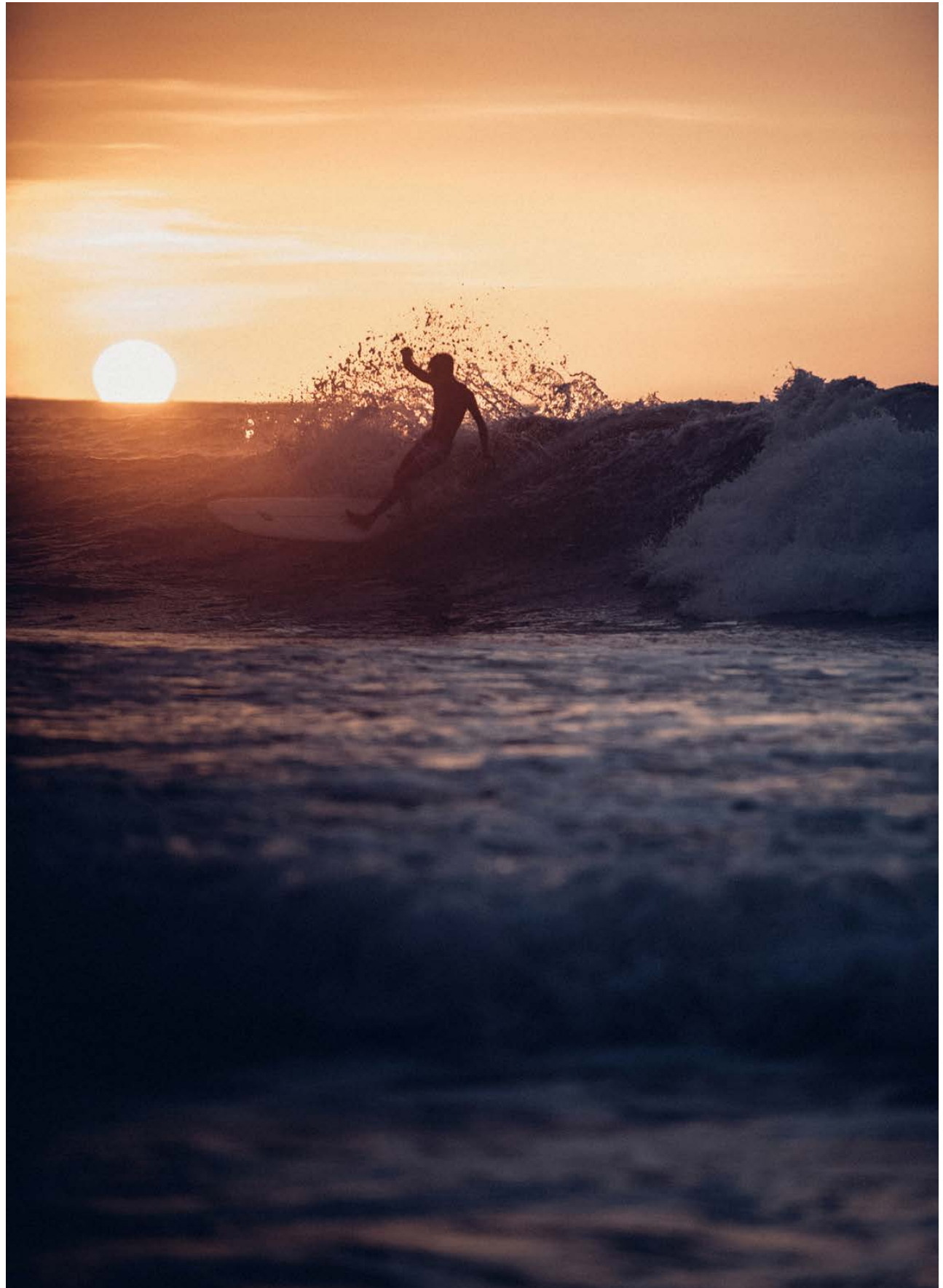
As someone who's now a fixture at these beach towns and surfing communities, what anecdotes have you accumulated from the people who've chosen to live a life less hurried?

Whenever I get to talk to people who are based at the beach, I see how happy they are now with their life.



“Whenever I get to talk to people who are based at the beach, I see how happy they are now with their life. And it’s so obvious. With how they talk, with how they treat other people, with how they move.”

TARISH ZAMORA





“What I noticed with our generation is that we all don’t really find it ideal for our life to be surrounded with just work. There needs to be a balance.”

TARISH ZAMORA

And it's so obvious. With how they talk, with how they treat other people, with how they move. Being around nature helped them a lot with this. They tell me that life is so much simpler for them because they don't have to go through the traffic and the busy streets of Manila. Nature makes them sane and makes them appreciate life more.

Why do you think there is an influx of young professionals all over the world giving up city comforts for simpler lives in far-flung places, often in contact with nature at its rawest?

I think that the work environment is such a big factor. Manila is getting too busy and stressful these days. What I noticed with our generation is that we all don't really find it ideal for our life to be surrounded with just work. There needs to be a balance. Being around nature and being away helps a lot to be able to reset your mind.

While your imagery makes this life transition look lovely and idyllic, the shift probably wasn't at all easy. What were some of the challenges you faced?

Things that you needed to give up? Finally, what convinced you that it was all worth it?

I must admit, it wasn't easy at all. It was exhausting because I was traveling nonstop and was driving all over the Philippines chasing waves. I also had to sacrifice and say no to a bunch of shoots especially when I already had trips planned. But I also had trips that I had to cancel or cut short because I needed to go back to Manila to work. I also missed a lot of social events, and rarely got to spend time with my Manila friends that much too. I really lived a simple life while this was all happening. The places we stayed at weren't fancy and luxurious too. It was all part of the transition. And I realized that it was all worth it because this has made me the happiest girl, and I can say that I'm at my healthiest and happiest mental state. ●

Catch Tarish Zamora where the waves are or, well, on Instagram [@tarishzamora](https://www.instagram.com/tarishzamora).





CANVAS

BEYOND THE FRAME

Artist and curator *Lex Balaguer*
redefines the art gallery for the digital
age, in CURARE Art Space

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*

VISUALS *Lex Balaguer*

CURARE ART SPACE

Meaning "to care for," CURARE gives artists a space to explore the deeply personal in a dynamic online platform. CURARE's exhibitions are activated through research and collaboration. As an art space that focuses on the stories of artists, writers, performers, and creators through their art, we engage with art as life, and make space for human stories. - Lex Balaguer



CURARE
ART SPACE

Hello Lex, It's been a while since we last talked.

What keeps you preoccupied nowadays?

Yes, it's been a while. A lot has changed since 2017. I am now in operations at Palacio de Memoria, a heritage art and events center, after four years of research and writing at Ayala Museum. I'm also busy doing some critical writing for Art Asia Pacific Magazine, as well as continuing my MA in Art Studies in UP Diliman. I'm still making digital art, and have a few works exhibited in private and commercial spaces. Recently, I opened Curare, an online art space where I am curating. My life seems to have taken a hectic turn, but I'm thankful for the experience. Sleep would be nice though!

As an artist now working in the field of art management, which industry insights have helped you shape the way you see and do art?

I've been in the arts industry professionally for some time now, having worked at the gallery, museum and auction fields. If anything, I learned that the art world is a political world. As a young artist-curator, I am hoping my work helps in recovering the industry's humanistic capacity. So in managing the works of other artists, I think I have become more careful about the meanings my curation makes of their art, and in my own art-making, authenticity becomes a priority as opposed to marketability or public popularity.



What major differences lie in how artists and professionals in art management view and value art?

The way I see it, while there may be obvious differences in creative or administrative priorities, each role informs the other. We may argue that the artist looks at art by symbolic value, and the art manager by social capital, yet today these roles seem to be blurring. Artists are increasingly conscious about how they want their works to be communicated, and curators are now using exhibitions and spaces for artistic practices. There is dynamism in this ambiguousness that lends itself to opening opportunities in exploring what values we make of art.

Lex Balaguer at Palacio de Memoria



Clockwise, from left:
 Lex Balaguer at work:
 Moderating ArtSpeak with
 Doktor Karayom and Archie
 Oclos at Ateneo Art Gallery;
 Balaguer weighs in, ArtSpeak
 2019; 2019 Ateneo Art Awards
 ceremony, with Balaguer
 winning the Purita Kalaw-
 Ledesma Prize for Art Criticism;
 The artist becomes the artwork:
 Balaguer performing Erwin
 Wurm's *One Minute Sculptures*
 at Ayala Museum



**“I’ve been in the
 arts industry for
 some time now.
 If anything,
 I learned that
 the art world
 is a political
 world.”**

LEX BALAGUER

What trends and issues in the art world did you perceive that inspired you to start your latest project, CURARE Art Space?

Working in art institutions and bringing to it my experiences as an artist, I was surprised at how a number of professionals blindly conform to some monolithic corporatism. While the art and market are inextricable, people are becoming less and less interested in the inherent humanistic values of art, and are only interested in authentication, marketability, or sensationalism. There is also rampant gate-keeping of knowledge, privatization of heritage, inflation of values, and commercialism of history in the industry, and it is exhausting to be directly involved in such structure. Moreover, the turn-of-the-century white cube framework of galleries and museums is now being challenged by contemporary art such as new media, digital art, performance, and ambient mediums, among others. My personal experience as someone privy to the inner workings of the art world has shown me that it could use some consciousness and compassion. CURARE was founded for that reason.

In a nutshell, what is CURARE? What do you hope to achieve with this platform?

CURARE is an art space that collaborates and exhibits emerging artists. Its exhibitions are all web-based, making them dynamic, timeless and accessible. "*Curare*" means "to care" so the approach is more explorative: How do we exhibit an expression that is personal to the artist? How do we make sure the artist's process translates into the exhibition? How does the site make space for the artist to explore and develop his or her project? How does its curation allow for the audience to relate to the work of art? These are all questions CURARE aims to address. Instead of merely displaying finished works, CURARE looks at the development of an art project in order to reflect on the artist's human condition, and for the audience to connect warmly to the contexts around a work of art.



Therese Nicole Reyes (b. 1990) is a Manila-based visual artist. She has a degree in BS Psychology from Ateneo de Manila University, and a BFA Major in Painting degree from University of the Philippines - Diliman, where she graduated *summa cum laude*. Reyes has exhibited at the University of the Philippines, Erewhon Center of the Arts, Underground, 1335 Mabini, and Tin-aw Art Gallery. She received the Loyola Schools Award for the Arts for Illustration, and the Gawad Tanglaw (Outstanding Thesis) Award.



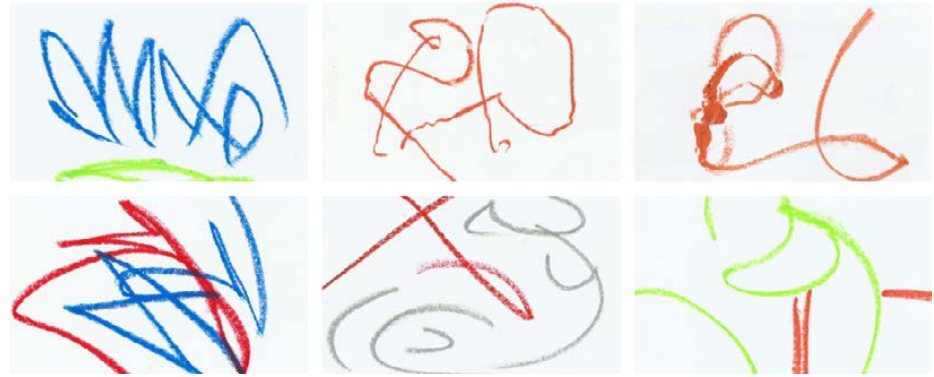


Space Between Thoughts

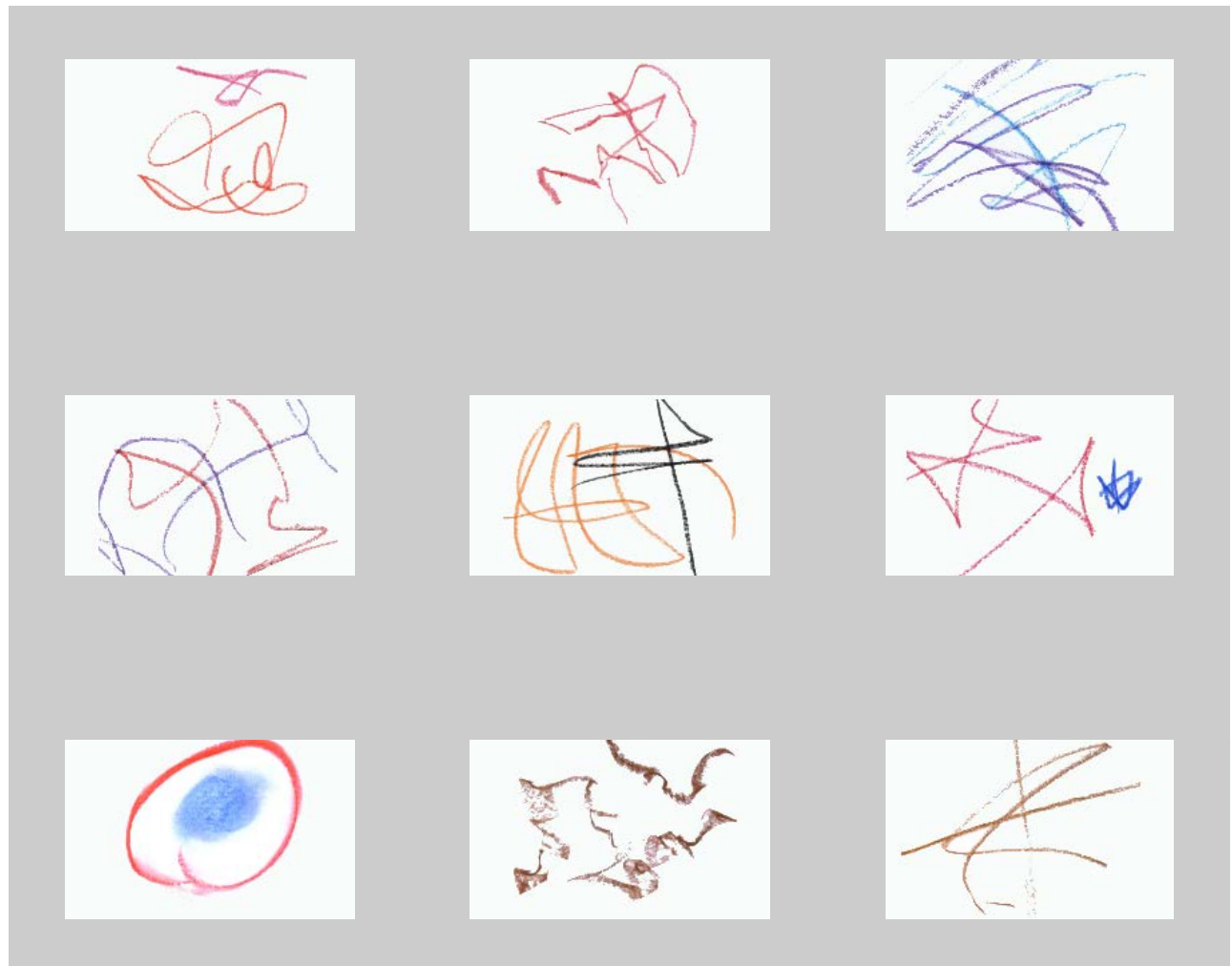
by Therese Nicole Reyes

Recording one's spontaneous gesture by illustrating and connecting finite works into a continuum, and making technical and reflective notes, reference a personal desire to make sense of unknown spaces and a collective desire to harbor nature. Using psychological tests and formal fine arts media as starting points, Reyes arrives at a poetic consciousness of the artistic process, and a recognition of the nature of thoughts.

Right: *Trials 1- 6 in Oil Pastel, GIF animation, 40 sheets of 100 milliseconds interval per trial, 2019*



Bottom: *Trials 1- 6 in Chalk, GIF animation, 40 sheets of 100 milliseconds interval per trial, 2019* **Opposite page:** *Trials 1- 6 in Charcoal, GIF animation, 40 sheets of 100 milliseconds interval per trial, 2019*



“Because it is in a non-physical space, there is much room to play around with alternative ways of presentation and meaning-making, without sacrificing coherence.” LEX BALAGUER

Can you tell us about how it works? How do you curate the artists you work with? Is there a regular schedule for 'shows'?

An artist (or researcher, or curator) can propose a project he or she wants to develop. It can be in any medium or format translatable to the online platform. I work closely with the exhibitor in the progress of the project, suggesting concepts, modes and formats that would best align and exhibit the output. Curatorially, the development of the project must come through in the presentation, so archival materials, research and processes must be considered in the overall exhibition design. I am also able to write about the exhibition to encapsulate the artist's intention, both personally and aesthetically. Overall, the journey of the work's creation bears more importance in the final exhibition on the online site, so as to reflect the development of the artist within his or her project. From production to collaboration, to exhibition, to public program, CURARE takes care of the artist. Because the whole process takes some time, I am only looking at four to five major exhibitions in a year, along with some smaller-scale projects.

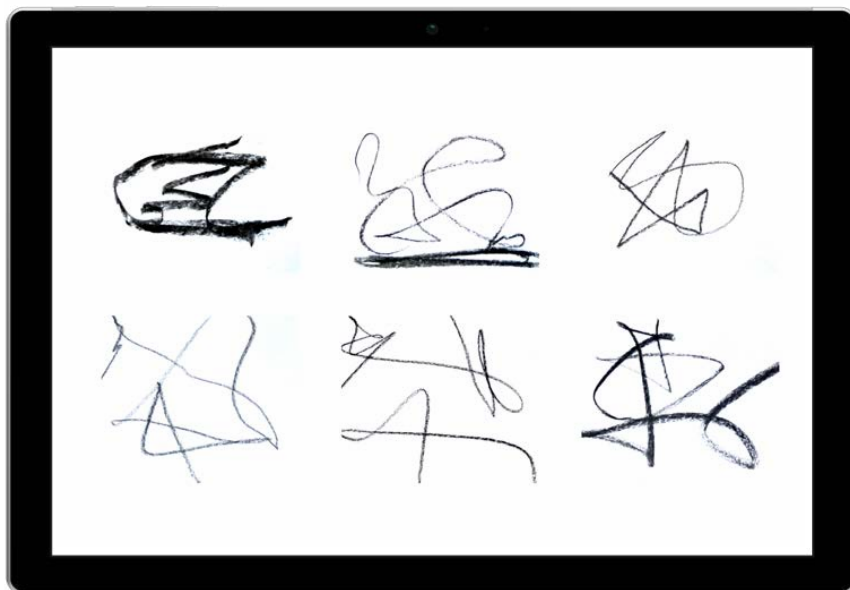
What is your desired reaction for the project from artists? From viewers?

I would very much like to work with artists who are willing to explore unconventional ways of producing or exhibiting their art. Because the collaboration process involves working closely with myself as an art manager and curator, the artist must be eager to both agree and argue with me! [laughs] But seriously, I always say CURARE is a space to explore something personal with their art that they were not able to do because galleries, museums or publication platforms had strict

guidelines and expectations for them, or are simply misaligned with the artist's intentions. Because it is in a non-physical space, there is much room to play around with alternative ways of presentation and meaning-making, without sacrificing coherence. I would be happy for an artist to say that working with CURARE has made him or her more conscious about his or her own intentions, processes and outlooks. I also hope that by exhibiting a full view of the project, viewers will be able to see and understand the sincerity of artists who in the end have personal goals, as opposed to seeing only the functional, curricular, or commercial aspects of production or management.

What is your long term plan for CURARE? Do you envision it shifting further in form, structure and medium as time progresses? What are its limitations?

In terms of content, there will be more projects catering to art not exclusively visual. Our current exhibition, for example, is a selection of written and performed poems by Paolo Tiasas who writes in Filipino. Previously, CURARE exhibited digital art in the form of GIF animations by Therese Nicole Reyes.





Ang Lahat ng Nag-aangas ay Inaagnas

by Paolo Tiasas

"Lahat ng Nag-aangas ay Inaagnas" is a selection of poems in Filipino that attempts to capture manhood within the variety of violence its image has caused. By way of writing about actual experiences of places, people, and phenomena, performing these works in public spaces, and documenting these iterations, Paolo Tiasas uses the masculine action of assertion of presence to capture man's own image in particular points in time and space, thereby locating the persona of his poetry (and consequently himself) as man.

As an act of centering, he contemplates on "angas," an assertion of presence, and its demand to be embodied and performed; and "agnas," an inevitable consumption, dominating the dominator. Tiasas' poetry turned performance turned institutional critique turned autocritique narrate this distortion involved in finding a way to articulate masculinity, not to honor, but to contribute to the discernment of this image.

Paolo Tiasas (b. 1993) is a writer from Pasig City, Philippines. He writes primarily in Filipino, using the medium of poetry to render and question his experiences of living in the Philippines in this particular cultural moment. He is the author of poetry books *Isang Taong Maghapon* (2017), *my heart is an edge/ang puso kong hiwâ* (2019), and a forthcoming full-length collection, *Tuwing Nag-iisa sa Mapa ng Buntong-Hininga* (2020). He received the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature - 3rd Place in Maikling Kuwento in 2016. He is also a volunteer for Ang Sabi Nila, a monthly poetry night series that aims to encourage the viewership of performed poetry.

HINDI KARANIWAN ANG BUHAY

Kaharap ang mga bayani ni Coching,
ang mga kabayo, buhok, baril, itak,
natitiyak ko sa wakas ang wala ako:
ang mahika ng tapang at pagnanasa
na kapag pinagtagpo sa isang pahina
nagiging senyor, bandido, sundalo.
Walang nagsabi sa akin kung ano ito.
Nabubuhay akong wala ni kislap
sa mata kapag may katunggaling kausap,
mas magaan pa ang boses sa hangin
samantalang dumadagundong ang mundo
sa mga salita ng iba: hoy, ikaw, ayos.
Minsan hindi ko pa magawang masabi
sa konduktor ng jeep na lagpas na ako
sa tamang babaan kaya sa pananahimik
hinahanda ko ang sarili ko sa mahabang
prusisyon pabalik sa dapat puntahan.
Hula ko lang, pasintabi na lamang,
hindi nagiging bayani ang mga tanga.
Nakaayon ang paghanga sa kakayahang
bumunot ng sandata, sa pagpapangako,
sa matatag na postura't pagpapakilala,
sa katiyakan ng loob kapag mambabroso
ng nangangatal na boses at lalamunan,
sa maayos na tupi ng kuwelyo sa polo.
Habang ang tangi kong tangan-tangan,
ang kaalamang hindi ako mapapabilang
sapagkat tuwing kinikilala ko ang laro
may dambuhalang bato na pumuputok
basta-basta sa loob ng aking sikmura
at gusto ko biglang iluwa ang kaluluwa.
Matagal nang hindi karaniwan ang buhay.
Tuwing pipikit ako nakikita ko ang pahamak
na kayang-kaya kong gawin at gustuhin.
Gusto kong wakasan ang lahat ng pagnanasa
kung mabubura lamang nito ang panganib
na nakapulupot sa bawat kong pagtingin.
Kapag may nakakasalubong ako sa daan
talagang gusto ko na lang tuluyang mawala.
Habang sa mga pahina matingkad pa
ang tinta ng lihim, ngiti, landi, at lagim,
hinahanap ko pa itong tamang salita
para tuldukan ang kasaysayan nitong
halimaw kong hangad na matanggap,
na mapasaakin ang isang pagkalalake
na kapag nasasadlak sa alinmang aksyon,
kayang-kaya na magpatiwakal na lamang
sa kathang-buhay na wala ako doon,
sapagkat ano na bang naiambag ko
bukod sa sapilitang paglamon ng sitwasyon?

I am hoping that more emerging and experimental artists will be attracted to the opportunity CURARE offers. While it uses the web as a platform for exhibition, I am also open to doing pop-up public programs if only to engage more critical response and connection from the audience, as well as developing a platform within the site for public engagement. The site acts as a gathering space, but its reach extends beyond the screen for sure.

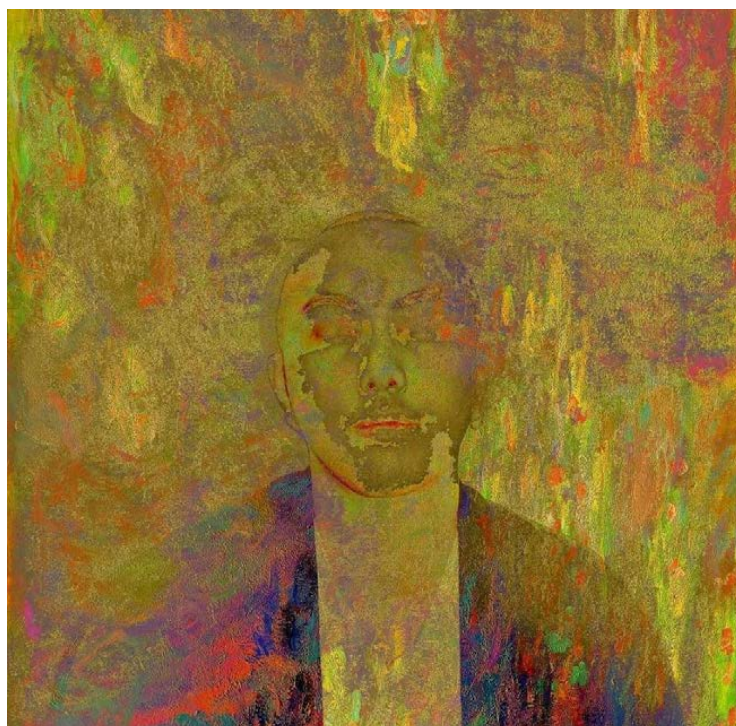
How do you hope to inspire budding artists with such a new platform?

I hope emerging artists are inspired by the advocacy of CURARE, to open their mind to models and platforms outside of the white cube. Galleries, museums and publications offer great opportunities for artists and audiences, and this is respectable as my curatorial language still references this but with the emerging enthusiasm and originality of artists today, the industry needs to stay fresh and open-minded to peculiarity and eccentricity. The art world desperately needs a refresh, and I believe CURARE gives artists and audiences a breathing space to reconnect with the sincerity of art and its capacity for growth rather than perfection. For now, the digital space carries this function.

Life seems to have treated you well lately, netting a win at the Ateneo Art Awards for art criticism. As an individual privy to all these developments in the local art scene, would you say that this is a great time to be a Filipino artist?

My achievements say nothing if I do not use them to better the world I am involved in. Yes, it is a great time to be brave and to tell new stories because the current climate deeply needs it. I am no longer interested in artists, art professionals, or collectors whose echo chambers keep the industry stagnant, no matter their name. It is time we shift the focus to those who are willing to contribute to the greater good and not just share an opinion.

This is where humaneness in the arts comes in. Arts and culture institutions and individuals have the power to shift symbolic value, national histories and even collective memory in a positive direction. I hope I do not sound prophetic when I say this, but now is a great time to be a provocateur. ●



*Self portrait (After Monet),
photo manipulation, 2020*

**EXHIBIT
CALENDAR
2020**

Mira Angeles
Illustrations

Walther Hontiveros
Poetry

Pamela Celeridad
Paintings

Immerse your digital senses in art that provokes at curareartspace.com.



CARTELLINO

CANVAS

Asian Fixation

Cartellino holds the doors for all
to appreciate Asian contemporary
art from the comforts of our
digital screens

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*

VISUALS *Cartellino*



Cartellino is a website dedicated to Asian art.

Is there a particular reason for the Italian-inspired name? How did it all start?

Cartellino: The website was created with a community in mind; not only in existence but one that continues to grow and seeks growth. We saw it as something necessary and thought that a lot of people could benefit from the site: from getting news and updates, to having to see art from all around Asia without putting a dent on your bank account, wasting time on traffic or flying here and there, to simply getting to know people behind the artworks and exhibitions we admire.

“*Cartellino*” is an Italian word that means “little paper”. In the Early Renaissance, it’s what they called the attached inscription behind paintings with the artist’s signature and notes about the work. The *cartellino* would also include either a religious expression or a motto from the subject of a portrait.

Bearing the name, we aim to present art beyond each piece. *Cartellino* intends to convey what the little paper provides: simple yet valuable knowledge. We open an avenue for everyone to engage in, to explore and to learn about art.

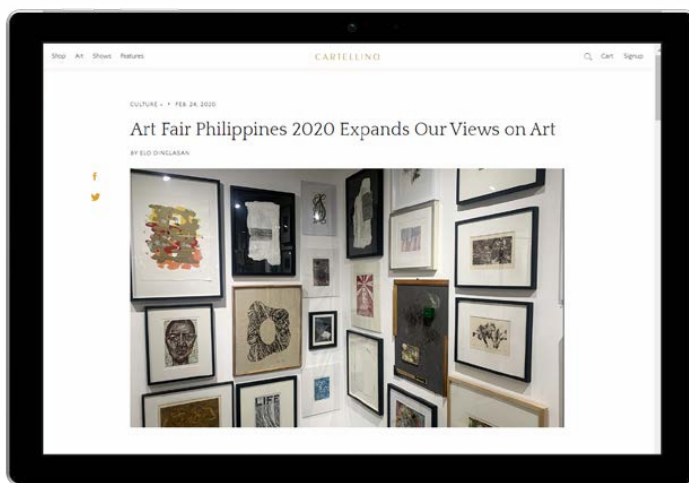
In the context of the Asian art scene, is *Cartellino* a response to a specific state, issue or trend?

Since we’re a Manila-based team, much of our content centers on the Manila art scene, but we want to widen our reach by also featuring Southeast Asian and Eastern Asian art. This is to foster dynamic influences within Asia and to illustrate the similarities of our local artists with other Asian artists. We want to break the stereotypes of art being intimidating and only for the elite. We thought of putting up an online platform where younger enthusiasts can easily browse through relevant information, and encourage them to involve themselves more in the industry and even start collecting art.

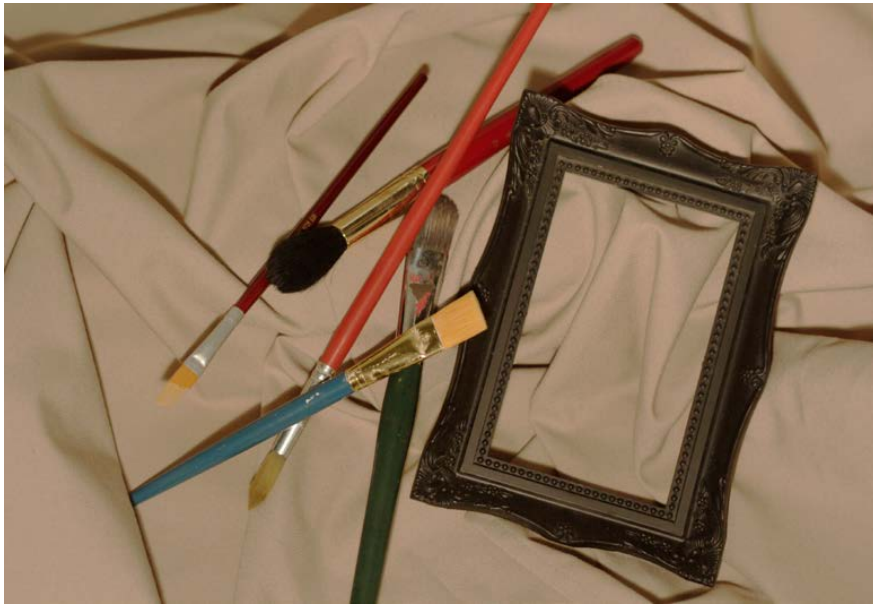
Was it instantly clear to you the form *Cartellino* was to take? Or did you consider other mediums to execute the idea?

It was always going to be a digital platform. In this day and age, technology can either be your best friend or worst enemy.

Cartellino’s art coverage is largely concentrated on local and Asian art shows and developments.



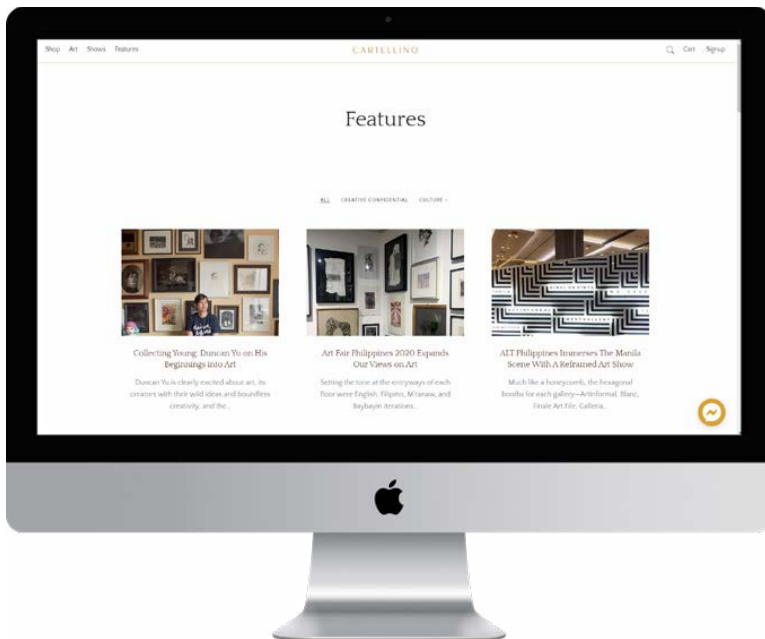
CANVAS



“We open an avenue for everyone to engage in, to explore and to learn about art.”

CARTELLINO





Clockwise, from top: Duncan Yu, interviewed by Kara de Guzman for *Cartellino*; Keb Cerda's *Dahlia* installation; *Cartellino*'s minimalist website design cedes the stage to cut and curated art content.

More and more people are on their phones, computers, tablets, etc, and everyone consumes content one way or another. As we were both from the publishing industry, we've seen digital media take over and very clearly saw that it's the most effective way of putting the word out there and share the vision to as many people as possible.

Since our background is also in online media, we want to apply our knowledge when producing content. But of course, we'd still want to utilize other mediums as we grow as a brand. We'd like to do collaborations with artists, galleries and relevant brands in the future.

What informs your editorial direction?

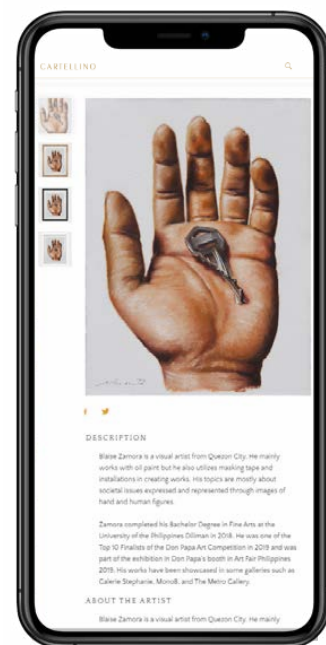
Every start of the month, we research and peg upcoming art events like exhibit openings, art fairs and forums. We collate content relevant to our brand and outline them within the social calendar. When we attend art events, we take time to talk to artists, curators and gallerists. We want our platform to highlight not just Asian contemporary artists but also curators, gallerists and collectors.

We also try to stick with a theme every month. We're always fascinated with artists who tell stories through the essence of their work or by demonstrating their artistic and creative process. Sometimes we feature non-Asian artists who get to exhibit in Asian galleries, showing how they present and immerse their art in a different context.

We want to be a daily reference for information on Asian contemporary art. Aside from continuous updates on art exhibits, we also publish content on art collecting—where to start, how to's, etc. We believe in the stories we feature. We also keep in mind the people who will consume our content. What will they get out of it? How will they react to it?

The art experience online and in person, and its relationship with social media, have all been issues of contention between art aficionados and laypeople. What does Cartellino want to say about art and our experience of it?

Admittedly, there's a difference in experiencing art in person and online. Not to mention, a lot of artists and aficionados are still skeptical about social media, but we have to also keep in mind that not everyone has the luxury to experience art in person, spending time and money to travel here and there for art fairs, exhibitions, etc. Not everyone can pilgrimage through Asia's biggest art fairs for weeks or to even take a step beyond the comfort of their homes to see five exhibition openings in one night. *Cartellino* is for everyone to experience art, from anywhere, in any way we can.



Shopping for art has never been this easy to aspiring Asian art collectors

“We believe in the stories we feature. We also keep in mind the people who will consume our content. What will they get out of it? How will they react to it?”

CARTELLINO

“That art experience is online does not change the art itself. It’s a matter of transforming our perceptions of art.” CARTELLINO

Art aficionados are also present online, and we feel like there is an irony about these contentions when these issues themselves are present on social media. We want to see these issues in healthy discourse that add value to art conversations.

That art experience is online does not change the art itself. It’s a matter of transforming our perceptions of art. We want *Cartellino* to be a supplement of this influence that social media has to the industry. We recognize the dangers of social media, but we see it more as an innovative platform that could further enrich the experience of art.

Any memorable anecdotes from users of the site giving feedback or memorable artist interviews you have conducted?

Sometimes when we go to art exhibits and introduce ourselves as the people behind *Cartellino*, we’re very flattered to hear how they appreciate our content and that they think it has an international appeal. We’re happy to be recognized by international artists we post on social media, like Akira Miyamoto, Zhong Wei, Victoria Sin and a lot more. Some Asian galleries like Sullivan + Strumpf (Singapore) and One and J. Gallery (Seoul) give us updates on their upcoming shows, and also share the articles and posts we publish.

Each feature is a one of a kind experience. One of the most memorable would be our three-curator feature in November 2019 with Gwen Bautista, Francisco Lee and Ricky Francisco. It’s amazing to go behind the scenes and see how blank walls transform in their perspective.

Another memorable feature would be our very first Creative Confidential with Manila-based Brazilian artist Ciane Xavier and Thai-Japanese artist Yuree Kensaku. Both have such different aesthetics but through the interview, we’ve learned so much about how they’re alike. You’ll realize that the industry is filled with people who would want to share their thoughts and experiences with as many people as possible not only through art but through platforms like ours.

How can your readers expect you to evolve?

So far, we’ve done features mostly focusing on artists and curators. For 2020, we want to produce more content on art collectors and gallerists. We also want to be more present in art fairs. Hopefully, we could also expand our readership internationally and be physically present in art events outside Manila.

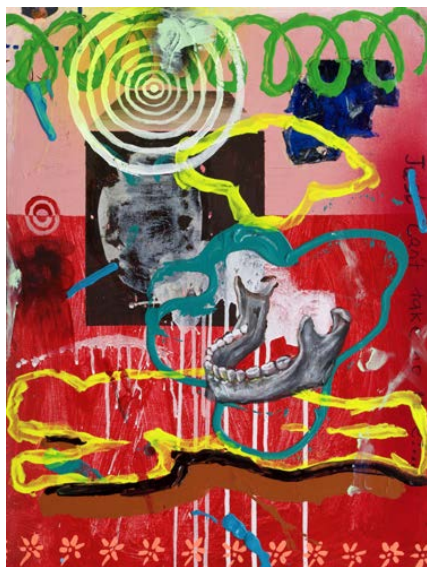
We are also looking forward to a lot of collaborations. We’ve been coordinating with artists, art collectives and art spaces in doing pop-up exhibits, workshops and art forums. We’re very open to coming up with different forms of output to push the boundaries of experiencing art.

Our website will also evolve into an alternative platform for purchasing art, where we’ll do online curated shows twice a month. We’re preparing for our soft launch, and we’ve tapped artists who will be making their works available online. We hope to empower a new breed of artists by giving them an alternative platform to showcase their work. ●



FOR THE ART COLLECTORS

Some artistic must haves to kickstart that art collection on sale at *Cartellino*, clockwise, from top left: Bea Policarpio, *Tic Tac Toe No 1*, Acrylic on canvas; Mars Buagaoan, *No 30-2*, 2018, Monotype; Ushijima Ko, *1511-2*, 2010, Sumi ink and watercolor on handmade paper; Roman Soleno, *Perfect Storm 3*, Mixed media on canvas





Un uSually Goody

The Unusual Network uses eye-popping, interactive art to educate kids on complex topics like internet addiction and waste

INTERVIEW *Danielle Austria*

VISUALS *The Unusual Network*

Great to have you here. How are you feeling?



Co-founders Tanya Wilson and Steve Lawler at their Singapore office

Tanya Wilson, global communications and PR manager:

Great, thanks! I just had a great conversation with a wonderful teacher as part of my design thinking-led research for *EYEHYAH!*

I was introduced to The Unusual Network at the 2019 IMMAP Digicon where you were a speaker. You have an incredible portfolio that we will unpack later. But for those who are

still strangers to your work: a quick origin story?

Steve [Lawler, co-founder] is an artist (Mojoko) and creative director, and my background is in PR and communications. We started working together in 2015 on a global campaign for Tiger Beer that involved highlighting some of Asia's best-emerging artists. We soon discovered that many other brands wanted artists to create work for them, and that's where we found our niche. We launched Kult Gallery, Singapore's underground gallery that sells the work of young Asian artists in 2018. The Unusual Network is the coming together of our expertise and network to create artist-led experiences and content for brands, government bodies and the education sector.

You work with different artists, some of whom are based here in the Philippines. How do you screen talents? Are you keen to take on styles that are more consistent with what's in your portfolio so far, or are you open to collaborating with a wide range of design aesthetics?

We work much the same way as curators, in that we explore artists working across a range of mediums and styles.

Opposite page: 'Shark Cafe' by Singapore-based Ting Yi Le for *EYEHYAH!*'s Sea issue

Right: Artwork by South Korea-based Bang Sangho for the same issue



GUESS THE EXPLORERS

ZHENG HE

He explored the world on behalf of the Chinese Emperor and brought back all sorts of interesting items including various animals!

NAPOLEON

Unlike most other conquerors, this French Monarch believed in conquering knowledge, he believed that "Imagination rules the world"

BARTHOLEMEW DIAS

A Portuguese explorer stumbled upon Cape of Good Hope during a deadly storm which he then renamed Cape of Storms.

ORUC REIS

During a battle this brave man helped many refugees find safe passage. During a gruesome battle, he lost one of his arms.

COLUMBUS

A famous Italian conqueror who completed four voyages across the Atlantic ocean. He is known for trading cotton, coffee and tobacco.

CAN YOU MATCH THE NAMES TO THE PORTRAITS?

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON WWW.EYEYEAH.COM



Above: Guess the Explorers by Singapore-based Adeline Tan

Left: Hydrothermal by Singapore-based Angee Neo for the Sea issue

Opposite page: Issues of Kult Magazine

We are always looking out for exciting new people as well as established artists. It keeps us interested and plugged into what's going on.

Quite often the client will choose an artist or collected from a range that we propose, which is often dictated by the project brief, i.e. what we think will be a great solution to the project. Nothing excites us more than discovering new artists.

The Unusual Network is based in Singapore but has done plenty of work around Asia. What are your observations on how design is approached or accepted in different parts of the region? Are there common threads or mainly differences?

We find that places like Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines have a much greater appreciation of the visual arts, design and photography than we do in Singapore. It is quite limited, possibly by the size of the population but also by fault of education. Having said that, there are so many great artists here and from all over the region, and many of them are friends.

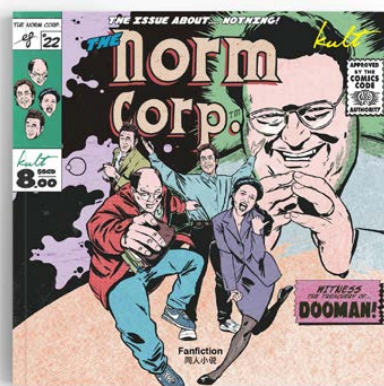
We are a network built up from community. Our previous magazine, *Kult*, connected us to hundreds of great underground artists and that network continues to grow as we travel and meet friends within the network.

You've done a lot of work for Netflix. As a pop-culture driven business, it's easy to assume that their openness to creative ideas is a given. (Of course, the more experienced agencies and designers know not everything is as it seems.) But you've also come up with standout work for insurance providers (Prudential) and toilet-makers (Toto), which to some may not sound as fun at face value. How do you end up working with clients who let you create as you do? Do you still make concessions?

We have been lucky in that we have built a very specialist expertise that can't easily be duplicated, so we never have to pitch for business—instead brands approach us. And the very fact that they approach us means they are looking for our unusual approach and network to be applied to their business.

“We have been lucky in that we have built a very specialist expertise that can't easily be duplicated, so we never have to pitch for business—instead brands approach us.”

TANYA WILSON



“We feel great work should be taken out of the digital realm as celebrated in the 'real world'.” TANYA WILSON

We value every client that comes through our door and sees the value in working with artists, and never make concessions because we don't have to.

Nowadays, design conversations and output are centered on digital. Most of your work are ambient, outdoor and experiential. Is this a conscious decision on your part?

There is something magical in the physical representation of great work. It can be digital in nature, but when applied onto a huge outdoor screen, or in an exhibition, it suddenly takes on a life of its own and can be appreciated as you would a painting in a museum. We feel great work should be taken out of the digital realm as celebrated in the “real world”.

Let's talk about EYEYAH!

It's a series of ad-free activity books that introduce social issues to children via art and design. What sparked the idea?

We published *Kult* magazine for many years and see the way it still lives on bookshelves and in ad agencies as a source of reference and inspiration for many years later. We wanted to apply this same approach for children—exposing them to high-quality professional graphic design and illustrations, and demonstrating the power of creative thinking in action. Being parents to young children definitely sparked the idea.

How important is it that children be exposed to (and not sheltered against) the problems of the world?

How young can they be to start education on heavy issues like internet addiction and waste?

EYEYAH! tackles topics that we feel should be part of every school curriculum. Starting from primary school, children can start to learn about almost every topic and not feel “heavy”. For example, did you know that primary schools are some of the biggest producers of waste? What can you do in your school to reduce waste? Those are some of the questions that *EYEYAH* images are used to spark discussion about.

We feel every child should be exposed to media literacy education, starting from primary school. We have toolkits to provide teachers with ongoing age-appropriate content to spark discussions and learnings about many issues.



We've come across many designs for kids that seem to have come out of the impression that all we have to do is “dumb down” what works for grown-ups, but kids are actually a lot smarter than we give them credit for. How should designers approach content-making for kids? What's important to get right, and where can we be more open to take risks?

Not sure it's about risk-taking, but we certainly find it harder to make work that truly engages a young audience. Kids are exposed to so much garbage these days that they become quick at filtering quality.



Living at Sea by Indonesia-based Gerson Gilrandy



Arctic Trash by Angee Neo, for the Trash issue **Below: EYEAH!** on the iPad

“Kids have incredible observation skills and a natural aptitude towards creativity. Often they’ve spotted things in our detailed imagery that we hadn’t seen ourselves.”

TANYA WILSON



Try and make the content appeal to as many ages as possible. This means you need to work a bit harder but chances are if a teen likes it, then a pre-teen will too. Universal good design is a lot harder to make than hyper-targeted content.

Empower the youngins with art and design; download and buy *EYEHYAH!* via eyeyah.com. Follow them on Facebook and Instagram [@eyeyahmag](https://www.instagram.com/eyeyahmag).

They say that it takes a village to raise a child. Who comprises the *EYEHYAH!* village? Do you involve parents or teachers (or even the kids themselves) in the design process?

It's more of a global town. For each issue, we work with around 30 artists from around the world, and their amazing visuals are at the heart of what we do. We work with teachers to create a suitable framework for schools and, of course, we have our own kids on our board as creative directors. It's because of the kids that we give away a free sticker pack with every magazine.

Artwork by Australia-based Maddie Egremont for the Sea issue

Have there been any surprises or revelations from how the kids respond to the content or the topics?

Yes, all the time! Kids have incredible observation skills and a natural aptitude towards creativity. Often they've spotted things in our detailed imagery that we hadn't seen ourselves. Our images act as a hook and generate very animated, lively discussions amongst children. We've also had older students using the images from our Internet issue to 'teach' their younger peers.

For the grown-ups in the room: What can we learn from kids when it comes to social awareness and action?

Use your imagination. Have an open mind. Have crazy ideas, draw them. Be brave, and have the confidence to express yourself!

We'd like to end the interview with a cliché question. Can art and design save the world?

Absolutely! And it already has. Have a look at our Trash issue for some examples. ●



ARMCHAIR REVOLUTION

FRAME

Online Filipino Worker and
creative entrepreneur *AJ Dimarucot*
makes the case for online jobs as a
solution to the myriad issues faced by
the Filipino employee

INTERVIEW Patrick Kasingsing

VISUALS AJ Dimarucot





The name 'AJ Dimarucot' really doesn't need further introduction.

But for the benefit of some readers, would you please talk a little about who you are and what you do?

My name is AJ Dimarucot. I am a college dropout, a self-taught graphic designer with 20 years in the industry. Being self-taught, I'm still learning how to design and always on a journey to improve myself.

I've worked as a web designer in a startup, an art director at a global ad agency, and have freelanced since 2008, mostly designing for apparel brands outside the country.

You are a renowned illustrator, creative entrepreneur and a champion of online freelancing. Do you remember how you got into the world of freelancing and what about it appealed to you?

In 2007, my then-girlfriend and I decided to get married. Both our salaries didn't afford us a nice wedding so I decided to start freelancing to raise more funds. I started scouring craigslist in the US for freelance work and landed some pretty interesting jobs.

One client wanted me to create 50 logos, and I thought I hit the jackpot. But it turned out that she would love my work one day and hated it the next day. We ended up doing one logo, and it didn't really pay well.

Nevertheless, I quickly found out that doing work a few hours a day could make me more money than working 14 hours in a highly stressful advertising job.

I decided to leave the same job in January 2008, a few weeks after I got married.

What were some of the initial challenges you faced as a freelance creative? What valuable insights can you share that can help creatives wanting to dive into freelancing?

While making more money over the course of a year than I ever had in working full time, the influx of cash was highly inconsistent. I quickly learned that I had to hustle every day to land the next gig. I needed to string some gigs together.

This spread: AJ Dimarucot preaches the gospel of online work and the freedoms and family time granted by being an Online Filipino Worker at the Foundree learning hub.





“I quickly learned that I had to hustle every day to land the next gig. I needed to string some gigs together.” AJ DIMARUCOT

Finding job leads became a skillset. I was relentless and would apply to five to 10 jobs daily, consistently. That also honed my skills in writing applications and emails.

I had to become everything other than a designer—sales agent, application writer, project manager, accountant, marketing manager, etc. I had to do all those things and run a little design business. When you start freelancing, you decide to become a small business owner to survive. Once you start investing time and money on your talents and skills, you become a creative entrepreneur.

What would you say are three traits that every aspiring creative freelancer should have?

Number one is the relentless pursuit of clients and opportunities. There is so much work out there and there is no reason to not have enough work to sustain your lifestyle. But you need to grind it out every day and find the work. It's a numbers game.

Second is self-promotion. A lot of creative people cringe at the idea of selling themselves. I embraced that as just a part of freelancing. I also do cringe when I catch myself being a bit 'salesy' but you just have to do it. If you don't, then you don't eat.

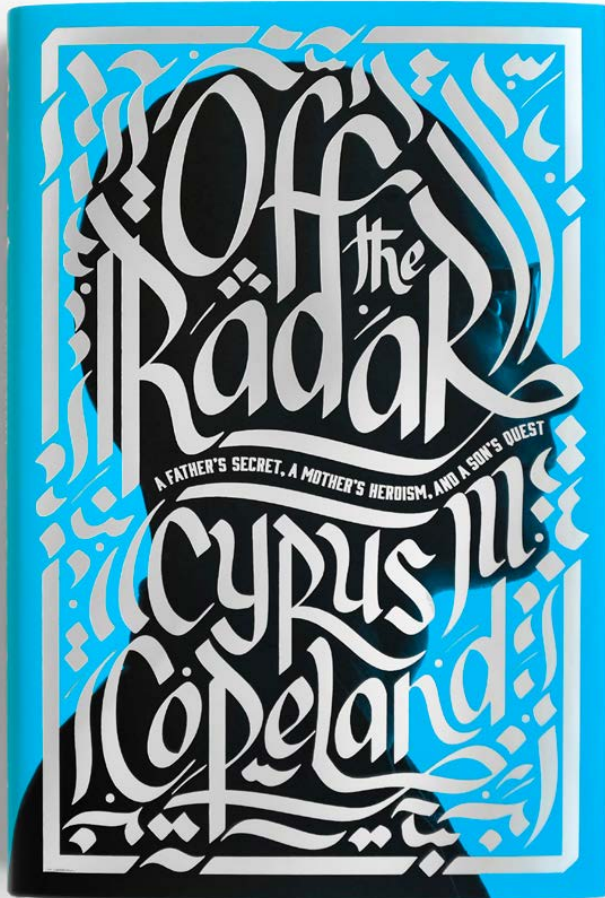
I learned a lot of cold-emailing techniques that now teach in my workshops. I got to work with Adidas because I met a guy at a bar who worked for them, and I sent him a piece of 'fan art' for one of their athletes. I pitched myself while we were tipsy, lol.

A third trait would be the propensity to take on things you've never done before. I've already mentioned being your own accountant, project manager, etc.. Freelancing is getting yourself into new situations, working on different timezones with different clients coming from various backgrounds and cultures. I've learned some new skills like writing, logo design, social media design in recent years. I'm not the best at all of those things, but those skills are now part of my arsenal.

How has being a freelance creative changed how you do graphic design? How has freelancing shaped your creative process when you design?



Above: Branding for J&M Naughty & Nice Cream, an alcohol-infused ice cream from the creators of Carmen's Best.
Top: Calligraphy work



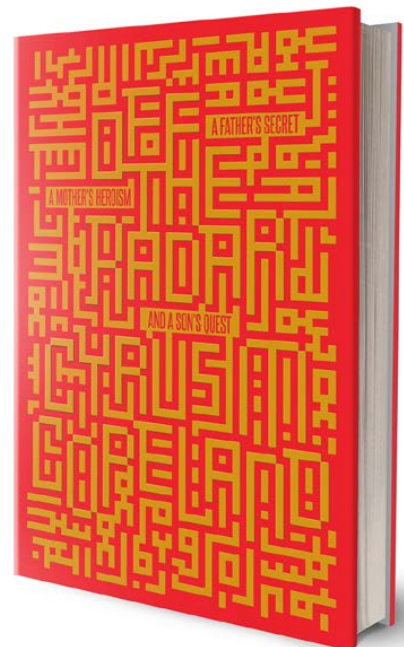
“When you start freelancing, you decide to become a small business owner to survive. Once you start investing time and money on your talents and skills, you become a creative entrepreneur.”

AJ DIMARUCOT

The actual design part is probably 20% of the work I do. Everything from the search for work, self-promotion, planning projects, coordinating and managing other designers have become a huge part of the process. I like to pass on 'jobs that pay the bills' to other people under my management so I can take on big-name projects myself.

Any preconceived notions about creative freelancing that you want to debunk?

Nothing is easy. I also don't spend eight hours at the beach with my laptop out and creating work. A lot of the work is boring and done at home. It's not as sexy as some people make it out to be. There are true digital nomads out there, but they are probably a tiny fraction of the freelancing population.



This page: Book cover commission for Penguin Random House's *Off The Radar* by Cyrus M. Copeland. The blue cover was the chosen study.



This page: *Parasite* fan posters
Opposite page:
 Football logo, Adidas

“Want to do logos? Start doing logos for yourself, your friends, fake businesses, etc. You are directly taking control of the work you want to do.”

AJ DIMARUCOT

You do not *deserve* clients or jobs even after you find some success. Back in 2008, I won a lot of design contests and started working with big clients. I thought I had made it. I was wrong. The same things that made me successful were the exact things I needed to keep doing. Nothing is guaranteed.

You’ve amassed an envious clientele from the comfort of your home. What ways did you take to put your work out there?

I did and still do a lot of self-initiated work. Put in the work, and put it out there. Personal work gives people an insight into how you think. You need to create work that you want to get, even if you haven't done it before. Want to do logos? Start doing logos for yourself, your friends, fake businesses, etc. This is an important part of finding work outside of answering job ads. Because you are directly taking control of the work you want to do.

A lot of the clients I got were from self-promotion and self-initiated pieces. I had mentioned a piece of fan art I did for an Adidas athlete. That same design I then shared on Behance, and that's how Nike found me.

What makes for a strong online design portfolio? From your experience, what traits and skills do most of your clients look for?

A portfolio should only contain the work you want to get. If you hate brochures and that's all you did on your last job, then don't ever show it on your portfolio.

Clients want to work with people that can communicate well. Writing emails or short messages is so important. Because of the difference in timezones, you need to learn how to over-communicate with clients. You also need to manage projects efficiently, delivering when you say you will.

You've started the OFW (Online Filipino Worker) initiative with a talk and future ones planned. What pushed you to kickstart this venture? What do you hope to achieve?

Last year, I took up a course on creative entrepreneurship, and it made me realize that I had so much stored knowledge on finding work online. I realized that I could monetize what I knew and in turn help Filipinos find online work as well. I discovered that this was a pain point, and many Filipinos struggled to find the same success. A lot have no idea that it exists or if they do, have no idea where to start.

I try to let people know that there are even more people like me who have found success in their own industries. That there is so much opportunity out there.

My ultimate dream is for Filipinos to not have any reason to pursue a career outside the Philippines just so they could feed their families back home. I'm not talking about people who want to migrate to other countries or just travel. We all have family members who have left the Philippines for good because they wanted to. I am talking about the people who believe they don't have a choice but leave home. It is simply not true. My goal is to let people know that because of the internet, you can have a decent source of income here.

Online work is great for the environment. It helps with traffic. It develops local economies, and you get to spend time with your loved ones. I believe it will become the default setup for the future of work. Offices will become obsolete for creative workers and probably most knowledge workers. I used to be selfish about what I knew, but I now want to get on as many Filipino creatives on this OFW movement as I can. It is my contribution to the country.

I have told my wife repeatedly that if I help one young designer out of poverty, then I can die. But I'd like to help as many Filipinos as I can to live better lives and improve their lot.

Would you say Filipinos are well suited to creative freelancing? Why do you think so?

I say this in all of my talks: Filipinos are the most creative people in the world. We are built for freelancing because we always make the best out of the most difficult circumstances. It is both a blessing and a curse.

We have been through more than 300 years of being brainwashed as not being enough. That we are inadequate. This is a lie. We have underestimated our own greatness. And freelancing is a whole world of doubt. Being put down, being challenged, we Filipinos are built for that. We can not only survive, but we can also thrive in that environment. ●



Celebrate design inspired by boldness at ajdimarucot.com. Follow AJ Dimarucot on Instagram @ajdimarucot.



FRAME



Designed with Love

Works of Heart envisions "a nation
that is free" with social impact design
rooted in everyday realities

INTERVIEW *Danielle Austria*

VISUALS *Works of Heart*

Wonderful to have you here at Kanto.

Please introduce yourselves to our readers and what you do for Works of Heart, and throw in a thing or two that's made you smile recently.

Hi, this is the Works of Heart team! We are a Filipino social impact design studio. A recent thing that made us all smile is Toby's Estate's white cold brew.

We know that Works of Heart opened shop in 2012. You serve the development sector—foundations, nonprofits, social enterprises—by providing branding, campaigns, graphic design and website development. What's different about designing for social good than, say, corporate or commercial work?

We think the main difference is scope. Designing for social good involves understanding the bigger picture or the role of the output in the larger project of making our country a better place to live. We do this by researching how social issues start and prevail, working closely with our partners, listening to their stories and, when lucky, meeting their communities.

Because of this, we realized that designing for social good is a lot more difficult than doing commercial projects. You have to constantly locate your strategy and messaging as something already part of existing societal systems and beliefs.

It's hard, but we love doing our work! We meet a lot of amazing people from different fields. They're extremely passionate about what they do, and it rubs off on us.

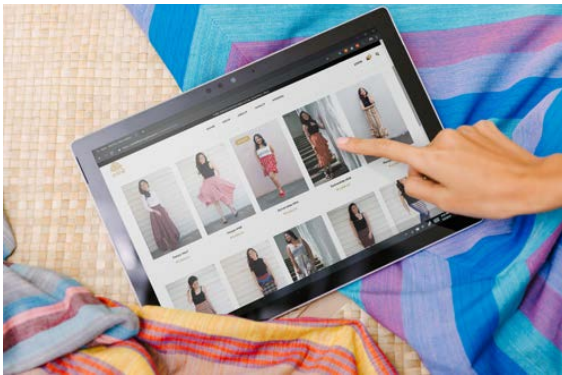
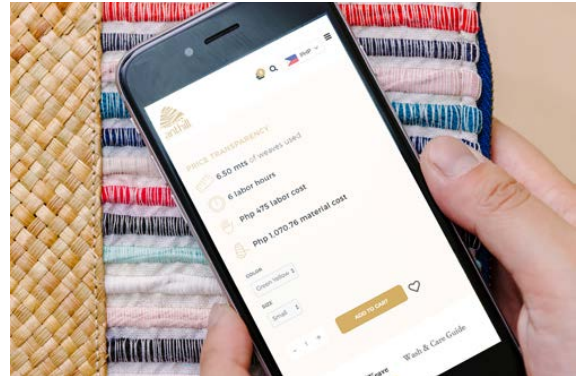
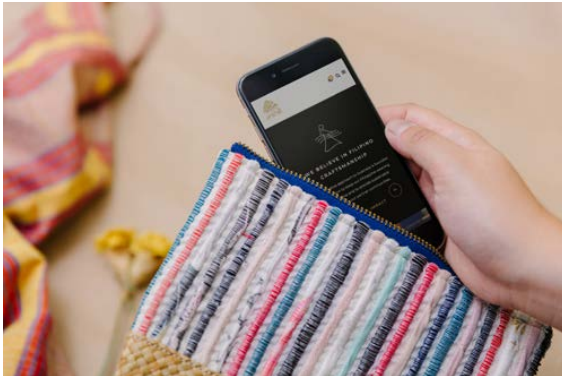
The Works of Heart team



Did you have any misconceptions about social good design that were immediately debunked as you started?

Yes! We all thought that social impact design is limited to only working with NGOs or NPOs and that the work will be pro-bono or have a very small budget. We now understand that addressing social issues through design is something that any company or person can do, and we are here to work with them on that!

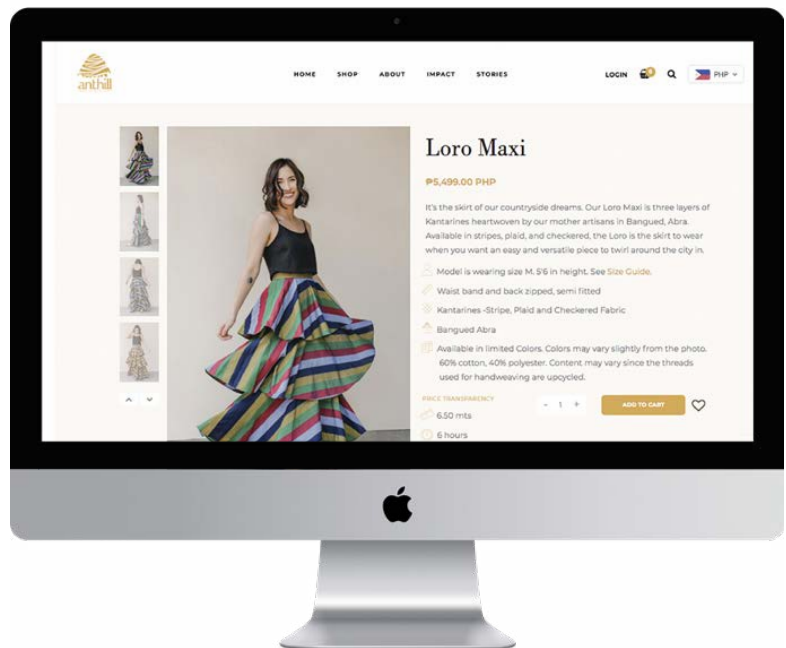
Another thing we thought back then was that the work would primarily revolve around just 'helping' and 'assisting', but that's a small part of it.



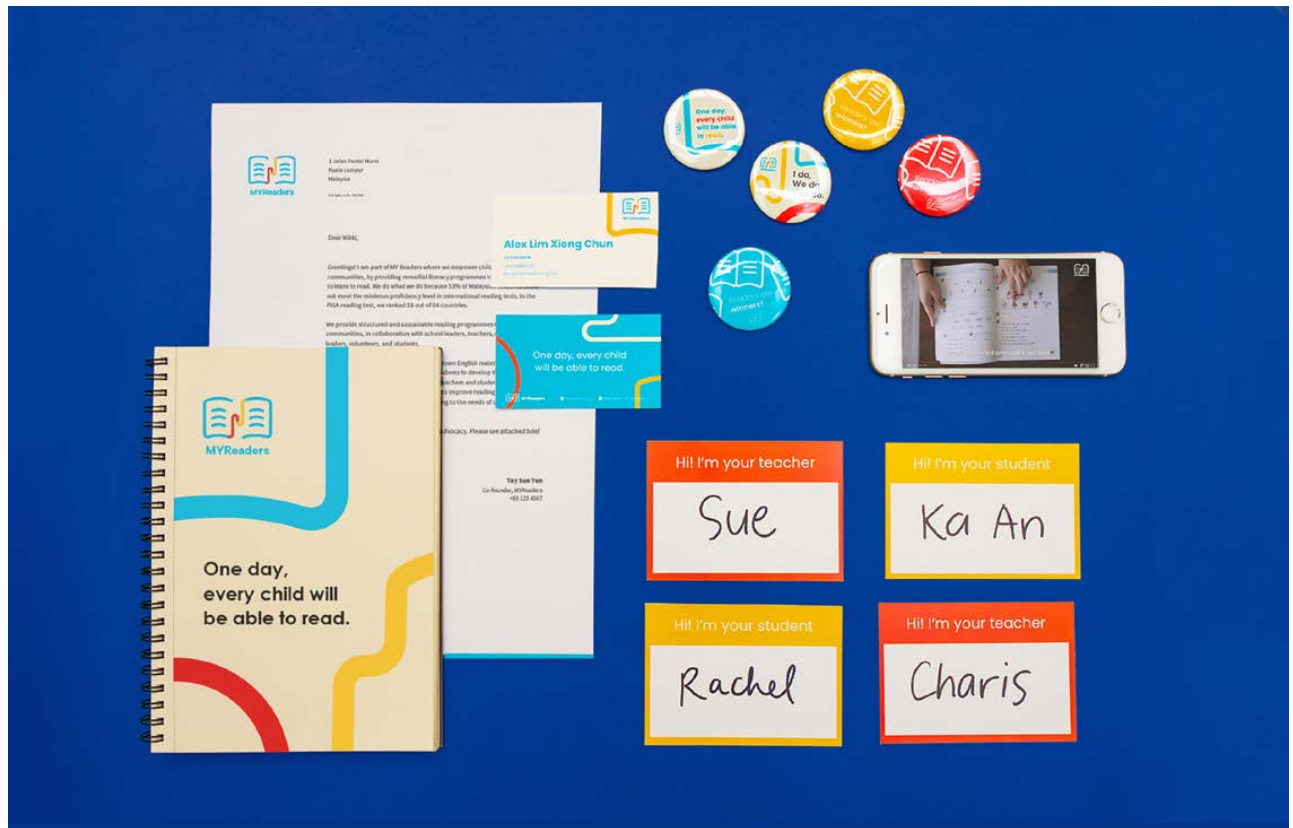
“Designing for social good involves understanding the bigger picture or the role of the output in making our country a better place to live.”

WORKS OF HEART

Work for ANTHILL, a social enterprise that weaves cultural preservation and sustainable livelihood together



FRAME



“In a world where it is so easy to put content out there, we want to be conscious of the story we share about ourselves.” WORKS OF HEART

It's a lot more radical now because you have to keep trying and constantly recreate new ways of facing the various and infinitely complex issues of society.

Are there any common storytelling struggles that drive clients to you for help?

Achieving clarity is a common storytelling struggle. For impact-driven organizations and enterprises, may it be non-profit or for-profit, they understand that the social issue they are trying to solve will need a lot of intervention, and they won't be selling or doing a single product or service. For example, ANTHILL's business ecosystem model will tell us they're not just selling weaves but do so for cultural preservation and sustainable livelihood, or non-profit MYReaders don't just hold teaching sessions but produce their own toolkits and manage their community of volunteers.

This is where the struggle comes in: how do they effectively communicate the core of their mission and the work that they do? We do our best to guide our clients in staying true to who they are, and what they do—nothing more or less. In a world where it is so easy to put content out there, we want to be conscious of the story we share and say about ourselves.

Seven or eight years down the line, perspectives and processes are bound to change. What has stayed, and what's different now?

Aside from the team growing from just two to nine members in seven years, we also all grew in age and maturity. In one of our blog posts, we talked about this growth and how one day we just realized that what we stand for, how we do things, the words and phrases we use have been different for a while now.

Our (sort of) tagline back then was “design for a cause” because we just wanted to help advocacy-driven groups. This passion to help do good has stayed but now, molded and shaped by our contemporary realities in the country, we knew that merely just helping was lacking; it wasn't enough that we had a cause or an advocacy and promoting it, and it wasn't enough to just use the blanket term “better” for our hopes for the country. We needed to be radical.

"When we met Alex and Sue Yen of MYReaders, what became apparent was that their organization was fueled by people who understood their vision. MYReaders, their youth literacy non-profit initiative in Malaysia, had a goal of literacy for all—a difficult feat considering that half of 15-year-old Malaysians are unable to read, especially in English." - Works of Heart



This led to our new thrust of pursuing good design and matching it with social imagination: the radical force to keep believing in pursuing better living circumstances for all.

We live in a time when it's easy and quick to get any information one needs—and free! via the Internet—but immersion remains an important part of your process. What makes it worth the time and cost investment? Can you share some of the discoveries or insight that you gained from immersions that you wouldn't have had otherwise?

Design works best and is more effective when grounded with reality. We always gain a deeper understanding of the context and realities of the audience or beneficiaries that result in designs that are genuine and honest. Sometimes, due to different circumstances, we can't always visit the partner communities of our clients but it's something we also push for.

Last year we did an internal project called Creative Connect. We all got to immerse ourselves in different places in the country and Asia with the help of our partner social enterprises.

“Design should always reflect the human experience.” Just by looking around Metro Manila, it's easy to find many designed things that don't. Why do you think poor design exists, and how can we help avoid it?

Ineffective design comes from a lack of empathy and understanding. When the designers don't think about who they are designing for and the context these people are in, then the output won't make sense to those who see or use it. This does not fall under graphic design, but an example is our infrastructures and streets were designed for cars when it should be for people—contributing to the worsening traffic that inconveniences the very people these roads are designed for.

We also want to add that when we discuss 'bad' design, we should be aware that as a developing country, we have more pressing concerns.

A brand identity and publication effort, the Araw-Araw journal seeks to inspire its users of the potential every day holds with a beautiful, tactile planner

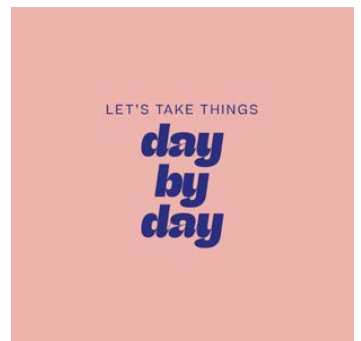
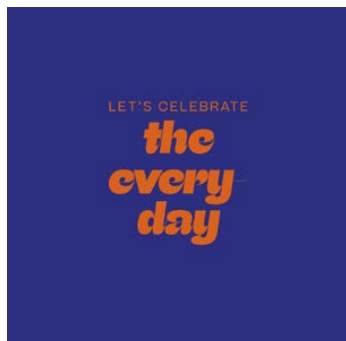
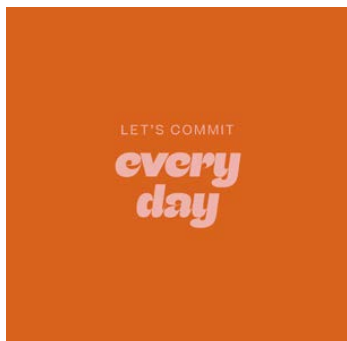


“Design works best and is more effective when grounded with reality.”

WORKS OF HEART



FRAME



FRAME



Left: Gouache x MAD Travel x 5 Partner Artists for the Future Forest initiative.

Clockwise, from top left: Isabel Weber (of Works of Heart); Raffy Borromeo (of Works of Heart); Ross Du (of Serious Studio); Raxenne Maniquiz (of Plus63); and Tim Lopez (of And a Half); Gouache



We are not very good at urban planning, maybe because we don't have the privilege to think long-term and instead just focus on fixing things for the present. In general, not everyone sees the value in having well-designed systems and things. We need to talk about design—good or bad—to bring it to people's attention and to find better ways to go about it.

2018 and 2019 were undeniably very loud years. Social media has become a megaphone for social issues. But, while awareness is welcome and crucial for change-making, a lot of the support is stuck in the echo chamber. How can designers help move people into action?

People coming together, whether offline or online, to voice concerns gives designers a large repository of testimonials that can be translated into a concrete output. It's important for us designers to listen to these people and converse. Say that things can be done, that we have the power to create change with our actions.

What we like doing now is trying out radically curious partnerships in pursuit of contributing to advocacy through our passion projects. We launched one in December called Future Forest, an art-led reforestation project that aims to use art as a way to dream up a new future—a more livable environment for everyone. This project brings together five Manila-based artists and a community-based social enterprise, MAD Travel, to promote the importance of forests and provide an avenue for other urban residents to participate.

Our thrust to pursue passion projects aligned with our personal advocacies was born out of the realization that we just can't wait for design to happen—we need to intentionally and actively pursue design that imagines better futures for us all. Our hope is that this type of design projects can help inspire others to participate or come up with their own projects too.

In your blog, you wrote about evolving your vision from creating “a better Philippines” to “a nation that is free”. Fair access to opportunities and choice, developmental and personal growth, freedom of expression—how do you see these concretizing in 2020? What are your hopes for the Philippines?

We hope for a nation where everyone has opportunities to be their best selves. We hope that we can worry less about tomorrow. To do this, we need more projects, more collaborations, more attempts at a better future. ●

“We need to talk about design—good or bad—to bring it to people’s attention and to find better ways to go about it.”

WORKS OF HEART

Find good design @worksofthe.art on Instagram and follow the Future Forest initiative @futureforest.ph.



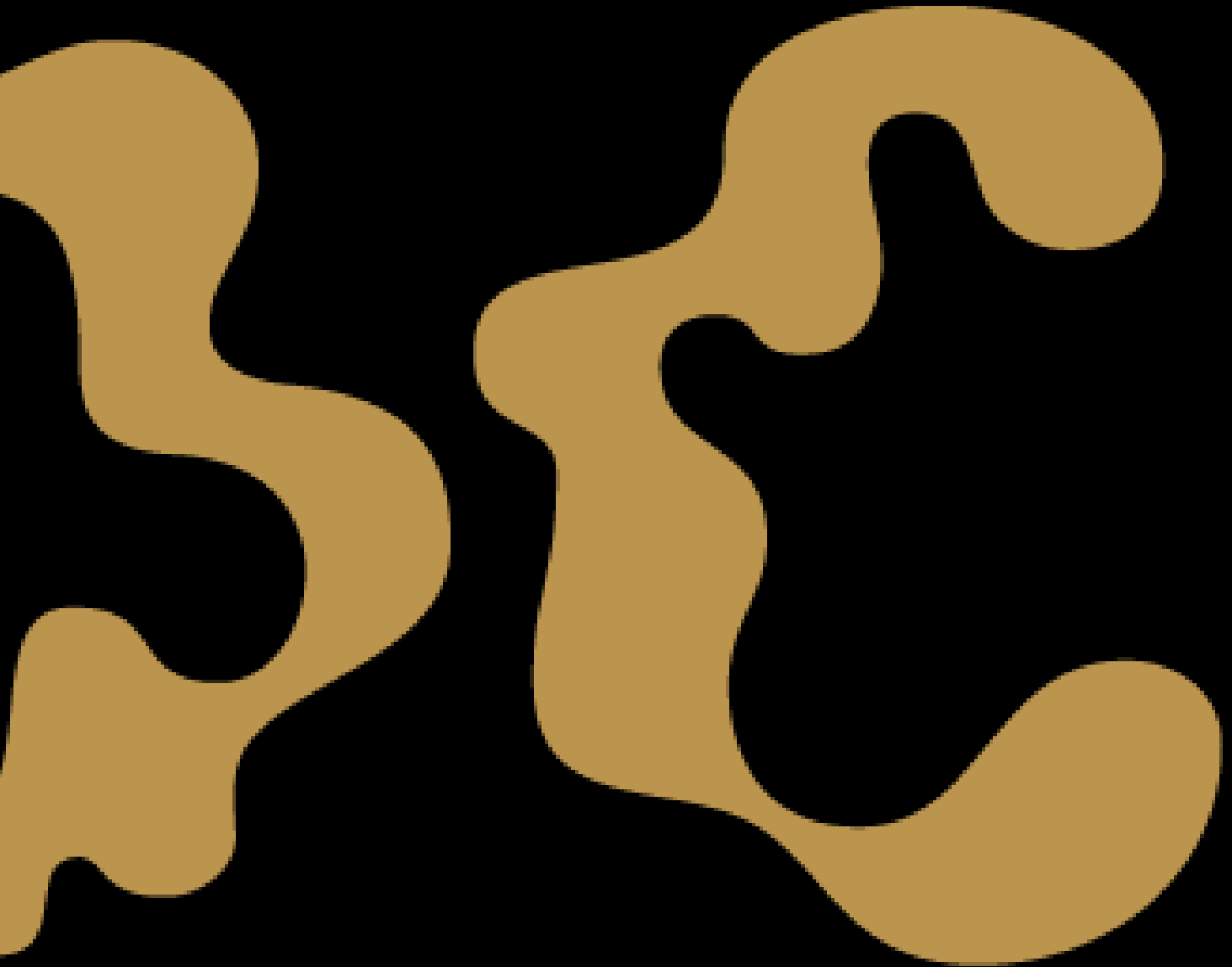
FRAME

GOLD
STANDARD



Uncurated Studio's *Karl Aguro*
and a team of like-minded collaborators
help cultivate a new generation of Mindanaoan
creatives through Oro Design Conference

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing* **VISUALS** *Uncurated Studio*



Hi Karl! Kindly introduce yourself.



Hello! I'm Karl Adrian Aguro, a graphic designer from Bukidnon who is currently based in Cagayan de Oro City. I run Uncurated Studio, a one-man graphic design studio that focuses on branding and identity and print design. I also have a hyperactive pug named Mambo.

How did you find yourself in the world of graphic design?

I got into graphic design while I was taking up an engineering course in Xavier University. Back then, I was part of a school program called STREAMS - Pathways to Higher Education where I was appointed as a communications head. I had to learn basic Photoshop and later

on realized that I can do illustrations with it. Long story short, my interest shifted to graphic design and convinced my parents to enroll me in a design course at the University of San Carlos in Cebu City.

As a CDO based designer, what about the creative scene there and in Northern Mindanao in general prompted you to start Oro Design Conference? Why a design conference?

I went back to Cagayan de Oro in 2017 because I got a call from a university colleague asking if I'd like to join her company as an Art Director. I was fresh from university life and briefly worked in advertising in Cebu City. I thought it would be nice to go back to CDO and see if it works since it's near to my hometown (just an hour's bus ride!). During that time, the company was starting its design department and encouraged everyone to be involved in the local design community.

We initiated the first Behance portfolio review and was quite surprised with the turnout. It was also a great event to get acquainted with the network of designers in CDO. After the event, I talked to my workmates that time for a possibility of hosting a design conference not only limited to CDO but extend it to northern Mindanao region. I decided to resign after 10 months and tried pursuing running a design studio (which is doing great, surprisingly! Haha!) so the idea of the design conference has been floating around for two years.

Top: Karl Aguro, Uncurated Studio principal and ORO Design Conference proponent

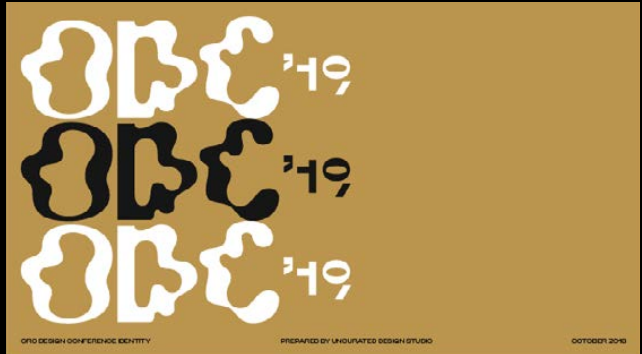
Opposite page: Branding and collateral for the inaugural installment of ORO Design Conference in 2019. The branding was driven by the literal translation of the Spanish word 'oro' or gold from its place of origin, Cagayan de Oro City. The wavy curves of the selected typefaces echoes the city's storied river of the same name, which has been the subject of countless myths and legends.

Heading - LYNO JEAN

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O
P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Numbers - BRUTAL BOLD

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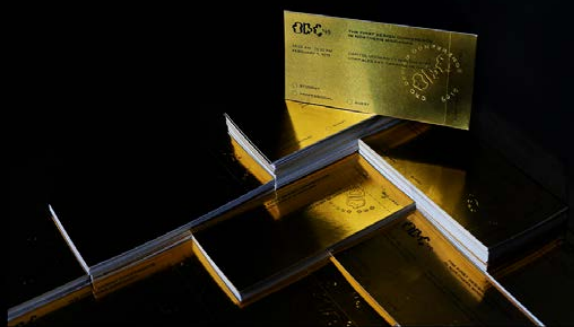


OBC
DESIGN
CONFERENCE 2019

OBC '19



“Our vision is to give a platform for local and national designers to inspire, motivate and further the knowledge of graphic design in Northern Mindanao.” **KARL AGURO**





Since I am alone in the studio, I had to gather some designer friends and asked them if they would be down to pursue the event we initially planned. I'm very lucky to have very supportive and talented designer friends who collectively share and believe the same vision we set for the conference.

Can you tell us a little about how it was like setting up the first installment of the conference in 2019? What were the challenges you and your collaborators faced?

When I was in college, I did have an experience being in a team that puts up events. However, these events were usually small-scale and most of the time under the university organization so the venue and financial support were not an issue. This time was a bit different. We had to figure out the logistics, financial backup, marketing and most importantly the venue. Last year, our timeline got messed up because of a last-minute venue change which is something that we have a high priority of correcting this time around. We also had to seek help and advice from peers in Cebu who are experienced in organizing events like TedX, Ignite Talks, etc.

We noticed that most of the designers in the area were not as informed on the type of format that a graphic design conference has so we also had to strategize a marketing plan that will introduce and educate them about the event.

Ultimately, what do you want to set out to achieve in Oro Design Conference? What is your long term goal for the event?

Our vision is to give a platform for local and national designers to inspire, motivate and further the knowledge of graphic design in Northern Mindanao. The idea of a design conference is nothing new. In fact, there are a lot of design conferences held each year in different parts of the country. But no matter how many events are out there, there has always been that one common denominator: to bring people together with the goal of understanding what it means to have good design and how it can influence a new generation of designers. It's also important to encourage a healthy dialogue about how can design bridge cultural tradition and the future.

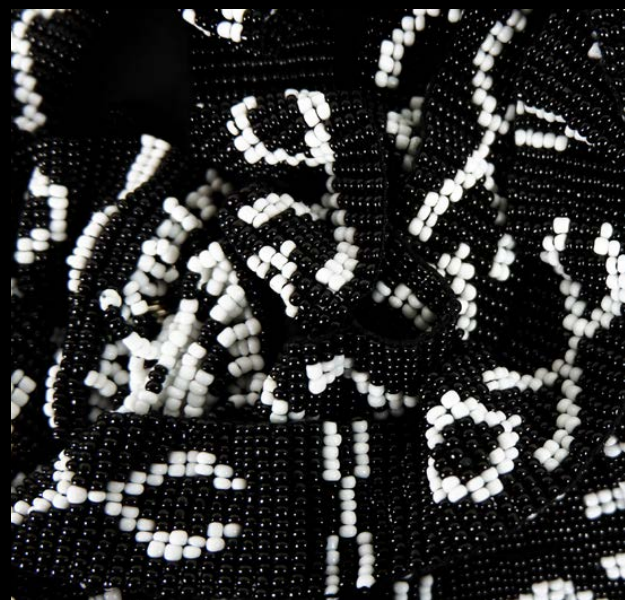
How did you curate your roster of speakers for the conference? Do you prioritize homegrown Mindanaoan talent?

The team is quite diverse, comprising of talented designers who do amazing motion, graphic and sound design works. We all have different influences (both locally and internationally), and it's always great to hear them share their points of consideration while we curate the speakers. We take time in curating a balanced roster of speakers, not isolating the region from talented designers around the country. (Hopefully, internationally!) We all have a common understanding that in as much as we want to highlight talented designers in the region, we can also learn a lot from designers in different parts of the country who are doing amazing and impactful works.

The country is undoubtedly filled with creative talent, but the artistic field is often seen as an unprofitable calling in comparison with more lucrative careers. What is your take on this? Would you say Oro is established to help debunk these claims?

I personally think this is what makes design conferences great in general. Aside from the inspiration and the right motivation you get from the speakers, it also fosters an environment for insightful conversations with designers alike and get advice from designers who make a living doing design. Living in CDO for three years, I'm a witness of its fast progress. I'm also aware of what putting up a design studio entails—having friends who also started theirs in the past. There's definitely a short lifespan, but what made me still pursue it was the potential I saw. I was interested in what we can create and come up with.

Couple years ago, businesses here do not see branding or design as an important aspect in amplifying their businesses. It has definitely changed over the years. There are a lot of companies hiring designers and illustrators nowadays which is really a good thing and a sign of great progress because CDO designers now don't find the need to fly to other cities to get a job in the creative field.



“We all have a common understanding that in as much as we want to highlight talented designers in the region, we can also learn a lot from designers in different parts of the country who are doing amazing and impactful works.”

KARL AGURO

ORO DESIGN CONFERENCE



ORO DESIGN CONFERENCE
2020

02.15.20

SPEAKERS

- ET A HALF
- CHINGKEE TE
- DAN MATUTINA
- JAN BURASAY
- JOEY SENDAYDIEGO
- MARCELINO CAHIG

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ORO DESIGN CONFERENCE
2020

02.15.20 XAVIER UNIVERSITY LITTLE THEATRE CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY

SPEAKERS

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- DAN MATUTINA
- JOEY SENDAYDIEGO
- MARCELINO CAHIG
- JAN BURASAY

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XAVIER UNIVERSITY LITTLE THEATRE CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY



Photography by Van Erik Pacamo & Christian Loui Gamolo



“As a designer, it’s always exciting for me to engage in conversations about the Filipino design identity.”

KARL AGURO

As the lead of the branding studio working on Oro, what was the concept and persona behind the branding your team established for the conference? Who were your other collaborators?

It’s easy to slap a geometric weave pattern and brand it as a Mindanao event. [Which ironically is what we are doing this time around but done tastefully. We hope so!] I won’t deny, this was the case during my first initial brainstorming and exploration with my best friend and frequent collaborator, Nikko Tan, who is a talented motion and graphic designer. However, we have always seen this type of approach everywhere and there are actually a lot of other things that you can get references and inspiration. Since the first installment is happening in CDO, we were inspired by its tagline being the “City of Golden Friendship” and the literal translation of *Oro* which is gold. We made sure that the gold finishing extends to all touch points from the ticket to the tote bag print. And because we wanted to introduce something fresh and new, we made a decision to make it type-based since it’s not often that you’d see an event around the area that is type-driven. We made sure that the typeface we’re going to use is wavy and organic to pay homage to Cagayan de Oro river flowing at the center of the city.



While the conference is still in its infancy, are there feedback and anecdotes that you wish to share that make you hopeful about its future? Of the future of the Philippine graphic design industry?

There were definitely a lot of things to improve that we prioritized this time around. I’d say we all did great on the first one but as an organizer, there were also a lot of things that we wish we did. Everything was a learning experience for all of us in the team and I’m just really fortunate

to be in a team that understands the vision we set for the conference, which is to bring like-minded individuals around the region and celebrate what we have here and start a conversation about things we need to nurture and improve. While it's great to show support to talented local designers, we also understand that we can learn a lot from designers all over the country, even the world.

What surprising thing did working for Oro reveal to you about being a Filipino graphic designer?

On the early phases of marketing the conference, there definitely was an undeniable doubt on whether the event would gather enough participants and meet our expectations. In fact, we set our expectations low (Haha.) But we were quite surprised by the interest shown and seen a lot of talented local designers participate. It's great to see them engage in discussions about the state of graphic design in the region. Does it makes it Filipino? Probably not. It's hard to put in a box or even pinpoint what makes Filipino design because historically, our country was a melting pot of different cultures having different foreign influences.

So as a designer, it's always exciting for me to engage in conversations about the Filipino identity through design because I personally think it's ever evolving. The recent typography exhibit I joined at Escolta was proof of that. Typefaces were getting inspiration from the current state like traffic and commute situations, local street signs, etc.

But if there is something that I've seen and witnessed during the conference [that stuck with me], it was the talent that shone through the whole experience and the good sense of rapport among creatives, which I think is something great to embody as a Filipino designer. More than the body of work we put out was the celebration of skills and talent in the pursuit of good design. ●

Keep posted on future installments of Oro Design Conference by following them on Instagram at [@orodesigncon](#). Follow Karl Aguro as Uncurated Studio at [@uncuratedstudio](#)

This spread, clockwise from top left: 2017 planner design; SOFT 2018 event poster; branding for Chingkeetea, a CDO-based milk tea brand; personal branding exercise





PAGES

HUMAN LIBRARIES



Rey Bufi encourages love for reading among children in far-flung communities in the Philippines with The Storytelling Project

INTERVIEW *Danielle Austria*
VISUALS *The Storytelling Project*



Hey Kuya Rey! Welcome to *Kanto!*

In 2010, you founded The Storytelling Project (TSP), a nonprofit organization that seeks to foster the love of reading among Filipino children. You do month-long, immersive programs in public schools where you facilitate storytelling activities with grade-schoolers and help build libraries. Could you give our readers a preview of how it started?

Wala akong *habit* na pagbabasa noong bata. Masipag ako mag-aral pero kulang ako ng *reading habit*. At dahil hindi ako masyadong nagbabasa, yung *comprehension* ko, ‘di malalim. Noon, gusto ko mag-abogada kaya nag-aral ako sa San Beda. Ang aking *undergrad* ay *double major course* na Philosophy at Human Resources Development.

Alam naman natin na ang Philosophy ay isang *reading and writing course*. Ang daming pinapabasa sa amin. *In a week*, ilang articles ‘yun na minsan inuulit ko ng limang beses para maintindihan. Tapos kailangan ko naman magsulat tungkol sa aking binasa—na minsan inaabot ng isang buong araw.

Ang naging *advice* ng *professor* ko sa akin [para mas mapadali ang gawain]: “*All you have to do is read, read, read; write, write, write; and start with what interests you.*”

Nagsimula ako magbasa ng mga John Grisham [*novels*] kasi nga gusto ko maging *lawyer*. *After two months*, napansin ko ang pagbabago. Kung dati ay limang beses ko inuulit ang binabasa ko, naging apat na lang at naging tatlo. Kung dati ay isang buong araw ako nagsusulat, naging kalahating araw na lang. Sayang sana kung naumpisahan ko noong bata, mas na-*enjoy* ko sana

ang pamimilosopiya. *In terms of speaking*, *organized* ako pero sa *writing*, sabog. Tapos yung *comprehension*, siyempre [mababaw]. *Language is familiarity*, so ‘pag hindi ka sanay sa *language*, mahirap itong gamitin. Ayoko na maranasan ng mga batang Pilipino itong nakalakihan ko.

After graduation, ang naging *training* ko sa Smart [Communications] ay HR. Meron akong *volunteer group* doon na nagtuturo sa mga bata *every summer*. Kahit wala na ako sa Smart, nagvo-*volunteer* pa rin ako sa kanila. Pag may *storytelling workshop*, pinapa-*attend* nila ako at doon nahasa ‘yung *skill* ko. Doon ko rin na-*meet* ang aking *wife* [na si Grace].

Rey Bufi doing what he does best





Pero sa *eight* Saturdays na ‘yun, na-*realize* namin na tuwing natatapos, *back to zero* uli ang mga bata. Walang *continuity*. Walang *habit* na nabubuo. Ginusto namin na palalalimin sana ‘yung *engagement*. Paano natin matutulungan yung mga bata na gawin *habit* ang pagbabasa? Doon nagsimula ang The Storytelling Project.

Can you give us a picture of how the month-long immersions pan out?

TSP *promotes happy learning*. Meron kaming *three-phased program* [na minsan nagsasabay-sabay] na *Imagine, Create and Share*.

First, we partner with public schools sa probinsya. Tumitira kami sa mismong paraalan. Mine-meet muna namin ang *parents, teachers, principal at local government* para i-*explain* ang *program* dahil naniniwala kami na ang *success* nito ay nakasalalay sa maraming *stakeholders*. *We target younger grade school students with fun activities like song and dance*. Tapos nakikipag-*partner* kami sa *colleges or universities* para i-*involve* ang *Education students with weekly storytelling sessions*.

Sa unang session, pinapipikit namin ang mga bata habang nagkukuwento kami. Pagkatapos, ido-*drawing* nila ang mga naalala nila—walang paghuhusga para ma-*build* ang *confidence* ng mga bata.

“Paano natin matutulungan yung mga bata na gawin habit ang pagbabasa? Doon nagsimula ang The Storytelling Project.”

REY BUFI

Sa unang mga araw, nagko-kopyahan pa ‘yan pero ‘pag tumagal, nagkakanya-kanya na sila. Lumalawak ang imahinasyon at *comprehension* nila. Tapos nabubuo na nila ang *story*. Hindi kami nagtuturo ng *technical aspects* ng *reading* (pagbabaybay, *sounds*) dahil ang gusto namin *is to foster a genuine love for reading*.

Sa mga susunod na linggo, nakadilat na sila habang nakikinig at ini-introduce na namin ang iba-ibang *storytelling styles*. Nagkakaroon din ng *post-reading activities* na *related* sa *stories*. Kunyari gamit ang *Araw sa Palengke* (ni May Tobias-Papa), pinagdadala namin sila ng tanim. Gumagawa kami ng *mini* palengke tapos binibigyan namin sila ng *paper money* at mamimili sila. Isang kuwento—integrated. Maaari maging *springboard* ng *discussions* ang mga kuwento. *Ang Araw sa Palengke* ay pwede magamit sa *Science: go, grow, glow*. Akala ng mga bata, naglalaro pa rin sila pero *part* na pala ng *lesson*.

Meron rin kaming *parenting seminars*. Naniniwala kami na sa bahay nagsisimula ang pagkatuto ng mga bata. Binubuksan natin ang isip ng mga magulang na hindi lang responsibilidad ng *school* ang pagtuturo. Pinaguuwi namin ng *storybooks* ang mga bata at ang *assignment* nila ay kuwentuhan ang buong pamilya. *This opens possibilities for better communication* at mas naiintidihan ng *parents* ang kalagayan ng mga bata.

After one month, tinutulungan namin ang *school* na mag-create at maintain ng *library*. Kadalasan, ang mga *public school libraries* ay nanghihiram lang ng espasyo. *Most of the books they have are old textbooks* at kung meron man na *donated books, these are Western titles* [na hindi *relatable* sa mga bata]. Hindi *sustainable*.

Sa *library* na nabuo namin sa Masbate, meron kaming *little helpers* na mga *grade four to six students* na nangunguna sa klase. Tine-train namin sila na maging ate at kuya sa mga mas maliliit na bata, at maging *part* ng *book club*. Ngayon, ang mga bata doon talagang nanghihiram ng libro. Nitong November, nagpa-*quiz bee* kami tungkol sa lahat ng nabasa nila. Ang *total* na nahiram na doon, nasa 700 *books* na. Nakakatuwa. Sana *in three to four years*, pwede na namin bitawan ‘yung *school*. Hindi na nila kami kakailanganin kasi ang *community* na mismo ang nagle-lead ng *reading activities*.



Pinaguuwi namin ng *storybooks* ang mga bata at ang *assignment* nila ay kuwentuhan ang buong pamilya. *This opens possibilities for better communication.*

REY BUFI



In 2014, The Storytelling Project launched *Super Labandera* by then sixth-grade learner Jim Mark Carolino, whose mother was a laundrywoman. This was followed in 2018 by *Ti Dakkel Nga Armang (Ang Malaking Alamang)*, a collective effort by public school teachers from La Union.





“Wag natin maliitin ang kakayahan ng bata na umintindi. Sayang ang *opportunity* kung magtanong ang bata tapos hindi mo ipapaliwanag.”

REY BUFI

Are there certain types of stories or themes that strongly resonate with kids?

Ang dala namin na mga kuwento ay tungkol sa mga bagay na pinagdadaan ng mga bata—*self-confidence, family, community*. May kuwento ng mahiyaing manok na hindi marunong tumilaok. Ang kuwento ni Pulong Patago-tago ay tungkol sa *playfulness*. Ito ay mga kuwento na tumutulong sa kanila na mag-*make sense* sa mundo.

Kung may gusto kang *i-explain* sa bata, pwede mo daanin sa kuwento para mas maintindihan niya. Lalo na pagdating sa mga kumplikadong *subjects*. Ang *Mama's House, Papa's House* (ni Jeanette Patindol) ay tungkol sa paghihiwalay ng magulang.

Coming from that, do you think today's kids are ready for stories with more progressive (or difficult) messages?

Minsan tayong mga *adults* ang nago-*overreact*. Gusto natin ipaliwanag agad-agad sa bata ang mga sensitibong bagay sa *level* ng isang *adult*. May *biases* agad tayo. Pero hindi mo pwedeng *i-bombard* 'yung bata ng mga mabibigat na *words* at *i-expect* na maintindihan niya 'yung buong konteksto, *let's say*, ng LGBT. Maaaring ang maintindihan lang niya ay magkaiba kayo ng *preferences* pero kailangan *i-respeto* ang kaniyang *choice*; hanggang doon lang. Minsan nago-*overthink* tayo. Ang importante dito ay *processing*. Base sa reaksyon ng bata, maaari kang sumagot at *ime-make sense* niya iyon.

'Wag natin maliitin ang kakayahan ng bata na umintindi. Sayang ang *opportunity* kung magtanong ang bata tapos hindi mo ipaliwanag.

When TSP started in 2010, the world was just on the verge of a major tech revolution. Now, we've never been more glued to screens, and we're raising a generation that's never known life otherwise. Does this worry you or make it challenging (or easier) to fulfill your mission?

Ang nadudulot ng *technology* ay paiksi nang paiksi na *attention span*. Pero ang *wonder*, kuha mo pa rin *with a book*. Hindi lang minsan nabibigyan ang mga bata ng



pagkakataon na makapagbasa. Kung may *opportunity* na magbasa ng libro at makuwentuhan, gusto pa rin ito ng mga bata. Lalo na sa probinsya. *Advanced* tayo sa *technology* sa *urban communities* pero sa *provinces*, malayo pa sila.

Dati, ayoko na ihalo ang *technology* pero hindi natin ito maiiwasan. Ang kailangan lang talaga ay simulan muna natin ang *solid reading habit with printed material*. Mas magiging mapanuri sila, mas mahaba ang pasensya nila, mas matagal ang kanilang atensiyon.

Aside from the kids, have you noticed your work with TSP making an impact on the teachers that you work with?

Isa rin na kailangan gawin ay mabago yung mga *teachers*, maging katuwang sila [sa layunin ng The Storytelling Project]. Ang nakatutuwa ngayon, dahil nakikita nila 'yung mga bata na nagbabasa, mas ginaganahan sila [magturo]. *Through TSP*, nakita nila na pwedeng magbago *from non-reader to independent reader* ang isang bata. Ang *goal* ng TSP ay yung mga bata ang magdadala ng pagbabago sa mga *adults* sa bahay, sa mga *teachers*. Dahil nagbabago ang mga bata, kailangan din mag-*catch up* ng mga matatanda.

Love kids and storytelling?
Share your time and talent
with The Storytelling Project.
Follow them on Facebook
[@TheStorytellingProject](#)
for workshop schedules and
community updates.

Tell us about your dreams of owning a bookstore.

Meron kaming Angkas Traveling Bookstore, isang *mobile* na *bookstore*. Sa isang *meeting* namin with National Book Development Board, nalaman namin na gusto nila sana dalhin sa mga probinsya ang mga *locally-published books*. Kaya lang, walang may gusto kasi magastos, *logistics*. Kaya naisip namin gawin ‘yung Angkas. Ang plano namin ay buong pamilya kami magta-travel sa probinsya tapos may mga activities like Angkas at the Park. Nagawa namin pasulpot-sulpot pero ang gusto namin gawin ngayong taon ay isang *website* na may *buy-and-donate option*.

Give us a peek into your personal library! Top five favorite books of all time?

Mga libro ni John Grisham, kadalasan *inspirational* tulad ng mga sinulat ni Paulo Coelho. *Outliers* ni Malcom Gladwell. *The Power of Habit* ni Charles Duhigg kung saan nakita ko ang tungkol sa pagbuo ng *habit*. *Grit* ni Angela Duckworth, *Finding Your Why* ni Simon Sinek.

Thank you for making time for Kanto! We absolutely enjoyed hearing your stories. Since this is our action issue, how would you encourage our readers to discover their own potential for change-making?

Being inspired is one thing; acting about it is another. Pwede kasing na-*inspire* ka pero ang mas malaking tanong ay: Ano ang gagawin mo sa inspirasyon mo?

Maraming tao na gustong tumulong pero hindi nila alam paano. May mga tao na hindi oras ang gusto i-*volunteer* pero pwede pera o *back office [work]*. Dati hinahanap ko pa ‘yung *same passion* sa *volunteers*, which is mali kasi na-*realize* ko na may *levels of volunteerism* rin. May iba na hindi pa nila alam kung ano ang gusto nila ma-*experience*. May iba na naghahanap ng *stress reliever*. ‘Yung iba, gusto maka-*meet* ng ibang tao o makapunta ng iba’t ibang lugar. May *levels of maturity* rin. Hindi mo pwedeng tanggalin yung mga nagsisimula pa lang. Maraming paraan. ●



“Being inspired is one thing; acting about it is another. Pwede kasing na-inspire ka pero ang mas malaking tanong ay: Ano ang gagawin mo sa inspirasyon mo?”

REY BUFI





PALATE



Food for Thought

Vincent Ong talks to Good Food Community's *Charlene Tan* about community-shared agriculture and turning dissatisfaction into action

INTERVIEW *Vincent Ong*

VISUALS *Good Food Community*



How's your relationship with food?

While that question may take the tone of a mental health advocacy or a body positivity campaign, there are other ways to look at it. Take it literally: How does your food get to you? And where exactly does it come from, beyond the supermarket?

For many of us—privilege check—it's nothing to think about, a given. But for Charlene Tan, that wasn't the case, which led to founding Good Food Community (GFC), an organization that links consumers and farmers in a newer, more direct way. GFC proposes the idea of community-shared agriculture (CSA). This gives us to subscribe to regular deliverers of whatever fresh produce are in season, thus producing steady income streams for their partner-farmers and ensuring that their crops don't have to be tossed because of oversupply and other factors.

We talk to her about her journey with GFC and how to turn that dissatisfaction into action.

Charlene Tan, photographed by JL Javier for CNN Philippines Life



How did you first learn about community shared agriculture (CSA)?

I learned about CSA through a UK volunteer at the NGO I worked for. He cooked rather well and when I asked as to what he owed his skill, he said he was subscribed to a CSA back in his hometown. He explained the concept to me, and I thought it was a brilliant model.

Did you always feel a connection to agriculture and food?

Apart from eating it, no. The first connection was a desire for a more just and humane world. Second came the sense of renewing our relationship with nature. Both brought me to agriculture: how we are as people is how we relate to the source of our life. As the years go by in deepening inquiry, it becomes so clear that “eating is an agricultural act”.

I read that you used to have an idealized image of a farmer's life before you entered the industry. What shattered this illusion and brought about these encounters?

Actually meeting different farmers and beginning to understand their contexts. The idea of CSA came first and since the NGO I mentioned earlier had been training farmers in Capas. That appeared the best place to start. Proposing the idea of a new kind of trade brought about the encounter and succeeding conversations. So the NGO brokered our meeting and we took it from there. Over time, we understood more.

What was the tipping point that made you found Good Food Community (GFC)?

Cheesy but true: I fell in love with the idea of CSA. Just that vision of growing a community around food systems totally animated me. Even now, I love cooking together, knowing who grew what, visiting the farms and working towards shared goals of health, justice, biodiversity. Back then I would have gladly joined any organization that was working this way with this mission. I couldn't find any so we began.

What were some of the obstacles you encountered in setting up GFC?

Err, too many to mention! When we first suggested this new model to farmer groups or even customers, it was challenging to comprehend.

“I must add that working with vulnerable sectors meant sharing in their precarity as well, especially when we didn't know the first thing about it!”

CHARLENE TAN

Why does it need to be this way? None of us have been in any allied industry before, so it took time to listen and understand things like what are their pain points? What are their dreams? How can we best work together? When we began, we had to do a lot of educating ourselves, so that took a lot of our energy.

I must add that working with vulnerable sectors meant sharing in their precarity as well, especially when we didn't know the first thing about it! The farmers we started with, and indeed many that we encounter, still do not have experience in collective marketing nor do they have organizational structures in place, access to capital or materials. And although we set out to shape the market towards more solidarity and mindfulness, it's challenging when we are conditioned against it. The habit of driving down prices and expecting what we want when we want it are all characteristics of the prevailing food system and it's just not sustainable. But challenges shape us too.

What kind of help did you need and receive along the way?

So many folks have become part of our story through the years. Trying out this new idea was definitely a vote of trust and very helpful at the start. Being patient, continuing to subscribe and feedback over time has really helped us root the idea unto our context. But things like publicity and media have shared the dream with an audience that we wouldn't have been able to reach ourselves. We also received donations, angel investment, gifts of seeds, bread and ferments. A few friends have opened up their kitchens in hospitality so that we may cook together as a community. All of these have nurtured the spirit of GFC.

In what ways have you seen GFC grow?

Oh, this question would make me cry. Well, today I can say that it's grown materially from a few sacks of beloved organic produce back in 2010 to over half a ton per week in 2020! The team has also grown in number, from three stubborn idealists doing everything to eight! From not having a formal address, we now have a headquarters, a satellite kitchen and a market!



Trying out this new idea was definitely a vote of trust and very helpful at the start. Being patient, continuing to subscribe and feedback over time has really helped us root the idea unto our context.

CHARLENE TAN

PALATE





How have you seen GFC impact the lives of farmers and customers? How about your colleagues and staff?

In *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen speaks about different kinds of poverty and commensurately, what development might mean in these different contexts. Growing capabilities to live the kind of lives they choose has been a guiding definition of impact for me. And it's one that all stakeholders can share. Concretely though, our farmers have shared freedom from food insecurity, better nutrition habits, being able to send their children to school and learning how to plan their production. A memory I like to share often was how a farmer remarked that they did not go hungry that year because of our regular trade.

What growing good food for a community means is always having food in your garden. Our customers say our produce tastes exceptional, that it's made them understand what real vegetables taste like, that in some cases that the natural food has remedied health conditions and promoted better eating habits. Many customers have become friends and this work has deepened friendships. My learning about vegetables, and how to cook and compost, are representative of the team's experiences as individuals. Over the years, it's been wonderful to witness a maturity to our perspectives and dialogue, how we are more capable of listening to each other, appreciating differences and caring for each other.

“What growing good food for a community means is always having food in your garden.”

CHARLENE TAN



“Choosing to work with smallholder organic farmers has also humbled me somewhat about the issues we face, what matters to different stakeholders and how we can develop a shared vision.”

CHARLENE TAN

Personally—beyond the context of the workplace—how has it impacted your life?

That's a funny question to ask because for most of us at GFC (and similar to farmers actually), it's not just work—it's a livelihood. So while a balance and harmony between professional and personal lives are worked towards, separation is somewhat illusory. To be more concrete, I've learned how to cook, how to compost, how to live simply because it is in line with this work. At the same time, my work allows me to practice these skills better. My family and friends are definitely eating better because of it, and the people I've encountered through this work tend to become my friends and family. Choosing to work with smallholder organic farmers has also humbled me somewhat about the issues we face, what matters to different stakeholders and how we can develop a shared vision.

What's one actionable thing our readers can do to help improve the farmers' livelihood in the long run?

Become a CSA member! ●

Visit goodfoodcommunity.com to find out how you can help grow community-shared agriculture in the Philippines.







Vegan Bicol Express

A green spin
on a favorite
Bicolano
culinary
institution

RECIPE BY *Celine Murillo*

*Serve hot and with lots of rice!
Makaon kita!*

Serving size

For 3-5 hungry vegans

Ingredients

- 1 large block of firm tofu.
- 1 medium red onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 tomatoes
- 1 red bell pepper
- 3 *siling haba* or *siling pansigang* (finger chili)
- 5 *sigarilyas* or winged beans
- 250 grams of coconut milk
- 1 thumb-sized ginger (or 2 tsp of ginger powder)
- 2 cups of water, more if needed
- 2 tsp salt, adjust to taste
- 2 tsp soy sauce

*If you wish to fry the tofu, have some canola oil at the ready (NO TO PALM OIL).

1. Preheat oven to 245C.
2. Cut the tofu in little square blocks, and arrange on a baking tray. Line it with a reusable silicone sheet to avoid sticking. A baking paper would also do. (But go get a reusable silicone sheet because #zerowaste! Oh, you may also air-fry tofu!)
3. Bake tofu for 30 minutes. Set aside when done.
4. Mince red onion and garlic. Chop tomatoes, red bell pepper, and *siling haba*. Roughly chop the winged beans. Julienne the ginger.
5. Put a medium to large saucepan on high heat. Saute red onion in water.
6. Stir and add in the other vegetables, but save a bit of the *siling haba* for toppings. Put in the garlic and ginger. Sauté for about 15 seconds or until it starts to smell really good.
7. Add the coconut milk and water, followed by a teaspoon each of salt and soy sauce. Cover the pot and let simmer until the coconut milk starts to release its own oil (the only oil here).
8. Check if the vegetables are cooked. If still raw, add another cup of water and simmer again for another 5 to 10 minutes.
9. Check the taste. Season with the remaining soy sauce and salt. Add more if desired. Add the baked tofu cubes and simmer for three minutes. Top with bits of *siling haba*.

ITINERARY



DISCONNECTION

NOTICE

Camp Isla founder *Mia Navarro*
breaks up with the fast-paced life to make
new connections in off-the-grid islands

INTERVIEW *Danielle Austria*
VISUALS *Vincent Lin and Daly Liu*

Drone photography by Daly Liu



Hello Mia! Tell us first about your work for GK Enchanted Farm!



I used to be the Luzon island head. Now I do strategic engagements. What that means is we help scale up existing businesses. It could mean providing agri-business opportunities. *Kunyari, kung maraming cassava [sa isang lugar], hahanap tayo ng magagawa sa cassava na ‘yan. O kung mayroon man ginagawang mga bags, paano natin i-scale up?* Or we build new ones: shared services. [I also handle] engagements with corporate, the academe and the government—how we can partner with them for one goal: to build the nation through social entrepreneurship and creating businesses that are socially good.

For the past three years, you’ve been with GK Enchanted Farm—working on partnerships, marketing and events. Before that, you were in publishing and took on a number of corporate positions. What called you to do social work?

I was volunteering at the Villamor Air Base in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda when I realized how helping out made me happy. And dissatisfied. That time, volunteering was something I did on the side but more and more, I wanted it to be the biggest chunk of my life.

Then the universe aligned. As a brand manager for a wine company, I found myself attending the GK Summit at the Enchanted Farm. It was in one of those summits where I met Benjamin [Benito] of Kayumanggi Organic who, after a *kamustahan*, told me they needed more people there and arranged for me to meet with the farm’s management.

That happened on a Tuesday. I met with the farm’s CEO (Shanonraj Khadka) on Thursday. *Nangamusta siya, kinilala ako. Nag-kuwento siya* about the farm, and how they want to be able to touch more people and help out. I was so touched; *naiyak ako*. He told me that he liked that reaction because it meant that what we talked about went beyond my understanding and felt it. He asked if I wanted to do it, and I said: “Game.”

So, the next day, on Friday night: I sent an email to my landlady saying that it was going to be my last month at the apartment. Saturday, I sent a letter of irrevocable resignation to my employer. By Monday the next week, I packed my bags and went to the farm.

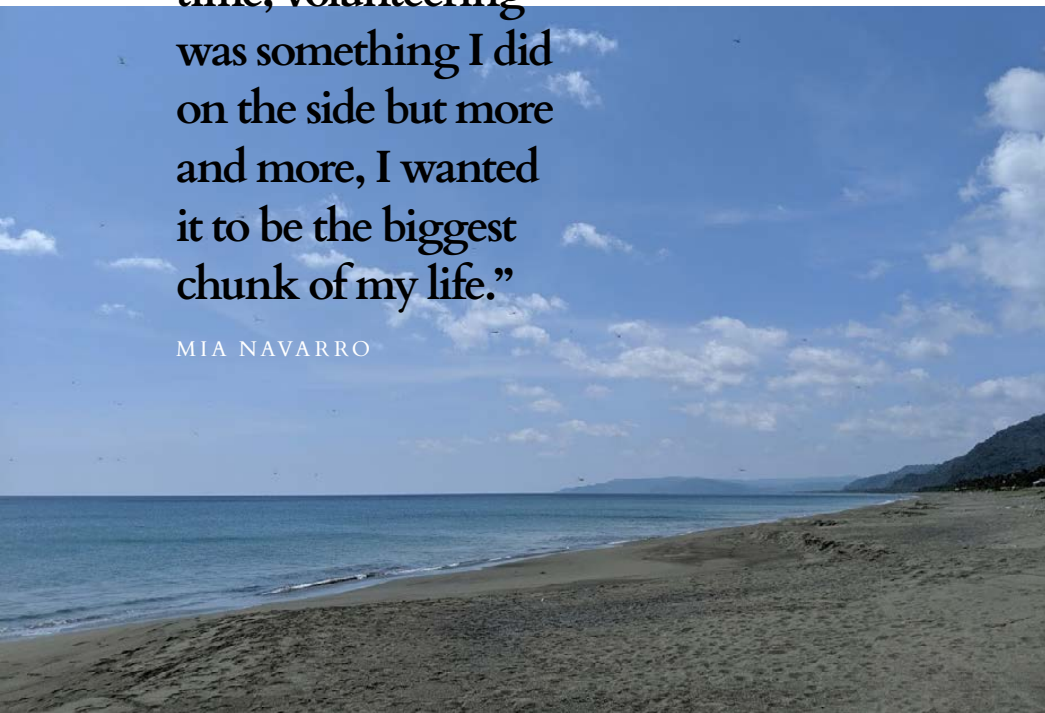
Where has your work with GK Enchanted Farm taken you?

Pinakamalayo na napuntahan ko sa Luzon is the farthest place accessible by land: Aparri. Apparently, it is very abundant with magnetic black sand, which is being smuggled by Chinese companies. Black sand is used in mining *para mahiwalay ‘yung* other elements from gold. *Hindi siya maganda* for tourism *pero ‘yun ang purpose ng* black sand.



“I realized how helping out made me happy. And dissatisfied. That time, volunteering was something I did on the side but more and more, I wanted it to be the biggest chunk of my life.”

MIA NAVARRO



We don't even have to go so far [from the city]. I've been to Smokey Mountain, *kung saan may image pa rin ang tao na madumi. Noong una kong punta, hinanda ko talaga sarili ko. Kakatapos lang ng ulan, so in-expect ko maputik. Naghahanap ako ng basura pero wala ako nakita. Nag-build ang GK ng mga bahay doon*, so there's a community there now. *Ngayon, ang daming mananahi na nakatira doon. Gumagawa sila ng mga eco bags, t-shirts, customized sacks, habi-habi, gantsilyo. Nakakatuwa.*

How would you advise someone who's looking to get into social work?

Social work is a mission. You need an open mind and an open heart. *Hindi lahat ng gusto mong tulungan, gusto magpatulong.* There are times when you're not the right person to give them help.

Unlearn things. Be very receptive to new things. I used to think charity meant dole-outs, but it's not the best kind of help. Relationships are the currency of social work, especially if you're an advocate for alleviating poverty. *Wag maging mas madunong* just because of your background.

Find balance. Not everyone is lucky with juggling. *May iba na nauubusan rin ng oras sa pamilya.*

Prepare yourself financially. *Totoo na walang pera sa social work.* [laughs] That was my fear, too, but I realized that I'm not driven by money. I decided that I would establish my own business for support, hence Camp Isla, and I also made lifestyle changes.

At the end of the day, social work is not really a selfless job because it also does you so much good. I have more time with my family and friends. I get to do what I want. I get to have a healthy lifestyle. I get to be away from pollution and noise. I'm less sickly.

On top of the work you do for GK Enchanted Farm, you also have Camp Isla – a social enterprise that takes explorers to off-the-radar islands in the Philippines. How did that come about?

There was a point when all I wanted to do was travel. *Dala 'yung sariling tent, pupunta ako sa Pasay Terminal.*

“At the end of the day, social work is not really a selfless job because it also does you so much good. I have more time with my family and friends. I get to do what I want. I get to have a healthy lifestyle. I get to be away from pollution and noise. I'm less sickly.”

MIA NAVARRO





Sasakay ako sa kung ano yung unang lalabas na bus. Wala akong pupuntahan, pero magtatanong ako sa konduktor ng hidden gems at kung saan wala masyadong tao. That's how I discovered the islands that we visit for Camp Isla.

Pinapakita ko sa friends ko 'yung mga napupuntahan ko, sinasabi nila: "Saan 'yan? Dalhin mo naman ako diyan!" Until one time, natuloy nga at sinama ko sila sa camp. Pagdating noong araw ng alis, akala ko tatlo o apat lang kami. Pucha, dose ata kami! I had to organize everything—from where to go, to how to get there, and food.

That first camp is where the idea to make it a business came about. Kasama yung mga kaibigan ko—isa na doon 'yung best friend ko na si Raymund Sison—inisip ko na kung gagawin itong negosyo, ayoko na maging tulad lang ng ibang DIY tours.



What's special about Camp Isla?

Laging may nagtatanong kung nasaan ang Camp Isla. Actually, it's not a location. It's an experience.

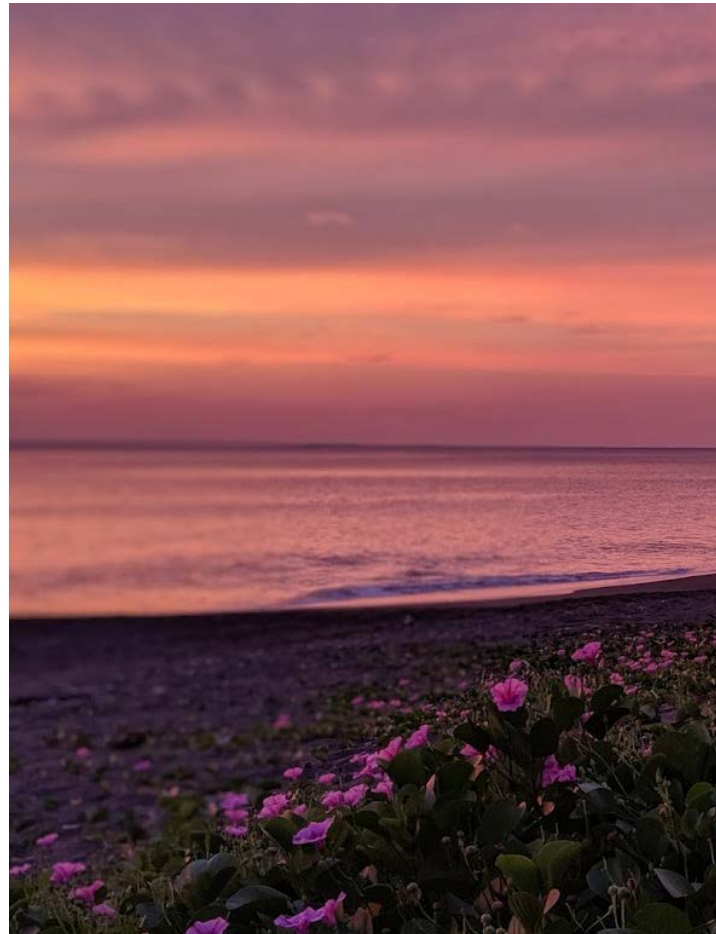
Unang-una, hindi namin sinasabi kung saan pupunta. The mystery is part of it. *Kapag wala kang expectations,* it humbles you. But we make sure *na dala namin lahat ng kailangan.* We also give our campers a kit, which lists the basics that they should bring and what they need to know in worst case scenarios [that comes with being out in nature]. We let them bring snacks if they want to, *pero sana* everything is sourced local or from social enterprises.

It starts the moment you step into the van. We let the campers get to know each other first, to expand outside their circles. *Sama-sama tayo mamalengke, kung may madaanan papunta.* *Pagkarating ng isla,* we give campers the chance to commune with the locals.

On the island, we prepare activities for them but overall, *chill lang.* People sing, dance, drink. It's like how my family used to do outings. *Sa dahon kami kumakain. Si mama, nagluluto pero tulong-tulong kami. Minsan may mga campers na mago-offer magluto para sa lahat. May iba-ibang versions na kami ng adobo: from adobong lasing to adobong malandi, adobong puti.* We let them teach us what they know, and we teach them what we know.

Ang gusto namin na mga isla, 'yung walang kuryente at walang signal. Iba yung saya 'pag walang signal. Iba yung tawa ng tao. Iba yung pag-enjoy mo ng pagkain. Iba 'yung sunset sessions. You really experience being with each other. But we also respect privacy. People can choose whether they want to share tents or bring they own. *Kung ayaw mo naman sa tao, okay.* At least you get your much-needed space. The people who come to our camps, they become really good friends after.

Ang pag-disconnect na nangyayari for the campers is not only a digital one, but it's also with the quality of their lives back in the city. You grow a different kind of connectedness here. *Kasama mo kumain yung mga nasa isla; hindi 'yung tagaluto mo lang sila.* You disconnect so you can find new connections.



ITINERARY



“You grow a different kind of connectedness here. You disconnect so you can find new connections.”

MIA NAVARRO

“There's this growing curiosity among people who feel that going out of the city helps to de-stress.” MIA NAVARRO

What kind of people does Camp Isla attract?

Marami sa kanila ay new to camping. There's this growing curiosity among people who feel that going out of the city helps to de-stress. These are people who really want to live the way of the locals.

How does Camp Isla tie in with your work for GK Enchanted Farm?

I value collaborations. Camp Isla gets its material and human resources from GK communities. We try as much to be zero-plastic when we go to the islands. *Gumagamit kami ng bamboo straws na galing sa Aeta community in Zambales. Ang mga bao, gawa ng farmers in Bulacan. We bring produce from the Enchanted Farm. Ang mga camp assistants ay galing din sa communities, minsan mga out-of-school youth football players 'pag wala silang laban. Bayad sila, and we treat them as we do our campers.*

We also keep in mind the communities *na nasa isla*. We build relationships with them. We ask our campers to bring toys or books, anything that they can donate to the community. *'Yung mga bangkero, binabayaran ng market rate. Tinuturuan namin sila paano kumausap ng turista, ng foreigners. Kung may kakilala sila na masarap magluto o magaling magmasahe, we get their services and help them improve so they can charge decent rates.*

Do you worry sometimes that, by exposing these islands to the world through social media, they would attract the “wrong” crowd? We all know what happened to Boracay that led to rehabilitation and what threatens La Union.

When we go to the islands, we do our best to prepare both sides. For example, the campers know if they can smoke or not, and if they can, *saan ang tapunan. Kung may basura, we tell them to bring it with them when we leave.*



ITINERARY



“For those *na nasa* woke stage, they are informed but they lack action. *Minsan kasi* inspired *ka lang*, romantic *ka lang*. That’s not enough.” MIA NAVARRO





We take back fruit seeds to plant on the farm. Then we tell the locals: “*Manita kayo.*” *Kung magkaroon man ng ibang grupo doon, dapat alam nila paano i-disiplina.* Careful kami na hindi makabulabog sa community.

Describe day one for a social entrepreneur founder.

First: know your “why”. Your “how”.

For me, it bothers me so much *na ang ganda ganda ng Pilipinas. Ang daming magagandang isla. Yung iba, napopollute pa.* How: I’ll go to the islands and find ways to keep it beautiful. *Ano ang nangyayari sa ibang isla? ‘Yung mga taong nakatira sa pinakamagagandang lugar, sila pa ‘yung mahirap.* It’s very unfair. I want them to live a comfortable life. A problem to solve becomes a business opportunity.

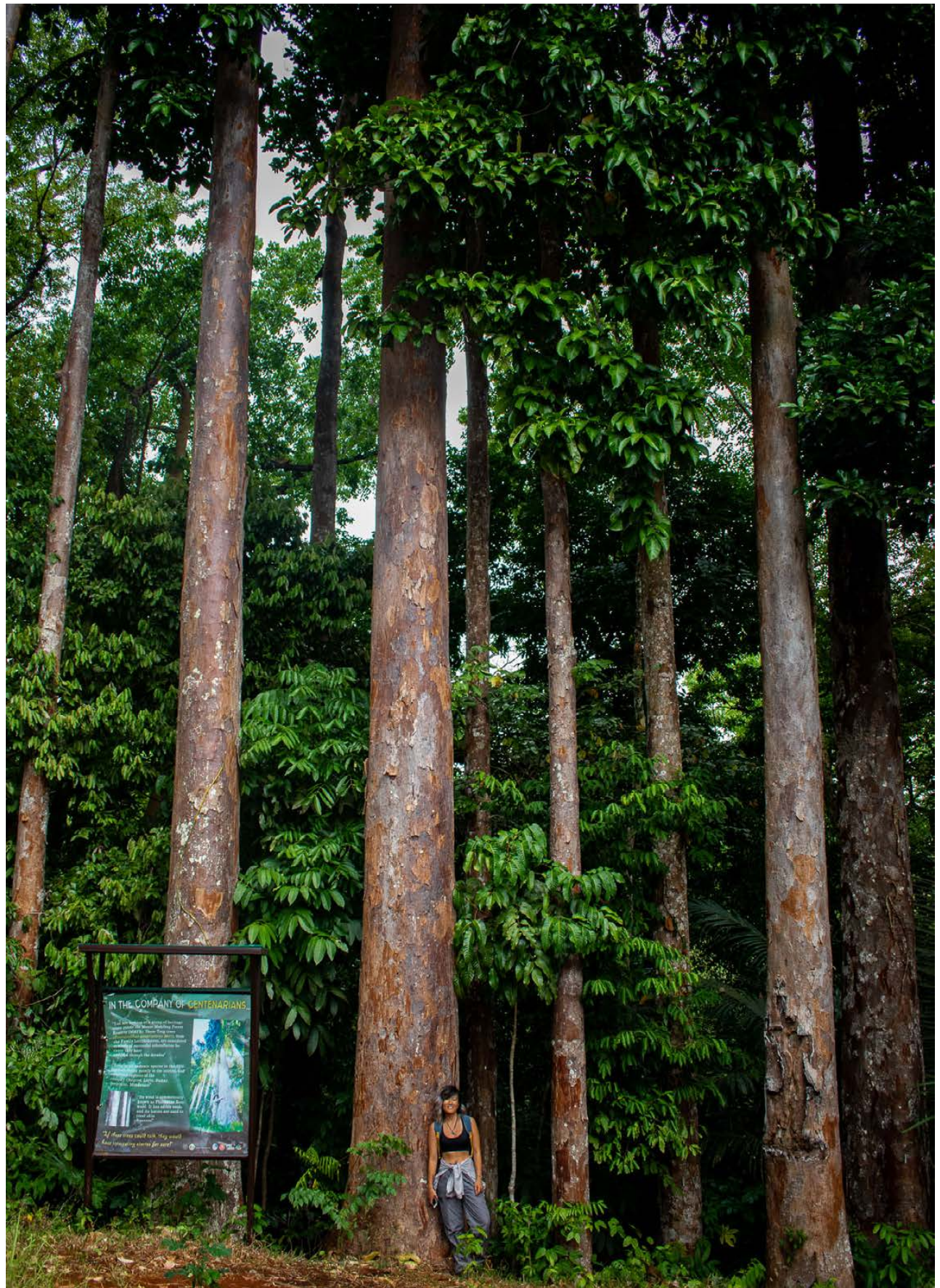
And don’t forget your “who”: who will be part of it, who will be benefiting from it?

And what would you say to the everyday Filipino who wants change but may not want to see it through social entrepreneurship?

For those *na nasa* woke stage, they are informed but they lack action. *Minsan kasi inspired ka lang, romantic ka lang.* That’s not enough. You have to be a builder. *Wag puro* romance, idea or inspiration. Put it into action. ●

Plant your stakes on Camp Isla’s next island adventure. Follow them on Facebook [@campisla](#) and Instagram [@camp_isla](#) for updates.





IN THE COMPANY OF CENTENARIANS

The forest is a living museum of the past. The trees here are the oldest in the region, and some are over 100 years old. They have seen the forest through its many changes, and they are still here today. The forest is a place of peace and tranquility, and it is a place where you can connect with nature.

The forest is a place of peace and tranquility, and it is a place where you can connect with nature. The forest is a place of peace and tranquility, and it is a place where you can connect with nature.

"If there is a forest, it is a forest. If there is a forest, it is a forest. If there is a forest, it is a forest."



Little Efforts Matter

This 2020, make these resolutions to help fight the climate battle.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY *Celine Murillo*

It was a gloomy afternoon, the air smelling like rain, when I heard these words from a meditation teacher: Climate change is a behavioral problem. We had the “technology” to reverse the effects of this global dilemma, she said, and yet we do nothing. This technology she talked about? One simple way we can do as soon as tomorrow to alleviate this ecological collapse?

Trees.

Plant trees, she said – and scientists agree. Billions of them. There is enough data and scientific evidence to support the efficacy of trees to lower global temperature. There’s even a recent study stating that we have enough unused land—i.e. denuded land that aren’t used for anything, even agriculture—to accommodate the planting of this number of trees. But why aren’t we doing it?

Because our human minds simply find this solution too impersonal, it turns out. Say, you live in the city where there’s barely any space for greenery, your mind—programmed for efficiency by these fast-paced times—immediately concludes that there’s nothing you can do. We are addicted to convenience, and when a solution to a problem is inconvenient, we ignore it.

Well, at least that’s what I think happens on an individual level.

On a system-wide scale, the truth is various economic interests get in the way of environmental sustainability. Greed is what is up. Money. And when you’re a commoner such as myself, with neither economic wealth nor political

influence to hold over people’s heads, it’s easy to feel helpless. You think I’m taking the meditation course “Overcoming Grief from Climate Change” just for kicks?

Every day, I’m on revolting against futility. I struggle to remind myself that the things I do in my daily life make a difference, especially in the midst of scholarly articles and conservationists putting a premium on policy overhaul—banning fossil fuels, stricter fishing laws, making businesses more accountable, etc.—and declaring that the time for “individual virtuosity” is over. And while I *do* think that in order to fully address this ecological suicide, decision-makers should get their shit together and make the choice between humanity’s survival and their bulging pockets, I also maintain—very adamantly—that small acts can add up to something big.

I’ve always believed that there’s a natural progression to involvement. Of course, it all begins with awareness, which will often make you care. This care will then lead to small lifestyle changes. And then you’ll get the sense that you can do more—and you’re absolutely right—so you *will* look for ways to do more.

And this why I agree that climate change *is* a behavioral problem. We are bombarded with solutions, with all these concepts too abstract for our fast-paced brains, without anyone bothering to check if we *actually* care. Sure, in an ideal world, we all care about the future of our planet, but if we live in an ideal world then we wouldn’t have this problem to begin with.

“Every day, I’m on revolting against futility. I struggle to remind myself that the things I do in my daily life make a difference.”

CELINE MURILLO

What I’m trying to say is this: what you do matters. Your everyday choices have an impact on the planet. Businesses, politicians, the people who “run” the world respond to demands, and you control the demand.

So, if you’re feeling overwhelmed but want to help fight the climate battle, here are things you can do:

1. Educate yourself. Like I said, it all begins with awareness. Find an issue that interests you—deforestation, mining, single-use plastics, marine conservation, veganism—and read up on it. Find out why this issue is important, what will happen when you do nothing. Find a community. Make yourself care.

Some documentaries you can watch: *Cowspiracy* for how animal agriculture contributes to climate change. *Bird Of Prey* for the Philippine Eagle conservation. *Suwag o Suko* (shameless plug) for the plight of our tamaraw rangers.

You can also join Facebook groups like [Buhay Zero-Waste](#), [Philippine Native Trees Enthusiasts](#), and [Manila Vegans](#) for support and ideas.

2. If you have access to a *palengke*, go to a *palengke*. Public markets or *palengke* are so underrated. It’s basically a big ol’ bulk store and, with a little effort on your part, also a zero-waste store. Make it a habit to buy your produce here. They’re almost always fresher, and you also help small business owners. Plus, prices are often cheaper here, too! You may even get “naked” products.

Palengke Pros: You can get pasta, popcorn, flour, sugar, salt, and a whole lot of things in bulk from the *palengke*. You may even bring your own container and get only what you need!

3. Buy less. If you’re trying to achieve a zero-waste lifestyle, the last thing you should do is make a purchase. Capitalism is what brought us here in the first place, so continuing to buy things you don’t really need—like rainbow-colored utensils or Instagrammable tote bag—defeats the purpose. Make use of what you already have. If you don’t have an impairment (and/or not a fan of milk tea), you really don’t need a metal straw or any kind of reusable straw. Just. Refuse. Straws. Refuse and reuse so you can reduce. And if you must buy, make sure it’ll last.

Some 3R Tips: make use of your empty ice cream containers by bringing them with you to the public market. Say no to plastic bags and have your *suking tindera* place your meat or fish (or tofu) directly into the container.

4. Eat less meat. Animal agriculture is one of the leading causes of climate change. It’s responsible for the clearing of forests, as well as almost half of the world’s greenhouse gases. It is a wasteful industry. And while I advocate going vegan, it’s important to go at our own pace. Again: natural progression. I used to love pork, as in *baboy* is life, but now I haven’t consumed any meat for two years. It’s the easiest thing you can do, if you really think about it. You don’t need government intervention to not eat meat. You can simply decide not to. If going cold-turkey is a bit too much, try to designate one day a week where you won’t eat meat. Meatless Monday maybe? Or make it full-on Pinoy and go Munggo Fridays.

I hope these non-abstract solutions can jumpstart (or further) your sustainable lifestyle. We may be hardwired to convenience, but if we care enough about something, we ultimately won’t mind. So may your 2020 mantra be: environment over convenience. Three cheers for the planet! ●

Follow Celine Murillo’s plant-powered adventures on Instagram [@celineism](#) and [thetravelingveganph.com](#). Request a screening for *Suwag o Suko*, a documentary on tamaraw conservation, on Facebook [@suwagosuko](#).

Spotlight

Life's a stage, and we're all actors under our own spotlight

WORDS *Jay Asiddao*

Another New Year has come and gone, and many of us probably wrote our resolutions with great conviction. We convince ourselves that “this is the year...” with great resolve, only to fall into the cycle of starting strong before slowly fading into procrastination and panic. We are caught in the cyclical trap simply because there are days, even small moments, when we feel we are forcing it.

Even I start to wish I could switch on autopilot mode to self-improvement. Unfortunately, I don't have an autopilot switch, nor do I know how to fly.

The great difficulty we find here is merely making that choice to action. In ‘Beauty within the Beast’ ([page 88, City Beautiful issue](#)), we established how important the present is in taking action. It is empowering to know that every moment is shaped in your grasp, and that this power is immense. However, similar to any sort of power, there is an accompanying fear in wielding it.

Somewhat ironic that something as simple as making a choice holds so much emancipating power, as well as debilitating fear.

The existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre thought as much.

He famously said that we are all condemned to be free. After our existence, there is only freedom. That is: every moment of our existence is faced with a choice. Even in the moments we do nothing, our refusal to act is still a choice. To an existentialist like Sartre, our actions hold so much significance because it is through our actions that we are able to shape and define our existence. It is how we build our essence. It is how we give our lives meaning.

In the end, our actions will define us. There is no fate to guide us to our destiny, or a divine being to follow and lead us into eternal bliss. We exist to give ourselves meaning, and our actions define it. We can only fully realize this by participating, or *acting*, in this world.

On the other side of the coin, failure to act is failure to realize ourselves. Whatever the causes, the ends, or motivations we have means nothing if we cannot act. This is why we are condemned. As long as we exist, we must always choose, we must always act. This is our condemnation.

However, the source of our fear is also the source of our power. We are thrust into the universe with boundless potential and possibilities. We already started from nothing, literally from non-existence we suddenly are able to create our meaning.

Perhaps one peculiarity of Sartre's life isn't a coincidence. Apart from being a philosopher, he was also a playwright. Many of his ideas translate onto the stage as well, exhibiting themes of existentialism and the anguish of existing. It is probable that Sartre sees the stage as a simpler avenue to emulate his ideas.

The world is our stage, and you are the lead in your own play. The stage is a place of action; actions executed by actors; viewed and judged by an audience. When we've set our values, written down our goals, we go out on stage. Once the curtain has lifted, you finally feel the heat of the limelight on your face, and with the glaring gaze of the audience focused on you, don't just stand there. Do something. ●



LOCATION *Baclaran Church, Manila*

Parting Shot

A VISUAL ENDNOTE

Photographed by Charisse Refuerzo

At a time when heroism is hardly upheld, Bam Romana has gone beyond the ordinary alms-giving and into immersing with the elderly to give them a sense of home amid homelessness.

Bam shares, *“Huminga ka minsan. Sa umaga, kung maabutan mo ‘yung pagsikat ng araw, hindi yan ginawa ni Lord para lang mag-umaga o ipaalala sa iyo na gumising ka at magtrabaho na. Paalala ‘yan ni Lord na bago lumubog ang araw, kailangan magmahal ka, magsilbi ka, magpatawad ka at mabahagi ka ng sarili mo.”*

Trail behind Charisse Refuerzo on Instagram [@crisref2004](https://www.instagram.com/crisref2004) as she captures moments from around the world.

A Reminder

At this time, the role of design in information dissemination cannot be overstated. Having accurate information in a language accessible to all can save a life. The folks at [@curecovidph](#), a multi sectoral-community based effort, have designed a Filipino-language pamphlet on the disease, complete with preventive measures.

Many thanks to Karl Castro ([@karlfmcastro](#)) for supplying us with the files.

You may also do your part in spreading the word by downloading the pamphlet here to print and distribute:
j.mp/curecovidphflyertag

Stay home, stay safe and wash your hands.



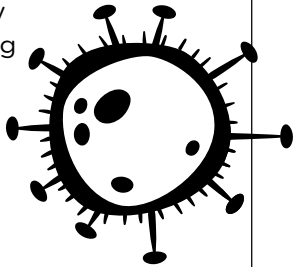
“Hindi lang agham: makatutulong rin ang kabutihang-loob.”

—DR MUKESH KAPILA, dating Director for Emergency Response, World Health Organization

Coronavirus, matatalo natin!

Ano ang novel coronavirus?

Ang coronavirus ay virus na lumalaganap sa pagitan ng mga hayop pero may ilan sa mga itong lumalaganap sa mga tao. Unang lumaganap sa mga tao ang 2019 novel coronavirus sa China noong katapusan ng 2019.



2.3



Basic Reproductive Number (R_0) o average na **bilang ng nahahawaang tao** sa bawat isang tao na may COVID-19

Paano lumalaganap ang COVID-19?



Sa pamamagitan ng **droplets o talsik** na galing sa ating lalamunan o respiratory system.

Banta sa mga mamamayan ng buong mundo ang pagkalat ng **Coronavirus Disease-19 (COVID-19)**. Sa ating bansa, lumalaganap din ang sakit na ito. Lalong bulnerable tayo dahil sa hirap ng buhay at kapabayaang ng gobyerno. Pero kung nagkakatulungan tayong mga Pilipino, mula sa barangay hanggang sa buong bansa, tiyak na mapagwawagian natin ito!

Paano maiwasan ang paglaganap?



Panatilihin malinis ang inyong kamay sa pamamagitan ng paghugas gamit ang **tubig at sabon** (di bababa sa 20 segundo) o kaya gamit ang rubbing alcohol (70%) o hand sanitizer.



Takpan ang ilong at bibig, laluna pag umuubo o bumabahing. Umiwas sa mga maysakit, katulad ng mga may ubo, sipon, lagnat, trangkaso.

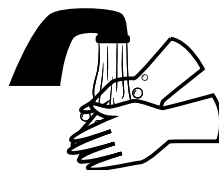
Lutuin nang maigi ang karne at itlog.



Umiwas sa di-protektadong paghawak sa buhay na mga hayop.

(wala pang ebidensya na nakakahawa ang mga alagang aso o pusa)

Maghugas ng kamay:



- matapos umubo o bumahing
- tuwing nag-aalaga ng maysakit
- bago, tuwing at matapos ihanda ang inyong pagkain
- bago kumain
- matapos gumamit ng kubeta
- tuwing narurumahan ang kamay
- matapos humawak ng mga hayop o dumi ng hayop

Sinu-sino ang pinaka-bulnerable sa COVID-19?



Mga matatanda



Mga may karamdaman tulad ng alta-presyon, diyabetes, sakít sa puso, sakít sa bagà, o kanser.

Anu-ano ang mga sintomas ng COVID-19?

Hinihinalang may COVID-19 ang pasyente kung siya ay may lagnat, nakararamdam ng matinding págod, may tuyóng ubo, at pasinghap o kapós ang paghinga. May ilang pasyente ring nakararanas ng pananakit ng kasukasuan, baradong ilong, tumutulòng sipon, pamamagâ at pananakit ng lalamunan, o nagtatae.

May mga taong nahawahan ng COVID-19 ngunit asintomatiko o **walang ipinakikitang sintomas ng sakít**. Ang mga táong ito ay sinasabing may malakas at malusog na pangangatawan kaya hindi malalâ ang epekto sa kanila. Panatilihing malusog ang pangangatawan sa pamamagitan ng sapat na tulog, pag-inom ng maraming tubig, pagkain ng masusustansiyang pagkain, at pag-eehersisyo.

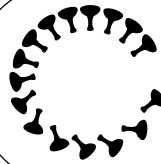
Kung may nararamdaman:

Kung nakakaramdam ng sintomas na sipon, ubo, lagnat, pananakit ng lalamunan, agad na mag-**self quarantine** o **lumayo sa ibang tao**, kabilang ang kapamilya, para mabawasan ang posibilidad na makahawa pa kung sakali mang may COVID-19 ka. Pagkatapos, agad na magpatingin sa doktor. Ipaalam sa barangay.

Kung nakalapit o nadikit sa isang taong may sintomas o posibleng maysakit, mainam na ring mag-**self quarantine** at obserbahan ang sarili kung makakaramdam ng sintomas sa loob ng apat na araw. Kapag nakaramdam ng sintomas, agad na magpatingin sa doktor. Abisuhan ang barangay.

[curecovidph](#) [groups/brgydamayan](#)
#covid19ph #KaalamanHindiKaguluhan #MedikalHindiMilitar

BATAY SA PAALALA NG WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. MGA IMAHE GALING SA FREEPIK.



cure
covid

CITIZENS' URGENT
RESPONSE TO
END COVID-19

Serbisyong nararapat

6 na mahalagang panawagan natin ngayon kaugnay ng Community Quarantine at COVID-19

1 **Agarang solusyong medikal.** Magpatupad ng **solusyong medikal** sa halip na aksyong militarista kaugnay ng COVID-19 outbreak. Magtalaga ng mas maraming doktor, nars, health workers at volunteers sa mga komunidad sa halip na magdeploy ng mga pulis at militar.

2 **Pondohan ang paglaban sa virus.** May badyet ang gobyerno para sa krisis sa COVID-19. Dapat ilaan ang malaking bahagi nito sa **prevention, monitoring, testing at treatment**. Pati sa pag-employo ng dagdag na frontline health workers. Hindi ito dapat ilaan sa turismo at suporta sa malalaking negosyo.

3 **Aksyon sa komunidad.** Isagawa ang mga hakbang sa **antas-komunidad** kabilang ang: **information drive** kaugnay ng COVID-19; **pamamahagi** ng libreng face masks, alkohol at vitamin C; **mass disinfection** ng mga paaralan, palengke, bahayan at mga karaniwang tipunan ng tao; libre at pangmaramihang **COVID-19 testing at kagyat na treatment** sa mga nagpositibo sa virus.

4 **Kapakanan ng mga manggagawa.** Tiyakin ang **kaligtasan at kalusugan sa lugar ng trabaho** ng mga may pasok. Gayundin ang **kaseguruhan sa trabaho at benepisyo** ng mga hindi makakapasok. Tiyakin ang **serbisyong pang-transportasyon** mula bahay papuntang lugar ng trabaho at pabalik.

5 **Presyo at subsidyo.** Striktong **imonitor at kontrolin ang presyo** ng mga batayang bilihin gaya ng pagkain, alkohol at sabon. Bigyan ng **tulong pinansyal** ang mga bulnerableng pamilya at komunidad, laluna ang pinakamahihirap.

6 **Tubig para sa lahat.** Kagyat na solusyonan ng Maynilad at Manila Water ang palpak at pawala-walang **serbisyo sa tubig**. Kinakailangang tiyakin ang 24/7 na suplay ng tubig sa mga kabahayan para sa paghuhugas ng kamay.

